WADDELL, TOM (1937–1987)

American founder of the Gay Games. A decathlete on the 1968 United States Olympic team who placed sixth at the Mexico City Olympics, he was a medical doctor.

As a child, Tom studied ballet but decided to pursue athletics instead. When he went to university he discontinued athletic training to devote himself to his medical studies. Drafted into the army, opposed to the war in Vietnam, Waddell managed to avoid going to war and began training for the 1968 Olympics with other military athletes. For a thirty-year-old man to undertake training for an event as demanding as the decathlon is an impressive feat. Moreover, he trained for only three months; it was normal to train for four years. Having a socialist background and strong feelings about racism, he associated himself with the U.S. Olympic team’s “black caucus,” an action which brought threats of court-martial.

With Sarah Lewenstein, he coparented a child, Jessica Lewenstein.

In 1980, he proposed the idea of the Gay Games and with others, founded the San Francisco Arts and Athletics, the administrative body for the 1982 and 1986 Games. He had a vision of using the Gay Games to build an “exemplary community” based upon equality and universal participation. He saw the Gay Games as the symbol of equality and inclusiveness which should be taken as the example for all athletic competition.

Four weeks before the 1986 Gay Games he was diagnosed as having pneumocystis carinii pneumonia, an opportunistic infection arising as the result of AIDS. Nevertheless, he competed at the Games in Track and Field and won a gold medal for throwing the javelin. He died of an AIDS-related disease in July 1987.


Brian Pronger

WARHOL, ANDY (1930–1987)

American artist, filmmaker, and cultural entrepreneur. Andrew Warhola, Jr., was born into a working-class family of Ruthenian origin in Forest City, Pennsylvania, on December 6, 1930. He claimed to have been born two years earlier, on August 6, 1928. Although this falsehood was probably originally created so that he could attend college on money from his father’s insurance policy, he clung to a biochronology that—unlike most such fibbing which is done for reasons of vanity—made him seem older than he actually was. This personal “disinformation” is part of his life project of forging a surrogate persona that would mediate between his real life, which was often surprisingly banal, and his creative works.

After studying art at the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh, he moved to New York City and adopted the name Andy Warhol. Making a living in
commercial art, he also practiced his own work in the blotted line technique, which fascinated him because of its impersonal print-like quality. Warhol became friendly with two other artists who shared both his sexual orientation and his general outlook on art: Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg. All three were to participate, though in different ways, in the spectacular launching of Pop Art. As his contribution, Warhol created the multiple Campbell's Soup cans and Brillo boxes that made him first a notorious iconoclast and then a representative figure. The aesthetic of these works based on mass-production features goes back to Marcel Duchamp, whose career had intrigued Warhol since his student days.

As Warhol became well known, he attracted an entourage that mixed various social types: all seemed welcome at his vast loft, sometimes known as the Factory since some of his associates were engaged in making collective works at his direction. In the 1960s the artist used the profits from his successful career as a painter and print maker, to produce a series of films. Such movies as Blow Job (1963) and My Hustler (1965) were crudely made but, presented as art, helped to expand the boundaries of the permissible in a cinema still hobbled by the restrictive standards of the Hays Office. More revealing, perhaps, of Warhol's own feelings is the S/M film Vinyl (1965), with Gerard Malanga, and the notorious Chelsea Girls (1966), in which "superstar" Ondine (Robert Olivio) delivers a notable soliloquy. As the sixties turned into the seventies Warhol, in collaboration with Paul Morrissey, attempted more ambitious films. Characteristically, these revolved around the beautiful but empty figure of the actor Joe Dallesandro, and they served to foster the then-current questioning of role models and sexual stereotypes.

Not only was Warhol reshaping two art forms, but he had become a celebrity. His activity was virtually synonymous with the Downtown scene in Manhattan with its drug use, sexual freedom, and cultural anarchism. At the same time the rapturous reception accorded even his most casual and mediocre productions signaled a change in the art world. The tone for the heroic days of modernism in the United States had been set by the high seriousness of such critics as Clement Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg, who had been identified with Abstract Expressionism. The new art scene of the sixties, however, saw the entrance of masses of enthusiastic, green recruits, few of whom bothered to undertake the arduous program of self-education that earlier critics and dealers had considered mandatory. Moreover, as contemporary art became popular, the inevitable simplifications and "hype" of journalism were fed back into the art world itself. Increasingly the new trends were promulgated with the imprint of the "glitterati" rather than of serious intellectuals. Continuing to abound, creative personalities nonetheless began to believe their own press releases.

The great years of Warhol as the incarnation of the sixties zeitgeist were cut short when Valerie Solanas, a disturbed feminist, shot the artist on June 5, 1968. Gravely wounded, Warhol never entirely recovered from the effects of the attack. After this setback he became more selective in his choice of friends, and gravitated to the world of the wealthy and fashionable. This milieu was chronicled in a chic periodical, Interview, produced under his auspices. The practice of assigning the execution of his works to assistants became more common. At the same time his paintings and prints enjoyed a great vogue in Europe as well as the United States, a status seemingly ratified by the huge retrospective exhibition of his work mounted by New York's Museum of Modern Art in 1989.

The most notable feature of Warhol's works is their blankness and absence of affect. Although he purloined his iconography from the world of mass consumption, it is impossible to tell
whether Warhol is celebrating or condemning this aspect of capitalism—probably both and neither.

Warhol's characteristic distancing has several possible sources. Some figures of the nineteenth-century French avant-garde, notably the novelist Gustave Flaubert, had championed an ideal of impassibilité, of inscrutable detachment, before the motifs they evoked. This standpoint was bequeathed to the artist Marcel Duchamp, who linked it with the world of industrial production. It is also possible that Warhol learned from the playwright Bertolt Brecht, whose ideas were becoming better known in the United States in the late fifties. The German writer emphasized the Verfremdungseffekt, or alienation principle, as a distancing device in the theatre. Brecht derived the kernel of this procedure from the “estrangement” (ostranenie) of the Russian formalist critics. Finally, it is even possible that pop versions of Eastern religions commending extinction of personality played a role in the mix.

Although Warhol liked to say that he preferred sex on the screen or in the pages of a book to the real thing he made no secret of his sexual orientation, which added to his glamor. His gayness was not simply a matter of personal inclination but interfaced with a large social circle in New York City, which also included, to be sure, sympathetic straight people. Having come of age in the repressive years immediately after World War II, Warhol would have been very much aware of the need to don a mask to conceal one's true nature from the world. His enduring project of self-fashioning and his artistic blankness are probably best regarded as pearls formed around the irritants internalized during America's most vocally homophobic era. Ironically, the very qualities of his art which the mainstream idolized stemmed from the harsh impact on a sensitive adolescent of a society which proclaimed that it had no room for nonconformity. In this respect his career recalls that of Jean Genet, who also purveyed to the public an image of what it had compelled him to become.


Wayne R. Dynes

WARNER, SYLVIA TOWNSEND (1893–1978)

English novelist, short-story writer, and poet. Born in Middlesex, the daughter of a school teacher, Townsend, was like many women intellectuals of her day, educated privately. Her early interests were musical, and she served as an editor of a ten-volume collection of Tudor church music. In the thirties she adopted Marxism and became active in left-wing politics and propaganda. She volunteered for service in Spain during the Civil War.

Warner began her career as a poet with The Espalier (1925), which was followed by two other volumes in 1928 and 1931 respectively. Subsequently she concentrated on fiction, producing novels that draw upon her interest in the supernatural to produce a world that hovers on the border of reality and fantasy. In 1967 she produced a biography of T. H. White (1906–1964), the author of the novels that became the basis for the musical Camelot, who was probably gay.

In 1930 Sylvia Townsend Warner met and fell in love with Valentine Ackland. Making their home among a small group of writers and painters in Dorset, the couple lived together until Ackland's death of cancer in 1969. The daughter of wealthy and dominating parents, Valentine Ackland was twenty four when she met Warner, and had had a number of affairs with both men and women. The younger woman's continuing infidelities were a source of anguish to Warner. Ackland also
WARNER, SYLVIA

had a problem with alcoholism, and it is probably only her lover’s faith in her that allowed her to continue to write poetry, some of which expresses her erotic involvement with Warner. She followed Warner in the British Communist Party, and the two cherished the belief that the Soviet Union incarnated the freedom, democracy, and justice that they were seeking. Fortunately, their writing on these themes is relieved by descriptions of events and evocations of nature. In the 1940s their political commitment faded, and they became dejected by the drab reality of Britain’s welfare state—especially its failure to free women from their economic dependence on men. Although Warner and Ackland were not feminists in the contemporary sense, their durable relationship is a positive example of two women’s success in braving the odds.


Evelyn Gettone

WARREN, EDWARD PERRY (1860–1928)

American art connoisseur and poet. The great love of his life was an Englishman named John Marshall, whom he met in 1884. Under the pseudonym of Arthur Lyon Raile, he wrote a number of books dealing with pederasty. These include Itamos [1903], The Wild Rose [1909], and an expanded edition of the latter [1928], these being volumes of poetry; A Tale of Pausanian Love [1927], a novel; and The Defence of Uranian Love [1928–30], an apology for pederasty in three volumes. Under his birth name he also wrote a short story, “The Prince Who Did Not Exist” [1900].

The dominant theme of his writings is the transference of the morals of ancient Greece to Oxford University. His refusal to return to America was based on a rejection of democracy, feminism, and Christianity, which he saw as being hostile to the restoration of his pederastic ideals, which were based firmly on the writings of Plato and other Greek idealists. He considered the primary task of the pederast to be the formation of the boy’s character, not the gratification of lust. The relationship was only to be justified by the character-building aspect of it. There was no room in his philosophy of love for the effeminacy and equality that play so large a role in modern homosexual liberationist theories, and women (lesbian or otherwise) hardly existed as far as he was concerned. His idealism is also out of step with the frank sensuality of today’s boy-love movement.

