

JEFFERS STUDIES



A Publication of
The Robinson Jeffers Association

JEFFERS STUDIES

VOLUME 20 2017/2018

CONTENTS

EDITOR'S NOTE

iii

ARTICLES

PRESERVING JEFFERS COUNTRY

SHELLEY ALDEN BROOKS

1

THE USES OF HISTORY IN THE ANTI-WAR WRITING OF
ROBINSON JEFFERS AND EZRA POUND

RICHARD DRAKE

16

"THO THIS IS MY LAST TALE": WHEN DID JEFFERS
WRITE THE FIRST VERSION OF *POINT ALMA VENUS*?

TIM HUNT

39

THE POET IN MOURNING: JEFFERS AFTER UNA
ROBERT ZALLER

56

BOOK REVIEWS

JUDITH ANDERSON: AUSTRALIAN STAR;
FIRST LADY OF THE AMERICAN STAGE

BY DESLEY DEACON

REVIEWED BY JIM BAIRD

79

THE FORBIDDEN SUBJECT: HOW OPPOSITIONAL
AESTHETICS BANISHED NATURAL BEAUTY

FROM THE ARTS

BY PETER QUIGLEY

REVIEWED BY WHITNEY HOTH

84

EDITOR'S NOTE

Although *Jeffers Studies* is a journal devoted to the interests of serious readers and scholars of Robinson Jeffers' work, it is important to remember that the poet and his verses mean different things to other readers. Professor Shelley Alden Brooks of the University of California at Davis, a new contributor to *Jeffers Studies*, reminds us in her essay that the beauty of Jeffers' poems about the Big Sur coast helped inspire its residents to save that beauty and limit its "development." The approach used to keep the area as pristine as possible while making it accessible to visitors involved local residents, so that the preservation of Big Sur remained under their control rather than that of state or national governments. This kind of solution might serve as a model for current attempts to save the environment.

Professor Richard Drake of the History Department at the University of Montana continues his examination of Jeffers as a figure in American history and political thought with an essay on Ezra Pound. Drake discussed the relation between the work of historian Charles Austin Beard and Jeffers in an article in *Jeffers Studies* 19. In that article he pointed out that Beard was the leading critic of the foreign policy of the United States in the first half of the twentieth century. Beard decried the government's plans of imperialism and military adventurism which resulted in our involvement in World War II. Jeffers, of course, shared this opinion, although Professor Drake found that Jeffers had not read Beard. In the decade prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor, many others felt the same as Beard. In the essay in this issue, Drake reviews the career of contrarian poet Ezra Pound who, unlike Jeffers, embraced both Fascism and Anti-Semitism in his attacks on the United States broadcast from Italy during the war. Drake finds that Pound and Jeffers were on common ground only in their opposition to American imperialism.

Perhaps Jeffers' role as a loner saved him from the prison and mental hospital that awaited Pound at the end of the war. Jeffers' only punishment for his sour view of the war was a formal disavowal of his opinions in *The Double Axe and Other Poems* by his publisher and the rebuke of critics.

Decades ago, former Robinson Jeffers Association President Rob Kafka discovered a previously unknown work that Jeffers wrote on the back pages of another poem. It took Kafka years to decipher and collate what he had found, which turned out to be *Point Alma Venus*, a series of attempts to start what eventually became Jeffers' longest and most ambitious poem, *The Women at Point Sur*. Kafka and Professor Tim Hunt, editor of *The Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*, have recently organized this material into understandable form. This long-awaited manuscript will be published in June 2021 by Stanford University Press as *The Point Alma Venus Manuscripts*. This volume will add an important entry to the Jeffers canon as the last of his known works to be published. It has long been thought that Jeffers wrote this material after the appearance of the explosive "Tamar," which established his reputation as a poet. In the essay presented in this issue, Professor Hunt considers the possibility that some of *Point Alma Venus* may have been written at an earlier time, and how this alternative dating might impact the reading of Jeffers' other works.

The book review section of this issue also reminds us that others see Jeffers in a different way. I review Professor Desley Deacon's masterful biography of the Australian-born actress Judith Anderson, which reminds us that Jeffers had a great impact on the American stage through Anderson's performance as Medea in Jeffers' adaptation of the legend of the Greek heroine (if that's what she was). Anderson also performed as Clytemnestra in a stage adaptation of *The Tower Beyond Tragedy*, which Jeffers prepared for the stage. Also in the review section, Associate Editor Whitney Hoth reviews RJA past President Peter Quigley's book, *The Forbidden Subject: How Oppositional Aesthetics Banished Natural Beauty from the Arts*, which, although it is an examination of the concept of beauty as it appears (or disappears) in contemporary literary criticism, involves lengthy assessments of Jeffers. Hoth, as in his earlier review of Robert Zaller's *The Atom To Be Split*, not only evaluates the book under consideration but presents a thorough appraisal of the critical assumptions that Quigley challenges. We learn, not to our surprise,

that Jeffers has been largely ignored by the scholarly community because he is a person who expresses his views through his poetry rather than an organism from which language events are generated.

Professor Robert Zaller sees Jeffers in another role that has been the fate of many, that of wounded and grieving surviving spouse. In his essay, "The Poet in Mourning," Zaller describes Jeffers' life after the death of his beloved Una, adding passages from his poetry that illuminate what the poet endured. Here we see Jeffers often helpless and inconsolable, but his struggles bring him closer to his readers, for at this time he is both a great poet and a fellow human being in pain.

This issue was made possible by the work of two who may be regarded as Assistant Editors, Robinson Jeffers Association President Jim Karman and his wife, Paula. They brought the careful scholarship and attention to detail that resulted in *The Collected Letters of Robinson Jeffers, with Selected Letters of Una Jeffers* to this issue.

SHELLEY ALDEN BROOKS

PRESERVING JEFFERS COUNTRY

For more than one hundred years, writers and artists have interpreted the beauty and power of Big Sur, and none more notably than Robinson Jeffers. Significantly, Jeffers did far more than bring attention to this coastal treasure; he helped define a land ethic for its future management. To a degree greater than any other private individual, and arguably more than any county, state, or federal land manager, Jeffers can be credited with shaping perceptions and attitudes regarding the appropriate treatment of the Big Sur landscape. The iconic beauty of Big Sur has long been celebrated in advertisements and portrayals of the California coast, luring millions of visitors each year from around the world. Despite experiencing similar tourist pressures associated with such prized landscapes as our national parks, Big Sur has maintained its natural grandeur while going against the typical land use model. Big Sur is neither a developed residential coastline nor a federal preserve. Its residents have worked with county and state officials to codify a unique public/private preservation approach that protects the beauty that the outside world has come to expect in Big Sur, while also protecting a way of life for those who call this coast home. Though formal preservation of the Big Sur coastline was never an explicit goal of Jeffers, he helped shape how people thought of their responsibility to this land as modern innovations made possible more exploitative relationships.

At the heart of Big Sur's successful preservation model are two key ideas laid out in Jeffers' work: that Big Sur's exceptionally beautiful landscape is worthy of thoughtful treatment, and that people belong here, not just as visitors but as inhabitants. Jeffers' maturation as

a poet occurred while he was living in Carmel and exploring its environs, and his impressions of the Big Sur coast and its people influenced his understanding of life and work, and of people's place within the cosmos. In 1938, Jeffers shared in the foreword to his *Selected Poetry* his first introduction to Big Sur:

A second piece of pure accident brought us to the Monterey coast mountains, where for the first time in my life I could see people living—amid magnificent unspoiled scenery—essentially as they did in the Idyls or the Sagas, or in Homer's Ithaca. Here was life purged of its ephemeral accretions. Men were riding after cattle, or plowing the headland, hovered by white sea-gulls, as they have done for thousands of years, and will for thousands of years to come (CP 4: 392).

Jeffers did not see settlers' work as out of place amidst such beauty. Indeed, he admired the way they chose to live their life, and he wrote in praise of it as the pastoral tradition was fading from American society.

I too

Believe that the life of men who ride horses, herders of cattle on the mountain pasture, plowers of remote Rock-narrowed farms in poverty and freedom, is a good life. (CP 2: 522)

Jeffers' praise for these early inhabitants' modes of living derives from his approval of a life lived within the constraints imposed by nature. In a foreword to a special edition of *The Loving Shepherdess*, Jeffers reflects on the early settlers of Big Sur who seemed to him "like natural growth of the mountain" rather than as typical members of a rapidly modernizing society (CL 3: 817).

Many of Jeffers' poems evoke a timeless landscape and enduring forms of human toil, but he actually came to know Big Sur during a time of tremendous change—change that did indeed draw this coastline and its people into greater contact with modern society. In 1922, the state began construction of Highway 1 through Big Sur using funds from voter-approved highway bonds. The state invested in the highway as a touring road, confident that the coast's scenery would attract visitors. Shuddering at the thought of what change the highway would bring, Jeffers, in his topical poem "The

Coast-Road,” juxtaposed the pastoral tradition (in the verses above) with the broader society beyond. Published in the same year the highway opened, “The Coast-Road” is a stinging critique of modern advances:

At the far end of those loops of road
Is what will come and destroy it, a rich and vulgar
and bewildered civilization dying at the core. (CP 2: 522)

Jeffers’ verse laments the appearance of the new road as something precious lost for locals and their traditions. The highway, however, was a direct response to people like Robinson and Una Jeffers—people who delighted in their contact with the Big Sur coast. Moreover, many locals had themselves welcomed the road—had in fact petitioned Monterey County for assistance to build a permanent connection to town for reasons of safety, commerce, and convenience. Despite his disapproval of the highway project, Jeffers largely began to adapt to the new possibilities. Though Jeffers labeled the newly popular automobiles as “vulgar,” he, like many other Americans uneasy about modernity, opted in (CL 1: 408). Jeffers and Una purchased a Ford that they used to take pilgrimages throughout Big Sur and beyond, prompting Una to acknowledge both the resentment they felt at the opening of the coast to “tourists” and the great value the road would provide to her family (2: 226).

The Jefferses may have objected to the growing number of residents and tourists, but they too were relative newcomers and were themselves responsible for drawing some of this attention to Big Sur and Carmel (CL 1: 606, 739). Indeed, Jeffers and the Big Sur coastline were increasingly linked in the public consciousness. Five years before the highway’s completion, a national audience learned (if they hadn’t already) about this coast’s bard when Jeffers won a place on the cover of the April 4, 1932 issue of *Time* magazine. In June of 1937, when the highway officially opened through Big Sur, the local *Monterey Peninsula Herald* ran an article entitled, “Jeffers Verse Infused With Rugged Spirit and Wild Beauty of Santa Lucia Mountain Country” (2: 735). Jeffers shared Big Sur’s beauty with an admiring public, and in no small part built his reputation on his appreciation of it.

Though Jeffers’ poetry drew broad attention to Big Sur, it would not overwhelm this treasured coastline. Monterey County, as the site of the state’s constitutional convention, numerous historic

adobes, and the popular 17-Mile Drive and Hotel Del Monte, employed people who understood tourism. County officials chose to establish aesthetic zoning along Highway 1 even before the highway's completion (Bard 619). The county's decision to designate only portions of the Big Sur coastline as commercial areas and to disallow billboards, meant that Big Sur would not resemble the developed beaches becoming increasingly popular along the California coast, such as nearby Santa Cruz where a beach boardwalk and amusement park welcomed visitors.

World War II offered a brief reprieve from tourist pressures, but the state's population explosion in the wake of the war—of both tourists and newly-settled residents—echoed in Big Sur. A 1948 *Monterey Peninsula Herald* article titled "'Down-the-Coast' Residents Worry Over Building Boom: Big Sur Area is Called 'Crowded'" highlighted the concern over the twelve new homes built in the previous year (Stevenson). Development pressures existed up and down the California coast as the state's population mushroomed, and the defense industry in particular gave rise to sprawling housing complexes like Lakewood, Los Angeles' version of Levittown. Importantly, while California as a whole was breaking all records with the growth of its population and economy, Big Sur residents and Monterey County officials chose a different path for their coastline. Instead of maximizing development opportunities, the conversation among Big Sur residents and Monterey County planners revolved around the idea of *restraint*. In only two other places in California during the early post-war era were there similar commitments to slow growth and open space—in the Santa Monica Mountains and in the San Francisco Bay Area (Stevens 127; Meyer 18). Both regions experienced rapid development during and after World War II. Measures to check development, or at least to concentrate it around protected open space, were perhaps not surprising in two of the nation's fastest-growing metropolises. But Big Sur's population density was approximately one person per 250 acres in 1960.¹ What made Big Sur residents and county officials want to protect open space at this time, and why were they successful? The answers have much to do with the growing cultural significance of Big Sur.

Robinson Jeffers had long since put Big Sur on the cultural map, and by mid-century national attention increasingly bore down on Big Sur. Features on this coastline appeared in *National Geographic*, *Life*, *Harper's*, and *Rogue* magazines, to name a few.² Monterey

County and state officials came to understand that it was more than beauty that tourists sought along this coast. In an era of rapid mobility and technological advances, visitors to Big Sur sought exposure to a culture that had evolved with a strong anchor to place. In stark contrast to a suburban landscape, the warp and woof of life in Big Sur was defined by the coast's dramatic natural features and elements. And as humanity achieved increasing dominance over nature—to the point of threatening nuclear annihilation—some Americans craved contact with a place where geography dwarfed human endeavors. Jeffers' powerful verses place characters at the mercy of a formidable landscape, while also highlighting "human courage—fortitude" in the face of these elements (CL 2: 325). His work resonated with so many at least in part because of his convictions regarding people's appropriate place within the natural world. Jeffers understood the universe as "one being, a single organism, one great life that includes all life and all things; and is so beautiful that it must be loved and revered" (1: 77). Jeffers' message—to seek a respectful, harmonious relationship with nature—would soon emerge in Big Sur's land use planning, but not before another artist echoed his support for such an approach.

Forced out of his expatriate home of Paris by World War II, the author Henry Miller settled in Big Sur in the mid 1940s and was deeply satisfied to find that it was indeed "magnificent (just as Robinson Jeffers describes it)" (Nin 3: 310). Miller's familiarity with Big Sur came from Jeffers' *The Women at Point Sur*, which Miller likened to song as he spoke in admiration of "our great American poet" (Big Sur Guide 23). Miller explained the move to Big Sur to his close friend, Anaïs Nin, as good for his work and his personal well-being: "I have much work to finish and am seeking peace and isolation. I am completely out of the world there" (Nin 3: 310). Soon after, Miller published *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare*, a set of reflections on the United States. In it, Miller queried: "What have we to offer the world beside the superabundant loot which we recklessly plunder from the earth under the maniacal delusion that this insane activity represents progress and enlightenment?" Indeed, Miller was troubled by America's relationship to its landscapes: "Nowhere else in the world is the divorce between man and nature so complete" (20). Big Sur offered an antidote to Miller, for it was here that he found "a region which corresponded to my notion of something truly American, something simple, primitive, and as yet unspoiled"

(Big Sur Guide 23). In his memoir on life in Big Sur, Miller called Big Sur “the face of the earth as the Creator intended it to look,” and his adopted home and community “Heaven enough” (*Oranges* 6; Fitzpatrick 19). Miller, influenced by Jeffers, attracted Jack Kerouac and Hunter S. Thompson to this coastline, artists who continued to expand Big Sur’s reputation. Miller’s works published while he lived in Big Sur, as well as his presence there, also helped to sharpen the focus of the open-space planning measures taken by residents and Monterey County planners.

Like Jeffers, Miller took great satisfaction in the pace of life and the orientation toward modernity to be found among Big Sur inhabitants. This coast’s visual and cultural distance from urban and suburban America provided reprieve and inspiration for Miller and promised to do the same for countless visitors. Monterey County’s treatment of Big Sur in this era reflected the reverence Jeffers, Miller, and others felt for this place, as well as the desire to preserve both the place and its community. Open-space planning grew out of residents’ own understanding of how best to interact with this landscape. Nathaniel Owings, a prominent architect and partner in the Skidmore, Owings & Merrill firm, settled in Big Sur in the post-war period and spearheaded an open-space plan for this stretch of coastline. Previously, he and his wife, Margaret, worked with the Jefferses to try and prevent overdevelopment of their stretch of the Carmel coast (*CL* 3: 666). With the support of Monterey County, Nathaniel Owings and his firm drafted a master plan for the Big Sur coast in 1960. According to Owings, the decision to protect against overdevelopment was premised on the idea that high-density development, increasingly common along other parts of the California coast, would cause chaos in Big Sur (Skidmore et al. 13). Owings described Big Sur as more than just a beautiful spot; it was also “a changer of one’s point of view” (Duddleson 29). The power of the Big Sur landscape prompted Owings, like Jeffers, to reexamine what society labeled “progress,” and to suggest a different path. Jeffers’ inhumanist philosophy echoed in Owings’ plan as he sought to put a check on development projects in Big Sur (*CP* 4: 428).

As an architect and planner, Owings used his medium to outline what he saw as an appropriate relationship between the human and non-human world. Owings’ experience taught him what could become of a place that lacked appropriate planning, and Owings and his wife both feared what would happen to Big Sur as its popu-

lation grew and the state considered modernizing it with a four-lane highway. The primary objective of Owings' plan was two-fold: to preserve the scenic beauty of Big Sur through securing open space and to do so "without imposing unjustifiable restrictions on present or future property owners" (Skidmore et al. 8). Notably, the introduction to the Big Sur master plan proposal drew upon Robinson Jeffers' verse to set a tone of wonder that Owings wanted to reinforce in other admirers of this coastline. What appeared in the draft plan was an excerpt from Jeffers' "Continent's End":

I gazing at the boundaries of granite and spray,
the established sea-marks, felt behind me
Mountain and plain, the immense breadth of the continent,
before me the mass and doubled stretch of water. (CP 1: 16)

The Big Sur master plan emerged at the height of California's post-war development, and the decision to decenter people and their desires by imposing constraints to growth set Big Sur firmly apart from contemporary land use. Two years of local input and county modification resulted in the county-adopted Coast Master Plan, which included minimum lot sizes for new development, architectural review for construction within view of the highway, and encouragement to cluster new developments and maintain Highway 1 as a two-lane road in order to limit future growth. Residents by and large recorded their approval of a plan to preserve open space. They were willing to increase regulations, and in the case of homeowners, impose some limits on their own property rights in order to keep Big Sur from losing its prized beauty and rural character. Big Sur's planning document was such a novel approach that it was reprinted in its entirety in a federal report on open space. William Whyte, the leader of the national open-space movement and the author of the federal report, conjectured that Big Sur's example could prove beneficial to other areas looking to restrict development. He also called the plan the earliest of its kind for establishing slow growth and scenic protection (3, 93).

Though Jeffers died shortly before the official adoption of the Coast Master Plan, he knew that Big Sur residents as well as Monterey County officials believed enough in the coast's special character to work to preserve it in the face of encroaching development. Given Jeffers' concern that humans had a tendency to "fill up the gaps" until wild places were rare, it likely pleased him that

in Big Sur people were checking this trend (CP 3: 435). In what may be seen as a meaningful set of coincidences, 1962 saw both Jeffers' death and the passage of the Coast Master Plan and ordinances that protected the place that Jeffers loved. This protection was timely, as California's growth was so rapid that in 1962 it surpassed New York to become the nation's most populous state.

Nineteen sixty-two was also the year in which the photographer Ansel Adams settled in Carmel Highlands, just to the north of Big Sur. The San Francisco native, fifteen years younger than Jeffers, had long admired Big Sur and its bard. Well before Adams moved to Carmel, he drew artistic inspiration from Jeffers, whom he photographed in 1928 (CL 1: 756). Adams appreciated Jeffers' verse for its evocative representation of the Big Sur landscape. In Adams' opinion, Jeffers' poems "sound more music and pile more mountains in the spirit than almost anything I know of." In 1945 Adams wrote to fellow photographer and friend Alfred Stieglitz, claiming that he planned to "do my best to call attention to the simplicities of environment and method; to 'the enormous beauty of the world,' as Jeffers writes. Pray for me." (Karman, *Stones* 6). Adams' professional success can hardly be overstated. It is notable that of all the beautiful landscapes he knew, it was the Big Sur region that drew Adams to settle. It may have been more than beauty alone that appealed to Adams; Jeffers had both reflected and helped to inspire a unique local culture that commanded broad approval.

It is no coincidence, finally, that 1962 also saw the official opening of Big Sur's Esalen Institute, a spiritual retreat that celebrates human potential. Founders Michael Murphy and Richard Price saw Big Sur as the appropriate location for their endeavor. "I don't think it would have worked as well if we started Esalen in, say, New Jersey," observed Murphy. "The sheer magnitude of the land and the power of the elements are what shape lives in Big Sur" (Wood 458). Murphy and Price chose the name "Esalen" as an acknowledgment of the indigenous people who formerly occupied this stretch of coastline, principally in the Santa Lucia Mountains. The Esselen people left a number of archaeological remains, including cave paintings that captured Jeffers' imagination. The Esalen Institute's website references Jeffers' poem "Hands," in which Jeffers interprets his understanding of humanity as "only a temporary and infinitesimal phenomenon in a large universe" (CL 1: 883).

. . . over the division of years these careful
 Signs-manual are now like a sealed message
 Saying: "Look: we also were human; we had hands,
 not paws. All hail
 You people with the cleverer hands, our supplanners
 In the beautiful country; enjoy her a season, her
 beauty, and come down
 And be supplanted; for you also are human."
 (CP 2: 4)

The Esalen Institute's focus on humanity and the self may not be entirely compatible with Jeffers' inhumanist convictions, but it is not a stretch to say that Esalen's success derived in part from the mystique that Jeffers and other artists bequeathed to this stunning landscape.

This same mystique was especially attractive to a particular demographic throughout the 1960s—the so-called “hippies.” These young people expressed familiarity with Big Sur's poet laureate. As a state park ranger noted of the youth flowing through Big Sur's campgrounds and forests, “All of them quote Robinson Jeffers” (Woolfenden). Hippies came to Big Sur hoping to find new meaning for their lives in a troubled world. They resembled Robinson Jeffers, Henry Miller, and countless others who embraced Big Sur for its perceived distance from America's technological, commercialized, mass culture. They also arrived on the heels of Jack Kerouac's visit to Big Sur, out of which came *Big Sur*, his 1962 memoir of his summer spent along the coast. Kerouac acknowledged his admiration of Henry Miller's work, just as Miller had of Jeffers'. All of these writers spoke of the influence of Big Sur's landscape on the people who encountered it.

Permanent residents, too, continued to identify with the powerful natural features of Big Sur. Margaret Owings worked to protect two creatures she treasured in Big Sur—the sea otter and the mountain lion. As Owings lobbied to remove the state bounty on mountain lions, she provided a platform for her neighbors who also championed the rights of Big Sur's nonhuman residents. Owings recounted how, in response to the sanctioned killing of a mountain lion outside a Big Sur home, a local resident articulated the perceived value of this elusive creature and its habitat: “We are living on the edge of the wilderness. We are the intruders. We are taking a risk living here and we have chosen to take that risk. . . .

When the Fish and Game warden pulled the trigger, he shot a much-loved neighbor of mine. He shot the reason I live here—he shot beauty and coexistence and respect” (Owings 99-101). Such sentiments echo Jeffers’ belief, as expressed in his poem “The Answer,” that humans would benefit from thinking of the Earth and its people as part of an integrated whole, not as adversaries (*CP* 2: 536).

Well after Monterey County established a master plan for balancing development and preservation, widespread concerns about the degradation of the California coast prompted a statewide voter initiative to coordinate regulation of the state’s prized coastline. The 1976 Coastal Act created the California Coastal Commission, and with it a requirement for county-created coastal land use plans that protected open space along the California coast and public access to such spaces. Big Sur locals and Monterey County planners built on the open-space planning principles of the 1962 Coast Master Plan to draft an updated planning document. Big Sur’s growing popularity prompted a more stringent approach, one that called for large minimum lot sizes (from ten to forty acres per new home construction) and the prohibition of new construction in view of the highway to preserve the wild feel of much of the Big Sur coastline. All of this required money to compensate affected landowners, well beyond what the county alone could afford.

Several years into the drafting process for this state-mandated land use plan, Ansel Adams proposed creating a national seashore in Big Sur that would maintain existing homes but give the federal government oversight for the entirety of the coastal region of Big Sur. In a letter to U.S. Representative Leon Panetta, Adams pressed for federal action to protect Big Sur:

I have been conscious for nearly fifty years of the extraordinary quality of the Big Sur Coast but only within the past decade have I become aware of the very real dangers facing its future . . . I am deeply concerned with the possible many small groups (regional and county) who might enter into the management picture and be incapable of an adequate inclusive management and funding program. Hence, my strong personal conviction that only National Park Service support and management could achieve the desired objectives. (Adams)

Adams persuaded Senator Alan Cranston and Representative Panetta to introduce legislation to codify federal management for Big Sur. Given who Ansel Adams was, and the fact that he had the ear of President Carter and the executive director of the Wilderness Society, what unfolded in Washington in 1980 was a reckoning on Big Sur's distinctive land ethic and the belief that community well-being must be balanced alongside ecosystem needs.

