



# The Palgrave Handbook of Cold War Literature

*Edited by*  
Andrew Hammond

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The Palgrave  
Handbook of Cold  
War Literature

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Brighton  
2019

Andrew Hammond

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# Introduction

*Andrew Hammond*

It is no longer the case that the Cold War requires the adjective ‘global’ to indicate the worldwide spread of hostilities between the end of the Second World War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. With the increasingly international focus of historical study, the conflict is viewed less as a current in US foreign policy or a feature of US-Soviet relations and more as a vast aggregation of actors, locations and processes that spanned the globe. The superpower stand-off may have driven much of the hostility, but at all times combined with the interests of diplomatic partners across the Western and Eastern Blocs and interacted with and became modified by local political currents in the Global North and Global South. After the initial focus on the division of Europe, events such as the announcement of the Truman Doctrine (1947), the creation of Israel (1948), the establishment of the People’s Republic of China (PRC; 1949), the Suez Crisis (1956), the Cuban Revolution (1959), the Six-Day War (1967), the Brezhnev Doctrine (1968), the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979) and the US invasion of Grenada (1983) pushed the conflict ever further into the Far East, the Middle East, Africa, Oceania and Latin America, advancing through nuclear testing to the remotest islands of the Pacific and through security concerns to the uninhabited icescape of Antarctica. Even when events were a legacy of previous periods or bore only a tangential relation to the Cold War, they quickly became inflected by the worldwide struggle between communism and capitalism. For Odd Arne Westad, ‘the Cold War constituted an international system in the sense that the world’s leading powers all based their

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foreign policies on some relation to it' and in the sense that the non-leading powers always found that 'the Cold War impinged on [their] freedom'.<sup>1</sup>

The military conflicts of the Cold War appeared in so many arenas and devastated so many lives that the modifier 'cold' also needs to be questioned. The complex, often paradoxical attempts by commentators to distinguish a 'cold war' from a 'hot war'—as a 'peace that is no peace', as 'acts of war without war', as 'war-like in every sense except the military'—capture the centrality of propaganda, espionage, summitry and the nuclear arms race, but neglect the numerous 'proxy wars' and counter-insurgencies that took place in (former) colonies, as well as US and Soviet sponsorship of oppressive regimes across the world.<sup>2</sup> When historians refer to the Cold War as 'a state of extreme tension between the superpowers, stopping short of all-out war but characterised by mutual hostility and involvement by indirect means', they ignore the violent attempts by the 'superpowers' to supplant the dominance of the 'great powers' in the Global South, one of the defining processes of the era.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, one may consider 'Cold War' as the most successful propaganda term of the period, concealing the extent of global violence and marketing Western diplomacy as a successful instrument of global peace. The act of naming the conflict by conditions largely confined to the West is repeated in the designators used for the conflict's various stages: the 'first Cold War' (the heightened tensions of the late 1940s and 1950s), 'détente' (the easing of tensions from the mid-1960s to the late 1970s) and the 'second Cold War' (the renewed tensions of the 1980s) each take superpower relations as the defining feature and communicate nothing of the timeline of events across the Global South. They similarly overlook the experiences of Eastern Bloc populations, who lived under the constant shadow of state violence, and those of many people in the Western Bloc, who 'lived with the permanent anxiety of war, and with many of the forms of organization and control that are characteristic of war'.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Westad, *The Cold War: A World History*, new edn (2017; London: Penguin Books, 2018), p. 1; Westad, 'Epilogue: The Cold War and the Third World', in Robert J. McMahon, ed., *The Cold War in the Third World* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 210.

<sup>2</sup>Orwell, 'You and the Atom Bomb', in Orwell, *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell, Volume IV: In Front of Your Nose, 1945–1950*, ed. by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, new edn (1968; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), p. 26; Paul Virilio quoted in David Pascoe, 'The Cold War and the "War on Terror"', in Kate McLoughlin, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to War Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 244; Anders Stephanson, 'Fourteen Notes on the Very Concept of the Cold War', *The International Security Studies Forum*, <https://issforum.org/essays/PDF/stephanson-14notes.pdf> (accessed 2 September 2019).

<sup>3</sup>Michael L. Dockrill and Michael F. Hopkins, *The Cold War, 1945–1991*, new edn (1988; Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Mary Kaldor, *The Imaginary War: Understanding the East-West Conflict* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 4.

