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Introduction by Thomas Maddux

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Introduction by Thomas Maddux, California State University, Northridge

Heonik Kwon's *The Other Cold War* may be brief at 157 pages but Kwon's major assessments of the nature of the Cold War and the differences between the Cold War in Europe and the Cold War outside of Europe are impressive. In making use of an extensive literature from a range of disciplines extending beyond history and cultural anthropology, Kwon critically examines a variety of perspectives as he comparatively evaluates the bipolar, geopolitical struggle between the U.S. and the Soviet Union in Europe in the context of the global Cold War outside of Europe and its interaction with decolonization after World War II and advocacy of competing economic and cultural modernization campaigns. Kwon's training as an ethnographer and previous books that focus on the war dead in Vietnam and how the impact of their loss on the family and local community are evident throughout the book. Remembrance and commemoration shape his insistence that a bottoms-up approach on the Cold War be integrated with the more familiar state-oriented policy studies to shape a new understanding of the global Cold War.¹

The reviewers view Kwon's study as an innovative overview of the nature of the Cold War in Europe and beyond. As Marilyn Young emphasizes, Kwon attacks the "construct of a unitary global cold war ...because it creates a false impression of a single or predominant cold war experience." In Europe, Kwon views the Cold War as having many forms of conflict and competition but as an "imaginary war" without deadly consequences. The memories of World War II and the destructive potential of nuclear weapons helped insure that armed conflict would not erupt during the most direct Soviet-American confrontations over Berlin in 1948 and 1962. The Cold War conflict in Europe existed in every other area from economic and cultural competition to espionage and Olympic Games battles over which side won the most gold medals and overall medal totals. The most dangerous potential armed confrontation came in the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962, significantly outside of Europe, and seemed to impress both Soviet and American leaders with the importance of avoiding crisis situations that risked bringing nuclear weapons into the contested issues.

Kwon's "other Cold War" outside of Europe has real wars, deadly violence and destruction of communities at the grass roots level. Young, Nick Cullather and Mark Bradley note the strengths of Kwon's emphasis on the differences in the Cold War and its impact as it moved away from Europe and became, as Cullather emphasizes, a "contest of social orders, a struggle to define the method and meaning of progress" as people struggled to gain independence from colonization, to deal with competing revolutions, economic transformations, and racial and ethnic conflicts. In developing the Cold War beyond Europe, Kwon focuses on Asia, the wars in Korea and Vietnam and anti-communist violence

¹ Heonik Kwon, *Ghosts of War in Vietnam* (Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press, 2008) and *After the Massacre: Commemoration and Consolidation in Ha My and My Lai* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006).

in Indonesia in 1965 but also sprinkles his analysis with references to the Middle East, South Africa and other areas of Cold War impact.

To demonstrate the “other Cold War” and how to address the end of the conflict, as Bradley favorably notes, Kwon proposes that the end be one of decomposition in Europe and elsewhere. In a discussion on “postsocialist” studies, Kwon objects to the static nature of viewing the end of the Cold War as fixed in 1989. Instead, Kwon insists on change taking place in both the East and the West, from the dramatic destruction of the Berlin Wall in 1989 to the more gradual decomposition of Cold War institutions and attitudes on both sides of the former divide. (53-54) Bradley also endorses Kwon’s effort to break with looking at the “sides” of the Cold War versus joining peripheral and geopolitical histories which Kwon explores in a discussion of the use of the color “Red” as a form of political and ideological classification in the U.S. and South Africa but also, as Bradley points out, that “crossed Cold War and colonial divides and operated between the spaces of top-down high policy and bottom-up social history.”

In the second part of the book, Kwon offers two examples of how the end of the Cold War arrived less dramatically at villages that had experienced some of the most destructive armed conflict and political violence generated by states aligned with the Cold War protagonists or caught up in indigenous conflicts that ended up getting linked to the Cold War. As Alexis Dudden notes, Kwon emphasizes the importance of this not only for understanding the different ways in which the Cold War conflict was waged but also to bring a degree of closure and contribute to a more viable political future. In southern Vietnam and the Danang area, Kwon discusses how after 1975 Hanoi inserted the revolutionary state into ancestral ritual and families who had lost sons on both sides of the conflict could not recognize the son who had fought on the losing side. With the revival of ancestor worship and other ritual activities that the state had opposed, families could move to memorialize their losses including a son who had been denied recognition whose photo was now placed on a shrine with his brother’s photo as part of a celebratory dinner. (89-96) In the second example, Kwon examines the impact of violence on the island inhabitants of Jeju island off the southern end of the Korean peninsula. In April the islanders commemorate the 4.3 (April 3) incident which involved a communist led uprising in 1948 and ensuing atrocities by the government and communist partisans. Not until the 1990s were islanders able to engage in death-anniversary rites for their ancestors. (103-112) From Kwon’s perspective both the left and the right in their anticolonial nationalism engaged in violence against the other side and decomposition of this Cold War related strife requires reconciliation and commemoration of the dead. (116-117)

