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Nature, Man, and God in Robinson Jeffers' Inhumanism

Chloe Winifred Armstrong

NATURE, MAN, AND GOD

IN

ROBINSON JEFFERS' INHUMANISM

Abstract of Thesis

Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

University of Northern Iowa

by

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Inhumanism, Robinson Jeffers' philosophical solution to the problems of modern society, is highly individualistic and reflects this author's pessimistic attitude toward the present and the future of the species. His definition, stated in prose as: " . . . a shifting of emphasis and significance from man to not-man; the rejection of human solipsism and the recognition of the transhuman magnificence.", presents a cosmography made up of three divisions: man, not-man, and the transhuman magnificence.

Man, in this definition, includes all the species homo sapiens from its beginning to some future end. Jeffers feels that the species came into being through environmental pressures which forced the man-like apes from the security of the trees. On the ground, in their new environment, the species developed not only its cruel and blood-thirsty traits but also its present posture and its quick wits. Through its superior intelligence this species has made progress in civilization and in science; however, this progress has not been paralleled by a developing sense of security or by a conquest of basic cruelty. This innate insecurity is reflected in man's acceptance of religious and political leaders who, sometimes, use their followers to attain selfish ends. Man's lack of security coupled with his cruelty have brought about the foreign involvements and the wars which have helped to destroy many past civilizations.

It is the individual's involvement with his society which has led to the attitude that the human race is the only important thing in the

universe. Most individuals are not strong enough to stand alone philosophically. Because the philosophy of Inhumanism is highly individualistic, it negates strong social or religious organizations. The individual, deprived of the security of a closely knit and organized society, is forced to make his own decisions. This individual freedom of choice does not give the individual license to commit any act because the removal of punishment for evil places upon the individual the entire responsibility for any act which he may commit. The individual must endure the consequences of his own acts and decisions without hope for expiation.

The "not-man" unit includes all of the universe except the species homo sapiens. Jeffers' concept of the natural world is cyclical not only in the recurrence of seasons and of birth and death but also in the patterns of peace and violence. This natural world accepts both peace and violence equally, knowing that both are necessary. Because this world has accepted its roles in the cycle of the universe, it is quiet, free, and enduring; this world is at peace with itself.

The natural world offers the only means by which man can perceive the transhuman magnificence. The individual must shift his emphasis from mankind to the entire universe and must realize that the species homo sapiens is only one small part of the existing universe. Through this shifting of emphasis the individual man gains some understanding of Jeffers' God-concept or the transhuman magnificence.

The God of Jeffers is totally self sufficient, a creative-destructive force which operates without reason or purpose. It is able to have

consciousness of all things only through the consciousness of men, animals, and all natural phenomena. This consciousness is the link between the transhuman magnificence and all things since, to Jeffers, all things have an awareness only through the consciousness of this God. Because the consciousness of all things is a part of this force, to Jeffers, this force is all that exists.

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has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Civilized, crying how to be human again: this will tell you how.
Turn outward, love things, not men, turn right away from humanity,
Let that doll lie. Consider if you like how the lilies grow,
Lean on the silent rock until you feel its divinity
Make your veins cold, look at the silent stars, let your eyes
Climb the great ladder out of the pit of yourself and man.

"Signpost"

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Robinson Jeffers, whose first major work, Tamar and Other Poems, appeared in 1924, has been one of the most controversial of the modern poets. Frederick Carpenter wrote "The author who had been almost universally acclaimed in the 1920's found himself almost universally damned in the 1940's."[1] The most important reason for this change of opinion, Mr. Carpenter felt was, " . . . the poet's philosophy of life, or morality, or religion."[2] This philosophy has been given the name of Inhumanism and has been defined by Jeffers as " . . . a shifting of emphasis and significance from man to not-man; the rejection of human solipsism and recognition of the transhuman magnificence."[3] Jeffers warns his sons: " . . . be in nothing so moderate as in love of man, a clever servant, insufferable master./ There is the trap that catches noblest spirits, that caught--they say--God, when he walked on earth." ("Shine, Perishing Republic")

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[1]Frederic I. Carpenter, Robinson Jeffers (New York: Twayne Publishers Inc., 1962), p. 11.

[2]Ibid. Mr. Carpenter also listed several other reasons for the decline of Jeffers' reputation. They are: (1) the effect of the great depression on the reception of violent tragedy, (2) reaction against the praise of his over-enthusiastic following, (3) his conscious involvement in contemporary affairs, and , (4) a decline in the quality of the long narrative poems. (p. 44ff.) To these Radcliffe Squires added "His isolation from the cliques of poets who stalk the pages of the little magazines," and " . . . the fact that Jeffers has had no successful imitators." Radcliffe Squires, The Loyalties of Robinson Jeffers (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1956), p. 9.

[3]Robinson Jeffers, The Double Axe and Other Poems (New York: Random House, 1948), p. vii.

Jeffers sees the modern individual standing at a point of decision. He may turn toward society, inward toward man and destruction; or he may turn outward through nature toward the "transhuman magnificence," the inhuman God. Thus the cosmography of Jeffers' universe is dominated by three major forces: nature, man, and God. The individual's ability to relegate each of these forces to its proper place will enable him to live with some peace of mind.[4]

Like many other literary men writing in the first half of this century, Jeffers was reacting to the changing and expanding world in which he lived. Inhumanism is the result of this reaction. The fact that this philosophy is both complex and mystical and that it is presented in poetic form where symbols take the place of direct statement has resulted in various interpretations of his ideas. His philosophy has been termed "materialism," "modern romanticism," "modern naturalism," and even "nihilism."

This study is an investigation of the factors which helped to shape Jeffers' philosophical ideas and a study of the relationship of nature, man, and God within the framework of Inhumanism.

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[4]It is to be noted that Jeffers does not promise happiness and that the only character in the narratives who finds total peace is Orestes in "The Tower Beyond Tragedy." The Inhumanist expresses the final value to man in his statement, "Retreat is no good, treachery no good, goodness no good./; but there is " . . . the endless inhuman beauty of things; . . . --and there is endurance, endurance, death's nobler cousin. Endurance." The Double Axe, op. cit., p. 81.

CHAPTER II

FORMATIVE PRINCIPLES

Inhumanism represents the mature philosophy of Jeffers. It appears first as a major factor in the third volume of his work, published when he was in his early thirties. Writing in the "Foreward" of Selected Poetry, Jeffers mentions what he felt to be the major factors influencing the type of verse which he wrote during his mature period.

The first of these influences was the poetic philosophy which he formulated. Early in his career, before the poems appearing in his major volumes were written, he set up three basic principles for poetry. First he felt that "Poetry must reclaim some of the power and reality which it was so hastily surrendering to prose . . . . It must reclaim substance and sense, and have physical and psychological reality."[1] This led him to write " . . . narrative poetry, . . . to draw subjects from contemporary life; to present aspects of life that modern poetry had generally avoided; and to attempt the expression of philosophic and scientific ideas in verse."[2]

Second he felt that "Poetry must concern itself with (relatively) permanent things."[3] Poetry, Jeffers wrote, was not written for the present but for the future:

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[1]Robinson Jeffers, The Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers (New York: Random House, 1938), p. xivf.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

> Its author . . . intends to be understood a thousand years from now; therefore he chooses the more permanent aspects of things, and subjects that will remain valid . . . let him not be distracted by the present; his business is with the future . . . thus his work will be sifted of what is transient and crumbling, the chaff of time and the stuff that requires footnotes. Permanent things, or things forever renewed, like the grass and human passions, are the material for poetry.[4]

Third he felt that the poet should not feign any emotion he did not feel.[5] This tends to give his poetry a highly personal quality and, frequently, a highly personal subject matter. An instance of this personal intrusion is found in "Roan Stallion" at the point where Johnny and Jim Carrier are leaving after the breeding of Jim Carrier's mare.

> . . . . Jim Carrier's mare, the bay, stood with
> drooped head and started slowly, the men
> Laughing and shouting at her; their voices could
> be heard down the steep road, after the noise
> Of the iron-hooped wheels died from the stone.
> Then one might hear the hush of the wind in
> the tall redwoods,
> The tinkle of the April brook, deep in its hollow.
> Humanity is the
> start of the race; I say
> Humanity is the mold to break away from, the crust
> to break through, the coal to break into fire,
> The atom to be split.
>
> "Roan Stallion," p. 149[6]

With the line beginning "Humanity is the start of the race;" there is

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[4]Robinson Jeffers, Poetry, Gongorism and a Thousand Years (Los Angeles: Ward Ritchie Press, 1949), p. 8.

[5]Selected Poetry, p. xv.

[6]The text of the poems quoted has been taken from Selected Poetry unless otherwise noted.

a complete break in the continuity of the story; the author intrudes in the first person and the following lines present a statement of his philosophy.[7] The only separation of this intrusion from the text of the narrative is seen in the indentation of the form.

This type of intrusion is also seen frequently in the shorter poems. It is apparent in the final line of "Cassandra" " . . . . Poor bitch, be wise./ No: you'll still mumble in a corner a crust of truth, to men/ And gods disgusting.--You and I, Cassandra." and is also frequently seen in "Meditation on Saviors." The occurrance of such phrases as "I watched him pass" ("Autumn Evening"); "I thought of the small lives" ("Fire on the Hills"); and "But I believe" ("The Beginning and the End") intensify the feeling of a strong personal involvement of the author with his poetry. Many of the shorter poems such as "Patronymic," "My Dear Love," and "Where I?" are structured entirely upon this personal feeling.

This intrusion of personal involvement, particularly in the narratives, tends to give the poetry a didactic quality which is not nearly so apparent in the structuring of "The Tower Beyond Tragedy," where the words of Jeffers issue from the character Cassandra. Jeffers admitted the weakness of personal involvement in the "Note" at the beginning of Be Angry at the Sun when he said of the poems in that volume, "Poetry is not private monologue, but I think it is not public speech either; . . . . Yet it is right that a man's views be expressed,

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[7]This same type of intrusion is found in many of the other early narratives. In "Tamar," at the beginning of Part V, there are twenty lines of Jeffers' own thoughts before the plot of the story continues.

though the poetry suffer for it."[8]

A second set of influences which determined the type of verse Jeffers was to write came about through what he termed a series of "accidents."[9] One of these was the influence of his wife. He said that she "excited and focused" his nature, "gave it eyes and nerves and sympathies;" and, "though she never saw any of the poems until they were typed, by her presence and conversation she has co-authored every one of them."[10] She had, he writes, "a powerful ambitious mind--ambitious not for herself but for life and knowledge."[11] Radcliffe Squires wrote of Una Jeffers, "She came to represent for him the ideal of life: the simple, the intense, the primitive."[12] In the introductory section of "Hungerfield," Jeffers pays tribute: "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."

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[8]Robinson Jeffers, Be Angry at the Sun (New York: Random House, 1941), p. vii. This personal involvement was to become one of the contributing factors of Jeffers' decline in popularity in the 1940's. Frederic Carpenter says "Personal isolationism had always been a central tenet of his philosophy. But gradually over the years his own personal isolation from the 'perishing republic' had changed to an emotional involvement in it . . . . by a bitter paradox of history, the national isolationism which Jeffers began to idealize in the 1930's was even then in process of becoming unpopular and obsolete. And as World War II engulfed America, it came to seem almost treasonous . . . . By 1948 Jeffers' reputation had reached its lowest point." Carpenter, op. cit., p. 48f.

[9]Selected Poetry, p. xv.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Una Jeffers, Visits to Ireland (Foreword by Robinson Jeffers) (Los Angeles: The Ward Ritchie Press, 1954), p. 7.

[12]Squires, op. cit., p. 28.

The second accidental influence was his coming to live on the California coast, where he found " . . . contemporary life that was also permanent life; and not shut from the modern world but conscious of it and related to it."[13] The very landscape of the coast came to represent to him the permanence of nature. In the poetry it represents the source for many of the settings of the poems, the basis for much of his imagery, and the symbol for the end of the westward movement of our culture cycle. It offered the unpopulated sanctuary for the believer in Inhumanism. The coast is apparent in such descriptions as:

> . . . . Straight down
> through the coursing mists like a crack in the
> mountain sea-root,
> Mill Creek Canyon, like a crack in the naked root of a
> dead pine when the bark peels off. The bottom
> Of the fissure was black with redwood, and lower
> Green with alders; between the black and the green the
> painted roof of the farmhouse, like a dropped seed, ...
> "Thurso's Landing," III. p. 275.

and in images such as "the wild birds of their metal throats" (The Tower Beyond Tragedy); "Lance head and shoulders against the sky like a dead tree/ On which no bird will nest" (Give Your Heart to the Hawks); and "I'll tell you/ What the world's like: like a stone for no reason falling in the night from a cliff in the hills, that makes a lonely/ Noise and a spark in the hollow darkness." (Thurso's Landing).

The California coast not only provided the subject matter in many of the shorter poems such as "Pelicans," "Fog," "Love the Wild Swan," and "Dawn"; but it also affected the stories which form the basis for

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[13] Selected Poetry, p. xvi.

some of the narratives and helped to provide the material for others. Jeffers writes that "Tamar" was influenced by "the strange, introverted and storm-twisted beauty of Point Lobos"[14] and that the actual stories for "Roan Stallion," "Apology for Bad Dreams," and "Thurso's Landing" were suggested to him by incidents and scenes on the coast.[15]

The third set of influences might well be termed "possible" influences since Jeffers does not directly attribute the growth of his philosophy to them. Two of these have been widely discussed by critics and scholars[16] because Jeffers' philosophy so closely parallels other philosophies existing at the time when he began to write and two can be seen in his writings. Because he attributed one of his poetic principles to a reaction to Nietzsche's statement, "The poets? The poets lie too much." and because of his use of the phrase "transvaluing values," the critics and scholars have attributed some influence to this source. Because of the prominence of the cyclical theory of history in his philosophy and in his poetry, they have also attributed influence to Spengler. There is little doubt that Jeffers was familiar with both these philosophers, but he denies that they influenced the formation of his philosophy of Inhumanism to any extent. The other two "possible" influences, which can be seen in his poetry, came from his wide study in the scientific fields and from his family background.

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[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Among these are Delmore Schwartz, H. H. Waggoner, Horace Gregory, Amos Wilder, and Eric Bentley. As early as 1927, Benjamin de Casseres discussed the relationship of Jeffers and Nietzsche in an article in Bookman. Benjamin de Casseres, "Robinson Jeffers: Tragic Terror," Bookman LXVI (November, 1927), pp. 262-266.

