

ABSTRACT

~~Reading Lu Xun through Carl Jung is a structural analysis of the short stories of Lu Xun, a founder of modern Chinese literature living in the early twentieth century. The study details correspondences between dynamic interactions among characters in Lu Xun's short stories and structural components of C. G. Jung's model of the psyche. Brown locates recurring intra- and interpsychic patterns in the stories, revealing the collective psyche of the Chinese people as Lu Xun's psychoanalytic subject.~~

KEY WORDS

~~Carolyn T. Brown, Carl Jung, Jungian psychoanalysis, Lu Xun, modern Chinese literature, psychoanalysis, structural analysis~~

Nuclear New Mexico

JOEL WEISHAUS

Review of: Joseph Masco, *The Nuclear Borderlands: The Manhattan Project in Post-Cold War New Mexico*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

In her introduction to Kyoko Hayashi's *From Trinity to Trinity*, the book's translator, Eiko Otake, wrote, "Every *hibakusha* [victim of the American atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki] knows their survival carries within it the wailing and silence of the dead" (2010, xi). This was written when Kyokoi Hayashi, a distinguished Japanese writer, was eighty-three years old. One of the few survivors of an atomic bomb, Hayashi had been a junior high-school student when, on August 9, 1945, an atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, killing 70,000 people, almost a quarter of Nagasaki's population, within minutes, adding to the nearly 150,000 instantly killed four days earlier in Hiroshima. Another 250,000 people would

suffer, and many slowly die, from the radiation their bodies absorbed on those two fateful days.

There has since been a plethora of books written on the atomic bomb and its continuing evolution into even more powerful nuclear weapons. What makes *The Nuclear Borderlands* different is that its author, a professor of anthropology and the social sciences at the University of Chicago, asks, "What kind of cultural work is performed in the act of making something 'unthinkable'?" (Masco 2006, 2). Thus, "sublime." The *sublime* literally means the *lintel*, the limit of a door (Clark 2000). But doors are meant to open, and this door opens to what? Using the Kantian model, Masco writes that "As a sensory experience, the profundity of the sublime is inexpressible, placing it outside of language" (56) and within a "traumatized psyche" with "a false sense of intellectual control" (57). This door opens outward to the ineffable depths of the sublime and inward to the trauma of the ego's resistance to its limitations.

The cultural work Joseph Masco addresses is not only political, but also concerns the psychology of scientists engaged in nuclear research and development, particularly at the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) in northern New Mexico. "By historicizing expressions of the nuclear sublime with the Los Alamos weapons science community," Masco continues, "we can see how the shifting experimental regimes open to weapons research since 1945 have worked to strip the exploding bomb of its visceral threat to the body of the scientist" (2006, 57). Thus, "weapon scientists" experience their laboratory work as "simply an aesthetic-intellectual form" (57)—that is, detached from the reality of its threat and terror to people living outside the laboratory's antiseptic scheme.

I take the first section of *Nuclear Borderlands*, entitled “The Enlightened Earth,” as a pun on the so-called European Enlightenment era of the eighteenth century—during which time modern science began its social ascendancy—and the blinding flash of a nuclear explosion, in which science revealed the depth of its demonic shadow. The book is then divided into two parts: “Everyday Life in the Plutonium Economy” and “National Insecurities,” a topic Masco continues to explore.

Presently, with nuclear weapons that can be delivered around the world within minutes, and with nine countries (US, UK, Russia, France, Israel, India, Pakistan, China, and North Korea) possessing a nuclear arsenal, talk of disarmament has, at least for the present, left the stage. Instead, under the guise of “national security,” billions of dollars are being allocated in the United States and Russia to “modernize” nuclear weapons, making them more adaptable to battlefield deployment. Masco calls the “phantasmagoria” of national security “a spectral fascination that distracts attention from the ongoing daily machinations of the U.S. nuclear complex” (2006, 4).

In February 2018, the United States Department of Defense released its latest Nuclear Posture Review:

America confronts an international security situation that is more complex and demanding than any since the end of the Cold War. In this environment, it is not possible to delay modernization of our nuclear forces if we are to preserve a credible nuclear deterrent—ensuring that our diplomats continue to speak from a position of strength on matters of war and peace.

Some thirty years after the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union ended, the aptly named MAD policy, for Mutually

Assured Destruction, still prevails. This “phantasmagoria” assumes that these weapons of planetary destruction will always be under the control of sane politicians and generals.

The current legal definition of sanity hinges on whether a person can bear legal responsibility for his or her actions (*compos mentis*). To their credit, psychologists agree on no definition, because sanity is the product of an extremely complex and tricky human mind. What we can say is that even considering the feasibility of a nuclear war borders on psychosis. Jill Lepore, a professor of American history at Harvard, put it this way: “Nuclear-weapons policy is a body of speculation that relies on fearful acts of faith. Doctrinally, it has something in common with a belief in Hell” (2017, 22).

As a scholar of post-Cold War security culture, Masco arrived in New Mexico in 1993 and began documenting the history of the Los Alamos National Laboratory. However, trained as an anthropologist, his primarily interest soon turned to the significance of this particular place and its inhabitants, namely, the Pueblo Indians of the northern Rio Grande Valley, where the first nuclear devices were conceived and weaponized.

While the first one hundred pages lay out the bomb’s scientific, political, and tactical histories, along with their philosophical implications, in considerable detail, it is with a chapter titled “Econationalisms: First Nations in the Plutonium Economy” that Masco begins to explore what he calls “a new moment in the colonial history of the Southwest,” and the deep cultural roots of “northeastern Pueblo perspectives on the Manhattan Project, forwarding the realization that Los Alamos occupied a space richly animated within preexisting universes, intimate worlds now tied not only to modernist

powers of self-reinvention but also energized by cyclic relations with nature” (2006, 101).

