

Adolf Brand und die Schwulenbewegung

Citation for published version (APA):

Oosterhuis, H. (2000). Adolf Brand und die Schwulenbewegung. In M. Keilson-Lauritz, & R. F. Lang (Eds.), *Emanzipation hinter der Weltstadt: Adolf Brand und die Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* (pp. 69-84). Mügge-Verlag.

Document status and date:

Published: 01/01/2000

Document Version:

Accepted author manuscript (Peer reviewed / editorial board version)

Please check the document version of this publication:

- A submitted manuscript is the version of the article upon submission and before peer-review. There can be important differences between the submitted version and the official published version of record. People interested in the research are advised to contact the author for the final version of the publication, or visit the DOI to the publisher's website.
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ADOLF BRAND UND DIE SCHWULENBEWEGUNG

Harry Oosterhuis

Adolf Brand was one of the most colourful, militant and controversial activists of the pre-war homosexual movement in Germany. As has been described elsewhere, he got mixed up in public quarrels, scandals, and trials many times. From 1896 until 1931 he edited and published *Der Eigene*, the first homosexual journal in Germany and in the world. Brand was also the leader of the second gay organization in Germany, the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen*, which he founded in 1903, six years after the Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee had been established. Contrary to Magnus Hirschfeld's Komitee, the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* was not so much a political organisation as a literary circle. Brand's journal was for a large part devoted to literature and the visual arts. In her *Die Geschichte der eigenen Geschichte: Literatur und Literaturkritik in den Anfängen der Schwulenbewegung* (1997) Marita Keilson-Lauritz has pointed out the role of literature in the development of homosexual self-consciousness and emancipation. However, in *Der Eigene* next to poetry and fiction also essays on social and political aspects of male homosexuality were published. In this article I will focus on some of the ideological and political issues that were raised by Brand and other authors in *Der Eigene*. Their views differed substantially from those of Hirschfeld and his supporters. The contrast between Brand's *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* and Hirschfeld's Wissenschaftlich-humanitäre Komitee, which I will highlight - although admitting that there were also similarities between the two movements - might still have some relevance for present-day debates on homosexuality. At the same time, however, the political views of prominent spokesmen of the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* are rather controversial. Several contributions to *Der Eigene* show that homosexuals need not always be on the liberal or left side of the political spectrum. On the contrary, in Germany before the Second World War some homosexual men seem to have opted for extreme nationalism as a way to realize their ideas on male bonding.¹

My interest in the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* was inspired almost twenty years ago by Michel Foucault's speculations on the history of (homo)sexuality.² After reading his work, especially the introduction to his history of sexuality, *La volonté de savoir*, (1976), the idea occurred to me that the writings of members of the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* could be considered as resistance to the labelling and control which was connected with the medical interference with homosexuality. The second suggestion I took from Foucault's work is that not biology and psychology but culture and history are of central importance to study homosexuality. Not only the attitude of people towards sexual behavior, but also the meaning and concept of sexuality itself are subject to continual variation and change. Human sexuality is determined not only by nature, but also by cultural and political factors. Recent studies have raised the idea that homosexuality, especially the gay identity, is a social and historical construct.

Brand's homosexual activism was closely connected to his anarchistic and aesthetic views. The title of his journal was borrowed from Max Stirner's *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (1844) that strongly rejected any subordination of individuality, not only to ecclesiastical and temporal authorities, but also to morals, rationalism, and ideology. Its readers, Brand declared in 1898, were men who "thirst for a revival of Greek times and Hellenic standards of beauty after centuries of Christian barbarism."³ His attacks were directed not only against government authorities

¹ In my lecture I will further elaborate on the political stand of the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* and discuss it from a historical perspective, including the ambivalent relationship between this branch of the homosexual movement and National Socialism.

² In 1983 I wrote my doctoral thesis on the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* and in 1991 I published a book on it: *Homosexuality and Male Bonding in Pre-Nazi Germany: The Youth Movement, the Gay Movement, and Male Bonding before Hitler's Rise* (New York, London: The Hayworth Press).

