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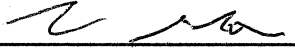
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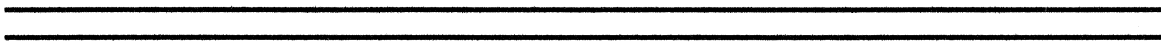
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**A Glimpse of Casual Queerness: The Radical Progress of Queer Visibility in
Weimar Film and the Inevitable Backlash That Followed**

A Thesis

Presented to the Department of English

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

and

The Honors Program

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for Graduation Honors

Claire Colburn

May 10, 2019

Modern representations of Germany's Jazz Age, such as the popular television series *Babylon Berlin* (dir. Tom Tykwer, 2017-2019), tend to characterize the interwar period as a chaotic expression of post-World War I anxiety. In retrospect, it can be temptingly easy to credit the changing political landscape and liberalization of German society between 1918 and 1933 as a brief but inherently doomed moment of progressivism that necessarily would give way to a strident, reactionary backlash. Dismissing the Weimar Republic as frivolous experiment in this way is an oversimplification that overlooks the important progress achieved in the fields of psychology and sexology. Often, the increased visibility and acceptance of LGBTQ individuals during this time is regarded as a symptom of the "anything goes" attitude for which the Weimar Era has been famous. In reality, the research performed by scientists like psychologist Magnus Hirschfeld proves that the progress being made for queer Germans during the Weimar years was meaningful and anything but frivolous.

Although Hirschfeld's research stands today as a radically prescient and modern understanding of sexuality and gender, the rise of the Nazi Party and the events of World War II reversed much of the progress he and his contemporaries achieved. The effects of Nazi ideology on cultural acceptance of queerness is oblique and unsurprising; what is perhaps more interesting to explore is the way in which Germans reckoned with gender and sexuality in the years following World War II. While both East and West Germany reversed the majority of Nazi policies, the criminality of homosexuality lingered on for decades.

In order to examine the radical queerness of German society during the Weimar Republic, as well as the post-World War II turn towards more conservative attitudes

about homosexuality, I will perform close readings and comparisons of two sets of films centered on gay and lesbian issues. The first section of film analysis will focus on the 1931 *Mädchen in Uniform* and its 1958 remake, and the second will compare *Anders als die Andern* (1919) with *Anders als du und ich* (1957). Highlighting the differences in queer representation between Weimar films and those produced in the late 1950s reveals the societal and scientific ideas that formed the cultural discussions of sexuality and gender in each respective era. Before delving into this film analysis, I will first provide a brief overview of the history of queer culture, sexology research, and laws that fostered the growth of a strong queer community in Germany during the Weimar Republic.

I. Historical Background

At the peak of the Weimar Republic, Germany, and Berlin in particular, was widely considered the epicenter of the burgeoning queer subculture spreading throughout Europe. Although Paris and London also boasted rapidly growing LGBTQ scenes, Berlin “epitomized a world in transition” to outside observers to a degree unmatched by similar metropolises (Whisnant 84). In response to Germany’s newly queer reputation, a journalist at the time complained “that the ‘evils’ of this city had grown to such an extent that foreigners were now referring to homosexuality as ‘the German disease’” (Whisnant 88). While travelers to German metropolitan areas may have been taken aback by what seemed an overnight shift in the open expression of homosexuality, a more gradual development can be traced.

This movement, though seemingly unpredictable and modern, grew out of the foundations laid in Germany beginning in the mid-1800s. In 1867, German writer and

LGBTQ researcher Karl Heinrich Ulrichs went before a convention of German lawyers in order to make his case for decriminalizing homosexuality. The crowd's reaction was mixed, with some calling for him to stop and others urging him onward. In the end, the Association of Jurists did not take Ulrich's agenda under consideration, and in five years, the newly united German nation adopted the strict anti-sodomy laws of Prussia. Still, Ulrich's extremely public coming-out, coupled with his extensive research, became fundamental to the emergence and growth of "the world's first movement for homosexual rights, launched a generation later" (Beachy 5).

As a researcher in the 19th century, Ulrich was working at a time when traditional medical experts "explained 'sodomy' as a willful perversion and the product of masturbation or sexual excess" (Beachy 5). Homosexuality was an act, not an identity. This view only evolved when, in the 1850s, a German medical doctor named Johann Ludwig Casper began to "question this received wisdom and argue that some 'sodomites' had an innate, biological attraction to the same sex" (Beachy 5). By the turn of the century, a new school of German psychiatry, led by Magnus Hirschfeld, grew around this idea, as "German speakers – both self-identified same-sex-loving men and medical doctors – invented a new language of sexual orientation and identity that displaced the older understanding of perversion and moral failure" (Beachy 5). With revolutionary developments such as those ushered in by Hirschfeld's research, one can see how Weimar would ultimately be known as a more liberal and accepting society, but this was not entirely the case.

Despite the liberal reputation of Weimar Germany, policies concerning homosexuality were actually quite repressive. Under Paragraph 175 of the German

Criminal Code, homosexual acts between men were a criminal offense. In spite of this law, the German police were actually unable to effect legal consequences for the arrests made under Paragraph 175, as a conviction required proof that “specific sexual acts had taken place” (Whisnant 106). In order to acquire such evidence, the police would need to violate the personal rights guaranteed to German citizens under the Weimar constitution.

Because of this loophole, as early as the late 19th century, unofficial LGBTQ bars began springing up throughout Berlin. As soon as the police managed to get one shut down, more would spring up in its place. Police Commissioner Hüllessem was behind many of the raids on underground gay clubs during the 1880s, but suddenly changed his policy in 1893 with the appointment of the rumored-to-be-gay Police President Bernard von Richtofen. From then on, Hüllessem’s police department allowed gay clubs to exist relatively undisturbed. An 1886 study suggested “that the implicit policies of Hüllessem and his subordinates actually fostered the growth of Berlin’s homosexual community: the sociability of an undisturbed bar culture created a feeling of ‘togetherness’ as well as the sense of official sanction” (Beachy 46). In addition to permitting the existence of queer spaces, Hüllessem also actively worked with Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, the most prolific and well-known sexologist and homosexual rights activist of the era. The standards that Hüllessem established regarding the law’s treatment of homosexuality was instrumental to the proliferation of Berlin’s LGBTQ community in the decades following his time as police commissioner.

From this brief summary of German queer history, one can see that the wave of queer visibility in the Weimar Republic was not random, but instead the logical extension of decades of sexology research and activism for LGBTQ issues. Today, many of the

founding principles of Hirschfeld's theories about gender and sexuality, such as the biological root of sexual orientation, still align closely with current research. In *Anders als die Andern* (1919), one of the films which will later be discussed, Hirschfeld expresses frustration at the continued criminalization of homosexuality even after fifty years of research which he believed indicated that homosexuality and non-binary gender identities are simply variations produced by nature, and not mental or physical illnesses. Hirschfeld hoped for a steady progression forward for the acceptance and celebration of the LGBTQ community, but due to the rise of Nazism and the resulting enforcement of anti-homosexuality laws, a conservative backlash halted and reversed the gains achieved by the LGBTQ social movement for decades.

One of the key policies that allowed for this regression was Paragraph 175a, a stricter, Nazi-produced version of the original law. Paragraph 175a changed the class of the violation from misdemeanor to felony, a decision that raised the potential maximum prison sentence to 5 years. Additionally, this revised law made it much easier for law enforcement to effect convictions, as cases no longer required the involvement of penetrative intercourse in order to be considered legitimate violations. According to Paragraph 175a, an act could be considered a criminal offense if “objectively the general sense of shame was offended” and “the debauched intention was present to excite sexual desire in one of the two men, or a third” (Whisnant 215). The broadening of Paragraph 175a resulted in a tenfold increase in convictions in 1935. After serving their sentences, many repeat offenders were brought to concentration camps as “pink triangle prisoners.” Of the approximately 10,000 prisoners incarcerated for homosexuality, roughly 40 percent survived through the end of the war (Blasius and Phelan 134).

