

Man-Boy Friendships on Trial: On the Shift in the Discourse on Boy Love in the Early Twentieth Century

Thijs Maasen, PhD

Schorer Foundation
Amsterdam

SUMMARY. Ideas on man-boy friendships prevailing in early 20th century Germany are analyzed in this paper. The friendships based on the concept of pedagogical Eros, as propagated by Gustav Wyneken (1875-1964) in his Wickersdorf Free School Community, are presented as an example. Wyneken's conviction in 1921 for acts of vice with minors and the diverse reactions in the homosexual and youth movements and the popular press shed light on the viewpoints then held regarding these friendships. As a result of this confrontation, the Platonic model was superseded by the medico-sexological model which has continued to dominate thought on man-boy friendships up to the present day.

Friendships between German youth leaders and boys were thrown into an unfavorable light during the first decades of this century: they were increasingly seen as homosexual relationships. Advocates of such friendships, especially in the youth movement and the movement for educational reform, defended them as a form of "pedagogical Eros," a reciprocal erotic bond between a charis-

Dr. Thijs Maasen is Psychologist at the Schorer Foundation in Amsterdam and Researcher at the Gay and Lesbian Studies Department of the University of Utrecht. Requests for further information can be sent to Dr. Thijs Maasen, Voetboogstraat 7, Amsterdam 1012 XK, Netherlands.

The author would like to thank Michael Dallas for translating the article.

matic teacher-leader and a boy, a relationship which, in keeping with the Platonic tradition, they considered to be endowed with special educational qualities. In intimate companionship with his teacher, the boy was initiated into a "higher world" embraced by art and philosophy.¹

I will trace the ways in which man-boy friendships in early 20th century Germany came to be viewed as homosexual friendships and fell into disfavor because of the prevailing anti-homosexual climate. I hope to show what the concept of pedagogical Eros meant to its proponents and how they used it in defense of man-boy friendships.

These questions can be answered by following the debate on pedagogical Eros which developed around Gustav Wyneken (1875-1964), an educational reformer who was one of the foremost champions of pedagogical Eros and boy love in Germany during the first quarter of the century. Wyneken was taken to court in 1921 because of his attempts to incorporate erotic friendships in the Free School Community (*Freie Schulgemeinde*) which he had founded some years earlier. At his trial he defended these friendships as a form of pedagogical Eros, thereby precipitating scores of widely divergent reactions in the press, youth movement, and homosexual and male-friendship organizations. Many of these reactions will be detailed in order to distinguish the various ideas on pedagogical friendships prevalent at the time.

The Platonic model of boy love had long served as a basis for appeals for man-boy friendships, particularly in 18th and 19th century Germany, where a general interest in classical Greek antiquity prevailed among intellectuals and artists.² Toward the end of the 19th century, however, a medico-psychiatric model became popular. Boy love was defined by the new model as a sexual deviation under the name of "paedophilia erotica."³ I will further address how the debate on pedagogical Eros surrounding Wyneken's conviction illustrates a shift in the discourse on boy love. His trial in 1921 took place at a time when differing views on man-boy love clashed.

I will consider Gustav Wyneken's ideas on pedagogical Eros and then show how the accusations against Wyneken came about and describe society's reactions to the trial. In closing I will return to the

question of the extent to which the trial and the reactions to it can be related to changes in the discourse on boy love.

GUSTAV WYNEKEN'S CAREER AS AN EDUCATOR

Background

Gustav Wyneken was born in Stade, near Hamburg, on March 19, 1875, the son of a Lutheran minister.⁴ Having first obtained a degree in theology under the auspices of the Hanoverian State Church in 1897, he completed his doctoral thesis in philosophy one year later, and then went on to study German language and literature and classical philology at Berlin. Contrary to his original intentions, he spent a good part of his life in education. Following his years in Berlin, Wyneken came into contact with the Country Home School Movement (*Landerziehungsheimbewegung*) through its founder Hermann Lietz (1868-1919). This movement of educational reformers (*Reformpädagogen*) set up many "home schools" which were guided by a "back-to-nature" philosophy. Wyneken became devoted to this movement, at first as a teacher and soon thereafter as leader of the Ilsenburg Home School, the first school Lietz set up in 1898. There were many splinter groups in the Country Home School Movement, the most important of which was led by Wyneken himself. In 1906 he led a resistance group against Lietz, who was considered too conventional. On September 1, 1906, the Wickersdorf Free School Community was founded for about 20 boys and girls 12 years and older. It would later develop into an international community of about 100.

The Free School Community

Paul Geheeb and Gustav Wyneken ran the school, located outside Wickersdorf on a plateau in the Thuringian Forest. The school buildings were situated over 2000 feet above sea level, surrounded by a ring of mountains. This sequestered site was meant to encourage a distinct community life and to guarantee the pupils a great measure of freedom.

The "school community" was governed by representatives of parents, teachers, and pupils, and these groups jointly made deci-

sions regarding instruction. Wyneken termed the school a “self-educating community.” Older pupils were entrusted with special care of younger “charges.” Sports, play, dance, and music were essential elements in the cultivation of the pupils, and, due to the superb talents of several music instructors such as August Halm and Martin Luserke, a distinct artistic style developed. Rivalry between Wyneken and Geheeb, however, led to conflict in 1910, and the latter resigned to start the Odenwald School.

