‘Mirrors of Ourselves’: Fictional depictions of Germans and Britons in British and German popular culture 1945-1965

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Abstract

In the 1990s, Anglo-Germanist Harald Husemann boldly stated the necessity of a comprehensive survey of mutual Anglo-German depictions. While there has been intense scholarly interest in British images of Germanness in recent decades (see Firchow [1986], Cullingford and Husemann ed. [1995], Argyle [2002], Paris [2007], Scully [2012]), this has largely been limited to literary or filmic representations and the comparative, multi-media, popular culture approach has been neglected, as has the immediate post-war period.

Using popular novels, films, television dramas, radio plays and comics – many of which have never been addressed in scholarship before – this thesis maps the interconnected landscapes of British images of Germany and the Germans and German images of Britain and the British in the immediate post-war period (*ca.* 1945-1965). Each chapter takes a theme or debate in the depiction of 'Britishness' or 'Germanness' and, through close analysis of three case study texts, addresses both the prevailing stereotypes and the (sometimes surprising) counter-narratives, and positions them within broader political, social and cultural contexts.

Although the chapters can be read individually, as a whole the thesis offers a broad yet nuanced analysis of mutual Anglo-German depictions and reveals how images of both Germanness in British fictions and Britishness in German fictions can be read as 'mirrors' of contemporaneous understandings of the national self.

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My friends and family for putting up with me

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And my beloved (but bonkers) dog Lola, who sat at my feet as I typed most of these words and listened patiently to my ramblings. Not that you care, but this thesis is for you.

INTRODUCTION

Coverage of issues relating to Germany in Britain's tabloid newspapers is often accompanied by crude depictions of that nation's past, usually focusing on violent episodes in Germany's history. Potted histories skip from Nazi rule and defeat to Germany's 'domination' of the European Union (EU), specifically the Eurozone, as if the latter were as much of a fact as, and indeed predicated on, the former. In a *Daily Mail* column in April 2013, Dominic Sandbrook reduced the history of Germany to a series of attempts to 'turn an entire continent into a greater German empire'. This crudely abridged narrative enabled Sandbrook to argue that Merkel, 'using the European Union as her vehicle […] has succeeded where Bismarck, Kaiser Wilhelm II and Hitler failed' and to back up his claim with a photo-shopped image of Merkel in a military *Pickelhaube*.[1] In an article in September 2016, Sandbrook commented directly on what he perceived as the ingrained tendency among (some) Britons to read contemporary German political decisions in light of the Nazi past. 'We in Britain often like to think of the Germans as genetically predisposed to marching about in uniforms,' he wrote.[2] This tendency found expression in the 2016 EU referendum debate. A not insignificant factor (although of course just one among many) was the perceived – and largely negatively so – dominance of the EU by Germany. In late May 2016, billboards were erected on the M40 telling drivers to 'HALT ze German advance' by voting leave.[3] Although these were dismissed by the official 'Vote Leave' campaign as the work of 'dummies',[4] Eurosceptic Conservative MP Bill Cash repeated the sentiment during the BBC's

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[1] Dominic Sandbrook, 'Angela Merkel has made Germany master of Europe in a way Hitler and Kaiser Wilhelm only dreamt of. The implications are frightening', *Mail Online*, 19 April 2013 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-2311874/DOMINIC-SANDBROOK-SATURDAY-ESSAY-mousy-hausfrau-ruthless-cunning-Angela-Merkel-Germany-master-Europe-way-Hitler-Kaiser-Wilhelm-dreamt-implications-frightening.html> [accessed 1 September 2016].

[2] Dominic Sandbrook, 'By trying to atone for her country's past, the irony is Frau Merkel has awakened Germany's Nazi demons', *Mail Online*, 21 September 2016 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3799375/By-trying-atone-country-s-past-irony-Frau-Merkel-awakened-Germany-s-Nazi-demons.html> [accessed 21 September 2016].

[3] Alexandra Sims, 'Anti-EU billboards reading 'Halt ze German advance' placed on M40', *The Independent*, 29 May 2016 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/anti-eu-billboards-reading-halt-ze-german-advance-placed-on-m40-a7055186.html> [accessed 21 September 2016].

[4] ibid.

coverage of the referendum result. ‘People want to govern themselves,’ he said. ‘And I think there is a German question as well, because they are becoming increasingly dominant in Europe.’[5]

The shockwaves that reverberated through Germany in the days following the British vote to leave the EU on 23 June 2016 exposed some German perceptions of Britain and Britons as similarly lacking in nuance. Two days before the referendum, *Bild* reporters Peter Tiede and Phillip Sandmann placed a £10,000 bet on Britain voting to remain (fig. 1).[6] ‘Bild believes in Great Britain,’ Tiede reportedly said, ‘Bild believes in the common sense and rationality of the British.’[7] According to *Guardian* journalist Philip Oltermann, the vote to leave caused shock and consternation among the majority of Germans.

Figure 1: Tanit Koch, Editor in Chief of *Bild*, tweeted about the bet made by her reporters.

Why would the British, ‘essentially cautious, sceptical, small-c conservatives’, gamble so flamboyantly with their economic future, they wondered.[8] In the same article, Oltermann went on to comment on the ‘deep-rooted Anglophilia’ of Alexander Gauland, then deputy leader of the far-right party, Alternative für Deutschland (AfD). He remarks on Gauland’s tweed jacket, the portraits of British parliamentarians including William Gladstone that adorn his parliamentary office,

[5] ‘EU Referendum: The Result’, BBC1, 23 June 2016.
[6] “@BILD setzt 10.000 £ auf Remain! Plan: Freibier im Pub vom Wett-Gewinn #EUref”(@tanit, 21 June 2016): “@BILD bets £10,000 on Remain! Plan: Free beer in the pub with the winnings #EUref”.
[7] ‘Smug German paper makes £10k bet on Remain saying Britain WILL vote to stay’, *Express*, 22 June 2016 <http://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/682296/Germany-EU-referendum-bet-remain-Brexit-Britain-European-Union> [accessed 21 September 2016].
[8] Philip Oltermann, ‘What do Germans think about Brexit? They pity us’, *The Guardian*, 28 June 2016 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jun/28/philip-oltermann-brexit-germans-pragmatic-cautious-british-character-leave-vote> [accessed 1 September 2016].

and his authorship of a book about the House of Windsor. The AfD's 'thinker-in-chief', Oltermann realised, 'nurtures a deep nostalgia for the British elites of yesteryear, of a world in which people read Country Life by the fireplace at their family pile. That is how deeply myths of Britishness are hardwired into Germany's cultural memory.'[9]

The place of this thesis

Oversimplified pictures of the past 'can be disastrous for fruitful political interaction between nations', warns Richard Scully in a 2012 study of British images of Germany between 1860 and 1914.[10] He takes as his example the furore surrounding Margaret Thatcher and her Trade and Industry Secretary Nicholas Ridley in the final months of Thatcher's government. While Ridley was forced to resign after comparing Chancellor Helmut Kohl to Adolf Hitler and suggesting that the European Economic Community (EEC) was a 'German racket' designed to take over the continent, Thatcher herself was 'exposed […] as an unreformed Germanophobe,' at the now infamous – but then secret – meeting with British historians at Chequers in March 1989, declaring repeatedly that one couldn't trust the Germans.[11] As we have seen, the image of Germans as untrustworthy warmongers is still pervasive in the British media, as are similarly oversimplified images of Britons in German media – all images that, as I will show in the course of this thesis, echo the themes and characterisations that dominated the fictional depictions of Britons and Germans in the years immediately following the Second World War. (In my exploration of German images of Britons, it is solely *West* German sources and texts that I address. Where such phrases as 'German images of Britishness' are used, it is 'West German' that is implied. The rationale for not including East German sources will be given later in the introduction.) This thesis takes that period, when 'the German question' was at its most pressing among Britons and when a new West Germany was seeking to build post-war, peacetime alliances with its European neighbours, as its subject. Yet, although stereotypes, many familiar but some unfamiliar to today's consumers of popular culture, were indeed prominent, at precisely the point in history when we

[9] ibid.
[10] Richard Scully, *British Images of Germany: Admiration, Antagonism & Ambivalence 1860-1914* (2012), p.3.
[11] ibid.

might expect these to be *most* virulent, they were often being called into question. It is to that period, the immediate post-war, that we now turn, firstly with a brief discussion of two post-war fictions that exemplify some of the themes – and complexities – to be addressed in the chapters that follow.

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At three o'clock in the afternoon on Friday 7 June 1946, BBC television resumed broadcasting after a hiatus of nearly six years. At ten past nine that evening, a play called 'The Silence of the Sea' was broadcast live. Adapted from a French novel by Jean Bruller, it tells the story of a German officer billeted with a French family during the war. It opens with a tracking shot out to sea, which cross fades into a panning shot of a 'watching crowd' and 'marching Huns'.[12] A voiceover follows:

> Since they came the symbol of France has been – silence. Silence among her crowds because the Germans are marching. […] Silence at the garden gate and behind the drawn curtains as the grinding clatter of tanks passes, dust [sic]; and the unending columns – marching men and marching vehicles. The Germans.[13]

Yet what came next was no jingoistic portrayal of Germanness as synonymous with a stereotyped image of Nazism. Despite being named simply and metonymically as 'The German' in the credits, the character played by British actor Kenneth More is not a manifestation of the repressive, violent image of Germanness peddled in the opening moments of the play, but rather a cultured man delineated with nuance and complexity. 'I am musician,' he explains to his hosts. 'It's comical for me to see myself as a man of war.'[14] After he has left, his French host reflects on the encounter with this sensitive, cultured German. 'Did he exist?' he asks. 'Could he exist?'[15] The play itself poses these same questions for a post-war British audience. It provides no definitive answer, yet this sympathetic portrayal of a German character, transmitted on the first day of Britain's post-war television broadcasting and just a few hours before the London Victory Celebrations on 8 June, was a clear signal that depictions

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[12] 'The Silence of the Sea,' BBC Television Service, 7 June 1946 (BBC Written Archives Centre).
[13] ibid.
[14] ibid.
[15] ibid.

of Germans and Germanness in post-war British popular culture would not be defined solely by images of 'marching Huns'.

A decade later, comedy drama *Robinson soll nicht sterben* was released in West German cinemas. Based on a 1932 theatre play by German writer and actor Friedrich Forster, it tells the story of a group of children living and working in the filth-ridden, poverty-stricken city of London in the early eighteenth century. Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* has been banned, because a large number of sailors have absconded from duty and gone in search of the exotic island inhabited by the protagonist. The children also believe in the existence of the island and pay regular visits to Defoe himself to hear stories about it. For them, the island is a tantalising source of hope for escaping their miserable lives. 'Wir wollten auf eine Insel, wie Robinson,' is the repeated refrain.[16] This experience echoes that of the West German cinema audience, for whom fictional stories of distant times and places (including this one) were vehicles of escape from the often miserable realities of post-war life. Such stories were frequently set in Britain and often in a largely fictionalised past. Yet, as I will explore in Chapters 5 and 6, these 'escapist' texts should not be dismissed as inconsequential as they served a specific purpose for post-war Germans, offering depictions of places and people manifesting characteristics desired but lacking in their own nation's contemporary reality.

These two vastly different texts embody key aspects of Britons' engagement with ideas of Germanness and West Germans' engagement with ideas of Britishness respectively. Their stark dissimilarity is revealing too, manifesting the wholly divergent, even opposing standpoints from which the mutual perceptions of Germans and Britons were forged in the immediate post-war period. By interrogating the depictions of Britons and Germans in popular novels, films, television plays, radio dramas and comics between *ca.*1945 and *ca.*1965, this thesis explores those mutual perceptions and the standpoints that produced them, mapping the trajectories of the most significant themes in the depiction of the British/German other in this period.

[16] *Robinson soll nicht sterben*, dir. by Josef von Báky (Comet, 1957) [on DVD]: 'We wanted to go to an island, like Robinson.'

I began this project with several questions. What themes dominated the fictional depiction of Germany and the Germans in post-war Britain, and of Britain and the Britons in post-war Germany? (How) did these fictional texts participate in broader public discussions about Germany/Britain? How did these discussions or debates develop over time and in different media? What do these texts and the discussions in which they participate tell us about the British perception of Germany and the Germans (and vice versa) and perceptions of the national self? The last part of this final question emerged in the course of my study as the most significant. Many scholars before me have made the argument that the particular images an individual or group has of 'others' are in part determined by the particular perspective of that individual or group. Expanding on his oft-cited social identity theory in 1981, Henri Tajfel argued the following:

> The characteristics of one's group as a whole (such as its status, its richness or poverty, its skin colour or its ability to reach its aims) achieve most of their significance in relation to perceived differences from other groups and the value connotation of these differences.[17]

A small number of studies of Anglo-German cultural and political relations highlight this close relationship between images of the (national) self and the (national) other, arguing that images of Germanness had a particular role in clarifying, problematizing or constructing images of the British national self from the late nineteenth or early twentieth century onwards.[18] I am particularly indebted to the work of Petra Rau, who, in her study of English modernism, national identity and the Germans, argued for the '*necessity* of the German other for the *construction* of Englishness' in the early twentieth century.[19] Like Rau, when I discuss Britishness or Germanness, the Britons or the Germans, in the context of textual representations, the reader must imagine quotation marks or the caveat 'as perceived'/'as depicted'. When I use these terms, I am not subscribing to the *a priori* existence of collective national identities

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[17] Henri Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology* (1981), p.258.
[18] See Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism 1860-1914* (1980); Sonya Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Britain 1939-1945* (2003); Richard Milton, *Best of Enemies: Britain and Germany: 100 Years of Truth and Lies* (2007); R. Gerald Hughes, *Britain, Germany and the Cold War: The Search for a European Détente 1949-1967* (2007).
[19] Petra Rau, *English Modernism, National Identity and the Germans 1890-1950* (2009), p.10

or characters, but commenting on how such concepts were constructed through and debated within the texts under scrutiny.

The interplay of images of self and other in Anglo-German perceptions is also addressed by Frances Rosenfeld in her doctoral study of post-war Hamburg. 'When the British discussed the Germans, they were also talking about themselves,' she argues, referring to the drive in the British press towards condemning the German nation as collectively guilty for the Nazi war crimes, a tendency she and others interpret as more a means of reinforcing the virtue of the British war effort than a judgement about Germans.[20] Gerd Rohmann makes a similar point in relation to images of Germany in post-war English fiction, contending that 'German stereotypes in English fiction are also related to British auto-stereotypes. Anglo-German attitudes are mirrors of ourselves.'[21]

Yet works such as these, which acknowledge that when Britons or Germans discuss the German or British other, they are also (perhaps even primarily) talking about themselves, remain rarities in the field of Anglo-German studies and none attempt a thorough analysis of these mutual discussions in the post-war period. This thesis fills that gap. In the chapters that follow, I will show how images (rather than merely stereotypes) of both Germanness in British fictions and Britishness in German fictions – by which I mean not just written texts but all forms of fiction that were mass produced, easily available and intellectually and financially accessible to a large proportion of the population – can be read as 'mirrors' of the national self, or more specifically, of contemporaneous understandings of the national self.

Research context

The mid-century period has received renewed scholarly interest in the last decade, and with good reason. It was a period of intense European and global political upheaval and one defined by cultural and social conflict and change. We have seen the proliferation of publications on 1940s and 1950s British fiction and film, from

[20] Francis Rosenfeld, 'The Anglo-German Encounter in Occupied Hamburg 1945-50' (2006), p.45.
[21] Gerd Rohmann, 'Images of Germany in Post-War English Fiction' in *Anglo-German Attitudes*, ed. by Cedric Cullingford and Harald Husemann (1995), p.64.

British Fiction after Modernism: The Novel at Mid-Century (2007) edited by Lyndsey Stonebridge and Marina MacKay, and Sue Harper and Vincent Porter's *British Cinema of the 1950s: The Decline of Deference* (2007) to Alice Ferrebe's *Literature of the 1950s: Good, Brave Causes* (2012) and Gill Plain's 2013 contribution to the same series, *Literature of the 1940s: War, Postwar and 'Peace'*. This interest is in part echoed in the German academic context, where recent studies by Gerhard Bliersbach and John Davidson and Sabine Hake among others have introduced a welcome sense of complexity and nuance into readings of 1950s West German cinema.[22] Much of the work on this period, however, has focused on literary fiction and film to the neglect of popular novels and other forms of fiction (television dramas, radio plays, comics, short stories in magazines and so on). While more literary post-war texts – such as Storm Jameson's *The Other Side* (1946) and *The Black Laurel* (1947), and Siegfried Lenz's *Duell mit dem Schatten* (1953) – were often more overtly nuanced in their delineation of the Anglo/German other and thus yield more immediately rich scholarly discussion than their less literary counterparts, the focus on the former has meant the unfortunate disregard of the latter. Furthermore, studies that examine multiple forms (novels and films, for example) are almost non-existent.

Existing scholarship in the field of Anglo-German relations tends to focus on political history to the neglect of cultural production and/or lack the nuance that this thesis embraces. Many studies seek to explain Anglo-German attitudes in the twentieth century largely, or even solely, in relation to Anglo-German conflicts and therefore antagonism, a trend epitomised by John Ramsden's *Don't Mention the War: The British and the Germans since 1890* (2006). These works also tend to assume both that mutual perceptions were dominated by stereotypes and that British images of Germany (or vice versa) were essentially and straightforwardly about Britain's relationship with or attitude towards Germany (or vice versa). The examples given above – 'The Silence of the Sea' and *Robinson soll nicht sterben* – show there was far more going on. Analyses that focus on Anglo-German conflict

[22] Gerhard Bliersbach, *Nachkriegskino: eine Psychohistorie des westdeutschen Nachkriegsfilms 1946-1963* (2014); *Framing the Fifties: Cinema in a Divided Germany*, ed. by John E. Davidson and Sabine Hake (2007). See also *A New History of German Cinema*, ed. by Jennifer M. Kapczynski and Michael D. Richardson (2012); *Reflexionen des beschädigten Lebens? Nachkriegskino in Deutschland zwischen 1945 und 1962*, ed. by Bastian Blachut, Imme Klages and Sebastian Kühn (2015).

and neglect the self-reflexive aspects of images of the British/German other cannot account for texts such as these (and many others addressed in this thesis). This thesis instead acknowledges that such images were partly devices used in the construction or negotiation of the national self and is therefore able to account for the nuances, complexities and contradictions within them.

The narrative implicitly presented by Ramsden in his 2006 study is in part legitimized by the work of scholars such as Peter Edgerly Firchow, who claimed in a 1986 study that, by 1915, 'the German cousin was dead'. From then onward, he writes, 'the German national character was to remain indelibly fixed in the British psyche […] it was the "hun".'[23] Much more recently, Gisela Argyle argued that 'Hitler's dictatorship and the Holocaust have largely dominated the treatment of Germany in English post-war fiction.'[24] Such works gloss over the nuanced landscape of mid-twentieth century depictions of Germanness. Where the depiction of Germans in post-war British fiction *has* been the subject of closer study, these works focus either on canonical literary sources or on popular texts from the mid-1960s onwards, glossing over the 1940s and 1950s.[25] Meanwhile, German attitudes towards Britain post-1945 have been almost wholly neglected in academia.[26] Broadly speaking, even German scholars have been far more interested in studying images of themselves than German images of other nationalities.[27]

Works that acknowledge the importance of exploring Anglo-German relations or perceptions from both the 'Anglo' and the 'German' perspectives have provided welcome context for my explorations. In his 2007 study, R. Gerald Hughes draws on an impressive range of sources to reach a nuanced and unusually balanced analysis of Anglo-German political relations between 1949 and 1967. Studies of Anglo-

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[23] Peter Edgerly Firchow, *The Death of the German Cousin: Variations on a Literary Stereotype 1890-1920* (1986), p.178.
[24] Gisela Argyle, *Germany as Model and Monster: Allusions in English Fiction 1830s-1930s* (2002), p.181
[25] Works by Kuhn ed. (1974), Stanzel (1980), Firchow (1986) and Geyken (2002) address the former, while the latter are discussed by Trautmannn (1991) and Rohmann in Cullingford and Husemann eds (1995).
[26] Gerwin Strobl's *The Germanic Isle: Nazi Perceptions of Britain* (2000) was an important contribution to our understanding of pre-1945 perceptions of Britain (although the focus was Nazi, not German perceptions), but it remains an exception in this field.
[27] See Kornder (1934), Langenauer (1954), Kuhn ed. (1974), Haas-Heye ed. (1979), Trautmann (1991), Süssmuth ed. (1994).

German interactions in occupied Germany have also been useful. Works by Michael Ahrens (2011) and Frances Rosenfeld (2006) focus on the particular conditions in Hamburg but draw conclusions that are relevant to a zone-wide understanding of Anglo-German relations. Patricia Meehan's superb 2001 study of the British occupation offers a broader perspective, drawing on official documents and first-person testimony to paint a vivid picture of Anglo-German relations (and relationships) in occupied Germany. Interest in Anglo-German matters has also spread beyond the academic world. Several recent works aimed at a largely non-academic audience have sought to tease out the points of coincidence and divergence between the two nations through stories of individual Britons and Germans (Miranda Seymour, 2013), personal reflections on history and geography (Simon Winder, 2010) or tales of personal and public Anglo-German encounters (Philip Oltermann, 2012).

Despite the large number of books, academic and otherwise, that address Anglo-German relations from both perspectives, the scholarly comparative cultural approach has been largely neglected. The only examples are a 1971 volume of essays and an Anglo-German conference on mutual perceptions and misperceptions in 1992 in Osnabrück, organised by Harald Husemann, a strong advocate of this field of study.[28] By their very nature, however, these contributions offer only an agglomeration of self-contained analyses, while deeper and broader (and more recent) perspectives are absent. With its comparative approach, its incorporation of a range of media, its focus on texts produced for mass consumption and its combination of depth and breadth, this thesis is an original and highly valuable contribution to mid-century studies and, more specifically, to the understanding of Anglo-German cultural relations in the mid-twentieth century.

My approach

The period *ca*.1945-1965 charts the transition of Britain and Germany out of war into an unstable peace and a new "cold" conflict, this time involving a divided Germany, part allied with, part against Britain. By the mid-1960s, following the building of the

[28] *Affinities: Essays in German and English Literature*, ed. by R.W. Last (1971).

Berlin Wall and the Cuban missile crisis, the conflict cooled and the possibility of a federalised (Western) Europe came to the forefront of the British and West German political landscapes. These two major shifts form the (porous) boundaries of my period of study. The choice of a twenty-year period was also a pragmatic one, being both short enough to enable me to identify, consult and draw conclusions from all of the relevant material within the remit of a book-length thesis, and long enough to map out a narrative of fictional representations that is not dictated by momentary phenomena or short-term trends.

In choosing to study popular fictions, I am treading a well-worn path in (Anglophone) academia, first legitimized by Richard Hoggart, Edward Thompson and Raymond Williams in the 1950s and 1960s. Developments in the field of cultural studies, as it was soon termed, have provided the key concepts that underlie my approach: firstly, the centrality of texts (and, more specifically, language) in the construction and representation of particular understandings of the world; secondly, the importance of the political, economic and social contexts in the production and consumption of those texts; and thirdly, the rejection of elitist definitions of 'culture' that deride the 'popular'. This project embraces these basic tenets of cultural studies by analysing textual representations of Britishness and Germanness as products of a specific set of circumstances (rather than neutral attempts to depict the British or German nation or people) and as participants in the development of the discussions with which they engage, not as peripheral commentators reflecting on discussions happening in loftier spheres.

This project also draws on a well-established link in cultural studies between popular culture and national identity. Cultural historian James Chapman addressed this in an essay more than a decade ago:

> A characteristic of much recent scholarly work on national identity is the attention now being given to the role of popular culture in the construction of shared sets of ideas and values. For the majority of people, indeed, it is largely through popular

culture that concepts of identity and nationhood have been formed, disseminated, contested and reformed.[29]

Yet popular texts are often discussed solely (and en masse) for the purpose of identifying the 'shared sets of ideas and values' they help to construct. The corpus is surveyed, the prevailing tropes or stereotypes identified and the texts themselves are lost within the discussion of the 'concepts of identity and nationhood' they expose. I have instead given priority to the kind of textual analysis that is usually absent in studies of popular culture. My readings reveal great depth and richness within individual popular fictions and restore nuance, tension and ambiguity to the narrative that seeks to link popular culture with 'concepts of identity and nationhood'. Indeed, it is only through close readings that the highly contested nature of these concepts emerges. This thesis thus seeks to provide both breadth and depth, using close readings to tease out the nuances of each theme or debate, while drawing these individual texts from a large corpus and locating them within the broader landscape of Anglo-German relations and perceptions.

Seminal texts on nations, nationalism and national identity by Renan (1882), Gellner (1983), Hobsbawm (1992) and Anderson (1983) have informed and underpin my analysis throughout, as has Walter Lippman's ground-breaking study *Public Opinion* (1922) and Henri Tajfel's work on human groups and social categories. They are, however, peripheral rather than pivotal to my subject of study: the texts themselves and the images of Britishness or Germanness that they convey. The minor field of imagology, pioneered by Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen in the 1990s, gives primacy to written texts as vehicles for the cultural construction of stereotypes of the national self and national others and seems highly relevant to my project. Yet the model, which seems to reject the basic tenets of cultural studies, has many points of weakness, including the assumption that textual images of nationality are always simple, static, devoid of ambiguity and wholly imagined. In the introduction to his co-edited imagology handbook, Beller argues that literary texts 'reduce the complex of various characteristics of an individual to a small number of noteworthy, salient aspects and characteristics' and describes the images of nationality generated by such

[29] James Chapman, 'Bond and Britishness' in *Ian Fleming and James Bond: The Cultural Politics of 007*, ed. by Edward P. Comentale, Stephen Watt, Skip Willman (2005), p.129.

texts as 'mental silhouettes'.[30] These assumptions are confounded by the complex, volatile and circumstantial nature of post-war depictions of Britishness and Germanness discussed in this thesis and the theoretical framework that generates those assumptions cannot therefore be relied upon.

For this project, a text's literary, cinematic or visual quality is irrelevant; I am simply interested in texts that were widely accessible. Consequently, among my case studies are novels by both John le Carré, often described as a 'literary' author, and Ian Fleming, a 'popular' writer by any definition, because these texts were shared widely.[31] I have not dwelt on theatre plays, whose audiences are by their nature extremely small, especially compared with cinema audiences.[32] The only case studies I have drawn from the medium of television come from well after its emergence as a mass medium and thus a mediator of popular culture.[33] I have identified as 'British' or 'German' those texts where the majority of the people involved in its creation – including authors, directors, producers, actors, publishers, production companies – were native to Britain (including England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) or West Germany. Where the Britishness or Germanness of a case study text could be debatable, I address this explicitly.

My argument emerges out of the study of a large corpus, comprising novels, short stories, films, radio plays, television dramas and comics. Having watched, read or

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[30] Manfred Beller, 'Perception, image, imagology' in *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters*, ed. by Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen (2007), p.4, p.7.

[31] Although novel reading declined among both the British and West German populations in this period, it remained a popular leisure activity. The number of lending libraries in West Germany grew from 13,111 in 1950 to 20,550 in 1955, loaning 90-100 million books per year, the majority of which came under the heading of 'Trivialliteratur'. *Heftchenromane* and novels serialised in illustrated magazines were even more widely read, the latter attracting 10 million readers in total every week. (Jost Hermand, *Kultur im Wiederaufbau: Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1945-1965* (1986), pp.366-7.) In Britain, the late 1950s and 1960s saw the collapse of private circulating libraries such as WH Smith and Boots' Book Lovers, but the number of books issued by public libraries remained steady. As in Germany, fiction was far more popular with book borrowers than non-fiction. (Alistair Black, *The Public Library in Britain 1914-2000* (2000), p.115, pp.125-6.)

[32] Cinema attendance peaked in West Germany in 1959 – when the average citizen visited the cinema nearly 15 times every year – and fell thereafter. (Calculated from statistics given in Hans Helmut Prinzler, *Chronik des deutschen Films 1895-1994* (1995).) Attendance peaked much earlier in Britain, falling from nearly 1.3 billion visits in 1954 to under 400 million in 1963. (Peter Hennessy, *Having It So Good: Britain in the Fifties* (2006), p.537) The cinema remained however a significant purveyor of popular fictions in both countries throughout the period.

[33] West German television ownership leapt from 4.8% in 1953 to 64% in 1965 (Hermand, pp.335-7), while in Britain, half of the population was watching either BBC or ITV at peak times by 1960 (Hennessy, p.535.).

variously consumed the relevant texts, I began to identify recurring themes in the depiction of Germanness (in the British texts) and Britishness (in the German texts) that persisted across media and throughout the period. These themes, including guilt, alienness and backwardness, emerged as the key sites of contention and interest for discussions regarding Britishness/Germanness in both fictional and non-fiction texts in the period. Each of the following six chapters addresses one of these themes through close analysis of three texts. These were chosen for exemplifying a particular stance or, more often, for manifesting the tensions and ambiguities inherent within the particular area of debate. The themes I have identified are naturally not wholly distinct from one another (a German character may be depicted as both wicked and deceitful, for example, or a Briton as both old-fashioned and morally dependable) and I have sought to acknowledge these overlaps wherever they are particularly relevant. Four of the six chapters address British debates regarding Germanness, and the remaining two look at German discussions of Britishness. There is a simple reason for the imbalance: there is inequity in the quantity of material. There is a far greater number, and a far greater diversity, of British texts participating in these debates than German texts. I will explore some of the reasons for this in the following section.

Britain and Germany in the post-war period

The broad trajectory of Anglo-German relations between 1945 and the mid-1960s – enemies to allies – indicates a convergence of interests that was reflected in the period's social and cultural developments.[34] Both nations experienced significant economic growth in the period and the rapid expansion of a mass consumption society. Living standards and incomes improved exponentially and participation in leisure activities old and new burgeoned. Both Britain and West Germany experienced the growth of new media, primarily television, and the clash of progressive forces – political, social and cultural – with conservative ones, a conflict manifested in the political arena in the power struggles of Winston Churchill and his Labour opponents in Britain, Konrad Adenauer and Ludwig Erhard in West Germany. While post-war exhaustion left both nations pervaded by a 'deep longing

[34] When I use 'Anglo-German' here and elsewhere, I am referring to relations between Britain and West Germany.

for normality', according to historian Tony Judt's analysis, this was paralleled by a widespread longing for progress.[35] Nowhere was this antagonism so explicitly manifested as in the debates regarding the moral value of certain forms of modern popular culture. In Britain, moral outrage was largely focused on comics, specifically horror comics, which inspired a nationwide campaign that aimed to force a ban, and on the content of radio and television programmes. The launch of commercial television in 1955 in the form of ITV triggered a fierce debate that pitted the new channel's 'unashamedly populist' bent against the 'Reithian' demand for educational content and a high moral tone.[36]

The debate in Germany took a far more extreme form. The campaign against so-called 'Schmutz und Schund' ('filth and trash') was a continuation of decades of resistance to the popular culture of the urban lower classes. Although the 1950s saw popular culture gaining legitimacy, the struggle did not end. Novels and *Heftromane* were attacked for disseminating sexualised and violent images that supposedly corrupted German youth. The offending books were catalogued by the 'Bundesprüfstelle für jugendgefährdende Schriften' (Federal Review Board for Publications Harmful to Minors) and burned along with music records deemed immoral or buried in pulp fiction graves.[37] Not until the 1960s did West Germany experience what Werner Faulstich calls the 'Sieg der ganz neuen, bunten, hochdifferenzierten Medienkultur über die alte, überschaubare, eindimensionale und autoritäre Schwarzweisskultur der Vorkriegszeit'.[38] Yet this cultural victory did not translate into the world of German scholarship. While in Britain, the development of what became known as British cultural studies offered an intellectually rigorous challenge to the forces of cultural conservatism, no such movement emerged in Germany. There, the study of popular culture remained – and still is, to an extent, today – confined by the label 'Trivialliteratur' and a pervasive attitude that privileged

[35] Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (2010), p.82.
[36] Lez Cooke, *British Television Drama: A History* (2003), p.29, p.10, p.55.
[37] Werner Faulstich, 'Groschenromane, Heftchen, Comics und die Schmutz-und-Schund-Debatte' in *Die Kultur der fünfziger Jahre*, ed. by Werner Faulstich (2007), pp.209-213.
[38] ibid., p.213: 'victory of an entirely new, colourful, highly differentiated media culture over the old, predictable, one-dimensional and dictatorial black-and-white culture of the pre-war period.'

so-called *Hoch-* or *Elite-Literatur* above *Unterhaltungsliteratur*.[39] Studies of popular culture in the mid to late twentieth century focused on issues of value, origin, definition and impact rather than content.[40] There are still remarkably few studies that involve close analysis of popular texts and even fewer that address fictional representations of Britons and Britain in German popular culture. Indeed, the German material presented in Chapters 5 and 6 has been almost wholly disregarded by the German academic community.

The differing attitudes towards popular culture in Britain and Germany in this period are indicative of far broader and more profound divergences that are brought into sharp relief in the following chapters. In Britain, representations of Germanness in popular fictions in the immediate post-war period were partly responses to an urgent desire to understand the German people. Who are the Germans and what might they do next were two of the period's most pressing questions. In fact, the problems associated with post-war Germany became subsumed within the phrase 'the German question' (a phrase that has recently returned to debate in Britain). Many texts were characterised by nuance and ambiguity, reflecting the uncertainty that surrounded the contemporary perception of Germanness. The acknowledgement of such uncertainty and complexity was only possible, however, because the perception of the national self and of the significance of national identity was largely free of both. Tony Judt argues that 'World War Two, for most Britons, had been fought between Germany and Great Britain and the British had emerged triumphant and vindicated'.[41] Britain, a single nation, had triumphed and with it, the idea of the nation as a meaningful, definable, united entity. Indeed, there is a consensus among social historians including Peter Hennessy, Angus Calder, David Kynaston and Sonya Rose that a powerful myth of British national unity was established in Britain during the Second World War and continued into the post-war period.[42]

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[39] While British writers such as John le Carré and Graham Greene could bridge the gap between 'literary' and 'popular' fiction, the gulf between the equivalent German categories was unbridgeable in this period.
[40] These include works by Nutz (1962), Holzer (1967), Nusser (1973), Waldmann (1973) and Klein and Hecker (1977).
[41] Judt, p.161.
[42] See Hennessy; Angus Calder, *Myth of the Blitz* (1991); David Kynaston, *Austerity Britain 1945-51* (2007); Rose; Paul Addison, 'National Identity and the Battle of Britain' in *War and the Cultural Construction of Identities in Britain*, ed. by Barbara Korte and Ralf Schneider (2002), pp. 225-40.

The 1950s, however, was a period of overall decline and fragmentation for Britain, with economic growth lagging behind that of other European countries, most notably West Germany, and burgeoning class, racial and generational conflicts. The British Empire was weakening and the status of Britain as a global political force was repeatedly called into question, most notably with the debacle at Suez in 1956. As a result, British identity became an increasingly unstable concept and depictions of Germans and Germanness now served a new purpose: to shore up a particular (and nostalgic) notion of Britishness. To serve this purpose, these images had to be themselves clear, not fraught with ambiguity. Broadly speaking, Britain's changing relationship with its self-image in the 1950s triggered a flattening – a move away from complexity and towards simplicity – in the depiction of Germanness.

In her survey of 1940s British literature, Gill Plain reflects on the advantages of setting stories in the past for a nation experiencing significant problems in the present:

> The past is both fixed and mutable: within the framework of a reassuring known resolution, all manner of fantastical interventions might be imagined. The past is also a site that enables the examination of contemporary issues through a safely distancing lens.[43]

Ina Habermann argues specifically for the value of memories of conflict in the strengthening of collective identity in the present:

> Collective identity is often forged out of the deliberate remembrance of conflict and of mechanisms of othering and exclusion, such that the conflict has to be perpetuated in order to guarantee group identity.[44]

As I will explore in Chapters 1 to 4, the examination of post-war British identity frequently took the form of narratives set 'within the framework of a reassuring known resolution' (Britain's victory in the Second World War). Via 'the deliberate remembrance of conflict' and, most importantly here, 'of mechanisms of othering

[43] Gill Plain, *Literature of the 1940s: War, Postwar and 'Peace'* (2013), p.149.
[44] Ina Habermann, *Myth, Memory and the Middlebrow: Priestley, du Maurier and the Symbolic Form of Englishness* (2010), p.27.

and exclusion', these fictions offered the means through which post-war British identity could be stabilised.

Yet alongside fundamentally hostile depictions were claims to Anglo-German affinities that bore echoes of the nineteenth-century belief in the shared cultural, perhaps even racial, heritage of Britain and Germany.[45] This belief had generated an atmosphere of mutual esteem and cultural exchange and enabled historian William Stubbs to declare in 1906 that 'the best part of almost all of us is originally German'.[46] Alongside this belief was a deep and widespread admiration for the German nation, which gave rise to stories of German spies and invasions in the years preceding the First World War that presented Germany as a modern, efficient, decent nation worthy of emulation by Britain, a perspective that was not wholly quashed with the growth of Anglo-German economic and military rivalry. As Scully points out, this was not a period of total antagonism, but rather a period of on-going debate about what Germany could and should mean for Britain.[47] Despite the overall trend towards the solidification of stereotypes of Germanness in the post-1945 period, this too was a time of debate. Alongside texts that asserted the fundamental mental and emotional instability, guilt, wickedness, deceitfulness and/or alienness of Germans were fictions that problematised those stereotypes, depicting ordinary Germans who are plagued by moral dilemmas, forced by political and economic circumstances into extreme behaviours and more akin than alien to Britons (or, more broadly, to all humans). Running through all of these debates was the tension between the need to assert national character as a valid concept and nationality as a readable marker of identity – thus enabling the positioning of Germans as other or alien and their recent actions as peculiarly 'German' – and growing uncertainty as to the validity of the framework of national character on which the assertions about the nature of Germanness relied.

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[45] See G.W. Stocking, *Race, Culture and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (1968); John Mander, *Our German Cousins: Anglo-German Relations in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (1974); H.A. Macdougall, *Racial Myth in English History: Trojans, Teutons, and Anglo-Saxons* (1982); Firchow; Rosemary Ashton, *The German Idea: Four English Writers and the Reception of German Thought 1800-1860* (1994); Argyle; Scully; Miranda Seymour, *Noble Endeavours: The Life of Two Countries, England and Germany, In Many Stories* (2014).
[46] William Stubbs, *Lectures on Early English History*, ed. by Arthur Hassall (1906), p.3.
[47] Scully, p.109.

In West Germany, the crude underlying trajectory was the mirror image of the above. In the immediate aftermath of the war, in the words of historian Richard Bessel, 'the German population was battered physically, emotionally and psychologically to an extent unprecedented in living memory'.[48] Even after the initially acute concerns regarding food, clothes, shelter and safety were assuaged, Germans in all zones faced a crisis of national identity. Collective shock, humiliation, shame and resentment were joined by fundamental questions regarding the German nation. While Britons bore their national identity lightly and with pride, the vanquished were saddled with what Judt calls the 'baggage of 'Germanness''.[49]

In his pioneering study of what he terms 'banal nationalism', Michael Billig argues for the importance of banal background signifiers for the maintenance of national identity.[50] These include unwaved flags and ordinary words such as 'we' and 'here' that work on the assumption of an existing nationhood that is being implicitly, even unconsciously, evoked and affirmed in these visual and rhetorical symbols. In post-war Germany, both the idea of the German nation and the banal signifiers upon which its existence relied were far from stable. Defeated, divided, ruled by foreigners and burdened with the repercussions of the crimes committed by an extreme nationalist regime, both Germanness in its prior conceptions and the possibility of creating a nation united through identity in the future had been severely undermined.

Many of these problems did not disappear after 1949 and, for both German states (and partly because there were two German states), the idea of national identity remained fraught with problems. Images of Britain in this period had little to do with interrogating Britishness and were used instead as a means of shoring up the German self-image. While debating Germanness was used as a means of stabilising a sense of British identity, the persistence of 'the German question' meant this was always accompanied by a genuine, often urgent, desire to 'discover' the 'true nature' of Germanness. For Germany, both East and West, there was no corresponding 'britische Frage', no pressing demand to answer the question, 'who are the British?' Britain had done nothing to precipitate a crisis in the accepted understanding of

[48] Richard Bessel, *Germany 1945: From War to Peace* (2010), p.7.
[49] Judt, p.417.
[50] See Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (1995).

Britishness among Germans; rather, as for the British, it was Germanness that loomed as the period's great unanswered question. Britain, changeless and predictable in the German imagination and defined by the rigid tropes of traditionalism, decency, intelligence and moral rectitude, was used as a foil to address the problem of Germanness. Particular images of Britain were invoked as a source of hope that both the nation as a concept and the German nation specifically could be salvaged, even celebrated. Gill Plain's reflection on the past as 'a site that enables the examination of contemporary issues through a safely distancing lens' is very pertinent here. Yet, unlike in Britain, it was not representations of the recent conflict that offered that 'lens' but rather nostalgic conceptualisations of pre-war Britain.

This perspective can help explain the notable lack of development in or debate surrounding the tropes of Britishness that dominated fictional depictions in the post-war period. Depictions of Britain were not attempts to engage with Britishness, therefore internal contradictions or external political, social or economic developments in Britain failed to trigger any change in the tropes. Real post-war Britain and Britain as it existed (or needed to exist) in the German imagination were largely distinct entities. In her study of post-war Anglo-German relations, Sabine Lee argues the following:

> [In] general Germany was less concerned with Britain than vice versa. She was not really interested in the country across the Channel. Anglo-German relations are often characterized with the word <u>mis</u>understanding. In the case of German public opinion about Britain, <u>non</u>-understanding would be more appropriate [… There was a] profound lack of interest.[51]

This lack of interest is indicated in several surveys conducted in Germany in the immediate post-war period. In April 1946, 58% of Germans questioned thought that the US would be the most influential power in the coming years, while only 2% named Britain.[52] Although these statistics were collected in the American zone,

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[51] Sabine Lee, *An Uneasy Partnership: British-German Relations Between 1955 and 1961* (1996), p.88.
[52] *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany: The OMGUS Surveys 1945-1949*, ed. by Anna J. Merritt and Richard L. Merritt (1970), p.95.

where it is likely that frequent contact with Americans and little contact with Britons resulted in some bias, the gulf between these two numbers is telling. It was America, not Britain, that beckoned as the most important Western power in the post-war landscape and was the subject of far greater interest. The 'profound lack of interest' in 'real' Britain is further manifested in the frequent conflation of Britain and England, the British and the English, in post-war German popular culture. The predominance of 'England' and 'Engländer' in post-war texts does not signify a conscious – and what would be remarkably discerning – attempt to acknowledge the differences between English, Scottish, Welsh (and even Northern Irish) identities. Rather, the German (non-) understanding of Britishness was dominated by and even conflated with stereotypes of Englishness, a misrepresentation that went largely unquestioned. Tabloid newspapers such as *BILD* even seemed to use 'England' and 'Britannien' interchangeably. Occasional references to other British identities in fictions were used not to say anything particular about those identities, but simply to enliven a comical stereotype of Britishness dominated for so long by an England-centric focus. In the following chapters, I will therefore continue to use 'Britain' and 'Britishness' as the dominance of 'England' and 'Engländer' signals more a lack of understanding about, and interest in, Britain's constituent parts – an understanding unnecessary for an oblique discussion of Germanness – than an attempt to acknowledge the differences between them.

For the images of Britain that dominated post-war fictional depictions to serve their purpose, they had to be flat, rigid and (as far as possible) undisturbed by reality. Texts that broke the mould were and remained anomalies. Yet this does not mean that analysis of these depictions will be equally flat. Rather, they are a rich – and largely untapped – source of material that offers a unique insight into the negotiation of post-war German identity in the sphere of popular culture. This richness is however limited to West Germany. In East German fictions, 'streng untersucht' by a regime that sought to prevent the publication or production of fictions that did not teach 'die Vorteile einer sozialistisch orientierten Gesellschaft', a stereotyped idea of Britain was invoked largely for the purpose of celebrating the Soviet Union or denigrating the United States.[53] Used as a crude political tool or as apolitical entertainment, images of Britain in 1950s and early 1960s East German fictions offer little of interest to a scholar of Anglo-German cultural relations, while the opposite is true of West German popular texts and it is therefore these that form the basis of my analysis in Chapters 5 and 6.

As the image of a post-war West German national self began to clarify in the later 1950s, the carefully preserved image of Britishness with which it was juxtaposed began to seem weak, even laughable. The German present – dominated by consumerism, electronic mass media and youth culture – was itself now highly desirable. From this perspective, traditional, conservative Britain appeared intransigent, old-fashioned and increasingly irrelevant. While Britain's weakening

[53] Eva Parra-Membrives, 'Trivialität, Identitäten und DDR-Kriminalroman' in *Literatur am Rand: Perspektiven der Trivialliteratur vom Mittelalter bis zum 21. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Eva Parra-Membrives and Albrecht Classen (2013), p.225: 'closely scrutinized', 'the benefits of a society oriented towards socialism'. Quoting from the *Daily Mirror*, an article in East Germany's television and radio magazine *Der Rundfunk* in December 1957 celebrated the apparent demise of the 'Geschäftsmann der Londoner City mit Regenschirm, steifem Hut und Kavaliers-Taschentuch' ('businessman of London City with umbrella, stiff hat and gentleman's handkerchief'). Scientists and engineers are the future, the piece declares, and here the Soviet Union has 'die Überlegenheit' ('the supremacy') (*Der Rundfunk,* 29 December 1957). The same technique was used in fiction. In Fritz Erpenbeck's 1966 crime novel *Tödliche Bilanz*, for example, one character disparages Scotland Yard, an institution widely admired in pre-war Germany, in order to underscore the alleged modernity and efficiency of East Germany's *Volkspolizei*: 'Man sagt, es seien die besten und modernsten [Polizeimethoden] im westlichen Europa, selbst Scotland Yard sei, mit uns verglichen, nur noch ein Kriminalmuseum' ('It's said that they have the best and most modern [policing methods] in western Europe – even Scotland Yard, compared to us, is just a museum of crime, they say') (Fritz Erpenbeck, *Tödliche Bilanz* [1966], p.123). Elsewhere, in a contradictory move that highlights the pragmatic rather than expository purpose of using images of Britishness, British traditionalism was hailed as the desirable alternative to American forms of modernity. In Klaus Kunkel's 1954 crime novel *Scotland Yard schweigt,* the narrator mourns the destruction of London's traditional, even medieval, architecture to make way for US-inspired 'viereckige Kästen aus Beton und Stahl' ('square concrete and steel boxes') (Klaus Kunkel, *Scotland Yard schweigt* [1954], p.19). Indeed, in this novel anything undesirable is attributed to American modernity. Kidnapping, claims the narrator, 'aus Amerika importiert, war eine akute Gefahr geworden' ('imported from America, had become an acute danger') (p.192). British characters were used for similar purposes beyond the crime genre. *Der Traum des Hauptmann Loy* was a 1956 novel by Wolfgang Schreyer, an East German writer of adventure stories. Hauptmann Richard Loy is a British officer on board a plane flying from Tripoli to Oslo along with a disparate group of Americans. Although he is the central figure, his character – retiring, chivalrous, shrewd, fair, morally upstanding: the epitome of Englishness according to this novel – is a one-dimensional foil for the aggressive, vulgar, self-obsessed, foolish and corrupt American characters. These texts neither engage with the reality of Britain nor manifest an organic response to the question of German national identity, as was occurring in the FRG. Neither Britishness nor Germanness (of the Eastern kind) pose a dilemma, these texts proclaim, shutting down any potential for the kind of nuance, tension or ambiguity that exists in many West German texts of the same period. The countless adaptations and dubbed versions of pre-war British fictions by Oscar Wilde, Robert Louis Stevenson and Edgar Wallace broadcast on East German television are no more suggestive of real engagement with the idea of Britain than the fictions mentioned above. They were offered as popular, apolitical entertainment that might lure audiences away from West German television channels.

self-image demanded a starker delineation of Germanness against which to strengthen the reflected image, Germany was experiencing the opposite. Against Germany's strengthening self-image, the image of Britishness that had served so useful a purpose – and in part continued to do so – came to appear insubstantial in comparison.

Yet, once again, the narrative was not a simple linear one. The occupation and the sudden deluge of direct Anglo-German encounters that it spawned caused a temporary hiatus in the long-standing and largely positive image of Britain and its people, while the later growth of German national self-confidence did not destroy the deep admiration for the particular conception of Britishness that had dominated fictional depictions for so long. Representations continued both to encourage fond affection for Britain and its people and to imply the need for strong political relations with that nation. Britishness remained closely associated with moral decency and strong masculine leadership into the 1960s, offering both a model for post-war authority and heroism and an indelible reminder of the difficulties of salvaging home-grown sources of pride and continuity from the Nazi period.

…

The first chapter addresses the post-war debate regarding the (in)stability of the German nation state and national character. I use the 1959 comedy film *The Square Peg* and Ian Fleming's third James Bond novel, *Moonraker* (1955) to explore how fiction was used to shore up the inherent paradoxes in both this particular conception of Germanness and the idea of national character on which it was founded. Through a close reading of a little-known 1950 novel by John Culshaw, *The Sons of Brutus*, I question whether British preconceptions regarding German politics and the German character prevented more widespread recognition of the progress towards stability and security being made in post-war West Germany.

The question of just how the genocidal atrocities perpetrated by Nazi Germany came about and the role of nationality in that process was at the core of the debate tackled in Chapter 2. Were the Germans collectively guilty of the crimes committed by the

Nazi regime and, if so, did this signify a specific, collective form of German wickedness that would continue to find expression in heinous acts? I use close readings of the crime novel *Fallen into the Pit* (1951) by Edith Pargeter (better known by her pen name, Ellis Peters) and Basil Dearden's 1947 film *Frieda* to explore the various (and sometimes ambiguous) answers to this question that were being explored in the immediate post-war years. Finally, through a discussion of several BBC television and radio dramas from the early 1960s, I explore the impact of chronological distance from the Nazi period on the perception of collective German guilt/wickedness.

Chapter 3 addresses the question of the legibility and significance of nationality from a different perspective, tackling the trope of German deceitfulness. I use James Kinross' 1956 novel *The Pike in the Reeds*, set during the occupation, and the 1959 comedy film *Desert Mice* to explore how the generalised notion of German mendacity was fictionalised in this period. Yet the post-war years were not devoid of fictions that countered the trope. Through a radical rereading of John le Carré's *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* (1963), I explore how popular texts were also used to explode the belief that the German nation and people posed a particular threat to Britain and that nationality, once successfully unmasked, is a credible signifier for character, ideology or allegiance.

Chapter 4 addresses alienness in the fictional depiction of Germans, a concept that underpins much of the argument of the first three chapters but that also demands to be explored separately. Close analysis of the metaphors of animals, machines and aliens often used to depict Germans in post-war texts reveals how allegations of inhuman behaviour during the war years were met with metaphors of literal inhumanity. I also use Lewis Gilbert's 1960 film *Sink the Bismarck!* to explore a parallel trend that posited Germanness as the alien opposite of Britishness specifically, rather than humanity in general. The opposing argument – that Germans were more akin than alien to Britons – found expression in fictions such as the 1957 box-office hit *The One That Got Away*, this chapter's third case study.

After a brief, re-orienting *Pause*, Chapter 5, the first of two addressing German images of Britishness, deals with the depiction of Britain and Britons as stubbornly old-fashioned. Using Rolf and Alexandra Becker's 1950 detective novel *Gestatten, mein Name ist Cox*, I interrogate the dual nostalgic function of these fictions for their German readers, before offering a close reading of Josef Maria Frank's novel *Unstet und ruhelos ist das Herz*, which was serialised in *Revue* in 1953 and countered a purely nostalgic portrayal of post-war Britain. Finally, through a discussion of Franz Marischka's 1961 musical film *Am Sonntag will mein Süßer mit mir segeln gehen*, I ask why depictions of old-fashioned Britons continued to outnumber more discerning portrayals but were increasingly invoked as a source of comedy.

The post-war boom in British or British-inspired golden age crime fiction, the subject of Chapter 6, initially seems to serve a similar nostalgic purpose. Yet why should a nation plagued by issues of crime and punishment, murder and justice, unprecedented in scale and complexity, turn for entertainment to stories that centre on those same issues? Through readings of Walter Ebert's 1949 detective novel *Die grinsende Maske*, the early 1960s television crime series *Inspektor Hornleigh* and Wolfgang Schleif's 1959 film *Rommel ruft Kairo*, I explore the changing role of the British detective in West Germany in the post-war period and the remarkable appeal of the 'alternate reality' offered by these fictions.

…

What follows is not a catalogue of stereotypes, nor the delineation of two trajectories, one plotting British depictions of Germanness and the other German depictions of Britishness. Instead, several overlapping, sometimes contradictory, trajectories emerge that paint a vivid, often surprising, picture of the mutual post-war fictional depictions of Britons and Germans. Certainly, crudely drawn images of the British/German other were frequently disseminated in popular texts, but there was never a moment when stereotypes – or 'mental silhouettes' – of Britishness or Germanness were regurgitated without challenge, never a time when a single image became synonymous with Britain or Germany. The mutable, often unstable, images explored in this thesis were expressions of pervasive, sometimes troubling, questions regarding the national self, the national other and the relationship between the two.

set his stamp'.[9] 'More of a slashing attack on Germany than a balanced piece of history', according to his biographer Kathleen Burk, the book nevertheless received some effusive reviews – the historian A.L. Rowse called it 'essential reading for all those who are concerned with German affairs' – and sold more than 6000 copies within a few months.[10] The implication – that a nation full of abnormal individuals generates a national history 'of extremes' – echoed historian Rohan Butler's claim four years earlier that a 'peculiar psychological kink' among the German people was at least partly to blame for National Socialism.[11] There was no attempt by these British historians to theorize the link between individual or group psychology and the nation state, just an assertion that Germanness, whether manifested in an individual, a group or a state, was in part characterised by instability and extremity. Frequently airing their Germanophobic views in public in the post-war period, figures such as Taylor and Butler thus legitimised the continuation of an indiscriminate belief in the innate extremity and abnormality of both the German people and the German nation state.

More broadly, these competing interpretations of the German state and people reflected the growing challenge posed by alternative explanations of collective behaviour to the prevailing belief in national character, a concept looking increasingly shaky beyond the immediate post-war years. I will show how the primary 'German' trait under discussion in this chapter – a tendency to swing unpredictably between rationality and irrationality – is inherently contradictory, exposing the inadequacy of the notion of national character when trying to explain Nazism, war and genocide. Yet the numerous post-war fictions that depicted emotionally and mentally unstable Germans ignore the paradox in this depiction and the larger flaw in the notion of national character to which it points. Instead, they present this inconsistency as further proof of the instability of the German character and thus lend implicit support to the idea that such a thing exists. I will use the 1958 comedy film *The Square Peg* and Ian Fleming's third James Bond novel *Moonraker* (1955) to show how the image of German instability developed and came to

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[9] A.J.P. Taylor, *The Course of German History: A Survey of the Development of Germany since 1815* (1945), p.13.
[10] Kathleen Burk, *Troublemaker: The Life and History of A.J.P. Taylor* (2000), p.253; cited in Chris Wrigley, *A.J.P Taylor: Radical Historian of Europe* (2006), p.162.
[11] Rohan Butler, *The Roots of National Socialism 1783-1933* (1941), p.10.

encompass both the German national character and the German state. Through a close reading of John Culshaw's 1950 novel *The Sons of Brutus*, the final section will explore texts and individuals that countered the notion of a fundamental relationship between Germanness and instability, whether emotional, mental or political, and thereby implicitly countered the idea of national character on which so many depictions depended.

1. The German 'streak of hysteria'

According to Dan Stone, the irrational claims made by the Nazis and the huge emotional energy emanating from Hitler were key to the formation of British opinion about the Nazis.[12] Images of massed German crowds succumbing to the 'affective powers' of Nazism and engaged in frenzied adulation of their Führer's words suggested that the same tendencies towards irrationality and emotional fanaticism had been aroused in ordinary Germans. John Ramsden argues that the British largely took such propaganda at face value in the pre-war period. Most Britons could not see, he contends, that all of the images emerging from Nazi rallies, youth camps and the Olympics in 1936 were carefully orchestrated for propaganda purposes.[13] Images of hysterical German crowds were thus accepted by many as evidence for the notion of a specifically German form of emotional instability. This notion also had a long history, allowing observers to identify this 'trait' as a facet of Germanness rather than Nazism. In his study of Britain's cultural relations with Germany, historian John Mander argues that the idea of Germany accepted abroad in the early nineteenth century incorporated two distinct notions: pious sentimentality, epitomised by Goethe's Werther, and violent incoherent emotionalism, embodied in the *Sturm und Drang* movement.[14] Both suggested emotional instability, but it was primarily the former that persisted and was later embedded in the twentieth-century understanding of 'old Germany', a pastoral and peaceful nation inhabited by cultured and sentimental Germans. Despite what was variously understood as the demise or submergence of this 'Germany', sentimentality remained an important and usually derogatory term in discussions about the German character. A passing reference to

[12] Stone, p.11, p.21.
[13] John Ramsden, *Don't Mention the War: The British and the Germans since 1890* (2006), pp.163-5.
[14] John Mander, *Our German Cousins: Anglo-German Relations in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (1974), p. 9, p.24.

the German people as 'sentimental' in A.J.P. Taylor's 1945 study of Germany suggests that the idea was commonplace, as does its appearance in both the instructions given to British servicemen entering Germany in 1944 and in James Stern's memoir of his time spent in post-war Germany.[15] No justification for this attribution is offered in any of these diverse texts, all published within three years of each other, implying that the notion of German sentimentality was commonly accepted. Newsreels, photographs and descriptions of hysterical German crowds in the 1930s had lent credence to and intensified the notion of emotional weakness on which the idea of German sentimentality was grounded, as well as conjuring up the historical precedent in the *Sturm und Drang* movement of German emotional volatility.

Wartime fictions drew heavily on the trope of Nazi/German emotional and mental instability, implicitly rejecting the widely accepted notion (popularised first by Gustave Le Bon and then Sigmund Freud at the turn of the century) that individual character and distinctiveness are lost when a person becomes part of a particular kind of group. According to these fictions, the hysteria displayed by the German crowds in the newsreels was a manifestation, rather than subjugation, of the individual character of its members. These hysterical crowds revealed, rather than repressed, the (nationally determined) character of the individuals within it. Comedy films such as *Let George Do It* (1940) and *Gasbags* (1941) and comics such as *Knockout* depicted absurd and foolish Nazis, whose irrationality and lack of emotional control echoes the behaviour of the German crowds depicted in newsreels while also rendering them inept and ridiculous. As well as functioning as narratives of reassurance – as discussed by both James Chapman and Robert Murphy – these fictions also fulfilled a broader purpose: to consolidate an image of unstable Germanness and thereby assert both the unique susceptibility of Germans to fascism's 'affective force' and the impossibility of ordinary Britons succumbing to its power.[16] Through an analysis of *The Square Peg*, made in 1958, but harking back to the tradition of comically volatile and irrational Nazis in fiction, I will show how this image continued to serve a similar purpose well into the post-war era.

[15] Taylor (1945) p.13; 'Instructions', p.30; James Stern, *The Hidden Damage* (1990), p.77.
[16] James Chapman, *British Comics: A Cultural History* (2011), p.37; Robert Murphy, *British Cinema and the Second World War* (2000), p.44.

1.1. 'I vill decide who you are and vat you do': Mental and emotional imbalance in The Square Peg

Directed by John Paddy Carstairs and produced by The Rank Organisation, *The Square Peg* was released in British cinemas in late 1958. Despite poor reviews in the trade press – *Films and Filming* called it 'desperately witless' – the film was a resounding success with audiences and broke box office records in countless cinemas from Newcastle to Islington.[17] It stars English comedian Norman Wisdom who plays both Pitkin, a warm-hearted but rather dim road-mender turned soldier, and General Schreiber, a sentimental yet tyrannous and emotionally unbalanced fool.

Mending a road near an army base during the war, Norman Pitkin frustrates the soldiers with his tomfoolery and is called up for active service, along with the Borough Engineer, Mr Grimsdale. Posted to France, they unwittingly end up mending a road behind enemy lines. Mr Grimsdale is taken prisoner while Pitkin wanders into a local town where his uncanny likeness to the local German general causes consternation. He foolishly blows the cover of two members of the French resistance who are arrested and taken to General Schreiber's chateau. Pitkin and the leader of the local resistance tunnel into the chateau to rescue the prisoners. Meanwhile, Schreiber is enjoying an amorous tryst with opera singer Gretchen von Schmetterling. In an amusing sequence of events, Pitkin disguises himself as Schreiber and, after locking him inside his own bathroom, is forced to take the general's place with Gretchen at the piano and to sing Schubert duets. His attempts are comically atrocious and he soon excuses himself and secures the release of the prisoners, still maintaining his disguise as Schreiber. They escape, but Pitkin is caught at the gate and sentenced to death. A moment before his execution, he falls down the original tunnel leading under the chateau wall and escapes. Back in England, he is promoted to mayor.

The duality of Norman Wisdom's performance explicitly invites us to compare and contrast his two characters. Pitkin, a variation on Wisdom's even more farcical and

[17] *Films and Filming*, February 1959; *Kinematograph Weekly*, 22 January 1959 and 5 February 1959.

slapdash character of 'The Gump', embodies a combination of traits that were understood to be part of the 'British' character at various times in the three decades prior to the film's production. Like Sidney Strube's 'Little Man', who appeared in the *Daily Express* between 1920 and 1947, he is kindly, modest, humorous, small, obstinate and easily bewildered. He is the little man against the world, one of the 'enthusiastic amateurs' or 'whimsical fellows' to whom J.B. Priestley paid tribute in his *Picture Post* paean to the British people in April 1945.[18] Yet Pitkin is also brave, tenacious and enterprising, qualities that were increasingly associated with Britishness during and after the war, most notably in relation to the myths that grew up around the retreat from Dunkirk and the Blitz and instigated in part by Priestley in his Sunday evening BBC broadcasts. The British people were no longer just 'simple, kindly [and] humorous' but also 'brave', he argued in a September postscript. 'We're the British people being attacked and fighting back.'[19]

In Pitkin, each of these traits is exaggerated for comic effect but the core of his character constitutes an established (and admirable) notion of Britishness combining gentleness and tenacity, silliness and perspicacity. We are invited to read Schreiber, Pitkin's double, in the same way, that is, as an embodiment of his own nation's 'character'. Within this framework and viewed from the perspective of a 1950s British audience, his character is wholly comprehensible. Not only does his emotional and mental instability reflect contemporary British ideas about Germanness, but his arrogance, aggression, militarism and authoritarian behaviour are also consistent with an established post-war image of Germany, and one that directly opposed the image of Britishness described above. A comic scene in which Pitkin is forced to act as Schreiber's literal mirror image highlights the perfect opposition of their individual and national characters by rendering it visual. The ruse works (for a while) because Pitkin is both Schreiber's duplicate and his exact inverse (fig. 2).[20]

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[18] *Picture Post*, 28 April 1945.
[19] J.B. Priestley, *Postscripts* (1940), p.69.
[20] *The Square Peg*, dir. by John Paddy Carstairs (Rank, 1958) [on DVD]. Same reference for all future screen shots and quotations from this film.

Figure 2: Pitkin stands in for General Schreiber's reflection (both played by Norman Wisdom).

Wisdom's two characters work as embodiments of national character because they are one-dimensional stereotypes. As Andrew Stott points out in a recent study, comedy usually uses stock characters, characters that are 'one-dimensional in the sense that they are apparently unable to learn and change'.[21] Such characters are often found in fictions that discuss and shore up notions of national character and difference as these rely on the assumption that such identities are fixed and replicated across all members of the nation.[22] Pitkin and Schreiber are two such characters, their lack of change or development affirming the validity of both the two particular conceits of national character they embody and the broader notion of nationally determined character that underlies those conceits. The well-rehearsed trope of German mental and emotional instability and the contrasting and equally prevalent image of British stoicism and placidity are invoked to achieve this. Being well known and widely accepted, these tropes were particularly useful in reasserting the validity of the idea of national character, but were also at the heart of the need to do so. For the idea of German instability, as well as producing comical depictions of hysterical Nazis, formed the core of an explanatory model for Nazism, war and

[21] Andrew Stott, *Comedy* (2014), p.41.
[22] As I explore in Chapter 2, such assumptions are disturbed by the fictional depiction of individuals with nuanced personalities subject to change and development.

genocide that located these as German phenomena. If this idea or the assumption of fixed national character on which it rested were undermined, the alternative explanation – that a combination of historical, political, economic and social factors, independent of nationality or national character, was to blame – would be strengthened. It was far less troubling to continue to blame the Germans' 'peculiar psychological kink' for the Nazi regime's atrocities.

