

# Heim@t

An e-mail discussion on Edgar Reitz' film 'Heimat'.

31 October 2003 - 15 April 2004



Theresia Sikkens-van der Mey: "Heimat is the most beautiful film I have ever seen. I first watched it on TV in the mid eighties (thanks to my mother) and since then it has become part of my life. I can't say how grateful I am to you (Edgar) for making this masterpiece."

Banty First Heimat moment: "In the mid eighties I saw a beautiful scene on TV. A pilot threw red carnations from a plane. They fell into the white snow and were picked up by people in a little village. About twenty years later, in June 2004, I stayed in this little village myself (together with my husband and daughter) at Gasthaus Molz. Heimat has come even closer this way."

Raymond Scholz: "Reitz' series heavily drew my attention towards fine arts in general at the age of 18. More than ten years later, that's me at the place where I read and wrote most of the contributions to the collective Heimat viewing and discussing experience with ongoing excitement about the Heimat series."

Thomas Hönemann: "Lieber Herr Reitz, zur Vollendung der Trilogie gratuliere ich Ihnen von Herzen. Vielen Dank für die schönen Stunden, die Sie mir und meiner Frau durch Ihre Filme geschenkt haben. Ich wünsche Ihnen für die Zukunft alles Gute, vor allem Gesundheit und Zufriedenheit, aber auch dass die Quelle Ihrer Kreativität nie versiegen wird."



Susan Biedron: "I first heard about Heimat in 1995 from someone in my adult German class. I received the videos as a Christmas gift and have been a fan ever since! Some of the Heimat and DZH characters are just like my relatives!"

Jack Woolven writes: "Ich habe Heimat zuerst 1984 in England gesehen und wurde sofort begeistert, nicht nur von der Geschichte, sondern auch von der Kunst des Filmmachers, Edgar Reitz. Heimat 2 habe ich in der Schweiz gesehen und, da ich dann die Geschichte in Deutsch folgen konnte, war das Vergnügen mindestens doppelt so gross. Ich freue mich nun sehr die Fortsetzung in 'Heimat 3' zu sehen. Herr Reitz, herzlichen Dank für die wunderschönen Stunden, die Sie uns mit Ihrer Vision geschenkt haben."

Wolfgang Flotigraf: "echter Koblenzer Schängel seit 1949, mit meiner Heimat aufs Engste verbunden weil mindestens einmal im Jahr wieder "zu Hause". Seit 1978 Ingenieur in Needham, bei Boston. Fan seit 1985 weil meine Eltern mir damals Heimat auf dem ganz neuen VHS Band schickten. Die Parallelen zu unserer Familie sind unglaublich."

Walter L. Foerderer: "Heimat habe ich bei der Erstaussstrahlung im Deutschen Fernsehen 1984 gesehen. Die Charaktere, das Thema und die filmische Umsetzung durch Edgar Reitz haben mich sofort gefesselt. Auch DZH, obwohl anfangs nicht unmittelbar zugänglich, fand mein höchstes Interesse, wohl auch wegen meinem Interesse für Neue Musik und Jazz. Auf die Fortsetzung mit Heimat3 bin ich äusserst gespannt."

Ivan Mansley: "Give Mr.Reitz my greetings and I wish him every success with his new film. If Heimat3 rivals either of the first two it will be a great work indeed."

ReindeR Rustema: "The past 8 years it has been a pleasure to bring people together around 'Heimat'. It seems that many have found a virtual 'second Heimat' in cyberspace where they exchange ideas they can not express off-line because they know no other people who have seen these wonderful series. Let us hope that theatrical showings and DVDs will give everyone around the world access to it in the next decades."



## Contents

The viewing took place according to this schedule.

31 October 2003	Heimat part 1. Fernweh (1919 - 1928)
14 November 2003	Heimat part 2. Die mitte der Welt (1928 - 1933)
28 November 2003	Heimat part 3. Weihnacht wie noch nie (1935)
12 December 2003	Heimat part 4. Reichshöhenstrasse (1938)
26 December 2003	no Heimat showing because of the holidays
9 January 2004	Heimat part 5. Auf und davon und zurück (1938 - 1939)
23 January 2004	Heimat part 6. Heimatfront (1943)
6 February 2004	Heimat part 7. Die Liebe der Soldaten (1944)
20 February 2004	Heimat part 8. Der Amerikaner (1945 - 1947)
5 March 2004	Heimat part 9. Hermännchen (1955 - 1956)
19 March 2004	Heimat part 10. Die Stolzen Jahre (1967)
2 April 2004	Heimat part 11. Das Fest der Lebenden und der Toten (1982)

After the viewing of Heimat, the viewing of die Zweite Heimat took place, between 16 April 2004 and 12 November 2004.

