

**ECOLOGY AND THE CREATURELY IN  
D. H. LAWRENCE'S 'SUN'**

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The title of a recent collection of essays on Lawrence, *Windows to the Sun: D. H. Lawrence's 'Thought-Adventures'*, edited by Earl Ingersoll and Virginia Hyde,<sup>1</sup> provides a compelling occasion for this essay. This volume rekindled my ongoing interest in Lawrence's short story 'Sun'. While the essays in the Ingersoll and Hyde collection do not address that story, I have no quibbles with the editors. Rather, the quotation from 'Chaos in Poetry' that inspires their collection – in which Lawrence figures creative work as a slit through an umbrella, providing a "window to the sun" (*IR* 109) – compelled me to return to Lawrence's story and ask after the protagonist's liaison with the natural world. I was also struck by the coincidence of "thought" and the sun in Ingersoll and Hyde's title, because the "deterritorialising" of Juliet's mind – of her "I think" – as a result of her sun-bathing is of enduring interest to readers of Lawrence's story.

In his introduction to *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Jürgen Habermas describes the struggle with what might be called modernity's cogito that has fuelled the work of thinkers from Nietzsche to Bataille "which turns centrally on the critique of subjectivistic rationalism".<sup>2</sup> Inextricably linked to this critique, he says, is the demise of the "atomistic and autonomous, disengaged and disembodied, potentially and ideally self-transparent" subject.<sup>3</sup> This critique of the subject is more than familiar to literary critics, but when coupled with an ecological perspective in order to read D. H. Lawrence's short story 'Sun', we discover a fresh and useful crossroads between studies of consciousness, ontology, and the nonhuman. Juliet, the story's protagonist, is an experiment in the flight from Western humanism. Lawrence characteristically under-

takes a consideration of the power of the unconscious in relation to the conscious in this story, and also explores the presence of the “irrational” in Juliet’s changing experience of the world. At the same time, Juliet undergoes a kind of ecological situating that aligns her with the inhuman. This situating can be usefully understood in terms of what Rom Harré calls environmental rhetoric, or a vision of “the fitting together in a dynamic equilibrium of the human race with all the other things, organic and inorganic, that grace the outer layers of the planet Earth”.<sup>4</sup>

The linkage between the dismantling of the subject and an eco-critical awareness in Lawrence’s story is hinted at in an early and quite brief discussion of ‘Sun’. Jeffrey Meyers in his book *D. H. Lawrence and the Experience of Italy* sums up the little boy’s experience in this text as such: “Like Juliet, he no longer fears the sun, emerges from his shell, sheds his civilized tension, and accepts even the poisonous gold-brown snakes ... as a natural part of the harmonious environment”.<sup>5</sup> It is worth our while to unpack these dynamics, for as Fiona Becket reminds us, the “greening of Modernism ... needs Lawrence”, whose ecological awareness, Becket suggests, can be framed as “a facet of his understanding of a relation, felt rather than articulated, with the non-human world”.<sup>6</sup>

I should note at the outset of this discussion that Lawrence’s story ultimately eschews a final and untroubled equilibrium for his protagonist. As readers well know, both versions of the story end with Juliet feeling tethered once again to convention and circumstance, albeit to varying degrees, as N. H. Reeve has explained.<sup>7</sup> We cannot accuse Lawrence of an easy primitivism in this story, to be sure. His narrative figures nature as redeeming, but Juliet is ultimately unable to abandon the forces of civilization altogether. However, her alignment with the inhuman draws our attention, and the alternation between “lapsing out” toward the natural world and returning to the civilized might be seen as instructive because it is partial rather than completely idealized.

