

POST APOCALYPTIC VISION AND SURVIVANCE:
NUCLEAR WRITINGS IN NATIVE AMERICA AND JAPAN

by

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PREVIEW

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Kyoko Matsunaga, Ph.D.

University of Nebraska, 2006.

Adviser: Francis W. Kaye

"Post Apocalyptic Vision and Survivance: Nuclear Writings in Native American and Japan" examines the way nuclear issues are addressed by American Indian and Japanese Atomic Bomb writers. At the core of my argument lies the fact that although American nuclear literature and criticism have developed during the Cold War, until recently the voices of actual witnesses to the devastating effects of nuclear weapons and their production have often been dismissed or unacknowledged. Among such witnesses are indigenous people in the Southwest whose lands have been exploited for uranium mining and milling, nuclear testing, and nuclear waste disposal. I particularly focus on Simon J. Ortiz (an Acoma Pueblo poet/short story writer/essayist), Leslie Marmon Silko (a Laguna Pueblo novelist), Marilou Awiakta (a writer of Cherokee heritage living in Appalachia), and Gerald Vizenor (an Anishinabe writer from Northern Minnesota) who address nuclear colonization, cross-cultural nuclear destruction, alternative thinking about the atom, or the ideology of "nuclear peace" in their fiction, poetry, and prose. I argue that these writers subvert and deconstruct the predominant "apocalyptic" nuclear discourse through their tribal, global, and ecological perspectives.

Like its counterpart in America, Atomic Bomb literature in Japan has developed a complex and rich discourse. My dissertation, therefore, overviews Japanese Atomic Bomb literature as

well, particularly discussing the colonial and global significance of works such as Masuji Ibuse's *Black Rain*, Makoto Oda's *Hiroshima*, and Kyoko Hayashi's *The Site of Rituals*.

PREVIEW

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I know the ending.
 One day it will happen.
 One day we will see flashes, all of us.
 One day my daughter will die. One day, I know, my wife will
 leave me. It will be autumn, perhaps, and the tree will be in color, and
 she will kiss me in my sleep and tuck a poem in my pocket, and the
 world will surely end.
 I know this, but I believe otherwise.
 (Tim O'Brien *The Nuclear Age*)

Silent Spring and Apocalyptic Narrative

In recent ecocritical theory and in the environmental movement, apocalyptic narratives serve as effective discourse to counter the ideology of "progress." As Jimmie M. Killingsworth and Jacqueline S. Palmer define them in "Millennial Ecology: The Apocalyptic Narrative from *Silent Spring* to *Global Warming*," apocalyptic narratives are "shock tactics to win the hearts and minds of the general public" by predicting total destruction caused by technology or industry; they emphasize that human attempts to manipulate nature bring about the end of the world (21-22). Following the definition posited by Killingsworth and Palmer, Lawrence Buell in *The Environmental Imagination* discusses "ecological apocalypse" as a device that destroys imaginatively for the sake of avoiding actual destruction. Buell sees "apocalypse" as "the single most powerful master metaphor that the contemporary environmental imagination has at its disposal" (285). This "master metaphor" is powerfully invoked by Rachel Carson in *Silent Spring*, a book that has become a seminal text in this genre. Carson's narrative made apocalyptic discourse universal for environmentalists and scholars concerned with changing present politics.

Silent Spring has had great impact on the government, academia, and industry as well as on the general public since it first appeared in an abbreviated form in *The New Yorker* in 1962. In *Since Silent Spring*, Frank Graham, Jr. enumerates the global impact of *Silent Spring* including

important legislative changes concerning the use of agri-chemicals: "In 1969 USDA banned the use of the chlorinated hydrocarbon, lindane, in home vaporizers, calling them a 'serious threat to human health'"; "In November, 1969, the United States Government acted to phase out the use of DDT, except for 'emergency uses,' over a two-year period"; other countries such as England, Sweden, Hungary, and Australia have taken similar actions against the use of DDT and other detrimental chemical pesticides (268-69).

As the success of *Silent Spring* affirms, the rhetoric of apocalypse has occupied a central place in environmental movements. Greg Garrard in *Ecocriticism* comments on how the idea of environmental apocalypse has been used to further political agendas.