Adams' proposal may have been influenced by Jeffers' reverence for the Big Sur landscape, but the plan was perceived as a threat by the residents who saw themselves as the appropriate stewards of this treasured place. "I resent not being grouped in the category of environmentalists," said John Harlan, a third-generation landowner, in response to Adams' proposal. "The people who've lived here—we are environmentalist by birth and training. We were environmentalists before anybody found it in vogue to be one. We've done pretty good keeping the place for more than one hundred years . . . I don't see why it should go to hell in a hand basket just because the federal government doesn't own it" (Yonay 43). Residents stressed that after a century of ranching and farming, this landscape still attracted a comparable number of tourists as Yosemite National Park.³ Locals argued that not only had they taken good care of the land, but also that Big Sur's special qualities included its culture, and they could point to evidence of national parks that had all but erased traces of former communities. Keith Thompson of the Esalen Institute, one of several residents who traveled to Washington, D.C. to testify at the Senate hearings on the bill, expressed his fear of what might be lost if the bill passed. Thompson argued that Big Sur should be thought of "as another country" with its "own language and customs, its own unique heritage, its own norms of social conduct, its own goals and values, its own pace of life." Big Sur's exceptional qualities derived from, and inspired, creativity along this coast, Thompson argued, and he challenged those who believed that Big Sur's unique essence could survive under federal ownership by asking, "how many artists are there in Yosemite?" (U.S. Congress 199).

The vast majority of Big Sur residents disagreed fundamentally with Adams' idea that Big Sur should be managed like a national park and instead argued in favor of seeing to fruition the land use plan that they and Monterey County planners were drafting under the guidance of the Coastal Commission. This preference for local

rule was a politically savvy argument during the conservative shift of 1980. In the end, senators were not convinced that the National Park Service could better protect Big Sur than Monterey County could under the developing land use plan, nor were these legislators inclined to commit federal funds to preserve a place that could ostensibly be protected without federal management. Senators shelved the legislation and it was not taken up again after the fall election. Residents were therefore able to proceed with protecting Big Sur's beautiful, rural, residential landscape. In doing so, they went against the popular notion that to preserve a landscape people could only be temporary admirers, not permanent inhabitants.

In 1986 the California Coastal Commission certified the Big Sur land use plan, codifying a state/county/private land management structure. The land use plan's primary planning objective is to minimize development in order to protect the coast as a "scenic rural area where residents' individual lifestyles can flourish, traditional ranching uses can continue, and the public can come to enjoy nature and find refuge from the pace of urban life" (Big Sur LCP 11). Decades earlier, Jeffers made the case for the importance of maintaining a vital connection between land and people. Ultimately, Jeffers' conviction won out over Adams' adherence to a wilderness-centered land ethic that minimizes peoples' impact on the land. Well after the implementation of the 1986 land use plan, the Coastal Commission called Big Sur one of the great regulatory success stories (Coastal Commission 29). Big Sur has indeed achieved an unusually effective land use policy that manages to satisfy on at least some level both the public and the residents, while also going a long way toward protecting the land itself.

Built into the parameters of Big Sur's well-preserved scenery is an unusual blending of the preservation and property rights strands that guide land use along the California coast. The state-approved land use plan is premised upon this idea that preservation and habitation can be mutually supportive endeavors. This unconventional land ethic reflects Jeffers' beloved verse:

A severed hand
 Is an ugly thing, and man dissevered from the earth and
 stars and his history . . . for contemplation or in fact . . .
 Often appears atrociously ugly. Integrity is wholeness, the
 greatest beauty is
 Organic wholeness, the wholeness of life and things, the
 divine beauty of the universe. Love that, not man
 Apart from that . . . (CP 2: 536)

Today, Big Sur is arguably every bit as beautiful as it was when Robinson Jeffers first immortalized it, in no small part because his work helped engender a powerful commitment to a distinctive form of preservation from multiple generations of locals and non-residents who cherish this coastline and its way of life. It seems particularly fitting that this story can be seen as an example of the complex ways in which culture and nature are intertwined and can constitute each other.

NOTES

1. This is based on the 1960 census data of 600 residents within a 150,000 acre boundary.

2. See George W. Long, "New Rush to Golden California," *National Geographic* 105, no. 6 (1954); "Rugged, Romantic, World Apart: Creative Colony Finds a Haven in California's Big Sur," photographs by J.R. Eyerman, *Life* 47, no. 1, July 6 (1959); Mildred Edie Brady, "The New Cult of Sex and Anarchy," *Harper's* 194, Jan.-June 1947; Hunter S. Thompson, "Big Sur: The Tropic of Henry Miller," *Rogue* 6, no. 10 (1961).

3. Tourism comparisons come from Ed Brown, District Director, California Coastal Commission, Central Coast to state commissioners and interested persons, Subject: Big Sur Coast Local Coastal Program, September 1981. Found in the California Coastal Commission, Santa Cruz office; and in Richard J. Orsi, Alfred Runte, and Marlene Smith-Baranzini, *Yosemite and Sequoia: A Century of California National Parks* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 124.

WORKS CITED

- Adams, Ansel, to Leon Panetta, private correspondence, 22 Apr. 1979. Leon and Sylvia Panetta Institute Archive, California State University, Monterey Bay.
- Bard, Albert S. "Highway Zoning Sustained by California Court: Design in Community Planning Upheld for Monterey County." *National Periodic Review*, 26 Dec. 1938, p. 619.
- Big Sur Coast Local Coastal Program. Certified by the California Coastal Commission, 1986.
- California Coastal Commission, Periodic Review of the Monterey County Local Coastal Program, 2003.
- Duddleson, William. "Protecting the Big Sur." *American Land Forum* 7, no. 2, 1987, pp. 28-36, 45.
- Esalen Institute. www.esalen.org/page/esselen-people. Accessed 6 Nov. 2019.
- Fitzpatrick, Elaine. "The Spirits of Nepenthe." California History Room, Big Sur File, Monterey Public Library.
- Hunt, Tim, editor. *The Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*. Stanford UP, 1988-2001. 5 vols.
- Karman, James, editor. *The Collected Letters of Robinson Jeffers, with Selected Letters of Una Jeffers*. Stanford UP, 2009-2015. 3 vols.
- , editor. *Stones of the Sur: Poetry by Robinson Jeffers, Photographs by Morley Baer*. Stanford UP, 2001.
- Kerouac, Jack. *Big Sur*. Penguin Books, 1962.
- Meyer, Amy, with Randolph Delehanty. *New Guardians for the Golden Gate: How American Got a Great National Park*. U of California P, 2006.
- Miller, Henry. *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare*. New Directions, 1945.
- . "Big Sur," Big Sur Guide, 1954. California History Room, Big Sur File, Monterey Public Library.
- . *Big Sur and the Oranges of Hieronymus Bosch*. New Directions, 1957.
- Nin, Anaïs. *Diary of Anaïs Nin*. Vol. 3, Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1969.
- Owings, Margaret Wentworth. *Voice from the Sea and Other Reflections on Wildlife & Wilderness*. Monterey Bay Aquarium P, 1998.
- Skidmore, Owings, Merrill, Planning Consultants. Monterey Coast Master Plan. County of Monterey. Oct. 1960. California History Room, Monterey Public Library.
- Stevens, Jennifer Audrey. "Feminizing the Urban West: Green Cities and Open Space in the Postwar Era, 1950-2000." Ph.D. thesis, U of California, Davis, 2008.
- Stevenson, Dorothy. "'Down-the-Coast' Residents Worry Over Building Boom: Big Sur Area is Called 'Crowded.'" *Monterey Peninsula Herald*, 30 Sept. 1948. California History Room, Big Sur File, Monterey Public Library.
- United States, Congress, Senate, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Parks, Recreation, and Renewable Resources. Hearings on S. 2551, A Bill to Establish the Big Sur Coast National Scenic Area in the State of California, 96th Congress, 2nd session, 24 Apr. 1980, Publication no. 96-125.

- Whyte, William. "Open Space Action." Report to the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, no. 15. Washington, D.C., 1962.
- Wood, Linda Sargent. "Contact, Encounter, and Exchange at Esalen: A Window onto Late Twentieth-Century American Spirituality." *Pacific Historical Review* 77, no. 3, 2008, pp. 453-87.
- Woolfenden, John. "Riding Herd on Big Sur." *Monterey Peninsula Herald*, 7 Sept. 1971. California History Room, Big Sur File, Monterey Public Library.
- Yonay, Ehud. "Big Sur: The Politics of Preservation." *New West*, 22 Dec. 1980, pp. 33-43.

RICHARD DRAKE

THE USES OF HISTORY IN THE ANTI-WAR WRITING OF ROBINSON JEFFERS AND EZRA POUND

Robinson Jeffers (1887-1962) and Ezra Pound (1885-1972) occupy places of infamy in the literary history of the Second World War. In the introduction to his *Poets of World War II* anthology, Harvey Shapiro describes the poems of his sixty-two authors as “bawdy, bitchy, irreverent,” as well as cynical and lacking in patriotism and piety (xxi). These are fair characterizations of the book as a whole, but none of them captures the true spirit of the writing by Pound and Jeffers. Shapiro includes them in the anthology, though not in a way that even minimally reflects their implacable fierceness in judging America’s wartime role to be an enterprise in equal parts criminal and lunatic. They based their condemnation of the United States, however, on radically different assumptions about the course of American history. Comparing the ways in which they thought about American history and American historians will help us to understand the cultural politics of both these literary masters and where they stood in the political context of their time.

Born in Hailey, Idaho, and raised in Pennsylvania, Pound found his true home in Europe. As a young poet in Edwardian London, he immediately won a critical following with his first collections of poetry, *Personae* (1909) and *Exultations* (1909). *Ripostes* (1912) and *Lustra* (1916) enhanced his fame and influence. He became a seminal figure in the modernist avant-garde that transformed early twentieth-century American and British literature. Success in London won him admirers back home in the United States, and for his generation of writers he played a key role in the cross-fertilization of Anglo-American verse. Pound influenced and promoted writers destined for fame, including James Joyce and T. S. Eliot. There

seemed to be no limit to his artistic ambition and capability. In 1915, he published *Cathay*, his translation and brilliant reworking of classical Chinese poetry based on the notes of Orientalist Ernest Fenollosa whose scholarly work had deepened his interest in Asian art and literature.

Pound belonged to the generation of 1914, not as a combatant, but as a caustically articulate voice of the disillusionment that followed the Great War. He stood in the front rank of the lost generation artists and intellectuals alienated from a capitalist status quo they blamed for having murdered ten million young soldiers. In 1920, Pound wrote in “Hugh Selwyn Mauberley”:

There died a myriad,
And of the best, among them
For an old bitch gone in the teeth
For a botched civilization

Eliot judged this poem to be “a positive document of sensibility. It is compact of the experience of a certain man in a certain place at a certain time; and it is also a document of an epoch (xxiv).” The civilization Pound had in mind was corporate capitalism. Fascist and communist alternatives found many adherents among the artists and intellectuals of that era. Drawn to elements of both radical traditions, Pound ultimately chose fascism because he thought Mussolini—an ex-Marxist—had adopted the best of Marx’s ideas for the overthrow of capitalism. During his full-blown fascist phase beginning in the early 1930s, there would be little sign of these earlier mixed ideological affiliations, but they constitute a vital part of Pound’s political education¹. Indeed, he had met Major Clifford Hugh Douglas, the radical Social Credit theorist and critic of the capitalist monetary system, in the offices of the *New Age* socialist magazine. Its editor, Alfred Richard Orage, hailed Douglas as “the Einstein of economics,” a judgment shared by Pound, who from 1911 to 1921 regularly wrote for *New Age*. As Tim Redman has shown in a landmark book in Pound studies, his economic ideas were derived from a serious intellectual formation on the subject (Chs. 1-2).

In 1924, Pound moved to Italy and would live there for the next twenty years, writing the epic poem generally considered his masterpiece, *The Cantos*, and a series of works glorifying the Fascist regime. He found in Mussolini the personification of an ideal

leader and celebrated his genius in *Jefferson and/or Mussolini* (1935). During World War II, Pound strenuously defended Mussolini as well as Hitler, whom he habitually called a modern-day Joan of Arc. Enlisted by the regime as a propagandist during World War II, Pound fervently devoted himself to the Axis cause.

Leonard W. Doob edited a series of 120 programs that Pound presented on Fascist radio from October 2, 1941, to July 25, 1943, "*Ezra Pound Speaking*" *Radio Speeches of World War II*. Noting that Pound was a leading Fascist propagandist for a decade and that his broadcast presentations numbered in the thousands, Matthew Feldman describes Doob's book as "the most scholarly and widely available edition of the radio speeches" (90). Pound explained in his wartime radio broadcasts that the American media—newspapers, movies, and radio—were "a mass of lies" (Doob 113). He bitterly complained about journalists and "their fake news" (76). Advancing an anti-Semitic interpretation of American economic and cultural life, he argued that Jewish interests completely controlled these media. Truth about the country could not be found in such sources. The work of honest historians he believed to be the only cure for the brainwashing routinely administered by, in his view, the country's real masters, Jewish elites.

Pound commented at length in these radio talks about his favorite historians. The programs contain the names of thirteen historians. Most of those names are mentioned only once or twice, but he cites Claude Bowers, Henry Adams, Brooks Adams, and William Woodward repeatedly. No other source in Pound's voluminous collected works contains more substantive references to his historical mentors than do these notorious radio broadcasts, deemed to be treasonous by the United States government. For his punishment, he first would spend six months in a prison for army criminals near Pisa, Italy, and then twelve and a half years, on charges of criminal insanity, at St. Elizabeth's psychiatric hospital in Washington, D.C.

Of the four historians most frequently noted by Pound, the name of Bowers is the first to appear in the radio scripts. Pound cited Bowers in nine of the programs, initially on February 3, 1942, praising him for having done "a bit of digging about" (Doob 30). He chiefly had in mind *The Tragic Era: The Revolution after Lincoln* in which Bowers attacked Radical Republicans for their vindictive policies against the South during the Reconstruction period following the

Civil War when, as the book relentlessly proclaimed, white people underwent a reign of terror imposed by corrupt governments led by northern carpetbaggers and ignorant ex-slaves. He lamented, “the political parasites and looters, scalawags and scavengers, knaves and fools, took possession of the State Governments, and entered upon the pillaging of the stricken people” (219). In the Southern scenario depicted by Bowers, the Ku Klux Klan heroically fought to save white civilization from the destruction planned for it by the vindictive occupiers and their black allies.

Pound especially appreciated the way that Bowers highlighted the economic causes and consequences of the Civil War. Bankers, speculators, and capitalists moved into the foreground of American life during these years: “the new slavery power” consisted of combinations of capital and consolidations of monopoly (Bowers 268). Bowers believed the high-minded democratic republic envisioned by Jefferson had given way to the most disgusting oligarchy in all history. Bowers, in Pound’s view, had caught the true spirit of the country, now in 1942 allegedly fighting a war for FDR’s trumpeted Four Freedoms. Pound subjected this wartime sloganeering to merciless ridicule as a cover for the country’s true objective of enhancing the wealth and power of its elites.

Henry Adams, a Harvard University historian and a grandson of John Quincy Adams, is mentioned in six of Pound’s radio scripts. He presents *The Education of Henry Adams* as a guide for understanding the power of money over American politics. When Adams writes, “[t]he world after 1865 became a bankers’ world,” he addresses the cardinal point in Pound’s interpretation of contemporary history (247). Pound singles out for special attention the book’s analysis of the Civil War, as “still EDUCATORY” (Doob 75). He has in mind such Adams observations as, “Little by little, at first only as a shadowy chance of what might be, if things could be rightly done, one began to feel that, somewhere behind the chaos in Washington power was taking shape; that it was massed and guided as it had not been before” (H. Adams 169). Financial elites harnessed this new power to serve their needs, a view in perfect consonance with Pound’s understanding of American politics. Bowers, too, made frequent use of *The Education of Henry Adams* in his analysis of America’s post-Civil War oligarchy.

Pound also cited Adams’s *The Degradation of Democratic Dogma*, a collection of essays posthumously published in 1920, to explain why

“the American people gets dumber and dumber each year” (Doob 112). The key essay is “A Letter to American Teachers of History,” written in 1910. He analyzes the second principle of thermodynamics, regarding “the progressive degradation of energy by dissipation and levelling of intensities,” and discusses its implications for the study of history (H. Adams 51-52). Adams displays a virtuoso mastery of the scientific literature in multiple languages on this subject, but for understanding what the law of entropy entails for the American people specifically, Pound finds more help in the work of Henry’s brother, Brooks, who wrote a 122-page-long introduction for *The Degradation of Democratic Dogma*. Addressing “certain fundamental facts which are stronger than democratic theories,” Brooks Adams lamented that democracy had not proved out (vii). Instead of producing a polity that fostered the collective moral and mental growth of the American people, democracy American style had led to a uniquely crass and ignorant form of oligarchy, with results that foreclosed any prospects of high civilization.

Featured in fifteen programs, Brooks Adams comes up more often than all the other historians mentioned by Pound. *The Law of Civilization and Decay: An Essay on History*, Adams’s 1895 survey of civilization from ancient times to the present, Pound judged to be one of the most profound historical works ever written: “I quote him as a propicient author whose perceptions are worth careful consideration” (Doob 230). In the 1952 edition of his *Guide to Kulchur*, Pound would list *The Law of Civilization and Decay* as the “most recent summary of ‘where in a manner of speaking’ we had got to half a century ago.” It was one of the books in modern literature without which a reader today “cannot measure the force of the others” (352).

Brooks Adams argued that one empire after another had ruled the earth through all recorded history. Beginning with the ancient Romans, great oligarchies would form the core elements of all the empires to come. Every empire had arisen from an economic foundation and had ruled through an imperial bureaucracy, as in the paradigmatic case of Rome: “This bureaucracy was the core of the consolidated mass called the empire; it was the embodiment of money, the ultimate expression of force, and it recognized and advanced men who were adapted to its needs” (91). Inevitably, though, the vitality of the world’s empires waned and always for the same reason: the fatal corruption caused by the greed of economic

elites. Decline and fall inevitably followed. Then the economic center of gravity would shift to another empire and the process of civilization and decay would begin all over again.

Pound identified Jewish money lenders, bankers, and financiers as the most destructive of the economic elites denounced by Brooks Adams, himself an anti-Semite, though this point is not stressed in *The Law of Civilization and Decay*. Pound held that exploiters emanating from this peculiar race had undermined every society they had entered. He was in most respects a classic anti-Semite, and the vulgarity with which he expressed such views in the radio scripts knew no bounds. He did make a significant exception for the “small Jews,” those with no connection to the economic power structure, allowing they should be left alone. Without explaining this point precisely, he seems to have adopted the view that Jews were not necessarily tainted by blood to wreak havoc on earth. The Nazis, on the other hand, did condemn all Jews expressly for their ineradicable biologically determined evil. Pound insisted that only the “big Jews”—the money men among them—could be accused justly of conspiring to destroy non-Jewish society (Doob 115). Matthew Feldman traces the increasingly Nazi strain in Pound to his reverential reading of *Mein Kampf* in 1942 (116).

The defenders of Pound among mainstream literary critics who strive to salvage *The Cantos* for the canon make just this kind of argument regarding the important distinctions between the radically evil racial anti-Semitism that led to the Holocaust and the merely regrettable conclusions that Pound drew about Jewish kingpins from his obsessive reading about the Social Credit economic theories of Major Douglas in *Economic Democracy* and numerous other works by him. Hugh Kenner is a good example of this mainstream critical approach to Pound’s work. He celebrates Pound as a writer deserving to have a contemporary stage of Western culture named after him—*The Pound Era*—while lamenting “the impotent vituperation into which Pound kept lapsing in the 1930s and 1940s and over Rome Radio” (243).

The Italian translator, writer, and University of Trieste professor of German literature, Claudio Magris, makes the same argument about Pound: a protagonist of the modernist revolution in art, he deserves to be recognized as one of the greatest writers of the twentieth century. Such brilliant authors, Magris reasons, rise above their politics. In Pound’s case, fascism was “probably a great

ingenuousness,” and his numerous friendships with Jewish writers prove that anti-Semitism for him “was not racist” (Magris 1, 42-43). *Ezra in gabbia* (Ezra in Jail), an intellectual homage play by Leonardo Petrillo, portrays Pound as a genius who should be remembered primarily not for unfortunate lapses in political judgment, but for his revolutionary artistic vision and his struggles on behalf of economic justice. The play opened in Venice’s Teatro Goldoni on November 16, 2018, and received national attention. Redman dismisses this approach to Pound’s work: “Pound *was* anti-Semitic, and I think it useless for Pound scholars to pretend otherwise or to see in his distinction between ‘big jews’ and ‘poor yitts’ some basis for exoneration” (4-5).

William E. Woodward, the least well-known today of Pound’s preferred historians, comes up for mention in four of the radio scripts. His major book, *A New American History*, appeared in 1936. Pound extolled Woodward as a generally reliable preceptor for understanding the complexities of American history. *A New American History* “is better reading after you have digested Brooks Adams taking the grand, but inhuman sweep, seeing ideas and material forces” (Doob 242). In effect, according to Pound, Woodward had written a kind of popularization of Adams’s master work, while remaining faithful to its theoretical structure of economic determinism. Woodward himself, though, appears to have been much more influenced by economic historian Charles Austin Beard than by Brooks Adams, who is never mentioned in *A New American History*. Beard, “eminent historian and educator,” is cited at key points in the narrative for the insights that he furnished in *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (1913) and *The Economic Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy* (1915). In these books, and the many others that he wrote during a long career filled with acclaim and controversy, Beard sought to bring into the light of day the overarching oligarchical and imperialist features of American history. Economic power he judged to be the driving force behind American politics, including and above all the country’s wars. His ideas fueled national debates about the American past and present.

Although Beard presided throughout the interwar period as the country’s foremost historian and public intellectual with book sales in the millions, Pound generally disregarded his work. He does mention him in the radio scripts, but only twice and both times without esteem. In a 1952 addendum to his *Guide to Kulchur*, however,

Pound would give Beard credit for indicating “the essential omission from Adams’s thought” (352). Beard had written the introduction for the 1943 reprint of *The Law of Civilization and Decay* and ranked the book “among the outstanding documents of intellectual history in the United States and, in a way, the Western World.” According to Beard, “It has a distinct position in the long line of American protests against plutocratic tendencies in American development.” (3). The book served as an indispensable aid in understanding the country’s imperialist policies and wars. The omission in Adams’s thought addressed by Beard concerned the focus of the book on Western Europe, not on the United States. Adams had the depression of the 1890s uppermost in mind when he wrote it, but in the text does not deal with American history.

Beard and Pound differed fundamentally over the character of the U.S. Constitution. Pound revered the handiwork of the Founding Fathers and disputed Beard’s economic interpretation of it as a class document intended first and foremost to protect the financial and property interests of economic elites. In an undated radio script of 1942, he said about the Constitution, “Even if Charles Beard does think it a barrier against real democracy, I would remind Prof. Beard that Adams [John, the second president] studied republics. Even Beard now knows less of the Constitution than did John Adams and Madison” (Doob 393). Pound claimed that the problems with the U.S. Constitution had emerged not at the 1787 Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, but during and after the Civil War when northern and international economic elites, significantly composed of Jews, took over the country’s banking and financial systems. The seeds of America’s eventual downfall were sown then, but, contra Beard, from 1789 to the Civil War the United States had been blessed with the best form of government ever known to mankind, as Pound understood American history.

In a March 2, 1942, radio script, Pound included Beard in a group of historians who had “been gittin’ down TOWARD but not TO the real bedrock” (50). Anyone who takes the trouble to read these scripts in their entirety will understand exactly what Pound means by “the real bedrock” that Beard missed. Beard, according to Pound, overlooked the master variable of Judaism in the doleful subjugation of the American people to the world’s real command center, headquartered politically in Washington, D.C., but economically and, therefore, really in New York City with a permanent address

on Wall Street. Getting down to the real bedrock, in Pound's view, meant uncovering the eternally nefarious Jew and exposing him in all his hiding places.

Not in the books of his favorite historians did Pound find the ornate anti-Semitic conspiracy theory that he used to explain how the precious legacy of constitutional government had been subverted and lost. He combined facts and interpretations from those books with the theories of anti-Semites he admired, most notably in the radio scripts, Louis-Ferdinand Céline. Speaking about Céline's anti-Semitic pamphlets *Bagatelles pour un massacre* (1937) and *L'École des cadavres* (1938) over two programs, Pound rhapsodized: "Time to read Céline for the simple truths that stand there in his writing, expressed with perfect lucidity—and simplicity" (132). He also firmly believed the claims made in *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, commenting in one of the scripts about the charges of forgery and plagiarism made against this text: "you haven't stopped to ask what they are a forgery or plagiarism OF" (201).