From 1885 to 1910 Perry presented many classical objects to Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts. Among these was a notable group of vases with homoerotic scenes; those pieces did not go on public exhibition until 1964.


Stephen Wayne Foster

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Incorporated in 1802, the new capital of the United States suffered a setback when it was burned by the British a decade later. Washington grew very slowly until the Civil War, when the city was dignified by Walt Whitman’s sojourn. In a notebook the poet laconically records having slept with a soldier on October 9, 1863, an act that others, unknown to us, must often have consummated during the turmoil of wartime. Yet it is not until the “gay nineties” that one can obtain a real glimpse of the Capital’s homosexual subculture. Lafayette Square, opposite the
White House, was already a favorite cruising spot. According to one account, the black gay community affirmed itself in an annual ball which many male government employees attended in drag. Some Washington prostitutes were reported to have been fond of lesbian activities in their free time.

In the ensuing years the flow of elected and other governmental officials from all parts of the country brought many closeted homosexuals to the city. Massachusetts Senator David I. Walsh was forced to retire after being linked in the 1940s to a male house of prostitution in New York, while the escapades of Sumner Welles, Under Secretary of State, came to the attention of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. An undercurrent of gossip regarding FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover has resisted substantiation to this day. In 1950, however, the accusations of Senator Joseph R. McCarthy led to an investigation by a Senate subcommittee of "Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government." Unlike an earlier subcommittee which concluded by a 4–3 majority that McCarthy had perpetrated a "fraud and a hoax" on the Senate, in this instance the Democratic majority capitulated to the Republican charges against the Harry S. Truman Administration. The report unanimously called for more punitive laws and screening procedures designed to "ferret out sex perverts" on the ground that they were particularly liable to blackmail by Soviet agents even in agencies that had nothing remotely to do with national security. In other words, Magnus Hirschfeld's argument that the sodomy laws encouraged the practice of blackmail was now turned against homosexuals for political advantage. Although the report referred to government in general, it was the federal District of Columbia (coterminous with the city of Washington) that was the focus of the investigation and recommendations, which were duly enacted into law three years later when the Dwight D. Eisenhower Administration took office and commenced another purge of "security risks." Police surveillance increased, and in the early 1950s arrests by the vice squad topped 1000 annually. In the same time national attention focused on Washington's sins as a result of the spread of muckraking popular journalism, including Jack Lait and Lee Mortimer's gossipy book Washington Confidential (1951).

Then in 1954 Senator Lester Hunt, a conservative Democrat from Wyoming, committed suicide under mysterious circumstances. It later was revealed that his son had been compromised when the Washington police raided a gathering of homosexuals, and that two Republican Senators had threatened to make this fact known to his constituents should he run for a second term. In a politically distorted form this incident inspired the novel and motion picture Advise and Consent in which the culprit is a left-leaning member of the Senate—conveniently reversing the fact that the blackmailers belonged to the Republican Party.

In the 1960s Franklin E. Kameny, a discharged homosexual government employee who fearlessly defended others wrongfully fired, achieved prominence as head of the Mattachine Society of Washington. Kameny gained national prominence in the homophile movement, organizing the first public demonstrations by homosexuals (at the White House) in 1965. The radical upsurge of the late 1960s brought a gay liberation movement to Washington, and there was visible homosexual participation in the mass demonstrations of April–May 1971 calling for an end of the war in Vietnam. Dupont Circle, a center of radical activity in that period, also attracted the gay subculture, and has remained a focus of community life with the Lambda Rising bookstore as a national outlet for gay literature. The Washington gay newspaper, The Blade, is considered one of the major papers in the country. Appropriately, the capital is the headquarters of the National Gay and Lesbian Task...
Force. The preponderance of black citizens in the District of Columbia has fostered the rise of a vibrant local black gay culture and a favorable local political climate.

Sodomy statutes enacted by the federal Congress for the District of Columbia were repealed in 1981 by the City Council, but the same year Congress overrode the repeal ordinance, leaving sodomy still criminal.

Washington does, however, have one of the strongest gay rights laws in the nation, adopted in October 1973 as one of the first such. The Human Rights Law, of which it is part, is enforced by a 15-member commission. At the end of the eighties, four of the commissioners were openly gay or lesbian.

In 1979 and again in 1987 Washington was the scene of national marches for gay rights that attracted myriads of activists and supporters from all parts of the country, showing that in the decade since 1969 the movement had grown from a score of semi-clandestine organizations hiding in the bohemian quarters of the large cities to a phenomenon as vast and variegated as the fabric of American life itself.

Ward Houser

WEIRAUCH, ANNA ELISABET (1887–1970)

German prose writer and playwright. After an eight-year stint (1906–14) as an actress with Max Reinhardt’s famous ensemble in Berlin, Weirauch discovered her true calling as an author. She began with attempts at dramas but soon turned to prose, and in 1919, the first year of her long career, she published four novels and three novellas. One of these was the first volume of a trilogy entitled Der Skorpion (1919, 1921, 1931), which is the work for which Weirauch is remembered today.

This three-volume Entwicklungsroman (novel of personal development) presents the story of Mette Rudloff as she learns and grows from the various loves she experiences for other females. The first volume portrays her from childhood through her early twenties. Although Olga, the woman she loves, does bend to social opprobria and commits suicide, Mette refuses to succumb to the prejudice and hostility heaped upon her. She pursues her own path toward happiness, no matter how difficult it proves. Over the course of the next two volumes, Mette learns about the lesbian and homosexual subcultures, has several love affairs, and builds her own character so that, at the conclusion, she stands confident in the validity of her choices and at the same time hopeful and able to build a long-lasting relationship with another woman.

The first edition of the initial volume quickly sold out. Readers, especially lesbian readers, praised the sympathetic—and convincing—depiction of lesbian characters which they found here. They begged Weirauch to tell more of Mette’s story, a request she then granted twice over. The novels have been translated into several languages. In English alone, they have had seven editions in various forms.

No other of her 64 prose works approached the success of Der Skorpion. Her long and successful career, however, was based on her ability to tell a story which the public wanted to hear and which it could easily digest.

A complicated and private person, Weirauch shared her life for almost six decades with another woman.


James W. Jones
WHITE, ANDREW DICKSON (1832–1918)

American university president, historian of ideas, and diplomat. Educated at Yale in the famous “class of 1853,” he early conceived the ideal of a university on the European model, with a scientific spirit and a breadth of learning in contrast to the narrow denominational instruction that had been the rule in the American college of the antebellum period. Together with Senator Ezra Cornell of Ithaca, New York, he drew up the charter of a new university that marked a major step toward the secularization and modernization of American higher education. Cornell University, founded in 1865, was novel in that it placed the natural sciences and engineering and the modern languages and their literatures on a par with the classics, and that its board of trustees was never to have a majority of any religious denomination; it was in all respects a modern institution comparable to those that already existed in Europe. White became President of the new university when it opened its doors in 1868.

In 1892 President Harrison appointed him American minister to St. Petersburg, where the minor rank and scanty means of the American legation prevented him from achieving anything of note at the corrupt court of Alexander III. But there he worked on his two-volume History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom, which he completed after his resignation in 1894. Published two years later, the work contained two chapters in which he exposed the story of the destruction of Sodom and the pillar of salt into which Lot’s wife had been transformed as a geographical legend inspired by the peculiarly barren and salinized terrain on the shores of the Dead Sea. Relying on the investigations of the French geologist Edouard Lartet published in the five-volume work of the Duc de Luynes, Voyage d’exploration à la mer Morte, à Petra et sur la rive gauche du Jourdain (1871–75), he explained that the site of these legends had been submerged by the Dead Sea in prehistoric time, and that the fall of the water level exposed the surfaces whose sterility and desolation had been ascribed to an act of divine retribution for the depravity of the former inhabitants. Ignored as the work has been by the official scholarship of the divinity schools, it remains his legacy to critical scholarship on homosexuality.

Named Ambassador to Germany by President McKinley in 1897, he succeeded within a few months after his arrival in Berlin in winning the confidence of the homosexual Emperor Wilhelm II, whose favorite, the later Prince Philipp zu Eulenburg, was the center of a gay clique that influenced German foreign policy. He succeeded in keeping Germany neutral during the War of 1898, when the expanding American presence in the Western Pacific threatened to clash with German interests in the region.


Warren Johansson

WHITMAN, WALT (1819–1892)

American poet and prose writer. Often acclaimed as America’s greatest poet, Whitman, of working-class background, was self-taught, but as a printer, school teacher, journalist, and editor he contributed fiction and verse in the worst modes of the day to the best literary journals. There is no evidence of his genius until he suddenly began to write scraps of what was to become Leaves of Grass in his notebooks.

The earliest of these are full of philosophical or religious speculations in prose and poetry; those after 1857 are full of names of men he had met in his strolls through Brooklyn and Manhattan, and after
1862, the names of wounded soldiers he met in the military hospitals around Washington. These (at least the civilians) seem to be compulsive. The names are rarely repeated, and little information is given: where they met, the man’s occupation, place of origin and any peculiarity of appearance or behavior. Aside from the fact that all the names are of working-class men, the lists are less informative than a telephone book. The soldier lists are frequently more detailed memoranda.