³ A. Brand, "Über unsere Bewegung", *Der Eigene* 2 (1898), 100-1.

and Christian moralizers, but also against physicians and psychiatrists, whose scientific research on human sexuality, as Brand wrote in 1899, "took away all beauty from eroticism".⁴ In this way he took a stand against Hirschfeld, whom he had met in 1896, when they planned together a political campaign for the abolition of Paragraph 175. For Hirschfeld, fighting the oppression of homosexuals was primarily a matter of revealing what he considered to be the true nature of "uranism". Being a physician by profession he tried to prove scientifically that it was a natural phenomenon and that the biological and psychological makeup of urnings differed from that of heterosexual men. According to his widely publicized theory, homosexuality was an inborn physical and mental condition of a specific minority, the so-called third sex, which he described as an intermediate human species between full-blown men and women, comparable to androgynes, hermaphrodites, and transvestites. For a short time Brand supported Hirschfeld's Komitee, but very soon he and other writers in *Der Eigene* gave voice to their dislike of sexologists such as Hirschfeld.

From 1899 on Hirschfeld's scientific and political opinions were criticized and ridiculed incessantly in *Der Eigene*, not only by Brand but by several contributors to his journal. They shared an aversion to contemporary medical theories on male homosexuality, including the emancipatory one of Hirschfeld. The idea that homosexuals were feminine in disposition was an abomination for them. That this idea had taken such firm and deep root was, in their opinion, primarily the fault of medical doctors and psychiatrists. Again and again writers in *Der Eigene* stressed that the homoeroticism they advocated had nothing to do with the third sex psychiatrists and sexologists were describing and for whose rights Hirschfeld's Komitee pleaded. In fact, they preferred not to speak about *homosexuality* or *uranism* because to them these were medical terms, loaded with the stigma of sickly deviation and effeminacy. Instead, they adopted the words *Lieblingminne* and *Freundesliebe*, which were introduced in *Der Eigene* in 1899 by the poet and painter Elisar von Kupffer. With his anthology of homoerotic literature, *Lieblingminne und Freundesliebe in der Weltliteratur* (1900) Kupffer hoped to create a counterbalance to the new medical-psychiatric and biological theories of homosexuality, namely those of the influential Richard von Krafft-Ebing and Hirschfeld. In his opinion same-sex love should be viewed not as a medical or biological matter but as an ethical and cultural one. His intention was not to explain the homosexual disposition, but by using literary sources refer to certain forms of experience of male love, namely those in the literary trends of classical Greece, the Renaissance, and eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Germany. With this, he tried to demonstrate that a good deal of homoeroticism lay hidden under the denominator of friendship and that this had been of great importance to their respective cultures. According to Kupffer, Greek boy-love, pedagogical eros, and the cult of romantic friendship were discredited by the medical categorizing and treatment of same-sex love. The highly polemic introduction to his anthology, "Die ethisch-politische Bedeutung der Lieblingminne", was published in *Der Eigene* in 1899. With this essay Kupffer set the tone for other authors in *Der Eigene*; Brand considered it as a kind of program for his Gemeinschaft der Eigenen.

A few years later two prominent supporters of Brand, the physician Edwin Bab and the zoologist and political philosopher Benedict Friedländer voiced their criticism of medical thinking on homosexuality. Intellectually they were among Hirschfeld's most challenging critics within the German homosexual rights movement. Both put forward epistemological arguments refuting two important presuppositions in Hirschfeld's thinking: the existence of a homosexual category, independent of morals and culture, and the biological identification of homosexuality in men with femininity. Their reasoning, reminiscent of the Kinsey scale (according to which exclusive homosexuality and heterosexuality are mere abstractions), pointed to eroticism in male friendships and male bonding, since they believed most men to be essentially bisexual. Homosexual and heterosexual behavior was predominantly determined culturally, they asserted, and, as Bab added, the same was true of masculinity and femininity. Therefore, the association of homosexuality in men with effeminacy was also a consequence of social processes which reflected a self-fulfilling prophecy: the theories of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, Krafft-Ebing, and Hirschfeld did not so much explain as model individual behavior.