**Date: Fri, 31 Oct 2003 06:57:48 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

HEIMAT Part 1. FERNWEH [ The Call of Faraway Places 1919-1928 ]

My video tapes had not been touched since their original recording over 17 years ago. Would the film be alright? No need to worry! There was the familiar pounding music as Edgar Reitz's epic began to unfurl before my eyes. I quickly came to realise that the tapes have lasted much better than my memory. I had forgotten most of the detail but the story quickly captured me.

Much has been made, I think, of Reitz's ability to recreate and convince us of the reality of his scenes through the accumulation of small detail. And it was all there in the depiction of the Simon household, Schabbach and the Hunsruck region. The particularity of things. The hunk of bread, the bucket, the cart-wheel, women watching in doorways. What struck me even more, however, was the use of symbols and for want of a better word the use of surrealism. For instance, the apparition of the dead soldier by the fire that Paul Simon sees and no one else does. It speaks to him: " Hello Paul. See my white robe. I have a white robe like an angel. All soldiers go to heaven and get a white robe." Wishful thinking! What Paul Simon would like to believe? How did fellow viewers interpret this? It certainly conveyed to me, in a way that realism could not, the horrors and strangeness that Paul had experienced whilst fighting as a soldier, which set him apart from his family and the life back home. Who was the apparition? The angel of death? He had some very reassuring words, however. "Down on earth as you all know there's high and low German but in heaven, as you'd expect they speak the Hunsruck dialect." The comforts of heimat for eternity.

As for symbols consider the fly paper and the release of the fly? The most vivid symbol is surely the trap set for the pine-marten at the end of the episode. The camera focuses on it as it lies in the puddle and the credits roll over it. Is the notion of "heimat" the trap which has ensnared Paul Simon but from which he escapes responding to the call of faraway places? There is much to say about this, I think. Notice the framing of the episode.

At the beginning a man walks into a village. At the end he walks out of it. A lone man. An enigma! We are no more prepared for this than his family and the other characters. Or are we? Viewers should consider the huge emphasis Reitz gives to the effect of the 1914-18 War on his characters, the village, the nation. Count them up.

Consider the use of colour and its significance or lack of it.

One of the things I had forgotten is Reitz's habit of juxtaposing scenes of near farce with very moving scenes of great intensity. For instance, Eduard's scheme to unveil the memorial is treated comically in a sense and is then followed by the sight of the baker from Simmern, driven mad by grief for the loss of his three sons in the war. The central and most important scene for me was the meeting between Appollonia and Paul in the Rhineland town and her challenge to him never to return to Schabbach. He is unable to break free as yet. There is much in the dialogue which focuses all the themes of this episode. Armand "was so far away from home". " I am 20 now. Must I pay for ever because there was a war." " You came back 3 years ago , but you still aren't at home here." " It's an evil village. Like all the evil villages out there." A magnificent sequence which I found profoundly moving, far surpassing the soap-opera-like elements and almost completely forgotten by me.

I hope my words will get you all watching and even more important discussing what you have seen. Please feel free to disagree with me but do it gently.

My background was the teaching of literature but I am not an academic nor do I know much about the technicalities of film making and the film industry.

If you feel like introducing an episode please let me know. I have had no volunteers yet but I live in hope! Anyway happy viewing.

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Sat, 1 Nov 2003 01:24:53 +0100**  
**From: "Maarten Landzaat" <gijs xs4all.nl>**

Hi,

I just finished viewing Fernweh, which I found fascinating again. Thanks Ivan for getting me to dig up the tapes! I viewed an old WDR broadcast without subtitles. Following the Hunsrucker platt was quite difficult, so I looked up some parts on <http://www.erfilm.de/h1/frame.html>.

I started thinking of the word "fernweh" which (I think) means "longing for the far", but the words literally mean "far" and "pain", which is the opposite, but then again not, since longing is a kind of pain. I found many examples of both the joy and pain of the far:

The longing/far:

- Paul reaching out to the world with his radio
- Paul's popularity with the girls, partly due to his coming from far
- "pilots are the real heroes"
- The plane flying
- Paul and Apollonia (Apollonia moving away farther and farther)
- Paul leaving the village
- Chocolate

The pain/far:

- Eduard reading the newspaper aloud (bad news from far)
- Paul obviously hurt by what happened to him in the war
- The entire village hurt by the war (as Ivan pointed out)
- Throwing stones at the jewish shop
- Apollonia being cast out of the community because she got pregnant by a french soldier.