Life and Works. Probably in June 1847, he had a mystical experience in which he and his soul lay on the grass and his soul “plunged... [it]s tongue to my bare-stript heart.” This experience, whether actual or invented, richly erotic like so many mystical experiences, was the discovery of his true Self which freed his tongue. It has in fact been argued that Leaves is an inverted mystical experience. This work, which encompassed his complete poetic opus, was first published in 1855 with twelve poems (“Song of Myself” being rather lengthy); the second edition (1857) had thirty-two, the third (1860) 156, and so on through various printings and editions until 1881. Beginning in 1860, Whitman not only added poems (including the homoerotic “Calamus” collection), but dropped them, changed them, and rearranged the order. He has often been criticized for making changes, but he clearly did not do so for purposes of concealment.

Whitman went to Washington in December 1862, to look for his brother, who had been reported wounded, and stayed there for ten years as a volunteer visitor in the military hospitals and supported himself as a government clerk. In 1865 he met and fell in love with a young streetcar conductor, Peter Doyle. His affection was returned, at least emotionally, and the two remained intimate for a number of years, even after Whitman’s stroke of 1873 forced his removal to the protection of his brother in Camden, New Jersey. They almost lost touch, but twelve years after Whitman’s death (1892) Doyle remembered him as a beloved guide and counselor and confessed that in moments of depression he comforted himself by lying down wrapped in Whitman’s old overcoat. In the late 1870s Whitman had a very intense relationship with an eighteen-year-old boy, Harry Stafford, on whose father’s farm Whitman took curative mud baths. (It is worth noting that he became a friend of the whole Stafford family.) There were also a number of brief affairs with similarly half-educated, lonely young men. His relationship with Horace Traubel, his secretary and “Boswell” in the last years of his life, was probably of a somewhat different character, for Traubel was older and better educated while Whitman was aging and very ill.

Erotic Nature. It is impossible to determine the nature of Whitman’s homosexuality. Some naive critics thought that he was merely talking about the brotherhood of man; others, naive in a different direction, have thought that he was bedding every man mentioned in his notebooks. Oral report from Edward Carpenter to Gavin Arthur to Allen Ginsberg stands or falls on the reliability of Gavin Arthur, which is unproved. It seems likely that, beyond the embraces and kisses, he had some experience before his 1873 stroke of man-to-man genital sex, possibly also experience with women. The notebooks and letters give evidence that Whitman had some sort of intimate relationship with two women, one probably an actress, the other a French “artiste,” ostensibly an entertainer. Passages in the “Children of Adam” poems (which are heterosexual) seem as “sincere” as any in “Calamus.” In his more programmatic poems, Whitman was always careful to say “he and she,” “him and her.” Women are permitted to have sexual lives, and he sympathizes with a prostitute, but they are generally thought of and idealized as perfect mothers for the new race of Americans.

It was his explicitness about male-female sex that shocked his early
readers. Only a few homosexuals in England and some readers in Germany caught what is now obvious to any reader who can admit what he sees on the page. The second and third sections of “Song of Myself” are homosexual in their imagery, as is the subsequent discussion of the body and soul, which climaxes in the intercourse between body and soul in the fifth section. One might also cite the tremendous sweep of eroticism from section 24 to the climax of fulfillment in male intercourse in section 29. Another 1855 poem of interest is “The Sleepers,” with its surrealistic imagery.

In contrast to the philosophical and psychological passages of “Song of Myself” and the passionate sexuality without a referent in “Children of Adam,” “Calamus” reveals not only Whitman’s mastery of the short lyric as against the longer ode or rhapsody (an underappreciated aspect of his art after 1860), but also differ in their obviously personal nature. The object has never been identified, and the poems lack the physicality of the passages referred to above, yet they convey poignantly many of the experiences of being a lover. In “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking” (also 1860), the loss of a lover is imaged through the disappearance of the female of a pair of nesting mocking birds. Again one suspects a personal involvement.

Whitman’s poetry changed after the Civil War. He himself considered the 1860 edition to be final and expected that later poems would form a new, more spiritual, book. For various reasons Whitman did not attempt a new book, but wove his new poems into a loose autobiographical cycle centering on the Civil War. Homosexuality appears (actually as early as 1856) as “adhesiveness,” a term taken from phrenology and meaning for Whitman not only friendship but the capacity for “manly love” as a governing principle of society. He was not merely the poet of an idealized Jacksonian democracy nor of a new political structure, but of a culture bound together by love and religious faith in which each person could fulfill his or her own sexual nature. Representative statements are in “I hear it was charged against me” (1860), “Democratic Vistas” (1871), and in the Preface to “Two Rivulets” (1876).

Whitman, who was disappointed at his contemporary reception, would have been gratified by his reputation in the twentieth century, which is too widespread to mention. He is the democratic poet and a progenitor of the development of poetry beyond traditional metrical practice in the United States and foreign countries. A remarkable number of modern poets have paid him tribute in prose or verse, among the most notable being Ezra Pound, Pablo Neruda, Federico García Lorca, Fernando Pessoa, and Allen Ginsberg.


Edward F. Criher

WILDE, OSCAR F. O. W. (1856–1900)

Irish wit, poet, dramatist, novelist, writer of fairy tales, and convicted criminal. His wealthy and eminent parents sent him to Trinity College and to Oxford, where he began to be notorious for his effeminate pose as an aesthete under the influence of Walter Pater. This pose culminated in his trip to America and his identification with the effeminate poet in
Gilbert and Sullivan's 1881 operetta *Patience*. However, it appears that he was not yet homosexual, and he married Constance Lloyd, by whom he had two sons, one of whom died in World War I and the other of whom became a writer under the pseudonym of Vyvyan Holland.

Introduced to homosexual practices by Robert Ross, Wilde was soon sneaking out of the house to have relations with male prostitutes, usually ephebic teenagers. He fell in love with a young Scottish aristocrat, Lord Alfred Douglas, known as "Bosie," who was beautiful but full of character faults.

Meanwhile, Wilde had been dazzling the literary world with one masterpiece after another, such as *The Happy Prince*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. He had become wealthy and famous, and everybody from the Prince of Wales on down went to see his plays.

Success went to his head and he provoked scandal with the overtones of vice in *Dorian Gray* and by consorting openly with Lord Alfred Douglas, who was also patronizing young male prostitutes. Wilde and Douglas introduced André Gide to pederasty in Algeria.

The ax finally fell in 1895 when the Marquess of Queensberry, Douglas's father, accused Wilde publicly of being homosexual (or more precisely: "posing as a sodomite [sic]"). Although the aspersions were well founded, Wilde was pushed by Douglas into a suit for libel, which backfired. There were three trials in all. The lawyers quoted passages from *Dorian Gray*, from Douglas' poems in *The Chameleon*, and from some love-letters that Wilde had sent to Douglas, which had been stolen. *The Chameleon* was a literary review that also included a short story attributed to Wilde, "The Priest and the Acolyte," with a pederastic theme. Wilde held out against all of this damaging material until he finally blundered into saying that he had never kissed a certain boy because he was ugly. This was the turning point, and Wilde was convicted of having sexual relations with several male prostitutes and sentenced to two years at hard labor. His marriage fell apart, his sons were removed from him, his house and belongings were auctioned off, many of his friends deserted him, and he contracted an ear infection in prison that eventually killed him three years after he was released.

While in prison, he wrote two final masterpieces, "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" and *De Profundis*, the latter being a long letter addressed to Douglas and blaming him for everything that had gone wrong. Wilde hobnobbed with Douglas in France and Italy after leaving prison, but he died in poverty in Paris at the age of 44.

Once he was safely dead, his writings earned for him the stature of a classic, and the horror evoked by his name gradually faded—though we have an account by Beverley Nichols (a man) of the destruction of a copy of *Dorian Gray* by his outraged father when Nichols, as a teenager, was caught reading it (*Father Figure*, 1972).

By now, thousands of books and articles have been written about Wilde and his sexual life, and he is probably the most famous homosexual in history as a homosexual (rather than as a writer or whatever). Scholars have often tried to deny or overlook the homosexuality of many famous men and women, but Wilde's conviction forever assured him of fame—or infamy—for his sexuality, and his life has overshadowed his writings, as he knew it would ("I put my talent into my writings and my genius into my life."). *De Profundis* was eventually made available in its complete form, and a large volume of Wilde's correspondence was published. To a certain extent, the letters take the place of the autobiography that Wilde never wrote. After Wilde died, Douglas converted to heterosexuality, writing several books about his relationship with Wilde.

Frank Harris produced a memoir about Wilde that is full of errors (or lies),
and this unfortunately has been taken as a source by several biographers. It was Harris who invented the famous episode of the hordes of homosexuals running over to France as soon as Wilde was convicted. The publication of the Wilde letters automatically makes more recent biographies more accurate, and Ellmann’s is a tour de force.

Wilde has been claimed as the author of “The Priest and the Acolyte” (a German translation gives his name as author) and of the pornographic novel Teleny, but these attributions are wrong. There is little actual homosexuality in Wilde’s writings, mostly in De Profundis and The Portrait of Mr. W. H., a novella about Shakespeare. There are some other letters, some poems, and some parts of Dorian Gray that reflect Wilde’s homosexuality, but not much. It was Douglas rather than Wilde who coined the famous phrase “The Love that dare not speak its name,” although Wilde ably defended himself, and was even applauded, when he was asked about this phrase during one of his trials. The one great mystery about him that remains to be solved is why he did not flee to France when he had every chance to do so on the eve of his arrest.

Oscar Wilde was the first famous homosexual to be pilloried by the mass press. On the Continent the ordeal to which he was subjected was widely interpreted as a sign of English hypocrisy and moral backwardness. Yet America tended to follow Britain in its condemnation. In the long run, a certain compensation (though not for Wilde himself) may be detected in the fact that, in the wake of the enormous publicity of the case, in English-speaking countries it became somewhat easier than before to speak of homosexuality, however negatively.