The impact of events on social, economic and political life was matched by their impact in the realm of culture. Robert McMahon's point that 'one simply cannot write a history of the second half of the 20th century without a systematic appreciation of the [...] superpower conflict' is as germane to literary history as it is to diplomatic, military or economic history.<sup>5</sup> Whether emerging from the US and the Soviet Union or from Burma, Benin, Fiji, Finland, Guyana or Mexico, literature was such a vital medium for reflection on the Cold War that it is rare to find a major writer, even a major work of poetry, fiction, drama or autobiography, which doesn't include commentary on the topic. Such material supplemented the political coverage of historians and journalists with accounts of individuals and societies undergoing the trials of conventional warfare, the horrors of authoritarian government, the fears of nuclear disaster and the obfuscations of state propaganda. In part, the interest was an inevitable outcome of the saturation of the public sphere by Cold War politics. Writing in one of the most peaceful societies in world, the British author Doris Lessing describes the Cold War as 'a poisonous miasma' that permeated so many areas of national life that it was 'as if an air that had once been the climate of a distant and cataclysmic star had chosen to engulf our poor planet'.<sup>6</sup> Yet literature's intrinsic interest in the lived experiences of individuals and communities was not the only reason for the engagement. A more official cause was the work of propaganda agencies such as the US Congress for Cultural Freedom, the Soviet Cominform and the British Information Research Department, which pumped funds into international congresses, conferences, exhibitions and magazines in a bid to sway cultural production to the preferred ideological camp and to encourage the loyalty of national populations at home and abroad. In this sense, cultural diplomacy took its place alongside propaganda, nuclearism, espionage and conventional warfare as one of the key tools by which nations defended themselves against the incursions of others. The notion of literary production as a medium for conducting the Cold War is captured in Jean Franco's claim that '[l]iterature is a protagonist in this drama' and David Caute's assertion that '[t]he novel rode escort to contemporary history'.<sup>7</sup> It is also captured in the critical contention that, although late twentieth-century culture is commonly viewed through the rubrics of postmodernity and postcoloniality, a wider and more inclusive context would be the Cold War. For example, Ann Douglas argues that '[p]ostcoloniality and postmodernity originated in a common site, in the events and developments of World War II and of the Cold War', and 'that exploring the [latter] term might help us to

<sup>5</sup> McMahon, *The Cold War: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 105.

<sup>6</sup> Lessing, *Walking in the Shade: Volume Two of My Autobiography, 1949–1962*, new edn (1997; London: Flamingo, 1998), p. 53; Lessing, *The Summer before the Dark*, new edn (1973; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), p. 205.

<sup>7</sup> Franco, *The Decline and Fall of the Lettered City: Latin America in the Cold War* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 1; Caute, *Politics and the Novel during the Cold War* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2010), p. 351.

understand better the period we are naming'.<sup>8</sup> With regard to the present collection of chapters, the term is perfectly suited to the multiple and overlapping currents that dominated global literatures from the mid-1940s to the late 1980s, the decades chosen as the period of study.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the interventions of Douglas and others, the study of international literary treatment of the Cold War has developed only slowly over the past few decades and remains a field in emergence. Between 1945 and 1989, little research was conducted into the subject, with only a few book-length publications on particular national literatures, predominantly that of the US.<sup>10</sup> The focus was evident in an early strand of Cold War literary studies termed Nuclear Criticism, a multidisciplinary field initiated by papers delivered at a colloquium at Cornell University in 1984 and collected in an edition of *Diacritics* in the same year. Its approach was summed up in Jacques Derrida's call for critics to examine the treatment of nuclear weaponry in cultural texts and to challenge the scientific and political discourses endorsing the weaponry, thereby initiating 'a global version of deconstruction, grounded in the universal threat posed by total nuclear war'.<sup>11</sup> As universalist as the field claimed to be, however, the school of criticism that developed during the 1980s and 1990s highlighted such US authors as Walter M. Miller Jr., Kurt Vonnegut, Judith Merrill and Tim O'Brien, with only occasional forays into Nevil Shute, Hara Tamiki or Mordecai Roshwald.<sup>12</sup> The emphasis on US writing and US experience continued in the early 1990s, when a certain distance was gained from the conflict and more general studies began to appear. For example, Stephen J. Whitfield's *The Culture of the Cold War* (1991) and Thomas H. Schaub's *American Fiction in the Cold War* (1991) looked back on the political influences exerted on US writers such as Joseph Heller, Richard Condon, Flannery O'Connor, Ralph Ellison, Norman Mailer and others during the 'first Cold War'. The focus on US literature was soon furthered by Steffen Hantke's *Conspiracy and Paranoia in Contemporary American Fiction* (1994), Alan Nadel's *Containment Culture*

<sup>8</sup> Douglas, 'Periodizing the American Century: Modernism, Postmodernism, and Postcolonialism in the Cold War Context', *Modernism/Modernity*, 5: 3 (1998), pp. 84, 74–5.

<sup>9</sup> Naturally, there is disagreement over the beginning and ending of the Cold War, with the former marked by various dates in the 1940s, by the October Revolution of 1917 or by the growth of the labour movement in the late nineteenth century.

<sup>10</sup> Scholarship on Soviet-Russian literature was also developing through such work as Lev Losev's *On the Beneficence of Censorship: Aesopian Language in Modern Russian Literature* (1984) and Katerina Clark's *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (1985).

<sup>11</sup> Ken Ruthven, *Nuclear Criticism* (Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1993), p. 77. For Derrida, literary scholars may not be 'professionals of strategy, diplomacy, or nuclear techno-science, but are certainly "specialists in discourse and in texts"' (Derrida, 'No Apocalypse, Not Now (Full Speed Ahead, Seven Missiles, Seven Missives)', *Diacritics*, 14: 2 (1984), p. 22).

<sup>12</sup> The criticism includes Paul Boyer's *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (1985), Paul Brians's *Nuclear Holocausts: Atomic War in Fiction* (1987), Martha A. Bartter's *The Way to Ground Zero: The Atomic Bomb in American Science Fiction* (1988) and Nancy Anisfield's edited *The Nightmare Considered: Critical Essays on Nuclear War Literature* (1991).