I want to make one other preliminary remark about having to choose between two versions of the story. I take seriously Anna

Grmelová's suggestion to "read" both versions in our analyses of the narrative.<sup>8</sup> Some of Lawrence's revisions do alter Juliet's ecological experience that I want to analyze here; they make it more gendered and constrained. Thus, the second text that has undergone Lawrence's "tightening", mitigates the spirit of an intertwining between human and inhuman that I would argue constitutes one of the deep ideological structures of the text. There are moments that do transcend or, better yet, survive the increasing phallicisation of the story. Nonetheless there are several examples of Lawrence's revisions hampering the potential of his "first" protagonist, as Reeve points out in his own speculations on the biographical corollaries that may attend Lawrence's changes. For the most part, then, I discuss the initial version of the story, in which Juliet's relation to the sun is figured more as an *exchange*.

'Sun' opens on a diagnostic note as Juliet's condition is given an imperative prescription: "'Take her away, into the sun,' the doctors said".<sup>9</sup> Many critics have noted the way this line echoes the instructions of Lawrence's own doctor to have him convalesce at the ranch in New Mexico in 1925.<sup>10</sup> Beyond the biographical similarities, though, the thematics of disease provide important symbolic terrain in the story. Indeed, one of Nietzsche's most significant binaries – sickness/health – is immediately operative here. Even in his earliest work, *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche inverts these terms and contests their typical associations. While defining the Apollonian and Dionysian states as polar, he notes that the more symbolic or reflective Apollonian misreads Dionysian revelling as sickness "with a smile of contempt or pity prompted by the consciousness of their own health: of course, the poor wretches do not divine what a cadaverous-looking and ghastly aspect this very 'health' of theirs presents".<sup>11</sup> This ironic theme – that the reasonable are sick – becomes constitutive for Nietzsche and reappears as the condemnation of ascetic morality in his *Genealogy of Morality*. "Bad conscience", he insists, is a "serious illness".<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, health is really sickness, civilization really deterioration.

Juliet is implicitly classed among the civilized in the second line of the story that begins, “She herself was sceptical of the sun”. Scepticism, the bedfellow of education and intellectualism, locates Juliet within the cultured realm that tends to reject or manipulate the natural world. However, Juliet permits herself “to be carried away, with her child, and a nurse, and her mother, over the sea” (*WWRAP* 275), to Sicily, where she is to convalesce.

Despite the therapeutic atmosphere of her Italian destination, Juliet is initially unconsolated because the landscape is “all external”. In contrast to its serenity, her internalized anxiety remains. She is beset with frustration and anger that surface through her experience of motherhood: “The child irritated her, and preyed on her peace of mind. She felt so horribly, ghastly responsible for him: as if she must be responsible for every breath he drew. And that was torture to her, to the child, and to everybody else concerned” (*WWRAP* 276). It is just this kind of responsibility that Nietzsche attacks in his *Genealogy*. At the outset of his second essay, “‘Guilt’, ‘bad conscience’ and related matters”, he delineates the required developmental steps that humans must have taken in order to become conscionable:

That is precisely what constitutes the long history of the origins of *responsibility*. That particular task of breeding an animal which has the right to make a promise includes, as we have already understood, as precondition and preparation, the more immediate task of first *making* man to a certain degree undeviating [*notwendig*], uniform, a peer amongst peers, orderly and consequently predictable.<sup>13</sup>

This process of becoming a responsible person, answerable to one’s conscience, requires self-discipline and, in Freud’s terms, repression. Nietzsche is one of the first philosophers to suggest that perhaps the disavowal of our “animal” being is a hindrance rather than an accomplishment. As Nietzsche continues to explain, “The proud realization of the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*,

the awareness of the rare freedom and power over himself and his destiny, has penetrated him to the depths and become an instinct, his dominant instinct".<sup>14</sup> The conscientious person has actually suppressed her "true" instincts – forgetfulness and aggression for Nietzsche – in order to cultivate the "instinct" for responsibility.