Apocalyptic rhetoric seems a necessary component of environmental discourse. It is capable of galvanizing activists, converting the undecided and ultimately, perhaps, of influencing government and commercial policy. In the United States, in particular, it can draw upon deep wellsprings of popular and literary apocalyptic sentiment. The news media often report environmental issues as catastrophes not only because this generates drama and the possibility of a human interest, but also because news more easily reports events than process. Apocalypse provides an emotionally charged frame of reference within which complex, long-term issues are reduced to monocausal crises involving conflicts between recognizably opposed groups, such as Greenpeace versus whalers. (Garrard 104-5)

As can be seen in Carson's case, by utilizing "persuasive means" such as television, newspapers, magazines, or bestselling publications, the apocalyptic narrative as a political strategy has successfully influenced the general public by warning about the danger of agri-chemical production with immediacy and urgency.

Not surprisingly, the rhetoric of environmental apocalypse is most effective when it is associated with the rhetoric of nuclear apocalypse. As Killingsworth and Palmer point out, Carson's work demonstrates profound connections between bio-chemical contamination and nuclear rhetoric:

Carson contributed a new dimension to the more sinister image of science that lurked in the popular imagination. Just as physics had joined with the military to produce the bomb that ended the big war but also left the world on the brink of nuclear disaster, so had agricultural science, as Carson depicted it, joined with agribusiness to produce chemicals that increased agricultural production in the short run but in the long run

threatened the environmental safety of the very citizens who prospered from the advances in farming technology. (27-28)

While insisting that chemical technology replaces or is equivalent to nuclear war in terms of destroying the environment and mankind, Carson's *Silent Spring* decries contemporary society for enabling the production of nuclear weapons and fatal chemical products: "Next to the possibility of the extinction of mankind by nuclear war, the central problem of our age has therefore become the contamination of man's total environment" (17-18). Curiously, Carson's rhetorical effect relied upon comprehending everything "nuclear" as something mortally dangerous and believing that nuclear war, should it come, will definitely cause the end of the world. Contained in this apocalyptic discourse is the subtle but firm presumption that we have not seen a "nuclear war," and that we might encounter complete "contamination of man's total environment" when it happens in the *future*.

Fiction of Nuclear Apocalypse

Carson constructs her narrative around the defining characteristic of "canonical" nuclear literature: accepting nuclear war as a "fable," or "something that has never happened before." This feature has been ever-present in the nuclear literature of the United States. From 1945 to the 1980s, a plethora of books on nuclear war was produced by writers and filmmakers. In such texts produced during the Cold War, prophecies of annihilation and images of atomic destruction and fallout abound.

Science fiction writers have especially taken advantage of general interests in a "nuclear war." Following the lead of works such as "Tomorrow's Children" (1947) by Poul Anderson and F. N. Waldrop and "The Figure" (1947) by Edward Grendon, a great number of science fiction writers including Walter M. Miller Jr. (*A Canticle for Leibowitz* [1959]), Edgar Pangborn (*Davy* [1964]) and Russell Hoban (*Riddley Walker* [1989]) explored the theme of nuclear war and

destruction in their works.¹ Interestingly, however, as Paul Brian points out in *Nuclear Holocaust: Atomic War in Fiction*, science fiction often avoided dealing with the "war" itself, focusing on the aftermath or "post" nuclear world instead (88). This "avoidance" of detailing an actual nuclear war in science fiction explains the "fable-like" nature of war in particular. While depicting adventures before and after the war, even science fiction was unable to imagine the "indescribable" realities of an apocalyptic nuclear holocaust.

The film industry followed a similar strategy. Produced during the Cold War period, for example, *Dr. Strangelove, Or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964, directed by Stanley Kubrick) predicts the aftermath of a nuclear war without showing the actual effects of a nuclear war. The film ends sarcastically when Dr. Strangelove suggests selecting people to live in a nuclear shelter, indicating another tyranny that perversely resembles Nazism. Focusing on the absurdity of nuclear politics, the film also "avoids" describing the holocaust, preferring to deal with nuclear war only metaphysically.

As *Dr. Strangelove* proves, nuclear politics has been one of the most intriguing subjects for novelists and moviemakers who are concerned with a nuclear war. However, the nuclear politics described in the movies and fiction seemed separated from "ordinary people" or the grassroots-level political movement against a nuclear war or nuclear weapons. According to Brian, "Most entirely absent from fiction, both science fiction and otherwise, is effective political action to prevent nuclear war or its recurrence, as noted earlier. When action is taken, it is usually by high government officials and not by ordinary citizens" (86). Unlike the tremendous success achieved in national and global environmental movements by invoking the environmental apocalypse, the rhetoric and images of nuclear apocalypse have had much more limited success, leading to few effective changes to prevent a nuclear war or to halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Nuclear apocalypse is viewed almost as "unavoidable" and "uncontrollable," and most