Wyneken’s Influence in the Youth Movement

After Geheeb’s departure Wyneken was replaced by Martin Luserke as leader of the school at Wickersdorf, but as chairman of the Association of Free School Communities, Wyneken continued to exert influence there. He also propagated his ideas in journals such as *Die Freie Schulgemeinde* and *Der Anfang*, in which writers such as Hans Blüher and Walter Benjamin also published. Through Blüher, Wyneken came into contact with the Wandervogel, a youth movement which originated around the turn of the century in Berlin-Steglitz in resistance to the teachers’ authority in the disciplined German schools and to urban life in general. Soon boys 12 to 19 years old, from many cities, were making their exodus into “unspoiled” nature under the leadership of older youths.

The youth movement in Germany reached a peak on October 13, 1913, when the great Free German Youth Meeting was held on the Hohe Meissner, a mountain near Kassel. Wyneken was one of the speakers, along with other prominent movement leaders, who spoke on behalf of the young. Wyneken was convinced that a confluence of the Wandervogel and the Free School Communities would lead to a new “youth culture.” He believed that the youth movement would find fulfillment in the Free School Community, because the School provided a guarantee for the fertile interchange of “spirit” (*Geist*) and “youth.”

“Comradeship” as Initiation Ritual

In his book *Schule und Jugendkultur* [School and youth culture], published in 1913, Wyneken enunciated the educational method of

the Free School Community. He attacked the authoritarian discipline offered by the traditional school and rejected both the nuclear family and the state as providers of education. The family limited curiosity to its own horizons, while the state was guided by political interests. Only intellectuals were qualified to initiate the youth into culture. As procreators of art and science united in the Free School Communities, intellectuals could realize the school's aim "to attain, conserve, and ultimately perhaps create culture," as Wyneken stated in the school's first annual report.

The Free School Community introduced the erotic bond between a leader and a boy as an educational principle, in this way accommodating the boy's desire:

to be loved by a man he admires, to follow this man, to belong to him, to be allowed to share in his life . . . the man who understands his longings, the man to whom he can give his love because he feels love radiating from him, the man who opens his heart to him, who shares his life with him, who becomes for him the symbol of a higher, godly life,

as Wyneken (1921, pp. 48-49) wrote in his essay *Eros*. The "leadership" (*Führerschaft*) represented spiritual beauty and wisdom, while the "disciples" or "followers" (*Jüngertum, Gefolgschaft*) emanated the beauty of youth.

In the school the pupils were to choose a teacher with whom they formed a "comradeship" (*Kameradschaft*). A personal friendship and erotic bond took shape; the initiation into the "world of the spirit" was realized. One spoke of "belonging to each other," "living together," and "maturing under the eyes of the master."

Wyneken shared with Stefan George (1868-1933) the ideal of cultivation of youth to a "new nobility" (*neuer Adel*). The friendship circles in Wickersdorf exhibited a clear affinity to George's "circles of disciples" and his friendship cult. Both drew their inspiration from Plato's *Symposium*, where pedagogical Eros was acclaimed.⁵ For them the roots of German culture lay in Greek antiq-

uity – George spoke of “neo-Hellenism” (*das neue Griechentum*) and Wyneken of “paiderastia.”⁶

PEDAGOGIC EROS IN DISREPUTE

With the fall of Imperial Germany in World War I and the consequent shift in the political climate that ushered in the Weimar Republic, Wyneken became an adviser to the Ministries of Culture in Berlin and Munich. While he held this position he tried to inaugurate a number of radical education reforms. His ultimate aim was to introduce the school community principle throughout Germany and make religious education no longer obligatory. In Prussia, several of these measures became law, but in Bavaria his reform proposals met with major objections. Wyneken also attempted to set up old unoccupied castles as “youth refuges,” but his negotiations got nowhere.

The opposition to his plans in Bavaria became increasingly more acute, and during the 1920s public lectures by Wyneken were prohibited even in Munich because the authorities feared rioting. By 1919 the ministry found itself unable to support his reform proposals, whereupon Wyneken resigned. He was given the opportunity to resume his post as leader of the Wickersdorf school after a nine-year absence.

The Scandal at Wickersdorf

Wyneken reassumed leadership of the Free School Community in 1919, against the wishes of some teachers. They viewed him not only as an uncompromising person who was difficult to work with, but also as a representative of outdated ideals from the early years of the school. Some teachers left upon his return. Wickersdorf was divided into several camps, and this made it a hotbed for conflicts.

The return to “his” school, so adamantly desired by Wyneken, was to be short-lived. On October 6, 1920, he was forced to resign again, accused of having had homosexual relations with boys in his friendship circle. Shortly after the first rumors arose, a statement repeating the allegations was circulated through the school. It was

drafted by assistant teacher Kurt Hoffmann and signed by the boys. Wyneken was accused of homosexual relations with two boys, Heinz Herrmann and Viktor Behrens.⁷

Hoffmann's allegations caused much commotion in the Free School Community. Most teachers and pupils sided with Wyneken, and Hoffmann was accused of treachery—an attempt to get rid of Wyneken. The leadership of the school set up a commission of inquiry to investigate the allegations. The interrogation of the boys focused on the question of whether sexual motives had been involved in two instances in which Wyneken, who was nude, had embraced the boys who were also nude. The statement had referred to “sexual relations,” “touches,” “homosexual relations,” and “coitus” (*geschlechtlicher Verkehr, Berührungen, homosexueller Geschlechtsverkehr, Coitus*). The boys were asked the minutest details regarding the circumstances under which the embraces had taken place. The commission decided, however, that no sexual motives had been involved and that the accusations against Wyneken were unfounded.

