Nuclear Texts & Contexts

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Time to Renew Your Subscription

All subscriptions to *Nuclear Texts & Contexts* cover two issues, beginning with the fall issue and ending with the spring issue, no matter when you subscribe.

Therefore, except for a very few people who have paid in advance for more than one year, all subscribers must renew now to receive the next issue, due out next Fall.

You will find a renewal form at the end of this issue. Note that it has been somewhat redesigned to allow for a box within which to place your activities. This information is used to create our membership directory, mailed out in August. The directory is one of the most valuable products of ISSNTC. It has already been used by two editors of forthcoming volumes of essays to solicit contributions. Most of the scholars now publishing on nuclear issues in language and literature belong to ISSNTC (currently more than 100 members in 10 countries), and our organization provides an excellent means of getting in touch with others in your field of interest.

But the directory is much more useful if we can print fairly detailed information about our members: their research, publications, teaching activity, etc. We would very much appreciate it if you would fill in the "Comments" section of the form, including any information which you would like to have appear in the directory. Similarly, if changes need to be made in your directory entry, we would like to hear about them. Otherwise, we will reprint last year's entry unchanged.

Next issue: the first-ever Soviet book on nuclear war fiction, Vladimir Gakov's *Ultimatum.*

Annual ISSNTC Meeting

Officers of the International Society for the Study of Nuclear Texts and Contexts held our second annual meeting at the Modern Language Association meeting in Washington, D. C. last December 28.

New member Millicent Lenz agreed to try to get a session on nuclear literature for children accepted for next year's meeting. For more information, please write Professor Millicent Lenz, One Ruso Drive, Menands, NY 12204.

Professor Lenz has a book on children's nuclear fiction forthcoming.

Changes

You will have noticed some changes in this issue of *NT&C.* Several members have complained that the postal service sorting equipment was mutilating or entirely destroying our stapled-together newsletters; so we have shifted to envelopes for domestic subscribers as well as foreign ones. This is more expensive and a great deal more time-consuming, but we hope this change will mean all of you will receive your newslettters intact.

Because this issue was not as crowded as past ones, we have been able to make two other improvements:

we are printing longer reviews than previously, and we are using a slightly larger typeface which should be more readable.

The other change is a regrettable one: this issue is terribly late. We had many problems assembling the material for this issue, including dealing with the vagaries of mail from the U.S.S.R. But we trust the issue makes up in usefulness for its tardiness. It was announced in the first issue that *NT&C* would be somewhat irregular in schedule (although we guarantee two issues per year). We hope you will agree that sticking to a rigid schedule, if it prevents us from creating a really interesting publication, is to be avoided.

Reviews

Martha Bartter. ***The Way to Ground Zero: The Atomic Bomb in American Science Fiction.*** New York: Greenwood Press, 1988. 278pp. $39.95.

At first it might seem that to write books on such a theme is almost an intellectual perversion, treating to academic scrutiny all possible ways of ending civilization and life on Earth. A sort of cannibalistic feast or literary necrophilia, one might say. The same applies, of course, to the reviewers of such books.

But "nuclear" novels and short stories are constantly being written, as are academic studies of them. Bartter's book complements a recent triad of such studies: Paul Brians' *Nuclear Holocausts,* H. Bruce Franklin's *War Stars,* and (I add, immodestly) my own book, *The Ultimatum: Nuclear War and Non-nuclear Peace in Fact and Fiction* (published recently in Russian). Your reviewer thus belongs to this same gang of literary perverts.

One of the most attractive features of Prof. Bartter's book is its logical approach. For me *The Way to Ground Zero* represents classic academic scholarship: the presentation of basic assumptions and the outlining of a strategy and tactics for deciphering "literary code," in order to excavate the secret meanings in the work of art. Plot structures and other fictional devices are examined to discover what lies under the verbal surface. The notion that a work of literature may convey what it says boldly, directly, *on* the surface, is mostly ignored.

But I think this topic is rather special: most authors have said directly what they have wished to say to the reader. The quite clever deciphering of covert messages sometimes obscures the overt one in these works.

After reading Bartter's book, I still think that "nuclear literature" is more suitably to be discussed by religious thinkers, politically conscious journalists and essayists, philosophers or social thinkers rather than English teachers and scholars. This theme is understood much more appropriately in relation to "real life" than in relation to artistic imagery.

