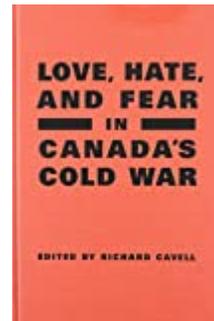




Richard Cavell, ed. *Love, Hate, and Fear in Canada's Cold War*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004. vi + 216 pp. \$26.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8020-8500-9; \$56.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8020-3676-6.



Reviewed by Christopher Dummitt (Department of History, Simon Fraser University)

Published on H-Canada (September, 2004)

What About Freud? Canada's New Cold War History

Just exactly who was Canada's "enemy" during the Cold War? Was it the Soviets? Communists more generally? Or was the category much more elusive, and broader? The consensus amongst Canadian social historians, as well as sociologists, and film and literary critics who work on this period, is increasingly forming around the latter answer. Although traditionally understood as a conflict between rival political ideologies and states, in actual practice the Cold War was as often as not a battle within western society itself. The conflict pitted politicians, bureaucrats, judges, and police against gays, lesbians, immigrants, and left-leaning individuals and groups. The concern in high politics over communist subversion and fifth columnists spread outwards, meaning that sexual, gender, and racial differences could themselves be construed as signs of subversion. You did not need to be a communist to be considered a Cold War enemy; you could equally be a woman who wanted to work outside the home, a man who liked to visit gay bars in Ottawa, or just someone who thought that nuclear weapons were a bad idea.

All of this should not come as a drastic surprise. This

has been the theme of much historical work on the American Cold War over the last fifteen years.[1] The work on Canada has been slower to emerge, and so the essays in *Canada's Cold War* are a welcome addition to the historical literature. Originally presented as a lecture series at the University of British Columbia's Green College, this collection brings together works from a number of the key figures currently trying to make sense of Canada's Cold War (Reg Whitaker, Steve Hewitt, Franca Iacovetta, Gary Kinsman, Mary Louise Adams, Valerie Korinek, Thomas Waugh, and Robert K Martin). As in most collections of this kind, the overall themes are difficult to decipher. The papers are divided into three sections based on the book's title: fear, hate and love. However, many papers could have appeared in any of the sections and neither the authors nor the editor seriously engage with these subject headings. We are on surer ground when, in his introduction, the editor Richard Cavell links all the papers together via their discussions of "the politicization of the personal" (p. 4). There are essays here showing how Cold War fears encouraged the regulation of sexuality, gender, and even religion. Sex and gender are the most repeated categories, with six of the nine pa-

pers exploring these themes. Moreover, the book focuses around the “cultural production” of these issues. Sometimes this is quite literal with five of the papers exploring their themes through the study of film, pulp fiction, newspapers, magazines and poetry. But more generally, the emphasis is on the cultural meaning of Cold War, and meaning here is not straightforward and always needs definition.

You should buy this book to read three of its papers, those by Valerie Korinek, Mary Louise Adams, and Steve Hewitt. Each of these papers tells us something new and important about the way the Cold War worked in Canada. In “‘It’s a Tough Time to be in Love’: The Darker Side of *Chatelaine* during the Cold War,” Korinek continues the work she did in her book *Roughing it in the Suburbs*, this time taking us into the discussion of international politics that appeared in Canada’s women’s magazine *Chatelaine*.^[2] The magazine shows evidence of serious debate amongst Canadian women over the main issues in Cold War politics including wary discussions of “progress,” the atomic bomb, and the differences between women in Canada versus women in communist countries. Moreover, Korinek argues that the debate in Canada differed from that in American magazines in that it was more open to discussing the darker aspects of these issues. The concerns over the “age of anxiety” that appeared in the stories and editorial content offered, she argues, “an implicit critique of the advertisements” and their focus on the “age of affluence.” In her contribution, “Margin Notes: Reading Lesbianism as Obscenity in a Cold War Courtroom,” Mary Louise Adams also gives us a wholly new angle on her already published work.^[3] Adams is able to dip into postwar discussions of lesbianism by focusing on a 1952 obscenity trial. During the trial, discussion over the pulp novel *Women’s Barracks* took up two days of discussion. And although lesbianism was not the major theme of the novel, it was this subject that interested the court. All involved in the trial characterized lesbianism as a “problem” but the differences lay in whether they believed the novel could serve to educate about this problem or whether its intention was to deprave and corrupt. Adams argues that the censorship of the novel was successful because of the way critics linked fears around sexuality and youth. Advocates of censorship could invoke the category of youth, noting that while adults would not be susceptible to the book’s dangers, teenagers might be.

Steve Hewitt’s contribution is perhaps the most conventional of all the papers and yet his insights help us to understand how the definition of “enemy” or “subver-

sive” could spread so widely. In “Sunday Morning Subversion: The Canadian Security State and Organized Religion in the Cold War,” Hewitt allows us to see the logic whereby the RCMP spied on such radical institutions as the United Church, the Mennonite Central Committee, and the Unitarian Church. Hewitt argues that a variety of factors including a vague definition of “subversion,” an ill-defined role, a lack of direction from political masters and the limited educational background of police officers contributed to a rapid expansion of targets for surveillance. He notes also that “the expansion of targets had a bureaucratic element, the state’s security system requiring continual information if for no other reason than to justify its existence” (p. 60). This led to the kinds of debates as that which tried to distinguish between communist-infiltrated groups or those in which membership alone implied communist sympathy. Hewitt’s paper gives the institutional answer that nicely complements the cultural fears as outlined in the other papers, especially Korinek and Adams.