Moreover, the boys had not made use of sexual concepts of their own accord—Hoffmann had presented them with a ready-made document to be signed. They hadn't even known what was meant by “homosexual relations,” and the word “coitus” was also unknown to them. It was true that Wyneken had embraced them in the nude, but, the commission concluded, he had not done so with any sexual intentions.⁸

The Free School Community subsequently affirmed its confidence in Wyneken and asked him to again assume leadership of the school. By means of a petition the teachers protested the attempts to undermine Wyneken's position and that of the Free School Community. Although the petition did reaffirm the importance of pedagogical Eros, it rejected on principle any sexual interaction between teachers and pupils within the Community.

Wyneken filed a libel suit against Kurt Hoffmann in Rudolstadt. He alleged that Hoffmann had acted out of political motives, having contrived a plan to destroy Wyneken's life work. He accused him of putting the boys up to making libelous statements.

Parents' Reactions

The allegations soon became known to the parents, many of whom lived in Berlin. The leadership of the Free School Community therefore arranged a parents' meeting on October 24 in Wickersdorf to discuss the commission's findings and to reassure them.

At the parents' meeting, the acting head of the school, Martin Luserke, read a number of letters from concerned parents and went on to recount what had happened. The discussion centered on the questions of whether the erotic friendships at Wickersdorf made the boys homosexual, what the nude embraces had involved, and whether sexual motives played a part. Several parents expressed concern. Parents who sympathized with Wyneken urged solidarity: the children had purposely been sent to the Free School Community to receive an anti-bourgeois education. Also discussed were the distinction between pure and unnatural friendship and between sexuality and eroticism, and the importance of pedagogical Eros in the youth movement. Teachers argued that the pure friendships in Wickersdorf had wrongly, from "urban perspectives," been associated with homosexual relationships. In the Free School Community these had an educational function.

In a joint statement, the parents and the leadership of the school rejected the allegations against Wyneken. The allegations had unjustly thrust a sexual consciousness upon the school. The effect that this forced perception of sexuality was to have on those concerned, however, was expressed as follows:

Trust and tenderness were seen to have been violated by treachery, and because of the insinuations that have been made, everyone in the school will therefore be expected to exercise a certain abstinence in this direction in the time to come.⁹

Restraint was the word. The statement went on to urge parents not to withdraw their children from the school, and confidence was expressed in Wyneken.

“Proof” of a Sexual Motive

The legal proceedings that Wyneken had instituted against Kurt Hoffmann boomeranged. The public prosecutor decided to take not Hoffmann but Wyneken to court. He was indicted on February 8, 1921, in the court at Rudolstadt. The indictment read:

I hereby charge Dr. Gustav Wyneken that he, in several separate incidents in Wickersdorf, Saalburg, and Berlin between the summer of 1919 and 1920, as teacher did commit acts of vice with his pupils of minor age, and to wit a) Viktor Behrens, 17 years of age, of Berlin b) Heinz Herrmann, 12 years of age, of Friedrichshagen.¹⁰

Petitions filed by the lawyer Anton Gänsler and by Wyneken and the Free School Community to dismiss the case were to no avail.

The trial took place on August 30, 1921, and aroused great public interest. Despite protests by Wyneken, the court decided to hold the trial behind closed doors on the grounds that an open sitting would present a threat to public morals.

Pupils, parents, and teachers were subpoenaed as witnesses. The questioning focused primarily on whether sex acts had occurred on two occasions in Wyneken's interaction with the boys. The defense witnesses (many of those called were not admitted) stressed that the intimate modes of interaction at issue in the trial formed part of the new educational relationships in Wickersdorf. They lauded Wyneken's educational qualities.

At the end of the lengthy sitting, the judges came to totally different conclusions. The contested embraces were placed entirely in a sexual light in their ruling. They pointed out that Wyneken had kissed one of the boys on the mouth and induced him to undress and that the boy had done so because he was totally under the influence of the accused.

One of the embraces was described as follows: “They both reclined onto a bed, they embraced each other there and lay wrapped in each other's legs, the accused kissed Behrens on his mouth and face, caressed him and pressed him to his body.” The court viewed this as proof of a sexual motive, and this was explicitly underscored by the passage which followed: “The genital of the accused lay at

this time on the youth's abdomen."¹¹ In the second incident involving such an embrace, according to the ruling, it was even clearer that sexual gratification had taken place. Wyneken denied this and provided a different reading of what had happened.

A Spiritual Bond

Erotic friendships, including embracing and kissing, were placed by Wyneken in another light. He denied any sexual motive whatsoever, calling it a misunderstanding to try to subsume pedagogical Eros under the concept of "sexuality."

If one conceived Eros from a sexual perspective, as the prosecutor had done during the proceedings, then Eros could only be seen as an aberration in the sex drive or a physical deviation. Wyneken wrote in *Eros* (1921),

So let it be clearly said: we are speaking here of a form of love in the sense of the Greek concept of Eros, as we will provisionally designate it. We are not speaking of the sex drive. Bourgeois ignorance habitually combines the sexual classification or derivation of paiderastia with a value judgment: it is abnormal, thus something pathological, and therefore a human deficiency. What standard is being used to measure here? (p. 5)

With this court ruling, bourgeois society was taking its stand against the new educational relations in Wickersdorf, he concluded.