Echoing Kupffer, Bab pointed out in *Der Eigene* that their "movement for a male culture" should not be confused with Hirschfeld's Komitee, which unjustly assigned, as he wrote, "uranian petticoats to profound minds

⁴ *Der Eigene* 4/5 (1899), 175-6.

and heroes".⁵ Not only did Bab reject the connection of same-sex love with femininity in men, he also criticized Hirschfeld's assumption that "genuine" homosexuality was congenital and confined to a minority. Furthermore, he argued that while Hirschfeld did not consider homosexuals as ill or degenerate, he still treated them like patients. Bab not unjustly pointed out Hirschfeld's affinity with medical sexologists such as Krafft-Ebing and Albert Moll. According to Bab, Hirschfeld affirmed the traditional dualism between natural and unnatural because of his belief in innate, mutually exclusive homosexuality and heterosexuality and his distinction between orientation and action. Following the reasoning of Hirschfeld and Krafft-Ebing, "normal men" having sex with other men (so-called pseudo-homosexuality) would perform "unnatural acts" because such practices were considered as biologically incompatible with their heterosexual nature. Same-sex behavior could only be seen as natural by Hirschfeld, Bab argued, when it originated from a homosexual constitution. Physicians such as Hirschfeld had proclaimed themselves the proper authorities for determining whether a person was a "genuine" homosexual or not and so, he concluded, they had taken homosexuals out of prisons and asylums in order to send them to a doctor's office to be diagnosed properly. According to Bab, Paragraph 175 could not be effectively contested by Hirschfeld's formulations; they were more likely to be a hindrance than a help in the fight for judicial reform. The differentiation between inborn homosexuality and pseudo-homosexual acts was consistent with maintaining criminalization in cases where acts did not correspond to disposition. Just like Friedländer, Bab criticized Paragraph 175 from the standpoint of natural law: that which took place between individuals on a voluntary basis without bringing harm to a third party or the collective could never be criminal.

Friedländer's views joined in with those of Bab. A cofounder of the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen*, Friedländer was at the same time a prominent administrator of the *Wissenschaftlich-humanitären Komitees*, until he headed a secession from the Komitee in 1906. The main cause of the dramatic rupture were divergent views on homosexuality. In his main work, *Die Renaissance des Eros Uranios* (1904) Friedländer had explained that Hirschfeld's third sex theory as well as Krafft-Ebing's influential *Psychopathia sexualis* should be considered as ideological monstrosities resulting from a regrettable historical development in European culture. Physicians' appropriation and treatment of same-sex love could all be explained historically. The feeling of being sick and aberrant, the sense of belonging to a different species originated in Christian consciousness of guilt. For Friedländer, most medical theories were a modern version of Christian superstition, condemning every form of homoeroticism as sinful and criminal. Supported by women, Friedländer said, priests had imposed an ascetic morality upon males, forcing them to suppress their homoerotic leanings. By associating sensuous relations between males with sodomy, priests and women had succeeded in discrediting the precious "uranian eros" in Western society. As a consequence of Christian matrimonial morals, which were affirmed by modern science, only heterosexual love was considered natural, and therefore "physiological friendship", a fundamental human passion according to Friedländer, had to come to an end.

Other adherents of the *Gemeinschaft* were also of the opinion that medical thinking about homosexuality was in line with the traditional, repressive attitude of the church and the judiciary. The Stirnerian anarchist John Henry Mackay, whose poems appeared in *Der Eigene* under his pen name Sagitta, asserted, for example, that the spread of scientific knowledge on homosexuality had not only increased the visibility of homosexuals but also their vulnerability and oppression. Besides, as many authors in *Der Eigene* lamented, suspicion had been fastened on intimate friendship between men and on platonic boy-love. Most of the writers in *Der Eigene* were of the opinion that science was unable to grasp the essence of the "nameless love," as Sagitta called it. Scientists relied only on external appearance and could not plumb the depths of spiritual and aesthetic motives. The latter could be represented or verbalized only in art; it's language approximated the truth of their love more closely than that of science. The emphasis on art and aesthetics in *Der Eigene* implied that, as homoerotics, the authors not only felt different from average man, but, because of their idealism and artistic sensibility, even better. This stereotype permitted them to consider themselves, not as pariahs, but as elite critics of modern society. Homoeroticism was presented as a way to develop individual uniqueness and artistic qualities, to raise oneself above everyday mediocrity and materialism. Several contributors to *Der Eigene* made a distinction between a superior and an

⁵ E. Bab, "Frauenbewegung und männliche Kultur", *Der Eigene* 6 (1903), 404.

inferior form of the love of men. Effeminate urnings, who served as models in the medical literature and the Wissenschaftlich-humanitäre Komitee, were pictured as decadent monsters. The kind of homoeroticism that they advocated, had nothing to do with weakness or decay: they stressed that the Gemeinschaft der Eigenen was for masculine men. In the circle around *Der Eigene* these views were accompanied by an ambiguous attitude with respect to sexuality between men. On the one hand, sensuality and physicality were glorified and attacks on christianity, Wilhelminian prudishness, bourgeois respectability and Paragraph 175 were quite fierce; on the other hand, discussing sexual behavior was scrupulously avoided. Medical doctors, according to adherents of the Gemeinschaft, placed too much emphasis on the "coarse desires" whereby friendship and male bonding might appear in a bad light and be discredited.

