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NEWS AND NOTES

ROBINSON JEFFERS CENTENNIAL. Both the Carmel and the Occidental celebrations of Robinson Jeffers' birthdate, January 10th (see RJN 68), were impressive and much enjoyed. The Occidental commemoration of "Medea" on February 21st was also highly praised. The afternoon audience viewed the Kennedy Center's 1983 production with Zoe Caldwell and Judith Anderson, on a special large TV screen in Alumni Auditorium (there seems to be no film commercially or otherwise available either for sale or rent).

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In the evening the Jane Brown Dance Company drew from Jeffers' adaptation of Euripides' play, with excerpts from key scenes, uttered by the dancer while providing strong emotive resonances through interpretive gesture. Jane began the evening with a kind of Jeffersian prelude consisting of five vignettes called "Abstracts from the World Around Us" -- "Form of Water," "Oak Tree," "Dark Forest Pool," "Rim Rock," and "Earth Forms." After an intermission, "Medea" was then performed with beautiful vigor and fidelity, spotlighting key scenes and catching the vindictive hatred and pathetic ambivalence of the character. Medea was seen in a new and unique way as the audience was pulled into her split mind, a woman caught in a man's world in which sexual tyranny was presumed and Greek reason (and political manipulation) smothered all else. The authority that Jane Brown brings to the dance-theater reveals not only her expertise as a choreographer but also her understanding of Jeffers' intent. A one-time pupil of Martha Graham, Lester Horton, and Muriel Stuart, she shows a mastery and joy in her work which is truly impressive. The troupe travelled from Oakland, setting up, in remarkably short time, its own floor, lighting, and seating in Alumni Gymnasium, after no Occidental auditorium or theater stage was found to allow the necessary expansiveness and in-the-round immediacy demanded by the production.

Marian Seldes presented readings commemorating the Jeffers centenary in Coolidge Auditorium at The Library of Congress, January 12th. The program included selections from "The Tower Beyond Tragedy," "The Cretan Woman," "Themes in My Poems," and "Selected Letters," along with readings of "The Beauty of Things," "Tor House," "Love the Wild Swan," "The Storm Dance of Gulls," "Let Them Alone," "The Old Stone Mason" and the complete "Roan Stallion." Ms. Seldes reminisced on her acting in "Medea" and "The Tower Beyond Tragedy," rehearsing "The Cretan Woman," and visiting Jeffers at Tor House.

A Jeffers conference was held at Virginia Wesleyan College, Virginia Beach, on January 28th. The program featured Allan Mears, William Nolte, David Doherty, and Edward Nickerson as presenters.

"Robinson Jeffers: The Man, The Poet" is the title of a photographic exhibition of 39 images of Jeffers juxtaposed with a selection of his autobiographical poems at the California State University Library, Long Beach, during March. Leigh Wiener, photographer for LIFE magazine, is author of several prize-winning television documentaries and of HOW DO YOU PHOTOGRAPH PEOPLE, a collection of photos of celebrities and political figures. He met Jeffers in 1956 by going unannounced to Tor House and asking for an extended photo session. The selection, from hundreds taken by Wiener during a three-day visit, reveals the poet in a lonely aspect, not "tragic" but coping and enduring, bereft of Una, failing in health, stooped and bespeckled but still very much present to life. The exhibit is commemorated in a four-page catalog featuring a never before printed photo of Jeffers on the lower platform of Hawk Tower; two notes are appended, by John Ahouse and Robert Brophy.

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OTHER EVENTS AIND PUBLICATIONS

The keepsake for the joint Roxburghe-Zamorano meeting October 25-26 was "Robinson Jeffers and Religion," text of a Jeffers letter (SL 235) to Sister Mary James Power on his beliefs. Afterword by Robert Brophy. 125 copies were printed by Peter Rutledge Koch.

THE LITERARY HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN WEST, sponsored by the Western Literature Association, Thomas Lyon senior editor, is being released by Texas Christian University Press (address: TCU Press, Box 30783, Fort Worth TX 76129). It contains a chapter on Jeffers by Robert Brophy.

James Karman's ROBINSON JEFFERS: POET OF CALIFORNIA, Literary West Series, will be available in May from Chronicle Books (1 Hallidie Plaza, Suite 806, San Francisco, CA 94102). Paper \$6.45.

The Yolla Bolly Press announces the publication of WHERE SHALL I TAKE YOU TO: The Love Letters of Una and Robinson Jeffers, edited by Robert Kafka, foreword by Garth Jeffers, Covelo, California, 1987. Fifty-seven letters which survive, forty-seven of them appearing for the first time, are augmented by nine love poems written to Una during the correspondence and recently discovered in a sealed container left by Melba Bennett to Occidental College to be opened in 1987. Here also are eight photographs from the Jeffers Family collection, all but two published for the first time. The book is 144 pages, six by nine inches, designed by James and Carolyn Robertson, composed by Monotype in Eric Gill's Perpetua types. Photos by duotone offset lithography, tipped by hand to the text pages. There are two versions: A collector's edition of 225 numbered copies on Ragston book paper bound in German broadcloth with handmade endsheets, slipcased, \$245 per copy; and a deluxe edition, limited to 25 copies, printed on handmade Umbria paper, bound in full English Calf, numbered and signed by Robert Kafka and Garth Jeffers, in slipcase, \$585 per copy.

Still available through Yolla Bolly Press: ROBINSON JEFFERS: A PORTRAIT by Louis Adamic, foreword by Garth Jeffers (\$125) and CAWDOR by Robinson Jeffers, afterword by James D. Houston (\$275).

THE WILDER SHORE, Yolla Bolly Press Book, published by Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, 1984, photographs by Morley Baer, text by David Rains Wallace, has numerous references to Jeffers and photos of "Jeffers Country."

Stanford University Press has announced its intention to publish this year William Everson's long-awaited EXCESSES OF GOD, which examines Jeffers' mystic and religious dimension, utilizing the vocabulary and insights of Rudolph Otto's THE IDEA OF THE HOLY.

Pierre Lagayette of the Institute of English and North American Studies, University of Paris, has finished a critical biography of Robinson Jeffers. Professor Lagayette has an article, "L'engagement Solitaire de Robinson Jeffers," in the REVUE FRANCAISE D'ETUDES AMERICAINES, Vol XL (May 1986), pages 251-262.

Patrick Murphy of the University of California, Davis, has an article, "Robinson Jeffers' Macabre and Darkly Marvelous Double Axe," in WESTERN AMERICAN LITERATURE, Vol. XX, No. 3 (Fall 1985): Pages 195-209.

Lee Quarlstrom has published a photo essay, "Robinson Jeffers: Casting Light into His Own Darkness," in WEST magazine of the SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS, (January 4, 1987) pages 24-27.

The WESTERN AMERICAN LITERATURE annual bibliography for 1986 lists nine items under Jeffers.

The January issue of LITERARY CAVALCADE (upper level high school) has a piece on Jeffers and his centennial.

The March newsletter from the Book Club of California is a Jeffers issue.

Television station KUER, University of Utah FM, featured a Jeffers program on January 10th, which included the frame lyrics to "Hungerfield," "Contemplation of the Sword," "The Deer Lay Down Their Bones," and "Rock and Hawk." The reader: Eric Vaughn.

