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# Fantasy Woman: The Quest For Feminine Subjectivity In D.H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow*

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Fantasy Woman:  
The Quest for Feminine Subjectivity  
in D. H. Lawrence's The Rainbow

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In his article "The Phallus in D. H. Lawrence and Jacques Lacan," Ed Jewinski notes " Although Lacan and Lawrence differ on many points, they do share certain views about the 'phallus' and its relation to 'love'" (7). Jewinski, however, excludes The Rainbow from his discussion of Lawrence and Lacan, and in doing so, overlooks their similarities regarding Ursula Brangwen's developing feminine struggle for identity. Specifically, Lawrence's view of the inner and outer worlds in the novel parallels Lacan's Imaginary and Symbolic Orders. Further, as Ursula Brangwen emerges into the Symbolic Order, she fights an unquenchable desire to regain the subjective wholeness which she feels in the Imaginary and which she must release in order to successfully enter the Symbolic. The result of this insatiable desire is a repetitive cycle of symbolic castrations, which leave Ursula caught between Imaginary Order bliss and Symbolic subjectivity as she strives to define herself in The Rainbow.

Early within the novel, the infant Ursula is engulfed within a joyful fusion by her mother, "To Anna, the baby [is] a complete bliss and fulfillment...the child [is] everything. Her imagination [is] all occupied here. She [is] mother" (250). Ursula and Anna are encapsulated in a completed bond, which, in a Lacanian sense, is an Imaginary

Order existence, a "preverbal infantile stage of joyful fusion with the mother's body...[where] identity is inherently fluid, and strict boundaries between self and other have yet to be established" (Booker 36-37). Within this fluid relationship, Anna and Ursula are linked by the bonds of a completed identity. They exist in a separate world, set apart and secluded from the outer Symbolic Order, "the realm of language as representation," where identity is chiefly defined by the use of symbols as signification (37).

Entry into the Symbolic Order is marked by a castration, which, "for Lacan, is not a physical experience but a symbolic one, embodying the introduction to language and the acceptance of rules and regulations according to which society functions" (37). Separate from social relations, Anna and Ursula communicate without the confinement of linguistic laws through "the baby's crying and cooing" which rhythmically sound to Anna, who finds "it [is] enough to handle the new little limbs, the new little body, hear the voice crying in the stillness" (250). The infantile rhythms of the child place Anna and Ursula outside the linguistic realm of the Symbolic and within the Imaginary Order mother/child dyad of joyful fusion, inherently fluid identity, and boundless unity. This

fusion is soon broken by the intrusion of a third term, namely the father, or more precisely the Law of the Father.

While Ursula and Anna are submerged within their separate world of the Imaginary Order, Ursula's father, Will, is seen "waiting for the dread of these days to pass... for the child to become his... to look at him and answer him" (254). The importance of sight and voice becomes particularly important here in terms of a Lacanian analysis since "[Lacan] [adds] to the oral and anal drives [of Freud] the scopical and invocatory drives whose objects are the look and the voice)" (Rose 34). Will waits until "the newly-dawned eyes [look] at him, he [wants] them to perceive him, to recognize him. Then he [would be] verified.. It [begins] to be strong, to move vigorously and freely, to make sounds like words. It [is] a baby girl now" (254). "Ursula's child-identity is crystallized in an Oedipal moment of awakening through the father" where "she comes into her own as a visual and conscious little girl, the eldest and the first to mark herself off from sensory reality through the separating desire of the father," states Linda Ruth Williams (27). It is this stifling moment of outer consciousness that introduces Ursula to the phallic father, a figure of difference by

which she shall define herself, and from which she shall desire acceptance.

This epiphany of identity occurs during what Lacan calls the mirror stage, where "the infant begins to gain a sense of her own existence as a separate entity and to establish an awareness of the boundaries of her own body through its literal mirror image or through outside objects - notably mother" (Booker 36). As the child sets personal boundaries and identifies objects outside of itself through their difference, it begins to feel an anxiety of loss, believing it once possessed these objects in the prior fantasy of the mother/child dyad of wholeness. These objects of differentiation "function as symbols of primordial lack," causing the infant to become bound with a sense of loss to these objects (36). Thus, the subject's life "will involve a fundamental (and unquenchable) desire for these key lost objects" (36). Therefore, in her "first contact with a world outside the self, Ursula craves gratification and love from the father she adores and idolizes," but this desire is truly a search for the absent phallic power which is symbolized by the father absence (Chavis 19).

By viewing the father as different, Ursula objectifies herself as Other. It is this difference, the masculine

phallic signifier versus the feminine Other signified, that defines Ursula as a fantasy. In her introduction to Lacan in Feminine Sexuality, Jacqueline Rose notes, "As negative to the man [where man is identified with the phallus and woman is therefore without, or not man], woman becomes a total object of fantasy (or an object of total fantasy), elevated into the place of Other and made to stand for its truth" (50). Ursula then, becomes a verifying force for Will's power play with the child, while Will becomes the subjective truth with which Ursula compares herself.

Further, when the child answers Will by making "sounds like words" it immediately takes on gender identity as "a baby girl now" (254). Thus, Ursula's emergence into the Symbolic Order is brought about by the presence of her father, and the concepts of visual difference and linguistic acquisition. She identifies her father as male, and therefore true within the Symbolic Order, in turn classifying herself as female and false. This early relegation to the space of Other in opposition to her father precisely adheres to the Lacanian ideal where "The man places the woman at the basis of his fantasy, or constitutes fantasy through the woman" (Rose 47). Placed within her father's power structure, the child immediately "[knows] his strong hands, it [exults] in his clasp,"



images which begin to identify the father as possessing the phallus' power and authority (254).

The acquisition of language, gender identity, and acknowledgement and acceptance "of the masculine authority and superiority" in the Symbolic Order is what Lacan deems castration (Booker 37). As Mitchell states, "the castration complex ends the boy's Oedipus complex (his love for his mother) and inaugurates for the girl the one that is specifically hers: she will transfer her object love to her father who seems to have the phallus and identify with her mother, who, to the girl's fury, does not" (7). This desire for the father and identification with the mother troubles the child Ursula who "[knows] its mother better, [wants] its mother more. But the brightest, sharpest little ecstasy [is] for the father" (254). After this moment of castration Will "[takes] Ursula for his own" (254). In doing so, Will becomes a symbol of power and authority within the male Symbolic Order, attempting to sever the child's former blissful union with her mother.

Replacing the child's attempts to stay in peaceful harmony with the mother, a "Demand, which language does not allow to be spoken and for which there are no words," Will's emergence into the child's psychic life promotes an uncontrollable desire (Lacan, Freudian 131). At this

moment, "the stage of part-object love has been outgrown and the little girl is now interested in her father 'as a whole.' Resentment against the mother thus corresponds to the Oedipal rivalry which has long been present, but which at last can express itself" (Lacan, Phallic 106). Ursula's desire for the father (which again does not necessarily mean the physical father) and rejection of the mother is quite evident in the text, "Still, she [sets] [toward] him like a quivering needle. All her life [is] directed by her own awareness of him, her wakefulness to his being, And she [is] against her mother" (263). Ursula is struggling with an Oedipal conflict as she becomes aware of the outer force of her father. If she is the quivering needle, then Will is undoubtedly the phallic magnet. It is important though to recognize that as she is polarized against her mother, Ursula is also rejecting the feminine identity which Anna, as matriarch, somewhat distorts. Thus, the girl no longer seeks her mother, and in some sense her own feminine self; rather, she begins her quest for the phallus, symbolized by her father.

In "The Meaning of the Phallus," Lacan sets forth to explain the difficult type of phallus/non-phallus relationship that Ursula is experiencing as she searches for her own identity when he states, "Paradoxical as this

formulation might seem, I would say that it is in order to be the phallus, that is to say, the signifier of the desire of the Other, that woman will reject an essential part of her femininity, notably all its attributes through masquerade" (84). Ursula then, leaves behind the feminine link to the matriarchal, Imaginary inner world of the household in order to pursue phallic being in the patriarchal garden of the Father. Jewinski elaborates on this mirror stage being as he notes, "If one thinks of a child contemplating its image in a mirror, one can understand how a child might imagine that a 'human being' 'is' or 'should be' like that image - an integrated, visible, unified person" (10). Though different, Will presents an outer-world unified being that Ursula believes is 'correct' as opposed to her incomplete self-image that is experiencing the loss of the unified mother/child dyad identity. In part, Ursula wishes to become the "different" phallic being that she sees outside of the house (a world which Anna originally states, "The outside, public life was less than nothing to her, really") and in her father and his world because, "It is for what [woman] is not that she expects to be desired as well as loved" (34; Lacan, Meaning 84). Thus, Ursula attempts to build her identity based on

a phallic myth, forgoing her own femininity as she falters in her father's footsteps.

