The Dust Dwellers: The Environmental Philosophy of John Steinbeck, Robinson Jeffers, and Jack London

Carter Davis Johnson

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Ashley Reed, Chair
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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I explore the environmental philosophy of three Californian modernists, who I have collectively named the Dust Dwellers: John Steinbeck, Robinson Jeffers, and Jack London. I argue that these writers participated in a broader modernist response to the ascendancy of the Enlightenment and its manifestation in industrial progress. Furthermore, I demonstrate that the Dust Dwellers' response was distinctly informed by their American identity. They engaged modernist themes of decay as applied to Western expansion and the dissolution of the American Edenic dream. Investigating the fractured relationship between civilization and the environment, they searched for a philosophy that could reconcile humanity to nature. Specifically, I argue that their environmental philosophy displays intellectual and creative congruencies that can be traced to the common influence of twentieth-century psychoanalyst Carl Jung. The foundational tenet of the Dust Dwellers' environmental philosophy parallels Jung's concept of the *unus mundus*. Mirroring Jung's interpretation of this alchemic term, the Dust Dwellers describe a cosmic unity that encompasses all of life. I discuss depictions of the *unus mundus* across the Dust Dwellers' work and outline other implications of this central philosophic presupposition. Ultimately, I conclude that their environmental philosophy, along with other attributes, permits and even encourages scholars to approach these writers as a distinct group of American modernists.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

In this paper, I explore the environmental philosophy of three Californian modernists, who I have collectively named the Dust Dwellers: John Steinbeck, Robinson Jeffers, and Jack London. I argue that these writers participated in a broader modernist response to the Enlightenment's failed pursuit of utopia. Furthermore, I demonstrate that the Dust Dwellers' response was distinctly informed by their American identity. They engaged modernist themes of decay as applied to the American frontier. Specifically, they recognized that America had failed to transform into a new Garden of Eden. Investigating the negative effects of industrial civilization, the Dust Dwellers searched for a philosophy that could create harmony between humanity and nature. I argue that their environmental philosophy displays intellectual and creative congruencies that can be traced to the common influence of twentieth-century psychoanalyst Carl Jung. The foundational concept of the Dust Dwellers' environmental philosophy parallels the Jungian concept of the *unus mundus*. Mirroring Jung's interpretation of this alchemic term, the Dust Dwellers describe a cosmic unity that encompasses all of life. I discuss depictions of the *unus mundus* across the Dust Dwellers' work and outline other implications of this central philosophic presupposition. Ultimately, I conclude that their environmental philosophy, along with other attributes, permits and even encourages scholars to approach these writers as a distinct group of American modernists.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to the writers who inspired it, the Dust Dwellers. Their words stand as poetic accomplishments, and their lives stand behind their words. Their hands were rooted in the earth, and their thoughts stretched beyond. They were bold, honest, and flawed. They were humble enough to recognize their weaknesses and resolute enough to build on their strengths. For Steinbeck, the writer's pen carried the weight of reality. For Jeffers, it carried the unflinching sincerity of a stone chisel. For London, the pen accompanied the plough.

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Finally, I praise God for His mercy and grace, without which I could not write a word.

Soli Deo Gloria

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CHAPTER ONE: Dust, Myth, and Modernism

Propelled by industrial growth and marred by political upheaval, the early twentieth century was an era of tremendous volatility. In this environment of innovation and revolution, modernist thinkers expressed a growing apprehension concerning the Enlightenment's ostensible "progress." In the destructive wake of the early century, modernists wrestled with a lack of harmony that was exacerbated by global conflict and challenging recoveries. The trenches of World War I and the millions killed in the Russian Revolution were not the hoped-for outcome of the age of reason. These social calamities, combined with the philosophic catalyst of early Existentialism, brought human identity under new scrutiny. T.S. Eliot helped canonize this angst in *The Waste Land*. As he thwarted traditions of rhyme and meter, Eliot simultaneously thwarted the Enlightenment vision: "The Nymphs are / departed. . . / A rat crept softly through the vegetation / Dragging its slimy belly on the bank."[1] Eliot emphasized the consequences of unbridled reason: the pursuit of a rational, material Utopia banished the nymphs and inadvertently replaced them with destruction, grime, and disease. Eliot's goddesses can be interpreted as that which is not rational; in other words, the nymphs are those mysterious, lovely spirits which the Enlightenment had vanquished and expelled as archaic superstitions. Yet, at the turn of the twentieth century, many modernists challenged the ability of pure rationalism to create a habitable paradigm. In his typical aphoristic style, G.K. Chesterton wrote, "The madman is not the man who has lost his reason. The madman is the man who has lost everything except his reason."[2] Similar to Eliot's departure of the nymphs, Chesterton decried the abandonment of

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[1] T.S. Eliot, *Wasteland, Prufrock and Other Poem,* ed. Paul Negri (New York: Dover, 1998), III.178-79, 187-88.

[2] Gilbert K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1936), 32.

what he called "Elfland," which roughly represents the capacity for imagination and, to use a term from Keats, negative capability. By the turn of the twentieth century, the limitations and dangers of pure reason were prominent motifs. Furthermore, this skepticism of reason's supremacy was closely connected with criticisms of social decay; the individual's existential struggle became symptomatic of a broader issue. Responding to a dismissal of the metaphysical, many modernists embraced mythological and religious imagery. Their use was certainly not orthodox; however, the twentieth century underwent a distinct resuscitation of mythology. This is starkly evident in the work of W.B. Yeats, especially in his "The Second Coming": "The falcon cannot hear the falconer; / Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; / Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world."[3] These images of social decay precede the second stanza, which depicts an antichrist figure that "slouches towards Bethlehem."[4] The apocalyptic imagery of Yeats resounds within the broader twentieth-century resuscitation of mythology.

In this paper, I will trace an American iteration of this broader modernist response to reason's ascendancy and its manifestation in industrial progress. This American iteration considers the issue in regard to Western expansion, exploring the fractured relationship between humanity and the environment. Specifically, I will discuss how three Californian modernists searched for an environmental philosophy that could reconcile humanity to nature and prevent the decay of civilization. This group, whom I will refer to as the Dust Dwellers, consists of John Steinbeck, Robinson Jeffers, and Jack London. I will argue that their philosophies display intellectual and creative congruencies that can be traced to the common influence of twentieth-

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[3] William Butler Yeats, "The Second Coming" in *William Butler Yeats: Selected Poems and Three Plays,* ed. M.L. Rosenthal (New York: Macmillan, 1986), 89.

[4] Yeats, 90.

century psychoanalyst Carl Jung. Ultimately, I will demonstrate that their environmental philosophy, along with other attributes, permits and even encourages scholars to approach these writers as a distinct group of American modernists.

In the Dust Dwellers' articulation, the decay associated with modernity was closely linked to the dissolution of the American Edenic dream, which R.W.B. Lewis outlined in his classic study *The American Adam*. Unlike the modernist use of myth, this dream of utopia was developed centuries before the 1900s, largely functioning as a mask for expanding industrialism and conquest. Yet, as the vision proved hollow, Americans, following the trend of European humanism, turned to reason and industrial expansion as the answer to the dream's failure. However, the Dust Dwellers recognized the inability of rational materialism to resolve social ills. Thus, they engaged the dominant modernist question: if the dreams of yesterday failed and reason was insufficient, what would fill the vacuum of the collapse? The Dust Dwellers' Californian identity contributed to their American exploration of this modernist question. While the East Coast had largely adopted European social structures and culture, the frontier was the final hope for the American utopia, a land "bereft of ancestry."[5] Yet, as this illusory, prelapsarian ambition disappeared along with swaths of native wilderness, industrial civilization established itself as a new hope. California was the center of this rapid transformation. With the conclusion of nineteenth-century expansion and the Gold Rush, the relatively new state (admitted in 1850) was quickly developing an industrial infrastructure. As San Francisco became the Western metropolis, the American frontier sank into twilight. The prospect of the "authentic American as

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[5] R.W.B. Lewis, *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 5.

a figure of heroic innocence and vast potentialities, poised at the start of a new history," crumbled at the turn of the twentieth century.[6]

During this transformation, the Dust Dwellers criticized the decaying effects of modern civilization. Each lamented that the industrial and cultural progress of the century devitalized humanity. As they looked to California's growing cities, they recognized the same issues that plagued Europe and the East Coast. An existential angst, framed by a skepticism regarding the humanists' progress narrative, occupied these Californians' minds. While their work communicated this decay in different ways, their underlying diagnosis centered on a shared problem: the alienation of humanity from the natural environment. This alienation, intensified by the affluence and distractions of civilization, caused human existence to atrophy through being disconnected from their ecology. As self-proclaimed conquerors of the environment, modern individuals no longer belonged to the natural ecology; they were inhabitants of the city, a locality that fostered a false image of self-sufficiency. These writers, all readers of Nietzsche, feared that modernity was producing a type of last man.[7] In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* Nietzsche comments on humanity's trajectory: "His soil is still rich enough for it [human advancement]. But that soil will one day be poor and domesticated, and no tall tree will any longer be able to grow in it."[8] The Dust Dwellers feared that Nietzsche's prediction was being fulfilled as Americans became more

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[6] Lewis, 1.

[7] See David Mike Hamilton, *"Tools of My Trade": The Annotated books of Jack London's Library* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1986), 213-214; Robert DeMott, *Steinbeck's Reading: A Catalogue of Books Owned and Borrowed* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1984), 84*;* Arthur B. Coffin, *Robinson Jeffers: Poet of Inhumanism* (Madison, Milwaukee and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1971), 60-61.

[8] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Clancy Martin (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 2005), 13.

and more disconnected from the land. The soil was becoming sterile, both figuratively and literally.

In response to this existential diagnosis, the Dust Dwellers searched for a philosophic remedy for the decaying individual. They derived their prescription from a mysticism that contemplates the unity of existence. Specifically, it was a mysticism founded in ecology. Their philosophy was situated in the material world; yet it reached past the material toward something beyond, a structure or organizing reality. They articulated this unifying reality using religious language that resembled a form of pantheistic Gnosticism. Informing this philosophy was a shared influence: the work of Carl Jung. In his work on alchemy, Jung wrote of a *unus mundus*, a noumenal reality: "the original, non-differentiated unity of the world or of Being; the ἀγνωσία of the Gnostics, the primordial unconsciousness."[9] Each of the Dust Dwellers engaged a version of this *unus mundus* within their work, communicating a single fabric of existence. They articulated this idea of unity but also maintained that the *unus mundus* was shrouded by the effects of civilization. Yet, the veil could be removed in an apocalyptic moment, revealing the "undistorted real."[10] While each artist communicated the idea of an *apokalypsis* differently, they shared a catalyst of revelation: the individual's encounter with nature. This was not a cerebral contemplation, but a mystical collision. In his poem "Return," Jeffers presented such an encounter: "It is time for us to kiss the earth again. . . I will touch things and things and no more thoughts"[11] The way to remove the veil was through an intimate encounter with the natural world,

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[9] Carl Jung, "The Conjunction," 1955, in *The Essential Jung*, ed. Anthony Storr (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 291.

[10] John Steinbeck, *To A God Unknown,* (New York: Bantam Books, 1960), 52.

[11] Robinson Jeffers, "Return," in *Rock and Hawk: A Selection of Shorter Poems by Robinson Jeffers*, ed. Robert Hass (New York: Random House, 1987), 178.

a "kiss."

The Dust Dwellers searched for a philosophy that could reconcile the individual to reality, halting the decay that characterized modernity and embracing both the beauties and harsh brutalities of nature. They did not propose a Romantic relationship with the environment; they moved beyond sublimity. Nor did they propose a Transcendental return to self-reliance and inward reflection. In many ways, their philosophy was the antithesis of Emerson's, an abolition of the self. Jeffers wrote that we must "unhumanize our views."[12] Their thoughts were directed against the narrow blinders of the particular and toward an encounter with the *unus mundus*. Oftentimes, they communicated these encounters through religious language, centering on rapturous visions and sacrificial violence. As the Dust Dwellers wrestled with conceptualizing this gigantic whole, they often described the revealed reality as dangerous and even destructive. Yet they also recognized the nurturing attributes of the *unus mundus* and searched for a mode of being that would reconcile their lives with this unified whole. By conceiving of human existence as *within* nature, they hoped to achieve a reciprocal *cultus* with the environment, a symbiotic relationship that is derived from the *unus mundus*. The Dust Dwellers searched for the underlying structure of reality; they searched for the intersection of the particular with the whole. Steinbeck communicated this succinctly: "Anything less than the whole forms part of the picture only, and the infinite whole is unknowable except by *being* it, by living into it."[13] Their pursuit of the *unus mundus* sought to reconcile the individual human life with the whole of time, space, and reality. In response to Jung's work, London wrote: "I am standing on the edge of a world so new,

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[12] Robinson Jeffers, "Carmel Point," in *Rock and Hawk: A Selection of Shorter Poems by Robinson Jeffers*, ed. Robert Hass (New York: Random House, 1987), 268.

[13] John Steinbeck and Ed Ricketts, *Sea of Cortez: A Leisurely Journal of Travel and Research* (New York: Penguin, 2009), 148.

so wonderful, that I am almost afraid to look over into it."[14] This new world involved a new way of being. Jung's psychology acted as a mutual catalyst, informing the Dust Dwellers' environmental philosophy and manifesting itself in precise intellectual similarities.

In chapter two, I will introduce the initial reasons for approaching these writers as a group, explore the term "Dust Dwellers," and outline their biographic connections with Jung. This conversation will not only present biographic information, but will also emphasize the significance of a group approach and the nature of Jung's influence. In chapter three, I will discuss the twilight of the Edenic dream, sketching the American context for the Dust Dwellers' art. This chapter will build on the work of Leo Marx and Henry Nash Smith, focusing on the expansion of industrial civilization and each writer's identification and definition of the problem. While the decay of civilization was a broad, modernist theme, the Dust Dwellers engaged in a version that was distinctly American, contemplating the historical moment in California. In many ways, they applied the modernist ideas of Europe, specifically those of Jung, to the situation in the United States. In chapter four, I will explore Jung's *unus mundus*, arguing that the concept underlies images of metaphysical unity that appear throughout the Dust Dwellers' work and reflects key premises of their environmental philosophy. In the fifth chapter, I will discuss the Dust Dwellers' depictions of *apokalypsis,* relating the concept to Jung's theory of mandalas. Finally, I will consider their embodied philosophy of the *unus mundus*, manifested in the idea of *cultus*. This chapter will also finalize thoughts concerning the legitimacy of the grouping and the significance of the broader modernist movement in California.

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[14] Charmian London, *The Book of Jack London, The Book of Jack London,* 2 vols. (New York: The Century Co., 1921), 2:323.

CHAPTER TWO: The Dust Dwellers and Carl Jung

The term "Dust Dwellers" is my own construction, one that attempts to convey the unity of these writers. It presents them as members of a somewhat formal movement, similar to other American literary groupings such as the Fireside Poets, the Transcendentalists, or the Beat Poets. There are a variety of compelling similarities that encourage us to approach Steinbeck, Jeffers, and London as a distinctive group. One of the first is geography. The Dust Dwellers inhabited the same coastline of California, centered on the shared peninsula that contains the towns of Carmel and Monterey. This region of California, including the nearby, developing metropolis of San Francisco, was home to a broader modernist movement that fused with the rural countryside and culture. The Dust Dwellers were key figures in this movement, and their homes were near the epicenter. At one point, Steinbeck and Jeffers lived only minutes away from each other. London, who also spent time in Carmel, made his eventual dwelling on the other side of San Francisco, north of the city in Glen Ellen. Although his Wolf House was engulfed in flames before its completion, London and his wife spent a large portion of their life and energy at their home on Beauty Ranch.

The Dust Dwellers' shared Californian geography is reflected in their work. Steinbeck, growing up in the rural Salinas Valley, depicted his childhood countryside home and boisterous time in Monterey throughout his work. *East of Eden, Cannery Row, Tortilla Flat, The Pastures of Heaven*, and *To a God Unknown* all engage the Californian coast, countryside, and culture. Unlike Steinbeck, Jeffers did not grow up in California. However, his permanent home in Carmel became an integral part of his life and work. His verse repeatedly contemplated this stretch of Californian coastline, evidenced in poems such as "Continent's End," "November

Surf," and "Carmel Point." London also engaged with California's geography in his fiction, most prominently in his novel *Valley of the Moon*.

The Dust Dwellers' historical proximity is another important reason to treat them as a group; they were bound to a specific time in American and Californian history. London, the earliest of the Dust Dwellers, was born in 1876 and died at the age of forty in 1916. As a result, he did not experience the developments of the mid-twentieth century; however, he was an important voice at its turn. Jeffers was born eleven years after London and lived until 1962. Steinbeck, the last of the three, was born in 1902 and shared with Jeffers the cultural experience of WWII, post-war politics, and the end of the modernist movement. Although he would later move to the East Coast, Steinbeck's time in California was the most formative of his career, stretching over the first few decades of the century. Steinbeck died six years after Jeffers in 1968. While there are noteworthy variances between their ages, these writers' overlapping years saw the rise of very similar cultural and philosophical concerns that coincided with broader modernist themes. Yet, their engagement with modernism was expressed from a distinctly Californian perspective.

The most compelling reason to study these writers together, however, is the remarkable congruencies in their environmental philosophies. Specifically, they combine metaphysics with a deep interest in biological observation, forming a unique system of thought. The prominence and uniqueness of their environmental philosophies reveal a primary influence; their central propositions closely mirror the work of Carl Jung. Jungian thought provides foundational premises that are central to their theorization and resultant creative expressions. This avenue of influence is further supported by biographical connections.

It is worth considering why the Dust Dwellers have not been apprehended as forming a cohesive school of American thought. Certainly, it is not because of their obscurity. Steinbeck and London have been canonical authors since the later twentieth century. Jeffers, although his reputation has declined, maintained a prominent place of literary standing in the early and mid-century. He was even featured on the cover of *Time* magazine in 1932. One factor that might contribute to their fractured scholarly treatment is a lack of self-identification. By this I mean that these authors did not consider themselves participants in a distinct movement. Unlike Ezra Pound's explicit attempts to launch brands of modernism, these authors were not especially concerned with literary classification. Their interests lay primarily with the work itself, not their place within academic or scholarly circles. After Steinbeck received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1962, an interviewer asked, "How do you look upon yourself as an author?"[15] Steinbeck responded, "I have never looked upon myself as an author. . . I've considered myself a writer because that's what I do. I don't know what an author does."[16] This response seems characteristic of these writers' indifference to literary categorization.