An essay competition for undergraduates at California colleges and universities with the theme, "The Pertinence of Robinson Jeffers in 1987" was held in Fall of 1986. Winners: 1st place - Paula Huston of Arroyo Grande, CA., for "The Beauty of Vultures: The Relevance of Robinson Jeffers' Poetry in the Modern Age," 2nd place - Scott B. Stevens of Chico, CA., for "Robinson Jeffers: Recovering a Spiritual Legacy," and 3rd place - Bryan C. Nichols of Los Angeles, CA., for "Not Man Apart at Continent's End."

Two current magazines carry articles on Jeffers and Tor House: LIFESTYLE (November/December 1986) and ANTIQUES AND FINE ART (December 1986). The latter includes some excellent color photographs of the interior of Tor House.

Professor Thomas Miura's translation of a group of Jeffers' poems into Japanese is available at 23-28 4-Chome, Naruse-dai, Machida-shi, Tokyo 194, Japan. Kokubun-Sha Publishing Company, Tokyo, 1986. \$18.75. Mr. Miura is writing a book in Japanese on the life and work of Jeffers.

The Sierra Club's NOT MAN APART: Lines from Robinson Jeffers: Photographs of the Big Sur Coast by Ansel Adams, Morley Baer, Wynn Bullock, Steve Crouch, William E. Garnett, Philip Hyde, Eliot Porter, Cole Weston, Edward Weston, Don Worth, Cederic Wright, and others (edited by David Brower: San Francisco, Sierra Club, 1965) has been reprinted by Arrowood Press, New York (166 Fifth Avenue, New York 10010). The book includes a foreword by Loren Eiseley, a preface by David Brower, an extended essay of acknowledgement by David Brower, an introduction by Margaret Wentworth Owings, and an essay, "The Sur Country," by Robinson Jeffers (five paragraphs taken without authorization from the preface intended for Horace Lyon's JEFFERS COUNTRY which later appeared (1971) from the Scrimshaw Press).

THE OXFORD ILLUSTRATED LITERARY GUIDE TO THE UNITED STATES by Eugene Ehrlich and Gaston Carruth (New York: Oxford, 1982), 402-3, has an article on Carmel and its literary denizens.

Czechoslovakian television has produced CAWDOR as a TV drama based on Kamil Bednar's translation of Jeffers' story.

William J. Colleta has completed "The Grammar of 'Inhumanism': A Linguistic Analysis of the Short Poems of Robinson Jeffers" for a Masters thesis at the University of Alaska, Anchorage, 1985.

NOTICIAS DEL PUERTO DE MONTEREY: A QUARTERLY BULLETIN OF HISTORIC MONTEREY (Vol. XXVII, 2) has a brief article in the June 1986 issue, "The Master of Hollow Hills," by Virginia W. Stone. It portrays Noel Sullivan, who was so important in the lives of the Jeffers family, bringing them into carefully modulated contact with great writers, artists, actors, and musicians of their time. The article recounts another of those rare evidences of Jeffers' sense of humor -- on the occasion of a birthday celebration at which Jeffers traded his poem tribute with that of another guest. In her hands his poem received only slight, condescending applause, whereas her poem in his hands received ovations.

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OBSERVATIONS ON MEETING ROBINSON JEFFERS

by David J. Eaton

I had read an article on Jeffers in the high school magazine called SCHOLASTIC. I was impressed. Civilization is a disease according to Jeffers, etc. I bought a copy of the 1938 Random House SELECTED POETRY. After Melville and Thoreau, he became a new hero for me.

While in Seattle, I wrote to Jeffers and he answered with a handwritten copy of "Signpost" and a brief note. Later in April 1943, I just walked in on him. I was young and brash.

It was a clear afternoon in the midst of World War II when I approached the gate above the abalone-strewn path leading toward Tor House. Suddenly a tall and rather austere-looking man approached and asked, "What is your errand?" I recognized the poet and replied that I had come to see him. I was an uninvited guest, and he seemed wary. (Later he would have reason to be wary.)

I gave him my name. He recognized it from previous correspondence and he welcomed me into the house. He appeared to be alone with his bulldog, Winnie (named, he said, after Churchill). After we sat down, he crossed his legs and proceeded to roll a cigarette, Western style.

After some forty years' I vividly recall the time, the place, and the poet. I especially recall the penetrating eyes and the calmness of demeanor, as though he was at peace with the world. When I asked him about his library, he said he had "no books." I saw none and presumed he meant he kept none. To a naive question about his attitude toward life, especially in connection with the pain and suffering reflected in his longer works, he said "Nothing bothers me anymore." To another naive question (I cannot recall its precise intent) he answered that "every man has his needs." I jotted these things down on the flyleaf of the Modern Library edition I had brought along.

As I recall, Jeffers seemed quite patient and sympathetic. He invited me to visit Hawk Tower and he showed me the view from the top. The memory of standing there with Jeffers--looking out to sea on that glorious April afternoon--still remains. As we descended from the parapet, he showed me his "room," the open space with stone bench at the head of the tower, then Una's room (with the reed-organ), and, finally, the play-room for his twin sons. The war was on; there were blackouts at night and people walked because of gasoline rationing. Carmel was never more beautiful, although there were already real estate encroachments from officer personnel at Fort Ord. We returned to the house. Finally, Una made some noise in the kitchen with pots and pans. I knew it was time to leave. My impression was that he was kind and cordial. He offered me an abalone shell as I left.

I met Jeffers again in the fall of 1946. This time I was with Rudolph Gilbert. (My twin brother, Donald--while in the army--had visited Jeffers and Gilbert in 1944.) Una was there and she asked "Robin" to get some wine. He seemed devoted to her and almost child-like in response to her request. Both were cordial. Una asked Gilbert many questions, mostly about his past and his book on her husband, ROBINSON JEFFERS AND THE TRAGIC SENSE IN MODERN POETRY (1936). It was a pleasant meeting. Jeffers and Gilbert had never met before although they had corresponded. (I often wonder what happened to that correspondence; it did not appear in SELECTED LETTERS and contained answers to Gilbert's questions about Jeffers' poetry.)

I stopped by again in the fall of 1947. Jeffers was walking around the yard in his bare feet, having injured his foot. Una was proclaiming the greatness of W.B. Yeats. Jeffers inscribed a copy of his MEDEA for me and commented that he knew nothing about Greek drama. Jeffers asked me to contact Sydney Alberts, who happened to live in my hometown, Yonkers, on the same street as I. Jeffers wanted a bibliography from Alberts and had written him to no avail. I saw Alberts later that fall, a hunchback, short, polite, and pleasant. I was puzzled by him--i.e., his evasiveness; nothing (no bibliography) was forthcoming. Una also wanted this bibliography. At this visit, she seemed vivacious and outgoing. I never saw her again.

Sometime after Una's death (1950), I stopped by again. Jeffers was in seclusion. I recall talking with Mrs. Donnan Jeffers for quite a while--outside near the garden. Her son, Lindsay, about two years old, was running about the place. Jeffers never appeared.