When Ursula is around three years old, she joins her father as he works in his garden. Symbolically, this scene stresses Ursula's struggle for subjective wholeness through her desire for acceptance and correctness in her phallus-bearing father's world. Here, the richness of Lawrence's writing lends itself to closer analysis. Within the novel, as has begun to be evidenced already, there is a juxtaposition between the inner world of the mother's household, and the outer world of the father's garden, work shed, and church. Lawrence writes:

The house [is] a storm of movement... the children [are] healthy and turbulent... To Ursula, as she [grows] a little older, it [becomes] a nightmare... She [knows] as a child what it [is] to live amidst a storm of fecundity...and as a child she [is] against her mother, passionately against her mother, she [craves] for spirituality and stateliness. (309)

Growing older, Ursula begins to break from the healthy and turbulent movement of the mother, opting rather for the outside world of the father. As her focus turns from the inner demand to be with the mother, to her outer desire to

obtain the father, Ursula sees the home as unorganized "bedlam. Children dashed in and out... children were swarming on the sofa, were kicking in the piano parlour, pulling a book in two between them" (309). The description of the house can be seen as a reflection of an Imaginary Order union with the mother. The children run and play in a state of joy and bliss while mirroring their fantastical state, "the mother [flourishes] amid all of this" (309). With the focus here on fecundity, the children's kicking movements, and the presence of the rhythmical piano which is made "to sound like a beehive," the Brangwen household becomes more than a "matriarchy" (309, 250). The house becomes a symbol of the womb, of the Imaginary stage of "joyful union with the mother's body, where a blissful fusion with the mother and with the world in which the infant lives - an 'oceanic feeling'... where images and rhythms are the dominant means of perceiving the world" (Booker 35). This "oceanic feeling" mirrors the "swarming" movement of the children, as they "[are] rolling on the hearthrug, legs in air" (309). Further, the children are seen "pulling a book in two between them," tearing the Symbolic Order of language, destroying the words for their rhythms (309). Yet, Ursula awakens as a psychic character from this dream of unified identity and

rhythmic tranquility into the painful nightmare of split-being consciousness. Her emergence from this Imaginary life is marked by her desire to obtain the "correct" symbols of her father's outside world.

Once again, Ursula is drawn to her father, a symbol of the phallus and bearer of phallic law. To her, "he [is] all-powerful, the tower of strength which [rises] out of her sight" (257). Considered "often a pest in the house" of the Imaginary, Will [leaves], and [enters] the outer world of his garden (262). Will, as the bearer of the phallus within his garden, overlooked by the phallic tower of the church, becomes once again the metaphorical father whose laws and regulations must be set and followed. These rules are visible in the exacting method and order with which Will attempts to teach Ursula the laws of his world by planting potatoes in the garden.

Giving Ursula a few potatoes to plant in the manner he has shown her, Will allows her a limited taste of his phallic power. To Ursula, "The responsibility [excites] her like a string tying her up" (264). Ursula is not freed by the limited phallic potency allowed by her father, feeling instead bound by his restriction and orderly methods. Ursula feels "overcome by her responsibility," and "[stands] by with the painful terrified helplessness of

childhood" when her father authoritatively corrects her method of planting "stooping over potatoes, taking some out and rearranging others" into his specific order (264-265). Ursula "[wants] to do the thing," to assume the father's power and authority, "but [can] not" (265). Yet, as Chavis argues, "when [Ursula] is thwarted by the strong will and fierce temperament, her child's love becomes tainted with shades of hate" (19). Thus, "Her father very soon becomes a part of the 'outward malevolence' that Ursula believes is against her" (19). Aware of her own inability to succeed and define herself within the patriarchal structure that Chavis points towards, Ursula finds herself outside of the correct path even at this early stage of the novel.

After she is reprimanded, Ursula notes that her father "[has] another world from hers. [She stands] helplessly stranded on his world.. Her mouth [is] dumb and pathetic.. She [is] conscious of the great breach between them. She [knows] she [has] no power" (265). Facing castration, "which to a certain extent requires an acceptance of masculine authority and superiority," in the Symbolic Order, "an experience of loss and acceptance of a child's own limitations," Ursula, relegated as inadequate in Will's world, chooses to free herself from the Law of the Father which limits her freedom in the Symbolic Order (Booker 37).

She would not let her father "smash into her child's world destructively" as he does by imposing order on the natural fecundity of mother earth; rather, Ursula retreats back to the world of the house, and the Imaginary where "her mother [is] lenient, careless" and "the children [play] about as they would all day" (265). Though Ursula attempts to retreat back into this world of fluidic identity, she is only allowed partial access, feeling alienated from the playing children upon her re-submergence.

Ursula not only attempts to "recover the bliss of the preverbal Imaginary Order fusion" in the house, she also tries to transfer that bliss onto the outer world of her father's Symbolic Order garden (Booker 37). Within the garden, Ursula slips into a fantasy world, "if across the garden she saw the hedge had budded, and if she wanted these greeny-pink, tiny buds for bread and cheese, to play at tea party with, over she went for them" (265). As a result of this fantasy, Ursula disrupts her father's orderly garden, and breaks his law by leaving "zig-zagging lines of deep little foot-prints across his work" (266). Replacing his lines with zig-zags, and his work for her play, Ursula attempts to overturn her father's exterior laws with her interior exuberance.



The result of Ursula's actions is the symbolic "NO" of her father, who is "shocked" by her unlawfulness, unleashing his power and authority on her by calling her a "nuisance," feeling that "he [wants] to break her," and yelling "I'll break your obstinate little face" (265-266). During this reprimand, "the child [does] not alter in the least, until he [has] gone," at which time she retreats inside the house of the Imaginary where "she [creeps] under the parlor sofa, and [lies] clinched in the silent, hidden misery of childhood" (266). Faced with the "NO" of the Father, Ursula does not accept her incorrect state in the Symbolic; rather, she returns to the safety of her Imaginary existence, huddling in a fetal position for womb-like security. Soon after, she crawls out and goes "rather stiffly to play" where she "[cuts] off her childish soul from memory, so that the pain, and insult should not be real" (266). Ursula submerges herself into an inner Imaginary world "in resistance and denial to all that was outside her," denying the masculine authority represented by the Law of the Father (266).

Once again, Ursula's attempt to unify her identity and return to subjective wholeness within the Symbolic Order is seen as impossible. Further, she can no longer exist purely in the Imaginary Order because she desires both

phallic acceptance and, to some extent, the phallus itself. Despite the awkwardness of her structural position, through questing into the garden and by "admiring and imitating something outside the self, Ursula has begun the process of self-definition" (Chavis 19). Consequently, Ursula will continually be drawn out, as she is "consigned to a perpetual metonymic movement from one object of desire to another in search of a satisfaction that can never come" (Booker 37). The ever-present force of desire will guide Ursula in her search to satisfy a need for a completed identity, a need that can never be satisfied.

Ursula's quest to dispel the Imaginary world for Symbolic acceptance and adequacy is also seen in her adolescent fantasies toward her role in the male (phallic) world. Though she wishes to maintain the freedom of the Imaginary, Ursula views the womb-like existence of her mother's house not as a fantasy, like the other children, but rather as a "nightmare," and chooses to go to her bedroom where she "[locks] herself in to read" (309). Ursula rejects her mother's inner world of the Imaginary and is seen looking out toward the phallic world of her father as she "[gazes] across the churchyard at the little church" where "she, Ah she, would remain the lonely maid high up and isolated in the tower, polishing the terrible

shield, weaving it a covering with a true device, and waiting, waiting always high and remote" (309-310). Ursula identifies and maintains access to the inner, fantasy world of the Imaginary, and masquerades as feminine object, "weaving," in the phallic tower of the outer Symbolic Order where she desires to be rescued by the phallic knight. Ursula's weaving of the shield can also be read as her desire to mask her own true nature, tailoring herself as a useful tool to this fantasized phallic knight. Thus, Ursula immerses herself as Other in the phallic fantasy, and as so operates to affirm Will's power over her in the outer world.

It is through these Imaginary eyes, that Ursula misreads her potential for subjectivity and defines herself as opposite, weak, and paralyzed at the top of the male phallic tower. She becomes an object, elevated to the position of fantasy and defined by her usefulness to the phallic order. As Rose notes, "The absolute 'Otherness' of the woman, therefore serves to secure for the man his own self-knowledge and truth" (50). Ursula secretly serves the phallic order that elevates and confines her from wholeness by adhering to the role designed for her in its structure. Lost between desire for acceptance and completion, and incorrect identity, Ursula subjects herself in her own

dreams of self-freeing fantasy, an identity mask which Lacan believes "femininity takes refuge in" (Meaning 85).

Yet, at the same time, Ursula refuses to submit to the phallic order, not desiring to be part of the church congregation, or to submit to the structure and serve the Law of the Father, or Word of God, as Will does. Will's attitude is one of "devotion to the church. It [is] the church building he [cares] for... to keep the church fabric and the church ritual intact [is] his business... to make the form of service complete" (251). Ursula, on the other hand, desires to be an object of male desire atop the phallic structure, the "lonely maid high and isolated in the tower" (310). Ursula can not realistically achieve this position in the Symbolic Order, for she can not blend her masquerade as the object of male desire with her need to retain the freedom of the Imaginary. Still, it is her desire to combine her Imaginary identity with her need for and acceptance by the phallus, the power and authority of the Symbolic Order, to break beyond the phallus and phallic gender roles, which represents fulfillment to Ursula since she believes it will restore her sense of subjective wholeness. Ursula's quest continues later in the novel as she embarks on her career as a schoolteacher, as an attempt to answer the call of her desire.

