

ENCHANTED DESIRES, SACRED EMBODIMENTS: SEX AND GENDER
VARIANT SPIRITUALITIES IN WEIMAR GERMANY

by

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ABSTRACT

Germany's Weimar republic has been understood as a time in which gays and lesbians asserted their demands for social tolerance and protection under the law. Many historians of this period have so far treated the complicated relationship between sex and gender variance and the scientific community. Yet the creation of the "homosexual" in the late nineteenth century as a kind of person also opened up the possibility for the discussion of a specifically sex variant soul. At the same time, the relative freedom of expression that occurred during Germany's Weimar period allowed for sex and gender variants to engage with existing ideas to articulate their own formulations.

One journal, *Die Freundschaft* was a mouthpiece for a particularly vast array of opinions regarding same-sex love. Influenced by the works of Plato, as well as German romanticism, *Die Freundschaft's* authors saw their desires as being guided by Eros, a non-human and sacred force. Moreover, they fused Magnus Hirschfeld's notion of a "third sex" with the theosophical principle of reincarnation, arguing that part of the karmic path was the eventual incarnation of a soul into a body of opposing gender. Finally, the sentiment commonly espoused during Weimar Germany, that one could discover one's soul in nature, made nature a place in which sex and gender variants could discover their unique souls, and come to terms with their desires. Examining the ways in which sex and gender variants chose to describe themselves and their experiences in the language of the sacred reveals the extent to which they were able put forward an articulation of same-sex love that subverted scientific prescription, describing a constellation of desires and embodiments that were hallowed as well as natural.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
"Enchanted Desires, Sacred Embodiments: Sex and Gender Variant Spiritualities in Weimar Germany"	1
Bibliography.....	44

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VARIANT SPIRITUALITIES IN WEIMAR GERMANY

In the February of 1920, the gay newspaper *Die Freundschaft* ran a front page article entitled, "The Way to Enlightenment" in which the author, writing only under the name Wassili, bemoaned the spiritual state of Weimar Germany's "inverted" population that had lead so few to reach higher states of consciousness: "Few among the inverted have gained an inner seclusion to them which is the way to higher planes. The majority are lead by a general interest, that in its principal composition before any thing else pays homage to theosophical principles. It is lacking a culture of the soul. It is lacking concentration, the first requirement for meditative mental dematerialization. Here in the coming decade a task lies before us."¹ That concern for the spiritual enlightenment of the "inverted" would be voiced at all, let alone in one of Weimar Germany's most widely circulated publications for the "differently oriented," may seem like an isolated occurrence. Yet it was a topic which continued to resurface during *Die Freundschaft's* fourteen years of publication.

Die Freundschaft was one of the more popular sex variant² publications during Germany's Weimar era, running from 1919 until it was shut down by the Nazis in 1933.

¹ "Nur wenige unter den Invertierten haben eine innere Abgeschlossenheit erlangt, die ihnen den Weg zu so hohen Weltzielen eröffnet. -- Die Mehrzahl führt ein Dasein, das in prinzipiellen komposition allem anderen als theosophischen Grundsätzen huldigt. Es fehlt die Seelenkultur. Es fehlt die Konzentration, das Bedürfnis nach meditativer seelischer Dematerialization. Hier liegen noch Jahrzehnte an Arbeit vor uns." Wassili, "Der Weg zur Erkenntnis," *Die Freundschaft*, no. 8 (1920).

² During the Weimar period labels which applied to sex or gender based identities were heavily contested. I borrow the terms sex-variance and gender-variance from Jennifer Terry and use them as an expedient way to group together a multitude of labels and identities while avoiding anachronistic terminologies such as "gay", "lesbian" "transgendered" or "transsexual." Whenever possible I will use the labels which my sources have applied to themselves. Jennifer Terry, *An American Obsession: Science, Medicine and Homosexuality in Modern Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

In addition to its contribution to the legal struggles for homosexual emancipation, *Die Freundschaft* allowed its contributors to draw from a broad range of cultural and literary resources to articulate subjective experiences of same-sex desire. Through the use of personal narrative, the writers of *Die Freundschaft* sought to develop a new model for human relationships which would serve as an alternative and a challenge to what they called *bürgerlich*³ or bourgeois modes of alliance. The writers in *Die Freundschaft* acknowledged that their unique desires removed them from the world of marriage and family, but rather than re-articulating their desires so as to make them compatible with *bürgerlich* standards, the contributors chose to embrace the differences which marked them from the larger German society. The purpose of *Die Freundschaft*, then, was not only to serve as a medium through which a minority could petition society, but also a construction of a liminal space which allowed both readers and writers to "evade new regulatory regimes that operate primarily by inciting them to speak."⁴ In articulating identities to each other, rather than to an embodiment of authority, the writers in *Die Freundschaft* were able to move beyond the focus on materialistic notions of sexuality and explore the symbolic and religious aspects of same-sex love.

As a textual space in which Weimar Germany's sex variants were able to reformulate the identities provided to them by a body of scientific research, *Die Freundschaft* allowed for the creation of sex variance centered upon a subjectively spiritual experience, rather than scientific formulations. This led to an articulation of same-sex love that focused on the sacred bond of friends, a traditional German concept.

³ This term generally refers to that which was non-Marxist or non-Socialist, but also refers to the civil or civic, and the plain. In many ways it is the German correspondent to *bourgeois*.

⁴ My understanding of marginal spaces as places where the articulation of a new identity becomes possible is greatly influenced by Anita Harris, "gURL scenes and Grrrl Zines: The Regulation and Resistance of Girls in Late Modernity," *Feminist Review* (No. 75, Identities, 2003), 38-56.

Moreover, it fused Hirschfeld's notion of a "third sex" with theosophical theories of reincarnation to argue that sex variants were karmically bound to find their soul mate. In this world view nature was seen as the ideal setting in which one could discover one's true self, one's spiritual destiny, and possibly one's soul mate. *Die Freundschaft* published articles in which authors described Eros as a sacred and powerful force which could affect the lives of sex variants. In this way *Die Freundschaft* facilitated the articulation of sex variance which built upon, and deviated from the materialist framework, engaging the spiritual world as a way of hallowing same-sex love.

The Weimar Republic is a period of special interest to historians of sexuality because of the sheer abundance of evidence which points to the formation of nationwide communities centered on sexually diverse identities. During the lifetime of the Republic, which began in 1918 and ended when Hitler seized control of the government in 1933, meeting places, night clubs, and associations catering to a sexually diverse population proliferated throughout Germany. Moreover, it is estimated that during the 1920s in Germany there were at least thirty different periodicals devoted to exploring aspects of sexual diversity.⁵ This proliferation has marked the Weimar Republic as a time in which a flourishing sex variant culture was able to establish itself.

At the same time that the profusion of printed material speaks to the sexual freedom which characterized Weimar Germany, it also points to a disunity in the way that identities were constructed around desires and behaviors. There were a number of publications, each with its own particular conception of sexual variance. As Florence Tamagne has said, "throughout the profusion of periodicals, and lobbying efforts, what is

⁵ James Steakley, *The Homosexual Emancipation Movement in Germany* (New York: Arno Press, 1975), 78.

striking is the discordance of the voices, the disagreement and the competition between the principal leaders, the lack of a common platform or even of a common definition of homosexuality."⁶ In short, sexual identities during the Weimar republic were subject to intense debate both within sex-variant communities and between sex-variant communities and the larger society.

For the most part, historians of sexuality have tended to focus on the "Third-Sex" model pioneered by Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, head of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee and one of the most outspoken advocates of sex variance of the early twentieth century. This has allowed scholars to treat the emergence and the struggle of sex variant movements within the context of a story of scientific progress. More recently, scholars have attended to the complicated relationship between those rights movements and the scientific community.⁷ What has largely been explored and contested in this literature is the process by which sexual identities were formed through the possibilities made available by legal and scientific developments, in which sex variance emerged as a scientifically discovered personhood to make demands upon a modern legal system.

In many ways this is the legacy of Foucault, who complicated and expanded the history of sexuality by presenting a model of sex that was not suppressed, but actually created, invested with a central importance, and deployed as a means of amassing knowledge. In the process, what had previously been a set of sexually deviant acts "came

⁶ Florence Tamagne, *A History of Homosexuality in Europe: Berlin, London, Paris 1919-1939*, vol. 1 (New York: Algora, 2004), 143.

⁷ An early account of the gay rights movement in Weimar Germany is James D. Steakley, *The Homosexual Emancipation Movement in Germany* (New York: Arno, 1975). A more recent account is Florence Tamagne, *A History of Homosexuality in Europe: Berlin, London, Paris, 1919-1939*, 2 vols. (New York, N.Y.: Algora, 2004). Although not pertaining strictly to Weimar Germany, the relationship between gay people and scientists in the formation of the "homosexual" identity is explored in Harry Oosterhuis, *Step Children of Nature: Krafft-Ebing, Psychiatry, and the Making of Sexual Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

to represent a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and a morphology, with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly a mysterious physiology."⁸ It is this part of Foucault's work that has been most central to historians of sexuality, and has consequently had an immense effect on the way that historians have investigated the formation of the "homosexual identity" as an axis of scientific notions of both gender and sexuality.

More recently, transgender and transsexual scholarship and activism have pointed to an experience of gender that, while it may not be rooted in the body or tied to sexual desire, is nonetheless a concrete and impermeable manifestation of the self rather than a social performance.⁹ In many cases sex and gender variants have accepted, and contributed to, the notion that the cause for their gendered experience or their sexual desires reside in some undiscovered part of the body.¹⁰ Both Harry Oosterhuis and Jennifer Terry have provided new insight into what Foucault's characterized as "reverse discourse" by studying the way that sex and gender variants have used their position as informants to shape scientific discourse around sex.

Yet what is less understood is the way that sex and gender variants have also used religious as well as symbolic discourse to understand their sexual desires and gendered experiences, either by locating the source of their gendered experience or desires in the

⁸ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume I, an Introduction* (New York: Vintage, 1978), 43.