In discussing the relationship between the philosophy of Jeffers and the philosophy of Nietzsche, Radcliffe Squires states that, "The differences between Jeffers and Nietzsche are more significant than the likenesses."[17] Mr. Squires lists as points of similarity: (1) the belief that no man can know the nature of God, (2) the " . . . incompatibility of 'Western Blood' and oriental Christianity," and (3) " . . . the distrust of the city and . . . of the crowd."[18] The points of difference which he believes to be significant are: (1) Nietzsche's contempt for morals as opposed to Jeffers' strict morality, (2) " . . . their separate reactions to mysticism," (3) the direct antithesis of their ideas of breaking away from humanity, and (4) their difference in the matter of wanting disciples.[19] Mr. Squires feels that "When Jeffers and Nietzsche touch, it is the accident of their both feeling for bearings in the same dark room"[20]

Although several critics have credited Spengler with influencing Jeffers' philosophical expression of the cyclical theory of the rises and falls of civilizations, Jeffers, in a speech at Harvard in 1941, says "The idea of culture-ages--culture-cycles--the patterned rise

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[17]Squires, op. cit., p. 46ff. Since this source devotes an entire chapter to the relation of Jeffers and Nietzsche and another chapter to Jeffers and Spengler and since these two philosophers are not directly related to the conclusions of this paper but are only mentioned to indicate an awareness of the probable relationships, they will be discussed only briefly.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid.

and decline of one civilization after another . . . came to me much earlier from my own thoughts." He credits Flinders Petrie, the eminent English Egyptologist, with reinforcing certain convictions which he already held from his own reading.[21]

The "culture-cycles" appear in his major poetry as early as 1925. In "The Tower Beyond Tragedy" at the beginning of part II, Cassandra says, "Watch the north spawn white bodies and red-gold hair,/ Race after race of beastlike warriors; and the cities/ Burn, and the cities build, and the new lands be uncovered/ In the way of the sun to his setting." This prophetic speech, together with the speech which follows, embodies much that is recognizable as basic Jeffers' philosophy. Cassandra, like Jeffers, would " . . . cut humanity/ Out of my being, that is the wound that festers in me,/ Not captivity, not my enemies:". Cassandra uses the same word, enemies, to refer to the peoples of all prosperous nations:

> Where are prosperous people my enemies are, as you pass them
> O my spirit,
> Curse Athens for the joy and the marble, curse Corinth
> For the wine and the purple, and Syracuse
> For the gold and the ships; but Rome, Rome,
> With many destructions for the corn and the laws, and the
> javelins, the insolence, the threefold
> Abominable power: . . .
> Smite Spain for the blood on the sunset gold, curse France
> For the fields abounding and the running rivers, the lights
> in the cities, the laughter, curse England
> For the meat on the tables and the terrible gray ships, for
> old laws, far dominions, there remains
> A mightier to be cursed and a higher for malediction
> When America has eaten Europe and takes tribute of Asia,
> when the ends of the world grow aware of each other
> And are dogs in one kennel, they will tear
> The master of the hunt with the mouths of the pack:
> "The Tower Beyond Tragedy," p. 114.

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[21]Squires, op. cit., p. 56ff.

The cyclical significance of the passage is further intensified because she sees the scene set between " . . . the column of the ice that was before" and "The column of the ice to come"; then the world will be " . . . . O clean, clean,/ White and most clean, colorless quietness,/ Without trace, without trail, without stain in the garment, drawn down/ From the poles to the girdle . . . . "

The attitude toward the human race in the "culture-cycle" idea in the poetry becomes more pessimistic in the later poems. Where, in his early writing, Cassandra had seen " . . . New fallings, new risings, . . . / No end of the fallings and risings?" (The Tower Beyond Tragedy), and in "Hellenistics" the poet spoke to " . . . future children going down to the foot of the mountain, the new barbarism, the night of time," and tells them "Mourn your own dead if you remember them, but not for civilization, . . . ", in the later writing the Inhumanist, again speaking to the future children, tells them that " . . . a day will come when the earth/ Will scratch herself and smile and rub off humanity: . . . . " and later in "Passenger Pigeons," Death " . . . grinning like a skull, covering his mouth with his hand . . . " says in a moment of irony, "'Oh, . . . surely/ You'll live forever . . . /What could exterminate you?'" Jeffers expresses this changing attitude toward the place of man in the cycle in a short poem "End of the World."[22]

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[22]The Beginning and the End, p. 20. Jeffers never seems to resolve the question of whether it is just man or the earth or the entire galaxy which will perish eventually. Cassandra sees "The column of ice to come . . . . drawn down/ From the poles to the girdle . . . " which would indicate a destruction of all life on earth. The Inhumanist

When I was young in school in Switzerland, about the time of
the Boer War,
We used to take it for known that the human race
Would last the earth out, not dying till the planet died.
I wrote a schoolboy poem
About the last man walking in stoic dignity along the dead
shore
Of the last sea, alone, alone, alone, remembering all
His racial past. But now I don't think so. They'll die
faceless in flocks,
And the earth flourish long after mankind is out.

The first of the two "possible" influences which are very clearly discernable in the poetry is Jeffers' interest in the fields of science. After attending private schools in the United States and in Europe, Jeffers entered the University of Western Pennsylvania (now the University of Pittsburgh) at the age of fifteen. When the family moved to Pasadena, he transferred to Occidental College, where he graduated at the age of eighteen. During the eight years between his graduation from Occidental College and his marriage, he studied literature at the University of Southern California, medicine briefly at the University of Zurich and for three years at the University of Southern California, and forestry at the University of Washington. His interest in his medical studies

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speaks of how "Time will come, no doubt,/ When the sun too shall die; . . . . Also the galaxy will die; the glitter of the Milky Way, our universe, all the stars that have names are dead." and yet in the same poem he speaks as if there were no end when he says "It is strange, truly,/ That great and small, the atoms of a grain of sand and the suns with planets, and all the galactic universes/ Are organized on one pattern, the eternal roundabout . . . /The eternal fire-wheel." Where he speaks of the " . . . earth flourishing long after mankind is out" in "End of the World," he also says "However . . . /It is not likely they can destroy all life: the planet is capacious. Life would surely grow up again/ From grubs in the soil, or the newt and toad level, and be beautiful again." (The Inquisitors). His own unresolved attitude toward the extent of the cycle seems to be expressed in Cassandra's question "No end of the fallings and risings?"

was largely in the field of science, and it is probable that through these studies he became familiar with the evolutionary theories which were prevalent at that period.

Both his medical knowledge and his scientific interest are noticeable in his poetry. Two of the narratives, a shorter one "Margrave" and a longer one "Such Counsels You Gave to Me," deal with young men who have been forced to face giving up a medical education because of lack of funds. Both poems contain descriptive passages such as the following one from "Margrave":[23]

> . . . . He saw clearly in his mind the little
> Adrenal glands perched on the red-brown kidneys, as if all his
> doomed tissues became transparent,
> Pouring in these passions their violent secretion
> Into his blood-stream, raising the tensions unbearably. And the
> thyroids; tension, tension. . . .

Evolutionary theories are very apparent in the title poem of the posthumously published volume The Beginning and the End which traces the development of life on this planet from the time when the Earth was " . . . like a mare in her heat eyeing the stallion,/ Screaming for life in the womb;" and " . . . . The sun heard her and stirred/ Her thick air with fierce lightnings and flagellations/ Of germinal power, building impossible molecules, amino-acids/ And flashy unstable proteins: thence life was born,". The poem proceeds through the time when " . . . . This virus now/ Must labor to maintain itself. It clung together/ Into bundles of life, which we call cells," and " . . . after a time the cells of life/ Bound themselves into clans, a multitude of cells,/ To make one

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[23]Selected Poetry, p. 367f.

being-- . . . ". These were stranded in the marshes and " . . . . From these grew all landlife,/ Plants, beasts and men . . . . "[24] The earth will go by decline as it grew by development:

"Time will come, no doubt,
When the sun too shall die; the planets will freeze, and the
air on them; frozen gasses, white flakes of air
Will be the dust: which no wind ever will stir: this very
dust in dim starlight glistening
Is dead wind, the white corpse of wind.
Also the galaxy will die; the glitter of the Milky Way, and
our universe, all the stars that have names are dead."
"The Inhumanist," The Double Axe, p. 58.

It is the very process of the development of the human race which has given rise to some of man's least noble characteristics.

But whence came the race of man? I will make a guess.
A change of climate killed the great northern forests,
Forcing the manlike apes down from their trees,
They starved up there. They had been secure up there,
But famine is no security: among the withered branches
blue famine:
They had to go down to the earth, where green still grew
And small meats might be gleaned. But there the great
flesh-eaters,
Tiger and panther and the horrible fumbling bear and
endless wolf-packs made life
A dream of death. Therefore man has these dreams,
And kills out of pure terror. Therefore man walks erect,
Forever alerted: as the bear rises to fight
So man does always. Therefore he invented fire and flint
weapons
In his desperate need. Therefore he is cruel and bloody-
handed and quick-witted, having survived
Against all odds. Never blame the man: his hard-pressed
Ancestors formed him: . . . .
"The Beginning and the End," p. 8.

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[24]The lines quoted in this paragraph are the main points which appear in a long section of poetry in which Jeffers fully explains his ideas regarding the process of the development of life on earth. The Beginning and the End, pp. 5-7.

The other "possible" influences came from his family background. In the formation of the theory of Inhumanism, there was a definite breaking away from the ideal of his family, a breaking away which Jeffers acknowledges in the poem "To His Father." Here he places in juxtaposition the life of his father and his own early life. Each lives by his own guiding philosophy; and, while the father remains "Intact, a man full-armed, . . . " and will end "With coronal age and death like quieting balm.", Jeffers, who has "followed other guides" compares his own years to "dripping panther hides/ For trophies on a savage temple wall" and feels that he can "Hardly anticipate that reverend stage/ Of life, the snow-wreathed honor of extreme age." Looking back in the poem "Patronymic" he writes " . . . I have twisted and turned on a bed of nettles/ All my life long: an apt name for life: nettlebed."

Jeffers' father, who had been a minister and, at the time of the poet's birth, was a professor of Old Testament literature at Western Theological Seminary at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, identified himself with the Presbyterian church and came from a family which had been strongly Calvinistic for generations. The father had turned to Christianity and humanism for his way of life; the poet takes the contraposition.[25] Inhumanism constitutes a turning outward from humanity. The philosophy turns away from many of those doctrines of the modern Christian faith which are based on humanism and the love of one's fellow man.

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[25]A comparison between Jeffers' way of life and his father's is given in the short poem "To His Father," Selected Poetry, p. 71.

In Jeffers' treatment of the world there is nothing comparable to the Christian belief in life after death:

> The immortality of the soul--
> God save us from it! To live for seventy years is a burden--
> To live eternally, poor little soul--
> Not the chief devil could inflict nor endure it.
> Fortunately
> We are not committed, there is no danger.
> Our consciousness passes into the world's perhaps, but that
> Being infinite can endure eternity.
> "Animula," The Beginning and the End, p. 71.

In Jeffers' philosophy Christ becomes simply another savior figure and is often paralleled with Oedipus as he is in "Meditation on Saviors":[26]

> King Oedipus reeling blinded from the palace doorway, red tears
> pouring from the torn pits
> Under the forehead; and the young Jew writhing on the domed hill
> in the earthquake, against the eclipse

Christ is also presented as a misguided individual in "Theory of Truth":[27]

> Here was a man who was born a bastard, and among the people
> That more than any in the world valued race-purity, chastity,
> the prophetic splendors of the race of David.
> Oh intolerable wound, dimly perceived. Too loving to curse
> his mother, desert-driven, devil-haunted,
> The beautiful young poet found truth in the desert, but found
> also
> Fantastic solution of hopeless anguish. The carpenter was not
> his father? Because God was his father,
> Not a man sinning, but the pure holiness and power of God.
> His personal anguish and insane solution
> Have stained an age; nearly two thousand years are one vast
> poem drunk with the wine of his blood.

Although Christianity has "stained an age," it has not changed the basic nature of mankind; man remains as "his hard-pressed/ Ancestors formed him".

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[26] Selected Poetry, p. 200ff.

[27] Selected Poetry, p. 614f.

> . . . . They are a little lower than the angels, as
> someone said.--Blood-snuffing rats:
> But never blame them: a wound was made in the brain
> When life became too hard, and has never healed.
> It is there that they learned trembling religion and
> blood-sacrifice,
> It is there that they learned to butcher beasts and to
> slaughter men,
> And hate the world: the great religions of love and kindness
> May conceal that, not change it.
> "The Beginning and the End," p. 9.

Hoult Gore sums this up when he says " . . . . Ah, today's Sunday, people are in church, I believe, praying God/ To bless their enemies: that is burn 'em alive and blast 'em/ To a bloody mash: . . . "[28]

The love of man is the "trap"; it is " . . . the mote in the eye that makes its object/ Shine the sun black"; it has brought about the evils of civilization which spring from the centering of mankind's love upon mankind or, as Jeffers calls it, "an introversion of society upon its own members."[29] He can praise the hawk, the heron, and the cormorants because they " . . . live their felt natures; they know their norm/ And live it to the brim; they understand life." (The Broken Balance) He can not, however, praise mankind, who

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[28] The Double Axe, p. 15.

[29] In a letter to James Rorty regarding The Women at Point Sur, Jeffers says, " . . . . There is no health for the individual whose attention is taken up with his own mind and processes; equally there is no health for the society that is always introverted on its own members, as ours becomes more and more, the interest engaged inward in love and hatred, companionship and competition. These are necessary, of course, but as they absorb all the interest they become fatal." S. S. Alberts, A Bibliography of the Works of Robinson Jeffers (New York: Random House, 1933), p. 38.

> . . . moulding themselves to the anthill have choked
> Their natures until the souls die in them;
> They have sold themselves for toys and protection:
> No, but consider awhile: what else? Men sold for toys.
>
> Uneasy and fractional people, having no center
> But in the eyes and mouths that surround them,
> Having no function but to serve and support
> Civilization, the enemy of man,
> No wonder they live insanely, and desire
> With their tongues, progress; with their eyes, pleasure;
> with their hearts, death.
>
> "The Broken Balance," p. 259.

Jeffers' doctrine, however, is neither agnostic nor atheistic. The presence of God is important to the inhumanistic philosophy, but the character of this deity is drastically different from the modern Christian view of the deity. The God of Jeffers' philosophy is described as being "our unkindly all but inhuman God,/ Who is very beautiful and too secure to want worshippers." ("Intellectuals"); "He is rock, earth and water, and the beasts and stars; and the night that contains them" ("The Inhumanist"); he " . . . is this infinite energy, . . . forever working--toward what purpose?--toward none." ("Look, How Beautiful"); and "he is no God of love, no justice of a little city like Dante's Florence, no anthropoid God/ Making commandments: this is the God who does not care and will never cease." This is in direct opposition to the Christian concept of the God of love, the father image, the judge, the creator, the merciful, and the protector. The God of Jeffers is not a man-centered or even an earth-centered deity, and he bears little or no resemblance to the deity who does not forget sparrows and numbers the hairs of a man's head.[30]

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[30]Luke 12:6-7

All things are a part of the God of Jeffers. He speaks of man as one of God's sense-organs and all feelings of man are known and felt by this God:[31]

> . . . so the exultations and agonies of
> beasts and men
> Are sense-organs of God: and on other globes
> Throughout the universe much greater nerve-endings
> Enrich the consciousness of the one being
> Who is all that exists. This is man's mission:
> To find and feel; all animal experience
> Is a part of God's life.

Mercedes Monjian called this God "The interchange of physical substance and spiritual essence . . . which is omnisecular."[32]

Vernon Loggins has called Jeffers " . . . the supreme modern poet of despair" who "says the last word in pessimism as the twentieth century feels it."[33] Mercedes Monjian, however, felt that Jeffers' problem is one of non-attachment rather than merely a pessimistic attitude. She wrote:

> Jeffers like Job struggles with the problem of non-attachment. When Job no longer feels himself to be the center of the universe, he is able to accept God's inflictions with understanding, just as Jeffers accepts his god's injustices with unflinching devotion.[34]

Although Jeffers like Job found his answer in non-attachment through pain, Jeffers' pain continued because he was unable to maintain the

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[31]The Beginning and the End, p. 10.

[32]Mercedes C. Monjian, Robinson Jeffers, A Study in Inhumanism (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1958), p. 12.

[33]Vernon Loggins, I Hear America Singing (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1937), p. 70.