Nietzsche later posits a radical shift in human history that engenders an age of responsibility. He implies that prior to this juncture, humans' natural instincts toward domination of others reigned supreme. But the shift to responsibility ushers in an era in which "all instincts were devalued and 'suspended'". Suspension for Nietzsche does not entail erasure; indeed, "the old instincts had not suddenly ceased to make their demands ... they mainly had to seek new and as it were underground gratifications. All instincts which are not discharged outwardly *turn inwards* – this is what I call the *internalization of man*".<sup>15</sup>

Freud addresses this process of internalization in his late work, *Civilization and its Discontents*. He outlines the process of "organic repression" in that text, explaining that the early human became non-animal by standing upright and thereafter rejecting formerly stimulating sensory and material pleasures. Thus the repression of organicism resulted in the onset of cleanliness, the family structure, and civilization itself.<sup>16</sup> These repressions that attend the inauguration of "the human" and of "responsibility" – in addition to the turning inward of instinct – help us to frame our reading of 'Sun'.

Once Juliet really begins to surrender her self to the sun, its power is registered first in her breasts, signifiers of the maternal responsibility that has constituted her civilized role: "Soon, however, she felt the sun inside them [her breasts], warmer than ever love had been, warmer than milk or the hands of her baby". Here the experience of the physical or natural world supersedes all human contact and interaction that Juliet has had. It is, in fact, more intimate than mother-love and the connection of mother and child. We should note the unconventional suggestion here that the putatively instinctive mother-love, the "maternal instinct" itself – often considered a woman's most natural inclination – is trumped

by the nonhuman force of the sun. Juliet's initial encounter with the sun also begins to suspend the power of rationality. The sun does not privilege mind over body, and Lawrence's descriptions reinforce this democracy: the sun "faced down to her, with his look of blue fire, and enveloped her breasts and her face, her throat, her tired belly, her knees, her thighs and her feet" (*WWRAP* 277). In this image, *all* of Juliet connects with the sun; her head, the seat of reason, is no more significant than her feet, which touch the earth. She is transformed in part because the sun does not make distinctions. The reach or ubiquitous quality of the heat and light of the sun are significant for several reasons. There are quite radical differences between the physics of the sun and, say, the physics of a tree as actors or markers within an eco-critical landscape. A tree is individuated; while it has roots and a rhizomatic underground structure, sunlight and heat cannot be isolated in the way a tree can. The sun goes everywhere, in a sense; its reach includes all earth-bound entities. In this way, the sun is a particularly elemental force that has the levelling properties akin to Juliet's transformation and that situate her among the organic.

Lawrence's passage describing the sun's capacities reinforces Juliet's singularity *as* a collectivity. The passage reads, "She knew the sun in heaven, blue-molten with his white fire edges, throwing off fire. And though he shone on all the world, when she lay unclothed he focused on her. It was one of the wonders of the sun, he could shine on a million people, and still be the radiant, splendid, unique sun, focussed on her alone" (*WWRAP* 279). This segment is tricky. It emphasizes Juliet's participation with or connection to the sun as "unique" but only by acknowledging the "million" other people having a singular encounter. The passage emphasizes the de-atomizing of the subject, previously caught in its private and individuated experience, now recognizing its own living in the broadest contextual sweep. That is, the protagonist's individual phenomenal world must be understood as also, at the same time, a shared phenomenal world.

Importantly, the sun's qualities echo a Deleuzian "deterritorializing" of the personality that we observe in the text. I will return to this concept of deterritorializing in more detail later in the essay. For now, I want to note how this form of un-doing moves from the skeletal to the psychological and cognitive: "She could feel the sun penetrating even into her bones; nay, further, even into her emotions and her thoughts". It is the burden of thinking, of rational analysis, that is most emphatically combated by the sun as the "cold dark clots of her thoughts began to dissolve" under its power (*WWRAP* 277).