The interrogations had been directed exclusively at "presumed" sexual motives, leaving the educational context out of the picture. The boys had been suggestively influenced by the questioning. What for the boys who loved him had been a "supreme and sacred youth experience" had now become stained by "crude grilling from a 'sexual' angle by strangers" (Wyneken, 1921, p. 40). The words on which the indictment was based had been put into the boys' mouths, and after such interrogations they could no longer view their pure friendships with an open mind. They had been saddled with a conscious homosexual perception. Although Wyneken did not condemn homosexual love, he distinguished it emphatically from pedagogical love. The first was aimed at sexual gratification, the second was not. Wyneken introduced in *Eros* the term "paid-

erastia” for pedagogical Eros in order to distinguish it from “pederasty” (by which he meant sexual relations between men and youths). By paiderastia Wyneken (1921) understood:

love for youths, Eros directed at youths. That is not the same, however, as that which one today calls same-sex love (*gleichgeschlechtliche Liebe*). It involves . . . a man’s erotic ties to youths, . . . and, reciprocally, these youths’ erotic ties . . . to a man. (p. 3)

Wyneken justified this erotic bond between a man and a youth by pointing to the cultural significance of a Platonic education. The “spiritually determined bond” was of growing importance in the pedagogical relationship between youth leaders and boys in the new youth culture.

In defending himself Wyneken expounded upon the meaning of “nudity” and “intimacy” within the educational atmosphere in the Free School Community. Being nude together meant standing open to one another. Intimacy was a logical consequence of the friendly comradeship between teachers and pupils which was alien to prevailing teacher-pupil relationships. Kissing and embracing were a part of such friendships, and Wyneken was therefore not averse to a certain measure of sensuality.

Pedagogical Eros Convicted

The court had not been convinced by Wyneken’s plea. The judges had found his actions contrary to a proper teacher-pupil relationship, setting their view against Wyneken: “Actions of this sort are in no way suited for exerting educational influence.”¹²

Whatever good intentions Wyneken might have had, the ruling went on, it was proven that he had sought sexual gratification in the two embraces. An educator and gifted man such as Wyneken should have known better. As additional argument for rejecting his plea, it was asserted that he had acted contrary to “popular consciousness” (*Volksbewusstsein*) and had violated “common sentiments of shame and morality.” He was sentenced to one year in prison plus court costs. Wyneken appealed the decision.¹³

REACTIONS IN THE GERMAN PRESS

Between 1920 and 1922, 150 articles on the scandal and trial appeared in German newspapers. They reflected public opinion on Wyneken's conviction. The volume and nature of journalistic attention for the subject make it clear that Wyneken was an influential and controversial person, of whom many had something to say. And so the pedagogical Eros debate extended far beyond the walls of the small Free School Community.

Sexual Pathology

Scores of papers copied the first published report from the bourgeois-liberal *Vossische Zeitung* on October 31, 1920, that followed the original allegations. This article reported that Wyneken had "abused two of his pupils." Even before an official accusation had been made, most papers had already placed the incidents in a sexual light. The Free School Community and Wyneken attempted to counter this with pedagogical arguments. Editorials opposing Wyneken jeered that one of the foremost pioneers of school reform had "morally derailed." The Free School Community had now been "immorally raped by her lord and master!! O prophet, O prophet, deep is thy fall!," an example from the conservative paper *Das Bayerische Vaterland* on November 9, 1920.

Critics depicted Wyneken as a dangerous seducer of youth. They pointed to how much damage this "fanatical school reformer" had already brought about; it was high time he vanished from public life. Political parties and progressive magazines were reproached for having supported him. The scandal was seized upon by *Das Bayerische Vaterland* (November 9, 1920) to denounce the whole movement for educational reform: "Now that . . . the father of school communities may be put in jail, we warn once again: The devil take this reform drive! Leave the schools in peace! Leave the old intact!" The compulsion to innovate was depicted especially by this paper as a form of sexual pathology: "Your dissatisfaction, your compulsion to overthrow and to better, it all just stems from your abnormal daintiness, your sexual or some other sort of neurasthenia!" *Der Bayerische Kurier* (September 1, 1921) accused Wyneken of "unclean activities."

Fiercely critical press reactions were also prompted by a petition in Wyneken's support adopted in 1921 by the First National Congress for Sexual Reform on Sexological Foundations. Because of this petition, the entire congress was deemed a public threat by *Das Deutsche Tageblatt* (September 29, 1921). It showed "how all our most vital German cultural treasures are to be eaten away at the foundations, from the inviolable monogamous marriage right down to the family itself."

Political Liquidation

Newspapers that were generally on Wyneken's side denounced the fact that the trial was being held behind closed doors. How could the public form a judgment on what had happened? Some argued that sensational articles on the topic had now been made unavoidable.

Numerous papers supporting Wyneken adopted the standpoint of the Free School Community that what was happening was a political liquidation of Wyneken, with sexual insinuations used as a means to that end. According to the left-wing Berlin newspaper *Die Freiheit* (August 31, 1921) the trial was a matter not only of the personal destruction of Wyneken, but also of the Free School Community, which was a thorn in the side of reactionaries with their "school of the rod" (*Prügelschule*). "Their snooping has indeed succeeded in arousing mistrust in Wyneken's method and even in staging a trial." The trial was now being gratefully seized upon to stifle attempts at educational innovation.

Sympathetic papers reported similar, less publicized scandals in other Home Schools in which educators were dismissed or schools were closed. A few articles even feared that the whole Country Home School Movement was being threatened by the trial. The *Leipziger Volkszeitung* (October 5, 1921) and the *Berliner Tageblatt* (October 6) reported on a mass meeting on October 4 in Central Theater in Leipzig, held to protest Wyneken's conviction. Some 1500 young people denounced the trial, using the motto "Taking a Stand on the Conviction of Gustav Wyneken." They viewed the trial as an attack on the gains of the youth movement.