⁹ Vernon A Rosario, "The Biology of Gender and the Construction of Sex?" *GLQ* (10:2. 2004), 282.

¹⁰ While current scholarship has advocated the decoupling of sexual desires (sexuality) from modes of behavior (gender) these two categories were seen as one phenomenon by Weimar contemporaries. This study largely focuses on the articulation of desire, but desire was seen as a gendered behavior during Weimar Germany, therefore this study will take up the construction of gendered, as well as sexual identities. As a consequence the interchangeable use of sex and gender will, at times, be unavoidable. Annamarie Jagose and Don Kulick, eds., "Thinking Sex, Thinking Gender," *GLQ* (10:2. 2004), 211-313.

soul rather than the body or the psyche, or by seeing their desires as the result of a non-human agent, such as Eros. The overwhelming number of studies concerned with the relationship between sex and gender variants and the scientific community in Weimar falsely suggests that by the end of the First World War, materialism had acquired a monopoly over the understanding of human sexuality. Yet according to Oosterhuis, by 1919 German homosexuality was defined by at least *two* conflicting traditions, neither of which could be considered straightforwardly materialistic.

The first was the work of sexologist and activist Magnus Hirschfeld, head of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee. Building on the work of 1870's gay activist Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, as well as British activist Edward Carpenter, Hirschfeld advanced the notion of a "Third Sex" or sexual/gender intermediary, demonstrating that sex and gender variance was an inborn, natural occurrence. Hirschfeld believed that an individual's sexuality and gender could be understood as an interaction between two spectra, both of which ranged from heterosexual masculine male to heterosexual feminine female. One spectrum described the body's gendered physical characteristics. The other spectrum described the psyche, which included behavior such as enjoying rough physical play, wearing women's clothes, and desiring men or women. Gays, lesbians, transgendered, transsexuals, bisexuals, slightly effeminate males, slightly masculine females, occupied the respective spaces between the two extremes. This model challenged the work of previous scientists such as Richard von Krafft Ebbing, which treated homosexuality as a sign of "psychological aberration". By advancing the claim that one could not choose or change one's own sexuality, and that homosexuality was not a threat, Magnus Hirschfeld was able to claim that sex and gender deviancy were part of the same natural occurrence.

These claims were critical in the struggle to strike paragraph 175 -- which banned unnatural acts between men -- from German law.

At the same time that the scientific conception was important to the struggle for legal emancipation on the part of homosexuals, it was contested by The Community of the Self-Owned (*Gemeinschaft der Eigenen*), which was headed by Adolf Brand. Brand's journal *The Self-Owned (Der Eigenen)* presented a same-sex love that was not congenital (in fact Brand was married), and had no bearing on one's gender identity, but was an experience only achieved by privileged males. *Der Eigenen* drew from platonic notions of Eros as well as eighteenth and nineteenth century German notions of romantic friendship to articulate a vision of homosexuality that was centered on man-boy love. Brand and his followers sought to argue against paragraph 175 by presenting a kind of homosexuality that improved the body as well as the nation by fostering traditional manly relationships.

Die Freundschaft emerged from the conflict between these two movements. James Steakly has described the way in which the founding of *Die Freundschaft* "institutionalized the dissatisfaction felt by many homosexuals about the academic orientation of the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee and the elitism of the community of the self-owned." Moreover, "The association attempted to meet the needs of homosexuals who had neither scientific nor literary pretensions: it opened an activities center in Berlin, and it held weekly meetings, sponsored dances, and published a weekly newspaper entitled *Die Freundschaft*."¹¹ While *Die Freundschaft* served a community that had been alienated by the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee and the Community of

¹¹ James Steakley, *The Homosexual Emancipation Movement in Germany* (New York: Arno Press, 1975), 74.

the Self-Owned, it also became a space in which both organizations could make their ideas available to a wider audience. During the paper's run, it sought to reconcile rather than exacerbate the differing streams of thought which characterized the Weimar Republic.

Unfortunately, little is known about the publication and its authors. Most of the regular contributors wrote under pseudonyms, making them difficult to track down outside of their contributions to the paper. As for the history of the paper itself, subscription numbers, sales, and even who was part of the staff are unknown to us. But according to Tamagne, *Die Freundschaft* became a symbol of German homosexuality. One visitor to Germany in 1921 commented on its popularity:

"It is difficult to get this newspaper, unless you look for it the very day it comes out. In downtown Frankfurt and Berlin, and many other cities, where there are many a colony of 'transvestis' [sic], it is snapped up as soon as it goes on sale, and it is futile to look for it at the newsstands the following day, as for back issues, they are untraceable."¹²

In addition to anecdotal evidence, advertisements from *Die Freundschaft's* October 1927 issue suggest that readership continued to grow during the 1920's. That same year, Magnus Hirschfeld commented that the paper had "succeeded for a time in mobilizing the homosexual masses."¹³ From these two statements we can hypothesize that *Die Freundschaft* served a growing base of both sex variants (Hirschfeld's "homosexuals") and gender variants ("transvestis").

The structure, format, and even the list of contributors changed so rapidly during the years of *Die Freundschaft's* publication, which went from weekly to monthly to semi-

¹² Quoted in Florence Tamagne, *A History of Homosexuality in Europe: Berlin, London, Paris 1919-1939*, vol. 1 (New York; Algora, 2004), 102.

¹³ James Steakley, *The Homosexual Emancipation Movement in Germany* (New York: Arno Press, 1975), 78.

annually, that it is impossible to treat the publication in the same way as a traditional newspaper. Reader's reactions and editorial policies are almost impossible to collect. In this way *Die Freundschaft* resembles a modern zine more than it does a national publication. Here the work of Stephen Duncombe is helpful, especially his formulation of a "media for the misbegotten, a tradition [which] operates on the margins of society, its concerns are common to all: how to count as an individual, how to build a supportive community, how to have a meaningful life, how to create something that is yours."¹⁴ Similarly, *Die Freundschaft's* focus on connecting with other like-minded individuals fits squarely with Duncombe's notion of a publication that is "not used as a medium to broadcast discontent to the dominant society, but as a way to share personal stories of living on the outside quietly with other disaffected individuals."¹⁵

As part of its mission to create a new community which was supportive of and conducive to same-sex love, *Die Freundschaft* articulated a moral system in which loving someone of the same gender was not only moral, but almost imperative in the creation of goodness in the world. In doing so, it addressed the issue of spirituality, but rather than arguing for a secular conception of same-sex love based upon morally neutral grounds of its right to exist, the writers of *Die Freundschaft* used literary, philosophical, and spiritual texts to demonstrate the existence of Eros as a divine force whose domain was same-sex love.

Eros played an important role in the way that *Freundesliebe* [Friend-Love] was articulated in *Die Freundschaft*. In its earlier publications, Eros in its same-sex

¹⁴ Stephen Duncombe, *Notes from the Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture* (New York: Verso, 1997), 15.

¹⁵ Stephen Duncombe, *Notes from the Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture* (New York: Verso, 1997), 25.

incarnation was primarily discussed as force that was only experienced by the privileged few, a sentiment analogous to other, more elitist, same-sex focused artistic circles such as the George-kreis and Der Eigene. At the same time *Die Freundschaft's* contributors were also influenced by Freud's work which held that Eros was a creative force which existed in all things. By fusing these two perceptions, *Die Freundschaft* ultimately was able to tie Eros to Nature as a primal force which drew people of the same sex together in an act of self-actualization.

The idea that technological and other forms of "progress" in some way rid a society of its beliefs in primal forces, what Max Weber has called "disenchantment" (*Entzauberung*), has come under increasing criticism. Probably the most direct and pointed critiques have come from post-colonial scholar Dipesh Chakrabarty who has called upon scholars to take up the issue of non-human agency: "One empirically knows of no society in which humans have existed without gods and spirits accompanying them. Although the God of monotheism may have taken a few knocks -- if not actually 'died'-- in the nineteenth century European story of 'the disenchantment of the world,' the gods and other agents inhabiting practices of so-called "superstition" have never died anywhere."¹⁶ Similarly, Joy Dixon has suggested "that we need to complicate our understanding of the historical contexts that shape both political and spiritual allegiances, the formation of political subjectivities, and the relationship between secular and sacred in modern political cultures."¹⁷ The contributors of *Die Freundschaft* saw themselves as the subjects of not only political, but spiritual forces as well.

¹⁶ Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 16.

¹⁷ Joy Dixon, *Divine Feminine: Theosophy and Feminism in England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 12.

If we are to follow the mandate of Dipesh Chakrabarty and "think from the assumption that the question of being human involves the question of being with gods and spirits,"¹⁸ then we must consider the question of how sex variance shapes and is shaped by spirituality. *Die Freundschaft's* contributors built upon Platonic and later Freudian notions of Eros in order to argue that *Freundesliebe* was a gift from the gods, and should be seen as a sacrament.

Sex variants had used Platonic discourse for centuries as a way of creating not only a meaningful past, but to understand their subjectivities on a spiritual level. Even 1860's activist Karl Ulrichs, who theorized sex and gender variance under the term *Urning*, borrowed his terminology from the *Venus Urania* of Plato's symposium. The early 20th century popularization of Freud's Eros "as a force whose primary "purpose [is] making one out of more than one... through the love of two human beings"¹⁹ breathed new life into the way in which sex variants could frame their desires as guided by non-human forces.

In the first several years of its publication, articles in *Die Freundschaft* borrowed heavily from depictions of Eros from earlier, more patriarchal gay journals. Stressing the Greek and pagan aspects of Eros, they described Eros as a deity whom an elite group of men had been called to serve. The conception of Eros as a god of whom only the cultivated worthy could even be aware served to depict homosexuals as an elite class rather than a persecuted minority; this clashed with *Die Freundschaft's* overall mission of inclusivity which sought to broaden the discourse on mental and spiritual same-sex love.

¹⁸Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 16.

¹⁹ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton, 1961), 65.