Lawrence continues to disrupt typical Western modes of knowing by rendering Juliet partially blind after her first significant sun-bathing: "So, dazed, she went home, only half-seeing, sun-blinded and sun-dazed" (*WWRAP* 278). Losing her vision, so to speak, correlates to the undermining of her humanist preoccupations. The epistemological primacy of vision also privileges an autonomous subject, as Emmanuel Levinas explains: "Inasmuch as the access to beings concerns vision, it dominates those beings, exercises a power over them. A thing is *given*, it offers itself to me. In gaining access to it I maintain myself".<sup>17</sup> Thus Juliet loses more of herself as her sight is dimmed. But this half-seeing state is clearly more valuable to her than the heavy thoughts it erases; "her blindness was like a richness to her, and her dim, warm, heavy half-consciousness was like wealth" (*WWRAP* 278). As I noted above, Freud discusses the transition to the visual as one that orchestrates a more human emphasis within the sensorium of living creatures: animals, he insists, are more dependent on smell and closer to "organic" processes.<sup>18</sup>

Lawrence's own disagreements with Freudian psychoanalysis reveal some fascinating ways of reading this particular story. In fact, we can understand elements of 'Sun' as Lawrence's working through of several theories he had proposed in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, a text he wrote four years (1921) before the composition of the first version of 'Sun'. The opening of his chapter 'Plexuses, Planes and So On' is worth quoting at some

length to reveal the connection Lawrence makes between his general concept of blood-consciousness and certain bodily locales or centres:

The primal consciousness in man is pre-mental, and has nothing to do with cognition. It is the same as in the animals ... The first seat of our primal consciousness is the solar plexus, the great nerve-centre situated in the middle-front of the abdomen. From this centre we are first dynamically conscious. For the primal consciousness is always dynamic, and never, like mental consciousness, static. Thought, let us say what we will about its magic powers, is instrumental only, the soul's finest instrument for the business of living. Thought is just a means to action and living. But life and action rise actually at the great centres of dynamic consciousness.

The solar plexus, the greatest and most important centre of our dynamic consciousness, is a sympathetic centre. At this main centre of our first-mind we know as we can never mentally know. Primarily we know, each man, each living creature knows, profoundly and satisfactorily and without question, that *I am I*. (PFU 79)

Lawrence goes on to reiterate that this ontological "root" of all knowledge cannot be transcribed into the rational mind: "The knowledge that *I am I* can never be thought: only known". We recognize here the trajectory that Juliet takes. Her thoughts uncoil and subside; a different and more corporeal awareness of her "self" emerges in her encounters with the sun. She knows a less cerebral and less isolated self.

There is, moreover, a clever trick of language that gets evoked between Lawrence's "solar" plexus and "cardiac" plexus, the latter of which he describes as being on the "upper plane" of our constitution, "where being and functioning are different" (PFU 82). From this other plexus we seek contact, we hope, and we experience the "wonder" of otherness or alterity (PFU 83). Interest-



ingly, Lawrence twice uses the image of the sun to describe the function of the cardiac plexus. First he claims, "At the cardiac plexus, there in the centre of the breast, we have now *a new great sun* of knowledge and being" (*PFU* 82; my emphasis). He uses similar terms to describe the significance of this plexus between infant and mother: "But when the mother puts her face quite near, and laughs and coos, then the baby trembles with an ecstasy of love. The glamour, the wonder, the treasure beyond. The great uplift of rapture. All this surges from that first centre of the breast, *the sun of the breast*, the cardiac plexus" (*PFU* 82-3; my emphasis). We have the *solar* plexus seated in the abdomen that corresponds with a more animal awareness of individual being, and we have the cardiac plexus, metaphorised as a radiating sun. This upper plexus corresponds with intersubjective activities and the going-forth of the self. These correspondences might help explain, in part, Lawrence's emphasis on Juliet's "womb" in a manner that is not limited to a gendered or reproductive reading. Perhaps Lawrence's portrait of Juliet can be understood as an attempt to re-balance or even unify the plexuses. In that case, the womb correlates to the realm of the solar plexus, and we see Juliet trying to recuperate its power, even in her interactions with the child who would ordinarily be linked to the power of the cardiac plexus.

