

(Free download) The Reification of Desire: Toward a Queer Marxism

## The Reification of Desire: Toward a Queer Marxism

*Kevin Floyd*

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#307791 in Books Kevin Floyd 2009-06-12 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x .80 x 6.00l, 1.05 #File Name: 0816643962304 pages The Reification of Desire Toward a Queer Marxism | File size: 60.Mb

**Kevin Floyd : The Reification of Desire: Toward a Queer Marxism** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Reification of Desire: Toward a Queer Marxism:

19 of 19 people found the following review helpful. Toward Queer Marxism By tamiii In his book, *Global Sex*, Dennis Altman complains that his students of queer theory fail to appreciate the historical circumstances which the theories that they study were intended to explain. Here, Floyd cannot be said to be guilty of this sin. Capitalism creates abstractions which take on a seeming reality all their own, a process Lukacs called 'reification.' However, these ideas

are inseparable from the particular historical and social soil from which they were grown. Floyd deftly elaborates how movies like *Midnight Cowboy* can be understood within the context of a post-Depression regulatory impulse known as Fordism, an intentional policy of engendering consumption in a somewhat vain attempt to stabilize capitalism's relentless and anarchic accumulation of productive capacity. Floyd further analyzes how ascendant financial capital has supplanted the strategy of Fordism with a vicious neoliberalism which simply steals the little space which Fordism permitted queer communities. Those interested in this approach might also read Rosemary Hennessy's *Profit and Pleasure: Sexual Identities in Late Capitalism*. While Floyd's book is tight, thoughtful, and arrestingly clear for an academic work, he seeks to merge queer theory with marxism rather than place queer theory within marxism. The result is bleak. It reminds me of Christopher Isherwood's *Berlin Stories*--a tiny queer population scattered by a rising brutal militarism. Lost is the brilliant innovation which those original Communists brought to the American Gay Movement when the Mattachine Society was first formed. There, three men rethought Lenin's principle of the right of self-determination for oppressed people and applied it to homosexual men, treating them as if they were an oppressed nationality. Implicit in this tactic was the recognition that queer survival is intimately intertwined with the survival of working people as a whole. Perhaps a few months ago, a friend and I were lamenting the lack of interest among local California gay organizations in the fight for single payer national health care, a central issue to working people in the United States, and a primary concern of union members--and plainly a concern to anyone who is HIV positive. These organizations were focussed on gay marriage. No one can say these things for sure but it is probably the case that today in Massachusetts the number of gay men who have decided to marry is probably little different than the number who are HIV positive--both small minorities within a small minority. Yet, one issue offers the possibility of joining in coalition with larger class forces; the other, though 'assimilationist' does not. I am grateful for Floyd's book and recommend it to anyone who is interested in queer theory--if only for his brief insightful critique of Foucault and Butler. Yet, I still look forward to the day when the descendants of the founders of the Mattachine Society return to their roots.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars  
By Artistar  
Great book.

*The Reification of Desire* takes two critical perspectives rarely analyzed together: formative arguments for Marxism and those that have been the basis for queer theory, and productively scrutinizes these ideas both with and against each other to put forth a new theoretical connection between Marxism and queer studies. Kevin Floyd brings queer critique to bear on the Marxian categories of reification and totality and considers the dialectic that frames the work of Georg Lukacs, Herbert Marcuse, and Fredric Jameson. Reading the work of these theorists together with influential queer work by such figures as Michel Foucault and Judith Butler, and alongside reconsiderations of such texts as *The Sun Also Rises* and *Midnight Cowboy*, Floyd reformulates these two central categories that have been inseparable from a key strand of Marxist thought and have marked both its explanatory power and its limitations. Floyd theorizes a dissociation of sexuality from gender at the beginning of the twentieth century in terms of reification to claim that this dissociation is one aspect of a larger dynamic of social reification enforced by capitalism. Developing a queer examination of reification and totality, Kevin Floyd ultimately argues that the insights of queer theory require a fundamental rethinking of both.