Like Will's garden, the schoolhouse in the chapter "A Man's World" can be read as a metaphor for Lacan's Symbolic Order, promulgating the Law of the Father. When Ursula enters the school, she finds that "the whole place [seems] to have a threatening expression, imitating the church's architecture, for the purpose of domineering, like a gesture of vulgar authority" (418). With this description, Ursula deems the school as a part of the authoritarian Symbolic, finding "the reality all outside of herself" and stating that "in the school it [is] power, and power alone that [matters]" (422, 426). While within her idealistic fantasy, Ursula can maneuver within her altered image of the church; however, "Ursula soon realizes, once she begins teaching, that idealism alone is deceptively fragile, providing no protection from the painfully concrete, dehumanizing school" (Templeton 142). Once again, Ursula must weave a shield to protect her inner-being from the cruel outside world, "and the only shield available is the indomitability of will which characterizes her colleagues and the educational system in general" (142). The headmaster, Mr. Harby, as the Symbolic father and upholder of the Law of the Father within this educational system, becomes the embodiment of patriarchy. Harby "[stands] like a wheel to make absolute his authority over the herd. That

different, she still desires both to be accepted in this patriarchal society and to break against the phallus in search of her own feminine identity (142-3).

Like her father's orderly garden seedbeds, Harby's school is overwhelmingly orderly, and Ursula finds herself "incompetent" as "Mr. Harby [comes] down every now and then to her class to see how she was doing" (426). Just as she felt "she had no power" and "could not do [work] as [her father] did," standing by "with the painful terrified helplessness of childhood" in her father's garden, Ursula "[feels] so incompetent as he [Harby] stood by, bullying and threatening" (264-265, 426). Although she feels incompetent and knows that her "class [belongs] to him," she refuses to subordinate herself to his authority, "She would not yet, however, let the school quite overcome her" (426, 433). Here it is important to remember Ursula's childhood dream of becoming "the lonely maid high up and isolated in the tower," because it is this dream of acceptance for which she is still striving (310). Ursula does not wish to become subjugated to the rules and regulations set by the phallic signifying Harby; rather, she wishes to gain his acceptance, willing to masquerade as an object, but at the same time, desiring subjective freedom.

[seems] to be his one reason in life, to hold blind authority over the school. His teachers [are] his subjects as much as the scholars" (427). Subjected to Harby's authority, the teachers and students within the school are objectified by the headmaster. It is through them that Harby measures his worth, and upon them that he enforces the law.

Maggie Schofield notes, Harby is "not bad as long as you keep in with him, and refer to him, and do everything in his way" (431). In other words, Harby's school functions as the Symbolic Order of society, where children are introduced to language, and students and teachers alike must show an acceptance of social rules and regulations. Harby's continual confinement of the students and teachers displays his phallic power and promotes a castration complex which "can only be understood in terms of this reference to prohibition and the law" (Rose 40). Thus, Ursula identifies Harby as a "fixed authority," whose soul purpose is the "application of a system of laws," and sets "herself in passive antagonism toward" him (432-433). This passive antagonism displays Ursula's confusion toward the phallic structure of the exterior world. Though, as Templeton notes, "Ursula has attained a sense of self, of reference to society" since she identifies herself as

The quest to become a signifying subject is seen as "She [dreams] that she would make the little, ugly children love her... she would be the gleaming sun of the school, the children would blossom like little weeds, the teachers like tall, hard plants would burst into rare flower" (416). The image of the sun/flower here evokes the relationship between Ursula and her father where, "She [is] the little blossom, he [is] the sun" (255). The phallic desire to beam down upon the teachers and children of the school, dictating their growth through her enlightenment of them shows Ursula's need for a heightened sense of phallic power. However, this fantasy also displays a seemingly delusional desire to overpower the patriarchal structure of the school, replacing the forceful order of her father's rules and Harby's orderly system with a free-floating, matriarchal garden of blossoming flowers. Once again, Ursula is unsuccessfully attempting to combine Imaginary Order dreams of blissful wholeness with the inevitable phallic desire to fulfill the loss which Symbolic Order experience necessitates.

Within the school Ursula is granted access to a limited phallic position of authority in the Symbolic world. As she enters her classroom she describes the school as a "new world, a new life with which she [is]



threatened" (421). Ursula then takes her place in the phallic tower of her dreams as "she [climbs] into her chair at her teacher's desk. It [is] high and her feet [can] not reach the ground... Lifted up there off the ground, she [is] in office" (421). However, unlike her damsel in distress dream, she is not "the lonely maid" who sits whimsically waiting for her rescue from a powerful and chivalrous knight; rather, she is constantly reminded of the harsh male superiority surrounding her, cut off from her Imaginary fantasy by the unromantic voice of Mr. Blunt, always "hard, high... inhuman," and the terrifying "fixed authority of Mr. Harby" (310, 426, 433).

Whereas in her fantasy, Ursula's savior bears the phallus, in the patriarchal reality it is her father and Harby that wield their subjugating phallic power as a means to stifle, not to set free her confined identity. Also, Ursula's desire to be "polishing the terrible shield, weaving it a covering," can be read as a statement toward a contradictory wish for acceptance in the phallic structure, and her willingness to masquerade in her phallic fantasy (310). It is not enough for Ursula to take the position of authority, because as she states, "she never [knows] what to do" with it (425). Even when "she [starts] a lesson,

she [does] not know how to go on with it," as if the lesson and her role within the school were a lie, a mask (425).

As before in her father's garden, Ursula finds herself helpless and powerless, teetering on the edge of failure which would force her to "admit that the man's world [is] too strong for her, she [can] not take her place in it; she must go down before Mr. Harby" (441). Like the crushing reality of Will's "NO" when Ursula plays rather than works in his garden, the reprimands of Mr. Harby's enclosing eye denies Ursula the Imaginary shelter for which she seeks. Within the school, there is no safe haven, no couch to crawl under, nor matriarchy in which to hide. Ursula realizes that "her life she must go on, never having freed herself of the man's world, never having achieved freedom of the great world of responsible work" (441). Yet, she struggles on, denying both the Imaginary pull of her home and the Symbolic hold of the outside world. It is precisely this battle, the struggle for subjective identity, that Ursula finds inescapable in "A Man's World."

As her time moves on at the schoolhouse, Ursula "always [sees] herself beyond that place" (434). Still, she possesses the knowledge of its existence, "It [is] no matter how she [says] to herself that the school [exists]

no more once she had left it, it existed. It [is] within her like a dark weight controlling her existence" (434). After her emergence into the Symbolic, social world, Ursula is unable to escape the reality of the confining structures surrounding her, or retreat to the Imaginary realm of home because of her desire for knowledge, making her "very life... a test" (435). Yet, she knows "she [is] incapable of fulfilling her task," of quenching her desire to assume the phallus and subjective wholeness (434).

Ursula, helpless in this Symbolic world, "[can] not keep order. Her class [is] a turbulent crowd, and the weak spot in the school's work. Therefore she must go and someone more useful must come in her place, someone who would keep discipline" (441). Ursula's classroom here resembles the turbulent Imaginary, womb-like house of the Brangwen family. As her father reacts strongly to her "zig-zagging" footprints in his neatly sowed seedbed, Harby "falls into a passion of rage" after viewing her classes composition books which "[have] grown more and more untidy, disorderly and filthy" (442). Unable to enforce the rules of linguistic signification upon the children, an act which reaffirms their existence in the linguistic Symbolic Order, Ursula allows her children to express themselves in an

unorganized, haphazard way that recalls the matriarchal disorder of the Brangwen household.

As a result of this defiance to the school's regulations, and the opposition to the letter bearing phallic order, Mr. Hardy "[canes] the worst offenders well" to reassert his order and authority on the class, and begins "blindly, thoroughly, moving in strong instinct of opposition, he [sets] to work to expel her" (442, 441). Once again, Ursula has shown her inability to become a signifier of phallic power and her pension to reside as the signified in opposition to the phallus. Yet, as Harby seeks her expulsion from the Symbolic school, Ursula decides to fight for her social existence, and in doing so attempts to transgress the phallus.

When Ursula is confronted in class by the child Williams who "[tickles] the children with him into ridiculing his teacher, or indeed, any authority of which he [is] not afraid," she attempts to define herself as superior in the Symbolic classroom (448). After several ineffective attempts at the phallic "NO," Ursula "[advances] on him, [seizes] him by the arm, and [drags] him from his seat... [snatches] her cane from her desk, and [brings] it down on him... [bringing] down the cane again and again," until "he [sinks] with a howling yell on the floor,

and like a beaten beast [lies] there yelling" (448-449). As Harby comes to investigate the outbreak, he stands "choked with rage and helplessness... robbed of movement or speech" (449). Ursula effectively castrates both the children and Mr. Harby by acting as a signifier of phallic power. The children who were once a turbulent crowd, now sit in "dead silence," robbed of their ridiculing voices by the powerful phallic beating they have just witnessed (449). Meanwhile, Harby is both speechless and powerless in the midst of this feminine revolution.

Usurped of the phallic power that the structure of the school has endowed upon him, Harby is now subjected to the physical and symbolic phallic cane with which he was once authorized. Further, Ursula seems to replace Harby as the phallic signifier in the eyes of the children who once again belong to her, gazing on her "in an attentive, expressionless stare" (449). Again, vision and linguistic acquisition become significant as the children are both silenced and mesmerized by the authoritative display of Ursula's physical phallic "NO." As she reflects on the incident, she finds that "something [has] broken in her; she [has] passed a crisis. Williams [was] beaten at a cost" (451). This cost, ironically, is Ursula's own castration.