Some other details:

When Paul came, Paul was sitting against the wooden pole, surrounded by half the village. When Paul left, Maria was sitting against the same pole, with nobody around her (except Marie-Goot), and only a messy spilled mug on the table.

I like Ivan's parallel of Paul and the marten (sp?): both came and went quickly, destroyed a live here and there, and couldn't be caught by the village.

I didn't understand the (or a) meaning or significance of the dead woman in the woods. The only thing that caught my attention was that Paul acted very disturbed. Anybody any ideas on that?

I'm looking forward to learn about your observations!

Maarten Landzaat

**Date: Sat, 1 Nov 2003 19:13:05 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

I found your analysis of the word " fernweh " very illuminating, Maarten,..the joy and the pain, the longing. When Paul leaves the village his face is set. We are not shown his inner turmoil but he is leaving his wife and family, his heimat, his everything. For who knows what? Reitz reveals to me a man of determination who hides his inner feelings. Picking up on the radio hobby I was very struck by the sense of wonderment the villagers show when they hear the service from Cologne cathedral direct on their picnic. Also at the end of the episode in the attic we see the dusty remains of radio apparatus and Paul gives them a wistful glance. He had advanced the idea of building a transmitter as his reason for

not leaving Schabbach when Appollonia prompted him to do so on their train journey. Either the transmitter was a trap which had kept him in Schabbach for too long or the demands of domesticity had prevented him from developing his contacts with faraway places and there was no alternative but to leave. I must confess I was shocked by Paul Simon's apparent callousness and cold-blooded calculation in walking out on his family. Contrast the erotic love making and proposal on the edge of the woods earlier. What a complicated piece of work is a man, Reitz appears to be saying. Many years ago now I saw a play at our National Theatre in London by Alan Ayckbourne, whose name I now forget, in which the father of a young family slips out of his child's birthday party and is never seen again. Even tho' one knew from the reviews that it was going to happen you somehow never actually saw him go. Very clever staging. Of no real relevance, of course, as Paul Simon makes no attempt to be furtive in his departure but no one knows his real intentions.

As for the dead woman in the woods my take on it was that it perhaps signified the moral decay of those years. Eduard had earlier been reading of the murder of a shopkeeper in the locality and now this. We learn she was Jewish, don't we, and that she had been shot in the back of the head. Reitz seems to focus on the way that politics controls the investigation and it is ludicrous. Talk about prejudiced and bumbling incompetence! Glassisch gives some voting figures and the chief suspect becomes someone who voted the wrong way. Police work and justice perhaps are perverted by politics in this era.

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Sat, 1 Nov 2003 14:08:49 -0600**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Maarten, Ivan and all,

Everytime I watch a Heimat chapter, I notice new things. As far as Fernweh - I have an Austrian friend who uses this word when she is tired of working and hasn't had a vacation in a while - for her it means she has longing to travel.

I had not watched this series in about 2 years or more. I was trying to get some meaning out of the flies that Ivan mentioned - and one thing that struck me this time was how the town treats Glassich (sp?). He comments that if he had died in Flanders and his name was on the war memorial, he would be treated with respect. I can understand considering the times, why the townspeople treated Appollonia as an outcast, but why Glassich, who served the Fatherland? This brings me to the instance when Glassich extends his hand to Paul, but Paul grabs a fly off the flycatcher. What does this mean?

I started out liking Paul, but then when he leaves his wife and small children, my feelings change. Of course, in the later episodes when he visits, Paul is a real jerk. Yet, Paul is about the only one besides Maria that treats Glassich with respect. Perhaps because they were both in the war. My only thought is that Reitz shows that once a soldier has served in a war but comes back injured or dysfunctional, society has no more use for him. ( A fact proven again and again by history.) What do other people think?

I also think that right before Paul leaves, he looks at his sleeping wife and sees the fly on her - it seems this contributes to his leaving.

The other thing that struck me is that when Paul first arrives home from the war, the first thing his father says to him is to tell him about the neighbor's boy who died in Russia. What a "first" thing to say! Does this make Paul feel guilty - is that why he imagines seeing his former friend?

Susan Biedron

**Date: Sat, 1 Nov 2003 15:54:12 EST**  
**Subject: Re: heimat123: Re: fern weh**

The Cassell's German-English/English-German Dictionary gives the translation of Fernweh as being "n. wanderlust". This is a good translation. My feeling is that Edgar has used this segment of Heimat to set the scene, to give us a detailed description who's who, what's what, where everyone is coming from, and a little bit about their inter-reactions with another. It's turn of the century small village, central Europe. Paul had enough, and returning after the war it hadn't changed, he was bored, and left....

