Jeffers Studies
Robert J. Brophy
Department of English
California State University
Long Beach, CA 90840

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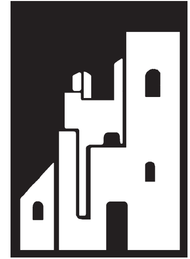

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Appearing simultaneously on the World Wide Web *Jeffers Studies Online* page:

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Mark Jarman

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Subscriptions and back issues: Robert Kafka, UCLA Extension, Room 214, 10995 Le Conte Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90024, e-mail <rkafka@unex.ucla.edu>. Submissions and editorial communications: Robert Brophy, Department of English, CSULB, Long Beach, CA 90840, e-mail <brophy@csulb.edu>. RJA membership applications should be sent to Robert Kafka, RJA Treasurer, at the above address.

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GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSIONS

Shorter manuscripts, suitable for numbers 1, 2, and 3 of each volume, in two double-spaced copies, should typically range up to 4,000 words. Longer essays should be between 5,000 and 9,000 words. Both should be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped postcard for prompt acknowledgment. The author's name should appear on the initial page only. All copies are non-returnable. Citation of Jeffers's poetry should be from the Stanford *Collected Poetry*, abbreviated *CP*. Until the *Collected Letters* (Stanford) is available, citation of Robinson and Una Jeffers letters should be from Ann Ridgeway's *Selected Letters* (*SL*) (Johns Hopkins) or from the Una Jeffers Correspondent series in issues of the *Robinson Jeffers Newsletter* (see *RJN* index, issue 100, Fall 1996). Formatting should follow the MLA *Handbook*, fourth edition, with parenthetical citations, endnotes, and works cited. A final revision of an accepted article should be submitted in hard copy and as an IBM-formatted Word file on a 3.5" floppy disk.

News and Notes

The *JS* editors are managing catch-up from 1999 but again acknowledge that the news here is from 2000.

RJA CONFERENCE 2000

The Robinson Jeffers Association Conference was held in Carmel on February 26–27 and is further commented on in the RJA president's message.

Saturday morning began at 9:30 with remarks by outgoing RJA president, Robert Zaller, who turned over the symbols of office to Alex Vardamis. Dana Gioia then warmly introduced the keynote speaker, poet John Haines, whose address was titled "Welcome to Apocalypse: The Poet as Prophet." The first discussion, 10:30 till noon, centered around a paper by Stephen O'Leary of the University of Southern California, titled "Endings of Blood and Fire: An Ethical Response to the Tragic Apocalypse of Robinson Jeffers." David Rothman provided the response paper.

The first afternoon session was reserved for the winner of the Second Annual Robinson Jeffers Association Essay Prize, Carmen Lowe of Tufts University, whose title was "Where the Country of Lost Borders Meets Jeffers Country: The Walking Women of Robinson Jeffers and Mary Austin."

The 2:30 panel, "Robinson Jeffers and the End of Things," featured "Jeffers's Post-Apostolic Vision: Death or Utopia" by Betty Moss of the University of South Florida; "Revelation and the Word: Apocalyptic Poetics in Dickinson, Jeffers, and the Book of Revelation" by ShaunAnne Tangney of Minot State University; and "Robinson Jeffers and the Pastoral of Apocalypse" by Kirk Glaser of Santa Clara University.

A poetry reading featuring Lili Bita, Bill Costley, and Claudia MonPere McIsaac at 4:00 and a wine and cheese reception finished off the first day.

Sunday morning sessions began with a discussion of Jeffers's narrative "Tamar" and included "Hate and Fate: Manifestations of Nihilism in 'Tamar'" by Stephen Wilhite of Long Beach City College; "Tamar's Apocalypse: The End of History" by Robert Brophy of CSU Long Beach; and "Apocalyptic Imagery in 'Tamar'" by Bruce Henderson of Fullerton College.

The 10:45 papers were dedicated to Jeffers's 1948 dark war-meditation *The Double Axe and Other Poems* and centered on "The End of Prophecy: The Double Axe and the Nuclear Sublime" by Robert Zaller of Drexel University, with a provocative response by James Karman of CSU Chico; and "Student Reactions to 'The Double Axe'" by Dirk Aardsma of the University of Colorado, with Shirley Linden Morrison as responding chair.

The afternoon panel was "Open Topic" and heard "Jeffers's Poetry and Scientific Theory" by James Baird of the University of North Texas; "'Jeffers is My God': Charles Bukowski's Commentary on the Work of Robinson Jeffers" by Donald Masterson of State University of New York, Oswego; and "Jeffers, Translation, and the Survival of American Narrative Poetry" by David Rothman.

The conference closed with a Forum on Jeffers Studies and an RJA Business Meeting.

OTHER CONFERENCES

The California American Studies Association (CASA) Conference 2000 will meet at the University of California, Santa Barbara, April 28–30. The theme this year is "Over the Edge"—over the edge of the century and of the millennium, over the post-NAFTA "edges" between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico; over the edge of social classes, ethnic

groups, gender boundaries, sexual conventions and orientation, and retrospectives on Millenarian thinking; over the edge of civility or party affiliation, of social conventions, consumer excess in spectator sports, alcoholism, television, film, literature, and other media.

The American Literature Association for the first time meets in Long Beach, California, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, May 25–28. The association normally does not choose themes but considers papers on all aspects of American Literature and as a special emphasis hosts panels of single authors. There will be no Jeffers panel this year, but the challenge will be taken up again. Cross subject panels are suggested for RJA members: Jeffers and Frost, Jeffers and Stevens, Jeffers and Robinson, Jeffers and Berry, etc.

Western Literature Association (WLA) will meet in Norman, Oklahoma, October 25–28, 2000, with the theme "Going to the Territory: Filling Space with Myth" (as noted in *JS* 3.1) celebrating the myths used in understanding, celebrating, and surviving in the West. Apropos for Jeffers would be his adaptation of myths in so many of his narratives and his creation of new myths from old archetypes of journey and discernment as in, for example, "Give Your Heart to the Hawks" or "The Love and the Hate." Deadline for submissions: June 15, 2000.

The Western Conference on Christianity and Literature has a call for papers for its conference at Seattle Pacific College, October 20–21, with the theme "Sacred Places: Literary Intersections of Spirit and Region." Deadline for abstracts or papers: 15 June 2000. Contact Mark Walhout, Chair, Department of English, Seattle Pacific University, Seattle, WA 98119, e-mail <mwalhout@spu.edu>, fax 206-281-2771.

The Tor House Jeffers Festival 2000 will be the weekend of October 13–15, theme to be announced.

The Stratford (Ontario) Festival this year will present Robinson Jeffers's *Medea*. Performances run from June 28 through October 1. Further information at <http://www.stratford-festival.on.ca/>.

