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NUCLEAR ANNIHILATION AND CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN POETRY: WAYS OF NOTHINGNESS (HARDBACK)



University Press of Florida, United States, 1996. Hardback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. A substantial contribution on three fronts: it identifies and associates for the first time a large number of poems pertinent to nuclear criticism; it advances our understanding of the subject of nuclearity in our time; and it provides surprising insights into the verse it considers. It is also an act of social conscience, not an apparent feature in most scholarly works. --William J. Scheick, J. R. Millikan Centennial Professor of English and American Literature, University of Texas at Austin The eve of the second millennium falls 50 years after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Looking across the spectrum of American poetry since 1945, John Gery explores the role that poets have begun to play in the nuclear age. While their diverse voices join in protesting against the end of the world, poetry also embodies what Gery calls the way of nothingness in contemporary experience, an individual sense of human continuity paradoxically coupled with a global sense of impending annihilation. The first full-length study of nuclear theory and American poetry, this book examines four distinct poetic approaches to nuclear culture--protest poetry, apocalyptic lyric poetry, psychohistorical poetry, and the poetry of uncertainty. Each is developed through a discussion of representative poems from a range of poets, including an extended study of works by Denise Levertov, Richard Wilbur, James Merrill, and John Ashbery. As a chorus of voices, Gery contends, these poets articulate both resistance to annihilation and an acceptance of the nuclear present. What recommends this poetry, he argues, is not its oppositional posture as much as its unique imaginative ability to connect the material threat and symbolic presence of nuclearism with the deepest confines of the human spirit. He concludes...



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