I last saw Jeffers in 1953. I remember chatting with him; he appeared sad and subdued. It was not a happy visit. He was a changed man since Una's death.

A few more observations from memory -- He spoke sympathetically of Ezra Pound's plight. He said that Walt Whitman was too "ebullient" for him. He enquired about a mutual acquaintance, Dr. Gustav Beckh, professor of history and art N.Y.U. I told him that this acquaintance had been committed to a mental institution. It was then that he told me that Dr. Beckh had written to him, warning him to beware of the Eaton twins who were out to kill him. He quickly added that he was not surprised to hear about the commitment.

I wrote to Jeffers a few months before he died. His son, Donnan, replied that his father was very ill. Jeffers enclosed lines--unsigned but written in pencil in his own hand:

The universe, like poetry, exists for the sake of its beauty;
Mankind is privileged to feel it, and sometimes share in it, but that
is difficult.

The main of the beauty is not in man, and it is ridiculous to believe
so.

Melba Bennett later wrote that she thought the lines were not in print.

From my experience, Jeffers was always kind and courteous. He also displayed some humor. Although he did not suffer fools lightly, I managed to sit and chat and look into the eyes of this godly man. Once seen, never forgotten.

Fitzwilliam, New Hampshire
May 24, 1986

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ROBINSON JEFFERS: LITERARY INFLUENCES

The subject of Robinson Jeffers' literary influences is one that has received relatively little attention thus far. Those scholars who have sought to establish his intellectual sources have focused principally on the philosophical precursors of his concept or, as one might better say, his attitude of Inhumanism, or on the influence of his wide reading in anthropology and myth. But Jeffers was neither a philosopher nor a scholar, but a poet. He not only eschewed prose forms and discursive modes - except in his correspondence, which greatly repays study and greatly needs collecting - but made a rhetorical commitment to poetry unique among his contemporaries and probably in this century. It is almost, however, as if we refused to take him at his word, and indeed his practice. Is it wholly unfair to say we have taken him as a philosopher, anthropologist, psychologist, mythomane, social prophet - as everything but a poet, that is to say a writer anchored within a specific literary tradition in the context of which he is to be finally understood and judged? I must confess that I have often had the uneasy

feeling that what Jeffers' more uncritical admirers were looking for in him was anything but literature. Even among those of us who have dealt with him on a more scholarly basis, there has been a tendency to see him sui generis, as if he transcended literary modes altogether the way Bach transcended fugues. This is the real Jeffers myth, and few of us have wholly escaped its seductions.

This said, it must be added at once that there are formidable difficulties in the way of doing justice to Jeffers' literary background, and to establishing his place in literary tradition. Let us consider what some of these difficulties are. In the first place, there is the fact of Jeffers' erudition. Systematically educated at the best Swiss schools by this father, Jeffers acquired a formidable basis in classical literature and languages. In contrast to Pound, however, whose Cantos are in many respects the schoolbooks of an autodidact, he did not wear learning on his sleeve; instead what he knew is to be found in the structure rather than on the surface of his work, and in the breadth of vision that informs them rather than in the particularity of their allusion. This was combined with a wide-ranging interest in the thinking and discovery of his own time to make him one of the most formidably educated American poets of this century. The unassuming reader who plows through Cawdor as a tale of lust and retribution without perceiving its basis in the Greek myth of Hippolytus or the wealth of its allusion to primitive myth and ritual in general that has been so brilliantly excavated by Bob Brophy will not only miss much of its density and sophistication, but much of its moral significance and its ambition as a work in the Western tradition.

This brings us to the second point, which is the nature of Jeffers' ambition. Large ambition is embarrassingly out of place in our self-deprecatory age; where we acknowledge it, as in Pound, it is rather to patronize than to applaud it. The Cantos are, in the positive sense, a grand failure, the wreck of a great ambition; but I sometimes think that even were they not, we would be obliged to see them that way simply because we no longer believe in successes, at least not epic ones. Jeffers' ambition was no less great than Pound's, and it was a far more coherently focused one. The sweep of that ambition encompassed Greek and Norse mythology, Aeschylean and Euripidean tragedy, the Old and New Testaments, Stoic Cosmogony, Miltonic epic, Freudian psychology, and the figures against whom, in his more exalted moments, he was not afraid to range himself-- Lucretius, Shakespeare, Dante. This is a very broad context indeed. Of course, one cannot regard Lucretius as an influence on Jeffers in the same way as, for example, one might regard Thomas Hardy, or even Wordsworth. Immediate and distant forbears present entirely different interpretive issues. But whereas distant forbears can be more or less safely ignored in the case of most poets-- Pound is again the interesting exception, with his debt to Cavalcanti and the Provençal poets--Jeffers' whole project, by careful and deliberate intention, spans the whole of Western culture. Like Samuel Beckett, whose vital sources have been sought in Descartes, Dante, and as far back as obscure Patristic heretics such as Marcion, Jeffers demands the broadest kind of reading. It is easily arguable, for

example, that the most important source of Jeffers' art is the Bible. The same thing can of course be said, even more forcefully, of Milton. But Milton's Bible is self-evidently a very different book than Jeffers', and intelligible statements about either poet's relation to the text demand rigorous qualification.

The third and final point, paradoxical to the first two, is Jeffers' provincialism. From the standpoint of literary history, being rooted in central California is quite different from being rooted in Dorset or even New England. The problem of finding, or more properly creating roots, faced not only Jeffers but all the poets of his generation. I fancy a rather good book could be written tracing the routes by which Jeffers found himself finally in California, Frost in New England, Eliot in Anglican London, and Pound in Fascist Italy. Each of these choices represented far more than a choice of residence or ambience. They were choices within the Western literary tradition and the spectrum of its values and commitments for a generation that was forced, in effect, to forge the American literary identity. The only such identity available was the tradition of the New England Transcendentalists. But Transcendentalism--though clearly an influence on Jeffers by way of Emerson--was no longer a viable means of expression for early twentieth-century Americans, and in any case it had never been (despite Emerson) a verse tradition. The only true forbear of that generation of the 1870s and 1880s was Whitman; but a single forbear is an obstacle and not a tradition.

All four poets, faced with the same problem, sought the most obvious solution: England. Frost's experience of England was crucial in making him the poet of North of Boston. Eliot, like Henry James before him, disappeared into literary London. Pound spent a crucial decade there before discovering Italy. And Robinson Jeffers, in the spring of 1914, was poised to go to England as well with his new bride. The Jefferses planned an indefinite residence. But the First World War intervened, and sent Jeffers up the California coast instead, where he discovered the sleepy, pre-Eastwood hamlet of Carmel. The rest was history. When the Jefferses finally did get to England, in 1929, Jeffers was no longer the fledgling poet still seeking his style and stance, but the fully mature author of Tamar, Roan Stallion and The Women at Point Sur. What he saw confirmed his already settled view of Europe as a posthumous civilization. Less, then, than any of his contemporaries was Jeffers influenced by the poetic currents of pre- and postwar Europe, although the idea of Europe bulked very large in his imagination. At the same time, Jeffers consciously rejected both the nineteenth-century experiment of Symbolism that was so formative for Eliot and the post-Symbolist movement of Imagism led by Pound. Cut off by choice from the emerging Modernist aesthetic and isolated by geography from the literary currents of the moment, the young Jeffers poured his ambition into the mold of what he himself called "dead men's music." For Jeffers, provincialism was partly a matter of historical accident, partly a matter of deliberate

choice. No serious and self-conscious young poet working in a community of peers could have produced the archaic and often naive verse of Californians and The Alpine Christ. Keats and Shelley, as Jeffers himself noted, were conscious models, and the Tennyson of Locksley Hall. The influence of Wordsworth is even more conspicuous. Tim Hunt has I think rightly identified Jeffers as the most significant heir of the Wordsworthian tradition in modern poetry. The pastoral narratives of Californians are directly indebted to Wordsworth's own essays in the form, and if, as Bill Everson has shown, Hardy's Dynasts is clearly the model for The Alpine Christ, it is difficult to imagine the poem in the absence of The Prelude as well.