But, as I considered that part of Bartter's book which is devoted to literary analysis and the interrelationships between fiction and fact, art and real life, I found a good deal in common between this book and my own. I read the present study only after mine had gone to press, but I found myself nodding in agreement with almost every point. Especially the chapter entitled "The Way to Hiroshima," comparing fact and fiction, is strikingly similar. As a trained former physicist, I note the confirmation of a hypothesis by two unrelated tests.

But perhaps the degree of importance which each of us places on the influence of fiction on life differs slightly. So far as I could understand from Bartter's book, she supports the idea that every major sociopolitical change, every decision taken in "real life," is stimulated, ignited, by some work of art. "In the beginning was the Word," as the Bible says.

I sometimes think it would be ideal if this could be so, though often it would be horrific. I prefer to see only a gradual, cumulative effect by literature on life, not a distinct and direct effect caused by each important work. In regard to nuclear literature specifically, it has been necessary to achieve a *critical mass* to produce an effect on society.

This was also the case with earlier future war scenarios: general readers needed a lot of them—a veritable bombardment—to receive the impression of a real war to come.

One example illustrates the danger of overestimating literature's ability to change minds. Bartter begins her book with a description of "the Superman Syndrome," and quite rightly shows how this "mental illness" has led humanity to the present situation of atomic stalemate. But one wonders why there has been almost no effect on our minds of the (rare) examples of science fiction depicting a powerful antidote to such attitudes, such as nuclear winter fiction, which illustrate the impossibility of using nuclear weapons as *weapons.* As we all know, the development of the nuclear winter scenario by scientists in the early eighties was a shocking sensation, not only for politicians and the military, but for science fiction writers and readers as well. Detailed data for the study of such fiction are available in Paul Brians' invaluable study / bibliography.

From my own point of view, the most striking pages of Bartter's book are those in Chapters 6 and 8 where she discusses and speculates about both human nature and ways to change it if we are to survive. These speculations are fresh and thought-provoking, and accord well with my understanding of the effects of literature on society.

Those readers who have the time and patience to work through these final chapters will be awarded by a real "feast of the mind." And it won't be a necrophiliac feast because the author's speculations concern not how to end life on Earth, but, on the contrary, how to save it by using such a relatively ineffective tool as prose fiction.

To conclude, I would like to answer the statement made in my opening paragraph. It is a kind of intellec-

tual perversion *not* to write about nuclear holocaust now, and to ignore such books in literary criticism; for it is the society, the culture, which ignores an obvious danger to its own survival which is perverted.

Vladimir Gakov
Moscow

Joseph Dewey. ***In a Dark Time: The Apocalyptic Temper in the American Novel of the Nuclear Age.*** West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 1990. 272 pages. $27.50

Dewey argues convincingly for a lengthy American tradition of writing which is millenarian (a coming good time), cataclysmic (a coming bad time), and apocalyptic (a meaningful end entailing a meaningful present) and which stretches back to Edwards and Melville.

He is not impressed by most overtly nuclear fiction which, he says, "accepts a history gone critical and works only the thin hope of struggle and accommodation." It is "unnervingly disconnected from the urgency of its own history" and its writers are "like corpulent people standing in a shark tank placidly staring at their own belly buttons." Dewey betrays his moralistic/religious approach by dismissing *Alas, Babylon* and *On the Beach* for being "oddly and serenely cinematic." He is even more unimpressed by metafictionists—"bad fiction makers"—who are "lost to the funhouse." Metafictionists "pretend history without the investment of belief." His own preference is for moral philosophers like Walker Percy.

But having broadened his idea of "apocalyptic," he confines successful "crisis" writing to a narrow historical period, which commenced "most emphatically with the Cuban missile crisis in 1962." He argues that "the voices of American literature since roughly the mid-1950s have reawakened the apocalyptic temper"—but what about the visions of Faulkner, say, or Fitzgerald?

His exemplary novelists are Vonnegut, Pynchon, Percy, Coover, Gaddis, and De Lillo.

