

**DEEP GREEN LITERATURE:  
A STUDY OF ROBINSON JEFFERS'S LAST COLLECTION  
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دراسة في الادب الاخضر القاتم: الديوان الاخير لروبنسون جيفرز

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**المخلص:**

يتناول البحث الحالي قصائد مختارة لشاعر البيئة روبنسون جيفرز من ديوانه الشعري الاخير. وأحد أسباب اختيار شعر جيفرز ليكون موضوع الدراسة هو إهمال القراء وعدم اهتمامهم بقراءة شعره حتى مع ديوانه الشعري البداية والنهاية ومجموعة قصائد أخرى (1963) وذلك بسبب فقدان الشاعر سمعته الادبية بالرغم من فلسفته الايجابية حول البيئة في أواخر القرن العشرين بعدما أصبحت المشاكل البيئية تشكل تهديدا خطيرا على حياة الإنسان والكائنات الحية الأخرى على الأرض.

تهدف الدراسة الى إظهار كيف حاول الشاعر ان يعكس في شعره التدمير المأساوي لبيئة الأرض الناجم عن تفريط الانسان في التركيز على جنون الازدهار التقني والتحذير من آثار التلوث البيئي واستغلال الموارد الطبيعية بشكل مفرط. كما تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى توضيح إيديولوجية الأدب الأخضر القاتم في شعر جيفرز وكيفية استخدام الشاعر لاستراتيجية الأدب الأخضر الداكن أو العميق الذي يدعو إلى إبراز عواقب التمحور البشري على الحضارة المادية والتصدي لها بشكل جذري. وأخيرا تنتهي هذه الدراسة بخاتمة تلخص الاستنتاجات الرئيسية للبحث.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** جنون الازدهار التقني، نظرية "اللاإنسانية"، المركزية البشرية، مقاومة، البداية والنهاية.

## ABSTRACT

The present research studies selected poems from Robinson Jeffers's last collection. One of the reasons for choosing Jeffers's poetry to be the subject of the study is the readers' neglect and their lack of interest in reading his poetry, even with his acclaimed later work *The Beginning and the End and Other Poem Collection* (1963) due to his declined fame, no matter how positively his ecological philosophy is commented in the in the late twentieth century after environmental problems become a serious threat to the human life and the other living things on Earth.

The present study aims to show how Jeffers's poetry mirrors the tragic destruction of the earth's environment, caused by the human excessive emphasis on techno-prosperity mania, warning from the effects of pollution and the excessive exploitation of the natural resources. Also, this study aims to shed light on the purpose of Jeffers's poetry, which is to present reality and intensify the readers' awareness of the natural world, and to show how the poet manipulates the ideology of Deep Green Ecology, which calls for highlighting and radically resisting the consequences of the materially human-centered civilization.

Lastly, this study ends with a conclusion that summarizes the major findings of the research.

**Keywords:** techno-prosperity mania, the theory of "Inhumanism," anthropocentrism, resistance, The Beginning and the End.

## SECTION ONE

### Introduction: Environmental Ethics

The present research devotes a wide space to deal with the Deep Green Ecology, the subject of the study.

Environmental ethics concerns with the moral relationship that connects humans with the natural environment. As a reaction to the human-centered perspective, which situates humans as the only

significant creatures and marginalizes the role of the non-humans, Environmental Movement emerges. In 1972, Arne Naess, a Norwegian philosopher, recognize two types of Environmentalism. One he called Deep Ecology and the other was Shallow Ecology.<sup>1</sup>

Three classes emerge from Shallow and Deep Ecology. They are Dark, Light, and Bright Greens. These groups recognize the anthropogenic problems with the environment in different ways. The primary responsibility of Light and Bright Greens is the environmental protection without seeking bureaucratic reform. They are less interested in overcoming the environmental dilemma than the tools and ideas for overcoming them.<sup>2</sup> Contrary to both Light and Bright Green Ecologist, Deep Green Ecologists think that the environmental predicaments are part of the industrial civilization; therefore, they seek radical political changes.

Deep Green Ecology is **spiritually oriented**. It advocates that human beings and the other living things are just facets to one single elicit truth.<sup>3</sup> Since humanity is an integral part of the earth, human permanence is linked to and is consistent with the rest of the living beings each performing a certain role in the ecosphere. To accept this reality involves reshaping the outlook that believes in the supremacy of the human race over the natural world. This idea is based on the assumption that the more human beings dilate themselves to identify with "others," the more they acquire self-realization.<sup>4</sup>

In 1984, George Sessions and Naess suggested a number of rules to characterize the Deep Ecology Movement. These principles can be summarized as follows: **(1) the welfare of human and non-human lives have intrinsic values by themselves, regardless of the advantage of the non-human things for human intents. (2) Humans have no right to minimize the divergence of the natural life aspects except for satisfying their essential demands. (3) The thriving of human civilizations is congruent with a sturdy decrement in the human population. (4) Human monopolization of the non-human world is excessive. (5) To acknowledge life eminence rather than adhering to a costly living standard. (6) All patterns of life have the right to live, which is a universal right, and no single species has the right to live at the expense of the other species.**<sup>5</sup>

Deep Green Ecologists advocate Gandhi's ideas about nonviolence and anti-human strategies. Murray Bookchin criticizes the anthropocentrists and David Foreman in particular for embracing anti-human strategies, like violence against the Third World, population reduction, wars and the contention that "the best thing would be to just let nature seek its own balance, to **let the people there just starve** [emphasis added]."<sup>6</sup> The ecologists, Bookchin and Warwick Fox warn critics not to perpetrate the misconception of "misplaced misanthropy," that is, Deep Green Ecology is not misanthropic, and it does not justify starvation or wars committed against the Third World.<sup>7</sup> Some influences of Deep Green Ecology are the book *Silent Spring* (1962) by Rachel Carson.<sup>8</sup>

According to M. Oak, the field of environmental philosophy is complicated by various subdivisions in terms of ethical perceptions. Among these precepts are ecocentrism and anthropocentrism. They are two opposing perspectives on humans and their ability to affect the

1 Stephen Emmott, "Humans: The Real Threat to Life on Earth," *The Guardian*, 30 Jun 2013, [www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/jun/30/stephen-emcott-ten-billion](http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/jun/30/stephen-emcott-ten-billion) Accessed 24 Dec. 2017.

2 Julie Newman, and Paul Robbins (eds.), *Green Ethics and Philosophy: An A-to-Z Guide* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications Inc., 2011), 39; Paul C. Stern, Oran Young, and Daniel Druckman (eds.), *Global Environmental Change: Understanding the Human Dimensions* (Washington: National Academy Press, 1992), 46.

