



Querying Queerness in the Film Archive, the Ephemeral *Anders als die Andern* (*Different from the Others*) (1919)

By Lauren Elizabeth Pilcher

On May 24, 1919, *Anders als die Andern/Different from the Others* (1919), “arguably the first feature film with an explicitly homosexual theme made anywhere in the world,” (Steakley, “Cinema” 181) screened for the first time at a press preview at the Apollo-Theater in Berlin (188). The narrative film, approximately ninety minutes in length, followed a romantic relationship between a concert violinist and his young male protégé in an effort to inform audiences of the injustice that homosexual males faced under Germany’s anti-sodomy statute Paragraph 175 (181-182). Jewish sexologist and sexual rights activist Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, who had collaborated with controversial Jewish-Austrian director Richard Oswald to produce the film, gave an introductory address at the screening (181). The film, produced during a brief period of lifted censorship in Weimar Germany, was met with both theatrical success and controversy upon its public release in the summer of 1919. Though popular in Berlin, various local censorship boards blocked screenings of the film, and it was banned across Germany in October of 1920, following the national reinstatement of film censorship (192). The ban restricted screenings to select medical audiences, primarily at Hirschfeld’s Institute of Sexual Science in Berlin (188, 192). James D. Steakley speculates that prints of the feature-length film did not survive the Third Reich’s attempt to rid German culture of Jewish and homosexual influence (194). At present, the only remnant of *Different from the Others* is an abridged, re-edited version included in an exported print of Hirschfeld’s later film *Gesetze der Liebe/ Laws of Love* (1927) (181).

The extant twenty-four minute fragment of the film was lost for decades until it resurfaced and began to circulate among gay rights activists in the 1970s. In 1971, the fragment was found in a Russian archive and screened at a Richard Oswald Retrospective in Vienna (195). Beginning in 1974, the Gosfilmofond, the national

archive of the former Soviet Union, provided copies of the fragment to various European archives (195). The fragment attracted subcultural interest and audiences in Europe and the United States throughout the 1980s and onward as attitudes toward sexuality continued to shift. In 1999, the Filmmuseum München reconstructed the fragment from information found in documents from the Weimar period. Filmmuseum recreated lost scenes by adding new intertitles, archival photographs, and historical information on the film's relationship to Hirschfeld and German sexology. The reconstruction, which was updated in 2004 and has been released in several DVD editions, remains the most accessible version of *Different from the Others* to date. More recently, the Outfest UCLA Legacy Project has revitalized American interest in *Different from the Others* by again attempting to create a viewable reconstruction of the original using Weimar documents. The joint project is part of an ongoing partnership between UCLA's Film and Television Archive and Outfest, a Los Angeles organization that promotes "LGBT equality by creating, sharing, and protecting LGBT stories on the screen" ("About Outfest"). The unfinished Outfest-UCLA reconstruction has been publicized and promoted in online articles, on websites, and in social media spaces.

A single fragment of celluloid connects the near century that has passed since the first screening of *Different from the Others* and this latest American attempt to restore the film to its original state. In this article, I investigate the significance of the original film's fragmentation and the ways in which LGBTQ communities and allies have reconstructed the partial film in recent decades. The original *Different from the Others* was censored because its representation of homosexuality invited spectators to take pleasure in aesthetically appealing, erotic images of sexual deviance. As a result, the remaining fragment thwarts attempts to restore the feature-length film in a historically accurate manner. In the Filmmuseum and Outfest-UCLA reconstructions, the absence of the film proves as important as its extant content as they create a new original that can be authentically consumed by sexuality-aware viewers. Rather than provide conclusive archival accounts of the film, Filmmuseum and Outfest-UCLA engage the fragmented *Different from the Others* as ephemeral evidence of LGBTQ history uncovered in an imagined contemporary archive experienced on-screen and in new

media spaces. In doing so, these restorative returns to the film queer traditional standards of archiving and the contemporary narratives of a repressed, but increasingly visible LGBTQ community upon which they implicitly depend.

To explicate my argument, the remainder of the article examines how and why the fragmented *Different from the Others* eluded and continues to elude archival practice. The first section theorizes how the loss of a significant portion of *Different from the Others* effects historicizing the film as a cinematic origin of modern homosexuality. I interpret the film's production context, censorship, and destruction as a politically charged instance of failed archiving that resists a history of sexual enlightenment and social progress. In the second section, I analyze how production and reception of *Different from the Others* in Weimar Germany influenced its archival fate. Hirschfeld and Oswald drew upon German sexology discourse, political discussions of Paragraph 175, and the popular appeal of cinema to produce a film that would critique governmental regulation of sex. The film thus evidenced a tension in modernizing Germany between the need to legitimize homosexuality according to legal and social codes and a longing to cinematically visualize desires deemed socially and culturally perverse. By engaging an educative lesson and romantic narrative, the film failed to meet standards of appropriate cultural consumption and preservation. The third section considers how Filmmuseum München's and Outfest-UCLA's recent efforts to reconstruct the partial film ultimately recreate it as a hybrid archival text in the present. These recent efforts rely on imagined collections of extra-filmic materials that contextualize the fragment for contemporary audiences and allow spectators to visualize it as ephemera of LGBTQ history.

