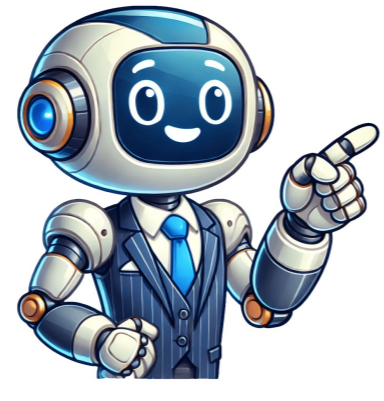


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Feeling backward heather love

Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History is a book that explores difficult and disturbing texts and contexts from the queer past. The author, Heather Love, encourages readers to engage with these narratives by embracing shame, fear, loneliness, obstinacy, and backwardness. Despite its challenging content, the book offers a hopeful perspective through its beautiful prose, theoretical sophistication, and attention to detail. Love's critiques of celebratory queer criticism are tempered by her concern for progressive intellectual and political life. This book is a significant contribution to queer studies, offering a new wave in thinking about the queer past. Feeling Backward challenges readers to reconsider the impact of early-20th-century literary works on queer readers. Drawing from psychoanalysis and Marxist philosophy, Heather Love rereads texts by Radclyffe Hall, Walter Pater, and others to examine "backward feelings" such as shame and depression. Feeling Backward explores the importance of acknowledging and valuing aspects of historical gay culture that are often overlooked in modern discussions of LGBTQ+ issues. The book examines how the increasing acceptance of same-sex marriage and gay-themed media has led to a phenomenon known as "gay assimilation," where individuals from marginalized communities conform to mainstream norms to avoid prejudice. By analyzing works by authors such as Radclyffe Hall, Sylvia Townsend Warner, and Willa Cather, Heather Love argues that this trend is not only erasing the past but also causing irreparable losses for the community. Feeling Backward looks back at lesbian and gay culture's mainstreaming, highlighting losses that threaten to disappear. The growing acceptance of same-sex marriage and LGBTQ+ media has its benefits, but assimilation also entails other costs, particularly for historical aspects of the community that are closely tied to pain and shame. Feeling Backward aims to preserve these elements, which are often dismissed as outdated or embarrassing. It reevaluates early-twentieth-century queer novels, asking how we can value and reclaim their dark emotions. Heather Love argues that this history continues to impact us today, urging us to consider its effects rather than moving forward. Feeling Backward by Heather Love is a comprehensive online PDF/ePUB that delves into the world of lesbian and gay culture, exploring the costs of assimilation and the importance of valuing historical experiences that are often overlooked. The book aims to challenge the notion of progress in queer history, arguing that a more nuanced understanding of social exclusion and its effects is necessary. Love examines the works of influential authors such as Walter Pater, Willa Cather, Radclyffe Hall, and Sylvia Townsend Warner, seeking to reclaim the dark feelings and emotions associated with these texts. Love's attempt to create an image repertoire of queer modernist melancholia, aimed at highlighting both the losses of queer modernity and the ambivalence surrounding these losses in literature from the period, is marred by her failure to adequately manage key terms and concepts. By arguing against models of progress, queer utopianism, and pride-as-normality, Love finds support among many queer critics, who acknowledge the limitations of the "pride" model and its entanglement with capitalist logic. However, Love's negotiation of these ideas is often frustrating and poorly managed. She begins by asserting that queerness itself is part of a legacy of backwardness, yet later suggests this characteristic applies only to specific modernist performances within her study. This slippage creates ambiguity around the term "backwardness," leaving unclear whether it's a queer trait or a feature of certain queer figures in relation to an otherwise forward-looking tradition. Furthermore, Love fails to adequately theorize negativity as such, instead grouping diverse terms like loneliness, passivity, victimization, and refusal under a single umbrella without justification. This oversight becomes one of the major issues with her work: she neglects to provide a comprehensive analysis of the figures of refusal and backwardness, despite identifying them and launching arguments against their recuperation. For critics, this failure is deeply dissatisfying because it reproduces the problem of the queer imperative. While Love successfully deconstructs the imperative to pride, she does not convincingly argue that embracing shame is a specifically queer component of modernism. Other scholars, such as Mia McIver, have explored similar themes without necessarily framing them within a queer context. The most compelling aspects of Heather Love's "Feeling Backward" are actually rooted in optimism. For instance, her examination of Walter Pater's concept of the vestibule is intriguing not because it emphasizes passivity, but rather because it highlights the transformative power of this liminal space. Conversely, Love's argument falters when she relies on examples that veer towards messianic and spectral futurities, which, although appearing negative on the surface, ultimately participate in an overwhelmingly optimistic philosophical stance. Furthermore, her concluding statement inadvertently performs the very recuperation she claims to resist: "the question facing us is how to make a future backward enough that even the most reluctant among us might want to live there" (163). Love's book presents a thought-provoking argument that resonates deeply with contemporary queer authors. The feeling of being stuck in the past, prevalent in many works from the 20th century, is skillfully articulated and contextualized