Pound certainly was right in his implication about Beard, who in none of his published work or known letters ever got down to this supposed Jewish bedrock. Beard had no inclination toward anti-Semitism.² Confusion has arisen on this point because many admiring readers of Beard's critiques of America's intervention in the Second World War, including some of his foremost champions in the history profession, did embrace anti-Semitism and even Holocaust denial. Beard, however, kept clear of anti-Semitism in formulating his philosophy of history. Just such a formulation lies at the foundation of Pound's Fascist radio scripts.

The radio scripts in 1943 betrayed increasing pessimism about the prospects for a Nazi and Fascist victory. The war would be followed, Pound feared, by the triumph of the American individualist liberal mindset. Liberalism, he complained, had no concern for the racial or even the cultural identity of the collective. The wealth and power of capitalist elites would be the only serious concern of American-dominated postwar power structures. Once the triumph of Americanization became complete, the West would cease to exist. There would be nothing to stand in the way of the homogenization of the West's racial stocks and the degradation of its cultural legacy. White people, Pound believed, had no chance even of surviving biologically if Germany went down to defeat. He predicted that an Allied victory would make it impossible in the postwar era for "two

Englishmen, or two Aryans of any kind, to produce and bring up two kids" (303).

To the end of the war Pound worked as a propagandist for Italian Fascism in radio, newspapers, magazines, and literature. During the regime's Republic of Salò death throes from 1943 to 1945, he proposed to his Ministry of Popular Culture boss, Fernando Mezzasoma, a publication project featuring books by American historians. His list of titles included *The Law of Civilization and Decay* by Brooks Adams, *The Tragic Era* by Claude Bowers, and *A New American History* by William E. Woodward (Redman 257). He thought that such works would serve an educational purpose for American and English prisoners of war. In that way they could learn from authors writing in their own language about the real historical background forces that had led to the war. With the regime about to pass into the pages of history, the hierarchs had more pressing matters to contend with, and they denied Pound's proposal. He fought on nonetheless for his fascist vision of a sane world nearly right up to the time the Americans took him into custody on May 3, 1945.

Pound had anticipated some of the concerns expressed by Jean Raspail in his dystopian 1973 novel, *The Camp of the Saints*, now enjoying a revival during Europe's crisis over non-white, and especially Muslim, immigration. In his introduction to the 1995 English edition, Raspail described the book as a parable for the fall of modern Europe: "For the West is empty, even if it has not yet become really aware of it." The West had no soul left and did not appear to be "cognizant of anything that would constitute the essential commonalities of a people" (xv). A young man in the book who wants his whiteness to disappear in the black mass of refugees descending on rich, weak, and stupid Europe embodies for Raspail the postwar generation's betrayal of the West's heritage. Marinated in the soul-killing values of the consumer society spawn of Madison Avenue and Hollywood, these young people cannot defend themselves and do not want to. The Europeans had followed "the example of urban America, fallen little by little into total decay" (227). Though different in some crucial respects from *The Camp of the Saints*, Michel Houellebecq's *Submission* (2015) is frequently compared with the earlier book as a novel about the retreat of Western values before a civilizational challenge from a more vigorous and self-confident Muslim world. He declared in an

interview, echoing Raspail, that Anglo-Saxon global culture dominates Europe as a prelude to the West's extinction: "Of European culture, I see little today" (Montefiori 1, 11).

As a political prophet, Pound is enjoying a revival of his own, thanks to Italy's extreme right-wing CasaPound party and movement.³ The country's long-term economic crisis, political chaos, and fear of Muslim immigration fuel extreme right-wing movements like CasaPound.⁴ These proud young neofascists join with the country's other right-wing parties in campaigns to oppose immigration, Italy's membership in the European Union, and its participation in the euro monetary system. They nevertheless have a world view all their own derived from Pound's ideas about the plague of usury, the existential threat that international finance poses to white Christian Europe, and the ruinous consequences of Europe's consumer-society Americanization. Emblazoned on their web site is Pound's claim, "If a man is not disposed to run risks for his ideas, either his ideas are worth nothing or he is worth nothing."⁵ Though statistically insignificant as a national political force, the group has attracted a following of true believers among Italy's alienated youth. The CasaPound web site claims a membership of more than twenty thousand in a hundred sections throughout the national territory. The collapse and virtual disappearance of Italy's historic communist political culture and the total absorption of social democrats and liberals into an increasingly discredited corporate capitalist status quo leave the highly variegated neofascist right with political advantages and intellectual cachet in challenging the system. Of the voices from the fascist past, Pound's is the most prominent in Italy today.

Compared with Pound, Jeffers is a somewhat indecipherable figure. Mysteries cling to him in ways that simply do not occur with Pound. His politics, for instance, lack the absolute clarity that we find in the long fascist career of Pound. Jeffers has been the subject of many important scholarly studies, but no full-length life and times biography of him has yet appeared. Partially filling this void is James Karman's "The Life and Work of Robinson Jeffers: An Introduction" in the first volume of *The Collected Letters of Robinson Jeffers, with Selected Letters of Una Jeffers*. A revised version of this essay appeared as a book under the title *Robinson Jeffers: Poet and Prophet*.

Jeffers did not leave a historiographical testament in the manner of Pound, who read history assiduously and, by identifying the historians he trusted, eliminated all guesswork about the sources for his historical outlook. Even Jeffers's collected letters reveal little about the individuals he chose for intellectual masters and guides. For his general historical outlook, Robert Zaller identifies as especially important influences Hegel and Nietzsche. Commenting on the way that the cyclical view of history shaped the poet's historical thinking, he writes, "Jeffers's view of history is thus partly Hegelian and partly Nietzschean." ("Jeffers and the Uses of History" 93). He also names Thucydides, Polybius, Machiavelli, Vico, Spengler, and the Egyptologist Flinders Petrie as the thinkers most in keeping with Jeffers's historical outlook, but there is no mention in the essay of the American historians who might have inspired him.

For clues about where he could have found the historical instruction that informed his politics, the poetry itself offers the best source of insight. Jeffers, too, had a Pennsylvania boyhood. Unlike the single-minded Pound, however, he passed through a series of fleeting career interests before settling on poetry. Following some early writing derivative of late Romanticism, Jeffers established himself on the literary scene in 1924 with the critically heralded *Tamar and Other Poems*. This book sparked a cult following for him. Over the next twelve years nine more major Jeffers collections of verse appeared. These publications were literary events. On April 4, 1932, he became one of the few American poets to be featured on a *Time* magazine cover. Critics were far from unanimous about him. Very much on the negative side beginning in the 1930s, Yvor Winters and the New Critics school generally deemed his work pretentious, maudlin, and lacking in artistic merit (Brophy 22-23). Nevertheless, he remained in the front rank of American poets. His work partook of the Spenglerian postwar and Depression-era pessimism that was characteristic of much Western literature in those years.

Against the grain of the avant-garde literary fashions that Pound had done much to pioneer, however, Jeffers spoke as an anti-modernist in a voice inflected with overtones of ancient Greek tragedy. In his study of Jeffers's literary and philosophical influences, Zaller frequently compares him with Aeschylus, devoting many pages to an analysis of the inspiration derived from the *Oresteia* trilogy for the long "Tower Beyond Tragedy" poem in *Roan Stallion*, a 1925

collection (216-29). Inspired by the beauty and power of the central California coast, Jeffers wrote magnificent nature poetry portraying the cosmos as an all-powerful force that subsumed man and rendered all his works vain and evanescent. Albert Gelpi describes Jeffers as “the poet of the sublime without peer in American letters (14). Zaller’s *Robinson Jeffers and the American Sublime* expands magisterially on this insight.

Living an intensely private life with his wife, Una, and their twin sons in the Tor House stone dwelling he helped to build in Carmel, California, Jeffers fanatically guarded his time and his inner life. Author Rudolph Gilbert, who knew Jeffers, described him as “a passionate introvert” (14). Gilbert took Jeffers’s part against the modernists. He remembered having been drawn to “the ‘tentative movements’ and ‘uncertain waverings’ of the Cummingses, Doolittles, and Pounds. Remember that happened ‘when we were very young.’ Now we have grown, we may be forgiven and they forgotten” (162). Jeffers would outlast all these rival authors, Gilbert predicted. Writing and stonework filled his days. He did not teach, seldom gave public readings, and scrupulously avoided literary politics. Radcliffe Squires writes about Jeffers’s “isolation from the cliques of poets who stalk the pages of the little magazines, reviewing the books of their friends—and their enemies” (9).

Unlike Pound, the reclusive Jeffers tried to stay out of politics altogether. Although many of his closest friends were active leftists, he refused to speak out publicly against fascism in Europe during the interwar period. When Jeffers declined to participate in the November 13-15, 1936, Western Writers’ Congress in San Francisco, an anti-fascist gathering organized by communist sympathizers he knew well, they judged him to be hopeless politically. In a letter explaining why he would not attend, Jeffers declared that such a meeting seemed quite useless to him, “for writers cannot be organized—except newspaper or film writers—and ought to associate with any or all classes in the community rather than with each other; and if they wish to express opinions they can write them.” He added, “And I do not think that culture can be maintained or handed down through conventions and committees” (CL 2: 600).

Most curiously, Pound from his Italian fastness in Rapallo took an interest in the Western Writers’ Congress and complained to one of its organizers about the way “bro Jeffers haz highHatted thet Kungress.” Though acknowledging Jeffers as a brother poet,

Pound faulted him for disdaining to attend the Congress. Why, he wondered, would the organizers have put themselves in a position to “get highhatted by a local half-wit instead of communicating with the few centres (incarnate) of thought who wd/willingly have increased the communicativity of the said KINGRESS.”⁶ Why, in other words, did the organizers not get in touch with Pound instead of Jeffers? This question, about his attending a left-wing writers congress, should not cause surprise. Pound’s main adversary was corporate capitalism, not communism. To him fascism beckoned as the middle path between these two inhuman extremes.

Jeffers had scant appreciation for Pound’s work. In 1958, he would write in a letter to Eva Hesse about the poetry of Pound: “I wish I liked his work better, but indeed I have read very little of it” (CL 3: 894). Hesse, Pound’s German translator and a steadfast friend, had written to Jeffers in the hope of finding a kindred spirit. For Jeffers, though, Pound inhabited an alien artistic and mental universe. In addition to his antipathies toward literary modernism, Jeffers would have made nothing of Pound’s complicated economic theories, had he bothered to try. In *Ezra Pound: metodo e follia* (1983), Hesse would shed much new light on his thinking about economics, particularly the influence on him of Silvio Gesell. For Pound, the ideas of this German economist in *The Natural Economic Order* (1906, 1911) supplemented and eventually overshadowed those of his earlier master, Douglas. Tim Redman observes of Gesell, “He provided Pound with an original and basic education in economics and an understanding of the true nature of money” (134). Such abstruse discussions about finance and money failed to engage Jeffers.

Despite their mutual aversion for each other, the two men came to the same conclusion about the nefarious role of Allied leaders as warmongers. Jeffers, too, systematically debunks patriotic interpretations of “the good war.” In his most famous collection of political poetry, *The Double Axe and Other Poems* (1948), he denounces Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin as war criminals every bit as evil as Hitler, Mussolini, and Tojo. The two-part lead poem, “The Double Axe,” singles out FDR for merciless vituperation. He mocks the President for having made “the wah” in which American soldiers “were sold to death / By liars and fools” (CP 3: 217, 227). In one of the collection’s shorter poems, “Moments of Glory,” Jeffers denounces all the Allied leaders as “[c]ontemptible people” glorying in the vast slaughter of the war (3: 98). He makes no distinction between

the two sides in moral terms. They were both irredeemably evil, fighting for the manifestly destructive ends of empire. No matter which side won, according to Jeffers in *The Double Axe*, the world would remain in the throes of imperialist disorder. The rich would continue to rule the poor.

Though Jeffers had tried to keep to himself and to avoid political controversy, the sensationally politicized *Double Axe and Other Poems* dragged him into the glare of national publicity in 1948. As William Everson lamented in his Foreword to the 1977 edition, "But though history may yet vindicate him, in terms of his poetic career his descent into the political arena was an unmitigated disaster" (x). Everson, an admirer of Jeffers and a close student of his poetry, sadly acknowledged that *The Double Axe* had been an "exercise to incense rather than convince" (xiv).

The reaction to the book, however, should not have been so extreme. Jeffers had gained fame as a nature poet with a strong proclivity toward philosophical speculation about the tragic human condition, but he had been writing about the central political themes of *The Double Axe* for much of his life, beginning in the early 1920s. Zaller analyzes the continuities between Jeffers's postwar writing in both world wars. He places Jeffers's interwar work in a larger context of earlier American authors, including Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, and Whitman, who have written about "the idea of America as a redeemer nation destined to give light to the world" (273). For Jeffers, however, America as a universal redemptive force is an idea always to be treated with astringent irony.

In his post-World War I political poetry, Jeffers drew inspiration from the revisionist movement in which Charles Austin Beard figured prominently along with Sidney Bradshaw Fay, Edmund Dene Morel, Harry Elmer Barnes, and numerous other historians in Europe and America.⁷ In *Revisionist Viewpoints: Essays in a Dissident Historical Tradition*, James J. Martin describes revisionism as it has been used to interpret World War I and World War II. The revisionists, he summarizes, "sought to balance the propaganda accounts of the coming of these conflicts, by demonstrating through emphasis on the part left off the record by all the belligerents, the mixed nature of the problem and the universal fact of responsibility on the part of victors and defeated alike" (191). Martin also notes that historical revisionism enjoyed a much greater scholarly acclaim

and widespread popular appeal after World War I than it did after World War II. No one in the 1920s and 1930s was writing about the Western Front as a “good war” in anything like the same sense that became commonplace in discussing the crusade against Hitler. Disillusionment with the war and the leaders responsible for it pervaded the lost generation years.

Jeffers did not fight in the war. He repeatedly sought to enlist but could not pass the physical because of high blood pressure. During the war, he appears to have been motivated by the conventional patriotic sentiments about making the world safe for democracy that had determined Beard’s own pro-interventionist stance as well. For Beard and the revisionists generally, the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 had a shattering effect. It was an imperialist peace bound to bring on another war. With his vast readership and scholarly prestige, Beard did more than anyone to promote the revisionist thesis about the war as a struggle not for democracy, but for empire. Beginning with his breakthrough success of *Tamar*, Jeffers’s writing about World War I fully reflects the revisionist outlook.

Tamar and Other Poems featured poems about the California landscape, but it also included “Shine, Perishing Republic” in which he described an America settling “in the mould of its vulgarity, heavily thickening to empire” (CP 1: 15). A year later, in “Woodrow Wilson” from *Roan Stallion*, he summed up the president’s war to make the world safe for democracy this way: “Your tragic quality / Required the huge delusion of some major purpose to produce it” (1:107). Wilson had deceived himself and the American people into believing that the war had been about something noble when in fact, as the egregious Treaty of Versailles made manifest, the ten million dead soldiers in that conflict had been sacrificed for empire, the root cause of all war. In “The Dead to Clemenceau: November 1929” from *Dear Judas and Other Poems*, Jeffers comments on the former French premier’s death at age eighty-eight with a chorus from the wartime dead: “Come (we say) Clemenceau. / Why should you live longer than others? The vacuum that sucked / Us down, and the former stars, draws at you also” (2: 127).

Such Counsels You Gave to Me and Other Poems, written from 1935 to 1938, is another revisionist book. In “Rearmament,” Jeffers somberly intones: “I would burn my right hand in a slow fire / To change the future . . . I should do foolishly. The beauty of modern / Man is not in the persons but in the / Disastrous rhythm, the

heavy and mobile masses, the dance of the / Dream-led masses down the dark mountain" (CP 2: 515). In "Air-Raid Rehearsals," he sees "far fires and dim degradation / Under the war-planes and neither Christ nor Lenin will save you" (2: 516). "The age darkens," he writes in "Hellenistics": "Europe mixes her cups of death, all the little Caesars fidget on their thrones" (2: 527). Men will fight as they always do and create empire as they always do.

Jeffers's task, he tells us in "The Great Sunset," is "'To be truth-bound, the neutral / Detested by all the dreaming factions . . .'" (CP 2: 535). "Not to be deluded by dreams" is a goal that he sets for himself in "The Answer." In that same poem, he offers a precept: "To keep one's own integrity, be merciful and uncorrupted and not wish for evil, and not be duped / By dreams of universal justice or happiness. These dreams will not be fulfilled" (2: 536). If history shows anything to be true, he asserts in "Contemplation of the Sword," it is, "Reason will not decide at last; the sword will decide" (2: 544). The sword in this April 1938 poem is a symbol for "the storms and counterstorms of general destruction; killing of men / Destruction of all goods and materials; massacre, more or less intentional of children and women; / Destruction poured down from wings, the air made accomplice, the innocent air / Perverted into assassin and poisoner" (2: 544). Not for a moment in *Such Counsels You Gave to Me* does the poet imagine the coming war to be a combat between the forces of freedom and tyranny. Staunch revisionist that Jeffers continued to be, he could see nothing in any war but a struggle for power and empire. There were no good wars. They were all evil, the coming one likely to be the worst of all. Already, the odor of doom for Western civilization was in the air. "What is that odor," he asks in "Decaying Lambskins," his image for "the Christian / Ideals that for protection and warmth our naked ancestors . . . but naturally, after nineteen centuries . . ." (2: 604). It would be doom by stages though: "Our civilization, the worst it can do, cannot yet destroy itself: but only deep-wounded drag on for centuries" (2: 605).

In *Be Angry at the Sun*, a collection written between 1938 and 1941, Jeffers comments on a peculiar defect in human psychology: "Ants, or wise bees, or a gang of wolves, / Work together by instinct, but man needs lies, / Man his admired and more complex mind / Needs lies to bind the body of his people together, / Make peace in the state and maintain power" (CP 3: 3). These lies Jeffers called the faith with which men went to war. On August 30, 1939, two

days before the Nazi invasion of Poland, Jeffers wrote in "The Soul's Desert," "They are warming up the old horrors; and all that they say is echoes of echoes" (3: 15). We already have had the experience of slaughtering ten million young men. We did that in the years 1914 to 1918. Why do it again? What new lies will be employed to justify the carnage this time, or will the old lies do? In "Battle," a poem written on May 28, 1940, he deplores the worst of this war's horrors: "Foreseen for so many years: these evils, this monstrous violence, these massive agonies: no easier to bear. / . . . and we shall have to perceive that these insanities are normal," even beautiful (3: 21).

America's entry into the war Jeffers describes in the manner of Pound. In "Shine, Empire," he rages, "Powerful and armed, neutral in the midst of madness, we might have held the whole world's balance and stood / Like a mountain in a wind. We were misled and took sides. We have chosen to share the crimes and the punishment." The punishment for America will be severe: "It is war, and no man can see an end of it. We must put freedom away and stiffen into bitter empire" (CP 3: 17). There are no exceptions for the curse that empire brings. All empires collapse in the end. Ours will as well: "Now, thoroughly compromised, we aim at world rule, like Assyria, Rome, Britain, Germany, to inherit those hoards / Of guilt and doom. I am American, what can I say but again, 'Shine, perishing republic?' . . . Shine, empire" (3: 18).

Be Angry at the Sun anticipates all the major themes of *The Double Axe*, though not its extreme verbal violence and fiendish imagery. In *The Double Axe*, Roosevelt is seen to be a warmongering monster alongside Hitler and Stalin. In "Great Men," from the *Be Angry at the Sun* collection, Jeffers writes about Roosevelt's "grandiose good intentions," which tragically miscarried, but the tone of the poem is one of understanding. In the earlier collection, he is even fatalistic and hardly judgmental at all about American foreign policy, as in the title poem, "Be Angry at the Sun." There he writes, "That public men publish falsehoods / Is nothing new. That America must accept / Like the historical republics corruption and empire / Has been known for years." He adds, "Be angry at the sun for setting / If these things anger you" (CP 3: 24). Whereas in *The Double Axe*, Jeffers—Pound-like—dismisses Churchill as a run-of-the mill imperialist uncommon only in respect of his opalescent oratorical style with which he disguises the global depredations of the British Empire, in the earlier "I Shall Laugh Purely" he has words of praise

for the fight Britain is putting up in the war: "... count England, / Bleeding, at bay, magnificent, / At last a lion ..." (3: 30).

Perhaps the clearest illustration of the difference in temper between *Be Angry at the Sun* (1941) and *The Double Axe* (1948) can be gained from a comparison of the poem "Fantasy" in the earlier collection and the title poem of the later one. In "Fantasy," written in June 1941, Jeffers imagines the end of the war: "On that great day the boys will hang / Hitler and Roosevelt in one tree, / Painlessly, in effigy, / To take their rank in history; / Roosevelt, Hitler and Guy Fawkes / Hanged above the garden walks, / While the happy children cheer, / Without hate, without fear, / And new men plot a new war" (CP 3: 109). The closing line is ominous, but in a cerebral not a visceral way.

In the title poem of *The Double Axe*, the main character, the revenant Hoult Gore speaks Jeffers's mind. His indignant reaction to war peddlers' lies and the people's imbecility about their totally corrupt government rakes this dead soldier out of the grave. He has come back from the dead to speak the truth about the war, first to his flag-waving father and then to all those promoting Roosevelt's foreign policies. All these pimps, as Hoult calls them, should be hanged, but not in effigy. They deserve an actual public execution: "You'll be there, old man, right along with the President / And his paid mouths; and the radio-shouters, the writers, the world-planners, the heavy bishops, / The England-lovers, the little poets and college professors, / The seducers of boys, the pimps of death, the pimps," Hoult laments, adding "... we were sold to death / By liars and fools" (CP 3: 227). He says, "... all governments / Are thugs and liars," the one in Washington, with its loathsome hypocrisies and double standards, the worst of all (3: 234). The shorter poems in *The Double Axe* follow in the same fierce condemnatory vein, as in, "Historical Choice," written in 1943: "... we were misguided / By fraud and fear, by our public fools and a loved leader's ambition" (3: 122). Pound, in contrast, was more circumspect in calling for the death of FDR: "I think that it might be a good thing to hang Roosevelt and a few hundred yids IF you can do so by due legal process. NOT otherwise. Law must be preserved. I know this may sound tame, but so is it" (Doob 289). Jeffers says nothing about the legal process in his poem.

As a modernist poet, Pound would not have been drawn to the traditional narrative style employed by Jeffers in *The Double Axe*.

Technique aside, he would have assented strongly to the anti-Roosevelt message of the poems. In the Fascist radio scripts, Roosevelt and Churchill stand condemned as war criminals, just as they do in *The Double Axe*. No more than Beard, however, did Jeffers ever get down to “the real bedrock” of the historical process, which for Pound always consisted of Jewish money, influence, and control. When Pound writes about the corrupting influences in American life, he always means the Jews and their multifarious allies, enablers, and sycophants.

Jeffers never does. He does not identify the money power in ethnic or racial terms. The comments about Jews in *The Collected Letters* are invariably supportive and express commiseration over the prejudice against them in Nazi Germany. He shares this trait with Beard, who in writing about the destabilization of American life by Wall Street paid close attention to such entities as the banking house of J. Pierpont Morgan and the Standard Oil Company of John D. Rockefeller. The Morgans, father and son, were both Episcopalians in good standing. Rockefeller combined his dedication to wealth accumulation with assiduous Bible study and attendance at Baptist prayer meetings. There was plenty of non-Jewish money in the American power elite. It would appear to be inadvisable on factual grounds, let alone moral considerations, to become distracted by an obsessive concern over Jewish power. In fact, Beard wrote very little about the Jews, and when doing so tried to stick to discrete facts and to avoid ideological generalizations. Jeffers did the same. As a student of American history, Jeffers generally inclined toward Beardianism, and most sharply on the Jewish question, which for Pound was the only one worth bothering about for understanding the policy decisions that led to American intervention in World War II.

As a term in American historiography, Beardianism essentially stood for the same critical ideas that animated Jeffers’s political poetry. From his classic *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (1913) to the valedictory *President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War, 1941: A Study in Appearances and Realities* (1948), Beard sought to expose the overarching oligarchical and imperialist features of American history. He did so, though a man of the left, not only as a non-Marxist, but also as an anti-Marxist. Such a sensibility would have exerted a strong pull on the politically uncommitted but historically revisionist Jeffers. Neither man had

any truck with the Marxist fashions that played a large part in the intellectual life of the interwar period and well beyond. Moreover, they both found nothing of political or moral value in Fascism or Nazism. Not for them the path of Pound. At the same time, Jeffers and Beard dismissed American exceptionalism as an intellectually disabled cause. The rich and the powerful ruled here as they did everywhere else in the world, only the truly exceptional feature in the American case consisted of a historically unexampled capacity for self-deception and self-congratulation about the country's actual hegemonic role in the world.