JEFFERS ESSAY WINNER

As noted above, the winner of the Jeffers Essay Prize for year 2000 is Carmen Lowe, with a twenty-page paper titled "Where the Country of Lost Borders Meets Jeffers Country: The Walking Women of Robinson Jeffers and Mary Austin."

Ms. Lowe is an ABD graduate student at Tufts University in Massachusetts. Her study of Jeffers and Mary Austin will form a chapter in her dissertation, which is titled "The Inhuman Imagination: Robinson Jeffers and the Reconfiguration of the Human in Twentieth-Century Poetry" and which traces differing notions of human consciousness, non-human nature, and the inhumane from early twentieth-century writers like Jeffers, D. H. Lawrence, and Mary Austin, to later poets like Ted Hughes, Sylvia Plath, W. S. Merwin, and Yusef Komunyakaa.

Of her beginnings with the poet, Ms. Lowe says: "I have been interested in Jeffers since I was an undergraduate and his *Selected Poems* was assigned in an upper-level American literature class. The opening lines of 'Continent's End' hooked me as a reader, and 'Apology for Bad Dreams' and 'Roan Stallion' inspired me to study Jeffers in graduate school."

RJA AND TOR HOUSE FOUNDATION: ONE HEAD

The new president of the Robinson Jeffers Association, Alex Vardamis, has an additional Jeffers venue. He has also been chosen president of the Tor House Foundation by the Tor House Board, succeeding John Hicks, who for seven years has been president and has hosted seven Tor House October festivals. A Ph.D. in English and Comparative Literature from Columbia University, Alex has been a Fulbright Fellow and has recently retired from the English faculty of the University of Vermont, Burlington, to settle in Carmel, where he became a member of the Tor House Board.

JEFFERS LITERARY PROPERTIES

Lindsay Jeffers, the oldest grandchild of Robinson, has taken the helm of Jeffers Literary Properties following the death of his mother, Lee, who for many years shared those responsibilities with her late husband, Lindsay's father Donnan. Lindsay already has a consuming full-time teaching job, so we can be grateful that he has accepted the added responsibility and burden so as to guide the fortunes of Robinson Jeffers works. The Permissions Desk at Stanford University Press, by the way, will still be the place to contact for queries as to use of the poetry. Lindsay has been a stalwart presence at Jeffers events, Fall Festivals, and Jeffers Association conferences, as has his cousin, Maeve, and Garth's wife, Brenda. Some will recall him as being there on the Jeffers listserver to counsel field-trip campers and well-missioned hikers in Jeffers Country concerning the whims of fall forest fires, as well as winter storms and spring drizzles, mudslides, and Coast-Road erosion.

OTHER NEWS

Storm damage again shut down California Highway 1 near Big Sur this February. South of the scenic town of Lucia, the southbound lane was "completely gone" and the north lane was undermined. The road was closed by CalTrans between Ragged Point and Lime Creek Bridge.

Radio personality Garrison Keilor referenced Jeffers's birthday on his January 10th broadcast of his radio program, "Writers Almanac." This year he read the poem "Return."

The Los Angeles Times's yearly "Literary L.A." *Calendar* issue locates Robinson Jeffers offshore at Hermosa Beach on its extended two-page centerfold and connects him with the text: "Lived throughout the city, most notably in Hermosa Beach, which he commemorated in the poem 'At Playa Hermosa.'" He appears flanked by Charles Bukowski, Thomas Pynchon, Horace McCoy, Henry Miller, Kevin Starr, and Bertold Brecht.

The new Kathleen and Gerald Hill book *Monterey and Carmel: Eden by the Sea*, after picturing Hawk Tower and describing the Tor House complex, claims "Steinbeck spent some time with poet Robinson Jeffers at his Tor House, 26304 Ocean View Avenue" and notes that Jeffers was one of the few contemporary poets whom Steinbeck admired and respected. The "some time at Tor House" seems undocumented.

Gloria Stuart (now of *Titanic* fame) in her recent book *I Just Keep Hoping* recalls the Jeffers family and of her book *Inscriptions at Tor House* writes, "It was the first book of mine that both the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Getty Museum purchased."

Jeffers's poem "Fire on the Hills" introduces the article "Burn, Baby Burn: The Los Padres Fires" on page 9 of the 30 September 1999 *Coast Weekly* newspaper.

Progress Report on Stanford University Press Projects

Editor Tim Hunt's most recent information can be summarized as follows:

Regarding *The Collected Poetry*, Volume 4: Copy-editing, galley proofs, and page proofs are all complete. The plan is for early summer publication.

Regarding *The Selected Poetry*: The introduction has been copy-edited. Proofing might not be necessary for the poem texts, since all poems are simply the texts from the *Collected Poetry*, photographically reproduced. Fall publication is a reasonable bet.

Regarding *The Collected Poetry*, Volume 5: Copy-editing is complete, with galley and page proofs expected over the summer. Publication is projected for late fall or early winter.

Jim Karman reports that *Stones of the Sur: Poetry by Robinson Jeffers/Photographs by Morley Baer* (selected and introduced by James Karman) is awaiting the arrival (shortly) of a final group of photographs. Then the book will enter design/production, which should take about nine months to complete. If all works well, the book should be out by spring 2001.

The Collected Letters, as text, is still several months from completion. A recent trip to Yale's Beinecke Library brought to light another 200 pages of material, most of it in an uncatalogued box hidden away in the Clapp collection. About 50 pages involves Langston Hughes (approximately 25 letters from Una and 10 from Robinson).

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1999

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———. "William Everson." *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 212: *Twentieth-Century American Western Writers, Second Series*. Detroit: Gale Group, 1999, 53–59. [Materials on Jeffers's influence and Everson's publications.]

Horstmann, Ulrich. *Jeffers-Meditationen oder Die Poesie als Abwendungskunst* [*Meditations on Jeffers or Poetry as the Art of Obviation*], 1999.

Quarnstrom, Lee. "Bridge Has Spot in U.S. Literature." *San Jose Mercury News* (31 August 1999). [Electronically received at *JS*.]

Ross, Robert L. "[John] Robinson Jeffers." *Encyclopedia of American Literature*. New York: Continuum, 1999, 585–586.

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Waldron, Robert. "Milosz, Jeffers, and Merton: Poets of Attention." *Merton Journal* (16 June 1999): 10, 43.

