

NAMING, SHAMING, FRAMING?

*The ambivalence of queer visibility in audio-visual archives**

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This chapter looks at the dynamics of visibility and vulnerability in audio-visual heritage. It analyses how film archives in Sweden and the UK, following their diversity policies, address and mobilise the notion of queer, recognising and making visible queer lives, history and cinema, and how they negotiate the risks of increased visibility. In this approach, the archive is positioned as an object of analysis, shifting the focus on the archive as a site of knowledge retrieval to a site of knowledge production (Foucault, 1972; Stoler, 2002). Instead of examining how sexual minorities as a priori identities are included in the archives, I suggest studying the processes of regulation according to which different lifestyles and experiences become 'acknowledgeable' (Schaffer, 2008; Thomas et al., 2017). Archival practices enacting recognition and regulation include the choice of metadata, the modes of selection for public screenings and online exhibition and the curation and contextualisation of online content. The case studies will be the BFI Player, the online portal of the British Film Institute, and the Swedish website Filmarkivet.se, which has created access to some of the digitised collections from the Swedish National Film Archives, administered by the Swedish Film Institute (SFI) and the National Library of Sweden (KB). As points of contrast and comparison, I will draw in the findings of my research on two queer 'minor archives':¹ Bildwechsel, based in Hamburg, and the Lesbian Home Movie Project in Maine (Brunow, 2015; forthcoming).

Heritage institutions, such as museums, galleries or archives, have been increasingly attempting to acknowledge LGBTQ pasts, often guided by diversity policies (Axelsson and Åkerö, 2016; National Trust, 2017; Sandell and Nightingale, 2012; Steorn, 2012). They are some of the stakeholders in the process of heritage construction during which different interest groups

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negotiate political recognition (Smith, 2007). Creating visibility for previously hidden narratives is based 'on the premise that queer lives ought to be worth preserving' (Stone and Cantrell, 2015: 7). The recognition of queer pasts is relevant for both political goals in terms of equal rights and legislation and the purpose of community-building. In this struggle for LGBTQ recognition, the trope of 'visibility' has been crucial. Visibility can provide role models and counter stereotypical representations, for instance via forms of self-representation, such as home movies or amateur videos (Brunow, 2017). Although often understood as empowerment for marginalised groups, dynamics of visibility and recognition also increase the risks of vulnerability (Foucault, 1990; Schaffer, 2008).² Johanna Schaffer (2008) pointed out this 'ambivalence of visibility' while studying the representation of minorities in visual culture. As representation is pervaded by hegemonic power structures, visibility does not immediately lead to empowerment. For queer individuals, visibility comes with an increased risk of vulnerability in forms of surveillance, governmentality, policing, pathologising, homophobic or transphobic violence, stereotyping and/or modes of shaming (Munt, 2008). Throughout history, exposing LGBTQ persons via 'outing' has been the cause of scandals and violence (Sedgwick, 1990). The fear of exposure has resulted in the desire for safe spaces or the need to be invisible within dominant society. Remaining unmarked within dominant society can thus be a means of protection, leaving only a thin line between archival neglect and recognition.

There has not been much attention given to the connection between film archives, digitisation and the recognition of LGBTQ pasts. Film historiography, media archaeology and archivology tend to neglect questions of archiving LGBTQ-related films, whereas studies on queer archives often ignore the specific requirements involved when archiving audio-visual footage. Studies on queer exhibition practice in museums tend to come to the conclusion that its production of knowledge, of inclusions and exclusions, is in need of further analysis (Museerna och hbtq, 2015; Steorn, 2010; 2012). While conceptualisations of queer perspectives on the archive and archival exhibition practice (Cvetkovich, 2003; Danbolt, 2010; Halberstam, 2005; Muñoz, 2009; Stone and Cantrell, 2015) have outlined a number of relevant aspects for curating LGBTQ-related content, research on the recognition and interpretive framing of gender and sexuality is lacking. The focus on national archives implies that I will be reading *along*, not *against*, the archival grain (Stoler, 2002). The recognition of queer lives in the archive is not automatically a means of 'queering' collections, but can produce and perpetuate normative meanings (Edenheim, 2014; Steorn, 2010).³ In fact, it 'is the disciplined recognitions of sexuality and gender that are produced through these signifying practices that make the knowledge they constrain

and preserve searchable and archivable', as the editors of a special issue on 'Queering archives' note in their introduction (Marshall et al., 2014: 4).