Although the habitually close-mouthed Jeffers did not compose in the Pound manner detailed acknowledgments pages about the most influential historians in his intellectual biography, the historical content of his poetry itself powerfully suggests a sympathetic awareness of what Beard was trying to do in cultivating for his countrymen a realistic understanding of the American past and present. It is certain that he knew of Beard's work by direct contact with it and by the cultural osmosis of his influence in the intellectual life of the time.⁸ When it came to distilling in poetic form the dark heart of American imperialism, Jeffers needed only one mentor among American historians, Charles Austin Beard.

NOTES

1. See Chace, "Ezra Pound and the Marxist Temptation."
2. For Beard on the question of anti-Semitism, see Drake, *Charles Austin Beard* (231-32).
3. For an overview, see Rosati, *CasaPound Italia*.
4. Capussela analyzes the crises of contemporary Italy in *The Political Economy of Italy's Decline*.
5. www.casapounditalia.org
6. Ezra Pound to Charles Erskine Scott Wood, 9 Feb. 1937-XV. The Roman numerals refer to the fifteenth year of the Fascist regime in Italy. C. E. S. Wood Papers, Huntington Library. I am indebted to Robinson Jeffers scholar James Karmann for this information.
7. For an overview of the revisionist movement in post-World War I historiography, see Drake, *Charles Austin Beard*, Chapter 3, "Becoming a Revisionist." For post-World War II revisionism, see Chapter 8, "Beard Finds an Ally in Herbert Hoover" and Chapter 10, "Defending Beard after the Fall."
8. For the connections between Beard and Jeffers, see Drake, "Charles Austin Beard and Robinson Jeffers."

WORKS CITED

- Adams, Brooks. *The Law of Civilization and Decay: An Essay on History*. Knopf, 1943.
- Adams, Henry. *The Degradation of Democratic Dogma*. Macmillan, 1920.
- . *The Education of Henry Adams*. 1918. Sentry Edition, Houghton Mifflin, 1961.
- Bowers, Claude. *The Tragic Era: The Revolution after Lincoln*. The Riverside P, 1929.
- Brophy, Robert, editor. *Robinson Jeffers: Dimensions of a Poet*. Fordham UP, 1995.
- Capussela, Andrea. *The Political Economy of Italy's Decline*. Oxford UP, 2018.
- CasaPound Web site. www.casapounditalia.org
- Chace, William M. "Ezra Pound and the Marxist Temptation." *American Quarterly*, vol. xxii, no. 3, Fall 1970, pp. 714-25.
- Doob, Leonard W., editor. *"Ezra Pound Speaking" Radio Speeches of World War II*. Westport, CT and London, Greenwood, 1978.

- Drake, Richard. "Charles Austin Beard and Robinson Jeffers: A Historian and a Poet against the American Empire." *Jeffers Studies*, vol. 19, 2015/2016 (published 2020), pp. 1-12.
- . *Charles Austin Beard: The Return of the Master Historian of American Imperialism*. Cornell UP, 2018.
- Eliot, T. S., editor. *Ezra Pound, Selected Poems*. Faber & Gwyer, 1928.
- Feldman, Matthew. *Ezra Pound's Fascist Propaganda, 1935-1945*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Gelpi, Albert, editor. *The Wild God of the World: An Anthology of Robinson Jeffers*. Stanford UP, 2003.
- Gilbert, Rudolph. *Shine, Perishing Republic: Robinson Jeffers and the Tragic Sense in Modern Poetry*. Bruce Humphries Inc. Publishers, 1936.
- Hunt, Tim, editor. *The Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*. Stanford UP, 1988-2001. 5 vols.
- Jeffers, Robinson. *The Double Axe and Other Poems*. Liveright, 1977.
- Karman, James, editor. *The Collected Letters of Robinson Jeffers, with Selected Letters of Una Jeffers*. Stanford UP, 2009-2015. 3 vols.
- . *Robinson Jeffers: Poet and Prophet*. Stanford UP, 2015.
- Kenner, Hugh. *The Pound Era*. U of California P, 1971.
- Magris, Claudio. "Giù le mani da Pound: lui è la poesia" ["Hands off Pound: He is Poetry"]. *Corriere della Sera*, 27 Oct. 2018, pp. 1+.
- Martin, James J. *Revisionist Viewpoints: Essays in a Dissident Historical Tradition*. Ralph Myles Publisher, 1971.
- Montefiori, Stefano. "Houellebecq: Ora la democrazia diretta," ["Houellebecq: Now Direct Democracy"]. *Corriere della Sera*, 24 Mar. 2017, pp. 1+.
- Petrillo, Leonardo. *Ezra in gabbia: Il caso Ezra Pound*. La Mongolfiera, 2018.
- Pound, Ezra. *Guide to Kulchur*. New Directions Books, 1952.
- . *Poems and Translations*. Library of America, 2003.
- Raspail, Jean. *The Camp of the Saints*. The Social Contract P, 1995.
- Redman, Tim. *Ezra Pound and Italian Fascism*. Cambridge UP, 1991.
- Rosati, Elia. *CasaPound Italia: Fascisti del terzo millennio*. Mimesis, 2018.
- Shapiro, Harvey, editor. *Poets of World War II*. The Library of America, 2003.
- Squires, Radcliffe. *The Loyalties of Robinson Jeffers*. The U of Michigan P, 1956.
- Woodward, William E. *A New American History*. Farrar & Rinehart, 1936.
- Zaller, Robert. "Jeffers and the Uses of History." *The Atom To Be Split: New and Selected Essays on Robinson Jeffers*, Tor House P, 2019. Originally published in *Robinson Jeffers: Dimensions of a Poet*, edited by Robert Brophy, Fordham UP, 1995.
- . *Robinson Jeffers and the American Sublime*. Stanford UP, 2012.

TIM HUNT

“THO THIS IS MY LAST TALE”: WHEN DID
JEFFERS WRITE THE FIRST VERSION OF
POINT ALMA VENUS?

In *Brides of the South Wind* (1974), William Everson gathered the published and unpublished poems that he believed charted Robinson Jeffers' evolution from *Californians* in 1916 to *Tamar and Other Poems* in 1924. The recovery of additional work from this period has since amplified our view of this period,¹ but Everson's commentaries in *Brides of the South Wind*, and his edition of *Californians* and his reconstruction of *The Alpine Christ*, an earlier unpublished Jeffers project, have remained an often-invoked model for Jeffers' emotional, conceptual, and stylistic development. In Everson's scenario, “Tamar” was Jeffers' “definitive poem,” and it constituted, as he put it in *Brides of the South Wind*, a “rebirth” born of the “ruling idea” of “*deliverance through violation*” (122); “Tamar,” in Everson's telling, *released* the psychic and creative energy that, in turn, generated the series of major poems that followed. For Everson, the realization of “*deliverance through violation*” in “Tamar,”

precipitated *The Tower Beyond Tragedy* in Orestes' murder of his mother; certainly, it was the force that produced “Roan Stallion” with California's refusal to rescue her husband and her destruction of the animal she revered. But most of all it swept to an awesome apotheosis in *The Women at Point Sur*, the self-immolation of the mad minister Barclay. (123)

In this scenario, “Tamar” is both origin and paradigm for the narratives that follow it, and the narratives it precipitates variously test and extend its initiating “ruling idea.”

While Everson may be right that “*deliverance through violation*” is central to “Tamar” and the long poems that follow it, his view that “Tamar” initiated a sequence of essentially linear development may need to be reconsidered in light of Jeffers’ work on the various abandoned attempts at *The Women at Point Sur*, material collectively referred to as *The Point Alma Venus Manuscripts*.² On April 24, 1926, Jeffers wrote Donald Friede, his editor at Boni & Liveright, that he was well into drafting *Point Alma Venus*, the narrative poem that he expected to feature in his next collection and that he hoped to complete in time for Boni & Liveright’s fall 1926 list. In the note, Jeffers adds that he began *Point Alma Venus* “soon after ‘Tamar’ was written” but then “put it aside because it was too exciting, and ever since has been a struggle to keep it out of my mind by writing something else” (CL 1: 563). A few days later he wired Friede to cancel plans for the fall collection and then wrote explaining that he was abandoning the draft and would have to start over (1: 566-67). A second, somewhat earlier letter, further clarifies the relationship of the versions of this abandoned project centered on the figure of the Reverend Barclay to Jeffers’ other work in this period. In a September 4, 1925 letter to Benjamin De Casseres, Jeffers writes,

I have begun a story four times, and each time but the last it has turned into a novel on the way, and been scrapped. It’s perhaps because I’m trying to write about more or less educated people this time, and it’s hard to set fire to too much thought. Ideas and passion don’t live together willingly. However, I hope it’s coming out of the nebula at last. (1: 509)

The letters to Friede and De Casseres indicate that Jeffers worked on at least four primary versions of Barclay’s story before *The Women at Point Sur*. The letters also suggest that he worked on these *Alma Venus* attempts between “Tamar” and *The Tower Beyond Tragedy*, then again between *Tower* and “Roan Stallion,” and then following “Roan Stallion.” After he abandoned the fourth (most fully developed) version of *Point Alma Venus* in April 1926, he next wrote the shorter narrative “Home” (originally to have been included in *The Women at Point Sur*), the “Prelude” that opens the *Point Sur* volume as finally published in 1927, and *The Women at Point Sur* itself. Although Jeffers never published any of the *Alma Venus* attempts, the manuscripts for them and related fragments total close to 270

handwritten pages (nearly all written on versos of the discarded typescript for *The Alpine Christ* and all but three stray pages in the Jeffers Archive at the Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin). This material, painstakingly transcribed by Robert Kafka, confirms that the four attempts at *Point Alma Venus* versions are preliminary conceptions of what becomes *The Women at Point Sur* and show that each involve a different conception of, and approach to, the Reverend Barclay's story.³

The recovery of *Point Alma Venus* complicates Everson's scenario of Jeffers' development in at least one way. Jeffers' comments in the letters to Friede and De Casseres indicate that "Tamar" did not directly lead on to his re-imagining of Orestes' story in *The Tower Beyond Tragedy* but instead led first to an attempt at Barclay's story. Similarly, *Tower* did not lead directly to imagining California and her violational experiences in "Roan Stallion" but instead to another attempt at Barclay's story, and after "Roan Stallion" came yet another attempt. The series of attempts at *Point Alma Venus* does not rule out Everson's assertion that "*deliverance through violation*" was the "ruling idea" of the published narratives from this period. But the timing, thematic ambition, and scope of the work on *Alma Venus* does problematize the view that "Tamar," *Tower*, and "Roan Stallion" are a linear progression leading up to, and culminating in, *Point Sur*. Instead, the *Alma Venus* material places the Reverend Barclay's story as a kind of gravitational center for the published narratives, which exist in tension with its precipitating centrifugal energy and its centripetal thematic pull. In Everson's scenario, "Tamar" initiates the pilgrimage to the base of the mountain and the climb to its peak, which is to say *The Women at Point Sur*. When the *Alma Venus* attempts are added in, the major, published narratives from these years become, to continue the astronomical metaphor, planets orbiting around Barclay's story as their generating source and energy. At the very least Jeffers' April 24, 1926 letter to Friede shows that the drafting of "Tamar" precipitated work on *Alma Venus* and that the work on the different conceptions of *Alma Venus* are an important context for the writing not only of *Point Sur* but also *The Tower Beyond Tragedy*, "Roan Stallion," and *Point Sur*.

The *Alma Venus* manuscripts may, also, complicate Everson's account in a second way. Although Jeffers indicates, in his letter to Friede, that all the attempts at Barclay's story followed the completion of "Tamar," there are features of the earliest *Alma*

Venus attempt that suggest it may actually have preceded “Tamar,” including at least one contextual factor. The purpose of this discussion is not to prove that Jeffers first attempted Barclay’s story before writing Tamar’s story. That cannot, as I see it, be proved. Rather the purpose is to briefly sketch why this chronology is at least possible, perhaps even plausible, and to suggest how this alternate chronology might enhance our understanding of Jeffers’ development, both stylistically and conceptually, as he progressed from “The Coast-Range Christ” to “Tamar” and the major poems that followed it.

*

Various textual and contextual details establish probable dates for when Jeffers was writing the published long poems during the period of his various *Alma Venus* attempts: ⁴

- “Tamar”: probably begun spring 1922; probably completed late winter or early spring 1923
- *The Tower Beyond Tragedy*: begun late summer 1924; completed no later than January 1925
- “Roan Stallion”: probably begun April 1925 (certainly by May); completed June (probably early June) 1925
- “Home,”
“Prelude,” *Point Sur*: composed May 1926 through February 1927

The textual and contextual evidence also suggests that Jeffers worked on Barclay’s story in the three gaps between writing the completed narratives. If Jeffers’ claim (in his April 1926 letter to Friede) that all *Alma Venus* work came after “Tamar” is correct, then the first two attempts at Barclay’s story are from the year-and-several-month gap between completing “Tamar” and starting *Tower* (the possibility that the first *Alma Venus* attempt may pre-date “Tamar” is considered below). The third *Alma Venus* attempt, the briefest of the four, is from the four or so months between Jeffers completing *The Tower Beyond Tragedy* and beginning “Roan Stallion.” (In this third version Jeffers approaches Barclay’s story through a framing narrative featuring a visionary character, McToral, who can perceive Barclay’s consciousness, a narrative experiment that merits further study. The fourth *Alma Venus* attempt, the most fully

developed and most nearly completed version, is from the nearly one-year interval between completing "Roan Stallion" and abandoning *Point Alma Venus* in late April 1926.

The rate at which Jeffers composed *The Women at Point Sur*, the finally completed and published version of Barclay's story, shows that he could have managed to draft both of the first two *Alma Venus* attempts in the period between "Tamar" and *Tower*. But there's another possibility to consider: namely, Jeffers, instead, first tried to write Barclay's story before "Tamar." The documentary evidence neither supports this scenario nor argues against it conclusively. And to consider this as a possibility one must, it is clear, discount Jeffers' claim to Friede that he began *Alma Venus* soon after finishing "Tamar." But several factors do suggest that the initial *Alma Venus* attempt may have preceded "Tamar." And if this is the case, it helps clarify Jeffers' transformation from the poet of *Brides of the South Wind*, a promising, serious figure but one still searching for his mature voice, into the distinctive, authoritative poet of "Tamar."

The chronology of other work from this period is, here as well, a key factor in considering this possible, alternative scenario. Sometime in the months after completing *Tor House* in the late summer of 1919, Jeffers compiled a collection that he submitted to Macmillan, which had published *Californians* in 1916. The rejection letter shows that this manuscript included "four long poems" that the Macmillan editor W. B. Drayton Henderson found "very unpleasant" because of their "fleshly incidents" (CP 5: 47-48). These "fleshly" long poems seem to have been the 1917 narratives "Fauna" and "A Woman Down the Coast" (which Jeffers also considered titling "Storm as Deliverer") along with two 1919 narratives, "Peacock Ranch" and "Sea-Passions," written spring 1919 shortly before he began working on *Tor House*. Although we lack a table of contents for this collection, it plausibly included one of the iterations of "The Truce and the Peace" and other work from 1918 and the early months of 1919 (such as "Suicide's Stone") that Jeffers variously included and omitted from the surviving tables of contents for the unpublished collections he constructed in the several years following the rejected Macmillan collection and leading up to the final configuration of *Tamar and Other Poems*. The purpose of the collection submitted seems to have been to collect and frame the considerable body of work Jeffers had produced since *Californians*.⁵

Significantly, the Macmillan manuscript did not include "The Coast-Range Christ," which Jeffers began drafting the later part of 1919 or early 1920, while the Macmillan submission was still under review, and which he completed spring 1920 around the time W. B. Drayton Henderson sent along the rejection, praising Jeffers' "splendid Californian backgrounds" but complaining of the inclusion of the "ignoble aspects of life" in the long poems. Henderson's comments amounted to a challenge to Jeffers to rethink the character of his narrative practice and perhaps even his commitment to narrative poetry in order to revert to "the grace of mind and incident" that (for Henderson) had characterized *Californians*. Although Henderson was not commenting on "The Coast-Range Christ," his remarks would necessarily have registered for Jeffers as a criticism of it, since what was then his most recent narrative was a further development of the approach in the narratives Henderson found distasteful. Two factors indicate that Jeffers rejected Henderson's critique. First, tables of contents for collections he compiled in the months and several years following Henderson's letter feature "The Coast-Range Christ." Second is the lyric "Brides of the South Wind," which reads as a kind of *apologia* to the Hendersons of contemporary poetry (whether or not he had Henderson specifically in mind). Jeffers cast this lyric as a kind of preface to "Fauna," "A Woman Down the Coast," and "Peacock Ranch" ("fleshly" narratives that troubled Henderson), along with "The Coast-Range Christ," and he placed it, in various tables of contents, immediately before the narratives. In "Brides of the South Wind," Jeffers not only explains (as if to justify) the destructive "wildness" of the four heroines by invoking World War I as the "tempest" that made them, but he also connects their wildness to the beauty of nature and divine energy—a grander and more comprehensive "grace" than Henderson allows for when he characterizes the long poems he's rejecting as "ignoble" and lacking the "grace of mind" that he'd admired in *Californians*:

BRIDES OF THE SOUTH WIND

I

Go then and wander about the world
 If you are resolute to go gipsying.
 And lead your lovers by the hands,
 But let your father alone, he has eaten
 Sufficient offerings, do not wake him.

Dove, Myrtle, Peace and Fauna,
Daughters of war, that tempest made you.

And made you as full of blood as the fields
Of Picard poppies, and three of you
Remembering the paternal Mars
Married a storm wind; Fauna instead
Found quieter love and lovelier sleep.
Dove, Myrtle, Peace and Fauna,
Ask pardon of people for your wildness.

II

Young wantons if you are bound to babble secrets
Let them blame woman's nature.
And tell them this: He who is rain and the rain-wind,
Wide gulfs of moving water,
Mountains and moon and stars and the steep sea-
wings
Of pelicans stringing northward,
He also is found in a child's wish, in human wildness
And all our laughable wisdom,
The beautiful one God, in the little red hearts
Of girls and the earth's red fire-veins. (CP 4: 368)

The centrality of "The Coast-Range Christ" in the collections Jeffers considered in the several years following its completion and the way he used "Brides of the South Wind" as both a kind of gloss on it and endorsement of it suggest that Jeffers regarded "Coast-Range" as not simply a success but as a major piece. If so, the question, then, is why Jeffers waited two years until spring 1922 to begin working on his next narrative poem: "Tamar."

Other than the months when Jeffers was working with the construction crew building Tor House and months directly after that were perhaps taken up with moving into Tor House, establishing a routine there, and shaping up the collection submitted to Macmillan, narrative projects dominated Jeffers' writing from spring 1919 through spring 1920. Some of the gap between "The Coast-Range Christ" and "Tamar" can be attributed to Jeffers' work on the distinctive, fully mature lyrics featured in *Tamar and Other Poems*. "Salmon Fishing," from late December 1920 or shortly after, seems the earliest of these, and in the months that followed these lyrics ("Natural Music" et al.) seem to have been Jeffers' primary

creative focus. But this still leaves the period from spring 1920 through the end of 1920 immediately following “The Coast-Range Christ” largely unaccounted for. And this is the period when Jeffers might well have been expected to be working on a narrative poem that would not simply consolidate the progress he’d made in writing “The Coast-Range Christ” but extend it.

A somewhat cryptic note from spring 1922 may be relevant to this seeming gap following the completion of “The Coast-Range Christ.” On the back of Jeffers’ February 19, 1922 bank statement (often referred to as the “great sheet”) are a series of notes and workings that show Jeffers sketching what becomes “Tamar,” and one note (just below the word “TAMAR”) reads “tho this is my last tale” (CP 5: 328-32). While it’s possible that Jeffers here is anticipating “Tamar” being so successful that it would come to be the capstone of his narrative work and mark an end to it, a more plausible reading is that Jeffers, in this remark, is giving himself permission to write one more narrative (a final “tale”) in spite of doubting the wisdom of stopping work, even temporarily, on the lyrics he’d been writing (“Continent’s End” is also drafted on the back of this bank statement and is apparently the most recent of these lyrics). And this doubt seemingly would involve some sense that some earlier narrative or narratives were either failures or had come to seem to him an aesthetic dead end. That Jeffers might well have come to question “A Woman Down the Coast,” “Sea-Passions,” and “Peacock Ranch” is quite conceivable. It’s less likely that he had come to reject “Fauna” and “The Coast-Range Christ,” both of which he included in *Tamar and Other Poems*, and since “Coast-Range” is the most recent of these, it’s unlikely that he understood it, however he viewed its mix of success and failure, as calling into question the option of writing narrative.

The remark “tho this is my last tale” can be parsed a third way, and that is to read it as occasioned by and implicitly referencing a narrative that Jeffers worked on and abandoned between “The Coast-Range Christ” and “Tamar.” This reading of the remark suggests that Jeffers, having completed “Coast-Range,” started work on a narrative that would have extended its conceptual and stylistic gains, had been unable to complete it, and had come to understand the failure less as the failure of the specific poem and more as an indication that narrative wasn’t a viable form for the direction his evolving poetic vision was heading. In this scenario, narrative,

which had provided Jeffers a way to delve into the psychology of his characters and to explore the moral, cultural, and political implications of their actions had failed to support the expression of what was becoming more central to his work: enacting lyric consciousness and exploring it as a mode of knowing nature and as an aspect of nature.

The unpublished lyric "Metempsychosis," written mid-1919 and predating "The Coast-Range Christ," signals the shift to a concern with lyric consciousness as a kind of embodied awareness of nature from within nature, and the series of lyrics beginning with "Salmon Fishing" further explore the self's position within natural process leading to "Continent's End" where the lyric *eye* overwrites the lyric *I* to reach a moment of recognition of the simultaneity of perpetual natural process (the "tides of fire") within time and the permanence of the "eye that watched" that is both within and beyond time. It is, I'd suggest, significant that Jeffers drafted "Continent's End" on the same sheet that he projects "Tamar" and commits to one "last tale." In writing "Tamar" Jeffers discovered a way to bring the two separate, even competing strands of his work—psychologically driven and allegorically framed narrative in the manner of "The Coast-Range Christ" and lyrics of embodied transcendence in the manner of "Continent's End"—into a dynamic and dialectical relationship, so that narrative comes to function as a kind of extended lyric, even as narrative action mediates, intensifies, and deepens lyric consciousness. And it is, I'd suggest, this reconfiguring of narrative through lyric that is the breakthrough in "Tamar" and that this is, at least in part, why it turns out to be not the "last tale" but instead leads on to the other major narratives of the mid and later 1920s.

The argument that some narrative project of considerable thematic ambition and aesthetic risk followed the completion of "The Coast-Range Christ" and preceded the series of lyrics that "Salmon Fishing" initiates is akin to the argument for the presence of an astronomical black hole. The otherwise unexplained perturbations around the invisible argues for something being there—something major enough that its energy or gravitational pull visibly impacts what surrounds it. If Jeffers did work on a major narrative following "Coast-Range," it is, of course, possible that it is simply missing. Jeffers reports that he burned the manuscript of "Tamar" and could have discarded an uncompleted narrative. But

Jeffers did not discard or destroy "Tamar;" he burned it only after the poem was in print (CL 1: 520-21). And the recovery of so much otherwise presumed lost material, including now the reconstruction of the *Alma Venus* attempts, shows that more manuscript and draft material has survived than we once thought. There is, to be clear, no way to prove that this third parsing of "my last tale" is correct, nor is there any way to prove that Jeffers worked on a narrative poem in the months following "The Coast-Range Christ." But if he did work on a narrative in this otherwise unaccounted for period, the first attempt at Barclay's story, the initial *Alma Venus* attempt, is the strongest candidate to have been that project.

*

In the absence of any clear documentary evidence, the case for placing the first *Alma Venus* attempt in 1920 following "The Coast-Range Christ" is necessarily hypothetical and derived from critical inference. In one sense, the matter boils down to the judgment that the approach to narration, the handling of verse line, and the syntax in the initial *Alma Venus* seem closer to "The Coast-Range Christ" than to the handling of these matters in "Tamar" and that the difference is great enough that Jeffers is unlikely to have written the initial attempt at Barclay's story after "Tamar." One could reasonably argue that the, at times, more labored writing of the initial *Alma Venus* attempt is explained by Jeffers' comment (already quoted) in his September 4, 1925 letter to De Casseres where he suggests (speaking of *Alma Venus*) that "It's perhaps because I'm trying to write about more or less educated people this time, and it's hard to set fire to too much thought. Ideas and passion don't live together willingly" (CL 1: 509). But the specific features of the initial *Alma Venus* attempt are better understood as reflecting an earlier phase of Jeffers' development (prior to both the mature lyrics of 1921 and "Tamar") than as a kind of stylistic regression driven by the nature of the material and his ambitions for it.