3 Stern, Young, and Druckman, 67.

4 Emmott.

5 *Anarchist Library*, "Basic Principles of Deep Ecology," 9 Jan. 2011, [theanarchistlibrary.org/library/arne-naess-and-george-sessions-basic-principles-of-deep-ecology](http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/arne-naess-and-george-sessions-basic-principles-of-deep-ecology) Accessed 25 Oct. 2017.

6 Murray Bookchin, "Social Ecology versus Deep Ecology: A Challenge for the Ecology Movement," *Green Perspectives/Anarchy Archives: Newsletter of the Green Program Project*, No. 4-5 (Summer 1987) [dwardmac.pitzer.edu/AnarchistArchives/bookchin/socecovdeepeco.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/AnarchistArchives/bookchin/socecovdeepeco.html). Accessed 30 Nov. 2017.

7 Michael E. Zimmerman, "Rethinking the Heidegger-Deep Ecology Relationship," *Environmental Ethics*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Fall 1993): 211.

8 Emmott.

environment. Ecocentrism and anthropocentrism emerge partly from nature vs. civilization conflict. The word anthropocentrism, a human-centered ethics or human superiority complex, is an ethical point of view that emphasizes the superiority of humankind. Advocates of anthropocentrism appreciate nature in terms of its potential intrinsic value for human cohabitation. Anthropocentrists advocate the biblical belief that humans are the center of the creation, that humans are made in God's image, and that people are given dominion over all other creatures. Alternatively, non-anthropocentric ethics emerges, including ecocentrism.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, Aldo Leopold conceptualizes ecocentrism stating that all species are interrelated with the life cycle and are subject to the evolutionary process. The term ecocentrism implies a nature-centered world as opposite to human-centered. It enhances the inherent value to all living beings, regardless of their advantage to humans, and it attributes the huge alteration in the balance of nature to humans' greediness that causes many environmental crises.<sup>2</sup>

Stan Rowe defines ecocentrism as a value-shift from "Homo sapiens to planet earth."<sup>3</sup> Thus, Ecocentrists do not concentrate on the organism of the environment, but they consider earth the life-axis of which humans are marginal parts. Earth is all. Ecocentrism lies in the belief that the whole ecosphere is more consecutive and quondam than time," and that environment is not found to be monopolized entirely by man; it is rather "inventive life-giving matrix."<sup>4</sup> Environmental literature is a reaction to the impact of the techno-industrial progress on the collective consciousness of human self-importance. The climate changes and the global heat retention mark the human destructive greediness for power and the triumph of the cosmic laws in the end.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, the perpetual techno-industrial progress that becomes the basic religion of the modern world seems to be a mere disillusionment. Wars as well as the rising of the environmental crises makes Robinson Jeffers's prophetic visions become true. Hence, Jeffers's theory of "Inhumanism" becomes a focus of attention after the environmental problems that are caused by the techno-industrial progress. As a reaction to human-centered perspectives, which situate humans as the only significant creatures and marginalize the role of non-humans such as animals and planets, Robinson Jeffers's theory of "Inhumanism" emerges.

## SECTION TWO

### Robinson Jeffers's Philosophy of "Inhumanism"

Jeffers's philosophy of "Inhumanism" provides a key to understanding many of his poems. From his early life the poet, Robinson Jeffers (1887–1962), showed his iconoclast predisposition to anthropocentrism and questioned the feasibility of ecocentrism in his theory of "Inhumanism." Having been an iconoclast environmentalist poet, Jeffers refutes fake modernity and criticizes the cultural sterility of the Modern Age through his resistance of anthropocentrism or the so-called humanism trying to find out a strong basis for his poetry.

Jeffers invents the term "inhumanism," to reveal his rejection of the anthropocentric conviction that humankind is self-conceited and uncaring about the beauty of the universe. Jeffers's theory provides keen illustrations about the atomic bomb, World Wars I & II, and the expected future of Western civilization. It deals with the environmental problems, and it is later evolved into a "scientific

1 A. Williamson, "Hurt Hawks and the Balance of Man and Nature," *Jolene P. Brown Essays Blog*, June 2009, [jolenebrownessays.blogspot.com/2009/10/enl-168-hurt-hawks-and-balance-of-man.html](http://jolenebrownessays.blogspot.com/2009/10/enl-168-hurt-hawks-and-balance-of-man.html) Accessed 6 Nov. 2017.

2 Alan Drengson, "Some Thought on the Deep Ecology Movement," *Foundation for Deep Ecology*, [www.deepecology.org/deepecology.htm](http://www.deepecology.org/deepecology.htm). Accessed 25 Oct. 2017.

3 Stan J. Rowe, "Ecocentrism: The Chord that Harmonizes Humans and Earth," *The Trumpeter*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (1994):106,107.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

pantheism." Jeffers believes that transcending the environmental problems require human concerns to de-emphasize themselves in favor of the absolute whole.<sup>1</sup>

The poet shares the ideology of Deep Green Ecology, which believes that there is a demand for radical modifications in human experiences and lifestyle, and that only a massive global effort as wartime ferocity can manage a controlled descent from industrial civilization's extravagance to establish a more sustainable society.<sup>2</sup> His ecological philosophy is misunderstood due to the commanding lead of jingoism during World War II and due to his disavowal of religion, and anthropocentrism.

Largely critical of the U.S. policy, Jeffers's poetry receives the lack of acceptance from the Random House publishing company. The general literary trend at that time attacks his ideas directly and diminishes his reputation. According to Robert Boyers, the ferocity of the critical reaction against Jeffers began to set in after the end of World War.<sup>3</sup> Because of his denunciation of war and his resistant dissent to the United States' policy of entering World War II, Jeffers's fame plummets and his poetry has been rejected by some of the most famous publishing houses such as Random House. However, it begins to revive along with the emergence of the Deep Green Ecological Movement in the late twentieth century.

Jeffers thinks that humans need self-sacrifice to release themselves from their excessive, narcissistic desires. In this sense, Jeffers's inhumanism and Schopenhauer's pessimism are identical in assuming that desire dominates humans. As for the first attendant factor, Jeffers suggests that humans' excessive desire leads to their eventual disastrous collapse. For instance, Rachel Carson shows that so long as humans occupy the peak of the chain of food, exposition to chemical products significantly increases. Hence, chemicals that are stored in the human tissues stack over time unfavorably affecting health.<sup>4</sup> The poet believes that human selfish desires will drive the human race to self-destruction. He Investigates the human depth as part of nature itself and suggests a solution for the crisis of modern civilization by concentrating on a radical ecological view of war and resisting the tyrannical side of humanity.<sup>5</sup>

Like Louis Althusser, Jacks Derrida, Michal Fauclt, and Stephen Jay Gould, Jeffers recognizes the core of the universe revealing it in his poetry. Jeffers depends in his deep green ecological philosophy on an awareness of the charming nature and wholeness of the universe, and on the assumption that humankind is not the central axis of the universe; rather it stands by itself since the beginning of the creation and will not be affected by the absence of humankind.<sup>6</sup> The poet declares the divinity of nature, the regenerative violent cycle of life, and the inconsequential task that humanity has to play in the drama of survival.<sup>7</sup>

Influenced by the modern theories of psychology (Freud and Jung, Frazer and Harrison), mythology and cultural anthropology, the knowledge Jeffers has gained underlay his theory of "Inhumanism," in which he condemns anthropocentrism, which frantically clings to the false conscious perception of a human-centered cosmos. The poet believes that an essential condition of freedom and of indispensable sanity is to turn outward from human-centeredness to the vast universe and the inexhaustible beauty

1 Robert Hass (ed.), *Rock and Hawk: A Selection of Shorter Poems by Robinson Jeffers* (New York: Random House, 1987), 488.