Many adherents of the Gemeinschaft der Eigenen agreed with the ideal of Freikörperkultur, the genesis of a new, better type of human being, who was in complete harmony with nature and had reached physical as well as spiritual perfection. The aesthetic dimension of homoeroticism that was celebrated in *Der Eigene* could only be experienced when alienation from the body had been overcome. Following Greek aesthetic values, the male body was considered to be superior to the female, and whereas heterosexual love was in the interest of physical procreation, homoerotic relations were justified by the aspiration toward unity between body and soul and by the longing for spiritual beauty and perfection. The male nudes pictured in *Der Eigene* often reflected spiritual and nationalist virtues: they were depicted in unspoiled nature (the photographs of Brand, for example) or in settings that remind one of the Greek or German past (respectively Wilhelm von Gloeden and Fidus); their poses often expressed firmness and strength (as in the paintings and drawings of Sascha Schneider, who also illustrated the books of Karl May) or, with their faraway looks, innocence and purity (the paintings of Kupffer, for instance).

Contrary to the Wissenschaftlich-humanitäre Komitee, the ultimate goal of the Gemeinschaft der Eigenen was not equal rights for a homosexual minority. Abolition of Paragraph 175 and the elimination of prejudice against homosexuals were seen only as initial conditions for cultural reform affecting male relations in general. Homoeroticism was held to be closely related to the social nature of males. Male bonding constituted the prerequisite for the ideal of masculinity, which numerous adherents of the *Gemeinschaft* considered to be fundamental for cultural achievements, education, politics, and patriotic and military virtues. Literature, history, and ethnology provided them with evidence to argue that homoeroticism existed, sometimes latent, in friendships and male societies, such as Männerbünde. As Sagitta put it, every man, married or not, carried part of the Greek heritage in him. In this connection, too, the tone was set by Kupffer, who deplored modern culture as no longer masculine. He proposed a revival of male culture: men should free themselves from their dependence on wives and families in the private sphere and put an end to their economic and sexual rivalry in public life. They should join ranks and youths were to be educated in friendships by adult males, because male bonds formed the foundation of the state and culture. Especially in Germany *Freundesliebe* ought to regain its social functions, Kupffer argued, for the Germans were the heirs of Greece. Apart from the classics, much attention was given in his anthology to the Sturm und Drang movement and German Romanticism, eras when passionate friendships among males had been cultivated in literary circles. In *Der Eigene* again and again the literary friendships in German Romanticism and also to those of such famous German thinkers and artists as Friedrich Nietzsche and Richard Wagner were presented as an alternative model to Hirschfeld's concept of homosexual emancipation. Also, intimate friendships between adult men and youths or boys were propagated in *Der Eigene*. The Greek cult of friendship should be revived to become the foundation for the education of boys. Some authors suggested that the love between a man and a youth was superior to a homosexual relationship between adult men. A pedagogical bond of friendship with a man would not only offer boys an individually directed education, but could also save them from prostitutes, venereal diseases, and masturbation. Bab, who also brought these arguments to the fore, added that women would benefit, too, since they would be treated less as sexual objects and not be troubled with unwanted pregnancies. Thus, Greek-inspired boy-love could be an important contribution to the solution of modern sexual problems as well as pauperizing overpopulation.