Absent Archives, Queer Fragments

The lost footage of *Different from the Others* raises questions about how archival materials are utilized in the writing of LGBTQ history. Recirculation and reconstruction of the fragment since the 1970s extends and complicates Jacques Derrida's claim that

archiving always involves a case of *archive fever*. According to Derrida, this sickness, which is brought on by the theoretical impossibility of “the archive”:

is to burn with passion. It is never to rest, interminably, from searching for the archive right where it slips away. It is to run after the archive, even if there’s too much of it, right where something anarchives itself. It is to have a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire for the archive, an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement. (91)

Derrida claims here that archival practice is driven and consumed by an enduring, burning desire to return to an absent point of origin. In the case of *Different from the Others*, shifting cultural attitudes toward sexuality have led to a “repetitive” and “irrepressible” desire to reconstruct the silent film as a lost origin of Western LGBTQ history (91). Restorations of the fragmented film in recent decades reflect a longing to locate and return to the first cinematic representation of unrepressed homosexuality despite, and perhaps as a result of, the fact that much of the original film’s content is omitted from the remaining print.

Feverish reconstructions of *Different from the Others* are more, however, than a contemporary excavation of a repressed history of sexuality. According to Michel Foucault, the idea that modern societies now progressively accept rather than silence discussions of sexuality is an enduring Enlightenment narrative that normalizes and regulates sexual desire in order to maintain bourgeois power (3-13). Within this modern cultural discourse, sex is an object of scientific investigation, education, and progress that follows the logic and social controls of reproductive heteronormativity. *Different from the Others* resists being subsumed by this normalizing historical discourse on sexuality. The original film critiqued the social control of sexual desire in Germany, particularly penal code Paragraph 175, by depicting homosexuality in an educational and entertaining way. Proponents of sexual regulation fragmented and attempted to erase the film’s depiction of deviant sexual desires. Though the content of *Different from the Others* is often read as affirming a historical narrative of increased LGBTQ visibility and acceptance, the absence of the film marks its failure to adhere to socially and politically respectable discourse on sexuality in modernizing Germany.

As a sexually controversial text rendered ephemeral to dominant historical narratives of desire, *Different from the Others* disrupts the conventional notions of archival evidence upon which preservation and reconstruction depend. Jose Munoz asserts that “Queerness is rarely complemented by evidence, or at least by traditional understandings of the term. The key to queering evidence, and by that I mean the ways in which we prove queerness, is suturing it to the concept of ephemera. Think of ephemera as trace, the remains, the things that are left, hanging in the air like a rumor” (65). He goes on to argue that “The ephemeral does not equal unmateriality. It is more nearly about another understanding of what matters” (81). Munoz implies here that accepted modes of establishing evidence devalue the material existence of queer desires and bodies by deeming representations of queerness perverse and limiting them to ephemeral forms and modes of communication and documentation. *Different from the Others* was censored and partially destroyed for failing to follow the social values and norms governing representations of sexuality in the Weimar and Nazi periods. Officially deemed perverse, the partial film shifts what matters when approached as an archival text that provides evidence of early LGBTQ life. The ephemerality of *Different from the Others*, more so than its positive content, evidences deviant sexual desires that resist and exist outside of “the archive.”

Recent reconstructions of the film engage the ephemeral failure of *Different from the Others* in ways that challenge the values that underlie conventional archiving and historicism. Jack Halberstam argues that *failure*, as a queer mode of being, provides greater potential for contemporary innovation because it adapts where well-rooted, institutionalized models of hegemonic success that value seriousness, discipline, and expertise remain have grown stagnant (6-15). Following Halberstam’s argument, *Different from the Others’* lack of sexual discipline and failure to meet the criteria of archival preservation during the Weimar and Nazi periods has allowed the extant fragment to adapt to changing conceptions of sexuality in ways that complicate reading it as an origin of Western LGBTQ communities. How the film has been lost and reconstructed shows where and how queer desires have been rendered ephemeral to dominant narratives of history. What can be historically experienced and imagined in the

absence of the film is equally and perhaps more important to historical accounts and reconstructions of *Different from the Others* than what can be excavated and archived.