To the twenty-first century viewer, the character of Schreiber is an absurd caricature of a particular idea of Germanness made popular by countless clichéd depictions of German officers in British wartime cinema.[23] This figure, analysed astutely by Raymond Durgnat in his seminal 1970 text on British cinema, boasts a 'sabre scar', speaks with a 'courteous hiss' and sits at a grand piano with a wine glass, 'finally bursting out with a maniacal high-pitched shriek'.[24] Yet Wisdom's own account of the casting and filming process tells a different story. Already cast in the role of Pitkin, Wisdom was asked by screenwriter Jack Davies to play the role of the general as well. He agreed but Carstairs was unhappy with the decision and initially refused to direct the scenes in which Wisdom was to play Schreiber. 'I've got to have an actor,' he said. 'It's an acting part, not comedy.'[25] Wisdom, recognising the part was 'straight' not comedic, played his first scene as Schreiber 'dead straight' and won Carstairs over immediately, according to the account given by Richard Dacre in Wisdom's biography.[26] This incident is highly instructive for our reading of the film. Schreiber is not intended to be a comical caricature but an earnest depiction of a particular idea of Germanness. That this character – an obvious caricature to today's audience – could be understood as 'straight' suggests that this representational trope of 'the Germans' had become so embedded in the post-war British public imagination that it was no longer recognised as a construct. For that audience, Schreiber's comic power was rooted in excess of character, not excess of characterisation. If the audience had been allowed to perceive the stereotype rather than the character as ridiculous, the film would no longer be reassuring comedy but

[23] A notable exception is Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's 1943 film *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp*, in which Anton Walbrook plays Theo Kretschmar-Schuldorff, a morally upstanding and wholly likeable German officer who wishes defeat to the Nazis.
[24] Raymond Durgnat, *A Mirror for England: British Movies from Austerity to Affluence* (2011), p.125.
[25] Norman Wisdom, *My Turn: Memoirs* (2002), p.204.
[26] Richard Dacre, *Trouble in Store: Norman Wisdom, A Career in Comedy* (1991), p.40.

instead transgressive in its explicit rejection of a key post-war trope of Germanness and implicit questioning of the concept of nationally determined character.

We first meet General Schreiber at his interrogation of Mr Grimsdale, during which he displays extreme emotional volatility and irrationality. At the scene's opening, however, these traits are hidden. Schreiber sits behind his desk, smoking a cigarette, his face impassive, his movements measured and his voice calm. The impression is of a dispassionate and self-possessed man of authority. As Mr Grimsdale enters, however, and asks him smilingly why he is dressed up like a Nazi general – a comment that is humorous on both the fictional and metafictional levels – Schreiber's composure dissipates and is quickly replaced with anger. He slaps Mr Grimsdale's hand away and shouts, 'Vat?!', enraged that his authority is not being respected. To a modern audience, his stereotyped accent and exaggerated gestures are humorous indications of caricature, yet the discovery that Schreiber's character is being played 'straight' invites us to read his outburst as part of a portrayal of unstable Germanness that met the expectations of a 1950s British audience accustomed to a particular representational trope. The comedy for that audience was generated by the (individual and national) German character being depicted, not by Wisdom's rendering of the stereotype. Put another way, we must assume the audience was laughing directly at 'the Germans', not at what we today see as a caricatured depiction of a set of tropes associated with Germanness.

Schreiber proceeds to question Mr Grimsdale. At the moments when Schreiber is in control of the situation, such as when he issues a threat of death to his prisoner if he refuses to talk, he reverts to his calm, composed demeanour of the scene's opening. Yet we soon realise that his sense of control relies on his ability to determine not only the future existence (or not) of his prisoner but also, wholly irrationally, that prisoner's identity. Before asking any questions, Schreiber has decided that Mr Grimsdale is Henri le Blanc, leader of the French resistance. 'You are le Blanc', he asserts quietly with a smug smile, jabbing Mr Grimsdale in the neck with his baton, in no doubt that his own irrational convictions will be borne out by reality. Yet it is inevitable that this desired total control over the situation is challenged by Mr Grimsdale's insistence on the truth, and when this occurs, Schreiber quickly loses control of his emotional and rational faculties. He bursts out, ‘Silence! I vill decide who you are and vat you do. I vill decide!’ His eyes widen, his chin juts out and he jabs Mr Grimsdale in the chest in a petulant manner (fig. 3). His movements become quicker and more frenzied and his voice louder and harsher. In Durgnat’s words, the ‘courteous hiss’ becomes a ‘maniacal, high-pitched shriek’. Again, the comedy for the contemporaneous audience was provided by the spluttering, gesticulating Nazi on the screen (not by the stereotype that generated the image) as well as by the radical contrast with Mr Grimsdale, the epitome of ‘British’ stoicism, who refuses to be cowed by Schreiber.

Figure 3: General Schreiber (right) interrogates Mr Grimsdale (left, played by Edward Chapman).

In a later scene, set in a large, opulent chamber in Schreiber’s chateau, the German general is enjoying an evening with Gretchen von Schmetterling. The two Germans drink champagne, simper indulgently, giggle hysterically and engage in excessively sentimental conversation before singing a Schubert duet in a melodramatic manner. Everything is excessive, from their hilarity at Schreiber drinking champagne out of Gretchen’s (open-toed) shoe and the elaborate furnishings and costumes to Gretchen’s gluttony and Schreiber’s overblown operatic performance. The whole sequence is a caricatured enactment of the conventional understanding of ‘old Germany’, incorporating (and parodying) its high culture, its sentimentality and its saccharine language ('mein Liebling, how I have longed for this moment'). The stereotype expands during the scene to embrace the violent emotionalism associated with the *Sturm und Drang* and, more recently, Nazism, alongside the conventional image of 'old Germany'. When events in the world do not meet their expectations (as we saw in the earlier scene), Schreiber and Gretchen's simpering sentimentalism quickly turns to acute anger and insult. Gretchen having mistaken Pitkin for Schreiber and Schreiber mistaking Pitkin's singing for Gretchen's, they trade insults in a melodramatic sequence that exposes and mocks their emotional volatility and inability to rationalise. Gretchen tosses her head theatrically and laughs scornfully, proclaiming in a loud and guttural voice, 'Tonight, you sing like an old crow!' Schreiber responds with his own, less imaginative, insult – 'You also vere singing bad' – accompanied by a severe glare and a puffed out chest.

Gretchen lets out an extravagant groan and turns her head away from Schreiber, as if unable to look at him (fig. 4). When she turns her head back, she sees Pitkin in the doorway and, confronted with two 'Schreibers', she faints in the ultimate expression of excess emotion. In this scene, the acute irrationality and capricious emotionalism of both German characters are foregrounded and further emphasised through contrast when Pitkin, the epitome of so-called British understatement, amateurism and ordinariness, tries to simulate his German counterpart's operatic and emotional excesses. His discomfort is obvious (and comical) as is his bewilderment when he must later imitate Schreiber's aggressive manner in order to access and release the prisoners. He remains an ordinary man out of his depth in a world of excess, volatility, illogic and unpredictability.

Figure 4: Gretchen von Schmetterling (Hattie Jacques) is outraged at General Schreiber's criticism of her (that is, Pitkin's) singing.

1.2. 'Thousands of disorganised, hysterical, screaming Germans': The developing stereotype of German instability

The unstable German appears in numerous post-war British fictions.[27] Several wartime and post-war factors encouraged the preservation of the trope, which was nevertheless dogged by ambiguity and contradiction. At the heart of this ambiguity was the question, how could Germans be methodical *and* irrational, emotionally cold *and* hysterical? Threatening to undermine both the notion of German instability and the idea of national character on which it was founded, this question was met with various responses, fictional and otherwise, that tried to explain the apparent paradox by the Ministry of Information in a pamphlet by J.B. Priestley published in the early stages of the campaign to arouse hostility towards the whole German nation. A 'highly influential middlebrow writer who captured, expressed and shaped the mood of the interwar period' and who was 'perceived as an embodiment of Englishness', Priestley was particularly useful to propagandists seeking to unite the nation against the enemy.[28] 'When their madness comes upon them', Priestley wrote of the German people, they kill without pity, 'roused to senseless fury'.[29] Irrationality is signified in the terms 'madness' and 'senseless', while 'fury' indicates a lack of emotional restraint. The ideology and rhetoric emanating from such a nation could surely have no legitimate basis, being born of hysteria rather than cool, rational thought. And again, in the case of the Germans, 'senseless' group behaviour was presented implicitly as evidence of the 'madness' of individual Germans rather than of the suppression of individual character. The existence of collectively shared – more specifically, nationally determined – character was thereby given implicit support. Priestley's language also served to bolster pride in Britishness. Traits such as stoicism, stolidity, frugality, modesty and pragmatism belonged to a long-standing idea of Englishness (frequently conflated with Britishness), epitomised by the stolid John Bull, but were viewed as potential weaknesses in a modern global conflict. As Peter Mandler explains in his study of the English national character, in the inter-war years the figure of John Bull had lost some of his aggressive, ruggedly individualist nature and morphed into Strube's 'Little Man', a kindlier, gentler, more reserved figure.[30] Yet, as part of the official discourse to establish Britishness and Germanness as opposites, these traits came to signify balance and ordinariness – the celebrated 'middle way' – in contrast with Germany's 'extremist tendencies'.[31]

Priestley's 'Postscripts', broadcast between June and October 1940, epitomise the celebratory attitude towards ordinariness, frequently invoked with an implicit

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[28] Ina Habermann, *Myth, Memory and the Middlebrow: Priestley, du Maurier and the Symbolic Form of Englishness* (2010), p.45.
[29] Cited in Ian McLaine, *Ministry of Morale: Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in World War II* (1979), p.146.
[30] Peter Mandler, *The English National Character: The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (2006), p.176.
[31] ibid., p. 202; from government documents on 'The German Character' issued to all officers of the Control Commission by Research Branch, Control Commission for Germany, 1 March 1945, cited in *Conditions of Surrender: Britons and Germans Witness the End of the War*, ed. by Ulrike Jordan (1997), p.133.

condemnation of its opposite, extremity. In several different postscripts, he eulogised the 'ordinary British folk' as the 'true heroes and heroines of this war', while in others condemned the enemy's volatility and irrationality.[32] Recalling a recent excursion to the countryside, he muses:

> I remember then how this island is threatened and menaced; how perhaps at this very moment, thin-lipped and cold-eyed Nazi staff officers are planning, with that mixture of method and lunacy which is all their own.[33]

The following week he invoked the threat posed by 'half-crazy German youths' to British 'women-folk' listening to the news 'as they knitted by the hearth', a deliberately conceived image of ordinariness.[34] In this schema, Britons were stable and predictable while Germans 'went mad', were 'roused to senseless fury' after a period of (apparent) sanity, were 'half-crazy' or combined 'method' with 'lunacy'. The paradox in this depiction is already apparent – how can someone, let alone a nation, be 'half-crazy' or both methodical and lunatic? Yet 1930s newsreels of events in Germany seemed to offer grounds for this paradoxical trope, depicting sequences of perfectly choreographed military parades and bands juxtaposed with images and audio of swarming, shouting crowds of feverish Germans, all jostling for a better view of their Führer.[35] Such images suggested a type of bipolarity, specifically extreme rationality and irrationality, callousness and hysteria, that was frequently incorporated into wartime and post-war public and fictional debates about Germanness.[36] Aside from the incoherence of ascribing such contradictory traits to a nation's character, there was ambiguity within the trope that found expression in many fictions. Were Germans lineally bipolar, veering unpredictably between efficient rationality ('method') and hysteria ('lunacy'), or was the former only a veneer for the latter? Does Schreiber swing between logic and illogic, frigidity and emotion, or is rationality merely a well-polished façade for the irrationality and hysteria that is the core of his character? The same question could be asked of the German protagonists in many other fictions – Dr Bruckner in *Counterblast*, General

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[32] Priestley (1940), p.64.
[33] ibid., p.7.
[34] ibid., p.11.
[35] See the clip 'Hitler in Berlin' on the British Pathé website, for example. <https://www.britishpathe.com/video/hitler-in-berlin> [accessed 11 August 2017].
[36] I am using bipolar in the sense of 'having or relating to two poles or extremities'.

Hammerfurter in *Private Angelo*, Hitler in *The Two-Headed Spy* and Captain Scheffler in *Mystery Submarine*.[37]

Although events in the final months of the war seemed to give validity to the idea of German mental and emotional instability, ensuring the preservation of it beyond the conflict and its propaganda, the ambiguity was not resolved. Yet at different points in the post-war period, each of the two poles (method and lunacy) gained prominence in British discourse. Dominant in the immediate post-war discussion was 'German' hysteria. Reports and images of a ruined, disordered Germany and of the chaos at the newly liberated concentration camps were not conducive to assertions of 'German' logic and rationality, but ideal for proclaiming the opposite. Instructions produced by the British Foreign Office for troops entering Germany in 1944 warned of the 'streak of hysteria' in the German people who lack a 'well-balanced mind'.[38] This imbalance of mental and emotional faculties seemed borne out by the decision of the Nazi elite to continue fighting long past the point when Germany's defeat was assured and by instances of mass hysteria as groups of Germans retreated from the oncoming troops. According to the *Daily Express* on 8 May 1945, one eye-witness of the final battle on the Western Front saw 'thousands of disorganised, hysterical, screaming Germans', trampling each other and pushing old women out of boats in order to save themselves.[39] An article on the so-called German 'Werewolves' published just a few weeks earlier in the same newspaper mentioned the 'hysteria' in the German 'make-up' as if this were an acknowledged truth.[40] The liberation of the concentration camps, primarily that of Bergen-Belsen, added fuel to the claims of German delirium, provoking accusations of 'German maniacal guilt' and assertions that Germany must be 'restored to sanity', the images from the camp taken as evidence of that nation's insanity.[41]

[37] Depictions of Hitler were and continue to be dominated by the myth of his tendency towards irrationality, paranoia and impulsive rage combined with the stereotype of German volatility (Hitler's Austrian origin was all too often ignored). With the extra impetus provided by this myth, Hitler became the ideal figure through which to epitomise German mental and emotional instability, and, as head of the German state and leader of the German people, was useful as a representative of the instability of both.
[38] 'Instructions', p.30.
[39] *Daily Express*, 8 May 1945.
[40] *Daily Express*, 3 April 1945.
[41] *Daily Mirror*, 23 April 1945; *Picture Post*, 16 June 1945.

Whether understood as a core characteristic of Germanness or one polarised extreme, mania was at the forefront of discussions regarding Germany at this time. Also writing in 1945, Lord Vansittart condemned the British tendency 'throughout the whole of this latest and greatest outbreak of German homicidal mania […] to address the German nation as a reasonable being'. That, he wrote, 'is a deep-seated misjudgement of the German character'.[42] His critique was based on an implicit belief that the appearance of 'reasonableness' projected by Germany in the pre-war and even wartime years was a façade for nationwide and innate unreasonableness or irrationality.

Continued allusions to a particular form of German hysteria and illogic were also a useful means of maintaining pride in stoical Britishness. In his seminal analysis of early post-war Britain, David Kynaston cites Churchill's speech made shortly after Germany's surrender, in which he praised Britain's stoicism, and later argues that stability and normality were high priorities for the majority of Britons in this period.[43] Pride in these values – and the belief that Germans lacked them – even fed into occupation policies, as Frances Rosenfeld demonstrates in her thesis on Anglo-German encounters in occupied Hamburg. Projected as a 'stable, secure, confident, well-balanced' society, Britain was held up as a model to be emulated by the 'pathological' Germans.[44]

Yet over time and as distance from the immediate post-war chaos increased, the discourse shifted from the 'German' excess of emotion to a lack of it. The notion that rationality was a key part of Germanness – rather than just a façade – returned, partly in response to the belated recognition of the highly organised and systematic nature of the Nazi crimes. By 1965, the tabloid press was emphasising the 'method' rather than the 'lunacy' involved in these crimes, claiming that the Holocaust was 'a gigantic murder operation against mankind organised in true German fashion'.[45] Here, logic is presented as an essential (a 'true') part of Germanness, not the antithesis of or a façade for irrationality and mania but a partner in crime. Logic or

[42] Robert Gilbert Vansittart, *Bones of Contention* (1945), p.39.
[43] David Kynaston, *Austerity Britain 1945-51* (2007), p.11, p.633.
[44] Francis Rosenfeld, 'The Anglo-German Encounter in Occupied Hamburg 1945-50' (2006), pp.174-6.
[45] *Daily Mirror*, 15 March 1965.

'method' – in the form of organised rallies, concentration camps with efficient registration, deportation and 'population management' procedures, and rhetoric intended to justify persecution and genocide – enabled the 'lunatic' policies of an extreme ideology, such as the 'gigantic murder operation against mankind', to be carried out.

The ambiguity and contradiction in the trope of German instability were both its greatest weaknesses and its greatest strengths. Different aspects of the trope could be invoked in different circumstances to 'explain' the rise of Nazism, war and genocide. With each invocation – whether the focus was on hysteria, efficiency or a combination – the trope and the idea of national character on which the explanatory model and the image of stable Britishness depended, were strengthened. The long-standing and largely benign trope of German sentimentality, while not disappearing, had expanded and morphed into an intensely malignant stereotype. Although ripe for comedy by the late 1950s and with an increasing focus on German 'method' rather than 'lunacy' in public discourse, the stereotype did not disappear from non-comedic popular fiction. Initially seeming to challenge the trope, Captain Scheffler, protagonist of 1963 war film *Mystery Submarine*, is pragmatic and calm, an admirable naval leader. Yet in the final scenes he rapidly transforms into a hysterical, aggressive tyrant whose irrational decisions condemn his crew to death. And so Priestley's 'half-crazy' German lingered on.

2. 'Will the Germans be democratic for long?' The fear of German political instability

'As for the Germans', M muses at the end of Ian Fleming's third Bond novel *Moonraker* (1955), 'Well, we all knew there was plenty of Nazism left and this will make the Cabinet go a bit more carefully on German rearmament.'[46] The comment is provoked by the actions of the villain Hugo Drax, an embittered half-English, half-German Nazi who is in the service of the Soviets and bent on the destruction of Britain. Ostensibly working to produce a nuclear missile to enable Britain to defend itself against its Cold War enemies, he is actually developing the missile with the

[46] Ian Fleming, *Moonraker* (1955), pp.248-9. Same reference for all future quotations.

aim of firing it into the heart of London. Bond is sent to investigate the death of a worker at the site and, with the help of Gala Brand, uncovers the truth and diverts the rocket into the North Sea, killing Drax who was hoping to escape in a Russian submarine.

Far from passing almost unnoticed in Fleming's fiction, as Lars Ole Sauerberg claims, Germany and Germans played a key role in several of his novels.[47] Critic Jeremy Black suggests that Fleming's characterisation of the German villain in *Moonraker* is a marker of his 'racism'. He argues that M's statement 'reflected Fleming's concerns about German rearmament, concerns born from his distrust of the Germans and his belief in national stereotypes'.[48] In arguing this, Black wrongly conflates Fleming and the novel's narrator. Umberto Eco's assertion that Fleming's villains stem from 'reaction to popular demand' is far more useful here.[49] In *Moonraker*, as so many of Fleming's novels, the nature and national identity of the villain – the former depicted as the corollary of the latter – are symptomatic of perceived contemporary threats to British interests. The timing of *Moonraker*'s publication alone is very revealing. It was published on 5 April 1955, just a month before the Federal Republic of Germany was given permission to create a civilian controlled and democratic *Bundeswehr* and to join NATO. This followed nine months of negotiations after France rejected the Pleven Plan, through which West Germany would have been permitted military forces functioning as part of the European Defense Community (EDC). At the heart of the – at times heated – debate regarding West German rearmament was the issue of political stability. How stable was the alliance between the Federal Republic and the West? Was a rearmed Germany likely to suddenly switch allegiance to the Soviet Union? Or was the rearmament of West Germany necessary to fully anchor the state within the Western alliance?

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[47] Lars Ole Sauerberg, *Secret Agents in Fiction: Ian Fleming, John le Carré and Len Deighton* (1984), p.157.
[48] Jeremy Black, *The Politics of James Bond: From Fleming's Novels to the Big Screen* (2000), pp.19-20.
[49] Umberto Eco, 'The narrative structure in Fleming' in *The Bond Affair*, ed. by Oreste del Buono and Umberto Eco, trans. by R.A. Downie (1966), p.59.

in British fears of future German extremism. As late as 1962, a review published in the British cinema magazine *Films and Filming* could assert quite boldly, 'In Germany it is very easy to influence people. The whole development of the Nazis was nothing else than the influence of people'.[56] Implicit in this sweeping statement is the assertion of both stereotypes presented in this chapter: Germans who are mentally and emotionally weak (therefore susceptible to propaganda) and a German state that tends to extremes (and uses propaganda to enforce its ideology).

Concern that the German state (and its citizens) might suddenly switch allegiance, swinging either towards Nazism or Communism, were met with British policies that focused on consolidating Germany's political and cultural links with the West. British occupiers established close control of cultural production and dissemination through, for example, the Book Selection Committee, the aim of which was, according to Rhys W. Williams, to turn 'Germans into democrats'.[57] If Germans were so easily influenced by propaganda, could they not be persuaded to ally with a centrist, democratic ideology rather than an extreme, undemocratic one? As regards the German state, Hughes contends that 'the Federal Republic had little option but to choose the Western camp, given the fact that isolationism and communisation were both very unpopular in the FRG'.[58] Yet the British government continued to interpret positions taken by the German state on various issues according to a belief in that state's fundamental instability and unpredictability. Bonn's 'intransigent stance' on the Oder-Neiße line, for example, was taken as further evidence of a German tendency towards extreme behaviours and inability to take the 'middle way'.[59]

The parallel concern, also explored in fictional form in *Moonraker*, was that destabilising forces could hide beneath the surface of the embryonic West German democracy and later emerge to plunge the nation – and possibly all of Europe – into conflict. Historian Barbara Marshall contends for example that the markedly slow and controlled licensing of political parties in the British zone was rooted in the

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[56] *Films and Filming*, April 1962.
[57] Rhys W. Williams, ''The selections of the committee are not in accord with the requirements of Germany': Contemporary English literature and the Selected Book Scheme in the British zone of Germany (1945-1950)' in *The Cultural Legacy of the British Occupation in Germany*, ed. by Alan Bance (1997), p.125.
[58] Hughes, p.38.
[59] ibid., p.46

suspicion that a threatening German force could emerge under the guise of a democratic group.[60] Developing political movements and parties were met with distrust, as was the Federal Republic's first government, led by Adenauer. By 1951, however, Adenauer was widely perceived as a powerful 'force for stability' in the new republic and, despite many disagreements between Britain and Germany, 'there was little real doubt amongst British policy-makers as to the peaceful intentions of the Adenauer government.'[61] Yet, almost two decades after the end of the war, fears regarding the relative political stability of Germany were still being voiced. In March 1963, Prime Minister Harold Macmillan – a renowned anti-German but echoing a still significant concern – mused in his diary, 'Will the Germans be democratic for long?'[62] Indeed, as Hughes argues, 'many in Britain feared the "old" Germany was simply awaiting the demise of the democratic experiment of Adenauer to return to centre stage.'[63]

2.2. A metonymic relationship: Hugo Drax and Germany

Emotionally and mentally unstable, Hugo Drax exemplifies the stereotype of Germanness discussed earlier, albeit in a far less comic form than Wisdom's General Schreiber. Both physically large with 'unnaturally long' thumbs (46) and a 'powerful nose and jaw', and displaying 'bullying, boorish' behaviour (45), he is depicted when we (and Bond) first encounter him during a game of bridge as a man of excess, conspicuous in a group of otherwise well-mannered and unremarkable British men. His hair is described as 'a riot' and his face as 'flamboyant' (45), metaphors signifying volatility and turbulence. These outward indicators of extremity and imbalance are soon borne out as his guise of sanity and controlled emotion, adopted as part of his role of English gentleman, slips and he is exposed as a 'raving paranoiac' (86), but one whose self-proclaimed 'watchword' is 'precision' (221), borne out in his actions. The stereotype of German efficiency and 'method' juxtaposed with 'lunacy' looms large here. Drax is depicted employing stereotyped

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[60] Barbara Marshall, 'British Democratisation Policy in Germany' in *Reconstruction in Post-War Germany: British Occupation Policy and the Western Zones 1945-55*, ed. by Ian D. Turner (1989), p.209.
[61] Hughes, p.18, p.23.
[62] Cited in Hughes, p.59.
[63] Hughes, p.17.

German efficiency and 'precision' to implement the ideologies generated by the equally stereotyped notion of German lunacy. The revelation of his true (German) character, indicated by the sudden explosion of German language in his dialogue, is described as the exposure of 'the man behind the mask' (184), alluding to the depth model of instability and indicating that his guise of sanity was, like his sham allegiance to Britain, purely a façade. As he tells his captives about his lifelong loathing of England and his love for Germany, dispassionate narrative gives way to uncontrolled fury. His words pour 'excitedly from his lips' and Bond watches a 'fleck of foam gather at one corner of his mouth and grow' (219). The first phrase suggests Drax's gradual loss of control over his emotion and thus over his own language – his words are the active subject of the verb ('pour'), while Drax is passive. The latter phrase projects a conventional image of insanity, one that Bond explicitly invokes as he calmly diagnoses Drax as a 'mad dog' (222), which works (as intended) to hasten Drax's descent into hysteria.

Drax's second role – a metonym for an unstable German state – is closely linked to his first and made explicit in M's remark in the novel's final chapter quoted earlier: 'As for the Germans. Well, we all knew there was plenty of Nazism left and this will make the Cabinet go a bit more carefully on German rearmament.' M reads Drax as a metonym for instability and unpredictability in the German state and, even more significantly, assumes the Cabinet will do so too. And by invoking the question of German rearmament – the first and only reference to this in the whole novel – at the point when the reader is emerging from the fictional into the real world, Fleming ensures that he or she is left pondering the relevance of this story to that topical question. Specifically, the reader is invited to reflect on the link between isolated incidents of Nazism in Germany – as reported in the British press – and the question of West German rearmament.

After the discovery of one Nazi plot in Germany in January 1953, the *Daily Express* asked, 'Can it really be said that the Germans have changed?' The plot was read as an indication of widespread Nazi allegiance in Germany, disguised with a 'façade of democracy and respectability'.[64] This concern is perfectly manifested in Drax, who

[64] *Daily Express*, 16 Jan 1953.

disguises his anti-British intentions and his Germanness – depicted as incorporating political and psychological extremity and imbalance – by adopting the role of rational and respectable English gentleman allied to democratic values. He personifies the perception of Germany expressed in the *Express* article quoted above: a volatile nation in which Nazism had not been eradicated, which tends to political extremes (of which Germany's literal division seemed to offer proof) and which disguises destabilising forces with a superficial display of democracy. The narrative strongly implies that both political extremes, as well as the perceived tendency to extremity that Drax embodies and initially disguises, are threats to Britain.

This Britain is represented by Bond, a conservative figure often interpreted as a revitalised version of earlier heroic but gentlemanly British spies.[65] As James Chapman points out, Bond is also cruel, vulgar, caddish and promiscuous.[66] What is most important for his role, however, is his embodiment of a set of values directly opposed to those manifested in the foreign villain: as in *The Square Peg*, the two men are representatives of their nationality/ideology, and their battle is a metonym for a broader ideological struggle. In *Moonraker*, Bond's unflappable nature, rationality and unwavering allegiance to British democratic values establish him as Drax's (and Germany's) personal, ideological and political adversary. In her study of 1950s British cinema, Christine Geraghty argues convincingly that post-war (continental) Europe 'was envisaged as a place of possible danger and entanglement' and was 'associated with unstable and shifting national positions'. Britain's national identity, in positive contrast, was 'tied up with an insular image of standing firm'.[67] In positing Germany (through Drax) as the centre and epitome of post-war instability, danger and entanglement and countering this image (through Bond) with one of British stability, political as well as mental and emotional, *Moonraker* is representative of numerous post-war British fictions. Many fictional thrillers for example set in divided Berlin in the 1950s and 1960s – a place that seemed to epitomize the perceived German tendency towards extremity and instability – could exploit the city's real tensions and dangers, while also offering a self-affirming contrast to Britain, standing firm with secure boundaries and a long democratic

[65] See Clive Bloom, *Spy Thrillers: From Buchan to le Carré* (1990), pp.90-91 and John G. Cawelti and Bruce A. Rosenberg, *The Spy Story* (1987), p.50.
[66] Chapman in Comentale, Watt and Willman eds, p.133.
[67] Christine Geraghty, *British Cinema in the Fifties: Gender, Genre and the New Look* (2000), p.95.

tradition. While the German villains are busy being Nazis or Communists (or both), the British heroes exude conservatism and social compliance. Manning Coles' thrillers, Christopher Landon's *The Mirror Room* (1960) and *The Testament of Casper Schultz* (1962) by Jack Higgins (the pen name of Henry Patterson) all drew on these established tropes.

In 1963, soon-to-be Labour prime minister Harold Wilson declared, 'We are completely, utterly and unequivocally opposed now and in all circumstances, to any suggestion that Germany […] directly or indirectly, should have its finger on the nuclear trigger.'[68] The debate had moved on from military rearmament to nuclear capability but, nearly a decade after M's politically provocative remark and nearly two decades after the defeat of Nazism, the image of an unpredictable, unstable German state was continuing to influence political (and public) opinion and policy.

3. 'I'm glad you're adapting yourself to the circumstances': The political, social and economic drivers of (in)stability

Alongside the doubts regarding the relative stability and volatility of both individual Germans and the German state was hope that long-term stability and security were possible. Belief did gradually grow that West Germany had successfully navigated between, as Judt puts it, 'the Scylla of neo-Nazism and the Charybdis of philo-Soviet neutralism, and was anchored securely within the Western alliance.'[69] Allegiance to a new political extreme had been avoided and the 'middle way' had been taken. Noel Annan, British military intelligence officer, was convinced of the wholesale transformation of Germany soon after the establishment of the Adenauer government. Looking back to this period in his 1995 book on the regeneration of Germany, he claims that the British 'could congratulate themselves' by the early 1950s. 'After all, West Germany became a peace-loving country, locked into the Western alliance of NATO'.[70] The language of Judt and Annan – 'anchored securely', 'locked into' – invokes the spectre of instability that necessitated such

[68] Cited in Hughes, p.129.
[69] Judt, p.265.
[70] Noel Annan, *Changing Enemies: The Defeat and Regeneration of Germany* (1995), p.233.

strong anchoring of this new Germany and continued to linger, but with decreasing potency.

In this final section, I will explore the texts (and individuals) that countered both the stereotype of German mental and emotional instability and the belief that the German state was fundamentally incapable of behaving democratically and peacefully. According to these anti-essentialist voices, instability was not an immutable trait of the German people or the German state, but the result of a turbulent history and a particular set of social, economic and political factors. Change those factors and the behaviour of individuals and states becomes less extreme and volatile and more stable, reasonable and predictable, they contend. Victor Gollancz was one of Britain's most vociferous opponents of the essentialist view espoused by Butler, Taylor and Vansittart. Trying to convince his readers in a 1945 pamphlet *What Buchenwald Really Means* that they would have acted (or failed to act) in the same way as the Germans given the same circumstances, Gollancz offers a succinct metaphor that encapsulates his position: 'The appetite grows by what it feeds on.'[71] The traits deemed 'Germanic' – hysteria, sentimentality, hyper-efficiency, coldness – are latent in all humans, he argues, and will flourish if nurtured. This discomfiting explanatory model rejected national character as a significant factor in the rise of Nazism and its genocidal practices and invited the conclusion, 'it could happen here.'

3.1. 'One extra mouth to feed can easily make the difference between living honestly and – you know the rest': The controlling power of 'circumstances' in The Sons of Brutus

John Culshaw's 1950 novel *The Sons of Brutus* exemplifies a set of post-war fictions that implicitly invited a similar conclusion.[72] Culshaw was primarily known as a pioneering English classical record producer for Decca Records. *The Sons of Brutus* was his first of two novels and was inspired by his visits to ruined German cities in the aftermath of the Second World War.

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[71] Victor Gollancz, *What Buchenwald Really Means* (1945), p.14.
[72] The title alludes to Livy's tale about Brutus' sons who conspired against Rome because they could not turn its institutions to their personal advantage. Culshaw implies that, like in Rome, the stability of post-war Germany was threatened by those who deemed the nation their inheritance but were now powerless under the forces of occupation.

The novel is set in a small fictional Bavarian town called Kirchstein in the summer and autumn of 1945. Surrounded by ruins and facing severe food shortages, its inhabitants struggle to survive. With no police force and a barely functional administration, crime soars, from cigarette trading on the black market to violent murders committed by displaced persons and locals. The narrative follows Manfred Bayer, a young man with no remaining family and who is suffering severe emotional trauma from the war. Torn between a moral life and the opportunity to 'progress' offered by Herr Bracht, a secretly fanatical Nazi who has duped the Americans into believing he is trustworthy, he chooses the latter and we watch his life spiral out of control. Interwoven with Manfred's story is that of Hans, a German soldier who returns from the Russian front changed by his horrific experiences but welcomed back into the loving arms of his fiancé and her mother. Teetering on the brink of the same abyss as Manfred, he chooses the opposite path and is rewarded for his decision with life and the promise of a secure future.

A central motif in the novel is the word 'circumstances', the flipside of which is 'opportunity'. The former word echoes through the novel, used by many of the characters as well as the narrator. It is used variously as an observation, an excuse, an explanation and a motivational tool. Both through the repetition of 'circumstances' and the narrative, which frequently brings the reader inside a character's mind to witness their turmoil, we see that all of the decisions taken and behaviours shown are a result of the abnormal 'circumstances' in which the characters find themselves. 'Opportunity' – another motif – presents itself rarely and, even if it demands criminal or immoral actions, must be considered if the 'circumstances' are to be surmounted rather than succumbed to.

So what are the 'circumstances' and the available 'opportunities'? Culshaw's Kirchstein, like most of real 1945 Germany, lacks functioning social, economic and political structures. Cigarettes, dead rabbits and knowledge are the new currencies and opportunities to barter for food and shelter must be seized whenever possible. Returning from war, Hans finds 'a new sack-covered world' and is told by his fiancé Elsa that the police have all gone, 'like the army, and Kirchstein, and almost everything else we used to have.'[73] The unusual image created by the phrase 'sack-covered world' and the necessity of a neologism to describe it reflects the strangeness and abnormality of their new existence. Longer descriptions of the town compound this impression, evoking images more commonly associated with the Third World: dust swirled, drains 'fouled the air', women wore 'torn cotton frocks', the skin across men's chests 'was loose and sagged towards their belts' and children 'playing in the gutters had thin legs and crude, distended stomachs' (69).

Norms have changed and the perception of normal or reasonable behaviour has changed with them. Beyond Hans and Manfred, whom I will address shortly in more detail, every character we meet who exists under these circumstances carries out actions that would be irrational and/or despicable in any other context. Extreme behaviour is depicted as the only possible response to extreme circumstances. For example, Hans' future mother-in-law exchanges a ring with great sentimental and economic value for a single dead rabbit, just so the family can enjoy a decent meal on the night Hans returns from war. Emil Lutz, a half-Italian black marketeer, steals cigarettes from American cars, while Ulla, a young German woman, prostitutes herself for cigarettes, food or clothes. Manfred barters his shoes for a night with her, but asks what she will tell her brother when she gives them to him. Laughing at his naivety, she says, 'he'll only ask me how many times per shoe' (98). Any 'opportunities' presented under these extreme 'circumstances' – whether theft, prostitution or even murder – must be considered if the trap of poverty, malnutrition and unemployment is to be escaped. Links with a pre-war or wartime world have been severed and there is no clear path to the future. Living in a state of limbo, Frau Grater is not alone in concluding that 'one must live today, and forget yesterday and tomorrow' (38).

Frau Grater is able to live in this way – without purpose beyond feeding her family 'today' – because she has the stability and security offered by that family. When we first meet Manfred, he lacks any external form of stabilisation or anchorage. He has no family, no friends, no permanent residence, no job and no ideology or belief system to which to cling. He is emotionally numb, having experienced the horror of

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[73] John Culshaw, *The Sons of Brutus* (1950), p.32, p.33. Same reference for all future quotations.

carrying dead and wounded bodies out of the rubble after a raid on Kirchstein, including the body of his own mother. Initially repulsed by the task, he had soon 'grown numb' (28) and inured to death. Normal human emotions – revulsion, grief, anger, sorrow – are depicted as insufficient in the face of such horror and, in response, Manfred's emotions deserted him, leaving him cold but invulnerable to emotional pain. His violent swing between intense emotionality and near emotionlessness is narrated as the comprehensible outcome of a traumatic set of circumstances, not as evidence of an innately German form of emotional instability.

It is in this state that he first visits the bar where Kirchstein's black marketeers gather and where Bracht plots his schemes. Unlike the rest of the town's inhabitants, the men he finds here 'had a purpose, something more vital than a search for food' (45). Their 'air of confidence and certainty' (47) is enticing to Manfred for whom both purpose and hope are lacking. In this changed world, their success comes as a result of rejecting the moral codes of the 'old' world and turning to theft, prostitution, murder, deceit and ruthlessness. In doing so, they generate both the means to sate their hunger and confidence for the future. In this context, Bracht's pitch to Manfred is highly persuasive:

> A healthy man in Germany today […] must choose between a life governed by the old rules – which means in effect that he must starve – or else he must cast those rules aside, according to his necessities and circumstances […] he has been removed from the world he knew, and you cannot expect him to transport all its values and laws into his new environment. As with the man captured by cannibals, it is a case of eat or be eaten, isn't it, Bayer? (83)

His rhetoric sets up Manfred's dilemma as a black and white choice, for which he is not fully responsible and in which he cannot be expected to choose anything other than survival ('to eat' rather than 'to be eaten'). He thus provides Manfred with the justification he seeks to take the path he is already edging towards as well as establishing himself as the external source of stability that will prevent the young man's further drift. Seeming to both offer an attractive ideology that gives free rein to individuals to take any opportunity to progress and to enact a paternal role, promising to help and look out for Manfred, Bracht appears like a saviour to

Manfred. In fact, he is a power-hungry Nazi who exploits Manfred's desperation, beguiling him with enticing ideas, using him for his own egotistic purposes and betraying him whenever necessary. Having read Bracht's journal – a Nazi treatise disguised as a call to individual empowerment – Manfred is fully converted and wants to tell Bracht 'how little he had understood, but how much he had admired what he understood' (153). The stereotype of the 'docile, highly compliant and easy to train' German looms large here. Yet, having witnessed Manfred's path to this point, it is not reasonable to dismiss his tractability as a manifestation of the German national character. Instead, we see a disillusioned young man seeking some form of certainty and acceptance and a ruthless older man pursuing self-advancement at any cost. The larger points being made here are clear. The relationship between Bracht and Manfred both echoes the ease with which Germans were seduced by Hitler's rhetoric and personality and manifests the fear that post-war Germans, living in a time of even greater instability than the Weimar Republic, could once again be seduced by a leader who offers hope and a promise of individual and national progress and security. Germany, in a state of collective desperation, could once again 'submit to the superior will of [a] leader' (213), as Manfred decides to do.

Soon after his submission, Manfred is framed for the murder of Frau Kup and sent to prison. Believing Hans to be responsible and desperate to get back in Bracht's good books, he escapes and returns to his master. He later visits Hans, intent on revenge, but Hans tells him the truth: that Bracht was the one who framed him. His reaction to this news is immediate and extreme:

> A strange expression came on his face […] it was a look of confusion, the expression that Hans had seen in the eyes of those driven mad through the pain of their wounds, the eyes of those for whom life had lost all sense and in whose hearts there remained no trust […] he screamed, laughing hysterically like a child out of control. (232-3)

The one stabilising factor in his life, upon which all of his hopes had hung, is exposed as a delusion. 'Sense' and 'trust' have vanished, implying that life for Manfred is now devoid of rationality or order and that there is no chance for a future relationship with a stabilising other. Sanity has been lost, leaving him 'mad', ‘hysterical’ and ‘out of control’. Again, we are met with the stereotype of a German who swings erratically between rationality and irrationality, emotionlessness and hysteria. Yet it is once again ‘circumstances’ that have provoked Manfred’s transformation. Shortly after he leaves Hans’ house, he commits suicide by throwing himself off a viaduct.

The parallel narrative of Hans offers a more positive message. Like Manfred, he struggles to reconcile his war experiences with everyday life in post-war Kirchstein. His time on the Russian front has left him with two fingers missing and emotional trauma that manifests itself as numbness in the face of violence. In a fight with Manfred, pummelling his opponent in the face, he experiences no anger, only a ‘strange pleasure’ (90) in the powerful impact of his fingerless stumps, and later feels no remorse. At this point, both characters seem to be on similar paths, traumatised, emotionally numb and acting according to an unfamiliar code of ethics that nevertheless seems rational in the extreme circumstances in which they find themselves. Hans recognises the change in himself, confessing to Elsa that after experiences such as his, ‘you find you’ve altered – like looking at yourself in a mirror and finding that, in some way you can’t describe, you’ve changed’ (35).

Yet, unlike Manfred, Hans has a loving family whose presence offers stability and purpose. His love for them prevents him from succumbing to criminality and encourages him to seek legitimate means to build a future for them all. Unlike Manfred, he has a reason to cling to the ‘man-made standards of morality and value’ that Bracht so despises (121), choosing the longer, harder path to success but the one least likely to end with imprisonment or death. He is rewarded for his decision, given a home and a job by the Americans who are impressed with his altruistic attitude and desire to work hard for his family. Having just heard the good news, Hans wanders through Kirchstein, pitying the men ‘wandering aimlessly […] seemingly without destination or departure point’, while for him ‘work and security’ are near (110). They remain in a void of uncertainty and rootlessness, prey to tyrants such as Bracht, while Hans, who has anchored himself securely to his family has thereby found even greater stability and purpose.

Hans' narrative teaches that, with a semblance of normality and security, external encouragement and strong individual willpower, positive progress out of an unstable, volatile existence is possible. Circumstances, not national character, govern the relative stability or instability of an individual or nation. The immediate post-war circumstances in Germany were indeed conducive to the development of extreme beliefs and behaviours, but this development was not, according to Culshaw's fictional analysis, inevitable.

3.2. British reluctance to acknowledge German progress towards stability

Granted the benefit of hindsight, historians are keen to plot (West) Germany's progress from a ruined nation in 1945 to a prosperous and stable country just a decade later.[74] This narrative and the favourable end result were not obvious at the time however and fears abounded that Germany could slip back into unstable governance and further disorder. First-hand accounts of post-war Germany allow us to rediscover the overwhelming uncertainty that pervaded the ruined nation and British perceptions of it. 'My main impression is of neutrality, indecision, almost a vacuum,' wrote war correspondent and anti-war activist Fenner Brockway shortly after arriving in Germany in April 1946.[75] 'Germany is still a battleground,' he wrote two weeks later. 'Here conflicting forces are concentrating which will decide the future of Europe, perhaps the future of the world'.[76] The right-wing Beaverbrook press responded to this state of imbalance with little of the compassion that characterises the accounts of socialist visitors to Germany such as Brockway and Leonard Mosley, instead tapping into what Hughes describes as the 'rich vein of anti-German feeling in British society'.[77]

Some of the period's most nuanced discussions of German (in)stability are found in fictions – like *The Sons of Brutus* – which are set in immediate post-war Germany and emphasise the role of circumstances in generating extreme, erratic or irrational behaviours. Others include Desmond Cory's 1958 novel *Pilgrim at the Gate*, in

[74] See Judt, and Ruth Wittlinger, 'Perceptions of Germany and the Germans in Post-war Britain' in *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 25 (2004), pp.454-6.
[75] Fenner Brockway, *German Diary* (1946), p.10.
[76] ibid., p.138.
[77] Hughes, p.52.

which Berlin is described as 'a peculiar place […] where the most frivolous remark […] could lead, with no other outward link, to a body lying spread-eagled in the gutter'.[78] Cause and effect have lost their rational connection in this setting. Films with the same theme include *Desperate Moment* (1953) and *Ten Seconds to Hell* (1959), the latter a British-German co-production in which six young German men, trained in defusing bombs, decide to continue with this work, despite the high chance of fatality. An irrational choice in most other contexts, in the 'peculiar' world of post-war Berlin, it is their best option. Fictions that dramatized the conclusion implicit in all of these texts that reject national character as a controlling force in favour of circumstances – 'it could happen here' – were extremely rare in this period. The 1964 alternate history film, *It Happened Here*, was one such fiction and was the brainchild of teenager Kevin Brownlow. Starting in 1956, he made the film over a period of eight years with the help of fellow teenager and Second World War enthusiast Andrew Mollo, a cast of volunteers and a largely amateur crew.[79] The Nazis, having successfully invaded Britain in 1940, are now the ruling power, aided by countless eager British fascists. We follow the story of Pauline, a nurse who finds work in London with the Nazi organisation 'Immediate Action'. Indifferent to politics – 'I know as much about politics as a lamppost' – she seeks only to 'try and get back to normal', actively supporting neither the fascists nor the resistance.[80] Yet she is soon implicated in fascist atrocities, eventually becoming an unwitting participant in a forced euthanasia programme, killing a group of foreign labourers who have contracted tuberculosis. Stunned by her own unintentional descent into fascism, she refuses to take any future part in the programme. The viewer, encouraged throughout to empathise with Pauline as an ordinary person in extraordinary circumstances, is reminded of the words of Pauline's friend, an antifascist doctor: 'We've all got a bit of it in us, and it doesn't take much to bring it to the surface.' Unsurprisingly, the film unleashed a tirade of criticism. Speaking at a press conference in Cork before the film's first festival showing, Mollo defended its

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[78] Cory, p.42.
[79] Preceded only by Noel Coward's 1946 play *Peace In Our Time* and Philip K. Dick's 1962 novel *The Man in the High Castle*, this film was a very early example of alternate history fiction inspired by the Second World War. Brownlow and Mollo began production more than two decades before the first major British novel in this genre was published (Len Deighton's *SS-GB*) and remains one of very few alternate history fictions set in a Nazi-controlled Britain. David Downing's *The Moscow Option* (1979) is set mostly in the Soviet Union, while Robert Harris' best-selling *Fatherland* (1992) takes Germany as its setting.
[80] *It Happened Here,* dir by Kevin Brownlow, Andrew Mollo (United Artists, 1964) [on DVD].

premise: 'The idea that everyone's in the resistance is absurd. Only a very small group in any country really resist.' The statement was met with a shout of 'Nonsense!' from the audience.[81] The *Jewish Chronicle*, always unlikely to approve of a film in which fascists were allowed to air their views, was however particularly enraged by the depiction of British compliance: 'No one will believe for a moment in the sheep-like acceptance of Hitlerian rule by the British people. They are made of sterner stuff.'[82] The suggestion that the British could succumb to extremism as the Germans had done could not be countenanced.

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In *Our Nazis*, Rau discusses the recent trend towards historiography that highlights the ordinariness of the perpetrators of the Holocaust. Studies by Zygmunt Bauman and Christopher Browning 'examine the insidious sliding into opportunistic lawlessness, the gradual brutalisation *process* or the effects of a modern administrative apparatus on the sense of individual responsibility' – precisely the same points made by Brownlow and Mollo's 1964 film.[83] Rau goes on to discuss Jonathan Littell's 2006 novel *Les Bienveillantes* (published in English as *The Kindly Ones* in 2009), in which the claim by the protagonist, a former SS officer, that 'I am just like you!' aroused a storm of controversy, inviting the reader to recognize the 'continuity between him and us'.[84] That these critical and fictional texts continue to arouse severe discomfort among Western audiences testifies to the remarkable nature of fictions such as *It Happened Here* and *The Sons of Brutus*, created so soon after the revelation of Nazi atrocities. The existence of these texts reminds us that post-war engagement in British popular culture with the question of the relative stability of the German people and state was not monopolized by essentialist voices. Instead of indiscriminately and uncritically asserting the fundamental instability of German individuals, the German people and the German nation state, they proffered a narrative that rejected both British and German exceptionalism: Germans were not uniquely unstable nor were Britons uniquely resistant to influence. Despite

[81] Kevin Brownlow, *How It Happened Here: The Making of a Film* (2005), p.180.
[82] Cited in Brownlow, p.185.
[83] Petra Rau, *Our Nazis: Representations of Fascism in Contemporary Literature and Film* (2013), p.88.
[84] ibid., pp.88-9.

widespread critical disapproval, Brownlow's film did extraordinarily well at the box office, a silent but significant endorsement from the British public of this narrative and the unsettling thesis that 'it could happen here.'[85]

[85] Brownlow, pp.186-92.

CHAPTER TWO

'My people did that […] My people, Germans': The Question of German Guilt

> Fast die gesamte Welt erhebt Anklage gegen Deutschland und gegen die Deutschen. Unsere Schuld wird erörtert mit Empörung, mit Grauen, mit Haß, mit Verachtung.[1]

German philosopher Karl Jaspers wrote these words in 1946, in the introduction to his soon renowned essay 'Die Schuldfrage' ('The Question of Guilt'), comprising a series of lectures delivered to students at the newly founded university in Heidelberg. A browse through archival copies of the British press in the immediate aftermath of the war suggests that Britain participated in the indictment he describes. The German nation as a whole was consistently blamed for both the war and the Nazi crimes. 'How can the German people even begin to atone?' asked the *Daily Express* on 19 April 1945, a few days after British troops liberated Bergen-Belsen concentration camp and began sending home news and images of its horrors.[2] The following weekend, the *News of the World* condemned 'the diabolically revolting and shameful crimes the Germans have systematically practised'.[3] Ten days earlier, screenwriter Patrick Kirwan had declared in an article entitled 'All Germans are guilty' in the *Evening Standard*, 'To acquit the German people of responsibility is to condone the terrible crimes that have been committed without protest in their name.'[4]

In his study of home front morale and the Ministry of Information (MoI) in the Second World War, Ian McLaine shows how the distinction between Nazis and Germans had disappeared in official propaganda by 1941. Publications now gave

[1] Karl Jaspers, *Die Schuldfrage* (1946), p.29: 'Almost the entire world indicts Germany and the Germans. Our guilt is discussed with outrage, horror, hatred and scorn.'
[2] *Daily Express*, 19 April 1945.
[3] *News of the World*, 22 April 1945.
[4] *Evening Standard*, 11 April 1945.

‘the impression that everything German was and always would be abhorrent’.[5] The hope expressed by Mrs Miniver, Jan Struther’s popular fictional character created in 1937 for a column in *The Times*, that children in this war ‘would at least know that we were fighting against an idea, and not against a nation’ was quickly disappointed.[6] Crafted long before the revelations at concentration camps across central Europe in spring 1945, the message of German wickedness and the atmosphere of general hostility towards Germany that it encouraged made it far easier for the popular press to respond to the liberations with immediate accusations of collective culpability. This attitude was not restricted to the popular press. As McLaine later argues, ‘Having for so long insisted on the wickedness of the enemy, perhaps the Ministry could not help but regard the discoveries of the allied armies in Europe as final proof of the allegation.’[7] Writing to his wife Clementine after the liberation of Buchenwald, Prime Minister Winston Churchill himself expressed shock at ‘the horrible revelation of *German* cruelty’ (my italics).[8] Not only did wartime propaganda help create a press and public to whom the notion of national wickedness was acceptable, but the revelations seemed to confirm the veracity of what had been a simplistic propaganda message designed to boost morale. The following widespread denunciation of all Germans as wicked and guilty also served British self-interests, offering seemingly inarguable justification for Britain’s role in the recent war and boosting Britain’s sense of moral superiority. As Dagmar Barnouw argues in her 2005 study, *The War in the Empty Air*, ‘the power of Allied remembrance of World War Two as the clean, good, just war’ drew above all on the collective innocence of the enemy’s victims and ‘the collective guilt of the enemy population’.[9]

Such stark divisions – between good and evil, innocent and guilty, hero and villain – offered welcome simplicity. Yet the terms ‘guilt’ and ‘responsibility’ that governed so much of the debate around German culpability were often used ambiguously and

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[5] Ian McLaine, *Ministry of Morale: Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in World War II* (1979), p.158.
[6] Jan Struther, *Mrs Miniver* (1940), p.64.
[7] McLaine, p.169.
[8] Cited in John Ramsden, *Don’t Mention the War: The British and the Germans since 1890* (2006), p.183.
[9] Dagmar Barnouw, *The War in the Empty Air: Victims, Perpetrators, and Postwar Germans* (2005), p.173.

interchangeably, their specific meanings glossed over. In his 2010 study of guilt, Herant Katchadourian discusses the two senses of the word, which correspond to the two definitions given in *The Oxford Dictionary of English*:

> The first is the state of *being* guilty of a transgression; it entails moral or legal *culpability* in an *objective*, factual sense. The second is the *subjective* emotion of *feeling* guilty that follows committing a moral offence.[10]

He later addresses collective guilt:

> Collective guilt results from feelings of culpability for unjust or criminal actions perpetrated by a group one identifies with [...] Collective guilt embodies the idea that a group, or a government, can be held responsible – above and beyond the guilt of particular individuals – for perpetrating a criminal action, such as genocide.[11]

Whereas individual guilt can be objective, collective guilt can only be ascribed: a group can be 'held responsible'. 'Responsibility' also has two senses, meaning both duty or role and fault or blame. All of these meanings – objective, ascribed and felt guilt/responsibility – were in play in post-war discussions of German culpability yet articles in the popular press largely failed to specify the exact nature of the 'German' guilt or responsibility in favour of vague but vehement accusations. Kirwan's article implies that the Germans were guilty because they did not resist, while others declared that knowledge alone was enough to render someone guilty and others still that a vote for Hitler in 1933 was sufficient. Clearly, the majority of Germans were not guilty of a crime in the legal sense, but were being ascribed moral guilt. Similarly, most Germans were not responsible for (that is, tasked with) any part of the criminal apparatus of Nazism, but were now being held morally or even politically responsible for its crimes. Only a few Germans could be tried in court, charged either with criminal actions that would render them legally guilty if proven or with responsibility for part of the apparatus that enabled the crimes. Yet the long and complex trial at Nuremberg seemed to set the precedent for future trials in which even the narrow legal definitions of guilt and responsibility were muddied by claims

[10] Herant Katchadourian, *Guilt: The Bite of Conscience* (2010), p.21.
[11] ibid., p.96.

such as 'I was ordered' or 'I was just doing my duty'. As Hannah Arendt noted in her report on Adolf Eichmann's trial in 1961, 'He did his *duty*, as he told the police and the court over and over again; he not only obeyed *orders*, he also obeyed the *law*' (original italics).[12] Similar evasions characterised countless interactions between British occupation troops or journalists and ordinary Germans considered morally guilty by the Allies. 'Guilty action and guilty feeling do not always go together,' notes Katchadourian, yet many non-Germans were frustrated by the apparent discrepancy between the 'objective' guilt of the Germans and the absence of 'guilty feeling'.[13] 'No one anywhere takes responsibility,' wrote journalist Alan Moorehead in the *Daily Express* on 2 May 1945, 'and consequently no one admits to guilt.'[14]

Along with a belief in someone's (or a nation's) guilt or responsibility for a conflict or a set of atrocities comes a desire for punishment. The difficulty in some cases of proving legal guilt, the subjectivity of accusations of moral guilt or responsibility, the anecdotal evidence of a lack of a sense of guilt among ordinary Germans and the collective nature of the guilt being ascribed meant that this desire, prevalent in Britain, was not fully satisfied. Many post-war fictions responded both to the desire for clarity in the discussion of German guilt and wickedness and to the desire for satisfactory consequences with simplistic narratives featuring undeniably criminally and morally guilty Germans punished with death before the chance of any trial that could delay or even preclude the desired punishment. Trials held other unwanted possibilities too. In her account of the Nuremberg trials, British journalist Rebecca West noted that, 'if a trial for murder lasts too long, more than the murder will out. The man in the murderer will out; it becomes horrible to think of destroying him.'[15] Side-stepping a trial in a fictional story of post-war justice meant that this troubling possibility could be avoided. Other texts portrayed wholly 'abhorrent' Germans as metonyms for Germanness, their lack of positive qualities used implicitly to explain both how the 'German crimes' were committed and the apparent subsequent lack of shame.

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[12] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (2006), p.135.
[13] Katchadourian, p.21.
[14] *Daily Express*, 2 May 1945.
[15] Rebecca West, 'Greenhouse with Cyclamens – I' (1946), *A Train of Powder* (1955), p.46.

Yet this was by no means the full story. Britons were far from united in their collective condemnation of Germany. Countless British journalists, politicians, authors and filmmakers engaged with the issue of German guilt as a question, rather than a foregone conclusion. In the months and years following the war, a debate took hold in the political and public spheres and found expression in popular fictions that allowed for ambivalence rather than offering clarity. In this chapter, I will use Basil Dearden's 1947 film *Frieda*, the 1951 crime novel *Fallen into the Pit* by Edith Pargeter (better known by her pen name Ellis Peters) and a group of early 1960s British television and radio dramas to explore how fictions engaged with the debate around German guilt. I will argue that an initial period of open and passionate discussion gave way to a decade or so of predominantly clichéd depictions of German villainy that sought to explain the Nazi crimes by asserting the fundamentally flawed nature of the German national character. Finally, I will show how the Frankfurt and Auschwitz trials of the early 1960s encouraged a renewed and more nuanced engagement with the question of German guilt.

1. 'Passively or actively, she has been party to a monstrous crime': Collective German guilt in fiction and in context

1.1. Were Germans collectively guilty? The debate in Britain

In the immediate post-war period, the debate around the extent to which ordinary Germans bore guilt or responsibility for the war and Nazi crimes was impassioned and polarising. As I mentioned above, wartime propagandists unwittingly prepared the ground for both parts of the 'collective guilt' thesis, their rhetoric incorporating sweeping generalisations about 'the Germans' and 'the German people' along with accusations of criminal or wicked behaviour. Early wartime rhetoric was very different. Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain carefully emphasised in his 1939 speeches that Britain's war was with Hitler, not the German people. An MoI pamphlet published on the outbreak of war confirmed this stance, diagnosing 'the tragedy of Germany' as 'the tragedy of a great people' led astray by a tyrannical leader.[16] Yet by late 1940, after the retreat from Dunkirk, the threat of invasion and

[16] Cited in McLaine, p.140.

the beginning of the Blitz, the carefully preserved distinction between Nazis and Germans had been eradicated in official speeches and MoI statements. An ambitious 'Anger Campaign' was launched by the ministry to stir up hatred among Britons towards ordinary German men and women, an approach that also served to gloss over British military incompetence. Articles in the popular press entitled 'Europe's gangsters rampant', 'Blows are all they understand' and 'Why the Kaiser called them 'Huns'' discouraged distinctions between Germans and Nazis, and rooted the cause of Germany's current immorality firmly in a pre-Nazi past.[17] In the same year, Sir Robert Vansittart, a senior British diplomat and famously vehement Germanophobe, published *Black Record*, a collection of radio broadcasts on the subject of Germany. Attracting considerable public attention and controversy, the broadcasts and subsequent book argue that the cause of the war and its crimes was rooted in the German 'character and system', an argument that implicates all Germans.[18] The tide of propaganda and public opinion was in his favour. By April 1943, according to a survey by the British Institute of Public Opinion, 41% of the British public thought that German people, as distinct from the Nazi government alone, were the chief enemy, up from 6% in September 1939.[19]

The atrocities committed at Buchenwald, Belsen and elsewhere and revealed in April 1945 were seen by some witnesses and journalists as confirmation of Germany's collective wickedness. Miss J. Rudman, a member of the British forces working to feed and treat the prisoners at Belsen following its liberation, wrote to her partner Bill on 8 May 1945, VE Day, 'I've always hated the Germans in this war, but now that I've seen what they've done to these people I feel I'll hate them for ever, you'd never believe such cruelty would exist.'[20] Implicitly or explicitly, newspaper reports largely supported the idea of collective guilt, usually accusing 'the Germans' rather than 'the Nazis' of the atrocities. Readers' letters were often even stronger in their rhetoric, condemning the 'German maniacal guilt' and denouncing Germany as a 'nation of barbarians'.[21] 'The only decent German is a dead German', wrote one *Evening Standard* reader, repeating a phrase in popular usage and echoed in several

[17] McLaine, p.144.
[18] Robert Gilbert Vansittart, *Black Record: Germans Past and Present* (1941), p.viii.
[19] Cited in McLaine, p.169.
[20] Documents.3109, Imperial War Museum Archives.
[21] *Daily Mirror*, 23 April 1945.

post-war fictions including Manning Coles' *Green Hazard* (1945).[22] Even where the existence of decent Germans was acknowledged, the distinction between 'good' and 'bad' Germans was often exaggerated and the categories perceived rigidly. As Barnouw argues astutely in her study of photographic representations of Germany in 1945, the chaos of Germany invited the observer to 'sort out immediately the good Germans from the very bad ones; the repentant from the unrepentant; the many guilty from the few innocent.'[23] Countless popular fictions reflected and satisfied the desire to 'sort out' the 'good' from the 'bad' through depictions of wholly bad, unrepentant, guilty Germans and good and innocent or genuinely repentant Germans.[24]

Yet the issue in both the public and cultural spheres was far from one-sided. Journalists Alan Moorehead and Leonard Mosley and writers Victor Gollancz, Bertrand Russell, Stephen Spender and James Stern were vociferous in their rebuttals of the collective guilt thesis, despite their diverse ideological standpoints. They responded, not with assertions of collective German innocence, but with stories of personal encounters with individual Germans and warnings against generalisation and collectivisation. Moorehead, an Australian war correspondent who entered Germany in 1945 with British troops, wrote the following soon afterwards:

> As soon as you discovered evil and malice in one place you were immediately confronted with kindness and genuine innocence in another, and there was every nuance of these extremes and every kind of character from the villain to the fool.[25]

Despite employing the same extremes and caricatures he is trying to counter – as Petra Rau points out in a 2012 essay – Moorehead does offer an acknowledgement of diversity and complexity that is entirely absent in the novels and films listed in the footnote on this page, fictions inhabited by German characters embodying 'extremes'

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[22] *Evening Standard*, 23 April 1945.
[23] Dagmar Barnouw, *Germany 1945: Views of War and Violence* (1996), p.140.
[24] Examples of novels include *Sinister Errand* (1945), *Dark Hero* (1946) and *Dark Wanton* (1948) by Peter Cheyney, *Phantom Fleet* (1946) by Geoffrey Martin Bennett, *Count of Six* (1948) by Lester Powell, *Green Hazard* (1945) and *Now or Never* (1951) by Manning Coles, *The Disappearance of Dr Bruderstein* (1949) and *Mr Blessington's Imperialist Plot* (1951) by John Sherwood. Examples of films include *Night Boat to Dublin* (1946), *Snowbound* (1948), *Portrait from Life* (1949) and *It's Not Cricket* (1949).
[25] Alan Moorehead, *Eclipse: An Eyewitness Account of the Allied Invasion of Europe* (1945), p.194.

rather than 'nuances' and filling the criteria for 'the villain', 'the fool' or 'the good German' with little variation from these types.[26] Gollancz and Mosley, on the other hand, both closely allied with the socialist cause, chose to highlight how many Germans had been political prisoners in concentration and labour camps, refuting the popular assertion that 'All Germans are Guilty'. More than 150,000 copies of Gollancz's pamphlet, *What Buchenwald Really Means* – which rejects that same thesis – were sold within a few weeks of publication.[27] Nor was coverage in the popular press wholly one-sided. *Picture Post* is particularly notable for its restrained and balanced discussion of the camps. Offering the first opportunity available to many readers to see extensive photographic evidence, the newspaper did not give way to emotional rhetoric but instead denied that there was anything particular about Germany that made such crimes possible. 'There is cruelty in every nation', we read in an article by Bertrand Russell. 'It is no help shouting about 'exterminating' Germany. Only one thing helps: the attempt to understand how men have sunk so far.'[28] Countless members of the British public also showed themselves sympathetic to German suffering, with 60,000 responding to a call from the government instigated by Gollancz and Eleanor Rathbone MP for Britons to donate some of their rations to starving Germans.[29] Clearly, many Britons agreed with Rathbone that 'all suffering is individual suffering […] all responsibility is individual responsibility.'[30]

1.2. 'I am one German, you are another': The battle between the individual and the general in Frieda

Dearden's 1947 film *Frieda* is one of several fictions produced in the immediate post-war years that explicitly engaged with the debate and refused to offer any simple answers. It was one of the year's most successful films at the box office and

[26] Petra Rau, 'Good Germans versus Evil Nazis? Reflections on the Enemy' in *The Edinburgh Companion to Twentieth-Century British and American War Writing*, ed. by Adam Piette and Mark Rawlinson (2012), p.342.
[27] Discussed in Susan Pedersen, *Eleanor Rathbone and the Politics of Conscience* (2004), p.370.
[28] *Picture Post*, 5 May 1945.
[29] Pedersen, pp.371-2.
[30] HC Deb 26 October 1945 vol 414 cols 2416-17 <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1945/oct/26/conditions-in-europe> [accessed 13 July 2017].

received extensive and emotionally charged coverage in the popular press.[31] First a 1946 stage play by Ronald Millar, quickly adapted into a television drama later the same year and featured again in a new adaptation on BBC television in 1948, *Frieda* was an almost inescapable part of British popular culture in the immediate post-war years.[32] I have chosen to use the 1947 film version for my case study, as it was undoubtedly the version that reached the largest audience. The story follows Frieda, a young German woman played by Swedish actress Mai Zetterling, and Robert, an RAF officer played by David Farrar. Frieda has helped Robert to escape from a prisoner-of-war camp in the closing stages of the war. They marry and return to Robert's hometown of Denfield where the news of this very unusual union has caused consternation. Frieda finds herself ostracised by the community, most notably by Robert's anti-German Aunt Eleanor who is campaigning to be elected as a Labour MP. Hostility gradually diminishes, however, and Robert, having married Frieda out of a sense of duty, begins to fall in love with her. News of the discoveries at Bergen-Belsen threatens their relationship but they remain committed. Several months later, Frieda's brother Richard, believed dead, arrives and is welcomed by Robert's family. But Frieda discovers that he has remained a fanatical Nazi at heart and a recently returned soldier soon identifies him as a concentration camp guard. After beating Richard in a fight, Robert revolts against everything German including his own wife. Frieda tries to drown herself but is saved by Robert at the last moment and they reconcile.