As a thinker Wilde was less subtle than Paul Valéry, less radical than Friedrich Nietzsche, less persevering than his friend André Gide. Yet his books are still read, The Importance of Being Earnest often reappears in the theatre, and Wilde continues to rank as an incomparable wit. Gay people honor him as a martyr.


Stephen Wayne Foster

WILLIAM III (1650–1702)
Stadhouder of the Netherlands and king of England. The son of William II, stadhouder of the United Netherlands, and Mary, the oldest daughter of Charles I of England, he was born at the Hague after his father’s death. A revolution precipitated by Louis XIV’s invasion of the Netherlands (1672) caused to him to be made stadhouder for life. In 1664 William Bentinck (1649–1709) joined the Prince’s household as a page and instantly endeared himself to his master. In a year the page became a courtier and a key figure in the household. It was, however, ten years later that Bentinck gave the most striking proof of his devotion to the Prince. On April 3, 1675, William fell ill to smallpox, the disease that had killed his father and mother. For 16 days he hovered between life and death, while Bentinck cared lovingly for him. It was only twenty years later that the Venetian ambassador in London learned the full story. When the Prince of Orange was in danger of dying from smallpox, the doctors believed that the violent progress of the disease could be stopped only if “a young man of the same age, lying in bed with the Prince, exposed himself to the dangerous contagion of his illness.” Bentinck volunteered his services at once, and the warmth of his body made the Prince sweat so heavily that the smallpox broke out. The Prince recovered, but Bentinck, after contact with the “dangerous fluids,” fell ill himself.
William's marriage in 1677 to the English princess Mary, the Protestant daughter of the later James II, was followed in February 1678 by Bentinck's to Mary's lady-in-waiting Anne Villiers. Long in touch with the English opposition to Mary's Roman Catholic father, William let his Protestant sympathies be known in England. After secret negotiations, he crossed the Channel (1688) with an army of 15,000, was joined by most of the leading men in England, and took the throne of James II, whom he allowed to go into exile in France. Effected without bloodshed, the so-called Glorious Revolution was the decisive victory in the long struggle between Parliament and the crown, since William had to accept the Bill of Rights (1689) and to give Parliament control of finances and the army.

William's policies did not, however, endear him to his English subjects, and none of his Dutch courtiers was especially popular, but easily the most hated man at court was Bentinck, created Earl of Portland at the coronation. Soon after William's landing, the English realized how much he depended on the advice of this unbending foreigner, who was nicknamed "the Wooden Man." The English peers resented Portland's high-handed manner and the jealousy with which he guarded the king, who did nothing without his approval, while in turn William's lavish generosity soon made him one of the wealthiest men in the country, Groom of the Stole, Treasurer of the Privy Purse, and more. The only Englishman who could compete for William's friendship was Henry Sidney, created Earl of Rodney at the coronation, and loyal to his sovereign even against his own interests; he was tall, handsome, and honest, but a mediocrity who made promises he did not keep and a drunkard as well. William's lack of interest in women, who "missed the homage due to their sex," was another cause of his unpopularity in England. After the death of Queen Mary (1694), who had remained childless during seventeen years of marriage, he took no new wife. When he lay on his deathbed, Bentinck was the last to bid him farewell; "for the last time," he murmured, holding the favorite's hand to his heart.

William III was the most European figure that the House of Orange has produced; for some thirty years he was one of the makers of European history. As protagonist of the Glorious Revolution in England, he was the first king to rule with the consent of Parliament, and by choosing men of Whig persuasion as his ministers, he began (1696) the system of a responsible cabinet. His homosexuality—of which rumors circulated among the high nobility—enabled him to form a lasting bond with his favorite, William Bentinck, who not only saved his life but served him loyally to the end of his reign.


Warren Johansson

WILLIAMS, TENNESSEE
(Thomas Lanier)
(1911–1983)

Major American playwright and a significant fiction writer and poet. Born in Mississippi—the setting, along with New Orleans and St. Louis, of many of his most important plays—Williams has been considered to be a Southern writer, but his influence, as the leading proponent of post-World War II psychological realism, has been international.

A prolific writer, Williams produced about seventy plays, including some one-acts, revisions, and works apparently lost and not yet published, as well as three novels, six volumes of short stories, two of poetry, and one of memoirs. Awarded both a Group Theatre and a Rockefeller grant in 1939, he had his first major professional production in 1944, The Glass Menagerie,
which was followed by a string of critical and popular successes for the next two decades: A Streetcar Named Desire (1947), The Rose Tattoo (1951), Summer and Smoke (1952), Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (1955), Orpheus Descending (1957), Sweet Bird of Youth (1959), and Night of the Iguana (1961). From the mid-1960s until his death, Williams’ plays met with less success and many critics found his later works derivative, repetitious, and often self-indulgent. But if his last, more experimental and autobiographical phase was less successful than his early canon, the plays are not dramatic failures: Confessional and Out Cry (1971), Small Craft Warnings (1972), Eccentricities of a Nightingale (1976), Vieux Carré (1977), Crève Coeur (1978), and Clothes for a Summer Hotel (1980).

Williams stated that he “slept through the sixties” and that both his personal and his professional life shifted in 1963 with the death of his lover of fourteen years, Frank Merlo; in 1969, he was briefly committed to a mental institution, and he later admitted a serious alcohol and chemical dependency during this period. With the publication of his sexually explicit Memoirs in 1975, the homosexual themes only implicit in his early drama became central to his work, and his biography began to eclipse his art as he gained an increasing celebrity status as an artistic renegade. Early accused of employing the “Albertine Stratagem” by disguising gay males as women in such works as Summer and Smoke and being excessively coy about homosexuality in such plays as Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, he was, in many of his last works, direct in presenting openly gay characters and themes.

This autobiographical tendency was always most explicit in his fiction. A story such as “One Arm” (1948) is much more direct in its treatment of homosexuality than the plays of the period, and his handling of sexuality became increasingly explicit as he moved from The Knightly Quest (1966) to Moise and the World of Reason (1975). His two collections of poetry, In the Winter of Cities (1956) and Androgyne, Mon Amour (1977), are lyrical explorations of homoeroticism, echoing many of the themes of his plays.

Whether women or gay men, Williams’ protagonists are always sensitive people, artists of life on the perimeter of contemporary society, battling against brutal forces which seek to crush and destroy them. Isolated and damaged by the larger world, his characters inhabit poetic and subjective worlds, yearning for a more delicate and civilized past but maintaining a noble stance in the face of seemingly inevitable annihilation. His canon is a testament to the strength and dignity of the isolated individual in a mechanistic world.


Rodney Simard

WINCKELMANN, JOHANN JOACHIM (1717–1768)

German archeologist, art historian, and prose writer. Born the son of a shoemaker in Brandenburg, Winckelmann’s diligence at Latin school and at the universities of Halle and Jena laid the foundation for his later scholarly achievements. After laboring for several years as a village pastor and schoolmaster, in 1748 he obtained a post as librarian to Count Heinrich von Bunau near Dresden, giving him indirect access to the court of Augustus III, who had made the city one of the leading centers of Central European culture. Then in 1754 he transferred to the service of Cardinal Passionei in Dresden itself. Here he began to study actual art masterpieces which he had previously

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known only from engravings, and this immersion, catalyzing the knowledge that he had gained through many years of insightful reading of Greek literature, brought forth his first statement of artistic theory. Winckelmann's pamphlet *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauer-Kunst* (Thoughts Concerning the Imitation of Greek Works of Painting and Sculpture; 1755) contained the talismanic formula that was to reverberate through his own work and that of subsequent interpreters of Greek art: “noble simplicity and tranquil grandeur.”

In order to settle in Rome, where he could examine the vast collections of ancient art that had been assembled there, Winckelmann converted to Roman Catholicism. Securing the support of Cardinal Albani, Winckelmann made the eternal city his base for the rest of his life. After publishing a number of technical volumes on archeology and antiquities, Winckelmann brought out his magnum opus, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* [The History of Art of Antiquity], at the end of 1763. In this work the archeologist proposed two major innovations: he isolated Greek art from such competitors as Egyptian and Etruscan art, viewing it as sui generis; and he established an overarching developmental sequence of stages for Greek art, wherein the achievements of each individual artist could be seen as responding to governing principles. By implication, Winckelmann argued that the central characteristics of Greek art had an absolute and transcendental value, and hence were valid for his own (and every) epoch.

In 1768 he traveled north to Germany and Austria, where he was received with signal honors by the empress Maria Theresa at the Viennese court. On the return trip south Winckelmann found himself in Trieste with time on his hands. While waiting for a boat. In his inn he struck up an acquaintance with an adventurer, one Arcangeli, who seems to have shared his homosexual tastes. Unfortunately, his sleazy companion became covetous of Winckelmann's wealth, and stabbed him to death on June 8, 1768. Although a police report exists, the exact relation between the scholar and the adventurer will probably never be known.

Winckelmann held that handsome young men, particularly those of aristocratic birth, were particularly capable of receiving his teachings of beauty and scholarship. While he never visited Greece, he was certain that the country had brought forth a superior human type, which the artists had simply refined. His appreciation of Greek beauty is grounded in his exaltation of the ephebe, the male adolescent, as the ideal reconciliation of the male and female principles. Accordingly Winckelmann's aesthetic reflects a criterion of androgyny, and this feature recurs in the work of the many neo-Classical artists who adhered to his ideas down to the end of the nineteenth century.