Attempts to counter the previous marginalisation of queer lives in collection and exhibition practice have coincided with diversity politics and the digital turn. Not least for film archives, which had to limit public access to the easily damageable analogue film stock, digitisation has had an enormous impact for the renewed circulation of archival content. These developments imply new challenges for archivists, in terms of not only legal issues but also metadata management and the curation of online content (Brunow, 2017). Metadata helps to make archival content searchable and findable, as well as creates the content by defining and categorising it. Rather than being neutral and objective, metadata entail values and norms which shape the content by defining what is worth searching for and what is not. While the materiality of metadata and analogue film or video is clearly distinct, digitised films and metadata are based on the same digital code. Their relation erodes the previous hierarchy of the 'original content' and the data describing the 'content'. Inextricably linked to the content it creates and therefore no less important than the films themselves, metadata is crucial for conditioning queer visibility. 'Naming' is inextricably linked to the notion of the archive as an instrument of power (Derrida, 1996; Foucault, 1972), highlighting some narratives while marginalising others. Understanding archival practices as performative acts (Brunow, 2017), this chapter argues that cataloguing, tagging and classifying LGBTQ-related content opens up questions about the ambivalence of visibility. As a consequence, it also makes a case for an increased self-reflexivity of the archive, inspired by Joan Schwartz's and Terry Cook's (2002: 1) suggestion that '[t]he power of archives, records, and archivists should no longer remain naturalised or denied, but opened to vital debate and transparent accountability'. In view of the risk of queer vulnerability, heritage institutions such as national film archives are in need of a thoughtfully conceived and ethically executed archival practice.

Arguing for the need of archival openness and accountability, this chapter discusses examples of archival practices which are especially sensitive with regards to the risk of queer vulnerability. While Schaffer's focus lies on visual representation, I would like to expand her notion of the 'ambivalence of visibility' towards archival practices of creating metadata and contextualisation.⁴ In the following, three aspects will be explored in relation to queer visibility. The first section, Naming, examines practices of cataloguing and the use of metadata as politics of recognition. The second section, Shaming, discusses the ambivalences of visibility and poses the question of whether visibility should be strived for at any cost, for example when curating online access. The third part, Framing, looks at challenges for online curation in

term of contextualisation and targeting audiences. Finally, this chapter will outline how national film archives could foreground their own role in the production of (normative) knowledge.

BETWEEN DIVERSITY POLICIES AND MINOR ARCHIVING

During the last decade, the notion of diversity has gained importance for heritage institutions, such as the Swedish and the British film institutes.⁵ The BFI policies draw on the UK Equality Act of 2010, in which the following characteristics are worth protecting: 'Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Race, Religion of belief, Sex, Sexual orientation'. In more recent policy documents, a rhetorical shift has occurred towards regarding diversity as an asset rather than a means to protect marginalised groups. To illustrate this, the BFI Film Fund Diversity Standards (BFI, 2016) understands diversity as a means not to empower marginalised groups in the first place, but to strengthen the film industry as part of the creative industries: 'Diversity is not just about doing what's right: it's good for creativity, supports economic growth, taps into under-served audiences and makes good business sense ... That's why our definition of diversity is to recognise and acknowledge the quality and value of difference.'⁶ According to the policy documents of the Swedish Film Institute (SFI, 2016), works by female filmmakers, producers, scriptwriters and cinematographers should be prioritised when selecting the one hundred films to be digitised each year. The same goes for films about the Sami and other officially acknowledged ethnic minorities in Sweden. Although the Swedish Film Institute very successfully works for a more even gender balance – an effort which is ground-breaking internationally – sexual minorities are not explicitly mentioned in guidelines and regulations.⁷ In contrast, the British Film Institute is actively promoting diversity, both in terms of film production, distribution and exhibition as well as in relation to LGBTQ people. These different strategies in implementing diversity issues influence the archival practice of both national film institutes, for instance when curating access to their archival collection on their internet platforms Filmarkivet.se and the BFI Player.

Launched in 2011, the Swedish website Filmarkivet.se provides free global access to a selection of films archived at the Swedish Film Institute and the National Library's Division of Audio-visual Media, as well as programmes provided by Sweden's public service broadcasting corporation Sveriges Television. Setting out to show 'the transformation of Swedish society over the last century' (www.filmarkivet.se), the 1,500 films accessible via Filmarkivet.se are mainly Swedish documentaries, such as industrial, city

or election films, as well as short films, animations, or experimental filmmaking. Although access to the exhibited material is not limited by geo-blocking, knowledge of Swedish is required when navigating the site, since both the films and their paratexts, such as metadata and contextual information, are available in Swedish only. Unlike *Filmarkivet.se*, the BFI Player is geo-blocked, prohibiting access outside the UK. Providing the interface for feature films available via VOD and S-VOD, the BFI Player is divided into three sections, Subscriptions (S-VOD), Rentals (VOD) and Free, which holds non-fiction material from the National Archives. The Free section in turn can be accessed through a number of curated collections, ranging from *Railways on Film and Punk* to *Black Britain*, *Chinese Britain on Film* and *LGBT Britain*. More than thirty films can be found in the free collection *LGBT Britain*, but the label is also used within the VOD and S-VOD sections.