During its first year of publication, *Die Freundschaft* ran a series of articles by an author named "Kaempfer (Fighter)" who, typical of many Freundschaft writers in its earlier years, wrote under a pseudonym. Working within the tradition established by Adolf Brand in *der Gemeinschaft der Eigene*, Kaempfer sought to use classical mythology on Eros, as well as streams of neo-Platonist thought found throughout German romanticism in order to argue effectively for the existence of an ancient deistic force which drives men to love each other.

What Kaempfer wanted to demonstrate to his readers was that these ideas had precedents in German culture as well as antiquity. In an article which managed to tie German romantic notions of Friendship to Eros in under two pages, Kaempfer says, "This is what Goethe teaches us (in addition to his own aberrations above which he elevated himself through creation!). To the pure everything is pure. Wherever there is an Eros, i.e. one human being bound to another *completely*, it is sacred and right."²⁰

These "aberrations" that Kaempfer brings up, is a reference to the well-documented intense literary friendship between Goethe and Schiller, which many writers in *Die Freundschaft* pointed to as a model for true *Freundesliebe*. Thus the article serves to illustrate that not only the phenomenon, but also its moral justification, can be traced back to one of Germany's most eminent literary figures. In this way Kaempfer is able to establish same-sex love as a phenomenon whose genealogical roots are eighteenth and nineteenth century notions of romantic friendship.

²⁰ Dies lehrt uns Goethe (auch seine Verirrungen, über die er sich durch Gestaltung erhob!). Dem Reinen ist alles rein. Wo ein Eros ist, d.h. ein Mensch dem anderen *völlig* verfallen ist, ist er heilig und im Recht." Kaempfer, "Sittlichkeit und Eros," *Die Freundschaft*, no.5 (1919).

In a sense then, Kaempfer's articles, which were usually a little over a single page in length, served to compile, compact, and distill a vast array of literary evidence for the specific purpose of combating the *bürgerlich* notions of love which privileged a desire for the opposite sex. In another article "Die Weihe des Eros [The Blessing of Eros]" from 1919, Kaempfer loosely quotes Plato's *Symposium* for the specific purpose of illustrating that in the Platonic paradigm, love between men is more sacred than love between a man and a woman. "Eros is the oldest of the gods... Eros has no mother and no father. 'Neither Poet or layman know the manner of his birth.'"²¹ Here, Kaempfer is referring to the more obscure myths in which Eros is not the son of Aphrodite and Hermes, but a primal force which has existed since creation. At the same time, this conception is consistent with the Freudian articulation of Eros as an timeless force responsible for the creative drive.

He goes on to say that there are many kinds of Eros, and that they are not all equal. "The worldly Eros loves only the body. But 'the highest love comes from heavenly Aphrodite, and heavenly Aphrodite was created freely from a Man and is the older and full of moderation and controlled/ restrained.'" In this confusing sentence, Kaempfer is jumping from the creation of Eros to the birth of Aphrodite from Uranus which occurred without female involvement. By tying Eros to Aphrodite Uranios, Kaempfer is able to present Eros Uranios as a deific force which sanctions the love of men between men. "'And so all men and youths who this love inspires, strive longingly to the male, to their own sex: they love the stronger nature and the higher sense.' Blessed Hour! Eros Uranios,

²¹ "Eros ist der älteste der Götter... Eros hat keinen Vater und keine Mutter, Dichter und Laien wissen nichts von seiner Geburt." Kaempfer, "Die Weihe des Eros," *Die Freundschaft*, no.6 (1919).

we desire to build your temples through our very lives!"²² The idea that the homosexual was a living temple to Eros would be reiterated, with varying interpretations, throughout *Die Freundschaft's* run as a newspaper. In this way *Die Freundschaft* became a textual space in which same-sex desire could be articulated as driven by a primal and sacred force rather than an ill constructed glandular system.

What was important for Kaempfer was to present for disbursement as common currency the idea of "Eros Uranios," a love that is superior to "common" love and is only granted to the select few: "Only when Eros turns into creative strength, and only, for one who is bound to the great questions of life, is worthy of this kind of friendship."²³ Thus, in its first year, *Die Freundschaft* succeeded in advancing a tradition that sought to integrate platonic notions of love, an understanding of the divine, and the individual experience, in order to present a moral system which stood in opposition to *bürgerlich* morality.

This creative fusion of myth, Neo-Platonist sentiment, and German literature in order to advance the idea of an Eros specific to same-sex love came to be an important feature of *Die Freundschaft*. During 1919, Eros Uranios was the name that *Die Freundschaft* put forward as the primal source responsible for same-sex love; in 1920 however, the newspaper changed its mind, and in an article by an unnamed author

²²"Der irdische Eros liebt nur den Leib. Aber "die hohe Liebe stammt von der himmlischen Aphrodite, und die himmlische Aphrodite war aus dem Manne frei geschaffen und ist die ältere und voll Maß und gebändig. Und darum also streben sehnd alle Jünglinge und Männer, welche diese Liebe begeistert, zum männlichen, zum eigenen Geschlecht hin: Sie lieben die stärkere Natur und den höheren Sinn."

Weihevoller Stunde!

Eros Uranios, wir wollen dir Tempel bauen durch unser Leben!

Kaempfer, "Die Weihe des Eros," *Die Freundschaft*, no.6 (1919).

²³ "Nur wenn Eros zur schöpferischen Kraft wird, und nur, wer sich den großen Fragen des Lebens verpflichtet weiß, ist der Freundschaft würdig." Kaempfer, "Das Hohe Lied der Freundschaft," *Die Freundschaft*, no. 7 (1919).

(though with a writing style very similar to Kaempfer's) advances the notion of an "Eros Protogonos" who hatched from the egg of chaos fertilized by the wind, and is the source of all sensual experience. Yet, maintaining the link to Venus Urania, *Freundesliebe*, and German literature is clearly important to the author as the article begins with an epigraph which quotes Herder:

Nature saw, that the pure heavenly flame of the highest friendship would mostly be too fine for us on Earth; thus she clothed it in earthly-heavenly charms, and Venus Urania now appeared as Aphrodite. Love should invite us to friendship, love itself should become the most intimate kind of friendship.²⁴

The epigraph establishes the intellectual tradition to which the article belongs: here it is clear that the author intended for the reader to see friendship and same-sex love as the same sacred phenomenon. Even more important than getting their Greek myths aligned with the German Romantics' reading of Plato's *Symposium* was the conception of the male homosexual as a sacred vessel for Eros, a force which had affected humanity since the dawn of time, and had been praised since antiquity.

Ulli Herweg, who wrote frequently and on a variety of subjects, reiterated Kaempfer's sentiment that "we will build your temple through our very lives" in much stronger terms. In a 1920 article titled "The Oblates of Eros [Des Eros Opfer]" Herweg proclaimed: "We the disciples of Eros Protogonos (the creative love beyond the division between male and female) are not only his priests, but his temple, we are his altar." Here we see traces of Adolf Brand's patriarchal notion of separate spheres, or "creative division between males and females," but also the re-conceptualization of same-sex love

²⁴ Die Natur sah, dass die reine himmlische Flamme der höchsten Freundschaft für uns auf Erden meistens zu fein wäre; sie kleidete sie also in irdisch-himmlische Reize, und nun erschien Venus Urania als Aphrodite. Liebe soll uns zur Freundschaft laden, Liebe soll selbst die innigste Freundschaft werden" Johann Gottfried Herder, "Die Geburt des Eros," *Die Freundschaft*, no.2 (1920).

as a call to serve a sacred primal force, not only to be the priest, but the altar and the sacrifice. Herweg goes on : "If we dedicate our lives to Eros, so then we make of our actions a sacrificial pyre that we burn on the altar of our body in the flame of life."²⁵

Thus human mortality becomes in and of itself a sacrifice, our body the flames that will ultimately consume us. In loving those of the same sex, one's very life can be seen as an oblation to Eros.

The articles in earlier publications of *Die Freundschaft* featured Eros as a powerful, godlike, and specifically male-gendered entity which an elite few were called to serve. These writings by Kaempfer, Herweg, and others fulfilled an important role in transforming same-sex love, something that was seen by mainstream religious writers as a sin, perversion, and an abnormality, into something that was sacred, whose followers were looked after by a powerful superhuman force. At the same time the depiction of the followers of Eros re-enforced Adolf Brand's notion of same-sex love as an activity for an elite group of males with finely tuned aesthetic principles. This went counter to *Die Freundschaft's* original mission, to articulate a kind of same-sex love that was practiced by a large number of people from all walks of life. Yet the tradition of Eros was too rich to leave behind. Later articles which featured discussions of Eros focused less on Greek mythology or Plato, and more upon the Neo-platonic tradition in which Eros is a primal driving force found in every aspect of creation and that can be embodied in the object of one's desire.

²⁵ "Wir, die Jünger des Eros Protogonos (der schöpferischen, über der Trennung von Männchen und Weibchen stehenden Liebe), sind zugleich seine Priester, wir sind sein Tempel, wir sind sein Altar. Wenn wir unser Leben dem Eros weihen, so machen wir unsere Taten zu Opferhölzern, die wir auf dem Altar unseres eignen Körpers in des Lebens Flamme verbrennen." Ulli Herweg, "Des Eros Opfer," *Die Freundschaft*, no. 4 (1920).

Ideas around Eros and *Freundesliebe* that had been formulated by the "Gemeinschaft der Eigenen" were reinvigorated and adapted by the work of Kaempfer and Herweg as a driving force behind same-sex love. Yet *Die Freundschaft* drew from both Magnus Hirschfeld and Adolf Brand in formulating a spirituality which centered around same-sex love. In fact a key component to the disaffection that found a voice in *Die Freundschaft* was the quite literal disenchantment with the materialist understanding of sexual subjectivities. For many of *Die Freundschaft's* contributors, the third-sex model put forward by Magnus Hirschfeld was indispensable for its articulation of a concrete and immutable sexuality and gender identity, but its explanation for and the meanings it ascribed to these phenomena remained inadequate.