by Love, revealing its significance within queer culture. Most notably, she posits that these sentiments cannot be dismissed through gay pride alone. It's difficult not to ponder the implications of her arguments and consider their potential applications. Love's work suggests a queer politics that incorporates the negative emotions inherent in queer experiences (such as shame, self-hatred, and loss) instead of rejecting them altogether like pride culture does. Although this premise is undeniably captivating, Love remains somewhat ambiguous regarding what this alternative queer politics would entail in practice. Additionally, she occasionally universalizes the queer experience while at other times minoritizing it. Love's research opens up an intriguing realm of ideas concerning the practical utility of negative emotions within a political context, as well as the distinction between personal experiences and their potential for political impact. Throughout her analysis of various literary works, Love presents several compelling points that are mostly relegated to supporting her overarching theme. One potential criticism is that Love may have taken on too many "backward feelings." Her exploration of the connection between loss and the impossibility of love was particularly effective (though it raises questions about how Lacan's notion of love as impossible contributes to this understanding). However, it's unclear how this relationship differs from those involving queerness and other negative emotions such as shame or depression. Perhaps it lies in the temporal/phenomenological implications: loss situates us within time, whereas shame and depression might displace us from it. Not all feelings are inherently backward-looking or focused on the past. Ultimately, Love's work is a crucial contribution to theoretical discussions surrounding generational trauma, affect, historical consciousness, ghosts, injury, and isolated identity. It encourages readers to engage with difficult historical material in a way that is both essential and necessary for understanding our collective experiences. The concept of coming out is often romanticized, but in reality, it can be a daunting and anxiety-ridden experience. The societal pressures surrounding identity can feel overwhelming, making it difficult for individuals to break free from the shackles of heteronormative paradigms. Mourning and loss are deeply tied to shame, yet rejecting these norms can lead to the destruction of certain emotional, cultural, and intellectual ties while creating new bonds. Love draws inspiration from Odysseus's encounter with the Sirens, where he survives by listening to their song while moving forward. This serves as a cautionary tale, urging us to engage with negative affects and difficulties in making feeling the basis for politics. In her chapter on Radclyffe Hall's "Spoiled Identity," Love explores the complexities of loneliness as a historically specific structure of feelings. The concept of loneliness is particularly relevant to transgender identities within a queer context. The policing of identity politics can be a site of fissure, with individuals facing judgmental reactions when they don't conform to societal expectations. Dean Spade's work highlights the importance of appearing "normal" and traditionally masculine or feminine, yet this comes at the cost of erasing marginalized identities. This book offers an interesting engagement with questions about embracing negative feelings and considering the room it leaves for the "tragic" figures of early queer history, including sad queens and butches. Love's book is an engaging and thought-provoking exploration of queer history and literary readings. While it doesn't delve deeply into historiography itself, her discussion on thinking about a queer past is invaluable for those interested in history as practice. Her focus on texts may benefit readers with a greater familiarity, but it sparked enthusiasm for reading The Well of Loneliness. However, she could have utilized Jose Esteban Muñoz's Disidentifications more effectively to address the complexities of her arguments. The book offers a compelling perspective that challenges critics to acknowledge the validity of emotions evoked by queer texts, despite their historical context. Love makes excellent points about interpretations and criticisms, yet occasionally presents them in an uncharitable light. Her epilogue is stronger than the rest of the book, providing a more nuanced exploration of negative affect within broader cultural contexts. A significant oversight is her lack of discussion on HIV/AIDS, an issue that has had a profound impact on the LGBTQ+ community. Given article text here "Love's theory has a lot to offer when it comes to understanding queer history, but I'm not entirely convinced by her approach. The author makes a compelling case for reevaluating the way we discuss queerness in history, highlighting the importance of engaging with shame and loss. While I appreciate her ideas on how to approach queer texts, I have some reservations about the methodology used. Despite these criticisms, Love's work provides a valuable contribution to the field, offering new insights into the complexities of queer identity and experience. It is essential reading for scholars interested in historical references to LGBT work, but it may not be suitable for casual readers due to its academic tone. Love tackles complex ideas, such as the concept of a one-size-fits-all history of queer people, but her analysis can be confusing at times. However, her introduction and conclusion provide a strong foundation for her arguments. Overall, Love's work is engaging and thought-provoking, offering much to consider for readers willing to invest time and effort into understanding its complexities."