¹ For more information about fiction and films on nuclear war, see Allan Winkler's *Life Under a Cloud* and Paul Brian's *Nuclear Holocaust: Atomic War in Fiction*.

often dealt with the same way as natural disasters such as earthquakes, volcanoes, or tsunamis.²

Despite its seemingly "uncontrollable" and "sublime" nature, a nuclear war surely has been discussed and handled by nuclear scientists and politicians. Kurt Vonnegut Jr. in *Cat's Cradle* (1963) particularly suggests the dangerous alliances between scientists, politicians, and militarists, implying the highly political nature of nuclear threat. Vonnegut introduces Felix Hoenikker, a fictional Nobel Prize-winning physicist, who invents "ice-nine" to eliminate the problem mud presents to the U.S. Marine Corps. *Ice-nine* was invented to make the progress of soldiers easier. Ultimately, this concoction brings about the "end of the world" by freezing everything it touches, mirroring the threat of total annihilation posed by nuclear weapons. Vonnegut refers to the fragile balance of life on earth as he mocks the irresponsibility of scientists, politicians, and militarists for inventing a dangerous new technology that destroys the planet.

Following Vonnegut's fanciful satire, Tim O'Brien in *The Nuclear Age* (1979) depicts the ironic reality of the atomic age in which the fear of nuclear war escalates the modern industrialization and militarism. This text takes up the life of William Cowling. After leaving anti-Vietnam War extremists who become involved in bomb terrorism, Cowling applies his geological knowledge to discover new sources of uranium. Although he becomes wealthy and lives comfortably with his wife and daughter, Cowling begins to dig a hole in his yard in fear of a nuclear war--a fear that originated in childhood when he imagined seeing the flash of an atomic bomb. O'Brien portrays the dark side of the nuclear age: people's lives are so interwoven into nuclear industrialization and militarism that nobody can escape from it.

How the threat of the nuclear war affects the psychology of "ordinary" people is depicted most subtly but articulately in Wright Morris's *Ceremony in Lone Tree* (1960). Focusing on the relationships of a large family, Morris portrays an intricate human drama in Lone Tree, Nebraska.

² Considering nuclear holocaust as "a natural disaster" might be understood better within the context of the "nuclear sublime." The "Nuclear Sublime" is a newly developed concept produced out of the nuclear age, dating back to the idea of "American sublime" during the 18th century. See Francis Ferguson's "The Nuclear Sublime."

A recurring motif in the story is the test bombings in Nevada. Gordon Boyd, who later joins the McKee family in Lone Tree, is asked at a motel near the test site if he wants to wake up to witness the explosion. Intrigued by the idea of seeing the flash of the bomb, Boyd becomes obsessed with the notion of "waking before the bomb" since he believes that this symbolic act has never occurred in Lone Tree. The theme of the bomb is entwined with the mention of twelve people in Nebraska who have been murdered in 10 days. The tension created in the story resembles the mixed feelings of anticipation and dread experienced by Boyd while waiting to wake up before the bomb to witness the sublimity and violence of human creation.

The dread and anticipation of nuclear war has been studied and deconstructed by prominent post-structuralists as well. Nuclear Critics--the name coined by literary critics who studied the relationships between nuclear war and language--have defined nuclear war much more strictly than most novelists and filmmakers; they treat nuclear war as *total* annihilation. According to these critics, nothing like the aftermath of a nuclear war depicted in science fiction would be possible after a nuclear war since a nuclear apocalypse threatens not only human presence but also our imagination: no survivors, no mutated monsters, no nothing. Jacques Derrida, in particular, has done much to establish the theoretical concept of a nuclear war. In an article "No Apocalypse, Not Now (full speed ahead, seven missiles, seven missives.)," based on a talk given at a conference on nuclear criticism held at Cornell University in 1984,³ Derrida focuses on the importance of "nuclear critics" in the face of a nuclear epoch. Derrida argues that "nuclear war" can exist only as a "hypothesis" because once it occurs, it threatens to annihilate our semantic system, thus supporting his idea about deconstruction.

