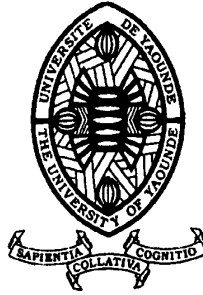


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THE TRANSMUTATION OF THE WOMAN IN HER ROLE IN VIRGINIA WOOLF'S TO THE LIGHTHOUSE

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Award of a Postgraduate Teacher's Diploma(DIPES II) in English

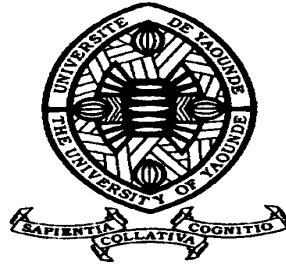
Par :

ARREY EBOT NJANG ENOW
BA English

Sous la direction
Dr DAVID KUSI
Senior Lecturer



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ABSTRACT

This work, entitled “The Transmutation of the Woman’s Role in Virginia Woolf’s *To The Lighthouse*,” examines the complexities embodied in the role of the contemporary woman. It shows transmutation as an evolutionary process in order to determine the woman’s struggle from the period which the novel was written to present day. It aims at studying the mutations undergone by the woman through many years and how these mutations have led to the transformation of the woman’s role and her personality. In investigating these mutations, the work employs the postfeminist theory to show how these transmutational tendencies have been attained. It also uses the postcolonial concept of hybridity to show the complexities embellished in the role of contemporary woman. Based on the hypothesis that the contemporary woman is embellished with transmutational tendencies, the study reveals that women use subjective and relative approaches to empower themselves and promote harmony in society. In an attempt to show the pedagogic relevance of *To The Lighthouse*, the work establishes a suggested pedagogy on how the novel can be taught in a language classroom. This study concludes that the contemporary woman is endowed with complex values which help in promoting peace and harmony in society.

RESUME

Ce travail, intitulé “The Transmutation of the Woman’s Role in Virginia Woolf’s *To The Lighthouse*,” examine le roman de Virginia Woolf dans une perspective postféministe. Il montre la transmutation comme un processus évolutif afin de déterminer la lutte de la femme de l’époque où le roman a été écrit à nos jours. Elle représente également un point de vue idéologique par lequel la transmutation idéologique permet une enquête appropriée de conflit idéologique existant dans le texte. Et enfin, il examine le résultat de mutations transmutationnel et comment cette évolution a conduit à la création d'une femme idéale et complexe tel que décrit par l'auteur. Il est sur la base de ces objectifs majeurs que l'étude est guidée par l'hypothèse que *To The Lighthouse* par Virginia Woolf dépeint la preuve de tendances transmutationnel dans le rôle de la femme qui pourrait conduire à la création d'une femme idéale et complexe; de sorte que la transmutation du rôle de la femme est utilisée comme une stratégie par femme contemporaine à se responsabiliser et suggère également de mettre un terme aux tourmentes dans les relations entre les sexes. Du point de vue du discours postféministe, l'étude va plus loin pour révéler des aspects de l'approche subjective des femmes à l'autonomisation et aussi des moyens relatifs de mettre l'harmonie dans la société. Le travail examine comment *To The Lighthouse* peuvent être pertinentes dans les écoles secondaires camerounaises. Cette étude a conclu que Virginia Woolf suggère que les femmes ont pris des mesures audacieuses individuelles aux problèmes de la place et le rôle de la femme dans la société comme un moyen de se habilitant.

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I, equally, acknowledge the help I received from the staff of the Department of English of the Higher Teacher Training College, Yaoundé. I want to thank all my teachers who ensured that I received a qualified training required for my career as a teacher.

I would like to thank my grand mother, Emilia Egbe Etchu Njang, and my brother, Enow Njang Besong, whose love and moral support kept me in school.

Finally, I also want to thank my classmates, more especially Muke Njeba Bianca, Kfeban Ethelbert and Sakwe Standley for their enormous contributions to this work.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my son,

Kom Nono Persie David and to my late mum,

Maiky Ebangah Etchu Njang.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this work entitled, “The Transmutation of the Woman’s Role in Virginia Woolf’s *To The Lighthouse*”, was carried out by Enow Njang Arrey Ebot in view of obtaining the Postgraduate Teacher’s Diploma (DIPES II) in English, ENS Yaounde.

Supervisor :

Dr Kusi Toh

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INTRODUCTION

The problem of the woman's place and her role in society has been a preoccupying issue for many centuries. The works of early writers like Aristotle and Aeschylus suggests that women are objects of the house meant to raise children and take care of the entire home including the man. These writers considered women to be weak intellectually and physically. Aristotle had declared that the woman is defined "female" because of her lack of certain qualities(qtd in Selden, 116). These misconstrued definitions given to the woman made her relegated to a secondary position in almost every domain in life. However, this treatment of the woman varied according to the different cultures and periods around the world.

In Victorian Britain (19th Century Britain), the ideal woman was considered pure, refined and modest. During this era, women did not have suffrage rights, the right to sue or the right to own property. Women were seen, at least by the middle class, as belonging to the domestic sphere. This required them to provide their husbands with all the care and love, and to be submissive. An alliance between a Victorian man and woman meant the creation of an entity whereby the man becomes the head of this entity. With this, he has control over property including the woman's body and all what her body procures and produces like sex, children and domestic labour. However, the woman's domestic duty of catering for her husband and raising children was considered, by the society, very important in social stability. As a result, some women, during this era, internalised these patriarchal considerations placed on them by society. A phenomenon that Lois Tyson refers to as the "patriarchal woman" (39).

As concerns the woman's sexual and educational life, she experienced the same relegation. Discussing sex subjects openly was considered a taboo. In the educational domain, women were exposed only to subjects like History and Literature which were interesting and did not have controversial topics. Challenging subjects such as Physics and Maths were considered intellectually demanding and so, they were reserved for the men. This notion of making education gender-specialised deprived women of their economic independence.

These stereotyped and misconstrued ideologies concerning the role and position of the woman in society began to be contested by some feminist writers who emerged in the early 18th and 19th centuries. Their writings were reactions against the constraints placed on the woman which deprived her of equal political, economic and social rights with the man. Some

of these feminist writers, whose writings took the feminist quest and endeavour to a more serious level, include : Mary Wollstonecraft, Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millet, Adrienne Riche, Mary Elleman, Elaine Showalter, Angela McRobbie and Judith Butler. However, feminist ideologies can be traced far back in the 17th century in the writings of Anne Bradstreet and Aphra Behn. The writings of these critics emanated from their diversified cultural backgrounds and so they raised different views as concerns the origin of female subjugation and her eventual freedom from patriarchy.

From an evolutionary and historical bearing, feminists' quest and endeavour for freedom from patriarchal domination has been divided into three modern feminist waves : First Wave Feminism, which centred around promoting women's right to vote. Second Wave Feminism, which focused on the politics of reproduction and the woman's sexual experience as a form of subjugation ; and Third Wave Feminism which is a follow up and at the same time a reaction to the perceived backlash in Second Wave Feminism.

Third Wave Feminism emerged in the late 20th century and early 21st century. The movement embraces contradictions as inherent components of late 20th and 21st century women's (and men's) lives and they envision a new model of feminist thinking and practice that goes beyond black or white. Furthermore, Third Wave Feminism is influenced by postmodern theories as well as multiculturalist sensibilities which welcome relativism and pluralism, and describes itself as a post-identity movement that engages with the postmodern challenge to a unified subjectivity and goes for individuality (Genz & Brabon, 156-159). It is in this atmosphere of relativism and subjectivism that the notion of backlash in the Postfeminist movement is born. The early postfeminists think that feminists ideologies (fighting for equal rights with their male counterparts) in the 21st Century are obsolete and groundless. They think that equality is no longer the subject because it has already been achieved. Rather, they are more focused on the woman as a source of empowerment to herself.

However, far from being anti-feminists, the late postfeminists positively draw on and evoke feminists' endeavours, as those that can be taken into consideration, to suggest that equality has already been acquired. Hence, late postfeminist aim at retrieving some palatable ways of old feminine past to combine them with new and modern ones to create a new and hybridised self (McRobbie, 12). It is in this light that transmutational ideologies of the woman's role find their way in feminists' thought. The late postfeminists envision a society

where there is gender negotiation between both sexes to create a peaceful society. One of those strategies to create such a society include the transmutation of the role of the woman.

Virginia Woolf is one of the world's greatest and influential female writers. Her works such as *Mrs Dalloway*, *Orlando* depict a strict criticism on how society places constraints on women. She advocated women's right to have the same political, economic and social opportunities as men, in society. Her experiences in life influenced her perceptions concerning the treatment of women in society. Through her experiences with her parents, she concerned herself with the question of women's equality with men in marriage and brilliantly evoked the inequality that existed in the marriage of her parents in her works. According to Vanessa Bell, the novel, *To the Lighthouse*, is based on the marital life of Woolf's parents and also Woolf's mother's experience in marriage. Her mother represented the image of the "Angel in the House" which symbolised the ideals of a Victorian woman as stipulated by the society. Apart from the problem of inequality women experienced in marriage, Woolf also based herself on the problem of sexual abuse on women. As narrated in her memoir, *Moments of Being*, Woolf herself had experienced some sort of sexual abuse in the hands of her half brothers. With these experiences, she could easily use literature as a medium to expose these social offences on women, though her works discussed sex indirectly.

Although her experiences in life played an important role in building her feminist ideology, she also had other preoccupations in her feminist writings. These preoccupations were : the reclaiming of a female tradition of writing, the re-writing of the female history, and the deconstruction of gender differences. In Woolf's *A Room Of One's Own*, she traces the rise of women writers and raised the possibility of a feminine style of writing. However, she concludes the essay saying that great English writers like Shakespeare, Jane Austen and Marcel Proust are androgynous ; that is, being able to percieve the world from a gender ambiguous angle; a man and a woman's perspective. This binary theory of androgyny brought up by Woolf has created content among critics who either hate Woolf or love her. Those who agree with this theory of hers, like Carolyn Heilbrun and Nancy Topping saw androgyny as a balance and union between opposite sexes which give satisfying patterns to life. Other critics, like Elaine Showalter, find the theory annoying. She sees it as some sort of escape from the body and from key feminist issues. For Woolf, androgyny gave an opportunity for men and women to write without consciousness of their sex ; giving way for uninhibited creativity. Acclaimed by many critics, Her writings can be situated between Second Wave Feminism, and somehow Third Wave Feminism.

Of all the works of Virginia Woolf, the novel *To The Lighthouse* is the only work that diverts from the author's ideology concerning feminism. As one of the pioneers of feminist endeavours, her ideologies have even been studied from an extremely radical point of view by critics like Lisa Williams, Carolyn Heilbrun, Laura Marcus and Juliet Mitchell. However, these ideologies have been contradicted in this novel under study. Steve Ellis' essay, "Integration : *To The Lighthouse*" argues that the novel shows transmutational tendencies in the woman's role where women can be able to obtain public recognition contrary to the private roles they have been subjected to, for a long time. However, the intricacies that constitutes the author's drift in perspective and the outcomes of this shift are preoccupying and are fundamental tendencies worth investigating in this work

This study, therefore, aims at examining the transmutation of the role of the woman in Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* from the following perspectives : an the evolutionary perspective in order to determine the woman's struggle from the period which the novel was written to presentday ; an ideological perspective whereby ideological transmutation permits a proper investigation of ideological conflict existing in the text ; and finally, the study aims at discussing the outcome of transmutational mutations and how such evolution has led to the creation of an ideal and complex woman as depicted by the author. The work also illustrates how *To The Lighthouse* can be taught in a language classroom. Here, some aspects of society and the woman's role are examined using excerpts from the novel.

It is on the bases of these aims and objectives that the following hypothetical questions have been conceived and formulated to guide this research :

- To what extent does Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* reflect an evolutionary transmutation of the woman?
- To what extent can ideological conflicts and symbolic mutations be seen as different dimensions of transmutation of the woman in her role?
- How is 21st Century woman's role reflexive of the fusion of the woman's role ?
- How can *To The Lighthouse* be taught in a language classroom?

This study is therefore based on the assertion that Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* portrays evidence of transmutational tendencies in the role of the woman which could lead to the creation of an ideal and complex woman. Transmutation of the woman in her role is used

as a strategy by contemporary woman to empower herself and put an end to the turmoils in gender relations. While the novel is examined as the only text that diverts from the author's feminist ideologies, transmutation is expatiated upon in the text as a drift in perspectives, evolutionarily and historically.

Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* is very relevant to contemporary society because it embodies the characteristics of all types of women and portrays the woman's struggle in society from an individual subjective perspective and not from a collective subjective perspective as depicted by early feminists. The strategies employed by these women to overcome various social challenges are significant because they help to raise awareness on the relativity of feminist ideologies. Moreover, from a context-specific perspective, this study is relevant to young Cameroonian girls (and even boys) who need to be given orientation on how to function with patriarchal systems and norms in society, negotiate gender roles and promote peace and harmony in society.

The key term to be defined in this study is "Transmutation." There are various definitions to the term but the ones explored in this work are those that contribute to the understanding of the concept in relation to change, mutation of the individual, reconstruction of identity and the recreation of the Self.

"Transmutation" is a term used in alchemy to refer to the transformation of base metal to gold. It was later used in the works of early evolutionary thinkers like Joseph Gottlieb Kölreuter in the 18th and 19th centuries, to describe species that have obtained biological transformation due to hybridisation (Bowler, 142). In another perspective, *The Century Dictionary and Encyclopaedia* defines "Transmutation" in Biology, as the change of one species into another by any means; transpeciation; transformism. It could be said that, the history of transmutation runs parallel with that of transformism, from an early crude or vulgar notion akin to that involved in the alchemy of metals, to the modern scientific conception of transmutation as an evolutionary process.

This term has been adopted in other spheres of knowledge like philosophy. It is used by the German poet, Frederiech Schlegel, to explain the concept of the new transcendental poetry. As a synthetic writer, Schlegel looks at transcendental poetry from a deeper sense. He sees it as "a transmutation of what is known about poetry and what is known about philosophy" (qtd in Weston, 9). As Weston argues, making a transmutation (or what he also

calls “Fusing” or “Mixing”) between poetry and philosophy promotes concept-formation, that is, the desire to form something new ; a new form of writing. In the book, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Weston provides a definition of transmutation from Nietzsche’s perspective as : “Not a change of values but a change in the element from which the values of values derive...Transmutation means a change of quality in the will of power. Values and their value no longer derive from the negative but from the affirmation as such.” (186)

These foregoing definitions highlight the following processes involved in transmutation : transformation, change of quality, hybridisation, fusion, mixing and creation. Hence, drawing from this alchemic, biological and philosophical definitions, this study examines the ability for women to change, transform, mutate and create new roles that can emancipate them into an ideal and complex woman as projected in *To The Lighthouse*.

A lot of critical material has been written on Virginia Woolf’s *To The Lighthouse*, exploring the text from different perspectives. The novel has received wide acclamation as one of the most influential novels which reflects the complexities of modernist writings.