While melodramatic and contrived, the plot is far more nuanced than the synopsis implies. This is borne out by the divergent and competing scholarly interpretations of the film. Refuting the claim that Nazism or Germanness represents the greatest threat to the British community depicted, Marcia Landy locates the film's challenge instead 'in its exposure of underlying sexual and class conflict'.[33] The 'real enemy is Robert', she claims, an argument echoed in two feminist analyses of the film in a 1997 collection of essays about Basil Dearden.[34] Even among those critics who

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[31] *Kinematograph Weekly*, 18 December 1947: *Frieda* was one of six 'runners-up' at the box office after the year's most successful film.
[32] Alan Burton and Tim O'Sullivan, *The Cinema of Basil Dearden and Michael Relph* (2009), p.250; Lez Cooke, *British Television Drama: A History* (2003), p.14.
[33] Marcia Landy, *British Genres: Cinema and Society 1930-1960* (1991), p.464.
[34] ibid.; see Charlotte Brunsdon and Rachel Moseley, '"She's a Foreigner Who's Become a British Subject": *Frieda*', pp.129-36, and Pat Kirkham and Janet Thumim, 'Men at Work: Dearden and

defend the central significance of national identity and Anglo-German relations in the film, specifically the pressing question of German guilt, opinions diverge significantly. In his study of British cinema and the Cold War, Tony Shaw argues that Dearden's film anticipated 'the cinema's subtle post-war refurbishment of Germany's image, with 'ordinary' Germans increasingly portrayed less as accessories to Nazism and more as its victims'.[35] This reading allows for far more certainty in the film's conclusion than that of Terry Lovell, who criticises the film for 'fudging the issue of Frieda's political responsibility'.[36] I am offering a new interpretation, one that focuses on the role of the audience in the debate around wartime culpability being played out on the screen. I will argue that the film powerfully undermines the Vansittartist argument, but never quite relinquishes an underlying desire for simplicity and clarity, specifically a desire for Germans to be easily sorted out into the 'good' and the 'bad'. It flirts with ambivalence but fails to embrace 'every nuance of the extremes' or to abandon national identity as a meaningful frame of reference. We are left with the sense that Germanness *is* the problem, despite the film's apparent rejection of this argument.

The question of culpability – implicit in many conversations in the first part of the film and in the ostracization of Frieda by the Denfield community – is pushed to the foreground in a key scene at around the halfway point. The war is still going on and the concentration camps remain undiscovered by the Allies. Eleanor (Nell) is giving a speech in Denfield's town square and is heckled over Frieda's presence in her house. She responds by denouncing all Germans as 'responsible' for the war in a powerful statement that seems to crystallise the film's stance.[37]

Gender', pp.89-107 in *Liberal Directions: Basil Dearden and Postwar British Film Culture*, ed. by Alan Burton, Tim O'Sullivan and Paul Wells (1997).
[35] Tony Shaw, *British Cinema and the Cold War: The State, Propaganda and Consensus* (2001), p.26.
[36] Terry Lovell, 'Frieda' in *National Fictions: World War Two in British Films and Television*, ed. by Geoff Hurd (1984), p.34.
[37] *Frieda*, dir. by Basil Dearden (General Film Distributors, 1947) [on DVD]. Same reference for all future screen shots and quotations from this film.

[redacted]

Figure 5: Film poster for the 1947 Ealing Studios film *Frieda*

The scene's strength and significance are rooted in its conflation of the fictional crowd and the cinema audience. Even before entering the cinema, audiences were encouraged to identify with the inhabitants of Denfield by the text on the Ealing Studios film poster (fig. 5): ''The film that puts the question – would **you** take Frieda into **your** home?' (bold in original).[38] Robert's description of the Denfield residents as 'just ordinary, everyday people' and the flat, documentary style of filming through which Denfield's working-class men and women are depicted drinking beer or collecting rations further encourage the audience to identify with this fictional community and to question how they would react to the same scenario in their town. In the scene of Nell's speech, the experience of identification is intensified. The cinema audience is aligned with the Denfield crowd, both through their depiction as a collection of individualised but ordinary people (fig. 6) and through a series of close-up, head-on shots of Nell (fig. 7). This choice of shot creates the impression that Denfield's inhabitants are fictional substitutes for the cinemagoers who are the real recipients of her message. She declares:

[38] *Projecting Britain: Ealing Studios Film Posters*, ed. by David Wilson (1982), p.4.

> The responsibility for plunging the world into the misery and disaster of the last five years is not the responsibility of one man, or one group of men, but of every individual member of the entire German nation, man and woman.

Asked whether Frieda, as a member of that nation, is responsible, she answers:

> Yes, she is. Passively or actively, she has been party to a monstrous crime. She cannot evade responsibility for it. She has no right to escape its consequences.

These statements seem perfectly explicit, but, beyond their immediate blanket condemnation, they contain a multitude of allusions to the contemporary debate. She unambiguously denounces the whole German nation as 'responsible', a claim that conjures up and supports the idea of 'collective guilt'. Her declaration that neither 'one man' nor 'one group of men' were alone responsible alludes to and rejects the argument that only Hitler or the leaders of the Nazi regime were responsible for Germany's wartime actions. The phrase 'passively or actively' references the controversial debate around the moral accountability of those who failed to resist or averted their eyes rather than actively supported Nazism. Finally, in the light of the 'crime' just mentioned, 'consequences' is a clear euphemism for 'punishment'. Since she is soon after elected to parliament, we can assume that her Vansittartist stance on Germany, depicted as a key issue for Denfield voters, is endorsed by the majority of these 'ordinary, everyday people'. Through the many implicit and explicit invitations issued to the audience to identify with these people, the film seems to encourage its viewers to adopt a similarly hard-line stance.

Figure 6: The Denfield crowd during Nell's speech.

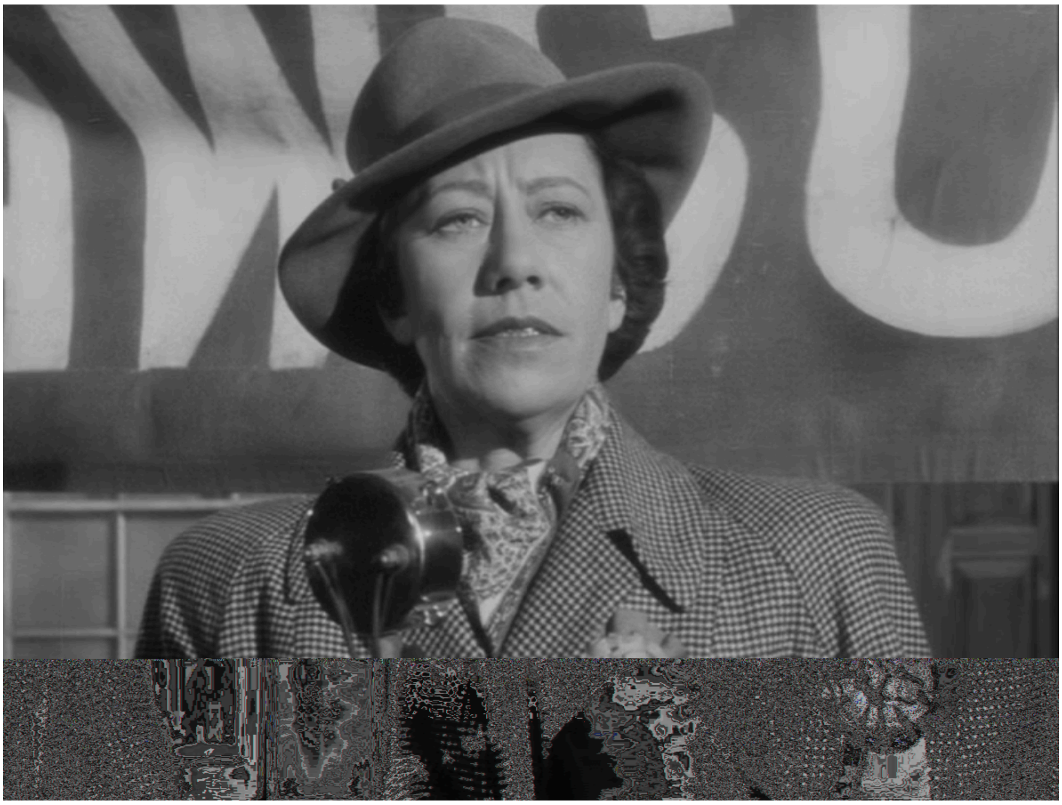

Figure 7: Nell (Flora Robson) gives her speech to the Denfield crowd and cinema audience.

Yet a scene a short while later challenges both this attitude and its disregard for complexity. We see Robert and Frieda in the cinema, enjoying a romantic feature film along with the full cross-section of Denfield society. A newsreel following the film portrays the recently discovered and liberated Belsen concentration camp in graphic detail. The earlier parallel between the fictional and real audience is repeated here even more explicitly, since both audiences are in a cinema theatre. A real British Gaumont newsreel from April 1945 is shown to the fictional audience in an eye-level shot that conceals that audience, most of the shot taken up with the fictional cinema screen. Through this meta-cinematic device, the audiences are conflated and the real British cinemagoers take the place of the visually absent fictional audience. Seeing this newsreel for the first time in two years, the audience would have relived the shock and horror they experienced when first witnessing the images.[39] This reaction is explicitly invited when the fictional context disappears and the newsreel fills the entire screen for ten seconds. Several times in this sequence, the camera cuts between the newsreel footage and Frieda's expression of wide-eyed horror (fig. 8). The camera zooms slowly in on her face, isolating her from her context and the British characters around her. As the camera cuts between the footage and Frieda's face, both now filling the screen, a link is forged between them. The camera is accusatory in its refusal to back away or register any context: '*you* are guilty of this', it seems to say, echoing the posters disseminated across Germany by the Allied military governments following the revelation of the Nazi atrocities in an attempt to induce the 'guilty feeling' that the Allies believed the Germans should be experiencing. Yet Frieda's face registers the same shock and disbelief that millions of Britons would have felt while watching the newsreel and this renders the link forged between Frieda and Belsen ambiguous. In what way is this human being, who reacts to horrors in the same way as any other human being, morally or politically accountable for these crimes? What form does this accountability take and how should she be punished?

[39] It is likely that the majority of the 1947 cinema audience had seen the original newsreel. In *Belsen: The Liberation of a Concentration Camp* (1998), Joanne Reilly describes how newsreels depicting the camp were screened to British audiences in the week beginning 30 April 1945. Newsreels were usually shown for three days before being superseded, but this one continued for a week and by 1 May had broken all box office records in London news theatres (p.61).

Figure 8: Frieda (Mai Zetterling) is shocked at the images of Belsen camp on the cinema screen.

These questions are partly resolved in the following scene as Frieda and Robert exit the cinema into a shadowy alleyway lit by a single bright streetlamp. Frieda is depicted walking slowly away from the camera and up a short flight of steps in a low-angle shot that conceals her human, emotion-filled face and emphasises the large hulking shadow she casts on the wall beside her (fig. 9). In the contrast between the petite blonde woman and her dark ominous shadow, the question is implicitly presented again: how could this human individual, along with the millions in the nation to which she belongs, have effected such dark and inhuman deeds?

Figure 9: Frieda and Robert leave the cinema.

Pausing at the top of the steps, another low-angle shot – one of few used to show Frieda in the film – emphasises the unpleasant, almost menacing aspect to her depiction at this point. Unprompted, she says, ‘My people did that […] My people, Germans.’ Robert asks, ‘but did you know?’, a question that recurred frequently in discussions regarding German collective guilt. Robert has a chance to ask it directly of a German and answers his own question in the same way as many Britons in 1945: ‘Yes, you must have known.’ She confirms this: ‘I knew, I knew there were such places. We all knew.’ Through this fictional exchange, the real cinema audience seems to be offered an answer to a question that in reality went unanswered. Her response seems to give weight to the notion of collective accountability explicitly proclaimed by Nell. However, after a pause, Frieda adds: ‘Some of us were inside them.’ The ideological certainty this scene appears to offer is suddenly undercut, throwing its audience into discomfort with Frieda’s final words and provoking a new set of questions. In doing so, the film replicates the arguments being put forward by various left-wing figures including Victor Gollancz, Eleanor Rathbone MP and the cartoonist David Low, who sought to remind the British public that Nazi Germany was a totalitarian regime ruled by fear, that many Germans were victims of that regime, and that resistance, which did occur, was harshly punished.[40]

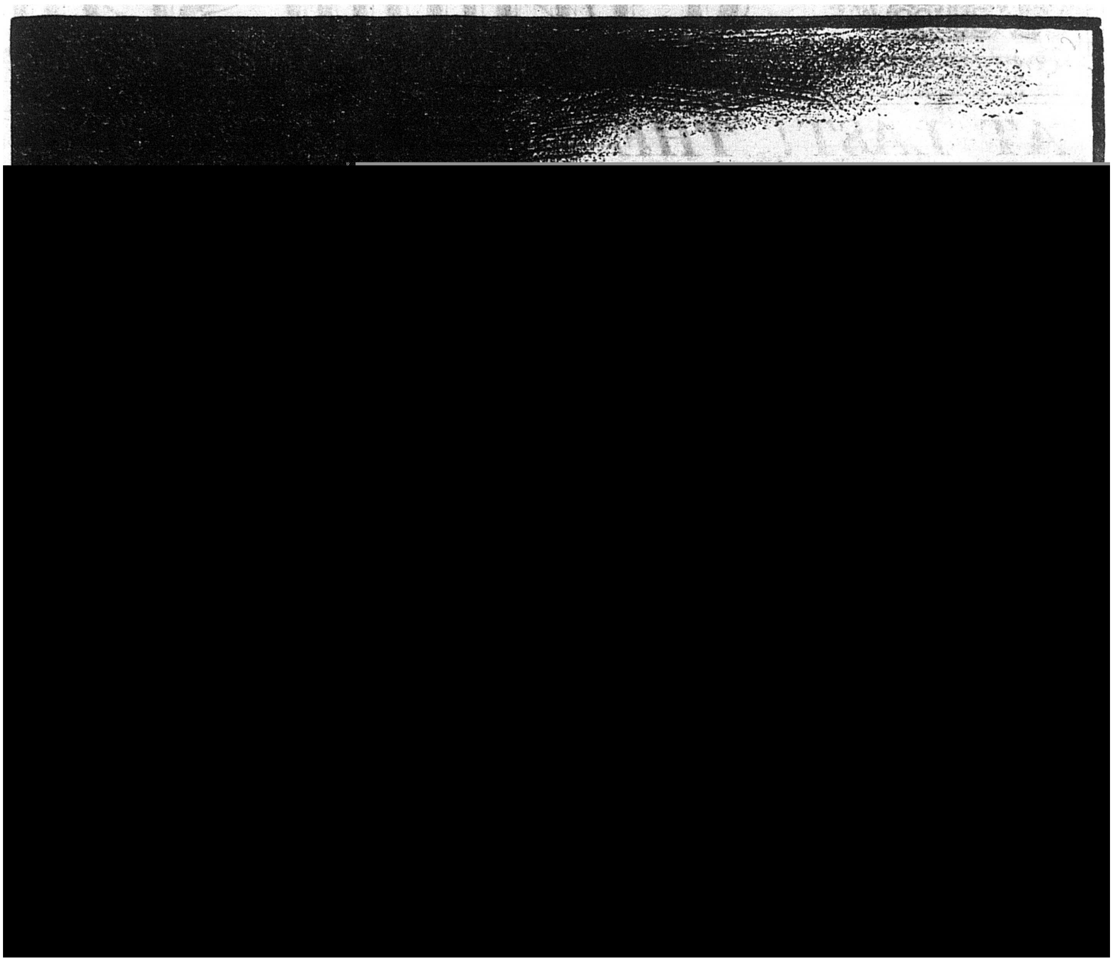

Figure 10: David Low's now famous cartoon depicting a German concentration camp survivor challenging a British man's declaration of collective guilt was first published in the *Evening Standard* on 19 April 1945.

Yet this powerful moment of liberal argumentation, neglected by many scholarly appraisals of the film, is itself undermined by the partial retreat to essentialism that follows. Outside this scene, the portrayal of the female protagonist is dominated by well-lit, close-up shots of her round face, emphasising her smooth girlish skin, her doll-like bright eyes and her wavy blonde hair (see fig. 8). These conventional visual

[40] See Victor Gollancz, *What Buchenwald Really Means* (1945). In a House of Commons debate in November 1944, Rathbone reminded MPs that some Germans had resisted Hitler and MPs should ask themselves whether, in a repressive regime, 'we should have been quite as courageous in open opposition as we now feel ought to have been the case.' (HC Deb 10 November 1944 vol 404 cols 1725-31 <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1944/nov/10/germany-war-criminals> [accessed 13 July 2017]) Low responded quickly to the liberation of Belsen with a cartoon published in the *Evening Standard* on 19 April 1945, 'Not All Guilty' (fig. 10) [accessed in the British Library Newsroom].

tropes of childish innocence are juxtaposed with a peculiar 'blankness' of character, as Brunsdon and Moseley address in their feminist analysis of the film. This petite, pretty, blonde, submissive figure, always asking, 'is it alright?' hints, they contend, at the 'contemporary difficulty of the film's project of creating plausible good Germans'.[41] Indeed, for the majority of the film, Frieda says little, is demure and obedient and is characterised mostly by her childlike looks and her eagerness to be 'a good wife'. Beyond this, as Brunsdon and Moseley argue, she is indeed 'blank'. In a society in which the collective guilt thesis and anti-German hostility were still widely exhorted and in which the popular culture market was already full of fictional German and Nazi villains, it was indeed difficult to create a plausible good German. Were the only good Germans 'dead Germans', that is those who were victims of the Nazi regime? If not and if all other Germans were at least partly responsible, morally or politically, for the Nazi crimes, what did a good German look like?

More obviously, the casting of a Swedish rather than a German actress is a resounding indicator of the contemporary impossibility of convincingly allying goodness and innocence with Germanness beyond the fictional level. As the play's author Ronald Millar recollects, there were significant practical problems involved with casting a German actress in the role for the film, including the difficulty of getting a work permit and the lack of information about suitable candidates.[42] But, as Ramsden notes, it would also have been 'difficult to find any German actress not associated in the public mind with the Nazis'.[43] Any actress bearing that association could not, he implies, convincingly portray a 'good' German.

Casting an actor to play Frieda's fanatical, violent brother Richard who believes that the return of fascism and war is the answer to Germany's problems was far less tricky. German actors had been unproblematically cast as villainous Germans in British films for many years. Albert Lieven, who plays Richard, was one such actor, having moved to Britain in 1937 and subsequently appearing in numerous British wartime films in this role.[44] In a scene in *Frieda* in which brother and sister confront

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[41] Brunsdon and Moseley in Burton, O'Sullivan and Wells eds, p.131.
[42] Cited in Burton and O'Sullivan, p.251.
[43] Ramsden (2006), p.312. Hildegard Knef was an obvious exception to this.
[44] Examples include *Spy for a Day* (1940), *For Freedom* (1940), *Night Train to Munich* (1940), *Convoy* (1940), *Neutral Port* (1940) and *The Big Blockade* (1942).

each other, Richard preaches ‘all Germans are one’, echoing Nell’s conservative essentialism (‘there’s a common denominator in every one of them’), while Frieda argues for individualism and disaggregation: ‘I am not like you. I am one German, you are another.’ Cuts between close-up shots of each character highlight the visual contrasts that echo their moral disparity. Frieda’s smooth, glowing skin, loose wavy hair and large blue eyes, unencumbered by excessive make-up that would undermine her childlike simplicity, are contrasted with Richard’s slicked dark hair, coarse skin and small dark glinting eyes filled with anger and manic energy (fig. 11). In Patrick Major’s 2008 discussion of the depiction of the *Wehrmacht* in post-war British popular culture, he touches on the frequently recurring gendered divide between good German (woman) and bad German (man) in texts that address the issue of German morality. ‘It was simply good theatre,’ he argues, ‘to have a flawed, but essentially good character to offset the truly wicked.’ The former, in this case Frieda, is redeemable, while the latter, Richard, is not.[45] Not only was this ‘good theatre’, however, but such characterisations fictionalised and resolved the problems, mentioned earlier and addressed by Barnouw, surrounding attempts to categorise Germans in occupied Germany. The desire for Germans to be easily identified as good or bad, anti-Nazi or Nazi, redeemable or not – as exemplified by Margaret Bourke-White’s photographic attempt to capture ‘existential differences between good and bad Germans’ – is satisfied in these fictions which depict unrealistic characters who are wholly good or wholly bad.[46]

[45] Patrick Major, ‘Our Friend Rommel: The *Wehrmacht* as ‘Worthy Enemy’ in Postwar British Popular Culture’ in *German History*, 26 (2008), p.530.
[46] Barnouw (1996), p.72.

Figure 11: Richard (Albert Lieven) proclaims his desire for a Nazi resurgence.

However, Frieda's role of 'good German' in this scene is contingent on the process of redemption she is undergoing. This takes the form of the Anglicisation of her appearance and behaviour, which gives further impetus to the implicit idea that a 'good German' is an oxymoron. Her bulky and forbidding leather coat, incongruous among Denfield's population, and her stereotypically Germanic braided hair that dominate her appearance in the early scenes give way to fitted jackets and dresses and a hairstyle tamed in the English fashion. She learns how to cook and clean; she learns English dances, social customs and colloquialisms. This is the process, it is implied, by which she becomes 'a good wife': subduing her Germanness in favour of 'English' habits.

We are left with the following contradictory conclusions. Firstly, that the unqualified denunciation of all Germans as equally culpable for the Nazi crimes is misguided and neglectful of individual difference. And, secondly, that Germans are wholly good or wholly bad and can be easily visually and behaviourally identified as such. The good German can be redeemed, but only by the suppression of his or her Germanness and its replacement with Englishness. The bad German is irredeemable and must be eliminated. The film thus equates a successful future Germany with the elimination of most of what is currently associated with that nation, implying an underlying assumption of Germany's collective and irredeemable guilt and immorality that strikes a discord with the film's apparent rejection of Vansittartism.

1.3. 'I don't like the Germans and I believe they should be punished': The question of redeeming or punishing a whole nation

Frieda is not an anomaly in post-war British popular culture. We find the same mixed messages – that Germans should not be viewed collectively but can be sorted into identifiable categories, usually 'good' and 'bad' – in several other fictions in the immediate post-war years that engaged with the question of German culpability. These include *The Edge of Darkness* (1947) by John Prebble, *To the Victors the Spoils* (1950) by Colin MacInnes and *Thine Enemy* (1950) by Philip Gibbs, all of which were set at the end of the Second World War and drew heavily on their authors' first-hand experiences of wartime and post-war Germany. Nuance is not absent in the depiction of Germans in these novels, yet, as in *Frieda*, the triumph of ambiguity is consistently thwarted by description and dialogue that close down debate and spurn ambivalence. MacInnes' novel, for example, follows a group of British servicemen as they enter Germany in the final weeks of the war and was based on the author's own experiences as a member of the British occupying forces in Germany. As in the novels by Prebble and Gibbs, we are presented with a host of diverse German characters that counters any drive to collectivise. Yet a conversation between the British soldiers about what should be done with the Germans reveals a stubborn underlying assumption of collective national guilt that jars with the portrayal of individualised Germans. They disagree only on the appropriate consequences of German guilt not on its existence. 'Major Parsons had been for killing them,' explains the narrator, 'Cuthbert for bringing them up to his own level, and I had spoken against both solutions, without putting forward an alternative'. Even Cuthbert, generally disliked for his liberal intention to 'understand' and 'cure' the Germans, acknowledges, 'I don't like the Germans, and I believe they should be punished.'[47]

[47] Colin MacInnes, *To the Victor the Spoils* (1950), p.33.

In a reflection of non-fictional discourse, where less doctrinaire writers and thinkers such as Gollancz were in the minority, these men assume the collective guilt of the German people but fail to reach a conclusion as to the punishment or 'consequences' that should follow. The judicial, logistical and diplomatic consequences of denouncing an entire nation as guilty were simply unimaginable. Addressing the notion of collective guilt in his study of Europe since 1945, historian Tony Judt remarks, actions of the Nazi regime and by the German people, who could not be tried for any crime within the law but could debatably be branded with moral guilt. 'Although what is considered legal and moral often overlap,' notes Katchadourian, 'they are not always the same; some actions may be legal but not moral [...] or illegal but moral.'[53] Even with this new category of crime, three defendants at Nuremberg – Hans Fritzsche, Franz von Papen and Dr. Hjalmar Schacht – were acquitted and seven of the nineteen convicted men received prison rather than death sentences. Of the 91,000 people tried for Nazi crimes in the FRG after 1949, none were executed as the death penalty had been abolished.[54]

Journalists, ordinary Britons and creators of fictions were free of the responsibility of dealing with the practical consequences of collective guilt and could thus easily denounce the 'German murders', argue that all Germans 'must share the guilt' and, like Nell, insist that no German must 'escape the consequences' without concerning themselves with concrete details. Many popular fictions – including the novel discussed in the next section – offered the British public the certainty and finality regarding German accountability and punishment that was desired but absent (and impractical) in reality. Writers exploited the almost unanimous assertion of the guilt of Nazi leaders to create fictions that narrate the search for, capture, and punishment of unquestionably 'guilty' figures such as elite Nazis and concentration camp commandants.[55] Narratives of a hunt for an individual were free from the related and thorny issues of collective guilt and collective punishment. In these fictions, guilt is a satisfyingly (and unrealistically) simple concept and is met with immediate and immutable punishment (death), fulfilling the desire expressed by many ordinary Britons for the immediate death of Nazi criminals.[56] The narrative ends when the Nazi or Nazis are caught and killed and the reading public, weary of reports of slow progress at Nuremberg, is spared the depiction of a drawn-out trial that had the

[53] Katchadourian, p.287.
[54] Ian Buruma, *The Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan* (2009), p.155.
[55] These include the novels *Count of Six* (1948) by Lester Powell, *Dark Wanton* (1948) by Peter Cheyney, *Now or Never* (1951) by Manning Coles, *Pilgrim at the Gate* (1957) by Desmond Cory and *The Testament of Caspar Schultz* (1962) by Jack Higgins (pen name of Henry Patterson); the films *Night Boat to Dublin* (1946) and *Portrait from Life* (1949), and the 1965 BBC drama series *Contract to Kill*.
[56] 'I'd hang the lot of them' and 'They should be shot' were responses to Mass Observation questions about the men on trial in Nuremberg (Sharples, pp. 40-1). On 3 May, Mass Observation diarist Herbert Brush wrote: 'all those [Germans] under twenty-five should go into a lethal chamber' (*Our Hidden Lives: The Remarkable Diaries of Postwar Britain*, ed. by Simon Garfield [2004], p.15).

potential to introduce doubt into the assertion of guilt or humanity into the depiction of a monstrous individual.

Placed in this context, it is perhaps remarkable that any fiction targeted at a mass audience would acknowledge any uncertainty or nuance in the discussion of German accountability and categorisation. Despite their refusal to entirely relinquish certainties and generalisations, *Frieda* and the novels by MacInnes, Prebble and Gibbs stand out as reminders that Britain and Britons did not simply accept the notion of German culpability but that the debate was both heated and ongoing.

2. 'Nasty, devious and unwholesome, he had run true to type right to the end': The villainous German character

The debate around German culpability for the war and Nazi crimes formed the backdrop to and impetus for discussions regarding the existence and nature of the German national character, both in the public and political spheres and in fictional texts. Was it not only guilt that was collective, but also the cause of the actions that determined such guilt? Was the cause of such immoral behaviour based in the constituents of Germanness, which made morally criminal acts more likely? These discussions formed part of the debate around what became known as 'the German question', as Barnouw explains in *The War in the Empty Air*: how could 'a civilized people [...] have committed such acts of unspeakable, unbelievable cruelty'?[57] One answer, offered by liberals and socialists such as Gollancz, Mosley and Russell, was rooted in a refutation of the existence of any distinction between Germans and other nationalities. In *Report from Germany*, Mosley wrote the following:

> We came away [from Belsen] realising, with renewed horror, how thin was the margin that separated even the most ordinary men and women from bestialism. [...] You do not need to be German to beat and kick and torture. All you need is the regime that encourages the instinct.[58]

[57] Barnouw (2005), p.30.
[58] Leonard Mosley, *Report from Germany* (1945), p.95.

The majority of popular fictions that addressed 'the German question' in the post-war period took the opposite stance, asserting the existence of a rigid distinction between Germans and others. 'In the immediate wake of the war anti-German feeling rode high,' argues Douglas Botting in his study of post-war Germany. 'In 1945 the majority of the British, French and Americans would have regarded the Germans as a race permanently warped by an hereditary flaw. It was an attitude that could be found from top to bottom of western society.'[59] It was this 'hereditary flaw', claimed Lord Vansittart and A.J.P. Taylor as well as many MPs and journalists, that explains 'how' the German nation 'committed such acts of unspeakable, unbelievable cruelty'. This argument both derived from and supported the collective guilt thesis and both arguments served to locate Germanness as, in the words of Captain Saul Padover, officer of the Psychological Warfare Division, 'a race apart'.[60] Numerous post-war British fictions offered implicit or explicit support for this essentialist stance, depicting German villains displaying the same collection of traits – egotism, sadistic cruelty, deviousness, aggressiveness and slickness – that were identified by Lord Vansittart, Robert van Cutsem and A.J.P. Taylor as well as MPs and journalists as central to the German character.[61] This image was perpetuated through fiction well into the 1950s and served a very British purpose, namely justifying the conflict and affirming the continued moral superiority of Britishness.

2.1. 'What is it, to be here in this country a German?' Ellis Peters' Fallen into the Pit

German prisoner-of-war Helmut Schauffler is at the centre of Peters' novel *Fallen into the Pit*, the author's first of many crime novels featuring policeman George Felse and an excellent example of a text that supports the 'hereditary flaw' argument.

The novel is set in a small village in rural England in late 1946/early 1947. The village's young men have returned from war while some German prisoners from a nearby camp identified as anti-Nazi have been recruited to work in the local mines. There is immediate antagonism between the groups, especially when some of the Germans are seen saluting and greeting each other in the Nazi fashion. Helmut

[59] Douglas Botting, *In the Ruins of the Reich: Germany 1945-1949* (1985) p.157.
[60] Cited in Botting, p.78.
[61] See Vansittart (1941) and Robert Gilbert Vansittart, *Bones of Contention* (1945); TNA, FO 371/46864, 'The German Character', Brigadier W.E. van Cutsem, 9 March 1945.

Schauffler causes several fights but is treated leniently each time by the local magistrate, despite the general hostility towards Helmut from the villagers. He is invited by Gerd Hollins, a German Jew, to live with her, but he abuses Gerd and causes her great distress.[62] Halfway through the novel, Helmut is found dead and George Felse investigates. He discovers that Helmut was involved in a corruption scandal involving the sabotage of mining machinery and was killed by landowner Selwyn Blunden in a disagreement.

Early in the novel, having been accused of purposefully spitting on a photo of a young man's brother who died in Germany in 1945, Helmut responds indignantly: 'If I am not German, this does not happen. If I am not German, he does not so quickly think the worst in all I do. What is it, to be here in this country a German?'[63] He argues that Germans are automatically perceived by Britons as guilty, simply because of their nationality, challenging the essentialist argument behind the theory of collective guilt. Couched in direct speech and voiced by a German character whose true nature has not yet been revealed, Helmut's accusation is directed as much at the early 1950s British reader as at his fictional community and arouses some discomfort. At this point, we are not yet sure whether it is the British community (fictional and real) who will be criticised by this novel for condemning all Germans or whether the character of Helmut will prove the villagers (and by extension, the reader) correct in such condemnation.

The local magistrate's tolerance and liberalism last the longest. 'I have a horror of doing the young wretch less than justice', he admits. 'I dare say it does seem as if we're all incurably against him' (54-5). The word 'wretch' is indicative of the magistrate's pity towards Schauffler, whom he sees as a victim. 'Incurably', a slightly odd word in the context, conjures up discussions of Germany's future in which the word 'cure' and the question of 'curability' were often present. The implication is that 'we' (Britons) should neither be fixed in our ways nor believe that others (that is, Germans) are. This echoes a point often made against the collective denunciation of the German people. Satirical columnist Beachcomber commented in

[62] Gerd is a male name and Gerda the female equivalent. Peters used the former erroneously for her female German character.
[63] Ellis Peters, *Fallen into the Pit* (1951), p.27. Same reference for all future quotations.

May 1945 in the *Daily Express*, 'We are in danger of adopting the German racial theory' by saying they are 'a race apart and all sub-men'.[64] Peters' novel makes the same point through the magistrate's words: by automatically rejecting Helmut because he is a German, 'we' are acting as poorly as those Germans who rejected and persecuted groups of people because of their ethnic or cultural identity.

It is not long, however, before Helmut's indignation is exposed as entirely unjustified. His claim that he was forced to join the Nazi party – 'one must conform' (28) – is contradicted by the Nazi salutes he enthusiastically shares with the other prisoners and by his increasingly sadistic behaviour and violently anti-Semitic attitude. He stabs a local boy, fights another, is physically, emotionally and verbally abusive to Gerd, and is aggressive, cruel and sly at every opportunity. Indeed, it becomes clear that Helmut is not just a Nazi character, but a character analogous to Nazism: he is a metonym for the entirety of the Nazi movement. This is first established in the description of Helmut after he is invited to live with Gerd (a point I will address in greater detail later):

> In a few days Helmut began to expand to his full size [...] his great, loose young breadth of shoulder spread for all to see, his gait and all his movements [...] acquired a glossy exultant smoothness, his step an effortless spring. (36)

This description invites us to read his entry into Gerd's home as a metaphor for invasion. The word 'expand' alludes to discussions of the expansionist politics of the Nazi regime evidenced first by the annexation of Austria in 1938 and sets up the following description as an analogy of Nazism. Helmut's 'young breadth of shoulder spread for all to see' is a metaphor for the geographical breadth and pride of the 'young' Third Reich, while the 'effortless spring' of his step signifies the ease with which the initial invasions occurred and the lack of resistance.

The magistrate's reluctance to punish Helmut for his initial criminal and immoral acts and his insistence that he be given another chance are equally significant for our reading of the protagonist. With the fictional hindsight offered to the reader by Helmut's later actions and the real hindsight offered by the events of the war instigated by Nazi Germany, this lenient approach can be interpreted as a metaphor

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[64] *Daily Express*, 1 May 1945.

for Britain's appeasement politics in the 1930s and the reluctance of many countries, Britain among them, to punish Hitler and his regime for their pre-war crimes. By exposing the folly of the magistrate's clemency, the novel criticises the British government's leniency towards crimes that should, it is implied through Helmut, have been recognised as the precursor to far more immoral and criminal acts.

The second half of the novel is dominated, not by the investigation into his murder, but by discussions of Helmut's significance for an understanding of Britain's victory and of post-war Germany. For by this point, it is clear that Helmut is seen not just as a representative of Nazism by the villagers, but also of Germanness – a view that the reader is encouraged to adopt. This is achieved by several means. Firstly, Helmut is frequently referred to, both by the narrator and by characters we are encouraged to like, as a type – 'a Helmut Schauffler' (29), 'the Schauffler kind' (23), 'the usual kind' (35). His own frequent identifications as a 'German' – most notably in his complaint, 'If I am not German, he does not so quickly think the worst in all I do' – establish that nationality as the 'kind' he is supposed to represent.

Secondly, several characters voice complaints that the war failed to eradicate the behaviours and beliefs that characterised Nazism, a point for which Helmut serves as evidence. 'If the Schaufflers can come squirming out of their holes only a few years later', Jim contends, the defeat of Nazism has achieved nothing (104), while Gerd says to Sergeant Felse, 'You think you have changed something, with your war! You think you have drained that pool! It's only frozen over very thinly' (98). Early in the novel during a discussion about the possibility of forgiving Helmut his wrongs, Jim argues, 'Forgive! You might as well forgive an adder for being an adder, and pick it up in your hand, and expect it not to bite you' (34). The language of snakes and worms implies sub-humanness, deviousness and evil, while the imagery of holes and pools likens 'the Schaufflers' to non-human creatures who exist among darkness and dirt. These creatures are not simply Nazis, these statements imply, as the Nazi regime has been defeated. Their cruel, violent, expansionist and devious behaviour is rooted not in Nazism, but rather in Germanness, of which Nazism is one manifestation.[65]

[65] This was an argument made by Vansittart and others and which I will address later.

Finally, the explicit remarks made by Gerd Hollins regarding the role of Helmut for her are a key means by which he is established as an embodiment of Germanness. Hoping to reconcile herself with her race by seeking a German who is 'not altogether vile', she invites Helmut to live with her.[66] If Helmut had proved himself to be what she sought, 'it would have been like recovering a whole country', she says (97). Here is a direct indication that, good or 'altogether vile', Helmut is to be read as representative of his nation – 'country' – *not* just of Nazism. 'There must be some who are good', Gerd contends, 'you know it is impossible there should be none at all' (34). Pinning all her hopes for reconcilement on Helmut, she is disappointed and, instead of being 'recovered', his country remains in her perception 'altogether vile'. Helmut's death – a solution to the violence, fear and emotional abuse he brought to the village – represents the elimination of Germany, a solution, it is implied, to the violence and fear brought to Europe by the Nazi regime. For Nazism is a manifestation of Germanness, Helmut's character implies, and can only be eliminated if the nation that spawned it is also eradicated.

The discomforting implications of national stereotyping raised by Helmut's accusatory statements near the start of Peters' novel do not last for long. Helmut perceives the label 'guilty' to be the direct and misguided consequence of his nationality, but he has missed the middle stage of the argument. For the novel implies that Helmut's guilt is the result of actions caused by his characteristics, which are the result of his nationality. Through Schauffler, the association by the fictional village (and by extension, the real British) community of 'German' with guilt and villainy – specifically violence and cruelty – is emphatically validated.

2.2. 'So brutal, so unprincipled, so degraded': The essentialist understanding of the German national character

In 1946, Peter Bielenberg, a young German lawyer and concentration camp survivor, followed his family to England. He was shocked by how the British people treated him. 'I was suffering in an atmosphere in which there was an unspoken understanding that I belonged to a nation of swine,' he wrote. 'I […] deeply resented

[66] Gerd identifies more as Jewish than German, meaning that her kind, forgiving personality can be attributed to Jewishness and does not upset the image of Germanness that Schauffler represents.

being treated as a beastly German.'[67] He, like Helmut, was subject to the widespread anti-German hostility in post-war Britain, but, unlike Helmut, he did not deserve this treatment. His experience and fictions such as Peters' expose how, in Sabine Lee's words, the '*Feindbild* of Germany, created and 'officially' fostered in the late 1940s, outlived the actual policy of treating Germany as an enemy politically.'[68] Even when 'anti-German *Feindbilder* were no longer supported officially,' she goes on to argue, 'public and published opinion were still tainted by anti-German feelings.'[69] Sensationalist books such as Lord Russell's *The Scourge of the Swastika* (1954), an emotive indictment of the German nation and national character, and Taylor's *The Course of German History*, in which he describes the German people as 'so brutal, so unprincipled, so degraded, as to be not fit to live,' quickly became bestsellers. According to a memo sent from Churchill, whose government was concerned about the impact of Russell's book and had attempted to prevent its publication, *The Scourge* had sold 60,000 copies by November 1954 and was being 'reprinted as fast as possible as the demand is very great'.[70]

A steady stream of fictional stories promoting the supposedly unpleasant German national character both fed and nurtured what seemed to be a voracious appetite among the British public (indicated by the popularity of Russell's book) for depictions of German villainy.[71] As well as appearing in novels and films, such characters frequently appeared as adversaries faced by hero Buck Ryan in the *Daily Mirror* cartoon strip and by Captain Phantom in the weekly *Knockout* comic. Yet the British had not always welcomed *Feindbilder* such as these. In his examination of cinematic propaganda in Britain during the Second World War, James Chapman explores the deep antipathy among Britons to the idea of propaganda, which was

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[67] Cited in Botting, p.160.
[68] Sabine Lee, *An Uneasy Partnership: British-German Relations Between 1955 and 1961* (1996), p.86.
[69] ibid., p.4.
[70] Cited in Wendy Webster, 'From Nazi Legacy to Cold War: British Perceptions of European Identity 1945-54' in *European Identity and the Second World War*, ed. by Menno Spiering and Michael Wintle (2011), p.103.
[71] Fictions featuring aggressive, cruel, egotistic and intelligent German villains who exhibit no character development or any capacity for it include the novels *Green Hazard* (1945), *The Fifth Man* (1946) and *Now or Never* (1951) by Manning Coles, *Dark Wanton* (1948) by Peter Cheyney, *The Search* (1958) by Roy Farran and *Hands of the Devil* (1959) by Tony Faramus, and the films *The Echo Murders* (1945), *Night Boat to Dublin* (1946), *Counterblast* (1946), *Snowbound* (1948), *Carve Her Name With Pride* (1958), *The Treasure of San Teresa* (1959) and *The Quiller Memorandum* (1966).

widely considered 'un-British'. How did a public who disliked overt propaganda come to embrace the rigid *Feindbilder* that filled so many popular fictions in the post-war period, long after Germany was no longer the *Feind*? Why was Peter Bielenberg considered to belong to 'a nation of swine'?

The MoI campaign to conflate Nazis and Germans, the wartime rhetoric of Vansittart and his followers and the discovery of the concentration camps all played a role, as previously discussed. Yet pre-war precedents were also significant in offering textual and visual manifestations of the type of Germanness being peddled. During the conflict, Vansittart and others argued that the German people's current display of collective 'wickedness' could be explained by their fundamentally wicked character. Cruelty, efficiency and mechanical obedience are innate German characteristics that simply found their perfect expression in Nazism, argued Vanisttart in *Black Record*.[72] In 1944, British serviceman were issued with leaflets warning them of the callous nature of the German people, while Con O'Neill, Foreign Office advisor on Germany, wrote in a memo in June 1945, 'National Socialism has been no more than a special form of organization of the instincts and capacities of the German people'.[73] Depictions of ruthless Germans in early twentieth-century novels by John Buchan, Erskine Childers and E. Philips Oppenheim as well as later incarnations in Val Gielgud's *Gravelhanger* (1934) and Eric Ambler's *The Dark Frontier* (1936) seemed to strengthen the credibility of the claim that Nazism had grown out of longstanding German tendencies, while also offering models of German villainy that could be easily imitated in post-war texts. Meanwhile, fictions such as the television and radio adaptations in 1948 of *Nurse Cavell*, a play based on the true story of a British nurse in the First World War who was arrested, tortured and tried by the Germans, drew heavily on memories of First World War propaganda that, according to Tony Kushner, generated 'profound and destructive' Germanophobia and led to the 'denigration of anything regarded as having German origins'.[74] Such fictions

[72] Vansittart (1941), p.1.
[73] Cited in Lothar Kettenacker, 'British Post-War Planning for Germany: Haunted by the Past' in *Conditions of Surrender: Britons and Germans Witness the End of the War*, ed. by Ulrike Jordan (1997), p.22.
[74] Tony Kushner, *We Europeans? Mass Observation, 'Race' and British Identity in the Twentieth Century* (2004), p. 33.

provided fuel for the concept that cruelty and violence were German, not just Nazi, traits.

The ground was thus laid (and justification provided) for the generic German villain who would inhabit so many post-war fictions. His continued presence can be explained, however, by the particular British need that the figure served. Ian Buruma recalls how the Germans were the 'comic-book villains' of his childhood in The Hague. The Dutch were brave and the Germans wicked, these comics implied. He writes:

> It was comforting to know that a border divided us from a nation that personified evil. They were bad, so we must be good. To grow up after the war in a country that had suffered German occupation was to know that one was on the side of the angels.[75]

Alan Moorehead and Leonard Mosley both recognised a similar impetus among the British occupiers, whose grounds for claiming to be 'on the side of the angels' were perhaps considered even more powerful than those of the Dutch, who had suffered under Germany but could not declare themselves conquerors of that nation. 'Since Germany was manifestly beaten,' Moorehead wrote, 'People wanted to have a justification for their fight, a proof that they were engaged against evil.'[76] To cast the former enemy as wholly and even irremediably 'evil' allowed Britain and Britons to cast themselves as wholly and invariably 'good'. Once this link had been forged, continued depictions of German wickedness functioned implicitly as affirmations of that goodness. Such depictions soon began to appear in fictions with Cold War settings, suggesting that the notion of wickedness was indeed linked with Germanness not just Nazism. The image altered little, simply absorbing the consequences of the Soviet Union becoming an enemy and the creation of a Communist East Germany. The German villain was once more reclothed and appeared in his new guise in novels such as *The Case of the Berlin Spy* (1954) by Don Betteridge, *Pilgrim at the Gate* by Desmond Cory, *The Cold Dark Night* (1957) by Sarah Gainham and *From Russia, With Love* (1957) by Ian Fleming. In an echo of

[75] Buruma (2009), pp.3-5.
[76] Moorehead, p.229.

the trajectory we saw in Chapter 1, where the same trait (instability) was ascribed indiscriminately to German individuals, groups and the nation state, here we see a different trait (wickedness) being ascribed to all Germans irrespective of ideology. The assertion that the German character bore an irremediably wicked trait simultaneously shored up the notion of fundamental British 'goodness' and lent support to the concept of national character on which that particular (and necessary) notion of Britishness depended.

Vansittart, whose ideas about Germany and the Germans were so influential to post-war Anglo-German perceptions, explicitly advocated generalisation when it came to the German people. 'You will always think of the *Germans* in the plural, if you are wise,' he wrote in *Black Record*.[77] Despite their depiction of individual Germans, which could theoretically disturb the comforting collectivisation of the German people and the concomitant assertion of national character as a valid framework for perceiving both the British self and the German other, many post-war fictions did not challenge an essentialist outlook. Through caricatured figures such as Helmut, the obstacle of individuality is surmounted by the depiction of this character as a metonym for 'the Germans'. With *Frieda*, in contrast, the viewer is confronted with the question, what about this particular German, is he or she essentially wicked? Yet we have seen how the film is imbued with tension between the acknowledged need to recognise that 'the Germans' should not be perceived 'in the plural' and the desire to perceive them in exactly that way. This is the film's greatest weakness and its greatest revelation, exposing one dilemma at the heart of British perceptions of Germanness in the post-war period.

Wolfgang Friedmann, lawyer and member of the British Military Government in occupied Germany, wrote in 1947 of the widespread acceptance of the collective guilt thesis and of German character generalisations among the British occupiers. His own view, that the German character was 'neither universal nor unalterable' and that Germans were 'no more all of one kind than any other people' was far less common.[78] Continuing to depict the German character as universal and unalterable via depictions of German characters as metonyms for Germanness or for its 'good'

[77] Vansittart (1941), p.19.
[78] Wolfgang Gaston Friedmann, *The Allied Military Government of Germany* (1947), pp.223-5.

and ‘bad’ categorisations allowed Britons to reassure themselves of their own universally and unalterably ‘good’ character. ‘The *German* is often a moral creature, the *Germans* never,’ wrote Vansittart, ‘and it is the *Germans* who count.’[79] Post-war fictions largely implicitly affirmed this stance, neglecting the individual ‘moral’ German in favour of characters that ratified established ideas about ‘Germans in the plural’.

3. ‘Is that what a murderer looks like?’ 1960s re-examinations of the question of German guilt

The debate about the nature or existence of Germanness rumbled on through the 1950s. While some parts of the popular press continued to assert the unchanged, aggressive nature of the German people, the BBC offered more nuanced perspectives that challenged the assumption that the Germans were ‘all of one kind’ and that that ‘kind’ was unpleasant.[80] Numerous BBC radio and television programmes scheduled in the post-war months and years asked ‘what are [the Germans] like today?’, ‘have they changed at all?’ and ‘what sort of people have the Germans turned out to be?’ as well as programmes that were solely concerned with the German ‘national character’.[81] Following a 1955 BBC television programme aiming to present the personality of ordinary Germans, audience members responded positively, writing, ‘It gave us a good insight into the minds of the Germans and the way they are thinking’ and ‘Very glad to get the inside information about the Germans’.[82] These statements, alongside the regularity and peak-time scheduling of the programmes, indicate that the nature of the German people was of great interest to Britons and was still a subject for debate and curiosity. Although still using the language of collective

[79] Vansittart (1941), p.19.
[80] A *Daily Mirror* article published in November 1949 closed with an ominous message from Field Marshal Lord Wavell: ‘The Germans are the most dangerous people in Europe. I do not think two defeats have changed their nature much’ (19 November 1949). As late as 1958, a *Daily Express* opinion piece entitled ‘Germans do not change’ argued that the Germans are deceptive, aggressive and expansionist: Germany ‘has plenty of ambition and a desire for revenge [...] the truth is that Germany never changes’ (18 December 1958).
[81] These included the radio programmes ‘An Englishwoman’s Story’ (Home Service, December 1947), ‘Window on Western Germany’ (Home Service, May 1949) and ‘Talking with Germans’ (Home Service, October 1954), and the television programmes ‘News Special: Blockade Ends’ (May 1949) and ‘Special Enquiry: Germany 1955’ (April 1955).
[82] Cited in Howard Smith, ‘Have They Changed At All? The Portrayal of Germany in BBC Television Programmes 1946-55’ in *Cold War Propaganda in the 1950s*, ed. by Gary D. Rawnsley (1999), p.161.

national character, the BBC's programmes show an awareness of the possibility of variation and change within that character.

It was in the early 1960s, however, that the debate regained its full vigour. Several high-profile trials brought the issue of the culpability of the German people for the Nazi crimes and the related issue of the German character back into the spotlight of public scrutiny. The trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem in 1961 received widespread coverage, as did the Auschwitz trials in Frankfurt that began in 1963. The remarks of German politicians in response to the trials were also of great interest to the British press. The *Daily Mirror* welcomed a speech given by Dr. Adolf Arndt, Shadow Minister of Justice in the FRG, in March 1965, in which he claimed, 'I know myself to be a sharer in the guilt.' The paper interpreted his words as the long-sought affirmation that the German people did indeed know about 'the gigantic murder operation', a 'true answer' to the question voiced by Robert in *Frieda* but asked by many: 'but did you know?'[83] The paper's erroneous leap of logic – between one man's confession and proof of national guilt – implies that the question of German culpability had not yet been resolved but that the desire for resolution, so palpable in the immediate post-war period, was still alive. In contrast, a *Daily Express* review of a German play staged in London in 1963, *Power of Persuasion*, which thematized the involvement of ordinary Germans in the Nazi crimes, acknowledged and welcomed the growing subtlety of the debate. Indeed, the paper criticised the play for its lack of nuance, describing it as a 'desperately well-intentioned but heavy-handed parable' that ignores the 'level of sophistication' achieved in 'the great debate about the collective German responsibility for the Nazi regime' over the previous two decades.[84] Such sophistication is evident in a group of BBC radio and television dramas broadcast between August 1961 and March 1963. I will briefly address three of these dramas to show both how the questions and concerns regarding German guilt and wickedness that were under debate in the immediate post-war period were revived and how that debate had changed and progressed with the passage of time.[85]

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[83] *Daily Mirror,* 15 March 1965.
[84] *Daily Express*, 20 September 1963.
[85] My analysis is based on scripts of the television series and the two radio plays viewed on microfilm at the BBC Written Archives Centre.

The Racketty Street Gang was a six-part television drama broadcast during the day on six Sundays between August and September 1961 and repeated the following summer. It plays on the audience's expectations of German guilt and villainy and challenges those assumptions by revealing them to be prejudicial conjecture. *The Racketty Street Gang* tells the story of a German family, the Smertzers, who have emigrated to Australia and are trying to integrate into the local community. In the first episode, a local newspaper prints a benign story about the father Stephan along with a photograph of him. Stephan and his wife show great concern at this and their son Anton asks why they are so worried. 'One day, Anton, I will tell you why, but not now,' his father says.[86] We begin to wonder what secret from his past Stephan hopes to keep hidden from the community in which he now lives, a secret that is not suitable for his young son to hear. With the war less than two decades distant, the assumption is easily reached that this secret involves Stephan's actions during that conflict. His migration to the other side of the world and his evasiveness suggest a guilty conscience.

The truth is revealed in episode three when Stephan tells Anton about a wartime incident. 'There is much I have left out,' he begins, reinforcing the viewer's assumptions that Stephan is guilty of a wartime crime. His story is set in a POW camp in Crete where he was a guard. During a mass escape, Stephan explains, he was sent by the camp commandant to find and kill any escapees. He found two Australian prisoners, one of whom was already dead and another whose life he spared but whom he claimed to have killed on returning to the camp. After the war, his name was put on a list of war criminals for the murder of an unarmed POW and he is now desperate to find the man whose life he saved in order to prove his innocence. He lives in constant fear that 'someone from the prison camp might meet me, recognise me and want to know how a man who had murdered an Australian should be allowed to live in Australia'. The drama invites the viewer to jump very quickly to a biased assumption about Stephan based on his nationality – exposing the existing bias in the viewer's perception of the German people – and to falsely read his emigration and evasive behaviour as evidence of guilt. *The Racketty Street Gang* exposes and undermines both anti-German prejudice and the continued desire for

[86] *The Racketty Street Gang*, BBC Television Service, 13 August-17 September 1961 (BBC Written Archives Centre).

certainty regarding the nature of individual Germans (innocent or guilty, 'good' or 'bad'?) that was in part satisfied by lists of war criminals. 'These are the bad Germans', the lists seemed to proclaim. This drama teaches that such lists and the assumptions of guilt and wickedness that they inspire should be treated with great caution.

'The Return' and 'The Seventh Man' were two radio plays broadcast on the BBC Home Service on Saturday 24 February 1962 and Saturday 8 December 1962 respectively. The latter was repeated in August 1966. Both take issue with the collectivisation of the German people, specifically the notion that no 'German ever [accepted] any responsibility for the war, its events nor any atrocities.'[87] As in *The Edge of Darkness*, *To the Victors the Spoils* and *Thine Enemy*, we are presented with a set of German characters embodying 'every nuance of [the] extremes and every kind of character from the villain to the fool'. Yet unlike those novels, these two plays do not retr 724 0 0 0.T1 1 Tf [(pl) 0.2 (a) 0.2 (m).2 (e) 0.9rusNf [(pl) 7

‘The Seventh Man’ tells the story of Schwedler, a German man who is seeking the truth about the death of his brother, who served in the German army and died in April 1945. Schwedler visits each of the soldiers who fought alongside his brother and soon discovers that the ugly truth has indeed been hidden from him. Each of the men tries to rebuff his questions, with claims of forgetfulness or obedience (‘I’m in the clear. Orders is orders. I wasn’t in command,’ says Altmann), with flippant dismissals (‘you must have read far too many cheap detective stories recently,’ says Fürbringer) or with incomplete, distorted confessions.[90] We finally learn that these soldiers were given an order to shoot a group of unarmed foreign workers. Schwedler refused to obey and was shot by an officer. ‘We allowed it to be done,’ Simmel admits. Despite the horrific nature of the incident, the reprehensible behaviour of the surviving men in the face of Schwedler’s questions and the apparent anomalousness of Schwedler’s ‘goodness’, all of which seems to support the thesis of German wickedness, this is not the conclusion the audience is invited to draw. The survivors are not stereotyped German villains but ordinary men responding to overwhelming feelings of guilt with desperate attempts to keep the past buried. Yes, they are objectively guilty but they also have ‘guilty feelings’ and thus defy the popular post-war image of the villainous and shameless German.

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The Germans populating these dramas are a far cry from the clichéd characters epitomised by Helmut Schauffler and are devoid of the immediate post-war tension regarding Germanness that sparked the creation of contradictory figures such as Frieda. Although the debate had been revived, it no longer raged but instead comprised mostly calm and lucid reflections on a series of events now belonging to the past. This new atmosphere enabled nuance and complexity – with which creators of fiction in the immediate post-war period had wrestled so profoundly – to be embraced. The desire to collectivise and categorise could be relinquished or at least set aside and ambivalence could be acknowledged. Individual ordinary Germans were now depicted experiencing the universal emotions of anxiety, guilt and shame

[90] ‘The Seventh Man,’ BBC Home Service, 8 December 1962 (BBC Written Archives Centre).

and reacting accordingly: the universal and personal aspects of their character overrode considerations of national character. Guilty and innocent, 'good' and 'bad', are not character types that can be discerned visually, these fictions suggest, and nor are they related to nationality. This is exemplified by Schwedler's final words in 'The Seventh Man'. 'None of us is a murderer,' claims Werner. 'Is that what a murderer looks like?' Schwedler replies, 'I don't know what murderers look like. Perhaps they look exactly like this.'[91]

[91] ibid.

CHAPTER THREE

'The Germans, thought Oliver, could always smile as if they meant it': Germans and deceitfulness in British fictions

'There is nothing militaristic about German youth [...] the Führer is the greatest influence for peace in the world.'[1] So claims Rudi Peters, the German character who dominates the second half of Geoffrey Cotterell's 1956 novel *The Strange Enchantment*, mentioned in Chapter 1. His own actions and the increasingly militaristic and aggressive behaviour of the Nazi regime as depicted by Cotterell do not correspond with these claims, however, and he is exposed as an untrustworthy character. His deceitfulness also extends far beyond political matters. Earlier in the novel he successfully woos Isabel Rowland, a young English woman, with a convincing display of charm, gentility and wealth, only to be revealed as a chauvinistic, mean-spirited and impoverished Hitlerite.

Rudi embodies an image of Germany rooted in the concept of 'two Germanies' that emerged in Britain in the late nineteenth century as a response to the apparent contradictions between Prussian militarism and German Romanticism.[2] Germany was both a land of philosophy and culture and one of aggression, the theory suggested, with different sides proving dominant in various geographical regions and at different chronological junctures. By 1945, when A.J.P. Taylor popularised the theory in his widely read anti-German study *The Course of German History*, the idea of deceitfulness had seeped into the concept. For centuries, he argues, the West had seen only the Germany of literature, scholarship and peace, while Germany's second 'face' – 'the intolerant exterminator and overlord' – was first revealed in the Franco-

[1] Geoffrey Cotterell, *The Strange Enchantment* (1956), p.340.
[2] See John Ramsden, *Don't Mention the War: The British and the Germans since 1890* (2006) for a discussion of the development of the 'two Germanies' theory.

Prussian war of 1870.[3] Recent events seemed to endorse the idea of the 'two-faced' German state, disguising aggressive intentions with a mask of political accord. At the Munich conference of September 1938, Hitler famously agreed to refrain from a forced invasion of Czechoslovakia. Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain returned to Britain a hero, declaring (even more famously), 'I believe it is peace for our time.' Later it seemed that he, along with the entire British press, had fallen prey to the inclination described by Austrian writer Franz Borkenau in 1939: 'Before Hitler marched into Prague, a tendency prevailed to interpret German aims in the light of German official declarations […] an impression prevailed that Hitler's speeches had something to do with his intentions.'[4] The invasion of Czechoslovakia in March 1939 revealed the gulf between Hitler's words and intentions, triggering vitriolic accusations of deceitfulness from the British press. 'He didn't so much change sides,' wrote one journalist in the *Daily Mirror*, 'as reveal he has always been firmly planted on one side: his own.'[5] And in a radio broadcast to the German people just after the outbreak of war in September that year, Chamberlain declared, 'nobody in this country any longer places any trust in your Leader's word' before listing six examples of agreements or treaties that Hitler had violated or broken.[6]

By 1945, the widespread belief in Hitler's untrustworthiness had expanded to incorporate all Germans – now individual Germans, along with their nation state, were freely accused of being 'two-faced'. The pocket-sized Foreign Office booklet, 'Instructions for British Servicemen in Germany', which was given to all British soldiers entering the country in 1944, contained no fewer than eleven warnings regarding the perceived German tendency to lie and deceive. 'Be on your guard', they are warned repeatedly, and 'don't be taken in by first impressions'.[7] Suspicion, according to historian Frederick Taylor in his study of the occupation and denazification of Germany, was indeed the primary attitude of the Allied occupiers towards the Germans in 1945.[8] Yet the belief that Germans were essentially

[3] A.J.P. Taylor, *The Course of German History: A Survey of the Development of Germany since 1815* (1945), p.114.
[4] Cited in Dan Stone, *Responses to Nazism in Britain 1933-1939: Before War and Holocaust* (2003), p.59.
[5] *Daily Mirror*, 31 March 1939.
[6] *Daily Express*, 5 Sept 1939.
[7] 'Instructions for British Servicemen' (2007), p.7, p.36.
[8] Frederick Taylor, *Exorcising Hitler: The Occupation and Denazification of Germany* (2011), p.21.

deceitful, dissembling or fickle lingered beyond the end of the occupation and enabled Cotterell to depict ordinary Germans as deceitful and dishonest in a story set at a time when these traits were largely associated with Hitler and the German state.

The Strange Enchantment was one of many post-war fictions featuring deceitful, dissembling, fickle and untrustworthy Germans. In this chapter, I will examine the origins of this trope and explore the reasons for its prevalence in British popular culture long after the death of Hitler and the end of the Second World War. I will argue that Hitler's actions in the pre-war period, combined with the 'two Germanies' theory, wartime propaganda, the discoveries at Nazi concentration camps in spring 1945, the rapidly developing Cold War and a long history of anti-British German spies in British popular culture, led to the entrenchment of the stereotype of German deceitfulness. Close readings of James Kinross's 1956 novel *The Pike in the Reeds* and the 1959 film *Desert Mice* will allow me to interrogate the trope and its significance in post-war British society. Yet despite the trope's entrenchment, it did not go unchallenged. I will use John le Carré's bestselling 1963 novel *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* to show how the British obsession with the figure of the anti-British German spy was countered with stories of international espionage that debunked the prevailing nostalgic understanding of the relationship between nationality, ideology and character.

1. The developing trope of the deceitful German

1.1. 'They wrap their decency around them like overcoats': The Pike in the Reeds

In March 1946, Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin summarised British aims in Germany. Security from a revival of German aggression was at the top of his list.[9] This stemmed partly from a personal mistrust of Germany. As Douglas Botting remarks in his 1985 study of post-war Germany, 'Bevin never made much of a secret of his anti-German feeling, which dated from the Great War.' He had 'disliked and distrusted Germany ever since'. Prime Minister Clement Attlee was equally anti-German, writes Botting. His was 'the straight-forward prejudice shared by millions

[9] R. Gerald Hughes, *Britain, Germany and the Cold War: The Search for a European Détente 1949-1967* (2007), p.11.

of his fellow-countrymen at the time. (He had only known one good German, he confided later, and she was a house maid.)'[10]

Countless aspects of occupation policy – from the fraternisation ban and the prohibition of political groups to the establishment of guarded enclaves surrounded by barbed wire and soldiers under orders to arrest any German who got too close – bore strong imprints of the British government's distrustful attitude. Publications such as the 'Instructions' mentioned above and a British Control Commission paper circulated to all personnel in the British zone in March 1945, in which readers were warned, 'Don't take anything a German says in the course of duty at its face value,' drove home the message.[11] Policy and rhetoric ensured that the government's attitude of suspicion trickled down to the British men and women who walked the streets of occupied Germany, many of whom required little persuading that the Germans were essentially untrustworthy.

In September 1945, the fraternisation ban was lifted. Professional and personal relationships between Britons and Germans (previously conducted in secret) burgeoned as a result. Yet most popular fictions depicting Anglo-German relationships and set during the occupation period foregrounded the figure of the deceitful German and offered justification for a continuing attitude of suspicion. James Kinross's novel *The Pike in the Reeds* (1956), widely available in public libraries in the late 1950s, is one such novel.[12] The two-part story follows the young and trusting Brian Waugh, a prisoner of war in Germany in 1941 and later a member of the occupation forces in a small German town. While a prisoner, he spends time in hospital and is nursed by Margot, a patriotic young German with whom he becomes infatuated. Coincidentally, he meets her again in 1946 and they begin a relationship. She introduces her brother Kurt, an apparent Anglophile whom Brian immediately likes. However, he is in fact Adolf Eichmann and Margot's husband, and he exploits Brian's trust to divert suspicion away from himself as he makes plans to flee

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[10] Douglas Botting, *In the Ruins of the Reich: Germany 1945-1949* (1985) p.157.
[11] Cited in Patricia Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People: Germans under the British 1945-50* (2001), p.55.
[12] The novel is listed in *Cumulated Fiction Index 1945-1960*, ed. by G.B. Cotton and Alan Glencross (1960), a book described in the preface as 'a guide to representative library stocks', p.1.