[34]Monjian, op. cit., p. 12.

totally detached attitude which he recommended. The conflict between Jeffers' non-attachment, Inhumanism, and his concern for the race and the individual is clearly seen in the final lines of "Cassandra," in "Meditation on Saviors," in "Soliloquy," and in "Self-Criticism in February." It became, with Jeffers, a question of helping others to see the way out of the "trap" of civilization. It is the primary question in "Going to Horse Flats"[35]

> Why
> do we invite the world's rancors and agonies
> Into our minds though walking in a wilderness? Why did he
> want the news of the world? He could do nothing
> To help nor hinder. Nor you nor I can ... for the world.
> It is certain the world cannot be stopped nor saved.
> It has changes to accomplish and must creep through agonies
> toward new discovery. It must, and it ought: the
> awful necessity
> Is also the sacrificial duty. Man's world is a tragic music
> and is not played for man's happiness,
> Its discords are not resolved but by other discords.
>
> But for each man
> There is real solution, let him turn from himself and man
> to love God. He is out of the trap then. He will
> remain
> Part of the music, but will hear it as the player hears it.
> He will be superior to death and fortune, unmoved by
> success or failure. Pity can make him weep still,
> Or pain convulse him, but not to the center, and he can
> conquer them....But how could I impart this knowledge
> To that old man?
>
> Or indeed to anyone? I know that all
> men instinctively rebel against it.

Although Jeffers may be an inhumanist, he remains concerned with the fate of humanity; although he has found his rock, he could not let others alone to find theirs.[36] He continued to offer man a solution for

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[35] Selected Poetry, p. 582.

[36] Paraphrased from "Meditation on Saviors."

the social introversion which, he felt, was bringing about the decay of the present civilization as it had brought about the decline of every civilization in the past. Although Jeffers did not feel that his own solution would be the answer for everyone, he did feel that each individual should try to decentralize himself from the present man-centered culture. For Jeffers, as for the pantheists and for some of the transcendentalists of the last century, it was first necessary for man to get away from the man-centered culture and to get in touch with the nature of things. It was only when the individual had been able to see and understand man's infinitesimal importance in the total pattern of the universe that he would be able to find a measure of peace.

CHAPTER III

NATURE

One of the outstanding characteristics of Jeffers' poetry is his extensive use of nature and of natural phenomena.[1] The natural world serves a variety of purposes: First, it is the setting for many of the narratives and the subject matter for many of the shorter poems. Second, it is the visible evidence of the "Beauty" or "transhuman magnificence" toward which man must turn. Mankind in the natural world is only one segment of the whole; and, since Jeffers feels that "The old balance between people and the world is broken temporarily,"[2] it is necessary for man to turn outward in order to see his proper place in the whole before he can achieve a solution for his problems. Third, nature is a source for much of the imagery which Jeffers uses. Fourth, it represents the cycle theme through its recurring days, months, seasons, and years with their patterned variations of life, tides, and constellations.

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[1]The love of nature which was to dominate the mature period was noticeable in the earlier poem "He Has Fallen in Love with the Mountains," which appeared in The Californians. When this poem was reprinted in Literary Digest, it was accompanied by this note: "Mr. Jeffers is rather severe on humanity....But his misanthropy and misogyny are meant to throw into relief his love of nature." Literary Digest, LIII (December 2, 1916), 1484. Una Jeffers, in speaking of the forces which formed her husband's mature poetic philosophy stated that, as he was working at the building of Tor House "As he helped the masons shift and place the wind and wave-worn granite I think he realized some kinship with it, and became aware of strengths in himself unknown before. Thus at the age of thirty-one there came to him a kind of awakening such as adolescents and religious converts are said to experience." Carpenter, op. cit., p. 35.

[2]Alberts, op. cit., p. 39.

Lawrence Clark Powell wrote that Jeffers " . . . himself merits the words which he spoke of George Sterling, 'Probably there was never anyone since the Indians to whom this coast was so presently familiar;'."[3] Of the eighteen long narratives which form the bulk of Jeffers' work, twelve are set along the California coast in the region of Carmel.[4] Only the towns of Monterey and Salinas play any noticeable role in the narratives.[5] In "Tamar" Lee Cauldwell is returning from Monterey when he falls from the cliff; in "Roan Stallion" California goes there to buy presents for Christine; and, in "The Women at Point Sur," the Rev. Dr. Barclay begins his wanderings from a cabin near there. Reave Thurso, Hood Cawdor, Bruce Ferguson, Bull Gore, and the Inhumanist also go or are taken to Monterey. Salinas is the city where Clare Walker is tried in "The Loving Shepherdess" and where Lance Fraser plans to go to give himself up for his brother's murder in "Give Your Heart to the Hawks."[6]

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[3]Lawrence Clark Powell, Robinson Jeffers (Los Angeles: Primavera Press. 1934), p. 81.

[4]Lawrence Clark Powell divided the narratives up to 1934 into three general groups. "(1) Early Californian narratives not necessarily tragic; (2) Dramatic versions of themes from older literature . . . ; (3) Tragic narratives . . . which have the Carmel coast for setting." He also includes a map of the Carmel coast area showing the settings of the early tragic narratives. Powell, op. cit., p. 53 and p. 83. The long narratives which appear in the volumes after 1935 are predominantly of the latter two types. The posthumously published The Beginning and the End contains no long narrative.

[5]The major exceptions to this are Mary Abbey who goes to San Francisco and drowns herself, and some of the men who go to war.

[6]There seems to be a pattern in the use of these two towns. Monterey seems to represent pleasure and the social side of life while Salinas seems to represent the legal side.

These towns, however, play a very small part in the action of the narratives for most of the action in the tragedies is played out against the natural background of Point Lobos or Point Sur, Mill Creek Canyon or Mal Paso Canyon, or along the rivers of the coast.

As the characters ride or walk through the country, they see the wild beauty of the coast. In "Tamar":

> Lee Cauldwell rode across the roaring southwind to the winter
> pasture up in the hills.
> A hundred times he wanted Tamar, to show her some new beauty
> of canyon wildflowers, water
> Dashing its ferns, or oaktrees thrusting elbows at the wind,
> black-oaks smoldering with foliage
> And the streaked beauty of white-oak trunks, and redwood
> glens; he rode up higher across the rainwind
> And found his father's cattle in a quiet hollow among the
> hills, their horns to the wind,
> Quietly grazing. He returned another way, from the head-
> land over Wildcat Canyon,
> Saw the immense water possessing all the west and saw
> Point Lobos
> Gemmed in it, and the barn-roofs and the house-roofs
> Like ships' keels in the cypress tops, ...
> "Tamar," p. 6f.

Tamar walking along the cliffs sees:

> . . . . The calm and large
> Pacific surge heavy with summer rolling southeast from a
> far origin
> Battered to foam among the stumps of granite below.
> Tamar watched it swing up the little fjords and fountain
> Not angrily in the blowholes; a gray vapor
> Breathed up among the buttressed writhings of the cypress
> trunks
> And branches swollen with blood-red lichen.
> "Tamar," p. 16f.

The poetry not only conveys an awareness of the presence of the smaller natural phenomena such as tree trunks, leaves, and lichen; but it also pictures the vast sweep of the coast and the

height of the over-shadowing hills. Such lines as "Terribly far down the moonlight cliff crouched the dark sea." ("Give Your Heart to the Hawks") and " . . . high overhead the flayed gray ridges hard as flint knives/ Flamed in the sun:" ("Mara") give a feeling of the height of the landscape. The vastness of the coast is felt in such passages as:

> . . . . The sea's tide
> Rose too, white sheeting the dark reefs at the rockfoot, in
> the dark south the domed rock at Point Sur
> Stood opposite the mainland wall of hills; clouds closed the
> sea-line; landward far down the hillslope a hawk
> Hung like a wind-vane, motionless with beating wings in the
> stream of the wind
>
> The Women at Point Sur, p. 23f.[7]

and in "Roan Stallion, when California takes the horse to the hill, the vastness of the universe is felt in:

> . . . . Enormous films of moonlight
> Trailed down from the height. Space, anxious whiteness,
> vastness. Distant beyond conception and shining ocean
> Lay light like a haze along the ledge and doubtful world's
> end. Little vapors gleaming, and little
> Darknesses on the far chart underfoot symbolized wood and
> valley; but the air was the element, the moon-
> Saturate arcs and spires of the air.
>
> "Roan Stallion," p. 152f.

In the early narratives such as "Tamar" and "Roan Stallion," these passages of description are frequently long and sweeping; however, in the later narratives, the descriptive passages become more compact, and the conversation and thoughts of the characters tend to dominate the poems. This increased condensation of description may be seen in a comparison of the lines describing summer in "Tamar" (1924)

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[7]Robinson Jeffers, The Women at Point Sur (New York: Random House, 1927).

and the same type of passage in "The Love and the Hate." (1948):

> This was the high plateau of summer and August waning; white vapors
> Breathed up no more from the brown fields nor hung in the hills; daily the insufferable sun
> Rose, naked light, and flaming naked through the pale transparent ways of the air drained gray
> The strengths of nature; all night the eastwind streamed out of the valley seaward, and the stars blazed.
> The year went up to its annual mountain of death, gilded with hateful sunlight, waiting rain.
> Stagnant waters decayed, the trickling springs that all the misty-hooded summer had fed
> Pendulous green under the granite ocean-cliffs dried and turned foul, the rock-flowers faded,
> And Tamar felt in her blood the filth and fever of the season. Walking beside the house-wall
> Under her window, she resented sickeningly the wounds in the cypress bark, where Andrews
> Climbed to his tryst, disgust at herself choked her, and as a fire by water
> Under the fog-bank of the night lines all the sea and sky with fire, so her self-hatred
> Reflecting itself abroad burned back against her, all the world growing hateful, both her lovers
> Hateful, but the intolerably masculine sun hatefullest of all.
>
> "Tamar," p. 22f.

In "The Love and the Hate," summer is described as: "Summer came on, earth dried, grass whitened,/ The lupin hills that had darkened like withdrawing gods in the evenings in April/ Were now turned brown; they had their beauty; they were great brown-furred animals walking across/ The pale blue sky."[8]

In the above quotations it is also possible to see the close relationship between the characters and the land in which they live. At this point in the poem, Tamar, pregnant as a result of an incestuous

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[8] The Double Axe, p. 3. (A similar contrast exists between the descriptions of the earthquakes in The Women at Point Sur and in "The Inhumanist." These contrasts are also found in other passages of the narratives.)

affair, has taken Will Andrews as a second lover; and her feelings about nature reflect "the filth and fever of the season" in her blood. She sees the sunlight as "masculine" and "hateful," the waters as "stagnant," and the springs "turned foul." In the summer scene from "The Love and the Hate," Mrs. Gore has just been with her young lover; and, although the lupins have died, the hills have their beauty.[9]

This close emotional relationship exists between many of the characters in the narratives and the settings of the poems. Jeffers' characters have a tendency to take on the qualities of the setting; and, in turn, to endow the setting with some emotional reflection of their own minds. Lawrence Clark Powell felt that this linking of the tragic narratives "to the earth in time and place"[10] gave them a sense of reality and that "Not the least of their beauties is the presence in them of real earth and sky, stones, birds, beasts and flowers, of Nature which forms a vast and inscrutable background for the human actors."[11]

The natural world of the California coast not only serves as the setting for many of the narratives, but it also provides the subject matter for many of the shorter poems. In "Distant Rainfall" a natural

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[9]This parallel of subject and setting is also well illustrated by the description of Horse Creek Canyon: " . . . . There is an angry concentration of power here, rock, storm and ocean;/ The skies are dark, and darkness comes up like smoke/ Out of the ground." It is here that Hungerfield battles Death in human form for the life of Mrs. Hungerfield, his mother.

[10]Powell, op. cit., p. 99.

[11]Ibid.

phenomenon provides the basis for a simile around which the poem is constructed. The poem begins, "Like mourning women veiled to the feet/ Tall slender rainstorms walk slowly against gray cloud along the far verge.", moves through a description of the ocean and headlands; asks the question, "Whom are they mourning?" and repeats its initial comparison as the clouds move "Titaness after Titaness proudly/ Bearing her tender magnificent sorrow at her heart, the lost battle's beauty."[12] More often, however, Jeffers begins with a natural subject and leads to a philosophical conclusion as he does in "Birds." The poem begins with a description of two sparrowhawks hunting outside his window, moves on to the distant gulls, then, with the transitional lines " . . . come gulls/ From the Carmel sands and the sands at the river-mouth, from Lobos and out of the limitless/ Power of the mass of the sea," reaches the philosophical conclusion that " . . . a poem/ Needs multitude, multitudes of thoughts, all fierce, all flesh-eaters, musically clamorous".[13]

The structural pattern of description leading to philosophical conclusion is varied in several ways in the shorter poems. In

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[12]Selected Poetry, p. 571.

[13]Selected Poetry, p. 161. Josephine Miles wrote that Jeffers' poetry showed two kinds of writing, "progression, flat and literal yet emotional," which " . . . may be related to such prose as Lawrence's or Hemingway's, but it has not . . . a related practice in poetry."; and that it also showed "large metaphor and portent." She continued, "Better yet, though less frequently, these two kinds of writing, along with some philosophical abstraction, come together in a whole poem and make us see more integrally the patient and receptive nature of modern poetry as it takes in, lists, arranges and thus makes meaning of, the wealth of sensation at hand." Josephine Miles, The Primary Language of Poetry in the 1940's (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951), p. 450f.

"Autumn Evening" the author uses almost the entire poem to present a description leaving only the final two lines for the philosophical conclusion:[14]

> Though the little clouds ran southward still, the quiet autumnal
> Cool of the late September evening
> Seemed promising rain, rain, the change of the year, the angel
> Of the sad forest. A heron flew over
> With that remote ridiculous cry, "Quawk," the cry
> That seems to make silence more silent. A dozen
> Flops of the wing, a drooping glide, at the end of the glide
> The cry, and a dozen flops of the wing.
> I watched him pass on the autumn-colored sky; beyond him
> Jupiter shone for evening star.
> The sea's voice worked into my mood, I thought "No matter
> What happens to men . . . the world's well made though."

As, in the first poem, "Birds," nature is used to lead the reader to a statement of what goes to make up a poem; so, in the second, natural objects are used to lead the reader to one of the basic ideas of Inhumanism. This same idea of the world being "well made" is contained in the blending of nature and man in "Gray Weather" as "In the cloudy light, in the timeless quietness,/ One explores deeper than the nerves or heart of nature, the womb or soul,/ To the bone, the careless white bone, the excellence."[15] By exploring to the bone, it is possible to find the timelessness of the world. This timelessness is found by learning to appreciate the natural. In "Signpost" he tells man "Turn outward, love things, not men," and he explains that this turning outward may be accomplished in several different ways:[16]

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[14]Selected Poetry, p. 167.

[15]Selected Poetry, p. 572.

[16]Selected Poetry, p. 574.

> . . . . Consider if you like how the lilies grow,
> Lean on the silent rock until you feel its divinity
> Make your veins cold, look at the silent stars, let your eyes
> Climb the great ladder out of the pit of yourself and man.
> Things are so beautiful, your love will follow your eyes;
> Things are the God, you will love God, and not in vain,
> For what we love, we grow to it, we share its nature . . . .

Thus Jeffers uses natural objects to point out to man that once he has learned to love things, the things that are God, he will be able to " . . . look back along the star's rays and see that even/ The poor doll humanity has a place under heaven."[17] From a distance man becomes only a part of the natural scene.

