

tionally active, and Tsvetaeva had many plans of her own. Even though she had left the Soviet Union, the frontier was not yet closed, and her most famous collection, *Mileposts I*, was published there in 1922. For three years the couple resided happily in Prague, then in 1925 she moved to Paris—another émigré center—and lived there for fourteen years, taking an active and welcome part in the cultural life of the Russian community. However, unknown to her, her husband had been converted to communism and was working for the Soviet secret police. Now rejected and ostracized by the other émigrés, Tsvetaeva resolved to return to the Soviet Union in the wake of her husband, but when she arrived there in June 1939, she was even more hopelessly out of place. To boot, her husband was arrested and shot as an enemy of the people—because he knew too much. Evacuated to Elabuga in the Tatar Autonomous Republic, she committed suicide by hanging herself on August 31, 1941.

It was in Paris at the end of the twenties that Tsvetaeva was introduced to Natalie Clifford Barney and invited to Barney's celebrated literary salon at 20, rue Jacob. A model for lesbian characters in almost every novel of the first three decades of the century, Barney (1876–1972) kept one of the most elegant salons in Paris, where the Russian poetess, impoverished, shabbily dressed, and unknown to English and French readers, must have cut a strange figure. The nickname Amazon had been given to Barney by her male admirer, Remy de Gourmont, and she appropriated it for the title of her book *Pensées d'une Amazone* (1920), to which Tsvetaeva replied in turn in her essay "Letter to an Amazon," written in November and December of 1932 and revised at the end of 1934. Part essay and part narrative, it sets forth Tsvetaeva's thoughts on lesbian love based on her personal experiences at various moments in her life.

Love between two women is beautiful and rewarding; God is not opposed to it, but Nature rejects it in the interest of perpetuating the species. A typical lesbian affair—between an experienced older woman and a younger partner whom she seduces and initiates—runs onto the rocks when the younger woman feels the maternal instinct and abandons the older one to pursue her biological destiny in the embrace of a man who can give her children. The two part company, and the older partner searches vainly for someone to replace her lost love, but the younger one has become indifferent and is unmoved by the news, years later, of her death. This scenario parallels Tsvetaeva's own liaison with Sofia Parnok. The piece is a poetic and often moving prose rhapsody about a dimension of sexual experience which the poetess could not reconcile with the rest of her erotic personality.

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TURING, ALAN (1912–1954)

British scientist. Alan Turing was born into a social rank just between the British commercial classes and the landed gentry; his father served in the Indian Civil Service and Alan spent much of his childhood separated from his parents. He showed an early talent for science, and maintained this interest through his career in the British public school system, where science was simply referred to as "Stinks."

He seems to have been a brilliant, awkward boy whose latent genius went unnoticed by all his teachers; he also had no friends until his very last years at Sherborne. Then he fell in love with a fellow science enthusiast, Christopher Morcom: the Platonic friendship was re-

turned, and Alan Turing was for the first time in his life a happy young man. He had dreams of joining Christopher at Trinity, to pursue science together; unfortunately, Christopher Morcom suddenly died (from a much earlier infection with bovine tuberculosis). The effect on the young Turing was shattering.

He went up to Kings College, Cambridge, and embarked on a brilliant mathematical career; his first substantial contribution was his important article on the computable numbers, which contained a description of what is still known as the "Turing machine." He was made a Fellow of Kings at the very young age of twenty-two.

Turing spent two years in America, at Princeton University, and, on his return to Britain, was drafted into British cryptanalysis for the war effort. Turing was already unusual among mathematicians for his interest in machinery; it was not an interest in applied mathematics so much as something which did not really have a name yet—"applied logic." His contribution to the design of code-breaking machines during the war led him deeper and deeper into the field of what would now be called computer programming, except that neither concept existed at the time. He and a colleague named Welshman designed the Bombe machines which were to prove decisive in breaking the main German Enigma ciphers. For his contribution to the Allied victory in World War II Turing was named an Officer of the British Empire (O.B.E.) in 1946.

He also possessed one of the many brilliant minds of his era which independently conceived of the computer—to be precise, of the automatic electronic digital computer with internal program storage (the original "Turing machine" was a predecessor). The earliest inventor of such a device was the eccentric nineteenth-century Charles Babbage, who could not obtain the necessary hardware to implement his ideas. But in the 1940s the idea

became feasible, and the "real" inventor of the computer was an international network of mathematicians and engineers which included John von Neumann and Alan Turing, among many others.