Germany. When the truth is finally revealed, Margot, torn between the two men until this point, allies herself with Brian and helps him to kill Kurt.

When Brian first arrives in an unnamed German town as a member of the occupation, he is shown around by Michael Ashley, an experienced officer. He warns Brian, 'there's not a German born one can feel safe about'. He goes on to explain:

> It's the innocuous-looking chaps, the men with blue eyes and honest faces, who do these things and then vanish out of uniform when the Reich is in its death agonies. They wrap their decency around them like overcoats in the post-war world; such splendid camouflage that a rationally minded Englishman would never dream of poking about inside.[13]

The extended metaphor of deceptive appearance carries echoes of the advice issued by the Foreign Office in 1944. Germans 'on the surface at least, seem pleasant enough', troops were told,[14] an idea mirrored in Michael's warning that Germans 'wrap their decency around them', 'splendid camouflage' for their implied indecency or unpleasantness. Furthermore, the metaphor introduces a warning to Brian (and to the reader) that the English are likely to be deceived by this 'camouflage', not because they are foolish but because they are rational and tend to believe that an honest face signifies an honest person, that signifier and signified correlate. When dealing with the Germans, Brian and the reader are warned, different rules apply and the true relationship between sign and meaning must be discovered by 'poking about' rather than through logical deduction. Oliver, the protagonist in John Bayley's 1955 novel *In Another Country*, reaches a similar conclusion after spending time in occupied Germany: 'The Germans, thought Oliver, could always smile as if they meant it.'[15]

As well as physical appearance, facial expression and behaviour (all observable features) Michael also cautions Brian about the words that Germans speak, 'assuring

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[13] James Kinross, *The Pike in the Reeds* (1956), p.142. Same reference for all future quotations.
[14] 'Instructions', p.3.
[15] John Bayley, *In Another Country* (1955), p.98.

you they never hurt a fly and loathing your guts […] in the same breath' (141). Again, signifier and signified are in direct opposition and the former cannot be assumed to carry the meaning it straightforwardly implies. We are reminded of both the gap between Hitler's pre-war rhetoric of peace and aggressive intentions and the widely reported untrustworthiness of German denials of knowledge about or involvement in Nazi crimes. Contemporary accounts indicate that such suspicion was not unfounded. In a journal entry on 17 May 1945, Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, an anti-Nazi campaigner living in Berlin at the end of the war, describes how a former air raid warden had come to ask if she would vouch for him as an anti-Nazi. 'Tagtäglich erleben wir das gleiche,' she writes. 'Zu Dutzenden kommen sie, um sich ihr Nazitum fortattestieren zu lassen.'[16]

Brian ignores Michael's warnings and continues to read surface signifiers, whether words or visual cues, as a direct path to the truth. He accepts the claims of ignorance made by the Germans he meets, declaring, 'It's my belief that the ordinary German had no idea what was going on, any more than we did' (154). Through the comparison, he links Britons and Germans together in their shared ignorance and implies that Germans, like Britons, were themselves victims of Hitler's deceitfulness. It was a narrative frequently invoked by Germans in the post-war period. In his account of his experiences in post-war Germany working with the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey, James Stern describes an encounter with a woman who had lost her whole family in the war. 'Herr Hauptmann,' she said to him, 'I loathe the Nazis with a hatred I didn't know was in me. They screamed *Nie Wieder Krieg!* – No More War! And they swiped everything from us.'[17] Brian responds to similar claims of loathing and ignorance with admirable but naïve compassion. His credulous attitude leads him to befriend Margot and her 'brother' Kurt, accepting Kurt's pro-British assertions as fact and reading Margot's keenness to begin a sexual relationship with him as a sign of her love.

The reader however is given access to the contradiction between appearance or word and reality. On first meeting Brian, Kurt exudes charm and gratitude, declaring that

[16] Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, *Schauplatz Berlin: Tagebuchaufzeichnungen 1945 bis 1948* (1984), p.36: 'Day in, day out, we experience the same. They come in their dozens to have their Nazi-ness certifiably removed.'
[17] James Stern, *The Hidden Damage* (1990), p.232.

'[it] is a great pleasure to have an English officer in the house' (201). After Brian leaves, he complains to Margot of being 'driven mad by these English cretins' (204). A short time later, the reader learns of the discrepancy between Kurt's emotions and his facial expressions: feeling 'a wild desire to kick the Englishman out of his chair and hurl him through the window [...] his face expressed only the most respectful gratitude' (227-8). It is Brian's extreme gullibility – that is, his refusal to adopt the distrustful attitude demanded by his superiors – that both makes him appear a fool and enables the deception to take place. 'It was so easy, so unbelievably simple, buying him with this act,' the narrator remarks. In this way, the novel dramatises an issue that Perry Biddiscombe discusses in his study of post-war Germany – the widespread fear that British occupiers in particular were too easily led and too ready to trust the Germans.[18] Memories of Chamberlain's misplaced trust in Hitler's assertions of peace in 1938 would have made this fear particularly acute.

Kurt's true character is revealed in one key feature that Brian, if he were well read in the spy genre as developed by John Buchan and H.G. Wells, should recognise. The narrator tells us, when we first meet Kurt, that his 'eyes were blue and glittered strangely' (201). From the earliest spy thrillers, the presence of eyes described as glittering, chilly or icy, or an unusual colour such as black or violet was a certain indication of disguised villainy. This is particularly pertinent to a discussion of images of Germans, as shown by historian Jörg Leonhard, who published a paper in 2000 examining 'national images of Germany in Britain and of Britain in Germany from 1870 to the First World War'. In this brief but rare example of Anglo-German comparative study, Leonhard discusses the transition in Britain in this period between romanticised images of Germans with 'mild blue eyes' and images of Germans whose hostility and aggression is signalled by their 'cold blue eyes'.[19] The trend remained strong in post-Second World War British popular fictions, indicating the continued influence of much earlier models of war and spy fictions involving deceitful, hostile Germans.[20] Although the motif quickly became a cliché through repeated use, this repetition did not weaken but rather strengthened its power as a trustworthy signifier of hostility, even evil, in a fictional world where signifier and

[18] Perry Biddiscombe, *The Denazification of Germany: A History 1945-1950* (2007), p.91.
[19] Jörg Leonhard, 'Construction and Perception of National Images: Germany and Britain 1870-1914' in *The Linacre Journal*, 4 (2000), p.46.
[20] I will explore these influences more closely later in the chapter.

signified often diverge. With each use and subsequent revelation of that character's villainy, its reliability as a signifier that can enable the British hero and/or reader to identify a deceitful German is bolstered. The necessity for a reliable physical identifier was particularly pertinent in post-war Britain, rife with anxiety regarding the difficulty of identifying Nazis or Anglophobes among a nation of supposedly deceitful Germans. This anxiety is partially assuaged in *The Pike in the Reeds* by the (unrealistic but desirable) possibility for a foolproof means of recognising those Germans whose apparent pleasantness is merely a disguise.

The revelation of Kurt's 'true' character is also clichéd, echoing the moment in which the German villain is unmasked in countless twentieth-century British novels. His facial expression is suddenly transformed, displaying 'naked' hatred and a 'cruel and vindictive' smile (290) in the place of 'respectful gratitude'. Here, Kinross continues his earlier metaphor, indicating that the cloak of decency has now been discarded to reveal the 'naked' truth. Like Prussian villain Commander Haydock in Christie's 1941 novel *N or M*, Rudi in *The Strange Enchantment* and Ian Fleming's half-German villain Hugo Drax in *Moonraker* (1955), the revelation of true identity and allegiance coincides with the disintegration of the mask worn hitherto. In this way, the reader is given the certainty and stability that is denied when Nazis are caught and tried in reality. Whereas the desire for a discoverable and firm truth about the intentions, beliefs and actions of the real Eichmann remained unsatisfied, even after his trial, Kinross's novel offers a fictitious tale of his capture and death that satisfies this (unrealistic) desire for simple truths. The plot also lends credence to Michael Ashley's warnings and implies that suspicion is indeed the correct attitude with which to approach the Germans. Brian's (and therefore British) gullibility is depicted as a significant factor in the failure of denazification and in the successful escape from Germany and from justice of many former Nazis.

1.2. 'The Smiling Germans and Their Murder Camps': Post-war justifications for the trope

Kinross's novel was not unusual in its subject matter. Well into the 1950s, stories continued to emerge of underground Nazi movements aiming to restore Hitler's

Germany. The public interest in these stories and the fears they encouraged made them ripe for popular fiction in all media throughout the period in question, from the 1948 films *Portrait from Life* and *Snowbound* to the 1959 BBC television play *Echo from Afar* and the 1965 BBC television series *Contract to Kill*. *The Pike in the Reeds* is one of a cluster of novels published between 1945 and the late 1950s centred on a Nazi or group of Nazis living in disguise or in hiding or seeking a means to escape Germany.[21] A Briton or group of Britons is on their trail and the denouement involves the capture or killing of the Nazis. To maintain the tension to the very end, one Nazi often successfully escapes and this can also be read as a nod to reality where the failure of the occupiers to identify and capture all of the key figures in the Nazi regime had been well reported. These novels do several things. Firstly, they either show Britons outwitting and defeating their wartime enemy, who, these novels imply, remains a deceitful opponent even in peacetime, or, in the face of British gullibility, they affirm the urgent necessity of astute, distrustful Britons. Secondly, they encourage distrust and fear of Germans through the dramatization of the problems faced by the British occupiers assessing the role of individual Germans under the Nazi regime. Whose word can be trusted? Can apparent sincerity ever be accepted as such?

However, it was not just stories of disguised Nazis and denials of Nazi allegiance that encouraged the continued production of popular fictions with deceitful Germans into the late 1950s and beyond. Indeed, it is unlikely that such stories alone, becoming less frequent and less relevant for a 1950s British public increasingly fearful of the Soviet threat, could inspire such a profusion of these fictions. There were three other factors that ensured the continuation of the trope far beyond the immediate post-war period. The first was the discovery of the concentration camps in spring 1945, reported extensively in the press and weekly newsreels along with questions regarding the deception involved. The deceit was considered twofold. Firstly, the horror expressed in eyewitness accounts of the liberation of camps including Bergen-Belsen indicates that the extent of the crimes had been well hidden from Germany's enemies. On 18 April 1945, a Captain Williams wrote a letter home from Belsen, urging 'Tom' not to doubt the veracity of the shocking accounts in the

[21] These novels include *The Leaf of a Lime Tree* (1946) by Paul Tabori, *Now or Never* (1951) by Manning Coles and *Mr Blessington's Imperialist Plot* (1951) by John Sherwood.

British press. ‘Everything you’ve read and more are absolutely true. I’ve seen everything and can swear to it.’[22] The cover of *Picture Post* on 5 May (fig. 12) showed a German mother and her child and carried the headline: ‘Europe’s Problem: The Smiling Germans and Their Murder Camps’.[23] The cover’s power lies in two disturbing disjunctures: between the adjectives ‘smiling’ and ‘murder’ and between the image of a smiling woman and the images of the camps inside the magazine that it literally covers (up). ‘The face that hides so much,’ read the caption, making explicit what was already obvious. It was immediately assumed that ordinary Germans had known about the camps and had participated in their concealment, if not in their operation. The second form of deceit was the post-war denials from these same Germans of any knowledge of, let alone involvement in, the camps. Having concealed their existence (as many believed), they were now deceiving their occupiers with claims of ignorance. ‘In all the time I spent in Germany,’ wrote Edna Wallace in 1947, reflecting on her time with the British occupying forces, ‘I never met a confessing Nazi. No-one knew anything about it!’ In the face of the vastness of the crimes, such claims seemed laughable. Lord Robert Vansittart, vehement and influential anti-German politician, seemed to relish the chance to accuse the Germans of both horrendous crimes and calculated mendacity: ‘A new excuse is being cooked up by the Germans,’ he argued in a House of Lords debate in early May 1945, ‘and British

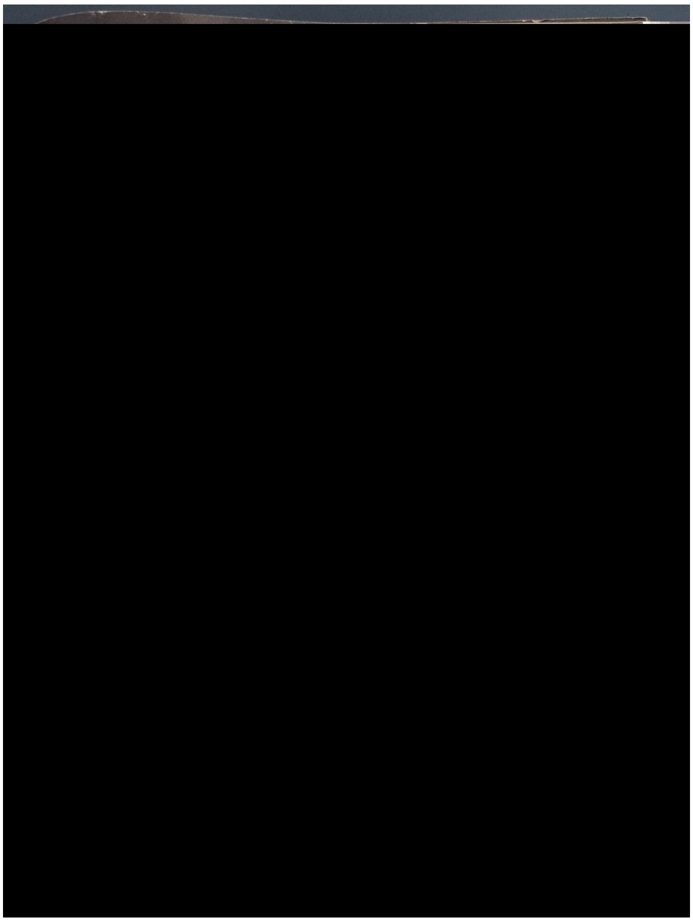

Figure 12: Cover of *Picture Post*, 5 May 1945

[22] Documents.3120 (Letter of 18 April 1945, from Capt Williams to ‘Tom’), Imperial War Museum Archives.
[23] *Picture Post*, 5 May 1945.

dupes are on hand to help. The excuse is that they did not know, and it is profoundly untrue'.[24]

Despite the widespread belief that the discoveries in April and May 1945 revealed a fundamental truth about past and present German deceit, the camps themselves aroused more questions than they answered. The chaotic, overcrowded conditions were a far cry from the efficiency that had characterised the camps' operation for most of their existence. Thousands of prisoners had been marched from the East, while resources dwindled and guards fled to avoid capture. Some Nazis had also tried to destroy evidence of their crimes before leaving. A BBC radio report revealed that members of the S.S. at Buchenwald had tried to whitewash the walls to remove evidence of torture, but left behind 'gruesome traces'.[25] The question was therefore, how should such 'traces' – of blood, corpses, chimneys, documents and testimonies – be read, and what about all the traces that were successfully expunged? Soon after the liberation of Belsen, British and US army units were sent to document the camps on film. 'The object of this visit is to find out the truth', Prime Minister Winston Churchill explained.[26] Yet too many visual signifiers were misleading, ambiguous, absent or corrupted to achieve this. The moving or still images of the camps, either those created by the Allies or discovered later, are also inadequate purveyors of 'truth' and could themselves be interpreted in countless different ways. As Janina Struk explains in her 2004 study, *Photographing the Holocaust*, 'Photographs are fragments. They illustrate stories, they do not tell them'.[27]

Put simply, the revelation (and documentation) of the camps did not mean the straightforward revelation of the truth about the crimes committed by Nazi Germany. The trials of Nazi criminals, both at Nuremberg in 1945-6 and in the following decades, also failed to satisfy the perhaps naïve desire for a comprehensible truth. Juridical processes could not – and indeed are not intended to – resolve moral or psychological questions, yet this did not inhibit the desire for answers. Acknowledging that 'we had learned what they did, beyond all doubt' in her account

[24] Reported in *Daily Express*, 2 May 1945.
[25] 'Buchenwald Concentration Camp', BBC Home Service, 1 April 1945.
[26] Cited in Toby Thacker, *The End of the Third Reich: Defeat, Denazification & Nuremberg, January 1944 – November 1946* (2006), p.112.
[27] Janina Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust: Interpretations of the Evidence* (2003), p.15.

of the Nuremberg trials, journalist Rebecca West remained troubled by the absence of explanation: ‘we had no idea *why* they had done what they did’ (my emphasis).[28]

Later trials, such as that of Adolf Eichmann, seemed to generate more ambiguity than they resolved. Hannah Arendt’s detailed and controversial analysis of the 1961 trial in Jerusalem exposed the difficulty of uncovering two-decade-old truths, any evidence for which the Nazis had endeavoured to destroy. She also laments the complications generated by Eichmann’s exaggerations, contradictions and lies, which meant many of the charges brought against him could not be proven and the truth remained at least partly obscured.[29] *The Pike in the Reeds* anticipates the complications and ambivalences of this trial and successfully alleviates the fears regarding duplicitous Nazis that were present half a decade earlier. By revealing the truth about Kurt to the reader early on, using the motif of glittering blue eyes and presenting the fictional Eichmann, post-revelation, as a readable and one-dimensional embodiment of evil, Kinross offers his readers the comforting certainty denied to them in the post-war discussions of the Nazi crimes.

The third factor that fed public interest in the trope of the deceitful German was the debate around the role of West Germany in an anti-Soviet Western alliance and specifically the subject of German rearmament. Along with the fear that the German state was fundamentally unstable was the concern that the new Federal Republic could, without warning, simply give ‘herself away to the highest bidder,’ in the words of Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden in 1952.[30] A second and related concern was the ‘fear of a German revival’, which, according to historian Sir Michael Howard, ‘governed’ European politics to a great extent in the post-war years.[31] Prime Minsters Clement Attlee, Anthony Eden and Harold Macmillan and prominent Labour MPs Aneurin Bevan and Ernest Bevin all spoke repeatedly through the late 1940s and 1950s of the danger of an armed and neutral West German state, which apparently could not be trusted with weapons. Both fears were rooted in the broad mistrust of the peaceful pro-West intentions voiced by Konrad Adenauer (Chancellor of West Germany between 1949 and 1963) and many other significant German

[28] Rebecca West, ‘Greenhouse with Cyclamens – I’, *A Train of Powder* (1955), p.64.
[29] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (2006).
[30] Cited in Hughes, p.26.
[31] Michael Howard, *The Lessons of History* (1991), p.127.

politicians. The popular press also placed little trust in their words. A *Daily Mirror* article in December 1949 responded to a statement by Adenauer that Germany would not seek to rearm with the question, 'How much more lead does Europe have to get in her body to realise that some people can't be trusted with guns?'[32]

An attitude of suspicion towards foreigners was not (and remains not) unusual. But, as Patricia Meehan argues, 'the usual suspicion of 'foreigners' was reinforced when these were also an enemy who had unleashed death and destruction upon Europe.'[33] The confluence of several further factors in the post-war period, addressed in this section, ensured the continuation of a belief that such an attitude towards Germany was justified. Even some Germans, such as Hamburg diarist Mathilde Wolff-Mönckeberg, accepted this. 'There is indeed sufficient reason to mistrust all of us,' she wrote on 27 May 1945. 'Ultimately I am sure we can work together but meanwhile we will have to bear the yoke.'[34]

2. Tales of German spies and British heroes

2.1. 'You can't tell 'em from our chaps': Wartime deceit in Desert Mice

A front-page article in the *Daily Express* on 15 July 1939 announced, 'M.I.5 Unmask Nazi Plot in Britain', and went on to explain how attractive German female agents were being sent to Britain ostensibly as 'special newspaper correspondents' or meeting under the guise of sewing groups to discuss how to spread Nazi propaganda.[35] Fear of German infiltration was heightened by the outbreak of war and inspired many wartime fictions set in Britain in which ordinary, honest British characters set out to discover and thwart the plans of deceitful Germans who disguise either their nationality or their intentions.[36] Such stories are hardly surprising in a wartime context. Yet similar stories, with either a Second World War or Cold War setting persisted into the 1950s and 1960s. I will argue that the rapid shift from the

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[32] *Daily Mirror*, 6 Dec 1949.
[33] Meehan, p.151.
[34] Mathilde Wolff-Mönckeberg, *On the Other Side: To My Children: From Germany 1940-1945* (1979), trans. by Ruth Evans, p.126.
[35] *Daily Express*, 15 July 1939.
[36] These include the novel *N or M?* (1941) by Agatha Christie and thrillers by John Creasey and Peter Cheyney and the films *The Spy in Black* (1939) and *Went the Day Well?* (1942).

Second World War into the Cold War meant that certain aspects of the wartime mind-set – including suspicion and paranoia – continued. I will show how the juxtaposition of several factors – including the long history of German spies in British thrillers, the unfamiliarity of the new threat and the continuing suspicion cast on the German nation in the popular press – inspired a flood of fictions featuring duplicitous anti-British Germans.

Basil Dearden and Michael Relph's 1959 film *Desert Mice* is a good example of this kind of fiction and was one of several films made by the partnership that engaged with Anglo-German issues. The title of Dearden's film alludes to 'the desert rats', an armoured division of the British Army that earned its nickname fighting in battles across North Africa, Italy and occupied Europe. A 1953 American film *The Desert Rats* starring Richard Burton, James Mason and Robert Newton celebrates this group of new recruits who go on to win some of the war's greatest victories, and depicts them as heroes. The 'desert mice' of Dearden's film are members of ENSA (the Entertainments National Service Association), a frequently derided but cherished British wartime institution, 'notorious', according to Alan Burton and Tim O'Sullivan, 'for the poor quality of shows it staged at military camps and bases'.[37] Like 'the desert rats', they are a motley group, mostly likeable if somewhat daft, but, as 'mice', they are smaller, less aggressive and more fearful, ostensibly useless in the desert war. The film's title and depiction invites us to read the group as a parody of the heroic 'rats' who won so many battles. The performers are mocked and jeered by the British troops they encounter as well as by the film itself, which invites us to dismiss them as witless amateurs, whose inanity is tempered only by their comic value. 'The joke all the way along is on ENSA,' wrote a reviewer in *Picturegoer*.[38]

My reading will show however that *Desert Mice* is far more than a comedic portrayal of a group of farcical Britons and is undeserving of the disparagement or the neglect of critics past and present. Rather, it engages with key questions regarding post-war

[37] Alan Burton and Tim O'Sullivan, *The Cinema of Basil Dearden and Michael Relph* (2009), p.28.
[38] *Picturegoer,* 26 December 1959. The film itself has been a target for ridicule similar to that directed at ENSA, suffering at the hands of both contemporaneous and more recent critics. *Monthly Film Bulletin* criticised the 'boorish script' and 'amateurish handling', while Alan Burton and Tim O'Sullivan spend just two paragraphs discussing the film in a 300-page volume on the cinema of Dearden and Relph. They reject the film as 'the feeblest of all the Dearden-Relph productions' (Burton and O'Sullivan, p.28).

Britain and Germany and the Cold War threat. The film transfers the late 1950s fascination with international espionage to a familiar historical wartime context in which the German threat is rendered comedic by the transparency of the disguise and the certainty of overall victory in this particular war. I will show how it distracts from and also soothes contemporary anxieties by suggesting that nationality remains a fundamental determiner of identity and can never successfully be disguised, even when confronted by the daftest of Britons. Wartime comedy films such as *Let George Do It* (1940), *Gasbags* (1941) and *Cottage to Let* (1941) had achieved the same end through similar methods. In post-war Britain, the Nazi threat was now used as a foil to address contemporary fears regarding the new, less familiar therefore more unsettling threat posed by the Soviet Union and its spies.

Key to my interpretation is the acknowledgement of the similarities between 'the desert rats' and 'the desert mice', rather than the superficial discrepancies outlined above. The film's working title was the servicemen's version of the ENSA acronym, Every Night Something Awful,[39] giving credence to *Picturegoer*'s assertion that the joke is on ENSA. Yet the eventual title and the second half of the film invite us to question our dismissive attitude towards the entertainers and to instead admire their quick thinking, courage and teamwork – the same attributes foregrounded in *The Desert Rats* – in the face of a hostile, devious enemy. Partway through the film, we learn that there is a group of Germans in the North African desert planning to infiltrate Cairo disguised as British soldiers. Peter Ribston, a British intelligence officer, is asked to tour with an ENSA group and use it as cover to locate the German spies. At one point, a truck with the officer and some members of the entertainment group becomes detached from the convoy and ends up at a remote fort where a group of German soldiers is being prepared to infiltrate Cairo disguised as Britons. The new arrivals are unaware of this reality and are greeted by an unusually organised and enthusiastic group of apparently British soldiers. They perform a concert, which the Germans use to test their disguises, before planning to kill the performers and travel to Cairo. The Britons discover the truth, however, and escape taking a German Major with them. The Germans give chase but meet a convoy of British tanks and flee. The German threat – in the form of deceit and disguise rather than weapons –

[39] Robert Murphy, *British Cinema and the Second World War* (2000), p.46 (footnote).

can be eradicated, even by a group of Britons with a firm reputation for idiocy and incompetence, this film asserts. You do not need 'desert rats' to defeat Britain's enemies; 'desert mice' will do.

The theme of disguise pervades the film. In the opening scene, Major Poskett is enjoying a quiet morning shooting rabbits in France, far from any sign of war, when Peter Ribston clatters clumsily onto the terrace. 'You spoiled my shot', Poskett says, peeved.[40] 'Was it a German?' asks Ribston, scanning the landscape. 'Yes, Ribston. It was a very very small German, dressed up like a rabbit.' He laughs and goes on, 'They couldn't fool us, could they Ribston, ey?' While Ribston is depicted as paranoid and silly, the latter impression exacerbated by his lack of physical coordination, Poskett's comment, which implies that Ribston need not be concerned about the threat of disguised Germans, reassures the audience that the British have everything under control.

Any unease that could be aroused by this conversation is dispelled by its comedy and the Germans are soon forgotten as ENSA takes centre stage. Yet with their entrance, the theme of disguise and performance is again foregrounded. Bert Bennett, leader of the troupe, introduces the 'master of magic', a man dressed in an oriental costume whose act relies on trickery and illusion. Others don elaborate costumes and falsely cheerful personas when they take to the stage. Yet their guises are recognisable as such – their audience is aware of the use of masks – and they have a benign purpose. Indeed, their use of undisguised illusion to entertain is later used in the film as a counterpoint to highlight the malevolent purposes of German deceit.

The first hint of this German threat is conveyed to Poskett by a Staff Colonel, who informs the Major about the German commando group posing as Britons. They have been trained in colloquial speech and customs, Poskett learns. 'Can't tell 'em from our chaps', the Colonel says, which gives them great scope for infiltration and sabotage. This fear – that Germans could look like Britons – was a key factor in the suspicion directed at the German nation both during and after the war and one that I will address in the next section. More broadly, the Colonel's words, 'can't tell 'em

[40] *Desert Mice*, dir. by Michael Relph (Rank, 1959) [on DVD]. Same reference for all future screen shots and quotations from this film.

from our chaps', engaged with a post-war discourse that addressed the extent to which nationality could be performed and the significance of this in the context of an inter-national conflict conducted partly by spies performing a different nationality to their own. The fact that such fears were still commonly focused on Germans, as in this scene, indicates an out-dated fixation with this particular former enemy that was rooted partly in a desire to assert the British ability to defeat a disguised enemy.

This film assuages these fears in several ways. Firstly, as in Kinross's novel, the Germans' identity is revealed to the audience before the hoodwinked Britons realise the truth. Our knowledge, of both this small truth and the larger truth of Britain's victory against Germany, lends us a feeling of superiority over and, more generally, difference from the fictional Germans. Secondly, the Britishness of the actors playing the Germans (playing the Britons) mitigates the potentially unsettling effect of their excellent British accents, which might seem to support the notion that national character is performed rather than inherent. The major is played by Marius Goring, a British actor well known for being able to play German characters convincingly. Both this and his actual Britishness make him ideal for this role, the latter serving as a useful justification for his convincing transformation into a visual, aural and behavioural echo of his British counterpart, Major Poskett (fig. 13 and fig. 14). Thirdly and most significantly, the German Major's assumption that nationality is easy to mimic and requires only a good accent, a fake moustache, clichéd behaviour and stock phrases (such as 'jolly good show' and 'where's the flippin' char') is wholly undermined by the obviousness of their disguise, both to the British characters and to the film's audience.

Figure 13: Major Poskett (Alfred Marks)

Figure 14: German Major (left, played by Marius Goring) in his British disguise

Figure 15: German Major and Captain (Alan Tilvern) sing along to 'Underneath the Linden' through gritted teeth.

The revelation of the Germans' identity takes place in a scene in which the entertainers perform a show for their German (but apparently British) audience. Forced to listen to renditions of 'There'll always be an England' and 'Underneath the Linden', which mocks Hitler, Goering and Rommel, the German characters are unable to disguise their fury. Their jaws clench, their eyes glare and they sing through gritted teeth (fig. 15). Their acting ability is laughable and their nationality (expressed here as national pride resisting the patriotism of the enemy) irrepressible. Denied the close-up shots that make the signifiers signalling the Germans' struggle so explicit to the cinema audience, the performers cannot yet read their audience's true identity. Nevertheless, they are unnerved by the reaction of the Germans to each performance and recognise that something is wrong. At the end of each number, during which the Germans sit in polite silence, there is a collective pause before a perfectly timed and over-enthusiastic, but never raucous, collective cheer (fig. 16 and fig. 17). The performers are bewildered and anxious, asking 'What's wrong with them?'. They are accustomed to British audiences who chatter and laugh through the performances and usually boo or jeer at the end. They find such disciplined silence and applause 'creepy'. Even when the Germans are performing Britishness, they do so in an unmistakeably (if stereotypically) German way that negates the Staff Colonel's unsettling claim, 'can't tell 'em from our chaps'.

Figure 16: The German audience sits in disciplined silence after the end of one performance.

Figure 17: Their silence is followed with an equally disciplined and unified bout of cheering.

Soon realising the truth when they spy one audience member singing in German, the performers remain admirably calm, continue with the show and concoct a clever plan to both escape and take the German Major prisoner. They thus engage in their own form of deceit, pretending to be ignorant of the Germans' identity in order to outwit them. Furthermore, the plan involves one performer dressing as a German to fool the guard at the gate; the elderly female pianist engaging a German soldier in conversation to distract him from a knock out blow with a metal pipe; and the 'master of magic' himself using his 'disappearing honeymooners' illusion to enable the performers' escape. Yet these duplicitous actions do not invite accusations of hypocrisy, but instead affirm the distinction between malignant deceit (performed by the Germans) and benign or necessary deceit (enacted by the ENSA troupe). What is more, the British are not very good at it. The magician cannot wholly disguise his unease, arousing some suspicious glances among his audience, while the Briton in Nazi uniform is caught off guard by the soldier at the gate and begins an affable conversation with him about his aunt in Sheffield.

Despite these mishaps, which are comic and convey the notion that deceit does not come easily to the British, the plan works, indicating that even the most inept Britons can outfox the wily Germans. The Germans are plunged into darkness and instructed to count to fifty, at which point their Major, who has been 'magicked away', will return. The obedient German audience dutifully counts to fifty in perfect unison and waits for several seconds afterwards in silence before realising they have been tricked. Their deceitfulness is undermined by their perfect obedience and credulity – also stereotypically 'German' traits – which make them unable to recognise the deceptive actions of others. The joke is no longer on ENSA – it is on the Germans. They allow themselves to be tricked by a troupe of entertainers and their assumption that nationality could be performed with ease is revealed as erroneous. Despite their perfect accents, uniforms and stock phrases, the Germans are never believable as Britons and their own national character – depicted in the film as excessively nationalistic, obedient and disciplined – governs the pretence and renders it absurd. Furthermore, the British characters are shown to be neither foolish – devising an ingenious escape plan – nor easy to fool – they are aware from the moment they enter the fort that something is not right. The transformation of Ribston exemplifies this revelation. A naïve and gawkish if well-meaning character until now, he rises to the occasion and shows authority and leadership, silencing even the cavalier Major Poskett.

A product of its time that lacks cinematographic sophistication, *Desert Mice* has been described as 'critically irrecoverable'.[41] Yet, as we have seen, it reveals and explores a set of anxieties specific to immediate post-war Britain and shows how stories of German disguise and deceit were central to both the development and resolution of those fears.

2.2. German spies in British fiction: A response to threats old and new

The central trope of *Desert Mice* – Germans masquerading as Britons – was well established in British popular culture. Yet its emergence and development had in the past been closely aligned with periods of Anglo-German conflict or intense rivalry. Why then did the post-war period, a time of strengthening ties between Britain and (West) Germany, see such a flood of fictions reiterating the trope of duplicitous, anti-British German spies?

The trope's pre-1945 history is well rehearsed – from its emergence alongside the spy thriller in the late nineteenth century and the plethora of spy and invasion fictions triggered by Anglo-German hostility culminating in the First World War, to the countless texts dramatising widespread anxieties about a Nazi fifth column in the early 1940s – and there is no need to repeat it here.[42] It is important to note, however, that many Second World War fictions that engaged with the trope also engaged more explicitly with its more problematic aspects than earlier fictions by John Buchan, William le Queux, H.G. Wells and others. For, in this war, alongside the fear that Germans could successfully disguise themselves and infiltrate Britain were two related concerns: that Britons also had to engage in deceitful behaviour to counter enemy espionage and that Britons themselves may be fifth columnists, acting against their own nation on behalf of the Nazis. If deceitfulness is a German trait, what happens to Britishness when Britons engage in the same practice? If reading

[41] Burton and O'Sullivan, p.46.
[42] See for example Murphy; Clive Bloom, *Spy Thrillers: From Buchan to le Carré* (1990); John G. Cawelti and Bruce Rosenberg, *The Spy Story* (1987).

nationality is the key to identifying anti-British spies, what happens when that nationality is in fact British? Key texts confronting these questions included the 1942 propaganda film *The Next of Kin*, Graham Greene's 1943 novel *The Ministry of Fear,* Agatha Christie's *N or M?* (1941) and Alberto Cavalcanti's 1942 film *Went the Day Well?*, adapted from a story by Greene.

Such thorny issues were mostly absent from post-war fictions however, which, as exemplified by *Desert Mice*, avoided the potential ambiguities of the spy plot and drew firm lines between deceitful, ideologically abhorrent Germans and reluctantly duplicitous, admirable Britons. The potential existence of British fifth columnists and the fear that Britons engaging in duplicitous actions would weaken Britishness had been made irrelevant by the Allied defeat of Germany. In a *Picture Post* article in April 1945 entitled 'A Tribute to Britain', J.B. Priestley praised the British people for staying true to 'British' ways. 'We British did not imitate our enemies,' he wrote. 'What is supremely important is that we did it in our own way, and that our way is a very good way.'[43] The perceived threats to Britishness particular to wartime had disappeared and fictions returned to more simplistic depictions of German duplicity and British triumph – depictions of fundamental Anglo-German difference. Examples include tales of real wartime espionage activities – the films *Odette* (1950), *Carve Her Name with Pride* (1958) and *Operation Crossbow* (1965) for example – as well as novels such as *Phantom Fleet* (1946) by British Royal Navy officer Geoffrey Martin Bennett, which features a German whose suave, polished exterior – a means to fool the British into believing he is on their side – is poor disguise for the 'demoniacal villain' beneath.[44] The villainous Germans encountered by the protagonist of the 'Captain Phantom' strip in the weekly comic *Knockout* are also easily identifiable, despite their attempts at disguise. Phantom's own identity as a 'man of a thousand disguises' is celebrated and justified implicitly through the depiction of his German enemies whose deceitfulness has necessitated his counter-deception. The hypocrisy remains unaddressed in this and other post-war fictions (and in reviews and discussions of them in the popular press), which rely on this discrepancy to maintain the fables of superior British intelligence and ability and of the impossibility of wholly masking Germanness. Unlike some of the nuanced

[43] *Picture Post*, 28 April 1945.
[44] Geoffrey Martin Bennett, *Phantom Fleet* (1946), p.16.

wartime fictions mentioned above, which were responding to the uncertainty of the war's outcome, post-war fictions were instead largely engaged with establishing and reinforcing a set of assumptions regarding the defeat of German fascism, specifically in the form of espionage, by ordinary, brave resourceful Britons and, more broadly, the validity of a concept of nationally determined and readable character.

This return to less nuanced depictions of Anglo-German espionage was paralleled with a resurgent interest in the pre-First World War fictions that first shaped the sub-genre. Saki's *When William Came* was re-published by Penguin in the 1940s and a film adaptation of John Buchan's *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1915) was released in 1959. An eleven-part radio play of H.G. Wells' 1906 prophecy *The War in the Air* – based on the premise that in 1920, peacetime Germany is hiding a fleet of zeppelins ready to attack Britain – was broadcast on the BBC Home Service in 1954 and repeated in 1958. As I have mentioned, these revivals and new fictions were not purely nostalgic. In the introduction to their edited volume on 1950s British cinema, Ian MacKillop and Neil Sinyard challenge the stigmatisation of the era's films as conservative, dull and nostalgic, an approach that, like the similarly conservative critical response to 1950s West German cinema, stifled useful criticism for several decades.[45] Clyde Jeavons and Roy Armes were just two of many critics who encouraged this stigma, the latter dismissing the war films of the 1950s as 'archaic memories of a self-deluding era's retreat into a cosy never-never land.'[46] Writing in the 1990s, Sarah Street argued that post-war depictions of British war-time triumphs over the German enemy such as *Odette* were simply 'symbols of a blinkered national nostalgia'.[47] A decade later, Tony Shaw made a contrasting argument for the prevalence of post-war films depicting the Nazi threat. 'Though groundless in reality,' he wrote, 'such a theme was understandable given the deep scars the war had inflicted in British minds.'[48] Shaw thus ascribes the continued fascination with Nazi Germany in post-war British cinema to an unpleasant association with that past rather than 'national nostalgia'. I suggest that, although nostalgia was indeed a key

[45] Ian MacKillop and Neil Sinyard, 'Celebrating British Cinema of the 1950s' in *British Cinema of the 1950s: A Celebration*, ed. by Mackillop and Sinyard (2003), p.2.
[46] Roy Armes, *A Critical History of British Cinema* (1978), p.179.
[47] Sarah Street, *British National Cinema* (1997), p.134.
[48] Tony Shaw, *British Cinema and the Cold War: The State, Propaganda and Consensus* (2006), p.26. Films addressing this theme include *Night Boat to Dublin* (1946), *Castle Sinister* (1948) and *Counterblast* (1948).

feature of many post-war films and fiction in other forms, specifically in stories of wartime German espionage, these stories were primarily responding to both the continued attitude of suspicion directed at Germany and the Soviet threat. These fictions were less about the past war than current fears regarding West Germany (could its expressions of allegiance be trusted?), East Germany (how could East Germans be distinguished from their Western counterparts?) and the Soviet Union itself (how might the Russians infiltrate Britain and is Britain able to thwart an attack?).

This argument is supported by the appearance of anti-British German spies in numerous stories with Cold War settings as well as those set during the Second World War. Indeed, a significant proportion of the anti-British spies depicted in fictions exploring the Cold War threat are German, either lingering Nazis or East German Communists.[49] Contemporary and recent attitudes towards the Russian and German nations propelled this trend. On 28 March 1950, Churchill spoke in the House of Commons about the Soviet threat. Fifty Russian bombs would produce fifty 'fearful experiences far beyond anything we have ever endured', he warned.[50] During the next decade, Britain was never free of the anxiety concerning this unfamiliar and unprecedented threat. Yet despite this threat, the Soviet Union did not become a target for intense British hostility. In his study of post-war Britain, David Kynaston argues that despite the dissipation of pro-Russian sentiment after the war, Britain never experienced the anti-Soviet paranoia seen in the United States.[51] The British popular press instead continued a vehement defence of Soviet Russia until 1948, castigating America's 'smouldering hatred of the Soviet regime'.[52] When Russia was finally acknowledged as an enemy, the popular press attacked Stalin and his regime with little censure directed at the Russian people. Furthermore, in the 1950s conventions and tropes for the fictional expression of Cold War anxieties and the depiction of Soviet threats were only just emerging – just as the threats themselves remained unfamiliar and unpredictable. Conditions were therefore far

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[49] Such fictions include *Bury the Past* (1954) by Alexander Fullerton, *Moonraker* (1955) and *From Russia With Love* (1957) by Ian Fleming, *The Cold Dark Night* (1957) by Sarah Gainham and *The Berlin Memorandum* (1965) by Adam Hall (pen name of Elleston Trevor).
[50] Cited in Peter Hennessy, *Having It So Good: Britain in the Fifties* (2006) p.181.
[51] David Kynaston, *Austerity Britain 1945-1951* (2007), p.133, p.341.
[52] *Daily Mirror,* 15 March 1947.

from ideal for the establishment of a credible and wholly unlikeable Russian villain who could inhabit post-war spy fictions.

In contrast, anxiety and hostility towards the German nation had deep roots, recent impetus (the war), continued encouragement from British politicians and the press and well-established means of fictional expression in the form of familiar tropes and figures. These recognisable figures and the stories they inhabited – stories rooted in or reminiscent of real events of foreign spies unmasked and defeated by Britons – were the ideal means of assuaging contemporary fears regarding the nature of the current threat and Britain's ability to deal with it. These were stories in which the enemy (Germany) and the threat (Germans disguised as Britons) are familiar and recognisable and in which the British triumph is always assured. In the introduction to his study of 1950s Britain, Peter Hennessey argues that 'the memory of the United Kingdom's superb collective performance between 1939 and 1945 [...] sustained the country through the vicissitudes of successive economic crises and waning global power in the Forties and Fifties'.[53] Specifically in this case, the memory of Britain's collective ability to unmask and defeat hostile, deceitful Germans between 1939 and 1945 was exploited in 1950s fictions, sometimes nostalgically, to assert Britain's ability to meet foreign threats, despite the nation's waning power. Film critics Christine Geraghty and Marcia Landy both acknowledge that many 1950s British films were responses to contemporary circumstances, the former describing them as a response to the 'demands of modern citizenship' and the latter as 'powerful representations of a society in flux'.[54] Yet they focus primarily on domestic demands and neglect the international element that I am addressing here, failing to address the specific role of stories of wartime or post-war espionage for a 1950s British audience.

A brief look at an aspect of Ian Fleming's *Moonraker* (1955) not explored in Chapter 1 will show how the figure of the German spy had become a useful vehicle for exploring British anxieties regarding the German and Soviet threats. Hugo Drax, Bond's half-German nemesis in *Moonraker*, embodies and justifies the simplistic

[53] Hennessy, p.2.
[54] Christine Geraghty, *British Cinema in the Fifties: Gender, Genre and the New Look* (2000), p.195; Marcia Landy, *British Genres: Cinema and Society 1930-1960* (1991), p.187.

story of German deceitfulness peddled in post-war British fictions. A disciple of Hitler, he fought against the British in the Second World War and was ready to join the invasion of Britain, for which the German soldiers would be dressed in British uniforms. After the war, he joined the Werewolves and, again disguised in British uniform, tried to blow up an Allied base. He was injured and wrongly identified as British, but did not reveal his true nationality, maintaining the disguise in order to gain the trust of the British government and build a missile ostensibly targeted at the Soviet Union but actually aimed at London. In a final twist, as Drax attempts to escape by Russian submarine, we learn that he has been working with Soviet intelligence all along. His life comprises a series of duplicitous, anti-British actions that seem rooted not in his (changing) ideology but in his nationality. Fleming's character exposes both the post-war reasoning in British culture for a continued attitude of mistrust towards the Germans – they are either (ex-)Nazis (in the West) or Communists (in the East) and often disguise their allegiance – and the concern regarding Britain's ability to counter the Soviet threat. Drax – symbolising Germany – was defeated in two previous attempts to outwit Britain and is now defeated once more in his present incarnation as a representative of the Communist threat. The novel reassures its readers that Britain can of course defend itself against the current threat, because it is no different from previous threats encountered and opposed.

Rather than indications of 'deep scars' in British minds, I suggest that the preservation of the German spy in post-war fictions offered a welcome sense of familiarity and stability. This enemy was always recognisable (or so spy thrillers from Buchan to Fleming would have us believe), always anti-British and always defeatable. In the introduction to their volume on 1950s British cinema, Sue Harper and Vincent Porter argue that films establish 'a set of shared assumptions, a safe place in which dangers can be explored and neutralised, and confidence restored'.[55] The primary danger facing Britain in the 1950s was the intangible Soviet threat. Fictions that displaced that threat to Germany – a displacement that was in part justified by the presence of East Germany as a satellite state of the Soviet Union – and in some cases to the past drew on the shared assumptions established and reinforced by countless post-war fictions regarding the certain defeat of mendacious

[55] Sue Harper and Vincent Porter, *British Cinema of the 1950s: The Decline of Deference* (2003), p.2.

Germans by judicious, courageous Britons. Rather than revealing marks of pain and damage or simply inviting nostalgic recollection, these fictions worked as a security blanket, offering a 'safe place' where the new, unknowable dangers of 'cold' conflict could be 'explored and neutralised' by affirming the British capacity to see off such threats.

3. 'Everywhere's the same, people cheated and misled': The trope is challenged

John le Carré's *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* offers no such 'safe place'. It was published in 1963, two years after the Berlin Wall went up and less than a year after the Cuban Missile Crisis. Cold War tensions were high and many feared the conflict could turn 'hot'. In his 1985 study of John le Carré's works, Peter Lewis accurately describes the novel as 'a response to a deeply divided Europe where power blocs play inhuman games of realpolitik'. He is also correct in arguing that it 'subverts the nationalistic, even jingoistic, assumptions underlying normal spy fiction'.[56] Yet within these broad themes, le Carré (whose real name is David Cornwall) has more particular targets. I will argue that this bestselling and critically acclaimed novel, which went through eight impressions within nine months of publication, is about Britain and the nation's out-dated, distorted perception of itself and Germany. Like so many other post-war fictions, German settings and characters are used to address Cold War issues. Unlike those fictions, however, *The Spy* is a scathing response to the continued assertion that the German nation and people were essentially untrustworthy and posed a particular threat to ordinary, honest Britons. It rejects the nostalgic belief that past successes in countering German espionage are a useful indicator of Britain's current ability to counter Soviet threats and exposes how the obsession with the perceived German threat means the neglect of Cold War realities. In his recent biography of le Carré, Adam Sisman offers a glimpse into the author's work as a covert intelligence officer in Bonn in the early 1960s, a period in his life hitherto entirely (and still partly) shrouded in mystery. Le Carré's role had been created out of fears of a Nazi revival in West Germany, Sisman explains. His task was to 'investigate and detect potential Nazi cells or organisations.'[57] As it turned out, he goes on, 'there was very little for him to do, because the feared Nazi

[56] Peter Lewis, *John le Carré* (1985), p.67, p.68.
[57] Adam Sisman, *John le Carré: The Biography* (2015), p.223.

revival never materialised.'[58] *The Spy* is an indictment of the same misplaced concerns that led le Carré into this unnecessary role. Crucially, the novel explodes any remaining belief that nationality, once successfully unmasked, is a credible signifier for character, ideology or allegiance. The novel undermines the credibility and usefulness of the post-war depictions of German deceit discussed in this chapter and casts doubt on the assumption of the validity of the concept of national character that underlies those depictions.

The Spy was le Carré's third novel but his first international bestseller. Reviewers were unanimous in their praise, describing it as 'a brilliant, bitter novel' (*Daily Telegraph*), 'wickedly plausible' (*The Times*) and a 'masterpiece' (*Time & Tide*).[59] The fiendishly convoluted plot follows Alec Leamas, Station Head of the West Berlin office of the British intelligence service. His last agent has just been shot and he returns to London where Control gives him a final mission before he comes 'in from the cold': to fake his defection to East Germany and 'expose' Hans Dieter Mundt, a ruthless East German who caused the deaths of Leamas's men, as a British double agent, thus ensuring his own people eliminate him. This plan is only gradually revealed to the reader, who spends much of his or her time questioning the truth or falsity of various characters' actions and words and wondering which characters are disguising their true allegiance and purpose. Leamas knows little more than us and we all learn the truth at the same time. In the final moments of Mundt's trial, in which Fiedler, an East German Jew, is accusing Mundt of treason using Leamas as his witness, we discover that Mundt is indeed a British double agent. The British set up his trial in order to banish all suspicion by discrediting the man who was accusing him of treachery. The role of Leamas, unknown to him, was to further weaken not strengthen the case against Mundt. While trying to escape back to the West over the Wall, Leamas and his lover Liz Gold, who was brought to the trial by Mundt as a witness to further discredit Leamas, are shot and killed.

In *The Spy*, everyone is involved in deceit and treachery and there is little distinction between (East) German and British methods. When telling Leamas about his final mission, Control reflects on British intelligence, which is, he claims, 'based on a

[58] ibid., p.224.
[59] Cited in appendix to John le Carré, *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* (2010).

single assumption. That is, we are never going to be aggressors […] Thus we do disagreeable things, but we are *defensive*' (original italics).[60] He then admits that 'our methods – ours and those of the opposition – have become much the same' (18). This is soon obvious in the portrayal of underhand tricks, violence and betrayal undertaken by both sides. Yet even the claim that British espionage is always 'defensive' – the same claim made explicitly or implicitly by many spy fictions of the period in order to preserve the semblance of British moral superiority in the murky world of espionage – is undermined by the events and revelations that follow. For although the operation is about defending their 'special interest' (Mundt), the British achieve this by launching an offensive against an East German Jew that puts their own man and an innocent British woman in great danger. In the months leading up to this operation, they also authorized the deaths of several British agents, simply to divert suspicion away from Mundt, an ex-Nazi East German whose allegiance to Britain is based solely on financial remuneration. In this context – believed by many readers and reviewers to reflect the reality of international espionage – the notion that Germans are particularly mendacious and that Britons are less able and willing to engage in deceit is laughable. As the narrator tells us in a rare reflective moment, 'the practice of deception is not particularly exacting; it is a matter of experience, of professional expertise, it is a facility most of us can acquire' (143). The ability or will to deceive is not determined by nationality – this skill, vital to the work of a spy, is learned and whose who master it will triumph over the opposition. Mundt is a paragon of mendacity but so are Leamas and Control. The German Mundt and the British Control succeed because they have perfected the skill, not because of any essential trait determined by their nationality. As Leamas says to Liz shortly before their deaths, 'it's the world, it's mankind that's gone mad […] everywhere's the same, people cheated and misled' (244).

In this world, like in the fictional worlds of *Desert Mice* and *The Pike in the Reeds*, both a sceptical outlook and the ability to read the reality beneath the mask are necessary skills for survival and success. Yet in this 'mad' world, masks are several layers thick and no one can be trusted, not even those apparently on the same side as oneself. Despite spending a significant proportion of his time in the narrative

[60] le Carré (2010), p.17. Same reference for all future quotations.

‘guessing’, trying to ‘make out’, ‘speculating’ and engaging in ‘deductions’, Leamas fails to discover the truth before it is revealed to him and misplaces his trust repeatedly. Leamas first places too much trust in Control, convincing himself during his interrogations in Amsterdam then East Germany that what ‘Control had said’ must be true. Later, he places his trust in Fiedler, ‘content in the knowledge that [he] was his ally and that they would shortly send Mundt to his death’ (179). Soon after that, he is won over by Mundt’s persuasive rhetoric. In each case, he experiences a moment of profound disillusionment when his trust is revealed as misplaced. Mistrust is necessary, the novel suggests, but not only towards Germans. Denied the necessary information to correctly interpret characters, events and dialogue, the reader has a similar experience to Leamas when attempting to read between the lines of le Carré’s novel. The first-time reader is unlikely to realise that Leamas’s metamorphosis into unemployed, violent drunkard following his return from Berlin is part of a plan to lure the East Germans into ‘encouraging’ Leamas to defect. ‘He had the drunkard’s habit of ducking his mouth towards the rim of his glass just before he drank,’ we are told, ‘as if his hand might fail him and the drink escape’ (58). The syntax and choice of vocabulary seem deliberately chosen for their restraint and ambivalence. From the given information, it is impossible to deduce whether this habit is real or performed, the ‘as if’ functioning ambivalently. This phrase could suggest either a real possibility of his hand failing – supporting the theory that Leamas has actually become a drunkard – or an action performed to give the suggestion of that possibility. This sentence is a microcosm of the novel, in which le Carré’s ‘great verbal economy’ on the syntactical level, as Lewis describes it, and his refusal to offer any context beyond the immediate events, leads the reader into a labyrinth of deduction and disillusionment not dissimilar from Leamas’s own.

For both Leamas and the reader, there is simply not enough to go on and the visual and verbal signifiers through which the truth is normally reached are often intentionally or intrinsically misleading and cannot be trusted. Le Carré’s fictional world is devoid of glaring signifiers such as glittering blue eyes or a song sung in the wrong language. More importantly, when deceit or nationality can be deduced, this knowledge is meaningless, as everyone is engaged in duplicity and nationality has no binary relationship with character, ideology or allegiance. Mundt is an East German currently allied with the British but with previous allegiances to fascist and communist ideologies – there is no guarantee that his allegiance will not change again, with or without the knowledge of the British. The character of Liz and her ideological allegiance to the Soviet and East German communists further complicates the picture. There is no simple process of unmasking true nationality and true character simultaneously – as we are shown in *Went the Day Well?*, *N or M?*, *The Pike in the Reeds*, *Moonraker* and *Desert Mice* – but rather a series of deceptive layers that present themselves as truths, beneath which lies an unstable reality.

For le Carré not only implies that signs are misleading but also that the truth we seek in reading them is not always desirable and is often more slippery than we expect. This is most clear in the tribunal, an event ostensibly established to uncover the truth. Liz, denied the knowledge of who is on trial, feels powerless and vulnerable, 'like a blind child among the seeing' (215). Yet she is told by the President in charge of the tribunal, 'It is better for you, far better, that you should know nothing' (210), both about the tribunal and about the events leading up to it. In Liz's situation, ignorance means innocence, while knowledge is incriminating. The tribunal proceedings also expose the complexity of truth, which is not neutral but can be manipulated. Bizarrely, the facts presented by both sides – that Mundt is a British double agent and that Leamas was sent by the British to incriminate him on false evidence – are true. Yet the outcome of the tribunal is the death of an innocent man and the rehabilitation of a traitor. Even when the many layers of deception have been peeled back and the truth is revealed, its significance remains vulnerable to misinterpretation. 'There is no certainty in our job,' Peters tells Leamas (105), who comes to learn the full and terrible significance of this fact at the end of the tribunal.

The Spy undermines conventional post-war depictions of German and British espionage by exposing the extremes of duplicity at all levels and on all sides of the Cold War conflict, by showing how national and ideological allegiances are bought and sold not inherited, and by revealing the simplistic constructions of truth and falsity in those fictions as mythical and naïve. Yet ironically the novel succumbed to the same unease and uncertainty regarding Cold War threats and the same desire for simple revelations of truth that inspired the fictions the novel seeks to undermine.

This desire was apparent in the drive to unmask le Carré's real identity. Just a few months after the book's publication, the media was revelling in the discovery that John le Carré was David Cornwall and set about deducing as much as possible about him, echoing Leamas's own attempts to 'read' the identities of those around him. A similar level of excitement was palpable in reviews that suggested the novel revealed 'the truth about the spy sub-world' (*Daily Mail*) and 'the monstrous realities behind the news paragraphs' (*The Scotsman*). 'Sounds perfectly authentic,' wrote Siriol Hugh-Jones in his *Tatler* review.[61]

Yet, according to le Carré and the British Secret Service – who would only have allowed the novel's publication if it were unrelated to any specific truths – these reviews were trying to 'penetrate a truth that isn't there'. Writing fifty years later, le Carré reflected on how the press wrongly 'decided that the book was not merely authentic but some kind of revelatory Message From The Other Side.'[62] This was a public desperate for truths about the Cold War and international espionage, so much of which was of necessity hidden from public view. This desperation was in part responsible for the flood of fictions depicting familiar and identifiable deceitful Germans and their defeat by Britons – old, recognisable tropes were used to fill the gaps in the public's knowledge of the current conflict and thus offer reassurance. The narrative of *The Spy* offered no such comfort but the novel itself came to be seen as a reliable and welcome revelation of long-sought truths. The public (aided by the press) fed themselves a story about *The Spy* and came to believe their own myth. Le Carré was baffled. 'The novel's merit,' he writes, 'was not that it was authentic, but that it was credible.'[63] But credibility alone could not achieve the reassurance sought by the reading public, so the myth of authenticity was born. The novel was authentic, its author was a spy and there was little room for discussion on either matter.

The British public bought into a myth that seemed to offer certainty in an uncertain world. It was the same drive that lay behind the preservation of the myth of a continued German threat, a myth that perversely offered comfort and stability. This drive ensured the continuing production of fictions alongside *The Spy* that espoused

[61] Cited in appendix to le Carré (2010).
[62] ibid.
[63] ibid.

the same myths that this novel explodes. These include Adam Hall's 1965 novel *The Berlin Memorandum* and the 1966 film adaptation as well as Martin Ritt's 1965 film version of *The Spy*. Scenes were added, including one in which Control and Smiley explain part of the plan to Leamas (and the viewer), while the ambiguity of the final sequence is eradicated by a shot of Smiley that directly triggers Leamas's retreat back to the Eastern side of the Wall and subsequent death.

In the novel however, as I have mentioned, le Carré gives little additional detail beyond the immediate events and conversations. A short paragraph describing the curator of the library in which Leamas is briefly employed cannot therefore be dismissed as contextual narrative and is thus particularly revealing. The narrator describes the curator as 'a very old man with First War shellshock who, said Liz, sat awake all night in case the Germans made a counter-attack' (33). The implication is that a belief in a specifically German threat to Britain – or in an older, simpler form of warfare – is ludicrously antiquated and the result of psychological damage.
The obsolescence of the British obsession with a German threat is a theme that le Carré develops and satirises in his 1965 novel *The Looking Glass War*. It depicts a group of hapless, nostalgic, self-deceiving Britons investigating the development of a nuclear weapon in East Germany. The British agents are told, 'We're having a spot of trouble with the Germans,' following which 'a little laugh went up', indicating 'not again' or 'as usual'.[64] One agent grumbles, 'typical of the Germans,' before being reminded, 'It's the Russians we're fighting' (65). Stuck in a past in which Germany was always the enemy, familiar and defeatable, these men, a microcosm of post-war Britain, are both laughable and threatening. As Steven Marcus noted astutely in his review, 'it is precisely their yearning to reinstate that past which prevents them from dealing with the present. Their blundering nostalgia for World War II and its values leads to the ruination of their plot.'[65] This is le Carré's message: that Britain must abandon its obsession, in both reality and fiction, with 'the deceitful German' and confront the new, less familiar, more nebulous threat that cannot be defeated by a simple unmasking of nationality.

[64] John le Carré, *The Looking Glass War* (1965), p.62.
[65] Steven Marcus, 'Grand Illusions,' *New York Review of Books*, 5 August 1965.

…

Impersonation is of course a central trope of espionage fiction. But why was it so often Germans doing the spying and impersonating in British popular fictions long after the end of the Second World War? And why did so many fictions outside the spy genre feature the figure of the deceitful German? I have shown that there were two key reasons. Firstly, a series of events combined with literary and political precedents and a propaganda campaign forged a link in the British imagination between Germanness and deceitfulness. 'It is difficult not to believe that mendacity has become an integral part of the German national character,' wrote Hannah Arendt in her account of Adolf Eichmann's trial in 1961.[66] Countless British fictions reflected and supported this notion. Secondly, stories of German deceit and British triumph were imperative for maintaining belief in Britain's capacity for self-defence. Finally and crucially, the trope is one that contains its own means of preservation. For how can honesty and transparency of intent be proven? How could German politicians show more clearly that their words reflected their intentions than with displays of peacefulness and a willingness to integrate with their Western allies, behaviours that could however always be interpreted as cunning guises for more hostile objectives? The fear that Germany was simply biding her time – that it was a case of 'when' not 'if' the German nation would reveal its true, aggressive intentions – lingered throughout and beyond the period in question, bolstered by fictional stories of mendacious Germans.

[66] Arendt, p.52.

CHAPTER FOUR

'Extr'ord'nary people, the Germans': Alienness in the fictional depiction of Germans

Launched in April 1950, the children's comic book *Eagle* was created by British clergyman Marcus Morris as a wholesome alternative to the increasingly popular genre of horror comics. A vocal advocate for 'better understanding between the nations of the world', Morris created a front-page hero who lives in a future free of international conflict and where the threat is extra-terrestrial.[1] Dan Dare's arch-enemy is the Mekon, the tyrannical leader of a technologically advanced, militaristic race of identical, mindless automatons called the Treens. They imprison and conduct experiments on human captives in concentration camps, they have bombing planes closely resembling Nazi Germany's V1, and they wear jackboots and salute their leader with raised arms. If the comparison is not yet clear, strip artist Hampson's words make it explicit: 'Basically we were fighting the Second World War again – the Treens were the Nazis.'[2]

In May 1955, West Germany was incorporated into NATO, an event welcomed and in part instigated by the British government under Winston Churchill. Exactly a decade after the end of the Second World War, Germany was joining Britain as part of an international alliance that stood against the Soviet bloc. At the same time, a popular comic was depicting a Nazi-esque alien race threatening to destroy the world of liberal democracy, individualism, freedom and justice that Dare represented. The conflation of Nazis and Germans in wartime propaganda and the continuation of this conflation in post-war popular fictions, along with the recurrent depiction of Germans (not just Nazis) as mindless, violent automatons, means that the Treens can

[1] Speech by Marcus Morris, cited in James Chapman, *British Comics: A Cultural History* (2011), p.57.
[2] Cited in Chapman (2011), p.67.

be read as part of a discourse on Germanness, not just Nazism, a discourse in which alienness was centre stage.

In this chapter, I will address three parallel strands of the debate regarding the alienness – or the ordinariness – of the German people. In the introduction to her study of the occupation of Germany, historian Patricia Meehan explores how British troops were 'indoctrinated about the alien tribe among whom they would be living' through official handbooks and documents. 'It had been officially dinned into everyone coming to Germany,' she writes, 'that the Germans were a nation of pariahs and would always be so.'[3] This attitude was deliberately encouraged by wartime propaganda but was lent additional and unforeseen impetus by the discoveries at the concentration camps in April 1945. As Caroline Sharples notes astutely, the revelations aroused a desire to 'impose a reassuring sense of distance between these 'monsters' and the rest of the human population'.[4] In other words, there was a desire to explain Germany's (and the Germans') supposed differentness not solely through the *Sonderweg* theory, but rather through an assertion of fundamental alienness that differentiated Germans from all other nationalities. I will show how fictions responded to this desire with crude and contradictory German characters depicted through metaphors of animals, machines and later aliens. Allegations of inhuman behaviour were expressed through metaphors of literal inhumanity.

The desire to differentiate the German people from the rest of humanity was paralleled by a growing desire in Britain to counter what Tony Judt calls 'the loss of national direction'.[5] As Sonya Rose argues, war is a time for demarcating the national self from others, for asking what makes 'us' different from 'them'.[6] Yet countless post-war fictions continued to assert the demarcation lines drawn in wartime, reiterating the narrative of tyrannical, violent Germanness in a bid to bolster

[3] Patricia Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People: Germans under the British 1945-50* (2001), p.14, p.151.
[4] Caroline Sharples, 'Holocaust on Trial: Mass Observation and British Media Responses to the Nuremberg Tribunal 1945-1946' in *Britain and the Holocaust: Remembering and Representing War and Genocide*, ed. by Caroline Sharples and Olaf Jensen, (2013) p.38.

[5] Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (2010), p.301.
[6] Sonya Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship in Britain 1939-1945* (2003), p.72.

a sense of British unity. While the first trend positioned Germanness as foreign to and inconsistent with all other national characters, the second located Germanness more specifically as the Other to Britishness. Implicit in this construct was a much older understanding of 'alien' as a person of foreign origin, an understanding that accrued less neutral associations towards the end of the nineteenth century as the concept of the 'alien friend' was eroded and 'alien' came to signify difference and threat. Previously welcomed, aliens were now often objects of hostility and suspicion, subject to the 1905 Aliens Act and to the whims of the newly created immigration department.[7] While the British attitude towards aliens was undergoing radical change, Germany was increasingly viewed as posing a significant threat to Britain and its borders. Indeed, as Ann Dummett and Andrew Nicol argue, it was fictional accounts of German invasion, rooted in contemporary paranoia, that fed that paranoia and generated popular support for the Aliens Restriction Act of 1914, passed again in 1919 'on a wave of anti-German hatred' and not repealed until 1971.[8] What Petra Rau calls 'the anxious notion of the foreign', which pervaded Britain in the pre-First World War period, developed at a time when the foreigners believed to represent the greatest cause for anxiety were Germans. Although concern regarding aliens in the post-1945 period was largely focused on non-white immigration, developments in the earlier part of the century had forged a link between Germanness and alien threat, which, combined with the renewed threat of invasion experienced during the recent conflict and the insistence on German alterity, led to the resurfacing of the trope.