The interrelationship between man and nature is also apparent in Jeffers' use of images. The rainstorm in "Distant Rainfall" was personified as mourning women. This same personification is also seen in " . . . the sun came up like a man shouting . . . " ("Thurso's Landing"); and in Fayne's picture of Lance as, " . . . like this mountain coast,/ All beautiful, with chances of brutal violence; precipitous, dark-natured, beautiful; without humor, without ever/ A glimmer of gaiety; blind gray headland and arid mountain, and trailing from his shoulders the infinite ocean." ("Give Your Heart to the Hawks"). The winds in "Tamar" become " . . . tall and terrible horsemen on patrol, . . . " and " . . . torturers,/ The old trees endure them." By using figurative language which interrelates the natural and the human,

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[17]The use of natural objects discussed in a poem and leading to philosophical conclusions may also be seen in "The Purse-Seine," "Nova," "The Beaks of Eagles," "Deer Lay Down Their Bones," and many of the other shorter poems. The shorter poems may be classified as (1) Natural, descriptive, (2) Natural, leading to philosophical conclusions, and, (3) Philosophical.

Jeffers blends the race into its environment in an attempt to reinforce his philosophical conclusion that " . . . . Integrity is wholeness, the greatest beauty is/ Organic wholeness, the wholeness of life and things, the divine beauty of the universe . . . . "[18]

Although Jeffers uses all types of natural phenomena as sources for his imagery, his predominant images are the rock and the hawk.[19] He combines these two images in a short poem called "Rock and Hawk":

Here is a symbol in which
Many high tragic thoughts
Watch their own eyes.

This gray rock, standing tall
On the headland, where the seawind
Lets no tree grow,

Earthquake-proved, and signatured
By ages of storms: on its peak
A falcon has perched.

I think, here is your emblem
To hang in the future sky;
Not the cross, not the hive,

But this: bright power, dark peace;
Fierce consciousness joined with final
Disinterestedness;

Life with calm death; the falcon's
Realist eyes and act
Married to the massive

Mysticism of stone,
Which failure cannot cast down
Nor success make proud.

Selected Poetry, p. 563.

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[18]"The Answer," Selected Poetry, p. 594.

[19]In an analysis of the symbols of the rock and the hawk published in Poetry, Frajam Taylor wrote: "The reader of Robinson Jeffers' poetry cannot fail to be impressed by the recurrence in his work of two symbols--

Here the hawk is equated with "bright power," "Fierce consciousness," "Life," and "Realist eyes and act"; and the stone with "dark peace," "disinterestedness," "calm death," and "massive/ Mysticism."; and, because of these attributes, both have become symbolic of two aspects of Inhumanism.

Both of the images appear in the long poems as well as the shorter ones. Both are related to characters in the narrative "Thurso's Landing."[20] The image used most consistently with Reave is that of the stone. He is said to be " . . . like a stone, hard and joyless, dark inside,"; and, in his stubbornness, a petrified man, one stronger than nature. Helen says, "' . . . . When Reave tackles it,/ Down it shall come. Not the mountain-backed earth bucking like a bad horse, nor fire's/ Red fox-tail on the hills at midnight, nor the mad southeasters; nothing can do it/ But Reave Thurso, ah? That's the man we're measured against.'"

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the hawk and the stone--which, though mutually opposed, are nevertheless equally honored by the poet as the tangible representatives of two antipodal ideas.

"The hawk to Jeffers is the image of all that is proud, fierce and unconquerable. It stands for ruthless force and indomitable courage. It is a hard, strong and lonely creature, ready to pounce with cruel predatory talons onto whatever it chooses . . . . It acknowledges no master; it bows to no law but that of its own being."

Later in the article, in the discussion of the stone, this author said, "Against the superb vitality of the hawk Jeffers now counterpoises the rigidity, the immobility and the insentience of the stone. And the stone, too, is an ideal whose attributes are all emulous virtues which are sung with as much conviction as he sings of the hawk's.

Quietness, peace and silence: to Jeffers these are the primal attributes of the universe." Frajam Taylor, "The Hawk and the Stone," Poetry, LV (October, 1939), pp. 39-46.

[20]In writing of this poem, Jeffers said, "It seems to me that the theme of the poem is courage, and its different colors and qualities, in Reave Thurso, in Helen and in Reave's mother." Alberts, op. cit., p. 72.

Mark, in speaking of Helen, Reave's wife, says, "'She's tied to you,' . . . 'Like a falcon tied up short to a stone, a fierce one,/ Fluttering and striking in ten inches of air.'"

Reave's mother appears to Helen as "a white-headed hawk," and she feels the mother watching her across the lamplight:

> . . . with eyes like a old hawk's,
> Red-brown and indomitable, and tired. But if she was hawk-like
> As Helen fancied, it was not in the snatching look
> But the alienation and tamelessness and sullied splendor
> Of a crippled hawk in a cage . . . .
> "Thurso's Landing," p. 277.

The same idea of natural freedom of choice and alienation from society is expressed in the final lines of the poem when Reave's mother says of herself, "' . . . . I am the last/ And worst of four: and at last the unhappiest: but that's nothing.'"

The image of the hawk with its natural freedom of choice and alienation from society provides one of the major themes of the long narrative "Give Your Heart to the Hawks."[21] This narrative deals with Lance Fraser's search for absolution after he has killed his brother. The story begins when Lance, his brother Michael, and his wife Fayne are at a beach party. Lance discovers his wife and his brother in a compromising situation and kills his brother in a fit of drunken jealousy. Later, when he wants to go to Salinas to give himself up for the murder,

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[21]In writing about this poem, Jeffers said, "The name I have in mind for the longish narrative poem that's being written is Give Your Heart to the Hawks, a quotation from something said by one of the people in the story. The hawks have a sort of symbolic value throughout the poem." Alberts, op. cit., p. 78.

Fayne dissuades him by saying:

> " . . . . Listen to me. When Arriba and his boys
> Stole cows of ours, did you run to the courthouse?
> We take care of ourselves down here. What we have done
> Has to be borne. It's in ourselves and there's no escaping,
> The state of California can't help you bear it.
> That's only a herd of people, the state.
> Oh, give your heart to the hawks for a snack o' meat
> But not to men." . . .
> "Give Your Heart to the Hawks,"[22]

Later Fayne points out to Lance that it takes strength to follow the way of the hawks:

> " . . . . I know you are strong enough
> To give your heart to the hawks without a cry
> And bear it in lonely silence to the end of life.
> What else do you want? Ah. Confession's a coward
> Running to officers, begging help. Not you."
> Give Your Heart to the Hawks, p. 30.

Lance finally decides to do as Fayne asks and to tell the story that Michael died because he tried to climb the cliff while he was drunk and fell, striking his head on a rock. Lance, however, is not strong enough to endure the natural freedom of choice and alienation from society which Fayne describes as the way of the hawk when she says:

> " . . . . Then care for this:
> To be able to live, in spite of pain and that horror and the
> dear blood on your hands, and your father's God,
> To be able to go on in pure silence
> In your own power, not panting for people's judgment, not the
> pitiful consolation of punishing yourself
> Because an old man filled you with dreams of sin
> When you were little: you are not one of the sparrows, you
> are not a flock-bird: but alone in your nature
> Separate as a gray hawk."
> Give Your Heart to the Hawks, p. 52.

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[22]Robinson Jeffers, Give Your Heart to the Hawks and Other Poems (New York: Random House, 1933), p. 29.

Lance begins to hate all hawks, the symbols of his alienation. He shoots many of them, and, in blood-lust, pits a game cock against a crippled hawk which is tied to a stake in the yard; however, even in this uneven battle, the hawk wins and kills the game cock. Not being able to find expiation through killing the symbol of his alienation, Lance turns to self-castigation. In his need for tangible punishment, he becomes impotent; and, finally, he tears his hands on a barbed wire fence and confesses his crime to his father asking, "'What must I do? . . . I was Michael's death;/ And I cannot bear it in silence.'" Old Fraser, who represents Christianity in the poem, can offer Lance no help.

The story ends when Lance, suffering from infection in his lacerated hands and from his extreme craving for tangible punishment, kills several steers and a horse because " . . . . They were horsemen . . . his enemies,/ Albeit a part of his mind was awake and faintly/ Knew what they were; the master part willed them to be/ Men pursuing a murderer; . . . ". He then climbs to a high promontory and jumps. Thus Lance dies at the foot of one cliff as his brother had died at the foot of another.

The way of the hawk, which Fayne describes as "a dizzy and lonely place of a height" where it is necessary to "peel off/ Some humanness or it will be hard to live," suggests the same alienation which is expressed by Reave Thurso's mother when she says, "'I am the last/ . . . and at last the unhappiest: but that's nothing.'" This idea is also typified by the hawk in the shorter poem "Hurt

Hawks"[23] who will not be humbled except by death and by the wounded and captive hawk in "Give Your Heart to the Hawks" who " . . . stood up and watched all with intent eyes accepting pain and not humbled."[24] This alienation is, perhaps, best expressed in the final lines of "Soliloquy" when the poet writes, "But you living be laired in the rock/ That sheds pleasure and pain like hailstones."[25]

The symbols of the rock and the hawk are bound together by their qualities of alienation. The rock, which in "Rock and Hawk" represents "dark peace," "disinterestedness," "calm death," and "massive/ Mysticism," embodies in its physical characteristics two of Jeffers' major themes. First the "dark peace" and "disinterestedness" show the separation from society which characterizes the inhumanist's point of view. Second,

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[23] Selected Poetry, p. 198.

[24] There is one poem in which the hawk becomes a representative of both the destructive and creative forces. In this poem the hawk is used as a symbol for the Hindu god "Shiva" and the poem is so named.

There is a hawk that is picking the birds out of our sky.
She killed the pigeons of peace and security.
She has taken honesty and confidence from nations and men,
She is hunting the lonely heron of liberty.
She loads the arts with nonsense, she is very cunning,
Science with dreams and the state with powers to catch them at last.
Nothing will escape her at last, flying nor running.
This is the hawk that picks out the star's eyes.
This is the only hunter that will ever catch the wild swan;
The prey she will take last is the wild white swan of the beauty of things.
Then she will be alone, pure destruction, achieved and supreme,
Empty darkness under the death-tent wings.
She will build a nest of the swan's bones and hatch a new brood,
Hang new heavens with new birds, all be renewed.

Selected Poetry, p. 611.

[25] Selected Poetry, p. 195.

the linking of the hawk's "life" qualities with the rock's representation of "calm death" reflects the impermanence of life as set against the permanence of the earth.

This symbolic paralleling of permanence and impermanence is frequently extended to the transience of civilization and the permanence of the world. The rock in "New Mexican Mountain" remembers that "civilization is a transient sickness." In this poem, as Jeffers watches the firelight on the rock, he feels the permanence of the rock as opposed to the impermanence of mankind:

> ... as if I were
> Seeing rock for the first time. As if I were seeing through the flame-lit surface into the real and bodily
> And living rock. Nothing strange ... I cannot
> Tell you how strange: the silent passion, the deep nobility and childlike loveliness: this fate going on
> Outside our fates. It is here in the mountain like a grave smiling child. I shall die, and my boys
> Will live and die, our world will go on through its rapid agonies of change and discovery; this age will die,
> And wolves have howled in the snow around a new Bethlehem: this rock will be here, grave, earnest, not passive: the energies
> That are its atoms will still be bearing the whole mountain above: and I, many packed centuries ago,
> Felt its intense reality with love and wonder, this lonely rock.[26]

The alienation of the rock in this poem is subordinate to its lasting qualities.

Jeffers frequently uses natural phenomena both in direct statement and in figurative speech to represent the cyclical theme in his poetry.

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[26] Selected Poetry, p. 363. Since Jeffers sometimes uses a three period ellipses in his poetry, it will be necessary to differentiate between his marks and those which show omission of quoted text in this paper; therefore, three periods having no spaces between them will be used to represent Jeffers' marks, and three or four periods having spaces between them will represent omissions from quoted text.

The tides, the seasons, the years, the life of man, and even the patterns of our solar system are presented in their perpetual rise and fall. Individual images and entire poems are built around the patterns of nature. In "Tamar" the " . . . year went up to its annual mountain of death,"; and in "Shine Perishing Republic" the poet remembers that " . . . the flower fades to make fruit, the fruit rots to make earth/ Out of the mother; and through the spring exultances, ripeness and decadence; and home to the mother."[27] The entire poem "Night" is structured on the rise and fall of the tides. The poem begins as "The ebb slips from the rock, the sunken/ Tide-rocks lift streaming shoulders/ Out of the slack, the slow west/ Sombering its torch;". The image is repeated in the last section of the poem as "The tide, moving the night's/ Vastness with lonely voices,/ Turns, the deep dark-shining/ Pacific leans on the land,/ Feeling his cold strength/ To the outmost margins: . . . "[28]

The cyclical theme is presented more directly in "Mara" when Bruce Ferguson speaks of " . . . 'A German professor/ Who thinks this bloody and tortured slave called history/ Has regular habits. Waves, you know, wave-lengths, separate waves of civilization/ Up and down like the seas . . . . '"[29] In the same poem, Bruce Ferguson also summarizes the patterned structure of the life of man when he asks, " . . . . 'What

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[27]Selected Poetry, p. 168.

[28]Ibid., p. 158.

[29]Be Angry at the Sun, p. 52.

good is a man/ Living, working, eating, making love, dying,/ And leaving a child or two/ To live, work, eat, drink, make love and die,/ And so on forever:"[30]

The cycle-of-existence theme is extended to include the entire solar system in "Nova":[31]

> That Nova was a moderate star like our good sun; it stored no doubt a little more than it spent
> Of heat and energy until the increasing tension came to the trigger-point
> Of a new chemistry; then what was already flaming found a new manner of flaming ten-thousandfold
> More brightly for a brief time; what was a pin-point fleck on a sensitive plate at the great telescope's
> Eye-piece now shouts down the steep night to the naked eye, a nine-day super-star.
>
> It is likely our moderate
> Father the sun will some time put off his nature for a similar glory. The earth would share it; these tall
> Green trees would become a moment's torches and vanish, the oceans would explode into invisible steam,
> The ships and the great whales fall through them like flaming meteors into the emptied abysm, the six mile
> Hollows of the Pacific sea-bed might smoke for a moment.

The extent of cycle of existence is never made entirely clear in the poetry. Although he frequently refers to the rise and decline of both civilizations and mankind as a race, there are few references, outside of the poem above, to an absolute decline of the solar system.

Through the disinterestedness of the inhumanist point of view, it was possible for Jeffers to see not only the cycles of life in their proper perspective but also to perceive the beauty which lay behind the patterns of nature. The Inhumanist is seeing the world from this point

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[30] Ibid., p. 15.

[31] Selected Poetry, p. 597.

of view when he says: "'The unique ugliness of man and his works, . . . / Seen astronomically, little and whole, in relation with time and vastness, the star-world,/ And the bitter end waiting for modern man,/ Disappears; it falls into pattern with the perpetual/ Beauty of things.'"[32]

Jeffers found the beauty of things most readily perceived through the natural world, and the natural world of the California coast is strongly reflected in most of his poetry. The descriptive passages which are used to provide the settings for his long narrative poems picture the world of nature in which he had chosen to live, and the characters of these narratives often take on the symbolic characteristics of their environment. By using primitive types, Jeffers is able to show a certain emotional and psychological interrelationship between the characters and the settings in the narratives. The shorter poems, as well, draw much of their subject matter and their imagery from the world of nature.

Nature, for Jeffers, became the only stable quantity in an otherwise transient world. Since, according to his cyclical theory, civilization must decline, the strong and seemingly indestructible mountains and the world of nature came to represent the only permanence. It is not the world of man but the world which contains man which is permanent. "The greatest beauty," he writes, "is/ Organic wholeness, the wholeness of life and things, the divine beauty of the universe. Love that, not man/ Apart from that."[33] The Inhumanist advises the

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[32]The Double Axe, p. 109.