Vonnegut, Dewey argues, has dwindled in his work from an apocalyptic to a cataclysmic writer, revealing like Twain "a disconcerting contempt for humanity." *Breakfast of Champions,* for example, "reviews the history of the United States in a particularly vicious manner." He is good at demonstrating Vonnegut's dislike of John/Jonah in *Cat's Cradle,* but by continuing to separate the author from his main characters, Dewey misses the sympathy felt and generated for Billy Pilgrim in *Slaughterhouse-Five.*

His humanist analysis of *Gravity's Rainbow* is refreshing and highlights Enzian as the true hero. (Oedipa, in the similarly apocalyptic *Crying of Lot 49,* also has her most epiphanic moments not with systems but with people.)

He's right to emphasize Coover's moralism, in a study of T*he Origin of the Brunists,* which is "long overdue for a thorough treatment." (He leaves *The Public Burning* to Le Clair.) Dewey seems to have lost some of his anti-metafictional rage by the end of his study, and correctly contrasts See's maudlin *Golden Days* with the textual play of De Lillo's *White Noise* and Gaddis's *Carpenter's Gothic.* Despite himself he likes Gaddis and De Lillo, though he doesn't like the former when he "smirks" with "literary despair" and he reduces De Lillo's play with language to an intent to reconnect "with the magnificent energy of a living cosmos. . . ."

Overfond of the adjectival clause to begin sentences (like this one), Dewey has a ponderous style (e.g. "It is nearly impossible to underestimate . . .") which extends to his notes, many of which in their uniform lengthiness should have been incorporated into his text. But as the book progresses, one begins to warm to Dewey's rhetorical flourishes, which often match his subjects in their eloquence. Some of his images are puzzling, e.g. "reading widely in the cataclysmic tradition is a rather numbing experience—like watching a succession of brakeless automobiles slowly heading up a long incline." But many are successful, e. g. "Disneyland is, after all, apocalypse-proof; it merely closes for the night."

Only the single-mindedness of Dewey's zeal is worrisome. His chosen few writers "face megadeath" and "defy the newer laws of historical gravity first written by the initial crack of light at Trinity Test Site." By his conclusion Dewey is waxing sermonical, rather than letting his detailed close analyses speak for him: "Surely [this] literature has confronted the premise of Hiroshima." One senses in Dewey's approach a remorseless humanism, an eye for the still, small voice asserting life against death.

This approach is all very admirable, but it has two things against it. First, it appears markedly old-fashioned in an era of critical theory preoccupied with issues of historiography, feminism and language. He claims that "clearly, contemporary American literature is finding a way to encompass the meaning, if not the fact, of the nuclear threat." I suggested in my *Fictions of Nuclear Disaster* (1987) (along with Jacques Derrida) that while any text is in a sense nuclear, the "meaning of apocalypse cannot be "said"—ever. Second, Dewey's ethical focus often precludes an appreciation of the other aspects in these novels (foregrounded by these other contemporary approaches) which make the humanist assertion so painful and precious.

David Dowling
Trent University Peterborough
Ontario

Jeff Smith. ***Unthinking the Unthinkable: Nuclear Weapons and Western Culture.*** Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989. 190 pages. $25.00

Even if the Cold War is now finally coming to an end, the nuclear predicament itself has hardly been resolved. And whether it will ever *be* resolved will depend, in no small measure, on how many individuals are willing to continue to think intelligently about its complex etiology and its antecedents, which long predate Hiroshima. Jeff Smith's incisive new study should be required reading for anyone interested in this challenge. It is certainly a book that every English teacher and literary scholar should peruse.

Like two other important recent nuclear texts, Steve Fetter's *Toward A Comprehensive Test Ban* and William A. Schwartz and Charles Derber's *The Nuclear Seduction: Why the Arms Race Doesn't Matter and What Does, Unthinking the Unthinkable* suggests that the conventional wisdom of the peace movement, and not merely those axioms which support nuclearism and the nuclear national security state, may be in need of a fundamental rethinking.

Because no analysis of the nuclear arms race can deal with every possible cause, Smith believes that we should allocate more attention to perspectives which have been given short shrift. For Smith the most neglected area has been culture. But rather than focusing merely on the "nuclear culture" of, say, the Rand Corporation or Los Alamos National Laboratory (which is really sub-culture), Smith urges us to look at culture in a much wider sense: Western (including Russian) culture and, more specifically, American culture. Smith's study nicely complements the recent cultural histories of Paul Boyer (*By the Bomb's Early Light*) and Spencer R. Weart (*Nuclear Fear: A History of Images).* Boyer, in fact, called for "ventures into even more tantalizingly speculative realms," and this is precisely what Smith has done.