It is important to note at this point that the idea of Germans as 'alien', fundamentally different to Britons and perhaps to all of humanity, is inherent in each of the three discourses discussed so far in this thesis. Each trope – instability, guilt or wickedness, and deceitfulness – was often invoked partly in a bid to shore up a specific and opposing understanding of what constituted the 'British' character. Yet in many fictions and public pronouncements about the Germans in post-war Britain, it was fundamental differentness itself that was foregrounded. It was a useful notion that could accommodate any possible characteristic, even contradictory ones –

[7] Ann Dummett and Andrew Nicol, *Subjects, Citizens, Aliens and Others: Nationality and Immigration Law* (1990), pp.102-4.
[8] ibid., p.109.

sentimentality and aggression or coldness and extreme emotion, for example. Each (negative) characteristic ascribed to the German character need not be explained in relation to the potentially contradictory traits already ascribed, but only as further evidence of the essential incompatibility of Britishness and Germanness. The discourse surrounding the alienness of Germans was therefore often illogical and embraced a hodge-podge of contradictory and unexplained traits. The fictions that embraced the notion were, as a result, often crude and confused in their depictions, a fact borne out by the close readings in this chapter.

Yet public figures including Victor Gollancz and Robert Birley fought against making Germany a special category of humanity. This view found expression in fictions that offered detailed depictions of Germans as ordinary human beings, often likeable, sometimes admirable but always displaying understandable behaviours and emotions. Such fictions, including the films *The Divided Heart* (1953) and *The One That Got Away* (1956), were often hugely popular and cannot be dismissed as anomalies in an otherwise one-sided debate. In this chapter, I will use the films *Sink the Bismarck!* (1960) and *The One That Got Away* and a selected group of popular novels to examine the trajectory and intersection of the three strands of this debate regarding the alienness of the German people.

1. 'Filthy beasts' and 'dreary robots': Germans in the British imagination

1.1. 'Unlike other peoples': The rhetorical isolation of Germany

J.B. Priestley's Sunday evening broadcasts on the BBC Home Service between June and October 1940 were heard by millions and widely celebrated, despite arousing anger in some quarters for their increasingly socialist tenor. Metaphors of animals, machines and the extra-terrestrial dominated his descriptions of Britain's enemy. The Nazis are 'warrior-ants', 'ravening wolves' and 'locusts', Priestley told his audience.[9] They command a 'great terror machine', turning human beings into

[9] J.B. Priestley, *Postscripts* (1940), p.8, p.15, p.64.

‘automata, robots […] death-dealing dolls’. They are an ‘evil encumbrance’ that has ‘emerged from the underworld’.[10]

Priestley refused to conflate Nazis and Germans, often speaking warmly of the many Germans who were not Nazis and who would be welcome in a future international socialist utopia. His metaphors referred to the adherents of Nazi ideology, not to all Germans, but many Britons were not so discerning, especially in the wake of the concentration camp liberations. The discoveries quickly provoked assertions that the German national character was to blame. In her study of the liberation of Belsen, Joanna Reilly explains how the Ministry of Information championed the view ‘that the Germans were a barbaric race, the only race who could have been capable of such crimes’.[11] Numerous public figures took a similar stance. In *The Course of German History* (1945), anti-German historian A.J.P. Taylor asserts that ‘no other people has pursued extermination as a permanent policy from generation to generation for a thousand years’ and ‘unlike other peoples’, the Germans demanded all the trappings of a nation state from the beginning.[12] After visiting Belsen on the day of its liberation, Major Stewart wrote that the mentality of those who had caused the death of so many was ‘impossible to imagine’, while a BBC Home Service report claimed that an ‘inhuman order’ had perpetrated the crimes at Belsen.[13] The language of negativity – ‘no other people’, ‘unlike other peoples’, ‘impossible’, ‘inhuman’ – forged an association between Germanness and abnormality or the extra-ordinary, terms whose prefixes positioned the bearer beyond the norm and inhibited any suggestion that ‘we’ (that is, ‘not them’) may be capable of similar deeds.

Sharples explores this desire to ‘impose a reassuring sense of distance between these “monsters” and the rest of the human population’ in her study of British responses to the Nuremberg Tribunal of 1945-6. She argues that press attention at the beginning of the trial attempted to ‘demonise’ the defendants or to draw out peculiar physical traits in order to avoid the reality of their ordinary appearances.[14] Rhetoric in the

[10] ibid., p.16, p.7, p.33, p.15.
[11] Joanne Reilly, *Belsen: The Liberation of a Concentration Camp* (1998) p.69.
[12] A.J.P. Taylor, *The Course of German History: A Survey of the Development of Germany since 1815* (1945) pp.14-16.
[13] Documents.1355 (Major H St C Stewart), Imperial War Museum Archives; ‘Buchenwald Concentration Camp’, BBC Home Service, 1 April 1945.
[14] Sharples, p.38.

popular press responding to the discoveries in spring 1945 often worked similarly. A widely discussed and reprinted photograph in the *Daily Express* in April 1945 depicted Joseph Kramer, Commandant at Bergen-Belsen. The caption read, 'the shackled monster of Belsen […] A typical German brute'.[15] Monstrosity – signifying unsightliness, deformation and evil and evoking connotations of alienness and sub-humanness – is presented as a normal ('typical') German trait. What is abnormal ('monstrous') to the rest of humanity is the norm for Germans, this caption implies. Such language – along with wartime rhetoric that cast Germans as 'Europe's secret beasts', 'filthy beasts' and 'creatures' – generated expectations of visible signs of monstrosity to match the monstrous ('inhuman') acts committed.[16] These expectations were disappointed in the Nuremberg Tribunal, but could be met in popular fiction through metaphors or literal embodiments of inhumanity.

1.2. 'Crafty little foxes' and 'armour-plated' Germans: Metaphors of beastliness and technology

In the immediate post-war period, suggestions of the essential differentness of Germans in fiction most often took the form of animal and machine metaphors. Used primarily to invoke differentness, or alienness, these depictions also necessitated and became sites of accumulation for a miscellany of more specific (and often contradictory) traits. While the animal metaphors foregrounded aggression, sub-humanness and primitivism, machine metaphors emphasised coldness, precision and obedience. This combination of traits in the depiction of Germans was not new and had its roots in First World War propaganda. In *Sex Drives*, Laura Frost shows how the idea of German primitivism pre-dated Nazism and how words such as regression, wantonness and barbarism that dominated discussions about Germany in the First World War returned unchanged in the Second.[17] Yet declarations that Germany was a nation of barbarians were juxtaposed through both conflicts with claims that the Germans were a 'nation of machines'.[18] Germany was both primeval and

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[15] *Daily Express*, 21 April 1945.
[16] From a 1940 wall poster, 'The Secret Beast', created by J.B. Priestley for the Ministry of Information (Ian McLaine, *Ministry of Morale: Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in World War II* [1979], p.146); *Daily Express*, 1 May 1945 and 19 April 1945.
[17] Laura Frost, *Sex Drives: Fantasies of Fascism in Literary Modernism* (2002), pp.20-23.
[18] John Ramsden, *Don't Mention the War: The British and the Germans since 1890* (2006), p.124.

progressive, according to figures as diverse as E.H. Benians, Gilbert Parker, G.K. Chesterton and Arnold Bennett.[19] A similar contradiction was inherent in the animal and machine metaphors used to depict Germans in post-1945 fictions. Yet both served to de-humanise the characters involved.

James Cadell's 1951 novel *Roast Pigeon* is notable for its extensive discourse of Germans and non-humanness. On the first page, the displaced Germans arriving in the British zone are described as 'one herd' and Briton Julia later experiences the town as a 'wilderness'.[20] The Nazis seeking to escape punishment are Lindtmann, a 'crafty little fox of a man', Hiepmann with his 'wolfish eyes' and numerous 'sharks' who have torn their way through the denazification net.[21] The invocation of 'fox' in the description of Lindtmann is unnecessary as craftiness, the trait the animal is supposed to suggest, is also directly indicated. It thus both strengthens the idea of cunning and generates an impression of beastliness that is reinforced by the character's inclusion in the 'sharks' metaphor. The impression of non-humanness goes beyond these individual Nazis to the rest of the German population through the denotation of them as a 'herd', signifying doltishness and a lack of individualism, and of their town as a 'wilderness', implying chaos and primitivism.

Animal metaphors denoting a predatory and aggressive nature – mostly wolves, lions and sharks – were widespread in British post-war depictions of Germans and appear in numerous novels as well as 1950s comics such as *War at Sea*, in which German soldiers are described as 'wolf packs'.[22] Indeed, animal and machine metaphors were frequently combined in combat fictions. It is rarely 'Germans' or 'Nazis' attacking Britons but more often 'a circling pack of U-boats', a 'lone wolf' of a U-boat or 'U-boat vermin'.[23] In his study of images of war in British popular culture Michael Paris argues that the reduction of the enemy to nameless, one-dimensional figures was a useful means of encouraging a mental state, both in individuals and in the nation, whereby the enemy could be 'annihilated without remorse'.[24] Dehumanising

[19] ibid., pp.124-5.
[20] James Cadell, *Roast Pigeon* (1951), p.3, p.27.
[21] ibid., p.60, p.81, 193.
[22] 'Close Quarters' (1962), *War at Sea Picture Library*, 19.
[23] Nicholas Monsarrat, *The Cruel Sea* (1951), p.190, p.356; C.S. Forester, *The Good Shepherd* (1955), p.99.
[24] Michael Paris, *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture 1850-2000* (2000), p.216.

metaphors such as 'U-boat vermin' served a similar purpose and their use in post-war fictions reflected real wartime dialogue. Yet the consumers of these fictions (the 1950s readers) were no longer required to annihilate the Germans or even acquiesce in such annihilation. These metaphors now served the purpose of maintaining and reinforcing the perceived distinction between Germans and other nationalities. The linguistic vitalising of these machines as animals renders the humans within them both invisible and redundant, their agency superseded by these apparently hybrid and self-directing animal-machines. A 1953 story in the popular comic *Knockout* takes this metaphor and reproduces it literally. British hero Captain Phantom is given the task of defeating the Germans' newest weapon: sand-spiders, a hybrid creature that is simultaneously (and non-paradoxically) animal and machine.[25] No longer a metaphor *for* the enemy, the animal-machine *is* the enemy.

The idea that Germans were both primitive and progressive is apparent even within the lexicon of animal metaphors in post-1945 fictions. The metaphors describing Lindtmann and Hiepmann in *Roast Pigeon* convey intelligence and ruthlessness not primitivism, yet the words 'herd' and 'wilderness' suggest idiocy and savagery. The contradiction in this notion of Germanness was largely ignored both within and outside fiction and was never allowed to weaken the diagnosis of 'the German character' that was being asserted. A series of documents published by the Control Commission in March 1945 on 'The German Character' identified a set of traits deemed to comprise Germanness. One such trait was complexity, under which it was noted that the German character is full of paradox, progressive in some aspects and primitive in others.[26] Significantly, there was no suggestion that such complexity and paradox weakened the very notion of a unique and homogenous 'German character', implying that the desire to define and circumscribe this 'character' overrode logic. In an article in *Picture Post* in late April 1945, Priestley succumbed to the same illogic, claiming first that Nazis reside in 'the darkness of primitive tribal superstition', before deriding them as 'machines' and 'robots' who 'plan and organise' to an absurd degree.[27] Lord Vansittart displayed a similar disregard for consistency in *Black Record*. He spoke of the German people as 'the Brazen Horde' who 'remained

[25] *Knockout*, 732-737, March-April 1953.
[26] Cited in *Conditions of Surrender: Britons and Germans Witness the End of the War*, ed. by Ulrike Jordan (1997), pp.132-7.
[27] *Picture Post*, 28 April 1945.

savages at heart', while claiming that 'mechanical obedience' had long been a German trait and that Germany was a nation of 'dreary robots'.[28] Indeed, while appearing to weaken the notion of a generic German character, the paradox may have reinforced the idea of essential difference, the cause which all these metaphors of inhumanity served: ordinary humans cannot be both savage and coldly logical so a people displaying both these traits must therefore be extra-ordinary, unique among all nationalities.

As with metaphors of beastliness, the traits (and therefore metaphors) of robotic precision and conformity became attached to portrayals of Germanness rather than Nazism, overriding Priestley's distinctions in favour of Vansittartist collectivisation. In this process, Britons became unwitting dupes of Nazi propaganda intended, according to Patrick Wright in his cultural historical analysis of the tank, to depict the German army as the 'epitome of mobility, speed and power'.[29] Roy Farran's 1958 novel *The Search*, which exemplifies this trend, tells the story of an Englishman (Martin) and a German couple working on a Canadian farm in the 1950s. Soon after the arrival of Heinz and his wife Lili, Martin reflects on his own opinion of the Germans:

> He thought about Heinz and wondered whether he hated the Germans. They were alike as machines and Heinz's face was the face of the S.S. guard on the prison camp near Stuttgart, but it was more dislike than hate.[30]

Thoughts of an individual German prompt reflection on the nation to which he belongs, a transition that the reader is also encouraged to make, in this and many other fictions. The justification for this train of thought is implied in Martin's following reflection that Germans are 'alike as machines' – one can thus be unproblematically viewed as representative of all. In this way, Farran overcomes the potential problem of using stories of individuals to discuss whole nations. Having neatly linked the individual German to 'Germans in the plural', Martin goes on to incorporate individual Nazis – 'the S.S. guard on the prison camp near Stuttgart' –

[28] Robert Gilbert Vansittart, *Black Record: Germans Past and Present* (1941), p.9, p.27.
[29] Patrick Wright, *Tank: The Progress of a Monstrous War Machine* (2000), p.261.
[30] Roy Farran, *The Search* (1958), p.46.

into this group. Both individuals, Heinz and the guard, are bound tightly by their identity as Germans, an identity that explains their complete alikeness and in which political allegiance is irrelevant. Post-war Germans are no different from Nazi Germans, Martin's reflection implies. Indeed, they are identical, the word 'machines' echoing the language of both Priestley and Vanisttart to imply extreme efficiency and coldness as well as an absence of individuality.

This language even found its way into comedic depictions of Germans such as Wolf in the 1958 film *Bachelor of Hearts*. A visiting student at Cambridge, Wolf is reprimanded by his Mathematics tutor for his 'electronic brain' that inhibits original thought.[31] Invited to like and empathise with Wolf, played by an actor who had achieved sudden and overwhelming popularity in Britain as Franz von Werra in *The One That Got Away* the previous year, we are yet reminded of a negative, supposedly German set of traits – exactitude, conformity and coldness – that was understood to have played a key role in the crimes of Nazi Germany. These traits had been fixed in the post-war British imagination as part of Germanness not just Nazism and thus continued to linger in fictional depictions of Germans, even non-Nazis inhabiting post-war settings.

1.3. 'People from another and infinitely abhorrent world': Language of the extra-terrestrial and fantastic

By the late 1950s and early 1960s, the use of metaphors of non-humanity had broadened to incorporate the language of the extra-terrestrial or fantastical. An early example is John Bayley's 1955 novel set in occupied Germany, *In Another Country*. Oliver, a member of the British occupation, becomes infatuated with a young German woman called Liese and unwittingly entangled in a web of neo-Nazism. He eventually extricates himself and returns to England, only to be followed by Liese a few weeks later. On her arrival in England, Oliver thinks, 'Nobody […] could move so completely out of their orbit and remain recognisable, or even survive. It would be like trying to survive in the craters of the moon or on one of the remoter planets.' Her

[31] *Bachelor of Hearts*, dir. by Wolf Rilla (Rank, 1958) [on DVD].

hand is 'alien' to him.[32] A central theme of the novel is the opposing nature of Britishness and Germanness, but the language of the extra-terrestrial that intrudes in the final pages both substantiates this and takes it further. Assertion of national difference is insufficient to convey Oliver's experience of essential differentness – only the language of species and planets can achieve this. This example shows clearly how the language of alienness changed according to the language available in the public sphere. It was in 1955, the year of this novel's publication, that the 'space race' exploded and regularly occupied front-page headlines of national newspapers. The increasingly familiar language of orbits, planets, craters and, especially in the growing science fiction genre, aliens (as extra-terrestrial not just foreign beings) offered a new means of discussing the differentness of Germans that put even greater distance between that nation and all others than animal or machine metaphors. In his study of metaphors, in which he claims that this device is a fundamental part of language, David Punter argues that successful metaphors cannot be too 'outlandish' and must not 'sacrifice the difficult terrain of translatability'.[33] In other words, the likeness being asserted must be easily comprehensible to the reader. The 1950s brought the language of the extra-terrestrial into the sphere of everyday public discourse, a fact that allowed it to be used in fiction and the significance of words such as 'orbit' to be fully understood by the average reader, even as the exact nature of these entities remained mysterious.

John and Emery Bonett's 1960 crime novel *No Grave for a Lady* exemplifies this trend towards otherworldly, fantastical and outlandish metaphors in the depiction of Germans. The plot revolves around German actress Lotte Liselotte, who is variously described as a 'lovely dragoness', a 'swan-necked goddess', a 'moon-goddess', a 'sphinx or a phoenix' and a 'sorceress'.[34] The use of fantastical metaphors positions Germanness as something extraordinary, abnormal and ultimately unknowable. According to Punter, metaphor is that 'by which something is recapitulated into recognisable terms'.[35] Yet in the characters' attempts to comprehend her Liselotte is in fact distanced – from characters and reader – and increasingly mystified, a result that is enhanced by the plethora of metaphors on offer. In what way is she like a

[32] John Bayley, *In Another Country* (1955), pp.270, 276.
[33] David Punter, *Metaphor* (2007), p.65.
[34] John and Emery Bonett, *No Grave for a Lady* (1960), p. 80, p.150, p.151, p.155.
[35] Punter, p.87.

dragoness or a sphinx, and how can she be like both? Through these metaphors, she becomes less, not more, recognisable. The 'terrain of translatability' is left behind in later fictions such as this, which employ increasingly outlandish (and often mixed) metaphors, and the reader is thereby estranged from the German characters they encounter. Their humanness and individuality is hidden beneath a linguistic cloak of metaphors and we are left with an unassailable impression of fundamental differentness and unknowability.

These outlandish methods of depiction avoided the paradox inherent in portraying Germans as both primitive and progressive by invoking attributes and beings that exist (as far as they exist at all) beyond the conventional evolutionary spectrum on which beast and robot inhabit opposite poles. The next stage in the trope's development was the reversal of the metaphor as extra-terrestrial beings in the burgeoning science fiction genre were depicted through motifs associated with Germany. Film scholars I.Q. Hunter, Peter Hutchings and Ian Conrich have all noted how British sci-fi films of the 1950s and 1960s rework motifs from the Blitz, incorporating unexploded bombs, warning sirens, bomb shelters and sandbags that would evoke powerful memories in their audience of London under siege in 1940-1941.[36] Yet these films' engagement with ideas relating to Germany goes far beyond contextual motifs of a recent war. Often depicted as a fantastical combination of technology and sub-human or animalistic features, the aliens themselves embody and make literal common post-war conceits about the inward abnormality of Germans. The aliens in the 1953 BBC serial *The Quatermass Experiment* and the 1955 film adaptation – a shiny rocket façade disguising a primitive biological organism beneath – are just one example. They are the literal version of the mechanical, animal and hybrid metaphors through which German characters in post-war fictions were so frequently depicted. Towards the end of Nicholas Monsarrat's bestselling 1951 novel *The Cruel Sea*, the crew of the British ship rescue a group of Germans from the sea after destroying their U-boat. Stripped of their mechanical façade, they appear to the British crew as 'hardly men at all […] people from another and infinitely abhorrent world'.[37] Fundamentally different life forms encased in metal, the *Quatermass* aliens are the literal manifestation of Monsarrat's Germans, the embodiment of the

[36] See *British Science Fiction Cinema*, ed. by I.Q. Hunter (1999).
[37] Monsarrat, p.222.

contradictory 'German character', progressive in some aspects, primitive in others. As non-human life forms, they could easily bear this paradox.

Germany had long been associated with the alien invasion genre, in which 'alien' is used in its primary meaning of 'foreign'. The earliest British invasion story – George Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking* (1871) – and the flood of imitations that followed, as well as the later group of novels triggered by Erskine Childers' *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903) all feature Germany as the (potential) invading force. At the same time as the 'anxious notion of the foreign' or of the 'alien' was intensifying, Germany was increasingly becoming the primary focus of that anxiety. Added to wartime propaganda, this cultural history allowed the easy resumption and subsequent reversal of the trope in post-1945 Britain. And it was not just films in which this trope could be found but also comics like *Eagle* and the BBC television drama *Doctor Who*. Like the Treens, the coldly efficient, ruthless and genocidal Daleks were modelled on the Nazis.[38] In these sci-fi texts, the extra-terrestrial and fantastic are no longer the metaphors through which Germanness is made more (or, indeed, less) comprehensible. Instead, the nature of the aliens and the threat they pose is clarified through the invocation of Germanness as metaphor, establishing the aliens as fundamentally 'different' and unknowable. This device was dependent on – and also reinforced – the association between Germanness and alienness that originated in the early twentieth century and was revived and further cultivated in post-Second World War Britain.

2. Visions of chaos and unity: Germanness as the alien opposite of Britishness

2.1. 'We live at opposite poles. We have not a main idea in common'[39]

As various scholars explore in Kathleen Burk's 2003 edited volume, *The British Isles since 1945*, the 1950s was a period of overall decline and fragmentation for Britain, with economic growth lagging behind that of other European countries, most notably West Germany, and burgeoning class, racial and generational conflicts. Despite the hopes that accompanied Labour's welfare reforms and what Jim Tomlinson calls the

[38] John R. Cook, 'Adapting Telefantasy: The *Doctor Who* and *Daleks* films' in ed. Hunter, p.124.
[39] Vansittart (1941), p.26.

‘vista of rising prosperity’, epitomised in Prime Minister Harold Macmillan’s famous declaration in 1957 that ‘most of our people have never had it so good’, Britain’s relative economic and real political decline was soon obvious to many.[40] A ‘narrative of declinism took hold,’ argues Tomlinson.[41] In her introduction, Burk addresses the more intangible fears that grew through the 1950s regarding the fractures and divisions within British society. ‘The national identity was, as historians began to say, contested.’[42]

Divisions within British society had troubled many public figures during the recent war too. As Rose argues in *Which People’s War?* wartime Britain was a nation with ‘deep class divisions’ populated by people with ‘heterogeneous pastimes’.[43] Churchill’s speeches did not give voice to an existing unity, but were, as Robert Colls argues in his study of English/British identity, ‘ruthless in their search’ for it.[44] In the introduction to their recent book, Wendy Ugolini and Juliette Pattinson briefly address the different versions of Britishnessness put forward during the conflict in an attempt to unite a disparate nation (or, indeed, group of nations):

> ‘England’, ‘the English’, ‘we’, ‘us’, ‘the nation’ and ‘the country’ were all terms deployed during wartime to draw together disparate groups of people divided by class, region and nation, to elide those differences and unite them around a sense of belonging to an ‘imagined community’ in opposition to a common enemy.[45]

The ‘othering’ of the German nation had long been used as a means of stabilising a sense of British identity and was used by figures as politically diverse as Lord Vansittart and J.B. Priestley in the years preceding and during the Second World War with the same aim. ‘We live at opposite poles,’ wrote Vansittart in 1941 of Britons and Germans, ‘We have not a main idea in common.’[46] One recurring element of this opposition was the ‘German’ suppression (and the corresponding

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40 Jim Tomlinson, ‘Economic growth, economic decline’ in *The British Isles since 1945*, ed. by Kathleen Burk (2003), p.63.
41 ibid., p.70.
42 Burk (2003), p.12.
43 Rose, p. 4.
44 Robert Colls, *Identity of England* (2002), p.126.
45 Wendy Ugolini and Juliette Pattinson, ‘Negotiating Identities in Multinational Britain During the Second World War’ in *Fighting for Britain? Negotiating Identities in Britain During the Second World War*, ed. by Ugolini and Pattinson (2015), p.17.
46 Vansittart (1941), p.26.

'British' celebration) of diversity, individuality and individual freedom. In a scathing attack on Hitler's Germany written in 1935, Leonard Woolf disparaged the absolutist German state, which demands unity, obedience and loyalty from its citizens, who are conceived of not as individuals but only 'in their relation to the state.'[47] In contrast, as Orwell observed in a 1940 essay, in which he explicitly conflates Britain and England, it is difficult to perceive 'that the whole nation has a single identifiable character […] Are we not 46 million individuals, all different?' he asks. 'And the diversity of it, the chaos!'[48] The well-established stereotype of German uniformity – understood primarily in visual depictions of eerily homogenous German troops saluting or goose-stepping in perfect unison – was particularly useful in turning the undeniable and potentially problematic heterogeneity of Britain into a strength. A homogenous society is a Germanic society, so the thinking went. From this perspective, diversity and 'chaos!' could, paradoxically, become the means of unifying Britain against the rigid, inflexible enemy.

I will argue that post-war fictions drew on the same trope for the same purpose: to turn the growing diversity of Britain into the means by which it could be united. Images of monstrous Germanness, unique among all national characters, served no useful purpose in countering the perceived threat to British social cohesion and national identity. Yet a second strand of wartime rhetoric that also asserted the alienness of the German people but posited Germans as alien specifically to (that is 'far removed from', 'of a completely different nature or character to') Britishness, could be usefully resurrected in the cause of post-war national unity. As Rau formulates it, ''the Germans', i.e. the cultural phenomenology to which they are harnessed, are a necessary other for a nostalgic post-war construction of Englishness'.[49] I will show how a particular understanding of the Germans, focused on the (once again) seemingly paradoxical traits of uniformity and disunity, became necessary in the immediate post-war period for a construction of Britishness.

The key role of wartime and post-war cinema in the establishment, preservation and questioning of the antithetical natures of Britishness and Germanness is undisputed

[47] Leonard Woolf, *Quack, Quack!* (1935), p. 71, p.76.
[48] George Orwell, 'England, Your England' in *England, Your England and Other Essays* (1953), p.193.
[49] Petra Rau, *English Modernism, National Identity and the Germans 1890-1950* (2009), p.9.

and has been addressed in several studies by Ian MacKillop and Neil Sinyard, Sarah Street, Robert Murphy and Richard Falcon.[50] Yet there is a lack of consensus in the critical field regarding the prevailing attitude in post-war films towards the co-dependent tropes of British wartime unity and Germanness. While Marcia Landy claims that 'the post-war war films appear increasingly to question and challenge, if not lament, the war ethos of national unity' and to puncture 'the sanctity of wartime myths', Christine Geraghty asserts that 1950s British war films exhibited a 'blithe resistance to change'.[51] Their divergent analyses reflect the diversity of British post-war films and caution us against any attempt to forge a single narrative to make sense of cinema's engagement with the issue. Furthermore, although a significant amount of critical ink has been spilled discussing the reiteration of the wartime myth of despicable Germanness and admirable Britishness in post-war British popular culture, specific aspects of the antithesis are ignored. Instead, we are presented with countless lists and tabulations of the supposedly opposing traits.[52] I will argue instead that in many post-war fictions, the wartime myth of Britain united in diversity and Germany homogenous but fractured was reiterated in a specific bid to replicate its unifying force for a fragmenting post-war Britain.

2.2. A war of national characters? Sink the Bismarck!

Lewis Gilbert's 1960 film *Sink the Bismark!* epitomises the post-war trend described above. The frequent cuts inviting comparison between diverse British and clichéd German characters, the incorporation of documentary footage, the black-and-white film and the truth-based narrative are elements repeated in numerous films of the period, all of which establish images of Britishness and Germanness congruent with the dominant wartime tropes. Significantly, in all of these films, the German characters are established as primarily German rather than Nazi, inviting the post-war audience to read the representation of Britain's erstwhile enemy as relevant to a

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[50] *British Cinema of the 1950s: A Celebration*, ed. by Ian MacKillop and Neil Sinyard (2003); Sarah Street, *British National Cinema* (1997); Robert Murphy, *British Cinema and the Second World War* (2000); Richard Falcon, 'Images of Germany and the Germans in British Film and Television Fictions' in *Anglo-German Attitudes*, ed. by Cedric Cullingford and Harald Husemann (1995), pp.67-89.

[51] Marcia Landy, *British Genres: Cinema and Society 1930-1960* (1991) p.171, p.177; Christine Geraghty, *British Cinema in the Fifties: Gender, Genre and the New Look* (2000), p.36, p.195

[52] See Angus Calder and Sonya Rose's studies of the myth of British unity: Calder, *Myth of the Blitz* (1991) p.196; Rose, p.158.

post-war understanding of the German nation. In *Bismarck*, this is achieved by the Germans' own rhetoric. In a speech to his crew, Admiral Lütjens declares, 'We are faster, we are unsinkable and we are German!' and, 'never forget that you are Germans, never forget that you are Nazis.'[53] His words instil a pride and self-belief that are rooted firstly in national identity (Germanness), and only secondly in ideology (Nazism). A close reading of this film will reveal how the portrayal of British unity through diversity and German disunity disguised by uniformity form the core of the cinematic depiction of Britishness and its alien opposite, Germanness.

Sink the Bismarck! tells a partly fictionalised story of the sinking of the German battleship *Bismarck* by the Royal Navy in 1941. Derided by critics, one of whom described it as an 'incredibly old-fashioned film; almost as though one were watching a 1940 piece of flag-waving instead of a 1960 piece of drama', it was nevertheless the highest box-office earner in Britain that year and was also financially successful in North America.[54] Fictional character Captain Jonathan Shepherd (Kenneth More) is assigned to co-ordinate the attempt to hunt down and destroy the ship. Much of the action takes place in the Admiralty War Room, with regular cuts to scenes on the *Bismarck* and on the British ships involved in the mission. The crew of the *Bismarck!* is headed by Admiral Lütjens (Karel Štěpánek) and Captain Lindemann (Carl Möhner), the film's central German characters.

[53] *Sink the Bismarck!*, dir. by Lewis Gilbert (Twentieth Century Fox, 1960) [on DVD]. Same reference for all future screen shots and quotations from this film.
[54] *Films and Filming*, March 1960; *Kinematograph Weekly*, 15 December 1960.

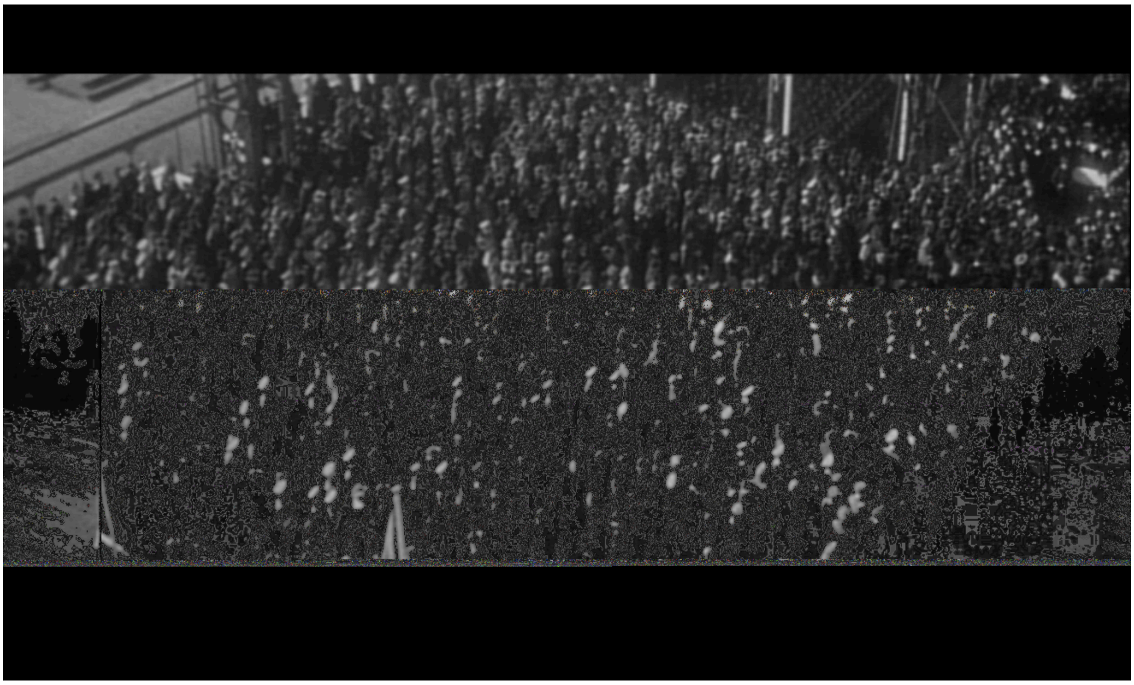

Figure 18: The massed German crowds at the opening of *Sink the Bismarck!*

The opening two scenes establish the contrast between the British and German characters and establishments. The film opens with real documentary footage of the launch of the battleship *Bismarck* in Hamburg, 1939 (fig. 18). Tens of thousands of German citizens raise their arms in a Nazi salute to Hitler. High-angle shots dwarf and dehumanise the massed crowds, already – and almost comically – dwarfed by the vast ship, while only Hitler and his entourage are granted close-ups. This short documentary scene serves two purposes. Firstly, it binds the subsequent narrative and the depictions of Germans therein closer to fact. Secondly, it provides an image of national homogeneity that contrasts starkly with the visual display of Britishness encompassing heterogeneity and individuality that follows immediately afterwards.

In this second scene, which takes place behind the credits, the camera follows Captain Shepherd as he walks to work through Trafalgar Square, his coat hung casually over his arm. More was a very popular actor with British audiences in the 1950s, his role in *Doctor in the House* (1954) described by Geraghty as 'resolutely British', a phrase that could equally be applied to his portrayal of Richard Hannay in the 1959 adaptation of John Buchan's *The 39 Steps*.[55] This 'Britishness' is characterised by a cheerful, breezy attitude and modest self-confidence. His

[55] Geraghty, p.93.

prominent position on the billing for *Sink the Bismarck!* would therefore arouse certain expectations for his role. This expectation, combined with the juxtaposition of the first two scenes, establishes Shepherd's first appearance as a display of British – as opposed to German – identity. As he walks through the square, his manner is self-possessed but relaxed, authoritative but not authoritarian. He passes other Londoners, some in military and some in civilian clothing, each differentiated by their appearance, stance and gait in their brief moment on screen. Their paths criss-cross as each figure or pair of figures chooses their own route across the square. After an initial bird's eye view, eye-level shots dominate the sequence, allowing each figure – female or male, civilian or military – to be perceived as an individual and symbolising the equal worth of each.

The first scene inside the Admiralty War Room confirms all of these initial impressions. As Shepherd sees one man without his regulation jumper, another eating a sandwich on duty and a third addressing a female officer by her first name, he is told by the outgoing chief of operations, 'We're quite informal here about some things.' This is the manifestation of what Jeremy Paxman, in an entertaining and rigorously researched study of 'the English', calls the 'society of individuals', a key facet of English/British identity in his analysis.[56] There is room for flexibility, informality and individuality and the challenge of superiors is permitted, even welcomed. Shepherd, however, is displeased and demands that rules are strictly adhered to without exception. His attitude changes by the end of the film, however, in an affirmation, as will shortly be explored, of the desirability of 'British' flexibility and heterogeneity as opposed to 'Germanic' rigidity and uniformity.
The first scene set on the *Bismarck* establishes the grounds for the contrast between the nationalities that were implied in the film's opening. In a visual motif borrowed from the crime genre, Lütjens is first seen sitting in a chair with his back to the camera casting a dark shadow on the wall next to him (fig. 19). His posture is rigid and he faces away from his interlocutor, responding to him in a formal monotone. The score, set in a minor key and featuring a solo violin emitting a long high-pitched note with menacing bass and percussive undertones, enhances the atmosphere of unease. Lütjens turns to face the camera, revealing a smug, hard face, pleased at an

[56] Jeremy Paxman, *The English: A Portrait of a People* (1999), p.139.

opportunity lent by the poor weather conditions to outwit the British. Just as More was expected to portray admirable Britishness, Štěpánek, a Czech actor who fled to Britain from Austria in 1940, was known for playing Teutonic villains including Franz von Brinkman in the 1943 thriller *Escape to Danger*, Herr Forster in the hugely successful 1946 war drama *The Captive Heart* and a Gestapo officer in *The Cockleshell Heroes* (1955). This scene both alludes to and re-affirms this extradiagetic association, as well as immediately confining the character within a cliché that allows for no individuality or malleability in a further reinforcement of the notion that Germanness meant the eradication of the individual. We are fed a series of visual and aural cues that declare Lütjens to be a typical German villain who will only affirm existing assumptions about the brutality, coldness and, significantly, uniformity of the German national character.

Figure 19: First shot of Lütjens (left, played by Karel Stepanek), with view to opulent cabin in background

Facing the camera, Lütjens continues to refuse eye contact with his conversation partner, now Lindemann, maintaining the distance dictated by their differing ranks. Lindemann is deferential, flattering his superior and agreeing with his every word. Unlike the cinematic portrayal of the British establishment, where rank is preserved but respect given equally and meaningful interaction encouraged, the German military hierarchy is depicted dividing and isolating individuals. But this is not the self-determining individualism in which the British took pride. Instead, Lütjens is rigidly defined by his rank, inhabiting a cabin full of cigars, crystal goblets, ornamental wood panelling, gilt-framed portraits and gleaming trophies, symbols of luxury that communicate Lütjens' role, not his individual personality, which we never glimpse. He does not resent this enforced existence, but relishes the individual glory he could achieve. There can be 'glory for us' in this voyage, he tells Lindemann, who responds ingratiatingly, 'For you, sir. You are the Fleet Commander.' Lütjens is visibly pleased with this response. Later, he is portrayed making individual decisions for personal gain, a trait that is echoed further down the ranks when the *Bismarck* is on the verge of sinking in the film's final scenes. Having heard about a dangerous fire in the forward magazines of the ship, the officer in charge gives the order to flood the magazines, an action that he knows will cause the death of many men. In contrast to Shepherd's decision to make a British troop convoy vulnerable to attack, depicted as an agonising choice in which ethical considerations are paramount, this order is given in aggressive tones and without any regard for the human lives that will be lost. The scene cuts to the men below as they struggle to escape. We see men clambering over each other, those higher up the ladder pulled back down by those below. Unable or unwilling to work as a team – 'a society of individuals' – to ensure the survival of some, they are instead depicted as a group of disparate persons driven by an instinctive and personal urge for survival.

Despite the perfect uniformity of this crew as they line up to hear Lütjens' rousing speech earlier in the film, these later scenes reveal that solidarity and emotional closeness are absent. Yet the individualism displayed by them and their superiors is not the kind celebrated by Orwell and Priestley, but an indication of deep-seated disunity. It is not in German uniformity that unity is to be found, this film asserts, but rather in British diversity. Continuous cuts between the Admiralty War Room and various characters on British ships are used to counter the depiction of German selfishness with one of British teamwork and unity. This is most clear in one of the film's earlier scenes, where the audience is given a contrasting image of human behaviour in the face of disaster. As *HMS Hood* is sinking, the final words spoken by a member of the crew are, 'Give us a hand' as he struggles to move a dead body away from the radio transmitter and seeks his colleague's help to do so. They work together with little regard for their personal fate in order to send a message that might lead to the rescue of some of the crew.

The reduction of the enemy to basic stereotypes in a nation's wartime fiction is a universal phenomenon, as Paris argues in *Warrior Nation*. Yet he goes on to show how the specific images of the Italian, Japanese and German enemy that pervaded British fiction of the Second World War 'became permanent fixtures in the pleasure culture of the post-war world'.[57] Italians were portrayed as comic and militarily incompetent, the Japanese as sinister and devious and the Germans as 'crop-headed bullies who slavishly followed orders'.[58] These distinctions, combined with the specificity of the image of Germanness projected in *Bismarck* and its correlation with wartime tropes, mean that the German characters cannot be explained away as necessary functions of the war genre. Indeed, the depiction of Germans through stereotypes was part of the means by which post-war Britishness was being constructed: depictions of Germans as mass-produced clichés brought British diversity into relief and affirmed it as a positive, rather than potentially ruinous, aspect of British identity.

Yet, as I mentioned earlier, the film is not merely a static portrayal of two divergent and stereotyped national identities. We witness the British protagonist pulled between two character types and confronting a choice between – as this film posits it – Germanic and British traits. The more disciplined, formal regime that Shepherd introduces in the Admiralty Operations Room threatens the emotional and professional solidarity that exists in the informal atmosphere as he finds it. It is clear that this new, more rigid, regime is to be read as anti-British and Germanic. Furthermore, Shepherd's strict professionalism and emotional distance from his colleagues echo the same (but far more extreme) tendencies in Lütjens. His behaviour is portrayed as a threat to the meaningful interaction between ranks depicted in this and other post-war naval films, interaction that indicates the unity that exists between disparate British individuals but that is absent from the German ranks. Unlike Lütjens, however, he is not devoid of empathy and is portrayed feeling deep and ordinary human emotions that he chooses to disguise. These are implied in

[57] Paris (2000), p.217.
[58] ibid., pp.216-7.

brief, silent signals – a heavy sigh or a hand passed over the face. His mildly 'Germanic' traits remain just that and are soon revealed as the result of the unhealthy suppression of grief after the death of his wife in an air raid. A return to a more emotionally open, informal relationship with his colleagues is depicted both as a return to Britishness and a return to emotional health.

While the British characters in *Bismarck* show diversity, development and depth, qualities celebrated as key to Britain's wartime victory, the German characters are depicted either as stereotypes or en masse. These clichéd characters repel the viewer who is instead drawn to the ordinary British sailors struggling to keep warm on the deck of their ship and thinking about crumpets. The wartime narrative of a diverse British society full of individuals and a nation of homogenous Germans is thus replayed in *Bismarck* in an attempt to stabilise post-war British identity. For despite the film's opening documentary segment, *Bismarck* is not a realistic account of a real wartime event: the German characters are clichés and the informality among the British ranks is far-fetched. Rather, it invokes idealised images of diverse but unified Britons and demonised images of villainous or robotic Germans to make an ideological intervention into the post-war discourse around past and present understandings of Britishness.

2.3. The 'mass' and the 'people': Two opposing perspectives

In *Bismarck* and the texts it exemplifies, we see two opposing visions of the ideal society, perceived in Britain as the 'British' and the 'German' vision. I will show how, established in wartime, these two directly antithetical ideals were taken as evidence that Germanness was indeed the alien opposite to Britishness and were repeatedly invoked in the post-war period to assert the value of diversity, disorder and democracy in Britain.

In a 1941 pamphlet, Priestley praised 'the people', a word that for him conjured up 'a confused but lively vision of a hundred faces and a hundred voices', and disparaged 'the masses', which he described as 'bundles of instincts and appetites' and 'units of man-power'.[59] It is the same distinction that he would later celebrate in his 'Tribute to Britain' in April 1945. 'We had to put ourselves into armour,' he wrote, 'but inside that armour we were still the same real people and not simply so many robots.'[60] In this understanding, echoed in *Sink the Bismarck!*, British unity was forged through the diversity of its constituent parts while superficial German uniformity – the 'units of man-power' in fig. 18 – belied that nation's deep-seated disunity. For the Nazis, too, 'the people' ('das Volk') were desirable and 'the masses' ('die Massen') undesirable. Yet the Nazi understanding of the terms was the exact inverse of Priestley's. While Priestley (and Orwell) celebrated the disordered, multifarious nature of 'the people', the Nazis decried this same quality in the *Masse*, understood as chaotic, uncontrolled and potentially rebellious, according to Klaus Theweleit in his two-volume work *Männerphantasien*. The *Volk*, equivalent to Priestley's description of the mass as 'units of man-power', was perceived as the desirable result of the imposition of a structure of domination on the mass, which becomes the ordered and oppressed subject of the oppressor.[61]

The difference between *Masse* and *Volk* is epitomised in the transformation of the German storm-troopers between January and September 1933 as reported in the *Daily Express*. When they marched through Berlin in January that year, the journalist wrote, they seemed to be 'lacking the uniformity and discipline of real troops'. Uniforms varied or were non-existent and their marching was 'poor'. In September, their uniforms 'were spotless and brand new', their goose-stepping 'strong and rhythmic' and their responses to the cheering crowds always 'in chorus' and 'always the same'.[62] Propaganda films of rallies and parades – thousands of Germans raising their arm in the Hitler salute – corroborated this image of uniformity and made their way into British newsreels of the period. According to these images, the German people had become the homogeneous 'bundles of instincts and appetites' that echoed First World War depictions and would later feature in British wartime propaganda and post-war fictions. Outward signs of heterogeneity and individuality had been purged in a visual display of (the desired) inward homogeneity of belief and character, the visual simulation of community. Germany under Nazism was to be a

[59] J.B. Priestley, *Out of the People* (1941), p.18.
[60] *Picture Post*, 28 April 1945.
[61] Klaus Theweleit, *Männerphantasien*, vol. 2 (1978), pp.102-114.
[62] *Daily Express*, 4 September 1933.

'Vision von Einigkeit und Verschmelzung', as phrased by Gudrun Brockhaus in her study of the emotional experience of Germans under National Socialism.[63] The obvious discrepancy between British society – 'the diversity of it, the chaos!' – and the Nazi pursuit of 'Einigkeit und Verschmelzung', both in displays of highly disciplined troops and in the more serious matter of the 'Arisierung' of the Third Reich, could be exploited as a key means of asserting the antithetical nature of Britishness and Germanness. Evidence that the Germans were seeking to stamp out difference gave Britons the best possible reason to celebrate it. For, like so many other traits, this was not perceived as a specifically Nazi or fascist trait but a Germanic one.

As Gill Plain explores in her survey of the decade's literature, 'unity forged out of diversity' quickly became the central theme of many fictional stories depicting British military triumphs.[64] These 'group hero narratives', such as W.E. Johns' *Spitfire Parade* (1941) featuring the ace pilot and adventurer Biggles and his 'Gimlet' series of novels (1943-1954), revolved around a heterogeneous group of British characters who worked together, while maintaining their individuality, to defeat the Germans.[65] In an echo of the First World War, in which victory demolished concerns that supposedly weak, degenerate Britain might need to emulate the nation's increasingly aggressive, organisationally efficient rival Germany, victory in 1945 seemed to reveal that similar concerns regarding 'muddle-headed', heterogeneous Britain were wholly unjustified. The British character, as it had been consolidated in wartime propaganda through contrast with Germanness, was vindicated (while the American and Soviet contributions to victory were downplayed if not entirely ignored). In response, Priestley launched his most rhetorically flamboyant celebration of Britishness yet, lauding Britain as 'the 'country of enthusiastic amateurs, of solemn but passionate hobbies, of cranks and whimsical fellows'.[66]

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[63] Gudrun Brockhaus, *Schauder und Idylle: Faschismus als Erlebnisangebot* (1997), p.215: 'A vision of unity and amalgamation.'
[64] Gill Plain, *Literature of the 1940s: War, Postwar and 'Peace'* (2013), p.115.
[65] ibid., pp.115-6.
[66] *Picture Post*, April 28 1945.

The idea of British oddity and individualism and the perceived German lack thereof soon seeped into post-war fictions and not just those set in wartime. Novels such as *Randle in Springtime* (1949), *Roast Pigeon* (1951), *Now or Never* (1951) and *Death in Berlin* (1955) were set in the post-war period and drew heavily on the concept of 'German' uniformity in contrast with British diversity. Consumed alongside fictions set in wartime invoking similar tropes, these depictions enabled the suppression of moral questions regarding the wartime and post-war treatment of German civilians and justified the metaphorical 'annihilation' of the German character through rhetoric that condemned or disparaged the entire German nation. A simple motif featured in Manning Coles' 1945 novel *Green Hazard* epitomises the trend in popular fictions that was to follow. Repeatedly used to justify actions that might lead to the death of one or more Germans, the phrase 'only Germans' deindividualises and devalues Germans, distancing them from other nationalities and positioning Germanness as intrinsically different, immutably lesser and gratifyingly alien.

In *Warrior Nation*, Michael Paris observes that authors of popular fiction in the post-1918 period rarely used Germany as the enemy, arguing that they were mindful of the government's attempts to heal rifts with Britain's former foe.[67] The contrast with the post-1945 period is striking, when countless fictions continued to depict fundamentally opposed British and German characters. As I have shown, this had far more to do with Britain's idea of itself as a nation whose identity was fragmenting than with a sincere attempt to understand the German people. With the onset of war, scepticism regarding Britain's ability to compete with either Hitler or his nation of apparently clone-like subjects had been quickly translated into a celebration of the diversity, individualism and amateurism of the British people. The myth of British wartime unity was founded on a desperate need to unify a disparate set of people divided by nationality, region and class. Facing a similarly desperate situation in the post-war period, the British unsurprisingly turned to the same tools that recently had served them so well.

[67] Paris (2000), p.183.

3. The (Only) One That Got Away: Britain's ambivalent response to Hardy Krüger

3.1. Alien or akin? Ambiguity in the British view of the Germans

'Put yourself, if you can, in the average German's place,' Victor Gollancz urged his readers in a 1945 pamphlet, *What Buchenwald Really Means*.[68] You hear rumours about the camps, but you know that if you start to probe, you will be signing your own death warrant and that of your family, he argued. '*Will* you do this?' For Gollancz, an ardent socialist, Britons and Germans were linked not only by their shared habitation of the planet – 'we are all brothers and sisters' – but by a particular bond.[69] 'If there is something wrong with German "blood" there is something wrong with English "blood",' he declared, 'for the two are, in large measure, one and the same.'[70]

For many Britons in 1945, the last thing they wanted to do was to put themselves 'in the average German's place' or to acknowledge any form of kinship with that nation. Yet, although Gollancz's assertion of Anglo-German affinity was probably discomfiting for many Britons in the light of the discoveries at Buchenwald and elsewhere, it was, as I discussed in the introduction, neither novel nor radical. Nor did popular fictions in the period entirely reject Britain's long history of admiring Germany's military prowess and asserting the close cultural, even racial, ties between the two nations. Films such as Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's *The Battle of the River Plate* (1956) and *Ill Met by Moonlight* (1957) are, as Sue Harper and Vincent Porter point out, partly about 'cross-cultural respect between members of the British and German officer class,' respect for a 'common tradition of civilised behaviour'.[71] In other words, these fictions acknowledge an Anglo-German kinship denied by other naval films such as *Bismarck* and countless fictions that contribute to the image of the German people as fundamentally different from Britons, or perhaps all humanity.

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[68] Victor Gollancz, *What Buchenwald Really Means* (1945), p.9.
[69] ibid., p.10.
[70] ibid., p.12.
[71] Sue Harper and Vincent Porter, *British Cinema of the 1950s: The Decline of Deference* (2003), p.47.

Yet in a period of British political and economic decline, respect for a formerly formidable military rival and currently formidable economic one was frequently juxtaposed with an assertion that Britain was still somehow superior, achieved most readily through the fictionalised depiction of real events in a war that Britain won. In light of both the current status of the two nations and the recent conflict, straightforward celebration of German prowess or German decency was just not possible. I will use the 1957 box-office hit *The One That Got Away* to show how empathetic depictions of Germans who were akin rather than alien to Britons embodied ambivalence and aroused an equally ambivalent response among Britons wary of suggestions of Anglo-German kinship.

3.2. Franz von Werra: An 'exceptional German'?

'What a story! Everyone wants it! *John Bull* secures first world serial rights! Film and radio rights sold before publication!' declared a full-page advert in the *Daily Express* in October 1956.[72] The story in question was *The One That Got Away,* a book by Kendal Burt and James Leasor. 'UNUSUAL … AUDACIOUS … ENTHRALLING' was how the *Express* described it, 'The War's Most Incredible Escape Story.'[73] The book tells the story of Franz von Werra, one of only two members of the German armed forces who successfully escaped back to Germany during the Second World War having been held as a POW by the British. Shot down over England in 1940, he was interrogated before being sent to a POW camp in the Lake District. An ingenious escape plan succeeded and he was hunted for five days before being captured and sent to a different camp. He immediately began digging a tunnel and escaped with four other men. Pretending to be a crashed Dutch pilot, part of a secret 'Special Bomber Squadron', he bluffed his way to an RAF base and into the cockpit of a Hurricane. He was caught once more and sent to Canada where he escaped through a train window and trekked through blizzards and across a frozen lake to reach the USA, a neutral country. He eventually returned to Germany and wrote, somewhat fancifully, about his escapades. Leasor and Kendal's book was based partly on von Werra's account and partly on other documentation and witness

[72] *Daily Express*, 2 October 1956.
[73] ibid.

accounts. Both the BBC radio adaptation that followed in November 1956 and the 1957 film, directed by Roy Ward Baker, were based closely on the book, serialised in late 1956 in *John Bull*. My analysis will focus on the film, as this was the version that aroused the most critical interest, both at the time and in subsequent scholarship, not least because of leading actor Hardy Krüger and his tempestuous relationship with the British press and public.

Krüger's brief British career, beginning with *The One That Got Away*, was superbly analysed in a 2006 article by Melanie Williams. She argues that Krüger's astonishing transformation from *persona non grata* to national heartthrob and unofficial ambassador can be attributed to a concurrence of factors, including improving Anglo-German political relations and Krüger's charisma and good looks.[74] Yet the transition was complex and controversial, and was mirrored in conflicting responses to *The One*. As Williams notes, 'the fact that the film encouraged the spectator to identify with a German protagonist did not go unquestioned.'[75] Isabel Quigly, writing for the *Spectator*, was particularly perturbed:

> The film's attitude seems to be that this was just somebody rather like us, only he happened to be on the other side: which, one cannot say often or loudly enough, isn't necessarily true.[76]

What initially seems to be a powerful rejection of the premise that Germans might be 'rather like us' and an acceptance of the essentialist arguments addressed earlier in this chapter becomes, through the qualifying word 'necessarily', far more ambivalent. The desire to maintain a distinction between Britons and Germans – and the fear that this distinction was weakening – is palpable in the clause 'one cannot say often or loudly enough', yet the final phrase implies that many Germans may indeed be 'rather like us'. Williams shows how the film itself manifests a similar ambivalence, arguing that it 'treads a tightrope in trying to make us identify with the German while still retaining a critical distance from his exploits'.[77] I will take this

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[74] Melanie Williams, '"The Most Explosive Object to Hit Britain since the V2!": The British Films of Hardy Kruger and Anglo-German Relations during the 1950s', *Cinema Journal*, 46 (2006), 85-107.
[75] ibid., p.90.
[76] *Spectator,* 18 October 1957.
[77] Williams (2006), p.91.

argument further by showing how the ambivalent British response to both von Werra and Krüger is echoed within the film itself, in which three conflicting understandings of what this German wartime hero should mean for Britain compete for supremacy.

The first of these is established in the opening scene. A German plane has been shot down and is making a crash landing. A British cook, hard at work in an outdoor kitchen a short distance away, looks up and yells, 'Another Jerry!' before running towards the plane, cleaver in hand.[78] The phrase invites us to see the downed pilot, before he has appeared on the screen, as simply one more German. 'Another' suggests he is just one more to add to a long list, while the generic 'Jerry' denies him any individuality and ascribes him the same identity as all other Germans viewed from the British perspective. The scene cuts to von Werra as he jumps out of his plane and, realising he will soon be a prisoner, burns his documents. A series of eye-level, medium close-up shots acquaint the audience with this particular Jerry. Yet his appearance only affirms the impression of generic Germanness. He is broad-faced, square-jawed and blond-haired – blue-eyed too, although this is disguised by the black and white film (fig. 20). Indeed, it was his striking 'resemblance to the Aryan ideal', as Williams puts it, that dominated his initial reception in Britain.[79] 'In appearance,' *The Times* noted, Krüger was 'the Nazi dream come true,'[80] while Krüger was met with accusations of Nazism at his first British press conference based on his 'athletic shape', '*Arian* shape of skull', blond hair and blue eyes.[81] During what turned into an ugly and, from Krüger's perspective, almost ruinous exchange, the *Evening Standard*'s Thomas Wiseman declared, 'You are the prototype of a Nazi'.[82]

[78] *The One That Got Away*, dir. by Roy Ward Baker (Rank, 1957) [on DVD]. Same reference for all future screen shots and quotations from this film.
[79] Williams (2006), p.88.
[80] *The Times*, 14 October 1957.
[81] Recounted in Hardy Krüger, *Wanderjahre: Begegnungen eines jungen Schauspielers* (1998), pp.255-6.
[82] ibid.

Figure 20: The 'Aryan' Hardy Krüger (playing Franz von Werra) in the opening scene of *The One That Got Away*

There was a desire to categorise this German, whose presence in the British film world was undesired by many and aroused anxiety. He was one of the Aryan masses, alien to Britons and a potential threat. Just as von Werra's presence on British soil in reality and in the film is a cause for defensive actions and ever greater vigilance, so too was Krüger's presence in Britain and in British culture often characterised by metaphors of bombardment and invasion. A September 1959 article in *Picturegoer*, titled 'The German Invasion' argued, 'It seems that what Hitler failed to do by way of invasion here during the war, German stars are determined to make up for – by getting plum roles in our pictures.'[83] The playfulness of the rhetoric cannot disguise an underlying anxiety about Krüger's presence, generated partly by the post-war drive, based on wartime myths, to characterise Germans as antithetical and hostile to Britons. The media simply did not know what to do differently with this strikingly Aryan German who used to think that Hitler was 'a terrific person.'[84] The opening segment of *The One* affirms the validity of this attitude. Von Werra, if not Krüger, is just 'another Jerry', one of 'them' posing a threat to 'us', who must be disarmed and

[83] *Picturegoer*, 19 September 1959.
[84] *Picturegoer*, 4 January 1958.

carefully guarded. He has no lines in this opening scene and is referenced as an object to be claimed in a brief exchange between two members of the Home Guard and the cook – 'Yours?' 'Mine'. The final impression as the scene fades out is of a generic German, an enemy alien whom we can observe with critical distance.

Yet this impression is quickly undermined. His first interrogation, during which he spouts generic Nazi rhetoric that foreshadows Lütjens' nationalistic pronouncements in *Bismarck* – 'we are stronger in every respect', 'the German people are as one man' – is followed by a telephone conversation between his interrogator and a colleague at Air Defence Intelligence. The latter asks of von Werra and the interrogation, 'usual sort of thing, I suppose?' The former responds thoughtfully, 'Not quite the usual. All the routine jargon of course, but he doesn't believe a word of it [...] The only thing von Werra believes in is von Werra.' Following the opening scene, in which he is 'another Jerry', von Werra quickly emerges as 'a rebellious individualist', as Richard Falcon aptly describes him in a brief discussion of the film.[85] He uses irony to mock his stoical British escorts, shows audacity in his repeated demand to be moved to a POW camp, mischievousness when he discovers the hidden microphone in his cell and starts talking directly to the RAF, and an extraordinary amount of pluck and ingenuity in his three escape attempts. As he recites 'the routine jargon' in his first interrogation, it is clear to the audience, not just the interrogator, that, unlike Lütjens, von Werra does not ascribe to the ideology he represents. His voice is unusually monotonous and his manner apathetic as he delivers a set of phrases obviously learned for this purpose.

His individualism and the traits revealed by his rejection of life as a 'unit of man power' are a far cry from the image of the obedient and emotionally cold German discussed earlier. The RAF staff member transcribing von Werra's first interview remarks dismissively, 'same old claptrap', while the ADI officer expects nothing other than 'the usual sort of thing', his question barely a question at all. The implication is that captured Germans have so far shown little diversity in character or ideology, an impression borne out by the prisoners we later meet. Although, unlike many post-war films, they are individualised by appearance, their behaviour and

[85] Falcon in Cullingford and Husemann eds, p.80.

dialogue is undifferentiated. We know neither their names nor their stories. They lack von Werra's imagination, humour or courage, dutifully following his instructions to enable his or their escape and joining together in a rousing chant of 'Sieg Heil!' before starting their journey to Canada. Amongst these Germans, von Werra is not only unusual, but unique. RAF interrogator Captain Bell comments with partial admiration on his 'unique code of ethics', while the protagonist's signet ring and rigid forefinger are invoked visually and in dialogue several times to draw attention to von Werra's singularity. His choice of pet – a lion cub – only underscores his anomalous nature. Indeed, the whole premise of the film and its marketing was based on von Werra's virtual uniqueness amongst all German prisoners held by the British during the Second World War. He is '*the one* who got away', one of only two Germans who escaped from British captivity and made it back to Germany. The *Daily Express* could not have described his story as 'fantastic', 'amazing' and 'incredible' if he were just 'another Jerry', a representative German whose escapes were commonplace. Britain's reaction to Krüger directly echoed these two attitudes – was he a generic German or an anomalous German whose existence proved the rule? Following his transition from figure of hate to heartthrob, the suggestion that he was representative of his nation acquired a positive spin. In February 1960, *Films and Filming* published a very optimistic article, claiming that after seeing Krüger in his British films, audiences 'saw the average German in a different light, taking Krüger as being typical of his people.'[86] Almost two decades later, however, and having observed Krüger's astonishing success from afar, Chancellor Helmut Schmidt cautioned him against viewing that success as particularly significant for Anglo-German relations: 'Die späte Zuneigung [hat] Ihrer Person gegolten […] Nicht uns. Nicht dem Volk auf der anderen Seite des Ärmelkanals. Denn ein einziger Film kann nicht zwei Weltkriege vergessen machen.'[87] Especially, he could have added, when that film was set during one of those wars. Furthermore, the 'affection' shown towards Krüger was rooted partly in the perception of his non-German traits as belonging to the post-war image of Britishness, not least his plucky individualism, stoical response to adversity and sense of humour. As Rau argues:

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[86] *Films and Filming*, February 1960.
[87] Krüger, p.260: 'Their affection was directed at you. Not at us. Not at the people across the channel. Let's face it, a film can't make people forget about two world wars.'

> The British audience took to Krüger's rugged good looks and cheered the plucky underdog in the same way in which it would respond to *The Great Escape* a few years later. [...] What made such characters appealing to a British audience (irrespective of the actors' nationalities or the characters' ideological affiliations) was that they embodied what the audience understood to be Anglo-Saxon virtues. This turned them into exceptional Germans; at least it de-politicised them.[88]

Von Werra is depoliticised early in the film, implicitly by his rebellious individualism and explicitly by the interrogator's remark, 'The only thing von Werra believes in is von Werra.' This made it possible, easy even, for a British audience to identify with the German protagonist, who shared neither the ideology nor the character perceived in wartime and in many post-war representations of the war as representing a threat to Britain and Britishness. This identification was encouraged by numerous medium close-up and close-up eye-level shots of von Werra that invite us to put ourselves in this German's place. This is indeed 'somebody like us', the film suggests, but this fact need not be as problematic as Quigley's review suggests. He is an 'exceptional German' in both senses – an unusual specimen of his nationality and unusually superior, due, we are invited to conclude, to his 'British' traits, which enable him and no other German to escape so successfully from British imprisonment. From being perceived or depicted as 'another Jerry', easily categorised as antithetical and hostile to Britons, both von Werra and Krüger became accepted as an 'exceptional German' displaying British traits of individualism and spontaneity. Krüger himself describes being accepted by the British public as 'einen der Ihren' and expected to agree with them and 'für England eintrete'.[89] Von Werra's escapes from British captivity and his ability to outwit bumbling Britons along the way did not therefore threaten the wartime myth of superior Britishness but instead bolstered it. Britishness was vindicated – through the depiction of a foreign hero displaying British characteristics, through his capture by the British on both occasions and through the multiple allusions to von Werra's uniqueness: the only German to have successfully escaped was one who displayed supposedly British traits.

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[88] Petra Rau, *Our Nazis: Representations of Fascism in Contemporary Literature and Film* (2013), p.132.
[89] Krüger, pp.261-2: 'one of their own'; 'speak out in favour of England'.

So despite asking Britons to put themselves in the place of a German, the final film did not present nearly as powerful a challenge to the idea that Germans were ‘unlike other peoples’ as the initial furore suggests. An anomalous German with British traits, von Werra is divested of any metonymic power. Yet there are two segments in the film that stand out for their refusal to locate von Werra as either ‘another Jerry’ or an ‘exceptional German’. The first occurs just after his escape from Grizedale Hall and the second on his trek towards the Canadian/American border. On both occasions, we see him as a man battling nature – terrain, weather and darkness. He struggles to find food and shelter and becomes soaked, frozen and exhausted. As he flees through the inhospitable, wintry Lake District, extreme long shots highlighting von Werra’s vulnerability are interspersed with medium shots and close-ups that reveal his dirtied, rain-streaked face and unkempt hair (fig. 21 and fig. 22). He has no dialogue in this sequence that would identify him as belonging to a particular nationality and, having removed the identifying badges from his jacket, he is devoid of any signs of allegiance: he is simply a man battling the natural elements for his own survival.

Figure 21: A long shot of von Werra stumbling across a hillside, showing him exhausted and vulnerable.

Figure 22: A medium shot of von Werra, drenched, cold and despondent.