Steve Ellis’ essay, “Integration :*To The Lighthouse*” shows transmutational tendencies in the role of the woman and gives a new reading to Woolf’s novel. He argues that *To The Lighthouse* gives rather a completely different vision to feminist endeavours. According to him, the novel expresses the idea of reconciliation and continuity. He looks at Lily’s finished painting at the end of the novel, as a symbol of integration between Victorian values of the woman and the modern values of the woman. He writes : “mystical rite of remarriage that Lily’s painting performs at the end of the novel, a symbol of partnership and union that reconciles a range of oppositions including that between the key values of the Victorian and the modern” (79). However, he ends the essay with the note that Mrs Ramsay is far from being the “Angel of the house” because of her manipulative schemes in trying to bring people under her care and control.

Unlike Ellis, other critics dissected the novel from different perspectives. James Sherry examines Woolf’s writing style in her “ *To The Lighthouse : An Introduction*”. She studies the novel as a novel of consciousness, and at the same time as an autobiographical novel and as a poetic novel. Woolf’s encounter with other modernist writers like James Joyce and her wide readings of the poetry of Coleridge and Blake, according to Sherry, explain the intricacies in her writing style.

As a follow-up to Sherry's study, Laura C. Miller in her work, "Virginia Woolf's Journey to the Lighthouse : A Character Development in *Jacob's Room*, *Mrs Dalloway* and *To The Lighthouse*", takes the novel's use of style to another level. The critic makes a correlation between character development and significance, and the author's use of style. Unlike Sherry, Miller, in this article, simply exemplifies how at the time Woolf wrote, there was need to show that characters were a reflection of a complex and contradictory experience of life. This is to say that the woman, though preconditioned by the constraints of patriarchy, was a mixture of identities. These mixture of identities permitted her to empower herself in her sphere, which is the domestic sphere.

Still from the perspective of character analysis, unlike Miller, other critics preferred to carry out their analysis of characters from a feminine orientation. The ideas and issues Woolf raised in her writings, concerning the condition of the woman, show that there is a need to study the female characters from a feminist perspective. Cristina Anderson, in her "The Woman as Mother and Artist in Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway*", establishes a relationship between the main female characters, drawing parallels between Mrs Ramsay and Lily Brosecoe. She raises a problem in the article which she thinks contradicts what Woolf refers to as "killing the angel in the house" (9), in her famous essay, "Profession for Women." She thinks the texts, that is *To The Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway*, rather celebrate the woman as a hostess and a mother. Anderson in the course of bringing out parallels between the two main female characters, indirectly brings out transmutational tendencies in the woman's role where by the woman transcends the domestic sphere to the public sphere in order to show that urge of emancipation.

Like Anderson, Ben Beach in *Depending on Distance : Mrs Ramsay as Artist and inspiration*, also traces transmutational tendencies in role of Mrs Ramsay and how these tendencies contribute in shaping of Lily Brosecoe's ideologies and feminist vision. He claims Mrs Ramsay is more of an artist in the text and pays tribute to her great artistic talents in uniting people and maintaining social stability. In addition, Beach turns to see Mrs Ramsay as the ideal woman ; a notion that will not be welcomed by some other feminist critics.

Contrarily to Beach's notion of the ideal woman, Firat Yildiz in "Women Types in *To The Lighthouse* and *Mrs Dalloway*", rather thinks Lily is the ideal woman and heroine while Mrs Ramsay is the anti-heroine. He argues that Mrs Ramsay cannot be the ideal woman because she possesses no virtue that can change the woman's condition. However, Yildiz like

Beach and Anderson, only established the links between the two female characters. The significance of the relationship does not go beyond to establish an artistic vision that can impact the contemporary woman. They failed to make their arguments reflect postfeminist realities like the women seeking to assert their identities.

Equally, other critics thought to understand the complexities and intricacies that embody the woman, there is the need to be theory-oriented. Magggie Sheridan in *A Beacon of True Femaleness : A Sociological Analysis of Virginia Woolf's To The Lighthouse*, studies the text from a sociological perspective. The study bases its arguments on the fact that women have internalised certain ideologies because of pre-existing social constructs concerning sex and gender role (in this case social constructs of the Victorian society).

Contrary to Sheridan, Isam Shihaba in *A Feminist Perspective of Virginia Woolf's To The Lighthouse*, focuses his study on a feminist perspective. He unveils the causes of female oppression and provides pertinent answers to the woman's problem. They include the woman empowering herself, making her life meaningful and realising her identity. His arguments tie with some of the arguments raised by postfeminists as he admits that all feminist movements have not been able to provide comprehensive solutions to the woman's condition. Also, he is more critical in analysing the two women. He recognises that these women acknowledge the fact that they are imperfect and they yearn for the ideal, that is the perfect woman. Though his work is focused on self-empowerment, the work fails to show how this quest for the ideal woman is attained by characters or by the author.

Similarly, Mariana DelVecchio in his *A Feminist Book Review : Virginia Woolf's To The Lighthouse*, like Shihaba, from a feminist perspective, shows the ideologies the main female characters have as concerns marriage and the society they find themselves in. DelVecchio thinks Lily is the type of woman every woman should aspire to become. She ends her review on a note which is very important. She says "it seems nowadays women do not have to kill the Angel of the house to create" (2). This suggests that marriage does not stop a woman from beginning what she wants to become as Woolf's explains in her "A Room of One's Own", that "Literature is open to everybody" (75). This implies that women can become who they want to become if they are self-determined and if they are ready to empower themselves. Therefore, it is left for them to prove they are capable of becoming what they want to become.

Like the others, Hui Jingrui in *Feminism Revealed from Lily's Picture in To The Lighthouse* establishes the relationship between Mrs Ramsay and Lily. However, he is more concerned in exploring how symbolism enhances feminist quest in the text using Lily's picture. His work is very relevant in that it portrays Lily as an extreme radical feminist, through her painting, as at the back of her mind all she thinks is of freedom and independence. The work also goes further to break the bond of inequality, hence, setting a foundation for a good gender relationship which is revealed between Lily and Mr Ramsay. The article ends on the note that men and women play complementalist roles to each other. Jingrui concludes his work in a symbolic note which indicates that Woolf holds an optimistic attitude towards feminism.

In view of the foregoing discussion, on critical materials written on this novel, it is evident that the condition of the woman has been examined from different perspectives. James Sherry analyses the novel from a modernist perspective coming up with complexities that embodied the woman during this era as reflected in the writer's use of style. This review material is very important to this study as it shows the writing of the era which gives way for relativity and pluralism. Isam Shihaba, Marina DelVecchio and Hui Juigrui on their part examined the novel from a feminist perspective, bringing out the ideological conflicts between the two female characters in the text. These works are relevant in that ideological conflicts trace transmutational tendencies between both women and their quest for the ideal. Equally, Laura Miller, Cristina Anderson, and Ben Beach established a relationship between the two female characters, bringing out ideological conflicts like the others and at the same time showing the interwoven and complementalist traits that exist in the roles played by these women. Hence, they highlight the evolution of transmutational ideologies or tendencies in the role of the woman. Steve Ellis, on his part, acknowledges the existence of transmutational traits in the role of the modern woman. However, his arguments are not guided by a particular theoretical framework and at the end of the essay, he contradicts the arguments he raises at the beginning of the work.

It is from this premise that this study stands unique and different from the other works in that it reveals transmutational tendencies in the role of the woman and gender negotiations between both sexes to create a peaceful society. Transmutation also takes into consideration the woman's endeavours from a postfeminist perspective to obtain public recognition as opposed to the private and confined roles she has been long subjected to. Transmutation is also examined from the perspective of a shift from confinement to

emancipation. This implies that in a society where men have become more reasonable towards the women's quest, a woman has something to offer in such a society.

This study establishes the complexities which constitute the role of the contemporary woman in society. In order to examine these complexities, the work employs feminism and postmodernism as theoretical frameworks. It is important to precise that feminist discourse in this work is guided by postfeminist perspectives. This postfeminist perspective is adopted because of its flexibility; that is, it intersects with some other post-discourses like postmodernism and postcolonialism which deconstruct universal ideologies for subjective or relative ideologies (Brooks, 92). Postfeminism, from these related angles, therefore, refers to a shift in the understanding and construction of identity and gender categories (Genz & Brabon, 1).

It is, however, worth noting that postfeminism stems from feminist ideologies. It is, therefore, very necessary to show how feminism contributed in building postfeminist thought. Feminism is an ideological movement which has as principal aim to redefine, establish and achieve equal economic, social, political, cultural and personal rights, and opportunities for women. Before the 20th Century, feminist thought could be traced far back in the works of Sappho, Aristophanes and Chaucer. Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* was one of the first books in the 18th Century that raised awareness about the woman's condition in society (Victorian society specifically). It exposed her cultural, social, economic and political incapacities due to patriarchy. During the 20th Century, feminists took a more serious turn with the publication of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* and Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*. These works raised powerful and radical arguments as concerns the politics of sex and sexuality as a form of oppression. Millett, who is one of the pioneers of radical ideologies in feminists movement, raises arguments in her work which opened the second wave thinking of reproduction, sexuality and representation especially when it comes to pornography.

The 1980's, in general, and in Britain specifically, is seen as a hearted and difficult period for feminism especially when Margaret Thatcher was voted into power. Feminism became a disgusting and dirty word. It became to mean something quite different in the 1990's than it had meant in the 1970's. It is in this atmosphere that postfeminism came into play.

Postfeminism emerged in the late twentieth century in a number of cultural, academic and political contexts from popular journalism and media to feminist analysis, postmodern theories and neo-liberal rhetoric (Genz & Brabon, 1). The term “Postfeminism” has generated much debate among feminist scholars. Roger Gill suggests that there are three dominant domains of postfeminism within the academia. They are : an epistemological or political stance in light of feminist incorporation of “difference” ; a historical shift within feminism directed by a movement away from second wave feminist ideologies and lastly a period which marked negative reactions towards feminism ; and some sort of a new kind of anti- feminist sentiments which is different from the simply being a question of backlash against the seeming achievements made by early feminists in their campaigns. In other words, it is a celebration of neoconservative, traditional values which have become prominent. (qtd in McRobbie, 1).

The last group of postfeminists argue that the focal tenets of feminist campaign have been assimilated into Western culture. Thus, feminism is somehow considered to be redundant and obsolete. According to them, feminism failed in its quest to improve on the situation and the condition of the woman because nothing has gone well with the woman. However, critics have claimed and appropriated the term, “Postfeminism” for a variety of definitions ranging from a conservative backlash, Girl power, Do-me feminism, third wave feminism or postmodern /poststructuralist feminism.

Postfeminism is a new form of empowerment, independence, individual choice, sexual pleasure, consumer culture, hybridism, humour and the renewed focus on the female body which can be considered fundamental for this contemporary feminism. It is a new way of understanding the changed relations between feminism, gender, popular culture and femininity. Postfeminism can be situated within, and is closely related to neoliberal ideologies and shares the same late capitalist values. It is not simply a response to feminism but also a sensibility partly constituted through the pervasiveness of neo-liberal thoughts (Gill, 163-164). Postfeminism is, thus, embedded within a neo-liberal context and located in post modern popular culture.

Late postfeminists have taken a slight shift from their early predecessors as they look at the term from an umbrella perspective. They have come to realise that “Postfeminism” could be understood in terms of a network of multiple possible relations ; that is, it can be understood from a variety of permutations and readings. It is from this perspective that

postfeminists like Angela McRobbie see the postfeminists' quest not as anti-feminist. She, rather, considers it as a hybridised concept that positively draws on and takes into account feminist achievements, suggesting that equality has already been acquired. Consequentially, there is a shift from fighting for equality to women's empowerment (McRobbie, 12). This is to imply that feminist activities and endeavours have a great impact on women and have also brought some significant changes in to human society. However, it has not been able to put an end to the difficulties women encounter in their daily lives.

The modern postfeminists, who are the generation of young and aspiring women, think the only solution to making a world safe and peaceful for women and men is to devise strategies to empower themselves. Strategies which will promote gender balance and negotiation. By empowering themselves, women sought to get freedom by valuerising their feminine values. Some women sought to putting more value on their body; that is, through pornography and the sex industry, as a way of empowering themselves. However, some group of women sought to negotiating gender roles rather than fight for them. From the perspective of this latter group of women, postfeminism looks at a generational shift in understanding the relationship between men and women themselves (Genz & Brabon, 3). Patricia Mann sees postfeminism as "a fertile site for risk" (10); that is she sees it as a concept that challenges us and broadens our scope in interpreting and understanding frameworks in order for us to accommodate the complicated modernity.

As earlier mentioned above, postfeminism intersects with other post discourses like postmodernism and postcolonialism. The study shows the correlation between these concepts and how it is relevant in the understanding of the transmutation of the woman in her role and the creation of an ideal and complex woman. To begin with, postmodernism is often described or applied to the literature, art, music, architecture after the Second World War. Postmodernism is the break away from the "high arts" of the modernist era. It seeks to cut boundaries between low and high cultures, hence the death of grand or master narratives. Postmodernism has been applied at different levels of conceptual abstraction to a wide range of objects and phenomena in what is referred to as reality (Bertens, 1). According to Hans Bertens, in his *The Idea of The Postmodern*, he divides postmodernism into different stages, beginning from postmodernism in the 1950's to present day, hence, he argues that "the term is deeply problematic" (6). He goes further to situate feminism within postmodernism in the 1980's, which in turn gives birth to postfeminism. According to him, postmodern feminism (postfeminism) interrogates the arguments inherent in feminist discourse and works against

the hegemony of a unified subjectivity concerning the woman's condition. Hence, it advocates difference, multiplicity and pluriformity in feminists' endeavours (8). Like Hans Bertens, Stuart Sim in *The Routledge Companion to postmodernism*, thinks that feminist theory does not speak on behalf of a universalized woman. Rather, it must embrace differences between women (43). This is the major standpoint of postfeminism.

Postfeminism, as a post discourse, is also linked with postcolonialism. Here, it challenges imperialist and patriarchal frameworks. According to Murray, from this perspective, postfeminism facilitates a broad-based, pluralistic conception of the application of feminism, addresses the demands of the marginalized, diasporic and colonized cultures for a hegemonic feminism capable of giving voice to local, indigenous and postcolonial feminism (69). Postfeminism also has a postcolonial tendency which is that of hybridity. Hybridity from Homi K. Bhabha's perspective, is seen as a synergy of cultural values which stresses a transformative linguistic, political and cultural impact on an individual. It is a concept that expatiates on an individual who is an entity of fragmented identities. In Bill Ashcroft's *Postcolonial Studies : Key Concepts*, hybridity is described as an assimilationist policy which leads to the creation of a new transcultural form (108). Hybridity, as a key concept in postcolonial discourse, plays an important role in this study as it enhances the concept of the transmutation of the woman's role. The outcome of a woman's transformation leads to the creation of a complex and hybridised woman ; that is, a woman who is able to incorporate both traditional virtues of a woman with modern (and postmodern) ones.

This work consists of an introduction, four chapters and a conclusion. Chapter One discusses, the Evolutionary Transmutation of the woman. It seeks to trace transmutational tendencies in the lives of the women through the female characters concerned. In so doing, it draws its arguments from the past feminine condition to understand the present and equally project. Furthermore, Chapter Two focuses on "Transmutation and Ideological Conflict." It raises arguments through the use of excerpts, to show how this quest for the ideal leads to ideological differences as to what comprises the ideal woman and symbolic mutations.