In the years following World War II, the two Germanys split in terms of how they dealt with the legal status of homosexuality. In East Germany, courts initially rejected the continued existence of Paragraph 175, seeing the law as an injustice, before reinstating the policy in 1950 (Pretzel 191). The revision of the criminal code in 1957 resulted in the suspension of charges based on the old version of Paragraph 175. When East Germany developed its own criminal code in 1968, it replaced Paragraph 175 with Paragraph 151, which only applied to cases in which a person above 18 years of age engaged with a minor of the same sex (Pretzel 191). It was not until 1989 that homosexuality was completely decriminalized in East Germany. In West Germany, from which the 1958 *Mädchen in Uniform* came, Allies left the status of Paragraph 175 up to German lawmakers to decide. In 1957, the Federal Constitutional Court ruled to reinstate the 1935 version of the law, since this iteration was not thought to be heavily influenced by Nazi thought (Moeller 534). Enforcement of the law rose 44 percent, compared to the pre-World War II rate, and in the 1960s, there were four times as many convictions for violating Paragraph 175 as compared to the final years of the Weimar Republic (Moeller 542). It is important to note that while these laws only applied to gay men, they were the product of homophobic ideology that regarded all homosexuality as being a violation of nature. The reunification of Germany in 1990 was the impetus that finally killed Paragraph 175.

II. Lesbian Representation: *Mädchen in Uniform*, 1931 vs. 1958

Before diving into film analysis, it is important to address that the teacher/student and adult/minor dynamic present in *Anders als die Andern* and both versions of *Mädchen in Uniform* would have been seen by contemporary audiences as highly problematic. As

is the case with texts that deal with romantic heterosexual relationships in which there is a significant age difference, such as Max Frisch's acclaimed *Homo Faber*, it is difficult for the viewer to reconcile and validate the relationship itself, even though genuine emotions of love may be expressed. In many cases, fictional texts that focus on romantic relationships with stark age differences tend to be read metaphorically or allegorically. Due to the scope of this issue, I can only address it briefly here. Based on a survey of the main scholarship related to these films, there appears to be a surprising paucity of criticism about the problematic nature of the age differences in these relationships. A comparatively livelier debate exists in non-academic forums; in an article on GoMag.com, film critic Corinne Werder defends *Mädchen in Uniform* (1931), writing “While at first, I was definitely nervous about this romantic crush between Manuela and her (much) older teacher being weird or creepy — the way Bernburg maneuvered the situation was actually very kind.” It is also worth noting that although Autostraddle.com and AfterEllen.com (two of the preeminent queer hubs for women on the Internet) published reviews of both versions of *Mädchen in Uniform*, any discussion of the character’s age difference as being problematic is conspicuously absent. A similar dearth of criticism can be found in an article from *The New York Times* about *Anders als die Andern*, in which reviewer Robert Ito praises the film for its progressiveness, and makes no mention of how the teacher/student dynamic could, at the very least, be seen as problematic today. Although the power dynamic between characters is not at the forefront of the conversation surrounding these films, it is an important issue to consider, especially given its prevalence in LGBTQ+ films. This being said, I do not have the

space to fully delve into this topic, and instead will focus on how the films function as examples of queer representation.

A comparison between two versions of the same film, one from 1931 and the other from 1958, highlights the shifting cultural attitudes about homosexuality as described in the section above. Among the Weimar-era films featuring queer representation, *Mädchen in Uniform* (1931) serves as one of the clearest examples of the ways in which filmmakers challenged their audiences with progressive (and controversial) messages about the nature of homosexuality. The first feature-length film about lesbian main characters, the film was both groundbreaking in terms of representation and well regarded by critics (Blount 74). A critical and commercial success, *Mädchen* “generated an enormous amount of press, and its name became synonymous with lesbianism” (Horak 181-182). Due to the newly instituted regulations in Hollywood against gay characters and themes, *Mädchen in Uniform* was banned in the United States. The ban was only lifted thanks to First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, who had apparently “marveled at the film’s powerful content” (Blount 74). Even so, the U.S. released a heavily edited version; in August 1932, the New York Board of Censors agreed to pass a version of the film, on the condition that the following items were to be cut:

- “[A]ll views of Manuela’s face as she looks at Miss von Bernburg in the classroom”;
- Manuela’s confession to von Bernburg that she wants to come to her at night;
- Manuela’s declaration to her classmates after the play;
- Von Bernburg’s defense of her affectionate attitude toward the schoolgirls;

- Frau Oberin's command forbidding von Bernburg to speak to Manuela;
- A scene in which Manuela clings to von Bernburg's skirt;
- Von Bernburg's admonishment to Manuela, "You should not like me so much";
- And, finally, "views of Manuela's face registering unseemly desire" (Horak 182)

Ironically, this censorship request provides a roadmap to the most strikingly queer moments of the film, and strengthens the general argument for *Mädchen* being a radically daring representation of lesbianism.

In Germany, the film went on to undergo severe censorship and editing, and did not fully resurface until the 1970s. Today, it is unknown which scenes from the original are missing in the surviving 83 minutes. Despite these censorship efforts, the remaining footage leaves no mystery as to why the growing Nazi party took such issue with the film. 88 years following its release, *Mädchen in Uniform* offers a startlingly clear and progressive view of queer female relationships. Part of the film's authenticity could be credited to its nearly all-female cast and crew; Christa Winsloe, author of the play on which the film is based, penned the screenplay, while Leontine Sagan served as director. Together with an all-female cast, the filmmakers created an exploration of the complex, often queer dynamics within the walls of an all-girls school in 1906 Prussia.

Nearly three decades later, the boarding school romance came back to the silver screen in a 1958 remake by Hungarian director Géza von Radványi, starring Lilli Palmer and Romy Schneider. The remake follows the original plot almost beat-for-beat, but in being a near-carbon copy, the moments of divergence stand out in greater relief. In addition to alterations to the script, changes in direction and acting choices combine to create a subtly but noticeably different film. Particularly noteworthy is the new ambiguity

of Fräulein von Bernburg's feelings for Manuela, the specific clinical language employed in describing Manuela's homosexuality, as well as the harsher general response to Manuela's public confession. Such changes are symptomatic of the political and social atmospheres of the time and place in which they were created, particularly with regard to the regression of acceptance of homosexuality among the general German public following the Weimar era.

Although much has been written about the 1931 *Mädchen in Uniform* with regard to German political history, Nazism, militarism, Communism, etc., the queerness of the film is usually mentioned in academic scholarship as something of a sidenote.¹ Through the following chapter, I intend to fill this gap by providing a close reading of the film from a queer studies perspective that highlights the sheer radicalness of its queer representation and how easily a shockingly progressive message of acceptance can be uncovered. Then, the original film will be put into conversation with the remake in order to explore what the differences between the two can reveal about major shifts in queer representation in 20th century German film.

The 1931 film begins with the arrival of Manuela Manhardis, a "sensitive" teenager dealing with the recent death of her mother, to the extremely strict boarding school. Within minutes of checking in, Manuela learns that she has entered a decidedly queer space. When her new acquaintance, Ilse, learns that Manuela will also stay in the dormitory overseen by a teacher named Fräulein von Bernburg, Ilse cautions Manuela, "Careful you don't fall in love with her!" When Manuela asks why, Ilse replies, "All of

¹ See for example: "Bolshevizing Communist Women: The Red Women and Girls'

the girls have a crush on Fräulein von Bernburg!” (Part 1, 6:31-6:38).² With this simple statement, the film introduces the idea of same-gender attraction as not only a natural, but even universal and inevitable aspect of many of the girls’ lives. From Ilse’s singsong tone and playful attitude, it becomes clear that the complaints she voices about these “crushes” stem not from judgment, but from annoyance at being pestered for insider information about von Bernburg from lovesick students.