An uninterrupted twelve-minute sequence of film following von Werra's escape from the train travelling through Canada echoes and builds on this earlier series of scenes. The snow-covered terrain, freezing temperatures and vast distances make this battle even more gruelling. In this long sequence, we see only von Werra and do not hear him speak. His battle to reach neutral territory and, even more fundamental, his battle to survive are told through his facial expressions, his body language and the film's soundtrack – universal languages that do not distinguish by nationality. Extreme close-up shots register his grimaces of pain, despair or exhaustion and his beaming smiles of delight or relief (fig. 23 and fig. 24), while medium and long shots reveal his hunched shoulders as he trudges determinedly across the vast frozen river and his slumped, exhausted form lying in a boat that carries him to the American shore of the river. Shots of von Werra trekking across the hostile terrain are accompanied by orchestral music in a minor key that conveys the perilous nature of his quest. His arrival at the river heralds a crescendo, a transition to a major key and a sequence of soaring, uplifting strings that provides the perfect aural accompaniment to the smile that spreads across von Werra's face. As he jumps up and down with glee, the tempo picks up and echoes his frolicking. In a later sequence, ominous bass notes in a minor key form the aural backdrop to his arduous slog as he pushes a wooden boat across the frozen part of the river. Williams argues that 'the film has attempted to depict him as an admirable but almost superhuman escape machine' and it is only his 'euphoric little jig' as he reaches America that 'humanizes the hero'.[90] I would contend instead that this is the culmination of a humanizing process that begins soon after the first scene with his expression of sympathy for his interrogator and his glances at a photograph of his sweetheart, is developed in the depiction of his escape across the Lake District and finds fulfilment in the long sequence just addressed. In this sequence, more closely related to the adventure than the prisoner of war genre and narrated through visual and aural cues that render nationality invisible and irrelevant, von Werra is a human being confronting the universal challenge to survive. This is not just 'somebody like us', which implies a 'them' elsewhere who are not like 'us', but a human being akin to all others.

[90] Williams (2006), p.92.

Figure 23: Von Werra grimaces as he pushes the boat over a ridge of snow on the frozen river.

Figure 24: Von Werra grins with childish delight when he realises he has reached the river.

The depiction of and response to both von Werra and Krüger are invaluable tools for exploring the tensions within the debate regarding the alienness or otherwise of the German nation. The intrusion of a German actor and a German hero into the British cinema industry, a key place where post-war British identity was being negotiated and ratified, crystallised the 'creeping national anxiety about German superiority', as Williams puts it, and the debate about what Germany could and should mean for Britain.[91] In the context of films such as *Bismarck* and fictions such as *The Cruel Sea*, in which the German submarine crew are described as 'hardly men at all', it certainly was a mark of progress to depict a German as a hero and find such resounding box-office success. Yet, as I have shown, this depiction was less straightforwardly positive than it first appears. The ambivalent response to both von Werra and Krüger are epitomised in two readers' letters published in *Picturegoer* in January 1958. 'Heroism is heroism whatever the nationality', wrote Stephanie Horne of Sheffield. Mrs Owen in Coventry disagreed. 'Why glorify a callous and sadistic enemy?' she demanded.[92]

…

John Ramsden argues that the 25,000 German POWs who settled in Britain after the war 'confounded stereotypes by their ordinariness in churches, pubs and village shops' across Britain.[93] In an equally optimistic spirit, he claims that Krüger 'helped normalise cultural relations between Britain and Germany'.[94] Yet a closer look at Krüger and the post-war political and cultural context of which he was a part shows that the ordinariness – the humanness – of Germans could not yet be acknowledged in British popular culture without a corresponding urge to depict such figures as anomalous. The drive to preserve the depiction of Germans as, in the words of James Stern's father, 'extr'ordinary people', alien to Britons and perhaps to all of humanity, remained strong.[95]

[91] ibid., p.98.
[92] *Picturegoer*, 4 January 1958.
[93] Ramsden (2006), p.251.
[94] ibid., p.297.
[95] James Stern, *The Hidden Damage* (1990), p.58.

Pause

Although emerging from the same conflict, Germany's post-war landscape – political, economic, social, cultural, psychological – was startlingly different to Britain's. In a recent study of post-war German cinema, psychologist and author Gerhard Bliersbach attempts to encapsulate the psychological condition of post-war Germans:

> Es gab den Schock über die und das Leiden an den eigenen Verlusten. Es gab die Traumatisierungen durch die Bombardierungen. Es gab das Entsetzen über das Ausmaß der deutschen Verbrechen und das irreparable Leid. Es gab das Gefühl der *Schande: man konnte sich nicht mehr sehen lassen*. Es gab die Kränkung der *Niederlage* und die Verletzung des Stolzes. Es gab den Impuls dagegen: *Davon wollte man sich nicht unterkriegen lassen*. Es gab das Gefühl von Schuld. Es gab den Impuls dagegen: *Man wollte nicht schuldig sein. Man wollte nicht dazu gehört haben. Das hatte man nicht beabsichtigt. Davon hatte man nichts gewusst*. Es gab das Gefühl von Beschämung über das eigene Handeln. *Man hatte sich verguckt in den und in die falschen Politiker*. [...] Es gab die Angst vor Schuldvorwürfen und alliierter Vergeltung [...] Es gab das Gefühl der Erleichterung. Der nationalsozialistische Albtraum war beendet.' [original italics][1]

It is unlikely that every German experienced all of these conflicting emotions and even more unlikely that they were experienced consciously. Yet it is indisputable that 'the German population was battered physically, emotionally and psychologically to an extent unprecedented in living memory'.[2] Beyond immediate

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[1] Gerhard Bliersbach, *Nachkriegskino: Eine Psychohistorie des westdeutschen Nachkriegsfilms 1946-1963* (2014), pp.16-17: 'There was the shock of the suffering after personal losses. There was the trauma of the bombing. There was the horror over the extent of the German crimes and the irreparable suffering. There was the feeling of shame: you couldn't show your face. There was the mortification of defeat and the injured pride. There was the impulse against it: you didn't want to be beaten down by it. There was the feeling of guilt. There was the impulse against it: you didn't want to be guilty. You didn't want to belong to that. You hadn't seen it coming. You didn't know anything about it. There was the feeling of humiliation over your own actions. You fell for the wrong politicians [...] There was the fear of accusations of guilt and revenge by the allies. [...] There was the feeling of relief. The national socialist nightmare was over.'

[2] Richard Bessel, *Germany 1945: From War to Peace* (2010), p.7.

and often acute physical needs, Germans in all zones faced a crisis of national identity that was arguably far more severe than that experienced by Britain in this period. ‘Banal signifiers’ of nationality such as the words ‘we’ and ‘here’ were unusually problematic. Who is ‘we’? Does it include Germans in all of the zones? What about the millions of ethnic Germans displaced from Eastern Europe? How can it embrace both Nazis and resistors? Were Nazis true Germans or betrayers of the German nation? And where is ‘here’? Does Germany comprise the Western zones, the Soviet zone, or all four? And where exactly does ‘Germany’ stop and Poland begin? Sub-conscious ‘flaggings’ of nationalism had been replaced with a conscious awareness of belonging to a defeated, divided, decried and debilitated nation. No words or symbols related to nationalism could be banally affirmative in this context.

And it is out of this context that the texts presented in the following chapters emerged. While Germanness continued to pose a dilemma (for both the British and the Germans) well into the 1950s, Britishness did not and images of Britain and the Britons could therefore be usefully invoked as a means of indirectly – or, in some cases, very explicitly – addressing and attempting to stabilise the national self-image.

CHAPTER FIVE

'Beneidet und karikiert': The image of Britain as a nation of the past

In the opening pages of *Mill Farm*, a collection of anecdotes published in 1959 about her years spent living and working on a farm in Hampshire, Elisabeth Castonier, a German writer who fled Nazi Germany in the 1930s, tries to convey her understanding of English society:

> Tradition ist eine seit über tausend Jahre erprobte, gefestigte Lebensform, an der zäh festgehalten wird […] Ja, vieles bleibt beim alten. Dies gilt für die berüchtigt schlechte Küche wie für die altväterliche Höflichkeit […] Die Liebe zu sehr alten Gegenständen und Gebräuchen erstreckt sich vom uralten Auto, in dem unbekümmert herumgefahren wird, bis es zusammenbricht, über alte Schauspielerinnen und Varietestars auf pensionerte Rennspferde in ihren Altersheimen.[1]

Castonier's widely read memoirs encourage a view of England that was far from unusual in Germany in the post-war period. In tone, too, they echo countless fictional and non-fiction texts that gently mock the tradition-bound England they depict, laughing at its absurdities while using language that implies warmth and fondness for these familiar settings and characters. And it is indeed a perspective on England, not Britain, that she offers her readers. She writes almost exclusively about 'englische' not 'britische' customs and 'Engländer' not 'Briten'. She refers occasionally to 'Großbritannien' when discussing the effect of island geography on national character, implying that the Scottish and Welsh characters might be similarly

[1] Elisabeth Castonier, *Mill Farm* (1959), pp.15-16: 'Tradition is a way of life that has been tested and consolidated over a thousand years and to which these people cling doggedly […] Yes, there is much that remains as it always was. That goes for the famously bad cuisine as well as the old-fashioned politeness […] The love for very old objects and customs ranges from ancient cars, in which people drive around unconcerned until they break down, to old actors and music hall stars and race horses in their retirement homes.'

influenced. She does not therefore explicitly exclude these nations from her discussion of national character, implying that 'Britishness' might still be a meaningful subject for debate, but nor does she address them directly. As in the majority of post-war texts produced in both East and West Germany, Wales and Scotland – and also Northern Ireland, not part of Great Britain but belonging to the British Isles – are neglected or simply subsumed into representations of and discussions about England.

The widespread depiction of England (that is, Britain) as a nation of the past – embodied most frequently in Edwardian and Victorian settings, characters and class systems – had its origins in the nineteenth century and held great appeal for a post-war German audience seeking light relief from the manifold economic, political, social and psychological struggles of the here and now. This Britain, filled with lords and ladies, eccentric butlers and rambling manor houses, was, as Gerwin Strobl notes in his study of German perceptions of Britain, 'largely a figment of a romantic imagination'.[2] Yet this 'figment' had a serious purpose beyond light relief, best expressed by film critic Tim Bergfelder who claims that Germany's obsession with this 'largely fictitious cultural other' was a means of identity formation.[3] It is widely acknowledged that the past, or more accurately, present understandings of the past and one's relationship to it, are central to the identity formation of both individuals and groups. Post-war German audiences were offered countless popular fictions – from *Problemfilme* to *Heimatfilme* – that engaged with the question of identity formation, many of which drew directly on Germany's own past. What then was the role of antiquated images of Britain in the construction of post-war German identity and why did they continue to find devoted audiences into the 1960s?

Despite the valuable insights offered by Bergfelder and Strobl, this question goes unanswered in their work. In this chapter, I will argue that these images performed a dual nostalgic function for post-war Germans. In his study *A Sociology of Nostalgia*, Fred Davis reasons that nostalgia is always evoked by the present situation. 'Nostalgia *uses the past* [...] but it is not the product thereof,' he contends. As a

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[2] Gerwin Strobl, *The Germanic Isle: Nazi Perceptions of Britain* (2000), p.32.
[3] Tim Bergfelder, 'Extraterritorial Fantasies: Edgar Wallace and the German Crime Film' in *The German Cinema Book*, ed. by Tim Bergfelder, Erica Carter and Deniz Göktürk (2002), p.46, p.39.

consequence, 'nostalgia tells us more about present moods than past realities.'[4] The fascination with tropes of old-fashioned Britain, found in countless popular novels, films and television and radio dramas, was a response to Germany's present mood, specifically a response to the widespread sense of discontinuity between Germany's past and present. Depictions of class structures, settings, costumes, character types and behaviours associated with the prevailing (and largely positive) image of Victorian or Edwardian England offered their audience welcome comfort in their implicit assertion that the past need not always be problematic and that continuity between past and present was possible. In both texts set in a 'largely fictitious' British past and those set in a, still largely fictitious, British present, into which essentially unchanged images of a romanticised British past were inserted, a society was depicted that was fundamentally unchanged and unchanging, undisturbed by social or political upheavals. These fictions reflect nostalgia for a (chiefly imagined) time and place where the primary characteristic is continuity. Germany was partly responsible for generating the impression of fundamental continuity in British society, having appropriated numerous Victorian and Edwardian British popular fictions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, reproducing them in translations and adaptations up to the 1930s and beyond. This leads us to the second nostalgic function of post-war images of antiquated Britain. Davis argues that for an attitude to be nostalgic, the past that is the object of that nostalgia must have been personally experienced.[5] Ostensibly, the past that post-war Germans were interacting with through these texts was not their own. Yet, as we have established, this past was the fictitious, and most importantly, German product of a collective romantic imagination. While on the fictional level, audiences could enjoy depictions of continuity in British national identity, the textual level offered a politically neutral means of forging a sense of continuity with pre-war Germany, whose cultural landscape was home to the images of Britain now being revived.

I will use Rolf and Alexandra Becker's early post-war detective novel *Gestatten, mein Name ist Cox* to show how the (perceived) unchanging nature of Britain and the unchanging nature of the tropes themselves assured the popularity of such fictions in

[4] Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia* (1979), p.10.
[5] ibid., p.8.

this period.[6] Depictions of Britain that rejected the theses of British and German continuity offered by texts such as the Beckers' and inhibit a nostalgic response did exist however. A close reading of Josef Maria Frank's novel *Unstet und ruhelos ist das Herz*, serialised in the magazine *Revue* will show how attempts to dismantle the tropes took place in the sphere of popular culture.[7] Yet stories such as *Gestatten* continued to dominate 1950s depictions of Britain, inadvertently encouraged by images of 'the British way of life' projected by the occupying forces in West Germany. In the same period, as Germany began to acquire a more positive relationship with its national present and future, the problem of discontinuity with the past dwindled in importance. The image of tradition-bound Britain continued to be invoked, yet increasingly as a source of comedy, a trend epitomised in the 1961 musical film *Am Sonntag will mein Süßer mit mir segeln gehen*, this chapter's third case study.[8]

1. 'Ich liebe natürlich mein Vaterland': The appeal of national pride

1.1. The need to escape

German identity in this period was fraught with problems. In his seminal 1882 essay 'What is a nation?' French philosopher and historian Ernest Renan argued that, alongside 'a common will in the present' (similar to if perhaps more passive than Michael Billig's 'banal nationalism'), the 'national idea' requires a sense of having 'performed great deeds together, to wish to perform still more – these are the essential conditions for being a people'.[9] In other words, a strong sense of the national self in the present demands an awareness of positive continuity with both

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[6] *May I introduce myself, my name is Cox:* The same story was re-published in 1961 as *Gestatten, mein Name ist Cox: Ein Spaßvogel im Kampf mit der Unterwelt* (*A jester battles with the underworld*).
[7] *Capricious and restless is the heart;* According to data referenced by Christian Steininger in Werner Faulstich's 2002 edited volume on 1950s German culture, *Revue* was the third most popular weekly magazine among West Germans after *Hör Zu* and *Stern*. In 1954, 5.74 million people (15% of the population) bought the magazine every week (Christian Steininger, 'Die freie Presse: Zeitung und Zeitschrift' in *Die Kultur der fünfziger Jahre*, ed. by Werner Faulstich (2007) p.245). Critic Walter Hollstein estimates that over 10 million people read serialised novels such as *Unstet*. Not every purchaser would have read the weekly instalments, but several people would have seen each copy. The potential readership for this novel was therefore huge (Walter Hollstein, *Der deutsche Illustriertenroman der Gegenwart* [1973], p.12).
[8] *On Sunday my sweetheart wants to go sailing with me.*
[9] Ernest Renan, 'What is a nation?' in *Becoming National: A Reader*, ed. by Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny (1996), p.52.

the past and the imagined future. In the late 1990s, historian Mary Fulbrook applied this understanding to post-war Germany, concluding that the nation lacked both a shared positive legacy and a shared vision of the future, both vital for a strong sense of collective identity.[10] The recent past was discredited, offering only a model for 'what the new Germany was *not*', while the impossibility of continuity with the past and the chaos of the present left the future unimaginable.[11] Writing in 1945, German writer Hans Magnus Enzensburger expressed the shared struggle to envisage not just a future for Germany but one for Europe: 'Daß der verwüstete Kontinent überhaupt noch eine Zukunft haben könnte, wagte niemand zu glauben.'[12] Nations rely on continuity, yet it was discontinuity between past, present and future that held sway in post-war Germany.

This discontinuity found expression in the two antithetical drives that, according to Irmbert Schenk in his discussion of the relationship between cinema and national identity in post-war West Germany, defined the 1950s. The authoritative government, repression of alternative perspectives, conservative school curriculum and repressive sexual morals of the 'Adenauer-Zeit' clashed, according to Schenk, with 'einem allgemeinen Fortschrittsoptimismus', a 'Wunsch nach Veränderung'.[13] Each offered a means of generating a positive 'national idea', one legitimised either by its roots in the past or by a shared vision of the future. The plethora of imported Hollywood films and American thrillers, immersing their consumers in fantasies about the 'New World', was a cultural manifestation of the latter drive. To the post-war German audience, America 'stood for the opposite of the past', argues Tony Judt.[14] In his 1989 study, Ralph Willett goes further. In his analysis, America was the

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[10] Mary Fulbrook, *German National Identity after the Holocaust* (1999), p.17.
[11] ibid., p.28.
[12] Hans Magnus Enzensburger, 'Europa in Trümmern: Ein Prospekt' in *Europa in Trümmern: Augenzeugenberichte aus den Jahren 1944-1948,* ed. by Hans Magnus Enzensburger (1990), p.7: 'No one dared to believe that the ruined continent could possibly have a future.'
[13] Irmbert Schenk, 'Populäres Kino und Lebensgefühl in der BRD um 1960 am Beispiel des Krimigenres' in *Film – Kino – Zuschauer: Filmrezeption*, ed. by Irmbert Schenk, Margrit Tröhler and Yvonne Zimmermann (2010), p.264, p.266, p.275: 'Adenauer era', 'a general belief in progress', 'desire for change'. In the introduction to a 2007 volume of essays, Lars Koch and Petra Tallafuss argue against the tendency of some critics to categorise the 1950s in West Germany as a time of either 'Restauration' or 'Amerikanisierung'. I have sought to avoid this tendency and instead show the greater 'Sensibilität für gegenläufige Bewegungen' ('sensitivity to conflicting movements') that Koch and Tallafuss advocate ('Modernisierung als Amerikanisierung? Anmerkungen zur diskursiven Dynamik einer Analysekategorie', *Modernisierung als Amerikaniserung? Entwicklungslinien der westdeutschen Kultur*, ed. by Lars Koch [2007], pp.9-13).
[14] Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (2010), p.351.

embodiment of Germany's 'own liberal capitalist future'.[15] The popularity of fictions depicting post-war America can therefore be partly ascribed to the problems inherent in post-war Germany, not least the question of national identity. Seeking a viable national future, Germans saw a possible model in America's present.

The role of depictions or conceptions of Britain (rather than America) in the process of identity formation in post-war Germany – little discussed in existing scholarship – was the opposite one, manifesting the conservative drive in 1950s West Germany. In *A Sociology of Nostalgia*, Davis writes, 'at the most elemental level collective nostalgia acts to restore, at least temporarily, a sense of sociohistoric continuity with respect to that which had verged on being rendered discontinuous.'[16] Images of antiquated Britain – a manifestation of collective nostalgia – invoked a sense of sociohistoric continuity to counteract the sense of national discontinuity that plagued post-war Germany. Through their depiction of an apparently unchanging society and their replication of certain tropes prevalent in pre-war German popular culture, these texts offered a twofold refutation of the inevitability of national discontinuity between past and present. The images offered by these texts were ideal for this task, in part due to their long and largely positive history within Germany. Paul M. Kennedy outlines the widespread admiration among much of the German upper and middle classes in the mid to late nineteenth century for what they termed 'der englische Lebensstil' ('the English way of life'), epitomised by the (partly imagined) figure of the English gentleman and the world in which he lived. Many sons of German aristocrats were sent to Oxbridge in this period, while Germans lower down the social hierarchy contented themselves with buying traditional English furniture and paintings of English country scenes.[17] Perceived as apolitical, the widespread – if also contested – fascination with the imagined figure of the English gentleman continued even as Anglo-German relations began to sour towards the end of the century and persisted through the turbulent decades that followed. Even the politicisation of the image of the sportingly heroic English gentleman under Hitler – who first idolised and later vilified the figure and the Britain he represented – had little effect on this particular popular understanding of Britain among Germans. In

[15] Ralph Willett, *The Americanization of Germany 1945-1949* (1989), p.119.
[16] Davis, p.103.
[17] Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism 1860-1914* (1980), p.121.

his memoirs, George Clare, a Jewish man who fled with his family from Vienna to Britain in 1938, recalled a conversation with a German woman called Anita just after the end of the war:

> Her, and Berlin's, favourites just then were us, 'die Tommies'. The image of the English gentleman, his fairness, his devotion to the spirit of cricket, was so firmly implanted in the German mind that it survived Hitler, Goebbels, even reality, with ease.[18]

Numerous translations of nineteenth and early twentieth century British novels by authors such as Walter Scott, Oscar Wilde, Somerset Maugham, Agatha Christie, Arthur Conan-Doyle and John Galsworthy, transported post-war German readers to a world inhabited by this figure. Despite the distinctly unsavoury or caddish nature of many of the male characters in these novels, the world depicted was nevertheless the world inhabited by the traditional image of the gentleman, a Britain defined by rigid, unchanging social structures. Historical figures such as Sir Francis Drake and Elizabeth I were featured in *Heftromane* and in television and radio dramas, implicitly affirming Britain as a nation with a rich and proud legacy.[19] Plays by Shakespeare and George Bernard Shaw were frequently staged, while Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* were adapted so many times in so many forms that 'Robinson' and 'Gulliver' became shorthand for brave adventurer and oversized person respectively.[20] Television dramas based on classic tales such as *Treasure Island* and *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* were regularly broadcast through the 1950s and into the 1960s, as were plays by Terence Rattigan, J.M. Barrie and Rudyard Kipling.[21] Even many of the contemporary British plays chosen for German television or radio broadcast were set in the Victorian or Edwardian periods. These included William Douglas-Home's *The Reluctant*

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[18] George Clare, *Berlin Days 1946-1947* (1989), p.58.
[19] See Andreas Knigge, *Fortsetzung folgt: Comic Kultur in Deutschland* (1986); e.g. 'Columbus', Funk-Opera by Werner Egk, Bremen Radio, 7 March 1952; 'Elisabeth von England,' ZDF, 21 April 1962; 'Christoph Columbus', radio play by Ch. Bettin, SWF, 11 June 1963.
[20] Bernd Dolle-Weinkauf, *Comics: Geschichte einer populären Literaturform in Deutschland seit 1945* (1990); Knigge; Gerhard Teuscher, *Perry Rhodan, Jerry Cotton and Johannes Mario Simmel: Eine Darstellung zur Theorie, Geschichte und Vertretern der Trivialliteratur* (1999).
[21] e.g. 'Die Macht des Bösen' (adaptation of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*), NWDR, 16 February 1949; 'Der Fall Winslow' (Terence Rattigan), Südwestfunk, 9 June 1953; 'Lockende Tiefe' (Terence Rattigan), ARD, 22 February 1962; 'Mary Rose' (J.M. Barrie), ARD, 5 October 1961; 'Phantom Riksha' (Rudyard Kipling), ARD, 3 June 1957.

Debutante (broadcast 1956 as *Ein Mann für Jenny*) and Charles Morgan's *The Burning Glass* (written 1953, broadcast 1955 as *Das Brennglas*).[22]

Adaptations or translations such as these not only depicted but also manifested continuity, while, primarily through the modern medium of television, engaged with the simultaneous drive for novelty and fundamental change in West German society. Amongst the array of appropriated fictions depicting Britain as unchanged and unchanging, the Beckers' novel *Gestatten, mein Name ist Cox* was one of a much smaller number of original German texts that engaged with this trend. Like those adaptations, which juxtaposed tradition with modernity, this text juxtaposes, on the fictional level, an (often ridiculously) antiquated Britain with allusions to American youth and modernity. Despite the obvious appeal of the latter, I will argue that it is the very possibility of invoking the past light-heartedly, apolitically and even proudly that renders this otherwise laughably old-fashioned Britain an attractive prospect in the Beckers' novel.

1.2. Gestatten, mein Name ist Cox*: The serious purpose of senseless traditions*

Rolf and Alexandra Becker were a married couple who together authored some of the most successful crime fictions in post-war Germany, including the Paul Cox and Dickie Dick Dickens novels. Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk (NWDR) broadcast the first multipart radio adaptation of *Gestatten, mein Name ist Cox* in 1952. Six further series, based on or inspired by the Beckers' Paul Cox stories, were made between 1954 and 1969 by various West German broadcasters. A feature length film was released in 1955, directed by Georg Jacoby, and 1961 saw the novel's reissue and a thirteen-episode television series. This stream of adaptations testifies to the popularity of the Beckers' stories, positioning them as an important, yet wholly neglected, element in the post-war representation of Britain in West Germany.

Gestatten is set in post-war London and opens with Paul Cox discovering a corpse in his apartment. He is innocent but naturally the main suspect. Doubtful that the police will believe his story, he goes on the run, determined to find the murderer and prove

[22] 'Ein Mann für Jenny', ARD, 22 July 1956; 'Das Brennglas', ARD, 7 July 1955.

his innocence. Aided by his friend Richardson, he follows a trail that takes him from the heart of London's criminal underworld to the upper echelons of English society. He naturally solves the murder and order is restored.

The novel's tone combines tongue-in-cheek hyperbole mocking British backwardness with an air of nostalgia. The dominant mood is light and comic with none of the grit, violence or, most importantly, moral ambivalence, that characterised American crime novels of the same period.[23] It is often the depiction of entrenched but harmless British traditions that lends the novel its lightness. Paul Cox is surrounded by Britons who drink endless cups of tea, make bad coffee and talk about the weather. They inhabit a London evoked by timeless signifiers and institutions including Big Ben, the Thames, Scotland Yard, black taxis and red buses, or rural manor houses replete with medieval weapons, suits of armour and antique furniture.

According to Bergfelder, part of the huge appeal of the West German Edgar Wallace film adaptations made in the late 1950s and 1960s was the 'comfortably old-fashioned plots' and the elements of (to Germans at least) quintessential Englishness.[24] The same argument applies to the *Gestatten* franchise. Seemingly peripheral elements such as tea-drinking and Big Ben's chimes as well as butlers, country houses, portraits of the royal family on the walls of a launderette and frequent rain showers tap into entrenched stereotypes that were familiar and embodied a comfortably old-fashioned understanding of contemporary Britain (or, more accurately, England). In other words, they invited their contemporary audience to engage nostalgically with a set of images that were rooted in Germany's pre-war past and presented a nation where the past impressed itself with enviable ease on the present and whose members could therefore engage with equal ease in nostalgic recollection.

Two particular settings epitomise the novel's negotiation of antiquated Britain. At one point, Cox and Richardson pay a brief visit to a tearoom, which the narrator describes as follows:

[23] Several hard-boiled crime novels by American writers Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett had been translated and were available to German readers in the early 1950s.
[24] Bergfelder in Bergfelder, Carter and Gokturk eds, p.42.

> Es war eine der üblichen englischen Teestuben, bei denen man nie genau weiß, ob der Staub, der auf der Theke liegt, von einer Woche oder von einem Monat stammt. Aber man merkte gleich an dem Geruch, daß der Tee, der hier gekocht wurde, gut war. (166)[25]

The past – dead, decaying and useless – is tangible in the form of layers of dust, weighing down and sullying the present. The metaphor seems to condemn the nation's stubborn adherence to senseless antiquated traditions, which, as worthless as dust, should be discarded. Yet the description is immediately softened by the admission of the excellent quality of the tea made in this typical English tearoom. We realise that, to the light-hearted narrator at least, good tea is a welcome tradition and other remnants of the past ('Staub') must be admitted into the present along with it. Indeed, if dust is the least palatable aspect of this nation's past, that past and its continuity with the present is cause for celebration, conveyed in the buoyant tone of the passage. Furthermore, the opening phrase 'eine der üblichen englischen Teestuben' aligns the reader with the narrator in their apparently shared knowledge of both the existence and nature of those 'typical English tearooms'. The reader is positioned as someone who has had personal experience of such places and who can therefore personally experience (and enjoy) the benign nostalgia they exude.

Shortly after this, Cox and Richardson visit the upper class Henry Montague and his lover Alora Crawfield in their country house:

> An der Wand hing ein Haufen verrosteter Gerräte, von denen sich nicht mit Bestimmtheit sagen ließ, ob es mittelalterliche Waffen oder Gartenzwerge waren. Ein paar grenzenlos unbequeme, antike Stühle luden den Eintretenden dezent zum Stehen ein. (170)[26]

Again, elements of the setting – rusted tools and uncomfortable chairs – act as metaphors for antiquated Britain. Yet the narrator's injection of playfulness in the apparent confusion of medieval weapons and garden gnomes and in the wry description of chairs that invite one to remain standing, prevents the reader from

[25] 'It was one of those customary English tearooms, where you were never quite sure whether the dust that lay on the counter had been there for a week or a month. But you realised immediately from the smell in the air that the tea made here was good.'
[26] 'A cluster of rusty implements hung on the wall, but it was difficult to say with certainty whether they were medieval weapons or garden gnomes. A few infinitely uncomfortable antique chairs unobtrusively invited those entering the residence to remain standing.'

forming a wholly adverse impression. The tone is similar to Castonier's, who writes of the countless pointless British traditions she encounters (and often assimilates) with a fondness that dispels any sense of ridicule that her humorous tone might otherwise suggest.

Yet *Gestatten* not only allows readers to visit the past (via contemporary Britain), but also transports them to the future through intrusions of American modernity. In this juxtaposition, the authors anticipate the conflict between conservatism and modernisation that plagued 1950s Germany as the nation strove for self-definition. The elements mentioned above exist alongside motifs, characters and language inspired by modern American thrillers and hard-boiled crime novels. The leader of a criminal gang is 'Gangster Nat', a word more usually used in American than British settings, while the text is littered with slang words and phrases that do not belong in the vocabulary of the traditional admirable Englishman, described by the narrator as 'höflich' and 'bescheiden' (199).[27] The juxtaposition of British past and American future is sometimes explicit, as in the characterisation of Henry and Alora. Henry – a leisured young man who resides in a country house and is sustained by inherited wealth – is presented as a relic of a now defunct British class system, while Cox likens the stunning Alora to a 'Pin-up-Bild aus einem amerikanischen Flottenkalender' (131).[28] This alluring figure does not belong in polite English tea-drinking society and can be described only in terms of an American cultural phenomenon. A few chapters later, Cox attributes the out of character yet masterful handling of a dangerous situation by his elderly widowed neighbour Mrs Chataway to 'ihre Erfahrungen mit Gangstern' through 'die amerikanische Filmindustrie' (193).[29]

America is thus directly associated with sex and violence, but in a desirable not condemnatory way. The character of Cox too – handy with a pistol, attracted to Alora, a devoted coffee drinker, frustrated by the ineffectual, passive English characters around him and favouring slang – embodies a set of traits more associated with the idea of America in post-war Germany than that of Britain. The novel's most proactive characters – Cox, Alora, Gangster Nat and even Mrs Chataway in her

[27] 'polite' and 'modest'.
[28] 'Pin up girl from an American naval calendar'.
[29] 'her experiences with gangsters' through 'the American film industry'.

moment of heroism – are explicitly aligned with America and modernity, while the incompetent, drunken, extraneous Henry and the Scotland Yard officers who sit around drinking tea embody British passivity and an apparent contentment in being left behind. As well as anticipating the clash between progressive and conservative forces that would dominate 1950s West German life, the novel presages the glut of popular films in the late 1950s and 1960s, epitomised by the Edgar Wallace franchise and its spin-offs, that this conflict would inspire. By the late 1950s, West German cinema audiences comprised a growing proportion of young people, many of whom consumed *Heftromane* inspired by hard-boiled crime fiction from the US. Critic Patrick Major argues that the 'foggy London streets' of British detective fiction 'had become *de rigeur*', while American settings and US heroes such as Jerry Cotton, John Drake and Kommissar X were increasingly appealing.[30] The Beckers' novel suggests that the appeal of US-inspired crime fiction had its roots much earlier in the post-war period than Major suggests. With this in mind, it is perhaps surprising that the more traditional British settings and characters remained prominent in popular crime fictions well into the 1960s. Early Wallace adaptations such as *Der Frosch mit der Maske* (1959) and *Der rote Kreis* (1960) rely heavily on images of antiquated Britain such as rural manor houses lit by candlelight and endowed with suits of armour and Tudor-style thatched cottages. Intrusions of modernity – such as a London bar filled with 1950s music and dancers and episodes of brutal, if highly stylised, violence inspired by American fictions – echo the intrusion of Gangster Nat and Alora Crawfield into the Beckers' narrative and manifest a similarly crude attempt to appeal simultaneously to two visions of post-war German identity, one essentially nostalgic and one future-oriented. Despite the increasing prominence of the latter in the subsequent Wallace films, images of traditional Britain did not disappear or even abate significantly. The result is a set of films that awkwardly juxtapose stately homes, starched butlers and aristocrats in bow ties and ball gowns with dramatic car chases, helicopter rescues, Soho bars and 1960s fashion and hairstyles. The success of the franchise led to numerous spin-offs including *Piccadilly Null Uhr Zwölf* (1963), *Der Würger vom Tower* (1965) and several adaptations of novels by Edgar's son Bryan, all of which reproduced accepted

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[30] Patrick Major, ''Smut and Trash': Germany's Culture Wars Against Pulp Fiction' in *Mass Media, Culture and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany*, ed. by Karl Christian Führer and Cory Ross (2006), p.237.

images of traditional Britain and juxtaposed them, often clumsily, with a depiction of contemporary Britain crafted out of images of modern America introduced into London streets.

The internal contradictions in all of these fictions could be tolerated because both visions – the nostalgic and the future-oriented – served the same purpose: sating the post-war audience's need for visions of desirable nationhood, one defined by continuity, the other by advancement. Bergfelder argues that, alongside the old-fashioned plots, the depiction of London as a vibrant modern metropolis in the Edgar Wallace films was key to their appeal to post-war German audiences.[31] In implying that it was possible for the ostensibly antithetical forces of conservatism and modernisation to be reconciled, the – to a twenty-first century audience, discordant – juxtaposition strengthened rather than weakened the appeal of these fictions. They enabled Germans to have their cake and eat it, to do what they could not in reality: indulge in nostalgic representations of a national past while embracing a liberal capitalist future. The fact that these visions were inspired by nations other than their own and that the German present was a far cry from the supposed ideal offered by either, let alone an idealistic blend of the two, was ignored.

So despite being depicted as passive, ineffectual and old-fashioned, Britain as portrayed by the Beckers possessed several vital elements that rendered it admirable, even enviable, for post-war Germans. This vision of nationhood was diametrically opposed to the problem of post-war German nationality as identified by Karl Jaspers in a lecture published at the start of *Die Schuldfrage*:

> In Grundzügen gemeinsam ist uns Deutschen heute vielleicht nur Negatives: die Zugehörigkeit zu einem restlos besiegten Staatsvolk, ausgeliefert der Gnade oder Ungnade der Sieger; der Mangel eines gemeinsamen uns alle verbindenden Bodens; die Zerstreutheit: jeder ist im wesentlichen auf sich gestellt, und doch ist jeder als einzelner hilflos. Gemeinsam ist die Nichtgemeinsamkeit.[32]

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[31] Bergfelder in Bergfelder, Carter and Gokturk eds, p.45.
[32] Karl Jaspers, *Die Schuldfrage* (1946) p.18: 'Today we Germans may have only negative basic features in common: membership in a nation utterly beaten and at the mercy of the victors; lack of a common ground linking us all; dispersal – each person is essentially on his own, and yet each is helpless as an individual. Common is the non-commonality.'

In contrast, Britain's supposedly untroubled relationship with its past generated the ability to define and unify the nation in its current form. This was a nation that seemed secure in its identity and able to inspire pride in its members. When the murderer, Mr Peacock, realises he will soon be arrested, he tells Cox, 'Ich muß jetzt England verlassen. Das tut mit sehr leid – denn ich liebe natürlich mein Vaterland' (241).[33] Such casual expressions, even feelings, of patriotism were problematic if not impossible for post-war Germans. Fictions such as *Gestatten* sublimated this frustration and offered hope via nostalgic recollections of romanticised Britain that the nation could find continuity and commonality once more.

1.3. The post-war entrenchment of the stereotype

Discussing the booming market of *Heftromane* and comics in post-war West Germany, Faulstich comments on the high proportion of stories set in jungles, the wild west, outer space, the middle ages and foreign countries. 'Nur eines war absolut ausgeschlossen: Comics im Hier und Jetzt, mit aktuellen Anspielungen oder zeitgenössischen Problemen und Figuren.'[34] Yet he fails to acknowledge that stories set in foreign or fantastical times and places are often an indirect response to the 'Hier und Jetzt' and a means of addressing rather than escaping current events and contemporary problems. Stories set in contemporary but old-fashioned Britain or in a sentimentalised British past were particularly suited to offering both an escape from and a response to the question of national identity faced by post-war Germany. Reflecting on 'the ideal Englishman' in his popular but thought-provoking study of 'the English', Jeremy Paxman argues that 'the Breed', the 'so-called English ideal', represented a class far more than a nationality. In other words, 'it was not necessary to be English to belong.'[35] Accordingly, the figure found imitators across the world, including in Germany. Well into the twentieth century, countless fictions endorsing an idealised 'English' society had been adapted for, even appropriated by, German audiences.

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[33] 'I must now leave England. I'm very sorry to do that – as of course I love my homeland.'
[34] Werner Faulstich, 'Groschenromane, Heftchen, Comics und die Schmutz-und-Schund-Debatte', in Faulstich ed., p.208: 'Only one thing was out of the question: comics set in the here and now, with allusions to current events or contemporary problems and figures.'
[35] Jeremy Paxman, *The English: A Portrait of a People* (1998), p.182.

The continued flourishing of these images in the post-war period was given impetus by the British occupiers' attempt to project 'the British way of life' as a democratic ideal.[36] The principle of avoiding books or films that depicted Britain negatively in any way resulted in a general retreat to safe cultural ground in the form of old or old-fashioned depictions of Edwardian or middle/upper class conservative lifestyles.[37] Alongside historical non-fiction books such as J.R.M. Butler's *History of England 1815-1918* and D. Cecil's *Early Victorian Novelists* were countless novels depicting a Britain of the past, such as Edith Sitwell's *Fanfare for Elizabeth* (1946) and C.S. Forester's *Lord Hornblower* (1946).[38] Meanwhile, despite the professed aim to show Britain's modernity as well as its heritage, the cultural centres across the British zone ('die Brücke') were decorated with images of the royal family, Stonehenge and the dreaming spires.[39] Discussing the Selected Book Scheme in the British occupied zone, Rhys W. Williams remarks, 'That Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson should reappear with monotonous frequency signals a desire to evoke a conservative set of assumptions about an intact social structure in Britain, a set of values, moreover, radically at variance with what was actually taking place in the United Kingdom under the Labour government.'[40]

These romanticised images of 'English' life transported Germans away from the 'Hier und Jetzt' but, significantly, to a place that was familiar rather than exotic. For these audiences, the discrepancy between the images and 'what was actually taking place in the United Kingdom under the Labour government' was almost irrelevant, since these tropes were an indirect response to the question of contemporary Germanness, not an attempt to better understand Britishness. Fulbrook poses this question as such: 'When the past seems utterly discredited, when all roads seem to

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[36] Rhys W. Williams, ''The selections of the committee are not in accord with the requirements of Germany': Contemporary English literature and the Selected Book Scheme in the British zone of Germany (1945-1950)', in *The Cultural Legacy of the British Occupation in Germany*, ed. by Alan Bance (1997), p.113.
[37] See Gabriele Clemens, *Britische Kulturpolitik in Deutschland 1945-1949* (1997), p.170, and Williams (1997), p.120.
[38] ibid., pp.120-2. Appendix in Bance ed.
[39] Frances Rosenfeld, 'The Anglo-German Encounter in Occupied Hamburg 1945-50' (2006), p.173; Clemens, p.208.
[40] Williams (1997), pp.120-1.

lead to Hitler, or fail adequately to oppose him, in what can a nation take pride?'[41] Returning to Germany from exile in 1949 and speaking on the bicentenary of Goethe's birth, Germanist Richard Alewyn encapsulated the problem with remarkable directness: 'Zwischen uns und Weimar liegt Buchenwald.'[42]

The *Gestatten* franchise, along with the numerous films inspired by the crime novels of Edgar Wallace and his son Bryan, and crime novels such as *Tanger nach Mitternacht* (1957) by Frank Arnau and *Die Bar in London* (1964) by Siegfried Bertl all offered post-war Germans a nostalgia-driven means of reengaging positively with the past. While all of these fictions juxtaposed British-inspired tradition with American-inspired modernity, the 1960 and 1962 film adaptations of G.K. Chesterton's Father Brown stories are notable for their rejection of the latter. Set in a sentimentalised early-twentieth century Britain defined by rural landscapes, rigid social hierarchies and a slow pace of life, these films presented an image of stable, continuous, predictable national identity. This simple, rural society was a far cry from both the urbanised modernity celebrated by the National Socialist regime and the social and economic upheaval that defined 1950s West Germany. Bliersbach argues that the nostalgic depiction of Britain in the Edgar Wallace films betrays 'eine neidvolle (verständliche) Bewunderung für die humanen Formen des britischen Alltags und für die gewachsene demokratische Tradition'.[43] In these films, Britain was both 'beneidet und karikiert'.[44] He goes on:

> Der Neid auf den reichen Verwandten bleibt, ebenso die Scham über die eigene nationale Herkunft. In den westlichen Demokratien erwarben die Bürger eine untadelige Herkunft […] der Brite wurde zum *gentleman*, der auf sein Land stolz ist und dessen Institutionen, zu denen auch die Polizei gehört, respektiert. Das war für Britannien ein langer Weg. Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland muß ihn noch gehen.[45]

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[41] Fulbrook, p.233.
[42] Richard Alewyn, 'Goethe als Alibi?' in *Goethe im Urteil seiner Kritiker*, ed. by Karl Robert Mandelkow, vol. 4 (1984), p.335: 'Between us and Weimar lies Buchenwald.'
[43] Gerhard Bliersbach, *So grün war die Heide: der deutsche Nachkrigsfilm in neuer Sicht* (1985), p.155: 'an envious (and understandable) admiration for the humanity in British daily life and for the well-established democratic tradition.'
[44] ibid., p.154.
[45] ibid., p.156: 'The jealousy of the rich relation remained, as did the shame about one's own national legacy. In the western democracies, the citizens inherited an irreproachable legacy […] the Briton became 'the gentleman', proud of his country and respectful of its institutions, including the police. That had been a long road for Britain. The German republic must now tread the same path.'

Bliersbach implies that the dual nostalgic power of these texts was always tempered by the knowledge that the images depicted remained the property of another nation and its citizens. These images manifested and became the receptacle for 'die westdeutsche Sehnsucht nach einer intakten nationalen Identität' but could never wholly satisfy this longing.[46]

2. Undercutting the image of old-fashioned Britain

2.1. West German visions of modern Britain

The idea of Britain discussed above underwent little interrogation in either fictional or non-fiction texts in this period. Born more of Germany's need to discuss itself rather than a sincere attempt to engage with the realities of Britain's past or present, the tropes were simply reproduced. Indeed, challenging their validity would undermine their fundamental role as signifiers of the possibility of a national self that is continuous and unchanging. While the increasingly strident intrusions of modernity into the Edgar Wallace films were associated with America, late 1950s and early 1960s depictions of post-war Britain in magazines such as *Revue* and *Stern* and in television documentaries suggested that Britain itself was an amalgamation of conservatism and progression, the old and the new. A six-page feature in a January 1963 edition of *Revue* entitled 'Englands Städte mit neuem Gesicht' opened with a large night-time photo of London's 'pulsierend und schön' Piccadilly Circus. The hubbub is conveyed by the blurred pedestrians, taxis and buses that fill the scene, their movement captured by the long exposure and lit by the vast array of illuminated advertisements that cover the façades of the surrounding buildings. 'Hinter ihrer traditionsgeprägten Fassade wandelt die größte Industriestadt der Welt, London, ihr Leben und ihr Rhythmus,' the opening paragraph reads. 'In England wird heute schon das Gesicht des einundzwanzigsten Jahrhunderts sichtbar.'[47]A documentary series broadcast on West German television in the early 1960s conveyed the same simplistic image of post-war Britain or, more specifically, London, the city that

[46] ibid., p.155: 'the West German longing for an intact national identity'.
[47] *Revue*, 20 January 1963: 'The new face of England's cities'; 'pulsating and beautiful'; 'Behind the façade of tradition, the biggest industrial city in the world, London, is transforming its life and its rhythm'; 'In England the face of the twenty-first century is already visible.'

dominated German depictions of the nation. A colour photograph of Piccadilly Circus advertising the programme in an October 1961 issue of *Hör Zu* shows the nineteenth-century Shaftesbury Memorial Fountain against a backdrop of neon-lit advertisements.[48] Other programmes promised reports from the 'buntes internationales Vergnügungsviertel' of Soho alongside visits to the Tower of London, 'an dessen Mauern man die Geschichte des Inselvolks ablesen kann'.[49] Both the articles and – as far as we can glean from the descriptions available – the television programmes fail to interrogate this simplistic and contradictory image. Like the Wallace films, they are a projection of West Germany's internal conflict between the 'Status quo' and the 'Wunsch nach Veränderung'.

However, there was a group of fictions that challenged this casual, even careless, image of Britain as an over-simplified combination of the ancient and the modern. These took the form of adaptations of contemporary British television plays set in post-war Britain, either German-language versions or the British originals dubbed. Countless such plays were broadcast on German television in the 1950s and early 1960s, many of which were repeated several times over a period of many years. Featured playwrights included Noel Coward, John Osborne, Harold Pinter, John Mortimer, Hugh Walpole, Patrick Hamilton and Giles Cooper. The plays, often social realist in approach, dealt with fundamental, often uncomfortable issues in post-war Britain, including the lives of the working classes, poverty, militarism and the nuclear threat. Neither nostalgic for a romanticised past nor glamorising Britain's present, these plays focused the audience's attention on authentic, contemporary, often discomforting Britain. There were very few original German texts that did the same thing, but a novel by Josef Maria Frank serialised in *Revue* between August and October 1953 is a striking exception. It is notable especially for its publication, firstly, in the early 1950s when images of backward Britain were predominant and had not yet been joined by acknowledgements of London's modernity, and, secondly, in a hugely popular magazine that seemed to resist the questioning of long-held assumptions about Britain and Britons elsewhere in its pages.

[48] *Hör Zu*, 15 October 1961.
[49] *Hör Zu*, 14 January 1962: 'colorful international entertainment district'; 'on whose walls is etched the history of this island people'.

2.2. Unstet und ruhelos ist das Herz*: A different kind of* Frauenroman

Unstet und ruhelos ist das Herz by Josef Maria Frank follows the story of Grace Lawrence, born as a servant girl into a stately home in rural England and forced to move to London at 17 where she trains as a nurse. She works in France and England as a nurse during the war, marries a soldier and later divorces him to marry a policeman whom she meets in London. Numerous scholars of German popular culture have dismissed post-war *Frauenromane* ('women's novels') such as this, often specifically those serialised in popular magazines, as superficial and formulaic. Peter Nusser writes contemptuously of these fictions' 'immer wiederkehrende formale Merkmale', which, along with the lack of courageous metaphors or complex syntax, render them monotonous.[50] Yet close reading of *Unstet* reveals an array of nuanced characters, unexpected but convincing plot twists and an unrelenting realism that refuses to satisfy any desire for escapism. Frank cuts through the dominant image of harmless, faintly absurd old-fashioned Britain and presents a realist landscape of immorality, poverty, misery and selfishness in which positive human interactions are the exception not the rule. Settings usually imbued with nostalgia are deconstructed and the figure of the English gentleman is exposed as a chimera.

The novel begins before Grace's birth in a manor house belonging to an extremely wealthy marquess and marchioness. The reader is transported to a setting invoked countless times in fictions translated or adapted for German audiences. The house is large and antiquated, featuring architecture from the Tudor and Jacobean periods and filled with ancient relics. Worked on by generations, it stands as a testament to a proud aristocratic tradition that apparently continues unabated to the present day. Yet Frank does not allow the reader to indulge in the sentimental nostalgia usually invited by such a setting. On the very first page we learn that the marquess is an adulterer, easily and willingly seduced by a pretty music hall singer. Not only that, but his valet is a 'fast gesichtsloser' man 'von humorlosem Wesen'.[51] The accepted stereotypes of the decent aristocratic gentleman, the characterful and humorous butler and the innocent young woman seeking a suitor are discarded and replaced

[50] Peter Nusser, *Trivialliteratur* (1991), p.50: 'perpetually recurring formal elements'; see also Walter Nutz, *Der Trivialroman: seine Formen und seine Hersteller* (1962), and Teuscher.
[51] 'almost faceless', 'of humourless character'.

with a set of immoral individuals whose public behaviour is a façade for dishonesty and depravity. The description of the 'Glanz und Größe' of the aristocratic way of life in the opening paragraphs is exposed as a cynical nod to both the superficiality of its brilliance and grandeur and to the countless fictions that reproduce that surface without caring to look beneath it.[52]

The indecencies come thick and fast, from the maid Sheila (Grace's mother) becoming pregnant by the marquess and rapidly married off to the narcissistic and callous valet David to the frequent bullying to which young Grace is subjected by the other village children. Even the grand setting is no cause for celebration. Unlike the dust on the tearoom counter and the bizarre medieval weapons that symbolise the not entirely disagreeable impingement of the past on the present in *Gestatten*, this ancient house with its ancient contents is an unwelcome burden in the present. The marquess and his wife experience it as 'eine Welt zwangsläufiger Unbequemlichkeiten', a phrase that partially replicates the discomfiture of the setting in the juxtaposition of two polysyllabic words heavy with consonants and lacking in assonance.[53] For them, the constant and tangible presence of the past engenders a claustrophobic atmosphere, in which the present is choked by the past. 'Es war,' the narrator informs us, 'jene nun schon legendär gewordene "Große Zeit" der inzwischen verblichenen Pracht und Herrlichkeit.'[54] This time, the use of quotation marks ensures we make no mistake about the perspective of the narrator, who does not subscribe to the view that those were indeed 'great days' and should be mourned. Indeed, the statement suggests that the supposed 'greatness' of that time belongs more to the legend surrounding it than to reality. This text works to challenge that legend, not with an equally unrealistic depiction of unmitigated horror but with a tone of cool realism. At the age of 14, Grace is told by her teacher, 'Du hast zuviele Bücher gelesen, zuviele Romane! In den Romanen steht nicht das Leben. Das Leben ist anders. Immer anders!'[55] This metafictional device reprimands the reader as well as the fictional character. Grace, who has devoured novels from a young age, is convinced that fictional romance directly reflects real life. The 1950s German reader

[52] 'Brilliance and grandeur'.
[53] 'a world of unavoidable inconveniences'.
[54] 'It was those, now legendary, "great days" of splendour and magnificence that have since faded'.
[55] 'You have read too many books, too many novels! Life doesn't exist in novels. Life is different, always different!'

is implicitly accused of a similar blunder – placing too much weight on fictional representations of past and present Britain and thus neglecting reality. While the whole narrative works to dispute prevailing modes of representation, in this moment the reader is almost directly invited to confront the discrepancy between 'Romanen' and 'Leben'.

Arriving in London as a young woman, Grace is met with a surface that again meets her (and the reader's) expectations. She sees the parliament buildings, Big Ben, Westminster Abbey, Trafalgar Square and Tower Bridge. 'Alles war wie eine Bestätigung ihres Vorstellungsbildes gewesen,' the narrator tells us, again drawing the reader closer to Grace's perspective with which the reader would have likely identified.[56] As with the previous setting, however, it is not long before the 'Vorstellungsbild' is exposed as a façade for misery, depravity and, this time, also dirt and poverty. Grace travels to Whitechapel, a poor district filled with beggars and bad smells, and arrives at her residential training school with its 'schwarzfleckigen Mauer', 'eine trübe flackernden Gaslaterne' and a door 'wie ein Gefängnistor'.[57] The image is reminiscent of a Victorian workhouse, certainly a relic of the past but in no way enviable. Grace's only friend Molly is soon thrown out and begins a life deceiving rich young men into buying her expensive clothes and dinners. Grace, who has not yet relinquished her belief in fictional romance, is shocked when she hears about this lifestyle and asks Molly, 'Ist das … anständig?'[58] Molly does not affirm or deny but simply replies, what else can I do with such low wages? Resisting any temptation to sensationalise, Frank presents a realistic image of life in 1930s London, in which the struggle to survive often supersedes the desire to act decently. Men and women engage in brief, agenda-driven encounters devoid of genuine affection and the grandeur of Big Ben or the glamour of Piccadilly are irrelevant to ordinary, angst-ridden Londoners.

As well as cutting through the superficial images that so often formed the essence of post-war German depictions of Britain, Frank's narrative powerfully undermines the long-standing German admiration for the figure of the English gentleman. The reader

[56] 'Everything seemed to affirm what she had imagined'.
[57] 'wall stained black', 'a dimly flickering gas lantern', 'like a prison door'.
[58] 'Is that … decent?'

is presented with a diverse set of well-developed, realist male characters, only one of whom is admirable. Alongside the morally corrupt marquess and his conceited, unfeeling son, we meet a drunken gardener who sexually assaults the young Grace, and Oliver Mill, a cowardly 'Träumer und Romantiker' who breaks Grace's teenage heart.[59] She is equally disappointed by one of Molly's beaux, the weak and indecisive Mr Newman, and later by her friend's fiancé, whose most commendable feature is his 'Kreditwürdigkeit'.[60] In the face of such dismal prospects, it is hardly surprising that Grace settles for Robbie Blake, whose unchivalrous and selfish exterior disguises an even more unpleasant character beneath. Awarded a medal for his bravery in shooting down a German plane while escaping from Dunkirk, he turns out to be 'ein frommer Lügner, ein ehrlicher Aufschneider […] ein heroischer Feigling'.[61] His lack of admirable traits is cynically exposed by the narrator in the oxymoronic juxtaposition of positive adjectives with negative nouns. He is only pious in the practice of dishonesty, only heroic in the extent of his timidity and honest in boastful exaggeration. Thus, he is none of these things, a fact highlighted by the narrator's tongue-in-cheek invocation of them. As a husband, he is insensitive and self-interested, seeking only his own gratification with little regard for Grace's needs. She learns from other young married women, however, that the situation is not unusual – Robbie may be a disappointment but so are the majority of men.

At this point in the narrative, things seem bleak for Grace and the reader. The world of aristocratic grandeur has been dismantled, on both the fictional and textual levels. London is a modern city filled not with neon lights and Soho bars but with loveless marriages, poverty and discontent. Finally, the laudable English gentleman is absent, his existence, like that of the 'Größe Zeit', exposed as a myth. The entrance of 'ein wirklicher "Mann"', 'ein Held', into the narrative does nothing to restore the reader's belief in the myth.[62] In London one day, Grace crosses a road without looking and is saved from almost certain death by Bill, who is a good man but embodies very few aspects of the stereotyped English gentleman. He is a policeman who boxes in his spare time and lives in a small house with an overgrown garden. 'Ungeschickt und ungeübt' in the art of romance, he is nevertheless chivalrous, genuinely caring and

[59] 'Dreamer and romantic'.
[60] 'Credit worthiness'.
[61] 'A pious liar, an honest boaster, a heroic coward'.
[62] 'a real man', 'a hero'.

highly sensitive to Grace's needs.[63] This is no dashing knight or wealthy heir who will sweep Grace away to a life of exotic luxury; this is an ordinary man who is struggling to make his way in post-war Britain just like everyone else. After a hiatus, Grace divorces Robbie and marries Bill. The reader is denied a climactic 'happily ever after' ending, which would jar with the tone of the novel. Instead, Grace and Bill return to the village where Grace spent her childhood to get married in a quiet ceremony.

Discussing John Osborne's revolutionary 1956 play *Look Back in Anger*, Paxman writes, 'Legions of writers have followed in Osborne's wake, feasting on the corpse of Edwardian England.'[64] Yet three years before the premiere of Osborne's play, in a novel published in one of West Germany's most popular magazines, Josef Maria Frank committed an arguably even more radical act, killing off Edwardian England *before* feasting on its corpse. Like Osborne's play, *Unstet* was an anomaly in the cultural landscape to which it belonged. But unlike *Look Back*, Frank's novel did not inspire a movement to reject the cultural status quo. As we have seen, stagnant images of Edwardian England continued to fill West German cinema screens into the 1960s in the form of Chesterton and Wallace adaptations. *Unstet* remained an anomaly. Yet, as West Germany's relationship with itself developed over this period, the perspective from which the conservative images were viewed changed dramatically. It is this change that I will address in the final section of this chapter.

3. 'Wir sind wieder wer': German self-confidence and a new perspective on Britain

3.1. A change of perspective

The 1950s saw the transformation of West Germany. The currency reform of 1948 marked the beginning of a period of rapid economic growth in which gross national product doubled. Wages and employment rates rose steadily while average working

[63] 'Awkward and unpractised'.
[64] Paxman, p.233.

hours fell from fifty per week to forty-four by 1960.[65] Germans had more disposable income, more free time to use it and more products available to buy. As historian Axel Schildt argues, a 'soziale Marktwirtschaft', combined with a stable democratic system of governance and integration with the West, ensured the success of the FRG in this period.[66] The political, social and economic uncertainties of the late 1940s were being rapidly resolved and, as the number and influence of occupation troops steadily diminished, Germans began to take control of their own nation again. Although Germany was divided, the growing certainty that this division would not be short-lived meant that each state could forge its own path, irrespective of, sometimes in direct opposition to, the path taken by the 'other' Germany.

The political and economic rise of West Germany led to a new sense of national pride. As historian Hermann Glaser put it in his comprehensive cultural history of the FRG, during this decade there was a growing belief in Ludwig Erhard's 1949 phrase, "Wir sind wieder wer!" 'Man blickte um sich,' Glaser writes, 'und sah ein Land, in dem Milch und Honig flossen.'[67] Germany's past remained problematic and its future uncertain, especially in light of the constant threat posed by the Soviet Union. Yet Germany's trajectory was upwards and by 1963, in his farewell speech to the Bundestag, Konrad Adenauer could claim the following:

> Ich bin stolz auf das, was das deutsche Volk in dieser verhältnismäßig kurze Spanne Zeit geleistet hat. Wir Deutschen dürfen unser Haupt wieder aufrecht tragen.[68]

According to Anneliese Poppinga, who worked closely with Adenauer from 1958 until his death in 1967, West Germany's first chancellor was convinced that Germans could be proud not only of their post-1945 achievements, but also of their pre-Nazi past:

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[65] Axel Schildt, 'Modernisierung im Wiederaufbau. Die westdeutsche Gesellschaft der fünfziger Jahre' in Faulstich ed., p.14.

[66] ibid., p.17: 'social market economy'.

[67] Hermann Glaser, *Kulturgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, vol. 2 (1986), p.94: '"We are someone once again!" You looked around and saw a country, in which milk and honey flowed.'

[68] Anneliese Poppinga, *Konrad Adenauer: Eine Chronik in Daten, Zitaten und Bildern* (1987), p.139: 'I am proud of what the German people have achieved in this relatively short period of time. We Germans may hold our heads high once more.'

> [Er] vertrat die Auffassung, daß die dunkle Zeit des Nationalsozialismus nicht auslöschen könne, was im Laufe einer langen Geschichte vom deutschen Volk geleistet worden sei.[69]

He rejected the assumption that had driven the nostalgic demand for images of old-fashioned Britain in post-war Germany: that continuity between past and present in Germany was impossible and that national continuity could only be experienced vicariously or by embracing an aspect of Germany's past appropriated from elsewhere. According to Adenauer, larger parts of Germany's past could be reclaimed and integrated successfully into the nation's post-war identity.

The related issues of post-war German identity, the integration of the national past, and the prevailing view of tradition-bound Britain coalesce in the musical comedy *Am Sonntag will mein Süßer mit mir segeln gehen* (1961). Germany is modern, dynamic and successful, this film proclaims, while Britain, embodied in the conservative, irascible figure of Lord Andrew, is comically and undesirably old-fashioned.

3.2. Am Sonntag*: The comic value of old-fashioned Britain*

The film was directed by Franz Marischka, an Austrian of Jewish origin who spent the war years in England and became a sergeant in the Pioneer Corps before returning to Vienna in 1946.[70] It was released in German cinemas on 13 October 1961. *Am Sonntag* is an example of a *Schlagerfilm*, a film based around a hit song, in this case a 1929 hit by German lyricist David Gilbert and Austrian composer Anton Profes that gives the film its title. The hybrid film genre developed in the 1950s and was partly modelled on the Elvis Presley films.[71] These films manifested – and often also addressed on the fictional level – the urge to create a modern Germany modelled in part on images of American culture and society. Targeted at 'a younger,

[69] ibid., p.141: 'He held the view that the dark time of National Socialism could not erase what had been achieved in the course of the German people's long history.'
[70] Although the film's director was Austrian, the production company (Piran-Film & Televisions GmbH), the scriptwriters and most of the actors were German. The film is also registered as a West German production. I am therefore confident in using this film as a product of the West German cultural landscape.
[71] Sabine Hake, *German National Cinema* (2002), p.111.

fashionable audience not interested in […] sentimental *Heimatfilme*', the genre was a natural vehicle for extolling progression and modernity and, almost by default, ridiculing apparent backwardness.[72]

The plot centres on a camping trip to Yugoslavia where the German couple Corinna and Albert own a campsite. The eclectic party is made up of several young women and their various suitors, a recently divorced middle-aged couple and their divorce lawyer, bar owner Susi, musician Tommy and Danish princess Ulla. The plot revolves around the ensuing comical and romantic encounters.

At the start of the film, the Scottish Lord Andrew, played by Christopher Howland, is engaged to Princess Ulla. Their engagement is an arranged one and they are wholly unsuited. Ulla, like the rest of the young (and even the middle-aged) Germans around her, likes modern fashion, modern music and modern dancing. Like the others, she jumps at the chance to spend a few days on holiday in a Yugoslavian resort. Andrew, on the other hand, dresses in traditional tweed with a tartan kilt, sporran and long socks. He smokes a pipe, is unduly formal and stiff in his speech, behaviour and interactions and disdains modern entertainment. His most common response to anything belonging to the world of modernity, youthfulness and fun is 'ich verabscheue das', a phrase that is itself overly formal.[73] The list includes motorbikes, women in trousers, singing, camping and the American accent. Through his undisguised aloofness, he offends most of the people he encounters.

He is the early 1960s manifestation of the stagnant image of conservative, class-bound Britain. His Scottish identity does not diminish from his role as a caricature of Britishness, but enhances it. The kilt is useful both as a very visible marker of Andrew's singularity in this modern German setting and as a tool for the comical exploration of his lack of adaptation to the modern world. Both his dress and his stinginess – the two stereotypically 'Scottish' aspects of his character – enhance the image of conservatism and archaism that was associated with Britishness in this

[72] ibid.
[73] *Am Sonntag will mein Süßer mit mir segeln gehen*, dir. by Franz Marischka (Constantin, 1961) [on DVD]: 'I abhor that'. Same reference for all future screen shots and quotations from this film.

period. This image is made explicit, even caricatured, through comparison with the modern, youthful, carefree Germans that surround him.

The admiration, verging on envy, for British tradition that we saw in *Gestatten* is absent here and we are left only with affectionate mockery for a misguided nation stuck in its own past. Yet Andrew is not unlikeable. Rather than despising him, we, like some of the characters, laugh at the absurd behaviour of this non-threatening anomaly. We even warm to him through the film as he both softens slightly and at times allows glimpses of his kind, if ill-advised, intentions. Despite all of Britain's old-fashioned quirks, the film implies, Britain should still be embraced warmly as a friend and ally.

Indeed, the fact that Christopher Howland plays Lord Andrew informs us from the beginning that, as we saw in *Gestatten* and *Mill Farm*, any mockery of this character will be affectionate rather than scathing. The British born Howland, little known in his native country, was a popular radio DJ, television presenter and actor in West Germany. During the 1950s, he appeared in several German feature films as well as presenting the youth-oriented radio programmes *Rhythmus der Welt* and *Spielereien mit Schallplatten* for NWDR and later the television programme *Vorsicht Kamera* (based on the British *Candid Camera*), which ran until 1970. On his death in 2013, German newspapers ran adulatory obituaries describing him as 'der legendäre Radiomann' and 'Lieblingsbriten des Landes'.[74] Howland's popularity in the 1950s and 1960s West German cultural landscape would have made audiences more likely to think kindly towards the undoubtedly cantankerous and miserly Lord Andrew. Furthermore, although on the fictional level, Britishness is depicted as out-dated and irrelevant, with Howland as the actor German audiences were shown a Briton aware of this and prepared to join in the light-hearted mockery in which the film engages. These extradiagetic aspects inspire a more favourable attitude towards Britain than that incited solely by the fictional character of Andrew.

[74] '"Mr Pumpernickel" Chris Howland ist tot' (2013), *Die Welt* <http://www.welt.de/kultur/article122465685/Mr-Pumpernickel-Chris-Howland-ist-tot.html> [accessed 26 July 2016]: 'the legendary radio man'; Felix Bayer, 'Zum Tode Chris Howlands: Mr. Pumpernickel war Deutschlands Mr. Cool' (2013), *Spiegel Online* <http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/tv/nachruf-auf-chris-howland-mister-pumpernickel-ist-tot-a-936772.html> [accessed 26 July 2016]: 'the nation's favourite Brit'.