Note: The *Jeffers Studies* page of the World Wide Web <www.jeffers.org> offers a rich menu: (1) current articles published electronically and anticipating inclusion in the *JS* annual issue, (2) an archive of *JS* past issue articles, (3) *JS* reviews, (4) a bibliography of works by Jeffers, (5) a bibliography of biographic and critical works on the poet, (6) a Jeffers chronology, (7) a biographic sketch, (8) an ongoing year by year bibliography of pertinent articles, chapters, and books, (9) links to cognate Web sites, including the entire 1,353 pages of *A*

Literary History of the American West (Fort Worth: Texas Christian UP, 1987), which, under Part 2: "Many Wests—Far West," has an 18-page chapter on Jeffers, and (10) the 60-page Index to issues 1–100 (1962–1996) of the *Robinson Jeffers Newsletter*, the previous journal of Jeffers record. The Web site also features a page on the Robinson Jeffers Association, RJA calls for papers, an archive of past RJA conferences, announcements of activity such as the annual essay contest, and a forum for discussion. Upon its appearance in *Jeffers Studies* 3.3, the forthcoming 50-year Jeffers bibliography will also be available at the site.

Robinson Jeffers Association Bulletin

MESSAGE FROM THE NEW PRESIDENT

It is with pleasure and a feeling of great challenge that I take on the role of president of this association. Robert Zaller, my predecessor, leaves office with estimable accomplishments: the working through of the RJA constitution, the successful incorporation of RJA as a non-profit organization, the establishment of the Jeffers Essay Prize, and a work-in-process officially interrelating RJA and *Jeffers Studies*. Much waits to be done. For instance I look to the expansion of the membership, to an outreach with other single author societies for mutual cooperation, to RJA advertisement in academic and literary publications, and to a further expansion of our contribution to the conferences of allied organizations.

I can proudly observe that once again, the Robinson Jeffers Association has mounted a smash hit—its millennial meeting at Carmel's Sunset Center on February 26 and 27, 2000. The provocative theme of the conference was "Jeffers and the Apocalypse," with special emphasis on "Tamar" and "The Double Axe." After a transfer of the presidential gavel from Robert Zaller, who has served as president with such great distinction, the proceedings began with our keynote speaker—the distinguished poet, essayist, and longtime Jeffers admirer, John Haines, who addressed the topic, "The Poet as Prophet." Mr. Haines, the recipient of numerous prestigious prizes, including an Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, in addition read for us some of his own pure and concise poetry.

We were also graced by the presence of Dana Gioia and USC Professor Stephen O'Leary, who has published widely in the field of millennial rhetoric. Professor O'Leary spoke on Jeffers and the Apocalypse. The conference was well attended. Karman, Zaller, Brophy, Rothman, Glaser, Beers, Baird, and Kafka, veterans all, were strong presences. Shaun-Anne Tangney, from Minot University, braved the vagaries of North Dakota weather to read a vibrant paper in which she linked Jeffers with Emily Dickinson. On day two, Stephen Wilhite from Long Beach City College and Bruce Henderson from Fullerton joined in a discussion of "Tamar." Dirk Aardsma, from CU, Boulder, and Shirley Linden Morrison of the College of Notre Dame contributed to the discussion of "The Double Axe." Jim Baird, of the University of North Texas, presented a paper on Jeffers and science, and Donald Masterson, of SUNY, Oswego, discussed Charles Bukowski's admiration of Jeffers.

Stunning performances by the mystical Russian poet, Tatanya Apraksina, and the Hellenic bard, Lili Bita, as well as moving readings by the American poets, Bill Costley and Claudia MonPere McIsaac, demonstrated the creativity of our participants.

Next year, we all meet on April 28 and 29, in Taos, New Mexico! The theme of the 2001 conference is “Robinson Jeffers and the Circle of Mabel Dodge Luhan,” and the sub-theme, for day two, is “Jeffers and Wilderness.” This conference demands early commitment and preparation. Sign up with David Rothman as soon as possible.

JEFFERS ESSAY PRIZE

The Robinson Jeffers Association is pleased to announce the third annual Jeffers Essay Prize. The Award is underwritten by the Robinson Jeffers Tor House Foundation and its board member John Varady, and will be given annually to the undergraduate or graduate student who submits the best previously unpublished essay on any aspect of Jeffers’s work.

Applicants are encouraged to consider Jeffers’s relations to other significant writers and thinkers. In addition to a cash award of $500, the winning essay will be considered for publication in *Jeffers Studies*, and the recipient will be invited to deliver a talk based on the essay at the annual gathering of the Robinson Jeffers Association.

Each applicant should follow MLA style and submit four copies of his or her essay to David J. Rothman, Chair, Jeffers Prize Committee, P.O. Box 1296, Crested Butte, CO 81224. The deadline is December 1, 2000.

Abstracts of Dissertations, Masters Theses, and Articles

Editors' note: The following abstracts have been culled from the Internet. Each has its contribution, some being rather exotic. Original poems are included as testifying to the impact of Jeffers's narratives, especially on the modern American poetic consciousness. (See the Jeffers Studies Online page for this issue's electronic essay by Mark Jarman on this very subject.)

Gunnar Axberger. "Arson and Fiction: A Cross-Disciplinary Study." *Psychiatry: Journal for the Study of Interpersonal Processes*. 36.3 (August 1973): 244–265.

Axberger's article presents a review of psychological, psychiatric, and creative literature in an attempt to illuminate the psychological mechanisms underlying arson. The works of Robinson Jeffers as well as of writers from other cultures are used to clarify this fascination with fire. The analysis is further broadened to encompass the meaning of fire to those involved in warfare. Fascination with fire is seen as a discharge reaction, a safety valve for fantasies and repressions, especially those of a repressed sexual nature.

Eric William Case. "A Production and Production Book of Euripides' 'Medea' Freely Adapted by Robinson Jeffers." Baylor University thesis for Masters of Fine Arts, 1998. *Masters Abstracts International* (MAI) 37/02, p. 406, April 1999. 137 pages.

This thesis analyzes the life and works of Euripides and the style and meaning of his play Medea for a production in the Mabee Theatre of the Hooper-Schaefer Fine Arts Center at Baylor University. Included in this work is a biography of the playwright. This thesis analyzes the structural elements of the play: idea, dramatic action, character, dialogue, mood and tempo, and given circumstances. In addition, a detailed design approach is discussed. All elements of the play's design are explored: scenery, properties, costumes, make-up, sound, and lighting. Also included are: a light plot, ground plan, make-up chart, costume chart, properties chart, light cue schedule, sound cue schedule. The final chapter is a prompt book. Found in the appendix is the pre-production publicity and a copy of the program.

George Hart. "The Poetics of Postmodernist Nature Poetry." Stanford University dissertation 1997. DAI-A 58/07, p. 2652, Jan 1998.