A Weimar Other

The archival absence of *Different from the Others* reflects the cultural and social debates concerning sex and sexuality in the Weimar period. The content of the Hirschfeld Oswald production was directly related to Germany's established field of sexology. Unlike other European nations, German sexological research was both popular and widely circulated during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, due in large part to a free press and the enduring debates surrounding anti-sodomy statute Paragraph 175.¹ According to historian Robert Beachy, Germany was unique in comparison to other Western nations because the statute prompted open discussions of homosexuality that "compelled both activists and medical practitioners to explain same-sex attraction" (Beachy, "The German Invention" 820). German sexologists contributed to explanations of same-sex desire by differentiating and documenting sexual behavior and practices beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld continued the research of sexologist and psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing by innovatively intertwining his scientific research with social activism.²

Visual culture played an important role in Hirschfeld's commitment "to working for the acceptance of different kinds of sexual practices considered deviant, including homosexuality, transsexuality, cross-dressing, bisexuality and fetishism" (Mennel 11). Hirschfeld extensively photographed patients in thousands of consultations at his Institute of Sexual Science (Prickett 104). These photographs, which he also archived at the Institute, provided visual and material proof of diverse sexual intermediaries, or the "third sex" (Steakley, *Homosexual* 105). The sexologist catalogued, archived, and often

¹ See Beachy "The German Invention of Homosexuality" 801-838 and Beachy *Gay Berlin* for more in-depth discussion of this claim.

² Hirschfeld's activist efforts included founding sexual rights organization the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee (SHC) and fostering its annual publication, *The Yearbook of Sexual Inbetweenness*. See Steakley *Homosexual Emancipation* 23-40; Beachy, *Gay Berlin* 86-91, and 109-11.

published these images in the Institute's journal "as testimony, as narrative, and as memory of those who stood at the periphery of patriarchal, heterosexist German society" (Prickett 116).

Different from the Others was part of Hirschfeld's sustained efforts to scientifically and visually document sexual variation in ways that could be utilized for public education and social change. According to Jill Suzanne Smith, the push for sexual reform by Hirschfeld "intensified dramatically in 1918, when the prospect of a new democratic constitution presented the perfect opportunity to change the sections of the penal code that regulated sexual behavior" (24). In effort to capitalize on the potential for reform, Hirschfeld and Oswald collaborated during 1918 and 1919 on three *Aufklärungsfilme* dealing with sexual issues, including *Different from the Others* (24). The *Aufklärungsfilm* genre, which was popularized by Oswald and soon imitated by numerous lesser known directors, typically featured a fictional narrative about a sexual issue accompanied by instructive narration often utilized to more easily allow for controversial or exploitative content that appealed to audiences (Smith 14-15; Steakley, "Cinema" 189). In *Different from the Others*, Hirschfeld and Oswald similarly included a provocative narrative interwoven with informative elements, which allowed them to adapt an activist stance on the medical legitimacy of homosexuality to a popular platform in order to attract Weimar viewers.

According to the extant fragment and descriptions in written documents, the feature-length *Different from the Others* begins as famous violin virtuoso Paul Körner (played by Conrad Veidt) becomes visibly upset as he reads newspaper obituaries. As he reads about the suicides of three men, an intercut image reveals his interior reflection on why these men took their own lives – numerous historical figures stand in a line beneath a sword marked §175. Körner's fears temporarily subside as his concert performance in the following scene enralls young Kurt Sivers (Fritz Schulz). Kurt briefly introduces himself after the concert and visits Körner's home on the following day to inquire about violin lessons. The two, as teacher and pupil, develop a romantic relationship to the dismay of their families, who attempt to draw their attention away from one another.

Danger soon lurks as a scheming gentleman who is familiar with Körner, Franz Bollek (Reinhold Schünzel), follows the two as they stroll through a park. Franz later shows up at Körner's home demanding money to stay quiet about the violinist's violation of Paragraph 175. The blackmailer's threats settle only to turn dramatic shortly after Kurt plays his first concert with Körner. The couple finds Franz attempting to steal money from Körner's home, and a climactic fight ensues. Kurt, shaken by the event and Franz's claim that he too, is being paid by Körner, leaves town indefinitely. Körner seeks treatment for his enduring inclination toward men, and a series of flashbacks recall painful memories of shaming from his youth. Quite depressed, Körner attends a lecture given by Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, who assures him that his interest in men is natural and unfairly punished under the law. Soon, however, Franz brings Körner's offense to court. Though Körner is sentenced to only one week in prison due to his respectable reputation and Franz's prior record, he commits suicide before beginning his sentence. The final scene concludes as Kurt returns and collapses at Körner's deathbed. The young man also wants to take his own life, but Hirschfeld, present at the scene, advises him to fight for social justice in honor of Körner's memory.

As a hybrid of education and entertainment, *Different from the Others* not only informs audiences of the social and legal issues surrounding homosexuality but also incites spectator pleasure in the images and narrative. Conrad Veidt, Anita Berber, and Reinhold Schünzel, actors familiar to German audiences, play key roles in the film. Veidt, known for his androgynous portrayals and soon to play the sexually ambiguous somnambulist in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), plays the lead role, Paul Körner. Berber appears as Kurt's sister, Else, in a role that coquettishly downplays her provocative roles and nude cabaret performances. Schünzel, known for playing villains and corrupted men, makes a similar appearance as blackmailer Franz Bollek. Prior to and during screening of the film, the cinematic appeal of these popular actors, and the erotic appeal of Veidt and Berber, prompts spectators to identify with and take visual pleasure in the homosexual relationship at the center of the narrative. By casting Veidt, Berber, and Schünzel to realistically depict an underrepresented sexuality considered

deviant, Hirschfeld and Oswald play with the pleasure of cinematic experience as a way to critique and mobilize political resistance to Paragraph 175.