The reviewers do have some reservations on Kwon’s assessments of the literature and the issue of reality versus imaginary on both the European bipolar Cold War and the other Cold War. Cullather, for example, points to Kwon’s implication that the top bipolar Cold War of diplomacy is imaginary and the bottom “other cold war, rooted in specific localities, in family ritual, and in the proximity to mass death is contrastingly cast as real or authentic.” In questioning whether the “bottom is more real than the top,” Cullather points out that leaders at the top worried about a wide range of intimate experiences and intervened to shape them: “diet, procreation, family relations, ties to the land, religion, ancestral villages,

and memory were all seen as targets for intervention.” Cullather suggests that the issue of importance or centrality, Kwon’s local family and memory versus the Cold War “which reached into every valley and hamlet,” has yet to be resolved.²

Participants:

Heonik Kwon teaches anthropology at the London School of Economics and Political Science and is to take up a professorial senior research fellowship of social science at Trinity College, University of Cambridge, in October 2011. He is the author of the prizewinning *After the Massacre in Ha My and My Lai* (2006) and *Ghosts of War in Vietnam* (2008). He directs an international research project, *Beyond the Korean War*, supported by the Academy of Korean Studies, and has a co-authored new book in press, *North Korea: Beyond Charismatic Politics*.

Mark Philip Bradley is Professor of History at the University of Chicago. He is the author of *Imagining Vietnam and America: The Making of Postcolonial Vietnam, 1919-1950* (2000) and *Vietnam at War* (2009); and is presently completing a book that examines the place of the United States in the twentieth century global human rights imagination.

Nick Cullather is Associate Professor of History at Indiana University. His publications include *The Hungry World: America’s Cold War Battle against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010), *Secret History: The CIA’s Classified Account of its Operations in Guatemala, 1952-1954* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2nd Edition, 2006; and *Illusions of Influence: The Political Economy of United States-Philippines Relations, 1942-1960* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994). His current project is an investigation of the early history of the CIA. *The Hungry World* has been awarded the Robert H. Ferrell Prize by SHAFR and the Ellis W. Hawley Prize by the OAH.

Alexis Dudden is professor of history at the University of Connecticut where she also directs the program in humanitarian research. She received her PhD in history from the University of Chicago, and is the author of “Troubled Apologies Among Japan, Korea, and the United States” (Columbia, 2008) and “Japan’s Colonization of Korea: Discourse and Power” (Hawaii, 2005). She is currently working on a book about competing claims to the oceans and their resources in Northeast Asia.

Marilyn B. Young is a professor of history at NYU. Her publications include *Rhetoric of Empire: American China Policy, 1895-1901*; *Transforming Russia and China: Revolutionary Struggle in the 20th century* (with William Rosenberg) and *The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990*. She has edited and co-edited several anthologies, most recently *Iraq and the Lessons of Vietnam: Or how not to learn from history* (with Lloyd Gardner), *Making Sense of the Vietnam Wars* (with Mark Bradley) and *Bombing: A 20th Century History* (with Yuki

² For further development of Cullather’s perspective, see the forthcoming roundtable on Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America’s Cold War Battle Against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010).

Tanaka). She has published essays in a variety of collections on the subject of the American way of making war, the Vietnam war and its aftermath, anti-war resistance movements, post-1945 U.S. foreign policy more generally and the world post-9/11 and is currently working on the subject of counterinsurgency.

Review by Mark Philip Bradley, University of Chicago

As Heonik Kwon argues in his brilliant and timely book, our historical understanding of the Cold War remains impoverished. That this is so a decade or more after the emergence of the “new Cold War international history” may initially strike some readers as something of a surprise. The promise of that new history was that it would fundamentally transform the ways in which we saw the Cold War and its place in the global history of the twentieth century. With unprecedented access to the archives of the “other side” – whether that be the former Soviet Union, the former states of the Soviet empire in Eastern Europe, China or Vietnam – one major aspiration for the project was to encourage scholars to revisit what had largely been a Euro-American source driven narrative of the Cold War to recover the perceptions and policies of the communist superpowers and small state actors. But the new international history of the Cold War was also intended to be more than gap filling. At its most ambitious, many practitioners aimed, as Matthew Connelly nicely put it, to take off the Cold War lens that had driven international histories of the post-1945 period to consider how the geopolitics of cold war, empire and the postcolonial became enmeshed.¹ With Connelly’s own work and Arne Westad’s magisterial *Global Cold War*, among others, those larger aims began to be realized.²

In the interest of full disclosure I should acknowledge that my own work has been a part of those efforts. But whatever my investments in this project, my worries about it have grown in recent years. Despite the salutary new attention toward the communist world, and an increased willingness within the field to consider the once ignored postcolonial as a central presence in twentieth century international history, I sense that my own work and others like it may have helped foster a greater appreciation of the global complexities of the past century but have fallen short of realizing the transformative narratives we had confidently promised. And yet I have found it difficult to articulate this deeply felt unease.

Kwon’s book helps me better understand these discomforts, ones I believe many of us in the field share, by persuasively suggesting the removal of the Cold War lens in our work has only been partial, leaving the multiplicity of the lived experiences of the Cold War just out of view. While *The Other Cold War* is informed by acute and expansive theoretical readings across a variety of disciplines, Kwon’s perspective is powerfully shaped by the interpretative struggles he encountered in undertaking ethnographic research on war memory in Vietnam that formed the basis of his two previous and important books, *After the Massacre* and *Ghosts of War in Vietnam*. He writes,

¹ Matthew Connelly, “Taking Off the Cold War Lens: Visions of North-South Conflict during the Algerian War for Independence,” *American Historical Review* 105.3 (June 2000): 739-69.