I sympathize with him totally. My situation is very similar. I left a small village in Illinois in 1965, and return occasionally to check in, but it's still the same too. Nothing going on, same people, same clicques, same town dodo, same big cheese in town, very very similar to Schabbach. Not to change the subject, but since it's a continuation, Heimat 2 has more of the same parallels for me with Herman. But we all know that this is really Edgar himself, his life story - a great guy that could not find what he was looking for in his home village, and the wanderlust was the only way out. I personally don't think that Edgar was using the flies as any sort of symbols other than one way to show that Paul bored, still not a happy camper, and that everything at home was basically unchanged. It is an interesting topic, however, and I will ask Edgar next time I have the opportunity - the flies are interesting that he picked them.

Joel  
Gemünden, Germany

**Date: Sun, 2 Nov 2003 16:21:16 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

Susan and list members,

Just like you, Susan, every time I look at a scene from Heimat I notice something different. It's probably true with all films in a sense. Scenes and images flick by and we cannot reflect on them all in our cinema seat but Reitz does repay attention, doesn't he? Some of your very insightful comments made me go back and have a look at the video again. You will probably think my remarks about the flies and the fly-paper fanciful to say the least. Like you I noticed how Paul refuses Glasisch's preferred hand and looks up to the fly-paper. What is Reitz telling us? What is the significance? I was puzzled too. Earlier after urinating in the yard Paul seems to see the fly-paper in colour in a vision. It is very striking. The paper is a bright yellow and the container is blue. The camera dwells on it!! The paper is covered in flies. When Glasisch arrives there has been some discussion about his skin disease, I think, from the mustard gas used during the War. Paul, on one level, may simply wish to avoid contact but he rises, and with an almost demented look in his eyes plucks a fly from the paper and blows it from his finger and thumb. The fly was a prisoner and now it has been given its freedom. Maybe I'm talking nonsense but Paul [ and Glasisch ] is a prisoner and he releases himself and Glasisch from the trivia around them or from the imprisonment of being soldiers and the legacy of the war. Later, as Susan writes, we see a fly crawling over the sleeping Maria's hand, over her wedding ring finger. The fly is still there. It has not found freedom nor has Paul. So he must leave. Did you notice the music start up as Paul views his old radio apparatus in the loft?

I am writing this after my Sunday lunch during which I imbibed a bottle of wine and a couple of cognacs. I looked at bits of the tape again. The final scenes where Maria knows that Paul has gone and is not at an exhibition of radio parts in Mannheim made me cry at the sadnesses of life. Alcohol-induced? Maybe. But also Reitz's skill.

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Sun, 2 Nov 2003 17:56:11 +0100**  
**From: "Maarten Landzaat" <gijs xs4all.nl>**

Just a thought:

Maybe Reitz just tries to show us that Paul is very aware of the "trap" notion (fly trap, marten trap, village/marriage trap)? Since Paul doesn't say much, we are visually informed about this awareness?

I was deeply moved as well by Maria's grief at the end. She somehow knew it all along, but this doesn't make it easier for her to accept.

Maarten

**Date: Sun, 2 Nov 2003 13:36:12 -0600**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Ivan, Maarten and all, (answers after text)

Ivan's comments:

>> Paul, on one level, may simply wish to avoid contact but he  
>> rises, and with an almost demented look in his eyes plucks a fly from the  
>> paper and blows it from his finger and thumb. The fly was a prisoner and now  
>> it has been given its freedom. Maybe I'm talking nonsense but Paul [ and  
>> Glasisch ] is a prisoner and he releases himself and Glasisch from the  
>> trivia around them or from the imprisonment of being soldiers and the legacy  
>> of the war.

I like this explanation - and I did not notice the fly-paper in color.

Maarten's comment:

>> Just a thought:  
>> Maybe Reitz just tries to show us that Paul is very aware of the "trap" notion  
>> (fly trap, marten trap, village/marriage trap)? Since Paul doesn't say much,  
>> we are visually informed about this awareness?

Paul is indeed very quiet. He doesn't seem to say what he thinks, except with Appolonia. The "traps" seem to be a good devise. I have never had any type of film course, so I'm guessing here - but these explanations sound good to me. Paul's family is not exactly communicative - but neither was my family (100% German ancestry), so this is probably a German thing.

Ivan:

>> I am writing this after my Sunday lunch during which I imbibed a bottle of  
>> wine and a couple of cognacs.