Indeed, Juliet's relation to her son figures prominently in the story's philosophical considerations. The "de-civilizing" effects of sunning are immediately registered in Juliet's reaction to the child, who remains needy and clinging during their initial time in the Mediterranean. Rather than return this "love anguish" to her son, she removes his clothing and orders him to play out of doors. Because he still embodies the self-consciousness of the socialized, the child is frightened and resists the freedom bestowed upon him. Juliet, however, is indifferent to his "trepidation" and vows that the boy will not learn to be like his father, "[l]ike a worm that the sun has never seen" (*WWRAP* 278). Here Juliet hopes to thwart the power of social conventions in her child's upbringing and expose him to the sun's influence. Once Juliet decides to strip her son of

the trappings of civilization, Lawrence immediately informs us that she is “no longer vitally interested in the child”, and more importantly, that he “thrived all the more for it” (*WWRAP* 279). Implicitly, then, Lawrence critiques that most trenchant of civilizing forces, the family, in a very Nietzschean turn away from responsibility.

But the familial, as we know, returns through the back door in this story since Juliet’s relationship with the sun is figured as a heterosexual, and thus potentially reproductive one, for she thinks “of the sun in his splendour, and her *mating* with him” (*WWRAP* 279; emphasis added). As previously mentioned, the gender dynamics of the story have received widespread attention that I won’t rehearse here. Moreover, Lawrence’s ideas about the solar plexus provide some additional perspective on those dynamics. I will point out that while Lawrence seems eager to emphasize the mystery of conventional male-female sexual interaction, at the same time he insists that this mating is unconventional since Juliet’s “life was now a whole ritual” (*WWRAP* 279).

This image of the ritualistic reinforces the pagan element of sun-worship, that which Meyers connects to Taos and that is prominent in ‘The Woman Who Rode Away’. Indeed, Meyers’s use of a quotation from *Apocalypse* is salient enough to repeat here: “We can only get the sun by a sort of worship ... by *going forth* to worship the sun, worship that is felt in the blood ... Start with the sun, and the rest will slowly, slowly happen” (*A* 78, 149). While Juliet’s may be a depersonalized reverence toward the sun, we nonetheless ought not to go so far as to conclude with Janice Hubbard Harris in the 1980s that sunbathing and the natural world are empty signifiers for Lawrence’s next stage of “worship” thematics.<sup>19</sup> Rather, we need to pay attention to the interplay between ecological elements in the texts and Lawrence’s ideological explorations.

Indeed, at this point, nearly a third of the way through the story, Lawrence’s anti-civilization rhetoric becomes more explicit as the text insists that the materiality of the body be re-positioned in the

broadest of inhuman frameworks. Moreover, it is Juliet's "knowledge of the sun, and her conviction that the sun *knew* her" that is described as "cosmic carnal" (*WWRAP* 279). In moments such as this, we recognize what I have called Birkin's "exohumanism", or the posthumanist sensibility he develops in *Women in Love*.<sup>20</sup> Like Birkin, Juliet is drawn to the fantasy of a world without humans: she is overcome with "a feeling of detachment from people, and a certain contempt for human beings altogether. They were so un-elemental, so unsunned" (*WWRAP* 280). While Lawrence usually brings his characters "back" from these worlds that are wholly devoid of humans, these attractions are crucial to understanding his posthumanism. As I have maintained elsewhere, Lawrence suggests in these moments that we "must re-enter the 'outside' of the human in order to become fully human, because the reified human is not, and never was, itself".<sup>21</sup> Moreover, as I suggest throughout *Stalking the Subject: Modernism and the Animal*, it is often through the discourse of animality and species that this ontological exploration takes place in Lawrence's work.