Chapter Three discusses the quest for the ideal, the creation the new woman, and the new woman with regard to gender roles in society. It examines the complexities inherent in the New woman. Chapter four focuses on the pedagogic relevance that can be derived from studying the transmutation of the woman's role and how this concept can be taught in a language classroom.

The General Conclusion summarises all what the work sets out to investigate, the theories employed, the analyses of the different chapters, the results obtained and possible suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER ONE

THE EVOLUTIONARY TRANSMUTATION OF THE WOMAN

This chapter examines the evolution of transmutational tendencies in the woman's role with focus on excerpts from Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse*. It brings to limelight the origin of transmutational ideologies in the traditional woman and the modern woman ; that is, Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe respectively. It also takes into consideration the social construct of the society which defined the woman's role and image, from the perspective of writings which characterised this era. It looks at the different strategies these women employ to curb certain social norms and how these strategies lead to her emergence in society and eventual transformation in her role. Hence, the key concerns in this chapter include : the prototype of the Victorian woman and her evolution ; transmutational tendencies in the role of the traditional woman, and transformative tendencies in the modern woman. The analysis in this chapter is guided by the feminist theory, precisely the postfeminist theory.

As earlier mentioned, in the "Introduction", the Victorian woman, by virtue, is modest, chaste, innocent and submissive to her husband, who is the head of the family. She takes care of the home and procures children. Coventry Patmore's poem, "Angel of The House", gives a good image of the ideal Victorian woman. He portrays her as a woman who makes sacrifices for her husband ; whose principal role is to love, honour and obey her husband as stated in the marriage vows. In other words, in terms of family hierarchy, the woman is secondary to her husband. Not only has she been relegated to a secondary position, her domain of preoccupation is the domestic sphere. These gender considerations given to the woman were deeply entrenched into the Victorian way of life including the literature of this period.

In Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse*, Mrs Ramsay embodies these qualities of an ideal woman as outlined in Coventry's poem. As a typical traditional woman, gender ideologies and considerations of the Victorian era are deeply entrenched in her. Hence, these ideas of gender have become a culture and a way of life in the traditional woman. She is fifty years old (6). Moreover, she is married to Mr Ramsay for whom she bears eight children. The number of children Mrs Ramsay has confirms the woman's role as a procurer of children in a typical Victorian home. In addition, she is aware of her secondary status in her marital home. She believes her role is to take care of her entire home and provide her family with all the

love and care. At the beginning, we find Mrs Ramsay doing everything possible in order to console her son, James, when his father tells him the weather will not be good for them to go to the lighthouse (4). She believes protecting the “other sex” (6), that is, the men, is something, though obligatory, but also natural. As she explains : “[men] for their chivalry and valour, for the fact that they negotiated treaties, ruled India, controlled finance...”(6) have to be protected by the woman. By protection, she means, the man, after being exhausted mentally and physically, due to these responsibilities he shoulders, needs the woman’s care, tenderness and affection as compensation. In other words, she implies taking care of men’s needs outside their political and economic milieus.

These ideologies portrayed by Mrs Ramsay conform with Simone De Beauvoir’s gender ideologies in her *The Second Sex*. She identifies these ideologies, under five foci, as contributing factors for the differences in gender. These foci include : The Biological, Discourse, Economic Condition, The Unconscious and Experience (21). These foci are richly explored in Virginia Woolf’s *To The Lighthouse*. For instance, Mrs Ramsay’s bearing of eight children reiterates De Beauvoir’s concept of “The Biological.” It upholds that the woman is nothing but the womb. Natural phenomenon as menstration and child birth are factors that have contributed to the woman’s relegation to the domestic sphere as we see with Mrs Ramsay. She is confined to the domestic sphere.

It is worth noting that the middle class of the Victorian era stressed that the representations of women in novels or other works of art should embellish these conventions of an ideal woman. They must represent the separate spheres of domesticity, precisely reflecting the woman’s proper role in the home and her feminine culture. Women in Jane Austen’s novels, especially *Sense and Sensibility*, offer a clear representation of the 19th Century woman. In her novels, she deprives her female characters of sexual expression, as women, during this period, were not permitted to discuss topics on sex as such topics were forbidden among women and were considered taboo subjects. She also creates and embodies her characters with stereotyped ideologies which focuses them more only on issues of the home, marriage and society.

Charles Dicken’s Agnes Wickfield in *David Copperfield* and Esther Summerson in *Bleak House* respect and embody victorian domestic values. They do not involve themselves in things which are of the public sphere. Their preoccupation was to cater for their husband’s needs as well as the needs of the house in general. In poetry, Christina Rossetti’s “Goblin

Market”, Alfred Tennyson’s “Lady of Shalott” and Robert Browning’s “Women and Roses” define the place and the role of the woman in Victorian society. It creates a woman’s world from a strictly conservative perspective. Poets and novelists had to be pretentious and meticulous when addressing the status and role of women in society in order to avoid the wrath of the society.

However, though constraints were placed on different forms of expression, though women were given such stereotyped images and symbols, writers still portrayed, in their works, the urge to express themselves as individuals; that is, express thought from their own perspective rather than being tied to a particular way of writing which does not give room for self expression. This urge for an individualist way of writing is evident in Virginia Woolf’s use of innovative and experimental writing techniques such as the stream of consciousness technique. Using this technique she creates a gap between her works and the works of her contemporaries. Moreover, Woolf used the technique to empower her characters as they have different opinions as concerns the woman’s condition. This brings about the theme of subjective reality. Mrs Ramsay and Lily Broscoe have different ideals as concerns the woman’s condition.

To The Lighthouse, shows the transition of the woman’s role from the Victorian to the modern/postmodern woman where Mrs Ramsay represents the traditional woman while Lily Broscoe represents the modern/postmodern woman. Woolf’s novel does not only evoke the ideals of the Victorian woman but also evokes the ideals of a radical, independent and emancipated woman, who transmutes to a more reasonable emancipated woman. This explains why postfeminism, as iterated by Angela McRobbie, is employed in the analysis of this study to show the transformation in feminist ideologies from the first wave to the third wave. Hence, postfeminism takes into consideration feminist ideals of the first wave while being critical about second and third wave ideologies.

In addition, there were other male writers who sympathized with the feminine condition who envisioned new perspectives as concerns the role and status of the woman in society. These writers yearned for female liberation from patriarchal hegemony and dominance and advocated a society whereby women could have the possibility to express themselves without fear. A good example is the writer and poet, Thomas Hardy. He depicts the woman in Victorian society in his novel as one who seeks for her own identity. For example, Tess in *Tess of the D’Urberville*. Though Tess loses her virginity through rape,

Hardy gives voice to his female character, showing the extraordinary insight of her psyche. He sympathises with the unjust treatment of women in a severely unforgiving hypocritical society. He resists Austen's socially-accepted depiction of the female with his radically independent heroines. He redefines the role of the woman in his novels focusing on sexuality.

Furthermore, other male writers like William Makepeace Thackeray in and Anthony Trollope's Lily Dale in in their works, *Vanity Fair* and *The Small House at Allington* respectively present characters who are almost masochistic parodies of the feminine ideal. This image of the woman presented by Makepeace and Trollope was considered by the Victorian society as the "fallen woman." According to the norms of the society, she is a woman stripped or strayed of morality and innocence, and therefore she must deal with both her own guilt and society's ostracism. However, writers like Gaskell Ruth and Thomas Hardy twisted these considerations and rather presented these women as victims of circumstances, as victims of male hegemony. This concern showed by some male writers towards the woman's treatment only goes further to reiterate one of the concepts discussed in Angela McRobbie's speech on "*Postfeminist Passions*". In the speech she tries to persuade young girls that "most reasonable men had respect for female grievances..."(3). Hardy and the others have respect for female grievances. This explains why McRobbie urges women to negotiate gender relations rather than fighting for equal rights which have already been attained.

It should be noted that writers like Virginia Woolf, Thomas Hardy, William Makepeace and the others realised that Victorian ideologies of women were conditioned to ensure the dominance of patriarchy in society. Presented as a role model and ideal for the family, the traditional woman, the sweet and beautiful angel becomes the arbiter of domesticity in the face of an uncaring world. In return for her loving devotion, she is rewarded with marriage which provides her security, identity and status. In contrast, those women who are embittered and unlovable, and strive for freedom from patriarchal dominance, are punished through spinsterhood. Preferring independence to obedience, the independent or "fallen" woman is destined for loneliness and, probably, guilt.

The precarious sexual position of young single women is depicted by the fallen woman as seen in Woolf's character, Lily Broscoe. Her ideals are not the ideals expected of a Victorian woman. Firstly, she does not want to get married because she, like every other radical feminist, believes marriage is used by men as a pretext to confine women to the house and deprive her of other opportunities in society. Secondly, she loves a profession which is

usually alluded to men ; painting. For this, Lily faces so many challenges for choosing to be a free and independent woman. For instance, in her quest to make a painting of Mrs Ramsay, Charles Tansley tells her “‘women can’t read, women can’t paint” (47). Also, the thought that because of her gender, her painting will never be seen as it will be hanged in attics or placed under the servant boy’s bed (16), puts Lily in serious psychological torture. This psychological trauma is revealed through the author’s use of the stream of consciousness technique. This technique emphasizes the internal conflicts that go through Lily’s.

Virginia Woolf in *To The Lighthouse* tends to be more ambivalent about stereotyping her female heroines than her other female contemporaries. Her heroines, be them traditional or modern, had complexities within them with regards to gender role. Mrs Ramsay represents “‘Angel of the house” and embodies the ideals of a woman according to Victorian standards. However, she also has that urge to be given the opportunity to participate in decision making, in issues that not only concern her home but also out of her home. In other words, she feels the need to transcend the domestic sphere to the public sphere. In this work, Mrs Ramsay is able to use artistic capabilities to transcend her domestic sphere to public sphere through the dinner party (79). It should be noted that this form of transcendentalism is not the type aimed at bringing both sexes at logger heads. Rather, it is aimed at bringing reasoning to the other sex, about the potentials and capabilities of a woman outside her confines.

Lily Briscoe, on her part, does not wish to be enslaved by any form of marriage. She yearns to be free to express herself in public concerning any subject in life. However, while passionately striving for independence, the heroine also desires to be loved. For instance, Lisa Williams views the relationship between Lily and Mrs Ramsay as a lesbian relationship. But the question remains if the society concerned will accept such a taboo relationship. The inability for society to accept and encourage female autonomy blocks the heroine from resolving these internal conflicts in her. Virginia Woolf’s *To The Lighthouse* chronicles the heroines’ growth through struggle, from which she emerges as a stronger and more self-assured and assertive individual in society.

Elaine Showalter, in her *A Literature of Their Own*, finds in each subculture and in women's literature, first a long period of imitation of the dominant structures of tradition and an "internalization of its standards of art and its views on social roles" (65). She identifies three phases. She termed the first phase “‘Feminine phase.” In this phase, she identifies women who attempted to “‘integrate themselves into a public sphere, a male tradition, and many of them felt a conflict of "obedience and resistance”’. (65)

Furthermore, she identifies a second phase in feminist struggles, feminist phase. In this phase, the minority or rather, the subordinate lashes out against the traditional standards and values, demanding that their rights and sovereignty be recognized. In this phase, women's literature had varying angles of attack. Mary Braddon, Rhoda Broughton, and Florence Marryat, “explored genuinely radical female protest against marriage and women's economic oppression, although still in the framework of feminine conventions that demanded the erring heroine's destruction” (101). The paradigms of womanhood they adopted mock contemporary expectations of “Angels in the House”. For instance, in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, the image of the ideal Victorian woman, the mother of the house, is far fetched.

The third phase, the female phase, is characterized by a self-discovery and some freedom from some of the dependency of opposition as a means for self-definition. Some writers turned inward in search for an identity. Writers such as Dorothy Richardson, Katherine Mansfield, and Virginia Woolf worked towards elevating sexuality and feminine esthetics. Moreover, the female experience and its creative processes held mystic implications both transcendental and self-destructive vulnerability. These women employed cultural theories in their writings. However, Showalter criticizes their works for their androgynistic view point. It is worth noting, that Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* is divided into three parts: “The Window,” “Time passes” and “The Lighthouse.” This division is reflective of the different phases in feminist conquests and endeavours as outlined by Elaine Showalter. Mrs Ramsay represents the first phase woman while Lily Broscioe represents both the second and third phase women.

In view of the above analysis, the woman in Victorian literature experienced three phases : the phase where she is constrained to standards and norms of the society ; the phase where she struggles to express herself through radical strategies and the phase where she decides to come out of her confines but being more critical in her approach.

In Gille Deleuze's *Nietzche and Philosophy*, he defines “Transmutation” as a “change of quality in the will of power.” In other words, transmutation can be seen as a transformative process which is motivated by certain intrinsic forces. Drawing from this definition, “change of quality” is very important in revealing the evolution of transmutational tendencies in the role of the traditional woman and how these tendencies help in creating a new ideology in the personality of the traditional woman.

Virginia Woolf's character, Mrs Ramsay, embodies what the Victorians refer to as the "Ideal woman". She is the prototype of a typical traditional woman. She is a mother of eight children and a devoted wife to her husband, Mr Ramsay. When the novel opens, Mrs Ramsay is found knitting "a reddish brown stockings" (5) for the lighthouse keeper's boy. Knitting or needlework, in a patriarchal society like Britain, is regarded as the traditional form of empowering the woman in her own sphere, though prescribed by men. Through this prescription, women became confined to their households, as a result, they are unable to compete with men in other domains of life. With this, women only have to learn to get used to such cultures imposed on them thereby making them lose their identity and become defenders of patriarchy, as seen in the character of Mrs Ramsay. Fitzwilliam opines that far from the fact that knitting is prescribed by men for women, "women [themselves] are unable and unwilling to write their history, and often resort to needlework" (12). Moreover, the Victorian woman sees it as a responsibility to have the man under her protection and cater for his needs. In the text, Mrs Ramsay's reason for protecting the opposite sex, as she says, is that :

Indeed, she had the whole of the other sex under her protection ; for reasons she could not explain, for their chivalry and valour, for the fact that they negotiated treaties, ruled India, and controlled finance ; finally for an attitude towards herself which no woman could fail to feel or to find agreeable, something trustful and childlike, reverential ; which an old woman could take from a young man without loss of dignity, and woe betide the girl_ pray heaven it was none of her daughters ! ... (6)

Also, many at times in the the novel, Mrs Ramsay is said to be always looking through the window from inside her house. When Lily does a painting of her, she is sitting by the window (7). She keeps looking at the terrace through her window and also when she is trying to see if her invitees for the party have started coming. The window here is connotative of the confines that patriarchy has placed the woman. It represents the woman's view and understanding of the society from an insider perspective. In this confined world of hers, she cannot get access to good education, she cannot get access to truth and the realities of life. This scene serves as a contrast to Lily Broscoe who is rather always sitting outside and painting Mrs Ramsay. Looking from outside, Lily understands society from an outsider

perspective. This in turn implies that both women have a different point of view about the woman's life.¹

Moreover, women's deprivation of full educational facilities has made her turn to her kitchen or needlework. Women, during this era, are considered weak physically and intellectually. Intellectually demanding subjects like Physics, Mathematics and Philosophy were studied only by the men. Critics like Mary Wollstonecraft believe society did this to deprive women of the knowledge that exist in great books, knowing fully that if women had access to this knowledge they will use it against the men. In *To The Lighthouse*, Mrs Ramsay reads just two types of books : fairy tales to lure her son, James, to sleep and cookery books. In addition, she consoles herself with needlework in order to evict studying books she does not understand their content. Also, Mrs Ramsay's discussion with Charles Tansley, on their way to town, gets boring because he begins using academic jargons which Mrs Ramsay is unable to understand (11). Her husband usually thinks she is foolish because she cannot contribute to knowledge or his works nor be at the same level of understanding with him especially if they are involved in an intellectual dialogue.