In the post-war era, Turing became fascinated with the concept of artificial intelligence, and was a pioneer in exploring this new domain. (The "Turing test" is still a current phrase among computer scientists.) He was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1951.

A lifelong homosexual, Turing's life took a bad turn when he reported a burglary to the police. The officers were quick to sniff out the possibility of an "offense against morals" which soon preempted the burglary investigation; Turing gladly described what he had done with a young man in his bed, thinking that a commission was currently sitting to "legalize it." He was brought to trial and sentenced to a year's probation under the care of a psychiatrist, who proceeded to administer doses of female hormone to his patient, this being the current "wonder-therapy" which replaced castration as an attempt to kill the sexual instinct. For the entire year, Turing underwent the humiliation of feminization ("I'm growing breasts!" he confided to a friend), but emerged seemingly intact from the public ordeal. He committed suicide in 1954, by eating an apple he had laced with cyanide.

Turing did little or no theorizing about homosexuality, and his life accomplishments had nothing to do with the question. He does stand out as an example of a gay man whose talents were clearly "masculine" in nature. His love of young men was as simple and unpretentious as the rest of his life. If there is an object lesson in his career, it is perhaps this: this harmless English homosexual atheist mathematician made a huge contribution to winning World War II, and his reward was to be hounded into suicide by the forces of British prudery within eight years of that victory.

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TURKEY

The history of same-sex love is almost coterminous with the Turkish state. At the Seljuk court of Konya there flourished the great Sufi poet Jelal al-Din Rumi (1207–1273), whose life was decisively marked by his passion for the youth Shams al-Din of Tabriz. Not himself ethnic Turkish, Rumi prepared a path for many other figures who were. **Sufism**, which continues to flourish in Turkey, incorporates a tradition of the beautiful youth or Beloved as the channel of Divine Love. The cultivated school of *divan* poetry, which includes such masters as Kadi Burhanettin (1344–1398), Şeyhi (d. ca. 1430), Nedim (1681–1730), and Şeyh Galib (1757–1799), stems from this source, though sometimes inflecting it in secular directions.

Quite early in Turkish history, its rulers discovered the pleasures of sensual boy-love, and Bayezid I (1360–1403) sent his soldiers to comb the conquered areas to find the most delightful boys for his harem. His example caused the practice of taking boys for sexual purposes to spread in the army, among government officials, and through the nobility. During their wars of conquest the Turkish sovereigns did not fail to renew their supply of slaves—especially beautiful, highly desired European youths. This levy as much as anything else contributed to European hatred of the Turks.

Mehmed II, who captured Constantinople in 1453 and made it the capital of the Ottoman Empire, is described as a notorious boy-lover. To rouse his troops to assault the city he painted a glowing picture of the booty that awaited them—especially the gentle, beautiful, aristocratic boys, enough for all. The historical accounts of the fall of the city abound in tales of **rape** and atrocity, as the Greek nobles

were murdered and their children enslaved, with the 200 most handsome going to the Sultan's harem. At the battle of Mohacs in 1526, the Turkish victory caused the entire Balkan Peninsula to fall under Ottoman rule. The Croatian Bartolomej Durdevic has left an eloquent description of the boys enslaved after such conquests and sold as **catamites** or male prostitutes.

The boys chosen for the service of the ruler ranged in age from 8 to 16; they received a geisha-like training to make them both entertainers and skilled bed partners. When the Turkish Empire ceased to expand, the Sultan imposed an infamous "child tax." Every four years the Sultan's agents would visit each village in European Turkey to select the most handsome boys between 7 and 9 for the army corps, the palace pages' school, and the labor corps. European boys were typically not castrated, but feminized in training, manners, and costume "to serve the lusts of lecherous masters." Much has been written on boy-love in the court of Ali Pasha, the Turkish governor of Ioannina in Greece, whose agents roamed the dominion in search of beautiful children, even killing parents who refused their sons to the governor. Ali and his son are said to have engaged in sadomasochistic practices reminiscent of the writings of the Marquis de Sade, both torturing the boys and presenting them with gifts.

Even after Mehmed IV (1641–1691) abolished the "child tribute," the supply of boys was maintained by an active slave traffic into the Turkish Empire. In the 1850s Circassian slave dealers supplied large numbers of children—often sold into slavery by their own parents. Again in 1894, large numbers of the handsomest Armenian boys were taken for sexual purposes. Perhaps no city has ever been so famous for its boy **brothels** as Istanbul, where boys of various nationalities were once available as freely as girls. The anonymous English poem *Don Leon* falsely attributed to Byron (1836) tells of "seeking a brothel where . . . The black-eyed boy his