In fact, Lawrence uses animal images to describe how Juliet's initial feelings of burden about the child are transformed into a less taxing kind of relationship. At first she "had had the child so much *on her mind*, in a torment of responsibility, as if, having borne him, she had to answer for his whole existence" (*WWRAP* 278; my emphasis). Lawrence emphasizes the way in which a Cartesian duty defines Juliet's bond to the boy. However, it is almost as if the source or centre of her obligation shifts out of the head – or nerves if we want to use Lawrence's own terminology – and into the body, or blood, as she continues to engage with the elements. Later in the narrative, the nature of her obligation shifts as well. When her naked child stumbles near some prickly thorns, Juliet is "quick as a serpent, leaping to him". She is even "surprised" by this display of spontaneous protective behaviour and remarks to herself, "What a wild cat I am, really!" (*WWRAP* 282). Rather than an anxious woman who mentally rehearses anxieties about the child's well-

being and fixates on her own role in his upbringing, she is a serpent or a cat who comes to his aid just, and only, as aid is needed.

If we think for a moment about this rendering, we realize that Lawrence implicitly denounces the kind of anticipatory dread and obsessive anxiety that are endemic to the human psyche, more aware of time's expansiveness, more burdened by the knowledge of contingency and the impossibility of knowing the future than most nonhuman minds. What also interests us is the way Lawrence recasts responsibility as something that can be natural, ultimately in contradistinction to Nietzsche's claims. While Nietzsche insists that the adoption of bad conscience produced man's "forcible breach with his animal past",<sup>22</sup> Lawrence suggests that there is a kind of primal, parental responsibility not dictated by social expectations but located in our inhuman, creaturely instincts.

While we can't ignore the overlap with problematic claims to a naturalized maternal "instinct" here, we also have to consider the way in which Lawrence's depictions can be linked to a Darwinian and bio-centric force that binds mammals to the evolutionary success of their offspring. For Juliet, the waning of her self-consciousness produces an unthinking and spontaneous protective impulse that does not correspond with her earlier claims of feeling "horridly, ghastly responsible" for her son (*WWRAP* 276). And it is here that my reading diverges slightly from that of N. H. Reeve, who suggests that the child "gradually ceases to have much reality for her, except as an instance of annoyingly ineradicable male-ness".<sup>23</sup> While I agree that Juliet continues to feel ambivalence about her duties to the boy, what is important about her sunning is that it opens up what I am calling a creaturely mutuality with him that seems much less stultifying to her as a mother.

The child, as we have mentioned, undergoes a transformation that Juliet orchestrates alongside her own unfolding of an elemental and animal way of being. At the story's inception, the little boy is fearful, "clutching", and anxious for his mother's presence (*WWRAP* 278). She strips him naked, as we have seen, throughout the story, and insists he becomes "sunned". At first he holds

himself “tight” and “hidden”, but in time he is changed as well (*WWRAP* 281). A dual easing of tension takes place for the boy. First, Juliet’s own anxious looking after him abates: “Now a change took place. She was no longer vitally interested in the child, she took the strain of her anxiety and her will from off him. And he thrived all the more for it” (*WWRAP* 279). Moreover, his own needs and behaviour shift as he becomes less needy of human attention: “The child, too, was *another creature*, with a peculiar, quiet, sun-darkened absorption. Now he played by himself in silence, and she hardly need notice him. He seemed no longer to know, when he was alone” (*WWRAP* 283; my emphasis). The dwelling in solitude, the lack of grasping after companionship, is something Lawrence insistently codes as animal in one of the story’s very next scenes. When the child encounters a potentially harmful snake, an animal image so iconic in Lawrence’s wider work,<sup>24</sup> Juliet comments on its withdrawal: “Yes! Let it go. It likes to be alone” (*WWRAP* 283).