² Matthew Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria’s Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); and Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

I began reading about cold war history when, while trying to write about a village in central Vietnam, I realized that I could not write the village history without contextualizing it in global history. My historical research led me to learn about North Africa as well as about French colonialism in Indochina after I heard the villagers tell of...their memories of colonial conscripts from Algeria and Morocco. My research also came to involve not only U.S. foreign policy but also a political history of South Korea as I learned that the village had lost many lives to the Vietnam War pacification activity by America's close East Asian ally....The village history project also led me to learn about World War II in Europe after some elderly villagers told me about their experiences there.

As Kwon concludes, the "village's modern history implicated a world history, and the transition from the colonial to the bipolar order was central to the village's global historical experience." (134) Far from being a singular experience, he argues, these entanglements along with the mass death produced by the Cold War and its lingering and problematic aftermaths in the present moment are an inescapable global presence, though one largely ignored by both Cold War and postcolonial scholars.

The stakes of their recovery, he suggests, are very high and the interpretative impulse to go there requires scholars to more carefully ask which, and whose, Cold War. How do we reconcile the extraordinary violence in villages and cities throughout the global South with the prevailing Western perception of the Cold War as a long peace? Kwon reminds us in the Euro-American world that the Cold War was largely seen to operate in a geopolitical frame as an imaginary space, and that much of the Cold War has been studied through this optic. What goes missing in this still dominant perspective is an account that unpacks the Cold War's on-the-ground violence in much of the global South where contests of power and relations of domination collided to create new historical realities. Critically, Kwon seeks to move beyond simply taking into account the views of peripheral and decolonizing state actors, an interpretative position he argues that has sometimes rendered their agency in "unrealistically homogenous" ways, toward a multifocal perspective that comes at the intertwined problems of bipolarizing and decolonizing societies "from inside out as well as from outside and from above as well as from below." (89)

That many of us in the field initially articulated the Cold War's new history in terms of "sides," albeit concerned about the novelty of examining some of them, may in fact have obscured as much as it revealed. Kwon's chapter on the color line is especially illuminating in this regard, in part for what it suggests about the necessity of joining "peripheral" and "geopolitical" histories. Here he starts with W.E.B. DuBois' famous statement about the "problem of the color line" as the central problem of the twentieth century. Yet as Kwon revealingly shows, the problem "turned about to be as much about the color of human belief and thought as the physical color of the human body." (38) If whiteness was often determinative for individual identities and social hierarchies in the past century so too he suggests was being labeled "Red" or "not Red," categories constructed and employed through a mix of political, biological and racial idioms. Importantly, he argues, they were ones that crossed cold war and colonial divides and operated between the spaces of top-

down high policy and bottom-up social history. The phrase “red seed and seed plants” (*hat giang do*) in South Vietnam, he notes, put the political project of uprooting communism from society in both the individualist register (plants) and their genealogical or familial origins (seeds). If the usages of this ideologically charged vocabulary differed across state and societies, Kwon argues the idiom of redness –along with its interconnections with race and its power to often violently remake social and political worlds– was present in such disparate Cold War locales as South Korea, Bali, South Africa, Austria, France and the United States.

His rich and suggestive book is in many ways focused on a more capacious reading of the end of the Cold War –and indeed it queries whether in fact there has been an “end”– and he deftly sketches out the limits and submerged potentialities of post-socialist and postcolonial scholarship to envision an enlarged analytical frame. In doing so Kwon charts a bold and original interpretative course that may finally allow the full promise of the new Cold War history to be realized.

Narratives Are All We Have and All We Will Ever Have

The *Other Cold War* is divided into two principal parts, each innovative in its own way. The first is a historiography of “the emerging field of social and cultural studies of the cold war” filling the introduction and first three chapters as well as the final three (113). The second part is wrapped in the middle, a brief but fine-grained study of the memory and commemoration in Viet Nam and Korea as expressed through kinship rituals. Although diplomatic historians are apt to take the most interest in the historiographical sections and pass over the discussion of funerary rites, this middle section is crucial to Kwon’s critique of history and social science literatures and his aspirations for their reform. Kwon is a social anthropologist. He argues that his fellow ethnographers need to account for the pervasive and manifold forms of cold war influence in everyday life, and historians need to rescale the putatively global narrative of the cold war down to the more intimate level of personal and social experience.

Kwon’s historiography arrives at two overarching claims, each attacking the construct of a unitary global cold war. The abstract notion of “the cold war” is misleading, he claims, firstly because it creates a false impression of a single or predominant cold war experience. Although the standoff in Europe provided a focal point for orthodox narratives, most of those who experienced it did so on other continents. In fact, conflict became more murderous the further from the iron curtain one stood. It was on the fringes, in Greece, Central America, Korea, and Vietnam that the reverberations were experienced most intensely through the intrusion of “tragic mass death” (111) into everyday life, and in these places the narrative of dualistic opposition, of two “sides,” left and right, communist or anti-communist, bore the least correspondence to the choices actually facing combatants or victims. The cold war could more accurately be described, according to Kwon, as an event that was “globally staged but locally diverse.” (32)