Winckelmann was fortunate to live in a time in which contemporary art was discarding the decorative paradigms of the rococo, and he was privileged to guide it into new channels, those of neo-Classicism. Although he enjoyed a European reputation (his most important works were translated into French almost immediately after their appearance), his profoundest influence was in Germany, where his following was not confined to those involved in art and archeology but struck chords in everyone seriously interested in culture. This broad influence was made possible by his German style, which was both limpid and eloquent. His general approach, which has been aptly termed aesthetic paganism, was grounded in his homosexual appreciation of the beauty of the ephebe, but he knew how to confine himself to the results of his perceptions without risking offending his readers by proclaiming too openly their source. Perhaps it would not go too far to compare his role in discovering and conveying transcendental aesthetic values to the priestly
function of the primordial shaman, whose homoerotic orientation gave him special insights.

More concretely Winckelmann called upon German philology to focus its attention on the whole spectrum of the heritage of ancient Greece; his Hellenism helped to lay the foundations for a century of supremacy of German classical scholarship. He also had a salutary effect on the discipline of art history, which for a long time afterwards was virtually a German monopoly. He showed that the history of art need not restrict itself to connoisseurship or the biographical study of great masters, but could instead aspire to lay bare the governing laws which made art works what they were and not otherwise. Moreover, he held that art has a history in the most meaningful sense, a history that only a clear concept of organic development could explain. Thus, while Friedrich Nietzsche and others were to show a century after his death that his insights into the specific character of Greek art were incomplete, in that they overstated the elements of tranquility and equipoise, the ideals of scholarly dedication for which Winckelmann stood have remained of lasting significance.


Wayne R. Dynes

WITCHCRAFT

Witchcraft is the form of sorcery allegedly practiced in Western Europe between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries. Sorcery itself is universal, found in almost every period and every human culture as a set of magical beliefs and practices intended to manipulate the phenomena of nature for the benefit of the sorcerer or his client. Most sorcery is operative, that is to say, the practitioner has the capacity, through spells and paraphernalia, to compel occult forces to do his will. The medieval notion of witchcraft, however, was contractual: the witch had to elicit the patronage of a demon by making a pact with him. As contemporary legends and documents attest, this contractual relationship parallels the feudal bond between liege and lord.

Witchcraft and Christianity. Christian theology, taking Old Testament texts and New Testament stories of demonic possession as its point of departure, transformed the earlier notion of the sorcerer into that of the witch or wizard as the agent of Satan and accomplice of his infernal legions. It further made a logical connection between witchcraft proper and heresy, namely any belief obstinately held contrary to the orthodox teaching of the church.

The witchcraft delusion that obsessed European society from 1450 to 1700—hence from the end of the Middle Ages until the onset of the Enlightenment—is a major problem for the historian that has not yet been fully resolved. Many theories have been advanced to explain the reasons for the phenomenon and the real background, if any, of the belief system cherished by the witch hunters. Earlier investigators often were animated by a Protestant or anti-clerical bias that led them to place the blame solely on the Roman Catholic church and Catholic theologians. It is true that Pope Innocent VIII on December 5, 1484 issued the bull Summis desiderantes, confirming the support of the papacy for inquisitorial proceedings against presumed witches, and this text became a preface to the Malleus maleficarum (Witches' Hammer) published by two Dominican inquisitors in 1487 and reissued in 29 editions, 16 of them in German, down to 1669. The Malleus was far more influential in that it colorfully detailed the diabolical orgies of the witches and convinced a credulous public that a plot of cosmic dimensions hatched by Satan himself threatened the very foundations of Christian society.
Part of the problem posed by the witchcraft delusion is that an exotic belief system derived from the Bible and St. Augustine was superimposed upon the actual practice of sorcery in all the variants that the racial and ethnic diversity of late medieval Europe, and the particularism of its folk culture, had inherited from pagan, pre-Christian times. Every province had its own customs and superstitions, its enchanted springs and haunted dwellings, its survivals of Celtic or Scandinavian or Slavic lore.

Sexual Aspects. Perverse sexuality played a major role in the fantasies associated with the witchcraft delusion, but contrary to what has been alleged in some recent publications, homosexual relations between human beings and demons, or simply between human participants in witchcraft, do not figure prominently in the sources. The bisexuality and androgyny of demons and the preoccupation with change of sex suggest a psychological substratum of homoeroticism, but comparatively few homosexual acts are reported in the literature of witchcraft.

When sodomy does appear in the accounts of sexual union with the Devil, it is heterosexual sodomy \( \text{(peccatum contra naturam ratione modi) } \) that is usually meant, most often anal intercourse or the osculum infame, the kiss applied to Satan’s posterior. One account of a witches’ sabbat, it is true, mentions a gathering held atop Mount Tonale, in the Italian Tyrol, at which handsome youths were provided for the sexual pleasures of the all-male gathering.

There are several reasons for the absence of homosexual relations from the dossiers of witchcraft. The first is that the starting point for the belief system was the passage in Genesis 6:1–4, further developed in I Enoch and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, according to which the “sons of God,” identified in later legend as fallen angels, took wives of the “daughters of men” and had offspring by them, the “men of renown.” Hence the whole fantasy of sexual intercourse between demons and human beings was rooted in a heterosexual and demonically procreative context, not a homosexual one. The second is that over the entire span of the witchcraft delusion women outnumbered men by at least three to one as objects of prosecution; in New England, for example, 80 percent of the accused were women. For the male theologians and witch hunters who promoted the delusion, the carnal aspect of woman was the heterosexual one—her power to entice and ensnare men. Lesbianism was then, as later, invisible to the male unconscious, hence it could play no role in the paranoid fantasies entertained by the authorities of church and state. The third is that the crimes blamed upon the witches had no homosexual content, but more often took the form of causing crop failures or other misfortunes that provoked the wrath of peasant communities.

In the treatise of Jean Bodin De la Démonomanie des sorciers (1580) there is a comparison between witchcraft and sodomy: “If one avers that one should not dwell upon the confession of something against nature, as some say, [then] the sodomitic buggers should not be punished who confess the sin against nature. But if one wishes to say ‘against nature’ for something impossible, that is false, for what is impossible by nature is not [truly] impossible, inasmuch as all the actions of intelligence and the workings of God that one often sees, go against the course of nature.” In other words, the belief that sodomites had been empowered by the devil to commit “unnatural” acts matched the preposterous claim that witches could ride through the air on broomsticks and perform similar “impossible” feats because of their covenant with Satan.

Modern Revivals. In the 1970s the emerging gay movement overlapped with certain phases of neo-paganism, including a revived interest in witchcraft understood as part of the archaic “nature religion” that has been supplanted by Christianity. Some lesbians took part in
the revival of Wicca, or the Craft, which emphasized the spiritual and thaumaturgic power of the feminine as it had been embodied in the traditional healing art of the witch, and also emancipation from the oppressively patriarchal aspects of the Judeo-Christian tradition. In like manner, the gay-male Radical Faeries, who held their first gathering in 1979, stressed the distinctive insights of the personality that is neither male nor female, yet partakes of both and throughout human history has played a role as mediator between the divine and the human. The cultivation of a gay spirituality as a dimension of contemporary neo-paganism has for some held the promise of a release from the constricting taboos of Judaism and Christianity and a rediscovery of the enduring values of the homosexual experience in the religious sphere.

Some Comparisons. The witchcraft delusion, as it has been analyzed by historians in modern times, does offer several lessons of paramount importance for the understanding of the attitude toward homosexuality in Christian Europe—a mentality that has far outlasted the belief in witches and their pact with Satan. The first is that the religious mind scorns true motivation and causality, preferring magical influences, even where empirical investigation can find none. This is the attitude that sees in AIDS divine retribution for “immorality,” and rejoices in the “death of the wicked.”

A second crucial point is that witchcraft began like sodomy as a sacral offense but was transferred in time to the secular courts, for the reason that capital crimes came increasingly to be the domain of the state rather than the church. The ecclesiastical courts were denied the right to impose the death penalty, but convicted offenders were relaxed to the secular authorities who had no qualms about inflicting it—on witches or sodomites.

A third consideration is that in trials for witchcraft it was most often the prosecutors and the witnesses for the prosecution, not the defendants, who were mentally ill, were in the grip of paranoid beliefs grounded in a magical understanding of the origins of the misfortunes which had befallen the community. The analogy to this in the case of homosexual sodomy is that while the acts committed by the defendants were harmless and even pleasurable, the prosecutors imagined them a source of potential divine retribution that would overtake the whole of society if the “unnatural” acts were left unpunished.

A fourth issue is that in many trials for witchcraft the principal witnesses were children who later were proven to have made the charges without foundation or out of sheer malice. This historical precedent is relevant to the problem of the uncorroborated testimony of children in cases of child abuse, particularly of homosexual pedophilia. Both the prosecution and the defense in such cases are often bedeviled by the suggestibility and unreliability of children as witnesses who, because lacking the adult’s clear perception of the dividing line between truth and fiction, can be manipulated in a variety of ways scarcely conducive to ascertaining guilt or innocence. It is just this element of immaturity in the child’s character that is used to deny minors the right to give valid consent to sexual acts, even when psychological willingness is present, just as civil law withholds many rights from the child simply because it is said to have not yet reached the age at which the majority of normal individuals are capable of exercising such empowerment.

A fifth consideration is that even at the height of the witchcraft delusion there were observers who fulfilled Rudyard Kipling’s condition “if you can keep your head when all about you/are losing theirs and . . . make allowance for their doubting too.” That is to say, even in a still medieval society there were educated men who saw through the whole belief system that obsessed their contemporaries, and to the best of their power sought to calm the ignorant and superstitious masses whom
fanatics had goaded into paroxysms of irrational fury. A subtle interaction between the authorities in church and state who manipulated the credulity of the uneducated, and the folk upon whose superstitious fears and anxieties they played, maintained the belief in witchcraft. The analogy with modern right-wing demagogues who exploit the lingering homophobia of those who are still in the grip of traditional attitudes is self-evident.