Throughout the film, Hirschfeld and Oswald provide educational information on homosexuality but also invite spectators to viscerally experience the narrative representation of homosexuality according to cinematic expectations. In the opening scene, a medium close shot of Körner becoming upset as he reads suicide notices in the newspaper positions audiences to understand and empathize with the character's subjective emotions. The image that follows – a line of male historical figures standing beneath a sword marked §175 – represents Körner's realization that the obituaries relate to Paragraph 175. The juxtaposed images connect Körner to Paragraph 175 and reveal the violinist's fear that he may face a similar plight under the law. On an informative level, the historical icons are linked to Körner's anxious reaction as a way to point to an individual within an enduring group of men who suffer under Paragraph 175. On a visual level, Veidt's appearance and the images that provide access to Körner's emotions bring the protagonist's thoughts, feelings, and implied homosexuality into the field of spectator desire and expectation.



Fig. 1 In the opening scene, Paul Körner becomes increasingly fearful as he reads male suicide notices in the newspaper
(*Anders als die Andern*, Richard-Oswald Produktion, Filmmuseum)



Fig. 2 An image of famous men standing beneath the sword of Paragraph 175 provides viewers access to Körner's realization that the anti-sodomy statute is the historically enduring cause of recent male suicides (*Anders als die Andern*, Richard-Oswald Produktion, Filmmuseum)

Scenes depicting the romantic relationship between Körner and Kurt then provide viewers visual access to a private space of homosexual desire in order to incite pleasure in a represented site of legal regulation. The blocking, gestures, and framing of the two during Kurt's violin lessons early in the film aesthetically represent their growing sexual desire. In one particular scene in Körner's home, a medium iris shot frames the two as they practice playing the violin in close spatial proximity to one another. Körner plays the instrument briefly and passes it to his new pupil. Kurt imitates the tune as the two gaze longingly at one another and exchange the phallic gesture. The iris shot focuses the gaze of the camera and audience on the couple while also giving the impression of looking through a keyhole at the private, erotic scene. In a letter to Hirschfeld, a postal worker who had seen *Different from the Others* fondly recalls a similar scene, seemingly lost from the extant fragment, where Körner strokes Kurt's hair while the two play music with a group of family members (Trans. Barbara Menzel, qtd. in Steakley, *Anders* 71-72).³ He describes the scene in detail and claims that he will

³ Steakley quotes from *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* [Yearbook for Sexual Inbetweenness] 19 (1919/20): 40-41.

never forget this visually pleasing, superbly acted moment in the film (*Anders* 71-72). For this viewer, the recollected scene visualizes prohibited sexual desires and practices in the aesthetically and erotically pleasing ways expected of cinema. Considered in relation to the film's activist message, scenes where Kurt and Körner play music prompt audience desire for a budding, private intimacy depicted on-screen but deemed legally and socially deviant.



Fig. 3 Violinist Paul Körner gives a lesson to his newest pupil, Kurt Sivers (*Anders als die Andern*, Richard-Oswald Produktion, Filmmuseum)

Extending its educational message, the film also provides a provocative view of public spaces of homosexual desire that complicate accepted notions of sexual perversity. In a flashback that recalls Körner's past experiences of same-sex attraction, a brief scene depicts how he and Franz met at a masquerade ball in a Berlin bar. In the scene, which caused a riot in a Berlin cinema in 1919, Körner and Franz talk in the foreground while costumed men (some in drag) dance with other men in the background (Steakley, "Cinema" 195). Within the medium long shot, the decorative mise-en-scène that surrounds the two characters suggests that the space is an exciting, moving spectacle where the two play with sexual desire and identity. Franz's desires remain hidden and mischievous, however, since he has been established as a blackmailer earlier in the

film. The flirtatious content of his conversation with Körner is inferred without intertitles, and the two return to the violinist's lavish home. As Körner makes a sexual advance, Franz slyly demands money.



Fig. 4 Körner recalls meeting blackmailer Franz Bollek
(*Anders als die Andern*, Richard-Oswald Produktion, Filmmuseum)

The scene raises provocative questions about Franz's sexuality: Why is Franz at the masquerade ball? What are his intentions with Körner? Is he also gay and repressing his sexual desires? Does he take pleasure in manipulating Körner? Why does he continue to blackmail Körner? On an educational level, the attention to public spaces where homosexual men gather informs audiences that there is community of people who are attracted to the same sex. The scene also suggests that Franz is driven by corrupted desires hidden maliciously in the aesthetic, erotic excess of the masquerade under the name of the law. The scene ultimately visualizes Berlin as a space of queer desire where legal codes destroy the ephemeral, aesthetic codes of homosexuality via a contradictory cycle of hiding and exposing homosexual desire as perverse.