As Templeton states, Ursula is truly caught between two worlds here, "The more she recalls her childhood, the less capable she is in the present, and yet the more she refutes the imaginative element of aspiration, the more susceptible she becomes to the tenets and methods of authoritarianism" (145). Therefore, utilizing the power and authority of the male phallus, Ursula again accepts the Symbolic as true and correct, further severing her link to the Imaginary Order of the Brangwen house, and submitting herself to the power relations of the patriarchal schoolhouse. Thus, Ursula is again caught between inner and outer worlds, "She [does] not know why she was going home. There [is] nothing there for her. There [is] nobody she could speak to, nowhere to go for escape" (451). As seen previously in her father's garden, Ursula's grasp for phallic being forfeits her feminine identity.

Further, her existence now depends on the school, and the Symbolic Order "that [will] destroy her, and with which she [is] at war. It [has] to be so" (451). The realization that something has broken inside of herself forces Ursula into an identity war in which she is "Isolated now from her childhood, a foreigner in an new life" (451). Ursula depends on a world to which she does not truly belong, and in which she is identified as false.

She is now in the "hands of some bigger, stronger, courser will," an image which recalls her original introduction to her father, Will, where "already she new his strong hands...exulted in his strong clasp" (451, 254). This courser will is the social equivalent to the struggling woman Ursula, as Will's garden is to the infant Ursula. As in this passage with her father, Ursula is deemed as the Other, the "support of male fantasy" who "is made to stand for its truth" (Rose 50). Thus, Ursula's defiance to the very system in which she masquerades as Other submerses her further into the endless chase of subjective desire.

After the castration of Harby, and the caning of Williams, Ursula exists where "nothing [can] touch her now: she [is] beyond Mr. Harby. She [is] if violated to death" (449). At this time, Ursula may break beyond the phallus into the Real Order "which is concerned with the fundamental and emotionally powerful experiences such as death and sexuality" (Booker 35). As Sheridan states, the Real "stands for what is neither symbolic nor imaginary... the foreclosed element which may be approached, but never grasped" (ix-x). When Ursula snatches the phallus from Harby she is relegated to a place outside of the "dialectic [of imaginary and symbolic] to which [woman] is constantly rejected" (Rose 51). This moment, which is not quite a

phallic pleasure and not entirely social exclusion, may be best described a *jouissance*, a "something more" that "goes beyond" the structure of phallic being (51).

Lacan notes, "There is this *jouissance*.. a *jouissance* of the body which is, if the expression be allowed, beyond the *phallus*" (GOD 145). The caution and at times difficulty of Lacan's attempt to define the concept of *jouissance* itself speaks to the essence of *beyond*, as it is in many ways beyond definition. Alan Sheridan's translator's note to Ecritis hints that "Enjoyment conveys the sense, contained in *jouissance*," and points to the close relation of the French *Jouir*, slang for 'to come' (x). Thus, the term may best be described as a life force, an essence that is beyond which surfaces in fleeting moments of individual ecstasy.

While Ursula breaks against the phallic system containing her, it is *jouissance*, a *jouissance* of the feminine body, which provides her never-neverland escape. While the Real "stands for what is neither symbolic or imaginary, and remains foreclosed from the analytic experience," in essence beyond speech, the language of feminine *jouissance* may be a vehicle for its partial ascertainment (ix). Yet, since the Real is "available to consciousness only in extremely brief and fleeting



moments," she does not obtain the phallus, its acceptance, or the subjective wholeness that she seeks (Booker 35). Though Ursula can not maintain her Real world experience, "the alienation" of self and "actualization of ideals" that result from this encounter further solidify Ursula's formerly fragile self-image, as she hardens through her encounters to all those that oppose her (Templeton 144). Thus, as Ursula returns to the Symbolic, to teaching, and to the lifelong fight and unquenchable quest of fulfilling her desire, she "defines her role within the system as both a responsible one," in terms of her limited place in the phallic system, and "a subversive one" as a defiant Other (146).

Following her confrontation with Harby, Ursula relinquishes her desire to find her own feminine identity by attempting to submit to the patriarchal structure through the confinement of marriage. This feminine identity is not merely a Freudian assertion of a subject opposite to maleness, since Lacanian analysis in many ways a de-gendering theory; rather, as Diane Richard-Allerdyce insists, "it is a way of being that goes beyond the images of unity on which ego forms are based" (198). Richard-Allerdyce further explains that the "feminine" is "that perspective or mode that recognizes the fictional and

illusory nature of identification with that image and goes beyond it even while acknowledging its necessity in providing access to the Symbolic Order of culture and language" (199). This perspective of the "feminine" is found in the final chapter of the Rainbow as Ursula struggles to define her place within patriarchal society and desires to break beyond that very structure. Still reeling from the identity slippage experienced in "A Man's World," Ursula attempts to forfeit her desire for wholeness by subjugating herself to the confining establishment of marriage.

Engaged and awaiting her marriage to Anton Skrebensky, Ursula finds herself struggling between the confines of her approaching nuptial and the freedom of a searching self. She returns to London to take a teaching examination when she is hit with a realization, "Those quiet residential squares of London [make] a great impression on her mind. They [are] very complete. Her mind [seems] imprisoned by their quietness. Who [is] going to liberate her?" (518). Ursula, amidst the silencing gridlock of her social surroundings, is aware of the quiet imprisonment of social completion. She seems to desire the completeness of those tidy streets and an end to her stirrings, but is also

repelled by the confinement of this enclosed circle of completion.

This fear of imprisonment and desire for completion is quite evident when Ursula tells Anton, "I don't think I want to be married" as her "troubled, puzzled eyes [rest] on his a moment and then [travel] away" (518). Perhaps aware of the completing nature of marriage, Ursula realizes that her liberation cannot exist in relation to Anton, furthering her assault on his wishes for union by stating, "I mean never," the words coming "out of some far self which spoke for once beyond her" (518). Within the marriage of Anton's dreams, Ursula is a mere completion of his maleness. As Will and Harby have shown in previous stages of Ursula's desiring quest, she is intended to be the signified Other to their correct signifying selves. In that, Ursula is the blank figure to which the phallus bearing signifiers project their image of The Woman onto her Other. Thus, Ursula is intended to masquerade as an artistic creation of male completion in order to affirm and define her projectors' power and authority.

Here it is important to recall Ursula's childhood and the wooden doll that her father carved out so neatly for her, "It [is] he who would swing her up to the table or would make for her a doll out of an old table leg, whilst

she [watches] him saying: "Make her eyes, Daddy, make her eyes!" (256). As Will forms the wooden doll into the masculine version of female, Ursula stresses the importance of his creation's vision. The implication of Will's optic creation is that without his direction/manipulation, the doll, and by extension Ursula, will not know how to see.

Yet, Anton is unable to manipulate Ursula into seeing correctly or mirroring completely. As T. H. Adamowski insightfully states, "All he sees, all he knows, is her alien being, her otherness, for he is on the plane of reflection" (70). This is precisely why Anton hears Ursula's marriage denouncement, "and his manhood [is] cruelly, coldly defaced" (519). More than mere defeat, the defacing of Anton speaks volumes to the disruption of his own desire for completed identity through the vehicle of the Other. Whereas he desires control over Ursula, and thus by extension his own identity, Anton "[can] not gain control over his face" after the non-completion of Ursula's apparent rejection (519). As Will and Harby have so poignantly found, Anton is victimized by an Other who defines herself not through their wishes, but through her desire, the voice which speaks out beyond herself. This voice is the unseen feminine identity that will not be silenced or "[displaced.. onto a social plane, that of

marriage" (Adamowski 70). Further, though it is still unknown to the character Ursula, it is this voice, her voice, that will be the answer to her previously asked question of liberation.

Despite the emergence of this voice, Ursula is still caught within a confining patriarchal system. Her relationship with Anton lingers, and she is informed that she "failed her examinations: she had gone down: she had not taken her degree. It [is] a blow to her. It [hardens] her soul" (526). Chavis suggests that college "is a Mecca for Ursula where petty, mundane concerns and materialistic obsessions dissolve" (21). Chavis also reveals that "although Ursula's hope for college is idealistically based, a college education for her also represents the opportunity for independence and equality in a male-dominated world" (21). Though Ursula still dreams of incorporating her childhood fantasies of freedom with her cold material experience in a "social independence" and "pure, almost mystical knowledge of life," she is unable to obtain this "desire for separateness of self" through such conventional means as subscribing to a collegiate social structure that in reality bears no true relation to the ideal "Mecca" of her false dreams (21).

The failing of her scholastic examination, therefore announces that "her college career [is] over," and denounces her idealistic fantasies of escape and separation (526). The result allows Ursula two options, "There remained for her now to marry or to work" (526). Each option, marriage and work, are a means of confining and silencing the hidden voice within her that is attempting to break beyond. Even the prospect of India, where lieutenant Skrebensky is due to report, is tainted. Though "India [tempts] her - the strange, strange land," the exciting possibility of its exotic social escape is clouded with "the thought of Calcutta, or Bombay, or of Simla, and of the European population" which make "India no more attractive to her than Nottingham" (526). Surrounded by inescapable social settings, Ursula must submit. Whether she choose marriage or work as a form of submission is relatively meaningless, she must go down to the regulations of the silencing social forces at work about her.