Though concerned with history, *Unthinking the Unthinkable* relies primarily on literary and textual analyses. Literary and film analysis, Smith emphasizes, are highly relevant to our understanding of the nuclear predicament, but unfortunately have generally been overlooked by those whose voices are most frequently heard in the nuclear debate. That those writing on nuclear weapons issues have rarely drawn on these disciplines is at least partly the fault of literary and film critics themselves, who have done little to publicize the potential public relevance of their analyses. Unless this changes, "nuclear writers and journalists will continue to base their work on commonsense premises that disciplinary inquiry has more or less shown to be untrue."

Agreeing with Russell Jacoby, who argues in *The Last Intellectuals* that contributing to public discourse is what scholars ought to be doing, Smith reminds literary scholars that engagement with the world is "a central feature of literary analysis as such." It is no longer enough, if it ever was, to work merely within one's own discipline. In his chapter "Antinuclear Psychology and Antinuclear Theology," Smith writes that "If the existence of nuclear weapons is rooted in culture, then it lies somewhere close to the "soul." Theology and psychology are historically allied methods for diagnosing the ills of the soul." Many literary scholars, of course, do exploit the unique insights of both theology and psychology to illuminate a great variety of literary texts. Smith demonstrates how these disciplines might also help concerned humanists to better understand various *nuclear* texts.

Because more than a few in his profession clearly do not share his views on what literary scholars can—and should— be doing, Smith devotes a section of his first chapter to the role of nuclear criticism in the reformulation of the canon. Pointing out that some of the texts he will be analyzing are almost never subjected to literary readings, Smith proposes that other literary scholars too might apply their interpretive talents not only to canonical masterpieces but also to *Dr. Strangelove* and to the writings of Jonathan Schell. And, no less importantly, even to the discourses of Ronald Reagan. In fact, in Smith's book statements by the former President "are treated as equally revealing a text as works by Shakespeare and Orwell, while Shakespeare's and other texts of earlier times are treated as equally relevant to the nuclear question as a Reagan speech or *Dr. Strangelove*."

Far too many literary scholars, unfortunately, seem to share the "deep-rooted American antipathy toward politics," and thus have failed to challenge the legitimacy of nuclear weapons and the nuclear national security state. In his chapter "A Largess Universal: War, Technology, and the State in *Henry V*," Smith traces our views of the nation-state and its "presumptively exclusive claim on the means of violence" back to the time of Shakespeare. As long as we remain oblivious to the fact that people have not always felt as we now do about the state and its authority, it will be very difficult for us to envision viable alternatives to the modern (nuclear) state and its willingness to sanction unlimited violence.

Also militating against the possibility of conceiving and implementing a nonnuclear, alternative international security system is the intellectual dishonesty of many deterrence theorists and policymakers, who in turn require intellectual dishonesty on the part of very many (but, importantly, not all) ordinary citizens. The common failure is an unwillingness to honestly reexamine basic premises.

"The most thoroughly ideological position," observes Smith, "is that which holds certain social and political arrangements, albeit ones with majority support, to be simply the nature of things, and which thus sacrifices the chance to measure those arrangements against the real nature of things. Ideology in the deepest sense is

the mistaking of history and politics for metaphysics.

"By this subtler, nonmainstream definition, the strength of ideology is better measured not by the presence but by the lack of organized political activity in a given society, or by the lack of overt political position taking. A society where everyone seems to agree—and, hence, where people forget that other views are possible—would be the most ideological society of all. Total agreement, after all, is what the Party ideology of *1984,* Ingsoc, is all about."

Throughout the nuclear age, there *has* been remarkable agreement in the United States on how to best deal with the Soviet Union and with nuclear technology. The rigid cold-war consensus which has dominated U.S. nuclear debates for more than four decades now has simply accepted "deterrence" as a given. But when challenged by a reawakened peace movement (and by the American Catholic bishops' pastoral letter) in the early 1980s, deterrence soon came under fire even from Ronald Reagan himself, in his famous "Star Wars" speech of March 23, 1983. In his excellent chapter, "Nostalgia for Industry: SDI and American Metaphysics," Smith insists that the enigma is not that Reagan meant what he said in his speech, "but that anyone should have ever doubted it."