Furthermore, women in the Victorian era like Mrs Ramsay, defended the values of the traditional women over any other ideologies. Mrs Ramsay refers to feminist ideologies like those of Lily Broscoe as “ infidel ideas which they have brewed for themselves of life different from hers...perhaps ; a wilder life ; not always taking care of some man or other...”(7). This aspect reiterates the arguments brought up by anti-feminists like Susan Falludi and Mary K. Hassan. They believe feminist ideologies have done more harm than good as in their quest for equality, they turn to see their male counterparts as rivals, hence, creating conflicts. To oust these ideologies Mrs Ramsay is always pleased by her work in re-arranging her family and she says “domesticity triumphed”(30).

However, though confined to the domestic sphere, the traditional woman yearned to integrate herself in the public sphere. By integrating herself into the public sphere, she has to undergo transformation and change in her role ; valorize and empower herself for eventual emergence in society. In so doing, the traditional woman employed strategies which permits to transfer her domestic know-how to the public sphere. In Isabella Beeton's manual, *Mrs Beeton's Book of household Management*, she compares the woman's role as the mistress of

¹The symbolism of the window shows the disparity in ideology that exist between the traditional woman and the modern woman.

the household to that of the commander in an army. This comparison is very symbolic in understanding the ambiguity of the role of the woman, as she is seen as the forger of domestic stability and even social stability. In *To The Lighthouse*, Mrs Ramsay, during the dinner party, passes orders for the men to take their seats saying ; “Tansley there...Williams sit by me...”(81). Moreover, during this party, she sits at the head of the table. In the midst of her husband and other remarkable men like Tansley and Carmicheal. This sitting position is very symbolic of a traditional woman trying to assert her position in a public sphere.

The dinner party is also very symbolic as it comprises people of different walks of life making this scene comparable to public gathering where there is a leader, of which in this case, the leader is Mrs Ramsay. Charles Tansley is an apprentice atheist philosopher, Carmicheal is a poet, and William Bankes is a mathematician. In the midst of these people, Mrs Ramsay presides the party, filling in all the loopholes which can impede a good relationship among her guests and making sure that all her guests connect. The dinner party reflects a kind of creative expression whereby Mrs Ramsay creates a place of sanctuary wherein she suspends the normative rules that govern human interactions, that separate people from each other. This sanctuary enables the members of the party to forge a connection that transcends the normal experience of everyday life. It is worth mentioning that the dinner party does not take place outside the confines of Mrs Ramsay’s home. It takes place in a hall in her house. This scene symbolises an aspect of transmutation in the role of the traditional woman as she is able to transfer her domestic potentials in a comparably public scene to intergrate and assert herself.

In *To The Lighthouse*, Woolf does not only celebrate the woman as a mother and hostess. She also celebrates a traditional woman as one who metamorphosizes in her role, and empowers herself in her sphere and other spheres through creative strategies. These qualities are evident in Mrs Ramsay. She is able to carter for the needs of her children and at the same time carter for the needs of those outside her family. Her ability of transforming life incidents into something meaningful and memorable has made many critics like Jane Goldman call her an artist. This artistic attribute comes from the fact that she brings people together, she assembles and she creates. She extends the boundaries of the domestic sphere by transforming her dinner party into a place of connection, beauty and creativity. This explains why she easily realises how dispersed her guests are. Thus, she takes it as a responsibility to bring them together. She even organises marriages between Paul and Minta, and between William

Bankes and Lily Broscoe (though all her efforts in the lives of these couples turn out to be a fiasco).

Goldman introduces the idea of the creative elements of Mrs Ramsay's personality and her expressions of those creative elements within the domestic sphere. In the incident of the skull in the bedroom of Cam and James (107), she argues that Mrs Ramsay's solution to the problem and her decision to wrap her shawl around the skull becomes the seed of social and artistic progressiveness (174). Moreover, Mr Ramsay always sort for his wife's sympathy and consolation in times of his desolation though he looks down on her all the time. Woolf provides a reason for this behaviour of Mr Ramsay in *A Room Of One's Own*. She argues that women are a necessity to men. They depend on women because women had something the male sex could not provide (12). This reiterates why Mr Ramsay depends on his wife's sympathy. With Mrs Ramsay, Woolf expands her portrait of the traditional wife and mother as a social artist and an engineer of relationships as well as a creator of enduring moments of community and order in the face of life's indifference to humankind (Ronchetti, 66). This portrait of a traditional wife is contradicted in the character of Clarissa Dalloway, in Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, who is not deeply engaged in her maternal and spousal roles. She is not satisfied with her role and so life becomes a burden to her.

At the end, Mrs Ramsay succeeds in changing, emerging and empowering herself as her extraordinary potentials are recognized by her guests of different calibal, who represent the various domains in life. Her "Beouf en daube" is appreciated by Mr Bankes who says, "it is a triumph" (89). To be seen as an artistic figure by her guests implies she has been able to use her domestic potentials to integrate herself and her role into the public sphere. According to Ann Ronchetti, the most famous instance of Mrs Ramsay's transformative powers is her ability to enable her daughter, Cam, to imagine a frightening animal skull mounted in her room, when wrapped in Mrs Ramsay's shawl as a bird's nest... a beautiful mountain (68). This shows the extend to which her transformative powers impact the lives and way of thinking of others around her with regard to her role.

From the above analysis, though society defines the woman from a particular perspective and society also sets norms which keep the woman in confines, the traditional woman uses transformative strategies within her sphere of confines to transmutate her role and assert herself in society.

In the opening pages of the novel, Charles Tansley makes a chauvinist statement which defines the nature of the Victorian social construct and how women are regarded in the society. He says, “Women can’t write, women can’t paint” (47). This statement brings out the level of gender difference that exists in the society. Through out the novel, Lily reflects over this statement and struggles to overcome its effect on her. Lily’s ability to get access to truth permits her to understand that Tansley keeps using such statements to make her feel marginalised, low self-esteem and insecure in society. She expresses the thought of insecurity when it reads :

It was in that moment’s flight between the picture and her canvas that the demons set on her who often brought her to the verge of tears and made this passage from conception to work as dreadful as any down a dark passage for a child. Such she often felt herself struggling against terrific odds to maintain her courage ; to say : “But this is what I see ; this is what I see,” and so to clasp some miserable remnant of her vision to her breast, which a thousand forces did their best to pluck from her...as she began to paint, that there forced themselves upon her other things, her own inadequacy, her insignificance...(19)

Lily struggles against “demons,” “terrific odds,” and “thousand forces” which make her feel her “inadequacy” and “insignificance” in society. To be able to emerge, she has to overcome these forces and forge on her artistic vision.

Another situation in the novel where Lily feels down trodden because of her gender is portrayed when she tries to find out from Andrew the types of books his father writes about. Andrew tells her it’s on “Subject and Object, and Nature of Reality”. Lily has no notion of what Andrew tells her because of her educational status. When Andrew realises this he tells her “think of a kitchen table then” (22). These statements reflect the tussles and struggles women of Lily’s calibre go through in society. They are marginalised at all levels and suffer from gender inequality and male prejudice because of their urge to break free from societal norms and constraints. When Charlotte Bronte writes her controversial novel, *Jane Eyre*, she is discouraged by the famous poet, Robert Southey, that literature is not a woman’s business. These notions play an important role in forging the modern woman’s identity.

The modern woman, unlike the traditional woman, does not abide to patriarchal norms in society. She defies societal norms. She yearns for freedom and independence from

societal constraints placed on her by men ; seeks to emancipate and wants to be a subject with a voice of her own. She identifies the fact that men have deprived them (women) of their rights as human beings for their own egoistic purposes. This explains why she is always in the quest for a self. This explains why Lily takes ten years to complete her painting reflecting her determination to overcome every idea of chauvinism and male hegemony and asserts herself as a free subject in society.

In the novel, Lily Briscoe is the character whom the author uses to forge feminist vision. Lily is a young, plain looking, independent, empowered and unmarried woman. She represents the spirit of the woman's pursuit for equality and emancipation. She symbolises revolt against traditions which have confined the woman to the house and also represents the idealised feminist woman who challenges male hegemony to achieve a sense of individuality as concerns gender. She believes her gender cannot stop her from attaining her desires in life. Her ideologies are identical to those of radical feminists like Kate Millett and Adrienne Rich. In Millett's *Sexual Politics*, she reiterates the fact that gender role is a product of society when she talks of sex being biological and gender being psychological. This means gender depends on how it is perceived or understood by an individual whether male or female. She, thus, came to the conclusion that gender is a product of patriarchy.

Parrallels can be drawn between Lily Briscoe and Miss LaThrobe in Woolf's *Between The Acts*. Miss LaThrobe is a lesbian, a dramatist, a director and producer of a village pageant. Like Lily, she has a vision that she is trying to realise on the terrace-stage. The two women are modern women and are both marginalised in society. The marginalisation of these women can be read as a reflection of Woolf's struggle to find a place for women writing within a predominantly patriarchal society. The desire to break free from this marginalisation is expressed in the novel when the narrator says, "she could see it so clearly, so commandingly, when she looked. It was when she took her brush in her hand that the whole thing changed" (23). This act of taking up the brush symbolises the beginning of feminist conquests. This act shows that women have decided to seize their rights from men.

Lily is found in every stage of the novel, that is from "Windows" to "Time Passes" and "The Lighthouse." Finding herself in a society, where women who have modern ideologies are being marginalised, Lily sorts to different ways or strategies of expressing herself ; ways in which she can emancipate and emerge in society. She resorts to painting, to artwork, which is a manly occupation. Her artistic inclinations override the

prospects of marriage and domesticity. Lily is not out to be the “Angel of the House” as prescribed by the society. According to Lily, “painting is just another semiotic but non linguistic way of expressing desire ; the desire of reaching a satisfying totality of meaning” (Makela, 74). Just like this zeal, her art is described in the novel as “this other thing, this truth, this reality, which suddenly laid hands on her, emerged stark at the back of appearances and commanded her attention” (180). In more specific terms, her art is metaphorically a radical political statement of feminist ideals.

When the novel opens, Lily is found painting Mrs Ramsay and her son James. Through this scene, Woolf emphasizes Lily’s status as an outsider as she is seen making a portrait of Mrs Ramsay and her son James, who are sitting by the window. This image of the window is very important in understanding Lily’s personality. The window can be seen as a medium or a reflecting glass where Lily perceives the society which she finds herself and how she can possibly get out of the constraints of this society. Furthermore, the window can also be interpreted as a barrier that prevents Lily from attaining her objective in the social world.² She is described by Mrs Ramsay as having “chinese eyes” (16) and “puckered-up face” (16). Probably, this means she is pretty but her ideologies may influence her physical appearance such that it might not conform to the standards of beauty most respectable men would want. In other words, her appearance does not cater for the needs of men. This could possibly explain why she is a painter, a profession that is identified to men. Being a painter, Mrs Ramsay pities her saying, “nobody would take her painting seriously ” (13), for it is believed women produce any good work of art. In choosing to become a painter, Lily breaks that law that confines the woman to doing only needlework. Instead of holding a needle, Lily takes up a brush. This act, which is considered revolutionary, can be considered as a longing by women for a new way of expression. Furthermore, when painting, Lily is described by the narrator as, “drawn out of gossip, out of living, out of community with people” (180). This is unlike her predecessors.

Though at the beginning, Lily is not quite sure of her abilities to exhibit her controversial artwork to the public, her personal impressions are directly linked to an aesthetic development as an artist. Thus, this shows a satisfying level of creative expression. At the end of the novel, Lily shows transformative tendencies when she completes her painting. When she finishes her painting she is 44 years old, the same age Woolf had when she writes this

²The “Window” gives a dimension to which the status of Lily Broscocoe can be understood. As earlier mentioned, it shows the disparity between the two women ; Mrs Ramsay and Lily Broscocoe.

novel. Many critics have always made comparisons between Lily Briscoe and Woolf. She is argued to represent Woolf's feminist stance in the text. When she says, at the end of the novel, "I have a vision" (199), this vision is expressive of a liberated feminist who has been able to define her identity and create a space of her own in a society where women are confined to a particular space. Some critics have alluded this vision to Woolf's writing.

In conclusion, this chapter has discussed the prototype of the Victorian society, tracing evolutionary transmutational tendencies in the role of the woman. It further discussed how these evolutionary tendencies are endowed in Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe who are representative of the traditional and modern woman respectively. With this, it reveals that transmutation has long been and is still a form of empowerment used by the woman. Hence, to some extent transmutation can be seen as an evolutionary process in the woman's role in Woolf's *To The Lighthouse*. The next chapter will discuss how these types of women undergo mutations in order to assert themselves in society.

CHAPTER TWO

TRANSMUTATION AND IDEOLOGICAL CONFLICT

This chapter focuses on the transmutation of the woman in her role and the ideological conflicts that emanate from such transformations. While previous chapter examined the evolution of transmutational or transformatory tendencies in the role of the woman, this chapter aims at showing how the strategies employed by these women to empower themselves transforms their vision of their role in society. It also examines how their conflicting notions on the ideals of the woman lead to binaries in ideology. Hence, the chapter intends to show how ideological conflicts and symbolic mutations can be seen as other dimensions of transmutations in the woman's role. The analysis in this section of the work is guided by the postfeminist Theory.

A symbol is a communication element intended to simply represent or stand for a complex person, object, group or idea. It is an artistic method of revealing ideas and truths. The term has been defined by different writers from different perspectives. Judy Deloache, in *Becoming Symbol-Minded*, defines a symbol as “something that one can use with the intention of representing another thing other than itself” (2). From the perspective of the humanities, social sciences, theology and mythology, Deacon continues, the term “symbol” is often kept aside for complex esoteric relationships such as the meanings implicit in items or objects incorporated into ritual performances. In such cases, layers of meanings and references may be impossible to fully plumb without extensive cultural experience” (392-393). Mutation, on its part, is a significant and basic alteration or change in something. Mutation in an individual deals with a change that alters the individual's perception of viewing things; a change that has an impact on the individual's culture and life as a whole. For mutation in an individual to be effective, it has to be symbolic. In this light, symbolic mutations comprise a change in the subject and a change in its view towards truth and reality.