The June 1922 Preface for a collection Jeffers was assembling in the early months of writing "Tamar" provides a useful context for assessing the stylistic differences between the earliest *Alma Venus* attempt and "Tamar." In the Preface Jeffers observes, "The greatest dramatic poetry in English is not rhymed, the greatest narrative poetry is not rhymed." He then adds,

It may seem strange, in view of my belief, that the narrative poems in this book of mine are rhymed; it is because until quite lately I was unable to discover any rhymeless measure but blank verse that could tell a story flexibly, without excess of monotony. Blank verse I could not use, because it has been so much used by such masters; it carries their impress and inflections. I think I am at length discovering rhymeless narrative measures of my own; but the poems are not finished, and not included in this series. (CP 4: 376)

This indicates that the "narrative poems" in this gathering are rhymed, which suggest that it was to include "The Coast-Range Christ" and one or more of "Fauna," "A Woman Down the Coast," "Peacock Ranch," and "Sea-Passions," all of which are rhymed. The recent discovery of a "rhymeless measure . . . that could tell a story flexibly, without excess of monotony" seemingly refers to the long, cadenced narrative line he would then have been using as he was writing "Tamar." The assertion "Blank verse I could not use" can be read as indicating that Jeffers thought about using blank verse but rejected this strategy without ever trying. It could, however, be read as indicating that he tried using blank verse in a narrative but discovered he could not find a way to deploy it that would break free from the "impress and inflections" of the "masters." The opening passage of the initial *Alma Venus* attempt reads,

The Rev. Dr. Barclay outgrew his God,
He went to Europe with his wife and his son
But the trouble followed him in all his travels.
He wrote from Florence, under the blue sky
So much like home, resigning his pastorate
Of the Los Angeles church; his health he wrote
Had not mended as hoped. At Interlaken
The mountains troubled him with a sort of vision
That frightened and enthralled: the three peaks, Jungfrau,
Moench, Eiger, so accepted him: he and the peaks
Became one mountain: that mystical communion
Was dreadfully like death: and death approached,

The passage is a somewhat loosened blank verse in which Jeffers allows himself an extra syllable or two, so that lines tend to vary from 10 to 12 syllables.

That Jeffers plausibly understood this as a variation of iambic pentameter is suggested by his handling of iambic pentameter in his early sonnets. Up through 1918 (including the initial iteration of “The Truce and the Peace”) the lines scan consistently as iambic pentameter, suggesting that Jeffers was using the measure strictly. As he reworked some of these sonnets across 1919 and 1920, he began allowing himself extra syllables and more varied cadences, so that the lines begin to foreground the motion of the spoken phrases with the formal meter as an underlying system rather than foreground the meter and metrical variation. Reading the later iterations of these sonnets one might conclude that Jeffers wasn’t in command of the meter. The initial iterations of the poems, however, document the formal command, and this suggests that the shift in how the lines operate reflects a formal decision.

The handling of the passages in shorter lines in the initial *Alma Venus* version (such as the passage above) are, I’d suggest, another instance of this updating of, or variation on, or loosening of iambic pentameter, which suggests that Jeffers’ conclusion that blank verse wouldn’t work as a “rhymeless measure” for his narratives wasn’t an *a priori* matter but followed from an attempt to use blank verse for narrative and being dissatisfied with the results. In any case, this opening passage from the initial *Alma Venus* is noticeably different from the opening passage of “Tamar:”

A night the half-moon was like a dancing-girl,
 No, like a drunkard’s last half dollar
 Shoved on the polished bar of the eastern hill-range,
 Young Cauldwell rode his pony along the sea-cliff;
 When she stopped, spurred; when she trembled, drove
 The teeth of the little jagged wheels so deep
 They tasted blood; the mare with four slim hooves
 On a foot of ground pivoted like a top,
 Jumped from the crumble of sod, went down, caught, slipped;
 Then, the quick frenzy finished, stiffening herself
 Slid with her drunken rider down the ledges,
 Shot from sheer rock and broke
 Her life out on the rounded tidal boulders.

The night you know accepted with no show of emotion the
 little accident; . . . (CP I: 18)

The way the opening of "Tamar" pivots quickly from registering a scene into narrating action is one factor in the greater momentum of the initial passage in "Tamar" compared to the initial passage of the first *Alma Venus* version. But there's also greater variation in tone and pacing and greater play with the placing of stresses in the lines. The experience of having written in iambic pentameter and sought ways to vary it may inform these lines, but in them Jeffers is not trying to produce iambic pentameter.

The opening of the second line of "Tamar" reflects another key difference between the two passages. The word "No" signals that we are listening to a teller, a narrator who, while not an "I" within the narrative scene that's being presented, is still an active presence in the telling, and this evoking of the narrator as a figure phrasing the story while telling it asks us to hear the first two lines as alternative descriptions of the "half-moon," and to experience them as differing imaginative registers. (The phrase "you know" in the last of these lines functions similarly, with the added twist that it casts the reader/listener as a collaborating presence to the narrator's recalling and inventing.) The narrating voice in the opening of "Tamar" is above the scene, able to regard it with a certain objectivity or distance, but also imaginatively immersed in it through the process of inventing and reflecting on its presentation. By comparison, the narrative tone and logic established in the opening of the initial *Alma Venus* version is static. In what seems the earlier narrative, the material (both its substance and its conceptual significance) is prior to, and separate from, the step of inventing the writing to present the material. Writing is translation and presentation rather than writing being (as it becomes in "Tamar") a process of experiencing and discovering, and this difference contributes to a sense that the initial *Alma Venus* version is allegory trying to become vision, while "Tamar" is a visionary poem with an allegorical dimension. It should also be noted that both the initial *Alma Venus* attempt and "Tamar" include passages where Jeffers uses long lines, just as he had done—albeit combined with rhyme—in "The Coast-Range Christ." Other than the absence of rhyme, the handling of the long lines in the initial *Alma Venus* seems closer to "Coast-Range" than to "Tamar." There is still a tendency to manipulate syntax (undercutting the sense of the lines as spoken) in order to stay within the formal (even if loosened) measure, and this contributes to a slowness of pace and at times a somewhat stilted manner that

differs from the longer verse line that Jeffers develops across 1921 in the lyrics and then utilizes in “Tamar”—a verse line that draws on speech cadences (in a way the line of the initial *Alma Venus* does not) to create the rhythmic momentum that characterizes Jeffers’ narrative writing at its best.

While the character of the writing and the sense of line and measure suggest the initial *Alma Venus* attempt precedes rather than follows “Tamar,” these features do not explain why Jeffers abandoned it, even as he retained “The Coast-Range Christ” in the various collections he planned out in the several years prior to writing “Tamar” and included it in *Tamar and Other Poems*. In this regard, a passage from section 4 of the initial *Alma Venus* (it occurs about a third of the way into the draft) is suggestive:

The lighthouse tower rhythmically
unrolled and folded
Its fan of light, silhouetting the tops of the pines,
and the sea made a murmur. Dr. Barclay
Felt himself shamed by *so much calm*. *Be fretted for the*
soul's future
Under the waves of the great rhythm of day and evening?
Be agitate, ask anxious questions
When all the world moves to slow dance-music, impassive
and exalted, the tides, the seasons,
Life and decay and light and twilight, the growth of the
piners, ring over ring from the pith. “It is true.
It would be better to walk in the night and not ask
questions . . .” [italics added]

The italicized segment of this passage anticipates, I’d suggest, the 1921 lyrics, in which the natural world figures as a living, comprehensive organism. As in, say, “Natural Music,” nature is not a screen on which to project meaning nor a resource to mine for metaphors that gloss the human scene. Instead, nature is a multiform being, and this transforms metaphor (“slow dance-music,” for example) into a means of apprehending nature rather than metaphor being merely a means to express nature or nature-as-metaphor being a device to express the human. But even as this passage reads as a precursor to the lyric mode Jeffers fashioned and developed across 1921, it suggests that Jeffers was finding it difficult to modulate from the narrative material to this lyric apprehension and unable to fully

engage and develop this lyric apprehension because of the need to cast it as part of Barclay's interiority. In the passage, narrative exposition and lyric apprehension butt against each other rather than interfuse and then extend and enrich each other. Jeffers here has not yet, I'd suggest, developed the ability to shift from narrative exposition to the moments of lyric, visionary expansion that we find in "Roan Stallion" or even the more sober exposition of "Cawdor" with the caged eagle's death dream that Jeffers would excerpt from the narrative for the 1938 *Selected Poetry*.

*

Does any of this prove that the initial work on what eventually evolved into *The Women at Point Sur* dates from the middle and later part of 1920 in the gap between Jeffers' completing "The Coast-Range Christ" and the series of lyrics initiated by "Salmon Fishing"? The answer to that question has to be no. Writers do not necessarily develop in a linear manner, where each step forward leads inevitably and only to the next step forward. But if the question is whether it is *plausible* that Jeffers started and worked on the initial *Alma Venus* attempt in this gap, then the answer is yes. Locating the initial *Alma Venus* in this gap fits with the possibility that Jeffers would have wanted to continue with narrative after he completed "Coast-Range." It offers a way to understand the comment on the "great sheet" that "Tamar" is to be the "last tale." And it raises the possibility that the turn to lyric marked by "Salmon Fishing" wasn't simply a matter of writing short poems for the sake of writing short poems or something to do while casting about for the next "story," suggesting instead that the turn to lyric was driven by a sense that narrative as a mode, as a strategy, was at odds with his evolving sense of nature, the self in nature, and consciousness of nature. And this in turn suggests that the return to narrative in writing "Tamar" wasn't simply a matter of taking advantage of the poetic line he'd been exploring in the lyrics and applying it to the writing of narratives as he'd been conceiving narrative (of replacing one "measure" with another "measure"), but was instead a matter of developing a new sense of narrative—a sense of narrative interfused with lyric awareness and perhaps even a new sense of narrative where the function of narrative is to enable and release lyric awareness. If so, "Tamar" is at least in part the discovery of this possibility, and it initiates not only a renewed focus on narrative for Jeffers but the

advent of a new kind of narrative. In its themes and the character of its material, "Tamar" resembles the earlier narratives up to and including the initial *Alma Venus* attempt, but the significance of "Tamar" for Jeffers' career isn't only (or maybe even primarily) its themes and its material. Rather, the significance of "Tamar" is at least in part how the new approach to narrative, a new conception of narrative as process and mode, initiates the narratives that follow: the three later attempts at *Alma Venus*, *Tower*, "Roan Stallion," and *Point Sur*. These long poems, both the ones Jeffers completed and the ones he abandoned, further explore and expand the possibilities of narrative and lyric approached as a hybrid mode, and in this context what Everson termed the "apotheosis" of *The Women at Point Sur* becomes in part the heightened lyric risk (and the intensity of discovery this leverages) evident in *The Women at Point Sur* where Jeffers, in the opening unit of "Prelude," writes himself directly into the projected narrative world and this, in turn, becomes the implicit context for projecting and relating Barclay's story in *The Women at Point Sur* proper.

Whether or not the initial work on the *Alma Venus* project followed "The Coast-Range Christ" rather than "Tamar" and whether or not Jeffers' sense of the failure of this initial attempt led him to turn away from narrative for more than a year (from at least December 1920 to beginning "Tamar" in the spring of 1922), this initial attempt at *Alma Venus* and the three subsequent attempts (which can be more securely placed chronologically in relation to the published long poems from this period) call for further exploration of how such crucial poems as "Tamar" and "Roan Stallion" came to be. This exploration may lead us to revise Everson's scenario, but even if it primarily validates Everson's views, probing Jeffers' various approaches to the Reverend Barclay's story and how they interweave with the completed, published poems will deepen our understanding of this crucial phase of Jeffers' career.

NOTES

1. See CP 5: 29-66 for a discussion of the chronology of Jeffers' work in this period that draws on this recovered material.
2. See Hunt and Kafka, *The Point Alma Venus Manuscripts*. This collection gathers Robert Kafka's transcriptions of this material.
3. Although Jeffers referred to these attempts, in letters written while he was working on the fourth version, as "Point Alma Venus," the manuscripts for the first and third attempt are each titled "Storm as Deliverer" (an alternate title for an earlier narrative also titled "A Woman Down the Coast"); the manuscript for the second attempt is untitled, and only the fourth attempt is explicitly titled "Point Alma Venus." Because Jeffers came to refer to the successive attempts as "Point Alma Venus," that designation is retained for this discussion, and the first attempt at the narrative is typically designated as the "initial *Alma Venus* attempt."
4. For a summary of the evidence for these probable dates, see CP 5: 54-78.
5. For an overview of Jeffers' productivity in this period, see CP 5: 34-54.

WORKS CITED

- Hunt, Tim, editor. *The Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*. Stanford UP, 1988-2001. 5 vols.
- Hunt, Tim, and Robert Kafka, editors. *The Point Alma Venus Manuscripts: Preliminary Versions of The Women at Point Sur*, by Robinson Jeffers. Stanford UP, forthcoming.
- Jeffers, Robinson. *The Alpine Christ & Other Poems*. Edited by William Everson, Cayucos Books, 1973.
- . *Brides of the South Wind: Poems 1917-1922*. Edited by William Everson, Cayucos Books, 1974.
- . *Californians*. Edited by William Everson, Cayucos Books, 1971.
- Karman, James, editor. *The Collected Letters of Robinson Jeffers, with Selected Letters of Una Jeffers*. Vol. 1, Stanford UP, 2009.

THE POET IN MOURNING: JEFFERS AFTER UNA

ROBERT ZALLER

Una Jeffers died on September 1, 1950, after a long struggle with cancer. Robinson Jeffers would survive her by eleven years. Their thirty-seven-year marriage, often difficult, was the core relationship of Jeffers' life. His mourning for Una lasted until his own death, and was the climate of the last phase of his career. It provided the subject of his last completed narrative, "Hungerfield," which was framed by a two-part elegy that contained some of his most nakedly personal verse. Repeatedly thereafter, he invoked her in his lyric and meditative poetry, often briefly, but always tellingly, so that the one "story" he told in his last years was his own.

Jeffers and Una met at the University of Southern California where both were students, she three years his senior and the wife of a prominent attorney, Edward "Teddie" Kuster. Their attraction was immediate, although it would be seven years before Una's divorce and their marriage, an event scandalous enough—no doubt because of Kuster's social prominence—to be noted in *The Los Angeles Times*. The following year, they moved to Carmel when the outbreak of World War I frustrated their plans to locate in Dorset, England. On a small annuity and, at first, in a modest cabin, they settled in what would become their permanent home. Their first years were not easy. Jeffers wrestled with a literary ambition that had not yet found its voice, and, despite young twin sons, he attempted to enlist when America entered the war. He was thirty years old, old for military adventure and with responsibilities he apparently found burdensome.

The postwar years saw Jeffers' maturation as a poet, but, as he approached middle age, such literary notice as he had had petered out. His first commercial publisher, Macmillan, rejected a new

manuscript, and he was reduced to having his second book, *Tamar and Other Poems*, printed privately. The job was wretchedly done, and the printer, despite efforts, was unable to procure reviews. The 450 copies sent to Jeffers were stored in his attic. They might well have seemed like an epitaph.

About the early years of the Jefferses' marriage one must largely conjecture. Una herself, looking back, described the period as "full and over-full of joy" despite the loss of a first child, Jeffers' ambiguity at the unexpected arrival of twins, and what appears likely, at least on the evidence of his poetry, to have been restlessness in the marriage. Temperamentally, Robin and Una could not have been more unlike, he taciturn and withdrawn and she, in James Karman's description, a woman of "volatile emotions" in whom "[a]nger, pity, jealousy, love, and hate could surface at any time, in any order" (Karman, *RJ* 24, 46). Yet, as often in such pairings of opposites, there was a deeper affinity too.

The improbable success of *Tamar and Other Poems*, once it reached sympathetic critical hands, is as remarkable a story as any in American letters. Within weeks, Jeffers became a national literary figure (Bennett 103-06; Karman, *RJ* 71-73). The book soon appeared in an expanded and respectable trade edition, and the Jefferses suddenly had to deal with fame. Jeffers set about to clinch his reputation by completing a lengthy poem that, after nearly a decade of drafts, was published as *The Women at Point Sur*. Una found a new role in which, both as Jeffers' shield from the world and intermediary with it, she protected her husband's genius and managed his daily affairs.

All this brought new tensions into the household. The Jefferses made their long-deferred trip to the British Isles, whose effect on Jeffers was encapsulated in the verse cycle he produced there, *Descent to the Dead*. In the 1930s, they summered in Taos as the guests of that imperious consumer of literary reputations, Mabel Dodge Luhan, an annual ordeal Jeffers suffered reluctantly and which, in a moment of personal crisis, produced a brief but intense attraction to another guest, Hildegard Donaldson, and a consequent suicide attempt by Una (Karman, *CL* 1: 71-74, 2: 865n2 et seq, and *RJ* 132-33). The breach was repaired with difficulty, and Jeffers reportedly strayed again. The next decade brought the onset of the cancer that would ultimately kill Una, and a near-fatal bout of pleurisy for Jeffers on a final trip to Britain and Ireland. Una nursed

him, only to fall ill again herself and enter a final decline in which Jeffers cared tenderly and devotedly for her.

It is a complex story, and one to which no brief overview can begin to do justice. Una cultivated a public image of Robin as an Olympian observer of the human condition, serene under all circumstances.¹ This was no doubt in part an attempt to deflect any association of him personally with the tales he told in his narratives of violence, license, and incest. As Melba Berry Bennett pointed out, part of the difficulty in securing publication of "Tamar" was resistance to issuing a work that, even under the imprimatur of a prominent New York publisher, would be condemned for its "salaciousness" and "riot of lust" (Bennett 105; Vardamis 53). This criticism was only amplified with the appearance of *The Women at Point Sur*, and, under the more generalized charge of misanthropy, would dog Jeffers to the end of his life and even to the present day.² Una could not soften the impression of the verse, but she would strive resolutely to create a counter-image of the man. In this, we may note, she was considerably assisted by the many photographers who portrayed Jeffers in attitudes of calm lucidity and isolation against the backdrop of his coastal acres. To what extent these poses were suggested or naturally assumed, or influenced by Una herself, cannot be certainly known, but they helped establish a persona congruent with the one Una advanced.

Jeffers' mature verse contains very little direct reference to Una with the exception of "For Una" in *Be Angry at the Sun and Other Poems* (CP 3: 33-35), a poem whose opening quatrains unnervingly presage her death and which only returns to her in its final stanza; he refers, passingly, to "my wife" in "Now Returned Home" (2: 606-07), a poem about sailing up the Inner Hebrides on their second trip to the British Isles in 1937; and she is given a brief reference and a single query in "A Redeemer" (1: 405-07)—the only time she, or the character associated with her, speaks in a Jeffers poem published in his lifetime unless one assumes the posthumous dialogue of the couple in "My Dear Love" (3: 27-28) to be theirs.³ Otherwise, there is only the rather formal dedication "To Una Jeffers" in some but not all of the published volumes.

Jeffers did make up for this silence in the prose preface to his *Selected Poetry*, the one direct portrait he offered of Una in her lifetime:

My nature is cold and indiscriminating; she excited and focussed it, gave it eyes and nerves and sympathies. She never saw any of my poems until it was finished and typed, yet by her presence and conversation she has co-authored every one of them. Sometimes I think there must be some value in them, if only for that reason. She is more like a woman in a Scottish ballad, passionate, untamed and rather heroic,—or like a falcon—than like any ordinary person. (CP 4: 392)

Even in these lines, we may note, there is a certain detachment, a desire to separate the muse from the work. Una is presented as supplying the poet with something he lacks but then absorbs to serve his need, and as standing outside the creative process until it is finished. When he looks at her as such, she is as someone perceived at a distance, literary or otherwise. Indeed it is, for all the gratitude and admiration, a somewhat chill description.

Quite different are these lines from an undated, untitled fragment after Una's death: "I have loved once, one woman, and now no more. / The glory and the pain are forever past" (CP 4: 550). These are two statements. The first is a simple declaration, beyond comment. There have been other women, but one love. She is not gone, but, more finally, "no more." And all that was lived, the next line states, is never to be recaptured. There is no consolation. There is only loss.

One cannot know whether these lines, and the few that surround them, were intended as material to be worked toward a finished poem, or merely as a jotting. They are lines of poetry nonetheless, and they encapsulate what Jeffers would have to say more formally in the work of mourning that was the background when not the substance of the remaining years of his art.

Jeffers had written little in the nine months preceding Una's death; he wrote none for almost a year after it. An immediate concern was Una's burial, which he and she had long decided would be by cremation for both of them without ceremony of any kind, with the ashes shallowly placed in the courtyard of Tor House "so that the tree-roots might sooner absorb them" (CL 3: 689). The Jeffers who had written so often about shades, ghosts, and figures rising from the dead⁴ had been most worried when on the point of death himself from pleurisy in Dublin two years earlier that he could have no cremation in Ireland where it was prohibited by canon and secular

law. Home burial or dispersion of ashes had recently been outlawed in California itself, so that Jeffers was obliged to send Una's ashes to Nevada, where they could be released to the family and then secretly returned to Tor House for interment. The ashes were then interred as the Jefferses both wished, an event commemorated in one of Jeffers' final poems, in which he gives Una at last a voice of her own:

It nearly cancels my fear of death, my dearest said,
When I think of cremation. To rot in the earth
Is a loathsome end, but to roar up in flame—besides,
I am used to it,
I have flamed with love or fury so often in my life,
No wonder my body is tired, no wonder it is dying.
We had great joy of my body. Scatter the ashes.
("Cremation," *Beginning* 59; *CP* 3: 480)

The words would not have reflected anything Una might actually have said, since neither she nor Jeffers spoke of her impending death in the months of her final decline; but the spirit was certainly hers, and the coupling of "love or fury" would have been candor—and acceptance—on Jeffers' part of a relationship whose difficulty was inseparable from its intimacy.

Jeffers had the comfort of Donnan Jeffers and his family around him in Tor House, and as it expanded he and Donnan would build the house further until it was, finally, three times its original size. There were various affairs to sort out, financial ones among them, and he traveled to New York, albeit reluctantly, for five days in December to see the American National Theater and Academy's production of his verse drama *The Tower Beyond Tragedy* which he had adapted for Judith Anderson's performance. There was also a visit to Santa Barbara in these months, and one at Christmas to see Garth Jeffers and his family near Yosemite, whose landscape moved and stimulated him. Returned to Carmel, he spent the New Year's Eve, in Donnan's company, thinking "desperately" of Una. A week later, on January 6, he attended a birthday mass for her at the behest of a family friend, Ellen O'Sullivan, after previously attending one arranged by another friend, Noël Sullivan, shortly after her death. Both were trying for him—the service struck him as "Pure superstition," as he wrote to a close confidante in this period, Una's sister Daisy Bartley—but he bore them patiently, and when O'Sullivan

lost a sister a year later his own condolence letter noted, sympathetically if noncommittally, that she would “have great consolation in your faith, which makes death only a temporary absence” (CL 3: 701-03; 740-41).

Jeffers attempted to live as much of what he described as “a normal life” in these early months as he could. He responded to an invitation from *Poetry* by submitting seven poems that, published in January 1951, would win the magazine’s Eunice Tietjens Memorial Prize later in the year; wrote a commentary for *The New York Times* to accompany the production of *The Tower Beyond Tragedy*; gave permission for a limited, fine-press edition of “Meditation on Saviors”; and approved the use of his *Medea* for a choral setting by the Austrian composer Ernst Krenek. He responded as well to various literary questionnaires and requests, including a memorial comment on George Bernard Shaw, a statement to *The Humanist* concerning his philosophical views, and an impassioned defense of redwood preservation (CL 1: 103-05; 3: 681-83, 687, 692-93, 704, 713-14, 716, 727-28).

At the same time, Jeffers felt overwhelmed by the “hundreds” of condolence letters that inundated him. Always a reluctant correspondent, he complained that answering even a single ordinary letter might cost him a day, and, after putting the condolence pile in a box, he drafted a form letter for all but the most personal ones (CL 3: 696). To those whom he did write, he repeatedly expressed incredulity that Una had predeceased him, although she had had a mastectomy for breast cancer nearly a decade earlier. In part, this may have reflected his dependence not only on a partner who arranged the details of his ordinary life but one who, in giving him temperamental balance, was an enabling force in his art. But Jeffers’ preoccupation with his own mortality was a constant in his verse, beginning with the guilt of survivorship that runs through “The Alpine Christ” and “The Coast-Range Christ,” with their depictions of sons seeking an expiatory death. In “To His Father,” he writes, in his early thirties, that he can “Hardly anticipate that reverend stage / Of life, the snow-wreathed honor of extreme age” that the Reverend William Hamilton Jeffers, dying at seventy-six, had attained. In “Forecast,” unpublished in his lifetime, he notes that “I shall be thirty-nine next month, and live yet / Ten years to fifty,” and with luck perhaps prepared to write then “the poem to be remembered” (CP 4: 288, 505). Having turned fifty-one, he wrote

Una in April 1938 of a premonition that the plane journey he had planned with his brother Hamilton to Death Valley would end in a fatal crash, and he left instructions for his burial—the same that would be carried out, but not by Una, twenty-four years later (CL 2: 837-38).