The surprisingly overt sexuality of the film continues as the students enjoy free time back in their dormitory. Ilse beckons Manuela over to look at a secret stash of celebrity photos the girls keep hidden, and mentions that another student pinned up a photo of Henny Porten, a German silent film actress, before musing about the “sex appeal” that all film stars have. Then, the girls fight over a contraband book with pornographic illustrations. Later that night, as the students get ready for bed in the locker room, several blocking and framing choices underscore the queer subtext. Girls in varying states of undress (by 1906 Prussian standards, anyway) flit in and out of the stalls. A particularly close pair fill the frame of one shot, one girl brushing her hair and the other inspecting her own shoulders. After gathering an audience, Ilse pressures Marie, who, evidently, is further along in puberty than her counterparts, to take a deep breath and pop the buttons off her shirt, before pulling the garment off her shoulders and declaring “What a body!” (Part 3, 2:04-2:10).³ This moment of hazing might be cruel and more than a little bizarre, but it also illustrates the casually open sexuality expressed among the students.

² “Verliebe dich mal nicht!” “Warum denn?” “Fast alle Kinder hier schwärmen nämlich von Fräulein von Bernburg.”

³ “Das ist ein Körper, was?!”

The locker room hijinks end when von Bernburg suddenly appears, sending the girls scattering. She continues her authoritative stroll through into the dormitory, where she happens upon Manuela and Edelgard sitting side-by-side on a cot in an embrace that apparently warranted suspicion. Von Bernburg asks the girls what they were doing, to which Edelgard innocently explains that they were talking about Manuela's dead mother. Von Bernburg sends Edelgard to wash up, leaving her with Manuela. In the long seconds of silence that follow, a vignette shot of Manuela from von Bernburg's perspective highlights the softness of the woman's gaze as she takes in the emotionally compromised Manuela. In typical fashion, Manuela mentions the death of her mother and begins crying, which triggers an unexpected moment of kindness from the teacher. Von Bernburg calls Manuela over to her and offers her words of encouragement, instructing her to tell herself that she will soon be happy in her new environment. Manuela, eyes still brimming with tears, looks genuinely hopeful for the first time.

The scene that follows is perhaps the most famous (or more accurately, infamous) of the entire film. In von Bernburg's dormitory, the students are ready for bed when von Bernburg comes in to say goodnight. She turns off the light, then methodically goes to each girl and plants a kiss on their forehead. The ritual is shot from a distance, cutting between von Bernburg in the background and close-ups of the girls' beatific faces. Throughout the first part of the scene, the activity remains in silhouette, further obscuring any romantic potential. Ilse watches von Bernburg, saying to Manuela excitedly, "Gives each one a smacker — wonderful!" (Part 3, 6:14-6:21).⁴ When it is Manuela's turn, the camera closes in on the pair with a vignette effect as Manuela throws

⁴ "Knutscht jede ab — wunderbar!"

her arms around the teacher. After a pause, von Bernburg appears to come to a decision and takes a notably more romantic approach to the interaction; instead of a platonic forehead kiss, she places a hand on Manuela's neck, tilts her head, and goes in for kiss on the lips. The contact is brief, but the lead up is charged with tension that renders the moment significant. From the close framing of the pair, to the softly diffused lighting, to the intentionality displayed by von Bernburg in her hesitation, "visually, Manuela and von Bernburg's kiss imitates a heterosexual Hollywood kiss, contributing to the impression that their feelings for each other are erotic." (Horak 185) This scene's establishment of the romantic attraction of both parties will become especially significant when we later examine the moment's equivalent in the 1958 remake.

In the light of the next morning, life at the school persists in its casual queerness. One student excitedly calls over her friend to read a note from a girl who "has a crush" on her, and the two giggle until von Bernburg suddenly appears, demanding to see the note. The girl is reluctant to hand it over to the insistent teacher, but when she finally does, von Bernburg rips it up without reading it, saying "Your silly games don't interest me. Put it in the waste-paper basket and remember, once and for all: writing notes is strictly forbidden" (Part 3, 8:54-8:56).⁵ The relieved and ecstatic pair runs off, and Edelgard and Manuela enthuse about von Bernburg's decency in respecting the girls' privacy. This moment exemplifies von Bernburg's ambivalent nature; she is alternately strict and authoritative with her students, sometimes changing within seconds. In a meeting of the teachers and headmistress, it becomes clear that in spite of her authoritative bearing, von

⁵ "Ich will von euren Dummheiten nichts wissen. Schmeisst das ins Papierkorb und merkt euch eins für alle Mal, dieses Briefeschreiben ist streng verboten." (Original German)

Bernburg receives criticism from her fellow faculty for the kindness she shows her students.

Later, in the classroom, Manuela finds it impossible to concentrate during von Bernburg's lesson. The cinematography clues the viewer in to the queer desire emanating from both Manuela and von Bernburg. When one student recites a Bible passage about Jacob and Esau, the camera maintains a normal distance between the teacher and pupils. But when Edelgard launches into a passage about "a thousand tongues," a reverse shot reveals a dazed-looking von Bernburg, before a crossfade dissolves into a shot so close to Manuela's smiling face as to crop off her chin and the top of her head. As Edelgard continues, reciting "Oh, that I had a thousand mouths, then I would sing from the depths of my heart, praises for all eternity," the camera cuts back to an understatedly flustered von Bernburg (Part 4, 1:52-2:05).⁶ Another, even more extreme close-up of Manuela fills the screen, her face completely centered and her eyes staring directly into the camera. This editing technique provides a silent glimpse into the emotional states of both student and teacher, but especially emphasizes the overwhelming nature of von Bernburg's feelings for Manuela. Though Manuela is the one rendered unable to remember her memorized passage by von Bernburg's presence, the teacher's life is clearly disrupted as well.

If von Bernburg has any reservations about associating with a student in an inappropriate way, she pushes them aside and continues to show Manuela favoritism. Von Bernburg notices that Manuela's clothes are in disrepair, and calls the student into

⁶ "Oh, dass ich tausend Zungen hätte, und einen tausendfachen Mund, dann stimmt ich damit um die Wette aus allertiefstem Herzensgrund, ein Loblied nach dem andern an von dem, was Gott an mir getan."

her office. In a surprisingly lighthearted moment, the pair smile and laugh together over the state of Manuela's clothes, before von Bernburg offers the girl a new shirt from her own closet. Manuela, overcome by the entire situation, throws her arms around her teacher and bursts into tears. Von Bernburg manages to pry the girl off of herself, and asks her why she is crying. After some hesitation, Manuela tells her

“When you say goodnight and leave, and shut the door to your room... I stare at the door in the darkness. I want to get up and come to you, but I know that I can't. I think about what will happen when I'm gone and you're still here, and every night you kiss new girls—”⁷

At this, von Bernburg interrupts, saying “What a silly idea!” (Part 4, 7:47),⁸ but Manuela continues unabated, expressing her lovesickness. “I love you,” she declares, “but you're always so distant. I can't ever go into your room, or talk to you, or hold your hand—” (Part 4, 7:49-7:57).⁹ Again, von Bernburg interrupts, telling Manuela “Pull yourself together, child” (Part 4, 7:57-7:59).¹⁰ From von Bernburg's first interruption, the camera remains fixed on her face as she passes through a series of emotions. As Manuela's speech continues, von Bernburg turns to meet the student's gaze, her expression first softening with compassion, then shifting to something more conflicted and disapproving, as she presses her mouth together tightly and her breathing quickens. Finally, she stands

⁷ Part 4, 7:23 - 7:49. “Wenn Sie mir abends Gute Nacht sagen, und dann weg gehen, und die Türe zumachen zu Ihrem Zimmer, dann muss ich durch die Dunkelheit immer auf die Türe starren. Und dann muss ich doch aufstehen und herüber kommen zu Ihnen. Aber ich weiss doch, dass ich das nicht darf. Wenn ich dann denke, dass ich älter werde, und fort muss aus dem Stift und dass Sie hier bleiben, und dass Sie hier jede Abend fremde Kinder küssen—”

⁸ “Na, du hast aber Sorgen!”