While the lack of self-identification certainly contributes to a disjointed approach, the broader treatment of Western American modernism is also a significant factor. While the region produced canonical authors such as the Dust Dwellers, Western modernism has not been treated with the same coherency and attention as other modernist movements, most pointedly that of the American expatriates known as the Lost Generation. The rural nature of the Dust Dwellers' work could have exacerbated critical inattention. Unlike writers associated with the Harlem

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[15] Jackson J. Benson, *The True Adventures of John Steinbeck, Writer* (New York: Viking Press, 1984), 8.

[16] Benson, 8.

Renaissance or the broader modernist scene on the East Coast, these authors worked in rural settings. Their work reflected this environment, forgoing the motifs of industrial energy and class conflict that accompanied depictions of urban life. Furthermore, the work of the Dust Dwellers is stylistically different from the dynamic expressions of avant-garde modernism. London's prose, reflecting his nineteenth-century literary influences, is in sharp contrast to the usual modernist indicators, such as sparsity of language (the Imagists, Hemingway) or experimental complexity (Faulkner, Toomer, Joyce). Divorced from his content, which engages modernist themes, his style would locate his fiction more within the nineteenth than the twentieth century. Similarly, Steinbeck's clear prose also lacks the surface complexity that many modernists embraced. As a result, his style is often pigeon-holed as less substantive and more political or popular. Of the Dust Dwellers' art, Jeffers' creative fingerprint was the most modernist in style. His free verse and word choice reflect the dry, careful delivery of Eliot. However, his motifs often move into difficult metaphysical abstractions, which have perhaps contributed to a decline in critical interest. All in all, there are multiple factors that have prevented critics from grouping these writers together. I argue that because of their geographic, historical, and philosophical similarities, they should be considered a cohesive school of American literature and thought.

At the core of the name "Dust Dwellers" is an attempt to capture a holistic description of these writers' art and lives. This goal responds to the centrality of their environmental philosophy within their literary and personal lives. The first term, "dust," finds its most explicit reference in Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* and its depiction of migrants from the Dust Bowl. Implicated in this literary reference are the environmental practices that created the Dust Bowl. The pursuit of the Edenic dream, as will be discussed in chapter three, resulted in a depletion of natural resources and contributed to the emergence of this ecological disaster. Each of these

writers decried such haphazard practices; they recognized the dust produced by industrial civilization and its expansion. Metaphorically, "dust" also invokes a symbolic wasteland of meaning. London's most famous works are his stories of the Klondike and the frozen wilderness, which communicate humanity's struggle against the inhospitable aspects of the natural environment. If approached symbolically, we can view the drifts of snow as frozen dust, a wasteland where humanity's relationship with the natural world is unstable. In addition, London, who tried to develop renewable methods of farming, was deeply concerned with the soil. The idea of dust brings to mind this pursuit; more specifically, it emphasizes agricultural land that is barren.

Furthermore, "dust" carries the connotation of judgement. We see this concept expressed in Biblical motifs.[17] Jesus, instructing the twelve in Matthew 10:14, links judgement to dust: "And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town."[18] Of the Dust Dwellers, Jeffers expressed the most explicit language of judgment; he also used the word "dust" across his poetry. In *The Selected Works of Robinson Jeffers*, the term appears over forty times. "Dust" embraces the theme of judgment, which Jeffers often leveled at civilization:

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[17] The Dust Dwellers were very familiar with and engaged Biblical stories and motifs. See Hamilton, *"Tools of My Trade": The Annotated books of Jack London's Library*, 62-63; DeMott, *Steinbeck's Reading: A Catalogue of Books Owned and Borrowed*, 13-14; Steinbeck made direct use of the Cain and Able narrative in *East of Eden*, which I will briefly discuss in chapter three; Jeffers' father was a "minister and professor of Old Testament literature at Western Theological Seminary of Pittsburgh" (Coffin, *Robinson Jeffers: Poet of Inhumanism*, 7.); Jeffers also noted the Bible as a literary influence (James Karman, ed., *The Collected Letters of Robinson Jeffers: With Selected Letters of Una Jeffers*, 3 vols. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 1:777).

[18] English Standard Version.

> come peace / or war, the progress of Europe and America / Becomes a long process of deterioration. . . Our own time. . . Has acids for honey, and for fine dreams / The immense vulgarities of misapplied science and decaying / Christianity.[19]

Furthermore, "dust" also carries the implications of human fragility, another central motif in Jeffers' work. In "The Loving Shepherdess," he writes of "We others, being / faintly made of the dust of a grain of dust."[20]

While "dust" communicates the bleak aspects of humanity's relationship with the environment and itself, the second part of the title communicates a response. The idea of dwelling invokes a long tradition of environmental writing. Dwelling involves an active belonging to place. It is not merely living in proximity; it is living *within* and recognizing interdependencies. The environmental poet, critic, and novelist Wendell Berry describes this distinction:

> Once we see our place, our part of the world, as *surrounding* us, we have already made a profound division between it and ourselves. We have given up the understanding. . . that we and our country create one another, depend on one another, are literally part of one another. . . so all who are living as neighbors here, human and plant and animal, are part of one another, and so cannot possibly flourish alone.[21]

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[19] Robinson Jeffers, "Prescription of Painful Ends," in *Rock and Hawk: A Selection of Shorter Poems by Robinson Jeffers*, ed. Robert Hass (New York: Random House, 1987), 218.

[20] Robinson Jeffers, "The Loving Shepherdess," in *The Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*, (New York: Random House, 1937), 250.

[21] Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1977), 22.

The Dust Dwellers similarly conceived of an uninterrupted relationship between humanity and the environment. Their response to the dust was not to abandon the land but to draw closer. The term "dwelling" describes this environmental response, proposing that humanity might learn to live *within* their ecology. It is a proposition that cultivation does not need to be exploitation.

The interdependencies of dwelling are expressed in the Dust Dwellers' work and lives. One example of this interdependency in Steinbeck's work can be observed in *The Grapes of Wrath*. As the Joads prepare to depart for California, Grampa Joad says, "This here's my country. I b'long here."[22] Yet, despite his refusal to go, the family sedates him and brings him along. Only a short distance into the trip, Grampa dies. Like an uprooted plant, he cannot survive when he is separated from the land. His dependency is manifested in the loss of life. In Grampa's absence, the "machine man" fills the vacuum, "driving a dead tractor on land he does not know and love. . . his home is not the land."[23] London also embraced the permanence and rootedness of dwelling. This was most clearly expressed in his efforts as a farmer and his construction of Wolf House. The construction of his dream home on Beauty Ranch integrated natural resources from the land. His wife Charmian described the use of local resources,

> The "Wolf House' was slowly mounting. . . Jack's big draft horses laboring four and four, from a quarry three miles across the valley and up our mountain, with the great volcanic boulders that were the same red-amethystine hue of the redwood logs also to be used in construction.[24]

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[22] John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath* (New York: Viking Press, 1939), 152.

[23] Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath,* 158.

[24] Charmian London, *The Book of Jack London,* 2:248.

However, in a tragic turn of events, the house burned down when it was nearly completed. Charmian noted the effects that the fire had on her husband: "For the razing of his house killed something in Jack, and he never ceased to feel the tragic inner sense of loss."[25] The house was never rebuilt; it was more than a structure for London; it was to be his place of dwelling. The house's connection to the land was the embodiment of his own. Jeffers likewise pursued a sense of dwelling that focused on a relationship with the land. Not only was his coastal home a personal manifestation of dwelling, as will be further explored in chapter six, but similar ideas of environmental unity were also expressed in much of his verse. In "Theory of Truth," he writes that the "search for truth is foredoomed and frustrate. . . Until the mind has turned its love from / itself and man, from parts to the whole."[26] Once again, the sense of dwelling embraces the ideas of wholeness and interdependency.

The Dust Dwellers tried to build an environmental philosophy that could reconcile humanity to nature. Central to this project was the concept of cosmic unity. This doctrine of metaphysical unity was informed and influenced by Carl Jung's psychology. The connection between the Dust Dwellers and Jung is not a new discovery; it has been discussed by a number of scholars. In this chapter, I will outline some of the scholarship that places each author into conversation with Jung. However, the degree and nature of the biographical and philosophical connections have not been fully explored. While often relegated to passing comments and footnotes, the influence of Jung on each of these Californians is striking and deserving of further study. The correlation remains vague because scholars often identify instances of Jungian

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[25] London, 2:263.

[26] Robinson Jeffers, "Theory of Truth," in *Rock and Hawk: A Selection of Shorter Poems by Robinson Jeffers*, ed. Robert Hass (New York: Random House, 1987), 213.

influence in isolation. However, Jungian thought is not an anomaly or a curiosity in these writers' works; it is a foundational influence. When fragmented references are brought together, a new relevance replaces this peripheral concern. Furthermore, existing scholarship has not considered that these authors, bound together through geographic region, era, and environmental interest, were contemplating Jungian ideas in similar ways.

John Steinbeck's interest in Jung is strongly supported by multiple bibliographic sources. Robert DeMott, in his unrivaled catalogue of Steinbeck's reading and library, notes that Steinbeck read numerous books and essays by Jung.[27] During his most focused season of interest, Steinbeck was close friends with Ed Ricketts, a local biologist and Monterey sage. Ricketts' lab, a community *agora* for artists, townsfolk, trouble-makers, and scientists alike, was the epicenter of Steinbeck's intellectual and artistic growth. We see this vibrant community depicted in his fiction, most prominently in *Cannery Row*. Alongside stints of heavy drinking, partying, and listening to classical music, there occurred prolonged discussions about literature and philosophy. Several of Jung's works, including *Modern Man in Search for a Soul* and *Contributions to Analytical Psychology*, were kept in the lab's library; Steinbeck kept a copy of Jung's *The Psychology of Dementia Praecox* in his personal library.[28] Furthermore, Joseph Campbell lived beside the lab for a summer. Campbell, who had spent time with Jung in Europe, no doubt joined the conversations about mythology and the psyche. Benson notes that "Ricketts, Campbell, and the Steinbecks would grill steaks outside in the Steinbeck garden, then sit for hours under the stars talking about whatever they happened to be reading."[29] The "essays of Jung"

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[27] DeMott, *Steinbeck's Reading: A Catalogue of Books Owned and Borrowed*, 62-63.

[28] DeMott, 62-63.

[29] Benson, *True Adventures*, 119.

were among the many books discussed in the lab and, most likely, at these summer barbeques.[30] During this period, Steinbeck was also working on an essay titled, "Argument of the Phalanx," an exploration of group agency that echoes Jung's collective unconscious. In a 1933 letter discussing his progress, Steinbeck mentioned the primary influence of Jung on the topics of "folk lore" and "unconscious psychology."[31] Steinbeck engaged with Jungian ideas through direct reading as well as through conversations around the lab and among his circle of friends.

In many ways a quiet, private man, Robinson Jeffers was connected with Jungian thought through important but not overly explicit avenues. Jung's influence manifests itself most prominently in his verse; however, there are still significant biographic elements. Responding by letter to a question about his literary influences, Jeffers offered a brief list of six entries under the title "books;" the last three entries included the following: "d) Bible – heard read ~~in early~~ {throughout} childhood. e.) Wordsworth and Shelley through Una f.) Freud and Jung, mostly second hand."[32] Considering Jeffers' remarkable education and breadth of reading, Jung's spot on the top six is impressive, even with the qualifier of "second hand." In a 1931 letter, Jeffers answered a question concerning his experience with psychological texts:

> Yes, I read – one could hardly say studied – several works of and about Freud and Jung, and found the first one rather ridiculous, but changed my mind. That was probably in 1914 or so. I still think that Freud pioneered a new sort of knowledge, however limited or fanciful its later developments.[33]

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[30] Benson, 227.

[31] Benson, 270.

[32] James Karman, ed., *The Collected Letters of Robinson Jeffers: With Selected Letters of Una Jeffers*, 3 vols. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 1:777

[33] Karman, *The Collected Letters,* 2:33.

Consistent with his "second hand" description, Jeffers expresses his casual familiarity with Freud and Jung, specifically noting "a new sort of knowledge." Frederic Carpenter also describes this influence: "In exploring the depths of man's unconscious nature, Jeffers was guided partly by the traditions of myths, partly by his own intuitions, and partly by the psychological theories of Freud and Jung. . . [H]e read widely in the literature of psychology."[34] At one point, there was a rumor circulating that Jeffers had been psychoanalyzed by Jung.[35] In a letter to Una Jeffers, Sydney Alberts asked, "I'm told that R.J. was psychoanalyzed by Jung in 1916. If it is not prying into personal affairs, may I ask if I am correctly informed?"[36] Una replied, "No. This question made R. J. laugh OUT LOUD which doesn't happen very often."[37] Yet despite pointedly dismissing the rumors, the Jefferses had several peripheral connections to Jung. In the letter to Philip Horton, Una included a postscript: "A dear friend of ours is Dr. Carey de Angulo Baynes who has been with Jung as patient, pupil, & teacher about 8 yrs. & her husband Dr. Baynes English colleague translator of Jung."[38] In another case, Una mentioned an acquaintance, Elizabeth Whitney, who was a patient of Jung's, a medical practitioner, and a founder of the Society of Jungian Analysts.[39] While Jeffers was fairly reluctant to establish an affiliation with

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[34] Frederic Carpenter, *Robinson Jeffers* (New York: Twayne Publsihers, 1962), 130.

[35] How this rumor began is uncertain; there is a chain of names involved in its circulation. One of the most prominent was a statement from Mr. Philip Horton in Princeton's *The Nassau Literary Review*. Una wrote a letter to Mr. Horton in which she requests a correction be made to the magazine. In this same letter, Una also describes Robinson's state of mind, noting his "extraordinary serenity & poise of mind and body." She mentions his psychological health in this case and others, citing it as a rebuttal to his need for psychotherapy. This defense seems to be partly in response to Jeffers' denial of the "therapeutic" aspects of psychoanalysis and the field's association with neuroticism. (See Karman, *The Collected Letters*, 2:149-150)

[36] Karman, *The Collected Letters,* 2:112

[37] Karman, 2:111.

[38] Karman, 2:150.

[39] Karman, 2:182-183.

psychoanalysis, he was notably influenced by it, as communicated through his own words and further reinforced by his readings, conversations about, and associations with Jung.

Jack London was perhaps the first major Californian novelist to engage Jungian themes in his fiction. However, his encounter with these ideas occurred later in his life. It is not an overstatement to describe the encounter as transformative. London's interest in Jung was encompassed by his growing interest in psychoanalysis; however, it was Jung specifically who drew his attention. He wrote to a friend:

> I have quite a few books on psychoanalysis, which you would have access to any time you are visiting us. Also, I have just recently subscribed to the Psychoanalytic Review, which is a quarterly. Doctor Jung's book is a very remarkable book to me, and I do not hesitate to assert that you are no more excited about it than am I. It is big stuff.[40]

In a copy of Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious*, London made almost three hundred notations, leading Hamilton to describe this book as "the most important book in his library."[41] London's discovery of Jung marked a distinctive shift in his approach to life and philosophy. His wife Charmian noted the dramatic influence of this intellectual discovery:

> To him the work of Freud and Jung and others of the school presented a psychological-philosophical key to the 'understanding and practical advancement of human life' which leads to synthetic evaluation of human endeavor.[42]

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[40] Earle Labor, Robert C. Leitz III, and I. Milo Shephard, eds., *The Letters of Jack London*, 3 vols. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 3:1598.

[41] Hamilton, *"Tools of My Trade": The Annotated books of Jack London's Library,* 175.

[42] Charmian London, *The Book of Jack London, 2*:355.

But London's fascination with Jung was not merely academic. Scholar James McClintock notes that "both London's last biographer, Richard O'Connor, and his earliest, Chairman London, have recognized that his interest in Jung was rooted in his personal concerns."[43] What were these personal concerns?

Near the end of London's life, he suffered a variety of illnesses. During this season, he became disenchanted with his earlier passions; for instance, he resigned from the Socialist Party, frustrated by their inactivity and passivity. His abandonment of political activism combined with his existential musings to throw London into a dance with nihilism. His interpretation of Darwinian thought also propelled a bleak materialism. He wrote, "I am a hopeless materialist. . . I believe that when I am dead, I am dead. I believe that with my death I am just as much obliterated as the last mosquito you or I smashed."[44] It was in the face of this vacuum that Jungian ideas took hold. McClintock writes that Jung "proffered. . . [London] a scientifically defensible rationale for subscribing to humanly sustaining values as he flirted dangerously with nihilism."[45] Jung's exploration of the psyche, especially his work on the unconscious, offered London an avenue to psychological mystery, providing the possibility that human life might not be as inconsequential as the death of a mosquito. After searching the material world for teleology, London turned to the mysterious waters of Jungian psychology.

London was specifically interested in a specific Jungian concept, libido. Often overshadowed by the sexual emphasis of Freud's definition, Jung's conceptualization of libido

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[43] James I. McClintock, "Jack London's Use of Carl Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious,"* in *Jack London: Essays in Criticism*, ed. Ray Wilson Ownbey (Santa Barbara and Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1978), 48.

[44] Charmian London, *The Book of Jack London, 2*:363.

[45] McClintock, "Jack London's Use of Carl Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious,"*44.

was much broader, described as psychological energy or vitality. McClintock discusses how this concept of libido impacted London's existential struggle: "London had found in Jung's libido concept a new rationale for suggesting, as he had suspected early in his career, that man has an internal energy equivalent to the hostile natural forces crushing in upon him."[46] Similarly, Charmian noted that Jack had underlined this passage from Jung: "It may be said that the whole art of life shrinks to the one problem of how the libido may be freed in the most harmless way possible."[47] London approached Jung's theories pragmatically, looking for their influence on the art of life, the release of energy, and the avoidance of neurosis. However, his interest moved beyond the "advancement of human life," extending to a theory of metaphysics. Charmian wrote that psychoanalysis became one of Jack's tools for "seeking for the noumenon of things."[48] Invoking the Kantian split between phenomena and noumena, Charmian hinted at her husband's underlying pursuit. She described this pursuit when she wrote, "with Jung [Jack] moved on into the realm of cosmic urge of which man's psychic energy is a part."[49] Here lies the core of London's twilight musings and work: a search for the cosmic noumenon beyond the nihilism of his late materialism.

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[46] McClintock, 46.

[47] Charmian London, *The Book of Jack London, 2*:353.

[48] Charmian London, 2:355.

[49] Charmian London, 2:355.