One of Dr. Masco’s continuing areas of research is governmental secrecy. “The untold story,” he writes, “of the Manhattan Project involves [a] collision between regimes of knowledge, concepts of nature, definitions of security, and secrecy societies of the Pajarito Plateau” (2006, 102).

Los Alamos is located sixty miles southwest of the Taos Pueblo, where C. G. Jung visited in 1926.

Never before had I run into such an atmosphere of secrecy; the religions of civilized nations today are all accessible; their sacraments have long ago ceased to be mysteries. Here, however, the air was filled with a secret known to all the communicants, but to which whites could gain no access. (Jung 1965, 249)

The US nuclear infrastructure is also hidden, even if in plain sight, where, ironically, “*the boundary between what is secret and what is not secret is also secret*” (Masco 2006, 225). There is even a “Traveler’s Guide to Nuclear Weapons,” whose web page advertises a book that illustrates 160 important homes, offices, laboratories, factories, mills, and bomb detonation sites in the United States. Scaled maps, photos, tour schedules, and site telephone numbers provide atomic tourists with all they need to visit these historic locations . . . often located just down the street or across town (see <http://atomictraveler.com>).

Living in the midst of Los Alamos, where weapons “brighter than a thousand suns” were born and continue to be created, if not worshipped by their creators, where “power, place, and identity are thus woven together in these [two] traditions to promote a specific ecosocial order” (Jung 1958, 105), it seems ironic that the Pueblo Indians, as

Jung wrote, worship the sun. “As I sat with Ochwiay Biano on the roof, the blazing sun rising higher and higher, he said, pointing to the sun, ‘Is not he who moves there our father? How can anyone say differently? How can there be another god? Nothing can be without the sun’” (Jung 1965, 250).

Jungian analyst Wolfgang Giegerich may have been replying to the Pueblo Elder who spoke to Jung, when he wrote “Are you suffering from a loss of meaning? Searching for a spiritual dimension? Wanting to reconnect to the imagination? Longing for a God, a fate, an unprogrammed future? . . . Go to *our* reality, try the *real* thing: try the nuclear bomb” (1987, 108). Indeed, the epicenter of the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki was close enough to St. Mary’s Cathedral (known as the Urakami Cathedral because of its location) to totally destroy what was the oldest Catholic Church in East Asia.

At a time when the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* has moved its Doomsday Clock up to two minutes to midnight, to “the literal ‘end,’ the real Armageddon. Finished and done for” (Miller 1987), *The Nuclear Borderland’s* tightly written 425 pages of assessable scholarship should be, I suggest, required reading for anyone interested in acquiring an erudite perspective on what is, along with climate change, the greatest threat to the future of human existence.

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JOEL WEISHAUS is a poet, literary critic, and visual artist. He is presently the artist-in-residence at Pacifica Graduate Institute, Carpinteria, California, where he delivers lectures and counsels students on creativity and scholarship in the arts. His latest book, co-authored with Susan Rowland, *Jungian Art-Based Research: Joel Weislaus' Nuclear Enchantment of New Mexico*, will be published by Routledge in 2020. Correspondence: joelweislaus@gmail.com.

ABSTRACT

In 1926, C. G. Jung visited Taos Pueblo in northern New Mexico, whose chief said, "How can there be another god? Nothing can be without the sun." Nineteen years later and some sixty miles away, on land appropriated by the US government from the Ildefonso Pueblo, the Los Alamos National Laboratory was built. Here the first atomic bombs were designed and constructed. Then, in the summer of 1945, the first nuclear device was tested in the desert of southern New Mexico, lighting "a thousand suns." In *The Nuclear Borderlands: The Manhattan Project in Post-Cold War New Mexico*, Joseph Masco, an anthropologist at the University of Chicago, offers a unique ethnographic analysis of the people and land that was appropriated for the birthplace and continued research and development of nuclear weapons that have prompted, along with global warming, the so-called Doomsday Clock to be set at two minutes to oblivion.

KEY WORDS

C. G. Jung, Los Alamos National Laboratory, New Mexico, nuclear weapons, Pueblo Indians

Reflections in the Digital Mirror

STEVE ZEMMELMAN

Review of: Erel Shalit (with contributions by Nancy Swift Furlotti), *The Human Soul (Lost) in Transition at the Dawn of a New Era*, Asheville, NC: Chiron Publications, 2018.

Will Aquarius the water-carrier be a sorcerer who creates illusory images behind which hide loneliness, meaninglessness, and nothingness, and sometimes evil deception? Or will we be able to hold the nothing, the no-thing, having the wisdom to realize our decisive role in shaping the universe of the future and the enormous responsibility it puts on our shoulders?

Erel Shalit, *The Human Soul (Lost) in Transition at the Dawn of a New Era* (2018, 215)

Like the Old Testament prophets, Erel Shalit, in his final volume, speaks from the depths in a voice filled with passion and concern. Confronting the reader with timeless truths, he warns of the dangers of worshipping the false gods of the digital age under the thrall of a shadowless utopia created by human ingenuity. Shalit clearly identifies the perils of belief in a limitless computerized world that sacrifices a living relationship to the deeper archetypal sources of the Self, of the loss of meaning and psychic wholeness on the altar of hubris. His words resound like a modern-day Isaiah admonishing those who ignored the ethical and religious imperative to live in relation to the Divine. However, unlike the emotional urgency and single-mindedness of the prophetic messenger,