Arguing that national archives could learn from queer minor archives, I will draw comparisons to the archival practice of the Lesbian Home Movie Project (LHMP) in Maine (Brunow, *forthcoming*) as well as to the international archive for female and trans visual artists, *Bildwechsel* in Hamburg (Brunow, 2015). The term 'minor archives,' drawing on the notion of 'minor cinema' (Brunow, 2015), is used as an umbrella term for such grassroots, independent or community archives founded as a reaction to archival neglect. This form of archival activism set out to make personal memories visible and accessible within the (semi-)public sphere. While queer minor archives and national heritage institutions are facing similar challenges in the wake of digitisation, they have different approaches to recognising queerness and navigating the ambivalence of queer visibility. First, archivists might lack an insight into LGBTQ subcultures and fail to acknowledge these; second, the politics of representation at work in the archival footage itself can differ to a high degree (Kirste, 2007). To illustrate, the films and tapes found in queer minor archives, for instance home movies or amateur filmmaking, tend to 'portray LGBT people as complex individuals rather than stereotypes, offer a diversity of race, age, ethnic background, politics, gender identification, and other qualities, and show LGBT people in the context of our relationships, families, and communities,' as Lynne Kirste (2007: 134) points out. Such complex representations are rarely found in national film archives, and even if they are, archivists might not recognise or acknowledge them. Moreover, both *Bildwechsel* and the LHMP are highly reflective about their archival practice and are actively seeking the dialogue with the queer community about archival decisions, on location, via social media or via interactive art installations (Brunow, 2015; *forthcoming*). Minor queer archives' participatory approaches and their involvement in the communities they serve can provide a role model for heritage institutions.

NAMING

Archival practices of cataloguing and choosing metadata always imply a 'naming time' (Marshall et al., 2014: 4). Naming provides the discursive framework for the articulation of non-normative sexualities. Therefore, archivists need to understand cataloguing, not as a neutral, descriptive activity, but as a performative act of power. Search terms might 'appear unbiased and universally applicable – but they actually hide their exclusions under the guise of neutrality' (Olson, 2001: 640). This is why archives need to foreground their operations of classification as being transparent and acknowledge the interrelatedness of queer visibility and governmentality. For example, the National Archives in the UK advises researchers how to look for LGBTQ lives in criminal records, searching for 'relevant criminal offences': 'buggery, disorderly house, gross indecency, importuning, indecency, obscenity, sexual offences, sodomy, soliciting, street offences, unnatural offences, unnatural acts.'⁸ Through self-reflexive acts like these, the archive acknowledges that metadata and search terms are historically situated. Moreover, archives need to navigate the risk of defying the subversive, evasive quality of queerness (Muñoz, 2009; Steorn, 2012). Single catalogue terms cannot grasp the complexities of shifting sexualities or variable gender expressions. As Patrik Steorn points out: 'It is important to keep in mind that reclassifying and tagging objects not only makes them available for database searching, it also adds new historical layers and forces objects to fit established categories', thus restricting 'queer possibilities' (2012: 359). Overall, archivists might be hesitant to classify the persons portrayed in the footage in terms of their sexual identity. Given the history of criminalising or pathologising LGBTQ persons, the reluctance to tag archival holdings as LGBTQ-related is quite understandable. The scepticism about the usefulness of 'naming' can either be the result of latent or manifest homophobia among archivists or a means to acknowledge the risk of 'naming' as a way of reducing shifting identities to a single classification.

The metadata on Filmarkivet.se is mainly derived from the Swedish Media Database and the Swedish Film Database, an online catalogue containing information on almost 80,000 Swedish films and international productions screened in Swedish cinemas. Because the archivists do not work with single tags but on the basis of a full text search, LGBTQ-related terms need to be part of the text that describes the film. Since this text is often retrieved from older information to be found in the databases mentioned above, the discursive space for the articulation of LGBTQ identities is very limited. For instance, before 2017, when an updated version of the Swedish Film Database was relaunched, the search term 'lesbisk' ['lesbian'] did not lead to any results on Filmarkivet.se whatsoever. In contrast,

the BFI Player uses tags, such as 'Gay people' or 'Lesbians', 'Gay pride' and 'Gay activists', and can even take an intersectional perspective by combining these with, for example, 'Cultural identity', 'ethnic minorities' or 'Afro-Caribbean community in Great Britain.' Also in 2017, Filmarkivet.se launched the subject category 'Queer.' Two films in the section represent instances of cross-gender performance: the three-minute silent film *Skilda tiders danser* [*Dances Through the Ages*] (Walfrid Bergström, 1909) and an ad for shaving foam (Hylins Rakin, 1940), showcasing a male to female cross-dresser and including a sequence parodying Greta Garbo's notorious hat in *Ninotchka* (Ernst Lubitsch, 1939). The choice of these two films exemplifies the challenges of curating the trans archive (Halberstam, 2017; Rawson, 2010; Stryker and Currah, 2015) in view of a broad variety of queer subject positions, such as 'transsexual, transvestite, cross-dresser, transman/transwoman, genderqueer, androgyne, female-to-male (FTM), and male to female (MTF)' (Rawson, 2010). According to Laura Horak (2017), more than ninety films containing cross-gender performances can be traced in the history of Swedish cinema, but 'these performances were not necessarily subversive or queer' (Horak, 2017: 378). Of these ninety films, only one, *Skilda tiders danser*, can be currently seen on Filmarkivet.se. Trans in the archive epitomises the challenges queer visibility implies for archivists, both with regards to the lack of self-representation and the choice of metadata.