CHAPTER THREE: Waking from the Edenic Dream

Crucial to the development of their environmental philosophy is the context in which the Dust Dwellers experienced the world and created their art. Specifically, their shared geography and historical era both contributed to the development of their philosophy. In this chapter, I will explore the myth of the American West along with the delusion of the American Edenic dream. After establishing this backdrop, I will examine how each author addresses this mythology, specifically its degeneration and resultant atrophy. In each case, they diagnose an ailment in American culture linked to industrial progress. This criticism of American civilization is closely linked to the broader modernist engagement with the existential vacuum. This vacuum of meaning, an idea developed and elaborated by European writers such as Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, was contemplated in the American setting. Jung's engagement with this existential vacuum in Europe functions as a bridge between European modernism and the Dust Dwellers' Californian iteration. While the Dust Dwellers and Jung shared a skepticism toward industrial progress, they arrived at their criticisms of civilization in unique ways. While I will mark several Jungian correlations with the Dust Dwellers' diagnosis of civilization, this chapter will primarily attempt to show that they approached and recognized the same exigence.

The origins of the American Edenic dream stretch back to the early exploration of the continent. Perceived as separate from Europe, the Americas became a projection of Rousseauian potential. This early ambition came into further definition during the eighteenth century. St. John de Crèvecœur wrote of America: "Here are no aristocratical families, no courts, no kings, no bishops, no ecclesiastical dominion. . ."[50] The social structures of Europe were supposedly

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[50] H. de. Crèvecœur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (San Diego, CA: ICON Classics, 2008), 50.

suspended; the ramifications of feudalism and the aristocracy were apparently unable to cross the Atlantic. Furthermore, the image of the new utopia was specifically agrarian. In *The Machine in the Garden*, Leo Marx writes, "Beginning in Jefferson's time [the eighteenth century], the cardinal image of American aspirations was a rural landscape, a well-ordered green garden magnified to continental size."[51] The Jeffersonian dream galvanized in the nineteenth century, identifying Western expansion as the manifest destiny of the country. As European social structures and politics manifested their ills on the East Coast, the Edenic dream was projected onto the unexplored Western territories. In *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*, Henry Nash Smith describes how these visions of utopia coalesced into a unified symbol:

> The master symbol of the garden embraced a cluster of metaphors expressing fecundity, growth, increase, and blissful labor in the earth, all centering about the heroic figure of the idealized frontier farmer armed with that supreme agrarian weapon, the sacred plow."[52]

The symbol of the Garden also carried the inevitability of a "promise."[53] The Garden was not a possibility; it was an assured transformation: "the myth affirmed the impossibility of disaster or suffering within the garden."[54] This was nothing short of a mystical belief that the land would positively respond to the presence of settlers. If civilized man could just subdue the wilderness, then the wilderness would become an orchard, transforming to accommodate east coast farming

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[51] Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (Oxford University Press, 2000), 141.

[52] Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), 123.

[53] Smith, 123.

[54] Smith, 188.

practices. In this paradigm, the plough became the dominant symbol of the promise. Smith notes a popular slogan that expressed this belief: "Rain Follows the Plough."[55] Like Prospero's magic, the plough would cause the landscape to erupt in provision.

With increasing industrialization, the "plough" quickly became more invasive. One of the defining attributes of the United States' Western expansion was the presence of industrial technology. Not only was its presence physically significant, chiseling the landscape, but it was also metaphorically inextricable from the idea of American and human progress. Leo Marx describes the nature of this ideology and its relation to progress as "the official American ideology of industrialism [in which] a loosely composed scheme of meaning and value. . . appears chiefly as rhetoric in homage to 'progress.'"[56] The industrial machine came to represent the hope of civilization. Under the auspices of this philosophy and with the aid of technological innovation, Americans sought to transform "a wasteland. . . into a garden."[57]

Yet there was a problem. The dream was always a dream. It was an imposition, a projection, onto a land with its own natural characteristics. As Smith succinctly writes, "the myth of the garden was contrary to empirical possibility on the plains."[58] While ambitions for expansion continued to press into the late nineteenth century, an unfortunate truth emerged: there was nowhere left to go. The American garden, the vision of a new Eden, had failed; and it had failed miserably.

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[55] Smith, 182.

[56] Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden,* 181.

[57] Marx, 183

[58] Smith, *Virgin Land*, 180.

The collapsing American myth coincided with the broader modernist struggle to come to terms with the Enlightenment's shortcomings. Like Eliot and Chesterton, American modernists recognized that the forward "progress" of civilization was only progress in the most basic sense of movement. It seemed, with the onset of WWI, that it was progress towards a wasteland of mustard gas and artillery shells. With Enlightenment ideals failing, an existential vacuum, heralded a half a century before, began to transform into the prospect of nihilism. Not only was God considered dead but so was the Enlightenment.

As a practicing psychologist, Carl Jung addressed this existential vacuum at an interpersonal level, working with individual patients. At the heart of his practice was the concept of individualization. This was the process by which an individual integrates the contents of their unconscious into their conscious mind. Yet, as humanity became more separated from the natural world, this process became more difficult. The possibility of imbalance and neurosis increased. Jung explained the relationship between individualization and civilization:

> The more civilized, the more unconscious and complicated a man is, the less he is able to follow his instincts. His complicated living conditions and the influence of his environment are so strong that they drown the quiet voice of nature. Opinions, beliefs, theories, and collective tendencies appear in its stead and back up all the aberrations of the conscious mind. Deliberate attention should then be given to the unconscious so that the compensation can set to work.[59]

Jung believed that civilization had a tendency to repress aspects of the unconscious that needed to be integrated. For instance, Jung argued that an aspect of individualization involved

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[59] Carl Jung, "The Syzygy: Anima and Animus," 1951, in *The Essential Jung*, ed. Anthony Storr (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 117.

recognizing one's shadow: "to become conscious of it [the shadow] involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real."[60] However, the Enlightenment paradigm undergirding Western industrial progress emphasized the externality of human suffering, whether it be attributed to political or social causes. This transformed the internal problem of reconciling the shadow into an external problem of politics and social development. Operating with the binary of savagery and civilization, industrialized humanism had a tendency to deny the existence of a shadow, labeling it a relic of the primitive past; the shadow was but another superstition. Jung recognized that an over-identification with the prevalent theories of civilization would drown out the "quiet voice of nature." When aspects of a healthy psyche are repressed, the civilized identity becomes dissonant from psychological needs. Civilization becomes an isolating and repressive force, catalyzing a departure from the balanced psyche. In psychoanalytical terms, civilization can cause a type of neurosis.

Jung directed part of his criticism toward organized religion, stating that the "so-called Christian Civilization" had "proved hollow to a terrifying degree."[61] He argued that civilization and Christianity have removed humanity's focus from internal to external transformation. He writes, "It is all veneer, but the inner man has remained untouched and therefore unchanged."[62] Here, Jung's criticism becomes salient in regard to the American situation. We observe the individual's misdirected individualization enacted on a macro-scale in Western expansion. Central to the expression of the Edenic dream's axioms was an attempt to alter external

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[60] Carl Jung, "The Shadow," 1951, in *The Essential Jung*, ed. Anthony Storr (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 91.

[61] Carl Jung, "Introduction to the Religious and Psychological Problems of Alchemy," 1944, in *The Essential Jung*, ed. Anthony Storr (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 261.

[62] Jung, 261.

circumstances. Americans sought to alleviate the social ailments of the Old World by establishing and creating a completely New World. It was nothing short of a cosmic attempt to externally fix the problem of evil. The dream's industrial and technological promises were synecdoches for this external transformation. However, without internal transformation, the circumstantial changes could not alleviate the psychological problem. Despite the expanding Western boundary, Americans could not escape themselves. Jung discusses the dangers of exchanging the process of individualization for a hope in civilization. When infatuated with the veneer, humanity's "soul" becomes "out of key with his external beliefs."[63] Jung lays the brunt of his criticism at the feet of Western "Christian civilization":

> Christ only meets them from without, never from within the soul; that is why dark paganism still reigns there, a paganism which, now in a form so blatant that it can no longer be denied and now in all too threadbare disguise, is swamping the world of so-called Christian civilization.[64]

Central to Jung's criticism is the idea that internal issues have been neglected for the externality of civilization. In some ways, this is a counter-Enlightenment perspective. Regardless of advances in technology and industry, the "Machine," as Leo Marx calls it, will not be able to produce psychological health. The process of individualization must come from an inner transformation or, as Jung writes, "an inner correspondence with the outer God-image."[65] Jung diagnoses humanity as suffering from a great schism, a dissonance between the claims of civilization and psychological reality.

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[63] Jung, 261.
[64] Jung, 261.
[65] Jung, 261.

Furthermore, Jung correlates the advancement of industrial power with the alienation of humanity from the environment: "The more power man had over nature, the more his knowledge and skill went to his head, and the deeper became his contempt for the merely natural."[66] Jung relates the power of the machine to hubris, invoking a long tradition stretching from Icarus to Frankenstein. Interestingly enough, this power is also related to contempt. We can observe a type of contempt in the irony of the Garden Myth: the quest to transform the natural into a vision of paradise had destructive effects on the physical environment. The cultivation practices that produced the Dust Bowl, spurred by the power of the plough, resulted in ecological disaster. In the hubristic domination that Jung describes, the land is not cultivated according to its natural parameters; it is forced to conform to a projected vision. As the land rejects the vision, man's contempt for it only grows.

Despite criticizing the failures of "Christian civilization" and the hollowness of the modern individual, Jung did argue that religious experience persisted within civilization's growing secularism: "[religion] is an *instinctive* attitude peculiar to man. . . Its evident purpose is to maintain the psychic balance."[67] For Jung, the religious experience was an innate psychological necessity. Without a "extramundane principle," people cannot withstand the "physical and moral blandishments of the world."[68] However, Jung did not think that the religious impulse was extricated from secular modernity; rather, he argued that it was displaced. Without "the evidence

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[66] Carl Jung, "The Undiscovered Self (Present and Future)," 1957, in *The Essential Jung*, ed. Anthony Storr (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 390.

[67] Jung, "The Undiscovered Self," 361.

[68] Jung, 360.

of inner, transcendent experience," the individual is left vulnerable to an "inevitable submersion in the mass."[69] When this occurs, the state becomes a substitute for religion:

> The goals of religion – deliverance from evil, reconciliation with God, rewards in the hereafter, and so on – turn into worldly promises about freedom from care for one's daily bread, the just distribution of material goods, universal prosperity in the future, and shorter working hours…the masses have been converted from an extramundane goal to a purely worldly belief, which is extolled with exactly the same religious fervour and exclusiveness that the creeds display in the other direction."[70]

While religious belief seemed to wane in the wake of scientific advancement, Jung argued that the belief continued under a new façade. It transformed from a hope in divine intervention into a hope for political intervention. In the "purely worldly belief" of the materialist perspective, the transcendent qualities of religion are translated into matters of external policy. According to Jung, humanity cannot escape the religious impulse. While belief may adopt a new name, the essence remains.

We can hear echoes of Jung's diagnosis of civilization across the Dust Dwellers' writing. I'll begin with Steinbeck and his commentary on the American myth, perhaps best articulated in his novel *East of Eden,* in which Steinbeck's perspective contemplates humanity's internal struggle with good and evil. The novel traces an American family across two generations, including a Western migration. Despite the family's best attempts to escape their past, they cannot evade their internal propensities for good and evil alike. While in California, one of the

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[69] Jung, 360.

[70] Jung, 362.

main protagonists, Adam Trask, becomes obsessed with his recently purchased farm. Unaware of the calamity which will soon befall his family, he attempts to transform his arid countryside into a literal garden. Steinbeck connects Adam's vision to the theme of technological progress. Speaking of new irrigation systems, he remarks, "Just think what this land would raise with plenty of water! Why, it will be a friggin garden! . . . There wasn't any limit, no boundary at all, to the future."[71] The Edenic dream is played out in the life of the Trask family. By the end of the novel, the farm is abandoned, the family disrupted, and the future imbued with uncertainty. Throughout the book, there are multiple instances where external technology fails dramatically, including Adam's attempt to transport lettuce across the continent. On each occasion, the external solutions fail to remedy personal problems. In a final benediction, Steinbeck heralds internal transformation, enabled by human agency, as a necessity for the individual's and community's health.

Steinbeck also addressed the Edenic dream in his nonfiction prose. In a collection of essays, *America and Americans*, he discussed the early settlers and their relationship with the land. His views were certainly not beguiled with the utopic dreams of the eighteenth and nineteenth century:

> I have often wondered at the savagery and thoughtlessness with which our early settlers approached this rich continent. . . They burned the forests and changed the rainfall; they swept the buffalo from the plains, blasted the streams, set fire to the grass, and ran a reckless scythe through the virgin and noble timber.[72]

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[71] John Steinbeck, *East of Eden* (Penguin Books, 2002), 156.

[72] John Steinbeck, "Americans and the Land," in *America and Americans and Selected Nonfiction*, eds. Susan Shillinglaw and Jackson J. Benson (Penguin Books, 2002), 377.

Steinbeck identified the destructive effects that resulted from the external pursuit of the Garden myth. As he searched for a potential motivation for this recklessness, he suggested, "Perhaps they felt that it was limitless and could never be exhausted and that a man could move on to new wonders endlessly."[73] Steinbeck connects the destructive use of the environment with a belief in the limitlessness of the frontier. He describes the settlers' actions with a sense of wonder, communicating the mythic quality of this inexhaustible frontier. Furthermore, Steinbeck observed a new iteration of this same destructive behavior: "No longer do we Americans want to destroy wantonly, but our new-found sources of power. . . spew pollution on our country, so that the rivers and streams are becoming poisonous and lifeless."[74] While grand visions of a American utopia were in shambles by the end of the nineteenth century, the underlying premises persisted under a new disguise. The faith in technological innovation and the "ideology of industrialization" continued to foster reckless environmental practices into the twentieth century. Steinbeck's description of polluted streams may have been influenced by Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, published four years before *America and Americans*. While Steinbeck was hopeful that humanity would "learn," he recognized that the contemporary byproducts of civilization were needlessly destructive.[75]

Not only did Steinbeck recognize the physical effects that accompanied the march of civilization, but he also recognized a metaphysical decay. In "Americans and the Future," we see a criticism of civilization that is recognizably Jungian in theme. Steinbeck compares Americans to unused bird dogs:

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[73] Steinbeck, 377.

[74] Steinbeck, 382.

[75] Steinbeck, 382.

> They become quarrelsome, fat, lazy, cowardly, dirty, and utterly disreputable and worthless, and all because their purpose is gone and with it the rules and disciplines that made them beautiful and good. Is that what we are becoming, a national kennel of animals with no purpose and no direction?[76]

Steinbeck makes an important connection: he relates the material effects of civilization to a personal existential crisis. His critique is specifically aimed at the dulling effects of material prosperity. In a 1959 letter, he wrote, "If I wanted to destroy a nation, I would give it too much and I would have it on its knees, miserable, greedy and sick."[77] Yet, it was not merely that wealth spoiled the pack; there was something else occurring, something more profound. Steinbeck described the end of materialist philosophy:

> We have not lost our way at all. The roads of the past have come to an end and we have not yet discovered a path to the future. I think we will find one, but its direction may be unthinkable to us now. When it does appear, however, and we move on, the path must have direction, it must have purpose and the journey must be filled with a joy of anticipation, for the boy today, hating the world, creates a hateful world and then tries to destroy it and sometimes himself. We have succeeded in what our fathers prayed for and it is our success that is destroying us.[78]

It was not the failure of industry that crippled Americans; it was the success. Steinbeck argued that when physical necessity was removed, humanity entered a new situation, one that had never

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[76] John Steinbeck, "Americans and the Future," in *America and Americans and Selected Nonfiction*, eds. Susan Shillinglaw and Jackson J. Benson (Penguin Books, 2002), 395.

[77] Elaine Steinbeck and Robert Wallsten, eds., *Steinbeck: A Life in Letters* (Macmillan Company, 1975), 652.

[78] Steinbeck, "Americans and the Future," 400.

before been encountered. Civilization and its Machine created the perception that the struggle for material sustenance had been solved. It was only a matter of time before industrial advancement provided nourishment, shelter, and prosperity for the global community. If the problems that distressed humanity were of material quality, then affluence should result in greater happiness and flourishing. However, Steinbeck observed the opposite: Americans were not flourishing; they were atrophying. The promise that material, external innovations could solve all social ills was proving hollow.[79] The end of Steinbeck's "roads of the past" can be compared with the collapse of the Edenic dream. Although material demands were satisfied, there remained an internal issue. Steinbeck described the internal condition as an anemic decline: "A dying people invariably concedes that poetry has gone, that beauty has withered away. . . Then vision dims like the house lights in a theatre – and the world is finished."[80] While Steinbeck remained cautiously optimistic about the future, he gave a bleak description of the internal or psychological condition of Americans. Alongside Jung, Steinbeck rejected the Machine as a solution, searching for a "path to the future."

If Steinbeck's critique of industrial America pricked like a needle, Jeffers' critique cut like a bone-saw. Often described as misanthropic, Jeffers condemned civilization and its decaying effects, including technological innovation. In his poem "Edison," he juxtaposes the dream of technology with its misuse. Jeffers describes Thomas Edison as "full of benevolence"

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[79] It is worth noting that Steinbeck, an admirer of Dostoevsky, shares a criticism of materialism that resonates with ideas presented in *Demons* and *Notes from Underground* (DeMott, 35). This is another connection between the Dust Dwellers' criticism of modernity and the larger existential vacuum of the turning century.

[80] Steinbeck, "Americans and the Future,"400-401.

and "eager for knowledge."[81] Yet, despite Edison's intentions, technology is used destructively: "Why must the careful gifts of good men / Narrow the lives and erode the souls of people."[82] The incandescent lightbulb, a hallmark of twentieth-century innovation, is presented as soul-corroding. The poem works out the tragedy of technology: the invention intended for good becomes an instrument of destruction. Jeffers' skepticism toward technology is embedded in his overall rejection of the Western progress-narrative. He repeatedly characterizes the modern city as a de-humanizing environment.

In "New Mexican Mountain," Jeffers writes of tourists who attempt to regain the lost reality of human experience: "people from cities, anxious to be human again."[83] The city represses certain human qualities, emptying the citizens' psyche to the point of recognizable loss: "Pilgrims from civilization, anxiously seeking beauty, religion, / poetry; pilgrims from the vacuum."[84] As Steinbeck mentioned the departure of beauty, Jeffers also presents the city as a wasteland, the region of absence. However, the tourists have a pervading, if not conscious, recognition of this emptiness. They come to find renewal. The religious language of pilgrimage points to the spiritual nature of their visit. The tourists physically encounter the mountain, but their hope, communicated through inward longings, is for spiritual renewal.