In a centrally important moment for the story, Lawrence implies that this more animal way of being is not truly foreign to Juliet, for she is only tapping a resource already present within herself:

Something deep inside her unfolded and relaxed, and she was given. By some mysterious power inside her, deeper than her known consciousness and will, she was put into connection with the sun, and the stream flowed of itself, from her womb. She herself, her conscious self, was secondary, a secondary person, almost an onlooker. The true Juliet was this dark flow from her deep body to the sun. (*WWRAP* 282)

It is here that Merleau-Ponty’s refiguring of the sensible and sentient helps us understand the ecological implications of Juliet’s experience. As Louise Westling explains, Merleau-Ponty “avoided Heidegger’s humanistic elitism by embracing the body and erasing the heritage of dualism”.<sup>25</sup> Westling notes how Merleau-Ponty emphasized the fact that we “encounter the world as bodies”, and

she reminds us of his claim that “we are our body”.<sup>26</sup> Merleau-Ponty famously characterizes the body as a “chiasm” or a crossing-over and describes our material flesh as that which is in constant exchange with, and thus participation in, the flesh of the world.<sup>27</sup> Westling discusses these concepts in terms of a “dynamic, participatory bodily attunement to the world”, an attunement that reveals a “sympathetic” relationship between the sentient human and the flesh of the world.<sup>28</sup>

These concepts give us a useful purchase on Juliet’s experience above: “She herself, her conscious self, was secondary, a secondary person, almost an onlooker. The true Juliet was this dark flow from her deep body to the sun”. Notice that the “real” Juliet is a flow, a sympathetic sharing of energy we might say, with the sun. It is the intertwining of Juliet’s body with the sun that brings balance or fulfilment, or perhaps less idealistically, simply *is* her ontological reality. It is notable that Lawrence’s revisions for the second version of the story do shift the implications of this moment in a way that, however subtly, seems to limit the intertwining in the first version. The revisions have the stream of the sun flowing through her, rather than the source of the connection emanating from Juliet. Moreover, the second, 1928 version reads, “The true Juliet lived in the dark flow of the sun within her deep body, like a river of dark rays circling, circling dark and violet round the sweet, shut bud of her womb” (*WWRAP* 26). Here, as can be typical of Lawrence’s revisions, the sun seems to overtake the passage. In contrast, if we look back at the original sentence, Westling’s claims apply keenly to the original description of Juliet’s experience. Westling writes, “According to this [Merleau-Ponty’s] view, there is no clear distinction between subject and object, or mind and body, or each of us and the things around us. By implication there is no such separation between humans and Nature”.<sup>29</sup>

As a Western subject, Juliet “had always been mistress of herself, aware of what she was doing, and held tense for her own power. Now she felt inside her quite another sort of power, something greater than herself, flowing by itself. Now she was

*vague*" (*WWRAP* 282; emphasis added). This moment can best be understood as a Deleuzian deterritorialisation of the subject which, in fact, corresponds with Merleau-Ponty's concept of intertwining. Through her connection with the sun, with the natural world, Juliet's notion of herself as an atomised individual, an autonomous and rational subject, deteriorates. She experiences herself, rather, as bound up with the forces of the earth.

The pedestrian conclusion of the story, with its return of Juliet's husband, Maurice, seems to tear us away from these moments of transformation. The somewhat grim depiction of civilization's effects on Maurice, figured as a captive animal, is not unlike the story's initial descriptions of Juliet and the boy:

At table she watched her husband, his grey city face, his fixed, black-grey hair, his very precise table manners, and his extreme moderation in eating and drinking. Sometimes he glanced at her, furtively, from under his black lashes. He had the gold-grey eyes of an animal that has been caught young, and reared completely in captivity. (*WWRAP* 288-9)

We are invited to imagine, then, Maurice's own potential recuperation of an intertwined and posthumanist sensibility, most likely one that releases some of the animality that has been domesticated and tamed in him. Despite the insistent presence of the peasant and Juliet's desire for the peasant's "procreative sunbath", Maurice does consent that he will walk naked in the sun with Juliet, and Lawrence underscores the husband's desire and "male courage" as forces "not entirely quenched". Like his wife, he may not be able to abandon himself altogether to such elemental forces, but perhaps he can begin a re-balancing that will nonetheless shape some part of his future decisions about how to live in the world. The story's ending does render Maurice "branded", but Lawrence at least has us toying with the husband's own potential for sunbathing. While one cannot deny the sobering overtones of Juliet's resignation at bearing another of Maurice's children, he does agree

that he will “dare to walk in the sun, even ridiculously” (*WWRAP* 291).