Florence Tamagne has noted that the Weimar period was marked by "dissatisfaction with the initial definitions. While they [homosexuals] tried to assert themselves personally, they did not really succeed in detaching themselves from externally imposed concepts. Many did not want to be associated with proponents of the third sex or with congenital invert, and they did not do much to support theses which they did not believe in and which they suspected of serving contrary interests."²⁶ What the writing in *Die Freundschaft* illustrates is that while many contemporaries found Hirschfeld's hypothesis politically expedient, they also found it wanting in that it invested same-sex love with no spiritual meaning. This investment was undertaken in *Die Freundschaft* by a variety of authors who sought to articulate a sex and gender variant soul. The search for the seat of one's gender identity, as well as one's sexual desire had been an obsession for quite some time; biologists held that it was somewhere in the body,

²⁶ Florence Tamagne, *A History of Homosexuality in Europe: Berlin, London, Paris 1919-1939*, vol. 1 (New York; Algora, 2004), 283.

while psychologists held that it was in the psyche; the people quoted below held that it was in their souls that the secret to their desires could be found.

From its first publication, until it was forced to change its format radically to avoid censorship in 1928, the various contributors to *Die Freundschaft* articulated a version of sex and gender variance which transcended the material and was tied to the spiritual. For the most part, historians have been reluctant to explore the spiritual ramifications of sexual identities, and the way that those who have assumed or have been assigned those identities have grappled with the spiritual as a way of understanding themselves. In part this is due to the way in which the story of homosexuality has been written within the margins of the story of modernity, in which old superstitions, intolerant of sex and gender variance, flee from the light of a materialist reality which embraces such things.²⁷

Yet from the outset, the homosexual identity was more than just a material construction. Foucault understood this: "Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul."²⁸ For Foucault, a crucial development took place during the nineteenth century when the "sodomite," whose soul and body were the same gender, became the "homosexual," whose soul had a gender which differed from that of the body. Before this transition, committing an act of same-sex love may have stained the spirit with sin, but it was not indicative of an always already abnormal soul.²⁹

²⁷ Max Weber, "Science as Vocation," *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. and ed. H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 138-139.

²⁸ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume I, an Introduction* (New York: Vintage, 1978), 43.

²⁹ The formulation that one's sexuality and one's gender identity were the immutable center to one's self is one of many ideas on sex and gender variance which competed during this period. It is

Rather than being a wholly scientific construction, the sex and gender variant soul was actually first articulated in the 1870's by lawyer and activist Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, who described himself and other sex variants as *Urnings*.³⁰ In a series of twelve lengthy pamphlets aimed at overturning paragraph 143 of the Prussian legal code, which banned "unnatural acts between men," Ulrichs argued that same-sex love was natural and so could not be punished. The crux of his argument rested on his articulation of the *Urning* as a special kind of persons whose souls were of a different gender than their body:

Certain components of the unified person can neither be measured in linear measurement, square inches, or cubic feet, nor be weighed by the pound or gram: the ability to think, memory, willpower, the ability to make decisions, the passions, inclinations, character, the feelings and sentiments, the yearning for love and sexual desires. The totality of these homogeneous feelings and emotions, since they cannot be weighed or measured, I call "the soul."... According to this, I may speak of a sex of the male soul and the female soul. Now, while the *Urnings* body is of the male sex, the sex of his soul, no matter how puzzling this may appear, is female."³¹

According to Ulrichs, nature created not only male and female bodies, but an entire spectrum of intermediaries. In like fashion souls could range from entirely male to entirely female. The sex of the soul in no way determined the sex of the body or vice-versa. Thus an individual constitution was the result of the soul and body reconciling with each other. At the same time one's gender identity and one's sexuality were bound together, so that the desire for men was seen as an essentially feminine trait, while the

however, the one which has had the most historical impact on the way in which sex and gender variance has been understood.

³⁰ The name illustrates the connection to Platonic ideas of the diety/force *Eros Urania*.

³¹ Karl Ulrichs, "Memnon," *The Riddle of Man-Manly Love*, trans. Michael Lombardi-Nash (New York: Prometheus Books, 1994), 471.

desire for women was an essentially masculine trait. The more feminine one's inner constitution the more one desired men and vice-versa.³²

Ulrichs' ideas had limited purchase within the scientific community. Certainly the idea of the *Urning*, while popular amongst sex variants, never caught on as a scientific term in Germany. Yet many doctors who, in order to expand their own jurisdictions, presented sex and gender variance as an illness rather than a crime, saw the usefulness of the idea of congenital same-sex love. Carl Westphal, who argued for the legalization of same-sex love, nonetheless described it as a "a congenital inversion of the sexual feeling" that was "pathological."³³ In this way sex variance was seen as an inborn illness, and those who suffered from it should not be persecuted, but placed in the care of a qualified professional.

At the same time, scientists such as Richard von Krafft-Ebing were reluctant to accept the idea that sex variance was inborn (and therefore incurable). Believing that one could trace same-sex love to masturbation in early years, Krafft-Ebing wrote: "It despoils the unfolding bud of perfume and beauty, and leaves behind only the coarse, animal desire for satisfaction. If an individual, thus depraved, reaches the age of maturity, there is wanting in him that aesthetic, ideal, pure and free impulse which draws the opposite sexes together."³⁴ For Krafft-Ebing, sex deviancy was the result of a lifetime of bad behavior which had dulled the senses, but was not beyond hope of correction.

³² Karl Ulrichs, "Memnon," *The Riddle of Man-Manly Love*, trans. Michael Lombardi-Nash (New York: Prometheus Books, 1994), 471.

³³ Karl Westphal, "Contrary Sexual Feeling: Symptom of Neuropathic (Psychopathic) Condition," *Sodomites and Urnings: Homosexual Representations in Classic German Journals*, trans. and ed. Micheal Lombardi-Nash (Binghamton, NY: Harrington Park Press, 2006), 88.

³⁴ Richard Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis With Special Reference to the Antipathic Sexual Instinct: A Medico-Forensic Study*, trans. F.J. Rebman (New York: Physicisans and Surgeons Book Company, 1924) 286-287.

In this infamous passage, Krafft-Ebing argued that same-sex love was only the "animal lust" that was left when the "aesthetic, ideal, pure and free impulses" had long since burned out. The notion that same-sex love was in some way base and unrefined was directly contradicted by the work of Adolf Brand, who in a typically utopic style wrote as follows:

love for a friend does not come from animal desire nor serve animal purposes, but rather it springs from the divine spirit and divine drive to create, which has allotted it the great task of renouncing bodily creation and progeny in favor of pursuing intellectual creation - - not to work, that is, in a family way but in a social way, and to see its most distinguished duty to provide education, art, freedom, and well-being, not only for the welfare and blessing of our fatherland, but also for the good of the whole world!³⁵

For Brand, sex variance was not deviancy at all, but the highest expression of love. By equating it with the love of friends, which had a much celebrated history in Germany, Brand was able to claim that same-sex love was natural, healthy, and good for society. Yet his model did not account for other forms of sex variance such as lesbianism, or gender variance, such as effeminacy in males. For Brand, loving another man was another way of asserting one's manhood, rather than a sign of a poorly formed psyche.

Ulrich's notion of a "third-sex" or gender intermediary survived, without its spiritual ramifications, in the work of sexologist and activist Magnus Hirschfeld who describes the genealogy of his theory of sex deviancy thus:

Ulrichs writes in the first of the letters to his relatives which I have previously published:

"We are not even men in ordinary terms. We compose a third sex." In reality, however,

³⁵ Adolf Brand, "What We Want," *Homosexuality and Male Bonding in Pre-Nazi Germany: The Youth Movement, the Gay Movement, and Hitler's Rise: Original Transcripts from Der Eigene, the First Gay Journal in the World*, ed. Harry Oosterhuis (Binghamton, NY: Harrington Park Press, 1991) 162.

this idea and its expression is much older, and is found in antiquity. So replied, in Plato's Aristophanes, Pausanias in the above-quoted speech on the παιδεραστία: "In the beginning, there were three people among the sexes, not as it is now only two, the male and the female but still a third sex, and the community which these formed: the androgynous ...³⁶

Here we can see that even Hirschfeld's conception of sex deviancy derived from the idea of a soul whose gender contrasted with that of the body, as well as Platonic ideas. Yet Hirschfeld himself never built upon the spiritual understanding of sex and gender variance, favoring the materialist aspects in his understanding of sexuality. By basing his work on the hypothesis that sexual desire and gender identity could be located in the body, Hirschfeld advanced the cause of sex and gender variance in many ways. Still, others found that this emphasis on the body ignored experience of one's gendered self and one's sexual identity as an experience of the soul.

In many ways the creation of a "homosexual" identity in the 1920's was made possible by the work of sexologists such as Havelock Ellis, Iwan Bloch, and most importantly, Magnus Hirschfeld. By demonstrating that homosexuality was a natural occurrence, not a sign of "degeneration" or a symptom of modern society, sexual science was able to advance the claims that one could not choose one's own sexuality, and that homosexuality was not a threat. These claims were critical in the struggle to strike paragraph 175 (formerly paragraph 143, against which Ulrichs had fought) from German law.

At the same time that the scientific conception was important to the struggle for legal emancipation on the part of homosexuals, it was considered by *Die Freundschaft*

³⁶ Magnus Hirschfeld, *Die Homosexualität des Mannes und Weibes* (Berlin: Welter de Greuyter, 2001), 29.

authors such as Ulli Herweg to be an insufficient description of the sex and gender variant experiences. A significant number of the articles in *Die Freundschaft* were devoted to articulating everything about same-sex love that could not be explained through the sciences. What the authors of these articles sought, above all else, was an articulation of homosexual subjectivities that acknowledged what they saw as the mystery and the enchantment of same-sex love.