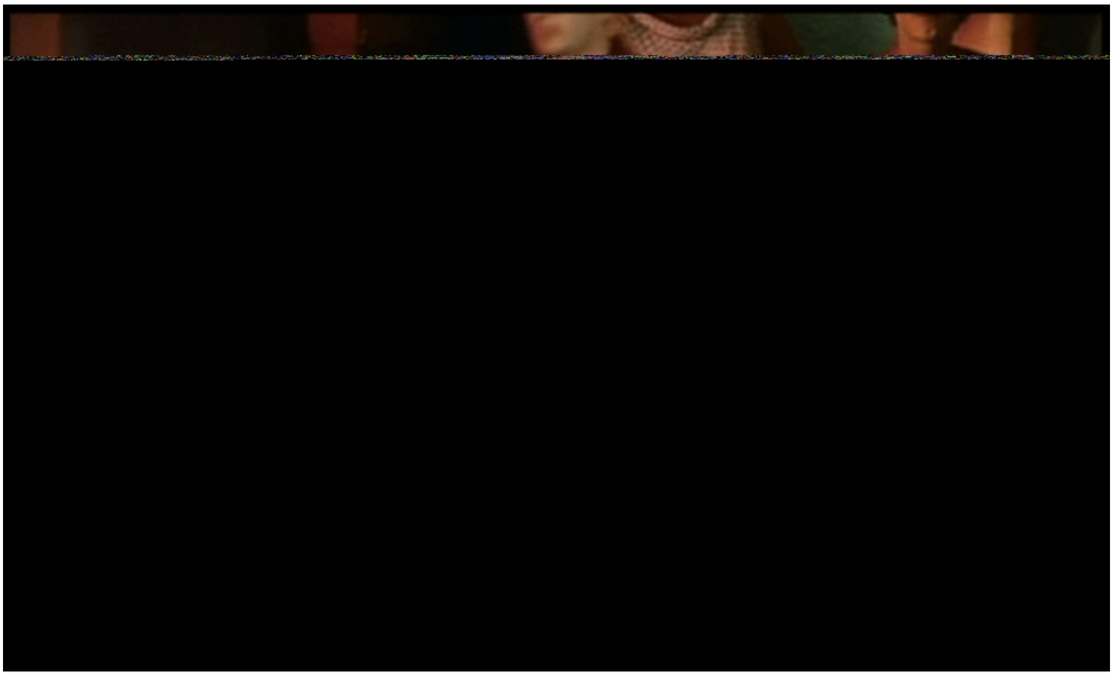

Figure 25: Lord Andrew (Christopher Howland) in the opening scene of *Am Sonntag will mein Süßer mit mir segeln gehen*.

In this context, Lord Andrew is a distinct anomaly. Instead of laughing, singing, dancing and smoking cigarettes with the others, he sits sullenly and stiffly in his chair, smoking a pipe and casting disdainful looks at the revellers around him (fig. 25). His petulant, childish attitude is comical in its extremity. He tells Ulla that he cannot understand why she likes this bar and later insults the owner Susi directly, telling her 'Ich finde Ihre Lokal gräßlich'.[76] When Ulla expresses her liking for a song, he tells her, 'ich verabscheue Singen', and when the couple is invited to go camping in Yugoslavia, Andrew makes his views clear: 'ich verabscheue Camping'.[77] His rejection of all aspects of modernity reaches its acme as he asserts haughtily, 'ich verabscheue Mädchen in Hosen', before storming out of the bar, his newly exposed tartan kilt flapping around his legs.[78] The irony is blatant and comical. How can a man wearing a 'skirt' claim to despise women wearing trousers? And, more to the point, his outfit is a slightly absurd remnant of a distant past, while trouser-wearing women are a sign of a more gender-equal future, for which he has already shown his contempt in his attempts to control the behaviour of his fiery fiancé. In this modern, joyful, newly self-confident Germany, Lord Andrew is a

[76] 'I think your bar is ghastly.'
[77] 'I abhor singing.' 'I abhor camping.'
[78] 'I abhor girls in trousers.'

humorous reminder of a Britain that, in this understanding, has completely failed to modernise.

A later sequence involves Andrew, Billy (played by German-American singer and actor Bill Ramsay) and a motorbike.[79] Ulla has joined the others on the camping trip without telling Andrew and he is livid. He bumps into Billy on his motorbike who jokingly pretends to run the Scotsman over. The symbolism of the first scene is repeated, but even more blatantly. Youthful, vital America – embodied in the carefree, playful Billy with his leather jacket, open neck shirt, jeans and loud motorbike – almost steamrollers antiquated, formal Britain, epitomised in Andrew's traditional dress, formal speech, stiff posture and scornful dismissal of Billy's banter. The display of American dominance and power – in the motorbike and in Billy's physicality and behaviour – usefully and comically accentuates British frailty. Andrew is both physically weak compared to Billy and offers a weak argument for his anger: he complains that Ulla has been 'entführt' ('abducted'), while Billy correctly replies, 'nein, eingeladen' ('no, invited').

Figure 26: Lord Andrew collapses after his motorbike ride.

[79] Like Howland, Ramsay was a popular figure in the post-war West German popular culture landscape. He recorded a number of hit singles, including German-language covers of songs by The Beatles, Elvis Presley and Jimmie Rodgers, as well as several originals. He was a regular in the German charts in the early 1960s and made many appearances as a singer in West German film and television.

Nevertheless, Andrew accepts his invitation to ride pillion. He gingerly lifts his kilt and climbs inexpertly onto the motorbike as if he is boarding a train. He treats Billy as if he were his chauffeur, shouting the imperatives 'Warte!' ('Wait!') then 'Los!' ('Go!'), waving his hand superciliously in the air to underscore the command. He sits stiff and straight-backed on the bike in a posture of total discomfort. Arriving at the campsite, Billy steps easily off the bike, while Andrew remains on it, his back still poker straight and his arms folded contemptuously. He shuffles, trying to dismount, but the kilt makes it difficult. Billy must lift him off and Andrew stands, his knobbly knees bent awkwardly until he slowly and comically collapses to the ground (fig. 26). British debility and frailty are again exposed for comic value in their contrast with American vitality and physicality.

Figure 27: Lord Andrew rides pillion on Billy's (Bill Ramsey) motorbike.

Yet in the interval between these two events, we are offered a slightly different perspective on Andrew. During the journey, he and Billy sing a light-hearted duet, 'Was geht das denn die Weiber an?'[80] In the course of the song, Andrew's posture relaxes and his hand gestures and face become more lively and expressive (fig. 27). He smiles, laughs and even imitates Billy's bizarre but tuneful raspberry blowing. They echo each other's words and sing the chorus in unison, implying a basic affinity as men that their external appearance and behaviour disguises. As the song

[80] 'How does that concern the women?'

comes to an end, however, Andrew returns to his default character, complaining of a draught up his kilt, pursing his lips, straightening his back and asserting coldly, 'Ich verabscheue Mottorräder'.[81]

We are allowed very few further glimpses beneath Andrew's starched exterior, yet this scene softens our impression of the British character sufficiently to ensure the viewer's approval of the romance that later develops between Andrew and Susi.[82] He remains both beholden to age-old social conventions, kissing Susi's hand haughtily in an archaic show of affection in the final scene, and comically inept as a modern man, spending a night 'fixing' a car that then only goes backwards and lacks working brakes. The film pleads for a different view of Britain, not because the prevailing image is incorrect, but because it is incomplete. Britain's conservatism does not render that nation wholly irrelevant or objectionable to Germany, the film contends, and need not be an insurmountable barrier to understanding and cooperation between these two nations. The stereotype of conservative Britain that had stagnated partly due to British self-projections during the occupation, partly due to its popularity in pre-war Germany, and partly due to post-war German needs, was now no longer required as a vehicle for nostalgia and had become a humorous caricature. Yet the warmth of depictions such as those in *Mill Farm* and *Gestatten* remains and, while reinforcing the still dominant image of Britain as old-fashioned and tradition-bound, *Am Sonntag* offers an affirmation of both the possibility and the value of good Anglo-German relations.

3.3. The declining appeal of the 'old days'

Britain's trajectory in the 1950s was the antithesis of Germany's. The nation's diminishing global political influence was symbolised in the collapse of the British Empire and revealed most potently and humiliatingly in the Suez debacle of 1956, after which Britain 'could no longer afford to pretend to power and influence across the oceans'.[83] The United States and the Soviet Union were now the heavyweights on the global stage while Britain, testing its first H-bomb five years after America and

[81] 'I abhor motorbikes'.
[82] Ulla, never happy with the idea of marrying Andrew, also finds a new romantic partner in the form of the dashing young Tommy.
[83] Judt, p.299.

the Soviets, was the 'third power', by no means irrelevant but far less influential than in the pre-war period. A survey in April 1946 suggests that this shift of powers was discernible to many ordinary Germans very soon after the end of the war. 58% thought that the US would be the most influential power in the coming years, while only 2% named Britain as that power.[84] Although these statistics were collected in the American zone, where it is likely that frequent contact with Americans and little contact with Britons resulted in some bias, the gulf between these two numbers is telling. The following summer, anti-Nazi campaigner and Berlin resident Ruth Andreas-Friedrich declared confidently in her journal, 'Es gibt nicht mehr als zwei Kontrahenten in der Welt, sie heißen Rußland und Amerika.'[85] Furthermore, while the FRG became 'the booming, prosperous powerhouse of Europe', Britain became 'an underperforming laggard' in economic terms with a growth rate slower than the rest of Western Europe.[86]

Germany in the 1950s was at the heart of the struggle for power between America and the Soviet Union, between capitalism and communism. Britain's waning significance in that global conflict and therefore for Germany can be traced through the pages of *BILD*, Germany's most widely read daily national newspaper.[87] Pronouncements by British politicians regarding the future of Germany and articles on political summits in which the British were key players were regularly given front-page prominence in the early 1950s. Yet even in these years, *BILD* reportage on British matters was primarily focused on past achievements and traditions rather than events pertaining to the present concerns and future hopes of Germany and Europe. The royal family, admired more for its traditions than its present significance, and Winston Churchill, an ageing statesman whose questionable ability to lead the country made front-page news in June 1952, were the key figures in *BILD*'s coverage of Britain. Even the *Hamburger Abendblatt*, a daily evening newspaper produced in a city with strong recent and historical ties with Britain, showed little interest in British affairs. And while Britain appeared with dwindling

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[84] *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany: The OMGUS Surveys 1945-1949*, ed. by Anna J. Merritt and Richard L. Merritt (1970), p.95.
[85] Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, *Schauplatz Berlin: Tagebuchaufzeichnungen 1945 bis 1948* (1984), p.198: 'There are no more than two counterparts in the world, they are called Russia and America.'
[86] Judt, p.354.
[87] In 1952, BILD had a circulation of 1 million. This quadrupled to 4 million by 1962. This made it West Germany's most widely read newspaper in this period (Steininger, p.242).

frequency in political articles through the 1950s, the nation became a growing source of frivolous, humorous anecdotes or stories about strikes and economic chaos.[88] *Hör Zu*'s weekly double-page spread 'Blick in die Welt' regularly featured stories of backward Britons. A caption below a picture of British children dressed in seventeenth century costumes in a 1956 edition described them as 'Vertreter der "guten alten Zeit"', while the headline asked, 'Ob die gute alte Zeit wirklich so gut war?'[89] The quotation marks around 'good old days' and the questioning heading suggest that although these children (and the nation to which they belong) may subscribe to the notion, *Hör Zu* and its readers are sceptical. In the earlier years of the post-war period, the assumption that the 'old days' were indeed 'good' (in the context of German images of Britain) went largely unquestioned.

Articles about the British royal family in popular magazines such as *Bunte* became less admiring and more impatient in the same period. An article in that magazine in February 1964 asks why British royalty was so obsessed 'mit der ganzen albernen Tradition' of having female royals cut ribbons on various official occasions. 'Man lebt in jenen höchsten Sphären offenbar noch tief in der Vergangenheit', the writer argues. The institution has not kept pace with modernity and does not look likely to change before the next 'Rationalisierung des Palastes in hundert Jahren'.[90] Articles later the same year dismiss the apparent obsession in Britain with the national anthem as a 'Kuriosität' and one of the nation's many 'unlogische Dinge', and denounce the tradition of sending young women out into the social scene at the beginning of each 'season' as an 'Anachronismus'.[91] The self-projection of the 'British way of life' under the occupation did nothing to counter the burgeoning narrative, which would only strengthen in the 1950s and 1960s, of a Britain that was out of touch and irrelevant. 'From a view of a country defined by its traditions, it is

[88] For example: 'London lacht über eine verlorene Hose' ('London laughs over a pair of lost trousers'), *BILD,* 17 October 1952; 'Please, schickt mir gleich den frechen Kerl' ('Please, send me back the cheeky chap immediately'), *BILD*, 13 May 1955.
[89] *Hör Zu*, 2 September 1956: 'representatives of the good old days'; 'Were the good old days really so good?'
[90] *Bunte*, 19 February 1964: 'with the whole absurd tradition'; 'In the elite spheres, they obviously still live deep in the past'; 'rationalization of the palace in a hundred years'.
[91] *Bunte*, 1 April 1964, 17 June 1964: 'curiosity', 'illogical things'; 'anachronism'.

but a small step to that of an old-fashioned nation', Strobl argues in *The Germanic Isle*.[92]

However, texts such as *Am Sonntag* and the depictions in *BILD*, *Hör Zu* and *Bunte* examined in this section are not devoid of warmth towards the British. Although losing some of its value as a vehicle for nostalgia during the 1950s, the prevailing image of Britain remained appealing and the perception of Britain as an important and desirable ally persisted. Francis Rosenfeld argues that for Hamburg's mayor Rudolf Petersen, good Anglo-German relations were at the top of the agenda in the occupation period.[93] This attitude was not restricted to this historically Anglophilic city. Poppinga shows how, throughout his post-war political career, Adenauer continued to stress the importance of Britain's involvement in a European union with Germany at its centre. 'Die Freundschaft mit England ist ebenso wesentlich wie die mit Frankreich,' he said in an interview soon after he was elected to office in August 1949.[94] The desire for Anglo-German friendship is expressed in *Am Sonntag* through the ending of Andrew's engagement with the foreign, royal Ulla and his willingness to respond to Susi's advances. They, like West Germany and Britain, make a slightly odd pair, but the relationship functions because Susi cares greatly for Andrew, accepting his eccentricities and outmoded behaviours without encouraging them. She also attempts (with humorous results) to teach him the ways of the modern world, showing him how to dance and giving him a pair of sunglasses, which he proceeds to wear upside-down in the ultimate display of incomprehension in the face of modernity. The same comical combination of modern German and bumbling, old-fashioned Briton is found in the 1934 film *Die englische Heirat*, broadcast on prime-time German television on 21 September 1963 implying its continued relevance, as well as in the 1959 German film adaptation of Georgette Heyer's Regency romance novel *Arabella* and in the 1966 film *Lange Beine lange Finger*. All three trace the relationship of a young German woman seeking the love of a British man. Such men are depicted as highly desirable suitors, whose eccentricities and antiquated beliefs must be accepted as mildly irritating traits in a man who offers status, exudes charm and warmth and whose intentions are always good.

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92 Strobl, p.127.
93 Rosenfeld, p.69.
94 Poppinga, p.67: 'Friendship with England is just as essential as that with France'.

…

The West German image of old-fashioned and unchanging Britain altered little in the two post-war decades. Yet the perspective from which it was viewed changed radically. From Germany's new, if still tentative, position of national self-confidence, traditional Britain appeared intransigent and outmoded. Rather than envying a mythical image of Britain's past, Germany now sought to maintain positive, and equal, relations with a Britain still widely (mis)understood as wedded to tradition and continuity. It was America, embodied in the fun-loving, energetic Billy in *Am Sonntag* that offered the model for Germany's future. His easy and successful integration into German society is a metaphor for the assimilation – in reality far more complex and contested than the film suggests – of certain American influences in post-war Germany. British conservatism had never been a model for Germany's future, only a nostalgic response to the present, thus the closer Germany moved to a future modelled partly on America, the more antiquated and the less desirable Britishness appeared.

CHAPTER SIX

The British: Restorers of order or creators of chaos

German caricaturist and author Peter Neugebauer is an avid reader of Sherlock Holmes stories. He read his first in 1939 aged ten after his mother had pleaded with his uncle to give the boy something to read that would distract him from his obsession with the violent and sensationalist Frank Faber stories. This is how he remembers his first encounter with Arthur Conan Doyle's detective:

> Ich warf also höflichkeitshalber den knappen Blick in das Buch und betrat das Bakerstreet-Domizil des Gentleman; ich las weiter, lernte seinen Freund und Kollegen Dr. Watson kennen, las mich fest and machte es mir in ihrem Wohnzimmer bequem. Dort blieb ich bis auf den heutigen Tag, das heißt, ich kehre nach allen möglichen Exkursionen immer wieder dahin zurück. Die Freunde der zwei Gentlemen wissen, was ich meine: Es ist unser aller Wohnzimmer, das imaginäre Wohnzimmer von Millionen treuer Klienten. Sein Inventar, Stück für Stück, ist uns innigst vertraut. Und Mrs. Hudson klopft an und serviert den Tee.[1]

The adventures of Sherlock Holmes had been entertaining German readers for decades before Neugebauer's discovery. Countless translations, adaptations and parodies had been produced since the 1890s, including a host of penny dreadfuls that exploited the famous name to sell wholly unrelated stories.[2] The 1950s and 1960s saw a rapid rise in the number of Sherlock Holmes translations and adaptations, in the form of written stories, comic strips, and radio and television dramas. These fictions were part of a post-war boom in classic or golden age crime fiction,

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[1] Peter Neugebauer, "Schrecklich, was der Bengel so liest" in *Sherlockiana*, *1894-1994: eine Bibliographie deutschsprachiger Sherlock-Holmes-Veröffentlichungen*, ed. by Michael Ross (1995), p.9: 'Half out of politeness, I took a quick look at the book and entered the gentleman's Baker Street residence; I read on, met his friend and colleague Dr. Watson, got hooked and made myself comfortable in their living room. And there I stayed right up to today; it is the place to which I always return after any imaginable trip away. Friends of the two gentlemen know what I mean: that living room belongs to all of us; the imaginary living room of millions of loyal clients. We know its inventory, piece by piece, intimately. And Mrs Hudson knocks and serves the tea.'
[2] See Ross ed.

traditionally understood as a form in which the shrewd, unflappable, usually British detective solves the 'puzzle' and restores order to the upset community. Conan Doyle's stories had been a key factor in the development of this sub-genre and were now at the heart of its resurgence. From the late 1940s onwards, radio schedules regularly featured adaptations of classic British crime fiction, a trend that spread to television soon after its emergence in 1952. Despite vehement objections from the *Schmutz und Schund* movement, golden age crime stories were some of the most popular among readers of paperback fiction and *Heftromane* in the post-war period.[3]

The post-war resurgence in Germany of a primarily inter-war form of crime fiction is particularly noteworthy in light of the fact that in Britain 'the clue-puzzle novel never again achieved the popularity or predominance of the interwar years'. Gill Plain attributes this to the coexistence of a desire to 'restore the known and familiar' in Britain with 'a powerful will to change'.[4] Yet, as we saw in the previous chapter, post-war Germany was marked, even defined, by the same juxtaposition of drives, making the boom in pre-war forms of crime fiction even more striking. Some critics have argued that these fictions, and many others produced in this period, were a means of escaping the problematic issues of national identity, politics and history discussed in the previous chapter. For although the late 1950s and 1960s brought ever greater prosperity to West Germans and a renewed sense of national self-confidence, these years were also marked by crises of national identity. Yet the catalyst for these crises was the Nazi successor trials, which included the high-profile Frankfurt Auschwitz trials (1963-1965), and the equally high-profile trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem in 1961, providing daily reminders in print and broadcast media of the Nazi crimes. To label crime fictions simply escapist in this context is erroneous. Why should a nation plagued by issues of crime and punishment, murder and justice, turn for entertainment to stories that have the very same issues at their core? And why did those stories so often have a British origin, a British setting and British characters?

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[3] See Introduction to this thesis, p.21, for a discussion of *Schmutz und Schund*.
[4] Gill Plain, ''A stiff is still a stiff in this country': The Problem of Murder in Wartime' in *Conflict, Nationhood and Corporeality in Modern Literature: Bodies-at-war*, ed. by Petra Rau (2010), p.122.

In a study of Arthur Conan Doyle and nostalgia, David S. Payne attributes the broad and persistent popularity of the Sherlock Holmes stories to their depiction of a highly detailed 'alternate reality'. Conan Doyle 'transformed ordinary middle-class English urban life into a complete romance,' he argues. 'The curious hypnotic credibility of his narrative made this mirror image somehow more actual than that which it reflected – and certainly more comforting.'[5] This appeal is tangible in the reflections of Neugebauer, who describes making himself comfortable in Holmes' and Watson's living room and gestures towards the welcome (rather than boring) predictability of both the room's contents and the appearance of Mrs Hudson. In a society undergoing rapid social, political and economic change and where questions of crime, punishment and justice so often seemed intractable, the Holmes stories offered an alternate reality defined by continuity and the certainty that justice will be done. Using the early 1960s West German television crime drama *Inspector Hornleigh*, I will explore the particular 'alternate reality' offered by crime fictions inspired by or modelled on pre-war British models and its appeal for post-war Germans.

The figure of the British detective – intelligent, cool-headed and gentlemanly – also migrated beyond the boundaries of the crime genre in post-war Germany. Critic Susan Rowland has suggested that the detective in golden age fiction was a 'hero for the post World War I traumatized landscape' of Britain.[6] I will use the war film *Rommel ruft Kairo* (1959) to show how the same (specifically British) figure served a similar purpose in post World War II traumatized, demasculinized Germany. The chapter begins however with a discussion of the pre-war factors that laid the ground for the post-war boom in British crime stories and the significant but ultimately short-lived hiatus in the image of the British detective as a result of the occupation. I will use Walter Ebert's 1949 crime novel *Die grinsende Maske* to explore the disappointed expectations of post-war Germans and the factors that contributed to the rapid return of the feted and barely modernised British detective after 1949.

[5] David S. Payne, *Myth and Modern Man in Sherlock Holmes: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and the Uses of Nostalgia* (1992), Introduction.
[6] Cited in Lee Horsley, 'From Sherlock Holmes to the Present' in *A Companion to Crime Fiction*, ed. by Charles J. Rzepka and Lee Horsley (2010), p.32.

1. Disappointed expectations?

1.1. 'Der gute englische Kriminalroman': Germany's pre-war love affair with British crime fiction

No history of the twentieth century, argues Gerwin Strobl, 'should underestimate the influence of the mystery novel in disseminating favourable views about the British way of life […] Murder in the detective story only serves to bring out the best in the Island Breed, as they put aside their secateurs or knitting needles to capture the villains through an appealing combination of Anglo-Saxon common sense (a phrase often left untranslated in German) and sheer pluck.'[7] This exported image of Britain is epitomised in G.K. Chesterton's Father Brown and Agatha Christie's Miss Marple. Taken as a double act, even Sherlock Holmes and John Watson manifest (and contributed to) the idealised perception of Britishness in the interwar period, the latter acting as a moderating moral force on the often churlish detective. The undue importance of these fictions in influencing the German understanding of Britain is illustrated in an anecdote recounted by Ian Buruma in *Anglomania*. Most German parents sending their children to England on the *Kindertransport* in 1938-9 had gleaned their idea of England from books and films, he writes, and some spent their savings on outfits for their children that (they hoped) would help them fit in with English children. This meant, according to Buruma, that 'boys would arrive at Harwich looking like fancy-dress versions of Sherlock Holmes'.[8]

British clue puzzle fictions dominated the popular crime market in early twentieth-century Germany. In contrast, there were very few fictional German detectives. In his 1947 study of German film, Siegfried Kracauer noted perceptively that, 'while the French and Americans succeeded in creating a national counterpart of Conan Doyle's archetype, the Germans always conceived of the great detective as an English character'.[9] The first German detective films featured Anglophone detectives – Stuart Webbs, Joe Deebs and Harry Higgs, for example – all of whom were

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[7] Gerwin Strobl, *The Germanic Isle: Nazi Perceptions of Britain* (2000), p.20.
[8] Ian Buruma, *Anglomania: A European Love Affair* (1998), p.229.
[9] Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (1947), p.19.

modelled on the intelligent, autonomous detective Sherlock Holmes.[10] He – and the fictional detectives he inspired – is the hero of a civilised, enlightened, free world in which independent sleuthing is tolerated and ordinary civilians can bring justice and restore morality to communities in which aberrant individuals have brought chaos through criminality. Germany did not experience democracy until 1919 and the attempt proved turbulent and short-lived, supplanted by illiberal, anti-democratic National Socialism. The conditions for developing German models of heroic sleuthing had simply failed to materialise, yet fictional models of justice and morality were in great demand.

Shortly before the war, Bertolt Brecht wrote an essay analysing the appeal of the British crime novel. He argued the following:

> Der Kodex des englischen Kriminalromans ist der reichste und der geschlossenste. Er erfreut sich der strengsten Regeln […] Der gute englische Kriminalroman ist vor allem fair. Er zeigt moralische Stärke. To play the game ist Ehrensache. Der Leser wird nicht getäuscht, alles Material wird ihm unterbreitet, bevor der Detektiv das Rätsel löst. Er wird instand gesetzt, die Lösung selber in Angriff zu nehmen.[11]

He admired the scientific quality of the proceedings, in which hypotheses are amended and tested and in which everything is logical and deducible, including 'die Kausalität menschlicher Handlungen'.[12] Motives are clear and comprehensible, there is a small group of suspects who 'kann exakt beobachtet werden', and catastrophe is always followed by clarity and resolution.[13]Although more recent academic work[14] has questioned the simplicity of this understanding and sought to uncover previously unacknowledged complexity and nuance in the genre, in my period of study such thinking was absent, even amongst the shrewdest minds. In a 1948 essay, W.H.

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[10] ibid., p.19.
[11] Bertolt Brecht, 'Über die Popularität des Kriminalromans' in *Der Kriminalroman: Zur Theorie und Geschichte einer Gattung*, ed. by Jochen Vogt, vol. 2 (1971), p.316: 'The code of the English crime novel is the richest and the most cohesive. It delights in the strictest rules […] Above all, the good English crime novel is fair. It displays moral strength. 'To play the game' is a matter of honour. The reader is not deceived; all the material is laid before him before the detective solves the riddle. The reader is put in a position to set about finding a solution himself.'
[12] ibid., pp.316-320: 'the causality of human actions'.
[13] ibid., pp.319-321: 'can be closely observed'.
[14] For examples of more nuanced analyses, see Susan Rowland, 'The Classical Model of the Golden Age' in Rzepka and Horsley eds, pp.117-127; and Plain in Rau ed. (2010).

Auden described detective stories as ‘escapist fantasies’, while a few years earlier Raymond Chandler, American author of hard-boiled crime novels, denounced the detective novel for its ‘depressing way of […] solving its own problems and answering its own questions. There is nothing left to discuss.’[15]

For post-war Germans who had experienced (and were continuing to experience) a level of disorder and confusion unimaginable to Brecht as he wrote his 1938 essay, it was the very neatness, logic and lack of ambiguity offered by the sub-genre of British detective fiction that was the basis of its appeal. This was compounded by the familiarity and popularity of the British detective, the ideal figure to meet the demand for fictional models of morality and justice, and by the corresponding lack of fictional German models. For a nation ruled until recently by corrupt and violent government controlled law enforcement institutions, the healthy distrust of the police as a force of authority in, for example, Conan Doyle’s stories, was hugely appealing. Even after the demise of the Nazi regime, German police and judicial systems were absent or untrustworthy, tarnished by their association with countless Nazi crimes and thus unsuitable for fictional representation in a story in which moral order is restored through the administration of justice. The depiction of a trustworthy, unsullied police force (usually Scotland Yard) made other British crime fictions equally appealing for similar reasons. As Gerhard Bliersbach argues in his study of German post-war cinema, London was ‘die Metapher für den institutionellen Rahmen […], den die Behörde *Scotland Yard* mit der Klärung der […] Verbrechen ausfüllte.’ In contrast, ‘die Ermittlung und Klärung schwerer Kino-Straftaten auf unserern Leinwänden [wurde] den westdeutsche Institutionen nicht zugemutet.’[16] Crime films such as *Nachts wenn der Teufel kam* (1957) and *Der Verlorene* (1951) offered post-war reminders of the corruption and immorality that pervaded the justice system under the Nazi regime, while the 1959 satire *Rosen für den Staatsanwalt* criticised the post-war West German judiciary. Although the police are

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[15] Cited in Joel Black, ‘Crime Fiction and the Literary Canon’ in Rzepka and Horsley eds, p.82; Raymond Chandler, ‘The Simple Art of Murder’ in Raymond Chandler, *Later Novels and Other Writing* (1995), p.977.

[16] Gerhard Bliersbach, *Nachkriegskino: eine Psychohistorie des westdeutschen Nachkriegsfilms 1946-1963* (2014), p.16: London was ‘the metaphor for the institutional framework that Scotland Yard filled in by resolving instances of criminality.’ In contrast, ‘the investigation and resolution of the crimes on our cinema screens was not entrusted to West German institutions.’

often depicted as inept in British tales of amateur detection, they are rarely (if ever) corrupt and thus remain an unambiguously positive moral force.

Yet with the British occupation, both the German fascination with British detective fiction and the positive perception it had partly engendered were threatened. Rudely awakened from their fantasy filled with plucky, sensible, intelligent Britons by real and fallible ones, the Germans under British rule were quick to express their disappointment. 'Mistakenly it was assumed that everything would be better and easier once the war was over,' wrote Mathilde Wolff-Mönckeberg, a middle-class, middle-aged Hamburg housewife, in her diary on 1 June 1945. 'Now it is almost as if the very opposite had happened.'[17] Her husband, Emil, once 'passionately devoted to Great Britain and all it stood for', is quickly 'disillusioned' and begins 'strangling the love for England in his heart'.[18] Ironically, it seemed that British detective fictions, partly responsible for keeping German perceptions of Britishness on a positive course with their idealised depictions, might now be the catalyst for a change of direction.

1.2. Die grinsende Maske*: An allegory of occupation*

Walter Ebert's crime novel *Die grinsende Maske* was published in 1949 by Henry Bürmester Verlag. On the back cover of the 2.-DM paperback, the reader is told, 'HBV-Romane bringen Freude, Entspannung, Unterhaltung'.[19] Yet beyond the entertainment it undoubtedly offers, the novel challenges one of the twentieth century's most entrenched and monotonous fictional forms with the characterisation of the British detective at the centre. Unlike his forebears, Stanley Cuppy is foolish, violent and corrupt. Conventional plot developments are obstructed by his tendency to create chaos rather than order and the movement towards a form of resolution is erratic and unpredictable. Ebert's novel can be read as an allegory for the British occupation and the altered perception of Britishness among West Germans that it engendered. By depicting the British detective as unusually arrogant, insensitive and

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[17] Mathilde Wolff-Mönckeberg, *On The Other Side: To My Children: From Germany 1940-1945*, trans. by Ruth Evans (1979), p. 127.
[18] ibid., p.123, p.126.
[19] Walter Ebert, *Die grinsende Maske* (1949), back cover: 'HBV novels bring joy, relaxation, entertainment'.

foolish, he critiques both the British occupiers and his German readers, whose fascination with the entrenched stereotype of the British detective was partly responsible for generating their own irrational expectations of life under British occupation.

The novel is set in Tokyo in 1932. A man has been murdered and Japanese police are failing to make progress on the case. Scotland Yard detective Stanley Cuppy is summoned to help with the investigation, but succeeds only in offending the locals with his obnoxious behaviour and his arrogant assumption that his methods are superior to those of the Japanese. He accuses the innocent, interrogates the vulnerable and shows no sensitivity to the culture into which he has been welcomed. Eventually, he returns to England in a fit of anger, leaving behind an unsolved case and greater disorder than when he arrived. Japanese detective Ishiga, who has embraced the best aspects of both European and Japanese culture, eventually catches the murderer.

When we first meet Stanley Cuppy, we are told that he is 'wütend', he has 'einen roten Schädel' and 'die Aschenschale auf seinem Schreibtisch war voll von halbaufgerauchten Zigaretten'.[20] We deduce that this man is short-tempered, impatient and compulsive. Immediately he is set apart both from the impassive, introspective, pale-faced Japanese characters we have met so far and from the British detectives in whose literary footsteps Cuppy follows. Yet in the next paragraph we are told that he is an expert from Scotland Yard who has been brought to Tokyo, 'um den Japanern die modernsten Methoden der Verbrecherbekämpfung beizubringen' (45).[21] Is this the image of a modern detective, the reader wonders, tougher and testier than Father Brown or Miss Marple?

We soon learn what his 'Methoden' will be. He plans to round up a few dozen prostitutes from Tamanoi, the district where the corpse was found, and 'ihnen so lange Angst [machen], bis sie zu plappern begannen. Und wenn das nichts nützte, dann ließ man das ganze üble Nest in die Luft fliegen […] By Jove, konnte man es

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[20] Ebert, p.45: 'furious'; 'a red head'; 'the ash tray on his desk was full of half-smoked cigarettes'.
[21] 'in order to teach the Japanese the most modern methods of crime-fighting'.

leichter haben?' he wonders (47).[22] The derisive, patronising verb 'plappern' and the phrase 'üble Nest' indicate his attitude of arrogant superiority towards and lack of empathy for these women, while the method itself shows his disregard for the traditionally more discreet and restrained Japanese approach to police work. His obvious pleasure at the prospect of sowing distress and chaos among Tokyo's citizens, revealed in the rhetorical question, is combined with an uncomfortable linguistic reminder ('By Jove') that this is a British detective, a figure whom German readers would be used to viewing with admiration and as a source of orderliness and resolution. The methods themselves invite associations with fascism and bear echoes of the Nazi interrogations described in Hans Fallada's anti-fascist 1947 novel *Jeder stirbt für sich allein*. Displayed by a British member of a law enforcement agency, this behaviour would have been doubly troubling to German readers, who had themselves recently experienced such brutality and who attributed far higher moral standards to the British criminal justice system.

These initial impressions are borne out and strengthened during an exchange between Cuppy and Inspector Hidekichi a short time later. Each faced with his cultural and personal antithesis, neither makes any attempt to comprehend the other and bridge the gulf of miscommunication. Instead, each defends his own cultural position (Japanese and European) by amplifying his customary behaviours. Cuppy, whose visible attributes – his large physical form, red hair, red face and boorish manner – work as a metaphor for his domineering attitude and colourful personality, is incensed that his plan for Tamanoi's prostitutes has not been carried out. Hidekichi, the manifestation of the traditional Japanese values of honour, prudence and deference who will eventually commit suicide because he cannot solve the case, knows that harassing innocent Japanese citizens would be 'völlig nutzlos' (50) and could damage the reputation of the police.[23] Yet his misunderstanding of European or British culture and a strong desire (rooted in his own Japanese culture) not to offend a man of Cuppy's 'Bedeutung' (51) leads him to thank Cuppy politely for his

[22] 'scare them so much that they'll start to blab. And if that doesn't work, then we'll blow the whole fetid place sky high [...] By Jove, could it be any easier?'
[23] 'totally useless'.

suggestion and avoid explaining the truth at all costs, a significant error faced with a man who wishes only to know the real reason why his plan has been rejected.[24]

The miscommunication and misunderstandings multiply. Cuppy tries to assert his authority with a display of physical force, but this is interpreted by Hidekichi, whom Cuppy has entirely misread, as a sign of weakness and his respect for the British detective wanes rapidly. Nothing is resolved, the case is no further forward and the gulf of miscommunication has grown. Cuppy prefaces his next suggestion – to involve the media in the search for the culprit – with the superficially deferential disclaimer, 'es liegt mir natürlich fern, unsere Methoden etwa für besser zu halten' (56).[25] Yet he is of course speaking ironically, as he arrived in Tokyo with an attitude of arrogant superiority that has only intensified with his experiences in what he calls the 'Mottenbude' (54) of Japanese policing, an old-fashioned word that encapsulates his belief that Japanese society is primitive, unenlightened and devoid of individuality.[26] To Cuppy, this is a society that needs saving with an injection of modern European forthrightness. Wholly convinced that Japanese culture can teach him nothing, Cuppy exaggerates his natural tendencies in the face of an antithetical approach to both detection and life. This is epitomised in his own interrogation of Sekunai, which he carries out aggressively. The verbs used to describe the encounter – 'schlagen', 'krachen' – indicate its violence, while the adjectives and adverbs – 'drohend', 'schroff', 'krachend', 'splitternd' (124-6) – create an atmosphere of threat and aggression.[27] The escalation of verbal and physical belligerence has only the undesired effect of angering Sekunai to the point where he smashes a table lamp over Cuppy's head. Shortly afterwards Cuppy returns to London leaving chaos behind him, symbolised by the broken lamp.

The pre-war fictional British detectives so loved by German audiences varied in their characterisation – from the coldly logical Holmes to the emotionally intuitive Father Brown, played by Heinz Rühmann in the film adaptations – but all were admirable and all could be trusted to find the culprit and dispense justice. Stanley Cuppy breaks that mould and, as I will argue, exists as a hyperbolic manifestation of the German

[24] 'importance'.
[25] 'Of course, the last thing I want to do is to suggest our methods are better'.
[26] 'den of moths'.
[27] 'to beat'; 'to crack'; 'threatening'; 'abrupt'; 'crunching'; 'splintering'.

tendency to blame the British occupiers for their current woes, a tendency that was the result of both real disappointments and the urge to deflect attention away from their own national and individual failings.

1.3. Anti-British resentment: the result of disappointment or deflection?

British troops entered Germany in 1944-5 anticipating general hostility and violence from the rumoured 'Werewolves' or, at the very least, resentment from the defeated Germans. Instead, they were widely welcomed as liberators, the preferable alternative to Soviet troops, and perceived as bringing hope for the end of German suffering. As British journalist and historian Leonard Mosley wrote in his *Report from Germany*, 'the people of the Ruhr […] left us in no doubt of what they thought of our arrival. They lined the streets, men and women packed side by side and dressed in their best suits and brightest frocks, and they waved and shouted at us.'[28] In her acclaimed study of Germany in 1945, historian Dagmar Barnouw remarks that there 'must have been an all-powerful instinct to set order against near total chaos'.[29] Personal accounts bear out this claim. Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, an anti-Nazi campaigner living in Berlin at the end of the war, wrote in her journal on 1 May 1945, 'Nur Chaos gibt es. Unübersehbares, undurchdringliches Chaos.'[30] Like so many others, she looked to the Allies to restore order, writing on 15 July, 'Die Besprechung der großen Drei [Stalin, Truman and Churchill] wird die Ordnung begründen. Sie wird den Boden bereiten, auf dem das Gute gedeihen kann'.[31] German citizens around the zone eagerly anticipated an occupation that would be fair and orderly and that would quickly restore Germany to 'normal'.[32] Yet the language of death and annihilation was ubiquitous in discussions about the state of Germany, suggesting that normality was a distant prospect. 'Our poor Germany is being

[28] Leonard Mosley, *Report from Germany* (1945), p.27.
[29] Dagmar Barnouw, *Germany 1945: Views of War and Violence* (1996), p.xiii.
[30] Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, *Schauplatz Berlin: Tagebuchaufzeichnungen 1945 bis 1948* (1984), p.19.
[31] ibid., p.83: 'There is only chaos. Glaring, impenetrable chaos.' 'The meeting of the great three men will establish order. It will prepare the ground for good to thrive.'
[32] See Barbara Marshall, 'German Attitudes to British Military Government 1945-47' in *Journal of Contemporary History*, 15 (1980), pp.655-684; and Josef Foschepoth, 'German Reaction to Defeat and Occupation' in *West Germany under Construction*, ed. by Robert Moeller, (1997), pp.73-89.

squeezed out of existence', wrote Wolff-Mönckeberg on 6 April.[33] German writer Ernst Wiechert lamented that 'der Tod uns geschlagen hat.'[34]

Although they perhaps did not realise it, what the Germans wanted was a group of real-life detectives combining the intellect, rationality and efficiency of Sherlock Holmes and the compassion of Father Brown to restore life and order following the 'death' of their nation. The British, along with the Americans – and, to a lesser extent, the French – were expected to establish moral and social order through the swift judgement and eradication of unambiguously criminal men. The overwhelmingly positive perception of the British among the Germans further raised expectations. In the 1930s, Strobl claims, 'Germany's positive image of Britain [...] was in its weight and solidity [...] like a giant liner. Winds and waves barely affected it; and when the ship's captain suddenly decided in 1937 to throw around the rudder, then – to his well-documented annoyance – the vessel stubbornly continued for some time on its old course.'[35] As Julian Petley argues in an analysis of the depiction of Britain in Third Reich cinema, the English were projected as decent opponents and worthy, even admirable, enemies in the regime's early years.[36] As late as 1942, Hitler refused to use propaganda to condemn all Britons, arguing 'we must persist in our assertion that we are waging war, not on the British people, but on the small clique who rules them.'[37] Wartime bombing also seemed to have minimal effect on Germany's broadly positive image of Britain and its people, despite vicious propaganda attacks on those who organised and carried out the raids.[38] In his haunting evocation of bombing raids on Hamburg, Hans Erich Nossack remarks, 'Ich habe nicht einen einzigen Menschen auf die Feinde schimpfen oder ihnen die Schuld für die Zerstörung geben hören.'[39]

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[33] Wolff-Mönckeberg, p.112.
[34] Ernst Wiechert, 'Über Kunst und Kultur' in *Die Stunde Eins*, ed. by Berndt Schmidt and Hannes Schwenger (1982), p.50: 'Death has defeated us'.
[35] Strobl, p.125.
[36] Julian Petley, 'Perfidious Albion: The Depiction of Great Britain in Films of the Third Reich' in *Anglo-German Attitudes*, ed. by Cedric Cullingford and Harald Husemann (1995), p.182.
[37] ibid., p.187.
[38] Jörg Arnold, *The Allied Air War and Urban Memory* (2011), pp.31-36.
[39] Hans Erich Nossack, *Der Untergang* (1976), p.42: 'I haven't heard a single person insult the enemy or give him the blame for the destruction'.

Yet until 1945, many Germans had never met a Briton. Their England, like that of Voltaire, an early Anglophile, was 'on the whole a sunny place, for it was based on an idea'.[40] For many, the illusion was shattered soon after the arrival of the British occupiers. British policies and behaviours gave rise to accusations of unnecessary strictness, inefficiency, arrogance and questionable morality, and hope quickly gave way to gloom and anger.[41] 'Our prestige here is pretty near the nadir', wrote Victor Gollancz, a British left-wing publisher of Jewish origin, in November 1946 while in Düsseldorf. 'We have all but lost the peace'.[42] Sixty per cent of Germans polled a month later in the British zone said they had expected better policies from the British and by June the following year 50% thought that the primary goal of British occupation policy was to ruin Germany. On 1 June 1945, Wolff-Mönckeberg writes how her previously Anglophile husband is 'indignant and furious about everything England does, thinks they are all hypocrites and self-righteous puritans'. Like Cuppy, the British were perceived as arrogant, culturally insensitive imperialists whose suspicious and combative attitude prevented a positive and productive intercultural encounter.

As contemporaneous writer W. Friedmann argues, too much was expected of the Allies and disappointment was inevitable.[43] Yet, as historian Josef Foschepoth explains, the expectation and the resentment later felt by many Germans towards the British was not simply a response to British occupation policies and behaviours, although it was often communicated as such. Rather, the vehement criticism directed at the occupiers was far more about the Germans themselves than the British, aiming 'at creating self-confidence or, better yet, reviving and validating an *old* German sense of self-assurance that had been battered by defeat and occupation'.[44] Hailing the British as saviours and heaping responsibility for the future success of their

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[40] Buruma (1998), p.22.
[41] Aspects of the British occupation that gave rise to these accusations have been studied in great depth by many historians, so it is unnecessary to repeat these arguments here. For discussions of the imperialist attitudes, inefficiency and immorality of parts of the British occupation, see the following: Michael Ahrens, *Die Briten in Hamburg: Besatzerleben 1945-1958* (2011); Perry Biddiscombe, *The Denazification of Germany: A History 1945-1950* (2007); Douglas Botting, *In the Ruins of the Reich: Germany 1945-1949* (1985); Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (2007); Marshall (1980); Patricia Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People: Germans under the British 1945-50* (2001); *Reconstruction in Post-War Germany: British Occupation Policy and the Western Zones 1945-55*, ed. by Ian Turner (1989).
[42] Victor Gollancz, *In Darkest Germany* (1947), p.29.
[43] See Wolfgang Gaston Friedmann, *The Allied Military Government of Germany* (1947), p229.
[44] Foschepoth in Moeller ed. (1997), p.88.

nation on the shoulders of the Allies enabled Germans to blame those same Allies when that success did not arrive quickly enough or in the desired form, perpetuating a narrative of German victimhood and bolstering the national sense of self-assurance.[45] Foschepoth goes on to argue that by insisting that National Socialism had been the result of political and economic factors for which the occupation powers were partly responsible meant both that the Allies were stripped of their moral and political legitimacy and that ordinary Germans were freed from any charge of complicity in or culpability for the actions of the Nazi regime and the resulting turmoil.[46]

From this perspective, the growing bitterness directed towards the occupiers and embodied in fictional form in Stanley Cuppy can be understood as a means of deflecting attention away from the political and moral failings of Germany and ordinary Germans. For both the fictional Japanese in Ebert's novel and the real Germans, it was easier to blame the interfering foreign individual or culture for current failings than to confront the structural, cultural or moral failings within the native society. As we see with Stanley Cuppy, the British occupiers' obvious failings made the application of blame far easier than it might otherwise have been.

This combination of factors – unrealistic expectations, actual and perceived British failings, and the German need to deflect attention and blame away from personal and collective culpability – did lead to a soured perception of the British, a shift that finds tangible form in the characterisation of Stanley Cuppy in *Die grinsende Maske*. Yet since this altered perception was partly a response to the German understanding of (or unwillingness to understand) themselves, the vehement anti-British resentment aroused did not last beyond the immediate post-war crisis in German self-confidence. The majority of British occupiers left Germany in 1949 and were thus no longer a visible or accountable 'other' onto whom blame could easily be displaced.

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[45] The success of this is hinted at in a UNESCO survey of 1948. When asked to choose a set of adjectives to describe themselves, 90% of Germans said 'hard-working', 64% 'intelligent' and 63% 'brave'. In contrast, just 13% of Germans described the British as 'hard-working', 34% 'intelligent' and 8% 'brave'. The British received higher percentages for the adjectives 'conceited' and 'domineering' but also for the positive descriptors 'generous' and 'self-controlled' (William Buchanan and Hadley Cantril, *How Nations See Each Other: A Study in Public Opinion* [1972], p.46).
[46] Foschepoth in Moeller ed. (1997), p.78.

Furthermore, most Germans' quality of life was rapidly improving, reducing the need to seek scapegoats and helping to generate the desired sense of national self-assurance. Accordingly, *Die grinsende Maske* remained an anomaly and Germans quickly returned, apparently with effortless ease, to enjoying stories of British detection in the classic or golden age style. In October 1949, radio audiences in the British zone were treated to a series of *Hörspiele* starring Sherlock Holmes, hailed in *Hör Zu* as 'das literarische Urbild aller scharfsinnigen Detektive und Kriminalisten'.[47] In July and August the following year, the same radio station broadcast a six-part drama, 'Im Dienst von Scotland Yard', adapted from a series by English scriptwriter Edward J. Mason.[48] 1951 saw peak-time broadcasts of the series 'Aus den Geheimakten von Scotland Yard' and Francis Durbridge's 'Paul Temple'.[49]

The occupation, whatever its perceived or actual realities, had little effect on the 'giant liner' that was Germany's positive image of Britain. The British detective, partly responsible for setting that ship's course many decades earlier, and the conventional fictional form he (or she) inhabits returned unaltered in the 1950s. Yet these fictions were not just escapist entertainment. British inspired crime fiction continued to play a serious, but now different, role in the narrative of West Germany's engagement with its National Socialist past.

2. The alternative reality of *Inspektor Hornleigh*

2.1. Beyond 'Eskapismus': Interrogating the crime boom

After 1949, the traditional British detective and his/her milieu were quickly rehabilitated in German popular culture. Numerous Edgar Wallace and Conan Doyle novels and stories were re-issued in translation and many of the sixty or so crime *Heftserien* published in the 1950s (out of a total of 215) featured shrewd, witty, highly principled British detectives.[50] Some even drew directly on the work of pre-

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[47] *Hör Zu*, 16 October 1949: 'the literary archetype of all keen-witted detectives and criminalists'.
[48] 'Im Dienst von Scotland Yard', NWDR, July-August 1950.
[49] 'Aus den Geheimakten von Scotland Yard,' NWDR, June-July 1951; 'Paul Temple', NWDR, November-December 1951.
[50] Heinz J. Galle, *Groschenhefte: die Geschichte der deutschen Trivialliteratur* (1988), p.146. Examples of such characters include Butler Parker, John Kling, Percy Brook and the British detectives of the City Club Roman series.

war British crime writers. The *Kriminal Bild Roman* series published by Semrau Verlag from 1953 onwards, for example, published regular stories inspired by the works of Ernest Dudley, E. Phillips Oppenheim and Edgar Wallace.[51] By the early 1960s there were an estimated 15 million copies of paperback crime novels circulating in Germany, many translated from or inspired by British detective fiction, with 800 new crime novels published in 1963 alone.[52] British detectives provided countless hours of entertainment for radio audiences too, from SWF's 1954 series 'Galerie der großen Detektive' ('Gallery of the great detectives') and numerous Francis Durbridge and Lester Powell serial dramas to one-off adaptations of stories by Conan Doyle, Chesterton and Agatha Christie.[53] Television schedules offered similar fare, along with regular adaptations or dubbed versions of British crime dramas.[54] German actor Wolfgang Neuss spoke resignedly in 1966 of 'das Durbridge-Fieber' that is 'bei uns nicht endgültig zu bekämpfen. Wenn jährlich im Januar die Welle anrollt, ist die Epidemie da.'[55] As his words suggest, these dramas were hugely popular with television audiences. In 1962, 90% of West German televisions were turned on for the third Durbridge series *Das Halstuch*, earning it the name *Straßenfeger*.[56]

Knut Hickethier attributes the remarkable popularity of such television dramas to the combination of the 'höchst konventionelle und eher leicht durchschaubare Rätselkrimis nach dem "whodunit"-Muster' with the 'neuer massenmedialer Form'.[57] Yet he fails to explain why, in an era when more sophisticated noir-influenced crime films, hard-boiled thrillers and Cold War spy stories were vying with conventional 'Rätselkrimis' – and when, more generally, the restorative urge was strongly

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[51] Andreas Knigge, *Fortsetzung folgt: Comic Kultur in Deutschland* (1986) p.129.
[52] Gerhard Schmidt-Henkel, 'Die Leiche am Kreuzweg' in *Trivialliteratur: Aufsätze*, ed. by Gerhard Schmidt-Henkel and others (1964), p.144.
[53] Discussed in Knut Hickethier, *Das Fernsehspiel der Bundesrepublik* (1980), p.177.
[54] Examples include 'Dr Crippen an Bord' (1 August 1953), 'Daniel ist mein Feind' (4 May 1954), 'Kopf in der Schlinge' (16 April 1956), 'Das Erbe von Cunningham' (7 March 1960), 'Ein Augenzeuge' (25 January 1961), 'Fingerabdrücke' (13 July 1961), 'Schuß im Dunkel' (19 February 1962).
[55] Cited in Hickethier (1980) p.250: 'the Durbridge fever that can't be fought off for good. When the surge arrives every January, the epidemic is already there'.
[56] Knut Hickethier, *Geschichte des deutschen Fernsehens* (1998), p.158. The word 'Straßenfeger' literally means 'road sweeper'. From the early 1950s onwards, the term was used to describe a television programme with a very high viewing rate that meant the streets would be virtually empty of people.
[57] ibid., p.158: 'highly conventional and rather transparent crossword puzzle crime fiction following the "whodunit" pattern' with the 'new mass media form'.

countered by a drive to modernise – the latter continued to prove so phenomenally popular with German audiences. Other critics' attempts to explain the popularity in 1950s Germany of stories with simple plots in which order is always restored also largely fail to pinpoint a specific reason. Jörn Glasenapp attributes the prevalence of *Hörspiele* with happy endings as serving an 'Eskapismus-Bedürfnis' ('need for escapism'), neglecting a more nuanced analysis, while Yogini Joglekar, writing about 1950s West German detective films, concludes vaguely that the Edgar Wallace films in particular imply an unwillingness to explore 'the problematic issues on home terrain'.[58]

Author and psychologist Gerhard Bliersbach is unusual in his direct approach to tackling the relationship between 'escapist' 1950s German popular culture (in his case, film) and the broader contexts of its creation and reception. His robust analysis of the Father Brown films as manifestations of the German desire for redemption is refreshing for its lack of equivocation.[59] Bliersbach understands that such fictions cannot be explained away as light, escapist entertainment. The shift away from parody in the post-war period is a further indication that the British detective now served a serious purpose. While the early twentieth century saw the production of countless Sherlock Holmes parodies in Germany, there were remarkably few in the 1950s and 1960s.[60] In 1950, Manfred Schmidt created a comic strip featuring the detective Nick Knatterton, clad in a Holmes-esque checked suit and cap and smoking a pipe. Intended as a parody of post-war American comics, the strip also ridiculed the German fascination with the now old-fashioned British detective. Yet the satirical aspect was ignored and the strip became a national obsession, its crime-solving protagonist 'der Held seiner Zeit'.[61] The television crime series *Inspector Hornleigh*, which I explore in the next section, was the culmination of a decade of popular crime

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[58] Jörn Glasenapp, 'Von Amputationen, Träumen und Autopannen: Einige alte und neue Überlegungen zum Hörspiel und Radio der fünfziger Jahre' in *Die Kultur der fünfziger Jahre*, ed. by Werner Faulstich (2007), p.57; Yogini Joglekar, 'Helmut Käutner's *Epilog: Das Geheimnis der Orplid* and the West German Detective Film of the 1950s' in *Framing the Fifties: Cinema in a Divided Germany,* ed. by John E. Davidson and Sabine Hake (2007), p.61.
[59] See Gerhard Bliersbach, *So grün war die Heide: der deutsche Nachkriegsfilm in neuer Sicht* (1985), pp.124-6.
[60] See Ross ed.
[61] Georg Seeßlen and Bernt Kling, *Romantik und Gewalt: Ein Lexikon der Unterhaltungsindustrie* (1973), p.184.

fiction celebrating the British detective and old-fashioned sleuthing and manifesting far more than a general desire to escape current and recent woes.

2.2. The appeal of Inspektor Hornleigh*: 'Light, straightforward, but thoroughly entertaining'?*

The 1961 ARD television series *Inspektor Hornleigh* exemplifies the use of crime fiction in this period in West Germany to explore ideas of Britishness and Germanness, yet it has received no critical attention. Four standalone episodes were broadcast at 8.50pm on four Fridays between May and August 1961. My analysis will focus on episode two, 'Der Schuß fiel gegenüber', although most of the points I will make can just as easily be drawn from any of the other episodes.[62] In this episode, set in London, Inspector Hornleigh and his wife are enjoying an evening with their friends, the Monkhams, when they hear a gunshot in an apartment block nearby. Hornleigh runs to the scene to find businessman James Harrington dead and his wife Lydia, an internationally renowned pianist, distraught. She claims he committed suicide, but Hornleigh is unconvinced. Over the next half hour or so, we watch as Hornleigh questions various suspects – including Jeremy Monkham, American businesswoman Jane Moody and a local tramp – before revealing that it was Lydia who murdered her husband. She confesses and the episode ends.

The series was written by Hans W. Priwin, a German Jew, who conceived the central character soon after moving to Britain in the mid-1930s. By 1941, British audiences had enjoyed three *Hornleigh* radio series, a trilogy of feature films, a stage play and a novel. Yet the series was not revived in any form in post-war Britain and nor was it adapted for German audiences until the 1961 television series and successive radio adaptations by Westdeutscher Rundfunk and Bayerischer Rundfunk. In light of these facts, and in light of the series' by then old-fashioned 'whodunit', crossword puzzle form, we must ask the following questions. Why did the Hornleigh character and the passé fictional form to which he belongs resonate with West German audiences two decades after its final appearance in British popular culture? And more broadly, how can we explain the late 1950s–early 1960s trend towards old-fashioned British

[62] 'The shot was fired over the way'.

detective fictions – including the Francis Durbridge *Straßenfeger*, the Father Brown films and, to an extent, the Edgar Wallace film adaptations – which *Hornleigh* exemplifies? Familiarity, history and the absence of German models all played their part, as I explored earlier in the chapter, but these factors alone cannot explain the persistence of the sub-genre well beyond the immediate post-war period. The questions are essentially the opposite of those posed in the previous section, which addressed the remarkable surge of resentment towards Britain that found expression in Ebert's novel. Now, fictional British detectives were once again depicted as hard-working, intelligent and courageous and their traditional fictional worlds were painstakingly recreated and warmly embraced. I will argue that the figure of the British detective and the golden age fiction he inhabits were a projection of the German desire for an alternative relationship between nationality and criminality, one defined by the eradication of anomalous incidences of criminality rather than by the burden of collective guilt.

The form of each episode is exactly that described by Brecht in his 1938 analysis of the English crime novel. There is a single crime (usually a murder) and a small group of suspects who can be observed and questioned by the detective. The solution is logical and the audience is presented with (or at least directed towards) all of the necessary information to solve the crime themselves. Hornleigh carries out his investigation systematically and objectively and is rewarded with a resolution in which the method and motive are clear and comprehensible. In essence, these stories offer what Gill Plain calls 'the satisfactions of explanations' that typically characterise interwar detective fiction. 'It is not so much that justice is done,' she argues, 'as that bodies, and what became of them, are fully and completely explained.'[63] Indeed, like so many inter-war fictions, each episode of *Hornleigh* ends as soon as the culprit has been identified. Order is restored without the need to depict a trial and sentencing. This is a world where one body is the result of one explicable and unambiguously criminal act by one person who is identified and ejected from the otherwise innocent society. Frequent clichéd shots of London – the Thames, Tower Bridge, Big Ben and so on – and the stereotypically British dress of Sergeant Smith (bobby's uniform) and Hornleigh (trench coat, bowler hat and black umbrella)

[63] Plain in Rau ed., p.108.

impress upon the viewer that that society is Britain. The series thus reinforces the link between Britishness and the restoration of moral order, the desirable alternative to Germanness, associated since Hitler with moral disorder.

The opening scene of each episode, part of a framing narrative, establishes this antithetical relationship between the German reality and the British fiction. The television audience is drawn into the frame through an implicit invitation to identify with its characters and then taught how to watch the film: as a re-playable and thus safely predictable piece of fiction offering an enjoyable intellectual exercise in sleuthing devoid of repercussions beyond the immediate fictional circumstances. This framing narrative takes the form of two short scenes, one at the opening of each episode and one near the end. Five middle-aged men and women sit around a coffee table in what looks like a middle-class West German, early 1960s living room, a context that would mirror that of the audience (fig. 28).[64] There are books and ornaments on the shelves, plants on the windowsill and pictures on the walls. The characters smoke cigarettes and recline in their comfortable chairs. The atmosphere is that of friends relaxing at an informal dinner party, again likely mirroring the audience's reality. One man, played by Paul Klinger (although the extent to which he is playing any character beyond his own is unclear), has the attention of the others. He explains, in a genial, relaxed manner, that they are here to watch a 'Hornleigh film'. Their job is to observe the events closely and to work out who committed the murder. After a brief conversation, full of laughing and joking, we cut to the film itself.

[64] 'Der Schuß fiel gegenüber', ARD, 16 June 1961 [on DVD]. Same reference for all future screen shots and quotations from this programme.

Figure 28: The opening scene of 'Der Schuß fiel gegenüber'. The narrator or moderator (Paul Klinger) sits second from the left.

In this scene – in each of the four episodes – we learn that Klinger already knows the identity of the murderer, but he refuses to give the characters (or the television audience) any clues. This both establishes him as an informed, authoritative figure and foregrounds the story as a piece of fictional, recorded drama that, unlike reality, can be re-played and re-watched, the outcome reassuringly predictable. Klinger foregrounds this aspect in the opening scene of episode four, in which, following some preliminary light-hearted small talk, he announces, 'es dürfte jetzt los gehen'.[65] In this world, crime itself, not just its resolution, is predictable and can be prepared for. There is no painstaking attempt, as with some television dramas, to convince the viewer that this story is true – instead, we are constantly reassured that it is fictional. No crime has actually occurred and there is no body. We should not therefore, this scene advises, approach the film as we would reality, where crime generates unease and where the purpose of a criminal investigation (the outcome of which is always uncertain) is to uncover the perpetrator as quickly as possible and bring him or her to

[65] 'Mord ohne Motiv', ARD, 4 August 1961 [on DVD]: 'It's supposed to be starting now.'

justice. Instead, as with an old-fashioned 'whodunit' detective story – and as with the crossword puzzle with which it is likened – one should take enjoyment in the purely intellectual exercise of logical deduction, secure in the knowledge that the perpetrator will be revealed, the body 'explained' and order restored.

The fiction itself is dominated by Hornleigh, described by Klinger in the opening scene of the first episode as a 'völlig normaler Mensch'.[66] According to Klinger, his remarkable ability to deduce the solution to the crime is based on a combination of education, experience, excellent observation skills and lots of hard work, not special powers. Tasked by Klinger with the same job in each of the following episodes, the audience is thus encouraged to see Hornleigh as a model for their own detective work and a model that is indeed imitable. Indeed, in the final episode, Klinger congratulates the characters in the framing narrative for correctly identifying the criminal in episode three and praises their progress in the art of detection. Klinger thus hints at the possibility of using the British fiction to impinge positively on German reality: Hornleigh's skills can be learned by any 'normaler Mensch' and used to transform a disordered society into one defined by orderliness and morality.[67] Yet we are invited to admire Hornleigh for far more than his ability as a detective. The actor Helmut Peine was known for playing admirable figures of authority – including policemen, professors and doctors – in numerous 1950s West German films and television dramas. He brings the same authority to bear on this role, in which he amalgamates the most commendable traits of various golden age British detectives along with the customary characteristics of the figure of the English gentleman and a hint of Winston Churchill in manner and appearance. He is not only a solver of crime but also, more broadly, a model of masculine leadership for post-war Europe.

First and foremost, however, he is a detective. Like Sherlock Holmes, Hornleigh is a highly astute observer and analyst of those around him, evident throughout episode two. When he speaks, he chooses his words carefully and observes his interlocutor with an indecipherable expression and a steady penetrating gaze (fig. 29). His tone of

[66] 'Der Mann aus Tanganjika', ARD, 26 May 1961 [on DVD]: 'a totally normal person'.
[67] Peine himself is partly manifestation of this possibility, being a German actor in the role of a model British detective.

voice remains calm and understated, whether he is declaring his determination to solve the case (‘das werden wir herausfinden’), demanding silence from an unruly suspect (‘Ruhe!’) or revealing the murderer (‘Harrington wurde von seiner Frau erschossen’).[68] He has none of Holmes’ aloofness, however, instead combining his intelligence with Father Brown’s wry humour. But unlike many pre-war fictional detectives, he is not an amateur but a member of Scotland Yard, an institution described by adoring fan Jane Moody as ‘großartig’.[69] In *Hornleigh,* the reliability and orderliness of Scotland Yard is represented not only by Hornleigh himself but also by the depiction of his office where everything is immaculate, from the neatly stacked papers on the desk to Sergeant Smith’s well-groomed moustache.

Figure 29: Inspector Hornleigh (right, played by Helmut Peine) questioning a suspect with a penetrating gaze and a stance exuding authority in ‘Der Schuß fiel gegenüber’.

Beyond his role as detective, Hornleigh is the perfect gentleman. Although the term is malleable and subjective, as Christine Berberich explores in her monograph on the

[68] ‘We will find that out’; ‘Silence!’; ‘Harrington was shot by his wife’.
[69] ‘splendid’.

subject, by the beginning of the twentieth century, a set of traits had emerged that were widely acknowledged as essential to the modern gentleman, made not born. Berberich cites historian Mark Girouard on the subject:

> 'a gentleman had to be chivalrous […] brave, straightforward and honourable […] unfailingly true to his word, ready to take issue with anyone he saw ill-treating a woman, a child or an animal. He was a natural leader of men, and others unhesitatingly followed his lead. He was fearless in war and on the hunting field, and excelled at all manly sports; but, however tough with the tough, he was invariably gentle to the weak; above all he was always tender, respectful and courteous to women.'[70]

Hornleigh displays all of these traits. On hearing a gunshot, he rushes to the scene of the crime, revealing both his courage and his (perhaps surprising) physical agility. His authority is absolute and his companions (including his naïve sidekick Bingham) willingly allow themselves to be led by him, first to the crime scene and then through the sleuthing process. We learn of his moral conscience in a tangential exchange when he admonishes a local tramp for buying scrap metal from children for unfair prices. He is shrewd but never cunning, authoritative but never authoritarian. His great respect for women is revealed by his interactions with his wife in this episode, whom he treats as an equal.