Different from the Others invites audience pleasure in viewing prohibited homosexual bodies, spaces, and relationships. The film emphasizes a pleasurable view of homosexuality in private and public spaces where legal and social controls deem them

deviant. By educating and entertaining Weimar audiences in *Different from the Others*, Hirschfeld and Oswald queerly employed cinematic desire as a way to illustrate the corruption of sexual desire that accompanies Paragraph 175. Audience pleasure in the images and narrative of the educational film was an integral component of the film's activist message and political resistance to governmental regulation of sex.

Different from the Others' persuasive channeling of sexual and cinematic desire for reformative aims proved controversial once the film was released. The film ran successfully in Berlin for months while other regions of Germany quickly banned public screenings.⁴ Following the reinstatement of film censorship law in June of 1920, the Berlin Censorship Chamber appointed a panel of three psychiatrists to evaluate *Different from the Others* (Steakley, "Cinema" 192; Beachy, *Gay Berlin* 166). The panel, in a formal decision dated October 16, 1920, banned the film from the general public and restricted viewing to limited private screenings at Hirschfeld's Institute (Steakley, "Cinema" 193). In a commentary published shortly after the decision, panelist Dr. Albert Moll explained that a primary concern in censoring the film was that it did not show the sexual acts that conclude homosexual seduction. He claims that Hirschfeld and Oswald, and other advocates of "ideal" homosexuality, "present homosexuality as purely aesthetic" while they remain deceptively silent about "homosexual acts and especially about the seduction of young people" (193). According to Moll, the film's aesthetic depiction of Körner and Kurt is seductive rather than attentive to the end result of homosexual desire – perverse sexual acts between men. The film, for Moll, needed to be censored because its visual appeal to spectators, more so than its educational agenda, was aesthetically deceitful and dangerous.

⁴ See Steakley 188. According to Steakley, prior to the May 24, 1919 press preview of *Different from the Others* in Berlin, "Oswald had prepared thirty to forty prints of the film and arranged for distribution points in Hanover, Cologne, Frankfurt am Main and Vienna, as well as Berlin." He explains that even though the film did not face national censorship, local debates ensued following distribution: the censorship board in Munich banned the film "for all of Bavaria prior to its scheduled July opening"; Vienna restricted the film to adult audiences and soon prohibited screening of the film entirely; the state of Wurttemberg banned the film as soon as posters for its release appeared in cinemas.

Supporters of *Different from the Others* downplayed the film's entertainment value with rhetoric similar to Moll's but used instead to emphasize its social value. A reviewer writing for a Berlin newspaper concluded:

As a film critic I do not want to meddle with the fight over pro and contra the penal code 175; I only saw how the average fate of a feminine man appeared on-screen with extreme urgency, and note that the dramatist [director] offered the leadership to the scientist in the truly enlightening [or: educating] film. (Trans. Barbara Mennel, qtd. in Steakley, *Anders* 69)⁵

By refusing to comment on the film's stance on Paragraph 175, the reviewer avoids explicitly discussing the film's depiction of a homosexual relationship. Instead, he goes on to praise Schünzel and Veidt for their dynamically acted, realistic portrayals in a narrative about the "average fate of a feminine man" (*Anders* 69). In doing so, he interprets the film as an enlightening and urgent representation of a relevant social issue rather than a visually pleasing depiction of homosexual desire. The rhetorical similarities between Moll's detracting statement and the reviewer's praise, even as they take opposing stances on the film's cultural value, pinpoint how Hirschfeld and Oswald's *Different from the Others* critiqued accepted conceptions of sexual desire by engaging the aesthetic, cinematic impulses of Weimar audiences.

The film's influence on spectators and relationship to Hirschfeld's sexual reform efforts ultimately played a key role in its archival disappearance. In an attempt to violently erase the marginalized sexualities that Hirschfeld had worked to scientifically and visually document, Nazis raided his Institute in early May of 1933 (Steakley, "Cinema" 105). In a public ceremony, they burned more than 12,000 books from the library's 20,000 volumes as well a significant number of the 35,000 collected photographs. Though it is unknown exactly what happened to prints of *Different from the Others* under the Third Reich, the film faced a fate similar to Hirschfeld's archive. The Nazis removed the film, and the sexologist's other materials, from archives in order to efface the abject, representational threat that they posed to strict regulation of sexual deviance. *Different from the Others* was censored and ultimately rendered ephemeral to

⁵ Steakley quotes from *B.Z. am Mittag* [Berlin Newspaper Midday Edition] 30 May 1919, qtd. in "Aus der Bewegung." ["From the Movement"] *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* [Yearbook for Sexual Inbetweenness] 19 (1919/20): 19.

dominant narratives of German history until it resurfaced and was reconstructed by gay rights activists in later decades.