Global or national narratives become problematic when they compress experience into a spatial hierarchy (center, periphery) or a political dualism (East, West), Kwon contends, but they are deceptive for a second reason as well: even at a global level the “cold war” was not one conflict but two. On one level it was a geopolitical conflict between two blocs of nations, but on another it was a contest of social orders, a struggle to define the method and meaning of progress. While much of Central Europe endured the first war, the rest of the world experienced it primarily in the second form. Robbed of their past by a century of imperialism, and watching an unstable present crumble around them, the postcolonial countries were forced to choose between two mutually hostile futures, the irreconcilable utopias (borrowing Arne Westad’s formulation) of “liberty” or “justice.”(129)

Each “war” followed its own geography, timeline, and historical imperatives, interweaving in diverse ways with other overlapping processes -- decolonization, social revolution, economic development, migrations, racial and ethnic conflicts. Policymakers, scholars, and combatants spliced these separate contests and their many local strands into a single script

for an “imaginary” cold war. Consequently, the image of a climactic culmination with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 is an illusion. The cold war never really ended; it only “decomposed” as its various narrative threads suddenly or gradually unraveled.

The book’s historiography efficiently and judiciously reviews a large literature that has not been digested in this way before. It is full of deft summaries; capturing in one two-page span George Mosse, Christian Appy, E. P. Thompson, Stephen Whitfield, Cynthia Enloe, and Slavoj Žižek (32-3). Kwon positions SHAFR regulars alongside cultural theory rockstars such as Žižek, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Dipesh Chakrabarty, setting up contrasts flattering to the diplomatic historians. They make the connections between globalist agendas and intimate experience that Kwon is looking for. Christina Klein, for instance, shows how international adoption made childrearing a geopolitical weapon; Walter LaFeber understands the violent reality of the “long peace.” (17) The cultural theorists, by contrast, don’t get it. Their examinations of hybridity and selfhood push out cold war categories without accounting for their unique power. It’s fine for Chakrabarty to provincialize Europe but how does that explain how Asians molded their individual and collective aspirations to fit two European templates of modernity?

This section is littered with stunning insights. At one point, Kwon distills from William A. Williams, Ron Robin, Christopher Shannon, and Peter Mandler evidence of an “epistemological break” with orientalism in the 1940s and suggests that our contemporary understanding of tolerance, cultural diversity, and moral unity stem from the cold war rhetoric of such figures as George C. Marshall and Joseph Stalin. Bipolarity changed “the very concept of culture--from an evolutionary, hierarchical scheme of thought to a relatively egalitarian, pluralistic notion.” (139) Having laid out that tantalizing thesis Kwon closes the chapter, as if leaving it for another writer to pick up.

Kwon turns in the second section to show how a renegotiated cultural history of the cold war would work in practice. Dropping from the abstract heights of paradigms and frameworks, his authorial voice changes as he explains the complex accommodations that marked the “end” of the cold war in remote villages that survived some of the era’s most brutal clashes. In a Vietnamese hamlet, the cold war finally ended for one family when an elderly widow hosted a celebratory dinner and placed photos of her two sons, one who fought for reunification and the other who resisted it, on a refurbished ancestral shrine. The two deceased sons had played equal parts in a strategy of familial survival, and they--the dead--deserved a share in the prosperity of the living. On the Korean island of Jeju, scene of bloody reprisals before and during the Korean War, conflict is not yet over, as descendants of communists and anti-communists still struggle over ways to commemorate their common tragedy. Funerary ritual richly captures the varied faces of cold war politics; Indian burial processions feature papier-mâché atomic bombs. Kwon finds a Balinese rice farmer who wears an army uniform and helmet out to his fields to ward off ghosts of massacred communists. “[T]he cold war was, in fact a ‘death-world’,” Kwon contends, amid which its victims struggled to preserve their authentic life-worlds.(157) This is the other cold war.

Throughout the book, Kwon characterizes narratives of the cold war, especially ones focussed on Europe or high diplomacy, as illusory, misleading, or “imaginary.” (26, 122, 154) The other cold war, rooted in specific localities, in family ritual, and in the proximity to mass death is contrastingly cast as real or authentic. Kinship and family are “elementary constituents of civil society” and “an important site of post cold-war state politics.” (114, 116) Even when the family was used as an instrument of control or oppression it remains for Kwon closer to the core of human experience than national, ideological, or global identities ever could be. When retelling the history of the cold war from the bottom up it may be reasonable to place the family at the bottom, but there are still problems with the claim that the bottom is more real than the top.

As Kwon acknowledges, all varieties of intimate experience, particularly the meaning of the family, the body, and death, were very much in play in the cold war and very much on the minds of those at the top. Diet, procreation, family relations, ties to the land, religion, ancestral villages, and memory were all seen as targets for intervention. “The U.S. must always keep in mind that the *ultimate and decisive target is the people*,” the White House Special Group on Vietnam cautioned in 1962. Moreover the means used to “target” these intimate spaces -- forcible sterilization, land reclamation, destroying and rebuilding villages -- were blunt enough that no target could mistake their intent. Writing in the 1990s, Akhil Gupta discovered that even in the remotest subsistence villages in India, illiterate peasants had recast their language and behavior in the developmental vernacular.¹ Stacey Pigg describes how WHO consultants sent to Nepal to train shamans found that the traditional healers already knew all the concepts, but also came to the training with expectations derived from earlier aid missions.² The relationships were already scripted. Gupta and Pigg conclude that the very notion of authentic, indigenous culture is a fiction, no more “real” than the abstract discussions of nation-building carried on in offices in the Pentagon or Geneva.