The pilgrimage also invokes the continuation of religious desire within a "secular" population. The narrative structure of "New Mexican Mountain" revolves around the tourists

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[81] Robinson Jeffers, "Edison," in *Rock and Hawk: A Selection of Shorter Poems by Robinson Jeffers*, ed. Robert Hass (New York: Random House, 1987), 154.

[82] Jeffers, 154.

[83] Robinson Jeffers, "New Mexican Mountain," in *Rock and Hawk: A Selection of Shorter Poems by Robinson Jeffers*, ed. Robert Hass (New York: Random House, 1987), 155.

[84] Jeffers, 155.

watching the Native Americans of Taos Mountain dance to "help the young corn."[85] The tourists' hungry eyes are set outside the dance and contrasted with the sound of the drum, which is the dance's "beating heart."[86] As they watch, they are looking for something that has been lost, a vague reverberation of previous presence. They are looking to extract something from the Native Americans: "Poor show how / they suck you empty! The Indians are emptied."[87]

Jeffers' description of the tourists closely resembles Jung's theory about the continuation of religious desire within secular society. While the tourists are representatives of modern civilization, they still recognize the religious quality of the tribal dance. Their religious impulse is exposed in the desire to extract some spiritual boon from the dancers. However, they are unable to participate in the experience because they consciously reject anything that might appear to be superstitious or religious. Jeffers describes this inability to be either filled or transformed: "there was never religion enough, nor beauty nor / poetry here. . . to fill Americans."[88] The materialistic philosophy of civilization is unable to participate in the ritual at Taos Mountain; it must observe spirituality as the tourists observe the dance. This leaves Jeffers to conclude that "only myself and the strong / Tribal drum, and the rockhead of Taos mountain, remember / that civilization is a transient sickness."[89] Jeffers clearly accuses civilization of having a blinding effect. The tourists have eyes but cannot see. The drum, which has "no eyes," can recognize the spiritual qualities and beauty that Jeffers describes.[90]

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[85] Jeffers, 155.
[86] Jeffers, 155.
[87] Jeffers, 155.
[88] Jeffers, "New Mexican Mountain," 155.
[89] Jeffers, 156.
[90] Jeffers, 155.

Like Jung, Jeffers identifies a remnant of longing within the secularized culture; yet the dulling effects of civilization make it difficult to recognize and fulfil internal desires. The mantra of civilization is the superiority of the present to the past. Jeffers juxtaposes this sense of progress with the tribal drum, a metonym for the unchanging aspects of the world: "It thinks the world has not changed at all; it is only a dreamer, / a brainless heart."[91] Regardless of the degree of external change, Jeffers contends that certain underlying realities of the world are unalterable. For instance, the mystical encounter with nature is permanent. However, this impulse can be dulled and muted by the dissonance of industrial life. When the modern city creates the illusion of living outside of nature, the natural world becomes a tourist destination. Jeffers presents the idea of "growing civilized" as a dream, an illusion. The curse of the tourist is to observe but never participate. Jeffers concludes that "civilization is a transient sickness." This statement is a prime example of what has been identified as Jeffers' misanthropy, an actual disdain for humanity. Not only is civilized life defined by emptiness, but it is also defined by its negative relationship with the natural world. The diagnosis is austere.

Of the Dust Dwellers, Jeffers certainly holds the most severe view of humanity and civilization. Jeffers' perspective, a self-described as inhumanism, receives its characterization from passages such as the following: "The earth is a star, its human element / Is what darkens it. . . the breed of man. . . looks like a botched / experiment that has run wild and ought to be stopped."[92] Jeffers viewed civilization as something that was out of step with nature. Rather than claim humanity's status as special and laudable, he denies the attributes that humanism

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[91] Jeffers, 155.

[92] Robinson Jeffers, "Orca," in *Rock and Hawk: A Selection of Shorter Poems by Robinson Jeffers*, ed. Robert Hass (New York: Random House, 1987), 238.

celebrates. For instance, he dismisses concepts that are often presented as defining attributes of human life. In "Birds and Fishes," he writes, "Justice and mercy / Are human dreams, they do not concern the birds nor the fish / nor eternal God."[93] This is a strange passage; typically, ideas like justice and mercy are associated with the divine; the transcendent is cited as the source. However, Jeffers pits these concepts against the "eternal God," suggesting that they are but manufactured human abstractions. These abstractions establish moral codes, justify force, and ultimately become the chains that dictate action. Jeffers positions human appeals to morality as antithetical to reality.

Related to Jeffers' attack on transcendent values is his dismissal of the self-determining will. In "Gray Weather," Jeffers writes of waves striking a "worn granite drum": "There is neither joy nor grief nor a person, the sun's tooth / sheathed in cloud, / And life has no more desires than a stone."[94] There is no desire in the wave to strike the stone; instead, it simply performs its very essence. Civilization, with its intricate structures built on desire and theorization, stands opposed to this pure existence. The unique qualities of humanity do not represent the triumph of the intellect, reason, and the will; rather, Jeffers calls their manifestation a "botched experiment." While his depictions are undoubtedly harsh, it is possible to overemphasize this inhumanism. He directs his disdain toward a paradigm that values the human experience above the natural world. Jeffers continually opposes the idea that humanity is somehow outside of nature; he decentralizes a perspective of human significance to introduce a more egalitarian view of the physical world. Humanity maintains no distinctive value outside of

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[93] Robinson Jeffers, "Birds and Fishes," in *Rock and Hawk: A Selection of Shorter Poems by Robinson Jeffers*, ed. Robert Hass (New York: Random House, 1987), 291.

[94] Robinson Jeffers, "Gray Weather," in *Rock and Hawk: A Selection of Shorter Poems by Robinson Jeffers*, ed. Robert Hass (New York: Random House, 1987), 175.

nature itself. In this regard, Jeffers' philosophic outlook is indeed antihumanistic, stripping humanity of traditionally afforded dignity. Yet, as Arthur Coffin reminds us, this aspect of Jeffers' philosophy was not an exhaustive system: "Actually for Jeffers, Inhumanism was a 'philosophical attitude,' rather than a genuine philosophy."[95]

This is an important distinction and nuance. If Jeffers' attitude was expounded to produce philosophical system, there would be a strong inclination to describe him as a nihilist. Yet this label would be misleading. While Jeffers challenged traditional understandings of human values, he did not completely obliterate a belief in values themselves. He identified and defended values that are derived from and congruent with nature. As his insistence on the physical cannot be reduced to materialism, neither can his Inhumanism be reduced to nihilism. Jeffers perceives beauty and truth as realities that exist at a fundamental level. Here, we find the paradoxical nature of Jeffers' philosophy. In the previously mentioned letter citing his influences, Jeffers wrote under the "Ideas" heading, "Mechanistic anti-spiritual point of view from medical school, running in harness with a mysticism that seems almost instinctive."[96] The anti-spiritual and the mystical run in the same harness. Jeffers does not abandon metaphysics; his work grasps at a reality that is deeper than merely the phenomenal world and simultaneously grounded in the natural world. However, this reality is shrouded by the abstractions and social conventions of civilization. Following Coffin's advice, we can view Jeffers' Inhumanism as the philosophic attitude that opposes this deadening effect of civilization.

Jack London, the earliest of the Dust Dwellers, was acutely aware of the nineteenth century's twilight. Growing up impoverished in San Francisco, London observed the inner cogs

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[95] Coffin, *Poet of Inhumanism,* 3.

[96] Karman, *The Collected Letters*, 777.

of the Machine. From stealing oysters to working on whaling ships to chasing gold in the Klondike, London had more work experience before he was twenty-three than most people do in their entire lives. His early years dramatically affected his perspective on society and civilization. James Haley describes the literary and cultural context of the Gilded Age: "With Twain questioning its economic justice and Wharton lamenting its social consequences. . . Jack London and other child laborers experienced its ugly, all-too real underbelly."[97] By the early 1890s, unemployment was skyrocketing and political unrest was growing. London battled bleak economic conditions, often finding corruption in the few opportunities he encountered. At the age of eighteen, he joined the "Kelly's Army" protest. Fueled by indignation and wanderlust, London vagabonded across the country and was eventually arrested and tried for vagrancy. The dreams of the Garden must have seemed alien to the young London. As Jeffersonian ideals collapsed, London's generation were caught in the gears of the malfunctioning Machine. These early struggles helped solidify London's political views, which were staunchly aligned with the socialist movement.

London's relationship with writing was forged out of early necessity. Unlike many of the bohemians with whom he fraternized later in life, London did not idolize the artistic muse. His career as a writer was propelled by a sense of survival. He deemed the profession a better alternative to the extreme physical labor and destitution that he experienced as a young man. His work was often driven by financial necessity, not by a desire to create *belle lettres*. He wrote,

> The only reason I write is that I am well paid for my labor. . . I always write what the editors want, not what I'd like to write. I grind out what the capitalist editors want, and

[97] James L. Haley, *Wolf: The Lives of Jack London* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 27.

> the editors buy only what the business and editorial departments permit. The editors are not interested in the truth; they don't want to tell the truth. A writer can't sell a story when it tells the truth, so why should he batter his head against a stone wall?[98]

One of the striking aspects of this quotation is London's cynicism towards his craft. Throughout his career, he oscillated between seasons of artistic inspiration and financially necessitated production. Even as his career developed, the necessity of creating new material felt more like an economic burden than the pursuit of truth. This quotation associates the "capitalist editors" with a particular trend of carelessness and greed. London's socialist beliefs were closely tied to his critique of society. For London, the current civilized climate was not defined by equal opportunity; it was defined by corruption and exploitation. Like the other Dust Dwellers, London diagnosed a deep cultural decay. Charmian, speaking of her husband's early imprisonment for vagrancy, wrote:

> For the rest of his life, until Mexico and Germania threatened his country, Jack London's only tender connotation of the word patriotism as applied to capitalist civilization was the fact that his father and mine were single-minded veterans of Abraham Lincoln's victorious forces.[99]

Along with his criticism of economic structures, London directed his ire at the governing political bodies. Frustrated with "progress" and hypocrisy, he became an ardent advocate of socialism. However, by the end of his life, around the same time he discovered Jung, London became disenchanted with the party. Citing a failure of action, he condemned the party's

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[98] Haley, 217.

[99] Charmian London, *The Book of Jack London*, 2:183.

"compromise" and resigned.[100] After Charmian asked what he would call himself, London replied, "I am not anything, I fear. I am all these things. Individuals disappoint me more and more, and more and more I turn to the land."[101] While London justified his apostasy by blaming the party's passivity, there seems to have been something more going on. As previously noted, the last years of London's life were a time of tremendous personal searching and growth. It seems likely, considering his extensive reading of Jung, that London became disenchanted with the external solutions of politics. Jung wrote, "The consciousness of modern man still clings so much to external objects that he makes them exclusively responsible, as if it were on them that the decision depended."[102] London's departure from socialism resonates with this Jungian critique of externality.

As London moved away from political organizations, his approach to writing transformed. As Hamilton notes, "During this final stage in his writing career, London abandoned much of his hackwork and began to write stories of significant literary merit."[103] He also engaged multiple Jungian motifs during this final stage, exploring archetypes and the interiority of the psyche. London's literary and political shift may have reflected his new interest in Jungian psychology. Instead of social problems being resolved by revolution, humanity's most basic struggle might be found in the internal transformation of individualization. London seems to have exchanged the external struggle of political revolution for the internal struggle of

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[100] Haley, *Wolf*, 301.

[101] Haley, 302.

[102] Jung, "The Undiscovered Self," 390.

[103] Hamilton, "*Tools of My Trade*," 43.

individualization. This shift toward the psychological and mythical is reflected in his later fiction.

One of London's short stories from this final stage is "Like Argus of the Ancient Times." Mapping the hero's journey onto an American quest, London presents a glimpse into the Edenic dream at the turn of the century. In this story, he recounts the adventures of John Tarwater. Driven west by "California fever," Tarwater had built a sizable fortune, but over the years, his wealth has dissipated.[104] Now a grandfather, he desires to "buy back the Tarwater lands," deciding to leave home and prospect for gold in the Klondike.[105] His family tries to dissuade him, citing his advanced age as a primary objection. However, Tarwater is propelled by a vision of his youth: "Bill Ping and me used to rope grizzlies out of the underbrush."[106] When he mentions his desire to leave, his son replies, "Them times is past, like roping bear with Bill Ping. There ain't no more bear."[107] London sets this story in 1897, making Tarwater an anachronism by the turn of the century. Having migrated from Michigan, he is the archetypal settler looking for the Western Garden. While he briefly achieved some success, his wealth was short lived. Interestingly, London does not deny the Edenic myth's existence. Rather, he locates it in the past. By 1897, "there ain't no more bear." As Tarwater proves himself in the wilderness, a colleague states, "You're the real stuff. . . They don't seem to make your kind any more, dad."[108] London describes a mythic generation of resilient adventurers. He does not deny the Edenic dream and its mythic

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[104] Jack London, "Like Argus of the Ancient Times," 1917, in *The Short Stories of Jack London*, eds. Earle Labor, Robert C. Leitz III, and I. Milo Shepard (Macmillan, 1990), 668.

[105] London, 669

[106] London, 668.

[107] London, 669.

[108] London, 679.

frontiersmen; he relegates them to the past. While his generation ought to have been reaping the fruit of the orchard, London presents the memory of a better time. It is as if the garden was achieved but only recently lost. By the early twentieth century, the Garden had already been identified as yesterday's pursuit.

However, the Edenic dream was a dream; it never substantialized, only transforming from a vision of the future into a memory of an indeterminate past. Why, then, does London write about the success of this old frontiersman? Was London duped into revitalizing the very dream that helped contribute to the civilization he condemned? We can recognize a potential answer when we consider the story alongside Jungian ideas. If the story is read psychologically, things begin to fall into place. Instead of viewing Tarwater as a remnant of a glorious yesterday, we can interpret him as the modern hero. The old man becomes the contemporary hope, attempting to move beyond the collapsed dreams of the past. His quest is not about conquering the wilderness but revitalizing the life within. The Klondike's gold is symbolic, the treasure of individualization. Furthermore, this transformation will bring health to the broader community.

"Like Argus of the Ancient Times" engages the mythic theme of the wounded Fisher King. The hero becomes a barometer for the community's health; Tarwater becomes the modern individual searching for a new way forward. There are numerous passages where London explicitly engages Jungian themes; perhaps the most prominent is the old man's encounter with the unconscious. At the story's volta, Tarwater is separated from his camp and caught in a storm. As circumstances worsen, he is forced to survive the winter by himself, struggling against the brutal elements of a frozen environment. Waiting out the perpetual storm, he barely manages to stay alive. During this near encounter with death, he experiences strange visions:

> Weighted by his seventy years, in the vast and silent loneliness of the North, Old Tarwater, as in the delirium of drug or anæsthetic, recovered, within himself, the infantile mind of the child-man of the early world. . . himself hero-maker and the hero in quest of the immemorable treasure. . . Either he must attain the treasure – for so ran the inexorable logic of the shadow-land of the unconscious – or else sink into the all devouring sea, the blackness eater of the light.[109]

In this portion of the narrative, we see Tarwater's quest explained in the terms of individualization. Jung described this process as integrating the unconscious elements, including one's shadow, into the conscious mind. If the shadow is not integrated, it becomes "blacker and denser."[110] Lost in a state of semi-dream, Tarwater must reconcile the archaic influences of the unconscious or succumb to the "blackness eater." Tarwater's winter survival is the precursor to a new birth, after which he can emerge from his small shelter as if from a womb; he is born again, a new hero in place of the old. If read in terms of individualization, London's story is not a resuscitation of the Western drama. It is the internal journey, allegorized through the external adventure. The hero must depart from civilization and move away from the external solutions that captivate his contemporaries.

"Like Argus of the Ancient Times" is set in the same year London went on his Klondike adventure; it is not difficult to trace similarities between Tarwater and the ill London of his final years. Taken together, London's departure from the socialist party and "Like Argus of the Ancient Times" provide an interesting perspective on London's late fiction, philosophy, and life.

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[109] London, 684.

[110] Carl Jung, "Psychology and Religion," in *The Essential Jung*, ed. Anthony Storr (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 88.

We not only observe his frustration with the external solutions of civilization, but we also observe a transition to inward reflection and reevaluation. Frustrated by inactivity and provoked by Jungian psychology, London began moving towards a prescription for civilization's decay.

CHAPTER FOUR: The *Unus Mundus*

Both the Dust Dwellers and Jung recognized the destructive repercussions of the Edenic dream and participated in a shared skepticism towards progress and civilization. However, this skepticism was largely a similarity with, not necessarily a direct influence of Jung. In this chapter, I will explore the Dust Dwellers' metaphysics, specifically considering how they share direct intellectual congruencies with Jungian thought. The Dust Dwellers' concepts of cosmological and environmental unity show close resemblances with the Jungian description of the *unus mundus*. I will begin the chapter by explaining Jung's position; then, I will address how each of the authors reiterates a version of these metaphysical ideas within his work.

Perhaps the most famous Jungian idea is the collective unconscious. A former student of Freud, Jung affirmed the existence of the unconscious along with its power in shaping the human psyche. However, unlike Freud, he held that there were two forms of the unconscious. First, he conceived of a personal unconscious; this idea was similar to Freud's conception, including "contents that became unconscious either because they lost their intensity and were forgotten or because consciousness was withdrawn from them (repression)."[111] The personal unconscious also included general "sense-impressions" that "never had sufficient intensity to reach consciousness."[112] Second, Jung developed his more famous psychological formulation, the collective unconscious, a shared substructure of every human psyche. The elements of this collective reservoir manifest themselves in archetypal images. These archetypes can appear in a nearly limitless variety of iterations. However, while the images differ, the content of the images

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[111] Carl Jung, "The Structure of the Psyche," 1931, in *The Essential Jung*, ed. Anthony Storr (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 67.

[112] Jung, 67.

is a shared human reality. Speaking of the origin of archetypes, Jung wrote, "It seems to me that their origin can only be explained by assuming them to be deposits of the constantly repeated experiences of humanity."[113] The contents of the collective unconscious do not depend on an individual's personal circumstances; they are composed of a shared reservoir of human experiences. Jung explains this distinction:

> Whereas the contents of the personal unconscious are acquired during the individual's lifetime, the contents of the collective unconscious are invariably archetypes that were present from the beginning.[114]

In its most basic form, the collective unconscious can be understood as the aspects of human consciousness that appear instinctual. Jung wrote, "The hypothesis of the collective unconscious is. . . no more daring than to assume there are instincts."[115]

The separation of the personal and collective unconscious is a major distinction between Jungian and Freudian psychology. For instance, Freudian dream analysis would interpret all symbols as condensations and associations of personal experience, often related to childhood development. Jungian psychoanalysis would consider dream images not only in relation to the personal unconscious but also in relation to the collective. Joseph Campbell, a student of Jung, discussed the collective unconscious in relation to the repeated symbols and narratives found in world mythology. Campbell's interpretation can help contextualize how the collective unconscious is related to literary images. He observed that certain mythological themes and ideas

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[113] Carl Jung, "On the Psychology of the Unconscious," 1917, in *The Essential Jung*, ed. Anthony Storr (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 70.