Jeffers had known that Una's condition was fatal since New Year's Day 1950, although she rallied to survive eight more months. He described himself as "stunned" by the initial news despite symptoms that had been apparent for most of 1949, and in a state of shock while tending her final period. At the very end, after confirmation that the cancer had spread to the heart, lungs, and liver, she was kept continually sedated, speaking passionately but unintelligibly to imaginary interlocutors—Una to the end. In her last waking days, however, she refused company, a sure sign to all who knew her. Yet Jeffers would say to Daisy Bartley in his first written note after her death that "The end came much more quickly than I had expected" (CL 3: 676-77). The shock persisted. At the end of December, he wrote to Melba Berry Bennett that he was still "stunned" and "useless," although determined to recover if not from grief then at least inertia: "I try to remember the thought and feeling that made my verses and are habitual to me, and I think that they have sustained me against despair—or rather *in* despair—and this loss will come into proportion after while" (699-700.)

What Jeffers expressed at this point was not the desire to write but to be able to; it was, as he told William Turner Levy in March 1951, "almost a triumph" even to compose a letter. The next month, he wrote to Lawrence Clark Powell that he had begun to resume his other former labor, laying stones for the expansion of Tor House, but at the same time he told Karl Shapiro, his editor at *Poetry*, that he hadn't been able to write a "line of verse" since Una's death, and wasn't sure it mattered. In May, he repeated to Levy that he remained in a "state of shock," and shortly after he told John Hay Whitney that he could still not accept Una's death except on the most superficial level. It was not until July that he was beginning to seriously write verse again, although as he wrote to Levy, the loss and loneliness of Una's death would "never cease" while he lived. On the anniversary of her death he told family friends Frederick and Maud Clapp that he was back to his former routine of writing in the morning and laying "a stone or two" to the new house wall in the afternoon—"The tasks that Una would want me to attend to if

she were here," although the verses, he said, were mere "nonsense" to mask grief (CL 3: 712, 717, 719, 720, 732-33).

The "nonsense" Jeffers was writing was "Hungerfield," his last completed narrative. That its subject or at any rate audience was Una was clear from the preliminary titles he considered for it, among them "To a Dead Woman," "To a Falcon," and "Farewell." The work went quickly after a number of false starts, including dated material that went back to the spring; by November 7 it was in typescript, and Jeffers wrote the same day to submit it to *Poetry* (CL 3: 738-40). Shapiro not only took the poem but, when it was published in May 1952, featured it as the only verse in the issue, and it was published on its own in December as a limited edition by the Grabhorn Press. When it appeared in 1954 in the Random House trade edition of *Hungerfield and Other Poems*, it was paired with *The Cretan Woman*, a verse drama based on Euripides' *Hippolytus*, and fourteen shorter poems, including the seven that had appeared in *Poetry*. This comprised a standard Jeffers volume, with one or two longer poems in narrative or verse drama form and an end-section of shorter poems, but it was not what Jeffers had originally planned: in first proposing the volume to Random House he suggested that, in addition to the title poem and some shorter ones, the book include an edited version of Una's travel diaries in Ireland and Britain and Edith Greenan's brief, laudatory memoir of her, *Of Una Jeffers*, which had been privately printed in 1939 (746-47). Clearly, Jeffers had at first conceived the book as an encomium to Una. Such a "hybrid," however, as Jeffers called it, did not receive encouragement, and he finally thought to substitute the unpublished and unproduced adaptation of Euripides commissioned earlier by Agnes Moorehead, while negotiating with Ward Ritchie to publish the diaries separately (1: 106; 3: 762-64).

"Hungerfield," as a narrative, displays the firmness and control characteristic of much of Jeffers' best work, and it drives to its conclusion with tragic inevitability. At the same time, its structure is a novelty, for the poem, as we have noted, is framed by an elegy whose first part is both a dedicatory address and a lament, and whose conclusion is a farewell and, as far as might be, an acceptance.

As it stands, the narrative is self-sufficient, with the elegiac frame adding a personal dimension to the story of a man who, in attempting to face down death, brings catastrophe. As the drafts of the poem indicate, however, the plot evolved only slowly, and

the character of Hungerfield's dying mother Alcmena was initially far more central. The details of her illness in one draft (where the name "Steve" is used instead of "Hawl") were an all but exact transcription of Una's own:

This man, Steve Hungerfield,
Sat by his mother's bedside when she laying dying, . . .
. . . She was not very old, she was sixty-five; . . .
 she had been dying for eight months . . .
 She had suffered a breast-operation
Nine years before, but somehow the deadly seed
Had remained in her body. The bone-tumors
Racked her with pain, and Hungerfield and his wife Thanat
Had learned the mercy of morphine. (CP 5: 825-26)⁵

These details are exactly those of Una's condition. She too was sixty-five years of age; she too was ill of metastasized breast cancer that had, likewise after nine years, spread to the bone; she too would die at the end of the eighth month of her final diagnosis. The only difference was that Hungerfield was Alcmena's son rather than wife, a dramatic necessity if he were to plausibly exhibit the strength required to confront a personified Death.

It appears that Alcmena had much of Una's own forceful personality as well, at least as conceived on the "epic" scale Jeffers had initially intended for the poem itself (CP 5: 823). She has had great ambitions for Hungerfield, now thwarted; she meets the approach of death with "grim endurance"; and, refusing consolation, she tells her son that "there is no soul, and no life after death," and that she is merely "going back into the mountains"—i.e., rejoining what is massive, indifferent, and materially enduring. Hungerfield, seeking to honor this bleak courage, "sets a huge granite boulder, unaided, over her grave," and inscribes her first name on it in large capital letters for a memorial (822).

Alcmena also plays a critical role in the drama itself in some of the drafts and fragments. Her false accusation that Hungerfield's friend Lou (a character later discarded) has betrayed him with his wife results in Hungerfield killing him, and in another episode she apparently tries to drown his child as she commits suicide in the ocean. In a further draft note, his wife and brother along with the rest of the household flee it "in terror" of him, and he is left alone

at the end “with no company except the monument to his dead mother” (CP 5: 828-29).

This last note suggests a very different vision of the poem, in which Hungerfield takes a posthumous possession of his mother that no one can challenge and that excludes everything else. In a poem whose Freudian elements are particularly transparent,⁶ and despite Jeffers’ own self-injunction in a parenthetical note to “Keep psychoanalysis out of it” (CP 5: 823), this would appear as indubitably Oedipal an image as could be.

What Jeffers had to do to rescue his poem from melodrama was to extract Una from it. The method he used, finally, was in framing it with the elegy. Without the elegy, the poem might have been creatively stillborn; without the poem, the elegy in which he was able to address her directly might not have come to pass. An early version of the poem’s opening—or perhaps a jotting for it—showed the awkward segue between the poem and the grief it was meant to deal with:

My Una whom I have loved for forty years
Has left me now. All I can think of or dream is death.
But man must have courage also. I will think of Hungerfield,
Who subdued death. (CP 5: 825)

The abruptness of this confession—*All I can think of or dream is death*—is startling, particularly in a poet of Jeffers’ personal reticence. We cannot however simply dismiss it, for in a note found with the manuscript of “Animals,” one of the poems Jeffers submitted to *Poetry*, he contemplates murder and suicide as a means of freeing Una and himself (CP 5: 813). Jeffers recovers himself with the statement that “man must have courage also,” invoking the “covenant of courage” he had formulated in an earlier crisis crystallized by the Great War (“Suicide’s Stone,” 4: 306). Jeffers then turns to the character he contemplates creating, whose valor is to “subdue” death. But the poem’s wisdom, as it comes forth, will be to show the horror such an attempt must entail.

The narrative may be briefly summarized. Hungerfield, like many of Jeffers’ mature protagonists a rancher, is a veteran of both world wars. Wounded in the first, he has a vision of a personified Death stalking the field hospital in which he lies, but resists being taken by Death through sheer force of will. When Death returns for Alcmena thirty years later, he battles him again and is briefly the

victor, but with a more general result. For a quarter of an hour, Death ceases its work: "Neither man nor beast died, though they might cry for him. Death, whom we hate and love, had met a worse monster / And could not come" (CP 3: 384).

Jeffers calls Hungerfield a "hero" for resisting Death in the poem's concluding lines (CP 3: 397), but a "monster" for having succeeded, for there is worse agony in having no relief from terminal suffering. Death resumes, as it must, and destroys everything around Hungerfield, human and animal, sparing only him and an Alcmena now restored to health. She is not grateful, having had her own vision of it as the "angel" and "bridegroom" who had come for her, and she now despises the life to which she has been unnaturally restored. When Hungerfield, his household destroyed around him, commits suicide by fire, she lacks the courage to join him and is left to live two years in limbo, hating both a life she has been unable to leave and a death she cannot embrace.

There is much in the story to ponder, but for our purposes it is the transformation of Alcmena from the indomitable figure of the drafts to the moribund one who wishes only for Death that is salient. When Hungerfield restores her, she is not truly alive but a thing that belongs to Death, and her only wish is to destroy the son whom she believes prevents Death from claiming her. Vengefully, she accuses Hungerfield's wife of infidelity (a plot item preserved from the drafts), confessing her lie only when he refuses to believe her; later, driving with him above a cliff, she tries to plunge them both over it by wresting away the wheel. But she has no power over events, and can only await Death's pleasure again.

We understand this Alcmena as pathetic, whose behavior is not to be held against her. What is interesting is that the imagery of the earlier Alcmena has now been transferred to Hungerfield himself: whereas she had been previously associated with rock and the granite monument bearing her name, she now sees him as "a great cold stone," and Jeffers describes him later as "Going heavily like a rock walking" as he prepares to burn his house down (CP 3: 387, 396). The poem's energy is entirely his, and Una herself, although its occasion, is no longer part of it.

What Jeffers had come to understand then in writing "Hungerfield" was that Una could not become a fiction, whatever of her might have gone into the other heroines of his maturity—Tamar, Clytemnestra, California, Helen Thurso, Fayne Fraser, Madrone

Bothwell, Medea. This meant that his address to her, if there was to be one at all, had to be direct and personal. He had dedicated many a book "To Una Jeffers"; now was the moment to express more fully what that meant.

The genesis of the elegy, and of the poem itself, may be found in a brief paragraph in Jeffers' letter of October 1950 to the Clapps: "I tell myself cold comfort, that her awareness and beauty are dissolved into the world, and make it more beautiful. But an old superstition keeps me praying silently: 'Make Una joyful, wherever she is'" (*CL* 3: 684).

The "rational" part of Jeffers' thought—that is, the cyclical, materialist cast of it—must conceive Una as returned to the cosmos, body and spirit, as a part of its perdurable value. To accomplish this wholly, however, something else had to be added, without which the thought alone was, at least for Jeffers himself, "cold comfort." That was the value of the poem he could not yet begin to write. At the same time, the "old superstition"—remnant Christianity, the "superstition" he could not but find in his Catholic friends' memorial services for Una—nonetheless made for the silent prayer that wished her somehow still constituted. The tension in the thought made for the poem; the poem completed, as far as could be, the value. The separation of the elegy and the narrative was the key to achieving it.

Jeffers began the elegy with his "cold comfort," the conviction that the universe as such was a vital projection, alive in all its forms and members, so that the extinction of any particular consciousness was the seed of its manifestation in something else: "If time is only another dimension, then all that dies / Remains alive; not annulled, but removed / Out of our sight. Una is alive" (*CP* 3: 375).

The elegy proceeds through time's halting witness, memory, to invoke Robin and Una in their first passion, "greedy as hawks"; then in Una tutoring their twins, Donnan and Garth; and then together in the adventure of travel and the joy of homecoming: the stations of life, pitched together in the coalescence of vision that death brings. Jeffers savors these moments a last time, and then, abruptly, surrenders: "It is no good. Una has died, and I / Am left waiting for death, like a leafless tree / Waiting for the roots to rot and the trunk to fall" (*CP* 3: 375).

The wait for death, however, is still a time of life. Jeffers records the moment of writing his poem; it is September, a world of "gray

grass" and "gray sea," and a year has passed. He confesses the weaknesses of sorrow, the vain emotions and the relief of drink, "the quart at midnight / And the cups in the morning," before pulling himself together with the grimly stoic line: "No doubt I can live without you, bitterly and well" (CP 3: 376). What cannot be assimilated, however, is the memory of Una's slow death, an image which refuses to fade. Jeffers attempts to segue directly into the narrative, but the effort is balked until by what appears a sheer effort of will he embarks on his story, not as a laying aside of mourning but as another entrance of it.

The epilogue of the poem is the completion of the elegy. It presents its story as a gift to Una never to be received, but also as a gesture that enables the poet to find a moment of epiphany:

You are earth and air; you are in the beauty of
the ocean
And the great streaming triumphs of sundown; you are
alive and well in the tender young grass rejoicing
When soft rain falls all night, and little rosy-fleeced
clouds float on the dawn. — I shall be with you presently. (CP 3: 397)

The tension of the poem remains up to its final words. The description of Una as present in the four elements of terrestrial beauty, "alive and well" in their grand and tender life, is an affirmation of Jeffers' vitalism as simultaneously a vision of incorporation and transcendence. It leaves room for the ambiguity of the poem's final statement, which, set off by its dash, suggests not only Jeffers' own readiness for mortality but the irreducible hope, against all knowledge and conviction, of posthumous reunion. It brings to mind, too, the lines that Jeffers had written nearly a quarter of a century before for his passionate heroine Fera Martial, who tells the son-in-law she desires, Hood Cawdor, that her love for him is inextinguishable: "What you think I want / Will be pure dust after hundreds of years and something from me be crying to something from you / High up in the air" ("Cawdor," CP 1: 445). The thought perhaps had not left him.

As Jeffers had to separate Alcmena from Una to realize the character of Hungerfield, he felt that part of Una's spirit had gone into him ("you were faithful and a lion heart like this rough hero Hungerfield," CP 3: 397). Be that as it may, Hungerfield's closest narrative precursor was Tamar, who like him sought to reverse

temporal progression and whose story ended, like his, in fire. As Tamar had been the first of Jeffers' heroes of transgression, so Hungerfield would fittingly be the last, contesting the terms of life. What he would express for Jeffers was his helpless witness of Una's death, and the deep-rooted fantasy he embodied for him:

In this black year
I have thought often of Hungerfield, the man at Horse Creek,
Who fought with Death—bodily, said the witnesses, throat
for throat,
Fury against fury in the dark—
And conquered him.

Jeffers does not "think" of Hungerfield, of course; he realizes him through the slow labor of composition, until for a moment he can momentarily imagine himself in his hero's place:

If I had had the courage and the hope—
Or the pure rage—
I should be now Death's captive no doubt, not his conqueror.
I should be with my dearest, in the hollow darkness
Where nothing hurts. (CP 3: 377)

Jeffers enacts a rage "no doubt" futile, for it does not reunite him with Una in the only way possible, through oblivion, but keeps him separate. At the same time, in donning the mask of his creation, he achieves the catharsis that will allow him to live "bitterly and well" (CP 3: 376).

Several other poems in the volume that contains "Hungerfield" relate to the loss of Una. When Hungerfield first encounters him, Death is figured as "handsome and arrogant," with a "contemptuous" face (CP 3: 380), but in "To Death" he is described variously as "a great king," a "mean little servant," and "steward of the estate, / Pale and a hunchback." Finally, he is the one with "the keys of the treasury," the arbiter of life's "games" and the end of its strivings, neither master nor servant but goal and reward: "it is for you we labor, / And after a time you give us eternal peace" (374).⁷ It is not however attainment but submission that constitutes passage, and Death in its final form is the merciful monster that metes out its favors by whim. It is this moment that Hungerfield seeks to reverse, only to create chaos that must ensue when, however briefly, Death must cease his work.

Hungerfield is not in error to “hate” Death, nor Alcmena to “love” him. If it is futile to resist Death, the moment of submission—of mortal change, whether for a beast or a man or a culture—is, however inevitable, also ignominious. Thus is Death, the king and servant, the agent of that which ordains all change; and thus is Hungerfield too both monster and hero.

For Hungerfield the price of resistance includes self-immolation, although as an act of defiance rather than defeat. This raises the more general question of suicide, a theme which as we have seen not only runs throughout Jeffers’ verse, but which he had directly contemplated after Una’s death. In “The Deer Lay Down Their Bones,” the final poem of *Hungerfield and Other Poems*, he discovers a glen where wounded deer have gone to die, and begins a searching colloquy:

—I wish my bones were with theirs.
But that’s a foolish thing to confess, and a little cowardly . . .
We have been given life and have used it—not a great gift
perhaps—but in honesty
Should use it all. Mine’s empty since my love died . . . (CP 3: 407)

The interjection stops the poem, and leads Jeffers to ponder the moral responsibilities of survival, the growth and welfare of children and grandchildren. With candor, he admits them insufficient; these persons are precious, but no longer in his care. His own road is short, and it is tempting not to wait it out. His heroes had frequently ended their lives: Tamar, Lance Fraser of “Give Your Heart to the Hawks,” Bruce Ferguson of “Mara,” Phaedra of “The Cretan Woman,” and of course Hungerfield. Nevertheless, he concludes:

—I am bound by my own thirty-year-old decision: who
drinks the wine
Should take the dregs; even in the bitter lees and sediment
New discovery may lie. The deer in that beautiful place lay
down their bones: I must wear mine. (CP 3: 408)

Jeffers refers to a personal crisis about which we know little, but which appears to have been decisive in setting him on the path his life would take. His mature poetry, at least in narrative form, involved in its first decade transgressive protagonists who sought novel or proscribed states of being. This, as Jeffers would express it in “The Broken Balance,” one of the major meditative poems that

summed up his poetic stance in the later 1920s, was a product of cultural decadence, which was in turn part of the human life cycle as such:

Reach down the long morbid roots that forget the plow,
Discover the depths; let the long pale tendrils
Spend all to discover the sky, now nothing is good
But only the steel mirrors of discovery . . .
And the beautiful enormous dawns of time, after we perish.
(CP 1: 374-75)

Decadence—the decline of a particular civilization—was for Jeffers a part of the cyclical experience of human destiny whose ultimate outcome, as with all aspects of creation, was dissolution. Whether at the dawn of an era or in its twilight, however, discovery was still to be made, and man was quintessentially the discovering animal: “It is good for man / To try all changes, progress and corruption, powers, peace and anguish, not to go down the dinosaur’s way / Until all his capacities have been explored . . .” (“The Beaks of Eagles,” CP 2: 537).

. . . the vast hungry spirit of the time
Cries to his chosen that there is nothing good
Except discovery, experiment and experience and
discovery: To look truth in the eyes,
To strip truth naked, let our dogs do our living for us
But man discover. (“The Silent Shepherds,” *Beginning*
47-48; CP 3: 424-25)⁸

The imperative was both personal and collective, even if it were only a sifting of “bitter lees and sediment.” If nothing else, there remained the task of endurance. Jeffers had explored this subject in the protagonists who succeeded those of transgression in the California narratives of the late 1920s and 1930s, and as he would put it for himself in “The Old Stonemason,” another poem of *Hungerfield and Other Poems*: “I must stand here / Alone with open eyes in the clear air growing old” (*Hungerfield*, 110-11; CP 3: 372-73).

These injunctions steadied the mind, as the writing of “Hungerfield” had enabled Jeffers to resume his own mode of discovery, verse. To reconcile the heart, however, was a more difficult project. The second anniversary of Una’s death brought another poem addressed to her, which did not appear in his lifetime and would only be published in the *Collected Poetry*:

Whom should I write for, dear, but you? Two years have
 passed,
 The wound is bleeding-new and will never heal.
 I used to write for you, and give you the poem
 When it was written, and wait uneasily your verdict . . . but
 now, to whom? —As for you,
 You have a better life than to read my verses,
 You have gone up with the flame to the high air; and that
 pitiful bone-ash,
 Not buried deeply, lives in bright flowers
 In the garden you loved. (“Whom should I write for,”
 CP 4: 541)

These lines may be connected with “The Shears” (*Beginning* 72; CP 3: 412), a poem published in the posthumous volume of Jeffers’ verse, *The Beginning and the End*, where the “eye” of a rose peers daily into the window of his house until his daughter-in-law, “very blonde and housewifely,” snips it for an indoor decoration. The flower is Una, fertilized by her remains, and the daughter-in-law is death come again, innocent and pitiless in the commerce between life and death.

At the same time, the “eye” is brought, however temporarily, into the house where the poet labors, and is thus a last vestige of Una herself. The “pitiful bone-ash” is gone, absorbed into the earth; the personal effects are inert; memory itself must fade. What remains, for the mourner, is the distillation of body and spirit as consciousness and personality. This too, however, must have its passage:

—As for the precious human consciousness—
 (Yours was most precious to me, not mine nor theirs)
 I think it is taken into the great dream of the earth; for
 this dark planet
 Has its own consciousness, from which yours came,
 And now returns. (“Whom should I write for,” CP 4:
 541)

To love in the deepest sense, as Jeffers suggests here, is to recognize the difference of self between two paired beings, and to love most fully that which is not ourselves. In “Salvage” (*Beginning* 63; CP 3: 421), he writes that:

I am old, and my wife has died,
 Whose eyes made life. As for me, I have to consider
 and take thought
 Before I can feel the beautiful secret
 In places and stars and stones, to her it came freely.

Jeffers is saying that he made poems, but that Una saw the poetry, and in what he wrote he only returned to her what had been given. We may judge this too neat, for Jeffers wrote far more than Una saw, and as he himself said, "her thought / Stood far from mine" ("My life is growing narrow," CP 4: 544). The stimulus was not the poem; but we may say that, however Jeffers scanted his own sensibility, Una undeniably quickened it.

The pathos of Jeffers' mourning is most affecting at its most direct. "[M]y dearest has died," he writes in "The Last Conservative" (CP 3: 418); "But now my love has died I am half dead," he says in "Seventieth Birthday" (443-44); in "Pleasures," "My wife has died, I can never see her again, nor speak to her" (473); and in "My life is growing narrow," "my dear and eternal love has died." (4: 544) These lines toll painfully through the late verse. The passing of years does not diminish the bereavement and shock; in "See the Human Figure," "A huddle of bed-clothes on the bed is visibly a woman dying, that dearest / Woman who has been dead for ten years" (*Beginning* 66; 3: 479). The last fragment in the *Collected Poetry*, also addressed "To Death," says, "You have Yeats and you have Una Jeffers: the voice that I admired and the woman I loved. / You will never touch me again" (4: 561). Not long after, Jeffers himself was dead.

Jeffers' attitudes toward the loss of Una thus ranged from the stoic to the defiant, from pathos to anger. As he sought in the culminating phase of his career to express a wider philosophical perspective, so he sought a more inclusive one for the human phenomenon. It was not easy to achieve balance, however, and in "De Rerum Virtute," the meditative poem that was in many ways the key to his late work, he gave vent to what seemed an outburst of misanthropy, only to bring himself up short:

. . . It is hard to see beauty
 In any of the acts of man: but that means the acts of a
 sick microbe
 On a satellite of a dust-grain twirled in a whirlwind
 In the world of stars
 Something perhaps may come of him; in any event

He can't last long. —Well: I am short of patience
 Since my wife died. (CP 3: 402)

"Since my wife died." The human career pivots abruptly on that interjection as Jeffers admits what every mourner knows, that the world loses value with the death of the beloved, and objectivity totters with it: one's own vision, no matter how carefully cultivated, is no longer fully reliable; one is simply, in some new way, not within or above but *outside*. Such a vantage might have its bitter satisfactions; in "Pleasures," Jeffers concedes that "to watch the world / Totter above its grave, and to hear the madmen / Who direct nations" is something that he can "enjoy . . . a little." But he cannot so easily maintain a perch above folly, and in "See the Human Figure" he notes,

As the eye fails through age or disease
 And the world grows a little dark, it begins to have
 human figures in it.
 A stone on the mountain has a man's face,
 A storm-warped tree against the fog on the mountain
 is a man running, hopelessly
 Fleeing his fear . . . (Beginning 66; CP 3: 479)

The next image in the poem is one we have already cited, that of huddled bedclothes invoking the dying Una, and it is clearly the absence of her steadying presence no less than the cataract Jeffers references that fantasized the landscape and made him fear to be "gabbling with ghosts." This made the distance he always sought as a means of sanity more difficult to maintain; it also made the temptation to seek it in misanthropy more essential to resist. In "The Beginning and the End" (Beginning 5-10; CP 3: 430-34) he essayed an anthropological explanation of the human condition, suggesting that despite the trauma that had formed the human mind in its beginnings it might yet "go far / and end in honor." In an unfinished poem, "To be the animal that despises itself" (1951), he goes further, and gives the lie to those who feel that, in arrogance or suffering, his vision of humanity had finally yielded to misanthropy:

To be the animal that despises itself
 Is man's distinction; the others, wild beasts, humble
 horses, satisfied cats and sycophant dogs,
 Love to exist; man does not; he despises himself

And would gladly not live. He aims, no doubt, higher
 than living; he has not reached it yet.
 But who knows? he might yet. He might see the ocean
 Pounding its rocks—see, I mean—he might see the
 stars dancing their courses. I should be
 His best admirer. (CP 4: 537)⁹

It is Jeffers himself, of course, who “would gladly not live,” but who is also, as he says elsewhere, “too proud for suicide” (“Dear little sister whom men call Death,” CP 4: 520-21). The animal who despises himself is by the same token the one who would surpass himself, and thus it is “That men know or discover, and make it vital in the mind, the enormous and terrible beauty of things” (“Not Solid Earth,” 538-40). What both inherited in that beauty and lay beyond it was what Jeffers called God, of whom one could predicate only a final unknowability that, whether expressed in the poet’s metaphor or the mathematician’s equation, was “enormous and terrible” in their sight. To strive and flag, but, whetted by beauty in its fullest sense, to persevere, not shirking “any experience / An old man finds,” was the human task (“We see ourselves from within,” 535). Mourning, too, was part of that experience, even if all it had to teach, as Jeffers said in another context, was “the honor and hardship of being human” (“Monument,” *Beginning* 25; 3: 419).