One of the speeches was entitled “The Pedagogical Meaning of Eros.”

REACTIONS IN YOUTH MOVEMENT PUBLICATIONS

Many periodicals in the youth movement published reactions to Wyneken’s trial, but not all of them took his side. Initially, the largest papers, such as the pacifist, left-wing *Junge Menschen*, the Wandervogel magazine *Der Zwiespruch*, and the Free German Movement paper *Freideutsche Jugend* unequivocally rejected Wyneken’s conviction and stood firmly behind him. They condemned the trial with terms such as “sex gossip” and “political liquidation.” *Freideutsche Jugend* in December, 1921, called on young people to show their support and protest, for “Gustav Wyneken convicted means for all members of the youth movement that they have been convicted with him.” And *Der Neue Bund* warned of impending danger for every youth leader: “If the Rudolstadt trial should become a precedent, every educator, every youth leader who *lives* with his boys can meet Wyneken’s fate.”

Soon afterward, however, protests against appeals for unconditional support could be read in the same papers. Sexual suspicions were not merely a “political instrument.” Skeptics in the youth movement first wanted to know exactly what had happened. Who knew Wyneken’s actions? wondered one writer in *Junge Menschen* (no. 20, October, 1921): “We don’t know what their nature was, whether they were in harmony with his work and his book.” In *Freideutsche Jugend* (no. 10, October, 1921) Wyneken was called a “shrewd wordmonger of unbelievable vanity,” and in *Der Zwiespruch* (September 16, 1921) one writer condemned him outright: “If we protest against it, we befoul ourselves.” A seemingly silence was more appropriate than a loud protest. Even a genius could take a false step, critics argued.

In *Eros*, Wyneken had expressly distinguished pedagogical Eros from homosexuality. Nevertheless, *Vivos Voco* (December, 1921) found that his appeal contained an “affirmation of man-to-man Eros,” just as had been the case with Blüher. Uncritically preaching love for one’s own sex had the effect of poison in the youth movement. Many a youth with a normally developed emotional life

would, under Wyneken's influence, "succumb to an inversion of his intellectual and subsequently his emotional life," wrote *Der Pfeil* on October 10, 1922.

It was clear from the publications of the youth movement that because of the dramatic trial, the movement could no longer avoid confronting the issue of pedagogical Eros. Whether or not one wanted to defend Wyneken, one was forced to take a stand and consciously reflect on man-boy friendships. Some who felt that pedagogical Eros was indispensable for the youth movement had less far-reaching conceptions of it than Wyneken. One commentator, for example, in *Der Zwiespruch* (March 17, 1922), rejected "indulgent Eros" and "erotic-sexual love" in favor of a "creative Eros" and "ethical-religious love" in which "spiritual affinity" and mutual "affection" were paramount. The psychologist Eduard Spranger (1928), in an essay entitled "Eros," took his stand against Wyneken's *paidierastia*, deeming it too sensual; he instead defended a spiritual variant.

STANDPOINTS OF HOMOSEXUAL ORGANIZATIONS AND MALE-FRIENDSHIP SOCIETIES

The debates over pedagogical Eros in the youth movement at the beginning of this century cannot be considered without taking into account the views of "homosexuality" held by homosexual organizations and male-friendship societies. The notion of "homosexuality" as a "sexual variant" was propagated, for example, by the Scientific Humanitarian Committee (*Wissenschaftlich-Humanitäres Komitee*), founded in 1897 by the physician Magnus Hirschfeld and whose membership numbered 5,000 by 1905. One of the foremost objectives of the organization was the repeal of Paragraph 175 of the German penal code, under which "homosexual acts" were punishable. To this end the Committee addressed a petition to the Reichstag, signed by thousands of prominent doctors, scientists, and politicians. Hirschfeld based his campaign for equal rights for homosexuals on a biological theory of a "third sex"—the homosexual as "intermediate type" (*Zwischenstufe*). Inborn homosexuality posed no danger of seduction and should be recognized. Such notions were disseminated in scholarly circles in the *Jahrbuch für*

sexuelle Zwischenstufen [Yearbook for Intermediate Sexual Types], a scientific journal first published by the Committee in 1899.

The debate surrounding Wyneken, occasioned by the trial of 1921, did not go unnoticed by the Committee. Wyneken's distinction between pedagogical Eros and "homosexuality," and in particular his critical stance regarding the medical approach to "homosexuality," were not appreciated. Dr. Arthur Weil, who reviewed Wyneken's book *Eros* in the *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* (no. 1, January, 1922, pp. 17-23), delivered a prelude to the Committee's stand by attacking Wyneken's contempt for the medical profession and thus for the medically oriented Committee. According to Weil, Wyneken failed to realize that medical scholarship on sexuality was just experiencing a major turning point. Instead of denouncing the medical viewpoint of an "innate third sex," which formed the basis of the Committee's campaign for equal rights for "homosexuals," Wyneken would be better advised to devote his energy to the campaign. When equal rights were achieved, Weil argued, the bias against pedagogical Eros would disappear.