Rather than simply dismissing SDI, as E. P. Thompson has done, with purely negative terms (e.g., "pychopathology, delirium, palpable insanity,") Smith contends that we need more positive terms like "vision" and "dream" if we are to grasp the project's cultural appeal and the beliefs underlying it: "It would not be so bad if, as Thompson says, SDI merely stood for our "worst" American traditions. A people can rise above its worst traditions—but how will it ever rise above its best" Smith also elucidates how media coverage of the president's views has often only exacerbated the public's already considerable confusion on nuclear weapons issues.

According to Smith, there is also considerable confusion (and not merely on the part of ordinary citizens) on the important question of whether the nuclear age is indeed fundamentally *new.* Because historians fail to trace the origins of the present situation far enough back into the past, they are able to impart what Smith sees as proximate causes of the nuclear predicament, but not its remote or underlying causes. From the perspective of cultural history, "nuclear weapons could not represent a fundamental change from past generations, for those generations laid down the cultural conditions for them. But those cultural conditions, in turn, *were* a change from the conditions of earlier eras, not permanent features of human existence. Nuclear weapons are neither wholly new nor timelessly old, but *historically* old." Asking us to consider the possibility "that modern technology *as a system of attitudes* has a surprisingly long history," Smith maintains that "it is fruitless to speak of pre-1945 and post 1945 as different worlds." "For how many times," he asks, "has civilization been thought to hang in the balance before?"

But has civilization *in fact* ever hung in the balance before? Smith is indeed correct in reminding us that the roots of our nuclear dilemmas appeared long before the nuclear age itself. But I would argue that it is nonetheless important to keep in mind that there is also something fundamentally *new* about nuclear weapons and the nuclear age, and that failing to remain cognizant of this fact leaves us terribly vulnerable to policymakers and other elites who are still trying to assimilate genocidal "weapons" into conventional views of war and peace and "national security."

Whether or not the nuclear age is indeed "new," Smith asseverates that we are not condemned to forever live beneath the balance of terror. Underscoring the centrality of discourse analysis in the search for solutions, Smith forthrightly challenges the pervasive cynicism of our age. "As discourses shift," he concludes his thoughtful study, "new ideas do enter culture and old ones are, in effect, unthought. There is nothing mystical about getting this to happen, not even in the case of nuclear weapons. It is said that politics is the art of the possible, meaning resign yourself to what little is possible. But the same phrase can mean, Anything is possible if it's within the realm of politics. Ending the nuclear threat is within the realm of politics."

If more of us who teach literature and writing can remain mindful that our teaching and research too is ineluctably "within the realm of politics," we might begin devoting considerably more of our professional energies to the nuclear threat. And we might even come to realize that our profession can make a much greater contribution to resolving this still pressing issue than we have been wont to believe. **Daniel L. Zins**

Atlanta College of Arts

Gakov Seeking Speaking Engagements

Soviet ISSNTC member Michael Kovalchuk, who writes under the name of Vladimir Gakov, will be a visiting professor this coming fall at Central Michigan University in Mt. Pleasant, August 18–December 29. His wife Natasha will accompany him. He will be teaching on a Tuesday–Thursday schedule which will leave him free to travel and speak on other days.

He is seeking speaking engagements on nuclear war fiction (he has just published a book on the subject entitled *Ultimatum*), on Soviet science fiction, Soviet journalism, and perestroika. He wants to take his wife with him as much as possible, but is not asking for more than a small honorarium and expenses in addition to airfare.

To make arrangements, write Joe DeBolt, English Dept., Central Michigan U., Mt. Pleasant, MI 58859.

New Scholarship

Bartter, Martha A. "The Hand that Rocks the Cradle." *Extrapolation,* vol. 30, no. 2 (Fall 1989). Survey of fiction written by women which is set after a nuclear war.

Brewer, Mária Minich. "Samuel Beckett: Postmodern Narrative and the Nuclear *telos*." *Boundary 2,* vol. XV, nos. 1, 2 (Fall 1986/Winter 1987), 153-170.

Dyck, Reginald. "Thinking the Unthinkable: Teaching Hiroshima." *Momentum* 14 (December 1983), 50-51.