2 Rowe, 107.

3 Robert Boyers, "A Sovereign Voice: The Poetry of Robinson Jeffers," *The Sewanee Review*, Vol. 77, No. 3 (1969): 2.

1- 4 *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Deep Ecology," Wikimedia Foundation, 5 Oct. 2017, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bright\\_green\\_environmentalism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bright_green_environmentalism). Accessed 16 Nov. 2017.

5 Geon-Geun Lee, "Pessimism's Aid to Robinson Jeffers's Inhumanism," *Journal of International Culture*, Vol. 9-1 (2016): 19, 20, 24, 27, 28.

6 John Michael Greer, "The Falling Years: An Inhumanist Vision." *Dark Mountain Project*, issue 1, summer 2010, [dark-mountain.net/stories/books/book-1/the-falling-years-an-inhumanist-vision/](http://dark-mountain.net/stories/books/book-1/the-falling-years-an-inhumanist-vision/). Accessed 30 Nov. 2017.

2- 7 Arthur Coffin, "Modern American Poetry: Robinson Jeffers' Life and Career," *American National Biography* (New York: Oxford UP, 1999), 34.

beyond humanity.<sup>1</sup> According to Jeffers, most people are blind to the outer world especially people who are dependent upon the modern conveniences, such as technological inventions. The poet suggests that human race has to think maturely not like "an egocentric baby or insane person," and that human decentralization is neither misanthropic, nor falsehood; rather, it is a means to maintain sanity. He advises humankind not to be self-obsessed and to think with a reasonable detachment because such conduct neutralizes man's fanaticism and satisfies his need to rejoice in beauty.<sup>2</sup> From his perspective, humans are neither superior to other beings, nor essential to the universe. Individual maturity begins with letting go self-regard that concentrates on the human ego. Jeffers admits that the entire human potency is wasted inwardly at a time when humanity must turn its awareness to the outside world.<sup>3</sup>

Not only environmental crises that are caused by the industrial society but also the brutal World War I & II is another reason that makes Jeffers opposes the war carnage and considers war a reflection of inhumanity. War becomes a form of inhumanity that influences Jeffers's poetry.<sup>4</sup> In his theory, Jeffers demonstrates his belief in the integrity of the universe and the splendor of its living beings, saying that the celestial beauty of the universe represents the utmost biotic entirety of life of which man is only a fragment.<sup>5</sup> Jeffers believes that man is neither a primary axis, nor a prerequisite for the universe.

Neither the happiness of man, nor his crimes are essential to the existence of the greater self of nature.<sup>6</sup> Glaser Kirk states that human beings must be rooted out from their conventional phantasies of centrality, self-conceit, and persistence. In addition, Jeffers says that the only condition of being a valuable human is to betray reason and deny instinct.<sup>7</sup>

Jeffers believes that man has to "uncenter" himself and this requires self-sacrifice. The act of self-sacrifice means choosing the pain arising from the violence inherent in all being—for the sheer ecstasy found in the unending discovery of new forms of being and beauty."<sup>8</sup> Part of this "uncentering" process is to die an awful death or undergo a kind of horrible violence, which is a sign that reflects Jeffers's philosophy. Much of Jeffers' poetry alerts the readers to the danger of human self-centeredness. He explains that "Inhumanism" encompasses a switching of emphasis from human to the nonhuman.

### SECTION THREE

#### The Beginning and the End and Other Poems Collection

Like other iconoclast writers, Robinson Jeffers's works suffered from neglect, which led the readers to step down from reflecting on his literary works. Among these literary works exposed to neglect are Jeffers's last collection, *The Beginning and the End and Other Poems Collection* (1963), including 48 poems divided into four series in addition to three uncollected poems.

The poem, "The Beginning and the End," (*The Root of All Things*, Series I) presents a conspicuous example of Jeffers's philosophy of "Inhumanism." While his early works are austere and naturalistic, Jeffers's later works are philosophical. The poet's growing philosophical opinion culminates in his *The Beginning and the End and Other Poems Collection*.

In iconoclastic tone, Jeffers personifies the earth in its revolution against the inhuman world of man like an angry volcano whose "molten metal" bursts rigidly from the bottom of earth furious at the civilization of man. The poet describes the angry Mother Earth, leaving the world with the rest of the planets and their lord the sun: "The unformed volcanic earth, a female thing/Furiously following with

1 Greer.

2 Williamson.

3 Charlotte Du Cann et.al. (eds.), *Walking on Lava: selected works for uncivilized times* (New York: Dark Mountain Project, 2017), 44.

4 Coffin.

5 Williamson.

6 Greer.

7 Lee 28; Robinson Jeffers, *The Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*, Tim Hunt (ed.) (New York: Random House, 2001), 633.

8 Lee, 29; qtd in Robert Brophy, *Robinson Jeffers, Dimensions of a Poet* (New York: Fordham UP, 1995), x vi.

the other planets/ Their lord the sun" ("The Beginning and the End," 1-3). Jeffers predicts the end of the universe because of the industrial capitalism describing a world that is sterile and lifeless stripped of any form of life. It is a world where planets, galaxies, and animals do not exist. He assimilates anthropocentrism to patriarchy. They are both validated by the same "conceptual logic," that is, both anthropocentrism and patriarchy support domination over women and nature.<sup>1</sup> By chemic-industrial progress, environment is polluted and no "blithe air" is left, rather "[m]en breathe and live, but marsh-gas, ammonia, sulphured hydrogen" ("TBE," 9-11). For Jeffers, environmental pollution is a manifestation of male domination. Man attempts to impose his will on the world by persuading others to see the world as he sees it. Truth, reasoning, and morality are just a reflection of male domination.