[114] Jung, "The Shadow," 91.

[115] Bennet, E. A. *What Jung Really Said* (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), 66.

were held across cultures and eras; he conceptualized the main, coexistent plot as the "monomyth," citing the collective psychological reservoir as its origin. Regarding dreams, Campbell writes in a particularly Jungian manner, "Dream is the personalized myth, myth the depersonalized dream."[116] The idea of the collective unconscious and its plethora of ever-transforming manifestations is central to Jung's conception of psychology and, as we will observe, his metaphysics.

Jung thought that the collective unconscious was a reality that had been previously identified by other historical theories. He described alchemy as one such example. Fascinated with alchemical ideas and their relation to psychology, Jung described the collective unconscious as the unknown quality that the alchemists were trying to discover:

> It is apparent from this explanation that the desperately evasive and universal Mercurius - that Proteus twinkling in a myriad shapes and color - is none other than the "unus mundus," the original, non-differentiated unity of the world or of Being; the ἀγνωσία of the Gnostics, the primordial unconsciousness. The Mercurius of the alchemists is a personification and concretization of what we today would call the collective unconscious.[117]

In this framework, the alchemical property of Mercurius along with the secret knowledge of the Gnostics were embodiments of the collective unconscious. Jung presented the collective unconscious as the reality which had been described by different names, one of these being the *unus mundus*. He sought to reconcile these historical conceptions, combining them within a

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[116] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (New York: MJF Books, 1997), 19.
[117] Jung, "The Conjunction," 291.

unified theory.

For Jung, this reality was not merely psychological; he postulated that all material and immaterial substances find their source in the *unus mundus:*

> Undoubtedly the idea of the *unus mundus* is founded on the assumption that the multiplicity of the empirical world rests on an underlying unity, and that not two or more fundamentally different worlds exist side by side or are mingled with one another. Rather, everything divided and different belongs to one and the same world, which is not the world of sense but a postulate. . . That even the psychic world, which is so extraordinarily different from the physical world, does not have its roots outside the one cosmos is evident from the undeniable fact that causal connections exist between the psyche and the body which point to their underlying unitary nature.[118]

Carried to its metaphysical conclusions, the *unus mundus* establishes three premises: 1. There exists a reality that is outside of individual experience; 2. This reality is unified in its nature; 3. The "multiplicity of the empirical world" is a manifestation of this reality. These are the important metaphysical implications that Jung engages beyond his psychological theory.

It is this move beyond psychology that brings the theory of the *unus mundus* into what Charmian London called "the realm of cosmic urge of which man's psychic energy is a part."[119] Jung's theorization beyond psychology is an arena of literary influence that has not been adequately emphasized. The predominant readings of the Dust Dwellers in relation to Jung focus

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[118] Jung, 334-335.

[119] Charmian London, *The Book of Jack London,* 2:355.

on psychological interpretations of their work. However, the theory of the *unus mundus*, as expressed in these foundational premises, is a statement about the metaphysical reality of existence. Exploring the premises of the *unus mundus*, the Dust Dwellers engaged with Jungian ideas that were philosophical, not merely psychological. By investigating images of the *unus mundus* in their writing, we can trace an influence of Jung on their environmental philosophy, specifically their conception of a unified reality.

In *Sea of Cortez*, Steinbeck uses language that is explicitly Jungian. In a conversation about nautical myth, he writes: "For the ocean, deep and black in the depths, is like the low dark levels of our minds in which the dream symbols incubate and sometimes rise up to sight like the Old Man of the Sea."[120] This description of the unconscious as a dark void parallels Jung. Recounting his encounters with the unconscious in dreams, Jung wrote, "I frequently imagined a steep descent. I even made several attempts to get to the very bottom. . . I found myself at the edge of a cosmic abyss."[121] Steinbeck uses the language of darkness and depth as he compares the ocean to the unseen regions of the mind. Furthermore, Steinbeck writes of dream symbols emerging from the depths of the mind that manifest themselves as mythic images. This process is a direct retelling of Jung's proposed origin of archetypes.

While the previous description is compelling in regard to its Jungian influence, Steinbeck continues to solidify the connection: "We have thought often of this mass of sea-memory, or sea-thought, which lives deep in the mind. If one ask[s] for a description of the unconscious, even the

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[120] Steinbeck and Ricketts, *Sea of Cortez*, 31.

[121] Carl Jung, "Confrontation with the Unconscious," 1962, in *The Essential Jung*, ed. Anthony Storr (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 118.

answer-symbol will usually be in terms of a dark water."[122] Again, Steinbeck compares the human mind to the ocean, a dark mass concealed but able to be explored. Additionally, he uses the language of a shared "sea-memory." This concept once again relies on the metaphor of the unconscious as ocean; below the waters, there is an abundance of life and knowledge, concealed by a reflective surface. The ocean holds beautiful as well as dangerous creatures. The unconscious holds the beautiful and terrifying collective instincts. In this metaphor, the dark ocean is comparable to Jung's "cosmic abyss." Steinbeck continues to confirm the explicit Jungian influence as well as the danger latent in the ocean symbol:

> The preponderantly aquatic symbols in the individual unconscious might well be indications of a group psyche-memory which is the foundation of the whole unconscious. And what things must be there, what monsters, what enemies, what fear of dark and pressure, and of prey![123]

Steinbeck's description is nearly an exact sketch of Jungian psychology. He cites symbolic and mythic representations as indications of a group unconscious. Additionally, he identifies the fear of darkness and predators as primal echoes of the unconscious. These dangerous contents resonate with qualities of Jung's shadow and "abyss." Throughout the *Sea of Cortez*, Steinbeck repeatedly uses Jungian terminology and theory.

Critics have discussed Steinbeck's essay "Argument of Phalanx" and several works of his fiction in relation to Jung's collective unconscious. However, the scholarship usually focuses on the anthropological aspects of the theory, noting its presence in mob or group actions, such as

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[122] Steinbeck and Ricketts, *Sea of Cortez,* 32.

[123] Steinbeck and Ricketts, 32.

those depicted in *Tortilla Flat* and *In Dubious Battle*. However, the influence of Jungian thought on Steinbeck's metaphysics is quite a different discussion. My argument moves beyond the existing scholarship on group action, revealing a Jungian influence on Steinbeck's metaphysics.

In his novel *To a God Unknown,* the manuscript of which Joseph Campbell helped revise,[124] Steinbeck explores recognizably Jungian metaphysics, specifically the concept of the *unus mundus*. Throughout the novel, Steinbeck uses pantheistic language to communicate this unified existence. He establishes this theme in the opening pages. Joseph Wayne, the novel's protagonist, leaves his family to establish a homestead in California. While he is away, his father dies and Joseph comes to believe that his father's "being" has entered into a tree on the newly settled property: "His eyes lighted with recognition and welcome, for his father's strong and simple being, which had dwelt in his youth like a cloud of peace, had entered the tree."[125] Death, rather than being a departure, becomes a transition from one manifestation to another. As this theme is further developed, Joseph becomes connected with his father's perpetual presence. Joseph's sister-in-law describes him as follows to his new wife, Elizabeth:

> You cannot think of Joseph dying. He is eternal. His father died, and it was not death. . . I tell you this man [Joseph] is not a man, unless he is all men. . . He is all these, a repository for a little piece of each man's soul, and more than that, a symbol of the earth's soul.[126]

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[124] Jennifer Banach, "'Roar Like a Lion": The Historical and Cultural Contexts of the Works of John Steinbeck," in *Critical Insights: John Steinbeck*, ed. Don Noble (Pasadena and Hackensack: Salem Press, 2011), 45.

[125] Steinbeck, *To a God Unknown*, 17.

[126] Steinbeck, 66.

Bearing a sharp resemblance to Jung's description of the collective unconscious, Joseph and his father are presented as individual manifestations of a great reality. The reference to the "earth's soul" communicates the singularity of existence, in which the individual soul is only a part. This passage also invokes the archetype of the father.[127] When Joseph is compared to his immortal father, they both become representations of a greater reality. This greater reality appears to change; yet, the change is a recurrence. Joseph comments on the cycle, "perhaps there isn't any change, ever, in anything. Perhaps unchangeable things only pass."[128] This statement invokes Heraclitus and his ever-changing river, along with the Nietzschean eternal return of the same. As to the substance of the "unchangeable things," it is easy to postulate from this passage a version of Jung's *unus mundus*. In alignment with this philosophy, Joseph exclaims, "all things are one, and all a part of me."[129]

While Joseph seems to be a prophet of this strange pantheism, the phenomenon is experienced by the community. When the Waynes hold a party at their farm, people gather for a feast and dancing. As the crowd moves with the rhythm of the band, the narrator describes a prevailing sense of unity: "The dancers lost identity. Faces grew rapt, shoulders fell slightly forward, each person became a part of the dancing body, and the soul of the body was the rhythm."[130] The scene is emotionally and spiritually charged. Joseph's brother Burton identifies

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[127] Campbell's input when reviewing the manuscript could have helped solidify this Jungian idea; Campbell would later comment of the father identity, "We and that protecting father are one. This is the redeeming insight. That protecting father is every man we meet" (*Hero with a Thousand Faces,* 161).

[128] Steinbeck, *To a God Unknown,* 45.

[129] Steinbeck, 61-62.

[130] Steinbeck, 87.

the dance as religious and occult; he exclaims, "It's devil-worship, I tell you! It's horrible!"[131] Once again, we observe the mystical combined with a prevailing sense of unity.

While Steinbeck's pantheistic themes are shrouded by a thin veil, Jeffers makes the connection between his verse and pantheism explicit. Although he was reluctant to label his thought, Jeffers discussed the influence of pantheistic ideas on his thinking and writing. During a speech at the Library of Congress, he stated:

> Another theme that has much engaged my verses is the expression of a religious feeling, that perhaps must be called pantheism, though I hate to type it with a name. It is the feeling - I will say the certainty - that the universe is one being, a single organism, one great life that includes all life and all things; and is so beautiful that it must be loved and reverenced; and in moments of mystical vision we identify ourselves with it.[132]

Jeffers connects the pantheistic elements of his verse to the existence of a unified cosmos. Not only can we recognize a version of Jung's *unus mundus*, but we can also trace similarities with *Sea of Cortez*. Steinbeck wrote, "Sometimes one has a feeling of fullness, of warm wholeness, wherein every sight and object and odor and experience seems to key into a gigantic whole."[133] In both cases, the whole is composed of a variety of manifestations that together account for the totality of existence. This point of intersection between Steinbeck and Jeffers engages a Jungian concept. Jeffers goes on to qualify his pantheistic theme, denying its equivalence with the Eastern religious tradition: "The Hindu mystic finds God in his own soul, and all the outer world

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[131] Steinbeck, 88.

[132] Melba Berry Bennett, *The Stone Mason of Tor House: The Life and Work of Robinson Jeffers* (War Ritchie Press, 1966), 182.

[133] Steinbeck and Ricketts, *Sea of Cortez,* 121.

is illusion. To this other way of feeling, the outer world is real and divine; one's own soul might be called an illusion."[134] This is an important distinction that refines our understanding of Jeffers' misanthropy. For Jeffers, the natural world was not a vessel for spiritual qualities; his pantheism was not a Gnostic denial of the material or an altered form of Platonism. Instead, his vision was directed at material realities.

Jeffers' emphasis on the physical world might dissuade readers from interpreting his verse with a metaphysical concept like the *unus mundus*. However, despite his focus on the physical, Jeffers was not a materialist. This is where his philosophy takes on a significant complexity. While he emphasized the physical, he also searched for an overarching structure that inhabits *and* exists beyond material realities. We can see this tension in a portion of *The Tower Beyond Tragedy*. His imagery depicts a unity with nature that moves beyond atomic composition:

> 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. I / was mankind also, a moving lichen / On the check of the round stone. . . they have not made / words for it, to go beyond things, beyond hours and / ages, / And be all things in all time, in their returns and passage, in the motionless and timeless center.[135]

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[134] Bennett, *Stone Mason*, 182.

[135] Robinson Jeffers, "Orestes to Electra" from *The Tower Beyond Tragedy*, in *Rock and Hawk: A Selection of Shorter Poems by Robinson Jeffers*, ed. Robert Hass (New York: Random House, 1987), 30-31.

In this passage, Jeffers describes a type of environmental unity as well as a wordless reality that transcends time and place. This unity is not coexistence in the manner of co-inhabiting; it is not a shared experience of creatureliness. Jeffers describes a relationship that is knit together in the fabric of being, a shared unity rolled together into an eternal oneness. The idea of being "all things in all time" sounds similar to Joseph Wayne's reflections. Again we see the idea of the particular leading into the whole. This unity situates another attribute of the passage, which describes breaking into a "beyond." This poem clearly departs from a purely materialist paradigm. The "beyond" encompasses all things and time; it exists outside of the material, maintaining a "motionless and timeless center." It resembles a type of unmoved mover, bringing the material into collision with the religious. In his poem "De Rerum Virtute," Jeffers' pantheistic language is prominent: "the Galaxy. . . Is not blind force, but fulfills its life and intends its courses. / 'All things are full of God. / Winter and summer, day and night, war and peace are God.'"[136] While "God" seems to be inextricable from the natural world, Jeffers does not present a material determinism. The divine seems to maintain a conscious teleology.

As one might already notice, Jeffers' metaphysics are undoubtedly influenced by Nietzsche; however, he diverges in ways that situate his philosophy closer to Jung. In the previous passage from *The Tower Beyond Tragedy*, Jeffers' describes a "lord of his / own summit." This figure is reminiscent of Nietzsche's mountain-dwelling prophet Zarathustra. Furthermore, Jeffers' idea of a perpetual "return and passage" resembles Nietzsche's eternal return of the same. Yet, while there are similarities to explore, there are also important differences. Contrary to the amoral Nietzsche, Jeffers does not deny transcendent values. For

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[136] Robinson Jeffers, "De Rerum Virtute," in *Rock and Hawk: A Selection of Shorter Poems by Robinson Jeffers*, ed. Robert Hass (New York: Random House, 1987), 266.

example, in *The Beginning and the End,* Jeffers writes, "The human race is one of God's / sense organs, / Immoderately alerted to feel good and evil."[137] While Jeffers often denies orthodox views of morality, he still suggests a "good and evil" that can be perceived. In another place, Jeffers gives a nod to Keats, saying "we have to live by the gospel that 'beauty is the effulgence of truth.'"[138] Jeffers maintained that truth could be discovered through beauty. Nietzsche denied such a discovery. In *The Will to Power,* he wrote that "'Truth' is. . . not something there, that must be found or discovered – but something that must be created."[139] Jeffers did not try to create reality, but rather tried to discover the veiled truth.

Jeffers' divergence from Nietzsche helps define the nuance of his unique metaphysics; it also reflects aspects of Jung's criticism of Nietzsche. Jung wrote, "Nietzsche was no atheist, but his God was dead. The result of this demise was a split in himself, and he felt compelled to call the other self 'Zarathustra.'"[140] Jung makes a critical qualification regarding Nietzsche's declaration of God's death. He argues that Nietzsche did not truly reject the idea of the transcendent, but rather that he rejected the "man-made image" of God.[141] Thus Nietzsche's grappling toward the übermensch and Dionysus were attempts to replace a lost image. Jung identified this as an inconsistency with the philosopher's proclaimed atheism. For Jung, the issue centered around the displacement of the God image in Western culture. He wrote, "perhaps, we could say with Nietzsche, 'God is dead.' Yet it would be truer to say, 'He has put off our image,

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[137] Robinson Jeffers, "The Beginning and the End," in *The Beginning and The End: And Other Poems* (New York: Random House, 1963), 9.

[138] Bennett, *Stone Mason*, 153.

[139] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York City: Vintage Books, 1968), 298.

[140] Jung, "Psychology and Religion," 245.

[141] Jung, 247.

and where shall we find him again?'"[142] This question is an accurate description of Jeffers' pursuit of transcendent value and the divine. While he rejected the orthodox Western view of God, Jeffers did not abandon a search for God. Like Nietzsche, he rejected a God image; yet, like Jung, he continued to maintain the idea of objectivity and the divine. Jeffers' belief in a transcendent reality situates his metaphysics closer to Jung than Nietzsche.

Across his work, Jeffers presents a paradigm that closely resembles Jung's *unus mundus*. In "The Answer," he writes of an "Organic wholeness, the wholeness of life and things, the divine / beauty of the universe."[143] Behind the veil of civilization and its decay, Jeffers searched for a determining structure. Like Steinbeck, he used religious language to describe a pantheistic unity, involving the natural world and beyond. Jeffers walked a paradoxical line between the physical and the transcendent. Jung described a similar division: "the psychic is a phenomenal world in itself, which can be reduced neither to the brain nor to metaphysics."[144] Jung argued that consciousness was neither an exclusively neurological process nor an exclusively metaphysical one; it maintained both functions. In a similar way, Jeffers' philosophy cannot be reduced to merely the material or metaphysical. He wrote, "I do not think I am wrong in using even in verse some of the fruits of contemporary psychoanalytic study."[145] Jeffers paradoxical metaphysics, tied together with a conception of "organic wholeness," closely mirrors the fruits of Jungian psychoanalysis.

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[142] Jung, 247.

[143] Robinson Jeffers, "The Answer," in *Rock and Hawk: A Selection of Shorter Poems by Robinson Jeffers*, ed. Robert Hass (New York: Random House, 1987), 195.

[144] Jung, "The Conjunction," 297.

[145] Bennett, *Stone Mason*, 153.

Jack London also crafted a fictional iteration of the *unus mundus*. Because he discovered Jung so late in his life, I will examine one of his last short stories, "The Red One." Furthermore, in addition to its chronological relevance, this story has also been described by scholars as engaging Jungian motifs. The protagonist of this delirious tale of cannibals and sacrifice is an egotistical and brutal English botanist named Bassett. Searching for the source of a mysterious sound, he encounters a series of perilous adventures in the jungles of Solon's Islands. He encounters a mysterious orb, the Red One, which is the manifestation of ideas resembling the *unus mundus*.