(1995), David Seed's *American Science Fiction and the Cold War* (1999) and Francis Stonor Saunders's *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (1999). Although Saunders included discussion of literary currents in Western Europe, a canon had started to emerge that could accommodate fresh material—Sylvia Plath, Joan Didion, Thomas Pynchon, Joseph McElroy, Don DeLillo—but that kept to US literary production, a trend continued into the twenty-first century by Greg Barnhisel, Steven Belletto, Susan L. Carruthers, Bruce McConachie, Daniel Grausam and many others.<sup>13</sup> There were even publications—such as Edward Brunner's *Cold War Poetry* (2000)—that denied an international focus even when appearing to hint at one in titles, so confident were their authors that Cold War culture was necessarily a US phenomenon. In the light of such preferences, Patrick Major and Rana Mitter were soon wondering whether there had been, in the years following the Cold War, a replication in literary scholarship of 'the cultural imperialism of which America was accused at the time'.<sup>14</sup>

It was at the turn of the twenty-first century that the first clear signs of a shift began to emerge. For the most part, this entailed a refocusing of criticism onto other national literatures, which may have shared concerns with their US counterpart, but which had their own geopolitical and cultural specificities. Amongst the early examples in kind were Ted Freeman's *Theatres of War: French Committed Theatre from the Second World War to the Cold War* (1998), Richard Cavell's edited *Love, Hate, and Fear in Canada's Cold War* (2004) and Lingzhen Wang's *Personal Matters: Women's Autobiographical Practice in Twentieth Century China* (2004).<sup>15</sup> A few years later, the trend was confirmed by an outpouring of research on national literatures across Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America, including Monica Popescu's *South African Literature beyond the Cold War* (2010), Ann Sherif's *Japan's Cold War: Media, Literature, and the Law* (2009), Janit Feangfu's *(Ir)resistibly Modern: The Construction of Modern Thai Identities in Thai Literature during the Cold War Era* (2011), Theodore Hughes's *Literature and Film in Cold War South Korea* (2012) and Cangül Örneş's *Turkey in the Cold War: Ideology and Culture* (2013).<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup>See Barnhisel's *Cold War Modernists: Art, Literature, and American Cultural Diplomacy* (2015), Bellatto's *No Accident, Comrade: Chance and Design in Cold War American Narratives* (2012), Carruthers's *Cold War Captives: Imprisonment, Escape, and Brainwashing* (2009), McConachie's *American Theater in the Culture of the Cold War* (2003) and Grausam's *On Endings: American Postmodern Fiction and the Cold War* (2011).

<sup>14</sup>Major and Mitter, 'East Is East and West Is West? Towards a Comparative Socio-Cultural History of the Cold War', in Mitter and Major, eds, *Across the Blocs: Cold War Cultural and Social History* (London and Portland: Frank Cass, 2004), p. 5.

<sup>15</sup>Amongst the few studies of non-US national literatures that appeared in the 1990s are Rhys W. Williams, Stephen Parker and Colin Riordan's edited *German Literature and the Cold War* (1992) and Andy Hollis's *The Cold War and East German Literature* (1994).

<sup>16</sup>See also Perry Link's *The Uses of Literature: Life in the Socialist Chinese Literary System* (2000); Andrew Hammond's *British Fiction and the Cold War* (2013); Christopher Lee's 'Decoloniality of a Special Type: Solidarity and Its Potential Meanings in South African Literature, during and after the Cold War', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 50: 4 (2014), pp. 466–77; Csaba Varga's

Importantly, early twenty-first-century scholarship also began to uncover the transnational nature of much of the material under study. Although the majority of studies retained a focus on national contexts, there were others that explored the ways in which literary concerns and approaches could transcend borders, particularly in parts of the world where local political structures or superpower intrigues assumed a regional pattern. The topic was pursued, for example, in work on Latin American literature by Jean Franco, Deborah Cohn and Patrick Iber, who uncovered a host of ideological and formal connectivities stemming from US military and cultural interventionism.<sup>17</sup> Similar work has been done by Tony Day and Maya H.T. Liem on the cultures of Southeast Asia, by Marcel Cornis-Pope and John Neubauer on the cultures of East-Central Europe and by Annette Vowinckel, Marcus M. Payk and Thomas Lindenberger on the cultures of wider Europe, both east and west of the Iron Curtain.<sup>18</sup>

The movement away from US literature has been furthered by a growing sense that the styles, concerns and ideological commitments of writers were as much trans-continental as trans-regional, cropping up in a multitude of social and political contexts which, on the surface of things, had little in common and, in some instances, had little contact with each other. This has been seen most extensively in Rana Mitter and Patrick Major's edited *Across the Blocs: Cold War Cultural and Social History* (2004), Adam Piette's *The Literary Cold War, 1945 to Vietnam* (2009), David Caute's *Politics and the Novel during the Cold War* (2010), Kathleen Starck's edited *Between Fear and Freedom: Cultural Representations of the Cold War* (2010) and Andrew Hammond's edited *Cold War Literature: Writing the Global Conflict* (2006) and *Global Cold War Literature: Western, Eastern and Postcolonial Perspectives* (2012).<sup>19</sup> While these globalised the field with different degrees of success, they all contributed to the growing emphasis on comparative study, understanding that the Cold War had affected citizens in, say, Casablanca, Helsinki, Rangoon, Caracas and Manila as much as policymakers in Washington and that particular literary concerns were

'Encounters with Western Literature (or The Intellectual Misery of Cold War Hungary)', *Central European Political Science Review*, 60 (2014), pp. 74–90; and Xiaojue Wang's *Modernity with a Cold War Face: Reimagining the Nation in Chinese Literature across the 1949 Divide* (2013).