The hypothesis of this total destruction watches over deconstruction, it guides its footsteps; it becomes possible to recognize, in the light, so to speak, of that hypothesis, of that fantasy, or phantasm, the characteristic structures and historicity of the discourse, strategies, texts, or institutions to be deconstructed. That is why deconstruction, at least what is being advanced today in its name,

³ See *diacritics* (Summer 1984), for more information about the papers presented at the conference.

belongs to the nuclear age. (27)

In Derrida's argument, the "reality of the nuclear age"--the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and capitalistic endeavors that made the destruction possible--is separate from (although in relation to) the "fiction of war" (hypothesis of a total nuclear war). Derrida dismisses the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as the conclusion of a conventional war. According to Derrida's sophistry, nuclear war cannot be imagined because it has never occurred. The paradox of the nuclear referent is embodied particularly in this paradoxical relationship between the nuclear age and nuclear war: *"The name of nuclear war is the name of the first war which can be fought in the name of the name alone, that is, of everything and of nothing"* (Derrida 30).

In the same conference Derrida attended, Frances Ferguson discussed nuclear imagery under the concept of the latest "sublime." In her article "The Nuclear Sublime" Ferguson, referring to the nuclear crises depicted in Jonathan Schell's *The Fate of the Earth* (1982), sees the nuclear catastrophe as a continuum of the eighteenth-century interest in the sublime: "the thing that is bigger than any individual, and specifically bigger in terms of being more powerful and, usually, more threatening" (6). Ferguson argues that the nuclear is "the unthinkable" and "the most recent version of the notion of the sublime," but that it also means "to exist in one's own nonexistence" (7). Since no man-made objects can be sublime according to Kant, "suicide" becomes "the inevitable outcome of the logic of the sublime" (Ferguson 6). Ferguson succinctly describes the nature of the nuclear sublime when she refers to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* as "the Gothic reversal of the sublime dream of self-affirmation, the fear that the presence of other people is totally invasive and erosive of the self" (8). While *Frankenstein* prefigures Gothic claustrophobia, Schell portrays the "nuclear threat as a temporal version of claustrophobia repeatedly brought on by the pressure of thought of other minds acting to condition an individual and his dream of the uniqueness of his consciousness" (9).

The Discourse of Fear: Deconstructing the Narrative of Nuclear Proliferation

There is no doubt that the motif of nuclear apocalypse is an effective device to titillate the imagination of people in various disciplines including scientists, ecologists, and novelists. Indeed like the repercussions of *Silent Spring*, the impact of Schell's *The Fate of the Earth*, a text about nuclear apocalypse and holocaust, has proved the political power of such rhetoric. As L. Bruce van Voorst points out in "The Critical Masses," "The U.S. political scene is simply not the same as it was before publication of *The Fate of the Earth*" (82). Called "the bible of the anti-nuclear movement," *The Fate of the Earth* had a great influence on the antinuclear movement (especially the nuclear freeze movement) in the early 1980's.⁴

However, a danger lies beneath the surface of such rhetoric as applied to nuclear apocalypse. The apocalyptic narrative ignites fears--fear of the Cold War, fear of nuclear weapons, and fear of environmental destruction. Even before the creation of nuclear weapons there was fear. As Rob Wilson states in *The American Sublime*, "America's use of the atomic bomb had historically originated in fear, of the Germans and Japanese and later of the Russians, as the militant apparatus if not of death then of an incapacitating truce founded in lifelong intimidation ("deterrence")" (246). Ironically, fear of the nuclear existence in one country facilitated proliferation of nuclear weapons in other countries, or vice versa. In March 2003, in the face of the war in Iraq, Schell reminds us of the "chicken or egg" relationship between the fear of the bomb and nuclear proliferation in "The Case Against the War."

Before there was the bomb, there was the fear of the bomb. Hitler's phantom arsenal inspired the real American one. And so even before nuclear weapons existed, they were proliferating. This sequence is important because it reveals a basic rule that has driven nuclear proliferation ever since: Nations acquire nuclear arsenals above all because they fear the nuclear arsenals of others.

But fear--soon properly renamed terror in the context of nuclear strategy--is of course also the essence of the prime strategic doctrine of the nuclear age, deterrence, which establishes a balance of terror. (18)

⁴ Voorst expresses his concerns about the actual effects of the freeze movement in the 80's: "Are the members of the freeze movement making history or merely participating in another trendy springtime protest?" (83).

In the same article, Schell criticizes the George W. Bush administration for advocating the use of military force to stop the "spread of weapons of mass destruction" in Iraq. Revealing several hidden reasons the Bush Administration intended to wage war against Iraq--nuclear proliferation, oil, and democracy--Schell points out the absurdity of waging war against Iraq, a country attempting to gain nuclear power. In a strict sense, as Schell points out, Pakistan, North Korea, and Iran are more threatening powers than Iraq in terms of nuclear proliferation. Schell emphasizes that the planet is not headed toward denuclearization because nuclear proliferation cannot be stopped by military force, or nuclear force. By utilizing the discourse of fear--Iraq's possession of nuclear weapons--the Bush Administration perpetuates the very system that has made the international nuclear race possible.