While these papers are important reading, the book as a whole is less than it might have been. The papers contain conflicting information, not just of interpretation but also of fact. For example, in his introduction Cavell notes that homosexuals were purged from the federal civil service through use of the RCMP-funded “fruit machine,” yet elsewhere in the collection, Gary Kinsman argues that the “fruit machine” was unreliable and therefore abandoned. Instead, purges more regularly depended on old-fashioned spying. Similarly, Reg Whitaker argues that the 1952 changes to Canada’s Immigration Act that added homosexuality to the list of prohibited categories were largely imposed because of pressure by the Americans and were not used. Franca Iacovetta mentions the immigration restrictions as a sign of the moral panic around homosexuality that engulfed postwar Canada, yet does not mention these qualifying notes. Who are we to believe? Was the “fruit machine” effective or not? Is it important—or true—that the immigration restrictions were not used? These are all potentially explainable irregularities, but a thorough editing could have helped to iron out the differences. Further editing would also have helped us to make sense of Franca Iacovetta’s article on eastern European immigrants and their portrayal in Canadian media and social service reports. The article is enlightening about the different ways in which Canadians saw these immigrants, and even partially about the experiences of the immigrants themselves. However, it ends abruptly without a conclusion, leaving the reader waiting for some final

comments that would tie it all together.

The conceptual problems of the book become evident in the first essay to follow the introduction, Reg Whitaker's "We Know They're There": Canada and Its Others with or without the Cold War." The paper skillfully shows how the logic of the Cold War has been transformed and modified in the years since 1989. Delivered before September 11, 2001, Whitaker's paper warned that international terrorists were becoming the next chosen "other" who would help to consolidate political orthodoxy in North America. And yet, this paper should rightly have ended the book, showing the continuities between the Cold War and our own period. The problem is symptomatic. There is a tendency in the essays to expand what has traditionally been meant by the Cold War, and this can be very useful. But at what point does the concept itself become meaningless? At what point are we beginning to talk about something else—social and moral regulation more generally, for example? So although the book is ostensibly about the Cold War, some of the papers may go so far in trying to undermine this category that they fail to pay attention to what was specific to that period.

The issue becomes clearer when we realize that none of the words in the title—love, hate and fear—are seriously analysed within the book's covers. There is a lurking rationality behind all actions here, as if Cold War claims to be afraid of the "other"—whether political, sexual, or moral—were all just a smokescreen for more rational purposes. There is an eagerness here to look underneath, above and just about anywhere else except directly at emotion. This is surprising not only because of the book's title, but also because of the period's particular fascination with the role of impulse and emotion in social life. This was the period in which Freud and the notion of the unconscious entered public speech—the time when Canadians learned what it was to make a "Freudian slip." It was exactly this sense that people could be controlled by something other than reason that so frightened and, at the same time, attracted contemporaries.[4] Hollywood

films took up these themes. Perhaps the most famous example is *The Manchurian Candidate* in which a brainwashed Korean war veteran returns to the United States and is eventually ordered to kill a presidential candidate. The whole affair is given an Oedipal tinge by the fact that the person giving the communist orders in America is the veteran's mother (and much sexual tension ensues).[5] What makes this film so riveting, and what made it so frightening to those in the early 1960s, was the possibility that individuals could be made to do terrible things by stronger forces, whether communist brainwashers or the unconscious itself.

There is some great scholarship in *Love, Hate, and Fear in Canada's Cold War*, including some very fine individual essays. As a whole the book points to the inadequacy of seeing the Cold War merely in terms of high politics, showing just how far the tentacles of this ostensibly political development spread into cultural and social life. It helps to tear down one way of seeing the Cold War, even as it leaves open the way for an alternative vision.

Notes

[1]. See, for example, Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War* (New York: Basic Books, 1988); and Alan Nadel, *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism and the Atomic Age* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).

[2]. Valerie Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

[3]. Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble With Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

[4]. For a thoughtful discussion of what he calls "the allure of accident," see Jackson Lears, *Something For Nothing: Luck in America* (New York: Viking, 2003).

[5]. See Tom Vanderbilt's review of Greil Marcus, *The Manchurian Candidate* in *The London Review of Books* 125, no. 16 (August 21, 2003).

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

<https://networks.h-net.org/h-canada>

Citation: Christopher Dummitt. Review of Cavell, Richard, ed., *Love, Hate, and Fear in Canada's Cold War*. H-Canada, H-Net Reviews. September, 2004.

URL: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=9750>

Copyright © 2004 by H-Net, all rights reserved. H-Net permits the redistribution and reprinting of this work for nonprofit, educational purposes, with full and accurate attribution to the author, web location, date of publication, originating list, and H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences Online. For any other proposed use, contact the Reviews editorial staff at hbooks@mail.h-net.org.