

9 The eternal Daughter, Fraulein Cerphal 1965

**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>
Sent: Friday, September 17, 2004 8:00 AM +0100**

DIE ZWEITE HEIMAT: PART 9: THE ETERNAL DAUGHTER; FRAULEIN CERPHAL, 1965

I read somewhere that Parts 9-13 of Die Zweite Heimat were only written after Parts 1-8 had been filmed and that there is a change of mood beginning with this episode. Of course, the stories are all interesting and we want to see how different characters develop and how the different plots and threads unfold, but this episode seemed flatter than the preceding 8, or was it just me? I was less emotionally involved; less moved, perhaps.

Fraulein Cerphal's "story" was less than compelling and somehow her "twenty missing years" were never very plausible to me. There is sadness and melancholy, but I wonder whether these feelings were fully conveyed to the viewer; whether these emotions were felt through the images. The title of the episode is taken from a piece of actual dialogue. Juan purports to read Fraulein Cerphal's character and her past from a pack of cards which he has asked her to cut. Having turned up the Queen of Diamonds he tells her, "You are the eternal daughter", and whilst admitting he has gained his information from observation and questioning, not the cards, he goes on to accuse her of knowing that Herr Gattinger had betrayed Edith [Goldblaum's daughter] and that she had allowed this because she was in love with Gattinger. [Edith was taken to Dachau concentration camp, only 20 kilometres away, where she died.] He adds, "You know to whom your house belongs" and we have already seen her dying father's concern about this. It does not belong to her. However, even if faintly reluctant, by the end of the episode she has arranged to sell the villa to a property development company who are planning to build 150 flats on the site, making her a very rich woman. Assets are seized and sold off! Reitz is depicting through the Cerphal story the history of Germany. There is a skeleton in the Cerphal past. There is a darkness in Germany's twentieth century history which many people try or tried to suppress. It does feel unduly schematic to me.

I was more interested in the way Reitz links scenes and episodes. Elisabeth Cerphal is asked by Juan to cut the cards with her left hand. Her dying father has something wrong with his right hand. It looks like a claw, and in the scene where he begins to write his last will and testament he writes uncertainly with his left hand, whilst the camera has focussed on his useless right hand with all its raised veins showing. Volker brilliantly plays Ravel's Piano Concerto in D major for the left hand only. Perhaps others might like to discuss the significance of this. When Hermann leaves the Conservatoire with his diploma he uses it as a makeshift umbrella. [I noticed a reflection in the piano lid again/see his entrance examination but there was no cheating this time]. In the very next scene we see Fraulein Cerphal on her way to Cerphal Verlag with an umbrella which refuses to close

and is abandoned on a road bridge.

When Alex finds Juan engaged in origami he exclaims, "From a philosophical point of view you're going mad, Juan." Juan certainly becomes the invisible man, as well as the obsessive man. He goes to visit Hermann, sees him engaged in bathing the baby, and vanishes. Hermann only sees a shadow on the wall of the stair-well. He approaches the restaurant where Volker and Clarissa are celebrating the former's concert success with champagne. Mrs. Lichtblau notices him through the window but then he is gone. He is the eternal outsider and loner! One notices how the episode begins and ends with Juan constructing his mosaic of an Indian/Aztec god in the garden [in place of the clef?] whilst wearing his funny, boat-shaped paper hat. He knows that the villa will be torn down but he wishes to finish. There is something pathetic about him. Earlier we had seen him in the foyer of the theatre where Volker is playing. He witnesses Volker's triumph through pushing a door ajar, but then walks disconsolately away. He senses his own failure and his own loneliness.

Hermann has retreated into domesticity but bemoans the fact that no one ever visits him anymore. One senses that things are not quite right between Hermann and his wife, Schnusschen. Three times she asks him whether she and the baby are in his way, and three times he does not answer. She promises to ask again for a fourth time the following day. Hermann does seem, however, perhaps surprisingly, to be quite a good father. As a husband he is less convincing. "Don't worry, I'm fond of you", is a pretty feeble declaration of love.

What of Clarissa meantime? She returns from America where she has had some success in a recording studio and invitations to perform in concerts in Boston and San Francisco, as she corrects her mother. Her hysterical anguish about the damage to her cello in the baggage hold of the plane is moving. The cello "waited 200 years for me." She is still a tortured soul. Her mother's open hypocrisy is almost amusing. Volker, the one-time sex-fiend has become a great pianist and that in her words "changes your feelings". He can stay in her home, and, like Juan before him, is presented with a toothbrush. Volker and Clarissa are presented by Reitz as a very attractive couple, and one wonders whether she will find happiness here. There is an underthread about Dr. Kirchmeier's love for her [present of pearl ear-rings; "You've grown even lovelier in America".] but this must be doomed, even if she does lead the old man on a little.