Another problem such discourse poses is that it separates us from reality by casting nuclear war as "imaginative." The premise--that nuclear war is a "fiction"--is dangerous reasoning on planet Earth where the nuclear threat is a real and ongoing process rather than just theory or conjecture. "Fictionalizing" nuclear war undermines the connection between nuclear/atomic issues and human agents. For instance, by reducing the use of the atomic bombs in Japan merely to devices ending a "conventional war," Derrida theoretically dismisses the "real" impact these weapons have already exercised on citizens around the world.

nuclear war has no precedent. It has never occurred, itself; it is a non-event. The explosion of American bombs in 1945 ended a "classical," conventional war; it did not set off a nuclear war. The terrifying reality of the nuclear conflict can only be the signified referent, never the real referent (present or past) of a discourse or a text. (23)

Derrida's statement is radical enough to draw attention to the role of literature in the nuclear age by reducing the "terrifying reality of [...] nuclear conflict" to an imaginary construct--a "signified referent," that is a product of the human imagination since 1945. In *Writing Ground Zero: Japanese Literature and the Atomic Bomb*, John Whittier Treat criticizes Derrida's logic for

insinuating the "Western monopoly of nuclear criticism" (353).⁵ Applying the Judeo-Christian rhetoric of "apocalypse" and looking at nuclear war from the perspective of those who have the power to wage such a war, Derrida renders nuclear war a " rhetorical simulation of a text" (Derrida 24). In Derrida's reasoning, nuclear war becomes a fiction separated from the historical events of nuclear destruction.⁶ In other words, Derrida's assertion (that "nuclear war has no precedent. It has never occurred, itself: it is a non-event. The explosion of American bombs in 1945 ended a 'classical,' conventional war; it did not set off a nuclear war") restricts discussion of the bombs actually detonated in 1945, since they do not truly represent "nuclear apocalypse" nor "nuclear war."

Derrida's ideas about nuclear war seem to form the foundation of nuclear rhetoric appearing in other literary criticism. Even criticism less abstract and more applicable to the peace movement shares Derrida's concept (nuclear war as non-event) and ignores the extent and the variety of the damage already caused by nuclearism: to the uranium miners in the African Congo and American Southwest, to the victims of nuclear testing in the South Pacific and the American West, and to the victims of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings. Consider, for instance, John Gery's claims in *Nuclear Annihilation and Contemporary American Poetry: Ways of Nothingness* emphasizing the "ubiquitous nature of nuclearism":

On annihilation, there can be no final word. Because the issue of survival in a time of human-made mass death touches every aspect of being--from the material to the symbolic, the political to the metaphysical, the inanimate to the sacred, and the quotidian to the sublime--it necessarily engages each of us. No one is safely beyond the reach of its influence and potential, whether we choose to respond actively to it or not. For this reason, I have taken the liberty throughout this book

⁵ Treat observes that the colloquium on nuclear criticism at Cornell University did not include "an essay by a Japanese critic or of any essay that at least introduced a Japanese (or, in an equally interesting omission, Soviet) perspective" and that nuclear criticism "has been, from the start, a conversation among critics gathered in the only nation that has used nuclear weapons." (352-53).

⁶ Treat recognizes that "it is a common error of those who have not read deconstructionist critics attentively to complain that they reject any relation of language to reality," but he also points out that "in the specific application of poststructuralist theory to postwar nuclear strategizing, once the 'authority' of superpower rhetoric is disposed of as a model' for understanding the nuclear era, the two facts of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are also discarded" (355).

of using the pronoun "we"--not because I presume a homogeneous community of readers, but because of the ubiquitous nature of nuclearism and its attendant technologies. (184)

While Gery admirably points out how all human beings share the same destiny when it comes to the threat of nuclear destruction, his argument fails to account for actual suffering nuclearism has already inflicted.