<sup>17</sup> See Franco's *The Decline and Fall of the Lettered City: Latin America in the Cold War* (2002), Cohn's *The Latin American Literary Boom and U.S. Nationalism during the Cold War* (2012) and Iber's *Neither Peace nor Freedom: The Cultural Cold War in Latin America* (2015).

<sup>18</sup> See Day and Liem's edited *Cultures at War: The Cold War and Cultural Expression in Southeast Asia* (2010), Cornis-Pope and Neubauer's edited *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe: Junctures and Disjunctures in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (2004–10) and Vowinckel, Payk and Lindenberger's edited *Cold War Cultures: Perspectives on Eastern and Western European Societies* (2012).

<sup>19</sup> More specific studies of trans-continental currents include Jeanne-Marie Jackson's *South African Literature's Russian Soul: Narrative Forms of Global Isolation* (2015), Nicole Moore and Christina Spittel's edited *Reading through the Iron Curtain: Australian Literature in the German Democratic Republic* (2016) and Josephine Nock-Hee Park's *Cold War Friendships: Korea, Vietnam, and Asian American Literature* (2016).

as likely to be found in the Middle East and Eastern Europe as they were in the US. More specifically, they uncovered a distinct cluster of Cold War phenomena—national security, military conflict, ideological conflict, propaganda, espionage, intelligence, anti-imperialism, neo-imperialism—that had affected societies around the world and that had dominated much of the literature. Indeed, so common were these concerns that many have become specific fields of research in their own right: for example, national security discourse in Sorin Radu Cucu's *The Underside of Politics: Global Fictions in the Fog of the Cold War* (2013), propaganda in Greg Barnhisel and Catherine Turner's edited *Pressing the Fight: Print, Propaganda, and the Cold War* (2009) and socialist commitment in Juraga Dubravka and M. Keith Booker's edited *Socialist Cultures East and West* (2002) and *Rereading Global Socialist Cultures after the Cold War* (2002). In a similar way, the awareness that particular genres had their roots in the pre-1945 period did not offset the sense that writers were now linked by a proliferating web of interconnecting aesthetic practices, a feature examined in Derek Maus's *Unvarnishing Reality: Subversive Russian and American Cold War Satire* (2011), Stephen Voyce's *Poetic Communities: Avant-Garde Activism and Cold War Culture* (2013), Justin Quinn's *Between Two Fires: Transnationalism and Cold War Poetry* (2015) and Peter Kalliney's 'Modernism, African Literature, and the Cold War' (2015). Such studies revealed one of the most significant features of the literary period: rather than endorse the Cold War binarism encouraged by cultural diplomats, writers often collapsed the constructed polarities between the 'free world' and the communist world, the Global North and the Global South, by developing aesthetic and ideological interconnections that traversed blocs and challenged blocist identities. The Cold War may have insisted on geopolitical division, and may have promoted US capitalism and Soviet communism as the only possible models of globalisation, but there were currents of contact, exchange, influence and allegiance that suggested quite another path of global development.<sup>20</sup>

It is the transnational nature of literary production between 1945 and 1989 that is the central topic of the current volume. Building on an understanding of Cold War literature as a global literary field, the following chapters locate numerous patterns of theme, form and approach that evolved in response to the military and ideological conflicts and that produced a set of overlapping concerns that appeared in all national cultures. The volume presents an initial overview of global literary treatments of geopolitical events, processes and outcomes between 1945 and 1989, giving equal importance to the literatures of Africa, Asia, Europe, Oceania and the Americas. Even a brief survey of the chapters that follow shows that the original focus of Cold War literary studies

<sup>20</sup> Adam Piette's insistence that Cold War literary scholarship needs to attend to 'the interrelations between Anglo-American texts and key dissident books of the Cold War [...], as well as the creative work from decolonizing cultures', is suitably broad in its ambitions, although can be expanded to cover more of the 'free world' and to accommodate non-dissident writings in the Eastern Bloc (Piette, *The Literary Cold War, 1945 to Vietnam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 212).

is no longer a defining feature of the field. Eschewing an emphasis on the US canon, the contributors find far more interest in Chinua Achebe, Ama Ata Aidoo, Chingiz Aitmatov, Claribel Alegría, Mariama Bâ, Gioconda Belli, Edward Kamau Brathwaite, Alejo Carpentier, Angela Carter, Aimé Césaire, Roque Dalton, Ding Ling, Assia Djebar, Duong Thu Huong, Buchi Emecheta, Aminata Sow Fall, Bessie Head, Nâzım Hikmet, Ghassan Kanafani, Sahar Khalifa, Alex La Guma, Naguib Mahfouz, Czesław Miłosz, Pablo Neruda, Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Anna Seghers, Andrei Sinyavsky, Chantal Spitz, Christina Stead, Arkady and Boris Strugatsky, Tōge Sankichi, Luisa Valenzuela, Derek Walcott and innumerable others. While the domination of English as a global language could bring benefits to those writing in it, the efforts made by large and small publishers to locate, translate and circulate work from other literary languages began to open up the global marketplace to non-Western authors engaged with both local and international contexts. For contributors to the volume, some of the most notable responses to the Cold War are not Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* (1956), Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* (1961) or Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973) but Kurihara Sadako's *Kuroi Tamago* (Black Eggs, 1946), George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), Oodgeroo Noonuccal's 'No More Boomerang' (1964), Christa Wolf's *Nachdenken über Christa T.* (The Quest for Christa T., 1968), Gabriel García Márquez's *El otoño del patriarca* (The Autumn of the Patriarch, 1975), Dambudzo Marechera's 'The House of Hunger' (1978), Zhang Jie's *Chenzhong de chibang* (Leaden Wings, 1980), Ngūgĩ wa Thiong'o and Ngūgĩ wa Mĩrĩ's *I Will Marry When I Want* (1980) and Epeli Hau'ofa's *Tales of the Tikongs* (1983). Indeed, if any single text has gained the most attention, it is likely to be Hone Tuwhare's poem of nuclear devastation in the Pacific, 'No Ordinary Sun' (1964).