The category 'Queer' currently (November 2017) contains six films, from the aforementioned *Skilda tiders danser* to the collective gay film project *Böjvävlar* [*Damned Queers*] (1977) and the award-winning short *Längs vägen* [*Along the Road*] (2011) about the secret love of two truck drivers.⁹ While the selection of films categorised under the header 'Queer' seems to be quite eclectic, a conceptualisation of the concept 'Queer' is missing both on the website itself and in the policy documents provided by the SFI (SFI, 2017; Svenska Filminstitutet, 2016). Unlike other themes on the platform, such as 'Football' or 'Radio', the category 'Queer' does not yet have introductory text. On what grounds the films are selected thus remains unclear for the users. To compare, the BFI Player introduces its theme 'LGBT Britain' by explaining:

British cinema boasts a long history of carefully coded queerness, but for much of the 20th century explicit depictions of gay life in drama or documentary were more or less taboo. Gay men were subject to vicious state-sanctioned persecution, while lesbians were socially ostracised and the transgender community ignored and misunderstood. Cinematic and small-screen breakthroughs in the 1950s and 60s played their part in the public debate ... From early glimpses of 'queer' characters, this collection charts the path towards '67 and beyond, through responses to the AIDS crisis to diverse reflections on queer life today.

The explanatory text gives an overview of the different historical contexts which have shaped the representations of LGBTQ lives in the British National Film Archives. This self-reflexive stand helps to widen the discursive space for the articulation of queer sexualities in the archive.

Along with visibility, invisibility also affects the risk of queer vulnerability. Instead of being binary oppositions, the notions of visibility and invisibility are interrelated (Schaffer, 2008). Queer lives which remain unmarked, unnamed or untagged might not be visible within the archive's dominant heterosexual structure, but their invisibility can protect them. As a consequence, archivists need to be aware that naming or 'outing' some individuals might put many others back into the closet. Choosing a category such as 'Queer' for only a small number of films while at the same time ignoring other works which could provoke queer readings or which could be considered part of a LGBTQ heritage produces new exclusions and perpetuates heterosexuality as the norm. I will briefly discuss the archival presentation of two queer Swedish icons: Selma Lagerlöf and Greta Garbo. Filmarkivet.se presents two newsreels on the Noble prize laureate: 'Ett besök hos Selma Lagerlöf' ['Visiting Selma Lagerlöf'] (1926) and 'Selma Lagerlöf 80 år' ['Selma Lagerlöf's 80th Birthday'] (1938), as well as three films on Greta Garbo: Garbo as a fashion model in a commercial from 1921 for the store PUB, a 1929 newsreel about Garbo's voyage from Hollywood to Sweden, and a screen test from 1948 for the projected film adaptation of Balzac's *La Duchesse de Langeais*, which was never realised. None of these five films is included in the section 'Queer', and the metadata and newly written editorial contextualisation do not relate the footage to LGBTQ heritage.¹⁰ As a result, Garbo and Lagerlöf are not legible as the queer icons they have become. In order to perceive the films as part of LGBTQ heritage, users need to bring their previously acquired knowledge to the viewing of the footage. The archivists might have wanted to avoid reductive classifications, but the lack of any hint to queerness risks 'unqueering' Garbo and Lagerlöf. The often-observed reluctance by archivists to tag or classify queer persons as LGBTQ-related can be a means of protecting their integrity. Yet, as Lynne Kirste points out: 'Without a subject heading or descriptive word to search on, a researcher or archive staff member must resort to searching film titles or the names of filmmakers, actors, or personalities, one by one' (Kirste, 2007: 137). This is especially difficult, if not impossible, in an archival collection such as Filmarkivet.se which grants access to newsreel footage and other non-canonised material. To compare, the National Trust's project *Prejudice & Pride: Celebrating LGBTQ Heritage* is described by Alison Oram and Matt Cook as 'not looking for gays and lesbians in history, but for signs of same sex relationships and desires and their different configurations' (National Trust, 2017: 5). This approach can prove useful for

film archives as well because it helps to create a self-reflexive take on archival practices of selecting and 'naming' and highlighting their repercussions on queer visibility.

SHAMING

As the visibility of queer lives is linked to notions of pride and shame (Munt, 2008; Sedgwick, 1990), the lack of metadata can be either a symptom of archival neglect or a sign of archival responsibility. In terms of the latter the lack of metadata can be considered as a way to acknowledge the vulnerability of LGBTQ people and a means to protect them from homophobia or transphobia.

Collection policies have had repercussions on queer archival visibility. As LGBTQ-related footage is rarely recognised by national film archives, queer filmmakers of home movies or amateur videos have often been reluctant to hand over their material. This is why works of queer self-representation are highly absent in national archives (Brunow, forthcoming; Kirste, 2007). Many filmmakers have been hesitant to expose the queer lives portrayed in their works to society's 'disapproving gaze' (Munt, 2008: 219), and have been suspicious of institutions, of being the potential target of homophobia or transphobia, or of being misrepresented. Another contributing factor to the lack of LGBTQ self-representations in official archives is the materiality of the analogue stock, especially with regards to video productions from the late 1970s and 1980s. Since not all film archives have included video into their collection policies, 'LGBT independent and amateur productions are typically stored in media-unfriendly conditions in filmmakers' homes rather than in archives' (Kirste, 2007: 134). As a result, the audio-visual memory of a whole generation is at risk of disappearing. Therefore, minor archives are currently urging queer filmmakers to hand over their home movies and amateur films so that they can be digitised and stored in climate-controlled vaults (Thompson, 2015). Handing over such private material is still a matter of trust, especially in times of political crisis. LGBTQ people have been confined to queer minor archives as safe havens for their material, to be taken care of in a spirit of love, affection and solidarity (Cvetkovich, 2003). Meanwhile, the idea of queer archives as safe spaces is challenged by the increasing possibilities to access archival footage online. Online access comes with a challenge: what happens when films leave the semi-public sphere of the minor archive and start circulating within the heteronormative public sphere?¹¹