⁹ “Ich habe Sie doch so furchtbar lieb. Und Sie sind, sind immer so weit weg. Nie darf man Ihr Zimmer betreten und reden, und nie Ihre Hände nehmen— ”

¹⁰ “Na Kind, nur nimm dich mal ein bisschen zusammen.”

up, and requests that Manuela limit her feelings to friendship, telling her “You know I can’t make exceptions or the other girls will be jealous,” before adding, “But I think of you often, Manuela” (Part 4, 8:06-8:16).¹¹ Apparently, this is enough confirmation of her feelings to satisfy Manuela, who says, “That makes me so happy!” and agrees not to cry anymore (Part 4, 8:19-8:20).¹²

After this interaction, Manuela’s affection for von Bernburg continues to deepen. In a scene that can be easily taken as the climactic moment of the film, Manuela becomes highly intoxicated during the after party for a play in which she performed one of the leading roles. She stands in front of the entire student body and waxes poetic about how she cares for Fräulein von Bernburg, and “she cares for me!” (Part 6, 7:10-7:16).¹³ Midway through her speech, the headmistress enters and the crowd of students parts before her. When Manuela sees this, she does not lose her resolve, instead pointedly shouting “I’m not afraid of anything!” (Part 6, 7:23-7:29).¹⁴

It is after this point in the narrative that the 1958 remake begins to diverge most noticeably from its predecessor, and before going further, our discussion will now turn to the moments of difference sprinkled throughout the film. In terms of plot, the 1958 version follows the original nearly perfectly. In spite of this, there are many relatively small changes, additions, and absences that, when connected, outline a picture of the movement towards conservatism taking place in West Germany following World War II.

¹¹ “Du weißt doch, dass ich keine Ausnahmen machen darf, sonst werden die anderen Kinder eifersüchtig. Ich denke sehr viel an dich, Manuela.”

¹² “Dann bin ich aber froh!”

¹³ “Ich bin jetzt so glücklich, denn ich weiss es ganz genau, sie hat mich lieb.”

¹⁴ “Ich fürchte mich von nichts!”

The shift in the representation of attitudes about queerness is exemplified in the changes between the two portrayals of Fräulein von Bernburg. In both films, the teacher is aware of her students' romantic feelings towards her, but in the 1931 version, she participates more actively in the queer dynamic at the school in general, and in her relationship with Manuela. The 1931 von Bernburg demonstrates her knowing, flirtatious attitude in several moments that are absent from the remake. One example occurs after Ilse has been fired from the play for having tried to sneak a letter out to her parents asking them to send food. Von Bernburg finds the moping girl and comforts her, joking that she is not in the play, either. When Ilse is sufficiently cheered up, von Bernburg sends her off with a quick pat on the rear. Ilse gazes after von Bernburg, saying to herself, "She's so adorable!" (Part 5, 8:55-8:57).¹⁵ While still a surprisingly overt moment of flirting, the scene fits within the original film's vision of the ubiquity of casual queerness at the school.

The remake maintains the common undercurrent of queer attraction that runs through the school, but the differences in von Bernburg's attitude towards her admirers speaks to a more negative cultural judgment of homosexuality. In the original version, when von Bernburg is dealing with the aftermath of Manuela's public confession, she is defensive of the student, her own actions, and their relationship as a whole. Von Bernburg first shows this attitude when she finds a confused, repentant Manuela in her office. After Manuela stops crying, von Bernburg offers a cryptic summary of the events culminating in Manuela's punishment, saying, "You know what you did. As for me...

¹⁵ "So ist sie zauberhaft!"

you know that, too. We needn't mention it again" (Part 8, 0:38-0:47).¹⁶ She informs Manuela that she is lucky not to be expelled, and that she should be grateful that "This time, mercy has prevailed" (Part 8, 1:26-1:28).¹⁷ Manuela is only interested in whether she will be able to see von Bernburg, and when the teacher tells her she will not, Manuela lapses into a bout of weeping. Von Bernburg attempts to rally the girl, telling her she "must recover, whatever it takes" (Part 8, 2:26-2:29).¹⁸ Manuela asks, "Recover? From what?" to which von Bernburg answers, "You're not allowed to love me... so much" (Part 8, 2:31-2:40).¹⁹ When Manuela asks "Why not?", von Bernburg has no answer, instead telling her it is time for her to go. Manuela agrees, says goodbye, and walks out.

This particular scene stands as one of the most noticeable and meaningful points of divergence between the two films. While the original von Bernburg acknowledged the part she played in creating Manuela's situation, the 1958 version of this character strictly denies having done anything to encourage the girl's feelings towards her. The film supports von Bernburg's blaming of Manuela from the start of the scene from the initial shot, in which Manuela is an indistinct figure lurking in a dark corner. Her presence remains threatening even after von Bernburg turns on the light, as she casts a large, warped shadow that fills a significant portion of the wall behind her. Von Bernburg appears fearful of Manuela, maintaining a cautious distance and keeping the desk between them as the girl slowly approaches. When Manuela winds her way around the desk and comes into the light, von Bernburg reacts antagonistically, exclaiming, "Haven't

¹⁶ "Was du getan hast, weisst du. Was du mir da angerichtet hat, darüber bist du dir klar. Also darüber brauchen wir gar nicht mehr zu reden."

¹⁷ "Aber es soll hier noch einmal Gnade vor Recht ergehen."

¹⁸ "Du musst mit allen Mitteln der Strenge geheilt werden."

¹⁹ "Geheilt? Wovon denn" "Du darfst mich nicht... so lieb haben"

you said enough?” (1:17:41-1:17:43).²⁰ She clenches her fist, stiffens her back, lifts her chin, and recoils as Manuela closes the distance between them by reaching for her waist and finally collapses at her feet.

This blocking sequence stands in sharp contrast to that of the 1931 version. In the first iteration of the scene, Manuela is immediately unmasked from the shadow by a light hanging above the chair she kneels before. When she reaches out to the teacher, von Bernburg folds her into a firm hug before gently settling her into a chair. The differences in lighting and blocking are highlighted by the costuming, as well; in the original film, Manuela wears a white dress that reflects the light and alludes to an angelic innocence, whereas the remake puts the student in a dark blue uniform and gives von Bernburg a light cream-colored dress. The second Manuela’s darker clothing not only deviates from the implied innocence of the first, but also literally allows her to disappear more completely into the shadows. When so much of the original film reemerges unaltered in the second version, this wardrobe change, however small, takes on added significance. In both films, the women’s dresses work in conjunction with the lighting to clearly indicate the moral alignment of Manuela and von Bernburg.

The 1958 von Bernburg does eventually position Manuela in the chair, but skips the long hug and maintains a cautious distance by keeping her arms extended. As the dialogue begins in earnest, she continues this defensive attitude as she tells Manuela, “You know well what you did. I just tried to show you and all the others some true friendship,” and then, throwing her hands up and shaking her head, muses “But you lot

²⁰ “Hast du gestern Abend noch nicht genug gesagt?”

can't handle that"(1:18:19-1:18:31).²¹ Her choice of words is particularly telling, as it is in the original film's equivalent of this line that von Bernburg acknowledges her own part in the events that lead to Manuela's confession. In this version, she instead not only denies her responsibility, but also distances herself from Manuela and the other girls who have romantic feelings for her by placing the blame on the students for misinterpreting her attempts at fostering friendship.