In emphasising the global nature of Cold War literature, the volume departs from many of the assumptions and practices of World Literature, a branch of comparative literary study that in the latter half of the twentieth century was less committed to universalism than its name suggested. As David Damrosch points out, the field not only failed to move critical attention away from Western European authors, but also tended to restrict itself to classic texts from the most prestigious national literatures.<sup>21</sup> Interestingly, as the canon became challenged at the turn of the 1970s critics on both sides of the debate turned to Cold War institutions for allusive material with which to attack their opponents. On the one side, Horst Rüdiger argued against a broadening of World Literature into a kind of 'UN General Assembly, in which the voices of the great powers count no more than those of the political provinces'.<sup>22</sup> On the other side, Werner Friederich lamented the inequality and entitlement enshrined in university curricula by stating that 'we should call our programs NATO Literatures – yet even that would be extravagant, for we do not usually

<sup>21</sup> Damrosch, *What Is World Literature?* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 110.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 110.

deal with more than one fourth of the 15 NATO-Nations'.<sup>23</sup> Yet even the oppositional school of comparativism often failed to internationalise the field, keeping instead to national categories of literary study and failing to examine the complex interaction of local tradition and outside influence. As a consequence, comparatists continued to suggest that each category had 'its own repertoire, its own distribution of genres and of writing techniques, its own institutions, etc., which are not drastically affected by its sharing of forms and concepts with other literatures'.<sup>24</sup> This is not to say that national-literary traditions didn't survive and develop during the Cold War, a feature that was as true of an authoritarian society like the Soviet Union, in which literary production was controlled by state prescription, as a relatively liberal society like Great Britain, in which radical writing failed to displace the right-wing mainstream. Yet the following contributions also show the porous nature of national-cultural categories in both the global centres and the global peripheries. Literary relations were never fully controlled by governmental agencies, with official policy continually circumvented by personal reading, social interaction, cross-continental associations and unofficial translation and publication networks, all of which opened up national cultures to political, philosophical and aesthetic influences from abroad. The globalisation of intellectual exchange not only involved the circulation of Western currents—Sartrean existentialism, Western European avant-gardism, US popular culture—but also included the Zhdanovite prescriptions on writing emerging from the Soviet Union, the cultural energies of the Cuban Revolution and the theoretical and cultural products of the People's Republic of China.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, literatures emerging from (post-)colonial cultures travelled across the Global South and often reached the metropolitan centres of the Global North, exerting a distinct (albeit gradual) influence on how (post-)imperial literary cultures viewed the world.

With the amount of cross-cultural contact in the period, it should be no surprise to find similarities between one national literature and the next. As mentioned, one of the most evident of these is the focus on the particular ways the Cold War was conducted, with propaganda, espionage, nuclearism, decolonisation and conventional warfare becoming themes in all regional literatures. Another is the concern with how the Cold War aggravated pre-existing social and political tensions, amongst them social injustice in Latin America, political

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 110–11. Wail Hassan compares the study of world literature to 'a leisurely stroll in a global literary mall that is structured at once to satisfy and to reinforce Western modes of consumption and interpretation' (quoted in Michael Boyden, 'Why the World Is Never Enough: Re-Conceptualizing World Literature as a Self-Substitutive Order', in Nele Bemong, Mirjam Truwant and Pieter Vermeulen, eds, *Re-Thinking Europe: Literature and (Trans)National Identity* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2008), p. 62).

<sup>24</sup> Lieven D'hulst, 'Translation and Its Role in European Literatures: Some Questions and Answers', in Bemong, Truwant and Vermeulen, eds, *Re-Thinking Europe*, p. 82.

<sup>25</sup> In the early 1970s, only a few years after the Chinese authorities had launched *Mao Zhubuxi Yulu* (Quotations from Chairman Mao Tsetung, 1964) at a global audience, some 110 million copies had been sold in 36 different languages (see Daniel Kalder, *Dictator Literature: A History of Despots through Their Writings* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2018), p. 182).



division in Europe and the legacy of colonialism in countries across the world. In a similar way, many contributors point out the lingering impact of the Cold War on geopolitical realities since 1989. For example, alongside areas of the Global South that remain affected by the Cold War transition from colonialism to neo-imperialism are countries still exposed to authoritarian governance and to the ‘civilisational’ ideologies that inform the increasingly militarised North-South divide. An additional feature that links so much writing of the period is the rejection of US and Soviet prescriptions on cultural production. What has been termed the ‘two-world ideology’ or ‘the Manichean dialectic’ of Cold War culture manifested itself not only in the constructed polarities of socialist realism and depoliticised modernism, the latter supposedly expressive of the artistic freedoms of the West, but also in the circulation of Western anti-capitalist texts in the Soviet bloc and of Eastern European anti-communist texts in the ‘free world’.<sup>26</sup> Yet while plenty of writers submitted to the official demands of national governments, there were others who attempted to operate in what Jean Franco terms ‘the third space between the Cold War extremes’, one that didn’t evade allegiance to socialism or capitalism, but engaged critically with both in the light of national and regional aspirations for political and cultural autonomy.<sup>27</sup>