Throughout the story, they are numerous instances of racism from Bassett and the narrator. London appears to criticize them by parodying a racist European. Throughout his career, London approached the people of the islands with a great degree of admiration and respect. Additionally, his description of the head hunter village does not match his experience with the people of the South Seas. London, who had visited Typee, would not have described life in the village as animalistic and dark. Actually, in response to the trip, London noted, "When one considers the situation, one is almost driven to the conclusion that the white race flourishes on impurity and corruption."[146] If one considers Earl Labor's work on London's symbolic wildernesses, the setting comes into greater clarity.[147] Yet, despite London's admiration for the

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[146] Jack London, *The Cruise of the Snark* (Santa Barbara: The Narrative Press, 2001), 130.

[147] See Earl Labor's "Jack London's Symbolic Wilderness: Four Versions." In *Jack London: Essays in Criticism*, edited by Ray Wilson Ownbey, 31-42. Santa Barbara and Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1978. Along with London's treatment of the Klondike and California, Labor discusses London's two symbolic environments of the Pacific. He notes that London "loved the islands of Polynesia"; they came to represent a type of symbolic Eden (35). In contrast, Melanesia became the symbolic "waste land" of London's fiction (34). Labor writes, "In Melanesia the concept of the wilderness as Eden is inverted: the Melanesian god is the Prince of Blackness himself, and his myrmidons are the cannibalistic natives" (34).

people of the South Seas and use of symbolism, he participates in a racist trope by presenting the inhabitants as symbolically animalistic. The categorization of the European as the embodiment of reason and the native as the embodiment of instinct is an instance of racism at the story's structural foundation. Additionally, London uses degrading language in his description of the natives, especially Balatta. Acknowledging these problematic elements can help us examine the Jungian ideas without ignoring the racism that occupies the story.

Because "The Red One" adopts the structure of a captivity narrative, it is easy to miss the symbolic nature of the plot. As noted by James Kirsch, the story is deeply involved with Jungian symbolism, involving encounters with the anima and the collective unconscious.[148] The characters bear little resemblance to a recognizable humanity. They are hyper psychologized, spiritualized, and mythologized. In a Jungian sense, they are archetypal. Earl Labor and Jeanne Campbell Reesman also connect this story to Jungian archetypes, commenting that "Jungian theory, especially the theory of archetypes, sheds significant light on London's mysterious work of art."[149] We are also attuned to the mythic quality of Bassett's quest by an early nod to Browning's "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came": "Was this, then, *his* dark Tower? – Bassett pondered, remembering his Browning and gazing at his skeleton-like and fever-wasted hands."[150] Because of the text's mythic and symbolic elements, the story is best approached allegorically.

The rhythm and style of "The Red One" creates an almost hallucinogenic effect. London accomplishes the affect early. After Bassett and his assistant Sagawa are attacked, Bassett flees

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[148] James Kirsch, "Jack London's Quest: 'The Red One,'" *Psychological Perspectives* 11, no. 2 (1980).

[149] Labor and Reesman, *Jack London*, 121.

[150] Jack London, "The Red One," in *The Short Stories of Jack London*, eds. Earle Labor, Robert C. Leitz III, and I. Milo Shepard (Macmillan, 1990), 579.

into the Jungle. His injuries and the jungle environment quickly destroy his health: "Twenty-four hours had made a wreck of him – of mind as well as body."[151] The "myriad stings of the mosquitoes" exacerbate his condition; he grows "maddened. . . by the tremendous inoculation of poison."[152] With his deteriorating health, the following "days and nights" are "vague as nightmares."[153] London rapidly propels the narrative, providing fractured and abstracted details through Bassett's semi-consciousness. Even when he is brought to Balatta's and Ngurn's village, the fracturing continues. As the months pass, he suffers from a "long sickness."[154] While the sickness is not completely specified, the narrator describes Bassett's struggle with "a combination of the most pernicious and most malignant of malarial and black-water fevers."[155] While Bassett occasionally has enough strength to move about the village, his condition declines. Ngurn, the medicine man, says, "you have not long to live. You are almost a dead man now. You will grow less strong."[156] Bassett's quest to discover the Red One is imbued with this context of physical decline and mental instability.

As the story continues, we are more convinced of Bassett's physical, moral, and spiritual sickness. London sets up this neurosis as related to Bassett's rationalism. After a particularly misogynistic description of Balatta, the narrator states, "Bassett was a scientist first, a humanist afterward."[157] Reading symbolically, Bassett's cruel treatment of Balatta is an extension of a

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[151] London, "The Red One," 581.
[152] London, 580,581.
[153] London, 581.
[154] London, 585.
[155] London, 585.
[156]London, 587.
[157] London, 589.

psychological neurosis. He has repressed the metaphysical world and is convinced of an exclusive materialism. We can interpret London's depiction of neurosis as parallel to the modernist skepticism discussed in Chapter One. Bassett represents the scientist, the vocational harbinger of the Enlightenment. However, Bassett's psyche is unbalanced, a condition that is compounded by his rejection of the anima, a Jungian archetype of the feminine. Kirsch makes the connection between Balatta and the anima, defining Bassett's relationship with her: "His relationship to her is simply that of making use of her and of exerting power over her."[158] Bassett's treatment of Balatta is evidence of a fractured relationship with his own unconscious anima. Bassett, the arrogant hyper-intellectual, represents the isolated ego, cut off from the other influences that individualize the psyche. He becomes a figure representing the sickness of modern civilization.

After convincing Balatta to take him to the holy place, breaking with taboo, Bassett encounters the Red One. It is shaped like a giant pearl, stretching two hundred feet in diameter. Its physical composition is unexplainable; Bassett compares its texture to the "iridescence of a pearl."[159] He also postulates that its substance is a form of unknown metal: "the substance of it was metal, though unlike any metal or combination of metals he had ever known."[160] While these enigmatic descriptions are interesting, Bassett's speculation about the origin of the Red One provides a more important insight into the nature of the sacred mass:

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[158] Kirsch, "Jack London's Quest," 149.

[159] London, "The Red One," 591.

[160] London, 591.

> A peal from some bell of the gods reaching earthward from across space. . . It was right-named by the ones of old-time as the Star-Born. Only from the stars could it have come, and no thing of chance was it. It was a creation of artifice and mind.[161]

This description embraces the idea of transcendence, something other-worldly. Bassett makes two important observations. First, he describes the object's origin as somewhere beyond earth. While the Red One is "Star-Born," it has descended into the earth's environment. That which was born of heaven has descended to the earth. Similar to Jeffers and Steinbeck, London uses religious language to grasp at the transcendent. Secondly, it is significant that Bassett ascribes to the object a semblance of knowledge. He supposes the necessity of "artifice and mind," identifying a teleology. Its particular existence implies the existence of a larger reality. The Red One becomes a messenger of the *unus mundus*. As Gorman Beauchamp writes, there is a "great Truth residing in the Star-Born messenger."[162]

After he returns from the holy site, Bassett reflects on what he saw. Still fatally injured, he spends the next few weeks musing about his encounter, contemplating a cosmic unity:

> Even as he lay here, under the breadfruit tree, an intelligence that stared across the starry gulfs, so must all the universe be exposed to the ceaseless scrutiny of innumerable eyes, like his, though grantedly different, with behind them, by the same token, intelligences that questioned and sought the meaning and the construction of the whole. So reasoning, he felt his soul go forth in kinship with that august company, that multitude whose gaze was forever upon the arras of infinity.[163]

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[161] London, 592.

[162] Gorman Beauchamp, *Jack London* (Starmont House, 1984), 85.

[163] London, "The Red One," 594.

Bassett's contemplation results in an experience of unity with the "starry gulfs." Similar to Jeffers' conception, London's unity also has a metaphysical quality. Bassett does not accept his place in nature; rather, he merges into the "august company." Once again, we see the individual contemplating a unity that reconciles the innumerable parts to the "whole." As Bassett dies, he desires to hear the Red One sound once again. There is a large wooden pillar that the local inhabitants use to strike the orb. Bargaining with his captors, Bassett makes a deal to be executed if he can visit the Red One and hear its toll. Ngurn offers Bassett a consolation, "I promise you, in the long days to come when I turn your head in the smoke, no man of the tribe shall come in to disturb us. And I will tell you many secrets."[164] They bring the crippled Bassett, who now has to be carried on a stretcher, to the Red One. As he prepares to die, the Red One sounds and the narrator offers this delirious description:

> Bassett, with his own eyes, saw color and colors transform into sound till the whole visible surface of the vast sphere was a-crawl and titillant and vaporous with what he could not tell was color or was sound. In that moment the interstices of matter were his, and the interfusings and intermating transfusings of matter and force.[165]

London's words slip into a type of theorization that is difficult to understand. However, it is centered on the combination, or "interfusing," of matter and force. Likewise, color and sound become inextinguishable. Everything begins to melt into a radiant whole. Then, as the blade strikes, Bassett has a final revelation:

> Almost, when he knew the blow had started and just ere the edge of steel bit the flesh and

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[164] London, 596.

[165] London, 597-598.

> nerves, it seemed that he gazed upon the serene face of the Medusa, Truth—And, simultaneous with the bite of the steel on the onrush of the dark, in a flashing instant of fancy, he saw the vision of his head turning slowly, always turning, in the devil-devil house beside the breadfruit tree.[166]

Bassett's final vision is of the "Medusa, Truth." Medusa becomes a working symbol for his understanding of the greater, cosmic reality that the Red One heralds. Medusa, though composed of many, has a single head. Similarly, the truth, composed of countless manifestations and variations, is unified. London is describing a type of *unus mundus*. The entirety of the universe is somehow an outgrowth of this singular, unified Truth. It has many faces and aspects, but it moves back to the single, frightening face. London also invokes the idea of a cyclic reality: as Bassett's head cures in Ngurn's home, it never stops turning.

In this strange story, London sketches a concept of cosmic unity. Bassett's encounter, like that of Jeffers' Orestes, stretches beyond the material. The story's final picture of the Medusa Truth presents a unified, transcendent structure similar to Jung's *unus mundus*. Building on the work of Kirsch, who interprets the story as a "picture of American psychology and of Western man," we can also draw implications concerning London's criticism of civilization.[167] For London, modernity suffered from an unbalanced psyche that was similar to Bassett's neurosis. The over-rationalized mind required a revelation from the *unus mundus* that would unveil the metaphysical and spiritual realities that civilization shrouds. Although a staunch materialist for most of his life, London centers "The Red One" around a reality that is beyond the

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[166] London, 598.

[167] Kirsch, "Jack London's Quest," 153.

physical. Furthermore, this revelation occurs deep within the natural environment. The jungle and native inhabitants hold the secrets of the Red One. The proud, “rational” explorer is unable to understand its mystery, although he recognizes the power and importance of the source.

CHAPTER FIVE: An Environmental *Apokalypsis*

The search for a new revelation was a broadly modernist response to the existential vacuum of the early twentieth century. The myth-making of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century engaged in a revitalization and transformation of religious imagery. We see this in works such as Camus's *Sisyphus*, Joyce's *Ulysses*, and explicitly in Nietzsche's theorization using Dionysus and Apollo. The modernist search for a new revelation attempted to reevaluate human identity in the face of scientific and technological advancements. We see this task specifically undertaken by the Vorticist and Futurist movements. As Californian modernists, the Dust Dwellers not only conceptualized a form of the *unus mundus*, but also communicated an accompanying revelation. The concept of the *unus mundus* opposed industrial alienation, offering a potential remedy to personal and social decay. However, this "Organic wholeness" was hidden by the effects of civilization.[168] In order for individuals to encounter the *unus mundus*, the veil of civilization would need to be removed. This removal could not be fabricated or rationalized. Resonating with Jungian thought, the Dust Dwellers theorized an environmental *apokalypsis*, a revelation of the *unus mundus*. In this chapter, I will argue that the Dust Dwellers communicated an *apokalypsis* that would tear away the shroud of civilization through an encounter with the natural world. By this experiential apparatus, humanity could avoid the pitfalls of civilization and the onset of nihilism.

In line with the modernist search for revelation, we find an analogous Jungian theory of *apokalypsis*. This revelation is connected with his theory of archetypes as well as the process of individualization. For Jung, the primary goal of individualization is to balance the personal,

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[168] Jeffers, "The Answer," 195.

conscious contents of the psyche with the influences of the collective unconscious. These influences are manifested in what Jung calls archetypes. In essence, a Jungian archetype is a representation of a collective influence that can be recognized as a set image despite countless unique manifestations. The interpretation of archetypes is the primary way that Jungian psychoanalysis translates the contents of the collective unconscious. Discussing the anima and animus archetypes, Jung writes that they "filter the contents of the collective unconscious through to the conscious mind."[169] By interpreting archetypal images, the individual can recognize how their own conscious mind is interacting with the influences of the unconscious. For instance, if the individual dreams of a dark figure acting violently, this might be an indication that an aspect of their shadow is being repressed. Trending toward balance, the psyche projects the unconscious influence of the shadow, displaying a need for integration. Thus, archetypes are significant because they are the imagistic manifestations of the collective unconscious. They *reveal* the outline of unseen psychological realities.

Thus, we can understand archetypes as windows into the *unus mundus*. However, individual archetypes are only glimpses, communicating a particular influence. Because there are an indeterminate number of influences, there is a massive range of archetypal expressions. However, there was one symbol that Jung identified as representing the entirety of the *unus mundus*: the mandala.

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[169] Jung, "The Syzygy: Anima and Animus," 116.

> The mandala symbolizes, by its central point, the ultimate unity of all archetypes as well as of the multiplicity of the phenomenal world, and is therefore the empirical equivalent of the metaphysical concept of a *unus mundus*.[170]

For Jung, the mandala was a representation of how disparate influences could coalesce into a unified whole. It was an *apokalypsis,* displaying the *unus mundus* in its entirety. By encountering the mandala, one could recognize the "multiplicity" of existence in a single symbol.

The Dust Dwellers described a similar theory of *apokalypsis*. The individual's encounter with an environmental reality functioned as an archetypal mandala, revealing the reality of the *unus mundus*. In many ways, this is a continuance of the Gnostic idea of hidden knowledge. The truth must be revealed, uncovered. The Dust Dwellers turned to the natural world for this *apokalypsis*.

In *To a God Unknown*, Steinbeck presents a prominent mandala symbol. Led by the native ranch-hand Juanito, Joseph and his brother come upon a clearing in the forest: "In the center of the clearing stood a rock as big as a house, mysterious and huge…A short, heavy green moss covered the rock with soft pile. The edifice was something like an altar."[171] This rock, described by Juanito as a place where the "old ones" come, becomes central in Joseph's mind; he calls it "ancient – and holy."[172] After a few instances of mystical experience, the rock becomes a central point in the novel. The action begins revolving around the clearing. This narrative choice reflects Joseph's belief about the rock. He says that the rock comes "Out of the center of the

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[170] Jung, "The Conjunction," 292.

[171] Steinbeck, *To a God Unknown,* 29.

[172] Steinbeck, 30.

world. . . Out of the heart of the world."[173] His wife Elizabeth also recognizes a mysterious quality. She tells Joseph about her encounter with the boulder:

> I loved the rock more than you or the baby or myself. And this is harder to say: While I sat there I went into the rock. The little stream was flowing out of me and I was the rock, and the rock was – I don't know – the rock was the strongest dearest thing in the world.[174]

In this passage, we see another instance of metaphysical unity. Similar to Jeffers' Orestes, Elizabeth expresses a unity with the inanimate world. This experience arises through an encounter with nature. Yet, more specifically, it arises from an encounter with the rock. Understood in relation to Jung's mandala, the rock becomes the point where all things intersect. Its centrality is like the mandala's outcrop of rings, extending influence outward yet drawing inward. The rock becomes the point of *apokalypsis*, a glimpse into the *unus mundus*.

While the rock is the most significant point of *apokalypsis* in *To a God Unknown*, it is not the only instance. Another example can be observed during Joseph's and Elizabeth's wedding. While the ceremony proceeds inside the church, it is described as "a mystic double death with its ritual."[175] The music is a "sunless prophesy."[176] Rather than displaying the expected energy and joy of a marriage ceremony, the event is lifeless: "two ripe bodies die by the process of marriage."[177] However, when the couple exits the church, the mood suddenly shifts. What was previously described as an empty ceremony, leading to a form of death, dissolves in a moment: "the bells

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[173] Steinbeck, 72.
[174] Steinbeck, 122-123.
[175] Steinbeck, 47.
[176] Steinbeck, 47.
[177] Steinbeck, 47.

broke forth in the belfry above them. Joseph sighed shudderingly. 'Here's God come late to the wedding. Here's the iron god at last.'"[178] The spiritual presence that was absent in the ceremony is discovered in the sound of the bells. Steinbeck presents something outside of organized religion as descending onto the ceremony. Yet, he continues to use religious language to communicate the experience. This divinity is an "iron god," a deity that uses the physical as its mouthpiece. Joseph searches for words to describe the phenomenon: "Beloved bells, pounding your bodies with your frantic hearts! It is the sun sticks, striking the bell of the sky in the morning; and it's the hollow beating of rain on the earth's full belly. . . [T]he bells are holy."[179] The sound of the bells communicates something that can only be expressed through natural images. In regard to the marriage, the real ceremony is initiated with the tolling bells. They are heralds of something that is beyond the social institution of marriage. The bells are another instance of *apokalypsis*.

Joseph often ponders the seemingly unknowable; he thinks, "I tell you I have thought without words."[180] This mental comment shares similarities with Jeffers' "Return": "I will touch things and things and no more thoughts."[181] In each case, reality is not discovered through abstract reasoning or an intellectual pursuit. It is revealed instead through experiential knowledge, produced by an encounter with the environment. As Joseph and Elizabeth return from the wedding, they must go through a pass before entering the Valley of Nuestro Senor. Joseph reflects on the geography as a symbol of their marriage and reality:

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[178] Steinbeck, 48.

[179] Steinbeck, 48.

[180] Steinbeck, 52.

[181] Jeffers, "Return," 178.

> Yesterday we were married and it was no marriage. This is our marriage - through the pass - entering the passage like sperm and egg that have become a single unit of pregnancy. This is a symbol of the undistorted real. . . Why, Elizabeth, this is all marriage that has ever been, contained in our moment.[182]

This description has distinct Jungian attributes. The conception that all marriage is wrapped in their individual marriage appeals to an archetypal perspective. The archetypal marriage represents the cosmic union of male and female. However, this glimpse into the *unus mundus* is once again accomplished in a moment of *apokalypsis*. The natural geography, not the formal wedding, reveals a vision of the unified reality. All marriages converge in this moment; like a mandala, the pass becomes the point where the "multiplicity" is unified with the whole.