Von Bernburg softens her chastising of Manuela only after the girl expresses her unwillingness to continue living, if she is unable to see von Bernburg. Looking alarmed, she walks over to Manuela and kneels in order to look at her directly as she tells her "You've got your whole life ahead you" (1:19:32-1:19:36).²² Abruptly, she breaks away from the brief moment of compassion and crosses the room again, saying "Sr. Superior was right. Only strictness can cure you" (1:19:39-1:19:42). When Manuela asks, "Cure me, what of?" von Bernburg hesitates before answering, "Your love for me is wrong" (1:19:45-1:19:52).²³ Although her words echo those of the original von Bernburg, her delivery casts the line as a reaffirmation of societal rules. Her handling of the "Why?" that follows reveals a difference in her approach to providing guidance to Manuela; the 1958 von Bernburg appears conflicted throughout this conversation, but still stridently aligns herself with a symbol of rigid societal rules by stating her agreement with the headmistress. In doing so, she positions herself on the side of society that would condemn Manuela's queerness.

²¹ "Was du getan hast, weisst du. Ich habe versucht, dir, und allen Andern auch, ein wenig Freundschaft zu geben. Aber vielleicht vertragt ihr das wirklich nicht."

²² "Du hast doch dein ganzes, schönes Leben vor dir."

²³ "Du musst mit Strenge geheilt werden." "Geheilt? Wovon" "Du darfst mich nicht so lieben."

The differences in von Bernburg's alignment between Manuela and the headmistress reappear in another shared scene. Both films intersperse shots of Manuela ascending the stairs on the way to her attempted suicide with snippets of a conversation between von Bernburg and the headmistress. The contents of these conversations, however, reveal the opposing messages supported by two slightly different endings. Both scenes begin as the headmistress admonishes von Bernburg for speaking to Manuela, in spite of her forbidding her to do so. In the original film, von Bernburg tells her, "I can explain it. I acted exactly as you would have." (My translation, Part 8, 3:54-3:57).²⁴ Becoming increasingly outraged, the headmistress says, "You're responsible for this uproar! I won't allow revolutionary ideas. As long as I am in charge, it won't happen here" (Part 8, 4:27-4:33).²⁵ A glaring von Bernburg replies, "I won't cling to my post. I know I can't stay here. I can't stand by and see children made into scared, helpless creatures" (Part 8, 4:33-4:43).²⁶ After a sequence showing the students searching for Manuela, and Manuela reciting the Lord's Prayer as she walks up the staircase, the scene resumes as von Bernburg argues "We're talking about a human being" (Part 8, 6:23-6:25).²⁷ The headmistress responds by telling von Bernburg, "Leave our establishment today" (Part 8, 6:37-6:38).²⁸ Suddenly, von Bernburg appears stricken, holding her hands to temples as the scene cuts to a close-up of Manuela's face which then fades into a

²⁴ "Ich kann diese Aussprache verantworten. Ich glaube durchaus im Sinne von Frau Oberin gehandelt zu haben."

²⁵ "Von Ihnen stammt der Geistes Aufruhrs! Ich lasse hier keine revolutionären Ideen aufkommen. Solange ich hier stehe, wird es das hier nicht geben."

²⁶ "Ich hänge nicht an meiner Stellung. Ich weiss, dass ich hier nicht bleiben kann. Ich kann es nicht mehr ertragen, mit anzusehen, wie Sie aus diesen Kindern verängstigte und hilflose Geschöpfe machen."

²⁷ "Es handelt sich doch hier um ein lebendige Menschen!"

²⁸ "Sie verlassen heute noch die Anstalt."

matching shot of von Bernburg's. The apparent moment of psychic connection spurs von Bernburg to find Manuela.

The 1958 version takes a starkly different path following the headmistress's initial reproach of von Bernburg for speaking to Manuela. There is no argument. Instead, when the film cuts back to the scene, von Bernburg has already offered her resignation, and the headmistress merely says "I'll take note of your decision. It saves me from having to issue an awkward dismissal" (1:21:57-1:22:00).²⁹ Von Bernburg does explain her disapproval of the headmistress's strictness, but acknowledges her defeat, saying, "I've lost the battle. I had been hoping to persuade you" (1:22:45-1:22:52).³⁰ The closest she comes to launching an argument is her statement that she pities the headmistress, whom she calls "a sad individual" (1:23:19-1:23:21).³¹ The scene ends not with a burst of psychic connection, but with a conflicted-looking headmistress commanding von Bernburg to be silent.

In both versions, Manuela is prevented from throwing herself off the balcony by her friends, who come up behind her and pull her back. But in spite of technically following the same plot point, the films end on surprisingly different notes. The original film closes as the defeated silhouette of the headmistress slowly disappears down a hallway. This image evokes the sense that the old, rigid forms of German society are giving way to a more youthful, freer-thinking, compassionate generation. Although the

²⁹ "Ich nehme Ihren Entschluss das Stift zu verlassen zur Kenntnis. Ohne Weiteres. Sie ersparen mir damit die peinliche Kündigung."

³⁰ "Ich habe den Kampf verloren, Frau Oberin, und es hätte mir etwas daran *gelegen*, Sie zu überzeugen."

³¹ "Sie sind ein armer Mensch."

fate of the characters remains unclear, the headmistress appears shaken by Manuela's attempted suicide and the part she played in pushing her towards this fate.

The remake delays this moment, instead cutting directly from the image of the collapsed Manuela embraced by her friends, to the headmistress as she enters the infirmary where Manuela lies sleeping. Von Bernburg watches as the headmistress briefly takes the girl's hand, before showing even more compassion by asking von Bernburg to remain in her position at the school. Von Bernburg does not accept the offer, saying, "Manuela will find her own way in life. I have to get out of here. I'm only standing in her way" (1:28:58-1:29:09).³² After von Bernburg turns out the light and leaves, the final shot echoes the ending of the original film as it follows the headmistress as she slowly walks down the hall. The image might be the same, but because of the additional scene, its meaning is much more opaque. Whereas the 1931 film left questions unanswered and the fate of von Bernburg and Manuela unclear, any potentially optimistic resolutions are closed off by the 1958 version's reestablishment of von Bernburg's departure. Particularly noteworthy is Manuela's positioning back in the infirmary at the end of the film. It is not stated that she will be forced to carry out the isolation punishment that was originally issued to her, but her solitude in her final moments on screen certainly hints that this might be the case. Her isolation is especially significant when contrasted with the last scene in the original film, in which her final shot featured her being physically and emotionally supported by her friends.

The first *Mädchen in Uniform* was undoubtedly a groundbreaking achievement in lesbian representation. Even during a moment of unprecedented queer visibility in

³² "Manuela wird ihren eigenen Weg finden. Ich muss gehen. Ich würde nur im Weg stehen."

Germany, it managed to stand out as a shockingly overt and controversially positive representation of queer female love. Its radical progressiveness is apparent not only in its unapologetic portrayal of queer attraction, but also in the backlash it faced from critics who sought censorship and banning of the film. While the film offers a message of steadfast resistance to the rigid, harmful societal rules, it now serves as a relic from the calm before storm in the final years of the Weimar Republic. World War II shattered Germany, and in the years following its end, Germans struggled to rebuild their country and construct a new kind of national identity. This tension pervades the 1958 remake of *Mädchen*. Although both West and East Germany sought to move beyond their recent past, harsh judgment of the Weimar Republic's perceived cultural and political chaos, in relation to the ramifications of World War II, pushed Germany towards more conservative attitudes, as compared with the interwar period. In a case of "throwing the baby out with the bathwater," mainstream German thought about gender and sexuality regressed towards the pseudoscience and fear that had previously been receding.