As Ursula is quieted through the hopelessness of her situation, Anton feels "He [is] almost sure of Ursula now. She [seems] to have given in. And he [seems] to become again an important, self-assured man" (528). Almost knowing her, dominating her, gives Anton the security that he needs to become convinced of his own identity.

Skrebensky again wishes Ursula to coexist with him here as Other, since "The absolute 'Otherness' of the woman... serves to secure for the man his own self-knowledge and truth" (Rose 50). It is as if Ursula's failure in the University world assures Anton of his own importance as he tells her, "It doesn't matter... What are the odds, whether you are a Bachelor of Arts or not, according to London University? All you know, you know, and if you are Mrs. Skrebensky, the B.A. is meaningless" (526). Thus, it is Anton who is signifying the power of the Father, and it is the acceptance of his name, the name of the Father, that will denounce her attempts at personal achievement as without meaning in his world.

Within this mindset, Ursula momentarily gives in to Anton, fulfilling his ideal by letting him dominate her physically, "She [lets] him take her, and he [seems] mad, mad with excited passion" (529). While Anton finds satisfaction in the sexual conquest of her, "almost savagely satisfied" and "revenged," Ursula "[lies] afterwards on the cold, soft sand, looking up at the blotted, faintly luminous sky," feeling "that she [is] as cold now as she had been before" (529). For Anton, the sexual act is one of authoritarian dominance that allows him to feel "revenged" against the mystic Other who so

often has escaped his definitions. Ursula, however, is illuminated not by the sexual union of her grasping partner, but rather by the remote luminous body of the maternal moon. It is the moon, which is "behind clouds, shedding a diffused light, gleaming down now and again in bits of smoky mother-of-pearl," that Ursula strives to mirror, not Anton (528). As she once desired to be the sun, a bizarre phallic mother, casting its nourishing rays down upon Harby's daylight school, Ursula is now the a maternal body of the night whose brilliance stands out in a deadened sky. During Anton's dominance of her, however, the moon too is subdued, blotted out. As she falls into the masquerade of the Other under Anton's savage yearnings, her own cosmic Other is distant and faded, destroyed by the rejection of herself that her act of submission necessitates.

Again, Ursula fights this submission, attempting to let out an inner-voice that comes in fleeting moments like the moonlight through the clouded night sky. While the moon is blotted out during Anton's physical domination of Ursula, it rages when she dominates him during a moonlight evening as their wedding approaches. Confined by the thought of their approaching marriage and the social setting of their vacation bungalow on the Lincolnshire



coast, Ursula begins to feel "a yearning for something unknown... a passion for something she knew not what" (530). While Skrebenski "[takes] his part very well with the rest," Ursula is "not used to these homogenous crowds. She [is] afraid. She [feels] very different from the rest of them" (548). Though Ursula feels her difference sets her apart from the others at the resort, she is "allowed a great deal of freedom and [is] treated with a good deal of respect, as a girl on the eve of her marriage, about to depart for another continent" (530). Despite the freedom allocated to the Other Ursula in this patriarchal paradise, she is granted personal vision through difference and understands the limited freedom available within all social constructs, including her impending marriage.

Ursula's inner yearning for some unknown pleasure is a *jouissance* reaction to the confining Symbolic system about her. Ursula is unaware of the origin of this stifled yearning since it "is a *jouissance* proper to her and of which she herself may know nothing, except that she experiences it - that much she does know" (Lacan, GOD 145). Ursula's identity, the item different from the mirror images that surround her, disallows her social disillusionment of the masquerade and promotes an inner-voice that is previously denied by her authoritarian

environment. This voice erupts as she leaves the others of the ordered bungalow town, escaping into the seashore night with Anton.

Stepping out onto the whitewashed sands of the seashore, Ursula and Anton are confronted by the "great whiteness" of the moon "incandescent as a round furnace door, out of which [comes] the high blast of the moonlight, over the seaward half of the world, a dazzling, terrifying, glare of white light" (531). Leaving behind the socialized bungalow world, Ursula enters into a frightening province of her own. Beyond the Imaginary escape of her childhood, and far from the confines of her restricted Symbolic social existence, Ursula experiences an authoritative epiphany of *jouissance* power that functions "beyond the pleasure principle" in the realm of the Real Order (Sheridan x). Attracted to the pull of the sky-bound maternal body like the fluid sea below her, Ursula "[seems] to melt into the glare, towards the moon," while Anton feels "himself melting down to nothingness, like a bead that rapidly disappears in an incandescent flame" (531). As the moon shimmers its gleam down onto her, it is Ursula who projects her own timid identity into her cosmic Other, the moon, by going "forward, plunging into it" (531). Coming from Skrebensky's bungalow world, where he stays "among the

others, till evening came, and he [then takes] her for himself," Ursula now embraces her own phallic mother nature as she "[gives] her breast to the moon, her belly to the flashing, heavy water" (531). As the phallic mother, Ursula identifies with the fluid identity of the Imaginary mother/child dyad and is empowered with an authority all her own. Ursula immerses herself within this mystic moment until she is one with both the maternal moon and sea, feeling the severed bond of the lost mother/child dyad within herself fulfilled in the unsevered gravitational pull between the moon and the sea.

Yet, unlike Ursula, Anton is relegated to a submissive position standing "behind, encompassed, a shadow ever dissolving" (531). As Adamowski notes, "It is Ursula's rapport with her sister in the sky that causes Anton to disappear," as Ursula is transfigured beyond his physical grasp and deemed altered within his potentially objectifying vision (70). While Ursula is false and a mere tool of completion for Anton in his Symbolic social settings, he is a victim to her powerful and devouring unveiled celestial identity. Within the feminized moonlight scene, Anton is deemed outside of the blissful union that Ursula flourishes in, and is termed false and

powerless within the glimmer of the moonlight and the grasp of Ursula.

Within this lunar washing, Ursula is no longer silenced, and again speaks to a place beyond, "I want to go," she [cries], in an strong, dominant voice. "I want to go" (531). Ursula is overcome with this oceanic feeling and wishes to break beyond, "to go," but she does not know to where her journey will take her. Once again, "Ursula reaches self-definition not only through her widening range of experiences but also by constant transcending of each experience, a constant rejection of and separation from what is not herself" (Brown 286). Thus, Anton is secluded from Ursula by his inability to overpower her self-definition and her unwillingness to masquerade for his completion. Therefore Anton "[sees] the moonlight on her face, so she [is] like metal, he [hears] her ringing, metallic voice, like the voice of a harpy," and is frightened by the sheer power with which she speaks, feeling revolted by the monstrous shape of her de-Othered subjective self (531).

As Ursula "[prowls], ranging on the edge of the water like a possessed creature," Anton follows helpless and partially mesmerized by the unveiled feminine creature whose own subjectivity necessitates his relegation to the place of

the Other. Lost for words, Anton is enclosed by Ursula as she "[seizes] hold of his arm, [holds] him fast, as if captive, and [walks] him a little way by the edge of the dazzling, dazing water" (532). The bound state of Anton here recalls the child Ursula's capture within the strong hands of her father and her presence within his world that tied her up like a string. Anton is transformed from captor to captured through Ursula's own inner-embrace. He is left powerless and speechless like Harby after Williams' caning, and is lead by the unknown creature before him like a little boy by his mother.

Yet, if Ursula is the mother, she is a devouring mother since:

she [clinches] hold of him, hard, as if suddenly she [has] the strength of destruction, she [fastens] her arms around him and [tightens] her grip, whilst her mouth [seeks] his hard, rending, ever-increasing kiss, till his body [is] powerless in her grip, his heart [melts] in fear from the fierce, beaked harpy's kiss. (532)

Prowling, capturing, and dominating, Ursula reverses Anton's prior physical domination of her as she sinks her talon-like grip into his soon flaccid body. While Anton literally goes limp under her authoritative clutches,

Ursula is seen with a phallic-like power, smothering him with her rigid beak. Further than overpowering Anton with a kiss, Ursula as feminine creature steals Anton's ability to speak, adding his linguistic removal from Symbolic society to his social geographic loss.

It is Ursula who chooses the location of their sexual union this time around stating, "No, here," and "going out to the slope full under the moonshine" (532). Though Anton attempts to cover her as in the previous scene, Ursula is now in control of her masking as she "[holds] him down at the chest, awful" (532). As he attempts to quite literally dominate both on and in her, it is Ursula who "[seems] to be pressing in her beaked mouth till she [has] the heart of him" (532). While Ursula lies "motionless, with wide-opened eyes looking at the moon," Anton is the active body caught in "The fight, the struggle for consummation" which "[is] terrible" (532). Yet, rather than participate in the union of consummation, Ursula consumes Anton, forcing him to "[succumb,] till he [gives] way as if dead" (532). Ursula's dominance in this scene is both a castration of Anton, stealing his power and very heart of being, and a rending of him backwards into an Imaginary Order existence. As Adamowski suggests, "The imagery of castration is perfectly appropriate here," but it may also be said that

"Anton has castrated himself, or that having abandoned his body to an ego, he deserves what he gets from the passion of a woman who can find no boundary against which to measure herself" (70). Without Anton's 'correct' phallic signification and beyond social structures, Ursula is not deemed false through difference; rather, she erupts in a self-fulfilling show of independent power.

