

partners would be uninteresting. When he fell in love, he was in the state of agitation which the ancient Greeks had called *aphrosyne*, a total loss of self-control that left him unable to write, obsessively jealous, and driven to verbal cruelty at the expense of the loved one.

Noel Coward is the classic example of the British "man of the theatre" of the twentieth century. His plays do not make pleasurable reading: they need to be seen and heard. Rich in wit and feeling, they reveal the author's talent above all in the design of the scenes and the scintillating dialogue. They are always more entertaining than profound, appealing to the element in the Anglo-Saxon character that rejects anything intellectual and wants only to spend an evening in the theatre to be relieved of the cares of the day. Unlike such authors as Wilde and Firbank, he rarely attempted the epigram or toyed directly with ideas in his plays. He shared the homosexual sense of living for the moment and not for the posterity that would never be. His comedies are masterful less for the situations in which the characters find themselves than for the dialogue by which they extricate themselves from them. But however wanting in ideas his comedies may have been, they captivated audiences for a generation, and made the author a phenomenon, a beloved theatrical personality. While Coward could not openly reveal his homosexuality to an Anglo-American public that had not reached the level of sophistication needed to accept it, his sexuality tinted the image of life that his plays projected onto the stage and screen.

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Warren Johansson

CRANE, HART (1899–1932)

American poet. Born in Ohio, Crane lived mainly with the family of his mother after his parents' separation when he was three. From his mother's Christian Science beliefs (which he formally abandoned) he distilled a kind of "home-brew" neo-Platonism in which true reality was remote, and when glimpsed, evanescent. His poetry tends to recall epiphanic moments of ecstasy, which have occurred fleetingly in the past or can be hoped for, rather than exhibit the fruits of any steady vision. Because of syntactic and other uncertainties, the poems are often hard to interpret. Undoubtedly these difficulties of resolution were linked to his double sense of alienation as a homosexual and an artist coming to maturity in an America that prized "normalcy."

After failing to find satisfactory employment in his father's businesses, Crane moved to New York City where he worked as a copy writer in an advertising agency. The intensity of life in the metropolis was both a creative goad and an intolerable strain. In 1923 he fell in love with the heterosexual Slater Brown, since Brown only wanted friendship, Crane sought sexual satisfaction in the speakeasies and with sailors, who then ranked as major homosexual icons. For most of his life Crane was troubled by the fact that his intellectual friends did not sympathize with his sexual nature. In 1924, however, Crane fell in love with a Danish publisher, Emil Opffer, and his feelings were reciprocated. The wonder of this event gave him the energy to envision his ambitious cycle *The Bridge*, which he was never able to carry out as he had intended.

Crane's poetry was influenced by the Elizabethan writers and the French symbolists, as well as living modernists, such as T. S. Eliot. By the time he began *The Bridge*, however, Whitman had emerged as the dominant influence; the older Brooklyn poet was important to Crane both for his sense that America itself was

an epic subject and because of his sexual orientation. Employing a kind of musical structure as a unifying element, *The Bridge* (1930) took the arc of the Brooklyn Bridge, which the poet could see from his room in Brooklyn Heights, as a symbol of the dynamism of America. The successive sections of the poem recount major elements of the American experience, including Columbus, Pocahontas, Rip Van Winkle, Melville, Poe, Whitman, and even the subway.

Crane was granted only about eight years of full maturity as a poet. Troubled by alcoholism and difficulty in achieving self-esteem, he traveled restlessly. Returning from Mexico, where he had gone to write a poem on Montezuma, Crane threw himself overboard from a ship and was drowned.

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Wayne R. Dynes

CRETE

Lying almost halfway between Greece and Egypt, Crete like Cyprus, the other large island in the Eastern Mediterranean, received writing, urban culture, and other elements of civilization from Egypt, Syria, and Palestine.

Minoan and Mycenaean Society.

Minoan civilization takes its name from the legendary Minos, king of the city of Cnossus, in whose labyrinth the Minotaur, son of a bull and Minos' wife Pasiphae, lurked to devour human sacrificial victims sent as tribute from Greece until it was killed by the legendary Athenian hero Theseus. On his return trip to Athens Theseus abandoned Ariadne, Minos' daughter who had helped him find his way through the labyrinth to the Minotaur, and took a boy as his *eromenos*. Modern archeologists divide Minoan civilization into three stages: early (ca. 3000–2200 B. C.), middle (ca. 2200–1500), and late (ca.

1500–1000), decline setting in about 1200 B.C. owing to earthquakes, fires, and invasions by sea peoples including Greeks. Artistic depictions suggest that Minoan religion included the worship of snakes, leaping bulls, and other sensual symbols and practices. Nudity was the exception in their art, and no unusual evidence of pederastic activity occurs in it. Because of the bare-breasted female figurines, including the so-called "snake goddesses," some feminists have hailed Minoan civilization as matriarchic, but this claim has no real support.

Although the tablets written in Minoan script (Linear A) remain undeciphered, in 1956 Michael Ventris published his decipherment of those in Linear B (an early form of Greek), many of which were also found on the mainland, particularly the Peloponnesus, to which their script had been imported by Achaean Greek invaders from there who conquered the island ca. 1400 B.C. Linear B tablets also show no evidence of pederasty, although they mention almost all the major Greek gods and goddesses, with the gods dominating the goddesses, being mainly tribute lists, inventories, and other financial records. Mycenaean art was less sensuous than Minoan, perhaps because unprotected by the sea, Mycenaeans, having unlike Minoans to wall their cities and stand on the alert, could less enjoy leisure and sensuality.

The Question of Pederastic Origins. The absence of any indication of pederasty in Minoan and Mycenaean records and remains indicates that pederasty had not yet been institutionalized in Greece, despite myths written later assigning pederasty to Minos and to Zeus. Beginning in the Archaic period (800–500 B.C.), when the first evidence becomes available (just before 600) with the introduction of writing among Greeks, this time in an adaptation of the Phoenician script after a 400-year illiterate "dark age" from 1200 to 800, during which barbarous Dorian Greeks seized the island, most