[33]Selected Poetry, p. 594.

future children: "And as to love; love God. He is rock, earth and water, and the beasts and stars; and the night that contains them."[34]

Much of the imagery of the poetry is drawn from natural objects. The rock and the hawk are two symbols which appear frequently and which are closely related to the tenets of the philosophy which came to be known as Inhumanism. The hawk represents the inhumanist's separation from society; and, although the inhumanist, like the hawk, is self-contained, he still remains conscious of the world of man. It is this very consciousness which requires a foundation in the strength and the permanence of the rock "Which failure cannot cast down/ nor success make proud."[35]

The very characteristics of natural objects make them easily adaptable as symbols for the cyclical theory. Since all things in nature progress through a regular pattern of change, various natural objects may easily be adapted to symbolize the cycle of civilization. To Jeffers, it is only through accepting man and civilization as natural objects which follow a patterned existence that the inhumanist is able to accept what Jeffers sees as the declining period of our society and the degradation of man.

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[34]The Double Axe, p. 106.

[35]"Rock and Hawk," Selected Poetry, p. 563.

CHAPTER IV

MAN

Jeffers defines his philosophy as a "shifting of emphasis and significance from man to not-man."[1] Nature is used as the visible representation of the "not-man" factor of this philosophy; man is the entire human race.[2] In presenting his philosophy in poetic form, Jeffers deals with the question of what man is both in his biological form and in his social form. He does this through the use of direct statement and, in the narratives, through the use of incest as a symbol for the "introversion" of the species. To Jeffers, man as a herd or group is not attractive. The innate characteristics of the human race are such that the individual must find peace through some means other than turning toward and becoming deeply involved with mankind. Man, to Jeffers, is a higher form of animal; but, because he possesses a reasoning mind without the understanding that this reasoning must be controlled, he brings about his own destruction. Man is shown as a despoiler as well as a builder; his "introversion" not only gives rise to great civilizations but also brings about their downfall. Because man has lost touch with the balance of nature, he does not understand the place of his achievements in the pattern of the universe;

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[1]See quotation on page 1.

[2]The word "man" and the singular pronouns "he," "him," and "his" are used in Jeffers' poetry in four ways: First, these words are used to represent man as a biological class. Second, they are used to represent the present civilization. Third, they are used to represent the Christian Culture. Fourth, they are used to represent the individual.

and, therefore, he cannot control them.

Jeffers does feel that it is possible for the individual to achieve some stability if he will change his outlook and seek to understand the true place of mankind in the universal pattern. This is the way of the inhumanist, but this way is neither easy nor secure and will probably not lead to happiness because "life never was bonded to be endurable nor the act of dying/ Unpainful."[3]

Man in the poetry of Jeffers, is a product of his heredity, but his hereditary factors were originally formed by certain environmental pressures. In "The Beginning and the End," Jeffers writes, "Never blame the man: his hard-pressed/ Ancestors formed him: . . . "[4] In this poem he traces the development of the race from the time when "A change of climate killed the great northern forests,/ Forcing the manlike apes from their trees, ... They had been secure up there,". There was no security for them on the ground where "Tiger and panther and the horrible fumbling bear and endless wolf-packs made life/ A dream of death."[5] Because of the constant threat of death, man developed certain traits which have become hereditary racial[6] characteristics. Man learned to kill out of terror; to walk erect, always alert; and to be cruel, bloody-handed, and quick-witted.

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[3]"Ante Mortem," Selected Poetry, p. 178.

[4]The Beginning and the End, p. 8ff. This poem contains a long passage tracing man's development. Jeffers seems to feel that such traits as cruelty, blood-thirstiness, and quick-wittedness were, in the time when man came down from the trees, made necessary by environmental pressures; however, they have since become hereditary to the race.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Jeffers uses the term "race" and the term "species" interchangeably.

These traits, Jeffers believes, influenced the uses of his inventions; although he learned to use fire and weapons, invented language to tell of his deeds, and formulated religion, the weapons are used to kill, the deeds he has related are cruel and bloody, and his religion is a trembling one which often requires blood sacrifice.

In "Believe History,"[7] Jeffers enumerates some of the violences and cruelties of mankind's earlier years:

> I think we are the ape's children, but believe history,
> We are the Devil's: the fire-deaths, the flaying alive,
> The blinding with hot iron, the crucifixions, the
> castrations, the famous
> Murder of a King of England by hot iron forced
> Through the anus to burn the bowels, and men outside the
> ten-foot dungeon-wall
> Could hear him howling.

These, however, were only the cruelties of mankind's youth. In some ways these are less terrible than the pain and suffering inflicted by modern, civilized man upon both animals and upon other men. Speaking to the animals in "The King of the Beasts,"[8] Jeffers lists some of modern man's brutalities:

> . . . . I wish you had seen the
> battle-squalor, the bombings,
> The screaming fire-deaths. I wish you could watch the endless
> hunger, the cold, the moaning, the hopelessness.
> I wish you could smell the Russian and German torture-camps.
> It is quite natural the two-footed beast
> That inflicts terror, the cage, enslavement, torment and
> death on all other animals
> Should eat the dough that he mixes and drink the deathcup.

These cruelties, Jeffers feels, will increase with the passage

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[7] The Beginning and the End, p. 40.

[8] The Double Axe, p. 136.

of time unless modern man is able to understand his proper place in the pattern of the universe and to adjust to it.[9] In "Do You Still Make War?",[10] he pictures a scene from the war of the future:

> I saw a regiment of soldiers shuffling and stumbling,
> Holding each other's hands for guidance,
> Falling into the ditches, falling on the plain road,
> Under orders to garrison the empty city.
> The furious light of what killed the city had killed their eyes
> At three hundred miles' distance.

The one great difference between the species man and all the other animals lies in the potential of man's intellect. It is through the use of his brain that man has been able to create civilizations and to make his wonderful discoveries. In "Passenger Pigeons,"[11] Jeffers,

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[9]Although Jeffers feels that man possesses certain attributes which will eventually bring about his downfall, Jeffers does not advocate a mass changing of the race nor does he seem to feel that such a changing is possible. Jeffers' solution for peace in a troubled world with an uncertain future requires that the individual remove himself from the center of humanity so that he will be able to view mankind abstractly. Then the individual will be able to see two things: First, he will be able to realize that " . . . great civilizations have broken down into violence, and their tyrants come, many times before . . . . these evils are necessary." "The Answer," Selected Poetry, p. 594., and, Second, then he will be able to take the omniscient point of view, seeing the pattern of development backward and forward through the eternity of time. This is the point of view the Inhumanist is taking when he says:

> "The unique ugliness of man and his works," . . .
> "Seen astronomically, little and whole, in relation with time and vastness, the star-world,
> And the bitter end waiting for modern man,
> Disappears; it falls into pattern with the perpetual
> Beauty of things. This is obvious, and this I have learned."
> The Double Axe, p. 109.

[10]The Beginning and the End, p. 23.

[11]Ibid., p. 14ff. Jeffers seldom uses irony as strongly as he

speaking as mankind, tells "Death" to respect humanity. "Death" cannot take all men at once as he has taken the passenger pigeons, the dinosaurs, and the sabre-tooth tigers because:

> . . . we are too powerful
> We are men, not pigeons; you may take the old, the useless
> and helpless, the cancer-bitten and the tender young,
> But the human race has still history to make. For look--look now
> At our achievements: we have bridled the cloud-leaper
> lightning, a lion whipped by a man, to carry our messages
> And work our will, we have snatched the live thunderbolt
> Out of God's hands. Ha? That was little and last year--for
> now we have taken
> The primal powers, creation and annihilation; we make new
> elements, such as God never saw.
> We can explode atoms and annul the fragments, nothing left
> but pure energy, we shall use it
> In peace and war-- . . . .

These are not the only things which the mind of man has been capable of achieving; he continues:

> We have counted the stars and half understood them, we have
> watched the farther galaxies fleeing away from us,
> wild herds
> Of panic horses--or a trick of distance deceived the prism--
> we outfly falcons and eagles and meteors,
> Faster than sound, higher than the nourishing air; . . .
> We have invented the jet-plane and the death-bomb and the
> cross of Christ-- . . .

Although man is quick-witted, he is also cruel and bloody-minded. He is shown in the above poem as controlling not only creation but also

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does in this poem. Death's attitude toward mankind's boastful words is very ironic: he grins behind his hand and replies to mankind's boast "Oh, . . . surely/ You'll live forever . . . . What could exterminate you?" The irony can also be seen in the examples which man uses to prove his greatness and his invulnerability for he parallels life with death by citing as his accomplishments creation and annihilation and uses his exploded atoms in peace and war. In the poem, man is proudly boasting not only of his intelligence but also of his ability to destroy himself.

annihilation; as using the great powers which he controls not only in peace but also in war; and as controlling the sky with the jet-plane which he also uses to transport the death-bomb. Man, in his pride, sets himself greater than God. However, the things which man has now achieved and of which he speaks so proudly are not natural to the race. Though he fancies himself greater than God, he lacks God-like wisdom. In "Unnatural Powers," Jeffers writes: "For fifty thousand years man has been dreaming of powers/ Unnatural to him: . . . now he has got them./ How little he looks, how desperately scared and excited, like a poisonous insect, and no God pities him."[12]

Jeffers, like many other writers of this age,[13] felt that the scientific and technological advances which have occurred during the first half of this century have made it necessary for man to re-evaluate his position in relation to our planet and to the universe. His concern for man's future can be seen in such poems as "Science," which was

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[12]Ibid., p. 19.

[13]In writing of the poetry of the first half of the twentieth century, John Hall Wheelock says: "In the nuclear age, nature through the agency of man, who is a part of nature, has acquired the power to commit suicide . . . . Above all, the nuclear age dramatizes and brings home to us, with almost blinding vividness, the fact of our mortality--not simply the mortality of the individual but of the race. Whether extinction comes as a result of his own unbridled tensions, man will not be eternal on this planet; the planet itself will not last forever. We are thereby instructed, once and for all, that the final values are not material and quantitative--mere mass, force and duration--but spiritual and qualitative. The brief consciousness that can take in the sweep of the galaxy--adding, in the creative merging of subject and object, its truth and beauty and meaning to the brute swarms of matter orbiting through space--in the end, outweighs them all. The poem, in the nuclear age, will reveal a more immediate sense of the secret behind the tragic flux." John Hall Wheelock, What Is Poetry (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), p. 44ff.

published in 1925 in the volume Roan Stallion, Tamar and Other Poems. In a later poem he likens two of the changes which are taking place in this period to two curves in the air. The first curve is " . . . the rise and fall of the Christian culture-complex, that broke its dawn-cloud/ Fifteen centuries ago, and now past noon/ Drifts to decline."[14] The second curve is " . . . the yet vaster curve, but mostly in the future, of the age which began at Kittyhawk." He feels that the presence of these two curves, one in its declining phase and the other in its ascendancy, in one lifetime, makes this age seem "pivotal."

Although man has been able to make great progress through the use of his mind, Jeffers sees him as still searching for the security which he lost when he came down from the trees. In "Intellectuals," Jeffers asks, "Is it so hard for men to stand by themselves,/ They must hang on Marx or Christ or mere Progress?/ Clearly it is hard."[15] He even admits that, for himself, he might have sought some security in the church when he says:

> Yourself, if you had not encountered and loved
> Our unkindly all but inhuman God
> Who is very beautiful and too secure to want worshippers,
> And includes indeed the sheep with the wolves,
> You might have been looking about for a church.
> "Intellectuals," p. 458.

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[14] The Double Axe, p. 141.

[15] Selected Poetry, p. 458. Jeffers also uses other terms to represent these phases of civilization. In "New Year's Dawn" he refers to them as "state," "church," and "custom;" and in "Thebaid" he uses the terms "Mother Church" and "Father State."

Although man searches for security, it is possible to see his cruelty and bloody-mindedness even here. He rewards both the Caesars and the saviors equally. Because mankind is " . . . an anxious people, rank with suppressed blood-thirstiness" who "has not outgrown blood sacrifice," it is necessary for a savior to "writhe on a high cross to catch at their memories;". The leaders of the state receive no better treatment; Jeffers says, "Let them lie down at Caesar's feet and be saved; and he in his time reap their daggers of gratitude."[16]

The "Progress" in which man has sought security Jeffers sees as the means of man's destruction because it causes the focusing of mankind's interest entirely upon man.[17] He speaks of the city and of civilization as a net in "The Purse-Seine" and he goes on in the poem to discuss its effects on mankind:

> . . . We have geared the machines and locked all together
> into interdependence; we have built the great cities; now
> There is no escape. We have gathered vast populations
> incapable of free survival, insulated
> From the strong earth, each person in himself helpless, on
> all dependent. The circle is closed, and the net
> Is being hauled in. . . . The inevitable mass-disasters
> Will not come in our time nor in our children's, but we
> and our children
> Must watch the net draw narrower, government take all powers
> --or revolution, and the new government
> Take more than all, add to kept bodies kept souls--or
> anarchy, the mass disasters.
>
> These things are Progress;
> "The Purse-Seine," p. 588f.

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[16] Ibid., p. 200ff.

[17] Jeffers writes: "With the thickening of civilization, science reforms the picture of the universe and makes it inhuman, but the values and desires are ever more fixed inward." He continues later, "People living in cities hardly look at or think of anything but each other and each other's amusements and works." Alberts, op. cit., p. 39.

Since both Caesars and saviors must die and since Progress leads to mass-disasters, mankind, Jeffers feels, will not find the security which he seeks in church, in state, or in Progress. Because man retains the characteristics of his ancestors and because he is "taken up/ Like a maniac with self-love and inward conflicts,"[18] he is unable to build a permanent society or to control his inventions. In her vision in "The Tower Beyond Tragedy," Cassandra traces the long vista of societies rising and falling into the future. She begins with Athens and Corinth and ends her vision when the ends of the earth "grow aware of each other/ And are dogs in one kennel."[19] In "The World's Wonders," Jeffers discusses the things which he has seen achieved by our country in his lifetime and the future he expects for our society:

> I have seen the United States grow up the strongest and wealthiest of nations, and swim in the wind over bankruptcy.
> I have seen Europe, for twenty-five hundred years the crown of the world, become its beggar and cripple.
>
> I have seen my people, fooled by ambitious men and froth of sentiment, waste themselves on three wars.
> None was required, all futile, all grandly victorious. A fourth is forming.
>
> I have seen the invention of human flight; a chief desire of man's dreaming heart for ten thousand years;
> And men have made it the chief of the means of massacre.
>
> I have seen the far stars weighed and their distance measured, and the powers that make the atom put into service--
> For what?--To kill. To kill half a million flies--men I should say--at one slap.
>
> I have also seen doom. You can stand up and struggle or lie down and sleep--you are doomed as Oedipus.
>
> Hungerfield, p. 107f.

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[18]"Science," Selected Poetry, p. 173.

[19]Ibid., p. 133ff. This theme, repeated in the shorter poems, makes Cassandra's vision appear more Jeffers than Cassandra in character.

Although Jeffers believes that society is doomed, he does think that it is possible for the individual to find a measure of peace or at least the stability and security of a belief. In order to find this peace, a man must turn away from his incestuous love of humanity and turn his eyes outward from mankind. This is what Fayne was advising Lance to do when she said, "Give your heart to the hawks without a cry/ and bear it in lonely silence to the end of life." Yet Lance, who has been environmentally conditioned to expect some tangible punishment for his crime, cannot find peace in a type of punishment which denies him absolution and requires that he carry the guilt of his brother's death for as long as he lives.