In this work I contend that American nature poetry changed significantly after the Modernist period. I argue that certain poets, in their reaction to and use of Modernist poetics, wrote nature poetry in two distinct modes. For my argument, I use the distinction between Postmodernist and Neoromantic modes as a model for categorizing and analyzing the nature poetry written by these poets. In the introduction I provide an overview of the nature lyric's Romantic origins, and a brief discussion of the status of nature as a subject in twentieth-century poetry. Close readings of poems by W. S. Merwin and George Oppen, and poems by Denise Levertov and Charles Wright, serve respectively as preliminary definitions of the Postmodernist and the Neoromantic. Chapters on Lorine Niedecker and Kenneth Rexroth stand as detailed examinations of these two poetic modes. Specifically, it is my contention that these two poets, as second generation Modernists, are the pivots between Modernist poetics and the Postmodernist and Neoromantic movements. The Postmodernist nature lyric, found in the work of Niedecker, continues Modernism's experiments with language, and reflects its preference for an impersonalism that effaces the lyric subject. The Neoromantic nature lyric, developed in the work of Rexroth, reestablishes the Romantic belief in the presence of the lyric subject, and asserts the connection between language and nature. In the next chapter, I examine the sacramental relationship to nature developed by Rexroth and Robinson Jeffers in their long poems written during World War Two. I then turn to William Everson and discuss how his extension of this sacramental stance adopts the rhetoric of crisis from the environmentalist movement. The final chapter considers the work of Charles Olson and Larry Eigner as indicative of Postmodernist nature poetry. The crux of Postmodernism is the materiality of the signifier, and both poets experiment with poetic methods that use words as things. The Postmodernist chapter serves as the conclusion, in which I hope to have introduced ecologically oriented readers and critics to poets who work outside of the more familiar Neoromantic mode, and thereby to have expanded the canon of American nature poetry.

Scott Johnson. "Distance and Fusion in Robinson Jeffers' 'The Purse-Seine' and Other Poems." *Contemporary Family Therapy: An International Journal* 2 (14 April 1992): 171–178.

Abstract: Discusses the themes of distance and fusion in 3 poems by R. Jeffers. The clinical ideas presented in Jeffers's work are examined; Jeffers carries the torch of "rugged individualism" against his perception of the gloom of social

homogeneity. Rather than pursuing closeness, he confuses isolation with autonomy and togetherness with smothering.

Scott Johnson. "Systemic Concepts in Literature and Art" (Family Therapy, Luigi Pirandello, Franz Kafka, Robinson Jeffers). Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University dissertation, 1991. DAI-B 52/03, p. 1702, Sep 1991. 135 pages.

The examination of literature and art has been one of psychotherapy's most powerful ways of explicating its theories and disseminating its concepts. In this study, I have explored various concepts of family psychotherapy by applying them to three works of imaginative literature, and one work of sculpture: Luigi Pirandello's play, "Six Characters in Search of an Author," Franz Kafka's novella, *The Metamorphosis*, Robinson Jeffers' poem, "The Purse-Seine," and the ancient Roman sculpture, the Laocoon.

Emelyn G. Joyner. "Medea for Soprano and Chamber Orchestra." (Original composition.) Memphis State Univeristy DMA 1989. DAI 50/09, p 2697, March 1990. 61 pages.

The version of Medea that I've composed is a music drama for solo soprano, five actors, and chamber orchestra. The script, based loosely on Euripides' Medea, as translated by Paul Roche, is set on a farm in Arkansas. Most of the dialogue is mundane—Medea is presented as an ordinary person, not as a supernatural sorceress. She copes with an emotionally devastating situation by destroying her tormentor—a mission which she accomplishes perfectly, at enormous sacrifice. Originally, I was invited to set the legend of Medea to music for a local ballet company. The ballet company disbanded before I began composing the piece. However, I was intrigued and involved with the drama, having read and analyzed Euripides' play with the intention of setting it to music. Not wanting to abandon this project, I made the decision to compose a work based on the Medea legend for my D.M.A. dissertation requirement. I read several more versions and interpretations of the legend. Roberson Jeffers's and Jean Anouilh's versions of the Medea legend interested me especially because of their portrayals of Medea as a survivor—a person who didn't compromise and succumb to circumstances; rather than as a demonic, vengeance-obsessed sorceress. As I began to think about how music could express my interpretation of the legend, I listened to 20th century composers' treatments of Greek dramas and related themes, including Noh-styled music dramas. These compositions included Karl Orff's Antigone and Oedipus Rex, Stravinsky's Oedipus Rex,

Benjamin Britten's Curlew River and Prodigal Son, Roger Brindle's The Death of Antigone, Luciano Berio's Laborintus II, and Jacob Druckman's Lamia, among others. The Medea which I've composed is presented from Medea's perspective—Medea expresses her anguish and plots her revenge in songs. The outer world is expressed by actors who have roles as everyday people in Medea's environment, and who also speak together as a chorus that comments on her plight. Actors and chorus however, are not at all independent of Medea—the outside world is presented as Medea imagines it. The shape, contour, and settings of the drama, again as perceived by Medea, are played by the chamber orchestra. The chamber orchestra, Medea as solo soprano (with piano accompaniment), and actors give voice to the cathartic experience of single-minded passion. Medea was given a first public reading on May 21st, in a program of new compositions sponsored by Memphis Composers Alliance, Inc., and the Memphis State University Department of Music. A conductor's score and recording are available in the Memphis State University Library.

William J. Lavonis. "The Songs of Richard Faith." University of Cincinnati DMA, 1991. DAI-A 52/09, p. 3122, Mar 1992. 337 pages.

The Songs of Richard Faith focuses on the fifty-seven unpublished songs of American composer Richard Faith (b. 1926). Included is a short biography of the composer and discussion of his neoromantic/impressionistic style. The primary emphasis is the investigation of the union of Faith's music with the poetry he has chosen. The songs are discussed primarily according to their poetry, beginning with texts by British poets (including William Butler Yeats, William Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Emily Brontë, and Joseph Campbell); American poets (Robinson Jeffers, Conrad Aiken, Lew Sarett, and Edgar Allan Poe); colleagues and friends of the composer; and songs whose texts reflect themes of the sea ("Sea Fever" by John Masefield, "Dover Beach" by Matthew Arnold, and English translations of two selections from "L'horizon chimerique" by Jean de la Ville de Mirmont). The final section deals with miscellaneous lyrics such as I Corinthians 13, "Though I Speak." A brief biography of each author along with pertinent information on the text and the original poem are included as a guide for performers.

Brian Lee Moore. "Ecocentric Personification in American Nature Writing (John Burroughs, Edward Abbey, George Sessions, A. F. Tansley)." Texas Christian University dissertation 1996. (243 pages) DAI0A 57/11m o 4741, May 1997.

