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British Art in the Nuclear Age ed. by Catherine Jolivet (review)

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rapidly raising the South Korean government's interest in biomedicine within a short period. Chapter 6 discusses aesthetic and plastic surgery, which is the most refreshing and yet somewhat alien topic in the volume. Tracing the origins of this type of surgery to reconstructive surgery performed immediately after the Korean War (1950–53), the author shows that the recent boom in such procedures in the nation in fact has a long history.

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The book is divided into two parts, with the first three cases grouped under "From Occupation to Nation" and the latter three cases grouped under "Meet the State." However, the function of the nation or the state is not very clear or consistent in the individual discussions. Instead, the roles of medical specialists relevant to each topic are highlighted, which nevertheless can serve as yet another forte of this book. In addition, the author claims that the state had granted privileges and power to elite groups of medical professionals to supersede the government's insufficient investments in health care, and that this had eventually resulted in the privatization of biomedicine in South Korea. Although this is not the central message the author intended to convey, it would be an interesting and useful guide for succeeding studies.

This work has both strengths and weaknesses generally shared by case studies. While each topic provides interesting information and insightful analysis, supplemented by figures and anecdotes, it is somewhat doubtful whether each individual case effectively integrates itself into the larger picture of which it is a part, and whether the cases coalesce with a consistent perspective. Meanwhile, recurring errors in the romanization of Korean proper names are distracting. The book well reflects the writer's broad interests, but leaves the reader wanting more, as the degree of completeness falls shy of the author's enthusiasm. Nevertheless, it has considerable value as a stepping-stone for future studies, for it presents, even if only partly, important issues and topics in the history of contemporary medicine in South Korea beyond the six topics addressed in the chapters.

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British Art in the Nuclear Age.

Edited by Catherine Jolivet. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014.

Pp. xvii+275. \$119.95/£70/C\$85.

Cultural responses in Britain to the onset of the nuclear age have remained relatively underexplored by scholars, especially in the light of such a rich range of literature on American counterparts. In Catherine Jolivet's carefully selected group of essays dealing with the visual culture of nuclear warfare and atomic science in Britain from the early 1940s to the 1970s, *British*

Art in the Nuclear Age seeks to redress this imbalance. The nine chapters cover much more than the fine arts alone; even though painting and sculpture form the book's main focus, there are significant chapters on the role of the *Picture Post* in disseminating visual images of the atomic attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Festival of Britain, and the work of leading public intellectuals such as Jacob Bronowski. As Jolivette states in her introduction, visual responses to nuclear culture were about making visible the intangible nature of the subject (p. 14): whether the tiny scale of atoms, the unimaginable scale of nuclear destruction, or the invisibility of the latter's deadly legacy, radiation.

Each of the chapters presents a detailed investigation of significant aspects of the relationship between the visual and the nuclear in Britain in the postwar period. Carol Jacobi grounds the book in the early part of this period with her focus on British art in the lead-up to the seminal *This Is Tomorrow* exhibition in 1956. Discussing works by Eduardo Paolozzi, Diego Giacometti, Nigel Henderson, Isabel Rawsthorne, and Francis Bacon, the author demonstrates how artists' responses in the immediate aftermath of the atomic bombings in 1945 were dominated by a *lack* of visual references (as most images of the attacks were suppressed). Robert Burstow enlarges on this in his chapter on sculpture produced in the same period and beyond (including works by Reg Butler, Naum Gabo, Bernard Meadows, Henry Moore, and Peter (Lazslo) Peri), exploring how the term "geometry of fear"—coined by art critic Herbert Read (p. 70)—relates to these works but also how it might obscure more complex readings of them.

Christoph Laucht provides an important context for such responses—photojournalism in the *Picture Post*—demonstrating how this British newspaper impacted on popular imagery of both real and imagined nuclear warfare. Jolivette's own chapter explores the more optimistic visualizations of atomic science at the 1951 Festival of Britain—in its buildings, sculptures, and murals—and suggests "a more complex range of uncertainties and aspirations" in these works than has previously been acknowledged (p. 121). Painting—particularly landscapes—come under scrutiny in Fiona Gaskin's chapter, demonstrating how neoromantic works by Graham Sutherland, Peter Lanyon, and Alan Reynolds were "metaphors of the danger posed by the nuclear threat" (p. 144), while the work of John Bratby forms the focus of Gregory Salter's chapter on more personal responses to the threat of nuclear warfare. Prunella Clough's enigmatic "urbscapes" are analyzed in Catherine Spencer's chapter, which shows how the artist's abstract works referenced contemporary landscapes of nuclear research and militarization. Kate Aspinall sheds light on another aspect of visual culture in the nuclear age—the role of the intellectual (in this case Bronowski) in informing public opinions of nuclear science.

Together the nine chapters present a rich array of insights into the complex range of responses to nuclear war and science that preoccupied

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British culture in the quarter-century after 1945. Yet there are some problems with the book. First, the chapters are excellent stand-alone contributions but are not tied closely together (despite the introduction's attempt to do this). Second, there is a sense in which the American contexts (already widely covered in sources such as Paul Boyer's 1985 *By the Bomb's Early Light*) were excluded for the sake of breaking new ground, but at the expense of some much needed transcultural analysis. Finally, although the book gives due attention to visual culture, it is still dominated by the fine arts (particularly painting) and it could have gone much further in bringing out the wider contexts in which the fine arts circulated and the ways in which they were informed by those contexts (notably absent are references to nuclear imagery in cinema). These caveats notwithstanding, this book is a welcome first step toward a wider exploration of the relationship between the creative imagination and nuclear culture.

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The Politics of Invisibility: Public Knowledge about Radiation Health Effects after Chernobyl.

By Olga Kuchinskaya. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014.
Pp. 264. \$28/ebook \$20.

Olga Kuchinskaya concisely explains the policy developments surrounding the Chernobyl site and the conflicting priorities between local, national, and international power players. She focuses attention on Belarus, at the time of the disaster a Soviet republic, and the governmental responses over time to the threat of contamination emanating from Chernobyl. Kuchinskaya uses the changing concerns over radiation to explore how the long-term health consequences of one of the world's worst nuclear catastrophes evolved into an invisible subject downplayed by international and national experts. Her analytical model applies not only to Chernobyl but might assist researchers in understanding the public discourses found around other disasters, such as Fukushima.

Kuchinskaya starts her examination by describing in her first two chapters the production of invisibility in Belarus and the complacency of local populations. She argues that the limited opportunities in post-Soviet Union Belarus for public debate about the dangers of radiation constricted dialogue and any critiques of governmental policies. Consequently, Kuchinskaya claims that affected populations lacked substantial understanding of the risks posed by radiation. In her second chapter, she uses interviews from residents living in contaminated areas to demonstrate contrasting levels of awareness and concern for radiation exposure. Her