A number of characters in the narratives do attempt to break away from society. Orestes in "The Tower Beyond Tragedy" is the only one who actually succeeds. He describes his experience when he first became a part of the natural world by saying:[20]

> . . . I remembered
> The knife in the stalk of my humanity; I drew and it broke;
> I entered the life of the brown forest
> And the great life of the ancient peaks, the patience of
> stone, I felt the changes in the veins
> In the throat of the mountain, a grain in many centuries, we
> have our own time, not yours; and I was the stream
> Draining the mountain wood; and I the stag drinking; and I
> was the stars,
> Boiling with light, wandering alone, each one the lord of
> his own summit; and I was the darkness
> Outside the stars, I included them, they were a part of me. . . .
> "The Tower Beyond Tragedy," p. 139f.

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[20]The experience which Orestes describes here seems to have been very much like the one which Jeffers underwent while helping the masons with the stones on Tor House. Although Jeffers does not discuss his feelings at that time in prose, the delineation of Orestes' mystical identification with the processes of the natural world is related to Jeffers' experience as it is recounted by Una Jeffers. See Note 1, p. 22 above.

Orestes has been able to do what Jeffers, writing in the short poem "Signpost,"[21] advises man to do. Orestes is able to turn outward and to love the God whom the Inhumanist characterizes as being " . . . rock, earth and water, and the beasts and the stars; and the night that contains them."[22]

Although California, in "Roan Stallion," probably comes closer to making a complete break with society than any other character in the modern narratives, her conditioning demands that her God have some form; she gives him the form of the stallion. At the end of the poem, however, she is not capable of making a complete break with mankind. She is "moved by some obscure human fidelity" which makes her kill the stallion after it has trampled her husband to death.

The Inhumanist, the major character in the allegory of the same name, has also broken away from society; he has gone to live alone in a deserted house in the hills along the coast. While California's break was an emotional one, the Inhumanist's break is a physical one as well.[23] Even the Inhumanist, however, is not capable of making a complete break with mankind; in his sleep he has nightmares and at these times he feels

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[21]This section of this poem is quoted on p. 30 above.

[22]The Double Axe, p. 106.

[23]Almost all of the characters in the Jeffers' narratives live in isolated sections of the country; however, not all of these people have intentionally isolated themselves from society as the Inhumanist has. Although California and her husband in "Roan Stallion" live far from town, there is no indication in the poem that they have moved here to get away from people.

his own humanness and curses it.[24]

The German scientist, who comes to the hills in the same poem, has also broken away from society and has turned to pure science for truth. He has discovered a mathematical formula which will bring all things under one rule, and he has proved his theory. He wishes to be free of any ties of organized society. He will not publish his mathematical findings because he feels that "science is not to serve but to know. Science is for itself its own value, it is not for man."[25] The scientist has broken away from mankind and has chosen to serve free science and to keep his solution to himself, but he has also turned away from God. The scientist is, therefore, unable to perceive the pattern or balance in the eternal structure of the universe. The Inhumanist, who tries to send the scientist away because he thinks "God does not care, why should I care?'", is shown a vision which presents the pattern of the universe. He sees:

> . . . . Flash after flash,
> And the terrible midnight beyond midnight, endless succession
> the shining towers of the universe
> Were and were not; they leaped back and forth like goats
> Between existence and annihilation. . . .

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[24]Some of the characteristics of the Inhumanist in this poem closely parallel some of Jeffers' own. He, like Jeffers, lives on the coast apart from society by choice; he sees the coming downfall of our society and tries to warn individuals of society's destruction; and he attempts to find God through nature. The Inhumanist battles with himself against this involvement with humanity just as Jeffers battles his own involvement in "Meditation on Saviors." Much of the material presented in this poem reinforces the philosophy of the shorter poems and helps to substantiate the ideas presented in the narratives.

[25]The Double Axe, p. 92.

After this vision, the Inhumanist feels that the scientist has made an error in his calculation because he has not "let in the mad old serpent infinity, the double zero that confounds reckoning, in his equation."[26]

The scientist has chosen to follow what Jeffers terms "the vast hungry spirit of the time" which:

> 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.
> It is a fine ambition,
> But the wrong tools. Science and mathematics
> Run parallel to reality, they symbolize it, they squint at it,
> They never touch it:
> "The Silent Shepherds"[27]

Although the scientist has turned away from mankind, he has turned toward the wrong things for he has chosen a kind of knowledge which is not reality and that knowledge will die with him.

While the German scientist has turned away from the state to search for truth in pure science, the Rev. Dr. Barclay in The Women at Point Sur has turned away from the church to search for God in the wilderness. He is searching for the answers to three questions: "First, is there a God and of what nature? Second, whether there's anything after we die but worm's meat?/ Third, how should men live?"[28] In his search for the answers to these questions, he comes close to the type of God which dominates the inhumanist philosophy; he says, "God thinks through

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[26]The Double Axe, p. 94.

[27]The Beginning and the End, p. 48.

[28]The Women at Point Sur, p. 26.

action/ And all this show is God's brain, the water, the cloud yonder,/ The coast hills, thinking the thing out to conclusion."[29] However, he soon loses this concept of God when he tries to focus God's attention on mankind. He reasons that, since "God thinks through action" there are two ways to discover him:

> . . . . gather disciples
> To fling like bullets against God and discover him:
> Or else commit an act so monstrous, so irreparable
> It will stand like a mountain of rock, serve you for fulcrum
> To rest the lever. In vacancy: nothing.
> The Women at Point Sur, p. 33.

As an illustration of the "monstrous" act, he imagines a parallel of the sacrifice of the Aztecs in the festival called Toxcatl when they offered the still beating heart of a human sacrifice to the god of gods. He makes his decision when he asks himself:

> . . . . "What is man? The filthiest of beasts;
> But a discoverer, God sprouted him for the sake of discovery.
> I have voyaged outside the maps, these waters not charted,"
> He said exultantly. Going down the hill a company followed him
> His daughter April among them. "Do you love me, April?"
> "Dearest!" "I am going to war, we must be alone for farewell.
> The people press me. I have taken hold of the future, I see
> the future
> Destructions," he said to the people, he waved his arms, "with
> a flail
> God is smiting."
> The Women at Point Sur, p. 34.

At this point in the poem, Barclay again turns inward toward mankind and begins to imagine that there is a crowd following him; he also commits symbolic incest with his daughter April, an incest which he believes

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[29] Ibid., p. 33. Jeffers, in writing of this poem, says, "Barclay in The Women at Point Sur was finding and identifying himself and the world (emotionally conceived as God) until seduced by desire of disciples and incestuous love, i.e., by letting himself be turned back on humanity." Alberts, op. cit., p. 39.

existed between April and her brother Edward before Edward went away to war. Thy symbolic incest later becomes an actuality when he rapes his daughter.[30]

From the point where he commits symbolic incest, Barclay's religion becomes totally devoid of any standards of right and wrong. When he returns to the Moreland home from this visit to the woods, he tells Mrs. Moreland:

> "I have knowledge and the world is changed. I have power to make
> you believe.
> All that was true when you were a child is rubbed out." . . . .
> "Don't fear. Did I forget to tell you there is nothing wicked
> in the world, no act is a sin?
> Nothing you can do is wicked. I have seen God. He is there in
> the hill, he is here in your body. My...daughter,"
> He said shaking, "God thinks through action, I have watched
> him through the acts of men fighting and the acts of women
> As much as through the immense courses of the stars; all the
> acts, all the bodies; who dares to enclose him
> With this is right and that's wrong, shut his thought with
> scruples, blind him against discoveries, blind his eyes?"
> The Women at Point Sur., p. 37.

The Rev. Dr. Barclay broke out of humanity through breaking out of established religion and morality; however, because of his desire for disciples and power, he simply established another religion or cult. At night alone on the mountain, Barclay's two minds, the sane and the insane, picture to him the God of Inhumanism and the God which he has created. The voice of sanity returned a moment to tell him:

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[30]Jeffers says of this poem, "All past cultures have died of introversion at last, and so will this one, ... I have often used incest as a symbol to express these introversions and used it too often." Alberts, op. cit., p. 38.

> . . . there is one power, you may call it God to the vulgar,
> Exists from eternity to eternity, all the protean phenomena, all
> forms, all faces of things,
> And all the negligible lightnings of consciousness,
> Are made of that power...What did it matter? outside communication
> nowise adorable, not touchable
> But in the minutest momentarily formed and dissolving fractions:
> rock...flesh...phenomena! the unhappy
> Conception closes and circles back to its beginning,
> Nothing discovered in all the vicious circumference.

But his mind with the twist of insane cunning tells him:

> . . . "There is one Power,
> You may call it God to the vulgar. How shall men live
> Without religion? All the religions are dead,
> When it stank you denounced it. You are chosen to found the
> new one,
> To draw from your own fountain the soul of the world.
> The Women at Point Sur, p. 100f.

Barclay, in his search for God outside humanity, became insane and turned to disciples and to power; and, finally, when his followers[31] tired and fell off, "he was dying and he said:/ 'I want creation. The wind over the desert/ Has turned and I will build again all that's gone down./ I am inexhaustible.'"[32]

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[31]In the early part of this poem the followers and April exist only in Barclay's mind. Later in the poem Barclay does attract a following but the group gradually grows smaller until, by the end of the poem, he is alone again.

[32]In writing of this poem, Jeffers says that his intention was " . . . to show in action the danger of that Roan Stallion idea of 'breaking out of humanity,' misinterpreted in the mind of a fool or a lunatic." He also felt that the question of morality expressed in this poem was an important one and that "Tamar seemed to my later thought to have a tendency to romanticize unmoral freedom...That way lies destruction ...often for the individual but always for the social organism, and one of the later intentions . . . . was to indicate the destruction and strip everything but its natural ugliness from the unmorality." Alberts, op. cit., p. 37.

Jeffers presents the individual with a number of choices. He may remain with the flock or the herd and follow the path to destruction; this is the way of the weak and the unthinking. He may choose to deny God and turn to science for total truth as did the German scientist and thus go down into darkness. He may seek to lead mankind and thus be deluded by dreams into insanity. Finally he may follow the way of the inhumanist, and, to Jeffers, this is the only way which leads to understanding. In "The Answer" he says:[33]

> Then what is the answer?--Not to be deluded by dreams.
> To know that great civilizations have broken down into violence,
> and their tyrants come, many times before.
> When open violence appears, to avoid it with honor or choose the
> least ugly faction; these evils are essential.
> 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.

If an individual will love " . . . the wholeness of life and things, the divine beauty of the universe," he will find a measure of peace.[34]

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[33] Selected Poetry, p. 594.

[34] Ibid.

CHAPTER V

THE TRANSHUMAN MAGNIFICENCE

In his definition of Inhumanism, Robinson Jeffers advocates " . . . a shifting of emphasis and significance from man to not-man; the rejection of human solipsism and recognition of the transhuman magnificence."[1] Although the "not-man" aspect of the natural world and the qualities of the human race are clearly discernible in his poetry, he never seems to have clarified even to himself the qualities of his force-deity.[2] Within the framework of a single poem, he may present a deity who is a directing force and one who is disinterested. It is relatively certain that this deity is a duality, present in nature and at the same time existing as a force outside the galaxies. Jeffers' lack of clarity in this respect makes his God-concept difficult to describe; however, it does strengthen the infiniteness of this deity whom the finite mind of man is incapable of presenting or of understanding.[3]

The Rev. Arthur Barclay, who, like Jeffers, searches for the nature of the true deity, poses for himself three questions. Jeffers restates these questions in the first stanza of "Theory of Truth," a philosophical

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[1]See quotation on page 1 above.

[2]In his poetry Jeffers uses two terms which appear to be synonymous, "God" and the "transhuman magnificence"; both of these terms are used to refer to the aspects of the omniscient, omnipotent, and eternal force of the universe.

[3]H. L. Davis calls this Jeffers' thesis that "No man can know the very god." H. L. Davis, "Jeffers Denies Us Twice," Poetry, XXXI (February, 1928), pp. 274-279.

poem, when he writes: "First, is there a God and of what nature? Second, whether there's anything after we die but worm's meat?/ Third, how should men live?"[4]

There can be little doubt that Jeffers answers part one of the first of Barclay's questions with a definite and unqualified "Yes." His definition of his philosophy which is quoted above and many passages in the poetry indicate his firm belief in the existence of a supreme power. In the early section of "The Inhumanist" the central character asks himself, "Does God exist?" and answers his own question:

> " . . . . --No doubt of that" . . . .
> "The cells of my old camel of a body
> Because they feel each other and are fitted together--through
> nerves and blood feel each other--all the little animals
> Are the one man: there is not an atom in all the universe
> But feels every other atom; gravitation, electromagnetism,
> light, heat, and the other
> Flamings, the nerves in the night's black flesh, flow them
> together; the stars, the winds and the people: one energy,
> One existence, one music, one organism, one life, one God;
> star-fire and rock strength, the sea's cold flow
> And man's dark soul."
>
> The Double Axe, p. 53.

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[4]The section quoted is the wording used in "Theory of Truth," (Selected Poetry, p. 614). The original poetry to which Jeffers refers is found in The Women at Point Sur, p. 25; and the wording of the latter passage shows the difficulty which the Rev. Arthur Barclay had in trying to express in exact terminology the qualities of a deity.

> First whether there's any...what the vulgar call God...
> spirit of the universe.
> But spirit's a more contaminated word than the other. Life,
> then, one life
> Informing...no, being: whether it's one being...why this is
> evident.
> Second, is anything left after we die but worm's meat?
> Third, how should men live?

The Inhumanist reasons thus: because there is an interrelation of feeling and function between all things, there is a God. This is reinforced later in the same poem when he tells the German scientist, an atheist, "'You have perhaps heard some false reports/ On the subject of God. He is not dead, and he is not a fable. He is not mocked nor forgotten--/ Successfully . . . .'"[5] Jeffers also addresses God directly in some of the shorter poems and mentions the "transhuman magnificence" in many others.

The nature of Jeffers' God-concept appears to be twofold. In the above poem all things are presented as a part of the one God; God's existence in the universe, therefore, can be perceived by man through the relationship of the aspects of nature within himself and within his environment.[6] It is only through this all-pervasive essence that man can have a knowledge of this deity; but this knowledge can be found only if man is able to understand the natural world, appreciate its beauty,[7] and relate himself to it.

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[5]The Double Axe, p. 93.

[6]Although Jeffers suggests in "Hurt Hawks" that the hawk remembers God, it appears that only mankind, with his potential for intellectual development, can have a full awareness of a deity. Jeffers' thesis in relation to mankind is that man has centered all his intellectual power upon improving the world for the race and has forgotten that man is only a small segment in the overall pattern of the universe. He emphasizes this idea in the final lines of "Theory of Truth" when he says that man cannot know the truth until "The mind has turned its love from itself and man, from parts to the whole." (Selected Poetry, p. 615)

[7]Jeffers does not always use the word "beauty" with its usual meaning and connotation. He frequently uses the word as he does in "Fire on the Hills" (Selected Poetry, p. 359) to denote something which

On defining God to the future children, the Inhumanist tells them, "'There is one God and the earth is his prophet./ The beauty of things is the face of God: worship it;/ Give your hearts to it; labor to be like it.'"[8] Later in the same passage he describes God to them, saying, "' . . . . He is rock, earth and water, and the beasts and stars; and the night that contains them.'" Man, also, is a part of this natural world and, therefore, a part of this deity. Although Jeffers found little in man to admire and much to condemn, he was never able to separate himself from the race because, as he writes in "Meditation on Saviors,"[9]

> Yet I am the one made pledges against the refuge contempt, that
> easily locks the world out of doors.
> This people as much as the sea-granite is part of the God from
> whom I desire not to be fugitive.