Joenniemi, Pertti, ed. *Discourse on Deterrence,* a special issue of *Current Research on Peace and Violence*, vol. XII, no. 2 (1989). Published by the Tampere Peace Research Institute, P. O. Box 447, 33101, Tampere, Finland. Contains an introductory essay by the editor entitled "Deterrence: A Story in Decline?"; Donna U. Gregory: "The Dictator's Furnace: Metaphor and Alchemy in National Security Discourse;" Jim Falk, "The Discursive Shaping of Nuclear Militarism;" Jan Øberg: "Deterrence Thinking and Everyday Life;" and G. M. Dillon: "Modernity, Discourse, and Deterrence."

Sonnichsen, C. L. "Fat Man and the Storytellers: Los Alamos in Fiction." *New Mexico Historical Review*, January 1990, 49-72. An interesting overview of fiction relating to the Manhattan Project, including several works not previously cited by other scholars. Sonnichsen discusses the following: Michael Amrine: *Secret;* Larry Bogard: *Los Alamos Light;* Pearl S. Buck: *Command the Morning;* Robert Olen Butler: *Countrymen of Bones;* Frank Castle: *Murder in Red*; Robert Cohen: The *Organ Builder;* Lawrence Dunning: *Keller's Bomb*; Mark Elder: *The Prometheus Operation;* Dorothy B. Hughes: *The Big Barbecue;* Dexter Masters: *The Accident;* Allen Maxwell: *Steal the Sun;* Patrick O'Malley: *The Affair of the Red Mosaic*; Thomas McMahon: *Princples of American Nuclear Chemistry;* Robert Mayer: *The Search;* David Quammen: *The Zolta Configuration;* George E. Simpson and Neal R. Burger: *Fair Warning;* Martin Cruz Smith: *Stallion Gate;* C. P. Snow: *The New Men;* James Thackara: *America's Children;* Frank Waters: *The Woman at Otowi Crossing;* and Thomas Wiseman: *Savage Day.*

New Fiction

Abbey, Lloyd: *The Last Whales.* New York: Grove Widenfeld, 1990. Blue whales are among the few survivors of a nuclear war.

Armstrong, Michael. *Agviq*. New York: Quyestar, 1990. This novel, due out in July, is a nuclear winter adventure set in Alaska among the Inupiaq.

Card, Orson Scott. *The Abyss.* New York: Pocket Books, 1989. Novelization of the film, which features a strong nuclear-weapons theme, made even stronger in the book.

Cox, Richard. *Ground Zero.* New York: Stein and Day, 1985. Technothriller in which Israeli intelligence hires an out-of-work pilot to destroy Qaddaffi's sole nuclear weapon.

Hino Hideshi. *Panorama of Hell.* Originally *Jigoku Hen.* Hibari Shobo, 1982. Trans. "Screaming Mad George," Charles Schneider, and Yoko Umezawa. New York: Blast Books, 1989. A nauseating Japanese manga (book-sized comic) depicting the horrible blood-and-slaughter-filled life of an artist who paints pictures of carnage with his own blood and who believes that his mother conceived him as a result of her exposure to the Hiroshima bomb. He is bent on achieving his masterpiece by causing the detonation of all the world's nuclear weapons.

Lem, Stanislaw. *Fiasco*. Trans. Michael Kandel. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987. Originally appeared in Polish as *Fiasko*, 1986. An interstellar expedition from Earth destroys the civilization it is trying to contact. A brilliant satire dealing heavily with SDI and deterrence theory, reminiscent of his classic *Solaris*.

McGowen, Tom. *The Magician's Apprentice.* New York: Lodestar, 1987. First volume of a series for young readers. Hundreds of years after "the Fire from the Sky" caused the 100-day-long "Winter of Death," a neomedieval culture considers pre-holocaust science to have been magic. A young boy becomes the apprentice of a "magician" who practices simple herbal healing and fortunetelling. Together they discover some examples of ancient "magical" technology: a telescope, a compass, etc. In the second volume, *The Magician's Company* (1988), it transpires that one of the ancient artifacts they have discovered is a device designed to hand on the knowledge accumulated by the pre-holocaust world. Meanwhile, humanity is threatened by a horde of intelligent mutant rats bent on world supremacy. In the final volume, *The Magician's Challenge* (1989), the magician helps lead a war to exterminate the rat-mutants, using the newly reinvented Molotov cocktail; but a peaceful strain of the mutants unexpectedly emerges and leads the rest of its race to live a peaceful, separate existence in the wasteland. At the end of the novel humans are bent on recovering the old science.