Die Freundschaft was a space in which sex and gender variants were able to contest what Corinna Treitel has identified as "the boundary between science and the public, between those who produced new knowledge and stoked the engines of socioeconomic and cultural progress and those who enjoyed its fruits but did not participate in its production." This rigidly maintained boundary, between those who produced science, and those who became its subjects and beneficiaries was challenged on multiple fronts during the Weimar era. In the case of Treitel's work, she has shown the way in which occult societies "took it upon themselves to found a science for the spirit aimed at the general enlightenment of humanity," and in doing so "committed an act of epistemological anarchism that challenged the cultural authority of German science."³⁷ The cultural authority of German science to determine what experiences could be deemed credible had drastic consequences for sex and gender variants, whose desires and experiences of gendered embodiment could be discounted by scientific authorities. By engaging occult ideas, which had already challenged the authority of scientific discourse, sex and gender variants were able to take their identity into their own hands.

³⁷ Corinna Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2004), 166.

Religious ideas, particularly those influenced by theosophy, a religious and metaphysical society founded in 1875 by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky which sought to combine the truths of all religions as a path towards spiritual progress, were articulated in *Die Freundschaft* as a way of creating a spiritual identity for sex variants. From early on, many contributors to *Die Freundschaft* worked to find a place in various religious dogmas -- including Christianity -- for homosexuality, but ultimately it was the theosophical system which proved the most satisfactory. As a result, theosophical principles were espoused by the authors of *Die Freundschaft* not only as an explanation for homosexuality, but as a system which infused the quest for same-sex love with spiritual importance.

An understanding of homosexuality had been developed during the first two decades of the 20th century through the work of occultist Charles Leadbeater and scientist and occultist Charles Lazenby.³⁸ Although it was never fully accepted in theosophical circles, it nonetheless circulated enough to become available to the writers for *Die Freundschaft*. It held that the soul went through a course of seven lives during which it was incarnated in a male body, on the seventh of which the soul took on feminine qualities in preparation for the next seven lives, in which it would be incarnated into a female body.³⁹ The doctrine of reincarnation proved an important explanation for why people were attracted to their own gender, and was often mentioned during *Die Freundschaft's* first two years of publication. Theosophical thought reinforced 1870's gay activist Karl Ulrichs' assertion that "The phrase 'the soul of a woman enclosed in a male

³⁸ Joy Dixon, *Divine Feminine: Theosophy and Feminism in England* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

³⁹ Charles Lazenby. "Sex," *The Path* (November 1910): 95-96, quoted in Joy Dixon, *Divine Feminine: Theosophy and Feminism in England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

body' will stand like an erect column, and the teeth of time will not gnaw it away."⁴⁰ *Die Freundschaft* provided a textual space which reignited discussions on the spiritual aspects of sex and gender variance, which had been ignored for the most part since Ulrichs in favor of materialist analyses on the part of scientists. By engaging theosophical and other spiritual systems, sex and gender variants were able to choose for themselves spiritual doctrines which confirmed their own experiences of embodiment and desires.

Ulli Herweg first raised the question of religious dogma in an article on homosexuality and Christianity. He began his critique of what he called the "materialist" interpretation, in which homosexuality is seen as part of the natural process, by restating its basic premise: "Within Nature," Herweg wrote, "nothing extra-natural can happen... Therefore homosexuality... has to be included in the plan of nature." In the materialist interpretation, nature's role is the maintenance and improvement of a species through procreation: "Nature provides for the conservation of the species. As some individuals... are not fit to maintain the race, so nature takes away the reproductive drive." Yet nature leaves within the reproductive machine that is the human body its reproductive urge. "On the other hand, since the organism as a mechanical machine has certain sexual functions to fulfill, the individual is driven away mechanically from the other sex needed for procreation and towards its own." In the materialist view as presented by Herweg, then, homosexuals were inadequate breeding stock, who nature in its infinite drive for perfection had removed from the gene pool by reversing the reproductive drive. For Herweg, this explanation may have been emancipatory, but it was still inadequate. "This solution is absolutely 'natural' and plausible," he conceded, "but does it satisfy us?... not

⁴⁰ Karl Ulrichs, "Memnon," *The Riddle of Man-Manly Love*, trans. Michael Lombardi-Nash (New York: Prometheus Books, 1994), 293.

quite."⁴¹ The place for sex variance in the materialist cosmology was unsatisfactory for Herweg. Although it may have been politically expedient as a means of gaining sympathy for society at large to present sex and gender variance as a type of handicap, it clearly did not speak to Herweg's experiences.

For Herweg it seemed that enough attention had been spent on developing a materialist understanding of homosexuality in which homosexuals were not to blame for their "wretched" condition.⁴² Instead he argued, "let us try to make this second...assessment of homosexuality clear to ourselves, that is, let us go into the religious significance of homosexuality."⁴³ In later articles, Herweg would espouse karma in his arguments, as well as a deeply spiritual conception of Eros, but in this case, his goal was to prove that homosexuality had a place in Christendom by arguing that same-sex love filled all of the requirements of Christ-like love. "For the characteristics of Christian love, we want to gather three utterances, which medieval scholasticism in crystal-clear purity marks as follows: 'Love, my friend, we recognize first by the longing for union with the beloved, second, by the wish to shape this union as tender and long-lasting as possible, and thirdly, by the desire of a sacrifice for the beloved.'"

⁴¹ "Innerhalb der Natur *kann* nichts außernatürliches vorgehen. Die Homosexualität ist eine Naturerscheinung. Folglich muß die Homosexualität -- ich vermeide absichtlich den französisch-süßlich-schamhaften Namen 'Inversion' -- im Plan der Natur enthalten sein. Die Natur sorgt für die Erhaltung der Gattung. Ist ein Individuum [sic!] -- oder, wie mein kleiner Freund sagt: Individuum -- zur Erhaltung der Rasse nicht tauglich, so nimmt die Natur den Fortpflanzungstrieb. Da andererseits der Organismus als mechanische Maschine bestimmte sexuelle Funktionen zu erfüllen hat, kehrt sich rein mechanisch das Individuum [sic!] von dem zur Fortpflanzung notwendigen andern Geschlecht ab und dem eigenen zu. Diese Lösung ist durchaus 'natürlich' und plausibel, aber befriedigt sie uns? Doch wohl nicht ganz." Herweg, Ulli, "Homosexualität und Christentum," *Die Freundschaft*, no. 17 (1919).

⁴² As was the repeated assertion of Krafft-Ebing throughout Richard Frierr von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis: With Special Reference to the Antipathic Instinct: A Medico Forensic Study*, trans. F.J. Rebman (New York: Rebman Company, 1922).

⁴³ "Versuchen wir uns einmal auch über diese zweite, grundlegende und letzte Beurteilung der Homosexualität vor uns selbst klar zu werden, das heißt, setzen wir uns mal auseinander über die religiöse Bedeutung der Homosexualität." Ulli Herweg, "Homosexualität und Christentum," *Die Freundschaft*, no.17 (1919).

He follows up by asking, "Do these words need any explanation? Which friend does not long for the beloved, which friend does not find his happiness in suffering for the beloved and in sacrificing everything for him: Money and goods, reputation and honor, body and soul, one's whole life?"⁴⁴ By pointing to the limits of the materialist framework, and presenting a re-interpretation of same-sex love within the Christian framework as a pure, undying and sacrificial love, Herweg opened the possibility for later discussions on the role of same-sex love in religious discourse.

For another contributor to *Die Freundschaft*, Giovanni Nemo, the materialistic model was not only inadequate, but also insulting. "The scientists," he wrote "at least the majority of them, see in the passions for the same sex a pathological degeneration."⁴⁵ Nemo's goal was to build upon Herweg's assertion that the religious sphere was of great relevance to homosexuals by introducing the ideas of theosophy to *Die Freundschaft*. In his writings, it is clear that Nemo does not see theosophy a return to an ancient Germanic-pagan past, which he disparages: "it was the folly of the German hordes and the meanness of Roman preachers who had to band together to bring same-sex love into disrepute. In 'Germania' Tacitus describes how he who embraced his friend was drowned in swamps."⁴⁶ Rather, for Nemo, theosophy represented a new way of understanding the

⁴⁴ "Für das Merkmal christlicher Liebe wollen wir drei Aeüßerungen der Liebe zusammentragen, die mittelalterliche Scholastik in krystallklarer [sic!] Reinheit folgendermaßen kennzeichnet: "Die Liebe, mein Freund, erkennen wir erstens an der Sehnsucht nach Vereinigung mit dem Geliebten, zweitens aus dem Wunsche, diese Vereinigung möglichst innig und langdauernd zu gestalten, und drittens aus dem Verlangen des Opfers für den Geliebten."

Brauchen diese Worte eine Erklärung [sic!]? -- Welcher Freund sehnt sich nicht nach dem Geliebten, welcher Freund findet nicht seine Beglückung darin, für den Geliebten zu leiden und ihm alles zu opfern: Geld und Gut, Ruf und Ehre, Leib und Seele, das ganze Leben?" Ulli Herweg, "Homosexualität und Christentum," *Die Freundschaft*, no. 17 (1919).

⁴⁵ "Die Wissenschaftler, wenigstens ein großer Teil von ihnen, sehen in der Neigung zum gleichen Geschlecht eine krankhafte Entartung." Giovanni Nemo, "Homoerotik und Theosophie," *Die Freundschaft*, no. 6 (1920).

⁴⁶ "Erst die Torheit der Germanenhorden und die Niedertracht römischer Pfaffen mußten sich zusammentun, um die gleichgeschlechtliche Liebe in Verruf zu bringen. Nach der 'Germania' des Tacitus

spiritual world by combining the best ideas of all the world's religions: "Theosophy is not linked to a specific dogma, and is in many ways a synthesis of all religions."⁴⁷ Nemo and others like him had to select what was useful from a variety of sometimes hostile traditions in order to piece together a self-understanding that was workable. As a doctrine which had developed through a similar process of taking what was useable and ignoring what was not, theosophy had an understandable appeal.