The members of the Gemeinschaft der Eigenen did not share a common political orientation: leftists, conservatives, and even some Nazi sympathizers contributed to *Der Eigene*. When Brand started his journal he

was inspired by a kind of anarchism which should not be confused with the main current of socialist anarchism. Beyond Stirner's *Einzigiger*, Friedrich Nietzsche's *Uebermensch* was the model for the radical and elitist individualism disseminated in *Der Eigene*. In its first issue, Brand dedicated the journal to "strong individuals" who organized their lives according to their own standards and who refused to conform to "the morals of the masses".⁶ Individual regeneration was considered to be more effective than realizing the ideal of social and political equality, which originated with the French Revolution. For Brand and several of his adherents, the rise of socialism and the beginnings of women's emancipation were indications that the striving for equality was accompanied by a levelling, resulting in a drab society of the masses in which creative individuals could not express themselves. On the whole Brand's political views were not very straightforward; like those of his followers, they were not only based on the position political parties took on homosexual issues, especially the abolition of Paragraph 175, or social and economic interests, but also on aesthetic values. Brand's writings show a constant variation of radical opposition to the prevailing social system in Wilhelminian as well as Weimar Germany and a somewhat naive-sentimental patriotism. Before The First World War he attacked the right-wing and center parties and showed some confidence in the social democratic party. Later in the twenties he seems to have lost faith in parliamentary democracy and leftist parties, in particular because Paragraph 175 was not abolished.

From the beginning of the century several prominent spokesmen of the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* voiced a kind of elitism and anti-modernism. The plea for a male culture in *Der Eigene* was frequently accompanied by criticism of contemporary society worded in Nietzschean rhetoric. On the whole, spokesmen of the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* were discontented with social and political developments that were transforming Wilhelminian Germany into an industrial and urban society based on practicality and profit, within which the proletarian masses had begun to have an impact in politics. By glorifying *Freundesliebe* as a way to raise oneself above bourgeois mediocrity and the materialism of the common people, they stressed the individual's feeling of uniqueness and rejected "dull" reason which brought "mere" prosperity, freedom, and equality to everyone. Friedländer, for instance, was of the opinion that Western culture was decaying, for which he blamed not only Christianity but also the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. The striving for political equality and the emancipation of workers and women had resulted in social levelling and the "feminization" of society. Kupffer's concept of male culture was also anti-egalitarian. He argued that in ancient Greece, the "growing democratic ignorance of high politics and great men" had been responsible for the decline of boy-love and, subsequently, of culture. His own "unmanly" times were also marked by a lack of reverence for strong men and monarchs. Instead, people preferred to listen to the humbug of party bosses, to demagoguery, and to female tea party gossip, Kupffer said, thus associating parliamentary government with the submission of males to female taste. In such countries as France and England, he wrote, many men had already lost their manhood as a result of "female ascendancy".⁷

For many contributors to *Der Eigene*, women's emancipation was the most objectionable consequence of democratization. Not only Kupffer, but also his friend, the philosopher Eduard von Mayer, and Friedländer declared that women, whom they considered inferior to men, exerted too much influence in modern society. In their view, mothers, mistresses, and wives made too many emotional demands upon men, so that intimate male friendships were thwarted, to the extent that these had not already been discredited by hypocritical prudery. Beyond Christian asceticism, Friedländer also criticized the romantic ideal of matrimony according to which husband and wife were equals and were totally wrapped up in each other. The secluded privacy of the modern nuclear family, Friedländer and Mayer said, was used by women to consolidate their power over men and to prevent male independence and solidarity. Although they were not against marriage per se, the family should not engross a man too much, since the tasks of reproduction and housekeeping were primarily women's concerns.

⁶ A. Brand, "Diese Blatt", *Der Eigene* 1 (1896), 1.

⁷ E. von Kupffer, "Die ethisch-politische Bedeutung der Lieblingin", *Der Eigene* 6/7 (1899), 190.

Being dependent and merely practical by nature, according to Friedländer and Mayer, women had nothing to offer men intellectually. In fact, man's idealism and creative drive were suffocated by exclusive emotional ties to women and by the material obligations entailed by marriage and family. Wives urged their husbands to pursue professional status and money instead of higher values. Since they thwarted male bonding, women, being materialistic and superstitious, were held responsible for cultural decline. Homoerotic friendships were considered superior to conjugal life, and a reassessment of the relationship between man and woman was therefore recommended by the spokesmen of the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen*. Since men were essentially bisexual, marriage should not rule out homoerotic bonds between men in general.