Symbolic mutation, as a process, has been exploited in several fields of study. However, in literature, characters undergo symbolic mutations to portray a transition in ideology. This transition could be radical or conformist. For instance, Stephen Dedalus in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young man*, undergoes a symbolic mutation at the end of the novel. In this context, symbolic mutation can be seen as self-realization and awareness (what is referred to in the novel as epiphany). Mutation in characters usually enhances the author's point of view on particular issues or subjects.

In Woolf's *To The Lighthouse*, both Mrs Ramsay and Lily Broscow undergo symbolic mutations where in these mutations influence their stance as concerns the question of the woman's role and place in society. To begin with, Mrs Ramsay, in the course of the novel, mutates from the traditional housewife, confined only to her kitchen and needlework to an empowered traditional woman. She takes upon herself the responsibility to bring people of different walks of life into a sort of communal flatter. As it reads;

...she felt, more and more strongly, outside that eddy; or as if a shade had fallen, and, robbed of colour, she saw things truly. The room (she looked round it) was very shabby. There was no beauty anywhere. She forebore to look at Mr Tansley...They all sat separate. And the whole effort of merging and flowing and creating rested on her... she felt the sterility of men for if she did not do it nobody would do it... (81)

The "shabby" nature of the room where the dinner party was held reflects the cold relationship that exists among her guest but Mrs Ramsay believes "...the whole effort of merging...flowing and creating rested upon her" not only because her nature as a woman obliges her to do so but because it is an artistic way of integrating herself into the public sphere. Her creative and artistic capacities make her able to bring everyone under her control. In other words, she is at the centre of everything and so everyone relies on her.

Furthermore, during the dinner party, Mrs Ramsay's sitting position affirms that she has been able to assert herself in the midst of men. We are told she sits at the head of the table while her husband sits at the extreme end feeling disgusted because his wife is the one now passing commands (81). What should be taken into consideration of this image is that, it is one that aims at portraying the woman's potentials out of her domestic sphere not that which aims at showing that the women can override the man as head of the family. This explains why at the end of the party, Mrs Ramsay is able to bring her angry husband to reason and the result is that he is jovial than ever (83). This act of negotiating gender role by Mrs Ramsay, instead of fighting or seizing it, is a very important tenet in postfeminist discourse. The postfeminists hold that these days equality has already been attained. By so saying, they think that it is needless fighting for equal rights when women have been given the chance to prove their worth. However, some critics like Mary Vavrus have disapproved of this. She thinks that equality has not been attained and that women are still victims of patriarchy as there are still incidents of rape and all the like.

As Virginia Woolf says in *A Room of One's Own*, "Literature is open to everyone" (75) meaning that every occupation is open to every woman. It is now left for the woman to

assert and empower herself in every domain in life, showing her capabilities and potentials. With this, if the woman is able to prove her capabilities, she gains the confidence of men. In *To The Lighthouse*, Mrs Ramsay gains the confidence of everyone. She gains the confidence of her husband, her children and her guests because of the role she plays at the dinner party.

However, some critics rather see these capabilities of Mrs Ramsay as manipulative and egoistic. Steve Ellis, in his essay, “Integration: *To The Lighthouse*”, argues that Mrs Ramsay’s strategies of organizing marriages between people portrays her manipulative skills of imposing her ideologies on others. For instance, her strategy of trying to get Paul and Minta marry, and Lily and Bankes marry, is a way of bringing others under control and under her way of doing things. Furthermore, Ellis compares Mrs Ramsay to the Queen of England, whom, though a female, everyone is answerable to her. According to Steve, this analogy intends to portray Mrs Ramsay’s quest for power. She wants to bring everyone under her command.

Many feminist critics argue that Mr Ramsay’s reliance on his wife for sympathy emphasizes the dichotomy that exists between men and women in terms of qualities. Women have been considered the weaker sex because of their possession of qualities like softness, tenderness and emotions and the men, the stronger sex because of their intellectual capabilities which overrides their emotions. Mr Ramsay’s reliance on his wife’s care and consolation during his times of dismay shows that he believes, as a woman, she can handle things of the emotion because she is gifted for that. However, this act of Mr Ramsay relying on his wife for consolation rather emphasizes the control Mrs Ramsay has upon everyone including her husband. She finds it very difficult to tell her husband “I love you” of which this contradicts the notion of the ideal Victorian wife. However, she succeeds in keeping her husband under her control and in making him feel consoled each time he needs consolation. This potential of Mrs Ramsay, from a postfeminist perspective shows that women can be able to empower themselves by making their potentials known to men in such a way that they can confine in them.

Postfeminists seek political, academic and social empowerment. Among young women, postfeminism is a conceptual frame which gives them the opportunity to express themselves using popular culture and the media. For instance, some group of young women feel pornography is a medium of empowerment which permits them forge-on their quest for love and have sexual liberty. However, other groups of women use postfeminism not only as

a medium to empower themselves but also to create gender balance in society. For instance, Mrs Ramsay makes her husband to understand that they are both different and what she possesses could be of help to him and vice versa. In other words, one of the major characteristics of postfeminist discourse is the freedom of choice. By this, women not only have the freedom to do things the way they like but also a wide variety of career options. If they wish they can stay at home and cater for their children, like Mrs Ramsay, but they remain empowered women in their spheres.

Furthermore, the incident at the beginning of the novel where James looks at his father with so much hatred because he says they would not be able to go the lighthouse (2), has been described by many as oedipal complex. However, this act also shows Mrs Ramsay's influence and power on others including her children. Her children look up to her not only as a mother but also as a person who provides them with security. This explains why James always compares to his mother as a tree. This is very symbolic as a tree metaphorically speaking refers to food, shelter and security. Also, the incident where Mrs Ramsay wraps the skull in her green shawl to make Cam sleep (107) shows the kind of impression she drives in the minds of her children. They see her as an extraordinary being who is able to provide solutions to their problems.

In Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market" and Tennyson's 'Lady of Shalott', they define situations where women who try to attain some higher knowledge in the man's world lose their ability to return to what they used to be and are seen in society as impure. However, Mrs Ramsay transgresses this stage as she mutates to an empowered traditional woman who acquires knowledge in the man's world but uses this knowledge to create and restore her own world. Symbolic mutation in the character of Mrs Ramsay proves that she is able to empower herself within her domestic sphere. In so doing, she creates an identity for herself which is unique and permits others to gain her confidence. For instance in the novel, at the dinner party, Mrs Ramsay is able to get her husband to a jovial state because she brings him to reason by making him to understand the purpose of her dinner party. The fact that he is jovial and engages himself in discussions shows he has been able to build his confidence in her and let her carry on with the party.

In the works of many female novelists of the Victorian era, they portrayed female characters who strived for a life of their own but suggested an ambivalence about independence and domestic security. Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre in *Jane Eyre* and George

Eliot's Dorothy Brooke in *Middlemarch*, though they achieved strength, individuality and self-knowledge through deep and enduring psychological struggle, they eventually marry and become primarily the stabilizing forces in the lives of their husbands. However, this is not the case with Woolf's Lily Briscoe. She ends up a single woman and creates a space of her own in which she can identify herself to.

Lily Briscoe, like Mrs Ramsay, undergoes symbolic changings in the course of the novel. As a single woman, whose preoccupations in life have nothing to do with marriage or domesticity, she experiences marginalization in society. Her preferences in life are responsible for her marginalization. She prefers her independence to the confined role of a wife and mother. She also prefers the manly professions such as painting to professions prescribed for women by society like needlework or knitting. Moreover, her physical appearance does not cater for the needs of men. For these preferences, Lily takes an outsider status in the novel. Such status in society permits her to easily understand the condition of women like Mrs Ramsay. She is able to perceive things the traditional woman from within cannot perceive. It also permits her to devise ways in which she will not commit the same errors committed by her predecessors.

With Lily's outsider status, she acquires knowledge, knowledge which can be considered radical by Victorian norms. She gets to understand that men confine women to the house for fear that if women are given their liberty, they might compete with them and probably seize power and authority from men which they have long protected for years. This fear is evident in Charles Tansley's statement to Lily, "women can't write, women can't paint" (47). Lily perceives this fear when she says; "Women can't write, women can't paint... since clearly it was not true to him but for some reason helpful to him, and that was why he said it?" Feminists like Simone de Beauvoir and Kate Millett traced female subjugation from chauvinist egoism; men's love for power made them subjugate the woman in every domain as seen in *The Second Sex* and its five foci.

In the course of the novel, Lily eventually struggles and overcomes this chauvinism as she is able to place herself on an equal flatter with men. Firstly, she takes the challenge of doing a male profession; painting. Though her painting is not very perfect, as described by Bankes, however, it takes scientific knowledge to understand the painting. Even Mr Bankes who is a mathematician is unable to understand Lily's painting because of its technicity and

complexity. What is very peculiar about Lily is her refusal to see other paintings, as Banks proposes.

She had been to Brussels; she had been to Paris but only for a flying visit to see an aunt who was ill. She had been to Dresden; there were masses of pictures she had not seen; however, Lily Broscoe reflected, perhaps it was better not to see pictures: they only made one hopelessly discontented with one's own work. (69)

Her refusal to see other paintings shows Lily's determination to create an authentic work that expresses her own ideas; that expresses her inner thoughts and feelings; and portrays her identity as a new generation woman. In addition, seeing the other paintings could corrupt her ideals on the woman subject. A Painting is a very important medium of communication especially in contemporary society. A Painting could metaphorically be a way of writing, could be a way of talking. It is a euphemistical way of expressing ones thoughts and emotions and shows the subjective nature of the author's world.

Moreover, after the death of Mrs Ramsay, Mr Ramsay now resorts to his daughters and Lily for sympathy and consolation in times of despair. However, Lily does not give in to his quest as she rather compliments his boots. This act of Lily shows that she sees herself with Mr Ramsay on an equal flatter. Astonished by Lily's behaviour, Mr Ramsay rather goes down on his knees and knots Lily's shoes. This shows a triumph on Lily's part. She has been able to negotiate gender balance and forge feminist quest for gender equality and emancipation in society. Mrs Ramsay through out her marital life with Mr Ramsay has been unable to make him know that they are equals in life but Lily has been able to do so. This incident marks the failure of the traditional woman in her for quest for the woman's emancipation. This metaphorically symbolize what postfeminist refer to as "backlash."

Postfeminists believe the traditional feminist failed to secure a better future for women. With such failure, the new generation women felt feminists values are no longer relevant to the society. Moreover, their main quest had been attained, that is equality. Hence, they felt the need to employ strategies aimed at empowering themselves in society, an empowerment strategy that will bring men to the same flatter of reasoning with them. Lily, in the novel, succeeds in doing this something which Mrs Ramsay fails to do.

Furthermore, Lily's determination to finish her painting after 10years reflects her desire to create a woman-centred space. Lily's determination to complete this painting shows

her quest for an androgynous mind. With the marginalization she undergoes in the hands of men like Tansley, she devises a strategy to be able to make her voice heard. In so doing, Lily needs to transcend her femininity by surpassing her body. This suggests that in a time when society considers that women cannot paint nor write, Lily has to step down from her female self and obtain a male role. Woolf seems to suggest a binary approach in perceiving issues on gender; that is, understanding the issues of gender from a male and female perspective. Though this binarist approach has been highly criticized by critics like Elaine Showalter who sees it as escapism from the female body and avoidance of key feminist issues (Wright, 1)

Woolf uses Lily to give voice to downtrodden and voiceless woman. Everything in her world is anchored around her artwork. She uses her arts as a medium of communicating her thoughts of which she succeeds in doing at the end of the novel. In Woolf's "A Room of One's Own", she encourages women to be self-determined and empower themselves, to be able to occupy positions open to the humanities as she says "Literature is open to everybody" (75). This is to say women just have to seize this opportunity to prove their worth. In other words, Woolf seems to suggest that women have the potentials to change society's values and save it from destruction. This explains why she comes up with a character like Lily, to pilot her ideas.

In view of the above analysis, we can conclude that symbolic mutations permit characters to discover their real selves and create an entity which they can identify themselves in. It should be noted that symbolic mutation is a stepping ground for ideological conflict. This is because as the women undergo symbolic mutation, it creates in them a new and subjective identity which influences their pre-conception of the notion of an ideal woman.

An ideology is a pre-conceived idea that can influence an individual's way of thinking, action and of perceiving things. According to *The Sage Dictionary of Cultural Studies*, ideology is defined as a coherent statement which gives understandings about the social world (46). Binary, on its part, deals with a combination of two things or two folds of something. Hence, by ideological binary, we mean the two folds of a particular concept. Individuals always have different perceptions as concerns particular ideas. Ideological binary is known to be the root cause of all conflicts in contemporary society because it raises differences between two groups of people. Each group aims at maintaining a hierarchy in their belief system and turn to impose their beliefs on others.

Ideological binary has been one of the factors that gave rise to the different feminist waves and different feminist movements. From the first wave feminist movements to the third wave feminist movements, they have different perceptions on the qualities a woman should possess. For instance, the first wave feminists strive for equality with men. The second wave feminists have diversified views. Firstly, the liberal feminists center on integrating women into the public sphere and seek legal equality with men. The radical feminists, on their part, with proponents like Kate Millett, emphasized the fact that women constitute a sex class and argue that gender relations is the main factor of male hegemony. Having developed from radical feminists, cultural feminists quest for essential sameness among women and aim to establish a female organization to ease gender oppression. The Socialist or Marxist feminists argue that capitalism is the cause of female subjugation. Third wave feminist movements focus more on the empowerment of the women in the face of patriarchy, in any domain in life.

In Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse*, this ideological binaries among feminist trends is evident among her characters under study. Mrs Ramsay's ideologies fit with those of the conservative feminists while those of Lily fit with those of the liberal feminists and radical feminists. With the different movements they represent, it is obvious that their ideology pertaining to the notion of the ideal woman will be different. Mrs Ramsay has a different perception of the ideal woman as well as Lily Broscoe. Each of them tries to maintain a hierarchy and standard in their view point. It should be noted that the differences in ideology between the two women is as a result of the process of symbolic mutation which they undergo. Symbolic mutations permits them to create a self which they identify themselves in as the ideal.

In addition, from a postfeminist perspective, these binaries in ideology only show how pluralistic the feminist quest is. As earlier mentioned in the "Introduction", postfeminism takes no fixed stance to meaning. It is a contradictory and pluralistic discourse which gives room for individualism and subjectivism towards concepts. In a postfeminist society, every woman recognises her own mix of identities. Postfeminism concentrates on furthering the idea of empowerment, the celebration of femininity, freedom of choice and liberation. From these perspectives emanates the central concern of this section, which is pluralism of the concept of an ideal woman.

Mrs Ramsay, embodies the qualities and standards of the Victorian woman. The ideologies of this period have conditioned her thinking and her culture. This explains why

her ideas, concerning how a woman should be, contradict those of the independent woman, Lily. This clash in ideology brings out a thematic preoccupation, which is that of tradition as against modernity. Traditional values of the “Angel of the house” are refuted by modern women, who sought for liberty and integration into the public sphere; rather than staying at home when they have something to contribute to national stability. According to Mrs Ramsay, for a woman to be complete, she has to be married, accomplish the purpose of every married couple, that is to have children, satisfy the needs of her home and that of her husband without complaining. She makes a night visit to Lily’s room and tries to convince her to get married to Mr Bankes. Lily lays her head on her laps and laughs but Mrs Ramsay does not understand why she laughs (36). This shows that Mrs Ramsay has not understood that Lily and herself belong to two separate worlds; Lily can never get married. She sees marriage as a sort of physical and psychological enslavement which deprives women their abilities to explore new spheres of meaning or new ways of perceiving things. Lily believes a woman should have the liberty to do what ever she pleases. In a situation where she is not given the opportunity to do what ever she pleases, she is bound to fight for her rights. In other words, the modern woman seeks equality in gender balance and equality, and also her emancipation in society. Such a woman is that who is capable of breaking bounds and challenging existing social norms to express herself.

