



The Naked Communist: Cold War Modernism and the Politics of Popular Culture

Roland Vegso

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The Naked Communist argues that the political ideologies of modernity were fundamentally determined by four basic figures: the world, the enemy, the secret, and the catastrophe. While the "world" names the totality that functioned as the ultimate horizon of modern political imagination, the three other figures define the necessary limits of this totality by reflecting on the limits of representation.

The book highlights the enduring presence of these figures in the modern imagination through detailed analysis of a concrete historical example: American anti-Communist politics of the 1950s. Its primary objective is to describe the internal mechanisms of what we could call an anti-Communist "aesthetic ideology." The book thus traces the way anti-Communist popular culture emerged in the discourse of Cold War liberalism as a political symptom of modernism. Based on a discursive analysis of American anti-Communist politics, the book presents parallel readings of modernism and popular fiction from the 1950s (nuclear holocaust novels, spy novels, and popular political novels) in order to show that, despite the radical separation of the two cultural fields, they both participated in a common ideological program.

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