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Cold War Friendships: Korea, Vietnam, And Asian American Literature



Synopsis

Cold War Friendships explores the plight of the Asian ally of the American wars in Korea and Vietnam. Enlisted into proxy warfare, this figure is not a friend but a "friendly," a wartime convenience enlisted to serve a superpower. It is through this deeply unequal relation, however, that the Cold War friendly secures her own integrity and insists upon her place in the neocolonial imperium. This study reads a set of highly enterprising wartime subjects who make their way to the Us via difficult attachments. American forces ventured into newly postcolonial Korea and Vietnam, both plunged into civil wars, to draw the dividing line of the Cold War. The strange success of containment and militarization in Korea unraveled in Vietnam, but the friendly marks the significant continuity between these hot wars. In both cases, the friendly justified the fight: she was also a political necessity who redeployed cold war alliances, and, remarkably, made her way to America. As subjects in process--and indeed, proto-Americans--these figures are prime literary subjects, whose processes of becoming are on full display in Asian American novels and testimonies of these wars. Literary writings on both of these conflicts are presently burgeoning, and Cold War Friendships performs close analyses of key texts whose stylistic constraints and contradictions--shot through with political and historical nuance--present complex gestures of alliance.

Book Information

Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1 edition (June 1, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0190257679

ISBN-13: 978-0190257675

Product Dimensions: 8.2 x 0.7 x 5.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

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