It is amazing how one can miss things of significance on first or even second viewing. I will return to this in a moment. Part of the plot concerns Fraulein Cerphal's visits to her father's publishing company, now in public hands, in order to retrieve, on her dying father's instructions, a brown envelope and other items from the safe in his locked office, which no one else is allowed to enter, as it turns out. Her first visit is at dead of night, when she manages to set off a burglar alarm and is arrested as a suspected criminal. There is a certain amount of suspense here. What will she find? Will she be discovered? On her second visit she is treated as an honoured guest. There is apparently a contract in existence, granting her father access to his old office for life and also to other members of the

family. The present management are "astonished" but showing true Germanic discipline <vbg> they are supposed never to have gone in to the office. There is some nice by-play where they show themselves to be desperately curious about the contents of the office and its secrets, but pretend not to be so. She opens a photograph album where she upturns a picture of her father in Nazi uniform. We are only given a glimpse as she moves hastily on. There are secrets locked away in German history. It is "a sacrosanct office". Reitz is telling us this. Throughout the episode there is great stress on locked entrances, master keys, keys dropped in puddles [Juan], forced entries and so on. The past, however, cannot help Elisabeth Cerphal. She begs, "Say something father", and then we have a camera shot of her father's empty leather chair. I shall return to that chair, as the film does!!

On her third visit, at night as was the first, she finds her father's war-time pistol wrapped in a cloth. She accidentally discharges it and the bullet would have killed anyone sitting in the chair. The camera hones in on the bullet hole in the back of the chair. I have written in my notes, "She has symbolically killed her father?!" We are given the exact time of this event, because she asks one of the security guards who have rushed to the scene, for the time. She is told 12.30 a.m. I had not realised the significance of this detail, nor had I understood the significance of Frau Ries giving the time of Elisabeth's father's death as 12.25 a.m. Exactly the same time as she fired the pistol!! Elisabeth Cerphal sees the symbolic significance, doesn't she? Watch her face! It was only on my 3rd note-taking viewing that I registered this.

Helga is at the head of the spouting left-wing student protestors who invade the villa. She has continued to torment Stefan by declaring she is pregnant but that the baby is not his. Olga is worried by dreams and female anxieties. Renate descends ever further into cheerful vulgarity!

Now 5 questions:-

1. Immediately after the picture of Elisabeth Cerphal's grandmother is unwrapped on the gravel outside the sanatorium there is a single shot of a boat on a lake under the setting sun. There is no explanation. Has it something to do with the painting? Or is it pointing to some future event? The death of Reinhardt, for instance. Or is it just a shot of a location at the bottom of the neighbouring parkland with no immediate relevance at all? Strange!!
2. Elisabeth Cerphal mentions to her father on his death-bed that Evelyne will sing at the Paris Opera. Is that our Evelyne, the beloved friend of Ansgar? Father Cerphal appears to understand. We did not know he knew her, did we? Perhaps it suggests the interwoven nature of all the lives we have participated in or is a remnant of an old script?
3. Father Cerphal wants the landscape picture on the wall facing him to be replaced by a picture of Elisabeth's grandmother, his mother I take it! "I've looked my fill at it", he says [of the landscape]. There is a shape at the top left of the painting, which looked like a skull to me. Father Cerphal suddenly becomes terrified at the sight of it, cries out, and pulls the sheet over his head. Was he reminded of his own mortality by the sight

of this shape? Does the enormity of death suddenly terrify him or have I misunderstood?

4. When Volker and Clarissa visit the shop where Clarissa's cello is being repaired he asks her about a photo on the wall of her old room. Which photo was it and what is the significance of the question?

5. I did not understand the final dialogue between the Professor and Elisabeth at the Conservatoire. She asks whether he will encourage her further studies. He answers both No and Yes! Can anyone explain?

I hope all the above will help fellow lovers of this film to enjoy, appreciate and understand this episode of the film. If not, the fault is my own.

Ivan Mansley.

**From: "Foerderer, Walter (MED)" <walter.foerderer@med.ge.com>
Sent: Friday, September 17, 2004 2:23 PM +0200**

Here some - hopefully useful - comments to some questions....

