

WHAT'S IN A WAR?

Did WW1 happen in 1900?
Some Cultural and Personal aspects of
Anglo-German relations

Introduction

- ▣ In this talk I explore some links between two kinds of imagination one social and one intergenerational that may help us integrate an understanding of inter-generational identity both now, in the present and in the past.
- ▣ I'm going to familiarise you with a number of popular stories concerning Anglo German relations in the decade before the first world war. These stories involve love marriage and relationship, and intimations of war and invasion.
- ▣ In the second part I'm going to talk about personal ancestry research and the light this sheds on the lives of the Anglo-German community in London before the First World War.

Dramatis theory

- ▣ I draw on the ideas of C Wright Mills, and the concept of the Sociological Imagination
- ▣ I add to that a perspective that comes originally from the psychoanalyst Sandor Ferenczi, that underlines the importance of the relational aspect to the healing of unresolved trauma
- ▣ I then go on to use a concept of two of his interpreters, Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, that of haunting, and the crypt.
- ▣ I suggest that an new form of imagination is required to understand large scale social problems like the relations between states and migrating peoples. This form of imagination based on sociological and psychoanalytic foundations is intergenerational, involving mourning and natal themes and is fundamentally relational .

Dramatis Story

- We will look at the invasion stories, stories about alien invasions and new world orders
- We will look at stories about love and conflict across the Anglo-German divide
- This can be done through the writing of George Chesney, Karl Bliebetrue, Erskine Childers, H.H. Monroe, William Le Queux, Ferdinand Grautoff, H.G. Wells, Kurd Lasswitz, D.H. Lawrence, Elizabeth Von Arnim, E.M. Forster and PG Wodehouse.
- Not all will be discussed this time though

Dramatis Story: some Anglo-German coupling and other key characters



Brother and Sister two Anglo-Germans circa 1905



Back to the future in 1871 Battle of Dorking

Box Hill-
" British Army
failed to defend
it"



The occupation of
Surbiton drawing rooms
Was "rough, boorish but
not uncivil"

In 1871 George Chesney published an anonymous pamphlet called "The Battle of Dorking". It ran to 80,000 copies in several print runs, and was translated into many languages. It is the template for all subsequent invasion stories and by far the most well known at the time. Translated for distribution to German troops in 1940 grimly retitled "What England Expects".

Chesney's 1871 Pamphlet



Invasion Fantasies British

- The Battle of Dorking marks the birth of a unified Germany, and fears about Prussian military prowess after the French defeat in the Franco-Prussian war of the same year. Over 60 stories are published between this and the start of WW1, the Daily Mail launches its reputation with Le Queux's story "The Invasion of 1910" in 1906.
- "The War of the Worlds" HG Wells 1898
- "When William Came" HC Munroe 1913
- "The Invasion of 1910" W Le Queux 1906 trans German 1907 with last chapter removed.
- "The World Set Free" HG Wells 1914
- "The War in the Air" HG Wells 1908
- "How Clarence Saved England" PG Wodehouse 1909

Invasion Fantasies German

- "Bur und Lord" Karl Bleibtreu (1900) (Boer and English)
- "Die Invasion von 1910: Einfallen der Deutschen in England" Trans Traugott Tamm
- "Der Zusammenbruch der alten Welt" (Armageddon) Ferdinand Grautoff (1906)trans English 1907
- "Auf Zwei Planetum" Kurt Lasswitz (Two Planets)(1897)trans English 1971

Anglo German romance and relationship

- Elizabeth von Arnim *Fraulein Schmidt and Mr Anstruther* (1907)
- DH Lawrence and Frieda Weekly (nee Richthofen) "*Mr Noon*" 1912/25.
- EM Forster *Howard's End* 1910
- Katrin Fitzherbert *True to Both My Selves* 1997 *Virago*

Romance v War

- HG Wells
- *Says in the World Set Free* in 1913 that knowledge and power, not love, are the essential vocation of humanity
- George Bernard Shaw says of Wells "from your Martians to your Samurai what you have been preaching all your life but the Superman?" letter 1910.
- EM Forster *women, sisters, effect reconciliation and understanding between warring men of differing nations and classes.*
- DH Lawrence *the sexes clash like the nations, war is a terrible labour to bring to birth a new Man, through the destruction of "mass man".*
- Elizabeth Von Arnim *gardens and attending to them greatly aid the emotional resilience needed to withstand wrathful husbands and men in general.*

Name changers and shape shifters?