In order to study such complex and wide-ranging phenomena, the following 33 chapters are arranged in three sections—on themes, genres and regions—that attempt to capture the major currents in transnational Cold War literature. Amongst the key concerns addressed in the first section are the institutional contexts for the production of literature, which not only worked to shape the outlook and form of texts, but also became a theme of many plays, poems, novels and memoirs. Catherine Turner opens with a study of the role that literature played in the ‘soft diplomacy’ of the period. Ranging through texts from the US, South Africa, Tanzania, China, Iran and elsewhere, the chapter examines the pressures placed on authors to participate in the battle for hearts and minds and analyses how, in many parts of the world, authors used their work to subvert state propaganda through explicit or coded attacks on the official line. A linked theme is censorship and the wide-ranging state control over the content, message and form of print material. As Nicole Moore examines in the following chapter, the aim of censorship was to create a harmonious national reading public fully protected against oppositional discourse. Through case studies of the German Democratic Republic, Occupied Japan and

<sup>26</sup> Even the Czech-born Milan Kundera, who carved out a highly successful career in literary anti-communism, once complained about the West’s fixation on Eastern dissidence and its inability to look beyond ideological binarism. As he wrote, ‘[i]f you cannot view the art that comes to you from Prague, Budapest, or Warsaw in any other way than by means of this wretched political code, you murder it, no less brutally than the worst of the Stalinist dogmatists’ (quoted in Cauter, *Politics and the Novel*, p. 242).

<sup>27</sup> Franco, ‘The Excluded Middle: Intellectuals and the “Cold War” in Latin America’, in Andrew Hammond, ed., *Cold War Literature: Writing the Global Conflict* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 226.

Indonesia, Moore presents a wide-ranging analysis of the limits placed on writing and reading during the Cold War and argues for more comparative study of censorship as a tool of statecraft across the blocs. Extending the study of the conditions of literary production, Andrew Hammond's contribution discusses the impact of authoritarian state systems on writers and wider populations. Drawing on the work of George Orwell, Bei Dao, Isabel Allende, Ágota Kristóf, Cristina García, Roque Dalton and E.L. Doctorow, Hammond looks at the variety of genres that addressed the devastating effects of censorship, restriction and persecution and examines the use of literature as a medium for opposition. Taken together, the three chapters show how the Cold War was both an inauspicious time for creative freedom and an inspiring time of political and creative dissidence.

The discussion of anti-authoritarian writing helps to introduce the numerous oppositional currents that existed in Cold War literature, which challenged the strictures on identity, behaviour, political expression and economic life imposed by national elites. The global nature of cultural protest is foregrounded in Sonita Sarker's study of women's and feminist transnational literature. In the face of masculinist ideologies and state practices, such literature formed matrices of transnational concern which, though diverse in approach, delivered a shared critique of the patriarchal assumptions underpinning the racism, imperialism and militarism of the Cold War. The global scope of the chapter, which ranges through the work of Lydia Chukovskaya, Assia Djebar, Jahanara Imam, Ghada Samman, Lan Cao and many others, is matched in Eric Keenaghan's analysis of queer writing. Locating a similar network of transnational defiance, Keenaghan details the criminalisation of homosexuality and the persecution of LGBTQ persons across both the northern and southern hemispheres and analyses the resistance of such writers as Grennady Trifonov, José Donoso, Qiu Miaojin, Etel Adnan, Cristina Peri Rossi and Muriel Rukeyser. The fight for equality and justice was also present in left-wing writing across the world. Andrew Hammond's contribution looks at how radical literature, which had been evolving over several centuries, not only expanded the call for revolution during the Cold War, but also lamented the obstacles to revolution created by social democracies and 'actually existing socialism', a system that came to govern over a third of the world's population.<sup>28</sup> Pessimism about the course of world history was most intense with regard to the apocalyptic threat of nuclear technologies. Drawing on the world-system theory of Immanuel Wallerstein, Daniel Cordle examines the range of anti-nuclear writing that emerged in the period, a field typically studied through North American and Western European literatures, but here extended to the literatures of Asia, Oceania, Africa and Latin America. As Cordle outlines, this was a strand of writing which,

<sup>28</sup> See Leslie Holmes, *Communism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. xii.

in locating a shared planetary danger, helped to shape a Cold War imagination attuned to worldwide connectivity and interdependence.<sup>29</sup>