Conclusion. The witchcraft delusion has vanished from European society, apart from a few provincial backwaters where it occasionally inspires acts of violence against persons suspected of being witches. In such cases the police naturally proceed against the superstition-ridden perpetrators of the violence, not against the victims. But what the author of this article has termed the sodomy delusion held sway until the middle of the twentieth century, and has only in the last two decades begun to recede. “Moral panics” provoked by an unsophisticated community’s discovery of a homosexual underworld in its midst persisted into the not distant past, and in such cases the police acted to enforce superstition and intolerance, while the victims suffered public humiliation and imprisonment, if not worse. Sporadic violence against homosexuals is often sanctioned by the mores of the heterosexual society, a form of intimidation that has been exacerbated by the epidemic of AIDS with the irrational fear of the “bearers of contagion” that it inspires. In the politics of conservative and clerical parties fear and aversion in regard to homosexuality still play a baleful role, giving them a hold over segments of the electorate whom they cannot win by more rational appeals. The record of the struggle against the witchcraft delusion may afford valuable lessons for planning the future campaigns of the gay liberation movement, and for analyzing the psychological and social processes that—even at the close of the twentieth century—keep such false notions alive in the face of the empirical evidence that contradicts them.

The history of the witchcraft delusion in Western Europe is a dark chapter in the annals of civilization, but the success achieved by reformers in purging the collective mind of the paranoid beliefs with which Christian theology had infected it must give heart to all those who even now struggle for the same goal in regard to homosexuality.


WITTGENSTEIN, LUDWIG (1889–1951)

Austrian-British philosopher. The son of a millionaire industrialist in Vienna, Wittgenstein came to England at nineteen with the intention of studying aeronautics at the University of Manchester. Finding his bent more theoretical, he transferred to Cambridge University, where he immersed himself in logic courses taught by Bertrand Russell. In November 1912, at the behest of his fellow student John Maynard Keynes, Wittgenstein was elected to the elite secret society known as the Apostles. At that time the group was closely knit and suffused with homoerotic atmosphere. Always prickly, Wittgenstein proved a difficult member and soon stopped attending meetings.
Having joined the Austrian army after the outbreak of World War I, he was captured by the Italians. From his prisoner-of-war camp he succeeded in mailing to Bertrand Russell the manuscript of his *Tractatus Logico-Positivus*. After its publication in 1921, this austere and condensed treatise, which suggested that most branches of traditional philosophy were nonsense, was to have a catalytic effect on the emerging logical-positivist trend in philosophy. Except for one article, the *Tractatus* was the only work published by Wittgenstein during his lifetime.

After the war Wittgenstein gave up philosophy, teaching elementary school in a number of Austrian villages. In 1929, however, he returned to Cambridge where he was given a research fellowship. His classes, which were often painful exercises in self-criticism, attracted a small, but devoted following. Much of the material from these lectures went into his manuscripts, which were only published after his death. Although Wittgenstein was appointed professor in 1939, he chose to spend the war as a humble medical orderly—a career decision recalling that of Walt Whitman eighty years before. After the war he returned to being a professor at Cambridge, but said that he found it torture. Following a trip to the United States, he died of cancer in 1951.

After his death, his associates undertook the difficult job of seeing that his manuscripts reached publication. The most important of these, the *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), contained major revisions of his earlier thinking, concentrating on questions of language and the nature of philosophy itself. During the third quarter of the twentieth century, Wittgenstein was probably the most influential philosopher in the English-speaking world, and his ideas existed in a fruitful tension with the school of analytic philosophy. This acclaim did not prevent his teacher Bertrand Russell from denouncing his later works as “mental beds”—invitations to shirk the problems that Russell still regarded as important. As Wittgenstein’s reputation slowly faded in England and America in the late seventies and eighties—in part owing to the reception of French contemporary thought—it gained influence in central Europe.

Some of Wittgenstein’s renown derives from his reputation as one almost ascetically devoted to pure thought and exempt from any sensuality. When, in the first edition (1973) of his biography, William Warren Bartley, III, first broached the subject of the philosopher’s homosexuality, the Wittgenstein establishment reacted with vengeful anger. Although his literary heirs reputedly had in their possession a coded diary containing references to homosexual encounters, they denied any sexual unorthodoxy, and sought to vilify Bartley. Their motives are hard to assess: Wittgenstein was certainly no flaming queen, and those who did not have access to the documents probably did have difficulty in conceiving him as a homosexual, a role for which they had only stereotypical models. Others may have foreseen that the philosopher’s sexuality, if openly discussed, would be used by philosophical enemies to tarnish his reputation—as has happened.

The facts appear to be as follows. In his student days in Vienna Wittgenstein became accustomed to cruise in the Prater, a large public park next to the inner city. Here he met youths of the “rough trade” type which remained his preference. Later he was to continue this activity in England. However, he also had long-term affairs with men of his own class, notably with Francis Skinner. Wittgenstein was always uncomfortable with his homosexuality, which accounts for his concealment from his close friends.

No close relationship seems to link Wittgenstein’s sexual orientation and his iconoclastic philosophy. That is to say, he might have reached similar conclusions had he been heterosexual. Nonetheless, his homosexuality—or rather his insistence on remaining in the closet—
contributed to the aura of oracular strangeness which helped to make the author of highly abstruse and technical papers into virtually a household name—at least in academic circles.


Wayne R. Dynes

WITTGENSTEIN, LUDWIG

Wittgenstein, Carl
(1943–1986)

Gay and radical activist. A “red-diaper” baby, Wittman was born in New Jersey and attended Swarthmore College. As a campus leader, he spent summers in Tennessee supporting black civil rights, wrote for the student paper and organized student support for anti-segregation demonstrations in Chester, Pennsylvania, and Cambridge, Maryland.

The Swarthmore Political Action Committee provided a model for the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Joining the national council in 1963, Wittman played a prominent role in SDS until his departure in 1966. In September, 1963, SDS established ERAP (Economic and Action Research Project) based on his paper, “Students and Economic Action,” which was further elaborated with Tom Hayden in “An Interracial Movement of the Poor?” They called for non-hierarchical organizing: “We are people and we work with people.” Wittman joined the Newark SDS project and recalled that “Tom Hayden confidently announced that there was to be no homosexuality or marijuana in our community organizing project, and then proceeded to borrow my room to bed down with his latest woman, leaving me stunned and terrified.” ("Us and the New Left," Fag Rag, 22/23 [Fall 1978], 22).

While listed as a speaker for the SDS affiliated Radical Education Project during 1967, Wittman went to the west coast where he settled into a mixed San Francisco commune of Resistance (an anti-war group), enjoyed the psychedelic revolution and raised money hustling. During 1968 he organized war resistance events in British Columbia, Oregon, and Washington State.

Although closeted about his love for other men, Carl had begun an active homosexual life at fourteen. “Kids can take care of themselves,” he wrote, “and are sexual beings way earlier than we’d like to admit. Those of us who began cruising in early adolescence know this, and we were doing the cruising, not being debauched by dirty old men.” Wittman came out in an anti-war magazine ("Waves of Resistance," Liberation, 13 [November, 1968], 29–33), where he held that resisting heterosexuality was related to resisting war.

Wittman was part of a gay contingent at a San Francisco demonstration in May 1969 against the States Steamship Line, a Vietnam war supply carrier. His essay, “Refugees from Amerika: A Gay Manifesto,” was written after the Steamship demonstration but before Stonewall (June 27, 1969) and was first published late in 1969. Providing an ideology for radical gay males and widely reprinted by gay and left movement groups, the Manifesto never became dogma: “the gay liberation movement is in its polymorphous, un bureaucratic, anarchistic form,” Wittman wrote gleefully in 1970.

In 1969, Wittman acquired land in Wolf Creek, Oregon, with his lover Stevens McClave, who committed suicide in 1974. Between 1973 and Wittman’s death he and Allan Troxler were lovers. In Autumn 1974 the first issue of the periodical RFD appeared with a cover by Allan and an article by Carl. RFD promised “to build some sense of community among rural gay people.”

In 1981, Wittman moved to Durham, North Carolina, where he worked in the Durham Food Co-op, was a leader in Citizens for a Safer East Durham, which closed the Armageddon Chemical plant, and helped write Durham’s Convention
Center: In Whose Interest! While co-director of the North Carolina Public Interest Research Group in 1981–82, Carl was one of the founders of the Durham Lesbian and Gay Health Project and was active in AIDS work. He died on January 22, 1986, after he rejected hospital AIDS treatment and chose to die in dignity among friends at home. In choosing the time of his death, he demonstrated his 1963 principle that people must be “confident that they have some control over the decisions which affect their lives.”

Charley Shively

**Wolfenden Report**

The *Report of the Departmental Committee on Homosexual Offenses and Prostitution*, published on September 3, 1957 by the British government, is known as the Wolfenden Report after the Chairman of the Committee, Sir John Wolfenden (1906–1985), at that time Vice Chancellor of Reading University. This Report was destined to have momentous and far-reaching effects.

