

the influence of drugs at the moment" (paralleling sober). Later expansions included "not inebriated" or "teetotaler." The term is semantically greedy, and new usages are appearing; thus in reference to employment, it may mean "normal/reportable to the government/taxable." Nonetheless, there remain three main layers to the colloquial meaning of straight: (1) honest or respectable; (2) heterosexual; (3) drug-free/sober. As with many argot terms this polysemy (multiplicity of meanings) serves the purpose of the deviant user group in confusing eavesdropping outsiders, even though this effect fades as the term seeps into general usage. From a sociological point of view, one can also note the testimony of the word about the propinquity of populations brought together by the maintenance of the victimless-crime laws. These groups are "birds of a feather" because society has made them so.

Built along lines similar to "bent" is the term "kinky," which originated as a directional term, developed a reference to criminality, and in recent times, perhaps in reaction to the growing sexual use of "straight," gained a non-pejorative sexual sense as a reference to erotic eccentricity, whether heterosexual or homosexual.

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DIAGHILEV, SERGEI PAVLOVICH (1872-1929)

Russian cultural figure and ballet impresario. Diaghilev came from a family of provincial nobles whose fortune derived from ownership of a vodka distillery. In 1890 he went to St. Petersburg to pursue a career while living in the household of his aunt and uncle. Their son Dmitri ("Dima") integrated the young man into a preco-

ocious set that had formed at his gymnasium, including the artists Alexander Benois, Konstantin Somov, and Leon Bakst. The newcomer soon established a sexual relationship with his handsome cousin Dima, and they traveled on holiday to Italy together. Diaghilev, who eventually discovered that he lacked the talent to become either a singer or a composer as he intended, began to look for another area in which to make his mark. He found it in the burgeoning artistic and cultural activity of what has come to be known as Russia's Silver Age. Russian symbolist poets and artists were casting off the narrow constrictions of aesthetic utilitarianism in favor of new trends that were both cosmopolitan and at the same time in touch with Russia's historic past.

The first great phase of Diaghilev's impact on the arts lasted from 1899 to 1909. He became the animator of *Mir Iskusstva* ("The World of Art"), which was both a group of intellectuals and artists and a sumptuous magazine. Although this work of editing and promotion brought Diaghilev into contact with ballet, at this time he was concerned with all the arts, for the program of cultural renovation proposed by *Mir Iskusstva* was all-embracing: painting, poetry, drama, dance, even architecture and the crafts. Unfortunately for Diaghilev, *Mir Iskusstva* was to lead to his breakup with his cousin-lover, for Zinaida Gippius, an ambitious writer and member of the group, succeeded in taking Dima away from him in 1904.

From 1906 to 1909 Diaghilev was engaged in organizing a series of exhibitions of Russian art in Paris, as well as performances of Russian concerts and operas. In 1908, in the course of organizing a ballet company, he had his fateful meeting with Vaslav Nijinsky, a promising young dancer at the Imperial Ballet. At that time Nijinsky was being kept by a wealthy aristocrat, Prince Pavel Lvov who seemed, however, willing to part with his protégé. In their five years together, Diaghilev was able to shape Nijinsky into

one of the finest dancers the world has ever seen, a figure who is inseparable from such masterpieces as Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* and Debussy's *Afternoon of a Faun*—ballets that Diaghilev organized. However, on an ocean voyage to South America, Nijinsky deserted him for a Hungarian ballerina. Diaghilev replaced him with the sixteen-year-old Léonide Massine, who, though heterosexual, was willing to go along with the relationship to learn what Diaghilev could teach him.

In the meantime Diaghilev's first efforts at establishing the ballet were difficult, though he did present the world with the genius of Igor Stravinsky through *The Firebird*. In 1911 he formed his own company, which from its base in Paris reached other Western European cities. World War I caused problems, but Diaghilev was nonetheless able to keep things going from Rome. Throughout his career as an impresario Diaghilev had the ability—through his matchless self-confidence—to rescue triumphs from seemingly impossible situations.

The last decade of his life was the time of achievement that has made his name virtually synonymous with ballet. He had not only a sure instinct for dancers, but also for conductors, composers and artists. He was able to utilize avant-garde artists such as Pablo Picasso, André Derain, and Georges Rouault in such a way as to make them accessible to a middlebrow public. In this way he made a decisive contribution to the emergence of modernist painting from its earlier constricted environment. During his last years Diaghilev had non-exclusive affairs with three young men: the English dancer Patrick Healy Kay (who became known by the name that the impresario gave him, Anton Dolin); the Russian dancer Serge Lifar; and the Russian conductor Igor Markevitch. In August 1929, after completing twenty years of ceaseless creativity in Western Europe, Diaghilev died suddenly in Venice, his favorite city, where he was buried.

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DICKINSON, EMILY (1830-1886)

American poet. After brief periods at Amherst Academy and Holyoke Female Seminary, she settled into an outwardly uneventful life keeping house for her family. Dickinson never married. The real events in her life are her writings, which have assumed classic status in American literature.

Emily Dickinson's letters to several of her female acquaintances convince us that throughout her life she had strong emotional attachments, which may be described as love relationships, with other women. A comparison of such love letters with letters which she wrote at about the same time to women who were merely good friends indicates that her impassioned language was not simply sentimental rhetoric of the period, and that these involvements, while probably non-genital, were clearly homoerotic. Those letters help to explain the forty or fifty poems in the Dickinson canon which cannot be understood unless recognized as love poems from one woman to another.

Certainly Dickinson had heterosexual interests as well—the Master letters, those to Judge Otis Lord, and many of her poems are irrefutable proof. But it is impossible to doubt the intensity of her involvement with women when one reads letters such as those to Emily Fowler:

I cannot wait to be with you . . . I was lonely without you, and wanted to write you a letter MANY times, but Kate [Hitchcock] was there too, and I was afraid you would both laugh. I should be stronger if I could see you oftener—I am very puny alone.