In her dominant submission, Ursula metallically clamors the phallic "NO" to Anton, a rigidity that must not be confused with frigidity. The coldness within her is not emblematic of a lifeless woman; rather it is the harsh, misunderstood passion of an independent being which rigidly denies the position of projected Other. For Anton, the formerly self-assured subject who "took [Ursula] for himself" as a means of verifying his own identity and correctness, the severance from his mirror maiden is a symbolic death of his own image (530). Cut from his means of phallic verification, Anton is expelled into self-doubt as "he [draws] gradually away as if afraid" (533).

Attempting to escape the cruel reality of Ursula's ever-emerging feminine identity, Anton flees the now true permanence of her "eternal face" till he "[curls] in the deepest darkness he could find, under the sea-grass, and [lies] there without consciousness" (533). Like the child

Ursula fleeing her father's wrathful garden rules by hiding in beneath the darkened, Imaginary safety of her mother's couch, Anton assumes the fetal position in the darkness near the fluid sea after he is so coldly rejected from Ursula's seemingly powerful otherworld existence. Anton is thus powerless and false within, and rejected by, the feminine world of Ursula's moon-charged identity.

Ursula destroys Skrebensky not through action, signification, or objectification; rather, she demolishes his identity through mere rigid, solid existence. Unlike the false, puppet form of herself that relies on the dance of the Other to satisfy the phallic world, Ursula functions as an independent, Real being, momentarily outside the reach of the Symbolic. The apparent permanence of this metallic soul threatens Anton's very existence. As a result, Anton in turn seeks to destroy Ursula.

In "D. H. Lawrence and the Devouring Mother," Judith Ruderman argues, "that the child's fear of being destroyed by the mother leads to a rage to destroy her - to commit matricide" (21). Childlike in his stance, Anton shows an inner desire to regain control over Ursula. As Ursula operates as a perverted type of phallic mother, Anton revels himself as an infuriated child who seeks her destruction. Though here the mother/child battle is a



symbolic one, Ruderman notes that "Although acts of matricide are uncommon, a person has access to equivalents of matricide that unleash hostility while keeping the actual wish repressed" (21). Usurped of his power by the phallic mother Ursula, Anton re-salvages his correctness by her visual expulsion, "When she [is] out of sight a great relief [comes] over him, a pleasant banality. In an instant everything [is] obliterated. He [is] childishly amiable and companionable all the day long" (534). Removed from his field of vision, Ursula is no longer the defiant Other who refuses to reflect Anton's version of The Woman; rather, she is expelled, like a creature exorcised from his daily social routines.

This type of visual warfare goes beyond the "more conventional expression of visual exchange" that Earl Ingersoll believes exists in the Rainbow and into the "more intricate expressions of looking" he finds exist in Women in Love (269). The visual play here moves beyond mere definition and into creation, confinement, and finally obliteration. Thus, once Anton frees his gaze from this unknown feminine creature, he "never [thinks] of her, not once, he [gives] her no sign" (535). Formerly subjected within the patriarchal structure of the Symbolic, Ursula now no longer exists within the phallic pattern as the

signified. Through the lack of Anton's signification towards Ursula, he has at once removed her from his life as well as from the power structure proper. Without sight, thought, or sign, Anton destroys Ursula in a symbolic matricide of revenge. In doing so, he allows himself the opportunity to re-establish his self-assured projection back onto the world.

Searching for an Other that will help him solidify his correctness, Anton "[turns] to immediate things. He [wants] to marry quickly, to screen himself from the darkness" (535). He decides, "He would marry his Colonel's daughter" and "Quickly, without hesitation, pursued by his obsession for activity, he [writes] to this girl" (535). Looking for a mirror image that will reflect his desires, Anton chooses a Colonel's daughter, who surely knows the significance of a regulated and lawful life, for his wife. His choice to write strengthens his tie to the linguistic Symbolic world, as his desire for a correct completion weighs heavily in the balance, "He would not be happy until he had a reply" (535). Upon her reply to his letter, "Anton [goes] down to her at once, and [proposes] to her the first evening. He [is] accepted" (535). The quickness of the young woman's reply, and her ready acceptance of Anton, demonstrate her willingness to complete Skrebensky's

search for a blank page Other on which to signify his phallic power. Seeking to heal the identity wounds left by Ursula's defiance and dismissal of this power, Anton seeks the immediate consummation of marriage, a social construct of completion. With his identity secured by a new masquerading bride, Anton flees for India, leaving a dangerous, but uninformed Ursula far from his reaffirmed self.

In the final chapter of The Rainbow, Ursula is caught within the grasp of a mis-recognition. This false state of being is at the crux of her problem and will shortly be considered in relation to Elizabeth M. Fox's view of a delusional and forfeited feminine identity at novel's end in "Closure and Foreclosure in The Rainbow." Throughout Ursula's painful search for her own identity, which Fox herself calls a "female quest," she is continually ruled as Other and termed as false. While oscillating between Skrebesky's cruel, hard, social world and her own inner individuality, Ursula is quite often deemed a falsification of her own being. Yet, it becomes clear that she is only false in the terms of her classifying social surroundings.

Within the social constructs of the Symbolic world that Skrebensky signifies, Ursula is offered two identities: the whore or the wife. Ursula is neither the

In "D. H. Lawrence and the Phallic Imagination," Peter Balbert argues that feminist criticism, "fails to convey the poignant drama and the doctoral principles that the novelist uses to highlight the sexual magnetism of the earlier Brangwen women" (58). Balbert, feels that despite the fact that the power of these women "is certainly confined to a domestic and maternal setting.. their sexual power remains admirable and authentic precisely because it is derived from the unharnessed, unmechanized expression of the pure and isolate self" (58). Though the sexual darkness of the Brangwen women remains a constant throughout the novel, it does so in submission to the domestic structures that Balbert attempts to dismiss. Thus, the darker, feminine identity is opposed and confined throughout through the masculine outer structures of the novel. Therefore, Anna's sexual power is confined within the structure of Brangwen house, imprisoned within her tiny matriarchal palace. Homer O. Brown describes the importance of this domestic imprisonment within the novel stating, "houses or buildings.. become prisons that no longer give meaning to the life lived in them" (288). The importance of the domineering construct of marriage within the novel is linked with this 'house arrest' theme since after her marriage to Will, Anna is relegated to an inner

Maiden of her childhood idealism, nor the revered Madonna of her father's church system since "passivity and virginity" are "two common denominators" that these icons share that she does not embody (Driskill 9). Caught between her inability to fill the prescribed role of these feminine ideals, Maiden or Madonna, and her persisting unwillingness to subscribe to the correct position of wife, Ursula struggles with the tainted reality of her whore identity.

When she rejects Skrebensky, she questions herself as "just promiscuous," a possibility which eternally denies her feminine correctness in society and forces her to marry "out of fear of herself" (527). Opposed to this whore identity, Ursula "[sees] her mother in a just and true light. Her mother was simple and radically true. She had taken the life she was given...She had not insisted on creating life to fit herself" (537). As Ursula has attempted to play within her father's garden, fantasized herself as the lonely maiden within the church tower from her bedroom window, imagined herself as a shining sun upon the structured school, and envisioned herself over Anton in the incandescent moonlight, she has consistently fought against the confines that term her existence as a puppeted Other. Her attempts to re-write her role within this

patriarchal society by projecting her true essence onto the cluttered page of social reality continually result in her social isolation and banishment.

More importantly, Ursula is caught between fearing her own feminine promiscuity, and revering the social construct of the completing mother. As she runs to the social confinement of marriage out of fear of her own true nature, she is propelled into a capturing state of peacefulness. Silenced by the remembrance of her mother's correct social masquerade, she "[gives] her limbs to the bondage, she loved the bondage, she called it peace" (537). Hedged by these vastly different feminine confines, the whore or the wife, Ursula's path is enclosed, rendering her non-submission incorrect and false. She recognizes the permanence on the structures that confine her and determines that this solidity translates into truth, while "she herself [is] false, trashy, conceited" (537). Yet, she continually attempts to break beyond these constructs by unleashing her inner-self, slipping past the social models arranged for her. When this inner-self is threatened by Anton, Ursula submits to the role of mother, nearly destroying her search for the new woman identity for which she longs.

existence that deems her virtually invisible in the novel's text. Thus, Ursula's character is in fact the material "genie in a bottle" whose mystic fantasy is to escape the reductive processes of her social and textual confinement.

Ursula's pregnancy mirrors the bondage that the thought of being like her correct mother originates in her, "now like a flame it took hold of her limbs and body. [Is] she with child?" (537). Replacing the flame of her desire for subjectivity that burns from within the depths of Ursula's soul, Skrebensky's overpowering seed impregnates her feminine body and confines her "as if tied to a stake" (536). While Anton's literal child is forming within her, the mental infant of the Symbolic for which he stands begins to bind Ursula to him, in turn eradicating her own independent sense of self as "The flames [are] licking her and devouring her" (536). Now, with child, Ursula is caught between the falsely termed promiscuous independent self, attempting to break beyond, and the correct mother role that is designated by the patriarchal structure and made to stand for its truth.