These ideologies of Lily contradict Mrs Ramsay’s vision of a harmonious society. Liberal feminist and Radical feminist ideologies, as those of Lily, have been considered by some conservative critics as catalysts to the conflicts the world is experiencing today. Critics like Mary A. Kassian, using statistic data, argue that radical feminist ideologies have brought more repercussions on human society than good. For deconstructing the Judeo-Christian view of womanhood and manhood, she accuses these feminists to be responsible for the disintegration of morality and concurrent increase in gender confusion and conflict. She metaphorically refers to feminist repercussions on human thought as a “tsunami”(9). Moreover, Mrs Ramsay’s description of Lily in the beginning of the novel, “chinese eyes” (16), “puckeredface”(16), shows that Lily is beautiful physically but she lacks the beauty of the inside. According to Mrs Ramsay, Lily’s deficiency of innate beauty makes her void of certain female like notions. However, Lily has no intension of pleasing any man with her physique. Critics like Lisa Williams think Lily finds solace more in women that is she prefers a lesbian relationship and that she could probably be in love with Mrs Ramsay. Radical feminists believe that men use the penis (phallus) as a medium of patriarchal

dominance. This ideology borrowed from Lacan's concept has greatly influenced feminist thought.

Feminist thinkers such as Avital Ronell, Elisabeth Grosz and Jane Gallop have interpreted the psychoanalyst, Lacan's concept of the Phallus as an opportunity for new perspectives or arguments in feminist discourse. According to them, it provides a useful means of understanding gender biases and imposed roles on the woman. This could probably explain why Lily does not even have the least feelings for men but rather sympathizes with Mrs Ramsay no matter their differences. She does not intend to ever get married. Lacan further argues that a child acquires language at the oedipal phase and enters into its symbolic order when it accepts its gender identity. This stage requires the acceptance of the "phallus" as a privileged signification and a consequence of female displacement; this explains why when Lily fails to understand Andrew's explanation of what his father writes in the book he is reading, as small as he is he tells Lily "think of a table in the kitchen"(37). This shows the degree at which even a child is aware of the fact that his possession of a penis makes him superior to his mother and women in general.

Moreover binary in ideology is also evident in their artistic visions. Mrs Ramsay's art has been described as the art of connection while Lily's as the art of representation (Makela, 9). By the arts of connection, this means Mrs Ramsay envisions a harmonious society where there is peace and unity. She envisions a society whereby man and women alike negotiate their differences. This explains why at the end of the dinner party, Mrs Bankes, as well as the others, think the party is a success because they are able to identify other potentials in Mrs Ramsay far from her domestic potentials. Moreover, she makes artistic correlations to her dinner party to the act of bringing people together. As it goes:

...she felt, more and more strongly, outside that eddy; or as if a shade had fallen, and, robbed of colour, she saw things truly. The room (she looked round it) was very shabby. There was no beauty anywhere. She forbore to look at Mr Tansley...They all sat separate. And the whole effort of merging and flowing and creating rested on her... she felt the sterility of men for if she did not do it nobody would... (81)

Such artistic correlations not only portray Mrs Ramsay's ideals but goes further to portray her objective nature which contradicts the self-centred, selfish and subjective nature of Lily. During the dinner party, Lily criticizes Mrs Ramsay for pitying Mr William Bankes and

Charles Tansley. Lily thinks only about herself. Her decision not to acquire female-like values contribute to this nature of hers. Moreover, these characteristics of hers are typical of some postfeminists. Critics like Susan Faludi and Mary Douglas Vavrus think postfeminists are selfish in their individualist and subjective quest which works for the interest of small groups of women at the expense of a large collective women's need. Further more, Lily's failure to understand why Mrs Ramsay pities men shows that she sees her relationship with men from an equal flatter. This contradicts Mrs Ramsay's ideals. She sees men from the perspective of difference. Carol Gilligan's philosophy of Difference stipulates that women are essentially different from men. Moreover, it opines that women should explore these values which make them different from men to be able to emerge in society. This is actually what Mrs Ramsay does in the novel.

Lily, on her part, goes for the art of representation. Her painting, at the end of the novel, shows the creation of a new self and new identity of a woman who succeeds in implanting and asserting herself in a patriarchal society. Though, at the beginning, she is not quite sure of her abilities to exhibit her controversial artwork to the public. Her personal independence and freedom emanate from negative influences of patriarchy which is directly linked to the aesthetic development as an artist. Hence, this shows a satisfying level of creative expression. Some critics like Habermas referred to as the ideal woman unlike Mrs Ramsay. She also recommends that the values of Lily should be emulated by every contemporary woman.

Lily's painting is very symbolic in feminist quest as it encourages women to voice their feelings and express themselves using any medium. Her arts is metaphorically a radical political statement of feminist ideals. Like Lily, Mrs Ramsay is able to express herself through her diner party. The diner party and the canva serve as platforms which these women explore to express themselves and prove their view points about life in society. In other words, this implies that pertaining to the woman's condition in society, women can adopt different ways to provide themselves with answers. Virginia Woolf uses her pen to express herself whereby the characters in her books convey her impressions on certain notions in society especially the condition of the woman and her role in society.

Moreover, the symbolism of the lighthouse to both Lily and Mrs Ramsay is also very important in understanding the ideological binary between the two characters. Both characters draw their inspiration from the lighthouse. To Mrs Ramsay, the lighthouse symbolizes the

woman as an empowered figure that provides social stability in her home and outside her home. At the beginning, Lily's vision is not very different from Mrs Ramsay's vision. The lighthouse to Lily symbolizes the assertion of the woman's new self and also the emergence of an empowered woman whose vision on feminine values are distant and far, like the lighthouse, from traditional standards of the woman. The parallels Lily draws between her artistic vision and the lighthouse depict both first wave and second wave ideologies of feminist endeavours. These women aimed at obtaining political, economic and social autonomy at all odds. With the incident where Mr Ramsay stoops to knot Lily's shoes, this can be interpreted by liberal and radical feminists as the collapse of the boundaries of inequality as men and women have been brought to an equal standpoint. This incident also marks a starting point for postfeminists arguments. This incident shows that equality has been obtained. Hence, talking of rights and equality in the twentieth and twenty-first century is groundless and irrelevant because postfeminists believe that equality has already been attained. With this postfeminists draw from first and second wave achievements at the same time being critical about them.

From the above analysis, this chapter examined the symbolic changes or mutations that the woman undergoes in the quest to empower herself and create a new subjective identity. It also discussed ideological conflicts as a product of symbolic mutations in the role of the woman. This said, it showed that every woman has her own perceptions as concerns the notion of the ideal woman's role. Moreover, it revealed that the different feminists trends which exists in contemporary society is as a result of ideological conflicts. With this, it can be concluded that ideological conflicts and symbolic mutations can be considered as different dimensions of transmutation of the woman's role in that both women. Furthermore, symbolic mutations foster the creation of an identity and ideology in an individual whereby the individual feels contented in this newly created philosophy.

CHAPTER THREE

THE IDEAL AND COMPLEX WOMAN

This chapter discusses the role of contemporary woman and creation of an ideal 21th century woman. It gives a completely different view of the concept of the role of the woman as explored in the previous chapter. This chapter seeks to portray the complexities that are embodied in the role of the New Woman and how these complexities lead to the creation of the complex and ideal woman. It further portrays how the contemporary woman is a product of the merge of roles that is, traditional and modern attributes of the woman's role. With this, this section portrays to what extent the 21st Century woman is an embodiment of the transmutation of roles. The focus of the present chapter is the quest for the ideal, the creation of the new woman and the new woman in society. The arguments in this section are guided by postfeminism and the postcolonial concept of hybridity.

Women's desire for ideal feminine values has been a debating issue from the very outset of feminist endeavours. The quest for ideal feminist and/or feminine values is one of the contributing factors to the emergence of different feminist trends within feminist endeavours. It should be noted that ideological binaries play an important role in the emergence of these diversified feminist trends. Though the original quest in feminist movement is seeking equality in the economic, political and social domains, these trends have tenets which makes them differ from one another. In other words, feminism began moving from collective subjectivity to an individual subjectivity.

In the novel, when both women undergo symbolic mutations they both create in them their own ideals of a woman. It should be worth noting that, undergoing symbolic mutations, the women are still in the imperfect state in as much as they contradict one another, there is something in one that the other believes she lacks. This shows that the women even still yearning for the ideals in a woman. They recognise their weaknesses and they are always found seeking from one another what they do not have. Mrs Ramsay longs to possess some of the qualities of Lily Brose and vice versa. For instance, in the novel, it is said that "Lily was an independent creature yet Mrs Ramsay liked her for it" (17). Though Lily's ideologies are considered out of place in society, Mrs Ramsay still admires her courageousness and wishes she could be like her. It is worth mentioning that Mrs Ramsay's ability to portray her potentials emanates from the fact that she somehow loves Lily's ideas of independence. What is very important in such situations is carving out an understanding about a concept. This is

what Mrs Ramsay does. She borrows Lily's ideas of emancipation and empowerment to create a new self though she still has imperfections in her. She recognises the limitations of her confinements and tries to uplift them. This explains why Mrs Ramsay, at one point, appreciates Lily's qualities and the values she upholds. This portrays Mrs Ramsay's imperfections on her part.

Moreover, almost through out the novel, Lily keeps refuting the ideas of Mrs Ramsay. However, Lily also recognises her imperfections and yearns for the perfect values of a woman. She is divided between her aspirations of the world of self actualization and the limitations of the maternal world. For instance, she actually likes Mr Bankes and respects him but her fear to be confined by domestic norms prevents her from exploring the natural and emotional side of her. Furthermore, the incident where Mr Ramsay knots Lily's shoes moves Lily to sympathize with him instead of being evasive and indifferent to him. This compromising behaviour of Mr Ramsay perturbs Lily so much that she finds it difficult to complete her painting (149). She feels some sort of emptiness and vagueness in her when she realizes she is unable to give Mr Ramsay what he wants (149). This brings in a psychological conflict in Lily as she is divided between her femininity and societal idealization of femininity which in turn impedes her from establishing a vision of truth in her arts. This incident helps her to understand her imperfections and also seeks to provide answers to gender and power relations. This incident in the text is very important in postfeminist discourse as it supports the arguments raised by Isam Shihaba suggesting that feminist movements have been unable to provide solutions to gender and power solutions and above all, they have not been able to secure a better future for the woman's condition (5).

In addition, though Lily finds Mrs Ramsay's ideas on feminine values obsolete as postfeminists would say she also feels so attached to Mrs Ramsay. Her daughter-mother relationship with Mrs Ramsay indicates her longing to return to women's traditional role (Jingui, 74). Even with the death of Mrs Ramsay, Lily always has Mrs Ramsay in mind and this has a role in her longing for the ideal values of a woman. These aspects reiterate the concept of retrieval of the traditional values of a woman in postfeminist discourse.

The quest for the ideal feminine role can also be evaluated from a symbolic perspective. Lily starts a painting of Mrs Ramsay in the first part of the novel and takes ten years to complete the painting. This long period of time she takes to complete her painting is very symbolic of her quest for an ideal woman, that she could represent in her painting. After

realizing her imperfections, she takes time to study and understand the woman's condition in society. It is worth noting that Mrs Ramsay may be dead but the fact that Lily keeps thinking of her makes her absence less felt by the reader. These ten years period that Lily puts a pause on her painting, permits her to evaluate the different strategies she can use to come up with something meaningful which can transmit a message about her art, her creativity and what her art intends to say. Moreover, Lily makes her painting but there is a blank space in the painting. Her difficulty to deal with this blankness hints the imperfections and the sense of loss in feminist endeavours as postfeminists argue.

In view of the above analysis, the quest for the ideal is not a problem of yesterday. It is still a problem of today. However, postfeminist think that this problem can be solved if taken from a subjective perspective rather than collective. This explains why the next sub chapter focuses on the role and creation of the New woman. This New woman is a subjective person with regard to her role in society.

The New woman (also called the first wave feminist, according to Jean Matthews) was a feminist ideal that emerged in Europe and America, in the late nineteenth century and had a profound influence on feminist endeavours. The term was first coined by Sarah Grand in her article, "The New Aspect of the Woman Question." The New woman during this period, was described as an educated, feminist, and independent career woman. She did everything possible to go above the boundaries and limits set by patriarchy, striving for equality and autonomy especially sexual autonomy. For women in the Victorian era, any sexual activity outside of marriage was judged immoral. However, divorce laws changed and gave rise to the New woman, who could survive a divorce with her economic autonomy.

However, the term, "New woman", seems to reappear in nearly every generation, remarks Sandra Lee (168). Jean Matthews defines the New woman as a "transitional figure who helped expand women's role and took advantage of new educational and professional opportunities, yet, in their quest, never achieved social, economic and political equality with men" (12). Ann Heilman opines, from a twentyfirst century perspective, that the New woman is "an ambiguous figure that has access to higher education, the right to vote, the right to earn a decent living and also internalize her challenges as to accepted views of femininity and female sexuality" (1). Stéphanie Genz, from a postfeminist perspective, defines the New woman as a subjective figure who has the urge to leave behind her 'old' self and

change into a new woman. She is a complex contemporary heroine who is simultaneously bewildered and confident in her quest to have it all (101-102).

In postfeminist discourse, what McRobbie refers to as “reflexive modernisation” or “female individualisation” is very important in the pursuit for an ideal life and the creation of an ideal and complex woman. Individualization permits every woman to have freedom of choice as a way of empowering herself (19). It is a movement from emancipatory politics to life politics. According to McRobbie, contemporary women are individually creating their own structures which are comfortable to them and which they would internalize and rely on to improve their daily lives. She says:

Individuals must choose the kind of life they want to live. They must become more reflexive in regard to every aspect of their lives from making the right in marriage to taking responsibility of their own working lives...Choice is surely, within the lifestyle, culture and a modality of constraint. The individual is compelled to be the kind of subject who can make right choices. By these means, new lines and demarcations are drawn between those subjects who are judged responsive to regime of personality, and those who fail miserably. (19)

The New woman, in this case, becomes an embodiment of subjective qualities created by individuals to improve on their lives. These qualities have to do with merging old palatable ways of feminine past to new ones and internalize these qualities in one’s personality. This concept puts aside the collective subjective nature of feminist quest to individual subjectivity where the individual self-defines herself and is responsible for every action she makes in life. as McRobbie explains:

The concept of subjectivity and the means by which cultural forms and interpellations call women into being, produce them as subjects while ostensibly merely describing them as such inevitably means that it is a problematic “She” rather than an unproblematic “We”, which is indicative of a turn to what we might describe as a new feminist politics of the body. (13)

The postcolonial concept of hybridity gives an understanding of the complex role of the twenty-first century woman and also portrays her as a mixture of identities. In Virginia Woolf’s *To The Lighthouse*, the role of the New woman deals with the transmutation of the

attributes of the traditional woman and that of the modern woman to create something new. It is worth noting that the theoretical concept of hybridity plays an important role in the creation of such a new figure. With this, the postfeminist new woman becomes complex woman embodied by binaries of traditional and modern values. At the end of the novel, Lily Broscoe is able to create a new self by combining the attributes of Mrs Ramsay to hers.