Zum Wohl! :)

>> I looked at bits of the tape again. The final  
>> scenes where Maria knows that Paul has gone and is not at an exhibition of  
>> radio parts in Mannheim made me cry at the sadnesses of life.  
>> Alcohol-induced? Maybe. But also Reitz's skill.

It is sad and the village could be seen as a trap. Yet the townspeople love their village - there's a scene where they are singing about their "Heimat" - and unfortunately I can't remember right now where it occurs. (Is it the weaving scene?) I like the village - to me it has a nice feeling and I would like to walk it's streets. It's nostalgic - but if I lived there everyday, I would probably have a different feeling!

Susan

**Date: Mon, 03 Nov 2003 00:24:41 +0100**  
**From: Raymond Scholz <rscholz zonix.de>**

· "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com> wrote:

> Also at the end of the episode in the attic we see the dusty  
> remains of radio apparatus and Paul gives them a wistful glance.

I was surprised seeing all the things covered with dust - yet another detail I never noticed before.

- > He had advanced the idea of building a transmitter as his reason for
- > not leaving Schabbach when Appollonia prompted him to do so on their
- > train journey. Either the transmitter was a trap which had kept him
- > in Schabbach for too long or the demands of domesticity had
- > prevented him from developing his contacts with faraway places and
- > there was no alternative but to leave.

I like your first explanation very much.

Yet another thing about faraway places: Schabbach may be the centre of the universe but during the first episode we must get the impression that all interesting things, all advance takes place outside Schabbach. Eduard's ongoing announcements from the newspaper, the radio broadcasts from far away, the dance hall in Simmern, and so on. Only Paul can imagine to leave, the others don't. And, btw, the centre of the universe is the only place not moving :-)

Cheers and good night, Ray

**Date: Sun, 02 Nov 2003 23:46:10 +0100**  
**From: Raymond Scholz <rscholz zonix.de>**

I think primarily "Fernweh" is just the opposite of "Heimweh" in a technically way, abusing the German language. But over the years "Fernweh" became exactly the meaning you describe, f.e. when talking about holiday destinations.

Cheers, Ray

**Date: Sun, 02 Nov 2003 23:54:47 +0100**  
**From: Raymond Scholz <rscholz zonix.de>**

"Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com> wrote:

- > The other thing that struck me is that when Paul first arrives home from the
- > war, the first thing his father says to him is to tell him about the
- > neighbor's boy who died in Russia. What a "first" thing to say!

For me this cold welcome by his father should be a clarification of Paul's duty to work at his father's smithy and on the fields again. There's no time to work up the things Paul must have seen during the war. Very harsh indeed, but impressive. And yet another brick in the wall that makes Paul think he's not belonging to Schabbach anymore.

- > Does this make Paul feel guilty - is that why he imagines seeing his
- > former friend?

I don't think so.

Cheers, Ray

**Date: Mon, 03 Nov 2003 00:07:43 +0100**  
**From: Raymond Scholz <rscholz zonix.de>**

"Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com> wrote:

- > Much has been made, I think, of Reitz's ability to recreate and convince us
- > of the reality of his scenes through the accumulation of small detail.

For the first thirty minutes acting (and dialect of some actors) and scene appears somewhat "wooden" to me. Maybe that's because of the age of Heimat (celebrating its 20th birthday next year...) - but then it was gone. Usually I stick to these things for the whole film and forget about following the plot. But somehow Reitz convinced me not to do so - which is a miracle...

- > For instance, the apparition of the dead soldier by the fire that
- > Paul Simon sees and no one else does. It speaks to him: " Hello
- > Paul. See my white robe. I have a white robe like an angel.

I saw an white angel later when sheet was lifted up to the sky during the unveiling of the memorial.

- > The most vivid symbol is surely the trap set for the pine-marten at
- > the end of the episode. The camera focuses on it as it lies in the
- > puddle and the credits roll over it. Is the notion of "heimat" the
- > trap which has ensnared Paul Simon but from which he escapes
- > responding to the call of faraway places?

A trap Hermann will be caught in years later?

Cheers, Ray

**Date: Mon, 3 Nov 2003 17:32:38 +0100**  
**From: heimat hoenemann.de (Thomas\_Hönemann)**

Dear Heimat-Fans all over the world, dear Reinder, Ivan, Maarten, Susan, Raymond and Joel (special regards!),

Many thanks for all your enlightening comments about Fernweh, the first part of Heimat. It was very interesting to follow the very deep discussion of the last days.

Today I want to post my contribution referring to some thoughts you brought up in the last mails. Please excuse my English which sometimes may be poor and hard to understand, I will do my best.

