

Conrad Veidt and Magnus Hirschfeld in *Different from the Others* by Richard Oswald (1919)

Abstract

One of the first openly gay films in the history of cinema, *Different from the Others* premiered on May 28, 1919, in Berlin and was immediately banned. In the scene below, Paul Körner (Conrad Veidt), a homosexual violin virtuoso, is consoled by physician, sexologist, and sexual reformer Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld (right), who played himself in the film. Veidt went on to become one of Germany's most famous actors of the period. In 1897, Hirschfeld co-founded the Scientific Humanitarian Committee [*Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee*], which aimed to overturn laws that criminalized homosexuals and to pursue research leading to a scientific understanding of homosexuality. Hirschfeld maintained that homosexuality was an innate condition, i.e., that it was a matter of nature versus nurture. He also advocated the theory of the “third sex,” whereby homosexuality was understood not as a perverse deviation from “standard” male or female heterosexuality, but rather as another legitimate sexual identity. In 1919, Hirschfeld opened the Institute for Sexual Research [*Institut für Sexualwissenschaft*] in Berlin, and in 1921 he organized the First Congress for Sexual Reform, which led to the formation of the World League for Sexual Reform.

Source



Source: Conrad Veidt and Magnus Hirschfeld in *Different from the Others*, dir. Richard Oswald, 1919. Edition Filmmuseum, Munich

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