What Una’s death cost Jeffers was the passionate spirit to whom the world’s beauty came, as he said, “freely,” and which made both “joy” and nobility in it (“Salvage,” *Beginning* 63; CP 3: 42). The human project of self-transcendence, fitfully pursued, was not in itself of value, whatever value it hoped to attest: what was revealed was only what was there, described within the limits of human language. This was the final lesson that beauty might disclose, and loss:

One light is left us: the beauty of things, not men;
 The immense beauty of the world, not the human
 world.
 Look—and without imagination, desire nor dream—directly
 At the mountains and sea. Are they not beautiful?
 These plunging promontories and flame-shaped peaks
 Stopping the sombre stupendous glory, the storm-fed ocean? . . .
 The beauty of things means virtue and value in them.
 It is in the beholder’s eye, not the world? Certainly.
 It is the human mind’s translation of the transhuman

Intrinsic glory. It means that the world is sound,
 Whatever the sick microbe does. But he too is part of it.
 ("De Rerum Virtute," CP 3: 403)

NOTES

1. That Una handled most of the family correspondence also helped her to fashion Jeffers' image. See CL 1: 768-80.

2. As Mark Van Doren noted, Floyd Dell rejected Jeffers as "a hater of humanity" as early as the appearance of *Roan Stallion, Tamar and Other Poems*. Misanthropy was an easy peg for the New Critics to hang their rejection of Jeffers on, and, with the publication of *The Double Axe*, even an erstwhile admirer such as Selden Rodman would conclude that his "driving motivation" was "hatred of mankind" (Karman, *Essays*, 61, 157; for the text of Dell's essay, 179-85). An obituary was simply headlined, "John Robinson Jeffers, 75, Misanthropic Poet" (*Newsweek*, 5 Feb. 1962). Jeffers himself assumed that, misunderstood even by his most perspicacious readers, he would be dismissed as a "Hater of men" ("Crumbs or the Loaf," CP 2: 281). The subject continues to be discussed, and the misanthropy assumed, by such critics as Helen Vendler and Calvin Bedient. See my discussion above, 73-75.

3. This poem, ostensibly a dialogue between two dead lovers buried side by side, belongs generically to the Jeffers genre of posthumous survival and consciousness, but it is difficult not to read as signifying a lingering breach in the aftermath of Robin's affair at Taos in 1938.

4. Notably in "The Alpine Christ," "The Women at Point Sur," "Dear Judas," *Descent to the Dead*, "Resurrection," "At the Birth of an Age," and "The Love and the Hate." Lee Cauldwell recovers from a near-death experience at the beginning of "Tamar" ("his body / Crawled without consciousness and like a creature with no bones," CP 1: 19), as does Orestes at the climax of *The Tower Beyond Tragedy*. Tamar herself "returns" in "Apology for Bad Dreams" and "Come, Little Birds," the latter poem an account of a séance in which various other dead souls appear, including that of Jeffers' father (1: 208-11; *Be Angry* 111-18; 3: 5-9). For further discussion, see "The Theme of Resurrection in Jeffers' Later Narratives" (Zaller, *Atom*, 254-78.)

5. As often in his narrative drafts, Jeffers experimented with different names for his characters, but the coinage here of “Thanat” (*Thanatos*, Death) for Hungerfield’s wife suggests Death as a presence in the household with whom the characters are complicit, even if as mere attendants. The final name given to the spouse was Arab.

6. See *The Cliffs of Solitude*, 219-24.

7. These images recall those of “The Mother’s Cairn,” the elegy for Jeffers’ mother written at her death in 1921 and unpublished in his lifetime, in which he addresses “Death [who] with his candle and keys, / Mean little dusty servant, can undo the gates of many palaces and great peace” (CP 4: 493-99, at 497-98). The recurrence of this figuration and its attendant imagery after thirty years suggests a connection not only with “To Death” but a psychic pathway between the loss of a wife and her recharacterization as a mother in “Hungerfield.” A “cairn” is a heap of stones piled up as a memorial or a landmark; the reader will recall the granite monument to Alcmena erected by Hungerfield in an early version of the poem. This earlier Alcmena is clearly a maternal archetype, and in “The Mother’s Cairn” Jeffers invokes a similar image, likening Annie Robinson Tuttle to an earth goddess, “terribly tall, dreadful and holy and dear,” depicted in “the great flanks and the bare / Grave breasts, her womb unweary of childbirth, her sure patience, her brooding eyes and sheltering hair” that give protection and refuge (495). The image segues from a divine incantation to the frankly Oedipal evocation of a mother as an infant child might perceive her. Even blunter is the poet’s complaint that “Darling that any man but I should have embraced you, any but I enjoyed the sweet / Small buds of your virginity” (497). At the same time, however, Jeffers describes the actual Annie as “helpless and subdued,” with “little strength but only the lamp of her loveliness,” occupying but “a vacant place among our years” (497, 498). The Alcmena who finally emerged in “Hungerfield” is not nearly so passive, but she flees death at the end when her son sets fire to the house, dying not as its “bride” nor in defiance of it, but merely “As others do” (3: 396).

8. See also CP 3: 473.

9. Jeffers began another stanza, but broke off: “Man—taking his place / In the glory of nature—[.] Perhaps this fragment summed up his vision of humanity more than any other. For Jeffers, man alone had the task not simply of being but of becoming.

WORKS CITED

- Bennett, Melba Berry. *The Stone Mason of Tor House: The Life and Work of Robinson Jeffers*. Ward Ritchie P, 1966.
- Hunt, Tim, editor. *The Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*. Stanford UP, 1988-2001. 5 vols.
- Jeffers, Robinson. *Be Angry at the Sun*. Random House, 1941.
- . *The Beginning and the End*. Random House, 1963.
- . *Hungerfield and Other Poems*. Random House, 1954.
- Karman, James, editor. *The Collected Letters of Robinson Jeffers, with Selected Letters of Una Jeffers*. Stanford UP, 2009-2015. 3 vols.
- , editor. *Critical Essays on Robinson Jeffers*. G. K. Hall, 1990.
- . *Robinson Jeffers: Poet of California*. Story Line P, 1995.
- Vardamis, Alex A. *The Critical Reputation of Robinson Jeffers: A Bibliographical Study*. The Shoe String P, 1972.
- Zaller, Robert. *The Atom To Be Split: New and Selected Essays on Robinson Jeffers*. Tor House P, 2019.
- . *The Cliffs of Solitude*. Cambridge UP, 1983.

BOOK REVIEWS

Judith Anderson: Australian Star; First Lady of the American Stage. Desley Deacon. Kerr Publishing Pty. Ltd. Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. 2019.

REVIEWED BY JIM BAIRD

Judith Anderson and Robinson Jeffers are forever linked because of their association during the 1947 Broadway presentation of Jeffers' greatest critical success, his adaptation of the legend of Medea with Miss Anderson in the title role. But this was only Judith Anderson's most notable appearance. She did much more, and the author of this biography, Desley Deacon, establishes her as the greatest artist Australia ever produced. Professor Deacon is uniquely qualified to analyze not only Miss Anderson but Jeffers' contribution to her star vehicle, because she is Australian herself but has lived and worked in the United States, including serving as Director of Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Texas at Austin.

The person who became Judith Anderson was born Frances Margaret (called Fanny) Anderson in 1897 in Adelaide to parents who were wealthy from mining interests in the arid western region of New South Wales. She had three older siblings, a sister and two brothers. But her father, James Anderson, squandered his wealth through his interest in racing and its corollary, gambling. Around 1903, by then also an alcoholic, he left his family to attempt to regain his status through mining. He failed, and his youngest daughter never saw him again.

Financially reduced, Jessie Anderson, Fanny's mother, started over by buying a grocery store behind which the family lived. Although it was a man's world, Fanny was not cowed by their power and competed with them as an equal, later calling herself a tomboy. Jessie Anderson insisted on a good education for her children, enrolling the daughters in a girls' school that taught what was then called "elocution." This opened a door for Fanny. She began performing in school shows and other local competitions. Adults noted that she was a good singer and presenter of poems and orations. When Nellie Melba gave two performances in Adelaide in 1908, Fanny knew what she not only wanted to do, but must do. She wrote later, "This was when I first felt that quite indescribable

Jeffers Studies 20 (2017/2018).

© 2020 JIM BAIRD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

sense of miracle that a great talent can produce. It was the moment when I knew that I, too, must try in my own way to do to people what she, standing by a piano, was doing to me and to everyone else in that theater" (16).

So she devoted herself to drama, and it soon became clear that she had a talent that touched everyone in a theater. The key phrase in her assessment of Melba is "in my own way." Anderson could not sing like Melba or dance like Irene Castle. Neither was she a great beauty like Garbo or a tall fashion plate like Sarah Bernhardt. One imagines Medea towering over and dominating other performers. Anderson was five feet three. Luckily she understood early that one must find one's own way to communicate, or one is just an imitation of another artist. She was able to command the attention of others in a way that was intensely personal and "indescribable," as it is for all great performers, and Professor Deacon has the good sense to leave her analysis at that.

Miss Anderson impressed audiences during the 'teens in supporting roles opposite leading performers who toured the country. She did well, but it became clear that in order to further her career, she would have to leave Australia. By then Jessie realized that Frannie, as she was then known, had a special talent, so in 1918 mother and daughter left for the United States and the film industry in Hollywood. She was unable to find good parts there, so the pair took off again by bus for New York. After some work on the stage there, in 1923 she finally got a star part (and the name Judith), touring the country with established leading man Frank Keenan in *Peter Weston*. She was so successful in this role that, as Prof. Deacon asserts, she "rarely had to look for work again" (71). Her first Broadway hit was as the main character of *Cobra*, a play in which she played a powerful seductress (then called "vamp"), establishing herself also as the type of stage personality who concealed a hidden menace, a trait which served her well when she met Robinson Jeffers and discovered his work.

That meeting occurred in 1928, when Jeffers' impact on American life was increasing. Although Anderson's fame continued to grow in the United States, where she was the toast of Broadway and partied with such luminaries as George Gershwin, Katherine Cornell and Noel Coward, her return to Australia was not well received, so meeting the poet inspired her. She was drawn to him and his wild poetry. Later she confided to the friend who had introduced her to

him, Professor of English at the University of California at Berkeley, Benjamin Lehman (later Anderson's husband), that she would love to be "a Robinson Jeffers wife." Deacon notes, "their love affair was always at the level of intellect and imagination" (133). But, of course, that means that they *did* love each other. That explains a lot.

Broadway producer Jed Harris actually insisted on her playing Medea that same year, although it would have to have been Euripides rather than the still unwritten Jeffers version. Anderson also thought that this would be her perfect role, and kept trying to get someone to produce a version for years. During the thirties she moved back and forth from New York to Hollywood to London, getting roles she was not happy with and in 1934 declaring that she had lost her youth and there was little left ahead of her on the stage.

Actually that period produced the other role for which she is remembered and one that can still be seen, Mrs. Danvers, the putatively lesbian housekeeper who drives Joan Fontaine, as Mrs. de Winter, out of her mind in Alfred Hitchcock's first American film, *Rebecca* (1940), adapted from Daphne du Maurier's popular novel of the same name. Although the sexual quality is muted, it was noticed by most audiences and considered rather strong for the time. Mrs. Danvers had been driven out of *her* mind by the late Rebecca, who, as recollected by the other characters, seems a devious flirt. Lesbian critics have cited the film as an example of the crippling effects of repressed sexuality. Anderson herself drew attention because her emotional relationships with men were usually brief and unhappy. Without stressing this point, Professor Deacon suggests that Anderson's romantic difficulties were caused by her insistence on living her life as she pleased during a time when it was still a man's world.

Which leads us back to Jeffers, a "safe" but strong man who could help her be herself. When "Solstice" appeared in 1935, she considered doing a dramatic version of that Medea-like poem, and later asked about the rights to *The Tower Beyond Tragedy* but that New York project was dropped by the producers. But in 1941 she did several performances of *Tower* in the Forest Theater in Carmel. Jeffers attended the first performance, a rare act for him. During a World War II bond-selling tour, Anderson planned to appear in *Tower* with Bette Davis as Electra (!), but Davis fell ill and Anderson was offered a role on Broadway in Chekhov's *Three Sisters* with Katherine Cornell and Ruth Gordon, so this intriguing production

never happened. When this play closed, she entertained troops in the field, meeting Garth Jeffers in Hawai'i.

With the war over and Anderson financially stable because of the films she had made, things began to fall into place for the role of her life. A new team of producers were eager to bring Jeffers' adaptation of *Medea*, which he had finished in 1946, to the New York stage. They and Anderson came to Carmel to confer with Jeffers; Anderson rented a cabin and screamed at the sea each morning to build up her lung power. When the play was finally presented, in spite of troubles with John Gielgud's performance as Jason, Robin and Una flew to New York for the opening night. The play was an instant and lasting success. Jeffers answered the cries for "Author, author" with a "bemused bow" (287).

After this triumph, Prof. Deacon notes that audiences came to see *her*, not the play she was in, no matter what it might be. It was often *Medea* again. She performed the role in several other productions and toured colleges, doing readings from the play and Jeffers' other works. Jeffers wrote a dramatic adaptation of *The Tower Beyond Tragedy* expressly for her, an indication of the depth of their friendship. Anderson actually preferred the role of Clytemnestra to that of *Medea*, but audiences expected another character like the sorceress, and *Tower* was not as successful. In 1952, Jeffers helped Anderson prepare for readings of his work at the nearby Ojai Festival. They continued to discuss collaborations, and they saw each other for the last time when Anderson gave a reading of his work in Monterey. Jeffers died a few weeks later. In 1970 Anderson made a fine recording of some of his poems.

Judith Anderson moved into a beautiful house overlooking Santa Barbara in 1949. Her age made for fewer opportunities for roles, but she was not through yet. In 1960, she was named Dame Commander of the British Empire. She performed in *Hamlet* as Hamlet, repeating Sarah Bernhardt's great cross-dressing breakthrough. Television also gave her new chances. Twice she won an Emmy for her performance as Lady Macbeth, first in 1955 and again in 1961, in productions by *The Hallmark Hall of Fame*. At 85 she returned to Broadway in *Medea*, now cast as the nurse while Zoe Caldwell played the title role, and, still working, had a role in a *Star Trek* film. In her final years, she moved into a small cottage in Santa Barbara. She died in 1992, a few days short of her ninety-fifth

birthday, honored by all as one of the great artists of the twentieth century.

In addition to giving readers a thorough account of Dame Anderson's life and full analyses of her work (including not only a complete list of Anderson's stage and screen performances and recordings, but a lengthy bibliography), *Judith Anderson* is a beautiful book. Presented in art deco format with a soul-revealing black and white photograph of the actress on the cover, it contains scores of photographs and illustrations, many in color. It is unlikely that anyone else will attempt to write a comprehensive biography of Judith Anderson. This is it. Constant readers of *Jeffers Studies* will be pleased to learn also that Lili Bitá, Robert Zaller, and James Karman make cameo appearances in the glow of Dame Anderson's footlights (448).

Peter Quigley. *The Forbidden Subject: How Oppositional Aesthetics Banished Natural Beauty from the Arts*. The White Horse Press, 2019.

REVIEWED BY WHITNEY HOTH

Peter Quigley has written an angry book. He is profoundly disappointed with what he calls the “ideological trajectory” of much contemporary ecocriticism, which he believes betrayed its early promise by moving away from interdisciplinary interpretive freedom toward rigid ideological conformity and institutional control. He sets out his indictment circumstantially in his last chapter:

Ecocriticism has been co-opted by: 1) a Trojan horse of knee jerk (mostly Marxist-born and certainly Marxist-serving) resistance postures that are not properly thought out or critiqued and are incurably divisive and corrosive; 2) insoluble problems and proposals around the issue of the individual, subject, agent, the transcorporeal, countering the lived experience of immediacy, privacy and individuality; 3) a denial of beauty which may run counter to humanity’s hard-wired nature and the immediacy and urgency of lived experiences; 4) a problem concerning a legitimate vision of where all this goes (e.g. ‘circulation without exchange’, ‘bioregions instead of country’, etc.); and 5) a crippling inability to have any modicum of appreciation for Western culture. (216)

The truculent tone here is representative. Quigley maintains this fighting posture through hundreds of pages of exasperated polemic. He is fighting an unequal battle, and he knows it. The currently dominant tendencies of ecocritical discourse are against him, and he has taken up the quixotic task of attempting a belated course correction largely on his own. He is able to cite a small number of notable co-combatants, including Alexander Nehamas, Roger Scruton, and Elaine Scarry, but his opponents are legion and firmly entrenched. Although Quigley suggests his focus is narrowly on the fortunes and forms of ecocriticism, it is soon apparent that his book involves a much broader socio-cultural critique of critical discourse in the humanities and its institutional entrenchment. Setting aside

the question of success, it is gratifying to see someone swimming so determinedly against the current.

Quigley anchors his challenge to dominant ecocritical discourse in the concept of beauty. In a word, he believes it exists, as experience if not as an attribute of objects. He believes it exists, and he believes it is valuable. This commitment is contrasted with various critical orientations Quigley believes denigrate or deny the existence and/or value of beauty: early modernists who associated beauty with discredited *beaux arts* pretention, a casualty of post-war disgust exemplified by Dadaism and the avant-garde; Marxists and neo-Marxists who believe beauty is a distraction and disguise of bourgeoisie privilege and oppression, and postmodern textualists who consider beauty a chimerical universal, a mirage of text to be deconstructed. All of these, separately or in combination, have discredited the concept of beauty and have authorized distrust and suspicion as the only critically informed response, which is inculcated in graduate schools and preferred (if not required) for publication in professional journals. The convergence of interpretive methodologies hostile to beauty, their concentration as doctrinal practice, and their reproduction and repetition in curricula and publication collectively create what Quigley, quoting Scott Heller, identifies as "the forbidden subject" (40), by which he means the impermissible assertion that anything is or is not beautiful in itself independently of our political purposes or its representation in language. Quigley believes hostility to beauty is now pervasive in ecocriticism, as it is in critical theory generally, modernist, post-modernist, and Marxist, or a codified amalgam of all three forming a specialized professional language for sanctioned discussion of literature, and increasingly, its production.

Taking this position commits Quigley to an embattled resistance on many fronts. His essentialist affirmation of beauty as a real and valuable experience, accessible outside as well as through language, is now considered a red-flag heresy and provocation. His position is fundamentally conservative, and the term conservative is now a pejorative as Quigley recognizes. Along with his concept of beauty, he is compelled to defend other related (and highly contested) concepts of the individual and place, of privacy and privileged perception. All of which are anathema to the critical orientations he admits are regnant. A reader might reasonably ask why Quigley would wish to engage this multiplying battle against intransigent opponents he is

unlikely to convince and by which he is thoroughly outnumbered. Evidently, he believes he can change the ideological trajectory. He believes ecocriticism can recover its earlier openness to the idea of the beautiful as a real and valuable experience and accept again that "beauty is 'in' the world and . . . is a bridge connecting humanity and the world" (9). Unfortunately, very little in Quigley's own assessment of the current professional landscape suggests this is likely or even possible. He has also published an anthology, *Ecocritical Aesthetics*, co-edited with Scott Slovic, that attempts to reopen an essentially conservative discussion of beauty, but even the articles in that collection are seldom full-throated affirmations of the reforms Quigley advocates, much less the constantly accumulating ecocritical articles and books exemplifying the oppositional aesthetics he decries. In his call for a return to founding principles in ecocriticism, which emphasize individual private experiences of the beautiful, and which he described as "inviolable and unsailable," Quigley is tilting at windmills.

Certainly, Quigley is not alone in thinking as he does about the co-optation and corruption of intellectual disciplines in the humanities, about post-modernism's seeming nihilism or the cognitive shaming and silencing of much neo-Marxist social justice criticism. Others have said the same, and Quigley quotes freely from some of them, notably the late Roger Scruton, but curiously Quigley seems to shy away from embracing the term conservative, although his position is aligned most closely with conservative critique, and he even allows himself some overtly conservative observations about the possible benefits of free markets and individual entrepreneurialism. His careful side-stepping of the conservative label may suggest bad faith but seems more a matter of confusion. Quigley may be in the process of transitioning away from the milieu in which he has been immersed, the discourse community of university presses and academic conferences in which left-leaning orientations are often accepted as orthodox and obvious. Quigley repeatedly describes the effective "muzzling" and "intimidation" of current ecocritical discourse, and perhaps he is yet experiencing it (1). His arguments would be strengthened if he acknowledged them as fundamentally conservative and defended them as such. He would be enabled thereby to draw support more broadly from traditions readily aligned with his own. Certainly a conservative ecocritical position is possible, and indeed, already exists if correctly

understood, including arguably John Ruskin and Robinson Jeffers, if not Thoreau and Emerson as well. Conservatism is a complex and variable phenomenon, including positions ranging from reactionary populism to intellectually rigorous orientations. The term “conservative” in much contemporary academic discourse is a reified straw man. Quigley need not fear the word.

Ironically, while Quigley is critical of what he considers Marxist recourse to historicizing relativism, he undertakes his own historicizing analysis of the anti-aesthetic tendency of contemporary literary criticism, which he attributes to a continuation and development of early avant-garde opposition to bourgeoisie *beaux arts* culture after WWI. For Quigley, modernist rejection of conventional pre-war aesthetic standards, which had been discredited by the slaughter of the trenches, became a cultural default of opposition reinforced and elaborated by the specifically political resistance of early Marxism and its later transformation into ideological critique following the failure of the Paris Revolution of 1968, which Quigley believes is the origin of postmodernism’s emphasis on deconstruction as a means to continue political agitation and revolution.¹ Quigley calls this overdetermined oppositional posture, “the permanent avant-garde.” Much of what Quigley has to say about the development of this permanent opposition as normative in cultural studies is persuasive and compelling, although it carries him far afield from his declared focus on ecocriticism. Following Marshal Berman’s analysis of modernity in *All That’s Solid Melts into Air* (1988), Quigley explores the impulses of opposition under three interrelated headings: withdrawal, negation, and affirmation. Revulsion against pre-war bourgeois culture fostered a retreative rejection of representation and a quest for what Berman calls “a pure self-referential art object” (47), which Quigley detects in both the surface-oriented foregrounding of abstract expressionism and New Criticism’s insistence on poetry’s non-referential linguistic autonomy, both gestures of withdrawal from a world of degraded externals. Modernist withdrawal takes the form of subjectivist relativism, denying the existence of recognized or recognizable standards of beauty available in either nature or culture, which can then become active negation of beauty as an obstacle to revolutionary transformation or simply an opportunity for nihilistic destruction. The affirmative impulse, which Quigley associates with Futurism and the pop-cultural pastiches of Andy Warhol,

celebrates the disruptions of modernity as a path to revolutionary transformation or as nihilistic sensationalism embraced for itself. All three responses have in common a hostility to the present or immediate past and seek to outrage or destroy it in the name of anarchic liberation, individual autonomy, or utopian revolutionary transformation, which Terry Eagleton has celebrated as “the failure of the present.” In this oppositional orientation, whatever is established must be devalued in the name of some as-yet-unrealized, even unimaginable, alternative. In Quigley’s arresting phrase: “*Nothing beyond the text; Nothing beyond the canvas; Nothing beyond the revolution*” (129).