Jeffers did not have to go as far back as Wordsworth and Tennyson to find models for the narrative form which became his most characteristic mode of expression. In his near-contemporary Edwin Arlington Robinson (1869-1935) there was a precedent in such works as Lancelot, Merlin and Tristram for narrative poems concerned with sexual aberration and incest, a point elaborated in a recent doctoral dissertation by Irwin Robert Blacker. This raises anew the vexed question of Jeffers' "decadence." The Symbolist aesthetic was widely identified with decadent sensibility, and in rejecting it Jeffers was not only rejecting its rarification of language and metre and its marginalization of subject matter but the fashionable sense of pessimism and impotence which it reflected. Jeffers shrewdly recognized the embers of this sensibility beneath the brilliant collage of Eliot's verse when he remarked that The Waste Land was not the beginning of an era but the end of one. In rejecting the cultural pessimism that had engendered Symbolism however, Jeffers did not escape it. He remained a child of the age that had produced Max Nordau, Brook Adams and Oswald Spengler, and that broke the heart of the later Nietzsche. Standing on the great prewar divide of the twentieth century, his battles were in large part with the demons of the nineteenth. It is in this sense--not in the alleged sensationalism of his subject matter, which grew naturally out of his preoccupation with cultural decline as well as the problems of his own inner life--that he relates to decadence. His kinship with Eliot is clearly evident here. Whereas Eliot sought solace in Anglican and monarchical tradition--two very faded cards even in the England of sixty years ago--Jeffers took a far lonelier and thornier path towards sanity and wholeness. This is surely not the place to judge between them, but only to note how far along the same road they had come before their ways diverged.

The purpose of this paper has not been to answer questions but to raise them. The problem of locating and interpreting Jeffers' sources is at least as complicated as in the case of any other modern poet. In the foreground stand such figures as Swinburne, Robinson and Hardy, and perhaps others less known as well, such as the once-reputed English poet Edward Carpenter. In the middle ground stand the great Romantic fathers, particularly Wordsworth, who form the matrix out of which all modern literature has come, and to whom Jeffers is more directly indebted than

most. The background is nothing less than the whole of the Western tradition, particularly the classic and biblical tradition, over which he ranged so widely and freely. But although specifically literary influences have been relatively neglected, and although specialized studies of them would now be most welcome, it remains true that Jeffers as few other poets cannot be satisfactorily studied outside the widest cultural milieu. Once the balance has been redressed and the sources of his poetic idiom are more securely established than at present, the work of synthesis will continue to go on.

Robert Zaller
University of Miami

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ROBINSON JEFFERS, THE OPINION OF HIS PEERS

Recently, in an attempt to discover the breadth and depth of academic interest in Robinson Jeffers, I conducted a small experiment. Although a poet need not be a media idol, if he is to avoid drowning beneath the flood of writing that is characteristic of our age, he certainly needs academic exposure. What better way to find out how interested academia is in Jeffers than to conduct a poll, a sampling of schools to see what, of Jeffers, is taught, and how Jeffers is received by the youth of this country. I mailed out a hundred questionnaires to a not-entirely random sampling of American colleges. I included the name schools, Harvard, Stanford, Brown, etc., a few religious-affiliated schools, a number of public institutions and some small private schools. I tried to gather a sampling from all over the United States. I have received 47 responses, and replies are still drifting in gradually. I found the results surprising and depressing. Of the schools responding, only eight (Iowa State, Butler U in Indiana, Bates, the U of Vermont, Pittsburgh, Hobart and William Smith, the University of Mississippi and Queens College in New York) said that they taught Jeffers in any course, graduate and/or undergraduate for more than one hour a semester. Sixteen more taught Jeffers for an hour or less. "Hurt Hawks" was the poem most often mentioned. Six more colleges almost never teach Jeffers. I received an absolute "no" to my inquiry from seventeen colleges. Jeffers is not taught at all at some of the more prestigious colleges in the United States, to include Williams, Vassar, Smith, Bryn Mawr, Bowdoin, Bard, Saint Olaf, the University of Oregon, Cal Berkeley, the Air Force Academy, and UCLA.

Some of the comments from the educators are more interesting than these statistics. First, many of the schools that ignore Jeffers say that they last taught him in the early to mid seventies. The schools that do teach him, with very few exceptions, say that the students find Jeffers an enigma. My correspondent at the University of Mississippi said Jeffers baffled his students. At Hobart, the students apparently

can't swallow, "I'd sooner, except the penalties, kill a man than a hawk"; at Duke and at Auburn the students find Jeffers' "life style" extreme. At the University of Vermont they tell me that most of the students there are "repulsed" by Jeffers' poetry. Perhaps the chairman of the English Department at the University of Pennsylvania summarizes best when says that Jeffers' appeal is "not as it was 15 years ago." "Alas," is the way my correspondent at Vassar characterizes the situation. "Clearly we neglect Jeffers," muses the English chairman at Colby. Rather plaintively he adds, "I don't know why."

The answer to the good professor's question, I believe, might be found in an analysis of Jeffers and the reaction to him and his poetry among his peers, the critics and writers of roughly his generation.

All Jeffers enthusiasts are familiar with the story of George Sterling, how he, in his last years fostered the career of Jeffers. In a review in the Overland Monthly in 1925, he said of Tamar, that it was the "strongest and most dreadful poem that I have ever read or heard of," and went on to warn those who "shrink from the hidden horrors of Life," to avoid reading the poem. Such hyperbole makes us, now in the '80s, a little uneasy. In any case, in the two years or so of their friendship, Sterling not only encouraged the new poet, he introduced him to this circle of friends. Sterling introduced Jeffers to the California, and specifically, the Carmel and San Francisco Bohemians. Among them were James Hopper, who remained a good friend; Mary Austin, of whom more later; Lincoln Steffens, the muckraker and radical editor of the Carmelite; and Edgar Lee Masters, who in the story of Jeffers' peers is of considerable importance. Edgar Lee Masters, poet, author of The Spoon River Anthology, said of Jeffers that he had a "great imagination," and was "motivated by a thinking mind of subtlety, courage and power." Masters felt that the success to which Jeffers might "go is beyond prediction." Sterling brought Masters to visit Jeffers several times. Apparently, he was a welcome guest. He was also a member of the Chicago literary world, and especially of those associated with Poetry magazine.

