

Contemporary America. The lingering distinction between friendship and love based upon the absence or presence of the overt erotic component also affects relations between homosexual men and heterosexual women. Certain women feel more comfortable in their dealings with gay men, just because they know that they do not have to be constantly on guard against sexual aggression, but can have close relationships, both social and professional, that attain high levels of creativity and imagination. Particularly in professions where homosexuality is no handicap, there can be friendships between gay men and women who take no offense at the male's lack of physical desire for them.

The use of "friend" or "friendship" as a euphemism for the homosexual partner (lover) and the liaison itself persists. Recently the compilers of newspaper obituary columns have taken to describing the lifelong companion of a deceased homosexual as his "friend," in contexts where a heterosexual would be survived by the spouse and children. And the author of a bibliography of *Freundschaftseros* published in West Germany in 1964 stoutly upheld not only the distinction between classical pederasty and modern homosexuality, but also the existence of a form of male bonding from which the erotic element is absent.

Conclusion. The overlap since time immemorial between friendship and eroticism persists in the ongoing debate over the place of homosexual feeling and homosexual activity in modern society. The advent of the gay rights movement has helped some individuals become more accepting of the erotic nature of their attachments to friends of the same sex—though some others have become more self-conscious and defensive. The lines of demarcation are being continually renegotiated as part of the revolution in moral values that has undermined many of the old norms without as yet formulating new ones. It will be the task of the future to resolve the antagonism rooted in the en-

counter of classical and Judeo-Christian attitudes toward homoeroticism/homosociality.

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FRUIT

In general English usage, this noun designates the edible reproductive body of a seed plant, particularly one having a sweet pulp. In North American slang, especially in the second and third quarter of the twentieth century, it has been a disparaging epithet for a male homosexual—sometimes used in the vocative: "Hey, fruit!"

Unlikely as it may seem, the term belongs to that significant class of words in which a pejorative appellation at one time given to women shifted to male homosexuals (compare *gay* and *faggot*). The explanation of this transfer is as follows. At the end of the nineteenth century, fruit meant an easy mark, a naive person susceptible to influence, reflecting the notion that in nature fruits are "easy pickings." From this sense it came to mean "a girl or woman easy to oblige." The transfer and specialization to gay men was probably assisted by the stereotypes that homosexuals are soft and use scent. In the 1940s, the heterosexual counterpart was the more specific "tomato," an available woman.

In England the expression "old fruit" is a mild term of affection (compare "old bean"). The word may also be a clipped form of "fruitcake"—from "nutty as a fruitcake."

The disparaging use of the term in reference to male homosexuals is now less common, and a Los Angeles gay radio program is called (with a quaint air) "Fruit Punch."

Wholly unrelated is the "Sodom apple," a name given to a mythical fruit that is fair to the eye but, once touched, turns to ashes—hence recalling the conflagration of Sodom in Genesis 19. The transformation could be glossed metaphorically as the outcome of vain or illicit conduct. "Through life we chase, with fond pursuit, / What mocks our hope like Sodom's fruit" (J. Bancks, *Young's Last Day*, 1736).

See also Flower Symbolism.

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FULLER, HENRY BLAKE (1857–1929)

American novelist. Scion of an eminent Chicago family, he gradually slid into genteel poverty and literary obscurity after enjoying early wealth and critical esteem. He used to be remembered as the author of novels which attacked the corrupt plutocrats of Chicago, and it is only in the last few years that attention has been turned to his literary treatment of homosexuality, in which he was a pioneer.

Little is known about his private life. His journals from his teenage days make it clear that he was in love with some dormitory roommates at Allison Classical Academy (1873–74). At the age of 19 he wrote an imaginary personal advertisement in which he says, "I would pass by twenty beautiful women to look upon a handsome man."

The years pass without further evidence until, at the age of 34, Fuller admits to being in love with a 15-year-old boy whose initials are "C.N.," and who had blue eyes and strawberry-blond hair. Five years later, Fuller wrote and managed to publish a very short play, *At Saint Judas's*, about a homosexual who commits suicide at the wedding of his former lover. This was strong stuff for the period,

but today this poorly-written play would be laughed at for its melodramatic absurdities. Nevertheless, it deserves credit as the first American play to deal explicitly with homosexuality.

Fuller did not return to this theme until 1919, when he published at his own expense *Bertram Cope's Year*, a novel about a homosexual love affair between Bertram Cope and Arthur Lemoyne, which ends with Cope turning heterosexual. Critics agree that Fuller lost his nerve while writing this novel and spoiled it by having his hero end up as a conformist. Four years later, the elderly Fuller began an affair with a college student named William Shepherd, with whom he went to Europe. A few years later, Fuller died after Carl Van Vechten had made an attempt to revive interest in his writings. Mention should also be made of the letters that Fuller received in 1897 and 1898 from a homosexual Canadian named Harold Curtis, which reveal the homosexual subculture of Toronto. Fuller saved these letters for future historians.

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Stephen Wayne Foster

FUNCTIONING

Down to the 1950s, psychiatric and psychological opinion held that homosexual behavior in an adult was symptomatic of severe emotional disorder. A detached evaluation of the homosexual personality was rendered even more difficult by the anger, revulsion, and distaste with which many clinicians reacted. The central difficulty, however, stemmed from the fact that for decades the clinical picture of homosexuality had been formed by the observation of subjects found in consulting offices, mental hospitals, or prisons. These groups did not constitute a valid sample of the homosexual population as a whole.