Jeffers expresses an even more complex relationship which, he feels, exists between the force-deity and man. The Inhumanist attributes the

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brings about any strong emotional response:

> The deer were bounding like blown leaves
> Under the smoke in front of the roaring wave of the brush-fire;
> I thought of the smaller lives that were caught.
> Beauty is not always lovely; the fire was beautiful, the terror
> Of the deer was beautiful; . . . .

[8]The Double Axe, p. 105f.

[9]Selected Poetry, p. 202. This theme of personal conflict is seen through much of Jeffers' poetry. Although he was able to remove himself physically from the society of mankind, he was never able to forget that man, bloody-minded and cruel though he might be, must, in the context of Jeffers' own philosophy be included as a part of the deity. The entire poem "Meditation on Saviors" is an argument against this feeling of involvement within himself. This theme may also be seen in the final lines of "Cassandra" and in all of "Self-Criticism in February." The Inhumanist is able to escape this involvement because he can kill the man-centered half of himself; but Jeffers was never able to forget the great concern which he had for the human race.

very consciousness through which man has the awareness of all things to this deity saying, "'A conscious God?--The question has no importance. But I am conscious; where else/ Did this consciousness come from? . . . '"[10] Not only does man's consciousness come from God, but Jeffers also states that a part of God's consciousness comes from men and animals.[11]

> The human race is one of God's
> sense-organs,
> Immoderately alerted to feel good and evil
> And pain and pleasure. It is a nerve-ending,
> Like eye, ear, taste-buds (hardly able to endure
> The nauseous draught) it is a sensory organ of God's.
> As Titan-mooded Lear or Prometheus reveal to their audience
> Extremes of pain and passion they will never find
> In their own lives but through the poems as sense-organs
> They feel and know them: so the exultations and agonies
> of beasts and men
> Are sense-organs of God: and on other globes
> Throughout the universe much greater nerve-endings
> Enrich the consciousness of the one being
> Who is all that exists. This is man's mission:
> To find and feel; all animal experience
> Is a part of God's life. . . .

This interrelationship of a part of the deity, man, and nature is, perhaps, best expressed in the final lines of "He Is All" when Jeffers writes, "There is no God but God; he is all that exists, ... God is a man of war,/ Whom can he strike but himself/ God is a great poet:/ Whom can he

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[10] The Double Axe, p. 53.

[11] The Beginning and the End, p. 9f. This selection not only illustrates the unity of God and man but it also seems to justify the use of tragedy in the narratives because the pain of men and animals serves to enrich the experience of the vital force of the universe. He is using tragedy as the Greek poets used it, but he does not introduce the idea of purification from the experience. In "Apology for Bad Dreams" and in "But I Am Growing Old and Indolent," Jeffers indicates that he also uses tragedy as a sacrifice to the beauty of nature.

praise but himself?"[12]

Although Jeffers was able, in his final volume, to say that "All animal experience/ Is a part of God's life" and although he was able to find beauty in the pain and terror of the deer in the earlier "Fire on the Hills," he found acceptance of his own pain-beauty-consciousness thesis difficult in the years before World War II. In "Contemplation of the Sword," dated April, 1938, he describes the horror of war using the sword as his symbol for: "Treachery and cowardice, incredible baseness, incredible courage, loyalties, insanities . . . . Tyranny for freedom, horror for happiness, famine for bread, carrion for children."[13] In this poem he addresses his deity directly:

> Dear God, who are the whole splendor of things and the sacred
> stars, but also the cruelty and greed, the treacheries
> And vileness, insanities and filth and anguish: now that this
> thing comes near us again I am finding it hard
> To praise you with a whole heart.
> I know what pain is, but pain
> can shine. I know what death is, I have sometimes
> Longed for it. But cruelty and slavery and degradation,
> pestilence, filth and pitifulness
> Of men like little hurt birds and animals...if you were only
> Waves beating rock, the wind and the iron-cored earth, the
> flaming insolent wildness of sun and stars,
> With what a heart I could praise your beauty.
> You will not repent, nor
> cancel life, nor free man from anguish
> For many ages to come. You are the one that tortures himself
> to discover himself: . . .
> Be Angry at the Sun, p. 119.

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[12] Ibid., p. 51.

[13] Be Angry at the Sun, p. 118. Jeffers seems preoccupied with the suffering of the human race, particularly with that suffering which is directly brought by other men. Although he uses man's inhumanity to man to achieve much of his tragic effect in the long narratives, many of the shorter poems deal with man's cruelty in such a way as to show the author's sympathy for the victims, especially the innocent.

The apparent aspect of Jeffers' force-deity which is seen in nature and in the consciousness of mankind is accompanied by another aspect which is hidden from man; this is the force which seems to represent the major factor of his God-concept. In "Look How Beautiful" Jeffers describes this hidden aspect as "an infinite energy" when he writes:

> There is this infinite energy, the power of God forever working
> --toward what purpose?--toward none.
> That is God's will; he works, he grows and changes, he has
> no object.
> No more than a great sculptor who has found a ledge of fine
> marble, and lives beside it, and carves great images,
> And casts them down. That is God's will: to make great
> things and destroy them, and make great things
> And destroy them again. With war and plague and horror, and
> the diseases of trees and the corruptions of stone
> He destroys all that stands. . . .
>
> The Beginning and the End, p. 52.

This factor of Jeffers' God-concept is represented as a totally impersonal force creating and destroying without reason or purpose. This is the aspect of God to which the Inhumanist refers when he says, "'Not a tribal nor an anthropoid God./ Not a ridiculous projection of human fears, needs, dreams, justice and love lust.'"[14] For this impersonal God, neither good

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[14] The Double Axe, p. 53. Some of the ambiguity of Jeffers' God-concept is apparent in the passage of this poem which follows the material quoted above. Although Jeffers has said that this is not a God of justice, in the next stanza he attributes the fates of the leaders of Germany to this very deity:

> " . . . . And who, I would say, but God, and a conscious one,
> Ended the chief war-makers with their war, so humorously, such
> accurate timing, and such
> Appropriate ends? The man of vanity in vanity
> Having his portrait painted; the man of violence at violence
> most dire high tide, in the fire and frenzy
> Of Berlin falling."

This deity seems to be taking at least a passing interest in the patterns of behavior of the human race and also to be taking some part in arranging the fates of men. This idea of God's interest in the world is also seen in "Hurt Hawks" (Selected Poetry, p. 198) when the poet writes, "The wild God of the world is sometimes merciful to those/ That ask mercy, not often to the arrogant."

nor evil exists since he does not judge. Jeffers describes him as, " . . . no God of love, no justice of a little city like Dante's Florence, no anthropoid God/ Making commandments: this is the God who does not care and will never cease."[15] In "Intellectuals," this God is pictured as including the sheep with the wolves,[16] and the Inhumanist, meditating on what God wants, says:

> "I see he despises happiness; and as for goodness,
> he says What is it? and of evil, What is it?
> And of love and hate, They are equal; they are two spurs
> For the horse has two flanks. . . . "
> The Double Axe, p. 56.

This disinterested force-deity which is Jeffers' concept of God places man and all of nature on the same level. Such a God-concept negates both the Christ-as-Saviour figure and the Holy Spirit of the Christian Trinity. Since there is, in the eyes of this God, neither rewardable good nor punishable evil, there is no necessity for a plan for individual salvation, therefore, no need for a saviour figure.[17] Since the force-deity is all-pervasive, there is no necessity for a messenger such as the Holy Spirit; the all-pervasive God can serve this function.

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[15] The Beginning and the End, p. 4.

[16] See page 48 above for the text of this poem.

[17] Jeffers uses the saviour image in the poetry, however, to point out the fate of those who fall inward or turn their interest and desires all toward the human race; and he warns against this attitude. This is the theme of "Meditation on Saviors." Christ, one of the major characters in "Dear Judas," is presented as a deluded man, who, loving the people too much, attempts what he believes will be a bloodless revolution against Rome. A part of Christ's delusion, which grew from his mother's explanation of his illegitimate birth, is that the Roman soldiers will lay down their weapons without a struggle. Judas, recognizing these delusions for what they are, betrays Christ to the officials. William P. Johnson writes, "Opposed to the figure of the hermit is that of the 'savior'; of which there are three types: mythical, historical and fictional. Christ is treated as mythical." William P. Johnson, "The 'Savior' in the Poetry of Robinson Jeffers," American Literature, XV (May, 1943), pp. 159-168.

Even though Jeffers presents a force-deity with the two distinct aspects of being a part of all things in the natural world and of having consciousness through the consciousness of men and the natural world, Jeffers seems to feel that these two aspects are unified into one whole and that this whole is composed of all things. Certain of his poems present the idea that this God is a part of all things and that all things are a part of this God. In "The Beginning and the End," he writes, " . . . . --But I believe/ That the earth and stars too, and the whole glittering universe, and rocks on the mountain have life,/ Only we do not call it so-- . . . "[18] Later in the same passage, he completes this idea:

> . . . . So we dream and laugh, clamorous animals
> Born howling to die groaning: the old stones in the dooryard
> Prefer silence; but those and all things have their own awareness,
> As the cells of a man have; they feel and feed and influence each other, each unto all,
> Like the cells of a man's body making one being,
> They make one being, one consciousness, one life, one God.

The Inhumanist expresses the same idea when he says, "'I see that all things have souls. But only God's is immortal.'"[19]

The very nature of this God-concept implies that Jeffers' answer to the second question, "Is there any life after death?" is a negative one. This is substantiated by the lines from "Animalia" when he states that living eternally could not be inflicted nor endured by the chief devil.[20] His only concession to a life after death in this

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[18] The Beginning and the End, p. 7f.

[19] The Double Axe, p. 54.

[20] See page 15 above for the text of this poem.

poem is his statement, "Our consciousness passes into the world's perhaps, but that/ Being infinite can endure eternity."

Some of his poetry seems to indicate that he feels that man becomes a part of the universe after death. Writing to his wife in the epilogue of "Hungerfield," he says:

> . . . . But the ashes have fallen
> And the flame has gone up; nothing human remains. You are
> earth and air; you are in the beauty of the ocean
> And the great streaming triumph of sundown; and 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.
> Hungerfield, p. 23.

The final lines of "The Shears" reinforce this image, "--So we: death comes and plucks us: we become part of the living earth/ And wind and water whom we so loved. We are they."[21]

In answer to Barclay's third question, "How should men live?", Jeffers advocates that an individual must first uncenter himself from society. This uncentering process, for Jeffers himself, involved a physical as well as a philosophical separation from the socially integrated world. In "The Coast-Road,"[22] he writes: "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. . . . " However, he also points out in the same poem, there is a danger from society for these men and this danger lies in their very separation which makes them innocent and unable to deal with the evils

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[21] The Beginning and the End, p. 72.

[22] Such Counsels You Gave to Me, p. 86.

and corruptions of civilization when it does reach them.

Orestes, in "The Tower Beyond Tragedy," avoids incest with his sister when he is able to enter into the life of the forest. Alone, the Rev. Arthur Barclay is able to make a beginning toward finding the truth, but he loses this when he imagines himself disciples. The Inhumanist lives alone for a little while, but the problems of the people who come to the Gore place press in upon him and his contacts with people and with civilization leave him unhappy. At the end of the poem, the Inhumanist, sitting beside a dead man, contemplates the state of the world and says, "'There is . . . no remedy.--There are <u>two</u> remedies./ This man has got his remedy, and I have one. There is no third.'"[23]

Jeffers outlines his idea of the best life for man in the poem "Silent Shepherds":

> What's the best life for a man? To ride in the wind. To ride horses and herd cattle
> In solitary places above the ocean on the beautiful mountain, and come home hungry in the evening
> And eat and sleep. He will live in the wild wind and quick rain, he will not ruin his eyes with reading,
> Nor think too much.
>
> <u>The Beginning and the End</u>, p. 47.

In this poem he also expresses his idea that if there must be philosophers they should be shepherds; that his poets would be lunatics; and that there would be neither lawyers nor constables since every man would guard his own goods.

The uncentering of the individual from society need not be physical, but it must be philosophical. In the final lines of "Theory of Truth," Jeffers points out that the search for truth will be "Foredoomed

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[23]<u>The Double Axe</u>, p. 114.

and frustrate" only "Until the mind has turned its love from itself and man, from parts to the whole."[24] Before an individual can find the truth, he must be able to see mankind and the world in their proper perspective and must be able to recognize the proper place of the race in the pattern of the universe.

In his poetry Jeffers mentions two things which will help the individual to determine his pattern of life after he has separated himself philosophically from the race; the first of these is conscience and the second is integrity.

Jeffers feels that conscience is greatly influenced by the individual's recognition of the place of mankind in the total pattern of the universe. In "New Year's Dawn, 1947," Jeffers expresses his conception of the true guiding conscience:

> . . . . There is no valid authority
> In church nor state, custom, scripture nor creed,
> But only in one's own conscience and the beauty of things.
> Doggedly I think again: One's conscience is a trick oracle,
> Worked by parents and nurse-maids, the pressure of the people,
> And delusions of dead prophets: trust it not.
> Wash it clean to receive the transhuman beauty: then trust it.
> The Double Axe, p. 142.

Lance Fraser's search for expiation in "Give Your Heart to the Hawks," illustrates the folly of trusting conscience before recognizing the transhuman beauty. Lance has been conditioned to expect chastisement for sin by the tenets of his father's religion; therefore, he must have some tangible punishment in order to find absolution for his brother's murder. Since his man-conditioned conscience tells him that the penalty for murder is death, he is driven first to self-castigation and finally

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[24] Selected Poetry, p. 615.

to suicide. For Lance, conscience became a "trick oracle." The Inhumanist must live with his deeds because he knows that the force-deity recognizes neither good nor evil and provides no absolution.

Jeffers uses the word "integrity" to indicate both "wholeness" and "honesty." In the poem "The Answer" he tells the individual:

> Then what is the answer?--Not to be deluded by dreams
> To know that great civilizations have broken down into violence,
> and their tyrants come, many times before.
> When open violence appears, to avoid it with honor or choose the
> least ugly faction; these evils are essential.
> 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.
> To know this, and know that however ugly the parts appear the
> whole remains beautiful. 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. . . .

Jeffers points out here that it is sometimes necessary for the individual to make a choice of the lesser of two evils; and, in so doing, a man must make the choice which compromises him the least. In "Time of Disturbance," he shows how this is necessary in the individual's relation with society:

> The best is, in war or faction or ordinary vindictive life, not
> to take sides.
> Leave it for children, and the emotional rabble of the streets, to
> back their horse or support a brawler.
>
> But if you are forced into it: remember that good and evil are
> as common as air, and like air shared
> By the panting belligerents; the moral indignation that hoarsens
> orators is mostly a fool.
>
> Hold your nose and compromise; keep a cold mind. Fight if needs
> must; hate no one. Do as God does,
> Or the tragic poets: they crush their man without hating him,
> their Lear or Hitler, and often save without love.
> <u>The Double Axe</u>, p. 109.

He ends this poem by saying, "It is better to be silent than make a noise. It is better to strike dead than strike often. It is better not to strike."

Inhumanism is a completely individualistic philosophy. The individual is given freedom of choice, but he must use personal integrity to make his decisions of right and wrong. In several of the poems, Jeffers stresses the need for reason rather than emotion as a basis for choosing a way of life or a course of action. In "Time of Disturbance," Jeffers advocates crushing without hate as the Gods do. In "Contemplation of the Sword," a catalog of the horrors of war, the line "Reason will not decide at last; the sword will decide." is repeated three times. It is the first line of the poem; it ends the first section; and it is used again as the final line of the poem. Although the inhumanist must be merciful and uncorrupted and must not wish for evil, he must also avoid love of the people or other emotional entanglements with the race as a whole. Jeffers seems to indicate that the inhumanist can only keep his own personal integrity by avoiding the emotional entanglements which will unite him with the ambitions and fates of his own society.

