



American Literature and Culture in an Age of Cold War: A Critical Reassessment (New American Canon)

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The time is right for a critical reassessment of Cold War culture both because its full cultural impact remains unprocessed and because some of the chief paradigms for understanding that culture confuse rather than clarify.

A collection of the work of some of the best cultural critics writing about the period, *American Literature and Culture in an Age of Cold War* reveals a broad range of ways that American cultural production from the late 1940s to the present might be understood in relation to the Cold War. Critically engaging the reigning paradigms that equate postwar U.S. culture with containment culture, the authors present suggestive revisionist claims. Their essays draw on a literary archive—including the works of John Updike, Joan Didion, Richard E. Kim, Allen Ginsberg, Edwin Denby, Alice Childress, Frank Herbert, and others—strikingly different from the one typically presented in accounts of the period.

Likewise, the authors describe phenomena—such as the FBI’s surveillance of writers (especially African Americans), biopolitics, development theory, struggles over the centralization and decentralization of government, and the cultural work of Reaganism—that open up new contexts for discussing postwar culture. Extending the timeline and expanding the geographic scope of Cold War culture, this book reveals both the literature and the culture of the time to be more dynamic and complex than has been generally supposed.

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