Ancestry Records What's in a name?

- ❑ In the 1891 census all my ancestors use their German name of origin.
- ❑ By the 1901 census they have chameleon like morphed into English sounding surnames, typically picking a shared Christian name, and turning it into a last name.
- ❑ More humorously another family branch get an English name Bark, from a characteristic sound the name makes in German!
- ❑ No one naturalises, the name is just changed, and in the decade 1890-1900 I can pick out documents where both names occur, or where the German name has a line through it but is clearly present.

Marriage and children in the first migrating generation

- ❑ This is an example of ambivalence as the cultural advantages and disadvantages of being German in London wax and wane.
- ❑ Marriage and child birth are stronger markers of deeper level identity.
- ❑ In the migrating generation of my family from 1880 to 1900 the couples are German. Their children are baptised with the German family name, all Christian names are of German spelling and origin. The marriage certificates have German sounding friends as witnesses, (they are brothers and sisters in the families), the fathers have clearly stated origins in various parts of Germany.

Who marries who in the 2nd generation

- Another kind of ambivalence makes its way in for the next generation and the younger of the migrating generation which is the opening of the question "Who do you marry?"
- In the decade 1900-1910 something happens that makes it desirable to have an Anglo-German marriage. The sons of my great uncles seek English women to marry. Their daughters are not so clear, one remains with a continental choice of partner, one makes an English choice. One uncle, a widower, in 1910 seeks and finds an English wife in second marriage. It's a strong pattern, so what is going on?

Desire, partner choice and social mobility

- When deaths occur people revert to their old names. When my great grandmother dies in 1905, Rebecca my middle great uncle's English partner signs in her husband-to-be German name on the death certificate. She is co-habiting but doesn't marry into the family for another two years!
- Whose desire is in the signing? Love for the cultural other is always to some extent transgressive and can denote both upward, downward and inward mobility.

Snakes and Ladders

- In the game of cultural snakes and ladders that migrants and their families play, perceptions of downward mobility are equally powerful and can haunt generations that have no power to alter them.
- Quote my Grandmother speaking of my father in 1946 about to marry my mother "A nice man such pity he is descended from those beastly Germans" as she unconsciously echoes Noel Cowards song of 1943.

Business, Marriage and War

- ▣ "My Saxon Hairdresser" Civil war and hairdressers in the trenches Christmas 1915
- ▣ Other Saxon hairdressers two generations of Uncles and Brothers in "Shipwrights" 1890-1950
- ▣ Women in business, manicure and empathy
- ▣ Life as normal, "Tommy" to his friends
- ▣ The Middlesex Regiment and the "Kaiser's Own"
- ▣ Internment Alexandra Palace and other places
- ▣ Deportation poverty and struggle in Weimar Germany the roles reverse, Anglo-Germans and German-Anglo's.
- ▣ Georg Kenner and Rudolph Rocker
- ▣ Katrin Fitzherbert

Post Traumatic Identities

- ▣ The haunting of the German Aunts, its 1940, not 1904 but the last carrier of memory is dying.
- ▣ The extended family that disappeared, first the women then the men. 1900-1950
- ▣ First anti German riots in London 1900, 1906
- ▣ I'm German, fighting in the British Army. 1915-18
- ▣ Deep guilt about concentration camps, but didn't we liberate them?
- ▣ Admiration for German technology, despite knowing "British is best"
- ▣ Anglo- German mutual projection and stereotyping
- ▣ The loss of middle Europe, Goethe and subjective science

Georg Kenner "my first Christmas" interned at Alexandra Palace



My first Christmas