In "Nuclear Criticism," Walter Kalaidjian rejects the "universal" and future view propounded by Gery:

One consequence, however, in embracing such an apocalyptic address risks the kind of culture of consensus that--as Henriksen shows--is ultimately repressive historicity and ethical responsibility. Although "we" are all potentially at risk of nuclear annihilation, some people, namely the hibakusha--those who survived Hiroshima--have a radically distinct relation to nuclear history from, say, that of their Japanese descendants, or those who conspired to drop the A-bomb and their American descendants. Thus Gery's "we" assumes a mode of temporality that, however prospective, is blind to genealogies of nuclear annihilation that have already happened. Moreover, such a consensus of address also assumes a certain version of national and canonical authority in the makeup of what "we" take to constitute "contemporary American poetry" as such. (317)

Referring to hibakusha--survivors of the nuclear destruction--Kalaidjian acknowledges the danger of assumption that everybody shares the notion of nuclear apocalypse, especially since "apocalypse" (if it means a "total destruction of human beings") does not apply to nor explain the survivors of Hiroshima atomic bombing.

Kalaidjian's discourse imagines beyond the apocalyptic nuclear discourse, but it is still limited in a sense that he refers to hibakusha only as "those who survived Hiroshima." Though it is a Japanese term especially used for survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki blasts, I interpret the meaning of hibakusha much more inclusively than it is used in the "traditional" nuclear writings and atomic bomb literature. For the purposes of this study, I use hibakusha to refer to those who suffer from any kind of nuclear detonation or radioactivity. Therefore, the term hibakusha--as I invoke it--includes not only those who have experienced the bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but also the "downwinders" and other residents affected by nuclear weapons testing and radioactive fallout in New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah; the survivors of

nuclear "accidents" such as Chernobyl or Three Mile Island; uranium miners and their families; and Native Americans and Africans whose land (and water) has been (and continues to be) contaminated due to nuclear colonization. Utilizing this broad sense of hibakusha, I attempt to look at nuclear literature more holistically and inclusively in this dissertation. My approach to nuclear writings emphasizes specific historic circumstances, multicultural voices, and global perspectives. The nuclear texts explored and analyzed in this dissertation range from post-Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bomb writings to nuclear literature dealing with the global nuclear colonization of Native America and Africa. My hope is that this global vision and (post) colonial perspective reveals a more complex and dynamic understanding of the social, cultural, socio-economic, and environmental impact of nuclear politics in American and Japanese literatures.

Toward a Holistic and Multicultural Reading of Nuclear Literature

As discussed above, the complexity of nuclear literature cannot be fully understood through the rhetoric of apocalypse. In "Seeing Through the Fire: Writers in the Nuclear Age," John Elder argues that both Jonathan Schell's *The Fate of the Earth* and Gary Snyder's "poetic vision of natural wholeness" are helpful to face the precipice of nuclear war. Although their approaches differ significantly, "together they allow for utterance about an evil, which from any one perspective, would be unbearable to contemplate" (223). Elder values Schell's *The Fate of the Earth* since it warns readers of the immediate danger of nuclear war while affirming the regenerative power of the natural environment. As a complement to Schell's work, based on the Judaeo-Christian belief system, Elder introduces Snyder's poetic view. Referring to Snyder's "different cultural perspective" (Elder points out Snyder's affinity for Native American and Buddhist thought and practices rather than the Judaeo-Christian model), Elder considers Snyder's multicultural perspective important because of its "inclusiveness" as well as its "anti-apocalyptic" nature. Elder specifically refers to Snyder's poem "For Nothing."

Earth a flower
 A phlox on the steep
 slope of light
 hanging over the vast
 solid spaces
 small rotten crystals;
 salts.

Earth a flower
 by a gulf where a raven
 flaps by once
 a glimmer, a color
 forgotten as all
 falls away.

A flower
 for nothing;
 an offer;
 no taker;

Snow-trickle, feldspar, dirt.

As Elder points out, Snyder's poem highlights "a longer view of the cycle of life, working against nuclear war by becoming *less* impressed with the prospect" (229). By taking an ecological stand against apocalyptic thinking, Snyder mitigates the numbing and muting effects the idea of nuclear holocaust brings to those shocked by Schell's description of the nuclear destruction and warning. According to Elder, together Schell and Snyder bring forth hopeful solutions to the nuclear age: "they complement each other as writers, in a cycle of human response including the discursive and the poetic, the admonitory and the celebratory voices. Perhaps, taken together, they suggest that we need to *act* as if we are responsible for the fate of the earth but *feel* as if we are not. Both activism and faith may come from surrender to a larger truth than one can comprehend" (229).

