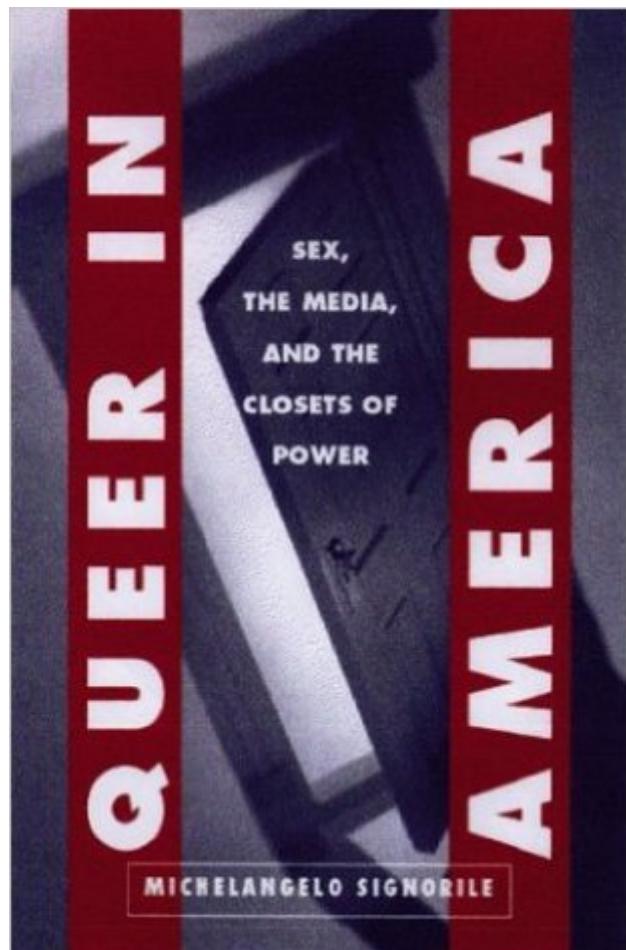


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Queer In America: Sex, The Media, And The Closets Of Power



Synopsis

In this tenth-anniversary edition, journalist Michelangelo Signorile updates his classic *Queer in America*, the bestseller that exposed the hypocrisy and prejudice that pervade mainstream American institutions. This third edition includes a new preface and a new chapter with an eye-opening critique of present-day America and its attitude toward gays and lesbians.

Book Information

Paperback: 456 pages

Publisher: University of Wisconsin Press; 2 edition (August 15, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0299193748

ISBN-13: 978-0299193744

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars See all reviews (8 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #2,066,079 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #98 in Books > Gay & Lesbian > Nonfiction > Coming Out #3713 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Specific Demographics > Gay & Lesbian #11745 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Communication & Media Studies

Customer Reviews

Never before did I have such a strong understanding of how the media and America's major power structures work until I read this book. In his unapologetic confrontational (and even gutsy) style, Signorile has stared down the actors, directors, politicians, writers, etc who'd prefer to sit silent as queers are beaten, taunted, denied housing, equal protection; as queers are denied their right to exist. One of the most fascinating sections is the one on the New York power structure (I especially like the chapter explaining how ACT UP was created, from the grassroots up). If there's anything I disliked about this book, it's that too often Signorile contradicts his own beliefs: there are way too many times when instead of exposing gay public figures as gay, he allows them to remain anonymous.

Signorile's ground-breaking text on the Closet and all its horror should be fundamental reading for everyone--gay or straight. Straight people may find the text particularly interesting in coming to understand why the closet exists, how it has manifested itself, and why it is very, very bad. Signorile

has a lucid, provocative style--and each chapter is replete with intriguing perspectives on how the closet and homosexuals have functioned in Hollywood and the movies, New York and pop culture, and Washington and politics. Last is a Gay Manifesto--a kind of challenge for gays and straights alike to work together to destroy the closet for good. In the end, this will probably become a canonized work of 20th-century gay and lesbian writing. It does have a somewhat dated effect on readers today--the urgency for social change that underpins Signorile's text seems overly harsh for the '00s. Nonetheless, this is a must-read, absolutely.

Before I read this book, I was vehemently opposed to the policy of "outing". Signorile wrote both so logically and so well that I was forced to think about this issue in some depth. Moreover, I came to be convinced by his arguments. I'm still not comfortable with this, but I think he's right. The closet destroys far too many people.

This book was written a decade ago, and a final updated chapter was added last year. It is a fascinating look at the state of Queer America in the late 80's and early 1990's. More important, it is a powerful exploration of the devastating effects of the "closet" in the centers of power, especially Washington and Hollywood. A compelling study of the effect of the closet on people in power and how they are twisted by the closet into actions that are devastating to their own lives and destructive to the GLBT community (can anyone say New Jersey?) Signorile was instrumental in early Queer journalism, and was, once upon a time, excoriated for "outing" public figures. He explains the history and justification for this approach, and his arguments are more than convincing. Highly recommended, required reading.

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