Building Gay Neighborhood’s Enclave

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**Introduction**

A significant change has been observed in the gay male world from 1890 to 1930. Chauncey made extensive research to demonstrate the changes that have been made before World War II. It is notable to mention that the author has used diaries, oral histories, newspaper accounts, and police records to illustrate the existence of a gay world before World War II. A critical examination of "Gay New York" is highly necessary to determine the existence of certain gay communities in New York. The author explicitly describes the urge of gay men to establish a specific space for them so they can be engaged in an intimate relationship with others. The urge for the establishment of a gay world was easily visible in the two neighborhoods including Greenwich Village and Harlem. Here, the focus is to illustrate the building of gay enclave in the New York region during the 1910s and 1920s.

**Discussion**

It is noteworthy to mention that the author has provided with an in-depth analysis and understanding of homosexuality. The author has demonstrated the idea that homosexuality was considered highly unethical due to which the gay community had to hide their sexual desires. A large number of anti-gay laws was in place due to which the gay world found it difficult to disclose their sexual identity (Chauncey, 1995). In order to avoid these anti-gay laws, the gay community began to found various necessary means to sustain in society. Literary skills of the author along with the provision of sufficient evidence such as reports by the anti-vice communities helped in revealing the bitter reality of the world before World War II. The areas of Greenwich Village and Harlem began to provide support for the gay community, which ultimately led to the establishment of the exclusive and discrete communities. Establishment of certain clubs and hotels began to provide gay men with an opportunity to interact with other homosexual individuals. Regardless of hiding their desires, gay men were able to express their feelings and affections of homosexuality in front of other gay members, without anyone judging them (Chauncey, 1995). It is important to mention that the provision of such space enabled the empowerment of the gay community.

The author demonstrates the ways in which the gay community carved out spaces for themselves to sustain in a given community. It is notable to mention that gay culture was highly suppressed in the late 19th and early 20th century. During that time period, the concept of homosexuality was considered as a taboo concept in the society, due to which it remained unseen for a major portion of the time. It is important to consider the fact that self-consciousness and group identification was unlikely to be accepted due to the lack of urban sub-cultures. Hence, the gay community began to provide opportunities for themselves in the two neighborhood, Greenwich Village and Harlem (Chauncey, 1995). The author tried to explain the reason behind the suppression of the gay community in the early 20th century. Sexual activities of gay were considered unethical in society. Anti-gay forces were in place due to the changing social antipathy. The systematic suppression of the gay community was not in place due to the sign of acquiescence or passivity by the gay community. However, the major reasons behind the suppression and oppression of gay people were in place due to the openness and assertiveness of gay people. It was analyzed by the leaders and members of the community that assertiveness of gay people would be catastrophic for the coming generations. The author demonstrated that the anti-gay forces wanted to damage the assertiveness of gay men and women in order to restrict its progress.

Extensive anti-gay forces made it difficult for gay men and women to live peacefully in those current circumstances. With the passage of time, an extensive gay world began to shape itself in the region of New York City. The author illustrated that the establishment of saloons, cafeterias, and apartments in New York began to provide a sustaining the environment for these gay men and women. At the beginning of the 1890s, gay people began to play a critical role in the social life of that region. With the availability of cafeterias, apartments, and saloons, gay people began to interact with each other without any fear of getting caught (Chauncey, 1995). The author demonstrated that the provision of a sustaining environment in the neighborhood allowed gay men to drank freely with sailors in that region.

The author significantly explored the importance of various residential opportunities in the neighborhood to provide a better understanding of the entire scenario. It is notable to mention that gay people were unable to show affection to one another in public space due to the placement of various anti-gay laws and forces. In order to engage in affections and intimate relations, gay people needed a specific place within that society (Chauncey, 1995). The author illustrated that the establishment of residence hotels and men’s club provided gay people with an opportunity to engage in an intimate relationship with one another. The author had given an example of Young Men’s Christian Associations (YMCAs), which afforded privacy to the young gay men in that region. It is noteworthy to mention that YMCAs were established to restrict the activities of the gay community and to rescue young individuals from the bad habit of homosexuality (Chauncey, 1995). However, with the passage of time, some of these YMCAs became a hub for young individuals to socially engage with each other.

The author presented the theme of invisibility with the existence of various cafeterias and bars within Greenwich Village and Harlem. It is essential to consider the importance of cafeterias and restaurants that provided an opportunity for the young population to fulfil their sexual desires. The author illustrated that it was easy for young men to drop their masks in order to avail the comfort of their other homosexual partner. In order to avoid from the anti-gay forces, gay men began to utilize comfort and affections in the gay bars. It has been analyzed by the author that class, race, and masculinity had made the existence of gay life multifaceted. The area of Harlem served as the center of the black gay community (Chauncey, 1995). The author had demonstrated that whites were also fascinated by the enclave in Harlem. Gay urban spaces in the Harlem and Greenwich Village was an initial step towards gay empowerment. However, each step towards gay empowerment met with strong and robust repression. The author argued that urban space for bachelors from residential opportunities to the bathhouse culture secured the future of the gay community.

**Conclusion**

In a nutshell, the author explicitly demonstrated various circumstance in the late 19th and early 20th century that suppressed gay community to flourish. Several anti-gay forces discouraged gay community to show affections towards one another. In order to empower themselves, gay men began to show affection towards one another in bars and hotels. Regardless of certain anti-gay policies in-place, gay community utilized a coping mechanism to sustain in the current circumstances. Areas of Harlem and Greenwich Village provide a sustaining environment for these gay men to remain even after the placement of anti-gay laws.

**References**

Chauncey, G. (1995). *Gay New York: The making of the gay male world, 1890-1940*. London: Flamingo.