Negotiating the binaries of secrecy and disclosure (Sedgwick, 1990: 11), of safe space and public access, and of pride and shame has become a crucial

task for minor queer archives in the wake of digitisation. As one of such minor archives, Bildwechsel was founded in 1979 in the wake of the political video movement. It houses more than 7,000 videotapes on nineteen different formats, of which about 10 per cent have been digitised. Among them are collections from the feminist film festival *Feminale* in Cologne (1999–2006), the West Berlin queer art space Pelze Multimedia (1986–90) or the lesbian television show *Lesben in Sicht*, broadcast on Hamburg's Open Channel (1994–98). Other works include film and videos donated by the artists themselves and productions by the Bildwechsel collective, such as travelogues, documentations of queer/feminist events or interviews with female artists from Martha Rosler to Pipilotti Rist (Brunow, 2015: 118–25; Maule, 2016). In 2015, Bildwechsel launched its website Videoschloss [Video Castle] as a streaming device for selected videos from the archival collections. A mixture of Tove Jansson's Moomin house and a classical art gallery, the video castle guides users through the online exhibition. The other minor archive to be highlighted is the Lesbian Home Movie Project (LHMP) in Maine, which was founded after a collection of 16mm home movies by New York schoolteacher Ruth Storm surfaced in 2008 (Thompson, 2015). As its board members are 'rooted within multiple lesbian communities,' the project's focus on lesbian filmmaking is both 'affectionate and pragmatic' (Thompson, 2015: 115). Since its inception in 2009, the LHMP has acquired more than twenty collections which are digitised and contextualised, for example via oral history interviews. Just like Bildwechsel, the LHMP actively engages with the filmmakers or their circle of friends.

Ethical considerations play an important role for minor archives, such as Bildwechsel or the LHMP. Their archival practice of curating archival exhibitions (online or in specifically programmed screenings) is ethically executed, recognising the risk of queer vulnerability. Acknowledging the cultural sensitivity of the films and videos in their collections, both archives are keen on respecting donor and participant concerns. Therefore, contracts with the individual donors include detailed information on to what extent the archived films or videos can be made accessible. This can range from access on location only to online access to selected clips. For each of the various collections archived within the LHMP, different modes of access are in use. For example, the 'Anonymous' collection consists of 8mm reels and VHS tapes shot by a Maine painter and her circle of family and friends. From this collection, only one half-hour segment is allowed to be shown. Other collections have restrictions, such as, 'Donor notification required. Donor retains right to also use the material & intends to collaborate on edit,' 'Donor & other permissions required for any public use' or 'DVD #6 cannot be shown at the present time'. Currently, the LHMP has limited access via DVD or public screenings in queer/feminist contexts, but has only recently

started to upload any of the material. We can now find a number of films from the various LHMP collections online on Vimeo, for instance three films from the Ruth Storm Collection, Corky Culver's 'Prairie Journal' or an interview with Audre Lorde (1975), for which none other than Michelle Citron operated the portapak.

The 1970s feminist slogan 'the personal is political' involves another challenge for queer minor archives. Aiming at turning vulnerability into resistance, the notion of the personal being political deliberately disrupts the boundaries between the private and public spheres. This becomes especially relevant for amateur films and home movies, especially those made during the 1970s in the context of social movements. To what extent can – or should – these films or videos be made accessible online? Even if online exhibition has been granted by donors, queer minor archivists would tend to refrain from uploading footage which they consider too personal to be exposed to the public (Brunow, *forthcoming*). Examples would be footage from feminist separatist events, such as summer camps or music festivals, or lesbian bars and clubs. Unlike Bildwechsel, which refrains from exhibiting such footage online, the LHMP was debating whether or not to upload home movie footage of topless lesbians at a feminist festival on their Vimeo portal in 2017. While no decision has been reached at the time of writing (November 2017), the upload would be an act of exposure which can turn into agency. These examples show that minor archivists are highly reflective when navigating the ambivalence of queer visibility. Queer minor archives are also able to engage with their respective communities when trying to find solutions for archival challenges.

FRAMING

The shift from analogue footage to digital data requires new contextualisations when curating online access. Titles, descriptions, search filters and suggestions for 'related content' provide a framework for the reception of the films. One of the earliest lesbian self-representations on film in Sweden, the 1983 production *Eva and Maria* (dirs. Mary Eisikovits, Marie Falksten and Annalena Öhrström) serves as an example of how contextualisation creates or prevents queer visibility. Meanwhile, the film has gained scholarly attention (Ryberg, 2015; Chapter 11, this volume) and has been circulated again. Since it was uploaded on Filmarkivet.se in 2015, its contextual information given on the website has changed three times. This makes it a case worth exemplifying on what grounds queer lives are acknowledged in the archive.

