

Finally, this book is very interesting and important for historians and anyone interested in history, especially that of the missionary activities in Indonesia and the cultural history of the Netherlands East Indies.

REFERENCE

Coolhaas, W.Ph. (ed.). 1980. *A critical survey of studies on Dutch colonial history*. Second edition revised by G.J. Schutte. The Hague: Nijhoff. [First edition 1960.]

Tony Day and Maya H.T. Liem (eds), *Cultures at war; The Cold War and cultural expressions in Southeast Asia*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2010, vii + 287 pp. ISBN 978-0-877-27751-4. Price: USD 25.95 (soft cover).

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In *Asia as method; Towards deimperialization*, Kuan-Hsing Chen (2010) argues that in Asian countries, the ideological division and internal split caused by the Cold War are still deeply entrenched within people's subjectivities. One way to de-Cold War or to attempt at reconciliation is to "compare or relate historical experiences throughout third world Asia" (p. 125). It is only through "regional reconciliation" that Asian nation states can "break out" of the deeply rooted sentiments within each national structure.

Tony Day and Maya H.T. Liem's *Cultures at war; The Cold War and cultural expressions in Southeast Asia*, does exactly what Kuan-Hsing suggests. It gives a regional perspective of the way Southeast Asian countries internalized, reworked, and creatively engaged with the Cold War through cultural expressions, namely through film, literature, theatre, mass media, arts, physical culture, and festivals. Except for Tony Day's comparative analysis of Vietnamese and Indonesian literature, all chapters examine the Cold War's cultural dynamics within the boundaries of each nation (The Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Laos, Burma, Thailand, Singapore, and Malaysia). Insightful comparative patterns emerge from the book.

Reading one chapter after the other, one can only imagine what might have happened if the history of the Cold War in these countries had taken a different turn. While Michael Bodden and Barbara Hatley had to play literary detective and oral historian in digging up the censored archives and memories of banned

leftist literary works, Boytran Huynh-Beatty documented for us Saigonese modernist arts, literature, and monuments, most of which had been destroyed in the War's aftermath. It is fascinating, chilling, and sobering to learn how during the Cold War era, conflicting ideologies were able to spur creativity and at the same time serve as destructive forces for arts and literature.

From the individual chapters on different countries, we see how the ideological clash between "art for art's sake" and "art for life's sake" (in different local terms) in Vietnam, Indonesia, Burma and the rest of Southeast Asia was played out differently, framed as it was within the local socio-political context. In The Philippines, the terror came from the threats of the hyena (uncontrollable monetary greed) and the tiger (communism). In his chapter on Lamberto Avellana's three films, Francisco Benitez examines filmic and discursive strategies in avoiding the hyena-tiger threats by constructing The Philippines' idealized "citizen-subject of liberal democracy characterized by law and order" and by "familial, community, and religious [Christian] bonds" (p. 40). In Thailand, a country sandwiched between Northern Communist China, Eastern Communist Cambodia, and the Southern Malay, Rachel Harrison shows how the persona of film star and the films produced by Mit Chaibanha negotiate between "the Red Peril" and the anti-Chinese, "Yellow Peril". Rachel Harrison examines how the fear of the red and the yellow contributes to the construction of the Thai subject's ideal position in Gold, the color that symbolizes loyalty to Nation, Buddhism, and the King. In his examination of the Burmese Army propaganda magazine, Myawaddi, Bo Bo argues that the way to escape "pollution" by the West during the Cold War was in "purification through a return to the Burman's own original identity" (p. 184). Simon Creak in his chapter on Laos shows how the new Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP) which took to power in 1975, invested in a program for national physical culture to build the Laotian "new socialist person". According to him, this rhetoric and the practice of corporeality, which espouses physical strength, health as well as solidarity and discipline, was a way to suppress the threat of independent thinking. Jennifer Lindsay's depiction of Singapore in the 1960s staged Southeast Asia cultural festivals in order to perform Singapore's own ideology of racial politics – which was contradictory to Cold War ideologies (socialism, communism, and Third Worldism) which transcended race.

In its own way, each Southeast Asian country reworked and engaged creatively with Cold War issues quite distinctly and independently from the ideological dominance of Western and Eastern blocks. This is what Tony Day argues when he points out how Indonesian writer Asrul Sani put Pascale Casanova's theory of world literature upside down by turning Indonesia into the center and Paris into "the province" of his literary world (p. 169). As the implication of the global Cold War was reworked locally, Southeast Asian subjects were apparently embroiled within their own 'culture wars'

The chapters in *Cultures at war* indeed examine Cold War ideologies in their complexities, pointing to the lucidity of propaganda as well as

underlying contradictions and ambiguities. The construction of modern Filipino subjectivity as discussed by Benitez naturalized its patriarchal norms and evaded the more problematic issues of the structural problems of imperialism. Rachel Harrison shows Mit Chaibancha's contradictory portrayal of communism as conniving money making greed, and exposing the gender ideology of female subordination. Simon Creak argues that the physical culture program in Laos was rife with the "paradox" between rhetoric and the "states' inability to fully realize its vision of a mass sports and physical culture movement" (p. 129). Michael Bodden's chapter on the fluid and inclusive leftist cultural activities in North Sumatra gives a more complex picture than what is commonly held about the leftist aesthetics in Indonesia.

The book's approach in looking at individual countries (except for the editors' introduction and Tony Day's chapter) allows for an in-depth examination of local complexities. However, the cost of this approach is the unexplored dimension of the trans-national dynamics that occurred during the Cold War era, mentioned briefly in some chapters. Inter-SEA cross-referencing is shown through the portrayal of "a man in Indonesian national costume" in Thai films, an index to the "proximity of recent communist activities in the region" (p. 209). In Burma, the alternative socialist model of "third world" refers to Soekarno's Indonesia and to India (p. 190).

On the whole, however, the book offers the reader the fascinating task of generating an overall pattern of Cold War cultural politics in the region by fitting one chapter as a piece of a jigsaw puzzle with the others. *Cultures at war* ends with two pieces of puzzle which connect the Cold War past with the present. These two final chapters are Gaik Cheng Khoo's discussion of independent documentaries in contemporary Malaysia and Barbara Hatley's examination of the recalling and representation of the Cold War conflict in Indonesian film and theatre. Both chapters speak to a phenomenon occurring at present in the rest of the region, as curious young urban cosmopolitans as well as the children of rural traditional performers stigmatized as belonging to the wrong camps revisit the past and rewrite history from different perspectives. The struggle and resistance that the young generation are facing in revisiting this past is an indication that the Cold War still haunts the present and that the War has not yet ended in the region.

Cultures at war signals the beginning of a new Cold War historiography. This is a seminal work, which pulls together the contributions of area studies' regional perspectives and cultural studies' ideological critique. Therefore, it should be on the reading list for scholars of Southeast Asian Studies as well as for cultural studies. For students unfamiliar with the region, the piling data of political and cultural organizations in some chapters could make difficult reading, but the overall picture that emerges of regional politics is definitely illuminating. For scholars of area studies the book highlights the connections between culture and politics, and the discursive complexity of the Cold War politics.