Two aspects of theosophy were of particular relevance to Nemo and other writers for *Die Freundschaft*: its notion of reincarnation and its notion of karma. For his readers, Giovanni Nemo laid out the journey that the soul makes according to theosophy: "The soul is immortal, it comes from the World Spirit, and returns, enriched with the knowledge of the difference between good and evil, and the certainty to have caused itself all suffered pains and all enjoyed delights, to the World Spirit. It does so, however, only after the full impact of karma. To enable this, the soul must pass through a series of incarnations."⁴⁸ In this spiritual conception, it became imperative to experience all pains and all sorrows, this not only included sex variant desires, but also gender variant embodiment. Moreover, in this narrative of the soul's journey, it was imperative to act upon one's unique desires. What was of particular interest to Nemo, was

the assertion sometimes made in some Theosophical circles, that over a period of seven reincarnations the soul wanders from a masculine into a feminine body and vice versa. In

wurde der in Sümpfen erstickt, der seinen Freund umfing." Giovanni Nemo, "Homoerotik und Theosophie," *Die Freundschaft*, no. 6 (1920).

⁴⁷ "Die Theosophie ist an kein bestimmtes Dogma geknüpft und in gewissen Sinne die Synthese aller Religionen." Giovanni Nemo, "Homoerotik und Theosophie," *Die Freundschaft*, no. 6 (1920).

⁴⁸ "Die Seele ist unsterblich, geht von der Weltseele aus und kehrt, bereichert um die Erkenntnis des Unterschiedes von gut und böse und die Gewißheit, selbst all erlittenen Schmerzen und alle genossenen Wonnen verursacht zu haben, in die Weltseele zurück. Sie tut dies jedoch erst nach voller Auswirkung des Karma. Um diese zu ermöglichen, muß die Seele eine Reihe von Wiederverkörperungen durchmachen." Giovanni Nemo, "Homoerotik und Theosophie," *Die Freundschaft*, no. 6 (1920).

the incarnations at the conclusion of these periods, the soul feels an increasing desire for a reincarnation in a body of the opposite sex than its current home. This inconsistency between the propensity of the soul and the sex of these enclosing bodies explains the feminine sentiments in men and masculine sentiments in women and, in doing so, the homoerotic constitution.⁴⁹

In Nemo's writing, both sex and gender variance were characterized as a phase in the journey of the soul, a learning experience which signified spiritual advancement towards the world spirit.

It was not only reincarnation that offered new possibilities for articulating homosexuality. Nemo also found the matrix of moral action and fate inherent in the concept of karma intriguing. "Karma (Act/Law) in the true sense is identical to the scientific law of causality: 'it is believed that from every happening an effect follows, which again turns into a cause'. On the territory of moral terms, karma determines with each and every good or bad deed or emotion its reward or its punishment."⁵⁰

For Nemo, karma is the force that judges each act *and emotion*, and in doing so determines the quality of the next life of the soul, or if it is ready to return to the World Spirit.

⁴⁹ "Interessant ist die bisweilen in theosophischen Kreisen erhobene Behauptung, daß die Seele in einer Periode von je sieben Reinkarnationen sich von einem männlichen in einem [sic!] weiblichen Körper und umgekehrt begibt. In den sich dem Schluß der Perioden zuneigenden Verkörperungen nun empfinde die Seele bereits eine sich steigernde Sehnsucht nach einer Reinkarnation in einer dem Geschlecht ihrer derzeitigen Behausung entgegengesetzten Leibe. Aus diesem Widerspruche zwischen den Neigungen der Seele und dem Geschlecht des diese umschließenden Körpers erkläre sich das weibliche Empfinden der Männer und das männliche der Frauen und damit das Wesen Homoerotik." Giovanni Nemo, "Homoerotik und Theosophie," *Die Freundschaft*, no. 6 (1920).

⁵⁰ "Karma (Gesetz) im eigentlichen Sinne ist mit dem von der exakten Wissenschaft ausgestellttem Gesetz der Kausalität identisch: "es nimmt an, daß auf jedes Geschehen eine entsprechende Wirkung folgt, welche ihrerseits wieder zur Ursache wird". Auf das Gebiet des Moralischen bezogen, findet also durch das Karma jede gute und jede böse Tat oder Regung ihren Lohn oder ihre Strafe." Giovanni Nemo, "Homoerotik und Theosophie," *Die Freundschaft*, no. 6 (1920).

The question that most fascinated Nemo and other *Freundschaft* writers was the destiny that karma had placed them, as sex/gender variants, to fulfill. In other words, what was the experience that the soul, on this its seventh incarnation, was supposed to undergo in order to come closer to enlightenment? Ulli Herweg, who had argued for the incorporation of same-sex love into the Christian moral universe by favorably comparing same-sex love to medieval articulations of Christian love, now sought to illustrate the role that same-sex love played in the theosophical "World Drama." Herweg began his article "Karma" by quoting the Chaûdogya-Upanishad:

This, what lies in the eye of the lotus, is not aged by age, and does not die by killing, this is the real city of Brahman, the sinless self, free of age, free from death, and free from suffering, without hunger and thirst, its desire is in truth, truly the resolution.

Whosoever parts without having found this treasure in the Lotus blossom, will then be reincarnated in all worlds to a life in unfreedom, but whosoever discovers it, then will he be reborn in all worlds to a life in freedom.⁵¹

The question for Herweg thus became, how do we, as homosexuals, find the sinless self? In answering this question, Herweg argued that one should not avoid love, but rather to seek it out. "Upon our love will we come to know ourselves; and upon the love that we give will we recognize what is given to us."⁵² In Herweg's interpretation of karma and the role of same-sex love the quest for love and the quest for enlightenment were one and the same thing. This sentiment was repeatedly expressed in articulations of "ideal

⁵¹ "Dieses, was in dem Kelch der Lotusblume ist, altert mit dem Alter nicht und wird nicht mitmordet beim Morde, dies ist die wahre Brahmanstadt, das Selbst, das sündlose, frei vom Alter, frei vom Tod und frei von Leiden, ohne Hunger und ohne Durst, sein Wünschen ist wahrhaft, wahrhaft sein Ratschluß.

Wer von hinnen scheidet, ohne dieses Kleinod in der Lotusblume erkannt zu haben, dem wird zuteil *in allen Welten* ein Leben in Unfreiheit, wer es aber erkannt hat, dem wird zuteil in allen Welten ein Leben in *Freiheit*." Ulli Herweg, "Karma," *Die Freundschaft*, no. 7 (1920).

⁵² "An unsere Liebe werden wir uns selbst erkennen; und an dem, was wir an Liebe geben, werden wir erkennen, was uns gegeben ist." Ulli Herweg, "Karma," *Die Freundschaft*, no. 7 (1920).

Friendship" in which friendship was the sharing of two pure souls. *Die Freundschaft* frequently published articles which advised their readers that one must find inner peace with oneself before one can find love in another person. As Fritz Siegel wrote in his article "Erkenne Dich Selbst! [Discover Yourself!]" self knowledge, and self understanding were necessary precursors for *Freundesliebe* "Only one with inner balance and divine inner peace can hope to achieve ideal Friendship. Therefore: *Nosce te ipsum!*"⁵³

The theosophical understanding of karma repeatedly resurfaced in *Die Freundschaft*. Arguing that it was the karma of all homosexuals to find their *Seelengenossen* or soul mate, the authors of *Die Freundschaft* were able to deploy theosophical thought in order to infuse an otherwise meaningless, seemingly hopeless and depressing search for love with religious significance.

The conception of homosexuals as souls at their seventh incarnation, whose challenge in this life was not only to reconcile their own conflicted natures, but to find another like themselves to accompany them on the journey of the seventh life, offered homosexuals many things that materialism could not. At the very least it explained all of those things that could not be explained by misfiring hormones or neurons. Moreover, by advancing a conception of same-sex love in which it was crucial to the soul's journey on the karmic wheel for it to find love, *Die Freundschaft* was able to put forward a model of sex and gender variance which, while building upon the materialist framework, ultimately favored a cosmology that infused their desires and embodiments with spiritual meaning.

⁵³ "nur ein Mensch mit inneren Gleichgewicht und göttlicher Seelenruhe wird einer idealen Freundschaft fähig sein. Darum: Nosce te ipsum!" Fritz Siegel, "Erkenne Dich Selbst!" *Die Freundschaft*, no.13 (1920).

Later developments of same-sex love as inspired by romantic natural surroundings also included the imperative of self-knowledge. Romantic natural surroundings were depicted as places in which one could rediscover oneself amidst ancient nature, and possibly discover one's soul mate as well. A 1925 article: "Vom Richtigen Suchen [The Right Search]" by F. Roack urged other homosexuals to leave the cities behind, and go out into nature where "one becomes human again, on nature's ground everything is resolved, and one comes to oneself."⁵⁴ In Roack's article, the city is a place in which one lived an artificial existence, in which true friendship was nearly impossible. Conversely finding true friendship in nature, one could pursue the course of enlightenment:

Do you want to let loose your instincts? Then search in the decadence of the big city that unnerves you with its enticements and turns you into a weak man, as you can notice daily with so many of our fellows.

If however you want body and soul to recover, start off with the right search and pick yourself a lotus blossom from the big garden of love.

If you are able to give true love, so it will be given to you. Hand in hand will you enter the land of bliss with your traveling comrade.⁵⁵

Roack's use of the lotus metaphor bears a striking resemblance to Herweg's quotation of the passage from the Chaûdogya-Upanishad. For Roack, the quest for love begins with the quest for the self, the lotus. In this quest the romantic vision of nature plays an

⁵⁴ "Hier wird man wieder Mensch, am Boden der Natur löst sich alles und man kommt zu sich selbst." F. Roak, "Vom Richtigen Suchen," *Die Freundschaft*, no.6 (1925).