Lost Fragments, Found Ephemera

In his influential gay and lesbian reading of *Different from the Others* in *Now You See It*, Richard Dyer describes how contemporary spectators encounter the fragmented Weimar film. He claims “What often strikes audiences today is the discrepancy between the tragic, down-beat story part of the film and – yet another gay film with an unhappy ending – and the unambiguously affirmative character of the lecture elements” (28). According to Dyer, viewers perceive a “discrepancy” in the film between its educational depiction of gay men and tragic narrative due to the missing footage and to “competing contemporary definitions of gay identity” (28). By acknowledging the archival loss of significant portions of *Different from the Others* here, and throughout his account, Dyer avoids taking an explicit political stance on this tension according to later notions of sexuality. He concludes that “for most viewers now, *Anders als die Andern* is a museum piece, touching, moving and testimony to the role of film in gay struggle, but needing an act of imagination to see beyond its fragments” (62).

If for most viewers today, *Different from the Others* is a “museum piece,” the fragment has been imagined as such in ways that are also “testimony to the role of film in gay struggle” (62). Any attempt to make sense of the film, textually or historically, requires an act of imagination due to the material fragmentation of the extant print. Absent scenes reflect the edits made to the original for its inclusion in censored and exported *Laws of Love*,⁶ and mark its resistance to social and legal narratives of sexual behavior in the Weimar and Nazi periods. Recent reconstructive projects inconclusively attempt to make sense of the film as an early gay text despite its lost footage and context. Relying on extra-filmic documents, Filmmuseum and Outfest-UCLA visually and virtually imagine the fragment as recently excavated evidence given new meaning in a

⁶ See Steakley, “Cinema” (181) for a description of the re-edited fragment that was screened in the years before the Filmmuseum reconstruction.

contemporary archive of LGBTQ materials experienced on-screen and in new media spaces.

The 1999/2004 Filmmuseum München reconstruction of *Different from the Others*, the version most accessible to audiences today, recreates a cinematic experience of the original film for spectators by visualizing the fragment within a found archive of Weimar documents. In the opening of the reconstruction, Filmmuseum appends introductory, scrolling text with information on the film's historical context, particularly the production's relationship to Hirschfeld's "third sex" activism. The text briefly charts the sexologist's pivotal role in German resistance to Paragraph 175, Oswald and Hirschfeld's collaborative film productions, and the political controversy over *Different from the Others*. The concluding lines establish *Different from the Others* as "The world's first film to deal explicitly with homosexuality" and explain that the film "survives today only as a fragment." The appended introduction invites audiences to relate the film, and their viewing experience, to a contemporary archive of historical information on sexual rights in Germany. By historically contextualizing the sexual politics of the film, the opening locates the fragment in a lost archive of sexuality from which it will be reconstructed.

Throughout the reconstruction, Filmmuseum replaces lost footage with Weimar information and documents that allow spectators to watch the fragmented film as part of an archive of LGBTQ ephemera. Filmmuseum creates a viewable version of the fragment that imitates the original by adapting information from extant written documents to intertitles and replacing missing scenes with archival photographs. For example, an abbreviated scene featuring a lecture by an unnamed sexologist, played by Hirschfeld, now features lengthy intertitles that stand in, in neutral digital font, for the missing images of the original sequence as described in written records.



Fig. 5 In a brief scene that survives in the extant fragment, Hirschfeld gives a lecture on the medical legitimacy of homosexuality to a large audience (*Anders als die Andern*, Richard-Oswald Produktion, Filmmuseum)

In an intertitle appended to images of the lecture, the sexologist claims: “Nature is boundless in its creations. Between all opposites there are transitions, and this is also true of the sexes. Thus, apart from man and woman there are also men with womanly physical and psychological traits, as well as women with all sorts of male characteristics.” Following the text is a series of archival photographs denoting various “in-between” females and males. Titles include “masculine woman as house painter,” “female homosexual couple,” “a man with female feelings in men’s clothing and women’s clothing,” and “a transvestite as waiter and maid.”⁷ The montage of photographs reshapes the partially absent lecture to make meaning in the present. The reconstructed sequence positions viewers to historically fantasize about an emerging LGBTQ community as they look at a collection of sexological photographs depicting gender and sexual play, or “in-betweenness,” in the Weimar period.

⁷ Detailed source information on these photos is not provided in the DVD version of Filmmuseum’s reconstruction. According to the concluding credits, the images are “still photos from the photos archives of the British Film Institute in London and the Filmmuseum Berlin.”



Fig. 6 Filmmuseum added a montage of archival photos depicting “sexual inbetweenness” during the Weimar period to an abbreviated lecture scene from the remaining fragment (*Anders als die Andern*, Richard-Oswald Produktion, Filmmuseum)

Still photographs accompanied by plot-laden intertitles also replace key scenes of *Different from the Others* that were cut for the fragment’s inclusion in *Laws of Love*. For example, a still frame of Kurt kneeling in grief at Körner’s deathbed as family members surround him stands in for a longer scene in which the film’s unnamed sexologist, Hirschfeld, consoles the young man who is now himself suicidal. An intertitle explains the missing action: Körner’s family is angry that Kurt returns to grieve, but Hirschfeld urges the distraught young man to fight for social justice rather than take his own life. Other key scenes are similarly reconstructed: an image of Körner standing with his family as he reluctantly hugs a woman replaces a scene where his family sets him up with a recent widow; a close image of Kurt playing a violin replaces a scene where he leaves town and plays music at pubs in order to avoid facing his relationship with Körner. The added photographs and intertitles prompt audiences to interact with the reconstruction as an archival space where the original narrative can be imagined from ephemera. The lost scenes from the original become a virtual space where viewers find fragmented artifacts of LGBTQ history.