This study explores the ways in which certain American writers employ personification as a means of calling for adherence to an ecocentric view of the world and/or undermining the anthropocentricity that legitimates the arguably excessive human industrialization of wilderness. The use of this trope has been criticized by such environmental writers and philosophers as John Burroughs, Edward Abbey, George Sessions, and A. G. Tansley, among others, who argue that personification is inherently anthropocentric and thus rhetorically self-defeating. And yet the use of language, which includes the rhetorical figures, is basic to the symbolic action that is unique to humans. The history of personification theory from (roughly) Homer to Paul de Man reveals that no single definition of the term cuts across all time periods, though writers and scholars such as Vico, Nietzsche, and de Man, though not ecocentrists, promote the idea that anthropomorphism is the result of human presumptuousness. A number of nature writers, including Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, Aldo Leopold, Loren Eiseley, Edward Abbey, Annie Dillard, and Terry Tempest Williams, are aware of the anthropocentric pitfalls inherent in anthropomorphism, but most of these writers employ the device frequently, not to valorize the human subject, but to argue that living things and natural objects possess an intrinsic value similar to that of humans. Ecocentric and/or anti-anthropocentric personification is not solely a device of "nature writers"; it is also employed by a number of American poets and fiction writers, including Walt Whitman, Herman Melville, William Faulkner, Flannery O'Connor, Robinson Jeffers, and several post-World War II poets.

Barbara S. Nadel. "Robinson Jeffers' Cawdor: The Emergence of Man's Tragic Beauty." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 45.1 (March 1977): 76.

This paper explores Robinson Jeffers' tragic vision through an analysis of his narrative poem Cawdor (1928). Attention is directed toward the dual assessment of mankind which this poem reveals and which characterizes Jeffers' thought as a whole. While Jeffers tends to be most remembered for those passages in which he bitterly attacks the "contagion" of humanity and reduces human illusions to proper perspective amidst the austere beauties of the natural universe, this harsh indictment constitutes only one pole of his evaluation of man. Ultimately, Jeffers saw mankind's multiple ills in terms of inevitable suffering and perceived man's agony as a lesser, tragic beauty, echoing an external tragedy. This study focuses upon the emergence of this viewpoint in the context of Jeffers' understanding of tragedy, his affirmation of the value of endurance, and his position of a tragic wisdom as mankind's only possible salvation.

In his revolt against modernist verse, Jeffers attempted to infuse his poetry with the power and reality of prose, to express philosophic ideas in verse, and to do so through a deliberate use of images whose function was to "activate thoughts." Accordingly, this analysis of Cawdor concentrates on the patterns of imagery which convey Jeffers' negative view of the human condition, but which also trace the emergence of man's tragic beauty.

The paper examines the images of damnation which dramatize Cawdor's descent into hell and records Jeffers' critique of mankind's inflated self-concern. The narrative, however, reveals the transformation of Jeffers' prophetic accusation against humanity into a tragic compassion through a series of other images which modify Jeffers' initial judgment. Most striking is the symbol of the caged eagle which both summarizes the tragic circumstances of human life and points to the tragic wisdom available to humanity which, in this work, only Cawdor achieves. Through his self-blinding, Cawdor associates himself with the eagle's vision of "the archetype Body of life," and the knowledge which he thereby symbolically acquires constitutes his, and the poem's, tragic affirmation. Jeffers' poetic conception is essentially Puritan in character, for his poems are intended as "instruments of discovery" rather than creation. The truth which his poems are meant to discover is precisely the caged eagle's vision of the Eagle God, of the beauty amidst the terror.

Far from preaching a mysticism beyond good and evil, Jeffers illumines man's nobility in endurance and celebrates a world of irrevocable evil in which salvation is achieved only by participation in the tragic spectacle.

Michael Oren Smedshammer. "Modern Writers in New Mexico: Charles Lummis, Oliver La Farge, D. H. Lawrence, Willa Cather, and the Quest for Purpose and Place in the Southwest." University of New Mexico dissertation, 1998. DAI-A 59/07, P.2495, January 1999.

During the modern period, New Mexico became an important art colony for painters and writers. Isolated in the Southwest corner of the United States, New Mexico and its Spanish-colonial history, exotic architecture, and striking landscapes appeared to offer a much-needed alternative to the modern world. New Mexico was also home to Native American and Hispanic cultures that did not seem to suffer from "modern angst." Artists vaguely hoped that New Mexico would provide a sense of purpose and place, notions that had eluded them in the modern world. But in New Mexico writers faced a unique problem. Their skills had been honed to describe the modern world and its ills. If the dominant theme of modern writing centers on the quest for purpose and place in a world where that goal has become impossible to achieve, how would writers interpret New Mexico, a region where purpose and place were not only possible, but

taken for granted? Ultimately writers discovered that they could not simply merge with the cultures they found in New Mexico; the great theme of their writing, the endless quest for purpose and place, depended on maintaining a sense of isolation and separation from the cultures they observed there. The writing they produced about New Mexico reflects, therefore, varying degrees of identification with and separation from New Mexican culture and landscape. Some writers, such as Charles Lummis, mistakenly believed that they could simply become part of the New Mexico environment when they needed an escape from the modern, often urban places that were their homes, while others, such as Willa Cather, understood that maintaining one's isolation was an inescapable but potentially beautiful aspect of the modern experience in New Mexico. For the writers discussed in this dissertation in addition to Lummis and Cather—Mary Austin, Witter Bynner, Robinson Jeffers, Oliver La Farge, D. H. Lawrence, Mabel Dodge Luhan, and Jean Toomer—reconciling the myth of New Mexico as sanctuary from the modern world with the reality of modern existence remained an important aspect of their work.

Michael Albert Zentius. "Learning to Climb." [Original poem.] 36 pages. San Jose State University Masters Project, 1998. MAI 37/03, p. 761, June 1999.

This project is a narrative poem in blank verse. In the tradition of poets Robinson Jeffers and Gary Snyder, the poem tells the story of Rex, who through learning the rudiments of climbing rocks and mountains also learns about the world around him.

Zimmerman, Lee. "An eye for an I: Emerson and Some 'True' Poems of Robinson Jeffers, William Everson, Robert Penn Warren, and Adrienne Rich." *Contemporary Literature* 33.4 (Winter 1992): 645–65.

Abstract: Two views about selfhood which may be found in "true poems" are those which construe the self as autonomous and those which view it as non-autonomous or relational. These are associated with the masculine and feminine conceptions of selfhood, respectively. Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Nature" and works by Robinson Jeffers, William Everson, and Robert Penn Warren also feature this autonomous self. In contrast with this is the self as characterized in Adrienne Rich's poem "Transcendental Etude" which does not subscribe to the concept of the self as in opposition to nature or God.