This is not to say that that the family or memory are not, as Kwon would have it, “important vectors in understanding the decomposition of the bipolar world” or “elementary constituent[s] of civil society” or “vital aspect[s] of political control,” (116) only that their relative importance in comparison with other vectors, constituents, and aspects has not been gauged. Since the cold war reached into every valley and hamlet, claims for importance and centrality -- which are really claims for narrative authority -- cannot be made on the grounds of authenticity, only on the grounds of, well, something else. Many would readily accept that a unitary global cold war is a conflation, and that the so-called periphery was actually the center of the action. The paradigm of one imaginary war is dead, but will the narrative that replaces it be any less imaginary?

¹ Akhil Gupta, *Postcolonial Developments: Agriculture in the Making of Modern India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998).

² Stacy Leigh Pigg, “‘Found in Most Traditional Societies’: Traditional Medical Practitioners Between Culture and Development,” in *International Development and the Social Sciences*, ed. by Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard (Berkeley: University of California, 1997).

In March 2003, two days before the United States re-opened its never-ending war against Iraq, I hiked down the backside of a mountain in South Korea called Jiri-san. Long a site of Buddhist pilgrimage and contemplation, Jiri-san is also known as one of the main locations of armed South Korean communist guerilla resistance before and during the Korean War. Some partisans held out until 1958, five years after the war's official cease-fire, fighting against South Korean President Syngman Rhee's vision of an American-ordered peninsula.

Jiri-san is a steep mountain, and I arrived at the base of one of its trails into an empty parking lot tired and hungry. It was off-season, and I sat down on the curb to wait for the bus. Out of nowhere appeared a deeply tanned man somewhere in his 70s or 80s wearing the contemporary spin on traditional Korean men's clothes (his in a light pink satin). He immediately started speaking to me in what many Koreans born outside this region consider the nearly incomprehensible, southern Jeolla dialect. On top of this, he had about three teeth. He spoke without pause for ten minutes with enormous energy and excitement, describing how within a very short period of time during the middle of the twentieth century he had fought for the Japanese against the Allies in the South Pacific, returned home and joined others in his village in an anti-Japanese collaborator/pro-communist moment, then fought with the Americans to rid his village of communists, then fought against the Americans when the North Koreans showed up, then fought again for the Americans, and then finally fought again with other villagers against the South Korean forces under American command.

He wondered what was wrong with kids today. They didn't read. He was delighted I was studying history and gave me some candy and waved goodbye, bowing his head politely as I boarded the bus.

It would be difficult to forget his story — true or not — yet I knew I should write it down, and I did, and when I read my notes later during the train ride back to Seoul, his story made the same perfect sense then as it does now: he fought for himself and maybe those he cared about, and he stayed alive. As a result, there he was in March 2003 at the dawn of a new century of perpetual war, living the globally dying category of village elder because he maneuvered through an array of twentieth century "isms" for himself.

Heonik Kwon's most recent book, *The Other Cold War*¹, builds on his earlier excellent work, and in it he argues that histories such as those told by the man I met near Jiri-san are vital to grasping why most macro approaches to the twentieth century so-called Cold Wars in Southeast and Northeast Asia fall short: they fail to consider how the multiple and multiply textured lived local histories make sense of what many of the big histories *still* try to justify

¹ Heonik Kwon, *After the Massacre: Commemoration and Consolation in Ha My and My Lai* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

politically. The importantly challenging new point of Kwon's new book is that we need to know how the big histories have over time come to permeate local histories in *their* retelling and commemoration to understand ways in which transnational power has come to shape everyday life up to the present in small communities in places such as southern Vietnam and South Korea where the Cold War was, in fact, very hot and often remains pretty warm.

Throughout *The Other Cold War* Kwon urges attention on such places as well as similar sites of the Cold War's greatest violence because they remained so conveniently far from and often deftly forgotten in the locii of much of the Cold War's theoretical and practical formulation and legitimization: the cold, hard Euro-American center. Through such outlier histories and especially through the places of their commemoration today sites of lamentation today, Kwon demands fresh thinking about the Cold War, stressing that the era is, thus, better understood in terms of its "decomposition" rather than its "end." He explains: "This book argues that how societies come to terms with the remains of the cold war's mass violence and death is vital for their political futures. In the sense, 'the decomposition of the cold war' has a more literal meaning, which is to relocate the human casualties of the bipolar conflicts (and the actions concerning their decomposing bodies and troubled memories) from the invisible margins to a vital center of the global cold war" (11). He is clear about his hopes for the book: "If we seek a genuine end to the cold war, I would argue that doing so requires us to come to terms with the diverse ways in which the global conflict was waged and is now coming to a closure" (34).

In the book's center, Kwon eloquently elaborates his point through examples from small places heavily interrupted by the global cold war: various villages in southern Vietnam — especially Danang — and the island of Jeju in South Korea. In these locations, he zeroes in on the sites and their rituals of commemoration and collective remembering for future purposes. In case after case in southern Vietnam, for example, Kwon notices how families tell of their internal rupture through a metaphor involving a traditional dessert: a rice flour and black bean cake called *xoi dau*; "when people savor" the treats, according to Kwon, "they need to eat both the white and black part of the pastry" (93). Thus, as Kwon beautifully explains, "Likewise, survival in the village war meant accepting both sides of the dual world" (93). Rather than detailing painful lived histories of brother versus brother according to ideological terms and chronological order, for example, people would explain matters to Kwon in the following way: "One brother joined 'this side' (*ben ta*, the revolutionary side) and another brother (usually the younger one) was dragged to 'that side' (*ben kia*, the American side). The situation was very tragic, and the result often painful: neither of them returned home alive, and even years later the younger one cannot return home even in memory. Yet the situation also had a creative side: the family hoped to have at least one survive the war by having them on different sides of the battlefield; or if the family had the extraordinary luck of seeing them both return home alive, the brother on the winner's side would be able to help the brother on the loser's side rebuild his life" (93).