2. Is that our Evelyne, the beloved friend of Ansgar?

Yes, it's our Evelyne and Elisabeth Cerphal is her aunt.

3. Does the enormity of death suddenly terrify him or have I misunderstood?

The landscape picture is painted in the style of the "Blaue Reiter" and shows a abstracted landscape and a part of the picture, a hill with some trees, looks as a skull.

Yes, he has definitely fear of death..

4. Which photo was it and what is the significance of the question?

They are talking about a photography of Man Ray showing the back of a woman in the shape of a cello (f-holes)

5. He answers both No and Yes! Can anyone explain?

It's presumably due to the translation that this conversation is not clear enough.

Let me try to analyse it.

In German:

Fraulein Cerphal: "Sie machen mir Mut, ja?"

Professor: "Eigentlich nicht."

Fraulein Cerphal: "Nein?"

Professor: "Eigentlich ja, das heisst nein."

In English (although I do not know how it is dubbed into English):

Fraulein Cerphal: "You encourage me, do you?"

Professor: "Not really."

Fraulein Cerphal: "No?"

Professor: "Actually yes, that means no."

So the "Actually yes" is enforcing her question "No?" and the "that means no" is related to the encouragement.

In fact he says NO.

Regards,

Walter

I am looking forward to see some of you in Munich tomorrow!

From: "Maarten Landzaat" <gijs xs4all.nl>

Sent: Tuesday, September 28, 2004 11:00 PM +0200

I also noticed the keys:

- people with keys are denied access (Juan, Elisabeth)

- people without keys gain themselves access illegally (the philosopher, Helga's club)

which I guess points to the underlying villa-ownership question (which in turn probably points to a general issue).

Queen of diamonds: does it refer to Elisabeth Cerphal's planned geology study?

I also wasn't too terribly excited about this episode. Somehow this detailed character description didn't feel necessary to me. But I can't really explain why.

I liked the music though! The recurring arpeggiated(?) piano piece was beautiful, and the left hand piece by Volker! (the funny 'boo-ba-plink-ploink-stop' piece was less to my taste)

I'm just thinking of the right hands. Were all right hands dead? (Daddy's was paralysed, Volker's did nothing, Elisabeth probably shot her father with her right hand.)

When Juan stands on his head and hands, he holds his hands exactly over the eyes of his mosaic god. Does this mean anything?

What did Gerold Gattinger do in Spain?

Ivan:

> Now 5 questions:-

>

> 1. Immediately after the picture of Elisabeth Cerphal's

> grandmother is

> unwrapped on the gravel outside the sanatorium there is a

- > single shot of a
- > boat on a lake under the setting sun. There is no explanation. Has it
- > something to do with the painting? Or is it pointing to some
- > future event?
- > The death of Reinhardt, for instance. Or is it just a shot of
- > a location at
- > the bottom of the neighbouring parkland with no immediate
- > relevance at all?
- > Strange!!

I don't know, I'm afraid I didn't even notice the scene. (That should teach me to read your intros first!) Another possibility is that it depicts Frau Cerphal's longing to travel?

- > 3. Father Cerphal wants the landscape picture on the wall
- > facing him to
- > be replaced by a picture of Elisabeth's grandmother, his
- > mother I take it!
- > "I've looked my fill at it", he says [of the landscape].
- > There is a shape at
- > the top left of the painting, which looked like a skull to me. Father
- > Cerphal suddenly becomes terrified at the sight of it, cries
- > out, and pulls
- > the sheet over his head. Was he reminded of his own mortality
- > by the sight
- > of this shape? Does the enormity of death suddenly terrify
- > him or have I
- > misunderstood?

I noticed another painting near the door with a skull on it, in a later scene. It was very short, I'll have to look back again.

- > 4. When Volker and Clarissa visit the shop where
- > Clarissa's cello is
- > being repaired he asks her about a photo on the wall of her
- > old room. Which
- > photo was it and what is the significance of the question?

I think there was the famous photograph of a woman's back with cello-like f-holes painted.

I'm not sure about the significance of the question or the entire issue, for that matter.

- > 5. I did not understand the final dialogue between the
- > Professor and
- > Elisabeth at the Conservatoire. She asks whether he will encourage her
- > further studies. He answers both No and Yes! Can anyone explain?

My understanding was that it was just a case of a negative question, where an affirmative answer causes confusion: does the answer confirm the negative, or does it just confirm?

Maarten

From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 30, 2004 11:28 PM +0100

Traffic has been very, very light. Indeed, it hardly seems worth the candle now! All the excitement resides with Heimat 3. Unfortunately there is no English version [subtitles] as yet so I cannot join in.