Poetry, and of course, publication in that journal, was important to the career of Jeffers. Harriet Monroe, the poet and the founder of the journal, was not always Jeffers' greatest fan. She condemned Jeffers for his lack of taste and particularly in Roan Stallion, his concern with "abnormal passions." She was not alone in this evaluation. There were many who condemned what they considered the immorality in Jeffers' poetry. Harriet Monroe did find much to praise in Jeffers, including his "unabashed sincerity," and his "rhythms as bold as the plunge of the Pacific on Carmel's rocks." Years later, another generation of Jeffers' peers continued to publish him. Karl Shapiro, the poet and editor of Poetry, although by no means a friendly critic, published Jeffers as late as 1951. He too, found objectionable not the verse but its content -- in Shapiro's case the nihilism.

Masters and Monroe represent Jeffers' Chicago connection. From New York and the East come such names as Edna St. Vincent Millay, Arthur Davison Ficke, Witter Bynner, Edmund Wilson, and Louis Untermeyer, all more or less outspoken admirers of the poetry of Robinson Jeffers. Jeffers, especially in the thirties and forties, was frequently compared, both in style and content, with Millay, and with O'Neill, a close friend of Millay. Millay, over many years, remained a staunch admirer of Jeffers. She often said she was his most enthusiastic admirer. Millay felt that the main reason Jeffers did not receive greater recognition was "his subject matter -- rape, incest, homosexuality." Arthur Ficke, similarly, admired Jeffers, not despite, but because of his content. In 1928, he said that "Americans resent Robinson Jeffers blindly -- because a secret part of them is aware of the terrible truth of all he writes." Ficke added later that, specifically, the "nightmare sex designs -- these will of course repel the generality of human beings all the more because of their extraordinary eloquence and their unquestioned genius. His aim is to blast the human universe apart." Ficke voices the opinion of the avant garde of his generation. Jeffers, to Ficke, and to his associates, was admirable, not merely because of his verse making, but because of the content of his poems.

Another group of early Jeffers admirers were those in the general Taos-Santa Fe area: Witter Bynner, Mary Austin (of the Carmel Bohemians), and of course, Mable Dodge Luhan. Luhan, an outstanding patron of the arts, did her best to convince Jeffers to abandon California and devote his powers to becoming the "Poet of New Mexico." Another of her set, Spud Johnson, prematurely consoled Carmel at the town's impending loss. "Carmel," he said, "should be interested and not jealous, for after all, even if Jeffers never writes another word about this coast . . . think how completely and perfectly he has already expressed it." Luhan failed to lure Jeffers away from California, but her association with him lasted almost ten years.

Those were Jeffers' peers, the poets, critics and literary people with whom he associated during the twenties, thirties, and to a degree, forties. Certainly Sterling, Millay, and Luhan were among Jeffers greatest admirers. They, and their associates, lesser poets or lesser personalities, perhaps, had of course, a great deal in common. With varying degrees of commitment, they were members of that portion of the literary elite that could be called the Bohemians of their day.

I do not use the term in any judgmental or pejorative sense. These artists and individuals had certain shared characteristics. They shared with Jeffers, if not a common politics, a general philosophical attitude that was radically anti-establishment. Radical journals such as Masses and Nation were the first to pay Jeffers serious critical attention. Jeffers' warmest admirers, Sterling, Millay and the others advocated, and in some cases, lived the sexual revolution four, five decades before the media discovered it. They were Romantics. Even those who found themselves

on the extreme political left were not bureaucratic, obedient communists. To describe John Reed, one of the Millay-O'Neill-Masses coterie, for example, as anything but a visionary, would be inaccurate. Similarly, Ms. Luhan, with her enthusiasms and grandiose schemes, is certainly a Romantic on a Byronic scale.

Could it be that to these romantic revolutionaries, the poetry of Jeffers: romantic, shocking, grand and definitely anti-establishment as it was, seemed a confirmation of all their ideals? DeCasseres found in Jeffers, "the tragic terror of Aeschylus, the supreme artistic aloofness and impersonality of Shakespeare, the divine melancholy and remote spiritual pathos of Chopin, the imaginative insanity of Blake, the lurid grandeur of Coleridge, the hallucinant chiaroscuro of DeQuincy, the satanic joy in the hideous of Baudelaire, the psychoanalytical topsyturvyism of Dostoievsky, the beautiful morbidity of D'Annunzio, the horror-love of Dante, the eeriness and incestuous motives of Wagner, and above all, and beyond all, the defiant and aurealed wickedness of Nietzsche's Anti-Christ and Superman." With an ironic smile, Robert Frost places Jeffers along with O'Neill, busily stoking the fires of Hell, which could be interpreted as a shorthand method of rephrasing DeCasseres' praise. Could the admiration of the Bohemians of the early decades of this century, in discovering in Jeffers' poetry the quintessence of all their passions, explain the unfortunate hyperbole that greeted early Jeffers' poetry and that later made a sensible reassessment so difficult?

Why did some of the earlier critics grow cool? As we've seen in recent years, the radical romantics of the hippie generation, who often were Jeffers fans, have grown older and some may say, more sensible. What seemed glorious iconoclasm to Babette Deutsch in the earlier poems, became obscure and sordid later on. There are two factors working here: first, shock-effect quickly wears thin; secondly, the critic grows older and perhaps wiser.

To illuminate this thesis further, there are those who never found Jeffers worthy of notice. These were by and large, religious and political conservatives, who complained early on that Jeffers' poetry was immoral. This line of criticism continues today. On a more elevated academic plain, there were critics like Yvor Winters who summed up his opinion of Jeffers by saying that "his writing, line by line, is pretentious trash," or Randall Jarrell, who felt that Jeffers' poems do not "have the exactness and concision of the best poetry; his style and temperament, his whole world-view, are to a surprising extent a matter of simple exaggeration." Robert Penn Warren found Jeffers' poems "turgid and feeble." I mean no pejorative connotation when I say that in both criticism and poetry, the work of Winters, Jarrell, and Warren is the antithesis of Jeffers'. They might be fine poets. There is room in literature both for Pope and Wordsworth, after all. However, the meticulous rationalists of literature would seldom pleasure in a poetry as radical as that of Jeffers.

And perhaps that is why the youngsters in college today cannot understand Jeffers. We live, as any association with college youth will quickly confirm, in a practical decade. Career-minded yuppies find it difficult to relate to the poetry of Inhumanism. We're not like people who live in apartments, Jeffers once told his wife. For better or worse, America in the 80's is often a land of apartment dwellers, communal people.

That may be why the English faculty, as I mentioned in the beginning, often expressed a vague nostalgia when discussing Jeffers. "Alas," says the professor from Vassar, and how very true, because the poetry of Robinson Jeffers could fill a void in the lives of this generation; he could be an antidote for a world that has, I believe unfortunately, forgotten to be visionary, forgotten to see things in a grand context. "It's time for a Jeffers renaissance," they told me from the University of Vermont. How very true.