Fig. 7 A still photograph of Kurt grieving at Körner's deathbed replaces a longer scene where he considers suicide and is consoled by a sexologist played by Hirschfeld
(*Anders als die Andern*, Richard-Oswald Produktion, Filmmuseum)



Fig. 8 Added intertitles provide the missing plot details of the film's concluding scene
(*Anders als Die Andern*, Richard-Oswald Produktion, Filmmuseum)

Filmmuseum markets the reconstruction of *Different from the Others* as a contemporary discovery of the lost silent film. Promotion of the project again contextualizes the fragmented film as part of an archive of Weimar LGBTQ ephemera made accessible to spectators. The Filmmuseum website claims:

One of the first gay-themed films in the history of cinema, *Anders als die Andern / Different from the Others* was banned at the time of its release, later burned by the Nazis and was believed lost for more than forty years. Using recently discovered film segments, still photos and censorship documents from different archives, Filmmuseum Muenchen has resurrected this truly groundbreaking silent film. (“Anders Als die Andern”)

As marketed here, the reconstruction “resurrects” the fragment for contemporary visual consumption via “recently discovered” materials. Filmmuseum similarly markets the DVD version of the reconstruction. The extra features of the latest edition, released in July of 2007, include a reproduction of the exported *Laws of Love*, a recent short film on the scandal surrounding the film, and various Weimar documents related to production of the film and its censorship. The added materials used in reconstruction as well as the DVD special features allow spectators to view and interpret the fragment in extra-linear ways as they watch the reconstructed film and navigate the extra-filmic material.

Filmmuseum makes meaning of the material fragmentation of *Different from the Others* by directing spectatorship to an on-screen archive that allows them to interact with the text as an artifact of early gay life. The sources used by archivists to reconstruct the film are listed in the concluding credits, as if actors in the recreation of the original. The list does not explain the details of how and where these obliquely related and gap-ridden pieces of archival evidence are used to reassemble the original film because where and how these sources fail to completely restore the original becomes a way to experience and play with the film as evidence of Weimar homosexuality. The Filmmuseum DVD extends the filmic boundaries of the fragment further by inviting viewers to participate in excavation of the film as they wander the extra features. Ultimately, the Filmmuseum project visualizes the fragmented film as part of an archive of historical documents where today’s spectators can visually interact with the ephemerality of the film as lost and found evidence of LGBTQ history.

Outfest-UCLA's reconstruction in-progress allows American audiences to experience *Different from the Others* as ephemera of early LGBTQ life by participating in various contemporary media spaces. The incomplete reconstruction extends to new archives and social networks that ultimately take the fragment beyond the archival scope and intentions of both UCLA and Outfest. Various sources provide information on the project, including several newspaper and magazine articles publicizing the reconstruction, Outfest's Kickstarter campaign to raise funds for the project, descriptions of public screenings of the work-in-progress, as webpages about the project on both UCLA's and Outfest's website. These sources outline the aims and progress of the reconstruction for a particular audience and often feature unverified historical details about the production of *Different from the Others*. These texts function much like the introductory and extra-filmic texts that accompany the Filmmuseum reconstruction, but, instead of being appended to the fragment or made available on a DVD, they are connected to the Outfest-UCLA project via the Internet. Online articles and websites detailing this most recent reconstruction of *Different from the Others* contextualize the film fragment as a trending topic of social media conversation available at the speed of a Google search. Potential spectators of the film experience the fragment and understand the LGBTQ-focused reconstruction by navigating a virtual archive of media information.

Discussions of the Outfest-UCLA reconstruction imagine the fragmented film as a lost archive of homosexuality excavated by institutional and/or LGBTQ community efforts and contextualized by contemporary media. In a recent *New York Times* article titled "A Daring Film, Silenced No More," Robert Ito discusses details of the Outfest-UCLA reconstruction by focusing on the institutional work of UCLA Film and Television Archive. He tells readers the aims and details of the yet to be completed reconstruction, reporting that it "will be the most complete to date, with new English intertitles and the inclusion of recently found photos and film stills" (Ito). For Ito, what is missing from the fragment does not deter UCLA's return to the fragment. He claims that even though the film is missing scenes, its explicit depictions of LGBTQ people tell "a captivating story" that needs to be recovered from silence (Ito). He also speculates about the archival

future of the fragment: “the preservationists at U.C.L.A. are not giving up hope on finding more “Different” material. ‘What if some other source turns up?’ Mr. Horak said. ‘In a sense, you’re never done’ (Ito). Ito informatively and intellectually considers the archival project for *New York Times* readers in terms of institutional progress concerning LGBTQ issues. In doing so, he imagines the ephemerality of *Different from the Others* in an ever-expanding contemporary archive explored by UCLA “preservationists,” interpreted by *The New York Times*, and consumed by educated, LGBTQ-aware *Times* readers. The notion that reconstruction of the fragment is never complete says less about the potential for new, illuminating source documents and more about the repetitive desire to extend the reach of institutional archives to changing histories and media spaces.