Beyond these final ambivalences, the quotation indented above, in which Maurice is described as “reared completely in captivity”, still requires our attention. For it is even here that Becket’s description of Lawrence as eco-conscious makes a good deal of sense, especially if we link that consciousness to the discourse of species. In the above passage, Lawrence assumes an *a priori* connection between human and animal ontology that the forces of civilization attempt to sever and disavow. Consequently, Lawrence implies that humans are not meant to conquer and control the natural world through the cultural, but are themselves so natural, so animal, that civilization is actually self-conquering.

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<sup>1</sup> Earl Ingersoll and Virginia Hyde, ed., *Windows to the Sun: D. H. Lawrence’s ‘Thought-Adventures’* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1987), viii.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, ix.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Lawrence Buell, *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 46.

<sup>5</sup> Jeffrey Meyers, *D. H. Lawrence and the Experience of Italy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 154-5.

<sup>6</sup> Fiona Becket, ‘Borderlands: The Intersection of the Religious and the “Natural” in Lawrence’, *Études Lawrenciennes*, 33 (2005): 43-60, 47.

<sup>7</sup> See N. H. Reeve, ‘Liberty in a Tantrum: D. H. Lawrence’s *Sun*’, *The Cambridge Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (1995): 209-20. Reeve provides a thorough discussion of the changes Lawrence made to the second, 1928 version of the story. Reeve notes how Juliet seems more embittered, and less autonomous, in the second instantiation of the text. I will refer to Reeve’s analysis at further points in the essay.

<sup>8</sup> Anna Grmelová, ‘D. H. Lawrence’s ‘Sun’ as a Parable of Participation’, *Litteraria Pragensia*, 11 (2001): 88-93.



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<sup>9</sup> D. H. Lawrence, 'Sun' (1925 version), in *The Woman Who Rode Away and Other Stories*, ed. Dieter Mehl and Christa Jansohn, with an introduction and notes by N. H. Reeve, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1996), 275. Further references to this edition will be cited in-text using the abbreviation *WWRAP*.

<sup>10</sup> See, e.g., Meyers, *D. H. Lawrence and the Experience of Italy*, 154.

<sup>11</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (New York: Russel and Russel, 1964), 26.

<sup>12</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994), 61.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>16</sup> See my more detailed discussion of this process in Carrie Rohman, *Stalking the Subject: Modernism and the Animal* (New York: Columbia UP, 2009), 23-4.

<sup>17</sup> Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP, 1969), 194.

<sup>18</sup> See Note 16 above.

<sup>19</sup> See Janice Hubbard Harris, *The Short Fiction of D. H. Lawrence* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1984), 197-8.

<sup>20</sup> Rohman, *Stalking the Subject*, 109.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>22</sup> Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, 62.

<sup>23</sup> Reeve, 'Liberty in a Tantrum', 213.

<sup>24</sup> See my discussion of Lawrence's poem, 'Snake', in the context of his species discourse, in chapter three of *Stalking the Subject: Modernism and the Animal*.

<sup>25</sup> Louise Westling, 'Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty: Eco-poetics and the Problem of Humanism', in *Culture, Creativity and Environment: New Environmental Criticism*, ed. Fiona Becket and Terry Gifford (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 240.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 241.

<sup>27</sup> See the Introduction to 'The Intertwining – The Chiasm' by Thomas Baldwin, in *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Basic Writings*, ed. Thomas Baldwin (New York: Routledge, 2004), 247.

<sup>28</sup> Westling, 'Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty', 241.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*