The first part, Fernweh, meets the center of the whole topic of the Film, that is Heimat, a word that can not be translated into any other language in an adequate way, so I will go on using it. Edgar Reitz once said that the feeling of having an Heimat can not rise before having left the home, the Heimat. And leaving home is characteristic for the people from the Hunsrück: in any time, especially during the 19th and 20th century, people left the Hunsrück because this very agricultural region was weak of economic structures and couldn't stand the changing of economical structures from the agricultural sector to the industrial and services sector (see the theories of Jean Fourastiè). So the Heimat could not feed all of their children anymore - and for this reason many of them left. So nowadays lots of Hunsrücker have relatives in the Ruhrgebiet, the U. S. and even Brasilia (Matto Grosso) (that is what Maria even will explain in some of the following parts). Talking about the "Geschichten aus den Hunsrückdörfern" (1980/1981), which was the project that built the basis for Heimat (or even can be seen as the documentary alter ego of Heimat), Reitz said: This documentary shows people who are living in the Hunsrück and did not leave their Heimat (yet). The Series [Heimat] will show, that almost all people are going to leave their Heimat. (see <http://www.fdk-berlin.de/arsenal/text2000/009dokument.html>).

Some of you wrote about the first parts title: Fernweh. I really agree with Raymonds thought: we will be able to understand this word best by looking at the opposite: Heimweh, the longing for home, Heimat. Pauls feelings are different from that: he disapproves his Heimat - possibly without being aware of that or having concrete reasons for it. But he has one thing in mind: "I will do something very special and I won't stop before I am done" (this is what he tells Maria while assembling the radio). Her answer is: "You are already doing it!" which characterizes Maria's narrow drawn horizon not longing out above

the villages borders. Paul instead has the feeling that he can't realize his dreams and targets in the (mentally) strong tightened Hunsrück borders. The radio indeed is a symbol for his longing to the far, and especially Apollonia is, the girl that does not seem to fit in the peoples expectations of how somebody has to look like and behave. She has the courage to leave, and this way Paul loses his only brother in mind and his first love. She sees through Paul, who seems to be absent with his thoughts for so many times: "Anyway, Paul, you are different from the other people around." ... "Paul, now you are back from the war since three years now, and you are still not home again." (taken from the scene at the Deutsches Eck in Koblenz). Shurely the fact that Apolonia has the courage to leave intensifies Pauls longing and makes his urge to leave more concrete. Nevertheless - before leaving he follows the traditions and expectations of the others again by supporting his father, marrying and founding a family. Besides: even Eduard and Pauline are longing to the far. Pauline takes the step out of the village by moving to the "big city" (Simmern) and becoming a business-woman, while Eduard tries to move the wide world (represented by Lucie, the girl "aus den besten Kreisen der Reichshauptstadt") into the Hunsrück. Without wanting to say too much about the following films, one day, when Paul got back from the U. S., Eduard will express his complete agreement, sympathy and even admiration for Paul having done this step, having left the "poor Hunsrückvillage", explicitly.

The function of the scene where Paul finds the body of the dead woman is not clear to me, either. In fact Reitz and his co-writer, Peter Steinbach, lived in the Hunsrück while writing the plot and did very intensive researches in newspaper archives and other chronicals to look for authentic facts they could integrate in their story. The murder of the woman relates to a series of murders which took place in the Hunsrück in the 1920th. So this dead woman is no fictive element but a historical detail. But the question is: why does Paul find her, and why does he get so upset we will never see him again throughout all the film? Sure, finding somebody dead will leave nobody of us in complete coolness - but maybe this experience even is just "another brick in the wall" (I like this Pink Floyd-methaphor used by Raymond very much - and it fits) that makes Paul (unconsciously) deny his home. (I even asked Edgar Reitz for the meaning of this detail, I will keep you informed if there are news wich can get this topic straight.)

Another detail that was discussed is the meaning of the color-shot of the yellow fly-trap. To understand this we should have a look of the philosophy of Edgar Reitz and his cameraman, Gernot Roll, concerning the using of color-material (all following information are taken from a documentary which is to see at the german video-release by absolut-medien on the last tape). Generally the use of color and black and white-material was one of the most discussed topics after the first broadcasting of Heimat in 1984. Reitz and Roll decided genereally to use black and white, because they thought color had no real relevance in people's memories. (Maybe we can understand this by thinking of our own historical memory, e. g. Hitler and WW2, which is often based on the impressions of old black and white films.) They decided to use color only while capturing impressions which they thought of that they would be remembered in color, for example the fiery iron, easter-eggs, the red post-car or the landscape - and: the fly trap. I myself can remember exactly this dirty yellow of fly-traps hanging around in my grandma's kitchen on their farm. So for me this color-shot completely fits in the concept. Reitz said about this discussion, that the most complicated theories were created of an aspect he and Roll did not spend much preparation on, often they just decided right before filming which material to use. Nevertheless: this color-shot gets a special emphasis because of the symbolical meaning of the trap.