Other Items Noted:

ARCHIVE/MANUSCRIPT. Lehman, B. H. (Benjamin Harrison), 1889-1977.
Recollections and reminiscences of life in the Bay Area from 1920 onward : and related material, oral history transcript / B.H. Lehman; tape recorded interview conducted by Suzanne B. Riess in 1964-1968. Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley,California, 1969 : 1964-1969. Includes a section on Robinson Jeffers.
Transcript : [22], 348 leaves ; 28 cm. + related material.
Phonotapes : 2 sound tape reels
Libraries: University of California, Berkeley, Bancroft Library
Lehman wrote the introduction to Jeffers's Book Club of California collection *Poems* in 1928. He was husband of Judith Anderson.

Marshall, I. "The dialogic and the Ecologic in Robinson Jeffers's 'The Inquisitors.'" *CEA Critic* 55.2 (Winter 1993): 42-51.

Musings on Contemporary Theology's Readings of Judas: A Note

Robert Brophy

For its contribution to Holy Week 2000, *The Los Angeles Times*, Good Friday, April 21, provided a front-page article (three pages, five columns) on the rehabilitation of Judas. Headline: "New Look at Ancient Betrayer." "For centuries, Judas Iscariot has been the archetype of the traitor. But some scholars are beginning to wonder if he was a villain at all." It is critically significant that Larry B. Stammer, *Times* Religion Writer, is not quoting heretics or gospel slanderers but respected scripture scholars like the Catholic Fr. Raymond Brown, author of a classic two-volume study of Jesus and editor of an *Anchor Bible* volume. The article traces Judas's scriptural embodiment from Paul's non-comment on Judas in his epistles, the earliest of Christian writings (AD 40–60), through the 489-word characterization of Judas the betrayer in John's gospel (AD 90–100), pointing up the layers of cumulated "bad press" from Mark to John, reflecting, it seems, the changing socio-ecclesial situation of the Christians as they broke with Judaism and were ejected from the Temple. Once separate (ca. AD 70), they used Judas as a marker in opposing Christian to Jew. Judas, whose name means Jew, became symbol of Jewish betrayal and rejection of the Messiah.

Among the points covered in the article:

- the need to differentiate Christian and Jew at the first century's end
- the anti-Jewish tone chosen to appeal to gentile converts
- Augustine's fourth-century, heavily symbolic depicting of Judas as perfidious Jew opposite to Christ the Messiah
- the subsequent prompting of art to depict Judas with exaggerated Jewish features and a consuming love of money
- the meaning of the Greek word *paradidomi*, whether to "hand over" or "betray," an important distinction
- the view of Judas simply as necessary agent of divine will, de-emphasizing his anti-Christ machinations
- Paul's use of the word *parodidomi* possibly to suggest the mysterious "suffering servant" of Isaiah, who was "despised and rejected" (figured prominently in Handel's "Messiah")

- one scholar's suggestion that Jesus and Judas together arranged Jesus' arrest as a means of presenting him to the chief priests and elders to make the case that he was the Messiah
- totally surprised by the direction of events, Judas's hanging himself as a gesture in the tradition of the soldier dying with his king
- a famous painting with Judas hanging on a tree beside Jesus hanging on the cross, with a nest of birds in the hanging tree symbolizing hope.

The *Times* article recalls the Judas that was narrator in the 1971 mildly controversial rock musical *Jesus Christ Superstar*, who selflessly betrays Jesus to "save the movement." It also cites the 1988 much vilified film *The Last Temptation of Christ* in which Judas acts as co-conspirator with Jesus in his death—a portrayal that in the 1950s novel earned for Kazantzakis excommunication by the Greek Orthodox Church. Not far from Jeffers's plot.

Admittedly Jeffers's Jesus and Judas are rather stark as Jeffers projects their motivations. Judas is an obsessive-compulsive rescuer of others from pain and has Jesus arrested to provide a cooling-off period among his Passover supporters and opponents; Jesus is depicted as driven by shame, grasping for acceptance and then for spiritual power over 2,000 years of the Western World by orchestrating his own crucifixion. Yet both are portrayed by the author as innocently fulfilling God's will. Jesus both grasps and articulates this fatalism-under-God: "I tell you feelingly [Judas], it is the honor of all men living to be dupes of God / And serve not their own ends nor understandings but His, and so die" (CP 2.30) and "You see men walking and they seem to be free but look at the faces, they're caught. / There was never a man cut himself loose" (*CP* 2.31).

The *Times* article's significance is that in the light of modern mainline biblical scholarship some of the quasi-historical gospel scenes are seen as layered with non-historical detail meant to convey specific lessons to their readership. Unfortunately the "truth" thus conveyed can be unintentionally mischievous—launching in this case two millennia of anti-Semitism. The metaphoric becomes an instrument of the racism which the Christian churches only now are renouncing.

The *Times* article makes no mention of Jeffers's play, but the discussion does suggest that the kind of Catholic (and other) outrage that greeted *Dear Judas* in Boston in 1929, though still possible, would no longer be stoked by theologians. Although it has been revered as exceptionally good theater (see Eric Vaughn, *RJN* 51: 7–22), *Dear Judas* might still suffer the fate of *The Last Temptation,* but presumably at this point only at the hands of fundamentalists reading each phrase as fact and history, not at the hands of the more widely read, those appreciative of the nuances of contemporary biblical interpretation.

Abstracts of Jeffers Papers Read at the Western Literature Association Conference "West of the West: California and the American West" Held at Sacramento, 13–16 October 1999

Editors' note: This year's WLA conference had a special occasion and theme. The occasion was the turn of a century which also marked a new millennium; the theme was the "westness" of California. The occasion found a remarkable response from Jeffers scholars: without a doubt this was the first time a conference hosted seven papers probing the Carmel-Big Sur poet's relationship with the continent's end and his vision from this vantage. We take this occasion to offer abstracts of each of the papers read—alphabetically by author.

"Continent's End: Landscape as Court of Judgment in Robinson Jeffers," by Robert Brophy, California State University, Long Beach.

The short lyric "Continent's End" is in many ways the defining poem of Robinson Jeffers's life. It was the poem chosen to title the 1925 anthology of California verse that in turn led to his discovery and fame, largely through the efforts of literary critic and *New Masses* editor James Rorty. The headland cliffs of Big Sur became for him more and more a platform from which the human cavalcade (Western Civilization at least) was to be judged—as it had evolved from emergent oceanic life-forms into the consciousness and assertiveness of humankind. This "drop off cliff of the world" (a phrase from "Tamar") was more than just a loved region for Jeffers; it was everything: his daily meditation, his cosmic context, his divine revelation. In the posthumously published lyric "My Loved Subject," he writes regarding his life-work: "My loved subject: / Mountain and ocean, rock, water and beasts and trees / Are the protagonists, the human people are only symbolic interpreters." He called his poetic stance "Inhumanism," identifying and placing humankind as a temporary species embodying a troublesome phenomenon, consciousness, which he judged in many ways dysfunctional ("Margrave"). In narrative after narrative ("Tamar," "Roan Stallion," "Cawdor," "The Women at Point Sur," "The Loving Shepherdess," and "Give Your Heart to the Hawks," for instance) this continent's

end was tribunal of inquisition (see also the lyric "The Inquisitors"). In two narratives in particular, this becomes explicit. In "A Redeemer" Jeffers's Doppelganger anticipates the horrendo us retribution awaiting the genocidal and environmental devastation of the western movement. In "Thurso's Landing," judgment is made successively, on one man, on one family, and on the race itself, summoned to a thousand-foot headland cliff, culmination of humankind's millennia of history.