Lily's finished painting at the end of the novel is very symbolic in conveying this notion of transmutation of roles and the creation of a New woman. From the very beginning of the novel, Lily makes a painting of Mrs Ramsay. What makes Lily's painting peculiar is that she makes a painting of a traditional woman with her son and not herself. The fact that Lily after ten years still feels determined to complete such a painting shows her quest for a postfeminist figure. A modern woman making a painting of a traditional woman metaphorically implies she is making a painting of a woman she has added her own attributes to. Hence this highlights the concept of binaries in postfeminist discourse. Postfeminist critics like Angela McRobbie and Stéphanie Genz posit that postfeminism aims at retrieving palatable values of the traditional woman, combining them to modern values of femininity. Hence, the postfeminist New woman is found between binaries of feminism and feminine empowerment; job and romance and, career woman and wife hybrid.

Lily is able to complete her painting because she is inspired by the ideas of Mrs Ramsay. Her visions parallel the visions of Mrs Ramsay like her painting and Mrs Ramsay's dinner party. For instance, it is through Mrs Ramsay's dinner party that Lily realizes she has to move the tree to the middle as she says; "there's the sprig on the table cloth, there's my painting. I must move the tree to the middle, that matters nothing else" (56). It should be noted that the tree metaphorically refers to Mrs Ramsay. In the beginning of the novel, little James compares his mother to a tree. Lily, putting the tree in the middle not only symbolize putting the woman at the centre but also reinstates past feminine values which were almost destroyed by radical feminists values. The two elements of Mrs Ramsay's potentialities revealed during dinner party; that is, coherence and stability, echo what Lily seeks to achieve in her painting. Both women seek to create an artistic vision that can be permanent even in the midst of chaos. Mrs Ramsay's artistic vision of bringing people together is for the purpose of maintaining harmony and unity. Lily, on her part, uses her painting to create an identity in herself which would change her way of perceiving things permanently.

Moreover, as Virginia Woolf says in *A Room of One's Own*; “we think through our mothers”(6) meaning women of today can understand today's life if we can understand the attributes and culture of our mothers. Though, Mrs Ramsay dies in first part of the novel, her legacy still reigns as Lily thinks through Mrs Ramsay through out the novel. She is always thinking of Mrs Ramsay like a heroine as she says:“That woman sitting there writing under the rock resolved everything into simplicity, made these angers irritation fall like old rags. She brought together this and that and then this and so made of that miserable silliness and spite something.” (153)Lily draws on and invokes Mrs Ramsay's potentials to be able to understand how to handle issues of gender and power relations. Lily's painting is a tribute to Mrs Ramsay as it reads; “she owed it all to her” (154). She also hears Mrs Ramsay echoing in her mind “...get up” (154) especially when she is unable to complete her painting. This goes further to show how the traditional woman plays an important role in shaping the ideology of the modern woman. Hence, postfeminists, according to McRobbie, though chiding feminist past as Lily does to Mrs Ramsay, however, they retrieve, reinstate and take into account some old-fashioned elements of femininity (12).

As Lily gets to make a correlation between her role and that of Mrs Ramsay, she gets to “live behind her old self for a new one” (qtd in Genz, 168). She also gets to have a better understanding of gender relations aimed at creating a harmonious society, which is one of the concerns in postfeminist discourse. For instance, Lily is able to bring Mr Ramsay into negotiating terms when Mr Ramsay goes down on his knees and knots her shoes three times(of which Lily had complimented his boots instead of sympathizing with him). This incident is very important both in feminist discourse and more especially postfeminist discourse. Mr Ramsay's squatting down to knot Lily's shoes portrays that men can come to a compromise if women are able to make them reason with them. Moreover, it shows that the social order which impedes men and women to be equal has been broken. As Lily in an act of reciprocating this humble act of Mr Ramsay also stoops too, with her face red-looking, “thinking of her callousness and her eyes swell and tingle with tears” (148). From a postfeminist perspective, this shows that equality has been attained and all women have to do is to focus on promoting good gender relations in society.

This is the point where Mrs Ramsay fails in her endeavours. This incident is very symbolic in postfeminist discourse as it brings to limelight the failures of the past feminist waves. This act of bringing men to a reasonable flatter of understanding, ensures a harmonious society rather than fighting for rights and equality. When Mr Ramsay knots Lily's

shoes, the reaction is reciprocal as Lily is moved to tears. She undergoes a state of epiphany where she gets to realize that feminists have been misunderstanding the solution to their problems for they had to bring men to reasoning than fighting.

Angela McRobbie in her speech *Postfeminist passions*,³ tries to persuade young girls that if men are brought to reason with women, they would reason out with them and have respect for female grievances as we see Mr Ramsay doing in the text. The relationship between William Bankes and Lily Briscoe also highlights this aspect. Mr Bankes is the only one who takes to understand Lily's complex painting. The painting is not a very good masterpiece but he tries to understand it; "what did she wish to indicate by the purple triangle just there?...the relations of masses, of lights and shadows" (50-51). He even proposes solutions on how Lily can improve on her painting. For this, Lily not only respects Mr Bankes but also enjoys his company.

The relationship between Lily and Bankes takes a postfeminist dimension where men and women come together to negotiate gender roles. The postfeminist envisions a society where a woman can come in when a man is able not to do something or a man comes in when a woman is not able of doing something. Critics like Carole Gilligan prefer to talk on "Difference" in sexes than "Equality." According to her, men and women play complimentary roles in society. Instead of the usual slogan "What a man can do a woman can do better", it should rather be "What a man can do a woman cannot do, what a woman can do a man cannot do." A woman can give birth but a man cannot; a man secretes spermatozote a woman cannot. Hence, men and women are essentially different and demanding equality plays no role in understanding their relationship.

At the end, Lily becomes a complex woman, embodied with the binaries of contemporary life; marriage and career, feminism and feminine values, and the private and public sphere. Hence, she becomes a mixture of identities. Though, critics like Susan Faludi and Mary Vavrus have ignored that such lifestyle does not guarantee a better future for women as it is a fragmented life, a life of dilemma. However, Stéphanie Genz opposes these views, arguing that it depends on every woman's determination and how she finds herself in the life. According to him, the postfeminist New and Complex woman negotiates these tensions, internalizes them and at the end celebrates hope and confidence in her new Self.

³Made in March, 2008, the speech focused on the disappearance of women studies, at undergraduate level, in British Universities which is symbolic of the changes that have been taking place in the landscape of gender and sexuality.

This notion of transmutation in the woman's role is expressed by Virginia Woolf herself. It is true she is known for her radical ideologies concerning the woman's role and status in society. However, she appears on the front page of *Vogue* magazine in May 1924 wearing her mother's dress carrying a baby (qtd in Ellis, 78). This photograph gives an ironic view of the dressing style of that period where women preferred wearing short skirts. The photograph simply connotes that the modern woman is nothing without the traditional woman. This implies that the traditional woman has contributed a lot to what the modern woman is today and so no matter how feminists try to refuse the idea of becoming the "Angel of the House", they still need some of her values.

This transmutation of the woman's role is evident in the popular TV series *Desperate Housewives* created by Marc Cherry. The series seems to enate the woman's struggle between work and career. However, this series does not live up to the expectations of postfeminist audience as the women end up privileging their public than their private spheres. However, in Laurie Kistemaker's comparative study of *Desperate Housewives* and *Steford Wives*, she concludes that the women in *Steford Wives* are able to find confidence and hope in their hybridized self by transmutating career and home and their feminist ideologies and their ideals concerning femininity.

In view of the above analysis, it can be said that the transmutation of the woman's role can yield good gender relations in that if women internalize these binary postfeminist values and strategies they can be able to make this world less chaotic as it is today. Anti-feminist critic, Mary K. Hassan thinks feminist ideologies especially radical feminist ideologies are contributing factors to the chaotic nature of the world.

From the arguments raised above, it is obvious at the end the transmutation of roles and the creation of the New Woman is attained through the character, Lily Broscoe. Though, both women undergo symbolic mutations however, Lily's mutation, at the end, is very symbolic as it enhances a postfeminist vision. At the end of the novel, the Lily we find in "The Window" is not the same Lily we find in "The Lighthouse" as she has transmuted to a new individual. At this point, the lighthouse gets a new symbolism different from what is obtained in the previous chapter.

In "The Window", the lighthouse, to Lily, symbolised the attainment of equality in all domains. However, the lighthouse's symbolism, to Lily, changes in the "The Lighthouse" compared to what is obtained in part one. The new symbolism of the lighthouse enhances

more of a postfeminist vision. With equality already obtained, the lighthouse symbolizes a secured future for both sexes whereby women like men can be able to talk out their differences and together find solutions to their problems. After the incident of Mr Ramsay knotting Lily's shoes, not only Mr Ramsay is brought to reasoning, Lily seems to undergo some sort of epiphany where she realizes that fighting for equality is not the solution but negotiating for equality would promote good gender and power relations. Lily's vision is reflective of the postfeminists quest as they sought to empower themselves in society and also promote good relations with men. As Angela McRobbie opines in her famous speech, *Postfeminist Passions*, when men are brought to reasoning, they can and will confine power to women. This explains the number of women who hold powerful positions in the world like presidents. If women can be able to rule countries it means men have been brought to reasoning in that they now believe in the potentials of women.

Such reasonable men McRobbie refers to are men like William Bankes. Lily's relationship with Mr William Bankes is a relationship envisioned by postfeminists. The fact that Bankes tries to understand Lily's painting, though he acknowledges it is not a masterpiece, reflects that men can negotiate power with women, who are ready to prove their potentials. Though, Lily does not get married to Bankes, as Mrs Ramsay has always wished, she respects him very much probably for the fact that he is a reasonable man who blurs the boundaries in gender relations. He never challenges Lily's painting rather he seeks to add meaning to it. This is the type of relationship envisioned by postfeminists as it is one that guarantees a less chaotic world.

When Lily, at the end of the novel, lays down her brush in extreme fatigue and says; " I have had my vision" (199), she becomes the upholder of postfeminist values and endeavours. With this she embodies postfeminist values. In society, postfeminist women "want to have it all" (Genz, 98) as they refuse to dichotomize and choose between their public and private space; their professional career and domestic relationships. They not only merge these binary distinctions but they also blur them as we see the women in the tv series, *Steford Wives* do. These binaries include: feminist and feminine empowerment; job and romance; and career woman and wife hybrid.

A simulation of Virginia Woolf's Lily Briscoe, in the media, is Helen Fieldings' *Bridget Jones' Diary*. Bridget Jones like Lily Broscoe, at the beginning upholds liberal and radical feminists ideologies. She is a well educated, middle class, independent and career

oriented woman. She puts her feminist values over her feminine values. No matter how much she struggles to uphold these ideals of hers, she yearns for love. At the end she finds herself in the arms of Mr Darcy. The situation becomes a dilemma resolving her fragmented self. However, like every post feminists, Bridget Jones overcomes such dilemma as she reconciles these hybridities. She internalizes and individualizes these postfeminist problematic as she turns her confusion and interprets it as her personal and psychological challenges (Genz, 101) as life can never be full of roses.

Such a life of turmoil has been ridiculed by critics like Susan Faludi. She feels it is ridiculous going through such psychological trauma. Women should make a choice between their domestic and career life. It is either the woman stays at home and takes care of her family and forgets about career or she focuses on career and forgets about home (35). However, Stephanie Genz, as a response to Faludi's arguments, opines that life in itself is chaotic and man is just trying to make meaning out of life. According to him, the postfeminist woman undergoes challenges in her hybrid self but she enjoys herself in the process because after all her dilemma she believes and celebrates hope and confidence in herself.

In view of the analysis, this chapter examined the woman in quest for the ideal and also discussed the complexities that entail the role of contemporary woman in society. The chapter uses Lily Broscoe to show the complexities in the role of today's woman. At the end, the chapter revealed that the contemporary woman is a subject and entity on her own. Her strategies pertaining to the role of the woman do not conform to general objective feminist perceptions. As an entity on her own her strategies are out to empower her first as an individual in society. Hence, the postfeminist New woman is not concerned about general priorities of women but her priorities which make life easy for her. Embellished with many complexities of feminist and feminine values, that is, the complexities of the private life and the public life, she pulls these binaries in life making her know how to handle situations of gender role and gender balance. Dynamic and outstanding women today like Michelle Obama, Hillary Clinton and Mrs Carter alias Beyoncé Knowles, have influenced the world in different ways and they all possess these binaries. The chapter also reveal that contemporary woman is what she is today thanks to the feminists efforts of her predecessors. She draws from feminist past and merge those ideologies to hers as a modern woman. These characteristics of the contemporary woman has a direct impact on culture and civilization of a particular people. For this, it is necessary to educate young girls and boys especially on the benefits of good gender relations promoted by the contemporary woman.

CHAPTER FOUR

A SUGGESTED PEDAGOGY OF VIRGINIA WOOLF'S *TO THE LIGHTHOUSE* IN A LANGUAGE CLASSROOM.

The essence of studying Literature is to be able to understand society and life, as a whole, through creative and imaginative works of art. Unlike the previous chapters which have discussed the transmutation of the woman's role from a postfeminist perspective, this chapter, on its part, discusses a proposed pedagogy in the teaching of language using a literary text (Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse*) in an ESL (English as a Second Language) context like Cameroon. In addition, the chapter seeks to show how the novel can be used to improve language competence and performance such as writing, listening, speaking and reading. It also provides suggestions on how to teach reading comprehension using an excerpt from *To The Lighthouse* in a form four class.

Literature, as a higher form of language, is not only important in understanding issues in society but is also of very powerful pedagogic relevance in a language classroom. Firstly, using a literary text in a language classroom encourages interaction, as a literary text provides a rich ground for diversified interpretations and meaning. Secondly, literature expands language awareness and introduces students to sophisticated use of language. Moreover, contextualizing a language lesson using a literary text makes the teaching of grammar points easier. Moreover, apart from developing the four language skills that is speaking, listening, reading and writing, literature is relevant in pedagogy because it covers many areas of human experiences. Finally, literature educates an individual on universal values and encourages learners' attitude towards them, permitting them to understand cultures across international boundaries.

The question of teaching language through literature has been a debating issue among pedagogues for many decades. Some pedagogues and language purists think literature is not relevant in a language classroom because of its deviance from the conventional use of language like the case of poetry or/and the New-English⁴ Literatures. They argue that language of poetry and even prose violates certain grammatical rules in the English language. Consequently, they do not see how such language can be of help to students especially when it deviates them from the original forms of the mother language. The New-English

⁴Form of English in postcolonial countries. It is deviant form of English which does not abide to the conventions of the standard form of English. The socio-cultural realities of the settings give form to the language.