Above all, Friedländer and Mayer were obsessed by the notion that female influence in culture and in politics was devastating for the vigor of civilization. According to Mayer's philosophy of culture, modern industrial and democratic society foreshadowed a decline to the prehistoric level of the "matriarchate," under which male spirituality had been stifled by collective materialism and primitive superstition. The rise of culture had only become possible when military *Männerbünde* broke through the torpor of matriarchal rule. For Mayer, a healthy culture was inherently masculine, aristocratic, and racist; and so it was for Friedländer who elaborated theoretical types of male and female cultures, imputing to the latter all signs of degeneracy, such as democratic levelling, desire for luxury, sexual hypocrisy, and also monogamy for men. As Kupffer had done before, Friedländer argued that Western countries such as the United States, Great-Britain, and France had already fallen victim to "feminization," which he considered dangerous for the supremacy of the white race. It was clear to Friedländer that the German nation had to stop further feminization of Western civilization by making the *Männerbund* the core of the state, safeguarding the exalted goals of male friendship such as moral strength, self-sacrifice, and spirit.

In the twenties and early thirties, various authors in *Der Eigene* and Brand's journal *Eros* gave voice to similar opinions. On the whole, they were not at all happy with Weimar democracy. Not only communism and socialism but even more dangerously the spread of American civilization was viewed as threatening the German spirit, since capitalistic consumerism and the desire for luxury were accompanied by cultural effemination. The German genius could only be saved from decadence by a homoerotic male culture. The leading *Männerbund* as some of them hoped, could be realized by the war generation that had experienced male solidarity in the trenches of the First World War. Although Brand from time to time raised objections to the ultra-nationalistic views expressed in his journal, he did not stop giving ample scope to dubious viewpoints. Endorsing an article in which the author stated that men like Ulrichs and Hirschfeld did not deserve to be revered as pioneers of homosexual emancipation because they lacked a deep feeling for German culture, was only a minor fault compared to the fact that in 1924 and 1925 anti-Semitic attacks on Hirschfeld and his associate Kurt Hiller - both were Jews - were published in *Der Eigene*. Brand must have been strongly aware of the ambivalent relationship between homosexuals and National Socialists. On the one hand, it was clear that they might be attracted to National Socialism, because the Nazis, organized in all-male troops such as the SA, celebrated masculinity, male comradeship and physical beauty. Brand knew that some of the men who had supported him and who had contributed to *Der Eigene* became Nazis or sympathizers of Hitler's movement. Perhaps they applauded Nazism because they hoped it would realize their ideal of the *Männerbund*. For some time Brand seems to have reasoned along the same lines. In 1932 he wrote that the homophobic utterances in the Nazi press did not correspond to the true historical foundations of National Socialism, since homoerotic relations between warriors had been held in high esteem in the Germanic past that the Nazis glorified. On the other hand, Brand also showed that the Nazis were a serious danger for homosexuals. In 1928 he conducted a poll of the political parties concerning their opinions on Paragraph 175. The answer of the NSDAP, headed by the slogan *Gemeinnutz über Eigennutz*, was the party's first public statement on homosexuality, which it rejected as detrimental to the German people. In 1931 Brand commented on the Röhm-affair: Ernst Röhm's homosexuality, he argued, proved that the Nazis were hypocrites and that they were upholding a double standard. Hitler's rise to power put an end to Brand's activities: Nazi storm troopers raided his house five times and seized his journals, books, and photo's. Brand was not arrested, however, and he would have survived the war were it not for the American bombardment which killed him in 1945.