III. *Anders als die Andern* and *Anders als du und ich*

The two versions of *Mädchen in Uniform* lend themselves perfectly to an examination of changing cultural perspectives on homosexuality during and after the Weimar period, but a similarly revealing comparison can be made between two other films hailing from the same eras. *Anders als die Andern* (1919) and *Anders als du und ich* (1957) both deal with the same essential societal concerns about homosexuality, but their differences in the portrayal of gay culture and the scientific basis of homosexuality reveal the strident turn towards regressive, homophobic attitudes in West Germany following

World War II. While *Anders als du und ich* is not a remake of *Anders als die Andern*, the later film makes sufficient reference to the original to invite a direct comparison. The choice of the second film's title alludes to this connection not only in its repetition of the phrase "Ander als," but also in its subtitle, (*§175*), which was also the subtitle of *Anders als die Andern*. This similarity was strong enough to warrant legal dispute, as addressed in a 1959 letter from Richard Oswald, the director of the 1919 *Anders* film, to Veit Harlan, the 1957 *Anders* director, which indicates that "Harlan had written to [Oswald] first and that there had been a legal debate about the title of Oswald's film" (Noack 339). The senior director's "anger was not directed against Harlan but at Metro-Goldwyn Mayer" for their decision to use *Anders als die Andern* as the German title of a new film, and Oswald's letter actually "expressed solidarity" with Harlan for the struggles of dealing with the contentious topic of homosexuality through film (Noack 339). From these connections with its predecessor, *Anders als du und ich* establishes its purpose as taking on the same subject matter as the earlier film, but providing a different assessment of homosexuality's place in the German community.

Anders als die Andern, directed by Richard Oswald, was released as part of the German "enlightenment film" movement of the 1910s and 1920s. Such films "first emerged as part of a campaign to educate the public about the need to identify and preventively manage the risks of modern existence" such as "venereal disease, tuberculosis, alcoholism, workplace accidents, mental illness, and so forth" (Killen 108). While the title card declaring *Anders als die Andern* a "Sozialhygienisches Filmwerk," or a social hygiene film, might evoke Nazi rhetoric to modern audiences, the larger enlightenment movement was a complicated, expansive response to the chaos that

characterized the Weimar era (Killen 109). In a nation struggling to recover from the World War I, enlightenment films became a way of using “the [film] medium to popularize scientific and medical knowledge and as a means to convey their faith in the possibility of finding scientific solutions to social problems” (Killen 109-110).

Sometimes didactic, sometimes sensationalized, always controversial, these films offered an avenue for sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld to spread his message of acceptance to a wider audience than had previously been possible.

Hirschfeld took on this unprecedented educational opportunity directly by serving as a co-writer of *Anders als die Andern*. The influence of his scientific theories concerning the basis of sexuality and gender is evident throughout the film, which centers on the story of a violin virtuoso, Paul Körner, as he develops a relationship with student Kurt and must contend with the consequences of practicing homosexuality under Paragraph 175. As an enlightenment film, *Anders als die Andern* expands beyond Paul’s story to explore the broader scope of how queer individuals have negotiated existence throughout history. This progressive understanding of queerness as a natural trait continues to be debated today, but was especially controversial in 1919. The Weimar Republic has a reputation for sexual permissiveness, but Hirschfeld’s scientific ideas were met with criticism. As a medium, film provided the opportunity counter homophobia through humanizing queerness. *Anders als die Andern*, while an educational film, follows a traditional narrative that offers insight into the experiences of queer Germans by focusing on the personal ramifications of Paragraph 175 for the main characters. Instead of remaining a nebulous “Other” lurking in the back-alleys and bars of

Berlin, the queer community was given a sympathetic face through Conrad Veidt's portrayal of Paul.

In 1957, director Veit Harlan took advantage of the same possibilities offered through film to promote an entirely different message about homosexuality. *Anders als du und ich*, originally titled "the third sex" in direct reference to Hirschfeld's sexuality and gender theories, engages with the anxieties and questions surrounding queerness that drove the earlier film, and functions as an equally didactic text. In creating this anti-gay film, Harlan was continuing the tradition of moralizing filmmaking for which he had become infamous; at the direction of Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, Harlan produced *Jud Süß*, "one of the most notorious and successful pieces of antisemitic film propaganda produced in Nazi Germany" (Cull 205). In 1957, he still carried this reputation as a Nazi filmmaker, though some scholars argue that Harlan "was neither an anti-Semite nor a homophobe, but he shared some of society's prejudices against Jews and gays and as an artist used those prejudices to achieve certain dramatic effects" (Noack 334). *Anders als du und ich* focuses on the story of 17-year-old Klaus Teichmann, a high school student who troubles his parents by having an unusually close friendship with his schoolmate, Manfred, while also spending more time in queer artist circles. The concerned Teichmanns seek counsel from a psychologist who instructs them on how to "cure" their son of his "inclinations." In following his advice, Mrs. Teichmann finds herself in legal trouble, but ultimately succeeds in steering her son onto the path of heterosexuality.

There is a myriad of commonalities between *Anders als die Andern* and *Anders als du und ich* that warrant analysis, as the points of divergence in the films' handling of

LGBT issues demonstrate the scientific theories, stereotypes, and moral questions that dominated the national conversations about queerness at the films' respective times. The most revealing aspects to compare are the films' depictions of gay culture, the role of psychology and scientific theories about the basis of homosexuality, and the consequences of living outside of the closet.

In *Anders als die Andern*, Oswald and Hirschfeld promote the theory that gender and sexuality are biological traits beyond an individual's control, and that any difference from the norm is not a defect, but simply a natural variation. The furthering of this perspective begins in the opening sequence of the film, in which Paul reads newspaper headlines about a circuit court judge and a student who both committed suicide "for unknown reasons." Paul "senses a common thread: the sword of Damocles that is §175 made life impossible for these unfortunate individuals." He envisions a procession of figures "from all times and countries" who, like the suicide victims in the headlines, struggled with their own queer identities under restrictive societal conditions. Among the roster in Paul's imagination are Peter Tchaikovsky, Leonardo da Vinci, Oscar Wilde, King Friedrich II of Prussia, and King Ludwig II of Bavaria. This image serves the purpose of establishing the characterization of queer individuals that Oswald and Hirschfeld will go on to promote throughout the film; their essential message argues that queer people have always existed, that they have been artistically gifted and productive members of society, and that the turmoil they experience in life emanates not from some kind of mental or physical illness, but instead is dictated by the societies in which they live.

The stereotype of gay men as being artistic, while today considered reductive, was not employed in a negative way in *Anders als die Andern*. In fact, Oswald and Hirschfeld used the artistic reputation of the queer community as a means of imparting the value and humanity of LGBTQ Germans. The music scene, in particular, is central to the film's depiction of queer life in Germany at the time, with considerable overlap between artistic and queer spaces. The main defining characteristic of both Paul and Kurt is their passion for violin, with both men being devoted students of music and committed to the honing of their craft. It is through music that the two initially meet, as Kurt attends one of Paul's concerts. Likewise, the blackmailer who ultimately brings about Paul's ruin first decides on his target when spots a poster for Paul's concert at a gay nightclub. Violin lessons become an outlet for the growing attraction between Paul and Kurt, and a socially acceptable reason for the two to spend time alone together. In the end, when the blackmailer has had Paul brought to court on charges that he violated Paragraph 175, it is not the one-week prison sentence that proves Paul's undoing, but rather his realization that he has lost his concert tour and performance contract, and that his career is effectively destroyed.

Just as Oswald and Hirschfeld use the artistic inclinations of queer individuals as positive representation for the LGBTQ community, Harlan uses a similar form of stereotyping to cast the queer German subculture in a much darker, more sinister, and predatory light. In *Anders als du und ich*, art and music reappear as central to the lives of queer individuals and as means by which they are able to connect with each other; Klaus is an aspiring painter, and Manfred is a poet and writer of short stories. At school, bullies beat up Manfred for writing poetry and for his "inclinations," inextricably linking the

queerness and art. The young men end up being pulled into queer circles by Boris Winkler, a middle-aged bachelor with a proclivity for the arts and a home open to a constant parade of queer young men participating in a variety of artistic pastimes. Through Boris' influence, Manfred gets his poetry published in the newspaper, and Manfred convinces Klaus to join him at Boris' place, where they listen to *musique concrete* and watch a Greco-Roman style wrestling match between other young men. This link between homosexuality and the arts was strong enough that, at the time of the film's release, one film critic "objected to the association of homosexuality with modern art, fearing for the latter's reputation" (Noack 334). From the predatory characterization of Boris and the unfavorable light cast over his social circle, Harlan disseminates misinformation about the LGBTQ community and reinforces homophobic societal attitudes through fear mongering.