Alex A. Vardamis
Dickinson State College

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"SHAKESPEARE'S GRAVE": AN EXPLICATION
by Nancy Dinsmore

"Shakespeare's Grave" is interesting because it's playful. We see Jeffers working with an idea central to his work, namely that nature is a unified whole and man only an anonymous part of its cosmic cycling--but doing so in a way that is designed, it seems to me, to provoke a smile. By an anachronism which is, I believe, deliberately and playfully contrived, Shakespeare is shown seeing the universe through Jeffers' eyes, but rejecting or rather trying to escape the implications of what he sees.

The poem opens acknowledging that the verses cut into the stone slab which covers Shakespeare's grave in Holy Trinity Church in Stratford are not up to the standard of Shakespeare's sonnets or other poetry:

GOOD FRENDE FOR JESUS SAKE FORBEARE,
TO DIGG THE DUST ENCLOSED HEARE:
BLESTE BE YE MAN YT SPARES THES STONES,
AND CURST BE HE YT MOVES MY BONES.¹

The purpose of the lines was simply to discourage some future sexton from disturbing the grave, displacing Shakespeare and consigning his bones to the church's charnel house, a real enough possibility. The verse really is doggerel and has embarrassed some Shakespeare lovers, me for one. However, a local tradition going all the way back to the late seventeenth century maintains Shakespeare's authorship. Jeffers

¹S. Schoenbaum, William Shakespeare: A Compact Documentary Life (New York: Oxford UP, 1977) 306.

imagines Shakespeare writing the lines contemptuously, "wasting" none of his talent on some future sexton, since the sexton (who is after all the only audience that counts for the present purposes) will presumably not be able to tell the difference.

"Doggerel," he thought, "will do for church-wardens,
Poetry's precious enough not to be wasted,"
And rhymed it all out with a skew smile:
"Spare these stones. Curst be he that moves my bones--
Will hold the hands of masons and grave-diggers."

I find this portrayal of Shakespeare strange. After all, Shakespeare is known both for his sympathetic portrayal of the common man in his plays and for the ease with which he is supposed to have written his verse. It's foreign, at least to my view of Shakespeare's character and abilities, to think that he would look down on a country "church warden" or grudge him a few lines of verse. I suspect Jeffers, for his part, knew very well that he was misrepresenting Shakespeare, but did so in order to make a point.

What was the point? The key, it seems to me, is line 6: "But what did the good man care? For he wanted quietness." This of course, is true. When Shakespeare had achieved his success, he bought New Place, gave up his share in the King's men and moved back, literally, to the "quiet" life of his hometown in the country. It's fair to assume that Shakespeare retired to Stratford because (like Jeffers) he disliked the bustle of the city. It's fair too, to assume that Shakespeare (possibly unlike Jeffers, who I assume didn't care or would have thought the concern silly) didn't want his bones disturbed after his death. Jeffers however, carries the idea and the assumption one step farther. He assumes that Shakespeare, like Jeffers himself, had a vision of his body decomposing and his constituent elements (still somehow retaining Shakespeare's identity) joining what Jeffers saw as the grand cosmic circulation of nature: he imagines Shakespeare seeing this vision and trying to avoid it.

He had tasted enough life in his time
To stuff a thousand; he wanted not to swim wide
In waters, nor wander the enormous air,
Nor grow into grass, enter through the mouths of cattle
The bodies of lusty women and warriors,
But all be finished.

This is Jeffers, not Shakespeare. Shakespeare would have seen his soul enduring independent of his body, an idea very different from Jeffers' view of man. Also the sciences underlying the passage, the biochemistry and the ecology, were unknown to Shakespeare, for whom the elements were earth, air, fire and water. Jeffers gives his own idiosyncratic view of nature and the universe to Shakespeare.

In giving these ideas to Shakespeare, Jeffers must have known that we would know that he was being unhistorical. I believe he knew, and did it anyway, playfully, because he liked the obvious parallel between Shakespeare's rejection of the city and well-known love of nature and his own. As Jeffers says, "He [Shakespeare] knew it feelingly; the game of whirling circles had become tiresome" (ll. 12-13). It seems to me that these and the concluding lines of the poem are Jeffers talking, not Shakespeare, but that although Jeffers means something more than Shakespeare would have thought or meant (in Shakespeare's time, Jeffers might have been burned for heresy), the two men might well have understood each other and agreed in at least some of their ideas. The final words attributed to Shakespeare might be Jeffers' own:

"Annihilation's impossible, but insulated
In the church under the rhyming flagstone
Perhaps my passionate ruins may be kept off market
To the end of this age. Oh, a thousand years
Will hardly leach," he thought, "this dust of that fire."

I find Jeffers' poem both amusing and a clear statement of his view of nature and his sense of being tired of civilization. In working out his deliberately anachronistic idea of a parallel between himself and Shakespeare, Jeffers is writing a poem that has much of the feel of the seventeenth century--of the metaphysical's delight in combining apparently incompatible elements. Jeffers also acts like an Elizabethan or Jacobean poet in another way: "Shakespeare's Grave" is a poem which quite literally follows Sidney's dictum that poetry should both delight and instruct.

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THE JEFFERS FAMILY: A REMINSCENCE
by Barth Carpenter Marshall

When I was a student at the University of California in 1936, I met Donnan and Garth Jeffers who were living at the International House. Their friend, Dick Oliphant, and my friend, Barbara Steven (now Countess Emo in Italy), the twins and I enjoyed each others' company and shared the same interests. Our first excursion together was an evening in San Francisco at the William Tell Hotel where we learned to dance the schottische. One October weekend that year, when the twins went home to visit their parents, Barbara, Dick and I drove down to stay in a nearby guest house. We all met at Tor House for a dinner prepared by Una and Robin. I remember seeing him standing in the kitchen doorway vigorously beating a bowl of mashed potatoes for our supper. There was no electricity in the house then, only kerosene lamps which lit the lovely low-ceilinged rooms. Robin taught us how to roll cigarettes and hold them over the edge of the lamp chimneys until the tobacco-filled paper caught a flame. After dinner we pushed aside the big refectory table in the dining room and on the red tile floor we danced the schottische till dawn. When Una appeared in a dressing gown, her long braids hanging down to her waist, the girls and Dick realized that it was time for us to leave.

Jeffers' volume, SUCH COUNSELS YOU GAVE TO ME, published in 1937, contains a poem entitled "October Week-end":

It is autumn still, but at three in the morning
All the magnificent wonders of midwinter midnight, blue-dog star,
Orion, red Aldebaran, the ermine-fur Pleiades,
Parading above the gables of the house. Their music is their
shining.
And the house beats like a heart with dance-music
Because our boys have grown to the age when girls are their
music.
There is wind in the trees, and the grey ocean's
Music on the rock. I am warming my blood with starlight, not
with girls' eyes.
But really the night is quite mad with music.

For many years after that October weekend, I visited the Jeffers at Tor House whenever I was in Carmel. At U.C. Berkeley I was a teaching assistant for Professor Ben Lehman, who married Judith Anderson, and Una knew of and appreciated my interest in literature. She encouraged me to study the Gaelic and showed me all the material she had collected about Irish round towers. Letters from the boys when the family was in Ireland made me long to see the land of my ancestors.