The Gemeinschaft der Eigenen can be placed in a specific German cultural tradition which disparaged the results of the Enlightenment as being mere Western (i.e., French and Anglo-Saxon) *Zivilisation*, meaning a utilitarian civilization ruled by economic and political self-interest. While Hirschfeld and his Committee drew from the aspirations of the Enlightenment, rationalism and humanism, Brand and his supporters were inspired by the romantic concept of *Kultur*, according to which the priority of aesthetic and spiritual values was rooted in the German soul. Their outlook had much in common with contemporary trends in the German youth movement, the *Wandervogel*, and in various groupings propagating *Lebensreform* by means of nudism, vegetarianism, agrarianism, garden cities, naturopathy-aiming at a return of modern man to unspoiled nature and close-knit "organic" communities (*Gemeinschaften*). Capitalism and socialism were both rejected in these movements since they were judged to be ideologies of an impersonal, alienating, industrial, and urban *Gesellschaft*. The common element in these movements was the project of a special "third" avenue to a better society based on reforms of personal lifestyle and individual consciousness. Although the *Lebensreformbewegung* was fully alive with religious ways of thinking, such as pantheism, theosophy, and idealistic notions of nature, and therefore in large part nonpolitical, the preoccupation with Germany's special destiny revealed a tendency toward nationalism. A similar state of mind can be seen in the Gemeinschaft der Eigenen: Brand's idealistic anarchism and the hazy aesthetic visions of some contributors to *Der Eigene* were soon pushed aside by nationalist rhetoric, for which the tone was set by Kupffer, Mayer, and Friedländer. Several spokesmen of the Gemeinschaft shared this ideal of national regeneration through promoting manliness. The idealizing of male friendships and the Männerbund was in line with certain trends in German nationalism. Inspired by the anti-Napoleonic Wars of Liberation, fought by volunteers, literary men and other intellectuals had celebrated male friendships as the most tangible expression of patriotism beginning in the early nineteenth century. In contrast to heterosexual relationships, these friendships embodying male solidarity guaranteed the control of egoistic passions by means of dedication to collective aspirations. The typically German ideal of the Männerbund was infused with new life at the beginning of the twentieth century, especially by trench-war comradeship during the First World War. Here male friendship was invested with nationalist virtues, as it was associated with communal sense, charismatic leadership, militarism, and self-sacrifice. Notably in the Freikorps, as stated in several memoirs and war novels, and later also in National Socialism, it was linked with anti-democratic and misogynist attitudes.

The "homosocial" tendency in German nationalism was embraced by several spokesmen of the Gemeinschaft der Eigenen; moreover, their endorsement of patriarchy, in society as well as in the family, is striking. Their anti-feminism can be explained to a great extent by their attitudes towards the family. As we have seen, their advocacy of homoeroticism did not rule out marriage, as long as the family maintained a strict division of roles. Woman's social role, characterized by servitude, should be restricted to the family, so that man was free to devote himself to culture and politics together with other men. In their view, the man's world should be segregated strictly from that of women; the family was no more than an institution for reproduction and the meeting of one's daily material needs. The Gemeinschaft's plea for homoerotic friendships outside the family showed their orientation to an idealized past in which men were not expected to be emotionally involved in marriage and family life. The modernization of the family during the nineteenth century, by which its social function and inner structure had changed, threatened this arrangement. Especially in the middle class, privacy and affection between husband and wife and between parents and children came to be considered essential for family life. In the Gemeinschaft, this middle class model of the family as a haven in a heartless world was regarded primarily as an infringement on traditional sex segregation, a development which they blamed on the emancipation of women.

Closely connected to their opinion of the family was the notion held by some spokesmen of the Gemeinschaft der Eigenen that the possibility of intimate relationships between men was restricted to a large extent by the unfortunate way hetero- and homosexuality were socially and historically determined. Their rejection of Hirschfeld's biological concept of the homosexual personality should be understood in this context. Hirschfeld's theory of the third sex was important as a confirmation of the notion that homosexuality was confined to a special category of men (and women); this view was a precondition for organizing homosexual emancipation. The attitude of the circle around *Der Eigene* can be characterized as a refusal to identify with this fairly new type of human being, the modern homosexual, as it was fostered by medical men as well as

emancipators. While Hirschfeld vindicated equal rights for a homosexual minority by ethologically differentiating urnings as clearly as possible from the heterosexual majority, Brand, Kupffer, Friedländer and Bab disputed the scientific validity of this biological partition, just as they also challenged Hirschfeld's psychological distinction between sexual love and friendship, or between bisexuality and homosexuality.

To the adherents of the *Gemeinschaft*, same-sex attraction between males could not be reduced to a biological mixture of manliness and femininity, as Hirschfeld suggested by associating homosexual orientation with female gender-identity. On the contrary, they linked homoeroticism to masculinity, while championing involvement of men in general. Since in their view a masculine gender-identity was anything but an indication of a heterosexual orientation, they encroached upon the "natural" role prescriptions for "real" men. In this sense, their critique of the heterosexual norm was more radical than that of the *Wissenschaftlich-humanitären Komitees*, as can be illustrated by the comments of Hirschfeld's assistant Numa Praetorius in the *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen*. Some authors of *Der Eigene*, he wrote, caused damage to Hirschfeld's campaign for enlightenment, which aimed to convince people that homosexuality was confined to a fixed minority and could not be transmitted by "seduction" or "contamination." Their propagation of homoeroticism as an option for all males would scare away potential heterosexual allies of the homosexual movement, Numa Praetorius argued, since "normal" men justly feared that their friendships would be associated with homosexuality.