*Creation of the Report.* In the wake of several scandalous court cases in which homosexuality had been featured, the British Parliament on August 24, 1954 appointed a committee of 15 men and women whose task it was “to consider . . . the law and practice relating to homosexual offenses and the treatment of persons convicted of such offenses by the courts” along with the laws relevant to prostitution and solicitation. The committee met on 62 days of which 32 were devoted to the oral interrogation of witnesses. All the sessions were private, not only to avoid sensationalizing of the deliberations on the part of the media, but also because “only in genuinely private session” could the witnesses “giving evidence on these delicate and controversial matters” speak “with the full frankness” which the subject demanded. The proposals with respect to homosexuality were for the time a radical innovation: of the 13 members of the Committee who had served during the full three years, 12 recommended that homosexual behavior between consenting adults in private should no longer be a criminal offense. The *Report* did not explicitly define “consent” and “in private,” leaving these words to be interpreted as they would be in the case of heterosexual conduct; it suggested that the age of consent be twenty-one; and it tried to relieve from the threat of prosecution the victim of blackmail whose homosexual activity had been revealed to the police.

For the common law countries of the English-speaking world, the *Wolfenden Report* meant a break with a legal tradition that had gone virtually unchallenged since the enactment of 25 Henry VIII c. 6 in 1533. It urged that homosexual behavior cease to be criminal, that the religious sanctions against it were not grounds for bringing it to the attention of secular courts, and that there “must remain a realm of private morality and immorality which is, in brief and crude terms, not the law’s business.” The signers of the document recognized that “to reverse a long-standing tradition is a serious matter and not to be suggested lightly.” But the task entrusted to the Committee was to “state what we regard as just and equitable law,” and that consideration of the question should not be unduly influenced by “the present law, much of which derives from traditions whose origins are obscure.” This last remark evidently reflected the work of the Anglican cleric Derrick Sherwin Bailey, who had put forward arguments intended to exculpate the Christian Church of responsibility for the legal intolerance of homosexuality, preferring instead to place the onus on pagan, pre-Christian beliefs and laws.

Moreover, and against the testimony of nearly all the psychiatric and psychoanalytic witnesses, the Committee found that “homosexuality cannot legitimately be regarded as a disease, because in many cases it is the only symptom and is compatible with full mental health in other respects,” echoing what Iwan Bloch
had written in 1907 in *The Sexual Life of Our Time*. This finding provoked an outcry in the psychiatric press, but it anticipated the later decision of the American Psychiatric Association—under pressure from gay activists—to drop homosexuality from its classification of mental illnesses. But in turn the judgment of the Committee closed the door on the notion that exclusively homosexual individuals are in any way less responsible for their actions in the eyes of the law.

The choice of twenty-one as the age of consent was motivated by considerations which the *Report* itself laid open to question. Some of the witnesses had urged an age of consent as low as seventeen or even sixteen, but the Committee deemed a boy of sixteen "incapable of forming a mature judgment about actions of a kind which might have the effect of setting him apart from the rest of society." It had encountered "several cases in which young men have been induced by means of gifts of money or hospitality to indulge in homosexual behavior with older men," and to fix the age of consent at eighteen would lay young men "open to attentions and pressures of an undesirable kind from which the adoption of the later age would help to protect them, and from which they ought, in view of their special vulnerability, to be protected." The practical implication of this recommendation was that the boy in his late teens, at the peak of his physical vitality and sexual attractiveness, ought to be placed off limits because older males might seek him out as a sexual partner. Such a high age of consent had been unknown even in Victorian times, when most law codes set the age of sexual responsibility for heterosexual activity somewhere between nine and fourteen, but it reinforced a trend to reform the law in favor of adult homosexuals having relations with other adult homosexuals and at the expense of pederasts, who would now be threatened with even more severe sanctions.

Results. The publication of the *Report* provoked a storm of debate, all the more as the immemorial taboo on public discussion of homosexuality had now been breached for once and for all. As John Wolfenden himself remarked, the subject "filled the front pages of Wednesday's evening papers, with VICE in inch-high capitals as the main headline." Despite attacks from the conservative sectors of the press, a writer in the *New Statesman* summarized the situation by saying that the liberal wing of the Establishment was solidly behind the recommendations of the *Report*, and that it was only a matter of time before they became law.

This prophecy proved correct: not Great Britain alone, but other English-speaking countries felt the impact of the Wolfenden Report as well. In 1961 the American Bar Association approved the draft of a Model Penal Code from which homosexual offenses between consenting adults were omitted, and the State of Illinois broke the ice as the first American jurisdiction to adopt the new principle. In Canada also the words of the *Report* were heeded, and in 1969 Parliament repealed the section of the Penal Code that made homosexual activity a crime. In England itself the Earl of Arran, inspired by zeal to remove what he regarded as a shameful injustice to a persecuted minority, had in 1965 persuaded the House of Lords—which is not subject to the control of the electorate—to initiate legislation for the same purpose. Eighteen months later, on the initiative of Leo Abse, the House of Commons followed suit, so that in the summer of 1967 the Sexual Offences Act became law in England and Wales—though not (at that date) in Scotland and Northern Ireland, where Protestant fundamentalism worked to stymie repeal of the laws against "immorality." At the behest of various high officers, the British military remained exempt from the reform.

With its limitations and with views that now strike many readers as old-fashioned and conservative, the Wolfen-
den Report was a landmark in the struggle for the legal toleration of homosexuality in common law countries. Its arguments, grounded in a liberal tradition that harked back to John Stuart Mill, solidly underpinned the impetus to law reform that made possible the gay liberation movement which was to blossom in the 1970s and later throughout the English-speaking world.


Warren Johansson

**WOMEN'S NAMES FOR MALE HOMOSEXUALS**

The use of the name Molly for an effeminate homosexual goes back to the early eighteenth century in London where the molly houses (male brothels and places of assignment) became notorious. The related form Mary Ann (Molly is a familiar form of the name Mary) seems to belong mainly to nineteenth-century England. Other women's names chosen to refer to gay men have been Cissy (or Sissy), Gussie (Australian), Jessie (British), Margery, Nance/Nancy (common especially after World War I), Nellie, Nola (rare), and Pansy (intersecting with flower terminology). While this list could be extended almost indefinitely, these seem to have been the most common names in the English-speaking world. In America in the 1950s, the word nellie (or nelly) was a general adjective meaning "obviously effeminate" (the antonym of "butch"), while Mary was often used in the vocative to address any fellow homosexual ("Well, Mary . . .").

Parallels occur in other languages, e.g., Spanish maricón and mariquita (from María), Portuguese Adelaida, and Italian checca (from Francesca). In the Flemish-speaking part of Belgium the word jen (from French Jeannette) is a generic term for homosexual.

It is a little-known fact that etymological analysis shows that a number of key slang terms (common nouns and adjectives) for gay men stem from previous use as pejorative appellations for women. Thus before being applied to homosexuals, faggot meant "a slatternly woman," while gay referred to "a fallen woman; prostitute." The modern slang word queen derives from a conflation of standard English queen, "consort of a king monarch," and the obsolete quean, "prostitute."

The ultimate grounding of all these acts of naming is the widespread acceptance of the idea of inversion—that male homosexuals have feminine qualities, while lesbians have masculine ones. Evidence is much slighter for a lesbian counterpart for these procedures of "transnaming." In Radclyffe Hall's The Well of Loneliness (1928), however, the heroine is called Stephen.

A question that has received little attention is why a few male names are taken by gay people to be stereotypically suitable for themselves. Until recently at least, Bruce was so regarded in the United States. In Germany Detlev (Detlef) has the same reputation; in France Emile. It may be that these names are a subset of a larger category of given names, such as Algernon and Clarence, considered sissy.

Some campy coteries have affected the feminine pronouns she and her for gay men. When these appellations are extended to straight men, the implication is that their heterosexuality is tainted and may soon crumble. Ultimately, there lurks the covert suggestion that all men are gay. Since those who are engaged in this verbal guerrilla war are usually admirers of the macho type they would appear to be cutting the ground out from under their feet. In such coteries male names of group members are regularly changed to female ones, e.g., Charles becomes Charlotte, and Don, Donna. These habits seem to be fading.

Wayne R. Dynes
WOOLF, VIRGINIA (1882–1942)

English novelist and essayist. The daughter of Sir Leslie Stephen, a prominent Victorian intellectual, Virginia Woolf was educated largely through reading books in the family library. Unlike her brothers, she did not go to university, and this perceived slight was later to sustain her feminist critique of discrimination against women. In 1912 she married Leonard Woolf, a brilliant Cambridge graduate who had served as a judge in Ceylon, and her sister Vanessa married the art critic Clive Bell. The two couples were major figures in the Bloomsbury group, which also included such male homosexual writers as E. M. Forster, John Maynard Keynes, and Lytton Strachey. Through much of her life Virginia suffered from severe spells of mental depression, and it was partly to provide work therapy that she and Leonard founded the Hogarth Press in 1917. At this time she also became a regular reviewer for the Times Literary Supplement, a task which brought her knowledge of a wide range of modern literature and laid the foundations for her later more substantial essays.

Virginia Woolf remained a virgin until her marriage, and found the idea of sex with a man repellent. At the time of their engagement she warned Leonard of this aversion, and their sexual relations seem to have been rare. Before marriage Virginia Stephen was closely attached to her sister Vanessa—loving her almost to the point of “thought-incest”—and was deeply involved platonically with Madge Vaughan, a daughter of John Addington Symonds, and Violet Dickinson, to whom she wrote an enormous number of letters. Throughout her life, Woolf was to draw emotional sustenance from her intense relations with other women.

Her first novel, The Voyage Out (1915), concerns the trip of a young Englishwoman to South America, followed by her engagement and death there. While this novel was conventional in form, Jacob's Room (1922) joined the mainstream of innovative modernism through its poetic impressionism and indirection of narrative development. After this work, which marks her real beginning as a literary artist, Woolf secured her place in modernism by a series of carefully wrought books. Mrs. Dalloway (1925) blends interior monologue with the sights and sounds of a single day in central London. To the Lighthouse (1927) explores the tensions of the male–female dyad in the form of a holiday trip of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsey. Its fantastic form notwithstanding, Orlando (1928) is of great personal significance, tracing the biography of the hero–heroine through four centuries of male and female existence. This book is a tribute to, and portrait of, her lover Vita Sackville-West, whom she had met in 1922. Woolf's most ambitious novel is probably The Waves (1931) which presents the contrasting personalities of six characters through a series of “recitatives” in which their inner consciousness is revealed. Shortly after completing her last book, Between the Acts (1941), she suffered a final bout of mental illness and drowned herself in a river near her country home.

