

sitāt. He thus ratified the error that had been made by the very Havelock Ellis whom he berates for his supposed anticlericalism.

However, Bailey's confusion only repeated the misuse of the word that was especially characteristic of two groups of writers: the authors of pornographic novels and the clergy. In Louis Perceau's *Bibliographie du roman érotique au XIXe siècle* (1930), the entries in booksellers' catalogues from 1907 onward show the word *perversion* used consistently in the sense of *plaisir raffiné*, a "refinement of erotic pleasure." And understandably the Christian clergy seized upon the new term as a pseudo-scientific weapon with which to castigate the practice of "unnatural vice."

Results of the Development. The upshot of this imbroglio is that homosexuality has had to bear the further stigma of being a "sexual perversion" (however ambivalently understood) whose spread "threatened to corrupt the youth of the nation," "undermined the moral fabric of society," "raised the spectre of race suicide" and the like, while abusive letters addressed to gay organizations abound in affronts such as "You filthy perverts." Through its inherent ambiguity and acquired sinister penumbra, the word perpetuated the semantic confusion that enveloped the subject, hindering the emergence of a rational attitude toward homosexual behavior—and indeed of all conduct that departed from the ascetic norm of Christian theology. Since the underlying assumption of moralizing psychiatry was that nonreproductive sexual activity was somehow "perverse," it served to reinforce the normative edict of Scholastic theologians that sexual acts are legitimate only when performed within marriage and for purposes of procreation. If a scientific term is to be employed for such a deviation of the sexual instinct, then the elegant neologism *parhedonia* would be the logical choice.

An Attempted Reformulation. In recent years several professional philosophers have proposed a redefinition of the concept of perversion. Thomas Nagel, for example, argues that perversion is more psychological than physiological, and that perversions are "truncated or incomplete versions of the complete figuration." Thus bestiality, where there is lack of reciprocity, would be perversion, while homosexuality is not. Unfortunately, these philosophers' discussions are conducted in the afterglow of the earlier history of the set of terms—the adjectives *perverse* and *perverted*, the nouns *perversity* and *perversion*, and the verb *to pervert*—rendering problematic their intended reconstruction of it.

Warren Johansson

PESSOA, FERNANDO (1888–1935)

Leading modern Portuguese poet. Born in Lisbon, he was educated in Durban, South Africa, where he became fluent in English and acquired a good knowledge of English literature. He returned to Portugal in 1905 and led an outwardly uneventful life, earning a modest but comfortable living as a translator of commercial correspondence until his death in 1935.

Though active in Lisbon's literary circles, Pessoa published only a small amount of poetry and some literary criticism during his lifetime. Since his death, however, he has been recognized as the greatest Portuguese poet after Camões and a major European writer. Pessoa is most famous for his invention of the heteronyms Alberto Caeiro, Ricardo Reis, and Álvaro de Campos, poetic creations with distinct personalities, philosophies, and styles, which were intended to add a dramatic element to his writing. Pessoa wrote poetry in both Portuguese and English, revolutionizing the use of the Portuguese language through his classical English education and his familiarity with English

literature. The influence of Walt Whitman can be seen in some of his major poems.

Pessoa's verse is intellectual and metaphysical rather than emotional or confessional. His poems are a constant reflection on the meaning of life and on different attitudes to the mystery of living. They convey states of mind and the manifold dimensions of experience, suggesting possibilities rather than certainties. Even in his lyrical moments Pessoa remains detached, an observer of life rather than an active participant.

Although there is no conclusive proof that Pessoa was homosexual, the fact that he never married, the extreme reserve he maintained about his private life, and his friendship with the openly gay poet António Botto point in this direction. Three episodes in his literary career have a homosexual theme. The Portuguese poems "Ode triunfal" ("Triumphal Ode") and "Ode marítima" ("Maritime Ode"), both published in 1915 under the heteronym Álvaro de Campos, have overtones of sado-masochistic fantasy. *Antinous* (1918), a long poem written in rather stilted English and published under his own name, commemorates the relationship between the Roman emperor Hadrian and his beloved Antinous; the passages in which Hadrian recalls their physical love-making are unusually sensuous and explicit. In 1921, a revised version appeared under the title *English poems, I-II*, in which Pessoa systematically removed all words expressing shame or wrong-doing in the relationship. Finally, the publication under Pessoa's Olisipo imprint of *Canções* ("Songs") (1922), a book of openly gay poetry by António Botto, led to a controversy in which Pessoa took a prominent part in Botto's defense. Underlying all Pessoa's work, however, are themes of particular relevance to gay readers, such as the multifaceted aspects of personality and the many levels of perceived experience.

Among the writers in Pessoa's circle, two are also worthy of note. Mário de Sá-Carneiro (1890-1916) was more

subjective in his poetry than Pessoa, writing on the crisis of personality and the sense of frustration, regret, and inadequacy which eventually led to his suicide. He also wrote a short novel, *A confissão de Lúcio* ("The Confession of Lucio") (1914), with a thinly-veiled homosexual theme open to various interpretations. António Botto (1902-1959) published poems on the themes of love, passion, sexual desire, disillusionment, longing, regret, humiliation, and shame. The poems are generally addressed to males and deal with the pleasures and disappointments of physical love and casual encounters, reflecting on the impossibility of complete fulfillment in any relationship. Botto's narcissism is pervasive and his poetic talent is frequently not equal to his themes, but his work is refreshing for its openness in dealing with gay male love.

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Robert Howes

PETRONIUS ARBITER (D. A.D. 66)

Roman satirist. Petronius is usually identified as a high official and Nero's favorite, "arbiter of taste" at the court, whose career and then suicide when he lost the Emperor's good will are recorded by Tacitus: "His days were passed in sleep, his nights in social engagements and the pleasures of life. The fame which other men attain by diligence he won by his use of leisure." The lengthy extant fragments of the fifteenth and sixteenth books of Petronius' *Satires* (usually called the *Satyricon*) amount to about one-tenth of the original.

Claiming that it had Hellenistic antecedents or models (in addition to the obvious borrowings such as the "Milesian Tales," the widow of Ephesus, and the boy