Committee staff member, Kurt Hiller, who was especially active in the campaign against Paragraph 175, attacked Wyneken fiercely for his aloofness toward "homosexuality." Hiller, who had at first sent Wyneken a declaration of sympathy, pointed in *Die Neue Generation* (no. 5, June, 1922, pp. 179-83) to the "favorable press" that Wyneken had been able to enjoy in democratic circles. Wyneken failed to see how much this could be directly attributed to "the fruits of decades of efforts at enlightenment by that very movement . . . which he for his part thrusts away from him, and how much he indirectly owes to a man whom he so despises as Magnus Hirschfeld." Hiller called Wyneken self-centered and arrogant and expressed deep disappointment in him. This just could not be the attitude of a socialist, let alone that of an aristocrat, Hiller concluded.

Another organization that defended male-to-male love, the Community of the Special (*Die Gemeinschaft der Eigenen*), responded positively to Wyneken's stand. The Community had been set up in 1903 by Adolf Brand, drawing adherents from the readership of the "magazine for male culture" entitled *Der Eigene* [The Special One]. Compared to the much larger Scientific Humanitarian Com-

mittee, this society undertook few activities on a political level, concentrating instead on cultural gatherings.

The Community of the Special identified largely with Wyneken's views on pedagogical Eros and looked back to classical Greek antiquity to defend boy love. The Community likewise adopted a critical stance toward the medical theory embraced by the Scientific Humanitarian Committee. Its concurrence with Wyneken's contempt for the medical approach was expressed in its periodical *Die Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* (no. 4, 1921): "What this man has done is a sublime and noble symbol of an alliance of love which bears only a superficial likeness to 'abnormal' sexuality" (p. 2).

The theme of pedagogical Eros was not unknown to the magazine *Der Eigene*. Pictures of youths assuming classical Greek poses were published, among them nude photographs by Wilhelm von Gloeden, romantic Jugendstil drawings by Fidus, and pictures of Wandervogel boys. The theories of doctors such as Hirschfeld on a third sex were ridiculed in *Der Eigene*. The "homosexual" as "intermediate type" was for Brand and his confederates a product of the urban subculture, an effeminate caricature. The "noble" experience of boy love could amount to no more than degeneration or pathology when judged from the medical viewpoint.

In Wyneken's defense the Community of the Special pointed to the political nature of the trial against him. Wyneken, like Oscar Wilde, had become the victim of bourgeois propriety. *Die Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* (no. 4, 1921) expressed full understanding of Wyneken's standpoint and his ideas on pedagogical Eros as a "spiritually determined bond":

And they live with him communally, they share with him their everyday lives, keeping his room in order, for example; but they also work with him, read with him, go on excursions together, participate in sports, and so forth. . . . That a much warmer tone, a more heartfelt relationship, something like an intimate friendship grows, really just goes without saying. (p. 2)

These are words that Wyneken himself could have written.

THE PLATONIC MODEL VERSUS THE SEXOLOGICAL MODEL

To what extent can the debate surrounding Wyneken's trial be understood as a manifestation of changes occurring at the turn of this century in the discourse on boy love?

From various quarters, pedagogical Eros was understood in sexological terms — in the original statement drafted by Hoffmann; in the discussion on the parents' day in the Free School Community; in the Rudolstadt court ruling; and in the diverse reactions to Wyneken's conviction appearing in numerous publications. The sexual perception that emerges in these commentaries cannot be seen in disjunction from a broader societal setting in which a medico-psychiatric conceptualization of sexuality was taking shape, in which a growing "sexual consciousness" and a new interest in sexuality were becoming manifest.

This "new interest" in sexuality had been noted in 1909 by the physician Albert Moll in his book *Das Sexualleben des Kindes* [The sexual life of the child], especially with regard to abnormal, perverse sexuality and sex drives. In this connection Moll cited Sigmund Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* from 1905 and the pioneer work by Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1886), *Psychopathia Sexualis*.

Moll adopted Krafft-Ebing's term "paedophilia erotica," by which was understood a sexual inclination (conscious or unconscious) on the part of adults toward children. Moll (1909) specially applied this term to the rearing of children. Adults charged with raising children were not always conscious of pedophilic feelings, according to him:

In part it is an undefined urge directed towards children which is operating here and which is partly responsible for interest in educating them. I have seen cases in which a sort of mania to educate and instruct was present, which upon closer analysis could be recognized as sexual interest in children. (p. 212)

In a later essay entitled "*Homosexualität und sogenannter Eros*" [Homosexuality and so-called Eros], Moll (1928) addressed Wyneken's ideas explicitly. He noted that some educators and psycholo-

gists saw something special in Eros that differentiated it from sexuality. Having read Wyneken's (1921) book, *Eros*, in which this distinction was likewise made, Moll (1928) concluded: "Wyneken does not at all contest that this in the end culminated in the homosexual genital act" (p. 137). To Moll, Eros was clearly a sexual phenomenon. The propagation of such views as his placed pedagogical Eros in jeopardy, because from a sexological point of view, it quickly came to be understood as a "rationalization" of sexual motives.

As has been shown, this sexual perception was not limited to medico-psychiatric circles, but was likewise voiced by the Scientific Humanitarian Committee. Its strategy was based on a medico-psychiatric conception of "homosexuality" as a "third sex," an innate sexual variant. Wyneken's aloofness with regard to the Committee's approach shows how much he wished to keep pedagogical Eros outside of any sexological interpretation. Hirschfeld (1914) exhibited in *Die Homosexualität des Mannes und des Weibes* [Male and female homosexuality] great skepticism toward friendships involving eroticism that one refrained from calling (homo)sexual.