Eva and Maria is the first Swedish feature 'by, with, and about open lesbians' (chapter 11, this volume), publicly funded by The National Board of

Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen), the very organisation which classified homosexuality as a mental disorder in 1968. This makes the film an important historical source. Ryberg details how the filmmakers deliberately avoided the use of terms such as 'homosexual' or 'lesbian' when applying for funding. Such strategic decisions need to be foregrounded when contextualising the film on Filmarkivet.se. In the Swedish Media Database (SMDDB), *Eva and Maria* is categorised as a 'fiction film', 'short film', 'feature' and 'drama'. The lesbian content is not mentioned in these subject categories, and even the description 'the L-word' (lesbian) is never used. Thus, the film could not be found by using search terms, such as 'lesbian' or 'queer', until 2017, when the category 'Queer' was introduced on Filmarkivet.se and these terms became part of the full text. In 2015, the Swedish Film Database described the film as follows:

It is important that heterosexuals understand that the love between Eva and Maria is based on true and worthy emotions. This love has the same obvious right to be respected as the love between woman and man. Many people are provoked when they see homosexuals kiss or cuddle. It is experienced as strange and disgusting. The script writers hope that those who have seen the film, and talk about it, can react in a less prejudiced manner when they will encounter homosexual men and women from now on.¹²

The text stems from a fact sheet provided by the distribution company Filmo AB, which is credited on the website. It states that homosexuals often do not consider their sexuality to be a problem, but that the problems are caused by the society that surrounds them – a description evoking Rosa von Praunheim's film *Nicht der Homosexuelle ist pervers, sondern die Situation, in der er lebt* (Germany, 1971). Including the information from the fact sheet echoes Ingrid Ryberg's contention that *Eva and Maria* and *Böjävlar* 'mark a significant shift in focus, from regarding homosexuality as problematic to critiquing and deconstructing homophobia and gender roles' (Ryberg, 2015: 147). The contextual information provided by the distribution company highlights the historical understanding of homosexuality from the perspective of LGBTQ activism in late 1970s Sweden: not as a timeless 'problem,' but as an identity which is created in relation to and by the surrounding society and its discursive frameworks.

Contextualisation can contribute to the queer visibility – or can prevent it, as the example of *Eva and Maria* shows. For the presentation on Filmarkivet.se in 2016, a much shorter text was chosen. Taken from the filmmakers' description (see chapter 11, this volume), it reads: 'A film about love between two young women. They meet understanding and tolerance, but also prejudice and lack of understanding by family and friends.'¹³ The source of the text, however, is not credited on the

website. The lack of contextualisation and the thus missing terms 'lesbian', 'queer' and 'homosexual' has had at least two consequences: first, an online search for these terms failed to find the film. Second, with this new version not only the historical context has disappeared but also the critical perspective on the Swedish society as a decisive factor of defining 'homosexuality' or 'lesbian identity'. Instead of offering an analytical perspective on contemporary politics, the focus is on the individual. At the same time the notions of 'understanding and tolerance' as well as 'prejudice and lack of understanding' appear as timeless conditions that homosexual couples will have to face. As Ryberg (2015: 144) details, after both the Swedish Film Institute and the left-wing Filmverkstan declined, *Eva and Maria* was funded by the National Board of Health and Welfare in 1977, remarkably enough from its budget for birth control education. When *Eva and Maria* was screened in Japan at a UNESCO health conference, it was distributed alongside guidelines for teaching, which state:

Homosexuals often feel that, rather than their sexual or emotional preferences being problematic, the attitudes in the surrounding world cause difficulties ... The few times homosexuality is represented in media, criminality and illness are often part of the picture. We want to turn the debate to focus on homophobia (fear of homosexuals) instead. (Ryberg, 2015: 145)

This approach, however, was considered as conveying a too positive message (Ryberg, 2015: 144). While Swedish television, especially the second channel, was usually open to left-wing progressive content, it refused to broadcast the film without an accompanying on-air discussion. As the filmmakers did not want to comply with these conditions, *Eva and Maria* was never broadcast on television (Ryberg, 2015: 144). Embedding contemporary material into today's online presentation, which contextualises the information, can illustrate the discursive framework in which the film has been circulating. At the same time such an approach can help the users to understand as to what extent filmmaking can be regarded as an intervention in hegemonic representation. A broader historical overview is provided by the latest version of the accompanying text, published in December 2017.¹⁴ It contextualises *Eva and Maria* in the events around the occupation of the National Board of Health and Welfare in 1979, which was a protest against the classification of homosexuality as a mental disorder.¹⁵ The example illustrates how the choice of metadata and paratexts not only can be seen as an attempt to recognise lesbian lives, but how it can also foreground the politics of exclusion at work in film production, distribution and reception. The film's contextualisation can help to understand on what grounds lesbian or homosexual identity could be articulated in history.