As a supporter of Deep Green Ecology, Jeffers defies the idea of man's domination over the universe. Like the Greek philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, Jeffers thinks that patriarchal power is destructive. It includes war, anthropocentrism, religious and political powers, etc. While Nietzsche praises the "free spirits" that struggle to be free from the prejudice of others and to inquire their own presumptions,<sup>2</sup> Jeffers considers nature as a woman-earth figure adorning "her beautiful skin" with "basalt and granite" ("TBE," 5) while the lighter components float over her surface. He assimilates the atmosphere of earth to the female emotions as a symbol of life and magnifies the status of woman describing her emotional nature as a fount of life. Without women and earth, man will encounter the nothingness of life. Earth is the spiritual side, the yin, the moon, and the female.

However, in his late poems, Jeffers reaches to a state of reconciliation with human civilization accepting the fact that the devastation caused by man is only a loop within the circle of life: "the stallion, /Screaming for life in the womb; her atmosphere/ Was the breath of her passion" ("TBE," 7-9). Like Yin-yang in Daoist philosophy, the poet describes the sun's adoration to the earth: "The sun heard her and stirred" ("TBE," 14). Without the elements of nature, nothing remains just a vacuous circle. Like women, the birth givers, the earth will be regenerated once again. Like the first screams launched by a newly born infant after being released from its mother's womb, life will be renewed in a cyclic movement going back to where it has ended. A new life will be regenerated as water when generated from clouds, salt from the sea, nitrogen from ammonia, and carbon from methane:

[T]hence life was born,  
Its nitrogen from ammonia, carbon from methane,  
Water from the cloud and salts from the young seas,  
It dribbled down into the primal ocean like a babe's urine.  
("TBE," 18-22)

As the element of nitrogen enters organically into the structure of all living tissues, mainly amino acids and proteins as well as nucleic acids, methane gas (resulting from the human and industrial waste) increase the rate of global warming putting all forms life at a very high risk. Methane has the potential to heat the atmosphere twenty-five times more than carbon dioxide and has a very negative effect on the ozone layer. It can displace oxygen, causing suffocation to any living organism.<sup>3</sup> Like the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, Jeffers thinks that a material world that is based on competition and violence against others will be crushed and the universe will return to its starting point: "Such poison as our remembering bodies return to/When they die and decay and the end of life/Meets its beginning"("TBE," 12-13). Hence, whenever life reaches its summit, it will transform into the opposite caliber, that is, fruits that sprout in summer and become entirely ripe (yang movement) will produce seeds and die in winter in a perpetual cycle. The bloom of the top needs light, while the roots springs

1 D. R. Keller, and Golley F.B., *The Philosophy of Ecology: From Science to Synthesis* (Georgia: Georgia UP, 2000), 6.

2 Paul Franco, *Nietzsche's Enlightenment: The Free-Spirit Trilogy of the Middle Period* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 2011), 86.

3 Environmental Protection Agency, "Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Understanding Global Warming Potentials," 14 Feb. 2017, [www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/understanding-global-warming-potentials](http://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/understanding-global-warming-potentials). Accessed 30 Nov. 2017.

in darkness.<sup>1</sup> All assets and creatures begin and end with God. The poet depicts the smooth flow of the universe and its return to its origin of existence. Human reproduction and human multiplicity will recede. The assets will revert to the "one cell" from which "[a]ll living things" had been made:

For after a time the cells of life  
Bound themselves into clans, a multitude of cells  
To make one being—as the molecules before  
Had made of many one cell. ("TBE," 49-51)

The chlorophyll absorption of the sunlight is a form of life "cradled in peace" ("TBE," 54). Jeffers reaches to a belief that the interaction of nature and man, in spite of the corruption wrought by man that "thick[ens] air with fierce lightnings" ("TBE," 15), gives birth to things. Stan Rowe assumes that humans are inseparable from the inorganic/organic environment. They are molecules and waves, body and spirit, in the context of Earth's ambient vivacity.<sup>2</sup> Birth and death, yin and yang, man and nature, are bound together as parts of one whole.

The conception of the deterioration of the human race has been potent in literature, both ancient and modern. While Prometheus' attestation in Aeschylus' play rests upon the belief in gradual stages from barbarity to civilization,<sup>3</sup> Jeffers reviews the process of the creation of the first molecule, not of a human body, but of a capitalist world that is established on the nuclear bombs and germinal power. Jeffers denounces human cruelty and violence against non-humans, among individuals, and among nations. He reflects on the cruelty of war especially the two main wars of World War I and World War. He criticizes violence and anomalies of the inhuman patriarchal civilization affirming that all wars and mass destruction are done for the benefit of sadist prostituting authorities using the lashes of violence and sadism to pursue their own interests: "Her thick air with fierce lightnings and flagellations/ Of germinal power, building impossible molecules, amino-acids/And flashy unstable proteins" ("TBE," 15-18).

The title of the poem suggests that it reviews the story of the beginning and the end of the universe, but the reader will be shocked to discover that the poem is about the threatening impacts of the nuclear world on man as well as on nature. Nuclear and germ warfare have not only killed millions of people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but have also poisoned the natural environment. They have made the natural growth of the organic molecules "impossible" leading to congenital malformations and diseases. Jeffers will not talk about how the human body is biologically created, rather, he relates a story about the creation of "flashy unstable proteins" ("TBE," 18) of the industrial world. He goes further when he underestimates the human race confirming that even if man reaches the peak of scientific advancement he is vainly trying to clone the life "impossible molecules" and "flashy unstable proteins," ("TBE," 16,18) and is vainly trying to reach the perfection of the Creator. The poet describes the stages of the industrial society progress as a germ or a fetus arising from a cell in the womb of its mother. The industrial society, in the eyes of the poet, is a starch of toxic molecules lethal to life in all its forms. This protein molecule is "[c]hemically growing" passing through abnormal chemical stages until it becomes a virus instead of becoming a cell:

In the inordinate molecule become unbearable—  
That is to say, growing and reproducing themselves, a  
virus  
On the warm ocean. ("TBE," 24-28)

The poet predicts deadly destruction the modern man will bring to himself and to all forms of life because of his excessive, irrational self-indulgence in materialism and wars so that even civilization becomes a germ threatening nature and human life. Therefore, the poet urges man to control his

1 Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia, s.v. "Yin and Yang," Wikimedia Foundation, 18 Nov. 2017, [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yin\\_and\\_yang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yin_and_yang) . Accessed 16 Nov. 2017.