Maarten's Points:

<When Juan stands on his head and hands, he holds his hands exactly over the eyes of his mosaic god. Does this mean anything?

What did Gerold Gattinger do in Spain?>

Perhaps he does not want the god to see the situation he is in. I cannot answer your last question nor do I remember the reference.

Walter's Reply:

<Yes, it's our Evelyne and Elisabeth Cerphal is her aunt.>
Yes, mea culpa!! I had forgotten their relationship. Silly me!

Ralf's Tiny Detail [Part 8]

<A very late contribution about a tiny detail:> Ralf asks about Juan and the caged, mechanical birds.

<I wonder whether the

cage with the mechanical birds plays a role here - behind it we see Juan and it almost looks towards the end of the scene as if he were caught in that cage - mere accident or intention?>

I turned back to my notes and saw that Juan was staring in a melancholic fashion at the caged mechanical birds on a table just before he goes outside to the lawn and attempts to commit suicide with the rifle. He is shown sitting outside on the steps with the cage and has opened the cage. It was my interpretation that he saw himself as being like a caged bird that cannot open its wings and fly and that suicide is the only means of escape. It thus most probably relates to Juan rather than Hermann.

Lastly I am going to copy below an e-mail I received from the BBC. It has made me very angry. It surely proves that the BBC is "dumbing-down." Heimat and Die Zweite Heimat were "jewels-in-the-crown" on BBC 2's 40th anniversary, and yet now they say Heimat 3 will have no popular appeal. How could they?! Could I urge list members, in particular those who pay the BBC licence fee, as I do, to bombard that organisation with e-mails of protest and complaint at their high-handed, arrogant and short-sighted decision?

COPY

Dear Mr Mansley

Thank you for your further e-mail regarding ?Heimat 3? that was addressed to

my colleague Joanne Fleming. As Joanne is not currently available, I am pleased to resplond on her behalf.

Firstly may I apologise for the delay in getting back to you. However, I was waiting on our research team to get back to me about your enquiry. They have told me that our schedulers considered that there would not be sufficient interest to warrant broadcasting the programme. I understand that this may come as some disappointment to you. However, please be assured that your request for the programme to be shown will be registered for the attention of our schedulers.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact the BBC.

Regards

*Geoffrey Watt
BBC Information*

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/> - World Wide Wonderland

My introduction to Part 10 will follow tomorrow.

Ivan Mansley.

**From: "Raymond Scholz" <rscholz zonix.de>
Sent: Thursday, October 14, 2004 10:56 PM +0200**

· On Sep 17 2004, "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com> wrote:

Ok, I'm breaking the rules again... This time I managed to watch the parts 9 and 10 in a row and there are a few things to add.

> DIE ZWEITE HEIMAT: PART 9: THE ETERNAL DAUGHTER; FRAULEIN CERPHAL, 1965

> Fraulein Cerphal's "story" was less than compelling and somehow her "twenty
> missing years" were never very plausible to me. There is sadness and
> melancholy, but I wonder whether these feelings were fully conveyed to the
> viewer; whether these emotions were felt through the images.

I cannot share this perception because in my eyes Hannelore Hoger plays Elisabeth Cerphal very well. Like her childish behaviour. Remember the scene where she buys the dress, she has seen before and then returns home sitting on the floor like a little child eating chocolates? Her uncertainty, her lack of independence from the father.

> The title of the episode is taken from a piece of actual
> dialogue. Juan purports to read Fraulein Cerphal's character and her

> past from a pack of cards which he has asked her to cut. Having
> turned up the Queen of Diamonds he tells her, "You are the eternal
> daughter", and whilst admitting he has gained his information from
> observation and questioning, not the cards, he goes on to accuse her
> of knowing that Herr Gattinger had betrayed Edith [Goldblaum's
> daughter] and that she had allowed this because she was in love with
> Gattinger. [Edith was taken to Dachau concentration camp, only 20
> kilometres away, where she died.]

Yet another distance of 20. She knew Edith for 20 years, 20 km to Dachau, Elisabeth says that she is missing 20 years and Juan states that Elisabeth's life has stopped 20 years ago.

> He adds, "You know to whom your house belongs" and we
> have already seen her dying father's concern about this. It does not belong
> to her. However, even if faintly reluctant, by the end of the episode she
> has arranged to sell the villa to a property development company who are
> planning to build 150 flats on the site, making her a very rich woman.
> Assets are seized and sold off!