"From the Range of Light to Continent's End: Mystical Naturalism and Revisionary Romantics in John Muir and Robinson Jeffers," by Kirk Glaser, Santa Clara University.

While John Muir and Robinson Jeffers are seldom considered together, they share a brotherhood as ecological prophets and nature mystics of Californian landscapes which reveals their centrality to California literature and culture, especially the aesthetic and spiritual dimensions of the California "wilderness experience." Most essentially, they share a pattern of immersion in the natural world that both locates them in the romantic-modernist tradition and reveals their too often and too easily dismissed revisions of the romantic quest. Both rely on the wisdom of intimate, sensate experience in nature to convey a reality outside of human imagination—what I call their mystical naturalism. Both writers "annihilate" themselves by immersing themselves in landscapes characteristically Californian and characterized by powerful elemental force—the glacially carved mountains of the Sierra for Muir and the ocean crucible of the Big Sur coast for Jeffers. This annihilation provides the nature-mystic's path to insight. Their immersion in living, elemental matter pushes both into versions of the geophysical sublime—visions of the geologic, cosmic forces that shape and reshape the places we briefly inhabit and which reveal the lives of the forests, lakes, mountains, cliff coastlines, and, most importantly, the life of humanity, all as a beautiful but temporary dance of creation's genius. Muir and Jeffers react with important distinctions to their geologic visions of nature's destructive creativity (Muir following the mystic's *via positiva* and Jeffers the *via negativa*), but they both present organismic models of nature in which they attempt to decenter the psychological self. Their poetics disrupt the dualities that typically constellate around the central conflict of culture/self versus nature/other which informs much romantic and modernist literature—dualities that often manifest themselves in patterns of attraction to, followed by alienation from, nature.

For both writers the imagination serves as a vehicle to connect with the natural world and its spiritual realities. This contrasts with the dominant romantic and modernist interpretation which celebrates the human imagina-

tion as the primary ordering and creative principle in the world but also as the source of alienation from nature. By examining the ways that Muir and Jeffers immerse themselves in elemental nature in prose passages such as the Yosemite Falls experience from *My First Summer in the Sierra* and poems such as "Continent's End"—which represent the feeling, thinking body as a vehicle to mystical, prophetic, and ecological wisdom—we may trace often overlooked elements of the California experience of the wild, and offer these two figures as serious alternatives to the line of romantic, modernist, and postmodernist discourse regarding the relationship between the imaginative self and the "other" of nature. Examining such writers enables us to re-imagine ways of inhabiting the earth as well as calls attention to the ways nature is shaped to meet human values and needs by even the most sensitive nature writers.

"Robinson Jeffers's California Landscape and the Rhetoric of Displacement," by Pierre Lagayette, University of Paris.

What strikes me in Teddy Roosevelt's remark about California [that it is west of the west]—besides its tell-tale expansiveness—is the intimation of a shift, of a beyond-ness which applies not just to the topographical actuality of California but to the search for an impossible crossing (through metaphorical language) into a further unknown. The capacity to express an overdimensioned West has always been one of the most formidable challenges for the American artist. And, for writers, the limitations of descriptive language clearly hampered their efforts towards expressing the full vitality, immensity, and beauty of western landscapes. Incidentally, Roosevelt's formula is a rhetorical acknowledgment of that impossibility, for "west of the west" in fact points to a nowhere—a location constantly displaced, whose best quality lies precisely in its intangibility (we could call it dis-location)—California being then the closest one could get to this inexpressible place.

There are many more examples of writers' attempts to weave this into the discourse of fiction (another name for the above "nowhere"), from Norris to Steinbeck to Bierce to Jeffers, or into the language of bewilderment, from Zebulon Pike to Muir.

Jeffers had his own idea: he worked with and on words to constitute the expression of the beyond into what has been presented as a philosophy and, to me, is primarily a poet's work on language: inhumanism. Confronted with the mutual exclusion of landscape and narrativity (nature cannot describe itself), Jeffers nevertheless strove to constantly use landscape as a strategy for the displacement of voice, to show that nature may find its best expression not in the lyrical, egocentric outbursts of forced empathy between man and land, but, on the contrary, when language becomes irrelevant to its mimetic purposes, when

nature springs forth in the interstices of language or takes advantage of the staged removal of narrators and protagonists.

This is Promethean work: nature will never "speak" for itself and Jeffers assigns an impossible task to his narrative poetry. Yet, if there is one place where the marginality of the human voice can be best felt it is in California. There is a darker side to the quest of the American Sublime, which is precisely the recognition of an impotence to bridge the gap between human achievements and the beauty of western landscape. For all its symbolic power to signify the conquest of a continent and the primacy of man over land, the American West—and California especially—still is the place where, paradoxically, man loses significance. Caught between desert and ocean, two natural spaces that are unnatural to him, the western man has only language to resort to if he ever desires to restore a missing link with nature, landscape.

It is this reconstruction through language, as Jeffers worked it out, which interests me, his use of landscape as material for the construction of discourse, providing spaces and structures which condition the treatment of characters, the conception of the poetic voice, the metaphoric impulse. Jeffers's favorite poetic devices are dynamic: they serve not just to extol nature's aesthetic power, nor simply to contrast the permanence or transcendence of landscape with man's transience (turning poetry into a dialectical instrument in the philosophical debate over man vs. not-man), but to actualize, in the poetic act, the displacement of the human voice by landscape, to create a space where the difference between human and inhuman—as established by voice—disappears. Jeffers's inhumanism is not merely an eccentric western version of the transcendental impulse; it is truly an attempt to provide a stage for the dramatization of the poet's linguistic dilemma: how to reconcile western man with the physical world using the words which precisely constitute the severance? Tensions, violence, tragedy proceed less from a representation of human vices (much has to be said about the nihilist Jeffers) than from the narrative display and/or indictment of the limitations of language (as conscious act). My goal is, ultimately, to show that Jeffers is closer to post-modernism than has generally been assumed.

"'The Coast Opposite Humanity': Competing Visions of Cosmos, Self, and History in Rich, Milosz, and Jeffers," by David Copland Morris, University of Washington, Tacoma.