2 Rowe, 107.

3 Mark Pomorford, and Robert J. Lenardon, *Classical Mythology*, Seventh edition (Ohio: Oxford UP, Inc., 1999), 56.

extravagant greediness and not impose his power in the universe. The poet approaches a scientific problem in a poetic way when he assimilates civilization and man's techno-development mania to a virus that will increase its risk as it gathers to form a cell enclosing itself by a wall to be fortified from outside danger: This virus now

Must labor to maintain itself. It clung together  
Into bundles of life, which we call cells,  
With microscopic walls enclosing themselves  
Against the world. ("TBE," 31-35)

For Jeffers, man is a mere weak virus " that is [b]eing nothing but a dirty scum on the sea, /Dropped from foul air" ("TBE," 38-39). He warns the man-centered society when man transcends his limits, it will become impossible for him to understand himself and the universe: "And the passionate human intelligence/Straining its limits, striving to understand itself and the/universe to the last galaxy—" ("TBE," 41-44). However, these lines might also refer to the end of life (the dark side of Yin), which is necessary for the coming of a new life (Yang). The poet-geologist postulates that all the elements of the universe including the human genus are subject to the law of evolution. He predicts climatic changes that result from residues of techno-chemical progress:

Time and the world changed,  
The proteins were no longer created, the ammoniac at  
mosphere  
And the great storms no more. ("TBE," 29-31)

Humankind "must labor to maintain itself" and thinks how to restore the natural balance to the universe; otherwise, the human race would become extinct like a virus that will disappear and become extinct one day. Jeffers agrees with Nietzsche in his somber view of humanity, while agreeing with Lucretius in his admiration for the beauty of nature specifically in his poem "De Rerum Natura."<sup>1</sup> Some of the Greek philosophers as well as Lucretius, the Roman poet of Epicureanism, provide a penetrating account of the human evolution that is astoundingly modern in many of its details.<sup>2</sup> Like Lucretius, who broke the conventions of both content and style in his poem "De Rerum Natura," Jeffers tries to find a rational explanation for the natural episode of life: "What is this thing called life" ("TBE," 65) through an investigation of its causes:

*Flammantia moenia mundi*, Lucretius wrote,  
Alliterating like a Saxon—all those Ms mean majesty—  
The flaming world-walls, far-flung fortifications of being  
Against not-being. ("TBE," 45-48)

In the quotation above, Jeffers borrows the phrase "Flammantia moenia mundi" from Lucretius' poem "De Rerum Natura." Nature in Greek (physis) and Latin (natura) means the nature of something. The poem "De Rerum Natura" means "on the Nature of Things," that is, the natural world. "Flammantia moenia mundi" means the blazing walls of the world or the borders that separate the space and the world where man lives. Blazing because of the sun, which flies, as the Greek believed, over the sky. Hence, Jeffers believes that the spirit of man is capable of smashing the boundary that the body cannot override and "travel[s]" into space and discover the mystery of nature. Therefore, the capacity of the poet's mind reigns, as he crosses the boundless sphere in both his intellect and imagination to trespass the inflammatory boundaries of the world.<sup>3</sup>

1 Giulia Bonasio, "The Transgressive Notion of the Sublime in Lucretius' De Rerum Natura," Journal of the LUCAS Graduate Conference, No. 4(2016):64.

2 David Konstan, "Epicurus," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall 2016 Edition, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), [plato.stanford.edu/entries/epicurus/](http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/epicurus/). Accessed 17 Nov. 2017.

3 Ibid., 75-76.



Like Lucretius, Jeffers chooses the approach of the "scientific-poetic sublime"<sup>1</sup> to explicate the cosmos. Rational reasoning combines the poetic creativity and imagination. Jeffers raises several philosophical questions related to existence. He believes that all living things have life and recognition as a man, but it is difficult for man to comprehend this: "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—I speak of the life" ("TBE," 65-68). Nature dedicates life and consciousness equally to all the creatures, thus, the poet denies the intellectual reasoning to be a privilege for man to rise him upon other creatures:

how do these things grow  
 From a chemical reaction?  
 I think they were here already.  
 I think the rocks  
 And the earth and the other planets, and the stars and  
 galaxies  
 Have their various consciousness, all things are conscious;  
 .....  
 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. ("TBE," 71-92)

The poet believes in the coexistence of nature before the creation of man. Joy and pain, love and grudge, peace and terror, that distinguish man from other creatures result from a "chemical energy," which is a manifestation of nature and thus man must show his gratitude and respect to nature. According to Jeffers, consciousness does not offer a privilege or uniqueness to man. The poet criticizes anthropocentrism describing the "clamorous" ("TBE," 83) human-centered world as a noisy hypocrite world where man likes light to be shed on him.

In a hilarious voice, Jeffers criticizes the inconvenience caused by the techno-industrial development. The human species, for him, are "clamorous animals" who are "born howling" and "die groaning," and therefore they have to learn humility and grandeur from "the old stones in the dooryard," which "prefer silence" ("TBE," 83-86). The poet wonders: "Whence came the race of man?" ("TBE," 93). To reach the scientific-poetic sublime, the poet is looking for an answer to that question; nevertheless, he approaches the scientific theory of Evolution by Charles Darwin poetically relying on his creativity and imagination. After a "change of climate killed the great northern forests," starvation assaults the "manlike apes" forcing them to descend down from the tops of trees to search for food and thus the carnivorous animals like "[t]iger and panther and the horrible fumbling bear and endless wolf-packs," ("TBE," 93-102) including the human species, emerge. The poet assimilates man to the carnivorous animals. He acclimatizes to the natural circumstances and walks erect so that he can fight, "as the bear rises to fight/So man does always" ("TBE," 105-106). The need for survival stimulates man to discover fire and use weapons.

In "To the Story-Tellers" (*Memoranda*, Ser. III), Jeffers describes man as an "illogical," "amazing animal" (1, 14) who may murder his love and feast his foe. The covetousness of man and his extravagant consumption of everything are "beyond use or cause, and suddenly spendthrift flings all possessions" ("To the Story-Tellers," 6-7). According to Lucretius, greediness and lustfulness push men to transcend the limits of law intriguing crime to reach the summit of power; however, these

<sup>1</sup> The scientific-poetic sublime is a way of thinking and writing characterized by an approach to nature and the cosmos that combines the scrupulous and curious eye of the scientist with the insight of the poet to interpret nature or what Lucretius considers to be the marvels of the universe (quoted in Pomorford and Lenardon 165).

negative instincts of man are fed by the phobia of death.<sup>1</sup> Modern man, who is driven by the material-possession sanity, and rage "will deny known truth" ("To the Story –Tellers," 13). His lunacy is "under the skin/ To the deep bone" ("TS–T," 5-6). Jeffers dedicates his poem to the human race, "the spoilers," who destroy themselves for no reason, and who crawl hopelessly for life when death "stinks" their bodies ("TS–T," 13, 14).

In "Believe History" (*Memoranda*, Ser. III), the poet visualizes the violence of man through different images such as castration, murder, and crucifixion: "Through such violence, such horrors/ We have come and survived time" ("BH," 6-7). He attributes this world of "horrors" and evil to Satan: "It came from the Devil and will go to the Devil, / The old Norman said " ("BH," 8-9). Jeffers observes human civilization as deteriorated and corrupt compared to the clean, delightful wilderness. That he has witnessed the two World Wars, the poet expresses his cynicism about the destructive tendencies of civilization and goes further when he reverses the theory of evolution by Charles Darwin stating that human beings are not "the ape's children," but they are "the Devils": the fire–deaths, the flaying alive" ("BH," 2). Since the time of the first murder committed on earth, man has faced the "dream of death. /Therefore man has these dreams, /And kills out of pure terror" ("TBE," 103-104). While the primordial man kills "in his desperate need" and becomes "cruel and bloody-handed and quick-witted" to survive "against all odds" ("TBE," 108-110), the civilized man kills because of his love of power and excessive desires. Hence, man is born out of torment and agony: "[T]he race of man was made by shock and agony" ("TBE," 113-114).