Quigley believes these are the historical sources of the oppositional, primarily destructive, aesthetics active in contemporary literary criticism, and specifically in the sub-discipline of ecocriticism, now subservient to a pervasive oppositional orientation to literature in which “a literary critic . . . becomes an adversary of the work he or she analyzes” (EA 7). Quigley provides representative examples: Thoreau’s *Walden* described as “cabin porn,” Muir’s achievements dismissed as “rooted in economic privilege and the abundant leisure time of the upper class,” Edward Abbey’s admiration of the Arches exposed as “sexist.” Quigley skillfully identifies the structural template underlying this criticism: “one might describe the situated speaker or scene in a historical/political moment and compare this to a preferred, but impossible, political high-watermark established anachronistically in hindsight: as a result, the critical commentary will be ‘they should have said X;’ they didn’t mention Y” (28). Much literary criticism in our time is essentially a debunking criticism of this kind, and in ecocriticism it takes the form of “a school of thought that casts Thoreau and most of his era’s prominent nature writers as naïve tools in a massive cover-up of the destructive forces of 19th-Century America” (EA 5). Quigley is unambiguous as to its merits, “Improper opinions, lifestyles that fall short and a troubled race or class positioning --- these make up a critical profile that gets repeated in order to take down previous thinkers and writers. It is uninspired, unfair, intellectually disingenuous and unnecessarily divisive” (32). A critical approach with an evident ambition to scold and for which the complexities of history are reduced to a simplified ethical calculus doubtless deserves Quigley’s censure, although something is missing in his condemnation, namely fair

acknowledgement that the Marxists and neo-Marxists sometimes have a point.

In recounting his personal experience of beauty, Quigley recalls his early years as a surfer in 1960s California “seeking out brooding, misty, lonely, dangerous, undiscovered coastlines” (4). This expresses an environmental interest and response quite different from that of, say, migrant workers in a rural Kansas slaughterhouse, and to some ears Quigley’s rhapsodizing will sound like patriarchal, privileged, neo-colonial complacency, which it arguably is, at least according to the interpretive framework of Marxist analysis. Marxists and neo-Marxist are consistent and coherent in their approach, and their assaults on Thoreau and Muir make sense given their terms of reference. Preservationist ambitions often do involve landscapes of interest to persons with secure privileges and advantages, and active cultivation of experiences of natural beauty is unlikely to survive close residence to refineries or landfills. If social issues are your primary focus, and you are convinced that equitable distribution and universal equality are primary and realizable goals, then much nature writing focused on the isolated individual in the wilderness will appear irremediably bourgeois, irrelevant at best, if not sinister. The environmental justice globalists want policies to redress Anthropocene toxicities, not inspiring views in curated jet-set ecotourist nature preserves: Walker Evans not Ansel Adams. Between traditionalists like Quigley and the current cadre of neo-Marxist critics there is no common ground. They represent fundamentally opposed ideas of value, and any dispute between them must take the form of an intransigent fight. Quigley objects to “arbitrary restrictions on issues of beauty” in current ecocriticism, but these restrictions are not arbitrary; they reflect a profoundly anti-pathetic but rigorously systematic philosophical position. If Marxist-inspired criticism is commonly adopted as a fad of academic discourse, driven by institutional concerns, this does not invalidate its methodology in some of its more rigorous and responsible applications, such as the enduringly useful studies of Raymond Williams.

The negative work Quigley has to do to clear a space for his own position leaves him small room for explaining what it is he wants to protect. Beauty is his watchword, but what is beauty to Quigley? He has an answer, but it is scattered throughout his book and requires assembly. Quigley invokes James Hillman’s suggestion that our

sense of beauty may have a biological origin: “a hawk soaring and diving . . . the playful leap of a dolphin in the bow-wave. You draw your breath and stop still . . . this *ahhhh* reaction is the aesthetic response just as certain, inevitable, objective, and ubiquitous as wincing in pain and moaning in pleasure” (49). Interestingly, the philosopher George Santayana made the same argument almost a hundred years earlier, including the idea of respiration as an index of aesthetic perception, in his own outline of aesthetic theory *The Sense of Beauty* (1896). Santayana himself noted the investigations of Darwin into sexual selection as suggestive for aesthetics, as did Freud, and Hillman is working in the same tradition. But Quigley, despite his passing references, does not build on Hillman. Rather than advance any theoretical defense of the idea of beauty, Quigley asserts its positive effects as experience. He is fundamentally a vitalist, arguing that beauty is good for us.

Quigley asserts that “beauty is embedded in the fabric of the world and in our experiences of the world” (9), and his evidence is his own experience and the recorded experience of others, notably Edward Abbey and Robinson Jeffers, whom he cites frequently as exemplars of his concept of beauty as an immediate experience available in the world independently of linguistic or social construction. In Jeffers’ phrase, “The poet is not to make beauty but to herald beauty; and beauty is everywhere; it needs only senses and intelligence to perceive it” (24). What Quigley prizes in these experiences is “the elevated grace and power associated with natural beauty and the life style that it can inspire,” which he believes is “foundational for health, hope, romance, wonder, independence and strength” (4). Quigley’s emphasis here recalls D. H. Lawrence’s hero Rupert Birkin in *Women in Love*, whose desire to escape the wordy abstractions of Bloomsbury intellectuals leads him to flee an English country house and plunge into a dense thicket “to sting one’s thighs against the living dark bristles of the fir boughs; and then to feel the light whip of the hazel on one’s shoulders, stinging . . . this was good, this was all very good, very satisfying” (100), and Jeffers expresses the same sentiments in his poem “Return,” “I will go down to the lovely Sur Rivers / And dip my arms in them up to the shoulders. / I will find my accounting where the alder leaf quivers / In the ocean wind over the boulders. / I will touch things and things and no more thoughts,” (CP 2: 409), and also Abbey in *Desert Solitaire*, “. . . you can’t see anything in a car; you’ve got to get out of the goddamned

contraption and walk, better yet crawl, on hands and knees, over the sandstone and through the thornbush and cactus. When traces of blood begin to mark your trail you'll see something maybe" (xiv). For Quigley, as for Lawrence, Jeffers and Abbey, perception of beauty involves a physical protest against the captiously intellectual and its multiplying analytical abstractions which obscure and vitiate "the great dark knowledge you cannot have in your head" (Lawrence 36).

One can readily imagine what a Marxist/neo-Marxist critic would make of this, the masculine assertion, the irrationalism, the celebration of strength. Quigley does imagine it, and expends prodigious energy answering it. He attempts to defend his visceral experience of beauty in terms acceptable to his critics. He invokes Elaine Scarry's "pressure of the distributional," her suggestion that the experience of beauty involves a radical "un-selfing," which acts as "preparation or a rehearsal for caring about the injuries of the world or caring to repair injustices" (225). Beauty, then, according to Scarry, and Quigley seizes on this, is a gateway to social justice. Quigley also emphasizes Abbey's inspiration of radical environmentalists as an instance of beauty's social utility, the desert anarchist's celebrations of individual isolation in the wilderness become drivers for ecojustice warriors spiking trees and bombing car dealerships. Surely that should be enough to satisfy revolutionary theorists and militant activists about Abbey's bona fides, but no. Quigley admits as much, "Abbey's association with anarchistic, direct-action, left wing labour and environmental movements earn him nothing in today's ecocritical discussions" (133). In a final bid to appease his opposition, Quigley declares, "Our critical focus must always include issues regarding justice and fairness where appropriate" (EA 9). He repeats this statement twice, once in his anthology *Ecocritical Aesthetics*, and again in *The Forbidden Subject*; tellingly in the second instance the phrase "where appropriate" is italicized. This emphasis bespeaks a certain teeth-clenched exasperation belying the concession. His critics are not likely to be convinced, and neither are we. The real energy in Quigley's book is all in the animadversions. He knows what he doesn't like, and his purpose is aggressively polemical.

Scott Slovic, co-editor of Quigley's *Ecocritical Aesthetics*, has mapped the changes in the ecocritical movement Quigley describes using the metaphor of waves, derived from the wave metaphor of the three-stage history of feminism (12). The First Wave of ecocrit-

icism, from roughly the 1980s to 2000, is the phase Quigley believes offered new interpretive freedoms to explore beauty uninhibited by postmodern preoccupations with language and social construction. According to Quigley, this First Wave was a conscious reaction against the dominance of European theory in universities in the United States, a liberating breakaway to celebrations of regional life and natural beauty. In this First Wave, figures like Thoreau, Muir, Leopold, and Jeffers were prominent; referentiality was considered largely unproblematic, and emphasis was centered squarely on the experience of isolated individuals in the wilderness. This First Wave coincided, Quigley believes, with a renewed interest in the study of beauty and the re-emergence and rehabilitation of aesthetics as a focus of criticism. The Second Wave swept all this aside and inverted its values. Thoreau, Muir, Leopold and Jeffers became marginal or malignant figures, unconscious imperialists, sexists, colonialists, casual racists, either by omission or commission or both. The individual in the wilderness was now unmasked as a bourgeois construction of capitalism, a domineering adventurer symbolically raping the land, disregarding or destroying its native inhabitants. Quigley characterizes practitioners of Second Wave ecocriticism as "scholars who police, exile, confess and silence themselves in relation to the subject of beauty" (10), focusing instead on global "de-aestheticized policy studies" designed to promote political activism against hegemonic powers of race, gender and class (9). In Quigley's view, this is a "completely ideological programme masquerading as a field of study" (34). Against this, Quigley champions a "reassertion of beauty," which he believes is "a vital form of experience and grounding in the world" with "an equally compelling need of being expressed and represented" (49). Slovic believes a Third Wave of ecocriticism has succeeded the First and Second, which allows for a mingling and refinement of their opposing energies, but Quigley doubts this, arguing instead that the Second Wave swamped the First, and the First must now free itself from its oppressive successor. In his words, "discussing beauty . . . is not . . . a reactionary gesture but . . . a return of the repressed" (11). Beauty will out, Quigley argues, because life requires it; our response to beauty is a biological imperative almost certainly inscribed genetically. Between an outlook suggestive of biological encoding and concepts of radical social constructivism there is no rapprochement, and there the matter rests. Quigley is not supporting Slovic's vision

of Third Wave tolerance and harmonization in ecocriticism; he sees a contest between unreconcilable enemies, and when Quigley likens Terry Eagleton to Unabomber Ted Kaczynski, we see that “enemies’ is not too strong a word (173).

The first article in Quigley’s *Ecocritical Aesthetics* and the final chapter of *The Forbidden Subject* concern Robinson Jeffers. Jeffers stands at the beginning and end of Quigley’s project, and perhaps at its center. It is clear that Jeffers is an important figure for Quigley, and he knows the poet well. Readers of *Jeffers Studies* will know Quigley as president of the Robinson Jeffers Association from 2006 to 2008. Jeffers serves Quigley as a touchstone, and he invokes him as “a respondent” to all the issues he identifies as problematic in contemporary ecocritical discourse: “modernism, representation, Marxism, social justice, desire, place, the individual, and beauty” (233). Quigley attempts a linkage between Jeffers and his discussion of beauty in ecocriticism by suggesting that Jeffers’ inhumanism resembles Scarry’s concept of ‘un-selfing.’ He argues that Jeffers’ affirmation of transhuman beauty, indifferent to the interests or desires of individuals, and his insistence that we must ‘de-center’ and detach ourselves from preoccupation with human desire, is analogous to Scarry’s assertion that in experiencing beauty ‘we cease to stand . . . at the centre of our world. We willingly cede ground to the thing that stands before us’ (225). The resemblance between these positions, as stated here, is compelling, and Quigley attempts a further linkage, arguing that Jeffers’ ideal of rational detachment from human passion promotes justice, so that Jeffers like Scarry sees in beauty “a rehearsal for caring about the injustices of the world or caring to repair injustices” (225). Quigley asserts that for both Jeffers and Scarry, “*justice emerges as dependent upon beauty.*” Soldering this linkage with italicized emphasis, Quigley soon introduces a problematic distinction weakening it significantly if not undermining it entirely: “Jeffers’ poetry dramatizes the ‘unselfing’ discussed by Scarry. If beauty were properly embraced, something Jeffers doesn’t think humanity is likely to do, one would see a reduction in violence and predation and an elevation of peace and *real justice*, not the *performative sort* described by Scarry” (italics mine) (233). Quigley is conscious of a forced equivalence between distinct positions which turns on foundationally dissimilar conceptions of justice. Nothing in the Jeffersian worldview involves aspirations to ‘repair injustices.’ Such a concept is profoundly foreign to Jeffers.

Pain might be diminished by minimizing unavailing struggle and appetitive assertion, but there is no injustice to repair, and certainly no human power to repair it if there were. There is much in the Jeffersian universe that is terrible, painful, frightening, and cruel, but nothing finally unjust, and while alleviation and adjustments may be possible, there is no foundational repair. The similarities between Scarry and Jeffers are largely superficial, and Quigley's thoroughgoing understanding of Jeffers undermines the link he rhetorically affirms.

In terms of the many other issues Quigley enumerates, he is on much firmer ground. Jeffers expressly rejected modernism and refused to make the artist and the artist's life his subject. He believed in the reality of the external world and the referential potential of language. He affirmed the representational function of art, and the primacy of natural representation, agreeing in this respect with Scruton that 'appreciation of the arts is a secondary exercise of aesthetic interest. The primary exercise of judgement is in the appreciation of nature' (10), or as Tim Hunt puts it, addressing the questions of representation and referentiality simultaneously, "our participation in the natural world . . . is, after all, the basis of our being" (130). Jeffers on these issues is an exemplar of Quigley's preferences. The same is true for Marxism and social justice. Jeffers had no faith in utopian reform and did not believe social justice achievable. For Jeffers, all human social order would be necessarily tainted by the irremediable insufficiency of human being itself. He believed with Kant that "from the crooked timber of humanity no straight thing is made." As to Marxism specifically, he dismissed it along with fascism and Christianity as mass delusion. The proletariat was not his messiah, and he was schooled enough by Nietzsche and Freud to know that victims are seldom more virtuous than their oppressors, and sometimes less so. Jeffers did teach that human desire was dangerous and dubious and required discipline and should be distrusted, and that the individual capable of such discipline *was* an individual, a conscious agent with meaningful identity, although that identity was a condition of pain subject to destruction. As to place, Jeffers celebrated rootedness and regional awareness as suited to our impermanence and unimportance, an expression of humility in a being bound by time and space. And, yes, beauty is unquestionably the ruling concept for Jeffers, a form of radical affirmation and acceptance of all that exists in its totality,

beyond good and evil, beyond individual interest, beyond any conception of justice relative to human beings and their desires. In all of this Jeffers does represent a counter-instance to utopian revolutionaries with their exaggerated faith in the human instruments of language and social action to achieve some condition of perfected justice outside the constraints of nature and independent of the limits of time. In Jeffers, Quigley finds support for his vitalist conception of beauty as an individual experience transcending social/linguistic/political mediation, a privileged perception of the annihilating sublime.

When Quigley writes about Abbey and Jeffers, he achieves a notable ease of expression and assurance, free of the oppressive presence of the unsympathetic other. He forgets himself and his adversaries for a moment. Tim Hunt, in his analysis of Jeffers' poem, "The Ocean's Tribute," in his article "It Is Out of Fashion To Say So," published in *Ecocritical Aesthetics*, observes of this late Jeffers poem that one of its intended lessons is that "the impulse to polemic is something to be overcome by turning away from fashion" (238). Quigley quotes this observation approvingly in *The Forbidden Subject* without, one assumes, noting its possible application. It is sometimes painful to see Quigley mucking out the Augean stable of contemporary ecocriticism, much of which is academic ephemera expressing passing fashions in cultural studies programs and English departments. He is much more interesting when he writes about the curious "resigned anguish" of Jeffers and his concept of strain and pressure as the origin of beauty (247). Quigley has very valuable things to say about Abbey and Jeffers, both of whom he knows well and understands, but he has been pulled into a fight with a Hydra and no sooner cuts one head away before two more appear. His Herculean efforts are impressive but finally unavailing.

Contemporary ecocriticism is an outgrowth of environmentalism, both share a foundational aspiration toward activism and reform, and both consider themselves forms of social action. Ecocriticism and environmentalism together are the only social movements that have conscripted Jeffers to serve a social purpose. Arguably, this instrumental use of Jeffers began when the Sierra Club used clippings from his poems as photograph captions in the book *Not Man Apart* in 1965 to promote appreciation and preservation of Big Sur. The title *Not Man Apart* (a phrase from Jeffers' poem "The Answer") later became the title of activist David Brower's *Friends of*

the *Earth* newsletter, and the association of Jeffers with environmentalism solidified. It has always been a strained relationship. Jeffers is not an environmentalist. The only *ism* he ever affirmed was his own, Inhumanism, and he remains its only exemplar.² Jeffers did not believe the environment, any environment, could be preserved. He accepted destruction as necessary and inevitable; although the degradation of his own coastal retreat was of the greatest personal regret to himself, it was to be accepted as natural. Social action of any kind was of no interest to Jeffers, not even to save wilderness or whales, both would likely have appeared utopian fantasies to him. For Jeffers, a world of mass populations manageable through ever intensifying administrative regulation is no alternative to environmental collapse. Human beings and human civilization will eventually be destroyed, and much will be destroyed along with them, but the natural world, which for Jeffers means the greatest geological and sidereal scale, will endure indefinitely. We can know that and recognize it as beauty even in its destructive phase. None of this has anything to do with justice, distributive, ecological, or otherwise. Jeffers cannot be made to serve any social purpose except through selective misappropriation or misunderstanding.

Jeffers is a poor fit with the various priorities of contemporary ecocriticism, and so, on the evidence of his book, is Quigley. Perhaps no one strongly responsive to the work of Jeffers or Abbey can be fully at home in any literary movement, dependent as these organized groups commonly are on absolute judgements and various degrees of ideological conformity. Quigley may hope to motivate a like-minded opposition within his field, but notably, with the exception of Tim Hunt's article in *Ecocritical Aesthetics*, Jeffers and Abbey are mentioned only once each in its 200 pages, although we are treated to an extended discussion of "Project Naked," a kind of eco-conference sexting (115). Quigley has said that "beauty did not leave the left, the left left beauty." Perhaps it is time for Quigley to leave the left as well. Environmentalists and ecocritics have made what use they could of Jeffers, but the association was forced from the start, and he is now a less central figure in most recent ecocriticism.³

Quigley's book is brave and heartfelt, well-researched and persistently energetic. He identifies and confronts a stultifying conformity in his own discipline of ecocriticism that is a known corruption of the humanities in our time, the substitution of

political allegiances for intellectual rigor, a set of repetitive pieties for thought. He fights the infamous thing as he is able, although his antagonists seldom justify his resistance. A kind of Gulliver in Lilliput, he has been driven to distraction by the squabbles of these big-enders and little-enders when he might have done better to sail away. The faults of his book are repetition and intemperance, common faults of polemic. Quigley is not reluctant to use a quotation repeatedly. He is hammering a nail, and he hammers hard. In the end, one learns a great deal from Quigley about the current drift of ecocriticism, and he lands his punches skillfully where they are deserved, but perhaps there is still important work for him to do for a readership still reading Abbey and Jeffers with interest and appreciation.

Notes

1. Consider in this regard Michel Foucault's programmatic statement in "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" (1971): "Rules are empty in themselves, violent and unfinalized; they are impersonal and can be bent to any purpose. The successes of history belong to those who are capable of seizing these rules, to replace those who had used them, to disguise themselves so as to pervert them, invert their meaning, and redirect them against those who had initially imposed them; controlling this complex mechanism, they will make it function so as to overcome the rulers with their own rules" (151). David Banash (cited by Quigley) characterizes this maneuver as essentially compensatory fantasy: "Would-be revolutionaries become the manipulators and bureaucrats of academic institutions because they cannot translate theory into an instrumental revolutionary force" (61). In Quigley's view, neo-Marxist social justice warriors have infiltrated ecocritical discourse as a "Trojan horse" to pursue Foucault's program of rules appropriation and inversion as an avenue for redirected revolutionary ambition. Quigley is explicit: "... postmodernism and post-structuralism are simply the defeated and impotent heirs of the Paris riots of 1968. These new schools of thought drove left wing radicals into academia and directed its revolutionary energies towards the new social movements such as feminism, environmentalism and identity politics around race and gender" (86).

2. A case might be made for the poet William Everson, self-described "disciple" of Jeffers.

3. There are notable exceptions. Quigley cites David Wallace Wells' sympathetic discussion of Jeffers in his recent *The Uninhabited Earth: Life After Warming* (2019), but the exception rather proves the rule of reduced reference to Jeffers in contemporary environmental scholarship.

WORKS CITED

- Abbey, Edward. *Desert Solitaire*. Simon & Schuster, 1990.
- Foucault, Michel. "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History." *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by M. Foucault*, edited by Donald F. Bouchard, translated by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, Cornell UP, 1977.
- Hunt, Tim, editor. *The Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*. Vol. 2, Stanford UP, 1989.
- Lawrence, D. H. *Women in Love*. Penguin Books, 1976.
- Quigley, Peter. *The Forbidden Subject: How Oppositional Aesthetics Banished Natural Beauty from the Arts*. The White Horse P, 2019.
- Quigley, Peter, and Scott Slovic, editors. *Ecocritical Aesthetics: Language, Beauty, and the Environment*. Indiana UP, 2018.

CONTRIBUTORS

Jim Baird has been a Jeffers reader since 1959 and a Jeffers scholar since 1974, when Robert Brophy introduced him to the field. He has published articles on the poet in *Jeffers Studies* and other publications. He is past president of the Robinson Jeffers Association. His other scholarly interests include The Blues, the music of Bob Dylan, and military history.

Shelley Alden Brooks teaches environmental history and U.S. history courses at the University of California, Davis. She also works at the university for the California History-Social Science Project and serves on the leadership council of the California Environmental Literacy Initiative to bring environment-based learning into the K-12 classroom. Alden Brooks' book, *Big Sur: The Making of a Prized California Landscape*, won the 2018 Weyerhaeuser Book Award for conservation history.

Richard Drake is Professor of History at the University of Montana. He has published several studies in European, notably Italian, history. His main field of study is currently the domestic resistance to the United States' expansion into imperialism and the economic and social changes this stance brought about. He has written a book about a political figure who embodied this resistance, Senator Robert LaFollette. He has recently turned his attention to the historian Charles Beard, who, with his wife Mary, wrote several books challenging imperialistic policies on constitutional and moral grounds. Drake's most recent book is *Charles Austin Beard: The Return of the Master Historian of American Imperialism* (Cornell University Press, 2018).

Whitney Hoth is a graduate of the University of Michigan and studied with Jeffers scholars Radcliffe Squires and Stephen Tonsor. He has presented on Jeffers at the Western Literature Association and is a long-standing member of the Robinson Jeffers Association. He served as Chair of the School of Language and Liberal Studies at Fanshawe College in London, Ontario, Canada from 2004 to 2010. He is currently serving as Associate Editor of *Jeffers Studies*.

Northern California native **Tim Hunt** is the editor of the Stanford University Press *Collected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers* (1988-2001), author of *Kerouac's Crooked Road: Development of a Fiction* (1981/2010) and *The Textuality of Soulwork: Jack Kerouac's Quest for Spontaneous Prose* (2014). He is also an award-winning poet of four collections: *Fault Lines*, *The Tao of Twang*, *Poem's Poems & Other Poems*, and *Ticket Stubs & Liner Notes*. Educated at Cornell University, Hunt has recently retired from Illinois State University, where he served as Professor of English. He is a recipient of the RJA's Lawrence Clark Powell Award for distinguished scholarship.

Robert Zaller is Emeritus Professor of History at Drexel University. He is the author of *The Cliffs of Solitude* (1983) and *Robinson Jeffers and the American Sublime* (2012). His latest publication is *The Atom To Be Split* (2019), a collection of essays on Robinson Jeffers published by the Tor House Press. He is a recipient of the Lawrence Clark Powell Award for distinguished scholarship.

Jeffers Studies (ISSN 1096-5076) is published annually by the Robinson Jeffers Association.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Jim Baird, Editor, and Whitney Hoth, Associate Editor.

ADVISORY BOARD

Charles Altieri, Albert Gelpi, Dana Gioia, Robert Hass, Mark Jarman, Brenda Jeffers, Lindsay Jeffers, Thomas Lyon, Scott Slovic, Gary Snyder, Diane Wakoski.

SUBSCRIPTIONS & MEMBERSHIPS

A subscription to *Jeffers Studies* is included with Robinson Jeffers Association membership. Annual dues are currently \$10 (Student), \$35 (Regular), \$60 (Sustaining), \$125 (Patron); Lifetime dues are \$1,000. Institutional subscriptions are \$50. The RJA is a tax-exempt corporation under section 501(c) (3) of the IRS tax code.

ADDRESSES

Jeffers Studies submissions and editorial communications: Jim Baird, email <jbaird06@juno.edu>.

RJA membership applications: Charles Rodewald, RJA Treasurer, 5140 Cutty Way, Las Vegas, NV 89130, email <charlier10@mac.com>.

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSIONS

Submit double-spaced, MLA formatted Word files of critical essays, book reviews, short articles, and news items as email attachments. 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*. Citation of his and his wife's letters should be from the *Stanford Collected Letters*, if the letter was published there, and abbreviated *CL*. Formatting should follow the *MLA Handbook*, eighth edition, with parenthetical citations, endnotes, and works cited. Final revisions of accepted articles should be submitted as email attachments.

Volume 20
2017/2018