In "The Answer," Jeffers uses the word "integrity" to mean "wholeness" as well as to mean "honesty." He says that man apart from the natural world and apart from the total of mankind's history is ugly. This idea that it is the wholeness or unity of all things past, present, and future which goes to make up the beauty of the universe is frequently used in his discussions of this civilization and its coming fate; Jeffers believes that the segments of human history and the individual societies of men are ugly unless they are related to the universal pattern. He ends

the poem "Invasion (written May 8, 1944)" with these lines:

> And this is bitter counsel,
> but required and convenient; for, beyond the horror,
> When the imbecility, betrayals and disappointments become
> apparent--what will you have, but to have
> Admired the beauty? I believe that the beauty and nothing
> else is what things are formed for. Certainly the world
> Was not constructed for happiness nor love nor wisdom. No,
> nor for pain, hatred and folly. All these
> Have their seasons; and in the long year they balance each
> other, they cancel out. But the beauty stands.
> The Double Axe, p. 131.

This beauty which lies in the balancing of all things is more fully expressed in the final lines of "Rearmament":

> . . . . 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.
> Selected Poetry, p. 565.

The beauty of modern man, which can best be seen at a distance, is often difficult for the individual to endure since it involves the balancing of pain and pleasure. Jeffers expresses this need for endurance in his apostrophe to his God in "Contemplation of the Sword," which was quoted above; and in "Praise Life" he indicates that both the pleasure and the pain in life are necessary:

> This country least, but every inhabited country
> Is clotted with human anguish.
> Remember that at your feasts.
>
> And this is no new thing but from time out of mind,
> No transient thing, but exactly
> Conterminous with human life.
>
> Praise life, it deserves praise, but the praise of life
> That forgets the pain is a pebble
> Rattled in a dry gourd.
> Selected Poetry, p. 570.

Realizing the shortcomings of mankind and touched by them,

Jeffers, early in his mature writing, pledges himself, "not to seek refuge, neither in death nor in a walled garden,/ In lies nor gated loyalties, nor in the gates of contempt . . . . "[25] This pledge and Jeffers' concept of the relationship of God and mankind through consciousness make endurance a necessary part of Jeffers' acceptance of himself, of mankind, and of his God. The Inhumanist found that endurance was his answer to the problem of his own relationship with society and says:

> " . . . . Retreat is no good, treachery no good, goodness no good.
> But still remains the endless inhuman beauty of things; even of humanity and human history
> The inhuman beauty--and there is endurance, endurance, death's nobler cousin. Endurance"
>
> The Double Axe, p. 81.

The man who would be a sense organ for God must expect to accept pain and pleasure equally. The Hanged God in "At the Birth of an Age" refers to this as "being" when he says:

> If I were quiet and emptied myself of pain, breaking these bonds,
> Healing these wounds: without strain there is nothing. Without pressure, without conditions, without pain,
> Is peace; that's nothing, not-being; the pure night, the perfect freedom, the black crystal. I have chosen
> Being; therefore wounds, bonds, limits and pain; the crowded mind and the anguished nerves, experience and ecstasy.
>
> Selected Poetry, p. 559.

The inhumanist philosophy does not present the individual with a happy life. The only character who achieves peace is Orestes in "The Tower Beyond Tragedy," and he does this by complete physical, psychological, and philosophical separation. The Inhumanist suffers from his contacts with mankind and from his own human nature as well as from his concern

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[25] Selected Poetry, p. 200.

for the race as a whole. The Rev. Arthur Barclay is unable to find truth because he is unable to make a separation.

Although Jeffers is not able to give a clear definition of his deity,[26] he does indicate that this God is present in all things and an integral part of all things as well as the guiding force of the universe. To this God all things are equally a part of the world and share equal importance. He is, for the most part, disinterested in the fate of individuals except as their experiences provide him with experience. He controls both creation and destruction and uses them without reason. He regards good and evil as equal for he does not judge; he permits pain and pleasure equally for he does not punish.

When anything dies, it returns to the universe of which it is a part. If there is a consciousness within any individual thing, this consciousness returns to the consciousness of God for it has always been a part of this force-deity.

Since his superior brain sets him apart, mankind is the only life

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[26]This lack of clarity in the definition of the nature of the deity is a weakness in Jeffers' philosophy. In considering the large body of the poetry from the publication of Tamar and Other Poems, in 1924, until the posthumous publication of The Beginning and the End, in 1963, there seems to be a development in the God-concept. The early concept of the deity seems to be one which is largely natural; he frequently points out the way to this deity through nature without giving any indication of the type of deity he has in mind. Even in The Women at Point Sur the nature of this deity is largely obscured by the Rev. Dr. Barclay's insanity. The poems written during and after World War II seem to indicate that Jeffers' was trying to clarify, for himself, the nature of his deity; however, he never seems to present this deity in a complete form in any of the poetry. It seems that this God can only be known, and then not fully, by the person who has had the mystical experience of Orestes.

form in the universe in which each individual member has freedom to choose how he will live. In order to live by the inhumanist philosophy, the individual must accept the disinterested, cosmic interpretation of God. Recognizing that each individual is an insignificant part of the natural world and that all things in the universe are equally a part of the force-deity, the inhumanist shapes his life guided by his own conscience and his integrity. He sees in the cycles of nature and of human history the work of his God; accepts the pain and suffering of all things as a necessary part of experience knowing that they balance peace and pleasure; and, while holding himself philosophically separate from the socially integrated world, still retains his sympathy for mankind. In this way the individual becomes more nearly a master of himself and less a slave to the industrialism and scientific advancement which, in the name of progress, now control modern man.

The final lines of "Nova" summarize this idea, and these lines might be termed the Inhumanist's creed:

> . . . . We cannot be sure of life for one moment;
> We can, by force and self-discipline, by many refusals and a few assertions, in the teeth of fortune assure ourselves
> Freedom and integrity in life or integrity in death. And we know that the enormous invulnerable beauty of things
> Is the face of God, to live gladly in its presence, and die without grief or fear knowing it survives us.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The philosophy of Inhumanism is Robinson Jeffers' solution to the problems which faced a changing world in the first half of this century.[1] He was reacting against the technological advances which were bringing about an increasingly interdependent social structure and the scientific advances which were not paralleled by any development in the race's ability to cooperate or even to coexist. He was also reacting against the Christian concepts which place man on a higher level than any other of the life forms and which present a deity with a personal interest in the fate of mankind. The poetry which was published during his mature period, beginning with Tamar and Other Poems in 1924, also reflects his extreme disillusionment with the ideals of the pre-World

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[1]In writing of the poetry of the first half of this century, John Hall Wheelock writes:

> . . . . the temper and mood of a period during which science has undermined many so-called truths, many cherished beliefs. The discoveries of Einstein and the physicists no less than the theories of Freud and Jung were fascinating but unsettling. Upheavals and disruptions on a world scale still further heightened the general bewilderment and disillusion. In the state of shock that followed these and their revelation of the brute potentialities in human nature, the idea of progress, of the perfectibility of man, of his innate goodness, suffered a setback.

John Hall Wheelock, What Is Poetry? (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), p. 52f.

War I period.[2]

The note of pessimism which is found in such early poems as "Woodrow Wilson" (1924) and "Shine Perishing Republic" (1925) increases with the developing crisis in Europe prior to World War II. The line "Reason will not decide at last; the sword will decide."[3] from "Contemplation of the Sword" (1938) reflects his pessimistic attitude toward mankind's ability to settle international problems peacefully. In "Pearl Harbor" (1948), Jeffers compares his own attitudes in the 1920's with his attitude at the time of our entrance into World War II, when he writes:

> Stare, little tower,
> Confidently across the Pacific, the flag on your head. I
> built you at the other war's end,
> And the sick peace; I based you on living rock, granite on
> granite; I said, "Look, you gray stones:
> Civilization is sick: stand awhile and be quiet and drink
> the sea-wind, you will survive
> Civilization."
> But now I am old, and O stones be modest.
> Look, little Tower:
> This dust blowing is only the British Empire; these torn
> leaves flying
> Are only Europe; the wind is the plane-propellers; the smoke
> is Tokyo. The child with the butchered throat
> Was too young to be named. Look no farther ahead.
> The Double Axe, p. 121.

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[2]Frederic I. Carpenter writes of Jeffers' reaction to World War I:

> . . . . This war caused in him an acute psychological crisis which led through a kind of counter-conversion to a sudden literary maturity. After the war, he totally rejected the qualified optimism characteristic of the 1920's. . . .

Carpenter, op. cit., p. 21

[3]Be Angry at the Sun, p. 118.

In the poem "Prophets," in the final volume, Jeffers states that man can never learn to achieve his ends by peaceful means.

Inhumanism presents Jeffers' philosophical solution, his own adjustment to the problems of the modern world. This solution is a completely individual one, and it reflects the author's pessimistic attitude toward the present and the future of the race. Inhumanism, stated in prose, calls for " . . . a shifting of emphasis and significance from man to not-man; the rejection of human solipsism and the recognition of the transhuman magnificence." In "Roan Stallion" he states this premise in poetry:

> Humanity is the
> start of the race; I say
> Humanity is the mould to break away from, the crust to break
> through, the coal to break into fire,
> The atom to be split.
> Selected Poetry, p. 149.[4]

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[4]Commenting on this quotation, Carpenter writes that the analogy between the poet and the atomic scientist lies at the heart of Jeffers' poetry.

> . . . . Like the scientist who is also an agent of God, man may transcend his own human nature and imagine the destruction of humanity, and perhaps learn power and wisdom thereby. The analogy between atomic scientist and tragic poet lies at the heart of Jeffers' poetry. No longer is "the poet" the mere aesthetic observer of sunrises; he becomes a discoverer of psychological truths, and even an agent in the harnessing of human power.

He quotes from a letter written by Jeffers in 1932 which emphasizes this analogy; Jeffers writes, "' . . . . I think one of the most common intentions in tragic stories, from the Oedipus down, is to build up a strain for the sake of the explosion of its release, -- like winding up a ballista.'" To this Carpenter adds, "On the primary level, the tragic poet seeks to create mere explosions of human energy, but he hopes secondarily to illuminate human psychology and history." Carpenter, op. cit., p. 137f.

The prose definition of Inhumanism presents a cosmography made up of three units: man, not-man, and the transhuman magnificence. Although, in the definition, these three seem to be separated, they are, in reality, united through the consciousness of the transhuman magnificence or creative-destructive force which controls the universe. This force, which is totally spirit or essence, can have experience only through its consciousness, which is a part of all things. The images which are used most frequently to express this inter-relationship and inter-dependence of the individual to the universal are the cell's relationship to the body and the atom's relationship to the object of which it is a part.

Man, in this definition, includes all of the species homo sapiens from its beginning to some future end. Jeffers feels that this species came into being through environmental pressures which forced the man-like apes in the northern forests down from the trees. In this new environment, the species lost its security and became the weakest of the ground animals. In order to survive in this new and hostile world, man developed cruel, blood-thirsty traits; but he also developed his present posture and his quick wits. The species homo sapiens is differentiated from all other species by its quick wits and its superior brain.

Although mankind, through the use of this superior brain, has developed scientifically and has built great civilizations, his lack of security and his natural cruelty have made him incapable of controlling his progress; therefore, scientific progress is greatest in periods of

war and destruction, and all of the great civilizations have fallen. Man's need for security, which first led him to build civilizations, has also led him to need religious and political leaders who, being men, sometimes use their followers to gain selfish goals. Because of man's natural tendencies toward cruelty and blood-thirstiness, societies frequently reward their leaders with death. Most individuals do not possess the strength and endurance necessary to stand alone and to make the required decisions; therefore, most individuals remain with the herd or, if they do try the way of individuality, return to the herd.

All past civilizations have gone through a cycle of existence just as all nature goes through a cycle of growth. Past civilizations have risen, developed their potential, and then, because of the characteristics inherent in the race, destroyed themselves through violence or decay. In Jeffers' opinion, the United States is reaching its period of fullest potential. The beginning of the downward spiral, he feels, will be brought about by an increasing involvement with foreign quarrels. Nothing can be done about this pattern of the rise and fall of nations; the only salvation for the individual, he feels, is to accept this cycle of change which is inherent in all things.

Not-man, in Jeffers' definition, includes all of the universe except the species <u>homo sapiens</u> and the creative-destructive force which Jeffers calls the transhuman magnificence. All things, both animate and inanimate, have an awareness and are a part of the consciousness of the transhuman magnificence. The natural world of Jeffers' poetry is not the idealized world of pretty flowers, soft breezes, and bubbling brooks; it

is the storm of the sea against the rocks, the all-consuming fire raging the mountains, and the hawk tearing its prey. Although Jeffers natural world does include both peace and violence, the emphasis is on the violence.

The natural world accepts the peace and violence equally; and this acceptance produces qualities in the aspects of nature which are needed in man. The stones have endured and found quietness; the hawk has his strength and his individuality; the rock accepts its role in weathering to form earth. The things of nature have accepted their roles in the cycle of the universe, they are quiet, free, and enduring. They have found peace. Jeffers emphasizes this in "nightpiece" when he writes:

> . . . . I seem to hear in the nights
> Many estimable people screaming like babies.
> I bite my lips and feel my way to the window,
> Where the moon rakes through cloud, the wind pants like a dog
> and the ocean
> Tears at his shore, gray claws of a great cat
> Slitting the granite. The elements thank God are well enough,
> It is only man must be always wakeful, steering through hell.
> The Beginning and the End, p. 61.

This natural world with its cycles and quiet acceptance is the only tangible representation of the not-man aspect of the transhuman magnificence. The individual who would shift his emphasis from man to not-man must experience a feeling of unity with this natural world. For Jeffers, this experience was a mystical one which occurred when he was helping to build Tor House. Orestes in "The Tower Beyond Tragedy" describes his metaphysical experience as becoming a part of the life of the forest and as becoming a part of each of the natural objects in the forest. Jeffers' poetry indicates a feeling that some type of metaphysical experience is necessary in order that the individual may become totally

aware of the relationship between man and the not-man factor of the world. In this way the individual may learn to see the species in its proper perspective, not as the controlling force of the world but as simply one more division of the vast, visible and invisible universe which is all that exists.

The transhuman magnificence is the force which creates and destroys all things. This force is usually disinterested in the present fate of any person, nation, animal, plant, or universe. It operates with neither reason nor purpose. However, although it controls all things, the transhuman magnificence is also a part of all things. Its essence, or what Jeffers terms consciousness, pervades all that exists. Through this all-pervasive consciousness, this force-deity is able to share all of the experiences of men and animals thus gaining knowledge which it could not otherwise have.

The philosophy of Inhumanism requires that the individual reorganize his thinking by rejecting the present humanistic approach to the world and its problems and, instead, recognize that man is an interactive part of the natural world; therefore, the fate of nature and the fate of the species homo sapiens are irrevocably linked. This is an individual philosophy because each individual must make his own philosophical adjustment and because the metaphysical experience of entering into the natural world is an individual experience. This type of philosophy negates a closely knit social or religious organization. It deprives the individual of the security which the closely knit and organized society provides and forces him to face squarely the responsibility for his own decisions and to accept the consequences of his own acts.

When the individual has separated himself from the closely knit society of which he has been a part, he is able to see the world in a different perspective. When mankind is no longer the beginning and the end of all things, the individual is able to perceive the beauty in the pattern of the whole of the universe.

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