Another area of literary radicalism which stretched across much of the world was linked to the movements for decolonisation in the Global South. Here, the surge in anti-imperial sentiment, combined with US and Soviet opposition to Western European imperialism, led to the creation of over 40 new states in the first half of the Cold War alone, although also exposed their 800 million citizens to the manipulations of the superpowers. Indeed, the Cold War can be viewed as a new age of imperial competition, waged by the US, the USSR and the PRC for control of the material assets, labour resources and political loyalties of the ‘Third World’. Monica Popescu’s contribution examines how the restrictions on political autonomy were matched by multiple pressures on cultural autonomy. Contextualising the discussion in the political coercion, economic control and military interventionism endured by (post-)colonial countries, the chapter analyses the superpower competition for cultural influence through case studies of two parallel conferences held in West Berlin and Luanda in 1979, which aimed to attract African intellectuals to the ‘free world’ and the communist bloc respectively. Popescu’s coverage of the resistance that writers mounted to the ideological polarisation of the age is taken up in the following contribution by Christopher Lee and Anne Garland Mahler. This examines the development of the Non-Aligned Movement after the Asian-African Conference of April 1955 and asks whether an associated ‘third-way literature’ can be located, one that sought to replace the demands of the US and Soviet Union with the ideals of cultural autonomy, self-determination and internationalist allegiance. Ranging through such writers as Langston Hughes, Dennis Brutus, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Aimé Césaire, Manuel Rui and Guillermo Cabrera Infante, the two chapters make clear that the academic study of Cold War literature can no longer ignore the centrality of the ‘Third World’ to the culture and politics of the time, a point furthered by many of the chapters on regional literatures summarised below.

The topics addressed in writing of the period are not limited to those already mentioned, but include a range of issues—dissent, espionage, technology, military conflict, forced migration—that were equally present in the Cold War imagination. The following section of the volume focuses on some of the genres that achieved prominence while also examining their utility for addressing these additional concerns. One of the most famous of the genres is socialist realism, a form of writing that was committed ‘to the task of ideological change and the education of workers in the spirit of socialism’ and that was contrasted, in Western cultural propaganda, to the supposedly liberal, autonomous realm

<sup>29</sup>The bombing of Hiroshima would have a ‘saturating effect’, Norman Cousins wrote soon afterward, ‘permeating every aspect of man’s [sic] activities, from machines to morals, from physics to philosophy, from politics to poetry’ (quoted in Charles A. Carpenter, *Dramatists and the Bomb: American and British Playwrights Confront the Nuclear Age, 1945–1964* (Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 1999), p. 11).

of modernism.<sup>30</sup> As Thomas Lahusen and Elizabeth McGuire explore, socialist realism was formulated at the Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934 and promoted heavily in Stalinist Russia during the ‘first Cold War’, although also spread into literary cultures worldwide. Through a case study of Soviet and Chinese literatures, the chapter details how the prescriptions for socialist realism were evolved to support Soviet development but still found resonance elsewhere, proving flexible enough to adapt to the vagaries of national need in different times and places. A second generic shift is examined in Ignacio López-Calvo and Nicholas Birns’s chapter on magical realism, often seen as a political and aesthetic rejection of socialist realism. Here, the manner in which writers combined historical reference with fantastical forms of writing allowed for an oblique commentary on national and regional politics, a practice which began as a left-wing, non-aligned current in Latin America but which came to express nationalist, conservative, even ‘free worldist’ ideologies when later taken up by writers elsewhere. Yet the appearance of a particular form of writing in different regions did not necessarily mean divergence. Although postmodernist writing was always torn between oppositional and reactionary sentiments, Elana Gomel’s chapter shows how many of its features—parody, indeterminacy, self-reflexivity, epistemological uncertainty—were found useful for critiquing governmental and military practices in cultures around the world. With a focus on US and Soviet literature, Gomel examines the remarkable similarities in the expression and exploration of paranoia in the postmodernist science fiction of the two superpowers, which lamented the monstrous nature of a reality in which truth was being lost amidst the labyrinthine claims of state propaganda. The chapter reveals the importance of a narrative innovation that Marcel Cornis-Pope, drawing on Raymond Federman, has termed ‘a form of resistance against official constructions of reality during the Cold War era’.<sup>31</sup>

Amongst the many innovations of postmodernist fiction was its commitment to ‘closing the gap’ between high and low literary forms.<sup>32</sup> The commitment typified writers’ increasing rejection of traditional cultural hierarchies and reflected the way that popular genres were becoming significant mediums for commentary on contemporary history. Following on from Gomel’s chapter, Andrew Hammond and David Seed examine the prodigious output of science fiction writing from the 1940s to the 1980s, much of which reflected on Cold War concerns. Retaining its traditional focus on scientific development, the genre expressed anxieties about technology’s role in military, political and economic structures of power, with such writers as Judith Merrill, Eduardo Goligorsky, Yasutaka Tsutsui, Buchi Emecheta and Angela Carter exploring the consequent threats to humanity, ranging from nuclear weapons to mass

<sup>30</sup> Statute of the Soviet Writers’ Union quoted in Régine Robin, *Socialist Realism: An Impossible Aesthetic*, trans. by Catherine Porter (1987; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 11.