On Jeju island off the southern end of the Korean peninsula, two years before the Korean War officially began, a horrific massacre of the island's inhabitants by government forces remains so painful in modern memory that at best it is called, "The 4.3 incident" to mark

the tragic date of April 3, 1948. In one of the devastated villages, Kwon makes note of a recently erected historical marker cum collective mass headstone cum threnody: "...The dark clouds of history came to us, whose origin we still do not know after all these years./ Then, many lives, so many lives, were broken and their bodies were discarded to the mountains, the fields and the sea./ Who can identify in this mass of broken lives a death that was not tragic?/ Who can say in this mass of displaced souls that some souls have more grievances than others? What about those who could not even cry for the dead?/...For the past fifty years,/ The dead and the living alike led an unnatural life as wandering souls, without a place to anchor to./Only today,/Being older than our fathers and aged more than our mothers,/We are gathered in this very place./Let the heavens deal with the question of fate./Let history deal with its own portion of culpability" (112).

Through this example and others, Kwon is at once able to observe the critical matter of reweaving kinship ties as well as to flesh out his important thesis that "the cold war was a globally staged but locally diverse regime of ideas and practices" (32) that we must make sense of in order to move forward. Kwon, in fact, devotes much of the book to thinking about this "diverse regime of ideas and practices," both in its/their formation as well as its/their unraveling. To achieve this goal, Kwon wants to premise an anthropological understanding — "cold war history is fundamentally an anthropological problem" (8) — which is fair: Kwon is an anthropologist after all. At the same time, he wants "to think of a way to bring (postcolonial and cold war studies) into a more intimate, constructive dialogue" (123).

To this end, Kwon performs an admirable state of the field study of these studies as well as examination of what some would call the primary sources from which they arise. Overall, Kwon's endeavor is at once extremely useful, yet, to be fair, at times tricky to parse because his strategy occasionally sets him more at odds with those he finds useful epistemologically (if only to launch his own thinking from a node of contention) than with those he finds completely counterproductive: i.e. the Cold War warriors who never even bother to consider the "other cold war." In this vein, Kwon makes clear through his elaboration of Edward Said's work, his own (Kwon's that is) sense that, in his mind, too much has been made of Foucault, and especially Foucauldian discursive theory— Said's use, for example. Yet, and perplexingly, Kwon does not consider Foucault's most intelligent contemporary inheritor, Achille Mbembe [*On the Postcolony* (2001)] or "Necropolitics" (2003)) whose interventions on life, death, sovereignty, and war in various worlds of post-colonial blowback would likely yield fruitful ground for Kwon's discussion.

An immediate response to this observation, however, is that there is already plenty in Kwon's *The Other Cold War* to think about and agree or disagree with. The book is of the same magnitude as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Empire*, yet Kwon's is at once angrier and more textured. For all these reasons it must be read and taken seriously if only to begin to make sense of how and why the cold war's real stories everywhere do not fit neatly anywhere.

Much of Heonik Kwon's work as an anthropologist has been devoted to the subject of how the war dead are remembered and commemorated in Vietnam. In *Ghosts of War* and *Aftermath of a Massacre* Kwon makes clear that Vietnam's American war did not end on April 30, 1975.¹ His exploration is itself a form of commemoration of the dead, a re-creation of the process through which families and villages, divided by the war and blocked for a time by state policy, have begun to bring their ghosts home. *The Other Cold War* insists that the same be done for the cold war and protests against the tendency of scholars to dismiss it as an abstract, geopolitical struggle between the U.S. and the Soviet Union which has obscured what was *really* going on in the world over those decades: decolonization, cultural globalization, history from the bottom up. Discussing the work of Arjun Appadurai, for example, Kwon wonders at the "propensity to disown cold war history." Why is it necessary "to obliterate the traces of the bipolar pasts from the local in a project whose stated aim is to give voice to the latter in the formation of the global?" (23) Can it be that there is nothing to be said about the global cold war at the local level? Obviously not, as Kwon has demonstrated in the past and, recapitulating some of his work on Vietnam and expanding it to a discussion of Korea and Indonesia, as he does here. Moreover, if we take the cold war seriously, in many parts of the world it hasn't ended. To be sure "we are moving beyond the era of a bipolarized world," but to write about "after 1989" is to embrace "a particular view of history that privileges the experience of Europe and the geopolitical explanation of the human world." (35)

The major part of the book is an exploration of the difference between the cold war as Europe or the US experienced it, as a steady-state pre-war, and the cold war as much of the rest of the world experienced it, as total war and mass death. But Kwon is alert to the differences within Europe as well. He is as allergic to the notion of "postsocialist" as he is to "postcolonial," pointing out that postsocialism assumes that only one side in the bipolar struggle changed whereas we should "consider both the East and the West as transitory entities rather than relegating only one side to the horizon of transition, thereby mistakenly making the other side appear to be a cohesive, unchanging entity." (53-54)