McLaughlin, John. *Toolmaker Koan.* New York: Baen, 1988. Intelligent dinosaur-descended beings from Earth's distant past destroyed their civilization in a prehistoric war. An intelligent machine brings some of them to our time to stop humans from plunging over the brink of a holocaust. The theory is propounded that all intelligent races tend to destroy themselves. The novel is set thirteen years after the "One-Day War," an abortive thermonuclear conflict which divied the world into East-West spheres. Another war using smuggled weapons breaks out. EMP is dealt with and the prospect of nuclear winter is described in very detailed form. The two races finally merge to transcend their doom. Cf. Gregory Benford, Across the Sea of Suns.

McMahon, Thomas. *Principles of American Nuclear Chemistry: A Novel.* Boston: Little, Brown, 1970. A well-

writ ten account of the recollections of the son of a fictional nuclear physicist who worked on the atomic bomb project, first at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and later at Los Alamos. Focusses mostly on his fascination with his father's mistress and on details of his own teenaged sexual initiation. Although the science is well presented by the scientist-author, the novel has little to do with the actual bomb-building project.

Monteleone, Thomas F. and John DeChancie. *Crooked House.* New York: Tor, 1987. A ghost story in which a young architect is lured to work on a bizarre mansion haunted by the victims of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings

Nakazawa Keiji. *Barefoot Gen: Life After the Bomb.* Third volume of the graphic novel *Barefoot Gen.* Originally serialised as *Hadashi No Gen* in *Shukan Shonen Jampu,* 1972-1973. Translated from Japanese by Dadakai and Project Gen. Philadelphia and Santa Cruz, Calif.: New Society Publishers, 1989. More sufferings of the bomb victims, persecuted and exploited by those they seek refuge with.

Olan, Susan Torian. *The Earth Remembers.* Lake Geneva, Wis.: TSR, 1989. A postholocaust Western featuring prehistoric nuclear weapons.

Pausewang, Gudrun. *The Last Children of Schevenborn.* Trans. from the German by Norman Watt. (Orig. Ravensburg: Otto Maier Verlag, 1983 as *Die Letzten Kinder von Schewenborn.*) Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1988. Reprinted as *The Last Children.* London: Julia MacRae, 1989. Though seemingly aimed at young readers, this is the most harrowing, detailed, and scientifically accurate fictional picture of nuclear war ever written. Tells of a German family's sufferings after a nuclear holocaust. Highly recommended.

Phillips, Tony. *Turbo Cowboys.* New York: Ballantine, 1988-1989. A new series of postholocaust adventure stories for young readers, loosely imitating *The Road Warrior.* Ten volumes published so far.

Poyer, D. C. *Stepfather Bank.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987. Struggle against a world-ruling computer set after the multilateral "Last War," which resulted inthe nuclear winter called the "Big Overcast." China attacked the USSR, and Taiwan, the Soviet Union and the U.S. all attacked Japan. Soviet undersea missile bases are still radioactive. The plot to free humanity and prevent the sun from going nova slights the effects of the long-distant war.

Weldon, Fay. *The Cloning of Joanna May.* New York: Viking, 1990. The Chernobyl disaster lurks in the background of this novel.

Wren, M. K. *A Gift Upon the Shore.* New York: Ballantine, 1990. Two women struggle to keep knowledge alive in Oregon in the wake of a general collapse climaxed by a nuclear war ("the End") and an ensuing nuclear winter and plague. Electromagnetic pulse effects destroy electronics, and damage to the ozone layer leads to widespread blindness in both humans and animals. After a period during which roving bandits pose the main threat, the greatest obstacle to the survival of civilization is the flourishing of bigoted Christian fundamentalism among the few survivors left. More sensitive and intelligent than most such stories. A list of the books chosen by the main characters to perpetuate human culture is printed on the inside of the dust jacket.

Paul Brians
Washington State University

News Notes from *Locus:*

According to Edward Bryant, Richard Austin, author of the postholocaust *Guardians* series is a pseudonym for Victor Milan, the author of the highly-regarded postholocaust computer novel, *Cybernetic Samurai.* A sequel is just out, entitled *The Cybernetic Shogun.*

Robert Adams, creator of the *Horseclans* series of postholocaust combat novels which began in 1975, died January 4, 1990. His widow is negotiating a deal to have the series continued by other writers.

