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Review of Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940

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accuracy, as Arizona, which has always been considered part of the Southwest, is not part of the story of Comancheria. That minor complaint aside, the text makes the case for the agency of Native-Americans masterfully, and provides a historical perspective that should be made standard throughout academia.

Michael Luneburg

Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940. By George Chauncey. New York: Basic Books, 1994.

The homosexual struggle is often linked to "the closet" concept. The closet sectioned the homosexual from the rest of the "normal" world. Chauncey argues in *Gay New York* that the three myths of homosexual culture (isolation, invisibility and internalization) are all embodied in the image of the closet and that this concept did not exist before the 1960s. He states that "gay people in the past did not speak or conceive of themselves as living in a closet" (p.6), however this does not prevent historians from using the concept of the closet, but it does "suggest that we need to use it more cautiously and precisely, and to pay special attention to the very different terms people used to describe themselves and their social worlds" (p.6). The various terms as well as the various locations that men would meet helped shape the gay world.

Chauncey combines informal records and public records to create an image of New York's gay culture in reference to the different time periods he covers. Gay male culture was not concrete and adapted accordingly not only to the time period, but also to outside forces that attempted to prevent their existence. Gay culture also had different appearances depending on the men that embodied them, for instance a "normal" married man who had sexual experiences with other men did not have the same experience as an effeminate "fairy."

Chauncey structures his book as a reaction to the three myths of isolation, invisibility and internalization. He first gives reports of successful police raids on gay locales such as bars, parks, and bath houses as well as the concept of vigilantes against homosexuality and then asserts through personal stories that the anti-gay culture did not prevent homosexuals from interacting and creating a culture of their own.

The next myth contests that gay men remained invisible to both the "normal" people and other gay men, preventing gay men from interacting with one another. Chauncey proves that this is untrue because "fairies" remained openly effeminate allowing both "normal" and gay men to know that they were gay. Besides this he also reveals that gay men had mannerisms, dress, and other indicators that kept them hidden from non-gay men. In addition to secret techniques, the private bath houses served as the social and sexual hubs for gay men to feel safe with their sexuality. This is not to say that there were not unsafe ways for men to satisfy their sexual needs. Tearooms, which were just public washrooms, were dedicated to impersonal sex between strangers and were often more dangerous.

The chapter "Internalization" contested that gay men did not resist their oppression. The "fairies" flamboyance and openness about their sexuality contests the myth of internalization. Not only this but other gay men would continue to frequent bath houses, parks and other gay establishments in spite of the possibility of police intervention. In general interference was fairly uncommon.

Chauncey's text is a useful look at the homosexual world. He does meet his goal of creating an image of homosexual culture before the 1960s revolution. His use of personal reports and public records creates a vivid description of the world that homosexual men were allowed to create due to being men. Without the use of personal stories and other personal primary sources the text would not have been able to dispel

any of the myths. This is not to say that Chauncey's book is the final text on the subject of homosexuality. He admits that the time period he has written about leaves room for more texts on the subject in the future. Regardless of its shortcomings due to a limited scope, Chauncey's text is valuable both as a text about homosexuality and sexuality in general.

Aaron Lan

The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity. By Jill Lepore. New York: Vintage Books, 1998.

Wars, especially those fought on the frontier of culture, generate mythical stories of heroism, nationalism, and pride as well as gore, death, and atrocity. Little known conflicts such as King Philip's War are no exception and woven into the accounts of this battle with Metacom is a fundamental crisis of identity. "Wounds and words," writes Jill Lepore, "cannot be separated" and these two things join in the common purpose of "defining the geographical, political, cultural and sometimes racial and national boundaries between peoples" (p. x).

The book is categorized into four topically distinct sections: Language, War, Bondage, and Memory. "Language" emphasizes the role of written and spoken communication in New England between the English colonials and the Algonquins. Not only did the lack of effective communication (of grievances and diplomacy) lead to hostilities but, yet more profound, the murder of John Sassamon, a literate Indian, represents a dangerous neutral area that neither side could suffer to exist. Literacy or, more specifically, the cultural threat literacy symbolized killed John Sassamon but also any chance of the Algonquin side of the story being told.

The second major section, "War," accounts how more physical elements of cul-

ture were used to both define what each society was and was not. Homes, agriculture, clothing, and livestock were important symbols of livelihood, privacy, and property which were all English values. In contrast, the nakedness and semi-nomadic lifestyle of the Native Americans was seen as barbaric and immoral. Lepore argues that the war was a conquest of personal and societal identity as much as it was about killing the other side.

The section titled "Bondage" demonstrates even more points of contention within New England society. Mary Rowlandson and Printer both appeared in captivity together but whereas Rowlandson went on to write a wildly popular account that "saved" her soul, or her identity, from proximity to Indian culture, Printer was required to kill two enemy Indians. It was an irony that Printer later printed Rowlandson's account but highlighted the precarious position literate Indians found themselves in during the war. Slavery also played an important role, justifying the perpetual widening of the chasm between cultures that amounted to the Indians becoming subhuman in the eyes of colonists.

"Memory" is the final section of the book which explains the written legacy of King Philip's War. The Indians had only oral stories while the English commemorated events in books and almanacs which gave them alone the power to reshape the memory of the war in a palatable image to those whose war of identity was still raging. The play *Metamora*; or, the Last of the Wampanoags allows, almost a century after the war, Americans to use the image of King Philip and the "noble savage" as a way to prove their Americanness. With the Indians long subdued and removed from New England, Americans were comfortable enough to use the repressed culture with pride but at the same time agree that it was inevitable and right that it disappear.

The Name of War delivers insightful analysis on the tribulations and roots of American identity as well as the roles that identity and language play during conflict