But to look for nuclear writings that cover both the warning of nuclear holocaust *and* multicultural and anti-apocalyptic perspectives, we did not have to wait for Schell (who refers to the Hiroshima destruction) nor Snyder (who has "affinities" with Native and Japanese cultures). Since the first atomic detonations in 1945, Native American and Japanese writers have expressed concerns and related their experiences of nuclear holocaust and colonization while introducing more global and ecological directions about the nuclear future. Most importantly, while

addressing the devastating effects of nuclear industrialism and militarism, many of these Native American and Japanese writers counter the apocalyptic visions by focusing more on the regeneration of life.

Undeniably, as part of the larger narrative of cultural imperialism the concept of the Judeo-Christian apocalypse has exercised a great impact on Native American history, culture, and literature. But it has also met a counterforce in the larger history of Native America and the ecological views promoted by various indigenous writers. Vine Deloria, Jr., for example, connects the idea of the apocalypse to the "ancient prophecies" of Native America:

In trying to make sense of the present situation it has occurred to me that the ancient prophecies of profound and universal planetary destruction may well be true--and not far from us. If widespread physical destruction were a certain possibility the survivors would need to have something in common so they could bring together whomever still lived here and formulate a society. Thus it might not be a bad thing that ancient truths are understood by a large number of people who after having survived massive earthquakes and tidal waves might be inclined to believe that Mother Earth is indeed more powerful than human science and technology. The survivors might have a little humility and respect for the natural world. (267)

Inheriting the legacy of earlier writers like Deloria, contemporary writers and thinkers like Linda Hogan and Robert Allen Warrior share similar concerns about current apocalyptic attitudes in society. Linda Hogan in *Dwellings* writes,

Unlike the cyclic nature of time for the Maya, the Western tradition of beliefs within a straight line of history leads to an apocalyptic end. And stories of the end, like those of beginning, tell something about the people who created them. [...] Without deep reflection, we have taken on the story of endings, assumed the story of extinction, and have believed that it is the certain outcome of our presence here. From this position, fear, bereavement, and denial keep us in the state of estrangement from our natural connection with land. (93-94)

Like Deloria, who interprets ancient prophecies of "apocalypse" as destruction caused by "human science and technology," Hogan recognizes human tendencies to imagine apocalypse and laments human separation from the land. Several other writers have discussed how the discourse of apocalypse has led human perception from the natural world to a more "tragic" anthropocentrism. In his examination of Deloria's work, Robert Warrior notes in *Tribal Secrets*,

"The basic problem with Christianity for Deloria, then, is its subsuming of place by a time-centered theology. In this it completed the movement away from what remained of space-centered theology in post-Exilic Judaism" (72). By privileging time over place, Warrior believes, Christianity "dismiss[es] myths and stories to the realm of pure imagination" (73).

While Deloria and Warrior critique the manner in which Christian theology and rhetoric downplay the role of nature and place, Donald A. Grinde and Bruce E. Johansen in *Ecocide of Native America* connect religious ideas about the apocalypse to the lack of political resistance:

What is to be feared is the path of least resistance--where the environment is allowed continually to deteriorate and the resulting mass destruction of populations will "appear" to be by the hand of "God." The Christian notion of the Apocalypse easily sanctifies this process as does Adam Smith's notion of the "invisible hand" (equivalent to the hand of God), when it really is a result of a lack of political courage, vision, and leadership. (277)

Like Deloria, Hogan, and Warrior, Grinde and Johansen recognize the detrimental effects of Christian views of the apocalypse on humanity's relation to nature--they even suggest that resistance starts by developing an awareness of the ways apocalyptic discourse works in contemporary society.

The "story of endings" prevent us from forming meaningful connections to the natural environment and elicit "fear," "bereavement," and "denial," as can be seen in the half-century of nuclear writings. The more we immerse ourselves in apocalyptic thinking, the more we are trapped in the belief that human perceptions, culture, and life are superior to life around us and the ecosystem supporting us. The Judeo-Christian notion of apocalypse, particularly in relation to nuclear issues, has been re-imagined and deconstructed by prominent Native American authors Simon J. Ortiz, Leslie Marmon Silko, Marilou Awiakta, and Gerald Vizenor.