That friendship which is friendship but not friendship, homosexual feeling but not really homosexuality, presents itself as a thing justly deserving the name of half-breed, of unhealthy, nebulous feeling—a feeling that is neither fish nor flesh, which of course may occasionally occur but which is among the greatest rarities. (p. 185)

Why beat timidly about the bush? Hirschfeld asked his readers. Why not just speak of homosexuality?

The appeals for pedagogical Eros cannot be considered without taking into account the unfolding medico-psychiatric conceptualization of sexuality in the early 20th century. The psychopathology of sex made possible a different view on pedagogical Eros. The emergence of this sexual perception in an era at the same time characterized by an anti-homosexual climate produced fertile soil for homosexual insinuations with, at times, political consequences. But the heated debates on man-boy friendships at that point reveal more: a shift in discourse on boy love. Views on boy love proved subject to

change. The Platonic model of pedagogical Eros, *Eros paidikos* or *paidierastia*, was forced to make way for the medico-psychiatric model of homosexuality and pedophilia.

The problem of sensual love was in the Platonic model a complex issue bound to numerous conditions.¹⁴ It was a hard issue to discuss, and many defenders of pedagogical Eros therefore settled for a spiritual bond between man and boy. In the medico-psychiatric model, however, the problem was placed in the limelight by conceptualizing it in sexological terms. Sensual love, reformulated as sexual impulses, was precisely the starting point for this model. This reformulation imputed a different intent to the Platonic model—the suggestion was raised that these pedagogical-erotic friendships were concerned chiefly with sexual gratification, even if the persons involved were not always aware. Although this did facilitate discussing sensuality, the assumption of sexual intent made the Platonic model a controversial issue.

The changes occurring in the discourse on boy love can be further analyzed. At the same time that the Platonic model was pushing sensual love into the background and non-sensual aspects were receiving greater emphasis, sensuality, termed as sexual desire, was achieving more prominence in the medico-psychiatric model. These sexual desires formed the criteria for classifying the pedophile beside the fetishist, the exhibitionist, the homosexual.

In the sexological model it thus became possible to see the boy lover as a child molester or pederast, and pedagogical Eros as a rationalization of sexual desires. Aesthetic ideals became transformed into perverse realities; initiation into beauty and wisdom were placed under the sign of seduction to evil. While within the youth movement the Platonic model had been understood as an integral part of social life and an indispensable element in the cult of friendship, the boy lover, having been identified in psychiatric terms, found himself as a pedophile in social isolation.

In the Platonic model, not every man had been viewed as a potential mentor for a boy. In Wyneken's eyes only intellectuals and artists were suited for this, because they possessed the wisdom which the boy wished to acquire. The leaders in the "comradships" were men who commanded admiration and respect. In the medico-psychiatric model these men were transformed into utter

failures, sexual-pathological personalities. In the course of the 20th century the psychiatric discourse on boy love would come to predominate, determining the countenance of man-boy friendships. An interesting question outside the scope of this article is: To what extent has the discourse on boy love been subject to new fundamental changes in the last two decades? Or is medico-psychiatric discourse still the determining factor for the view of boy love prevailing today?¹⁵

NOTES

1. Hans Blüher's (1912) book called *The German Wandervogel Movement as erotic phenomenon* appeared in response to campaigns against alleged homosexual youth leaders in the Wandervogel movement, and in part also in response to the trial in 1906 of the youth leader Wilhelm Jansen. Wyneken's (1921) publication *Eros* was his own account of his defense in the trial conducted against him in 1921.

Wyneken developed pedagogical Eros exclusively in the form of boy love. Although the Free School Community he led was coeducational, the girls' education derived entirely from that of the boys. There was some question for Wyneken in what measure girls could ever attain or represent the "spirit" which was aimed for at the school.

More general information on the youth and educational reform movements can be found in Laqueur (1984), Röhrs (1980), and Stachura (1981).

2. This orientation toward Greek antiquity is the subject of Butler (1935).

3. The term "paedophilia erotica" was introduced by Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1886) in the later editions of his book known in English as *Psychopathia sexualis: With especial reference to the antipathic sexual instinct. A medico-forensic study*. This book ranked around the turn of the century as a pioneer systematic study of sexual pathologies and may be considered a standard for the medico-psychiatric model.

The decline of the Platonic model is discussed by Eglinton (1964), who sees the rise of sexology as one of the causes.

4. An extensive biographical study on Gustav Wyneken which I have relied upon here is Kupffer (1970). See also Badry (1976), Dougherty (1977), and Panther (1960). For a political assessment of Wyneken's method, see Mosse (1966).

5. Plato (1967) lays down the conditions for pedagogical Eros as follows through Pausanias:

For when lover and favourite come together, each guided by his own rule — on the one side, of being justified in doing any service to the favourite who has obliged him, and on the other, of being justified in showing any attentions to the friend who makes him wise and good; the elder of his plenty contributing to intellectual and all other excellence, the younger in his pau-

city acquiring education and all learned arts: only then, at the meeting of these two principles in one place, only then and there, and in no other case, can it befall that a favourite may honourably indulge his lover.

6. See Ehrentreich (1972), who also specifically discusses George's critical stance on Wyneken's educational practices at Wickersdorf.

7. Memorandum über die Vorgänge in Wickersdorf [Memorandum on the events in Wickersdorf], p.2. Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung [Archives of the German Youth Movement], Burg Ludwigstein, West Germany (henceforth: AdJb), N Wyneken 1143.