The posthumous publication of Virginia Woolf’s Letters and Diaries have revealed some unattractive aspects of her personality: she was xenophobic and snobbish, sometimes given to expressions of personal malice, as well as anti-Semitic and homophobic asides. Yet she participated wholeheartedly in the Bloomsbury ethic of individual fulfillment and social enlightenment. Her use of stream-of-consciousness techniques, and other sophisticated literary devices, places her very near the front rank—if not within it—of modernist writers in English.

With the general decline of the Bloomsbury ethos in the middle decades of the century, Woolf’s reputation seemed to fade. In the 1970s, however, feminist critics hailed her as a major champion of their cause. There is no doubt that A Room of One’s Own (1929), and its sequel, Three
Guineas (1938), are powerful pleas for women's creative independence. Yet her own feminism was fluid and variable, and thus not easily accommodated to present-minded uses. Throughout her life she struggled valiantly against mental illness, succeeding in building up an imposing corpus of writings while expressing her own emotional feelings in her deep relationships with women.


Evelyn Gettone

WORKING CLASS, EROTICIZATION OF

For at least several generations, upper-class Englishmen have sought sexual companionship among the working class, including the enlisted men of the military (the availability at a fee of Guardsmen for these purposes has become legendary). While this practice, which Timothy d'Arch Smith termed the "Prince and Pauper Syndrome" after Mark Twain's 1882 novel, is hardly limited to England, it is there that it has been most documented, particularly in literature.

E. M. Forster, whose novel Maurice celebrates the aspiration for a permanent version of such a relationship, remarked: "I want to love a strong young man of the lower classes, and be loved and even hurt by him." (1938). Oscar Wilde described his own forays, which tended to involve the criminal underworld, in the striking image of "feasting with panthers." In a more idealizing fashion, John Addington Symonds wrote in 1893, "The blending of social strata in masculine love seems to me one of its most pronounced, and socially hopeful, features. Where it appears, it abolishes class distinctions, and opens by a simple operation the cataract-blinded eyes to their futilities." One of the reasons why Walt Whitman had such an impact on English homosexuals of this period was that his praise of democracy was (mis)understood in large part as a veiled plea for such prince-and-pauper liaisons. In France, the leftist writer Daniel Guérin justified his innumerable one-night stands with blue-collar workers as a device for achieving collective revolutionary solidarity.

The psychological roots of the aristocracy’s attraction to the working class have not been systematically examined, but are undoubtedly related to a sense that the upper class (in particular its intellectuals) has lost some of its masculine vitality, has become "effete," refined, sophisticated, removed from the exercise of physical power, while the (young) males of the lower class are more robust, earthy, grounded, more in touch with their sexuality, more physically aggressive, in short, more macho. For economic reasons alone, the ranks of male prostitutes tend to be filled from the underclass, and these are more readily available than the sons of the higher classes. There are suggestions of a streak of masochism connected with guilt derived from perceived inequities of class standing. Perhaps it is as much the attraction of opposites, the tension of distance temporarily resolved in the intimacy of sex. The homosexual aristocrat often appears to enjoy a reversal of usual power relationships, giving the working-class male the upper hand in the bedroom, yet paradoxically retaining a firm control over the general relationship. Indeed, the disparity in financial power between the two parties serves to strengthen the aristocrat's sense of overall security (the poor male being too dependent on the largesse of the rich one). At the same time the coarse machismo of the aggressive, disorderly,
non-law-abiding working-class male (and especially of the prostitutes, small-time criminals, and members of the armed forces who are most likely to be involved in such relationships) provides the spice of perceived danger to heighten sexual tension.

For the working-class male, there is in addition to financial incentives also the satisfaction of at least temporary domination—in a sphere which is a critical part of his self-imagery—of the otherwise loftily superior aristocrat, and moreover the adventure of obtaining glimpses of an otherwise fabled but unobtainable lifestyle. Psychologically, there is often, on the part of working-class men who remain in what they see as the "male" role, a sense of contempt for the "weak" aristocrat, which serves as compensation for the socially-propagated sense of inferiority of the class as a whole, and feelings of conquest which support a sense of masculinity and therefore help justify participation in homosexual acts.

In America there is a related phenomenon between members of the vast middle class and the working class, and to some extent between layers of the middle class itself. This motif is seen most prominently in the eroticization of such working-class occupations as construction worker, truck driver, cowboy, farmhand, enlisted serviceman, stock clerk, as reflected in gay-oriented art, pornography, and the like. It is also a factor in many if not most interracial relationships. An ironic twist to this theme has been the simulation of working-class play roles by members of the educated upper middle class when they dress for social encounters in gay bars; blue-collar work clothes are perceived as sexy, whereas tailored business suits are not.

There is some debate as to the extent of sexual democratization in the homosexual subculture. Observers have little doubt that non-commercial sexual liaisons cross class lines far more frequently than in heterosexual circles, and that an attractive young son of the working class can parlay his looks into upward mobility in a way known to the heterosexual culture only for a select few females. On the other hand, there is a question as to how many of these cross-class connections lead to long-lasting relationships; in the long run non-sexual affinities and differences may prove more powerful than the sexual stimulus of an interclass encounter. Even short-term relationships, however, provide exposure to differing class mores and economic situations, and it is at least arguable that these links have led to more political support for the working class among middle-class homosexuals than would otherwise be expected.

These class-crossing associations may be said to be part of a larger phenomenon whereby opposites attract. The parallel—and overlap—with interracial relations has been noted above. Other phenomena that may be psychologically related are intergenerational eroticism and the sexual pursuit of simpletons sometimes termed morophilia.

See also Fiedler Thesis.

Stephen Donaldson

**Wyneken, Gustav** (1875–1964)

German educator and pedagogical theorist. Born in Stade near Hamburg as the son of a Lutheran minister, Wyneken endured unpleasant experiences at the Ilfeld Boarding School that were one source of his impetus for educational reform. Through Hermann Lietz (1868–1919), the founder of the first Country Home School at Ilsenburg in 1898, he made contact with the educational reform movement. But after some years at Ilsenburg, Wyneken and a group of adherents, among them Paul Geheeb, split off in 1906 to form the Wickersdorfer Freie Schulgemeinde (Wickersdorf Free School Community). Located near the village of Wickersdorf in the Thuringian Forest, the school with its 140 pupils was an example of the pedagogical island: a nascent society of adolescents...
detached from the larger adult society around them, but possessing a Jugendkultur (youth culture) of its own that could be the nucleus of a future social order different from the existing one. But in contrast with the Wandervogelbewegung (the German equivalent of the Boy Scout movement) and the Country Home School Movement, the Wickersdorf community was not nationalist or pietistic in its ideology. It professed an international outlook, since Wyneken taught that the nation does not exist for itself alone, but as part of the higher division of labor within the world community; that if the nation possesses a specific genetic, historical, and cultural heritage, these have meaning only insofar as they outstandingly or uniquely fit it to perform certain of the eternal tasks of mankind as a whole. He rejected as a thing of the past the narrow, chauvinistic education that taught the pupil to hate and despise foreign nations and their cultures.

In the life of the school Kameradschaften (comradeships) between teacher and pupil served to institutionalize the pedagogical eros. It was a freely chosen relationship that entailed fidelity, veneration and love. The teacher-leader and pupil-friend addressed each other in the familiar Du form and on a first-name basis. The older friend bore in every respect the responsibility for the pupils under his charge. But though these bonds were an integral part of the school’s functioning now and then they gave rise to tension and rivalry, in part because the attachments were exclusive and emotionally demanding and could lead to intense possessiveness and an unwillingness to accept the transitory character of the union.

In the fall of 1920 Wyneken became the center of a scandal inside the Wickersdorf School Community. Some of his fellow teachers accused him of having committed homosexual acts with boys in his friendship circle, and even of having embraced pupils while nude. Wyneken had to resign as leader of the school to avert possible closing by the government, though a committee of inquiry appointed by the school itself concluded that his conduct did not imply homosexual relations. But a libel suit filed against a teacher named Kurt Hoffmann backfired when the public prosecutor in nearby Rudolstadt brought charges against Wyneken for violating Paragraph 174, Section 1 of the Penal Code (indecent acts with minors), and in the trial that took place behind closed doors on August 30, 1921 he was found guilty and sentenced to one year in prison. Wyneken appealed his conviction and defended his conduct in a book entitled Eros (1921), in which he dissociated his behavior from modern homosexuality and likened it to the pedagogical eros of Greek antiquity, to a “new Hellenism.”

A great controversy ensued in which the main wing of the homophile movement which championed the theories of Magnus Hirschfeld was at odds with those who defended paiderasteia as superior to modern homosexuality, while those who sought to classify homosexual relationships with minors as pathological denounced Wyneken for “attempting to rationalize homosexuality”—an accusation he rejected. A roman à clef about the affair was even written by Erich Ebermeyer under the title Kampf um Odilienberg (Struggle for Odilienberg). Even though Wyneken championed a concept of pedagogical eros in which the sensual element was overtly denied, the fate of his experiment was noted by other champions of “free schools,” in Germany and elsewhere, who thereafter tried to exclude every scintilla of erotic content from their institutions.


Warren Johansson