⁵⁵ Willst Du Dein Triebleben ausschöpfen, dann suche in der Dekadenz der Großstadt, die Dich mit ihren Verlockungen entnervt und Dich zum schwachen Menschen macht, wie Du es täglich an vielen der Unsrigen erlebst. Willst Du aber gesunden an Leib und Seele, so beginne mit dem richtigen Suchen und pflücke Dir Deine Lotosblume aus dem großen Garten der Liebe. Kannst Du wahre Liebe geben, so wirst auch Du sie bekommen. Hand in Hand wirst Du mit Deinem Weggenossen in das Land der Glückseligkeit einziehen." F. Roak, "Vom Richtigen Suchen," *Die Freundschaft*, no. 6 (1925).

important role in the great "World Drama" of karma as a setting for self discovery and for the discovery of one's true love. In this process the discovery of one's traveling comrade or *weggenossen*, was the final step before entering the promised "land of bliss" which bears remarkable similarity to Herweg's "City of Brahman" and the theosophical "World Soul".

Since the early Romantic Movement, nature had often been characterized in German culture as a setting in which one could commune with one's soul, as well as the "world rhythms of the earth."⁵⁶ Yet in an age in which one's sexuality was seen as a crucial and defining aspect of the soul, the use of nature as a place of self-discovery took on complex meanings. Back-to-nature movements, originally formed in the late nineteenth century as a way of combating what was seen as the demoralizing and degenerating effects of industrialization, took on sexual overtones almost immediately. George Mosse has produced the most thorough treatment of the phenomenon thus far. He describes the way in which "The quest for the natural, the exaltation of nature, had been an important bourgeois impetus; but now it was turned back upon the bourgeoisie itself in order to challenge its respectabilities. Those who lead this revolt were for the most part young, and their rebellion went beyond books and journals to inspire youth movements, sport, and eventually an entire new national consciousness."⁵⁷ In these back-to-nature groups, nature came to be seen as a place in which one could escape from *bürgerlich* ways of living, freeing one's body and one's spirit and reconnecting with the more authentic existence.

⁵⁶ Kate Rigby, *Topographies of the Sacred: The Poetics of Place in Early German Romanticism* (London: University of Virginia Press, 2004).

⁵⁷ George Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 48.

Of these movements, the organization which had the most profound effect on the writers of *Die Freundschaft* was the *Wandervogel*, an organization in which bands of youths consisting of both girls and boys hiked and camped together under the limited supervision of young adults. In his study on the *Wandervogel*, John Alexander Williams has described how "in the *Wandervogel* subculture, hiking brought small groups into a nature that liberated them, albeit temporarily, from adult surveillance. They approached nature with reverence and strong emotion. Their discussions of sexuality in 1913 also implied that nature could become the setting for erotic exploration."⁵⁸ The erotic overtones of the group was something that the *Wandervogel* and its members were constantly forced to come to terms with, especially in the aftermath of Hans Blüher's *Die deutscher Wandervogelbewegung als erotisches Phänomen* which argued that the group was held together by homoerotic bonds.⁵⁹ The authors who contributed articles to *Die Freundschaft*, many of whom had come of age within its ranks, looked back upon the *Wandervogel* as an organization which facilitated the discovery of their adult selves, and consequently their first sexual experiences.

By 1924 the *Wandervogelgeschichte* or Wandervogel story became a repeated feature in *Die Freundschaft*. The authors of such stories would give "true life accounts" of their erotic experiences as *Wandervogel* members. Rather than being overtly sexual, such accounts focused on the natural setting, the deep connection felt by the participants, and the awakening of the soul that resulted from the experience.

⁵⁸ John Alexander Williams, "Ecstasies of the Young: The Moral Panic Over Youth Sexuality in Germany on the Eve of the First World War" (paper presented at the meeting of the Society for the History of Children and Youth, Norrköping, Sweden, June 2007), 18.

⁵⁹ Hans Blüher, *Die deutscher Wandervogelbewegung als erotisches Phänomen*, (Frankfurt: Dipa Verlag, 1976).

By removing the protagonists from the *bürgerlich* world of the cities and physically placing them in romantic locals, forest groves, mountain peaks, cliffs overlooking stormy seas, writers of *Wandervogel* stories were able to speak to a kind of love that existed outside of societal boundaries. One story, called *Midsummer's Night* (*Mitsommernacht*) finds two men alone together in the forest, where they find themselves drawn to each other. The author says “Gripped by this sacred hour here in the vastness of nature, we reached for each other's hands, pressing cheek to cheek, the better to feel the pulse of each other's blood, we vowed to be true to each other, and to submit to the great world rhythm of life, to help our fellow man to the best of our knowledge and our abilities.”⁶⁰ Here we see the intensity of the emotions: spurred by the "vastness of nature" the two are able to overcome *bürgerlich* values and embrace each other.

Another example in which we see that love arises not only from the depths of the self, but from surrounding nature can be found in *Margaret: A Wandervogel Story*. Here, two young women meet while on a Wandervogel outing; they quickly develop a close friendship: “all I know that it was so right for us, the two of us getting all off our chests, before us not a single human soul, only the wonderful blue sky and the spring forest.”⁶¹ In the story, nature is not only the backdrop, but also plays an important role in the young women's relationship. Later, as the two hold each other in bed, the author focuses on the emotional and spiritual experience, rather than on physical terms: “All the love and all the tenderness that had been waiting for her for so long, and that I just did not want to

⁶⁰ "Ergriffen von der heiligen Stunde hier in der großen Natur, faßten wir hier beide unsere Hände, lehnten Wange an Wange, so daß wir den Pulsschlag unseres Blutes spürten, und gelobten Treue uns selbst, und gehorsam dem großen Weltenrythmus zu leben, um unseren Mitmenschen durch Einsetzen unseres Wissens und Könnens zu helfen." Rolf Rudolphi, "Mitsommernacht," *Die Freundschaft*, no. 7 (1925).

⁶¹ "Ich weiß nur, daß es uns so gerade recht war, so zu zweien uns alles von der Seele zu reden, vor uns keine Menschenseele, nur den wunderbaren blauen Himmel und den Frühlingswald." Elpo, "Margarete," *Die Freundschaft*, no.1 (1925).

admit to myself, broke in a torrent. O bless me, so I could die with this beloved soul, it came to me. In this hour we had found ourselves. -- In a sacred slumber we passed the remaining short span of the night.”⁶² The next day, the two wander through the forest, finding everything changed. “Hand in hand, with bright eyes we wandered through the magnificent forest. Was the world from yesterday now so much more beautiful, or was that just our impression, as we saw everything with entirely different eyes now?”⁶³ The two young women's perceptions were altered by their experience, clearly, the author wished to convey her experience of *Freundesliebe* as a phenomenon which literally transformed the world around her. This again illustrates not only the place of nature as a setting for self-discovery but the utopian nature of the project to articulate a new formation of same-sex love.

Discussions of Eros were enlivened by the "*Wandervogelgeschichten*". For the most part, *Die Freundschaft* ceased to publish treatises on Eros after 1922, and yet discussions of Eros resurfaced in *Die Freundschaft* to play an important role in many "*Wandervogelgeschichten*". In many stories, essays, and poems, Eros is presented as a powerful force, the experience of which was heightened by natural surroundings. The authors of the *Wandervogelgeschichten* sought to portray Eros as a creative drive found throughout nature, which manifested itself as many things, including sexual desire. These later discussions of Eros in *Die Freundschaft* were influenced more by Freud's notion of Eros as a creative force, than by Platonic ideals.

⁶² "Alle Liebe und alle Zärtlichkeit, die schon so lange für sie bereit waren und die ich mir nur nicht hatte eingestehen wollen, brachen sich Bahn. O Seligkeit, so könnte ich sterben mit dieser geliebten Seele, kam es mir in den Sinn. In dieser Stunde hatten wir uns gefunden. – Selig schlief jede noch die übrige kurze Spanne der Nacht." Elpo, "Margarete," *Die Freundschaft*, no.1 (1925).

⁶³ "Hand in Hand, mit leuchtenden Augen wanderten wir durch die herrlichen Wälder. War die Welt von gestern zu heute noch viel schöner geworden, oder schien es nur uns so, die wir jetzt alles mit ganz anderen Augen ansahen?" Elpo, "Margarete," *Die Freundschaft*, no.1 (1925).

The 1924 Wandervogel story by L. Omen, "Suicide [Freitod]" begins with two young men discussing suicide. The older man, Hanns asks, "So, you disdain suicide, you don't recognize it, you make no attempt to understand it?" The other responds that he does not understand "how a man, young and happy, and with the knowledge of a surrounding and accepting circle of friends, with the knowledge of the noble cause of our covenant can willingly throw away his own life." Hanns says that there exists a force more powerful than a bond between an individual and his companions: "Friedrich, there are higher compulsions..." Friedrich finds this statement unbelievable and questions Hanns' assertion, but Hanns says, "Friedrich, there is something, that makes you forget all that is external and all our ideals ...that is...Eros! I'm not sure you understand me here... love can once make you prefer death to a useless life, misunderstood by hateful people."⁶⁴ Here we see that Omen is describing the idea of Eros as a primal force that can even override the will to live.

For Omen, though, Eros is a powerful and dangerous force that overrides all human agency. He describes one youth who, though tormented, continued to find himself surrounded by Hanns' circle of friends in the "Wandervogel," which Hanns attributes to Eros. "Nevertheless, a violent passion raged inside him, the waves of Eros often tossed

⁶⁴ "Du verachtest also den Freitod, erkennst ihn nicht an, stehst ihm verständnislos gegenüber?"

"Ja, Hanns, ich begreife nicht, wie ein Mensch, jung, froh, und glücklich im Bewußtsein der Nähe eines verstehenden Freundeskreises, im Bewußtsein an die hehren Ziel [sic!] unseres Bundes, freiwillig das Leben von sich werfen kann."

"Friedrich, es gibt höheres, Zwingenderes..."

"Unmöglich..."

"Friedrich, es gibt Etwas, das alles Aeußere und alle idealen Ziele vergessen läßt..."