As if the abovementioned stereotypes were not sufficient, Harlan takes further measures to establish the untrustworthy, dangerous nature of queer subculture. When Klaus goes missing, his parents panic, concerned about the circles he has been associating with lately. Klaus's father and uncle go in search of him by first attempting to procure Boris's home address from the police, because, as his father remarks, "he's bound to be registered somewhere" (29:01-29:06).³³ When this proves fruitless, they visit "the Pokal," a local gay club, where a drag performance is taking place. At first, the uncle seems to offer a counterpoint to the previously unwavering onslaught of homophobic attitudes by arguing, in response to Mr. Teichmann's discomfort, "He's not doing you

³³ "Irgendwo wird dieser Herr ja wohl gemeldet sein."

any harm” (33:49-33:51).³⁴ This defense quickly crumbles, however, when the uncle recognizes two acquaintances in drag at the next table. His panic arises visibly at the implied threat: homosexuals are everywhere, not just in the entertainment industry, and no one is safe.

In addition to reestablishing old stereotypes about the overlap between the queer and artistic communities, *Anders als du und ich* also reinforces the particularly harmful myth of the gay man as a murderer or psychopath, against which Hirschfeld had fought back in the 1910s. Alongside the strong preoccupation with psychological health that arose in Germany following World War I came the resulting implication that, if unconventional sexual orientations were to be considered mental illnesses, then queer individuals must rank among psychopaths in terms of posing a threat to society. In *Anders als die Andern*, Hirschfeld does not directly address this stereotype, but rather quietly defies it through his humanizing, sensitive characterization of Paul. At Paul’s trial, with the help of testimony from Kurt’s sister, Else, the judge decides that “Paul Körner is an honorable individual who has hurt no one.” Else’s testimony is particularly significant, considering that earlier on, Paul had resisted her romantic advances. The emotional distress she experiences at this rejection is the closest Paul comes to harming anyone, but even this is done with care and compassion, as he directs her to a lecture by Hirschfeld’s psychologist character, who assures her that Paul’s case is entirely natural and has nothing to do with her, personally. Else comes away from her encounter with the psychologist with a decisive turn to allyship, telling Paul “I want to be no more than a loyal friend to you.”

³⁴ “Lass mal, Dir tut er ja nichts”

In *Anders als du und ich*, a similar situation results in vastly different consequences and a slew of negative stereotypes surrounding gay men. When Klaus dances with a girl at a party to which Manfred was not invited, his friend shows up anyway, slinking around and finally sneaking in to spy on Klaus. Watching the dancing couple from afar, he says, “I could kill her – Bloody women!” (16:13-16:16).³⁵ Later in this same scene another instance of violent misogyny emerges, this time through Klaus. The girl with whom he has been dancing reveals that some students at their school have been saying that Klaus does not like girls, and he demands to know who said so. “Everyone,” she replies, and asks if it’s true. He confirms that it is, because “When I see that silly posturing, those bitches, this stupid flirting around in my class ... it makes me puke!” (15:38-15:43).³⁶ Through this type of strongly misogynistic sentiment, *Anders als du und ich* furthers the inaccurate connection between gay male attraction and hatred of women. This vengeance later drives Manfred to side with Boris in scheming against the Teichmanns, ultimately resulting in Mrs. Teichmann’s arrest. It is not enough for the young men to simply be attracted to one another; they must also hate the women who might show interest in them, and become enraged with jealousy.

Just as the films demonstrate the shifting views of the queer community during their creations, they also show the changing (and regressing) scientific theories that supported these cultural attitudes. Both films claim a basis in science, with *Anders als die Andern* boasting the creative input of Hirschfeld, and *Anders als du und ich* bearing the stamp of the “Institut für Sexualforschung, Frankfurt/Main,” or the Frankfurt am Main

³⁵ “Ich könnte sie umbringen. Schieß Weiber!”

³⁶ “Wenn ich das schon sehe, dieses herumgetue, mit diesen Ziegen, dieses alberne Rumposieren in meiner Klasse, kotzt mich an!”

Institute for Sexual Research. From these scientific backbones, the didactic purpose of both films renders them closer to public service announcements than feature films, in terms of genre. By tracing the changing rhetoric and psychological foundations for describing and understanding homosexuality between the two films, the post-World War II reversion towards conservatism in West Germany becomes abundantly clear.

In *Anders als die Andern*, Oswald and Hirschfeld repeatedly and unequivocally outline the fundamental principles underlying Hirschfeld's theories about sexuality and gender. The first instance of this direct messaging comes when Paul's parents harass him for not having married and try to set him up on a date with a widow. In response, he sends them to a psychologist/sexologist, played by Hirschfeld, who tells them:

“You mustn't think poorly of your son because he is homosexual. He is not at all to blame for his orientation. It is neither a vice nor a crime, indeed, not even an illness, but instead a variation, one of the borderline cases that occur frequently in nature. Your son suffers not from his condition, but rather from the false judgment of it. This is legal and social condemnation of his feelings, along with widespread misconceptions about their expression.”

Through this scene, Hirschfeld engages with his potential opponents by proxy, and in doing so creates the potential to connect a wider, possibly skeptical audience. His credentials as a doctor, enhanced by the highly articulate, academic persona of his character, lends weight to his initial arguments.

Hirschfeld's proxy later reappears in a flashback during which Paul recalls his journey towards self-acceptance of his sexual orientation. When a round of “heterosexualizing” hypnosis fails to “cure” college-age Paul of his sexuality, he turns to

Hirschfeld's nameless "Doctor" for direction. The doctor tells Paul that "Love for one's own sex can be just as pure and noble as that for the opposite sex. This orientation is to be found among many respectable people in all levels of society. Only ignorance or bigotry can condemn those who feel differently." This second speech exists for the audience's benefit as much as Paul's. Hirschfeld offers a remarkable modern assessment of homosexuality as an inborn, natural trait that should carry no connotation of perversion or sin. Once again, Hirschfeld points to the source of any trouble concerning homosexuality as being the prejudice with which LGBTQ individuals are treated.

Considering the current legality of conversion therapy in many countries, it is especially notable that Hirschfeld addresses the impossibility of "curing" gayness and firmly states that such measures are as unnecessary as they are impractical. This message comes through during the situation between Else and Paul, in which she attempts to engage him romantically. His polite refusal culminates in offering her a ticket to a lecture given by Hirschfeld's doctor character, which she readily attends. After a lengthy presentation about the variations along the spectrum of gender expression, Else asks the doctor if she might be able to "cure" Paul with her love. Hirschfeld replies, "As hard as it may be for you, you must give him up. Such people are not suited for marriage. Nature itself forbids it." Else responds, "Now I understand everything," and, as previously mentioned, becomes an ally to Paul. Through Else and Hirschfeld's interaction, the psychologist is able to bring up and quickly dismantle the myth that heterosexual relations could serve as a corrective force for gay individuals. He reasserts the idea that homosexuality is a natural, inalterable trait, and Else serves as an instructive example to the audience of how to react when one discovers that a potential romantic interest is gay.