As a situated practice, the work of the archivist is defined by multiple discursive frameworks. In Sweden, notions of equality and cultural homogeneity are part of the hegemonic master narrative of the nation, whereas in the UK heritage institutions do not shy away from representations of social inequality and political struggle (Axelsson and Åkerö, 2016). However, a perspective on heritage which glosses over conflicts and political struggle can lead us to believe that our democratic rights can be taken for granted. Instead, these rights are the result of intense political struggle, which is why historical exhibitions should highlight that democratic rights are not won forever, but need to be continuously defended (Eivegård and Furumark, 2017: 13). Therefore, film archives, when curating access, could make use of a conflict perspective in favour of homogenising the past. For example, the BFI Player offers a number of examples for the recognition of the LGBTQ struggle. One is the current affairs report 'Oxford Housing' (1982). Tagged as 'Council housing' and 'Gay people', the film is contextualised with the following text:

Another small step towards equality came in 1982 when same sex couples in Oxford were able to register for council housing. There were conditions of course: couples had to be over 35 years old and able to demonstrate that they had a 'stable' relationship, a vague sounding stipulation that heterosexual applicants did not have to adhere to. Even this small concession was contested by the conservative group on the council, which was hoping to reverse the decision once in power.¹⁶

In this text, different political opinions are not glossed over but addressed and foregrounded. The archival clip is historicised, while at the same time showing the relevance of the past struggle for LGBTQ lives today. The case of *Eva and Maria*, discussed above, illustrates how different ways of contextualising the film can either avoid or implement a conflict perspective, which can point to the role of LGBTQ activism in the struggle for democratic rights.

Alternative ways of contextualising archival footage can be found in minor archives, for instance by including oral history interviews with the filmmakers or their circle of friends or family. The LHMP, for example, actively encourages donors to participate in the documentation of the material and its contexts (Thompson, 2015). In national archives, oral history interviews could also be employed to obtain different versions of an event, for instance by countering stereotypical representations in archival footage. Here, the use of oral history narratives could be a means of adding forms of LGBTQ self-representation to the archive. Oral histories could also be employed to generate knowledge about queer readings or queer (re)appropriations of specific films. Another way to contextualise online

archival exhibitions would be to add digitised print material providing background information on the production, distribution or exhibition context.¹⁷ National film archives and queer minor archives tend to host impressive collections of books, fanzines, press cuttings, flyers and posters, which would provide a historical context for the film footage, embedding it in its (sub)cultural framework.

CONCLUSION

The archival recognition of LGBTQ pasts leads to an increased queer visibility, but requires an ongoing reflection about the resulting risk of vulnerability. This chapter has examined this ambivalence of visibility faced by national film archives when trying to create a more inclusive heritage in relation to queer pasts. It has also shown that metadata management is of high importance in times of digitisation. Visibility, as a result of 'naming' practices, such as tagging and cataloguing, can be both understood as a way to recognise and empower sexual minorities and at the same time expose LGBTQ lives. Archivists need to acknowledge, reflect upon and negotiate these contradictions, navigating the epistemological challenges. Discussing the ambivalence of queer visibility, this chapter has shown how national film archives are in need of analysing 'queer' as a category. They should be able to share their reflections on archival decisions to the users. Furthermore, to acknowledge their agency in knowledge production, archives should: (1) date the descriptions, (2) credit the author(s) of the text, even if it was written by one of the archivists themselves, and (3) draw on scholarly film expertise, therefore (4) collaborating with scholars and members of the LGBTQ communities. These strategies can contribute to a contextualisation of queer-related content which historicises the material, while at the same time showing its relevance for today's audiences.¹⁸

Regarding the politics of queer recognition in the wake of diversity policies, national film archives would do well to learn from the experiences and reflections of minor archives. Collaborations between national heritage institutions and minor archives could be a way to employ the expertise assembled in these often longstanding community-based projects. To illustrate, the National Trust's Prejudice & Pride project mentioned above has been working in tandem with 'a number of communities, artists and creative practitioners to breathe life into our places, collections and stories' (National Trust, 2017: 4). For national film archives, such collaborations would be relevant in view of access policies and collection practices, especially with regards to home movies and amateur filmmaking. An example of a successful archival cooperation is the Outfest UCLA Legacy Project

for LGBT Moving Image Preservation, founded in 2005, a collaboration between the Outfest Los Angeles LGBT Film Festival and the UCLA Film and Television Archive. The Legacy Project has been a ground-breaking initiative for the restoration and renewed circulation of queer film classics, independent film productions or home movie collections.¹⁹ An option worth considering for national heritage institutions in Sweden would be to team up with projects such as the Swedish Archive for Queer Moving Images, initiated by curator and filmmaker Anna Linder and funded by the Swedish Arts Grants Committee from 2017.²⁰ Building relationships between official heritage institutions and other nodal points for queer knowledge can prove fruitful for the recognition of queer narratives and experiences.