Despite the unifying qualities of these mystical descriptions, Steinbeck presents a harsh sacrificial association with *apokalypsis*. Elizabeth dies falling from the rock and Joseph eventually commits suicide on top of the rock as he attempts to end the drought. The association of the rock with sacrifice returns to its initial description as an altar. Across the novel, the motif of sacrifice accompanies Joseph's search for the "undistorted real." His inclination toward the occult does not go unnoticed by the rest of the family. His brother Burton rebukes him for his relationship with the father-tree: "He is worshipping as the old pagans did. He is losing his soul and letting in the evil."[183] Burton is particularly horrified when Joseph sets his son on the tree. Burton accuses him of "offering. . . your own first-born child to the tree."[184] While Joseph dismisses the action as a "little game," it is difficult not to be harrowed by Burton's

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[182] Steinbeck, *To a God Unknown,* 52.

[183] Steinbeck, 112.

[184] Steinbeck, 112.

pronouncement.[185] He condemns Joseph for loving "the earth too much."[186] This statement becomes difficult to interpret when considering Joseph's suicide on the rock. On one hand, this sacrifice can be seen as an archetypal self-sacrifice. Joseph could be interpreted as a Christ figure, laying down his life to heal the land and restore vitality to the community. However, on the other hand, his actions could be interpreted as madness: leaving his family, obsessing over keeping the moss alive, and eventually killing himself in delirium. Similarly, the theme of sacrifice is explored when Joseph encounters a hermit on the coast of the Pacific Ocean. This strange hermit sacrifices an animal every evening with the setting sun. While the *apokalypsis* is a window into the *unus mundus*, it is also associated with danger and sacrifice. It is no small thing to confront the unity of existence.

Jeffers also engages the theme of *apokalypsis* and sacrifice. We encounter these motifs in his poem "Rock and Hawk," a stylistic accomplishment that contrasts with Jeffers' longer narratives. Composed of seven small tercets, it reflects aspects of Pound's Imagist movement. There are two main symbols which dominate the poem. The first is "This gray rock, standing tall."[187] As in Steinbeck's *To a God Unknown*, Jeffers presents a large edifice of stone. This stone cliff is massive, defying time and individual mortality. It is "earthquake-proved, and signatured / By ages of storms."[188] The stone is unmovable, like the *unus mundus*. It is the aspect of the landscape that is the most permanent; the other individual symbols, like the falcon, revolve around its presence. It symbolizes the organic whole. One does not expect a stone to represent

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[185] Steinbeck, 112.

[186] Steinbeck, 113.

[187] Robinson Jeffers, "Rock and Hawk," in *Rock and Hawk: A Selection of Shorter Poems by Robinson Jeffers*, ed. Robert Hass (New York: Random House, 1987), 167.

[188] Jeffers, 167.

life. It seems to be the antithesis of life; it "lets no tree grow."[189] Yet, on its point rests the second symbol, the falcon. In the fourth stanza, Jeffers writes: "I think, here is your emblem / To hang in the future sky."[190] This "emblem" of the future is the union of the rock and falcon. Jeffers marries the inanimate and animate, forming a new symbol: "Life with calm death; the falcon's / Realist eyes and act / married to the massive / mysticism of stone."[191] The distinction between the stone and falcon disintegrates. They are married as one flesh, one existence. Much as Steinbeck discusses the marriage of Joseph and Elizabeth, Jeffers depicts the stone and bird as unified. The eyes of the hawk are the eyes of the stone. Taking these symbols together, we discover an instance of another mandala structure and a point of *apokalypsis*. In their unity, we see the transient married to the permanent. Like a mandala, their unity is the intersection of diverse realities. Jeffers implicitly challenges the categorization of existence. While civilization has contributed to a fractured understanding of the world, life is not separated. Jeffers makes an argument for the unity of nature, a unity that includes human consciousness. Once again, an encounter with the natural world acts as an *apokalypsis*.

We can also interpret Jeffers' Inhumanism as a type of sacrifice which accompanies *apokalypsis*. In the poem "Sign Post," he writes, "Civilized, crying how to be human again: this / will tell you how. / Turn outward, love things, not men, turn right / away from humanity. . . Lean on the silent rock until you feel its divinity."[192] In response to civilization, Jeffers exhorts humanity to look outside of itself. The necessity of repentance is crucial to regaining the human

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[189] Jeffers, 167.

[190] Jeffers, 167.

[191] Jeffers, 167.

[192] Robinson Jeffers, "Sign Post," in *The Stone Mason of Tor House: The Life and Work of Robinson* Jeffers, by Melba Berry Bennett (War Ritchie Press, 1966), 158-159.

identity. The civilized man is "crying to be human again." When continuity with the environment is broken, humans sever an integral part of themselves. In order to regain the wholeness of the human identity, Jeffers promotes an Inhumanism that forsakes humanity, a type of self-sacrifice. His paradoxical prescription to heal requires a rejection, a turn to the natural world. Jeffers elaborates on this rejection in a comment about *The Tower Beyond Tragedy*:

> These verses express a mystical experience; they also express a protest against human narcissism. . . It seems to me, analogously, that the whole human race spends too much emotion on itself. The happiest and freest man is the scientist investigating nature, or the artist admiring it; the person who is interested in things that are not human. Or if he is interested in human beings, let him regard them objectively, as a very small part of the great music. Certainly, humanity has claims, on all of us; we can best fulfill them by keeping our emotional sanity; and this by seeing beyond and around the human race.[193]

In response to the unity of the natural world, Jeffers proposes that the individual must sacrifice a human-centric perspective. This is an act of self-denial: "We must unhumanize our views a little, and become confident / As the rock and ocean that we were made from."[194] In some sense, we can interpret Jeffers' Inhumanism as a form of sacrifice. Additionally, he also recognizes the experience of *apokalypsis* as violent: "Beauty is not always lovely; the fire was beautiful, the terror / Of the deer was beautiful."[195] Recalling Jeffers' aforementioned nod to Keats, we see once again that truth is communicated through beauty. This can be restated: the *unus mundus*

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[193] Bennett, *Stone Mason*, 184-185.

[194] Jeffers, Carmel Point, 268.

[195] Robinson Jeffers, "Fire on the Hills," in *Rock and Hawk: A Selection of Shorter Poems by Robinson Jeffers*, ed. Robert Hass (New York: Random House, 1987), 150.

(reality/truth) is communicated through *apokalypsis* (an encounter with natural beauty). For Jeffers, even the fire and shrieking deer are a type of beauty. He does not present a sentimental idea of natural unity; he wants to bring readers into an encounter with the substances of life. This requires that the *apokalypsis* include the more brutal aspects of the *unus mundus*.

In true Dust Dweller fashion, London also presents a mandala structure of *apokalypsis*. Providing the most explicit instance of revelation, London's description of the Red One engages a number of the previously described motifs. The Red One is a massive round structure; it rings like Joseph's god of the belfry; it is a spot of violence and terror; and it provides a window into the *unus mundus*. Furthermore, London explicitly engages the idea of religious sacrifice. Bassett's encounter with the mandala is anything but serene. As he moves around the structure, he is "always treading the bones and images of humans and gods that constituted the floor of this ancient charnel house of sacrifice."[196] The Red One is the location of human sacrifice, notably as a punishment for breaking taboo. When Bassett goes to strike the Red One, Balatta tries to stop him: "In the intensity of her desire to impress him, she put her forearm between her teeth and sank them to the bone."[197] Again, the *apokalypsis* is accompanied by violent images of blood and sacrifice.

London continues this motif in Bassett's execution. As the tribal leaders ring the Red One, Bassett responds to the sound that launched his quest: "Archangels spoke in it; it was magnificently beautiful before all other sounds; it was invested with the intelligence of supermen of planets of other suns; it was the voice of God."[198] Moments before his death, Bassett describes

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[196] London, "The Red One," 593.

[197] London, 592.

[198] London, 597.

an encounter with the transcendent. This *apokalypsis* occurs on the sacrificial altar. Kirsch, referencing Jungian thought, connects Bassett's rotating head with revelation:

> In his article, 'The Visions of Zosimus,' Jung speaks in detail about primitive beliefs and rituals in which animal and human sacrifices were made in order to gain a head and to make it white; he mentions other rather gruesome rituals the purpose of which was to gain a specially prepared head giving forth wisdom.[199]

Bassett's decapitation directly invokes sacrificial ritual. The shedding of blood and the cycle of nature become conduits of revelation.

The search for the *unus mundus* is ripe with danger and violence; we observe this when Argus faces the "blackness eater." Yet, London presents a mode of escape. Similar to Jeffers, London describes the necessity of looking beyond humanity: "Only from without could reality impact upon him [Argus] and reawake within him an awareness of reality. Otherwise he would ooze down through the shadow-realm of the unconscious into the all-darkness of extinction."[200] While human transformation must be internal, revelation must be external; the Dust Dwellers present the environment as an external point of *apokalypsis*. In Argus' case, the injured moose is "the smash of reality from without."[201] He kills the beast, providing the nourishment for his survival. London writes, "of the two shadow-wanderers, the one reeled downward to the dark and the other reeled upward to the light."[202] Once again, we can recognize a religious motif,

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[199] Kirsch, *Jack London's Quest*, 150.

[200] London, "Like Argus," 685.

[201] London, 685.

[202] London, 685.

invoking the trapped ram from the Abraham and Isaac narrative.[203] The moose becomes a type of substitutionary sacrifice. Again, a sacrifice accompanies *apokalypsis*.

[203] Gen. 22:13

CHAPTER SIX: *Cultus* and the Pursuit of a Better Garden

In the previous chapters, I considered the theorization of the *unus mundus* and its predominant doctrine of cosmic unity; I also examined the role of *apokalypsis*. In this chapter, I will consider the manifestation of the *unus mundus* within the Dust Dwellers' embodied environmental philosophy. If this Jungian idea were to fill the vacuum of the Edenic dream, it would need to move from abstraction to lived expression. I will return to the Dust Dwellers' biographies, tracing how the philosophy of the *unus mundus* was exemplified in their relationships with the natural world. In particular, I will examine how they lived according to a reciprocal *cultus*, a doctrine of symbiosis that arises from the *unus mundus*.

The idea of *cultus* is an important counterpart to the Dust Dwellers' often violent descriptions of nature's brutal realities. By emphasizing these unsettling characteristics, the Dust Dwellers denied an idyllic return to nature. However, their idea of nature was not all sacrifice and terror; the concept of *cultus* offered a path for the practical implementation of their environmental philosophy. The concept arises from a foundational premise of the *unus mundus*. If all things are composed of this unified reality, then humanity is also a manifestation of the *unus mundus*. This participation in the cosmic whole presents the possibility of balance, both psychologically and physically. However, as the Dust Dwellers decried, the influence of civilization separates people from the natural world. In order to regain balance, humanity must operate *within* their ecology, realizing the environmental interdependencies of life. The idea of *cultus* suggests that these interdependencies can be managed in a way that is reciprocal and beneficial to the whole. The Dust Dwellers searched for a method of being that was attuned to

the inclusion of humanity in the *unus mundus*. As the natural environment nourished their lives, they sought to care and cultivate the land, expressing the reciprocal nature of *cultus*.

The literal definition for the Latin word *cultus* is "tilling, cultivation, tending."[204] Recognizing the interdependencies involved with the *unus mundus*, the idea of *cultus* centers on the reciprocal caring relationship between the environment and humanity. However, there is a secondary, metaphorical definition that moves beyond physical dependency. Another definition of *cultus* is "reverence, respectful treatment; of the gods."[205] This definition forms the basis for the etymology of the English "cult."[206] Thus, the term *cultus* invokes the particular spirituality in which the Dust Dwellers viewed the environment, embracing their pantheistic motifs as an auxiliary expression. The land's provision was not merely physical sustenance; it was also a type of spiritual and emotional vitality. This brings the idea of ecology beyond the material and into the metaphysical realm of the *unus mundus*. Therefore, when used in context of the Dust Dwellers' environmental philosophy, *cultus* is the embodied philosophy of the *unus mundus* expressed in each writer's approach to nature.

By the end of his life, Steinbeck had moved away from his Californian home. While there were personal circumstances that helped propel his travels, he was also influenced by the political upheaval over *The Grapes of Wrath*. It had a polarizing effect on the community, and even got banned in certain Californian libraries.[207] As the cities and towns of his youth

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[204] D. P. Simpson, *Cassell's Latin Dictionary* (London and New York City: Cassell & Campany and Macmillan Publishing, 1968), 160.

[205] Simpson, 160.

[206] Oxford English Dictionary, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), s.v. "Cult, n."

[207] William Souder, *Mad at the World: A Life of John Steinbeck* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2020), 221.

transformed with growing industry, Steinbeck felt further and further estranged from his roots in the Salinas Valley. During the last chapter of his life, he became enamored by the small whaling town of Sag Harbor; he and his wife Elaine bought a house there on the coast. William Souder, in the most recent Steinbeck biography, describes Steinbeck's relationship with Sag Harbor:

> [It was] a place to escape to when the city grew tiresome. It was surrounded by oaks and had a protected frontage on the water. He'd gone from one edge of the continent to the other, putting a familiar ocean behind him and a new one at his door step. He'd come home.[208]

From his days collecting marine specimens with Ed Ricketts to his voyage in the gulf of California to his excursions for bluefish in the Atlantic, Steinbeck had a prolonged love affair with the coast and its tides.[209] His new home became a source of renewal; it reignited the relationship with the ocean that he had treasured in California. As Souder describes, it was not a home away from home; it was itself home.

Though distant from the California of his youth, he was at home with the wind and waves. A few years before purchasing the home, the Steinbecks had rented a cottage in the area. During that visit he had written in a letter, "I take great comfort from this wind and from the ocean. I didn't know I missed it so much. One gets so involved in New York."[210] As Souder mentions, Steinbeck's time away from the city renewed his relationship with nature. Sag Harbor filled a very important role in Steinbeck's life, functioning as a respite from the city and thus from civilization: "Out here I get the old sense of peace and wholeness. The phone rings seldom.

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[208] Souder, 337.

[209] Souder, 337.

[210] Steinbeck and Wallsten, *A Life in Letters*, 472.

It is clear and very cold but the house is warm."[211] His return to the sea was an encounter with the familiar *cultus* of his previous years in California. The effect of this return was transformative. Writing of himself and Elaine, he said, "You can't imagine the change in disposition and approach in both of us. And it seems to be getting into my work. I approach the table every morning with a sense of joy."[212] These expressions of wholeness and peace can be interpreted as the nurturing qualities of the *unus mundus,* the *cultus* that the natural world provides to the individual.

Steinbeck responded with a reciprocal *cultus* toward the land. His sense of dwelling was not equated with merely living in the area; it involved cultivation and care. During their time at Sag Harbor, he was continually working on projects. These began with his initial winterizing of the house.[213] Sag Harbor was not merely a vacation home; it was a place to live in and cultivate. He even connected his upkeep of the house and property to his own health: "I am actually losing some stomach working around here and haven't felt so good in years. Maybe I shall come to a healthy old age rather than a sickly one."[214] Steinbeck's sense of dwelling was not simply a product of living near the ocean; it was a result of working, resting, and encountering the rhythms of life. His time at Sag Harbor was one of the most peaceful of his life. This is the other side of the grand unity, a sense of reciprocal *cultus*. Humanity can live in a state of extension and belonging with the *unus mundus*. This dwelling stands in stark contrast to Jeffers' depiction of alienated tourists. *Cultus* is embodied through participation rather than observation.

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[211] Steinbeck and Wallsten, 521.

[212] Steinbeck and Wallsten, 521.

[213] Steinbeck and Wallsten, 506.

[214] Steinbeck and Wallsten, 506.

From the same creator of Joseph Wayne's obsession came a deep sense of restfulness when living close to nature. If it seems that Steinbeck's fiction does not match his embodied philosophy, it is worth considering his theory of writing:

> A writer out of loneliness is trying to communicate like a distant star sending signals. He isn't telling or teaching or ordering. Rather he seeks to establish a relationship of meaning, of feeling, of observing.[215]

Steinbeck's understanding of the *unus mundus* is multifaceted; it involves numerous relationships of "meaning" and "feeling." It ranges from the ramblings of Joseph Wayne to the cold quiet days at Sag Harbor. The *unus mundus* is not only manifested through sacrifice and violence; it can also be recognized in the nurturing relationship of *cultus*. Steinbeck's search for the unity of existence involved the nebulous postulating of *To a God Unknown,* but it also involved tranquil feelings of *cultus* as in *The Sea of Cortez*:

> We search for something that will seem like truth to us; we search for understanding; we search for that principle which keys us deeply into the pattern of all life; we search for the relations of things, one to another, as this young man searches for a warm light in his wife's eyes and that one for the hot warmth of fighting.[216]

The search for the *unus mundus* is not safe. One may encounter realities that are surprising and even counterintuitive to the logic of progressive civilization. However, this search is deeply ecological. It is tied to the natural world and the interpersonal relationships that accompany the

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[215] Steinbeck and Wallsten, 523.

[216] Steinbeck and Ricketts, *Sea of Cortez,* 110.

ecology. Steinbeck searched for the "relations of things." The reciprocal *cultus* between humanity and nature helped define this search.

While Steinbeck crossed the continent, Jeffers was firmly rooted in the Californian coast and the stone of his home, Tor House. As the years passed, the property become an extension of himself. In a 1927 letter, he wrote about his affection for his rural, domestic life: "I haven't been in San Francisco since 1918. . . I'm set here like a stone in cement. There are many reasons, but I suppose they come down in the end to preserving our serenity and getting my work done."[217] While Jeffers did occasionally travel, he was always drawn with a strong magnetism back to his home in Carmel. As this quotation suggests, he imagined himself as part of the land. Over the course of their life together, Una and Robinson became intertwined with the coast. The land's *cultus* became especially clear when Una died. After his wife's death, Jeffers wrote of the ameliorating effects of the environment: "the only way to become normal again will be to stay at home as quietly as possible and feel the hills and the sea."[218] For Jeffers, the *unus mundus* was not merely the realm of sacrifice and blood, it was also the source of relief and healing. Like Steinbeck, Jeffers encountered *cultus* in his dwelling near the sea. Behind this relationship was the same philosophy that produced the Inhumanism in his verse. Describing what he had "tried to say," Jeffers wrote:

> *First* Man is also a part of nature, not a miraculous intrusion. . . *Second* Man would be better, more sane and more happy if he devoted less attention and less passion to his own species. . . *Third* It is easy to see that a tree, a rock, a star are beautiful; it is hard to see

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[217] Karman, *The Collected Letters,* 1:667.

