Bradley, Mark Philip, and Mary L. Dudziak, eds. *Making the Forever War: Marilyn B. Young on the Culture and Politics of American Militarism*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2021.

Marilyn B. Young was a preeminent historian of American foreign relations. Perhaps best known for *The Vietnam Wars, 1945–1990* (1991), Young wrote and taught widely on war and international history. In *Making the Forever War: Marilyn B. Young on the Culture and Politics of American Militarism,* Mark Philip Bradley and Mary L. Dudziak assemble, for the first time, Young's scholarship on the broad nature of American militarism. Drawing from various writings and previously unpublished manuscripts, Bradley and Dudziak present a collection that testifies to the astonishing breadth and depth of Young's career. Her influence on contemporary American history is undeniable, and her strong voice of dissent and activist spirit shine through in her writing. A lifelong feminist and leftist who was unafraid to question accepted orthodoxies, Young pushed to interrogate the role of war in American society and the way it has become simultaneously invisible and ubiquitous.

Making the Forever War is divided into two parts. The first, "The Age of Global Power," catalogues Young's essays on twentieth-century American wars in Asia and the growth of the American empire. The second part, "Unlimited War, Limited Memory," chronicles Young's reflections on the normalization of ongoing conflicts in the Middle East in American public consciousness. Taken together, this collection presents a historian preoccupied with the meaning of war and a career spent grappling with militarism. The final essay in the collection is her SHAFR Presidential Lecture, aptly titled "'I Was Thinking, As I

Often Do These Days, of War'" (2011), in which she reflects: "I find that I have spent most of my life as a teacher and scholar thinking and writing about war. … Initially, I wrote about all of these as if war and peace were discrete: prewar, war, peace, or postwar. Over time, this progression of wars has looked to me less like a progression than a continuation: as if between one war and the next, the country was on hold. The shadow of war, as Michael Sherry called it fifteen years ago, seems not to be a shadow but entirely substantial: the substance of American history" (187). This volume speaks to the enduring importance of history and the politics of memory because it is in remembering that the meaning of war is created, recreated, and applied to subsequent conflicts.

Young's thoughtful analysis of American wars asks us to consider what war means, not just tactical or strategic imperatives. "There seem to be only two kinds of war the United States can fight" writes Young, "World War II and Vietnam" (165). World War II is the obvious symbol of a heroic and moral war, and yet even in the proselytising, there is a strategic forgetting of the role of the Soviets and other Allies in winning the war, and America's own culpability in atrocities. This heroic image was constructed even as it was being fought through military censorship of correspondence from soldiers and reporters. The brutality and senselessness of battle is obscured in the telling of war stories, and upon returning home veterans, "surrendered their war to the one civilians told them they had fought" (29). Vietnam, in contrast, had the unique combination of mass public attention (and outrage), veterans unwilling to relinquish their experiences and an embarrassing defeat for America. Through these reflections, as well as her analyses of other conflicts, Young articulated the way these wars are presented to the public. For

Young, "Vietnam Syndrome" no longer exists in the public sphere but is instead endemic in the government: "Vietnam, by negative example, had taught the civil and military branches of the government how to market a war as well as how to fight one" (165).

If there is one shortcoming, it is the repetitiveness of some of the essays which can be somewhat distracting and interrupt the reading experience. Young often returned not only to the same events, but to the same sources and quotations. In any other collection, this would feel completely redundant, but in this volume, repetition becomes a powerful tool for realizing the inner workings of a brilliant historical mind. At multiple points, Young recounts an American diplomat's speculations regarding the lessons to be learned from the war in Vietnam ("they will be whatever makes us think well of ourselves, so that our sleep will be untroubled"). She first uses this quotation as the introduction to "The Big Sleep," an essay published in *Red Badges of Courage: Wars and Conflicts in American Culture* (1998); it reappears in "The Age of Global Power," which was first published in *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* (2002) and acts as the introduction to this volume. In the repeated use of this quotation we are able to trace the ways in which Young's arguments changed over the years. The 1998 essay ends: "... I would like to think that many Americans have not been willing, or able, this time, to go back to sleep" (136), but by 2002, she made no such reassurances and instead spoke in present tense of the "need to keep in mind the reality of American hegemony and its dominant self absorbed culture" (34). Which is not to say that Young was a pessimist. Rather, she constantly called on historians to be critical and engaged. Through this repetition, we see her mulling ideas and allowing her analysis to evolve.

Making the Forever War is an excellent introduction to Young's work and stands as a testament to her career. It is required reading for anyone interested in the history of America's ongoing military actions around the world. Young's legacy is also a call to action for historians to decenter America's imperial self image, to make war visible, and to interrogate systems of power. The collection ends with her summation of the historian's craft: "It probably will not do for historians to howl or cry but it is certainly our work to speak and write so that a time of war not be mistaken for peacetime, nor waging war for making peace" (200).

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