During the war years Donnan was living in Zanesville, Ohio, with his first wife, Patty. Garth was overseas. I corresponded with him and with Una, sharing my news from him. Vacationing in Carmel in August, 1945, I visited Una and Robin at Tor House. One day they drove me down the coast, Una at the wheel, to show me places that were the settings in many of Jeffers' poems. A few years later I met Donnan's new wife, Lee, when they were living in the stone house adjacent to Tor House. The last time I saw Una before she died, we sat in front of the fire to have tea with the gingerbread she knew I liked and had baked.

The last time I saw Robin was in September 1956, the eve of my wedding in Carmel. In later years I saw Donnan and Lee and their children whenever I was in Carmel.

My friendship with the Jefferses during my formative years, especially Una's interest in my studies, greatly influenced my choice of a career in the academic world. For twenty-five years I taught in the English Department at San Francisco State University and took early retirement in 1975. When the Fromm Institute at U.S.F. was established in 1976, I joined the small staff of retired professors to teach the writing course to students over fifty years of age. This is now my eleventh year at the Fromm Institute.

During the 1960's I had my own bookstore here in San Francisco and at present I am associated with Minerva's Owl Bookstore. Books, you see, have always been an important part of my life, and I am grateful for the encouragement and support the Jefferses gave me when I was young and impressionable. Jeffers' poetry, Una's passion for all things Irish, the friendship with Donnan and Garth, Tor House and the beautiful simplicity of the family's life there will always remain a treasured memory.

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UNA JEFFERS CORRESPONDENT,
BARTH CARPENTER LETTERS

Editor's Note: The following letters are to be found in The Donahue Rare Book Room, Gleeson Library, University of San Francisco. The memoir which precedes gives them context. The correspondence attests once again to Una's independent, intellectual and cultural life, her readings and enthusiasms, her love of things Irish, her dedication to family, pride in her sons, interest in their friends, her love of music and socializing, her joy at swans, flowers, and sunsets.

November 13, 1943

My Dear Barth:

I returned your magazine a week or so ago and left this article out by mistake. Thank you so much for everything. If we ever live near enough to each other we must share our Irish stuff--and enthusiasms.

I wish I could suggest some really thrilling subject for you to be working on. --So much has been written and so badly for the most part, on the Irish Renaissance. All the Celtic Twilight and now so much against it, too much. It must settle down for a while. It has been the most exciting literary thing in my day. I'm not sure at the moment that many people know much about it. Some of the articles in the Southern Review were comical and things for any American who cares to be scholarly, to be ashamed of. Pompous, sterile, presumptuous. I refer to your Yeats number.

I myself have a fund of material about ancient Irish Round Towers. No one in my day has as much. But who would care if I write it? I may do, if I ever get a second to myself.

Judith Anderson long-distanced from Hollywood the other night. --my boys' birthday. She said Garth looks well and very handsome! etc., etc. Would I could see for myself.

Affectionately,

Una Jeffers

May 12, 1944

My Dear Barth:

I am delighted to have the snapshots of Garth and should have said so more promptly. The truth is that every hour of my day is overfull and I'm thoroughly tired by night.

Garth seems to like his post at Ft. Sam Houston and I gather that he is working very hard. It's a blessing to have him this side the water even if we can't see him often.

I often think of you and hope you are having an interesting time.

We saved and saved gas and hope to go a few miles down the coast tomorrow. We've heard that the wild flowers this year are just bewilderingly beautiful. One hillside above Palo Colorado which was burnt off two years ago is now a "blue mountain" they say. All wild lilac from top to bottom.

I go to Ft. Ord one day a week on my business as Chairman of Staff Assistance Corps. When that country was called "Gigling Field" before the Army took it over it was a solid mass of wild flowers and even now with all that's gone on there, they peep up in every untrodden cranny.

Donnan's Patty is very husky. Looks more like a boy than a girl. I am sad to miss all her baby ways.

Affectionately,

Una Jeffers

December 9, 1944

My Dear Barth:

I hope your mother is quite recovered from her operation. You must have been very frightened. The same day she had it, a young man we know very nearly died of a ruptured appendix, so the thing was very vivid to us. It was Maeve Greenan's fiance, a Capt. -- and strange to say, although he had been sick a week, the army doctors did not diagnose it until almost too late.

I had a letter from Garth today--in one of the Air mail envelopes he said you had thoughtfully provided. I haven't the least idea where he is. Have you? I can't understand what he meant by saying he didn't dare write to Tobb who wanted to hear from him. Tobb is Lloyd Tevis, you know, and he is in Dorset. I think in or near Blandford. Dick Tevis is stationed in Bournemouth. I haven't done anything exciting since I wrote you. I see a few intimate friends at dinner and cocktails, etc., thousands of soldiers at Ft. Ord every week and have heard two good concerts. Casadesus and the Roth Quartet.

Today Robin and I are going out to the Highlands to a cocktail party at the James house --do you know it --on the sea cliff, stone, turreted, chalkstone. Its stone wall is right along the edge of the road. It's a magnificent place and very dramatic. It would be hard to have quiet emotions living there. We are taking Van Wyck Brooks and his wife. They have rented a house here. They lived here long ago when we first came. Have you read Brooks' last book, "The World of Washington Irving"? It is a mine of information but rather tiring reading. It is almost like pages of footnotes. Represents a tremendous amount of preparation. Occasionally there are a few vivid pages.

The loveliest thing that has happened to me, seven wild swans rested all one day lately among the reeds in that water meadow near the river mouth. We were watching them in a rose sunset when they soared up and away straight up the valley. An enchanting sight. The only other time I ever saw swans here was once when our boys were little and we all watched a flight of 21 swans going overhead. Do you know that all over Ireland in the remotest spots you will see wild swans on little lakes and streams. Of course you know Yeats' Wild Swans at Coole.

I hope all is well with you. I try to be glad that Garth himself will think he is having a better time than at Camp Polk -- cannot bear to dwell on the dangers. Work is the best help.

With warm affection,

Una Jeffers

We have a friend -- a prof. at Harvard named Frederick [sic] I. Carpenter. Any kin of yours?

Epiphany! 1945

And it's my birthday. (Noel S. and I are always contending about the excellence of our birthdays. His is Christmas.)

My Dear Barth:

I suppose you have Garth's A.P.O. but I will give it to you in case your letter hasn't arrived. It's A.P.O. 226 c/o P.M. N.Y. He says he is near Dick and Lloyd Tevis. I know that Dick is in Bournemouth, Devonshire, and Lloyd near Farnham. From hints he gave me I think Lloyd is in Blandford, Dorset. You can see it on the map. Garth is nearer Lloyd, and he also says he had leave and went to Bath, so I conclude Garth is stationed in Somerset or in the part of Dorset bordering Somerset. I hope they keep Garth there for a while. It's a lovely part of England.

I am so hurried and flustered that I don't know whether I wrote to thank you for the perfect present. It has always been said Blum's fruit cake is the best in the world and I believe it. This year it tastes even better

than before. I think that's because we are a little starved for sweets. We spent Christmas at Noel's -- the first time in fifteen years we haven't dined with the Tevis family. He is having a dinner party tonight for my birthday as he has done for so many years. Tevises are in Bakersfield.

Barth, have you a copy of Yeats' "Reveries Over Childhood and Youth?" I have two copies and would love to give you one of them if you haven't it already. But I don't want to waste it! I am very fond of that book.