8. Protokoll der Vernehmungen [Report of the commission of inquiry]. AdJb, N Wyneken 1141.

9. Bericht über den Elterntag in Wickersdorf, 7. November 1920 [Report on the parents' day at Wickersdorf]. AdJb, N Wyneken 1145.

10. *Anklageschrift* [Bill of Indictment] no. J3952/20, February 8, 1921. AdJb, N Wyneken 1157.

11. Ruling of the court at Rudolstadt, no. J3952/20, September 20, 1921. AdJb, N Wyneken 1163.

12. Ibid.

13. The August 30, 1921, decision of the Rudolstadt court was upheld in higher appeal in late 1922. Some time later it was nullified by the government of the State of Thuringia.

14. See note 5.

15. The work of the French philosopher René Schérer (1974) is interesting in this regard. He links the forming of taboos on eroticism in educational relationships to the psychiatrization of boy love, calling it "the perversion of Eros."

REFERENCES

Anklageschrift, no.J3952/20, February 8, 1921, AdJb, N Wyneken 1157.

Badry, Elisabeth (1976). *Pädagogische Genialität in einer Erziehung zur Nicht-Anpassung und zum Engagement: Studien über Gründer der frühen deutschen Landerziehungsheimbewegung: Hermann Lietz und Gustav Wyneken* [Educational ingenuity in the breeding of non-conformance and social involvement: Studies on founders of the early Country Home School Movement: Hermann Lietz and Gustav Wyneken]. Bonn: published under auspices of the author.

Bericht über den Elterntag in Wickersdorf, AdJb, N Wyneken 1145.

Blüher, Hans (1922). *Die deutsche Wandervogelbewegung als erotisches Phänomen: Ein Beitrag zur Erkenntnis der sexuellen Inversion* [The German Wandervogel Movement as erotic phenomenon: A contribution to the understanding of sexual inversion] (6th ed.). Prien am Chiemsee: Kampmann & Schnabel.

Butler, E. M. (1935). *The tyranny of Greece over Germany: A study of the influence exercised by Greek art and poetry over the great German writers of the*

- eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dougherty, Richard (1977). *Eros, youth culture and Geist: The ideology of Gustav Wyneken and its influence upon the German youth movement*. Madison, WI: author's manuscript.
- Eglinton, J. Z. (1964). *Greek love*. London: Oliver Layton.
- Ehrentreich, Alfred (1972). Stefan George in der Freien Schulgemeinde Wickersdorf [Stefan George at the Wickersdorf Free School Community]. *Castrum Peregrini*, 101, 62-79.
- Freud, Sigmund (1943). Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie [Three essays on the theory of sexuality]. In *Gesammelte Werke* [Collected works], 5 (1904-1905). London: Imago.
- Hirschfeld, Magnus (1914). *Die Homosexualität des Mannes und des Weibes* [Male and female homosexuality]. Berlin: Louis Marcus.
- Krafft-Ebing, Richard von (1890). *Psychopathia Sexualis: Mit besondere Berücksichtigung der conträren Sexualempfindung. Eine klinisch-forensische Studie* [Psychopathia sexualis: With especial reference to the antipathic sexual instinct. A medico-forensic study] (5th ed.). Stuttgart: Enke.
- Kupffer, Heinrich (1970). *Gustav Wyneken (1875-1964)*. Stuttgart: Ernst Klett.
- Laqueur, Walter (1984). *Young Germany: A history of the German youth movement* (2nd ed.). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.
- Maasen, Th. (1988). *De pedagogische eros in het geding. Gustav Wyneken en de pedagogische vriendschap in de Freie Schulgemeinde Wickersdorf tussen 1906 en 1931* [Pedagogical Eros at issue. Gustav Wyneken and pedagogical friendship at the Wickersdorf Free School Community between 1906 and 1931]. Utrecht.
- Memorandum über die Vorgänge in Wickersdorf*, AdJb, N Wyneken 1143.
- Moll, Albert (1909). *Das Sexualleben des Kindes* [The sexual life of the child]. Berlin: Herm. Walther.
- Moll, Albert (1928). Homosexualität und sogenannter Eros [Homosexuality and so-called Eros]. In *1e Internationale Konferenz für Sexualforschung* [First International Conference on Sex Research], 3 (pp. 136-147).
- Mosse, George (1981). *The crisis of German ideology: Intellectual origins of the Third Reich* (2nd ed.). New York: Schocken.
- Panther, Ulrich (1960). *Gustav Wyneken. Leben und Werk* [Gustav Wyneken. Life and work]. Weinheim/Bergstrasse: Beltz.
- Plato (1967). Symposium. In *Plato in twelve volumes*, 3. London: William Heinemann.
- Protokoll der Vernehmungen*, AdJb, N Wyneken 1141.
- Röhrs, Hermann (1980). *Die Reformpädagogik: Ursprung und Verlauf in Europa* [The educational reform movement: Its origins and evolution in Europe]. Hanover: Hermann Schroedel.
- Ruling of the court at Rudolstadt*, no. J3952/20, September 20, 1921, AdJb, N Wyneken 1163.
- Schérer, René (1974). *Emile perversi, ou des rapports entre l'éducation et la*

sexualité [Perverse Emile, or the links between education and sexuality]. Paris: Robert Laffont.

Stachura, Peter (1981). *The German youth movement 1900-1945: An interpretative and documentary history*. London: Macmillan.

Wyneken, Gustav (1919). *Schule und Jugendkultur* [School and youth culture] (3rd ed.). Jena: Eugen Diederichs.

Wyneken, Gustav (1921). *Eros*. Lauenburg: Adolf Saal.