The authors of *Der Eigene*, on the other hand, thought that Hirschfeld's preoccupation with proving the biological nature of homosexuality contributed to the prevention of close relationships between men in general in modern society, since same-sex love was linked exclusively to deviants who could invoke mere pity and tolerance. Their ambivalent attitude towards sexuality and their aesthetic glorification of eros can be explained in part by their rejection of medical definitions of homosexuality, which they considered too limited. They did not share the dominant assumption in contemporary medicine and psychiatry and increasingly in public opinion that homosexuality could be explained biologically or psychologically. Most authors of *Der Eigene* did not think that their feelings and experiences could be squeezed into scientific categories; for them, art and literature were a better means to express themselves aesthetically. Other spokesmen of the *Gemeinschaft* referred also to history and ethnology to advocate homoeroticism. On the whole, they tended towards the view that it was a matter not of deterministic nature but of plastic culture.

In this respect Brand's, Bab's and Friedländer's criticism of Hirschfeld's confidence in science, as expressed in the latter's adage *per scientiam ad justitiam*, was not without significance. Since medical and biological research could also be used against homosexuals, they argued, scientific explanations should never be applied as a standard for judicial and political goals, much less for the social arrangement of same-sex relations. The principle of individual self-determination and not the argument that homosexuality was biologically inevitable should be the starting point for homosexual emancipation, Brand, Bab, and Friedländer said. To some extent they were put to the right by the fact that Hirschfeld tended to be infatuated by his scientific ambitions. For example, when around 1920 the Viennese doctor E. Steinach tried to 'cure' homosexual men by castrating them, Hirschfeld praised Steinach's research into the causes of homosexuality because it seemed to confirm his third sex theory. However, most of the authors of *Der Eigene* did not extend their notion of the priority of cultural factors to ideas on masculinity and femininity. Bab was exceptional in realizing that gender-identity was also socially determined. On the whole, the male chauvinism of the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* was rooted, just like Hirschfeld's affinity with Darwinism and eugenics, in biologist and sometimes even racist thinking. While the contributors to *Der Eigene* opposed a deterministic homosexual-heterosexual duality, some of them advocated an even more rigorous social separation of male and female spheres.

In the final analysis, the attempt of Brand and his supporters to promote homoeroticism while avoiding identification with the modern homosexual was not successful. They tried to escape being labelled as urnings or members of the third sex, but ironically, they were viewed as radical homosexuals. Their social footing was even more precarious than that of Hirschfeld's *Komitee*, which, although its political results were minimal, received some support from the scientific establishment and from socialist and liberal political parties. The *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* found some resonance in certain segments of the youth movement and among literary men and artists, but the nationalist political movements to which they were related ideologically were, of course, irrevocably opposed to openly propagated homoeroticism. On the contrary, the realization of a *Männerbund* and

the celebration of masculine strength and beauty in National Socialism was accompanied with persecution of homosexual men. Of course the Gemeinschaft der Eigenen cannot be made responsible for their fate, although the political views of its spokesmen were highly charged. But this might explain why their homoerotic ideals have fallen into disrepute and oblivion. After the Second World War the gay liberation movement in Western Europe and North America adopted a very different course that shows more resemblance to the policies of the Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee. The modern gay movement in general has fixed itself on individual disposition and identity, and it has more often than not shut its eyes to the fascination of many homosexual men with (hyper)masculinity. As a result, the Gemeinschaft's criticism and defiance of the medico-biological and psychiatric conceptualization of homosexuality were forgotten. Typically, in the historiography of the prewar German homosexual movement Hirschfeld and his Komitee have received more attention than Brand and his Gemeinschaft; as a rule Hirschfeld is considered as the true predecessor of the modern gay movement and Brand and his circle are viewed as a curious or objectionable deviation from the main road of gay emancipation. Without idealizing the Gemeinschaft der Eigenen, I think that Brand and his followers deserve more serious attention, not only because it is part of the homosexual experience in the past and the gay community has to face its history, however politically polluted that may be - but also because some of the issues which were raised by its spokesmen are still worthy of considering.