We are busier than ever at Ft. Ord. A very dear friend of mine, Esther Busby from New York, is staying at the Mark and wants me to come up to visit her but I think not. I haven't been in S.F. in over a year now and haven't any impulse to make the effort now. The trains are usually over-crowded on this run.

Best love from Una

March 11, 1945

My Dear Barth:

I wonder whether you know exactly where Garth is? --I think I do now. Chippenham about 12-1/2 mi. N.E. of Bath. Garth spoke once of visiting Bath but acted as if it were far away. But he has given us, otherwise, no clue to his location although he could so easily do so since we have motored back and forth often over that country. So you will please not mention the above name as he sets so high a regard on discretion. I got the idea from Lloyd Tevis who writes me often. I had a letter from him one day with talk about things and places we had discussed. Next day I got a cryptic note from Lloyd which said only, "You will be interested to know that I expect to visit Chippenham, near Bath." As he and I never had any reference to Chippenham in our talk I conclude he meant me to make the above inference. It was Lloyd who cleverly gave me such hints that I made out where he is (Blandford, Dorset) by certain references to an old manor house which three of Henry VIII's wives had had (it is Pimperne). Believe it or not, not a single Englishman we know could guess, --but I have dozens of little books and guide books about that region and finally found the manor in an obscure line. I told Garth before he went over and he wrote back I was exactly right. Garth visited Lloyd for three days. I think they are about 45 mi. apart. Lloyd says Garth looks "fine"! Garth spoke once about getting leave and visiting Lyme Regis. Did he ever mention that Robin and I had, on our marriage announcements "at home after--at Lyme Regis, Dorset, England" for there we had expected to live for many years. War prevented. How different our lives would have been! And under other skies would I have managed to achieve my ambition--to have twin sons!

Garth was full of admiration for your crafty dissecting the German book and sending [sic]. His only request to me has been for heavy underclothes and mittens which I got out of his trunk and sent --but, by the time they arrived, he had gotten acclimated and said he had gotten to dislike a temp. above 40°. I have no news. I am very very weary of the war. Love from Una.

One of my dearest friends in the world, anciently my lover, lives at Conu (?) Bissett between Salisbury and Blandford. He has entertained Lloyd but I haven't gotten Garth to go to him, nor to Sir Arthur Hobhouse's estate only 25 mi. away and where we had such fun in 1937 "Heidspen House." Garth doesn't seem inclined to mix war and social life!

July 9, 1945

My Dear Barth:

I've had several letters from Donnan and he is getting on all right but complained in his last of not having any energy. It's very hot there and as he is a very light eater it is probable that he won't feel like himself for a while. It takes a lot of nourishing food and care to get the better of any major operation.

Garth's last letter was from Cologne. I think he is thoroughly tired of army life. I hope, though, that he is kept there until he can be discharged rather than anything out in the Pacific.

Lloyd Tevis has been stationed all this time in a general hospital in Dorset (Laboratory?) but writes his parents not to send any more letters -- they are about to leave, destination unknown.

Dick Oliphant called here last week just back from a year in Paris, where he had an enormously interesting time. Now he is going to a Navy school on the east coast for three months, then expects to go on a carrier as intelligence officer.

I am busier than ever at Ft. Ord. There are more and more troops moving in and out all needing help of various kinds.

I hope to see you here before the end of summer.

Love from Una

I saw an advance news release about Garth's 508 M.P. Bn. highly praising its work. It spoke particularly of spectacular work at the bridges.

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ROBINSON JEFFERS AND THE CRITICS: 1912-1983

by Jeanetta Boswell

(Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1986. 184 pp \$18.50)

Any handbook that renders research easier is welcome. For this reason Jeanetta Boswell's "Bibliography of Secondary Sources with Selective Annotations" (the book's subtitle) is good news. The entries are presented in straight-forward alphabetical order, Ackerman to Zorn. There is a sort of no-nonsense simplicity apparent. One cannot help but compare and contrast this annotated checklist with Alex Vardamis' THE CRITICAL REPUTATION OF ROBINSON JEFFERS: A Bibliographic Study (Archon 1972) which has a much more complex format, grouping reviews, articles, books listing the entries chronologically.

It is curious that Boswell's checklist in 1935 shows fewer (829) entries than Vardamis's in 1971 (1040). This suggests some principle of selectivity; unfortunately, the book's introduction does not explain its criteria for inclusion, nor does it address the relationship of this work with that of Vardamis. Indeed Vardamis is barely acknowledged -- within part of a sentence which groups him with Alberts (a bibliography of primary sources principally) and with two response essays by Young and Nolte.

The usefulness of various bibliographic formats can be argued. If one wishes to know what particular critics have said about an author's works, Boswell gives you easy access to follow their commentary in chronological progression. However, if you wish to study the varied critical response to a particular work, e.g., to TAMAR, you must use the index forty times and then sift through a chronologically arranged six pages of "anonymous" entries, a clumsy and difficult process. Happily, both Boswell's and Vardamis's approaches being available, you now have the choice. And Vardamis's exhaustive listing is in the process of being updated.

In general, Boswell's checklist seems accurate and the two-to-ten-line synopses of articles or books seem readable and representative of actual contents. At times the author stays too close to the article's original wording which results in a clotted jargonese (as in the DeMott piece on TAMAR). At other times, without apparent reason, Boswell eschews synopsis entirely (as when noting Zaller's important CLIFFS OF SOLITUDE).

There are anomalies. Articles by Ella Winters and Lincoln Steffens are not indexed but noted under the publication in which they appear (THE CARMELITE). Jeffers' own principal works are listed under item 429, but this listing takes no note of posthumous editions of critical concern: THE ALPINE CHRIST, 1974; BRIDES OF THE SOUTH WIND, 1974; the Liveright reprint of DOUBLE AXE, 1975; IN THIS WILD WATER: The Suppressed Poems, 1976, and WHAT ODD EXPEDIENTS, 1981. The list notes THE CRETAN WOMAN, Random House, 1954; this play did not appear separately but was included in HUNGERFIELD AND OTHER POEMS, 1954.

Other reservations must be noted regarding accuracy and completeness. THE LITERARY HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN WEST entry has Jeffers appearing "passim"; actually the collection devotes a whole chapter to him. The pivotal article by Kenneth Rexroth (Saturday Review, March 1957) is nowhere noted. Nolte's MERRILL CHECKLIST, 1970, is omitted.

One does not look to a checklist for biographical materials but when they are given, facts should be meticulously checked. Jeffers was not born in Pittsburgh; he did not "return" to Los Angeles in 1903; Una was not separated from her husband when Jeffers and she met. Not only Hawk Tower, but also Tor House was built by Jeffers. The poet did attract some popular acclaim (1932 cover-story for TIME magazine, for instance). It is arguable whether he had a "negative philosophy."

Jeanetta Boswell's ROBINSON JEFFERS AND THE CRITICS is number 77 in an ongoing series, The Scarecrow Author Bibliographies. The editorial board is to be commended for its monumental contribution to scholars. What the present volume offers is substantial; what it lacks could have been supplied with a bit more care and consultation.

Robert J. Brophy

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