Literatures, on their part, also mutilate the original forms of Standard English, as some purists have referred to these forms of language as bastardised forms of language. In Cameroon, the use of Pidgin English and CamFrancGlais in school milieus have been highly discouraged, reason being that, it contributes to students' inability to express themselves properly in English. The General Certificate of Education Board (GCE Board), in 2014, complained of a serious drop in students' performance in English Language. For such factors, these above mentioned phatic languages have been discouraged in schools. Ironically, some of the literary texts put in the GCE syllabus are written by Cameroonians, who reflect their socio-cultural realities even in their language use. Good examples are the works of John NkemngongNkengasong . This goes to show that no matter the deviance in language use, this deviance can be used to enhance the understanding of the mother language in a language classroom. This can be determined only by the role played by the teacher and the approach he or she uses to attain his or her objectives.

There are three different approaches in literature teaching that the cultural model, the language based model and the personal growth model. However, To teach language effectively using literature, the integrated approach of the language-based model is preferable; that is the approach that merges literature and language, in other words, stylistic analysis. In so doing, this does not only foster the students' linguistic competence but also their communicative, functional and pragmatic competence. This also fosters eclecticism in the teaching approach of the teacher because at the end of the day, the literature-as-content method and the literature-for-personal-enrichment method are integrated in the stylistic analysis of a text.

Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* is a good example of a cross cultural text that can help students in the building of a positive self concept in their daily lives and also in the classroom. It exposes students to pertinent issues in society like gender and role which is one of the contributing factors of the turmoils in contemporary society. Teaching this novel in schools, the cultural appropriateness has to be taken into consideration. The text must reflect some cultural experiences familiar to the students to facilitate comprehension. In the case of this lesson, gender role is familiar to students though some aspects on gender may be strange to them. Gender role has universal implicatures but there are some modifications going on in different countries.

To be able to show the point of divergence in this study, it will be necessary to talk about the situation of literature and language teaching in the field. In the curriculum provided by the Ministry of Secondary Education in Cameroon, language is primarily taught for competency purposes, that is, giving students linguistic knowledge and how they can use this knowledge in their daily lives. This deals with the newly implemented teaching model called the Competence-Based Approach. In this approach of teaching the teacher's role is that of a guide. He is there only to compliment students' acquisition of knowledge. With this, the teacher has to make use of captivating resources so that the students are forced to discover on their own. To attain this, the teacher can use pictures, pantomimes, films, and realia. Pertaining to the prescriptions given by the ministry, a lesson like that of gender role and negotiation is to be taught following particular modules. For example, a teaching module can be satisfying daily basic needs, the reading, listening and writing tasks under a unit in the course book have to be orientated by this module. The teacher makes sure students develop competencies based on this particular module which is satisfying daily basic needs.

Using *To The Lighthouse*, this study proposes teaching language through literature to reveal aspects of the transmutation of the woman in her role in a form four class. The teacher needs to read the text and measure how powerfully he responds and relates the text. He also has to select an excerpt to serve as a medium of contextualizing the language lesson. With this, the teacher must take measures in the preparation and teaching of the lesson. He takes into consideration the class size, average age of students, the skills to be integrated during the lesson and the lesson objective most importantly. For this lesson, the expected outcome is: by the end of the lesson students should be able to scan the reading passage and answer questions relating to the text. The teacher also has to consider the students' previous knowledge. The students need to have competences in vocabulary and grammar. They also need to be familiar with the storyline of *To The Lighthouse*. With such competences, students are able to correlate intrinsic properties of the grammar point like form and structure to extrinsic properties like the biographical, historical, aesthetic and philosophical context of the novel. This permits them to obtain both linguistic and functional competences. In other words they will be doing a stylistic analysis of the text.

Pertaining to the students' previous contributing competence in relation to the transmutation of the woman's role, it is necessary to take into consideration the text under study and build correlations between the issues raised in the text to Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse*. In all form four classes in Cameroon, the novel prescribed in the syllabus is an

Eko prize award-winning novel; *The Immortal Seed*, written by Tah Protus. The novel recounts the story of two self-exiled parents, Assi and Akwen, and their son Tebene. The novel is set in imaginary village, Dik and Muyuka, a town which actually exists in Cameroon. It focuses on subjects that have to do with the social realities of the Cameroonian society like corruption, sexual promiscuity among youths and also gender role seen. It also explores themes which constitutes man's life as a whole. They include: greed, fate and destiny, love and cruelty. With this previous knowledge language can easily be taught using *To The Lighthouse*. Moreover, students need to have read the novel, *To The Lighthouse*.

Teaching language using *To The Lighthouse*, the following strategies need to be applied as proposed by Lazar: pre-reading strategies, while-reading strategies, and post-reading strategies. For the pre-reading strategies, the selected excerpt to be taught can be complimented with CDs, audio texts or a film can serve as elements of the lead in. For instance a film for the students to watch or a chart bearing the picture of a man in an office and a woman at home surrounded by children. The teacher could ask the students questions like:

- What can you say about the relationship of the man and the woman?
- What does the picture tell you about the man's role?
- What can the picture tell you about the woman's role?

These questions serve as a guide for the students in the understanding of issues that are raised in the excerpt and also issues that the teacher wants to pinpoint. With this guide questions asked, students will provide different answers which the teacher takes into consideration since it is a learner-centred form of teaching. Every student has something to offer in a language classroom. Moreover, giving the students the opportunity to express themselves motivates them and makes the class interactive and collaborative. Notwithstanding, the teacher is supposed to have a target answer. The target answer should be: showing gender role and disparity.

This film watching or picture presentation is not only going to help give them a hint on themes but it is going to help the students have a knowledge of the socio-cultural context of the novel. With this, the students encounter vocabularies and lexis which also influence their ability to use new words. Moreover, it is going to trigger their interest in the excerpt about to be read. The excerpt to be taught is now presented to the students after identifying to

topic of the lesson which is gender role. The excerpt chosen is taken from chapter One, page six to seven. It goes:

Indeed, she had the whole of the other sex under her protection; for reasons she could not explain, for their chivalry and valour, for the fact that they negotiated treaties, riled India, controlled finance; finally for an attitude towards herself which no woman could fail to feel or to find agreeable, something trustful, childlike, reverential; which an old woman could take from a young man without loss of dignity, and woe betide that girl- pray heaven it was none of her daughters... at fifty, she thought, possibly she might have managed things better- her husband; money, his books. But for her own part she would never for a single second regret her difficulties, or slur over duties...[h]er daughters, Prue, Nancy, Rose could sport with infidel ideas which they had brewed for themselves of a life different from hers; in Paris, perhaps; a wilder life not always taking care of some man or other; for there was in all their minds a mute of questioning deference and chivalry...of ringed fingers...

The next activity involves while reading activities. This activity has to do with giving the students a guide which will permit them understand the excerpt as they read. For instance, the students after haven skimmed for gist, they should take into consideration difficult words in the passage like “chivalry”, “reverential”, “woe”, “betide”, “infidel”, “brewed”, and “deference”. They should also take note of who is speaking in the excerpt and the characters being referred to in the excerpt. The teacher pre-teaches vocabulary used in the excerpt, that is, giving the meanings of the various words that impede the flow of the excerpt.

- i. Chivalry - the condition of being a knight
- ii. Reverential - being respectful
- iii. Woe -curse, a heavy calamity
- iv. Betide -to befall
- v. Infidel -to disbelieve
- vi. Brewed -to prepare by steeping and mingling
- vii. Deference -great respect

At this level, the students can now scan the text for detailed information. While-reading activities, as suggested by Lazar, helps students to understand the plot, to understand the characters, to understand difficult words used in the passage which render reading difficult and also understand style and language. These activities develop the students' reading, writing and listening skills. Also, while-reading strategies ensure the sustenance of the reading and exploration of the text and also permit the students to easily grab the theme of gender role.

Post-reading activities will determine if the lesson objective(s) have been fully attained. These activities are divided into two: written and oral practice. At the level of oral practice, the teacher can organize the students in groups and ask them to answer some questions. For instance,

- i. Who is the "She" referred to in the excerpt? Mrs Ramsay
- ii. Give the synonymes of these words
 - Chivalry -a soldier
 - Revential -respectful
 - Woe -curse
 - Betide -fall
 - Brewed -manufacture
 - Deference -respect
- iii. Draw a table, pick from the text expressions/qualities which you believe connote the man's sphere and those which connote the woman's sphere.

Man	Woman
chivalry	plates
rule	Her daughters
Negotiate treaties	
husband	
money	

- iv. From your observation on the table, write a short paragraph about gender role in society? It tell us that there is gender inequality.
- v. Is Mrs Ramsay a conformist or a feminist? She is conformist (depending on what the student say)
- vi. Is she contented in her role? Yes she is.

- vii. Give other words for these expressions: “ringed-finger” and “infidels ideas”
 - Mariage and bad ideas
- viii. why does the author use the expression “other sex” and what implications do this expression have in our understanding of gender role.
- ix. What measures can be taken by the woman to empower herself and encourage peace between both sex.

For the section on oral practice, the students may be asked to organize debates on issues concerning gender role. Debates can be made concerning the attitude of the major and minor characters of the novel. This is to make the class interesting and encourage speaking by inciting the opinion of the class. Generally, post-reading activities help the students to make interpretations of the text, to understand the narrative point of views and experiences. At the end of the lesson,, the teacher gives homework and tells the students to read chapter two and three and comment on Lily Broscoe’s role as a woman.

In Conclusion, a teacher must be a reflexive in teaching as this is very important in the success of a lesson. *To the Lighthouse* is used in this part of the work because it is fully embellished with issues that society experiences every day. This chapter has attempted a proposed pedagogy for the teaching of language through literature in a form four class. It focused on reading comprehension to develop students’ competence in scanning texts for details. Our analysis reveals that literary text provides a rich ground for interactive activities.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This work set out to examine the transmutation of the woman's role in Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse*. It showed a drift in the feminist ideals Virginia Woolf upheld in her writings, hence, making the text one of her most controversial novels. Drifts in feminist ideals have been the root cause of the emergence of different feminist waves and movements. The emergence of these different waves and movements was to provide solutions as concerns the woman's condition, role and status in society. However, these movements did not meet their objectives as concerns the woman's condition. Moreover, their methods in forging their quest rather marred their relationship with men. Thus, Virginia Woolf seems to propose transmutation as a strategy to improve on the woman's condition and, also gender and power relations.

This work examined the transmutation of roles from evolutionary and ideological perspectives. This study investigated if Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* portrays postfeminist tendencies such as the hybridization of the contemporary woman's role. Guided by several research questions, this study showed transmutation from an evolutionary perspective; ideological conflicts as outcome of transmutation in both women; and the creation of the New and Complex contemporary woman as the product of the merger of roles. It also examined the relevance postfeminist discourse in secondary schools and how the prose text can be taught in a language classroom.

Chapter One delineated the evolutionary transmutation in the role of the woman, from the prototype woman modeled by society, to the traditional and modern woman, through postfeminist theories. Here, the woman was seen one as undergoing significant changes which are different from the ideals prescribed by the society. These changes were evaluated taking into consideration the feminist considerations and representations in society and more especially in literary works of art from the traditional period and how these stereotyped representations drifted in modern/postmodern times. The chapter went further to show how Virginia Woolf embodies her two main characters under study; that is Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe, with transmutational tendencies and how they used these tendencies to empower themselves and create a convenient space for themselves in a society which placed constraints in the role of the woman.

This study went further to show how evolutionary transmutation in the role of the woman led to ideological conflict, which was the focus of Chapter Two. The analyses, done from a feminist and postfeminist perspective, showed that the traditional and the modern woman, represented in the novel by Mrs Ramsay and Lily Broscoe, transmutation also caused symbolic mutations in their lives. Taking note of the fact that the novel presents women of two different epochs, therefore, they have separate ways of regarding the woman's condition. Hence, separate notions of feminine ideals. The traditional woman's ideal of the woman is that who seeks for feminine values like marriage and motherhood and then use these values to empower herself in her domestic sphere. The modern/postmodern woman's ideal woman is far from the latter. Her ideals are radical and she soughts to free herself from societal constraints in the form of marriage and motherhood. Her ideal is that woman who has same opportunities in society as the man. In other words, she sees herself as an equal to the man. Hence, this chapter studied these women from separate angles, looking at the different strategies they used to improve on their conditions in a society which placed constraints in women.

As a synthesis of all what has been discussed in the previous chapters, Chapter Three examined the merging of roles; that is, retrieving old palatable traditional feminine values and merging them with modern feminine values leading to the creation of the New Woman. Here, we employed the postfeminist theory and postcolonial concept of hybridity to guide the arguments. As earlier mentioned in the preceding chapters, the cause of the emergence of so many feminist movements with different ideologies is because of the quest for ideal feminine values. Women have always been in quest for true values which actually valourises them. At the end of the novel, Virginia Woolf uses Lily Broscoe to create the New Woman. The New Woman becomes a symbol of many hybridities and complexities. As a hybrid, her purpose is to ensure a good relationship with her male counterparts to create a harmonious society. The chapter went further to show how the New Woman is adapted to contemporary society, drawing examples from significant feminine figures in the world.

Chapter Four, on its part, discussed the pedagogic relevance of postfeminist discourse in cameronian secondary schools and how Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* can be taught or be useful in a language classroom. The chapter discussed how the knowledge of transmutation of the woman's role can help improve the relationship in gender among young girls and boys. Moreover, using the Competence-Based Approach in teaching, it used a grammar point, gotten from an excerpt in the novel, to show how a literary work of art can

foster easier understanding of a language point and also encourage self-discovery of knowledge among students.

In the course of the analysis, this study made the following findings: it revealed that harmony in society can be brought about if men and women come to reason on the same flatter as equals who play complementary roles to each other. Through the transmutation of roles, the woman is able to ensure harmony in both the domestic and public sphere whereby domestic sphere potentials can be transferred to the public sphere. With this, she gains admiration from her male counterparts who then confide power in her, thereby, negotiating than fighting for power with the man. We also discovered out that transmutation of roles is a way of empowering the woman. It is a way to show that the woman makes use of her feminine values by merging both old and new ones to cultivate dynamic values in her. Furthermore, it also revealed that, postfeminism tries to resolve problems concerning gender power and gender relation, unlike other feminist movements have been seen as movements which caused turmoil between men and women mean while this two play complementary roles in society.

The significance of the work is based on the fact that many critics have exploited Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* in many feminist perspectives but this work examines the novel from a postfeminist angle, showing the contributions of feminist endeavours in the life of contemporary woman. It also shows the points in which the feminists failed in assuring a better life for woman since their objectives and quests always put them at logger-heads with men thereby greeting conflicts.

Finally, the work revealed that contemporary woman is a mixture of complexities. She is a hybrid that creates a link between the woman of the old times and of the woman of new times. She is a modern/postmodern woman who takes old patable feminine ways to give a unique touch to her personality. Many respectable women in society today are married women at the same time career woman. These above mentioned findings confirm the hypothesis that Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* portrays transmutational tendencies in the role of the woman. For further research, investigations can be carried out on other strategies used by women to curb problems of gender power and relations and also how androgynous perspectives in Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* can be used in understanding issues of gender differences.

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