Elisabeth Vonarburg's *The Silent City,* published by the small Canadian Press Porcépic, will have a new edition soon from American Bantam.

The April issue of Is*aac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine* contains an excerpt from a forthcoming Joe Haldeman novel which connects Ernest Hemingway and nuclear war.

Volume 8 of Jerry Pournelle's series *There Will Be War* was entitled *Armageddon*. Volume 9 is entitled—what else?—*After Armageddon.*

New from Bloomsbury Press in Great Britain, something called *Armageddon: The Musical,* by Robert Rankin, contents unknown.

Greg Bear's E*on* and *Eternity* have been translated and published in the "Ailleurs et demain" series of Robert Laffont in France.

James Blish's *Black Easter* and *The Day After Judgment* have been reprinted together by Baen Books as *The Devil's Day.*

Papers Read at Recent Conferences

Martha Bartter. "Slave Narrative Structure in Octavia Butler's Xenogenesis Trilogy." The International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts, Fort Lauderdale, March 21.

Paul Brians. "Nuclear Chic: Images from the Beginning and End of the Atomic Age." The International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts, Fort Lauderdale, March 22.

William J. Scheick. "Post-Nuclear Holocaust Re-Minding." The Fantastic Imagination in New Critical Theories, Texas A&M, March 1.

Work in Progress

As many of you have been informed by mail, two volumes of criticism of interest to ISSNTC members are currently being worked on. The first, *Critical Studies of Nuclear War Literature,* is being edited by Nancy Anisfield. For more information, write her at RR1, Box 1240A, Shelburne, VT 05482.

The second, a volume being edited by Bruce Henderson, entitled *Social Issues in the English Classroom,* will include a section on nuclear issues. Henderson may be reached at the Department of English, University of California–Irvine, Irvine, CA 92717.

The deadline for submitting MSS. to both volumes is past, but readers may wish to find out more about these books. Both editors are members of ISSNTC and used the Directory to solicit contributions.

Correction

Ion Hobana writes from Romania to correct the introductory note to his article in issue no. 3: "Concerning the complimentary introduction, I must specify that I'm not a 'past president of World SF,' but the present Coordinator of the European Science Fiction Society (until 1993)."

Comments from the Editor

I keep wondering when the production of nuclear related material in popular culture will begin to decline. With the striking dimishment of the threat of war between the U.S. and U.S.S.R., one would expect to find a rather drastic change. No one seems to be able to pay attention even to the momentous START talks.

Yet postholocaust novels, both serious and frivolous, continue to pour out. T-shirts with nuclear war themes are increasingly widespread, as are postholocaust comics. It might be argued that this is the product of simple inertia: the producers of pop culture have not reacted swiftly enough to the outbreak of peace. Yet some authors of political thrillershave been incorporating *glasnost* and *perestroika* into post-Cold War scenarios for some time.

Part of the explanation may lie in the fact that precisely *because* people no longer feel immediately threatened by the Bomb, they feel free to play with the concept with impunity. But it may also be true that nuclear war is simply too attractive, too convenient a plot device to create an exciting background for authors to be willing to give it up.

As one index of continuing public interest, I was informed just before this issue went to press that my *Nuclear Chic* slide lecture has been accepted by the Washington State Commission on the Humanities as part of their "Inquiring Mind" series. I will be sent around the state next year to lecture to various public groups on nuclear war imagery. **Paul Brians**

Hiroshima/Nagasaki Bibliography

Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and the Bomb: A Bibliography of Literatue and the Arts by James R. Bennett and Karen Clark, is now available from ISSNTC. Containing almost 200 entries, it is divided into sections entitled "Bibliographies," "History," "Language, Rhetoric, Criticism," "Personal Narratives, Eyewitness Accounts," "Imaginative Literature (Fiction, Plays, Poetry)," "Audio-Visual (Films and Film Strips, Audio, Paintings, Drawings, and Photographs)," "Pedagogy and Anthologies."

To order a copy, send a check for $2.00 made out to ISSNTC, to Paul Brians, Department of English, Washington State University, Pullman, WA 99164-5020.

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William J. Scheick, Treasurer ISSNTC, Department of English, Parlin Hall 108, University of Texas, Austin, TX 78712-1164

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Submissions to *NT&C* are invited in all areas of linguistic and literary research and pedagogy relating to nuclear issues.

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