These four authors deconstruct the trope of "colonial apocalypse" and the image of the "Vanishing American," characteristic representations of Native Americans in 19th and 20th century American culture. Simon J. Ortiz has been particularly vocal against colonial erasure in his work by emphasizing the survival of Native America. Significantly, Ortiz's fight against the

colonization of Native America parallels his fight against nuclear colonialism. In his collection of poetry and essay *Fight Back: For the Sake of the People, for the Sake of the Land*, Ortiz exposes the social, cultural, and racial injustices of the nuclear industry's southwestern presence, a contemporary facet of the colonialism endured by the Pueblo people since the arrival of the Spaniard, Coronado, in the 1540's. But Ortiz's poetry contains more than mere political protest against nuclear colonization; his poetry reflects a profound understanding of surviving the nuclear age. While revealing ways in which the land and residents of Native America have been affected by nuclear colonization and the apocalyptic discourse, Ortiz proposes more ecological and humanistic approaches as an alternative to nuclear rhetoric.

Following Ortiz's protest against colonization of the uranium-rich Southwest, Leslie Marmon Silko, a Laguna Pueblo poet/novelist/essayist, decries the nuclear industrialization and militarism in the Southwest in her two novels *Ceremony* and *Almanac of the Dead*. As Lawrence Buell in *The Environmental Imagination* suggests, the tone of apocalypse permeates both novels.⁷ Yet, the most prominent feature of *Ceremony* and *Almanac of the Dead* is more than the repetition of the apocalyptic narrative. I will take Buell's stance a step further and argue that the end of both novels, whether "utopian" or "unromantic" (both Buell's terms), show the writer's resistance against the nuclear apocalypse. In *Ceremony*, Silko poses a solution for the problem of nuclear colonization in American Southwest in terms of a culturally hybridized witchery narrative. On the other hand, in *Almanac of the Dead*, Silko emphasizes the shared historical and cultural experiences of Native America and Africa--exploitation of the lands and people through uranium

⁷ Buell states that in the atmosphere resembling *The Waste Land* by T.S. Eliot, Tayo, the protagonist of *Ceremony*, vacillates between "world as web and world as machine" (289). By barely escaping from the "world as machine" (or the "witchery craft") to the understanding of "world as web," Tayo comes to a "utopian" closure as a hero in both a regional and global sense. According to Buell *Almanac of the Dead* focuses more on the "dystopian" side of the modern society (289): "On the whole, *Almanac* reads like *Ceremony*'s counterpoint: a dystopian anatomy of the profane, as if *Ceremony* had been redone so as to make the bars of Gallup or the psychiatric ward of the Los Angeles veterans' hospital the center of the novel. The contrast again shows the ease with which utopian thinking can become its opposite" (290).

mining. Using the symbolism of a giant stone snake as a device to unite Africa and the Americas as well as introducing pan-tribal prophecies predicting the disappearance of European culture, Silko rejects the apocalyptic reasoning that enables nuclear colonization and predicts global destruction. In both novels, Silko delineates the post-apocalyptic vision in which western apocalyptic thinking and culture are contained in the larger cycle of ecological and tribal systems.

While Silko and Ortiz focus on apocalypticism and the nuclear colonization of the Southwest, Marilou Awiakta considers the atom from her point of view as a Cherokee, Appalachian, and a poet. As a writer of Cherokee heritage living in Appalachia, Awiakta discusses the influence the secret nuclear facilities at Oakridge, where her father worked, had on her life and writing. Although Awiakta criticizes the ways in which science has handled the nature of the atom by "splitting" and "separating" it, like Carson, she does not totally dismiss the use of science. Rather Awiakta calls for a paradigm shift in science that had privileged linear thinking about the atom instead of more complicated and dynamic movements of the atom. Awiakta's take on science is in many ways similar to that of nuclear physicists like Niel Bohr who recognize the poetic nature of the atom, rather than views about the atom based on scientific principles (like vivisection and triage) developed during the Enlightenment. Most importantly, Awiakta's ideas about the atom reflect her Cherokee and family heritage. Interlacing the legacy of *Selu* (the Cherokee Corn Mother), the history of Cherokee survival, and her personal experiences in Oak Ridge, Awiakta explores the more inclusive and holistic nature of the atom.

Most recently, in the form of a novel titled *Hiroshima Bugi: Atom 57* (2003), an Anishinaabe (Ojibwe, Chippewa) writer from northern Minnesota has also added his voice to the nuclear narrative. Having close affinity with Japanese culture, Gerald Vizenor deconstructs the formalized concept of "nuclear peace" that affects people regionally (the American Southwest and Hiroshima) and globally. The overuse of the phrase "nuclear peace" has rendered itself a convenient device for hiding truths about the dominant nuclear discourse. In this respect, Vizenor regards the "nuclear peace" as a "terminal creed," a phrase he also utilizes to reveal the inaccurate,