Finally, the similarity in both appearance and manner between Hornleigh and Churchill, whether intentional or not, cannot be ignored. Rather than diminishing the character's appeal to German audiences, as might be expected, the likeness with Britain's wartime prime minister would have strengthened it. An article in *BILD* reporting Churchill's resignation from the premiership in April 1955 hailed him as 'der große alte Mann', whose popularity spanned 'die gesamte Erde'.[71] 'Es ist gar nicht auszudenken', wrote journalist Peter Steinbach, 'wie unser Planet ohne Männer seines Schlages, ohne eigenwillige Persönlichkeiten, aussähe.'[72] His illness and death a decade later were greeted in German newspapers with sombre headlines and

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[70] Cited in Christine Berberich, *The Image of the English Gentleman in Twentieth-Century Literature: Englishness and Nostalgia* (2007), pp.22-3.
[71] *BILD*, 6 April 1955: 'the great old man', 'the whole earth'.
[72] ibid.: 'It's inconceivable how our planet would look without men of his heft, without headstrong characters.'

sorrowful rhetoric. The *Berliner Morgenpost* led with the headline 'Trauer um Winston Churchill' and reported that hundreds of Berliners, including the leader of the SDP Willy Brandt, had expressed their grief and sympathy in a public book of condolence.[73] Hornleigh is in part the fictional representation of the figure that Steinbach prematurely mourned, having both a great deal of clout and a headstrong personality (as well as a balding head, a portly figure and similar facial features to Churchill). This echo of Churchill in Hornleigh strengthens his role as a model for compassionate leadership and masculinity, both beyond as well as within the fictional world he inhabits.

Like that fictional world, Hornleigh is a throwback but a welcome one. As I addressed in Chapter 5, the drive towards restoration was a key feature of this period of West German history. This was most clearly embodied in Konrad Adenauer, still chancellor at age eighty-one when the Hornleigh series was broadcast. The roots of Hornleigh's character – pre-war British detectives, the English gentleman and Winston Churchill – are in keeping with this urge.[74] Surrounded by more youthful, glamorous, cigarette-smoking characters, he also appears as literally old and a relic of an earlier time with his thinning hair and pipe (fig. 30). The latter signals an affinity with his literary forebear Sherlock Holmes that is reinforced by Hornleigh's final words, which he acknowledges to be borrowed from Holmes: 'Wenn alle andere Möglichkeiten eliminiert sind, dann muss die Letzte, so unwahrscheinlich sie vielleicht zuerst auch klingen mag, die Richtige sein'.[75] Firstly, this intertextual allusion works as a final gentle and reassuring reminder that this character and his story, like Holmes and his, are works of fiction, distinct from the audience's reality. Secondly, it reinforces the impression that Hornleigh and this series belong to an earlier, perhaps preferable, time when all that detection (or at least the fictional variety) required was a logical mind, when answers were reached by the process of elimination and when that answer brought certainty and resolution. Not only are we convinced by Hornleigh's logical explanation of the crime, but Lydia immediately

[73] *Berliner Morgenpost*, 26 January 1965.
[74] While cinema audiences comprised a growing proportion of younger West Germans in this period, television attracted a larger proportion of older viewers, for whom Hornleigh was a welcome manifestation of the restorative urge.
[75] 'When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable it seems, must be the truth.'

confesses, offering a simple comprehensible motive ('ich habe meinen Mann erschossen aus Eifersucht').[76] If that were not sufficient to allay any doubts, a bloodless, horror-free replay of the murder is provided to convince us.

Figure 30: Hornleigh with his pipe questioning the glamorous American businesswoman Jane Moody (Susanne Schönwiese), who smokes a cigarette. This frame is also indicative of the type of frame used throughout the series.

A *Manchester Guardian* review of the 1938 British stage play described it as 'very acceptable summer fare: light, straightforward, but thoroughly entertaining. It does not strain the intellect or harrow the emotions'.[77] At first glance, the 1961 German *Hornleigh* series achieves the same. Yet the contemporary context denies the series the lightness and simplicity it works so hard to achieve. Hornleigh is not just shrewd, chivalrous, fair, courageous, witty, unflappable and authoritative, a sentimental embodiment of Germany's idealised images of Britain, but a constant reminder of what Germany lacked. The audience is offered a world, with Hornleigh at its centre, that directly opposes the reality of dealing with the crimes of National Socialism. As

[76] 'I shot my husband out of jealousy.'
[77] *The Manchester Guardian*, 17 May 1938.

I will explore shortly, in that reality, there was no framing narrative to guide one's interpretation, no neat separation of one's own reality from the criminality on display, no predictable actions or outcomes and countless unforeseeable and uncontainable ramifications. In other words and despite the allusions to the contrary, the *Hornleigh* series occupied a space uncomfortably close to early 1960s West German reality, existing as the desirable counter-image to the concurrent war crimes investigations and an uneasy reminder of the certainty, clarity and resolution that they lacked.

2.3. 'He caused justice to be done': The alternative reality of British crime fictions

The well-established fictional form that underlies the Hornleigh narratives – murder, search, elucidation – had entertained German audiences for decades but now acquired far greater significance. For despite the FRG's remarkable progress towards economic and political stability in the 1950s, the early 1960s saw a nation beset by controversy and unrest. By 1963, following the creation of the Central Office for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes in 1958, 141 trials for crimes committed outside Germany had taken place, addressing both individual actions and mass exterminations. These included the trials of Sorge and Schubert (KZ Sachsenhausen) in Bonn in 1958 and the trial of Unkelbach (Czenstochau ghetto) in 1959.[78]

These trials raised the spectre of several million bodies, not yet 'completely explained', and the question of German guilt or responsibility for them. Writing about his visit to Belsen a few days after its liberation, Australian war correspondent Alan Moorehead recalls that 'one's first coherent reactions were not of disgust or anger or even, I think, of pity. Something else filled the mind, a frantic desire to ask: "Why? Why? Why? Why had it happened?"'[79] Bodies, in fiction or reality and especially in such staggering numbers, demand explanation. Yet even the trials failed to satisfy this demand. In her account of the Eichmann trial, Hannah Arendt hints at the court's desperate search for an answer to the question, 'Why?' The 'unspeakable horror of the deeds' and the bodies that resulted could not be reconciled with the 'undeniable ludicrousness' of Eichmann, who was neither a monster nor a madman

[78] Mary Fulbrook, *German National Identity after the Holocaust* (1999), p.69.
[79] Alan Moorehead, *Eclipse: An Eyewitness Account of the Allied Invasion of Europe* (1945), p.225.

but simply a man doing his duty.[80] His guilt, like that of many others on trial in those years, seemed incontrovertible but evidence proved elusive (how could someone be a mass murderer who had never killed?), while millions of Germans, believing themselves to be innocent, even ignorant, of the Nazi crimes, felt unfairly burdened with accusations of guilt.

It is surely clear that a desire to escape the questions of guilt and innocence, crime and punishment, truth and justice that lingered through the post-war period would not best be served by stories of murder, crime and justice. Yet these were the stories that regularly featured on West Germany's library shelves, airwaves and television and cinema screens at precisely the time when the nation was struggling to deal with the crimes of National Socialism. 1959 saw the first Durbridge and Edgar Wallace adaptations, 1960 the first of two Father Brown films and 1961 the *Hornleigh* television series. This was neither coincidence nor simple escapism. They did offer escape, but only through the depiction of counter-worlds that were closely linked with (by being the mirror image of) the problematic reality inhabited by their audience. Where Germany lacked a justice system that could be relied upon to administer justice correctly, British-inspired crime fictions offered Scotland Yard and regular explicit assertions of its trustworthiness. Where moral agents of justice were absent, these fictions offered individuals (from the renegade Holmes to the Scotland Yard affiliated yet morally accountable Hornleigh) who embraced their individual agency to seek justice and who took responsibility for their actions.[81] Where the boundary between guilt and innocence had become blurred and guilt could now be attributed (or felt) in varying degrees, popular crime fictions offered characters whose guilt or innocence was easily deduced and wholly unambiguous. Where the idea of motive had been muddied by the question of obedience, fictions presented guilty characters who declare their motive explicitly and coherently. Where the capture of criminals was a long, complex and controversial procedure, fictions offered stories where the crime is resolved the same evening it occurs, or at

[80] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (2006), p.54, p.26, p.248.
[81] In the 1962 film *Sherlock Holmes und das Halsband des Todes* (English title *Sherlock Holmes and the Deadly Necklace*), a West German-French-Italian co-production starring Christopher Lee and directed by Terence Fisher, Holmes makes his motivation clear in a heated exchange with a Scotland Yard inspector. 'I do what I believe to be right,' he claims, 'and I'm prepared to accept all responsibility for it.' This was the core of Holmes' appeal to German audiences in this period.

worst within a few days. Where the process of administering punishment was drawn out, messy and undertaken in the glare of international media attention, the matter of proving guilt and administering punishment is wholly elided, portrayed as a simple task that can easily and appropriately occur off screen. Where crimes threatened to spill over from the courtroom and infect broader society with implications of guilt, audiences were given neat stories of domestic crime devoid of further ramifications. Where lists of suspects were overwhelming in length and permanently incomplete, crime fictions presented stories where the suspects are both observable and few. Where accounts of murder were full of horror and brutality, fictional depictions were comfortingly bloodless and horror-free. Where the only viable post-war man was defined by 'his very failure to match the steely ideal of fascist masculinity', as Jennifer M. Kapczynski argues, fictions such as *Hornleigh* offered positive models of masculinity that reclaimed leadership and agency as admirable qualities.[82]

In 1955, NWDR praised 'die britische Insel' as 'eine Fundgrube für Kriminalgeschichten'.[83] Since 1949, when the responsibility for creating or restoring order had been regained by an increasingly self-confident West German nation, the relationship between the German public and stories of British crime and detection had simplified. Yet by the late 1950s, these stories were once again embroiled in a complex relationship with West German reality. German versions of Britain's 'Kriminalgeschichten' became the manifestation of frustrations surrounding Germany's own 'Kriminalgeschichten', now being narrated in courts across Germany and elsewhere, and the issues of guilt, justice and masculinity they aroused. Both the perfect escape from reality (being its direct obverse) and intimately connected with it (for the same reason), these fictions embody the unease with which West Germans were confronting their collective past.

3. Rommel, Robertson and the tentative reclamation of German masculinity

[82] See Jennifer M. Kapczynski's discussion of masculinity in post-war West German film, 'Armchair Warriors: Heroic Postures in the West German War Film' in *Screening War: Perspectives on German Suffering*, ed. by Paul Cooke and Marc Silberman (2010), p.33.
[83] Cited in Hickethier (1980), p.117: 'the British isles' as 'a treasure trove of stories about criminals'.

The figure of the post-war British detective, epitomised in Hornleigh, appeared in numerous small and large screen crime dramas through the 1960s.[84] Yet the figure also migrated beyond the crime genre, most notably to fictions set during the Second World War. He (never she) had become fundamental, not just to post-war German perceptions of Britishness, but also to negotiations around post-war German identity, a duality that we have seen played out in *Hornleigh* but that could be transported out of the crime context and utilised elsewhere.

Many 1950s war films and popular fictions were engaged in an attempt to reclaim something positive from the war experience for post-war German identity. As Maria Fritsche argues in relation to post-war Austria, popular cinema played a key role in tackling the closely related issues of destabilised masculinity and destabilised national identity.[85] The masculine ideal under National Socialism – the athletic, dutiful soldier – was now both discredited (due to its association with the Nazi cause) and irrelevant (where were those men now?). This figure – the model for Germany's millions of fighting men – was intended as the foundation for the continuing success of the nation state and thus a cause for national pride. Instead, Germany's men in 1945 were mostly dead, missing, imprisoned or damaged (physically and/or psychologically) and bereft of agency. These men both symbolised and embodied the defeated, debilitated, occupied nation state: the collapse of the existing masculine ideal was synonymous with the collapse of national pride and sovereignty.

International condemnation and accusations of collective guilt further weakened any remaining sense of the German nation as a positive, unified collective. As Dagmar Barnouw notes succinctly, many 'outside observers saw "the Germans" as uniform products of a uniformly evil past that needed to be remade completely'.[86] Understandably, Germans tended to resist this narrative, as critics including Robert

[84] The films *Piccadilly Null Uhr Zwölf* (1963), *Das Wirtshaus von Dartmoor* (1964), *Ein Sarg aus Hongkong* (1964) and *Der Würger vom Tower* (1966), as well as the Edgar and Bryan Wallace adaptations, all featured shrewd, logical, highly experienced, principled, courteous, Scotland Yard-affiliated detectives. The inspectors who show up in the Durbridge *Straßenfeger* and other television dramas such as *Eine Geschichte aus Soho* (1958) and *Die volle Wahrheit* (1963) were no different. Small variations such as age, appearance, severity of manner and degree of rebelliousness could not disguise their essential sameness.

[85] Maria Fritsche, *Homemade Men in Postwar Austrian Cinema: Nationhood, Genre and Masculinity* (2013), p.2.

[86] Barnouw (1996), p.144.

Moeller, Dagmar Barnouw and Jennifer Kapczynski have shown.[87] An atmosphere of selective remembering pervaded post-war West Germany, one manifestation of which was the cinematic portrayal of German wartime heroism. The films *Canaris* (1954), *Des Teufels General* (1955), *Hunde, wollt ihr ewig leben* (1959) and *Nacht fiel über Gotenhafen* (1959), all set during the Second World War, either depicted individual or collective resistance among the military to Hitler's orders or strengthened the German victim narrative. These films implied that shame was not the only valid response to the Nazi past, that the war was not devoid of German heroes and that stories of brutality and mass murder did not exclusively define Germany's war. Essentially, they asserted that post-war German identity did not have to be negotiated from scratch – a 'Stunde Null' in the story of German identity was unnecessary – or generated solely from pre-war tropes.

Rommel ruft Kairo, a 1959 film directed by Wolfgang Schleif, belongs to the same group. The film tells the dramatized true story of two German spies, Johannes Eppler and 'Sandy', who are smuggled into British-controlled Cairo in 1942 to gather intelligence on British positions and manoeuvres. Field Marshal Rommel is in charge of the operation, but he and his spies must use all of their skill to evade discovery or capture by Colonel Robertson and his British troops. Eppler and Sandy are eventually caught, but only after they believe they have foiled a British attack. Robertson was one step ahead, however, and changed the British plans. He reveals to Eppler, now under arrest, that the attack will be on El Alamein, a name audiences would have known as the site of an Allied victory that proved a turning point in the war.

Like Canaris, Wisse and Harras, admirable figures of moral, masculine agency in the films mentioned above, Rommel (played by Paul Klinger) is depicted as an intelligent, compassionate, conscientious leader, a model of masculinity as applicable to the film's peacetime audience as to the fictional wartime context. Indeed, Rommel is an obvious candidate for a cinematic portrayal of admirable Germanness, renowned as exceptionally skilled and morally upstanding by both the German and

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[87] See Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (2003); Dagmar Barnouw, *The War in the Empty Air: Victims, Perpetrators, and Postwar Germans* (2005); Jennifer M. Kapczynski, *The German Patient: Crisis and Recovery in Postwar Culture* (2008).

the Allied nations. British Commander Wavell recalled in 1950, ‘Of all our enemies in the late war Rommel was the only one who appealed to the public imagination, both as a dashing commander in the field and, by all accounts, an honourable and generous enemy.’[88] As Patrick Major argues, Rommel and his depictions in post-war British popular culture were key to the ‘process of reconciliation’ with the former enemy in which some fictions engaged.[89] He appeared as a hugely likeable, laudable German in the American film *The Desert Fox* (1951) and the British film *Foxhole in Cairo* (1960), a fictionalised version of the same wartime incident depicted in *Rommel ruft Kairo*. For the Germans, too, he was part of a ‘process of reconciliation’, but with themselves and their own past rather than with their former enemy.

Admirable Germanness in this film – in the form of Rommel – is juxtaposed with an equally admirable model of Britishness in Colonel Robertson. This figure, closely related to the post-war British detective discussed in the previous section, is indicative of the tension between the German desire to salvage a source of pride and continuity from the Nazi period and the ongoing sense of unease and inferiority in discussions of German identity. From one perspective, the presence of this admirable Briton strengthens the assertion of admirable Germanness embodied in Rommel, the comparison working to show that Germanness can be (nearly) as much a cause for pride as Britishness. The casting of Klinger as Rommel enhances the assertion that a positive model of Germanness could be recovered from the Nazi period. Although Klinger became an established actor in the 1930s, he was not involved in any National Socialist productions, appearing instead in adaptations of classic German works by Goethe and Theodor Fontane.[90] In the post-war period, he was consistently cast in the role of morally upstanding characters of male authority – Herr Pogge in *Pünktchen und Anton* (1953), Dr. Uthoff in *Das fliegende Klassenzimmer* (1954) and Jochen von Roth in the *Immenhof Heimatfilm* trilogy of (1955-7) – while also being known for his work to improve conditions for disadvantaged actors. These extra-textual factors were the source of Klinger’s potency in his role as Rommel, lending

[88] *The Sunday Times*, 22 January 1950.
[89] Major, ‘‘Our Friend Rommel’: The *Wehrmacht* as ‘Worthy Enemy’ in Postwar British Popular Culture’ in *German History* 26 (2008) p.520.
[90] Rolf Thissen, ‘Paul Klinger - Charakterdarsteller mit Charakter’ in *Paul Klinger Report*, 29 (2007), < http://www.paul-klinger-ksw.de/pdf/leistungen/Paul-Klinger-Report_29-07.pdf> [accessed 1 February 2016].

him an aura of authority, morality, benevolence and trustworthiness that was key to generating an impression of admirable German masculinity.

Yet despite Rommel's almost flawless characterisation as an intelligent, genial, humane military professional, it is Robertson who sets the moral and intellectual standard. He wins the battle of wits and, in an unsurpassable display of gentility and humanity, agrees to ask Churchill to spare the life of Eppler at the request of his lieutenant Kay Morrison. As in *Hornleigh* two years later, Klinger's character must settle for being the slightly dulled reflection of the British model. The influence on Robertson's character of traits associated with post-war depictions of the British detective further contributes to the impression of British superiority and, by implication, German inferiority. These traits, reminders of a figure and society that had become the embodiment of a desirable but unattainable alternative reality and thus reminders of Germany's current moral disorder as revealed by the Nazi trials, hint at the impossibility of achieving the 'heights' of character exhibited by Robertson.

Like all British detectives in post-war German popular culture, Robertson's key traits are shrewdness, composure, compassion, wit and authority. Even when the Germans have taken Tobruk and Cairo is threatened, Robertson remains unflappable, confident that the Germans will not succeed but sensible enough to destroy vital documents as 'Vorsichtsmaßnahmen'.[91] 'Ich hasse selber Panikstimmung', he tells his colleague.[92] Like Hornleigh, he uses dry humour in moments of high drama to defuse tension and assert control over the situation, telling his lieutenant to write a report called 'Das Rätsel des Falls von Tobruk', a title that mirrors that of many crime fictions.[93] A few scenes later, we see him interrogating the two Germans captured by the British who had been receiving Eppler's signals. Again, like Hornleigh, he speaks quietly, steadily and authoritatively and reveals nothing about what he knows or is keen to discover. He shows interest in their families and empathy for their rheumatism and remains polite, wishing them 'gute Nacht, meine

[91] *Rommel ruft Kairo*, dir. by Wolfgang Schleif (Neue Filmverleih, 1959) [on DVD]: 'a precaution'. Same reference for all future screen shots and quotations from this film.
[92] 'I hate panic'.
[93] 'The riddle of the fall of Tobruk'.

Herren' (fig. 31).[94] Only later do we realise that, like the typical British detective, his knowledge of events is far greater than he admits. When his men intercept a signal revealing Eppler and Sandy's precise location, he says calmly, 'wie ich vermutete' and waits for the perfect moment to storm the boat, unmoved by his colleague's entreaties to act immediately ('Doch, Kingstone, wir warten').[95] Further influences of the post-war British detective on this character are unmistakeable. Robertson smokes a pipe rather than cigarettes, relates to his subordinate Amis as a detective does to his less quick-witted sidekick and treats his female lieutenant with the courtesy and respect of a gentleman.

Figure 31: Colonel Robertson (Herbert Tiede) asks the captured spies about their families and empathises with their rheumatism.

Yet this likeable, laudable figure, transported directly from the crime genre and given a military uniform, does not seem out of place in a film showing Germany at war with its former enemy. 'Through most of the war', argues Strobl, 'the German public thought much more highly of Britain and the British than would have seemed likely

[94] 'Good night, gentlemen'.
[95] 'as I suspected'; 'No, Kingstone, we wait'.

in the circumstances'.[96] And later, 'The hatred which the regime sought to inspire remained largely absent' and the 'core of admiration for Britain' among ordinary Germans 'remained essentially unchanged'.[97] The experience of occupation, bringing with it the opportunity for direct encounters, seemed to have a greater negative effect on perceptions of Britain than the war itself, but even that was quickly overcome, as we have seen. Unlike among Britons, whose reconciliation with the former enemy was an arduous, controversial process, Germans felt little or no need to reconcile with Britain as, from their perspective, there was no rift. Popular fictions bore out this lack of hostility. Even in the popular war *Heftserie* 'Landser', filled with stories of German wartime heroism, the British characters were often described in this period using positive adjectives such as 'zäh', 'hartnäckig' and 'tapfer'.[98] In stories such as 'Kampf auf La Plata: Der Untergang der Graf Spree' and 'Die Schlacht um England', the British sailors and pilots are depicted with respect and empathy.[99] This is particularly illuminating given the publication's National Socialist leanings and the depiction of Germany's other enemies as stupid, backward and immoral (the Russians) or foolish tacticians wading recklessly into war (the Americans).[100]

So the depiction of a group of admirable Britons – for Robertson is no anomaly among the British characters – in a German war film would not have surprised German audiences. Any potential discomfort at the depiction of an enemy who is even more likeable than the German hero is also assuaged by the lack of elements conventionally associated with the war genre. There are no battles and the only deaths are suicides. British soldiers are depicted behind desks, drawing maps, playing golf, drinking tea or engaged in group calisthenics, but never fighting. The German soldiers, led by Almassy, face their biggest battle in the desert, fighting for their survival against climate, terrain and dehydration, not against the British. The Anglo-German conflict is reduced to a battle of logic, mental agility and tactical skill and carried out at a distance, via photographs and encoded messages (fig. 32 and fig. 33). We have already seen how Robertson gave a German military victory the title of a crime fiction, alluding to his role as 'detective', while Almassy refers to 'playing'

[96] Strobl, p.191.
[97] ibid., p.226.
[98] Dirk Wilking, '"Der Landser" – Wie ein Mann ein Mann wird' in *Mobiles Beratungsteam*, ed. by Wolfram Hülsemann and Michael Kohlstruck (2004), p.83: 'tough', 'tenacious', 'brave'.
[99] 'The Battle at La Plata: The Sinking of the Graf Spree'; 'The Battle for England'.
[100] Wilking, p.82.

war (‘spielen’) and Eppler calls espionage a ‘Puzzelspiel’. Each of the ‘Rätsel’ faced by the main characters, including Lieutenant Morrison, who decodes Eppler’s messages after discovering which book provided the code, echoes the ‘Rätsel’ that countless British detectives are called upon to solve in post-war German crime fictions. And as always, the British ‘detective’ comes out on top. At the film’s core are two admirable men, each seeking to outwit the other and thus gain the advantage in a bloodless battle of wits whose broader significance within the global conflict is purposefully disregarded. The suppression of ‘war’ elements enhances the film’s relevance for its peacetime audience, both asserting the value of good relations with Britain, Germany’s admirable former enemy, and offering a model for individual and national character in post-war Europe, a model that embraces rationality, humanity, commanding leadership and a sense of humour.

Figure 32: Field Marshal Erwin Rommel (right, played by Paul Klinger) using maps and notebooks to plan how to get his spies into Cairo

Figure 33: Robertson (left) looking at an aerial photograph of the German vehicles in the desert

Strobl argues that as the war progressed and turned in Britain's favour, the already significant influence of British detective fiction on perceptions of Britain grew. 'The nation of Sherlock Holmes or Lord Peter Wimsey was unlikely to be deterred by initial setbacks, however severe', Strobl surmises of German thinking, and the later war years seemed to vindicate this belief.[101] Now, fourteen years after the end of the war, the link between British detection and military skill was being reasserted with the purpose of tentatively reclaiming a positive sense of German identity from the Nazi period. Rommel is depicted as (almost) the equal of Robertson (a verdict shared by the British), a manifestation of a post-war German masculine ideal. In this way, the figure of Rommel becomes a much-needed source of national pride and an implicit rejection of claims of 'uniform evil'. Bergfelder argues that the film provides a 'blueprint for amicable and cooperative relations between Britain and West Germany', most notably through the romance between Eppler and Kay.[102] But it does more than this; it both asserts and questions the possibility of either salvaging or generating a viable model of Germanness and uses a highly valued model of Britishness to do so.

[101] Strobl, p.192.
[102] Tim Bergfelder, 'The Passenger: Ambivalences of National Identity and Masculinity in the Star Persona of Peter van Eyck' in John E. Davidson and Sabine Hake eds (2007), p.55.

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Discussing the appeal of Sherlock Holmes, Payne writes, ‘He made human reason prevail over peril and mystery. He “understood” human nature in all its variety. He caused justice to be done. And he did it all by virtue of his possession of traditional “English” virtues.’[103] This was why fictions adapted from or inspired by British crime stories – and the figure of the detective at their centre – remained, beyond the brief hiatus of the occupation period, a crucial element in West Germany’s post-war engagement with the idea of Britain. These stories combined a nostalgic depiction of Englishness (the appeal of which was discussed in Chapter 5), with the certainty of justice achieved through the application of reason. No wonder that our culture continues to take such a ‘tenacious grip upon these tales’, Payne writes, ‘particularly in trying times or when our public leadership becomes especially sordid.’ Despite economic and political progress, the post-war period in West Germany was undoubtedly a ‘trying time’, in which the idea of leadership was mired in difficulty. Sherlock Holmes, Father Brown, Miss Marple, Paul Temple and Inspector Hornleigh proved the ideal antidote.

[103] Payne, Introduction.

CODA

'When the British discussed the Germans, they were also talking about themselves,' writes Frances Rosenfeld in her 2006 study of Britons and Germans in occupied Hamburg.[1] I have shown that when the British *or* the Germans depicted each other in popular fictions in the post-war period, they were, if often unwittingly, *primarily* talking about themselves. While the debates in Britain were much more nuanced than we might expect (and than we often see today), the prevailing lack of nuance in the corresponding discussions in Germany was a consequence of the nation's post-war struggle for national self-identity. We return to historian Sabine Lee's claim that 'Anglo-German relations are often characterized with the word <u>mis</u>understanding. In the case of German public opinion about Britain, <u>non</u>-understanding would be more appropriate'.[2] In the immediate post-war period, non-understanding, wilful or otherwise, dominated popular fictional depictions of the British/German other, both nations seeking in part to preserve a set of images that served their needs regarding their own national self-identity.

Post-war depictions of Britons as pragmatic, conservative and wedded to tradition and of Germans as aggressive, unstable, deceitful and fundamentally different were borne largely of non-understanding and were contingent on the contemporaneous political, economic and social landscapes. Yet such understandings of Britishness and Germanness live on, divorced from the contexts in which they were moulded and repeated ad nauseum in both fictional and non-fiction depictions up to the present day. On 28 June 2016, five days after the referendum on Britain's membership of the EU, Philip Oltermann, Berlin correspondent for *The Guardian* newspaper, wrote the following:

> As great as the shock at Thursday's result may have been in the UK, it is greater still in Germany. In Britain, some had seen it coming [...] But in Germany the leave vote blew away the foundations of what people believed the British character to be. For

[1] Frances Rosenfeld, 'The Anglo-German Encounter in Occupied Hamburg 1945-50' (2006), p.45.
[2] Sabine Lee, *An Uneasy Partnership: British-German Relations between 1955 and 1961* (1996), p.88.

> months, whenever I had tried to tell fellow Germans that a British vote to leave was entirely possible and even likely, they calmly assured me that this could not be the case. Britain was the home of pragmatism, of common sense – did I not know?[3]

A particular image of the Briton – dependable, predictable, slow to change, pragmatic, sensible – that was carefully preserved and continued to evolve in the immediate post-war period, propelled by the need for a specific kind of alternate reality, has long outlived that need and proved almost wholly resistant to change. Its stubborn trajectory can be plotted from the early 1960s – when *Am Sonntag will mein Süßer mit mir segeln gehen* hit German cinema screens and offered an image of old-fashioned Britishness that, liberated from the desire for a viable alternate reality, could be stripped of common sense and utilized as a comical cliché – through the fifty-two episodes of *Das Haus am Eaton Place* (*Upstairs, Downstairs*) broadcast on ZDF between 1971 and 1975 and on into the remarkable popularity of the same channel's television adaptations, beginning in the early 1990s, of Rosamunde Pilcher's old-fashioned tales of life and love in scenic Cornwall. And the enthusiasm for these fictions has not waned. Between 2006 and 2014, several DVD boxsets of *Das Haus am Eaton Place* were produced and are available on amazon.de, as are dubbed versions of similar British dramas including *The Forsyte Saga* and *Downton Abbey*. The 2010 revival in Britain of *Upstairs, Downstairs* was met with delight by a *Frankfurter Allgemeine* reviewer and is now also available in a dubbed version on DVD.[4] *Downton Abbey*, a natural successor to *Das Haus am Eaton Place*, has drawn huge and admiring audiences. '*Downton Abbey* ist hervorragend inszenierte, authentische Unterhaltung für Freunde britischer Adelsgeschichten', wrote Jan Schlüter on the website *Quotenmeter*, implying that such stories form a well-received sub-genre in contemporary German popular culture.[5] Fans of Pilcher's less lofty but equally old-fashioned stories are treated to regular broadcasts from ZDF's collection

[3] Philip Oltermann, 'What do Germans think about Brexit? They pity us', *The Guardian*, 28 June 2016 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jun/28/philip-oltermann-brexit-germans-pragmatic-cautious-british-character-leave-vote> [accessed 1 September 2016].

[4] 'Heimkehr in das Haus am Eaton Place,' *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, 26 December 2010 < http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/fernsehen/fernseh-serie-heimkehr-in-das-haus-am-eaton-place-1611184.html> [accessed 24 June 2017].

[5] Jan Schlüter, 'Die Kritiker: "Downton Abbey" (Pilot)', *Quotenmeter*, 20 July 2011 <http://www.quotenmeter.de/cms/?p1=n&p2=50900> [accessed 31 December 2016]: '*Downton Abbey* is a magnificently produced and authentic piece of entertainment for friends of British stories of nobility.'

of more than 100 adaptations, and many thousands visit Cornwall every year. Indeed, as reported by magazine *Cornwall Life*, ZDF programme director Dr Claus Beling and Rosamunde Pilcher won the British Tourism Award in 2002 'for the positive effect the books and the TV versions had on tourism in Cornwall and the South West.'[6] Furthermore, adaptations of stories by Agatha Christie and Arthur Conan-Doyle – a staple of post-war scheduling – have rarely been absent from Germany's small screen and airwaves since the 1950s and continue to pepper television and radio schedules.

The British myths of Germanness explored in this thesis seem equally intractable. Stories and films featuring narratives of British wartime heroism and German/Nazi cruelty and aggression – as well as spy thrillers that equated Germany with hostility to Britain – continued almost unabated throughout the post-war decades, while alternate histories such as Frederic Mullally's *Hitler Has Won* (1975) and Len Deighton's *SS-GB* (1978) recast the Nazi (or German) threat as a contemporary, not just a historical, one. David Lodge's *Out of the Shelter* (1970) is ostensibly an attempt to rehabilitate the image of Germany through the narrative of a teenage boy whose view of the country – 'soaked in blood and guilt and ugly memories' and full of 'wicked' Germans – has been wholly moulded by the conflict that formed the background to his childhood.[7] Timothy visits his sister in Heidelberg but interacts mostly with her and her American friends – the Germans remain on the periphery of both his experience and the narrative and little is offered to supplant his (and perhaps the reader's) initial prejudices. The Germany briefly visited in his later novel *Nice Work* (1988) is equally crudely drawn. On a business trip to 'sleek and stylish' Frankfurt, protagonist Victor Wilcox is reminded only of the conflict that ended more than four decades earlier – "Well, they had to rebuild from scratch after the war, didn't they?" – and grumbles about the inability of Britain to keep pace economically with Germany: "We won the war and lost the peace, as they say."[8] A five-part BBC television adaptation of Deighton's *SS-GB* broadcast in early 2017 indicates that the British appetite for stories linking Germany with war and aggression remains strong, while Wilcox's gripe was echoed by Lord Heseltine,

[6] 'The Novels of Rosamunde Pilcher,' *Cornwall Life*, [no date] < http://www.cornwalllife.co.uk/living-cornwall/rosamunde-pilcher-writer/> [accessed 24 June 2017].
[7] David Lodge, *Out of the Shelter* (1985), p.70, p.29.
[8] David Lodge, *Nice Work* (1988), p.195.

prominent Conservative politician and Deputy Prime Minister under John Major, in an interview with *The House* magazine in March 2017. Making his case for Britain remaining in the EU, he raised the spectre of a more powerful Germany. Britain's departure from the EU could 'see America turn to Germany for a new special relationship,' he said. Britain played a 'unique role' in defeating Hitler, he continued. 'So Germany lost the war. We've just handed them the opportunity to win the peace. I find that quite unacceptable.'[9]

The significance of this narrative – Germany's undeserved, unfair, even dangerous, dominance of the EU – in contemporary Britain is indicated by the response of the British press to the release of a set of government documents in December 2016, six months after the EU referendum. These documents, published by the National Archives, detailed the discussions of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government in response to the prospect of German reunification. Thatcher's concerns regarding German reunification are widely known and much of the material has been seen and discussed before. Yet the *Daily Mail, Daily Express, The Times* and *The Telegraph* all reported the release of the documents and all quoted from a note written by Charles Powell, foreign advisor to Thatcher:

> Apprehension about Germany did not relate just to the Nazi period, but to the whole Bismarckian era, and inevitably caused deep distrust. The way in which the Germans currently used their elbows and threw their weight around in the European community suggested that a lot had still not changed [...] In sum, no-one had serious misgivings about the present leaders or political elite of Germany. But what about ten, fifteen or twenty years from now? Could some of the unhappy characteristics of the past re-emerge with just as destructive consequences?[10]

In the context of the accusations of German dominance in the EU frequently made by the right-wing press in Britain both before and since the EU referendum, the implied significance of quoting this memo, released into the public domain seven years ago,

[9] 'Lord Heseltine: "Germany lost the war. Brexit hands them the chance to win the peace,"' *The House Magazine*, 23 March 2017 <https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/house/house-magazine/84510/lord-heseltine-"germany-lost-war-brexit-hands-them-chance-win> [accessed 24 June 2017].

[10] Christopher Hope and Lydia Willgress, 'Mrs Thatcher's anxiety over German power', *The Telegraph*, 30 December 2016.

is obvious. The *Daily Mail* was even more explicit in its reporting, accepting and perpetuating Thatcher's belief in the existence of 'national characteristics' ('The national character of the German people was also discussed at the meeting') and repeating the list of 'German' traits in a manner that seemed to assume their validity ('The group noted Germans could be prone to angst, aggressiveness, assertiveness, bullying […]').[11]

So has anything really changed in the mutual depictions and perceptions of Britons and Germans in the intervening five decades? The simple answer of course is yes. (The fuller answer must wait for another thesis.) But while the debates – who are the Germans and what will they do next? what can we learn from images of a foreign and idealized past? – have faded and the political, economic and social circumstances that generated the prevailing images of Britishness and Germanness in the post-war period undergone countless transformations, many of those images have solidified.

Crude depictions of Britishness and Germanness, of British and German history, are perhaps more prevalent than ever. By reconstructing the post-war debates and contexts in which these images developed, evolved and, frequently, were challenged, this thesis exposes the profound contingency of those images and reveals just how great a role contemporaneous understandings of the national self played in their conception. Implicitly then, this thesis lays bare the absurdity of preserving these images – the lifeblood of crude narratives of German history and misleading myths of Britishness – more than half a century on. In some small way, perhaps this thesis can contribute to delegitimizing those narratives and myths and thus erode their power when wielded by contemporary politicians and fear-mongering journalists.

[11] Stephanie Linning, 'Margaret Thatcher feared fall of Berlin Wall could herald return of Nazis as aides told her Germans were aggressive, egotistical and bullying', *Mail Online*, 30 December 2016 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4074992/Margaret-Thatcher-feared-fall-Berlin-Wall-herald-return-Nazis-aides-told-Germans-aggressive-egotistical-bullying.html> [accessed 31 December 2016].

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Thissen, Rolf, 'Paul Klinger - Charakterdarsteller mit Charakter', *Paul Klinger Report*, 29 (Paul Klinger Künstlersozialwerk e.V., 2007) < http://www.paul-klinger-ksw.de/pdf/leistungen/Paul-Klinger-Report_29-07.pdf>

Appendix

1. BRITISH TEXTS

1.1 Novels

Ambler, Eric, *The Schirmer Inheritance* (London: Ipso Books, 2015/London: William Heinemann, 1953)
Bayley, J., *In Another Country* (London: Constable, 1955)
Bellairs, George, *The Case of the Scared Rabbits* (London: John Gifford, 1946)
Bennett, Geoffrey Martin, *Phantom Fleet* (London: Collins, 1946)
Betteridge, D., *Dictator's Destiny* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1945)
—, *The Case of the Berlin Spy* (London: Robert Hale,1954)
Blake, Nicholas (pen name of Cecil Day-Lewis), *Minute for Murder* (London: Collins, 1960/London: Collins, 1947)
Bonett, John and Emery, *No Grave for a Lady* ([n.p.]: Chivers, 1988/London: Michael Joseph, 1960)
Burke, John, *The Man Who Finally Died* (London: Pan, 1963)
Cadell, J., *Roast Pigeon* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1951)
le Carré, John, *Call for the Dead* (London: Penguin, 1964/London: Victor Gollancz, 1961)
—, *The Looking Glass War* (London: Chivers, 1965)
—, *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold* (London: Penguin, 2010/London: Victor Gollancz, 1963)
Cauldwell, Frank, *The Firewalkers* (London: John Murray, 1956)
Cheyney, Peter, *Dark Hero* (London: Collins, 1946)
—, *Dark Interlude* (London: Collins, 1947)
—, *Dark Wanton* (London: Collins, 1948)
—, *Sinister Errand* (London: Collins, 1945)
Christie, Agatha, *N or M?* (London: Collins, 1941)
Coles, Manning, *The Fifth Man* (London: Hodder & Stoughton,1946)
—, *Green Hazard* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1945)
—, *No Entry* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1958)
—, *Not for Export* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1954)
—, *Now or Never* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1951)
Cory, D., *Pilgrim at the Gate* (London: Frederick Muller, 1957)
Cotterell, Geoffrey, *Randle in Springtime* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1949)
—, *The Strange Enchantment* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1956)
Crockett, Anthony, *Toys of Desperation* (London: Robert Hale, 1960)
Culshaw, John, *Sons of Brutus* (London: Secker & Warburg,1950)
Deighton, Len, *Funeral in Berlin* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1964)

—, *SS-GB* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1978)
Dick, Philip K., *The Man in the High Castle* (New York: Putnam, 1962)
Dowley, J.M., *Dr Ischenasch* (London: Peter Davies, 1952)
Downing, David, *The Moscow Option* (London: New English Library, 1979)
Faramus, Tony, *Hands of the Devil* (London: Brown, Watson, 1959)
Farran, Roy, *The Search* (London: Hamilton & Co., 1958)
Fleming, Ian, *For Your Eyes Only* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1960)
—, *From Russia, With Love* (London: Viking, 1957)
—, *A James Bond omnibus: containing 'Live and let die', 'Diamonds are forever', 'Dr. No'* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973)
—, *Moonraker* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1955)
—, *The Spy Who Loved Me* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1962)
Forester, C.S., *The Good Shepherd* (London: Michael Joseph, 1955)
Fullerton, A., *Bury the Past* (London: Peter Davies, 1954)
Gainham, Sarah, *The Cold Dark Night* ([n.p.]: Arthur Barker, 1957)
Gaite, Francis, *The Far Traveller* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1956)
Gibbs, Philip, *Thine Enemy* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1951)
Gielgud, Val, *Gravelhanger* (London: Cassell & Co., 1934)
Golding, Louis, *The Glory of Elsie Silver* (London: The Book Club, 1946)
Hackforth-Jones, Gilbert, *Danger Below* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1963)
Hall, Adam (pen name of Elleston Trevor), *The Berlin Memorandum* (London: Collins, 1965)
Harris, Robert, *Fatherland* (London: Hutchinson, 1992)
Higgins, Jack (pen name of Henry Patterson), *The Testament of Caspar Schultz* (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett,1962)
—, *Year of the Tiger* (London: Abelard Schulman, 1963)
Household, Geoffrey, *Watcher in the Shadows* (London: Michael Joseph, 1960)
Innes, Hammond, *Air Bridge* (London: Collins, 1951)
Landon, Christopher, *Ice Cold in Alex* (London: Heinemann, 1957)
—, *The Mirror Room* (London: Heinemann, 1960)
Leasor, James, *The One That Got Away* (London: Collins, 1956)
Linklater, Eric, *Private Angelo* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1946)
Lodge, David, *Nice Work* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1988)
—, *Out of the Shelter* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1985)
Kaye, M. M., *Death Walked in Berlin* (London: Staples, 1955)
Kinross, J., *The Pike in the Reeds* (London: John Murray, 1956)
MacInnes, Colin, *To The Victor The Spoils* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1950)
Majdalany, Fred, *The Monastery* (London: John Lane the Bodley Head, 1945)
Malcolm, J.E., *Discourse with Shadows* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1958)
Mannin, E., *Every Man a Stranger* (London: Jarrolds, 1949)
McGovern, James, *Fräulein* (New York: Crown, 1956)
Mitchell, Yvonne, *The Bedsitter* (London: Morrison and Gibb, 1959)
Monsarrat, Nicholas, *The Cruel Sea* (London: Cassell & Co., 1951)

Peters, Ellis (pen name of Edith Pargeter), *Fallen into the Pit* (London: Heinemann, 1951)
Powell, Lester, *Count of Six* (London: Collins, 1948)
Prebble, John, *The Edge of Darkness* (London: Transworld, 1958/London: Secker & Warburg, 1947)
Rochester, George E., *The Return of Grey Shadow* (London: Eldon, 1949)
Roth, Holly, *Content Assignment* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1954)
Royde-Smith, Naomi, *The Iniquity of Us All* (London: Sampson Low, 1949)
Sherwood, John, *Disappearance of Dr. Bruderstein* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1949)
—, *Mr Blessington's Imperialist Plot* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1951)
Struther, Jan, *Mrs Miniver* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1940)
Tabori, Paul, *The Leaf of a Lime Tree* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1946)
Tickell, Jerrard, *Appointment with Venus* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1951)
Whiting, Charles, *Journey To No End* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1957)
—, *Lest I Fall* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1956)

1.2 Films

The 39 Steps (1959), dir. Ralph Thomas; prod. Rank; dist. Rank
49th Parallel (1941), dir. Michael Powell; prod. Ortus; dist. GFD
Above Us The Waves (1955), dir. Ralph Thomas, prod. Rank; dist. GFD
Albert R.N. (1953), dir. Lewis Gilbert; prod. Angel; dist. Eros
Appointment With Venus (1951), dir. Ralph Thomas; prod. British Film-Makers; dist. GFD
Bachelor of Hearts (1958), dir. Wolf Rilla; prod. Independent Artists; dist. Rank
The Battle of the River Plate, dir. Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger; prod. The Archers; dist. Rank
The Big Blockade (1942), dir. Charles Frend; prod. Ealing; dist. United Artists
The Captive Heart (1946), dir. Basil Dearden; prod. Ealing; UK dist. Eagle-Lion
Carve Her Name With Pride (1958), dir. Lewis Gilbert; prod. Angel; dist. Rank
Castle Sinister (1948), dir. Oscar Burn; prod. Unicorn; dist. Equity
Conspiracy of Hearts (1960), dir. Ralph Thomas; prod. Rank; dist. Rank
Convoy (1940), dir. Pen Tennyson; prod. Ealing; dist. ABFD
Counterblast (1948), dir. Paul L. Stein; prod. British National Films; dist. Pathe
The Cruel Sea (1953), dir. Charles Frend; prod. Rank/Ealing; dist. GFD
The Desert Fox (1951), dir. Henry Hathaway; prod. Twentieth Century Fox; dist. Twentieth Century Fox
Desert Mice (1959), dir. Michael Relph; prod. Artna/Welbeck; dist. Rank
Desperate Moment (1953), dir. Compton Bennett; prod. George H. Brown; dist. GFD
The Divided Heart (1954), dir. Charles Crichton; prod. Rank/Ealing; dist. GFD
The Echo Murders (1945), dir. John Harlow; prod. British National Films/Strand; dist. Anglo-American Film Corporation

For Freedom (1940), dir. Maurice Elvey, Castleton Knight; prod. Gainsborough; dist. GFD
Frieda (1947), dir. Basil Dearden; prod. Ealing; dist. GFD
Gasbags (1941), dir. Walter Forde, Marcel Varnel; prod. Gainsborough; dist. GFD
The Great Escape (1963), dir. John Sturges; prod. Mirisch; US dist. United Artists
The Guns of Navarone (1961), dir. J. Lee Thompson; prod. Columbia Pictures; dist. Columbia Pictures
Hotel Sahara (1951), dir. Ken Annakin; prod. George H. Brown; dist. GFD
I See a Dark Stranger (1946), dir. Frank Launder; prod. Individual Pictures; dist. GFD
Ice Cold in Alex (1958), dir. J. Lee Thompson; prod. ABPC; dist. Associated British-Pathe
Ill Met By Moonlight (1957), dir. Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger; prod. Rank; dist. Rank
It Happened Here (1964), dir. Kevin Brownlow, Andrew Mollo; prod. Rath; dist. United Artists
It's Not Cricket (1949), dir. Alfred Roome, Roy Rich; prod. Gainsborough; dist. GFD
Let George Do It (1938), dir. Ken G. Hall; prod. Cinesound; dist. British Empire Films
The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp (1943), dir. Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger; prod. Rank; dist. GFD
The Lion Has Wings (1939), dir. Adrian Brunel, Brian Desmond Hurst, Michael Powell; prod. London Film Productions; dist. United Artists
The Man Who Finally Died (1963), dir. Quentin Lawrence; prod. White Cross; dist. British Lion
Moonraker (1979), dir. Lewis Gilbert; prod. Les Productions Artistes Associés, Eon; dist. United Artists
Mystery Submarine (1963), dir. C.M. Pennington-Richards; prod. Bertram Ostrer, British Lion; dist. Britannia
Neutral Port (1940), dir. Marcel Varnel; prod. Gainsborough; dist. GFD
Night Boat to Dublin (1946), dir. Lawrence Huntington; prod. ABPC; dist. Pathe
Night Train to Munich (1940), dir. Carol Reed; prod. Twentieth-Century Fox; dist. MGM
The One That Got Away (1957), dir. Roy Ward Baker; prod. Julian Wintle; dist. Rank
Odette (1950), dir. Herbert Wilcox; prod. Herbert Wilcox; dist. British Lion
Operation Crossbow (1965), dir. Michael Anderson; prod. MGM; dist. MGM
Orders to Kill (1958), dir. Anthony Asquith; prod. Lynx; dist. British Lion
Portrait from Life (1949), dir. Terence Fisher; prod. Gainsborough; dist. GFD
Sea of Sand (1958), dir. Guy Green; prod. Rank; dist. Rank
Sink the Bismarck! (1960), dir. Lewis Gilbert; prod. Twentieth Century Fox; dist. Twentieth Century Fox

Snowbound (1948), dir. David MacDonald; prod. Gainsborough; dist. RKO Radio
SOS Pacific (1959), dir. Guy Green; prod. Rank; dist. Rank
Spy for a Day (1940), dir. Mario Zampi; prod. Two Cities; dist. Rank
The Spy in Black (1939), dir. Michael Powell; prod. Irving Asher; dist. Columbia
The Spy Who Came in from the Cold (1965), dir. Martin Ritt; prod. Salem Films; dist. Paramount
The Square Peg (1958), dir. John Paddy Carstairs; prod. Rank; dist. Rank
Subway in the Sky (1959), dir. Muriel Box; prod. Orbit; dist. British Lion
Ten Seconds to Hell (1959), dir. Robert Aldrich; prod. Hammer; dist. United Artists
The Treasure of San Teresa (1959), dir. Alvin Rakoff; prod. Beaconsfield, Kurt Ulrich, Orbit; dist. British Lion
The Two-Headed Spy (1958), dir. André de Toth; prod. Sabre; dist. Columbia Pictures
Very Important Person (1961), dir. Ken Annakin; prod. Independent Artists; dist. Rank
The Vicious Circle (1957), dir. Gerald Thomas; prod. Beaconsfield, Romulus; dist. IFD
The Victors (1963), dir. Carl Foreman; prod. Columbia Pictures; dist. Columbia Pictures
Went the Day Well? (1942), dir. Alberto Cavalcanti; prod. Ealing; dist. United Artists
The Wooden Horse (1950), dir. Jack Lee; prod. London Film Productions; dist. British Lion

1.3 Television dramas/series

Scripts viewed at BBC Written Archives' Centre, Reading:

Alldridge, Jack, *All This is Ended* (1946) (television play)
Canning, Victor, *Contract to Kill* (1965) (television drama in six episodes)
Evers, L.H., *The Racketty Street Gang* (1961) (television drama in six episodes)
Gielgud, Val, *Gravelhanger* (1954) (television drama in six episodes, from novel by Val Gielgud)
Kerr, George F., *Almost Glory* (1953) (television play, from novel by F. Benedict)
—, *A Month of Sundays* (1952) (television play)

VHS recording viewed at British Film Institute, London:

Durbridge, Francis, *The Desperate People* (1963) (television drama in six episodes)

1.4 Radio dramas/series

Scripts viewed at BBC Written Archives' Centre, Reading:

Bechhofer Roberts, C.E. and C.S. Forester, *Nurse Cavell* (1948) (radio play)
Davies, Derwent, *Colonel Judas* (1945) (radio play)
Hodgson, Sheila, *The Return* (1962) (radio play)
King Bull, E.J., *South Sea Bubble* (1948) (radio play)
Leasor, James and Burt Kendall, *The One That Got Away* (1956) (radio play, from book by Leasor and Kendall)
Pile, Cecily, *The Trimmer* (1947) (radio play)
Vale, Adrian and Martin Esslin, *The Seventh Man* (1962) (radio play)

1.5 Theatre plays

Coward, Noel, *Peace In Our Time* (London: Samuel French, 1947)

1.6 Comics
n.b Accessed at British Library, London

Bulldog Brittain Commando; Combat Picture Library; Eagle; Knockout; The Victor; War at Sea Picture Library

1.7 Magazines
n.b Accessed at British Library, London

Radio Times

1.7 Non-fiction

Boyle, Kay, *The Smoking Mountain* (London: Faber & Faber; 1952)
Brockway, Fenner, *German Diary* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1947)
Byford-Jones, William, *Berlin Twilight* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1947)
Clare, George, *Berlin Days 1946-1947* (London: Macmillan, 1989)
Gollancz, Victor, *In Darkest Germany* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1947)
'Instructions for British Servicemen' (First published: Foreign Office, 1944; this edition: Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2007)
Moorehead, Alan, *Eclipse: An Eyewitness Account of the Allied Invasion of Europe* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1945)
Mosley, Leonard, *Report from Germany* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1945)
Nella, Last, *Nella Last's Peace* (London: Profile, 2008)
Priestley, J.B., *Out of the People* (London: Collins; Heinemann, 1941)
—, *Postscripts* (London: Heinemann, 1940)
Russell, Edward Frederick Langley, *The Scourge of the Swastika: A Short History of Nazi War Crimes* (London: Cassell & Co., 1954)
Spender, Stephen, *European Witness* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1946)

Stern, James, *The Hidden Damage* (London: Chelsea Press, 1990/London: Chelsea Press, 1947)
West, Rebecca, *A Train of Powder* (London: Macmillan, 1955)
Woolf, Leonard, *Quack, Quack!* (London: L. & V. Woolf, 1935)

2. GERMAN TEXTS

2.1 Novels

Arnau, Frank, *Tanger nach Mitternacht* (Frankfurt: Ullstein, 1961)
Becker, Rolf and Alexandra, *Gestatten – mein Name ist Cox: Mord auf Gepäckschein 3311* ([n.p.]:[n.pub.], [1951(?)])
—, *Gestatten – mein Name ist Cox: Ein Spassvogel im Kampf mit der Unterwelt* ([n.p.]:[n.pub.], [1952(?)])
Bertl, Siegfried, *Die Bar in London* (Munich: Goldmann, 1964)
Ebert, Walter, *Die grinsende Maske* (Bremen: Henry Burmester, 1949)
Erpenbeck, Fritz, *Tödliche Bilanz* (Berlin: Das Neue Berlin, 1966)
Frank, Josef Maria, *Unstet und ruhelos ist das Herz*, serialised in *Revue*, August-October 1953
von Kirchbach, Maria, *Heute ist Dienstag,* serialised in *Revue*, April-July 1949
Kunkel, Klaus, *Scotland Yard schweigt* (Berlin: Das Neue Berlin, 1954)
Schreyer, Wolfgang, *Der Traum des Hauptmann Loy* (Berlin: Das Neue Berlin, 1956)
Thorwald, Jürgen, *Das tödliche Mal, Stern*, January-April 1959

2.2 Stories

Fox, Johnny, *Ein Brüder in der Dämmerung, Revue,* 8 September 1963
Garden, Jacques Rose, *Bankraub in Boston, Revue*, 4 August 1963
Klein, Ernest, *Vater zuliebe*, *Revue*, 8 February 1958
Pille, Hans, *Die Kette*, *Revue*, 10 May 1958
Der Pirat mit der Krone, Hör Zu, August 1959-February 1960

2.3 Films

*Viewed at Deutsche Filmarchiv, Berlin

Das 7. Opfer (1964), dir. Franz Josef Gottlieb; prod. CCC; dist. Nora
Das blaue Meer und du (1959), dir. Thomas Engel; prod. Willy-Zeyn; dist. Union
Am Brunnen vor dem Tore (1952), dir. Hans Wolff; prod. Berolina; dist. Herzog
Am Sonntag will mein Süsser mit mir segeln gehen (1961), dir. Franz Marischka; prod. Piran; dist. Constantin

Die Bande des Schreckens (1960), dir. Harald Reinl; prod. Rialto; dist. Constantin
Bezaubernde Arabella (1958), dir. Axel von Ambesser; prod. Rhombus; dist. UFA
Die blaue Hand (1967), dir. Alfred Vohrer; prod. Rialto; dist. Constantin
Das blaue Zimmer (1964), dir. Robert Vernay; prod. DEFA; dist. DEFA
Canaris (1954), dir. Alfred Weidenmann; prod. Fama; dist. Europa
Dr Crippen lebt (1958), dir. Erich Engels; prod. Real; dist. Europa
Er kanns nicht lassen (1962), dir. Axel von Ambesser; prod. Bavaria-Filmkunst; dist. Bavaria-Filmverleih
Der Fälscher von London (1961), dir. Harald Reinl; prod. Rialto; dist. Constantin
Der Fluch der gelben Schlange (1963), dir. Franz Josef Gottlieb; prod. CCC; dist. Constantin
Der Frosch mit der Maske (1959), dir. Harald Reinl; prod. Rialto; dist. Constantin
Das Gasthaus an der Themse (1962), dir. Alfred Vohrer; prod. Rialto; dist. Constantin
Das Geheimnis der gelben Narzissen (1961), dir. Ákos Ráthonyi; prod. Omnia/Rialto; dist. Prisma
Gestatten, mein Name ist Cox (1955), dir. Georg Jacoby; prod. Eichberg-Film; dist. Panorama-Film
Der grüne Bogenschütze (1961), dir. Jürgen Roland; prod. Rialto; dist. Constantin
Die Gruft mit dem Rätselschloss (1964), dir. Franz Josef Gottlieb; prod. Rialto; dist. Constantin
Der Henker von London (1963), dir. Edwin Zbonek; prod. CCC; dist. Columbia-Bavaria
Der Hexer (1964), dir. Alfred Vohrer; prod. Rialto; dist. Constantin
Der Hund von Blackwood-Castle (1967), dir. Alfred Vohrer; prod. Rialto; dist. Constantin
Hunde wollt ihr ewig leben (1959), dir. Frank Wisbar; prod. Deutsche Film Hansa; dist. Deutsche Film Hansa
Das indische Tuch (1963), dir. Alfred Vohrer; prod. Rialto; dist. Constantin
Der junge Engländer (1958), dir. Gottfried Kolditz; prod. DEFA; dist. VEB Progress*
Kennwort: Reiher (1964), dir. Rudolf Jugert; prod. Filmaufbau/Franz* Seitz/Independent Film; dist. Nora
Lange Beine – lange Finger (1966), dir. Alfred Vohrer; prod. CCC; dist. Nora
Nacht fiel über Gotenhafen (1960), dir. Frank Wisbar; prod. Deutsche Film Hansa; dist. Deutsche Film Hansa
Nachts wenn der Teufel kam (1957), dir. Robert Siodmak; prod. Divina; dist. Gloria
Nebel (1962), dir. Joachim Hasler; prod. DEFA; dist. DEFA*
Neues vom Hexer (1965), dir. Alfred Vohrer; prod. Rialto; dist. Constantin
Das Phantom von Soho (1963), dir. Franz Josef Gottlieb; prod. CCC; dist. Gloria
Piccadilly Null Uhr Zwölf (1963), dir. Rudolf Zehetgruber; prod. Divina; dist. Gloria
Der Rächer (1960), dir. Karl Anton; prod. Kurt Ulrich; dist. Europa-Filmverleih

Das Rätsel der roten Orchidee (1962); dir. Helmuth Ashley; prod. Rialto; dist. Constantin
Die Ratten (1955), dir. Robert Siodmak; prod. CCC; dist. Herzog-Filmverleih
Robinson soll nicht sterben (1957), dir. Josef von Báky; prod. Neue Deutsche Filmgesellschaft; dist. Comet
Rommel ruft Kairo (1959), dir. Wolfgang Schleif; prod. Omega Film; dist. Neue Filmverleih
Die Rote (1962), dir. Helmut Käutner; prod. Compagnia Cinematografica Champion/Magic/Rapid/Real-Film; dist. Europa-Filmverleih*
Der rote Kreis (1960), dir. Jürgen Roland; prod. Constantin/Rialto; dist. Prisma
Die saltsame Gräfin (1961), dir. Josef von Báky; prod. Rialto; dist. Constantin
Ein Sarg aus Hongkong (1964), dir. Manfred R. Köhler; prod. Urania/Rapid/Les Films Jacques Leitienne; dist. Constantin
Der schwarze Abt (1963), dir. Franz Josef Gottlieb; prod. CCC/Copri/Rialto; dist. Constantin
Das schwarze Schaf (1960), dir. Helmuth Ashley; prod. Bavaria-Filmkunst; dist. Bavaria-Filmverleih
Scotland Yard jagt Dr Mabuse (1963), dir. Paul May; prod. CCC; dist. Gloria
Sherlock Homes und das Halsband des Todes (1962), dir. Terence Fisher; prod. CCC/Criterion/Incei/Constantin; dist. Constantin
Das Sonntagskind (1956), dir. Kurt Meisel; prod. Berolina; dist. Herzog-Filmverleih
Des Teufels General (1955), dir. Helmut Käutner; prod. Real-Film; dist. Europa-Filmverleih
Todestrommeln am großen Fluß (1963), dir. Lawrence Huntington; prod. Big Ben Films/Constantin/Hallam; dist. Constantin
Die toten Augen von London (1961), dir. Alfred Vohrer; prod. Rialto; dist. Prisma
Die Tür mit den sieben Schlössern (1962), dir. Alfred Vohrer; prod. Les Films Jacques Leitienne/Rialto; dist. Constantin
Das Ungeheuer von London City (1964), dir. Edwin Zbonek; prod. CCC; dist. Gloria
Der unheimliche Mönch (1965), dir. Harld Reinl; prod. Rialto; dist. Constantin
Der Verlorene (1951), dir. Peter Lorre; prod. Arnold Pressburger; dist. National-Filmverleih
Das Verrätertor (1964), dir. Freddie Francis; prod. Rialto/Summit; dist. Constantin
Vorsicht, Mister Dodd (1964), dir. Günter Gräwert; prod. Divina-Film; dist. Gloria
Die weiße Spinne (1963), dir. Harald Reinl; prod. Arca-Winston/Hans Oppenheimer; dist. Constantin
Das Wirtshaus von Dartmoor (1964), dir. Rudolf Zehetgruber; prod. Arca-Winston; dist. Constantin
Der Würger vom Tower (1966), dir. Hans Mehringer; prod. Interopa/Urania; dist. Pallas Filmverleig
Der Würger von Schloss Blackmoor (1963), dir. Harald Reinl; prod. CCC/Mosaik; dist. Gloria
Zimmer 13 (1964), dir. Harald Reinl; prod. Rialto; dist. Constantin

Der Zinker (1963), dir. Alfred Vohrer; prod. Rialto; dist. Constantin

2.4 Television dramas/series

**Viewed at Deutsche Filmarchiv, Berlin*

ARD: Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
BR: Bayerischer Rundfunk
HR: Hessicher Rundfunk
NWF: Norddeutsches Werbefernsehen
NWRV: Nord- und Westdeutscher Rundfunkverband
SDR: Süddeutscher Rundfunk
SFB: Sender Freies Berlin
SWF: Südwestfunk
WDR: Westdeutscher Rundfunk

Becker, Alexandra and Rolf Becker, *Gestatten, mein Name ist Cox* (1961-1965) (NWF television series in two seasons, 26 episodes in total)
Canning, Victor / Oliver Storz, *Das ganz große Ding* (1966) (SDR television drama)
Douglas-Home, William / Fritz Umgelter, *Der schlechte Soldat Smith* (1963) (SDR television drama)
Durbridge, Francis / de Barde, Marianne, *Der Andere* (1959) (NWRV television series in six episodes)
Durbridge, Francis, *Das Halstuch* (1962) (WDR television series in six episodes)
Durbridge, Francis / de Barde, Marianne, *Die Schlüssel* (1965) (WDR television drama in three episodes)
Hastings, Charlotte / Wilm ten Haaf, *Schwester Bonaventura* (1958) (BR television drama)
Jolly, Cyril / Franz Fühmann, *Die Schwur des Soldaten Pooley* (1961) (Deutsche Fernsehfunk Berlin television drama)*
Mackie, Philip / Martin Dongen, *Die volle Wahrheit* (1962) (BR television drama)
Mather, Berkely / Georg Hensel, *Instinkt ist alles. Eine Geschichte aus Soho* (1960) (HR television drama)
Mortimer, John / Marianne de Barde, *Sie können's mir glauben* (1960) (SWF television drama)
Oppenheim, G. Ph. / Hans Fagerno, *Smaragden-Geschichte* (1956) (BR television drama)
Wynn, John P., *Inspektor Hornleigh greift ein* (1961) (WDR television series in four episodes)

n.b. The following television dramas are not available for viewing in any format. In each case, I read the novel, story or play on which the drama was based.

Spark, Muriel / Christopher Holme, *Die Ballade von Peckham Rye* (1956/6) (ARD/WDR television drama)
Wodehouse, P.G. / Karl Wittlinger, *Blut floß auf Blendings Castle* (1966/7) (SDR television drama)
Wilde, Oscar / Herbert Asmodi, *Lord Arthur Savilles Verbrechen* (1967) (Bavaria Atelia television drama)
Eliot, T.S. / Peter Suhrkamp, *Der Privatsekretär* (1963) (BR television drama)
Watkin, Arthur / Erni Friedmann, *Schönes Weekend, Mr Bennet* (1963) (WDR television drama)
Fry, Christopher / Hans Feist, *Venus im Licht* (1960) (SFB television drama)
Coward, Noel / Peter Beauvais, *Zwischen den Zügen* (1955) (SWF television drama)

2.5 Comics/Heftromane
n.b. All accessed at Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, Leipzig

Abenteuer des fliegenden Reporters Harri Kander; Butler Parker; City Club Roman; Inspektor Percy Brook; John Kling's Abenteuer; Der Landser; Nick Knatterton; Soldaten und Kameraden; SOS Schicksale deutscher Schiffe

2.6 Magazines
n.b. All accessed at Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, Leipzig

Bunte; Hör Zu; Revue; Der Rundfunk; Stern; Das Ufer

2.7 Non-fiction

Andreas-Friedrich, Ruth, *Schauplatz Berlin 1945-1948* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984)
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