[218] Karman, 3:717.

> that people are beautiful, unless you consider them as part of the universe – the divine whole.[219]

While the *unus mundus* propelled visions of power and violence, it was also a foundational aspect of Jeffers' nurturing relationship with the land. A beauty emerges when humanity is considered "as part of the universe."

Once again, *cultus* was reciprocal. The ameliorating effects that Jeffers drew from the land were accompanied with his near-ceaseless care for the coastline. In the previously quoted 1928 letter, the unidentified correspondent also asked about the poet's daily work and schedule. Jeffers answered: "Mornings at the desk; afternoons stone-work or tree-planting; evenings read to the children and after they are in bed a little more work."[220] Jeffers' relationship with his home was defined by an active attempt to cultivate the land; this included planting "some two thousand trees on the property, eucalyptus and cypress and pine."[221] Another expression of Jeffers' *cultus* was his permanent home. Unlike London, who lost his home in a disastrous fire, Jeffers was able to build and live in Tor House. This dwelling place was an extension of the geography. Enlisting the help and mentorship of a stone mason from Monterey, Jeffers began construction on his home in 1919. Bennett remarks that the Jefferses preferred to use granite instead of the "perishable chalkstone."[222] This choice of material aligned with his desire to write about permanent things, the unmovable or ever-renewing. The poetic idea of stone was also important to Jeffers, expressed in poems like "Granite and Cypress," "To the Stone-Cutters," "To the Rock

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[219] Karman, 3:176. – Edits made

[220] Karman, *The Collected Letters,* 1:778.

[221] Robert Hass, introduction to *Rock and Hawk: A Selection of Shorter Poems by Robinson Jeffers* (New York: Random House, 1987), xxvii.

[222] Bennett, *Stone Mason,* 87.

That Will Be the Cornerstone of the House," and "Oh, Lovely Rock." Tor House was not an imposed structure; it was an outgrowth of the landscape: "Heavy granite boulders were lifted from the beach to the construction site via a chute."[223] After the house was built, Una directed Jeffers' efforts toward building a tower. "She had loved the medieval round towers of Ireland, and now she would have one of her own."[224] Working with stone became an integral part of Jeffers' creative process and life; he described it as his time to think.[225] The chores of dwelling manifested a reciprocal *cultus* toward the land.

Like Steinbeck, Jeffers embraced the wide manifestation of the *unus mundus*. However, his distressful musings about the violent natural world can seem irreconcilable with his embodied *cultus*. He could dismiss humanity as a blight in the morning and lovingly read to his children in the evening. Behind this complicated man, we find a grappling with the *unus mundus*. Responding to a question about his artistic "tragedy" and "his own life," Jeffers juxtaposes his individual life with a conception of the cosmic whole:[226]

> It seems to me that every personal story ends more or less in tragedy; comedy is an unfinished story. The impersonal and universal story. . . never finishes at all, and is neither merry nor sad. . . My own life is hitherto much happier than most lives, and quite ridiculously contented with its personal and natural environment. I should be glad to live like this for several centuries; but good and evil are very cunningly balanced in the most

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[223] Bennett, 87.

[224] Bennett, 98.

[225] Bennett, 93.

[226] Karman, 1:776.

> favored lives, and I shouldn't consider myself ill-used if I had to die to-morrow, though it would be very annoying.[227]

In this portrait, we see Jeffers gaze on the ever-unrolling cosmos and still provide a calm declaration of his happiness. His contentedness was closely related to his acceptance of a small role in the "universal story." Like Steinbeck, Jeffers searched for a way to reconcile things to things, to contemplate how a world of chaos can also be a world of extraordinary ecological harmony. To appropriate the words of Eliot, Jeffers sought to "apprehend / The point of intersection of the timeless / With time."[228] He searched for some truth that would make sense of the world, and perhaps save humanity from themselves. Through a philosophical attitude of unity, Jeffers experienced a *cultu*s associated with acknowledging environmental nourishment and responding in kind.

Like Jeffers, London was rooted in California and embodied a similar *cultus*. His Beauty Ranch was the epicenter of his later years. While he continued to travel and write, a combination that London practiced throughout his life, he would gravitate back to the ranch. His acquisition of the ranch roughly coincided with his divorce and remarriage to Charmian. London, with a life of hard labor, sickness, and personal strife behind him, limped onto the new property. Yet his encounter with Beauty Ranch was transformative. He described it as "the most beautiful, primitive land to be found in California."[229] His life of continual vagabonding was grounded by this new opportunity. Haley writes about this dramatic effect: "he felt peace there. . . [H]e realized the redemptive power of nature, the ability of the land to heal itself and those on it.

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[227] Karman, 1:779-780.

[228] T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1943), 44.

[229] Haley, *Wolf*, 205.

Perhaps it might even heal him."[230] London's perspective on the natural world began to change, and this personal change was reflected in his fiction. The world that he had once defined as the struggle of humanity against the dominating force of nature gave way to another possibility. Earle Labor describes this difference in relation to London's 1913 novel *Valley of the Moon*:

> Perhaps the main feature that distinguishes the Valley of the Moon from the other three versions of London's wilderness is this: only in this last version does London envision man as making a satisfactory long-term adjustment to natural surroundings. The central problem arising from this feature is how to place man in the wilderness, to enable him to live in nature and partake of its restorative essence without contaminating the crystal springs from which he drinks.[231]

We can observe this fictional motif of environmental harmony in London's ambitions for his ranch. In both cases, he searched for a way that humanity could dwell within the natural ecology. Similar to the other Dust Dwellers, London viewed the individual as a participant in the natural ecology, not as a spectator. This interconnectivity, founded by the theory of the *unus mundus,* captivated London. The man who had faced the brutalities of both the wilderness and industrial society found a shelter in Beauty Ranch. The garden that London desired was not the humanistic utopia; it was a habitable relationship of belonging within.

London's reciprocity of *cultus* was also clearly evident in Beauty Ranch. What began with a purchase of the Hill Ranch in 1905 grew substantially over the years. London purchased

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[230] Haley, 205.

[231] Labor, "Symbolic Wilderness," 37.

six adjoining plots and sought to put the acres to productive use. The land was not merely a homestead and solace from travel but was a serious project of agricultural ambition:

> I have no countryside home. I am a farmer. It is because I am a farmer that I live in the country. I am that sort of farmer, who, after delving in all the books to satisfy his quest for economic wisdom, returns to the soil as the source and foundation of all economics.[232]

Bristling at the idea that he might be considered a bourgeois owner of a countryside getaway, London firmly established his identity as a farmer. Beauty Ranch became the sole passion of his later years; he viewed the small ecology of his environment as indicative of the broader world. Charmian recounts his sentiment: "I see my farm in terms of the world, and the world in terms of my farm. . . Do you realize that I devote two hours a day to writing and ten to farming?"[233] His passion for Beauty Ranch even began to overshadow his writing ambitions. Charmian writes, "He was, in short, really far more interested in introducing better farming into Sonoma County and the country at large than he was in leaving behind masterpieces of literature."[234] Jack viewed his work on Beauty Ranch as his legacy. The land became inextricable from his personality, both as a man and a writer: "My work on this land, and my message to America, go hand in hand!"[235] Additionally, it was a specific type of farming that London wanted to achieve, an ambition that expressed a *cultus* toward the environment:

> In a few words, I am trying to do what the Chinese have done for forty centuries, namely, to farm without commercial fertilizer. I am rebuilding worn-out hillside lands

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[232] Labor, Leitz III, and Shephard, *The Letters of Jack London,* 3:1600.
[233] Charmian London, *Book of Jack London*, 2:266.
[234] Charmian London, *The Book of Jack London*, 2:269.
[235] Charmian London, *The Book of Jack London*, 2:272.

> that were worked out and destroyed by our wasteful California pioneer farmers. I am not using commercial fertilizer. I believe the soil is our one indestructible asset.[236]

This statement from London is telling in several ways. First, his farming ambitions emerged from the failure of industrial and technology-driven agriculture. He attempted to renew the countryside that suffered from the collapse of the Garden dream. He was acutely aware of the imposition of commercialized farming and its destructive use of fertilizer. In response, he desired to move back to a simpler method of farming, citing more holistic approaches like "green manures, nitrogen-gathering cover crops, animal manures, rotation of crops, proper tillage and drainage."[237] London recognized the interconnected relationship of California's ecology. He desired to foster practices that would involve less imposition from technology and more use of local resources. The same London who described the violent scenes around the *unus mundus* also saw this unity worked out in the relationship between a farmer and the land. The *cultus* he encountered from Beauty Ranch was reciprocated by the *cultus* of holistic agricultural practices.

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[236] Labor, Leitz III, and Shephard, 3:1601.

[237] Labor, Leitz III, and Shephard, 3:1601.

CHAPTER SEVEN: The Unfortunate Generation

The unity of the Dust Dwellers' environmental philosophy is a prominent reason to consider these writers as a particular school of American thought. However, there are also direct biographic connections that further reinforce this approach. In this chapter, I will outline the Dust Dwellers' biographic web of interpersonal relationships, displaying the group's coherency beyond their environmental philosophy. If we consider these writers within their communities, we can recognize an interconnected group of Californian artists. Furthermore, I will argue that the Dust Dwellers' coherency is indicative of a broader, underdiscussed movement of Californian modernism.

Steinbeck's relationship with London was literary. Jackson Benson notes that Steinbeck had an "early fondness" for London's work.[238] Additionally, Steinbeck specifically mentions London in *The Pastures of Heaven,* citing *The Sea Wolf* and *The Call of the Wild*. Steinbeck's affection for London shares notable similarities with his admiration of Sir Thomas Malory and his tales of King Arthur. Steinbeck's first novel, *Cup of Gold,* engages numerous mythic motifs as it recounts the story of a ruthless but fragile buccaneer. Often considered his worst novel, *Cup of Gold* is markedly different from his later works. It features an adventurous plot full of danger and wanderlust. These same motifs are at the forefront of London's fiction, especially his Klondike stories. Steinbeck's first novel, with definite overtures to Malory and London, features an individual braving the wilderness to pursue both physical gold and inner transformation.

Robinson Jeffers also holds a prominent place in Steinbeck's circle of influence. An admirer of Jeffers' poetry, Steinbeck wrote that his neighbor was writing some of the "greatest

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[238] Benson, *True Adventures,* 242.

poetry since Whitman."[239] Steinbeck held a significant collection of Jeffers' poetry, including *Roan Stallion, Tamar, and Other Poems; Such Counsels You Gave to Me and Other Poems;* and *The Selected Poetry of Robinson Jeffers*.[240] These were some of the works he kept in his personal library. At the lab, they also had copies of *Cawdor and Other Poems; Dear Judas and Other Poems;* and *Solstice and Other Poems*.[241] When approached about meeting the reclusive Jeffers, Steinbeck is said to have rejected the idea, remarking that "his poetry is perfect to me, and I don't think one should get the man mixed up with his work."[242] Along with Jung's theories, Jeffers' poetry was also a point of discussion in the lab.[243] Despite Steinbeck's initial comments, the two did eventually meet. Steinbeck, who had recently moved back to California in 1944, was settling into "the Soto House," a historic adobe in Monterey.[244] In a letter to Elizabeth Otis, he mentions that "Robinson Jeffers and his wife came in to call the other day. He looks a little older but that is all. And she is just the same.'"[245] Steinbeck's brief home on Pierce Street was only a 16-minute drive from Jeffers' house at Carmel Point. Their relationship, as far as the record shows, was mostly one of brief acquaintance, mutual respect, and neighborliness. Steinbeck's admiration for Jeffers' work was noted and expressed on multiple instances. However, Jeffers seems to have been only casually acquainted with Steinbeck's work, to which his collected letters make no reference.

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[239] DeMott, *Steinbeck's Reading*, 60.
[240] DeMott, 60, 61.
[241] DeMott, 60.
[242] Benson, *True Adventures*, 318.
[243] Benson, 227.
[244] Benson, 556.
[245] Benson, 557.

Jeffers was also connected to Jack London, albeit in a peripheral manner. One instance of their connection was geography. In a 1931 letter to a childhood friend, Una Jeffers describes Carmel as a "little artists' and writers' (mostly) village."[246] In her description she also mentions London as one of the local homeowners. More pointedly, the bohemian poet and Carmel resident George Sterling was a close friend of Robinson's, staying at Tor House on several occasions.[247] Sterling, the Ezra Pound of California's modernist scene, had a large artistic network. One of Sterling's closest friends was Jack London. London nicknamed Sterling "the Greek," and it was Sterling who gave London his famous nickname "the Wolf." While there is no documented evidence that Jeffers ever met London, he was certainly a close friend of the Greek. Sterling even earned an honorary tree, planted by Jeffers on his property. Commenting on Sterling's suicide, he provides a glimpse into their friendship: "It seems incredible even now that he is gone, the face and voice and personality so vivid in our minds, and to be always. . . so intimately present in our thoughts of this place and of this coast."[248] This eulogy bestows a high honor: an enduring place on "the coast," which is to say a place in Jeffers' world. Another friend, Edgar Lee Masters, writes fondly of the evenings spent with Jeffers and Sterling:

> If I were writing a poem about Jeffers I might draw a picture of some of those evenings I spent at his house in Carmel in July of 1926, when George Sterling was along, and Gaylord Wilshire (whom I nicknamed Quex) and when while Quex talked about

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[246] Karman, *The Collected Letters,* 1:319.

[247] Bennett, *Stone Mason*, 144. – potential footnote about stay

[248] Karman, *The Collected Letters,* 1:620.

> London, and an English writer named Shaw, and Sterling heckled Quex, Jeffers sat by smoking and chuckling.[249]

Not only is this a wonderful picture of the quiet, sociable Jeffers, but it also marks London as a distinct topic of conversation. Jeffers' correspondence with Sterling often involved artistic discussions, whether about their own poetry or someone else's work. Given their frequent conversations about literature, it certainly seems Jeffers would have been acquainted with London's work, especially considering Sterling's advocacy.

Although separated by a few decades, each of these men had a relationship with the land and the bohemian movement of the turning century. Across the continent and the Atlantic, modernism flourished in Harlem and in the streets of Paris. Modernism in California was distinctly different; it was not focused on European and urban subjects but was acutely concerned with the local Californian community, history, and environment. Yet, this movement has not been approached with the same attention. These writers and creatives are considered as isolated artists, not a generation. Reflecting on this distinction, Steinbeck wrote,

> We of that period might, or should have been called, the Unfortunate Generation because we didn't have a Generation nor the sense to invent one. . . The Lost Generation, which preceded us, had become solvent and was no longer lost. The Beat Generation was far in the future.[250]

This "Unfortunate Generation" was likewise a generation of modernists, but their Harlem was San Francisco and their Spanish stories were of California's Paisanos.

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[249] Bennett, *Stone Mason*, 122.

[250] Benson, *True Adventures*, 146.

Other factors distinguished these "unfortunate" modernists. As Jackson Benson notes of San Francisco, "there were plenty of artists and would-be artists around, but few places to gather in those days of Prohibition and speakeasies."[251] Unlike in Paris, bohemianism lived at home. The gatherings, similarly greased by alcohol, occurred in homes or private residences like Ricketts' lab. A bohemian-style modernism flourished, but it flourished in a different setting. When bars were reopened, no one was gathering to read poetry. As Steinbeck wrote, "Bars were for drinking, fighting, arguing and assignation, not poetry."[252] Gatherings occurred in backyards or living rooms.

While there was the formal San Francisco Bohemian Club, which Sterling and London frequented, the more important group was collectively known as "The Crowd," a "clique of writers, artists, socialists, and bohemians in San Francisco."[253] Encouraged by an earthquake to leave The City, the Crowd had relocated to Carmel by the time London and Charmian came to visit in 1907.[254] Many of their gatherings were held outdoors, usually accompanied by a large dose of nonsense along with artistic conversations. James Haley provides a wonderful description of one such "meeting" at the beach:

> [James] Hopper [Carmel resident and neighbor of Jeffers] was taking a photograph of Sterling, who had scaled a cliff in his bathing suit and stood, posed as a Poseidon with a trident. Mary Austin was communing with her Indian princess alter ego, standing on the beach in beaded buckskins, her arms raised to the Western twilight, chanting what

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[251] Benson, 146.
[252] Benson, 146.
[253] Haley, *Wolf*, 127.
[254] Haley, 229.

> sounded like Browning. . . London, who had been gorging on an abalone steak, decided to bring her down a tone. "Hell!" he bellowed at her with fork in hand. "I say, this sunset has guts."[255]

This riotous meeting is comparable to the wild gatherings at Ricketts' lab. Yet, counterbalancing this frivolity, the group shared a serious concern for philosophy, art, and literature. It was the seriousness of this discussion in which Jeffers was mostly involved, engaging the same trident-wielding Sterling about a theory of poetry's "essential qualities."[256] While he did, perhaps reluctantly, attend an outrageous party thrown by Salvador Dali, Jeffers was certainly not the type for these outlandish antics.[257] As his son Garth recalls, "there were few parties at Tor House;" they were more accustomed to a small group of friends, drinking home-brewed wine Una called "Cairngorm."[258]

Within this broader community of Californian modernists, the Dust Dwellers contemplated the collapse of the Edenic dream. However, they did not abandon hope for the future. They did not embrace a nihilism that forfeited any possibility of human flourishing. Instead, the Dust Dwellers sought to understand the collapse of American mythology and the dangers of industrial civilization. They reevaluated the implications of technology and hoped to avoid the mistakes of the previous generation. Carrying a shared conception of Jung's *unus mundus*, they imagined a way forward. In this future, humanity could function in a reciprocal

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[255] Haley, 229-230.

[256] Karman, *The Collected Letters,* 1:465.

[257] Robert Brophy, "A Salvador Dali Party Extravaganza," *Robinson Jeffers Newsletter* 100, (1996): 1-7.

[258] Garth Jeffers, "A Window into the Jeffers Social Life," *Robinson Jeffers Newsletter* 100, (1996): 10.

cultus with the natural world. They did not propose a new continental garden; they imagined a flourishing countryside in which humanity was an active participant, not a little god. They recognized the relationship between the environment and the human consciousness, searching for that reality which bound them together. They looked for the God by whom "all things were created…[and in whom] all things hold together."[259] While the Dust Dwellers might not have found what they were looking for, they never abandoned the search. Their gaze was as wide as the cosmos and as small as a stone. Their admonition was a recognition of the universal in the particular. As Steinbeck wrote, "It is advisable to look from the tide pool to the stars and then back to the tide pool again."[260]

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[259] Col. 1:16-17

[260] Steinbeck and Jeffers, *Sea of Cortez,* 217.

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