



Materializing Queer Desire: Oscar Wilde to Andy Warhol

Elisa Glick

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Uses iconic dandy and queer figures to explore relationships between homosexuality, modernism, and modernity.

How did the queer subject come to occupy such a central, and in many respects, contradictory place in the modern world of the early twentieth century? What role has capitalism played in the development of modern gay and lesbian identities? Materializing Queer Desire focuses on the figure of the dandy to explore how and why gay and lesbian subjects became heroes of modern life. Elisa Glick argues that the gay subject emerged out of the specifically modern, capitalist contradiction between the public world of production and industry and the private world of consumption and pleasure. Boldly bringing modernism into dialogue with Marxist and queer theory, Glick offers an innovative, materialist account of modern queer consciousness that challenges tendencies to oppose “private” eroticism and the systems of value that govern “public” interests. In the process she illuminates the connections between aesthetic, sexual, and social formations in modern life—between modernity’s disruptive, “queer” desires and their unfolding in an increasingly rationalized society.

“...[a] tantalizing, informative, erudite and resourceful book ... Materializing Queer Desire deserves to be read widely and seriously. Its ideas will prove illuminating tools for future critical inquiries in the many corners of GLBT cultural scholarship, and Glick is to be congratulated for such an important first book.” — Gay & Lesbian Review

“It was a pleasure to read Glick’s bold, well-written, and original book. At its heart, the book demonstrates the mutual investment of theories of sexuality and those of the commodity, emphasizing the ways in which the (usually male) gay subject emerges in and within the contradictions of capitalist modernity, particularly between the ostensibly private world of pleasure and consumption and the public domain of production.” — Amy Villarejo, author of Lesbian Rule: Cultural Criticism and the Value of Desire

“I really like how this book traces the persistence of a series of tropes—from decadence to artifice to dandyism—through what we might tentatively call queer modernity. This book also bravely puts its methodological cards on the table from the outset, bringing queer studies and Marxism into productive conversation. It makes a brilliant contribution to modernism and queer studies.” — Kevin Floyd, author of The Reification of Desire: Toward a Queer Marxism

Elisa Glick is Associate Professor of English and Women’s and Gender Studies at the University of Missouri.

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