Kwon illustrates his approach with anecdotes from the field as well as a careful analysis of the work of other scholars. His account of the "culture turn" in cold war studies I found particularly valuable. The "diffusion of the 'American way' in Europe was one thing; its dissemination elsewhere "was not always so subtle and civilized...nor was the demonstration of its promise of affluence always so peaceable and constructive." (148) As an anthropologist, Kwon addresses the dominant model of Clifford Geertz at length and with great subtlety. Here I can only invoke his conclusion that Geertz's long-term and over-arching model of culture as "a historically enduring, encompassing, organizing scheme of human affairs" tends actually to obscure certain kinds of historical events. Writing not long

¹ Heonik Kwon, *Ghosts of War in Vietnam* (Cambridge University Press, 2008); *After the Massacre: Commemoration and Consolation in Ha My and My Lai* (University of California Press, 2006).

after the massacres in Bali, Geertz barely mentions them in his account of the dynamics of Indonesian society. (147)

How about: A cold war history with casualties and one without casualties can nevertheless be written about in the same frame. Kwon's purpose is to "clarify key features of their disparities," so as to create "a new image" of the global cold war. (149)

The Other Cold War is basically a plea to scholars in all disciplines and every theoretical persuasion to see and remember the realities of the cold war. It was an "imaginary war and at the same time a generalized experience of political terror and mass death" and its history must therefore "be told accordingly, inclusive of the seismic death events experienced by communities, rather than considering the latter only perfunctory, marginal episodes in an otherwise peaceful, balanced contest of power." (157)

Author's Response by Heonik Kwon, London School of Economics and Political Science

"[This] way of narrating cold war history reflects the same provincialism. John Lewis Gaddis has written a history of America's cold war: as seen from America, as experienced in America, and told in a way most agreeable to many American readers. As a result, this is a book whose silences are especially suggestive. The "third world" in particular comes up short." Tony Judt, "Whose Story Is It? The Cold War in Retrospect," *Reappraisals: Reflections on the Forgotten Twentieth Century* (2008, p. 371).

I was in Berlin a short while ago. It was my very first visit to the city, although I had long wished to see it, especially the Berlin Wall or what remains of it. The reason for my trip there was to join a gathering of historians and members of the interested public in the public forum entitled "The Cold War: History, Memory, Representation." The event brought together a number of scholars studying German and European history, as well as others who specialize in the international history of the Cold War. Our conversations focused on both the divided city and the divided world during the Cold War. Participants shared their opinions about how to preserve memories of the Cold War in Berlin, including the idea of opening a museum at the former Checkpoint Charlie. They also discussed ways in which to represent the city's past division within the broader historical context of the bipolar era. The event was about both Berlin in the world and the world in Berlin, with a third component being Europe as a region. Jay Winter, an eminent World War I historian, adopted this approach in his memorable keynote address about remembering Europe's modern war experience.

I was the only anthropologist at the gathering, and also the only speaker who addressed the Cold War outside of Europe. I talked about the bipolar political history experienced in decolonizing nations, particularly those in Asia, and discussed the differences between this bipolar history and the Cold War as it was experienced in Europe and in the Transatlantic. I found the discussion that ensued to be encouraging, in spite of my marginal role in both disciplinary and thematic terms, as it showed that the disparities between the postcolonial Cold War and the transatlantic Cold War are important. I felt the same encouragement when I read the reviews featured in this roundtable, and for that I am very grateful.

Alexis Dudden's story about the man she met in Jirisan gets at the very heart of the issue. This man had lived through Korea's tumultuous, chaotic experience of the early Cold War and still carries the memories of this time with him many years later. The experience was traumatic for many, as it frequently involved members of the same families being herded into opposing political pathways and the deadly consequence of someone's taking one political pathway for the lives of that individual's close relations inhabiting the opposite political world. For individuals, such displacement was terrifying and confusing; for families, it not only meant losing loved ones, but also enduring organized violence that destroyed intimate relations. The situation left permanent wounds in communities, within families, and between neighbours, wounds that are still felt many years after the drum of war went silent. Keeping a community together takes great effort; if there is a history of divisive and vicious civil war, this effort is even greater.

As both Dudden and Marilyn Young mention, it is these local, communal histories of the global bipolar conflict that form the focus of *The Other Cold War*. These are contemporary histories, still unfolding and evolving long after the Cold War ended as a geopolitical order. The Cold War as a social and communal history long outlives the Cold War as an international and diplomatic history; its local history is as meaningful as its diplomatic history for understanding the global conflict. These two issues surrounding the Cold War's temporality and its spatiality are among the book's main concerns. I appreciate the fact that all the reviewers agree on the relevance of these questions for furthering our knowledge of the Cold War within a genuinely global context; that is, as a global history that is attentive to the War's local and locally variant manifestations. The book looks into these issues using ethnographic cases drawn from contemporary Vietnam and Korea. These cases also raise the question of how to tell Cold War history in places where people experienced the conflicts in forms other than a cold war. Mary Kaldor, for example, refers to the idea of imaginary war when speaking about the post-World War II European context, and John L. Gaddis invokes the expression of a long peace to refer to the era within the broader transatlantic realm.¹ How, then, should historians account for the Cold War's radical diversity, an imaginary war for some and a total war for others, without losing the sense that Cold War politics was a globally shared and endured experience?