Although academic criticism has largely ignored Robinson Jeffers, and he has no visible influence on contemporary poetry, his true importance is suggested by the number of significant writers who have felt compelled to grapple profoundly with his work. Obvious examples are Edward Abbey, Gary Snyder, and

Loren Eiseley. Adrienne Rich and Czeslaw Milosz are less obvious cases, but they have gone so far as to write major poems ("Yom Kippur 1984" and "To Robinson Jeffers," respectively) specifically and vigorously challenging Jeffers's "inhumanist" vision. Both were immigrants to California at the time they wrote their poems. The relocation in middle age to a dramatically new landscape, and the confrontation there with Jeffers's powerfully provocative "Inhumanism," caused both Rich and Milosz to seriously reexamine their basic humanist commitments. In striking out at Jeffers, they throw into illuminating relief some of the vital issues his work raises.

Jeffers, transformed by the extravagantly beautiful environment of the Big Sur coast and the grotesquely futile violence of the First World War, came to relish (perhaps inordinately) solitude and inhuman nature. As a result, he was often accused of misanthropy, a charge also leveled against many committed environmentalists today. Jeffers can be characterized as adopting what environmental theologian Thomas Berry calls a "geocentric norm of reality and value," and as embodying what deep ecologists call the expansive or cosmologically based self.

Rich and Milosz, on the other hand, put forward notions that approximate the concept some ecofeminists have designated the "relational self," a concept infused with wariness of attempts by people like Jeffers to achieve a supposedly god-like perspective. The fire generated by the friction Rich and Milosz feel between themselves and Jeffers illuminates current debates in environmental philosophy, as well as debates about the final value of Jeffers's work. We can also see in the writing of all three poets the power of the California coastal landscape to provoke elemental questioning and reevaluation.

"Landscape and Power: Jeffers, Empire, and the American Century," by Peter Quigley, Embry Riddle University, Prescott.

Over the past few years, landscape has been a hotly debated issue in theoretical discussions, both in and out of literary circles. In environmental discourse, one of the more interesting discussions is the issue of attempting to depict landscape "for its own sake," or more generally, the issue of representation in landscape. W. J. T. Mitchell, in his recent edited collection of articles called *Landscape and Power*, has suggested that there is a particular relationship between landscape painting and imperialism.

In this paper I am interested in the degree to which Mitchell's claim has any force, and if so to what degree does the recent interest in landscape and nature writing bear witness to disturbing global-political dynamics. In addition, I attempt to place Jeffers's work within the various arguments over the significance of landscape. In particular I am interested in addressing the claim,

implicitly or explicitly put forth, that the depiction of nature of writers such as Abbey and Jeffers falls short of some mark when compared to writers like Snyder, or ecofeminist and Native American writers. My claim will be that Jeffers's depiction of nature engages Mitchell's concern of imperialism in provocative ways. Also, I will suggest that Jeffers's depiction of nature is given short shrift if it is used as a foil to advance a trendy agenda. In fact I will suggest that Jeffers avoids the anthropocentric, neolithic regneration obsession of much of contemporary writing as well as the transcendent or scientific objectivity some critics accuse him of.

"Robinson Jeffers's Inhumanist Poetics and the Vision of Nature in American Art," by David J. Rothman.

At century's end, most if not all Americans are familiar with the nature photograph. Though recorded by a human, most nature photography studiously excludes human beings, reflecting instead on the grandeur, serenity, harshness, or purity of the landscape in the lens. While the evolution of this aesthetic is complex, it is safe to say that no writer had a greater influence upon its development than Robinson Jeffers. Jeffers's poetic vision of Inhumanism, in which he encouraged human beings to turn outward, away from contemplation of themselves and society, to the natural, "inhuman" world, had a tremendous impact on many of the century's greatest photographers, including Ansel Adams and Edward Weston, both of whom greatly admired Jeffers's work and made portraits of him. Jeffers work not only had a profound influence on the concept of nature as it evolved in the environmental movement; it had a direct, if still largely unperceived, effect on how many Americans (and those in other countries) imagine the natural world, which can be traced in the evolution of American art and photography. The talk will trace these developments, with discussion of the figures named above, as well as Winslow Homer, Edward Abbey, and John Fielder.

"Inhumanism, or, the Cultural Logic of California," by ShaunAnne Tangney, Minot State University.

"When I am in California, I am not in the west, I am west of the west."—Theodore Roosevelt

"But I reckon I got to light out for the territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally, she's going to adopt me and sivilize me, and I can't stand it. I been there before."—Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

The Theodore Roosevelt quote is handy in that it is memorable and mysterious, but I do think that it begs a larger question. Certainly California is the very edge of the Western World: next stop, the Orient. But I am always struck at how California and Californians consistently pride themselves on their west-of-the-westness. In their introduction to *The California Dream* Dennis Hale and Jonathan Eisen write, “because California is far away, both physically and psychologically, it has benefited from a process of self-selection that takes [people] who *want* to be far away and repels those who do not” (xiii). I am compelled to ask: far away (physically and psychologically) from *what*? I can only assume New York, and even London, traditional epicenters of Western civilization, tradition, and thought (that London has long been considered the geographical center of the Western World is but a construct, albeit a pervasive one, of the human brain which can turn a spherical planet into a flat map). And these people, these Californians, why do they *want* to be so far away from the epicenters of Western civilization, tradition, and thought? Perhaps they are a bit like Huck Finn: they’ve been in civilization before and they just can’t stand it any more. One of the longest lasting tenets of Western civilization, tradition, and thought has been the philosophy of Humanism; it has long stood as a definition of Western cultural authority and experience. According to Hale and Eisen, Californians are both products and producers of “a . . . [shift] of cultural authority and experience” (xiv). Perhaps the shift for those Californians’ cultural authority and experience led to a new philosophical tradition. In this paper I will argue that the Californian shift in cultural authority and experience was a direct influence on Robinson Jeffers and his fomentation of Inhumanism. In other words, the culture that is California had direct bearing on Jeffers and how he came to the philosophy of Inhumanism.

The paper will, of course, define and discuss both Humanism and Inhumanism, but the bulk of it will discuss and define California culture—the new cultural authority and experience that Hale and Eisen point to—and argue that it is largely that culture that was the constructive impetus for Inhumanism. Which is to say that Inhumanism happened in California because it is west of the west, and being so, needs to leave the Humanistic tradition of the West behind. Leaving Humanism behind, one of the things California makes to replace it is Jeffers’s Inhumanism. If the syntax of that last sentence seems tortured—that California was the impetus for Inhumanism, not necessarily or directly Robinson Jeffers—consider Shivva Naipaul’s contention that California is “a state of mind; a state of being.” Taking a poststructuralist and cultural studies tack, as my paper will, it is not inconceivable to argue that California created Inhumanism. I hope such an argument will be an unusual and intriguing addition to the panel.