Jeffers rejects using the language of violence to describe the massacres committed by man. He criticizes the writers who resort to the brutal and bloody language to be a standard for grandeur in their literary works. Because of the human violence and chaos that engulfed the universe, the poet undergoes a state of religious doubt and refutes what is said in *Hebrews 2:7*: "You made him a little lower than the angels; You crowned him with glory and honor."

The poet goes further and regrets the creation of the blemished man. Religions make man live in a state of "trembling" 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" ("TBE," 127-133). It is evident that the poet is influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of "Transvaluation." Nietzsche perceived the Christian civilization to be oppressive and hostile to life describing Christianity as poisonous, secret, subterranean, and as the immortal blemish of humankind.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, Jeffers rejects Christianity and all organized religions as well as political leaders in general. The poet thinks that his pantheistic view of the natural world will make him in a direct bond with God. The poet exaggerates in his vitriolic criticism when he blames the Creator for the misdeeds done by man. According to Jeffers, "the human race is one of God's sense-organs, / Immoderately alerted to feel good and evil/ And pain and pleasure" and therefore the sensory organ of man is a "sensory organ of God's" ("TBE," 137-140,142). In "Let Them Alone" (*Memoranda*, Ser. III), the poet declares that the true believers in God are not anthropocentrists but the individuals who have stripped themselves of greediness, cruelty, and selfishness, and those who consider all creatures occupy the same status of importance and their role is no less important than the role of man. The poet considers all humankind as "spoilers," but he excludes the "story-tellers, novelist, poet and playwright" as the only men who have awareness and deep perception, and who can understand the vast universe without borders because they work in the "free field[s]" of literature and arts where " [t]here are no fences" ("TS–T," 15, 16-17).

The poet thinks that poetry is capable of portraying "extremes of pain and passion" of animals and humans alike, which cannot be conceived in real life. However, through his "poems as sense-organs," the readers can feel and recognize the jubilations and pains of beasts and men ("TBE," 145-

1 Bonasio 72.

a. 2 Dominic Clifford, "Nietzsche: The Transvaluation of All Values," *Dominicana Journal*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (Summer 1960): 153.

147). Hence, the poet equates nonhuman to human, both are the "sense-organs of God" ("TBE," 158). For the poet, animals share with man feelings, thinking and life—all these lives pour into the Divine life of the Creator: "[T]his is man's mission: / To find and feel; all animal experience/Is a part of God's life" ("TBE," 151-153). Therefore, the poet does not deny the possession of the nonhumans of perception and awareness, a thing science has not discovered yet because man cannot grasp the idea that the world does not exist to be human-centered. However, the future may prove whether Jeffers is right or wrong in his hypothesis. Only in case that man accepts this fact, "he would be balanced and neutral/ As a rock on the shore" ("TBE," 153-154).

Moreover, the poet believes in the existence of another globe, where man is not the main axis, inhabited by more conscious and intellectual creatures than humans: "[A]nd on other globes/Throughout the universe much greater nerve-endings" ("TBE," 148-149). All the worlds that man has not yet discovered as well as the human-indulged universe "enrich the consciousness of the one being/Who is all that exists" and they are linked to one Creator and derive their recognition from Him ("TBE," 150-151). Like the rest of the atoms and molecules, the poet admits that the human mind has undergone the law of evolution; however, he leaves the question open to the reader to contemplate whether the human intellectual advancement will be positive or it will make man descend into the status of beasts:

Slowly, perhaps, man may grow into it —  
Do you think so? This villainous king of beasts, this de-  
formed ape? ---He has mind  
And imagination, he might go far  
And end in honor. ("TBE," 160-164)

Although man possesses a more intellectual apparatus than that possessed by nonhuman creatures, this does not make "this villainous king of beasts, this de/formed ape" ("TBE," 161-162) a nobleman nor does it give him a privilege over other creatures. Ironically, Jeffers thinks that the advanced nervous system of man increases his degeneration and brutality. Hawks are carnivorous birds but nobler than man. The poet compares the mind of man with the falcon's eyes ascribing sharpness that characterizes the falcon's sight to the human mind. Even though man possesses a sharp mind like the sight of carnivorous hawks, he is less heroic than those birds: "The hawks are more heroic but man/ has a steeper mind" ("TBE," 164-165). By means of paradox, the poet parallels between the falcon's mind, which shines above the high peaks of light and the total darkness of the human mind. Man is the dark side of the cosmos, the female, the earth (yin), while the hawk is the bright side of the cosmos, the male, the sky (yang): "Huge pits of darkness, high peaks of light" ("TBE," 166). For Jeffers, human beings are simply part of an evolved complex. Human beings will survive if they regain the vision of the complex itself, to reconsider the personal indifference to the health of the whole. This requires accepting the role of either hawk or rock without dispute.<sup>1</sup> The poet declares the impossibility to measure the human mind while "[y]ou may calculate a comet's orbit or the dive of a hawk, / not a man's mind" ("TBE," 167-168). This deep darkness of the human mind results from an old wound that may be attributed to the first sin committed by humanity when Adam and Eve lost the bright, celestial life of Eden and ascended into the depths of darkness where the earthly life is governed by instincts:

That ancient wound in the brain  
Has never healed, it hangs wide, it lets in the stars  
Into the animal-stinking ghost-ridden darkness, the human soul.  
The mind of man. . . . ("TBE," 156-159)

Furthermore, in "End of the World," (*The Root of All Things*, Ser. I) Jeffers predicts that human civilization holds the seeds of its decline and that nature will win victory at last. The speaker, when he

1 Hass 488.

was a "young [schoolboy] in Switzerland," thought that "the human race/Would last the earth out, not dying till the planet died" ("EW," 3-4). The young speaker snobbishly ruminates that man would be the last imperishable creature "walking in stoic dignity along /the dead shore/Of the last sea, alone, alone, alone, remembering all/His racial past" ("EW," 6-9). But as the speaker matures, his thoughts change and he expects that humankind will die collectively in a mass death caused by wars like "the Boer War," and World Wars I and II. Jeffers feels that the human egocentric attitude must be overcome if the entire biomass is to survive. Human beings will continue inflicting damage on the cosmic system to pursue their exclusive needs. This human recurrent spoilage will unbalance the cosmic system to the extent that all creatures including humankind are destroyed. This progressive collapse is inevitable unless human beings change.<sup>1</sup> In "End of the World," the speaker realizes that he misinterprets the truth that man will be annihilated and stripped of his racist disposition. The natural world or the universe will remain after all humankind perishes: "They'll die/faceless in flocks, / And the earth flourish long after mankind is out" ("EW," 9-11). If the face image is interpreted as a symbol of man's dignity, the word "faceless" may refer the loss of the human identity and dignity after death. Death, which is a phenomenon of the natural world, puts an end to man's existence and wiped off his arrogant features until he becomes faceless. Also, perhaps the speaker means the human race will be stripped of racism. By the word "racial," the poet includes not only racial discrimination but also the destructive domination of the human race over the rest of the creatures.