<sup>31</sup> Cornis-Pope, *Narrative Innovation and Cultural Rewriting in the Cold War and After* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> See Leslie Fiedler, ‘Cross the Border – Close That Gap’, in Patricia Waugh, ed., *Postmodernism: A Reader* (London: Edward Arnold, 1994), p. 47.

entertainment. The kind of planetary concerns expressed by science fiction continued in the linked genre of dystopian literature, explored in the following chapter by Derek Maus. Such literature mounted a sustained attack on the official utopianism of the superpowers and expressed anxiety about contemporary political trends, an anxiety which—if the global range of material under study in the chapter is anything to go by—was a defining feature of the literary period.<sup>33</sup> The utility of science fiction and dystopian writing as mediums for reflection on the East-West conflict was matched by that of spy fiction, which has been labelled ‘the war novel of the Cold War’.<sup>34</sup> As Allan Hepburn’s chapter reveals, the genre was concerned not only with the proliferating intelligence services in countries worldwide, but also with international relations, state sovereignty, inter-bloc rivalry, imperial decline, defection, freedom and citizenship. With a focus on the last of these, Hepburn ranges through a number of espionage novelists—Ian Fleming, David G. Maillu, Gérard de Villiers, Andrei Gulyashki, Yulian Semyonov—to examine the fraught relation between the individual and the state in the so-called Age of the Spy, revealing how the narratives addressed existential as much as geopolitical concerns.<sup>35</sup>

As such chapters may indicate, fiction is the most common genre through which the literary treatment of the Cold War has been studied, often to the exclusion of others. Nevertheless, drama, poetry and non-fiction continually engaged with the Cold War and often included some of the most acute observations on geopolitical affairs. This is illustrated by Meg Jensen’s contribution on testimonial literature, a typically non-fictional form that bore witness to the collective human rights abuses suffered by many communities around the world. Focusing on the subgenre of prison narrative, Jensen explores the themes of oppression and trauma in Soviet, Bulgarian, Cuban and North and South Korean texts, showing how testimonies often functioned as a kind of literary wing of the civil rights movement. The same focus on oppression and trauma informs the migrant poetry examined by Adam Piette. Generated by the innumerable military and political crises of the period, writings by Kurihara Sadako, Alexander Aronov, Christopher Okigbo and Severo Sarduy, amongst others, presented multifaceted responses to displacement and homelessness that, as Piette shows, complicated national divisions and refused the dichotomisation of cultures sought by propagandists. Such refusal is further illustrated

<sup>33</sup> ‘The reader looking for current utopias is likely to find them stumbling and unconvincing,’ Chad Walsh wrote in 1962: ‘but if he [sic] wants expertly-presented nightmares, he can choose amongst a greater variety of horrors than Dante on his pilgrimage through the nine circles of hell’ (Walsh, *From Utopia to Nightmare*, new edn (1962; Westport: Greenwood Publishers, 1972), p. 15).

<sup>34</sup> Michael Denning quoted in Pascoe, ‘Cold War’, p. 241. At times, commentators overstate the centrality of intelligence to the Cold War, as seen in Michael Herman’s claim that ‘[t]he Cold War was in a special sense an intelligence conflict’ and in David Pascoe’s assertion that ‘the main theatre of this war was the office, the conflict’s secrets contained in boxes, cabinets, and folders’ (Pascoe, ‘Cold War’, p. 241).

<sup>35</sup> John Atkins, *The British Spy Novel: Styles in Treachery* (London: John Calder, 1984), p. 9.

in Jacob Edmond's study of the poetic treatment of dissidence by Cold War poets. Attempting to avoid appropriation by one or other side of the political binary, many poets eschewed allegiance to dominant and oppositional ideologies, formulating political positions outside the usual Cold War categories from which to critique the division and conflict that characterised the period. The fact that artistic non-alignment was a difficult stance to maintain is taken up in Katherine Zien's work on the under-researched field of Cold War drama. Through case studies of Cuban, Nicaraguan, Kenyan, Eritrean and Ethiopian theatre, Zien reveals wide-ranging continuities in the ways that dramatists in 'hot' zones of the conflict used their work to critique political elites and mobilise audiences, although also shows how the political content of plays could lead to repression or co-optation on the part of governments. As with other contributions, the chapter indicates how a certain form of writing could originate in earlier periods but evolve rapidly after 1945, often showing remarkable unities between regions that appeared to lack any channels of knowledge transfer.

The third section of the volume moves to analyses of regional literatures in Europe, Asia, Africa, Oceania and the Americas. While illustrating the cultural variations that existed within and between nations, the chapters also emphasise the continuities that were created in particular regions by imperial legacies or superpower policies, continuities which these regions also shared with other parts of the world. Most extensively, the contributors reveal the multiple ways in which superpower policy not only exacerbated the despotism of local elites, but also became inflected by the region's cultural, social and political traditions. Many of these features are explored in Art Redding's contribution on the divergent institutional approaches to culture in Canada and the US. While the aim of the latter was to nurture literary production that would help export the ideal of free-market democracy, the Canadian policy was more defensive, aiming to mark out and promote a distinct national culture that could secure autonomy against the Cold War colossus to the south. Canada's national-cultural dilemmas recurred in more acute forms in the southern stretches of the Americas. Here, the social divisions and economic injustices created by past periods of colonialism were aggravated in the twentieth century by US attempts to secure political and economic advantage in the region. Christopher Bonner's contribution explores how the Caribbean became an arena for superpower competition after decolonisation, trapping societies between the competing claims of US capitalism and Soviet communism. Nonetheless, progressivist intellectuals such as Aimé Césaire, René Depestre, C.L.R. James and Nicolas Guillen sought an emancipatory literature that reflected leftist ideologies while insisting on the autonomous, creolised identities of local cultures. Sophie Esch extends the discussion to the literature of Central America, where cultural and political autonomy came under sustained assault by the US. Framing regional experience as an uneven struggle between the interests of US-backed elites and those of militant and guerrilla forces, Esch examines fictional and non-fictional treatments of imperialism, authoritarianism and political resistance and shows how writers simultaneously championed and questioned the radical movement,