Differing from the institutional, intellectual focus of Ito’s piece, Outfest’s *Kickstarter* campaign provides a space for organizational, social participation in reconstructing the film as an LGBTQ artifact. In the textual description of their funding pitch, Outfest sells the Outfest-UCLA project as a restoration of a “historic” film “explicitly about LGBT people” that will include the creation of a new negative and projectable prints intended for civic consumption. In the campaign video, Outfest spokesperson Michael Reisz briefly and dramatically describes the *Different from the Others* fragment and how it will be reconstructed:

When it was found, that fragment was in terrible, terrible shape. So far video restoration efforts have pieced together film fragments, photos, and documents but there has never been a full restoration to film or a new negative created until now. *Different from the Others*, one of the earliest films in existence to portray the LGBT communities on the screen [*sic*]. In conjunction with the UCLA Film & Television Archive, Outfest is working tirelessly to completely restore this critically historic film. (Racster, “*Different from the Others*”)

Here, Racster markets the project as a “full restoration to film” that is more about more fully imagining the fragmented film for contemporary, American “LGBT communities” than uncovering new sources that aid in reconstruction. In the campaign description, Outfest claims that a portion of the raised funds will ensure “educational kits for 35 mm screenings and DVD dissemination to high school and college campuses,” and links on the page provide supporters with further information on how to participate and invest in

the project and the organization. Audience participation in the Kickstarter and LGBT community building, rather than reading news in the *New York Times*, becomes part of reconstructing the film and its history.

The attention given to the Outfest-UCLA reconstruction in American media suggests that the project has become much more than an attempted return to accurately depicting a film viewed by Weimar audiences. The media discourse surrounding the Outfest-UCLA project allows the LGBTQ-aware Americans to read themselves into a virtual site of lost history via interactive engagement with contemporary technologies and communication networks. Ito's article in *The New York Times* imagines UCLA's archival preservation and reconstruction as an exploration of a lost yet expanding institutional archive of information on LGBTQ history. Outfest's Kickstarter campaign aims to restore the loss of the film via new configurations of cinematic spectatorship that privilege social interaction with material ephemera in online spaces like *Kickstarter*. The media discourse surrounding the Outfest-UCLA reconstruction makes sense of the fragmented film by allowing audiences to interact with its ephemerality in digital spaces where participation fosters contemporary LGBTQ communities and historical narratives.

Leave It To Queer Imaginations

In both its Weimar iteration and its current reconstructed state, *Different from the Others* shifts what matters when cinematically viewing and archiving representations of sexual desire and behavior. Hirschfeld and Oswald's original film controversially represented deviant sexual desires and practices by appealing to popular desire for the visual spectacle of cinema. The Weimar film was censored and erased from German archives because it invited audiences to take aesthetic and erotic pleasure in scenes of public and private resistance to Paragraph 175. Fragmented by cultural tensions in the Weimar period and effaced from German archives by the Nazis, *Different from the Others* exposes the social and cultural values that have shaped archival practice and critiques an historical narrative of culturally repressed Western homosexuality becoming more visible throughout the twentieth century.

Since the fragmented film resurfaced in the 1970s, the archival failure of *Different from the Others* has taken on new significance within LGBTQ communities. Filmmuseum München and Outfest-UCLA have attempted to reconstruct the fragment to its original state by engaging the ephemerality of the extant text. Far from recreating an accurate experience of the 1919 feature-length film, these reconstructions contextualize the absence of the fragment by imagining and reimagining its homosexual content as part of an expanding contemporary archive experienced on-screen or in digital media spaces. Audiences lose and find “arguably the first feature film with an explicitly homosexual theme” as they visually and virtually encounter the gap-ridden fragment and connect it to other past and present texts that illuminate its content. How the *Different from the Others* fragment has and will continue to be imagined provides important information on where, how, and why we construct histories and communities based on sexuality. The fragment that remains is not a repressed origin of modern homosexuality whose history needs to be more expertly and thoroughly uncovered so that it can be made accessible to contemporary audiences. *Different from the Others* is an abject and ephemeral site of cinematic and sexual pleasure that continues to fail the aims of institutional and cultural archiving as it is reconstructed in hybridity. Even as Filmmuseum, Outfest, UCLA, Dyer, and others inscribe the fragment with contemporary narratives of LGBTQ history, its adaptive absence eludes and leaves much to queer imaginations.

Lauren Elizabeth Pilcher is a doctoral student at the University of Florida.

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