The insert at the beginning of the scene where Elisabeth Cerphal is selling the villa caught my attention: "23. August 1965". I was asking myself why the exact date was given while other inserts restricted to a year. Only very few moments of DZH can be associated with concrete dates (like Kennedy's death). There must be some significance! The only thing I came up with (after some web resarch) was the Hitler-Stalin-Pakt (also known as Molotow-Ribbentrop-Pakt), signed on the 23th of August, 1939.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Molotov-Ribbentrop_Pact> says:

The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, also known as the Hitler-Stalin pact, was a non-aggression treaty between Germany and Russia, or more precisely between the Soviet Union and the Third Reich. It was signed in Moscow on August 23, 1939, by the Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov and the German foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop. The non-aggression treaty lasted until Operation Barbarossa of June 22, 1941, when Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union.

In a secret appendix to the pact, the border states Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania were divided in spheres of interest of the parties, that within a year would injure their sovereignty.

> Reitz is depicting through the Cerphal story the history of
> Germany.

Where is the link to the Cerphal story? I feel there is something

Reitz wanted to say. Two evil parties signing a contract?

- > I was more interested in the way Reitz links scenes and episodes. Elisabeth
- > Cerphal is asked by Juan to cut the cards with her left hand. Her dying
- > father has something wrong with his right hand. It looks like a claw, and in
- > the scene where he begins to write his last will and testament he writes
- > uncertainly with his left hand, whilst the camera has focussed on his
- > useless right hand with all its raised veins showing. Volker brilliantly
- > plays Ravel's Piano Concerto in D major for the left hand only. Perhaps
- > others might like to discuss the significance of this.

I didn't come to any conclusion. The human hands are part of so many allegories that one may find an appropriate explanation for this. But I think...

- > When Hermann leaves the Conservatoire with his diploma he uses it as
- > a makeshift umbrella. [I noticed a reflection in the piano lid
- > again/see his entrance examination but there was no cheating this
- > time]. In the very next scene we see Fraulein Cerphal on her way to
- > Cerphal Verlag with an umbrella which refuses to close and is
- > abandoned on a road bridge.

.... Reitz is simply playing with these pictures and they have no significance other than to be cinematic tricks.

- > He approaches the restaurant where Volker and
- > Clarissa are celebrating the former's concert success with champagne.
- > Mrs.Lichtblau notices him through the window but then he is gone. He is the
- > eternal outsider and loner!

- > Hermann has retreated into domesticity but bemoans the fact that no one ever
- > visits him anymore.

Did you notice the prison-like window to Schnüßchen's and Hermann's room? Hermann as a prisoner in his own home. Well, I've never seen a window like this before, open to the well.

[Mother Lichtblau and Volker]

- > Her mother's open hypocrisy is almost amusing. Volker, the one-time
- > sex-fiend has become a great pianist and that in her words "changes
- > your feelings". He can stay in her home, and, like Juan before him,
- > is presented with a toothbrush.

Great, I already had forgotten about Juan visiting Clarissa's home.

- > Volker and Clarissa are presented by Reitz as a very attractive
- > couple, and one wonders whether she will find happiness here.

If I were Clarissa I'd first convince Volker to get rid of his ridiculous mustache which must hurt her skin and her eyes :-)

- > It is amazing how one can miss things of significance on first or even

> second viewing. I will return to this in a moment. Part of the plot concerns
> Fraulein Cerphal's visits to her father's publishing company, now in public
> hands, in order to retrieve, on her dying father's instructions, a brown
> envelope and other items from the safe in his locked office, which no one
> else is allowed to enter, as it turns out. Her first visit is at dead of
> night, when she manages to set off a burglar alarm and is arrested as a
> suspected criminal.

Yet another detail accompanying the picture of mortality and decay of this episode. Several times (I only remember this scene with the policemen) the name "Cerphal" (emphasis on the first syllable) is pronounced as "Zerfall" (emphasis on the second syllable - decay, decomposition).

> There is a certain amount of suspense here. What will she find? Will
> she be discovered? On her second visit she is treated as an honoured
> guest. There is apparently a contract in existence, granting her
> father access to his old office for life and also to other members
> of the family. The present management are "astonished" but showing
> true Germanic discipline <vbg> they are supposed never to have gone
> in to the office.

And if they would have done, they'd have queued up before...

> Helga is at the head of the spouting left-wing student protestors who invade
> the villa.

Jumping over the closed gate while Alex has already started a philosophical reasoning about it. What a difference...

Cheers, Ray