The violence of the Cold War was typically intertwined with the process of decolonization. In this sense, we can start thinking about the Cold War's globally encompassing, yet locally variant, histories in terms of two broad realities: the imaginary war in Europe and North America on the one hand, and on the other, the postcolonial experience of the bipolar era in which the very concept of Cold War becomes problematic and contradictory. It is necessary to decompose the falsely uniform idea of the Cold War, before we can set out to bring the fragments together to recompose a new, more truthful, image of the whole. Young, Dudden, and Mark Bradley commonly show keen interest in the need to confront this contradiction. Bradley has pioneered this view by demonstrating the anti-colonial, postcolonial aspects of Vietnam's revolutionary struggle in contrast to the prevailing East-versus-West mindset in Vietnam's antagonist at the time of the war, the United States.² I endorse Bradley's perspective and, in fact, would not have been able to write my previous work about the impact of the Vietnam-American war on the Vietnamese society without what I learned from his work.

There are, however, some critical issues to be sorted out with respect to scholarship that specializes in postcolonial history. Contemporary studies of postcolonial history have a strong tendency to disengage with the Cold War, relegating it to a business among powerful

¹ Mary Kaldor, *The Imaginary War: Interpretation of East–West Conflict in Europe* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990). John L. Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

² Mark P. Bradley, *Imagining Vietnam and America: The Making of Postcolonial Vietnam, 1919–1950* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

states of the twentieth century (including former colonial powers) and thereby considering it of little importance for research agendas focused on decolonizing nations. This regrettable situation, as Odd Arne Westad rightly observes, results from a view of the Cold War order merely according to the scheme of a balance of power, and the related, mistaken assumption that “the Cold War conceptually and analytically does not belong in the south.”³ This view disregards the fact that “the most important aspects of the Cold War were neither military nor strategic, nor Europe-centered, but connected to political and social development in the Third World,” and that the Cold War order progressed in the way as we now know it did precisely because there were sustained, forceful challenges to it from the decolonizing world.⁴ This is a serious problem in contemporary historical scholarship, a problem that we should confront head-on if we wish to advance a more grounded, comparatively rigorous understanding of the second half of the twentieth century. Based on this recognition, and for this reason only, I am critical of the tendency in contemporary postcolonial historical and cultural studies to take the Cold War out of the global South and to take the South out of global Cold War history. Dudden recognizes the problem, but seems unsure about why I allocate so much space in the book to this criticism, rather than focusing it squarely on the more problematic orientation, mentioned earlier, of taking postcolonial history out of Cold War international history. Dudden asks why I do not mention Achille Mbembe, a scholar who is apparently critical of certain trends in contemporary postcolonial historical studies.⁵ In response, I read Mbembe’s work, *On the Postcolony*. I found it powerful and at times moving. It is indeed different from many current postcolonial studies, very much centred on the history of British colonial rule and its cultural effects. Here again, however, I noticed serious gaps, among which are the immense complications in Africa’s postcolonial development, caused by the chaotic intervention in the region since the 1960s by U.S., Soviet, and Chinese (plus North Korean and Cuban) powers. Nor could I feel in this work a commitment to historicizing empires, their powers of domination, and their changing visages and justifications for intervention. Perhaps my reading was limited in depth or in imagination, but I really couldn’t avoid feeling the gaps.

Gaps such as these in postcolonial studies are, of course, quite different from the gaps in Cold War studies. The former are about the absence of Cold War global history in postcolonial history; the latter are mainly, as Bradley and Dudden show, about the absence of the postcolonial experience in the international history of the Cold War centred on Europe and the transatlantic historical horizon. In my understanding, however, these two forms of absences are not unrelated and each reflects, following Tony Judt, a certain provincialism. I believe that, in order to deepen and broaden our understanding of twentieth century history, we must think carefully about these gaps and find ways to close

³ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 396.

⁵ Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

them. One way is to initiate a more reasoned, more open exchange of ideas between scholars of the Cold War and those studying postcolonial history. Bradley proposes another, possibly more realistic, solution: to further strengthen existing, already well-advanced, new Cold War international studies and to sharpen their research parameters further.

Until this happens, however, as Nick Cullather says, attempts such as mine to tell a new Cold War history may remain largely narrative efforts. They will mainly give new perspectives to history by bringing in fresh stories of human historical experience, rather than telling real history. Myra Jehlen wrote in her comments for *The Other Cold War* that, "Heonik Kwon is an ethnographer, and ethnography is a way of understanding peoples and events by composing their stories." Let me add to this, however, that in my training in the human sciences I have learned that history, like anthropology, is principally a story-making and story-telling discipline. Anthropologists tend to pick up sources from the streets; historians from the archives. The telos of both disciplines is, I believe, to tell truthful stories about the human condition. Another, more important issue is that the public expects to hear good stories about the Cold War from us. This is what I learned in Berlin. In this sphere, it is important to be able to tell stories of the Cold War as both intimate social experiences and high politics, so that the public can feel the issues more tangibly. It is equally important to remember that the public needs to hear not only stories that are familiar to them but those from places that are unknown to them and further away. Cold War history, whether based in Berlin or Seoul, Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh City, Beijing or Moscow, Bombay or Harare, always has another, less familiar history. In bringing the Cold War to public history, therefore, it is necessary to bring in the other's Cold War as well.

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