-- ? --

"... das ist... der Eros! Ich weiß nicht, ob du mich hier verstehst... Liebe vermag es, einmal den Tod nutzlosem, von haßgeifernden Mitmenschen unverstandenen Leben vorzuziehen..." L.Omen, "Freitod," *Die Freundschaft*, no. 8 (1924).

him around in our circle, in a desperate struggle and battle from one to the other."⁶⁵ In this case the youth has truly become the oblate of Eros described by Herweg. That Omen chose to describe the youth's condition as being tossed about by Eros as if by a storm, rather than resorting to clinical or scientific discourse, illustrates the importance of the understanding of sex variance as a phenomenon deeply connected to the universal creative force of Eros.

For Omen, Eros is a redemptive force as well, and it even pulls him back from the brink of death, as he finds himself on the cliff overlooking a stormy sea fighting in a "battle between Eros and Thanatos" in which it is Eros that tries to keep him from jumping. He retells how he is unable to love again in the wake of his friend Fritz's death. He wanders far and wide, finally coming to a point overlooking the sea:

Here at this point, where only hours ago the dearest man who I had had on earth stood and looked at the heavens for the last time, for the last time cried his dear friend's name, here, wrapped in the upcoming darkness of the quiet night, surrounded by the foaming waves of the stormy sea... here, defeated by the eternal power of Eros, I finally realized my big mistake, I fought in this night for many hours in a desperate struggle and searching the most difficult fight of my life... the fight between Eros and Thanatos...!⁶⁶

Not only is Eros presented as a powerful, godlike cosmic force that can even supersede human agency, but it can also intervene to redeem human beings. This is consistent with

⁶⁵ "Trotzdem tobte in seinem Innern heftigste Leidenschaft, die Wellen des Eros warfen ihn oftmals in unserem Kreis in verzweifelterm Ringen und Kämpfen von Einem zum Andern." L.Omen, "Freitod," *Die Freundschaft*, no.8 (1924).

⁶⁶ "Hier, an der Stelle, wo noch vor Stunden der liebste Mensch, den ich auf Erden hatte, stand und zum letzten Mal den Blick zum Himmel richtete, zum letzten Mal den Namen seines Herzensfreundes aussprach, hier, umhüllt von dem aufziehenden Dunkel der schweigsamen Nacht, umbrandet von den schäumenden Wellen der stürmischen See... hier erkannte ich endlich, bezwungen von der ewigen Macht des Eros, meinen großen Irrtum, hier kämpfte ich in dieser Nacht während vieler Stunden in verzweifelterm Ringen und Suchen den schwersten Kampf meines Lebens... Den Kampf um Eros und Thanatos...!" L.Omen, "Freitod," *Die Freundschaft*, no.8 (1924).

the articulation, discussed further below, in which Eros was portrayed as a force which guided sex variants on their karmic path.

A later article by Dr. Karl Werner, published in 1926 called "Inner and Outer Beauty [Innere und äußere Schönheit]" suggests that Eros is not only a creative force, but also a guiding deity that can help our souls to find their karmic path towards spiritual development by driving one towards one's companion or *Seelengenossen*. Werner concludes his treatise on the cultivation of beauty by saying: "What should we even believe, if someone comes to see this pure and unblended beauty itself, which is not only human flesh and colors and other mortal tawdriness, but the divine beauty itself in its peculiar nature? Therefore I try to convince others that in order to reach the domain of divine Beauty one could not easily find a better helper for human nature than Eros."⁶⁷ Werner's "domain of divine beauty" bears a striking resemblance to the "City of Brahman." Beauty for Werner, as well as for other neo-Platonic thinkers, is both an object of desire and a land within the self which must be sought out and cultivated. He claims that it is Eros that can serve as a guide in the quest to find true beauty.

In Werner's assertions we can see a clear departure from the earlier depictions of Eros as a force to which humans were subservient, as Eros becomes a guide that reveals true beauty in both nature and human nature. In this sense Eros is not only accessible, but is everywhere at all times and its presence can guide the individual on his karmic quest towards the sublime experience of true beauty. Yet we can trace clear continuities

⁶⁷ "Was sollen wir erst glauben, wenn einer dazu gelangt, jenes Schöne selbst rein, lauter und unvermischt zu sehen, das nicht erst voll menschlichen Fleisches ist und Farben und anderen sterblichen Flitterkrams, sondern das göttlich Schöne selbst in seiner Eigenart zu schauen? Und darum suche ich es auch anderen glaublich zu machen, daß, um zu diesem Besitz zu gelangen, nicht leicht jemand der menschlichen Natur einen besseren Helfer finden könnte als den Eros." Karl Werner, "Innere und äußere Schönheit," *Die Freundschaft*, no. 8 (1926).

between this articulation of Eros and Kaempfer's in that both authors sought to articulate a kind of Eros that was seen as a super-human force with the power to intervene into the lives of human beings. This placed discussions of passion within the context of beauty and the eternal rather than the moral and immoral, or the allowed and the forbidden.

Conceptions of Eros in *Die Freundschaft* thus served as a way to conceive of human desires as subservient to an eternal, superhuman concept which either demanded that one seek out beauty (in earlier works) or guided one in their quest to find it (in later works). In this way the writers and readers of *Die Freundschaft* could refer to themselves as a moral community without having to defer to Christian ethics, which saw them as sinners, or scientific objectivism, which saw them as aberrations of nature driven by misled desires. During the years of its publication, *Die Freundschaft* shifted the way that Eros was presented by its authors from a patriarchal Greek deity to an ever-present natural force that facilitated the karmic journey. In doing so they were able to take ideas that had previously only been accessible to an elite circle of aristocratic or educated men, broadening the definition so that it could be experienced by all. At the same time they were able to advance a world-view which removed passion from human agency without locating it in the irrational body or the subconscious, but in the totality of nature.

In this way *Die Freundschaft* functioned as a textual heterotopia, a space in which sex and gender variants sought to leave the known world behind in order to share their own experiences and forge new ways of being. The utopian nature that evolved in *Die Freundschaft* built upon an existing literatures of gay emancipation, most notably the work of Magnus Hirschfeld and Adolf Brand. These two traditions had historically been

at odds with each other, and yet in *Die Freundschaft* they found a space for reconciliation.⁶⁸

Die Freundschaft drew most of its Utopian sentiments from Adolf Brand. The forward to the paper honoring Brand quoted him, saying "We are searching our own land, the land of our affinity, the shore of the new men, the fields of the soul, the world of our pain and our pleasure."⁶⁹ Here, the utopian aspect of the project is clear, as well as its affirmation that what is being created is something new, a "shore for new men." Not only does this illustrate *Die Freundschaft's* utopian project, but also the ability of its authors and editors to borrow selectively from sometimes conflicting sources to further their own agendas. Here they borrow from the language of Adolf Brand's project, which was to create an aristocratic and pederastic model of same-sex love, in order to advance the utopian project of expanding the idea of romantic friendship to encompass same sex love.

An important aspect of this project which marked it as typically utopian, was that it was often described as a journey. Quoting Brand, *Die Freundschaft* goes on to say:

We are pushing our ship out from the shores of reality and sailing with singing harps in the endless, blue expanse of secret premonitions, to the still islands, that blossom at the borders of the sexes in elysian beauty, where the bright and shiny corn snow of blessed friendship beckon.⁷⁰

The writing of narratives focused on same-sex love was thus conceptualized as a journey in which the traveler creates a never-to-be-arrived-at destination.

⁶⁸ Magnus Hirschfeld wrote a piece for the journal in honor of Adolf Brand's 50th birthday

⁶⁹"Wir suchen unser eigen Land, das Land unserer Neigung, die Gestade der Neuen Menschen, die Gefilde der Seele, die Welt *unseres* Schmerzes und *unserer* Freuden..." Adolf Brand, "Prolog," *Die Freundschaft*, no. 8 (1924).

⁷⁰"Wir stoßen unsere Schiffe ab von den Ufern der Wirklichkeit und fahren mit singenden Harfen in endlos=blaue Weiten heimlicher Ahnungen hin, zu den stillen Inseln, die an den Grenzen der Geschlechter in paradiesischer Schönheit blühen, dorthin, wo uns die glänzenden Firnen seliger Freundschaft winken." Adolf Brand, "Prolog," *Die Freundschaft*, no. 8 (1924).

In this sense *Die Freundschaft* fits well within a larger body of Stephen Duncombe's "media for the misbegotten": sites of textual storytelling in which marginalized individuals are able to relate their personal experiences to each other.⁷¹ In such cases, the personal becomes and overcomes the political through the use of personal narrative, poetry, and fiction. The utopian character of the literature of *Die Freundschaft* spoke to a world that existed on the fringes of Weimar society.⁷² The contributors chose to present their protagonists outside of society, either physically, by locating their works in the forests or the mountains, far away from the life of the city, or mentally, by isolating the protagonist in a crowd, allowing him or her to lose themselves in their thoughts.

What all of these stories, articles, and treatises demonstrate, is that many sex and gender variants during the Weimar era were able to take their identities into their own hands, and form them as something enchanted. They wrote about the love that they experienced in a way which overcame the stigma placed upon them by *bürgerlich* society. Yet they did so in a way that did not petition society's forgiveness or understanding, but presented same-sex love as a phenomenon of intense spiritual significance that was more ancient than any medical discourse. Moreover, they were able to build upon Platonic and Freudian notions of Eros in order to articulate a super-human force which intervened in their lives. They drew on Theosophical ideas to understand gendered variant embodiment as a indicative of spiritual progression, and a unique karmic destiny. These articulations were not the work of one single person's study, but a collaborative effort of many individuals who desired to share their personal experience. If

⁷¹ Stephen, Duncombe, *Notes from the Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture* (New York: Verso, 1997).

⁷² Peter Gay's list of outsiders that became insiders during the Weimar republic omits sex variants. Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001).

identities are shaped through the stories that a particular community tells itself, then *Die Freundschaft* offered a discursive space through which people who had experienced same sex love were able to constitute an enchanted identity outside of the control of political or medical authorities.

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