In "Let Them Alone" (*Memoranda*, Ser. III), the poet asks the reader to listen to the poet: "If God has been good enough to give you a poet/ Then listen to him" ("LTA," 1-2). Listening to the poet embodies listening to God. Thus, God and the artists are one and the same. The same idea is mentioned by the poet in "He is All" (*Memoranda*, Ser. III) when he assimilates God to an "old Basque Shepherd" living in a western Pyrenees that lies on the border of both France and Spain on the Atlantic Coast. Nevertheless, that Basque shepherd was "brought to California fifty years ago/And has always been alone" ("HA," 4-5). The poet goes further assimilating the artists to God: "God is a great poet," implying that poets, artists, playwrights, and novelists, are but artificial creators as they create for themselves a world, in literary texts, and characters with features that are the product of the writer's fantasy.

Jeffers's philosophy of inhumanism makes us recall the theory of the Greek philosopher Heraclitus about the idea of eternal flux: "Listening not to me but to the Logos it is wise to agree that all things are one."<sup>2</sup> Heraclitus explains eternal flux or unity of opposites by scrutinizing that all things undergo transformations so that they become their opposites that are not identical but interchangeable.<sup>3</sup> Heraclitus states that every life is guaranteed death and with each death, a new life can be found. According to Heraclitus, Divine Logos represents a unifying constitution for all things in all places. Additionally, there is neither beginning nor an end. In "He is All" (*Memoranda*, Ser. III), Jeffers demonstrates his belief in the singularity and oneness of Logos; therefore, all creatures coexist in one Logos: "There is no God but God; he is all that exists" ("HA," 1). The poet attributes good and evil to the Creator; He alone manages the "[b]eautiful and terrible" things. The poet questions rhetorically: "Whom can he strike but himself?" and "whom can he praise but himself?" ("HA," 10-11). Here, Jeffers shows the ignobility and vileness of man compared to the strength and majesty of God. For him, Logos has no beginning and no end.

Jeffers refers to the environment poet as the only one who can listen "to nature and his own heart" ("Let Them Alone," 5). The speaker asks people to let the poet "alone until he is dead" ("LTA," 2). The eccentric environment poet does not need a human companion, for he scoops from nature and

1 Ibid.

2 Van Bryan, "Heraclitus: The Fire and the Flux," *Classical Wisdom Weekly*, 22 Jan. 2014, [classicalwisdom.com/heraclitus-fire-flux/](http://classicalwisdom.com/heraclitus-fire-flux/). Accessed 6 Nov. 2017.

3 Geoffrey Klempner, "Heraclitus' Principle of the Unity of Opposites," *Electronic Philosopher Blog Spot*, 18 Dec. 2008, [electronicphilosopher.blogspot.com/2012/12/heraclitus-principle-of-unity-of.html](http://electronicphilosopher.blogspot.com/2012/12/heraclitus-principle-of-unity-of.html). Accessed 6 Nov. 2017.

his own heart companionship; therefore, "no prizes, no ceremony" ("LTA," 3) he needs. The poet accuses the anthropocentrists of being criminals who spoil the poet's talent, threaten nature and "kill the man" ("LTA," 3). By killing, Jeffers attributes evil to the anthropocentrists who are trying to impose their will on the world by persuading others to see the world as they see it.

Nietzsche's theory of good and evil has influenced Jeffers's poetry. According to Nietzsche, everything is governed by a will to power. It is a fundamental drive in the universe.<sup>1</sup> However, if the noise of the self-centered civilization has risen around the poet, he threatens to shake off his enemies: "[I]f the noise of the/world grows up around him, and if he is tough enough, /He can shake off his enemies but not his friends" ("LTA," 5-7). Jeffers accuses the anthropocentrists of persecuting the writers who glorify nature: "That is what withered Wordsworth and muffled Tennyson, /and would have killed Keats; that is what makes/ Hemingway play the fool and Faulkner forget his art" ("LTA," 9-11).

In "Animula" (*Appendix: Three Uncollected Poems*) the poet mocks the human quest for eternity. Animula is a Latin word that is derived from "anima" meaning a small soul, or life ("Appendix"). The title is a religious allusion to a prayer of Hadrian to his soul and a literary allusion to Dante's *Purgatorio* XVI and T. S. Eliot's poem "Animula."<sup>2</sup> Jeffers's anima or animula pursues "immortality of the soul" ("Animula,"1). The poet is mocking the human quest for eternity for "to live for seventy years" and to live eternally, "poor little soul" is "a burden," which "God save us from it" ("Animula,"2-3). Therefore, "mankind are not committed" to it "[f]ortunately" ("Animula,"4-5). The essence of the poor little soul is in the anima—the world in which most people undergo discontent and suffering. For the poet, "immortality of the soul" is a big burden that neither humankind nor "the chief devil" can endure ("Animula,"4). Only God, "[b]eing infinite can endure eternity"("Animula,"7).

The word Hauteclaire or Halteclere, in the poem, is a historical allusion borrowed from medieval literature. It is the sword of Olivier, a character in the French epic *The Song of Roland*. Hauteclaire describes the sword that is made of polished steel with a crystal emplant in a golden hilt. The name "Hauteclaire" implies double meanings. Either it connotes destruction wrought by man, or it literally means *high* and *neat*.<sup>3</sup> If the first meaning is taken into account, Hauteclaire denotes death and war caused by Ronald's sword when he defeated his opponent in Spain. If the second meaning is taken into account, Hauteclaire denotes the mighty and perfection of "the beauty of God [that] is high, clear and visible," embodied in "the cliffs, the ocean, the sunset cloud" ("Animula," 9-10). Like Roland's sword, "whose steel is red with blood," man desperately seeks wars that have left nothing but "[b]lood-red and smoky amber" ("Animula," 11). Jeffers thinks that war is legitimate only for defensive purposes.

