

giving fiefs and promotions to his male lovers and was rumored to have had a harem of boys recruited from throughout Japan whence he summoned his favorites to his chamber at night. His taste for young men was apparently shared among the upper level leadership of the day, but his behavior drew criticism from contemporaries for its excess.

*Lesbianism.* The history of female homosexuality is much more obscure, largely because women's sexuality was not taken seriously except in relation to men. This is true both in literature by women in the Heian period (794–1185) and in later literature dominated by male perspectives. One exception is a twelfth-century tale called *The Changelings*, about a brother and sister who switched roles and lived as if they were the opposite sex. The story is told primarily from the perspective of the sister living as a man, and reveals the spirit of a woman who finds her society's definition of the female role too confining for her taste. In the seventeenth century, Ihara Saikaku wrote in *Life of an Amorous Woman* of an affair the heroine had with the mistress of an all-female household. Though such literary depictions are rare, pictorial representations of two or more women engaged in sex are much more common from the seventeenth century, when erotic woodblock prints became popular. It is not known whether these pictures catered to a male or female audience.

In modern Japanese literature, Nobel laureate Kawabata Yasunari (1899–1972) often depicts lesbian relationships, particularly in a triangular competition with a man, such as in *Beauty and Sadness*. The third volume of Mishima Yukio's *Sea of Fertility* tetralogy, called *Temple of Dawn*, uses both male and female homosexuality as a symbol of decadence. He wrote about male homosexuality as a source of adolescent confusion in *Confessions of a Mask*, and as a sadistic force in *Forbidden Colors*. A short story called "Onnagata" shows homosexual

desire as a petulant force in the personality of a kabuki actor of female roles. Japan's most highly acclaimed modern gay poet has been Takahashi Mutsuo, whose strange blend of Christian symbolism and gay sensibilities is captured for English readers in a collection called *Poems of a Penisist*. The title poem is reminiscent of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, of which it may be a conscious imitation.

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### JARRY, ALFRED (1873–1907)

French dramatist, novelist, and humorist. After an obscure apprenticeship in literary avant-garde circles in Paris, Jarry achieved sudden and stunning celebrity with the 1896 production of his knock-about drama *Ubu Roi*. Ubu, the violent and aggressive antihero, becomes king of Poland through guile and fraud. This farce, a reworking of a collaborative effort undertaken with two schoolmates when Jarry was fifteen, anticipates the Theatre of the Absurd. His 1902 novel *Le Surmâle*, which concerns a machine that falls in love with its creator, has a proto-surrealist character. Although Jarry garnered a cult following, his other works failed to earn him a living. Once his meagre inheritance was exhausted, increasing poverty and alcoholism brought on his early death.

In his personal life Jarry had very few intimate relations. No heterosexual affair has ever been documented. His one

close female friend, the novelist Rachilde (Marguerite Aymery Vallette), was known for her own interest in sexual ambiguity. The only serious treatment of sex in Jarry's work appears in the short play *Haldernablou* (*Oeuvres complètes*, Paris: Pléiade, 1972, pp. 214–29), based on his relations with the bisexual poet Léon-Paul Fargue. Whether he and Jarry were lovers in the physical sense is uncertain, though the play suggests that they were. The hero, Haldern (Jarry), seeks a partner who is "neither man nor woman nor monster at all, a devoted slave and one who could speak without breaking the harmony of his sublime thoughts."

Unable to resolve his personal conflicts, Jarry transformed them into the paradoxes of his art. In the 1920s the Surrealists took him up, together with his predecessor Lautréamont; today he is regarded as a major (though perplexing) French writer.

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### JESUS (D. CA. 29)

A Galilean Jewish teacher who lived during the reigns of the Roman emperors Augustus and Tiberius, Jesus was, if not the founder of Christianity—the point can be debated—certainly the inspiration for it. Hence any discussion of this faith, which has persecuted homosexuals, must begin with his pronouncements and examples, insofar as they can be ascertained. Franciscans, for instance, look to his ideal of poverty, while the Amish emphasize his style of simple living. Gay men and women have principally found his pronouncements on homosexuality curiously missing and taken this absence of condemnation as tantamount to tacit approval. Because no word from him favors it, critics of homosexuality have judged the silence to signify his endorsement of

other Scriptural condemnations, thereby attesting emphatic disapproval.

*Problems of Source Evaluation.* Both sides take as primary sources the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the first four books of the New Testament. The numerous apocryphal gospels, among other supplementary sources, becloud the issue, as does the meaning of the word "gospel" (*euangelion*) itself. With a long history, by the first century it meant simply "good news." Thus, the Good News According to Mark, the earliest surviving gospel, does not claim to be a life of Jesus but a proclamation or testimonial about him. Testimonials of faith are not biographies; it is misleading to use them as such. Above all, they are not history. The four endorsed by Christian orthodoxy as canonical were written between 40 and 80 years after the Crucifixion, and whatever sources, if any, they are based upon cannot be clearly identified. Besides, they not infrequently contradict one another as in the instance of how many witnessed the Resurrection and when and where they did so. Yet it can be argued that the gospels do convey the spirit of a person—relatively liberal, iconoclastic, somewhat political, certainly charismatic—who made a powerful impression on his followers.

How much of the record was changed to suit later circumstances? There is every reason to believe that if other facets of the tradition, different from those we now have, did exist at the time when James, the pious brother of Jesus, came to be head of the church, these facts would have been changed to suit the clean-cut image that James wanted to project. This "brother" (if indeed he was one in blood, for Roman Catholics deny that the perpetual Virgin Mary produced any other offspring), who had not even been a part of the movement during Jesus' lifetime, was beheaded about the year 44, which was approximately a quarter of a century before the first gospel, Mark, was composed. The non-canonical gospels, generally known as gnostic because they claim to