Hirschfeld's theories of sexuality and gender in *Anders als die Andern* might sound startlingly progressive to audiences today, and quite unexpected to be coming out of a German film from 1919. Part of this surprise might be due to the pivot towards conservative values that took place following World War II. The effect of this change on cultural views of homosexuality are laid bare when one examines the drastically different approach to questions about queerness taken in *Anders als du und ich*. Being, ostensibly, a film rooted in science, the film echoes *Anders als die Andern* in its emphasis on input from psychologists and discussion of common myths surrounding homosexuality. The original title, "The Third Sex," the title of one of Hirschfeld's most important works, declares the film to be in direct response to the psychological theories that prevailed during the Weimar Era. This intertextuality enters the foreground when Klaus's mother, concerned that her son has not shown interest in girls, picks up an encyclopedia and thumbs through to the entry for "the third sex." There, she reads:

"For all male and female homosexuals, Magnus Hirschfeld coined the term 'das dritte Geschlecht.' Contrary to the widely-held view that homosexuality is innate, the opinion is now gaining ground that homosexuality results from a reversal in the direction of sexual urges in early adolescence."

Through this brief scene, *Anders als du und ich* succinctly dismisses the entire premise upon which *Anders als die Andern* is based, refuting the most basic foundation of Hirschfeld's principles. Tellingly, the encyclopedia treats it as common knowledge that for a long time, the most popular conception of homosexuality was Hirschfeld's. Because of the success of his campaign to educate the German public about the reality of queer identity (as he understood it), it was necessary for *Anders als du und ich* to delegitimize

Hirschfeld's research, just as he had discounted the popular stereotypes about LGBTQ individuals that dominated popular thought before his time.

Anders als du und ich goes on to contradict Hirschfeld's ideas throughout the rest of the film. The doctor in *Anders als die Andern* would likely be appalled to discover that nearly four decades in the future, a new enlightenment film focused on homosexuality would function essentially as a success story for "curing" gayness. While Else learned to accept that Paul required no conversion, Klaus's parents are more desperate and hopeful at the prospect of forcing their son into heterosexuality. When Klaus stays out with Manfred suspiciously late, his parents have a discussion in which Mr. Teichmann tells his wife that he has conducted research, saying Manfred is "known to have a homosexual disposition – you don't like hearing that word, but it's got to be said" (22:41-22:46).³⁷ He asks his wife what they should do to help save their son from the influence of his friend, and Mrs. Teichmann answers, "Cure him!" The father skeptically asks, "Cure him?" Mrs. Teichmann responds "It can be done – it says so in the encyclopedia!" (23:13-23:18).³⁸ The optimistic couple meets with a psychologist, a meeting that, by its very nature, echoes the first appearance of Hirschfeld in *Anders als die Andern*. The doctor tells them that "These things are fairly easy to correct in the early stages," explaining that Klaus's homosexuality "is a delay in normal development" (37:12-37:23).³⁹ This diagnosis summarizes the film's central understanding of homosexuality; according to *Anders als*

³⁷ "Der Junge ist erwiesener Massen 'homosexuell' veranlagt. Ich weiss, dass du dir hörst das Wort nicht gern, aber es soll mal gesagt werden."

³⁸ "Etwas, das ihn heilt!" "Heilen?" "Ich hab in Lexikon gelesen, man kann sowas heilen in der frühen Jugend."

³⁹ "Denn am Anfang kann man diese Dinge doch mit leichter Hand korrigieren. Später weitet sich das zu Komplexen aus [...] nach ihrer Erzählung handelt es sich um eine Verzögerung der Normalentwicklung."

du und ich, gay people are frozen in a perpetual state of pre-adolescence, and therefore are not fully-formed adults.

While this predisposition towards gayness begins in youth, the psychologist warns that it must be reversed as soon as possible. In order to “fix” the young man, he suggests that “He must be drawn out of these circles. It begins with intellectual interest that can gradually lead to dangerous entanglements... Just a momentary occurrence could ruin the boy for a normal life” (38:08-38:18).⁴⁰ Mrs. Teichmann takes this advice to heart, and goes to Gerda, a young woman who has been employed as a housekeeper in the Teichmann’s home, and implies that she wants Gerda to sleep with Klaus in order to “cure” him. When the Teichmann parents go on a weeklong trip, Gerda takes advantage of the opportunity and approaches Klaus romantically. Though he hesitates at first, Klaus eventually gives in. He undergoes an abrupt and total volte-face, spending all his free time with Gerda and completely ignoring Manfred. Despite the fact that Mrs. Teichmann ends up sentenced to one week of jail time for “procurement of prostitution” charges brought against her by Boris, she ends up ultimately satisfied with her work. In the closing moments of the film, she gazes approvingly at Klaus and Gerda standing together, saying, “It’s alright. Everything’s alright” (1:26:37-1:26:45).⁴¹ The implication of this conclusion is that the goal of turning Klaus straight was noble enough as to warrant whatever moral or legal transgressions she had to perform. In the universe of

⁴⁰ “Er muss aus diesen Kreisen heraus gelotst werden, in die er da hinein gerutscht ist. Es beginnt bei dieser Art Mensch mit geistigen Interessen, die nach und nach zu schweren Verwicklungen führen können.”

⁴¹ “Ist ja gut. Ist ja alles gut.”

Anders als du und ich, homosexuality can be “cured” or confirmed with one sexual act, and this fragility of heterosexuality justifies the means taken to stop gayness in its tracks.

Conclusion

When thinking about the global LGBTQ+ rights movement, it can be deceptively easy to assume a relatively linear progression towards legal protection and societal acceptance. One could surmise that, over the past hundred years, queer communities have slowly become more visible, but that the most significant progress has only occurred in the last few decades. In reality, progress for the German queer community has been more akin to a spiral outward; while it might seem as though the conditions for LGBTQ+ individuals improve briefly only to be set back by reactionary backlash, there is a continuous positive trend towards complete acceptance. In a sampling of queer German film, both during the heady days of the Weimar Republic and in the post-World War II aftermath, one can see how cyclical nature of progress can obscure moments of unprecedented progressivism. Today, a full century since the release of *Anders als die Andern*, the film is more strikingly modern in its sensibilities and messages about the nature of homosexuality than ever. Though much of the science supporting Hirschfeld’s theories about gender is questionable, the root of his core ideology stands as a testament to a brief moment of unprecedented progressiveness in Germany. At a time when it was still illegal for a woman to wear pants in public on the streets of Berlin, Hirschfeld took a bold, uncompromising stance in favor of the acceptance of queer individuals into mainstream society.

Twelve years later, another significant moment of progress for LGBTQ representation would arrive in the form of *Mädchen in Uniform*. Critics such as Richard

Dyer consider these films to be the most remarkable examples of queer Weimar cinema, “both for their directness and assertiveness and for the degree to which they are rooted in the gay and lesbian cultures of the period” (Dyer 5). Despite their uniquely enduring legacies, “[t]hey do not stand in isolation: they were made possible, and delimited, by both the prevailing modes of film production and form and the contemporary subcultural formations of homosexuality” (Dyer 6). In hindsight, the Weimar Era and the 1920s, in particular, are often regarded as a time of unrestricted frivolity and the catharsis of post-war anxiety. But in such assessments, one can easily lose sight of the significant scientific and theoretical advances made in the field of gender and sexuality research. The reactionary post-World War II movement towards conservatism in West Germany helped to confirm the sweeping dismissal of the Weimar Era as a moment of chaos and confusion best left behind. This reestablishment of gender norms is clearly illustrated in both the later version of *Mädchen in Uniform* and *Anders als du und ich*, in which changing rhetoric and scientific understandings of sexuality demonstrate a significant shift in the way Germans were thinking about queerness.

In the past century, multiple cycles of movement forward and regressive backlash over queer issues have taken place in Germany and in the social justice movement for LGBTQ+ rights worldwide. This pattern can be discouraging, but can also serve as a source of hope. The short-lived but significant progressivism of the Weimar Republic proves that cultural attitudes towards queerness are artificial constructs, and thus have the potential for change. As global awareness of LGBTQ+ issues has become more mainstream than ever before, and as queer communities achieve new levels of visibility

and acceptance, Hirschfeld's vision for a more tolerant future comes into clearer focus with every passing year.

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