Anton once again attempts to silence her search since "it seemed, this child [is] like a seal set on her own nullity" (536). As Ursula's identity is blotted into nothingness by her phallic pregnancy, "she [begins] to

think, that she would write to Skrebensky, that she would go out to him, and marry him, and live simply as a good wife to him" (536). Balbert once again attempts to dismiss the confinement of a possible marriage to Anton, stating, "It is important not to give Ursula's fawning letter to Skrebensky any weight on the subject of normative marriage," since he believes "the self-abnegating sentiments she expresses about marriage and her wifely role stand in contradiction to the portrait throughout the novel of Ursula's reliable instinct and developing insight" (79). Balbert, however, fails to recognize the significance of both the structure of the letter as well the battle being waged between the insightful young woman Ursula strives to become, and the reflecting role of wife she is socially expected to fulfill. Thus, it is the very presence of 'normative marriage' that dictates Ursula's alleged hysteria. Ursula is forced into contact with the 'correct' doctrine of marriage and the wholesome ideals that denounce pregnancy out of marriage and relegate Ursula to a whore status.

Yet, Ursula is searching for acceptance into the surrounding social laws, an action that both confines and nullifies her as a subjugated individual through her lettered attempt at marriage. It is as Other that Ursula



writes to Skrebensky, believing that he will provide her with an alternate, correct form of completion. She envisions this lawful union replacing her wrongful desire for the "other thing, that fantastic freedom, that illusory, conceited fulfillment which she had imagined she could not have with Skrebensky," but which she did possess in the mother/child dyad of the Imaginary (536-7).

Ursula's search for fulfillment and quest to become a subjective signifier is halted as Other, since as Rose notes, "There is no Other of the Other" (50). Ursula thus finds her journey for self defeated, and reflects, "What [does] the self, the form of life, matter? Only the living from day to day, [matters], the beloved existence in the body, rich, peaceful, complete, with no beyond, no further trouble, no further complication" (536). Only through releasing her essence, the inner voice that horrified Anton, can Ursula masquerade as a reflective mirror, for a mirror can seek no reflection to its own inscriptional desires.

Ursula's letter to Skrebensky operates on its own as a self-inscription unto the position of Other. The "bondage" that she calls "peace" with which she "[sits] down to write 'Skrebensky'" is paralleled by the controlling content within the confined structure of the letter (537). A mask

for her true desires to become the self-created fantasy woman of her feminine dreams, the structured letter which she writes "sentence by sentence" depicts a suppressed and male complimentary life that she is lead to believe is true (537). Impregnated with Anton's Symbolic thought, Ursula is a diseased feminine subject. Thus, Ursula writes to Anton, "Truly, the best thing would be for me to die, and cover my fantasies forever. But I find that I am with child, so that cannot be" (537). Rather than extinguish herself from existence, Ursula must subjugate her own femininity to Anton's world, "It is your child, and for that reason I must revere it and submit my body entirely to its welfare, entertaining no thought of death, which once more is largely conceit" (537). Ursula writes herself into submission professing to Anton, "I swear to you I will be a dutiful wife, and to serve you in all things," and falsifies her feminine identity by stating, "For now I only hate myself and my own conceited foolishness" (537).

Ursula here strives to be bound both to Anton by the social contract of marriage and to the Symbolic by the linguistic structure of her lettered request. As Lacan theorizes in relation to the "Purloined Letter," "it remains that the letter is the symbol of the pact, and that, even should the recipient not assume the pact, the

existence of the letter situates her in a symbolic chain foreign to the one which constituted her faith" (Seminar 58). Thus Ursula's letter to Anton, and her very existence in the patriarchal structure for that matter, encloses her as subordinate within a symbolic chain of signification that is foreign to her feminine ideal. Indeed, this recalls David G. Gordon's analysis of the linguistic realm of Women in Love in which he states "we are still enclosed in a world of words" (363). The bondage of the letter into a "self-enclosed world of words," and the separation from her search for the "fantastic freedom" of the Imaginary, mark Ursula's attempted entry into the social and linguistic laws of the Symbolic (363; 536). Contracted to the role of The Woman by her request, Ursula seeks only "a word" of acceptance by the symbolic Father, Anton, in order to remove from her the feeling that she is "so false" and to solidify her as a correct Other (537).

Within his "Seminar on the Purloined Letter," Lacan sets out to determine the role of the letter in literature as both a topographical character and an epistle. Along the way, Lacan notes that fundamentally, a letter stands for that which is not there, a signifier of absence. Lacan also traces the meaning of the word, purloin, and finds that "it is a question then of *putting aside*, or, to invoke

a familiar expression which plays on the two meanings: *mettre a gauche* (to put to the left: to put amiss)" (59). Within his analysis of the work, the significance of the purloined letter is quite evident, for as he says, "we are quite simply dealing with a letter which has been diverted from its path; one whose course has been *prolonged*, or to revert to the language of the post office, a *letter in sufferance*" (59). It is, however, taken away from this narrative that Lacan's analysis of the letter is of particular importance. Lacan finds, "since [the letter] can be diverted, it must have a course *which is proper to it*: the trait by which its incidence as signifier is confirmed" (59). The use of the letter as object here, a construct which is attached to a meaning that it has no true relation to, is emblematic to Ursula's plight of misrecognition.

If Ursula is the object, the letter, that is misplaced/false, she must have "a course that is proper to herself," from which she has been diverted, making her a woman in sufferance (59). This path is unquestionably seen as false within the true path of the arbitrary but dominant structure of signification. While the purloined letter has been misplaced, falsely diverted from its correct path, Ursula's feminine identity has been rerouted, turned away

from its own passage through the fear and degradation of mis-recognition. Further, the appropriation of a male constructed language/letter itself upon the female body is in itself a mis-recognition of feminine essence. After all, as previously stated, "There is a *jouissance* proper to [woman], to this 'her' which does not exist and which signifies nothing... which she herself may know nothing, except that she experiences it" (Lacan, *God* 145). It is this feminine *jouissance* that has been mislabeled by the patriarchal structure and at times by Ursula herself as "false, trashy, conceited" (537).

Ursula awaits the Word of Anton "in answer to her letter, so that her course should be resolved, she should be engaged in fulfilling her fate," and finds it "curious how little she cared about his not having written before" (538). Unwritten by Anton, Ursula now wishes to be set down in the completing fate of her phallic destiny, believing that "This [is] her true self, for ever" (538). Though, "the child was like a bond round her brain, tightened on her brain... [binding] her to Skrebebsky," something calls to her from within, "Always the ache, the ache of unreality, of her belonging to Skrebesky" (544). Despite her subjugating wishes to masquerade in the form of the Other in the Symbolic, Ursula is aware that the role of

Other is an unreality, and moves to embrace the birth of her true self towards the close of the novel.

Tossing the need for the male structure aside, Ursula considers, "But why, why did it bind her to Skrebensky? Could she not have a child of herself? [Is] not the child of her own affair? All her own affair? What [has] it to do with him?" (545). Impregnated within her feminine body, Ursula is "aching and cramped with the bondage, to Skrebensky and Skrebensky's world" (544). She recognizes the distinction between "Anton's world" that "becomes in her feverish brain a compression which enclosed her," and the "new germination" of feminine identity in opposition to the phallic Father and his world (544,548). The confinement of her new germination ultimately forces Ursula to believe that "if she could not get out of the compression, she would go mad" (545).

Elizabeth M. Fox theorizes, "In the final chapter of The Rainbow, Ursula Brangwen's decision to become Anton Skrebensky's wife thwarts her earlier quest for what Lawrence elsewhere calls 'pure independent being'" (196). Fox's claim hinges primarily on the reading of Skrebensky's rejection of Ursula, her resulting pregnancy, and delusionary dreams as a form of psychosis. Though Fox rightly questions Ursula's fall into an otherworldly state

of being, she dismisses this moment as a psychotic swoon into self-destruction, feeling that "Instead of the fulfillment of a female quest, the ending offers a relinquishment of it and an abandonment of Ursula as desiring subject and protagonist" (210). Rather than an abandonment of her search for subjectivity, the movements of the Rainbow's final chapter demonstrate the emergence of a subjective self that is reborn from a patriarchal world into a voyage for an alternate form of subjective wholeness beyond the enclosing social confines of the Symbolic.

When Ursula slips into a seemingly delusional state, her mind erupts in a flourish of images of confinement, release, and rebirth. Apparently driven 'mad' by her enclosed place within Anton's world, Ursula attempts to, "extricate herself from feeling, from her body, from all the vast encumbrances of the world that was in contact with her, from her father, and her mother, and her lover, and all her acquaintance" (545). Caught in the face of the patriarch's final enclosing act, her marriage with Anton, Ursula desires to destroy all of the social, object relational ties within that structure. Ursula thus "Repeatedly, in an ache of utter weariness," releases:

I have no father nor mother nor lover, I have no allocated place in the world of things, I do not

belong to Beldover nor to Nottingham nor to  
England nor to this world, they none of them  
exist, I am trammelled and entangled in them, but  
they are all unreal. I must break out of it,  
like a nut from its shell which is an unreality.