The question remains as to what extent the current efforts to chronicle queer lives can be regarded as a means of counterbalancing the longstanding neglect of heritage institutions. Despite well-meaning efforts to integrate a queer perspective, 'the queer eye will always see its presences elsewhere and collect the neglected,' as Patrick Steorn (2010: 136) points out. Steorn is also sceptical about the capacity of heritage institutions to capture the complexities of queer experiences and affect. Heritage institutions, he states, need to critically examine their own role as producers of knowledge, thereby addressing the power relations involved in the politics of inclusion and exclusion: 'They should allow for queer presences to occur on their own terms rather than co-opt LGBT culture as a way to seem more radical than they really are' (Steorn, 2010: 136). At the same time, critical museum studies have shown that museums' efforts to target ethnic minorities do not automatically lead to an appellation of these groups (Dewdney et al., 2013). Archives should therefore provide a space for multiple identifications, I argue, instead of creating limiting classifications. And, of course, the perspective needs to be intersectional, taking other categories, such as 'race' or ability, into account (Han, 2007). It is my contention that LGBTQ-related visibility in the archives might be at best regarded as a form of a strategic essentialism and a means of reaching audiences, but not a means in itself. Archivists will still need to face the challenge of how to navigate the ambivalences of queer visibility in order to walk the fine line between surveillance and empowerment.

NOTES

- 1 The notion of 'minor archives,' just like the concept of 'minor cinema,' is derived from the Deleuzian understanding of 'minor literature.' See Brunow (2015: 16) for an overview of the concept of 'minor cinema.'

- 2 I understand vulnerability as a relational practice, always situated in a specific sociohistorical and discursive context. Neither is it a subjective disposition (Butler, 2016: 25) nor an essentialist concept. In this sense, when speaking of 'queer vulnerability' I am well aware of the social inequalities which pervade the various queer communities.
- 3 As Sara Edenheim (2014) points out, the extent of subversion is limited: LGBT lives, made 'visible', will still be embedded in a heterosexual logic of reproduction.
- 4 This contribution draws on some of the findings from my current research project 'The Cultural Heritage of Moving Images' (Swedish Research Council, 2016–18), in which I examine the ways digital film heritage is curated and contextualised in online collections (Brunow, 2017).
- 5 The concept of 'diversity' entails a number of epistemological problems which cannot be discussed here. For heuristic reasons the use of the term in this article will follow its use in official policies dedicated to the recognition of minorities within a national framework.
- 6 www.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/bfi-diversity-standards-leaflet-2016-05-11.pdf.
- 7 See SFI (2017), Svenska Filminstitutet (2016). See also the website Nordic Women in Film. www.nordicwomenfilm.com (accessed 10 August 2017).
- 8 www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/gay-lesbian-history/ (accessed 8 January 2017).
- 9 After a workshop which I conducted with some of the archivists at the Swedish Film Institute in May 2018, more films were added to the category 'Queer' on Filmarkivet.se, including selected footage of Selma Lagerlöf and Greta Garbo.
- 10 See note 9 above. The films included in May 2018 are 'Ett besök hos Selma Lagerlöf' (1926) and 'Testfilm Greta Garbo' (1948).
- 11 Such decisions are not made by the archivists alone, though. Online accessibility to audio-visual content is limited due to strict national copyright regulations (unlike in the US, in Europe the notion of 'fair use' does not exist), including property rights issues and neighbouring rights, such as music rights (Brunow, 2017). No matter how good the intentions of the archivists are, legislation can be an obstacle to unlimited online access.
- 12 The Swedish original: 'Det är viktigt att de heterosexuella i gruppen förstår att kärleken mellan Eva och Maria bygger på sanna och värdiga känslor. Denna kärlek har samma självklara rätt till respekt som kärleken mellan kvinna och man. Många människor blir provocerade den första gången de ser homosexuella kyssas eller hålla om varandra. Man upplever det som främmande och motbjudande. Manusförfattarna hoppas att de som sett och talat om filmen ska kunna reagera mindre fördomsfullt när de senare i livet möter homosexuella män och kvinnor. (Beskrivning i faktablad från Filmo AB)'. www.filmarkivet.se/movies/eva-och-maria (accessed 20 October 2017).
- 13 My translation. Swedish original: 'En film om kärlek mellan två unga kvinnor. De möter förståelse och tolerans men också fördomar och oförståelse från släkt och vänner'. www.filmarkivet.se/movies/eva-och-maria (accessed 20 October 2017).
- 14 www.filmarkivet.se/movies/eva-och-maria (accessed 18 December 2017). In the meantime the film description has been revised while taking Ryberg's research findings into account.

- 15 See Ryberg's chapter in this volume for a historically detailed version of the events.
- 16 <https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-oxford-housing-1982-online>.
- 17 The Swedish website Filmarkivforskning.se can be regarded as an attempt to compensate for the lack of contextualisation on Filmarkivet.se. It is the result of a three-year grant (RJ 2013–2016). From 2017, it has been administered by the National Library of Sweden (see also Snickars, 2015).
- 18 However, in times of right-wing populism the vulnerability of national archives dedicated to liberal identity politics is likely to increase.
- 19 www.cinema.ucla.edu/collections/outfest-ucla-legacy-project-lgbt-moving-image-preservation (accessed 20 February 2017).
- 20 Meanwhile, the Swedish Archive for Queer Moving Images and Filmarkivet.se have initiated a collaboration in 2018.

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