Nevertheless, the havoc made by man is "too small" and weak in comparison to the "infinite" "Being." Humankind dream too much. They are too "small," arrogant, bombastic, highly ambitious, and greedy for material benefits. Nature wins at the end. Like Dante's "anima" that is compared to a prospector of God who is bounced by life opacity and insanity, Jeffers describes man as a "toad," who puffs up his mind by trivialities and follies, causing him "a serene and wholesome deflation" ("Animula," 13-15)—man's death phobia is mingled with his desire for trivialities. Man is torn apart by his desire for eternity, but is caught by an awareness of his death. He returns after death to his origin where the body molds into its primal components in the soil in the shape of anima and "smoky amber"—an earthy pigment, typically with clay. The poet refers to the biblical theology, the promise of rebirth, that the human little soul will be transmitted after death and will return in another form wishing hopefully to be unlike the one completed.

1 JOSEPH BANKS, "FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE (1844–1900)," *SPARK NOTES LLC.*, 10 AUG. 2017, [WWW.SPARKNOTES.COM/PHILOSOPHY/NIETZSCHE/THEMES.HTML](http://WWW.SPARKNOTES.COM/PHILOSOPHY/NIETZSCHE/THEMES.HTML). ACCESSED 17 NOV. 2017.

2 Cosmo Learning, "Dante in Translation: Dante's Inferno, Purgatory and Paradise," [cosmolearning.org/courses/dante-in-translation/video-lectures/](http://cosmolearning.org/courses/dante-in-translation/video-lectures/). Accessed 25 Oct. 2017.

3 Wiktionary: *The Free Dictionary*, "Appendix: Mythological Objects," 28 Dec. 2016, [en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Appendix:Mythological\\_objects](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Appendix:Mythological_objects). Accessed 22 Nov. 2017.

Like Eliot's "Animula," Jeffers's "Animula" is an affirmation of life rising out of death and a biblical assurance of life after death. While Jeffers expresses, in "Animula," the frustration and panic of the dying spirit after its acquisition of awareness about its death, the poem "Cremation" (*Autobiographical*, Ser. IV) expresses the poet's joy of death through cremation. The last century witnessed a growing approval of cremation on reasonable rather than traditional basis.<sup>1</sup> Death is defined as the parting of the soul "prana" or the "odem" of life from the body. In non-Western cultures, people think that cremation is a dying ritual that is vital to unleash the spirit from the physique. The prime griever has to break down the skull of the dead to free the "atman" from the body. Only then, the deceased person reaches the status of its ancestral spirit "preta."<sup>2</sup> Through cremation, death is violated once it is turns from the natural domain to the cultural. Cremation is considered a violation of the laws of nature because of the human intervention that maims death in its natural sense. It is a man-made death, not a natural event. Jeffers in this poem, "Cremation," contradicts what he has already said in his early poem "Rock and Hawk". While he considers, in "Rock and Hawk," euthanasia a violent death and a violation of the law of nature, in "Cremation," the speaker fears no death and favors cremation rituals rather than to "rot in the earth," which is "a loathsome end" ("Cremation," 2-3). He thinks that to roar up in flame, the deceased would have a great joy of his transported body. Cremation ritual is not a scary experience for the speaker where the fire that transports the body of the dead is enjoyable. Unlike the fire of love and rage that the speaker uses before his death: "I am used to it, I have flamed with love or fury so often in my life, / No wonder my body is tired, no wonder it is dying" ("Cremation," 4). Scattering the ashes of the cremated body will release the soul from the realm of the material world to the ethereal world. Consequently, the soul of the deceased will be purified from sins and desires that tire his body; therefore, "no wonder it is dying" ("Cremation," 4-5).

The poet sums up his poem using the word "confidence" to say that although people have a limited life to enjoy, they have to accept the fact that nature will continue to exist, and that they are just one living thing among the wholeness of the universe and must confidently decentralize themselves. They must stop conducting themselves as if they were the creators of the world rather than as one who is created. The poet advises people to decentralize themselves restoring their confidence once they remove themselves from the epicenter of the universe announcing themselves as one element of the universe. Jeffers prophesizes that anthropocentrism will destroy itself by itself. While he expresses his displeasure at the centrality of man, Jeffers stresses the urgent need to combat human centrism openly and publicly. This is the strategy adopted by the Deep Green Literature, which in the first stage calls for highlighting the consequences human beings will cause to the environment.

## CONCLUSION

Considered an icon of the Environmental Movement, Jeffers adopts the view of the Deep Green Ecologists who celebrate nature as a center of their concern, and who believe that currently dominant political ideologies and industrialism inevitably lead to waste and alienation from nature.

As a Deep Green Ecologist, Jeffers comes to a realization that human beings owe nature their existence, and that treatment towards the environment is not only drastically altering the ecosystem, but also threatening human survival. His poems reflect a shifting of emphasis from man to nature, in addition to the rejection of anthropomorphism and the recognition of the organic whole. The poet regards man as parts of that organic whole. He explains how human history is inseparable from the natural history and how the living beings are interrelated within ecosystems. All existence, even that of human species is ephemeral.

The core message of Jeffers's theory is the refusal of anthropocentrism, the quest for ecocentrism, and the need for a radical reform: nature occupies a central stage not as a means for human advantage but as itself. The universe will not notice the absence of humankind if they pass

i. 1 JESSICA MITFORD, *THE AMERICAN WAY OF DEATH* (LONDON: QUARTET BOOKS, 1980), 162.

2 Vera Kalitzkus, "Neither Dead-Nor-Alive: Organ Donation and the Paradox of Living Corpses," *Making Sense of Dying and Death*, Andrew Fagan (ed.), Vol 9. (2004): 144.

away for it stands by itself from the beginning even before the creation of man. Through his observation of nature, Jeffers attempts to resolve a basic dilemma of the industrial civilization and seeks to search for a consolation. However, the poet does not offer poignant solutions to these socio-psychological problems in his philosophical thinking on the human predicament. As an environmentalist poet, Jeffers portrays humanity as a destructive ravager and a conqueror of nature.

The poet has already criticized America's competition for power and the madness of war and has prophesied that America will undergo a state of self-destruction. Like ancient civilizations, European and American civilization holds the seeds of its decline and is destined to fade away in the nearby future.

As a supporter of Deep Green Ecology, Jeffers does not believe in the modern technology. He shows in his poetry that the natural world should be highly estimated, and that the minimum impact of technology is more eligible than the technological control of nature. He calls for changing the basic values and practices in the industrial civilization; otherwise, man will exterminate the gorgeous beauty and grandeur of the world. The poet rejects the excessive technological advances and calls for moderation. Technology must be able to protect nature to ensure the preservation of the individual's future living subsistence, but not at the expense of the environmental degradation.

To sum up, the issues raised by the poet remain urgent; they are at the heart of the global problems the world is currently facing. The way humans deal with these problems in the coming years will affect, Jeffers predicts not only America's future but also the fate of humanity. His philosophy of "Inhumanism" will be more important in the times to come.

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