(545)

Chanting, repeatedly from her body, Ursula lets loose an incantation of social decoding. The desire to destroy her social relations, her chance at lawful marriage, and her place in the world are fueled by her search for the independent being that exists without the correctness of the phallus. As Homer O. Brown suggests, Ursula's life is imbedded by "the constant transcending of relationships by the traveling soul in quest of consciousness and individualization" (288). Further, unlike her structured and punctualized letter that is written, set down, sentence by sentence, Ursula's vocalized self defies textualization and ignores the linguistic rules and regulations that mark a subjects emergence into the Symbolic. Her attempts to untangle herself from these social/linguistic rules and regulations are a plight to release the true feminine creature into signifying subjectivity, rather than subjective expulsion.



Ursula chooses neither to perish at the hands of, nor become imprisoned in, the Symbolic structure; rather, she attempts to become a "new germination" of subjective awareness. Instead of using the false means of signification available to her in the phallic structure of language as representation, Ursula attempts to break beyond the structure and rewrite herself unto the world. Unlike a purloined subject, *put aside* by the dominating phallic structure, Ursula "[fights] and [fights] all through her illness to be free of him and his world, to put it aside, into its place" (545). Putting Anton and his world aside, Ursula attempts to purloin the ideals of a domineering social structure. Through the absence of these confinements, Ursula chooses to attempt self-definition and subjective completion.

Though she quite obviously is attempting become a signifying subject by assigning meaning to the dominating world about her, Ursula's fight for subjective wholeness is deemed an "illness." As Fox argues, "The 'cascade of images - the multiplicity of signifiers for the signifieds of castration, pregnancy, and phallic maternity - signifies a failure of symbolization in the necessity for repeated versions of mediating images" (209). She asserts that this failure leads Ursula to exemplify "delusional paranoia"

which pushes the character into a "insistent and concerted effort to gain meaning from these experiences" in an attempt to "patch over the 'female quest'" (209-10). According to Fox, the final images of the novel are a "dehumanization of the closure, a deracination of the protagonist's quest, [which signal] the move into psychotic process" (210). Thus, Fox renders the novel's final images as delusional and self-reductive to Ursula's feminine quest.

Though interestingly applying the Lacanian perspective of psychosis to these final scenes, Fox's theory itself becomes trapped within the confining structures from which the central character of her study is attempting to break beyond. By rendering Ursula as psychotic, Fox ascribes the value of Other onto Ursula. The focus of Ursula's "delusional" fantasies is one of rebirth, "And again, to her feverish brain, [comes] the vivid reality of acorns in February lying on the floor of a wood with their shells burst and discarded and the kernel issued naked to put itself forth" (545). The importance of this scene is indeed stressed by Lawrence as he focuses the text here to remove any chance of misreading, "She [is] the naked, clear kernel thrusting forth the clear, powerful shoot, and the world [is] the bygone winter, discarded, her mother and

father and Anton... And the kernel [is] the only reality; the rest [is] cast off into oblivion" (545). Here, Ursula's "feverish brain" is only delusional in terms of its difference to her surrounding 'correct' society.

Rather than go mad because of Anton's world, Ursula quests for an identity that challenges the enclosing shell of the patriarchy around her, and is in turn deemed a fantasy, a delusion. Yet, this delusional dream seems more prophetic than paranoia, and unlike the maiden awaiting rescue phallic fantasy of which she dreamt in childhood, Ursula's fantasy of independent identity is here brought forth into living reality. When she awakens from her bedridden sickness, Ursula again as in her childhood, looks out of the window of her room to see "all husk and shell... she [is] enclosed still, but loosely enclosed. There [is] a space between her and the shell. It [is] burst, there [is] a rift in it" (545). Brown notes that looking out of "windows and other barriers," as well as that pervasive organic image, usually a seed that must break and cast off its husk for germination" is a "constant breaking from confinement" (288). Unlike her prior window fantasy, Ursula here aims not to link her Imaginary need of fluid identity with her Symbolic desires for the phallus; rather, she forgoes the constricting Symbolic world, "this old,

decaying, fibrous husk" and dispels even her Imaginary self (546). Though filled with "the new air of a new world" and a "very deep and enrichening" peace, Ursula "[has] her root in the ground" and is "gradually absorbed in growth" (546). Ursula here is transformed, rewriting for the first time her feminine self into a masculine text.

As a result, Ursula moves beyond the confining social shell of phallic being through feminine *jouissance*. Fox misreads this visionary state of being, what Lacan in "God and the Jouissance of The Woman" calls "a mystic," as delusion (147). It is her mis-recognition of Ursula's final freeing act that attempts to reduce Ursula to a madwoman and carries the same type of identity reduction as what Lacan notes, "was an attempt to reduce the mystical to questions of fucking" (147). He continues that "If you look carefully, that is not what it is all about. Might not this *jouissance* which one experiences and knows nothing of, be that which puts us on the path of ex-istence?" (147). In Ursula's plight, this *jouissance* becomes a freeing force that replaces the misdirection of a phallic structure with the feminine's proper path to identity.

As Ursula re-identifies herself in the wake of her *jouissance* dream, she takes over the text. Again, Fox believes that at end of the novel:

The text tries to separate itself from Ursula's breakdown, mainly by scapegoating her as too ambitious in attempting to usurp male prerogatives; but it cannot, for her ambitious earlier attempts to fulfill. Her failure to realize independent subjectivity serves as an index for the text's failure to symbolize paternity. While the text recognizes, to some extent, the problem of achieving subjectivity, it depicts the problem as Ursula's: if she would fulfill her role, the plot suggests, all would be well. The plot successfully presents the lives of the two previous generations, but it does so using couples. The plot breaks down when an individual, in particular a woman, aims at parenthood and psychosis irrupts. (210)

Yet Fox's mis-recognition here is that neither Ursula nor the text break into psychosis. Though, the early portions of The Rainbow do indeed chronicle two previous generations of Branegwens, its primary movement is from familial/social relations toward the attainment of individual independence. The function of the historically written opening chapters of the novel, which ground Ursula into the social structure of family, is apparent in retrospect of the closing

chapter, a movement of final isolation, rebirth, and mystical apparition. As the novel moves from a textual chronicle of family history to the staunch independence of feminine freedom, it fragments, leaving the conventional structure of writing behind for a free-floating verse of visually metaphorical mysticism. It is thus Ursula who breaks free from the final confinement, the novel's text itself. The final images move beyond the outer narration of the novel's outset, and into Ursula's inner thoughts, symbolizing the birth of her own subjectivity by mirroring the flood of her mind with a loosening of textual/linguistic structure. She is the signifying agent of the novel's close, and as such controls the assignment of meaning toward her own vision.

Balbert observes that the structure of The Rainbow "can be regarded as three concentric and open-ended circles" where "the literal and metaphorical birth of one generation moves eventually into that of the other" (26-27). These circles form an "interweaving theme of birth" that represent not only a cyclical rhythm of familial continuance, but also a spiraling motion towards independence and self-actualization (27). This is evident as the births move from a literal generation to generation child rearing, to a psychological rebirth of an isolated

feminine identity. As Balbert notes, "The final circle significantly moves out and beyond," as the "novel seems to gain centrifugal force as it... thrusts a 'born' Ursula beyond the final circle" (27). Indeed Ursula breaks beyond the social/familial confines as well as the structured text "as it bends toward the open-end in the last chapter, there is no dialogue at all, but only narrative reference almost entirely about her" (27).

Balbert's insightful comments marry the emergence of Ursula's signifying self and the novel's overarching theme of feminine escape. In particular, Balbert's emphasis on Ursula's birth into the beyond directly coincides with her *jouissance* transcendence into a Real, mystic identity. Though Ursula's miscarriage symbolically frees her of Anton and his world, a literal purging/self-cleansing, it also functions as a identity induced feminine rebirth. As Cornelia Nixon suggests, "Ursula has a procreative experience that results in her spiritual or psychological rebirth rather than her child's physical birth" (138). Indeed Ursula is reborn at novel's close; however, if her psychological birth is traced to a metaphorical sexual encounter, then it is clear that Ursula is the byproduct of the union of the Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real Orders. Yet, this position proves problematic when considering the

limited access subjective experience is granted to the Imaginary and Real worlds. Thus, Ursula's rebirth speaks once again more to fantasy than reality.

Rather than combining the qualities of these potentially parental orders, Ursula furthers the movement of the novel and is born beyond their confines. She escapes her father's formulating grasp, Harby's hard denouncements, and Anton's objectifying gaze, as well as textual inscription, critical psychosis, and her own fantastical dreams. Impregnated with ejaculatory moments of feminine *jouissance*, Ursula mystically sees beyond the confinement of Symbolic life into the realm of the Real. Yet as the physical discarding of her miscarried child suggests, Ursula casts off even her male prescribed feminine bodily structure and the social responsibility of maternal nurturer to obtain this existence.

Rather than return from the beyond to Symbolic subjugation, Ursula operates in an isolated independence that is consigned to a metonymic movement that seeks permanent removal from these structures. Thus, she achieves self-definition and replaces her desire for Symbolic subjectivity with the self-creative independence of a feminized signifier. No longer the sculpted, fantasy Other of male creativity, Ursula finds in the beyond, a



fantasy woman of non-phallic subjectivity. It is this feminine subjectivity that defines her as a Fantasy figure whose Imaginary exclusion, Symbolic rejection, and Real conception perpetuate Ursula's continual quest for wholistic permanence at novel's end and in Women in Love.

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