So, this is i for today. Feel very friendly invited to visit my Heimat-Webpages on <http://home.t-online.de/home/th.hoenemann/heimat/index.htm> wich I already introduced to you last year (if the link doesn't work copy it and paste it into your browser's adress-line).

I am really looking forward to the following contributions because we all can never stop learning about this great, great film.

Best regards to you all, heimatlische Grüfle,

Thomas Hönemann

34 years old, 2 children of 3 and 1 year, teacher, Heimat-fan from Rietberg, Germany

<http://home.t-online.de/home/th.hoenemann/home.htm> (general section)

<http://home.t-online.de/home/th.hoenemann/heimat/index.htm> (Heimat-section)

**Date: Wed, 5 Nov 2003 22:00:30 +0100**  
**From: "Theresia en Martijn" <theresia\_martijn\_onetelnet.nl>**

Dear all,

First of all I've to confess that I didn't watch the first Heimat episode this weekend because I was away. And I still haven't had a chance to watch. Anyway I've seen the whole film many times so I suppose I can also give my reaction by everything I remember.

I've noticed that the kitchen scene seems a little too long and a little too boring for some people, it's a scene where people can get stuck and then they don't bother to watch the rest of the movie. They've no idea what they miss... The first time I was confronted with Heimat was on Belgium TV (they broadcasted it before the VPRO in Holland I think) I must have been 14 years old. I had never seen such a beautiful thing before and 18 years later it is still the best thing I've ever seen. After watching the whole film it feels to me like you've lived a whole life, that's how real Heimat is. It was only one or two years later that my parents took me to the Hunsrück because I wanted to see whether or not I could find some spots I'd seen in the film. It gave such a special feeling to drive through these villages but I didn't recognise anything and the tourist information couldn't help us either.

I always watched Heimat with Dutch subtitles and I thought I would know most of the lines by heart but the last time I watched Heimat it was without subtitles and I've to say it is VERY hard to understand the dialect. The good thing about watching without subtitles is that you start to hear more and new things, words they hadn't translated. Once a German man told me that some actors have a Hunsrücker dialect which sound very made up. Lucky for me I can't hear that difference between real and not so real dialect I suppose it could spoil some of the power of Heimat for me.

How weird the idea that your son comes home after several years in war and that there's no hug, no intimate way of saying hello just going back to normal life, helping his father. Maybe this was the only way for people to live on, the war could have been too confronting otherwise. Of course Katherina has her own way of happiness about Paul's return, of course the kitchen is full of people who are all curious to see him but they all talk about different things. Not really about Paul, they talk about themselves, their village, their world. Already in the first scene you can see that Paul doesn't belong in that world, the gap is too big.

The soldier by the fire speaks his Hunsrücker dialect, he speaks the words which we'll hear again in the last episode, at the cemetery the farmer uses the same words and at the end we'll hear the same text in the song sung by the choir. So Reitz has really created a circle. I really like that.

A thing which I never understood in the first episode is that Marie-Goot speaks about Glasisch Karl like he is someone she just knows, later we'll find out that in fact he's her son (I think the family tree makes it clear in the last episode)! Mäthes-Pat is her husband but he isn't the Glasisch's father. I always wonder if not making this clear was done on purpose by Reitz.

I always thought that Paul does avoid Glasisch's hand and the only way to do that without being too rude is to concentrate on the fly-paper. Glasisch does the same and right at that point you see a bond between the two man, they're so different but both soldiers with their own horrible experiences. Isn't it painful that Eduard who always speaks about planes and pilots doesn't get the chance to fly, and that his brother Paul gets this chance in stead. I always feel so sorry for him! Eduard would have loved it so much. And in stead of enjoying this huge opportunity (imagine flying over the Hunsrück in the early twenties!) Paul starts too shout that he wants to land because he's trapped in an illusion (he thinks he sees Appollonia). How must Eduard have felt after hearing this!

It's difficult to decide what to think of Paul. Should he have stayed with his wife and family? Should he have married Maria anyway? Appollonia was the one he loved but he never made that really clear. When he was lying between Maria's legs in the wood what else could he do then to ask her to marry him? Maybe he thought that she could and would join him in his desires and dreams. When Maria is

young she doesn't seem the conservative woman we'll later see. A woman who doesn't dare to make changes, not even to go on holiday with Pauline. I think her mother in law travelled more and further than she did! Even on Hermann's wedding in München she is not there because her world isn't bigger than Schabbach. Paul certainly is an enigma, a man who intrigues people because he's so mysterious in a way... Later on he is so very different, so open and joyful, so American. It's hard to believe that this is the same person as the one who's left in the first episode.

That's what I like so much about Heimat and also what makes it so real. Real people are playing here, they're not good or bad ones, they have good and bad sides like everyone. Could it be that it feels so real because so many amateurs played a part? I once heard that Katherina was an amateur actor as well. Could anyone tell me whether this is true? If she was then she must have played her own self, absolutely brilliant she is in every scene.

I like the paradox between feeling safe in such an idyllic little village, at the same time I know (because I was born in one) how horrible it can be to live there, people always know about every step you take and even worse... they talk about it! A town or city protects you much more although a little village has the image of being protecting.

It's great to get the chance to read all the different ideas people have about the scenes. It's such a pleasure to discuss things, to learn and to think about! Of course I knew that there were more people who love this film as much as I do but to be in touch with each other is really special! I can't say how much I enjoyed (already) to read all your mails. And, Ivan, what a brilliant prologue did you write!

So let's go on!!!

Theresia

**Date: Thu, 6 Nov 2003 10:57:25 -0600**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Theresia and all,

At 22:00 +0100 5/11/03, Theresia wrote:

> I always watched Heimat with Dutch subtitles and I thought I would know most  
> of the lines by heart but the last time I watched Heimat it was without  
> subtitles and I've to say it is VERY hard to understand the dialect.

Yes it is very hard to understand the dialect - I can understand "Hoch Deutsch" very well but the Hunsruck dialect is like another language. However . . . I have noticed that the more I listen, I actually pick up a few dialect words here and there. This also happened when I visited my great grandmother's village in the Swabisch Alb - people were very careful to speak in high German to me, but every once in awhile slipped into Swabisch -

> The good thing about watching without subtitles is that you start to hear more  
> and new things, words they hadn't translated.

Also true for the version I have with English subtitles - not everything is translated!

> How weird the idea that your son comes home after several years in war and  
> that there's no hug, no intimate way of saying hello just going back to  
> normal life, helping his father.

Although the "welcome" Paul received bothered me also, I think this is "typisch Deutsch." I grew up in a German American family and they were loving but not affectionate. Other people I knew with German parents said they experienced the same thing. No one hugged! Of course it is probably different in Germany today.?? I was always told "don't cry!" - one was supposed to be very stoical. Then I married into a Polish family - everyone was always hugging and crying - what a cultural shock!

> Already in the first scene you can see that Paul  
> doesn't belong in that world, the gap is too big.<<

good point!

> A thing which I never understood in the first episode is that Marie-Goot  
> speaks about Glasisch Karl like he is someone she just knows, later we'll  
> find out that in fact he's her son (I think the family tree makes it clear  
> in the last episode)! Mäthes-Pat is her husband but he isn't the Glasisch's  
> father. I always wonder if not making this clear was done on purpose by  
> Reitz

I thought this was strange too! One gets the impression at the beginning that Glasisch is alone, that he has no family.

> Isn't it painful that Eduard who always speaks about planes and pilots  
> doesn't get the chance to fly, and that his brother Paul gets this chance in  
> stead. I always feel so sorry for him!

I think Eduard was jealous of Paul and the attention he received. Eduard keeps interrupting the "welcome" party with reading excerpts from the newspaper. The newspaper is the only way Eduard can experience the world at this point. Then when he says "Pilots are the true heroes" -- is he suggesting Paul is not a hero? A little sibling rivalry perhaps?

> It's difficult to decide what to think of Paul. Should he have stayed with  
> his wife and family? Should he have married Maria anyway? Appollonia was the  
> one he loved but he never made that really clear.

Marie-Goot looks out the window and comments on Maria and Appollonia - something like "One has money the other is pretty." Is Maria not supposed to be pretty? I think she is beautiful, more so than Appollonia. Although I understand why men would be attracted to someone different. Comments? Reitz shows in Heimat what happened often in Germany and other European countries - men would just leave their family and go to America. We have 3 cases of it on both sides of my family.

Paul certainly is an enigma, a mysterious man, an intriguer. Later on he is so very different, so open and joyful, so American.

SO OBNOXIOUS! (Later when he returns, that is.) I can say that, being American :) But in this episode Paul is very quiet & serious, yet an obedient citizen of the village. You never see him joking around or laughing with the other men. In this episode, he is still likable because he seems special and destined for greater things. Maria thought so.

Can anyone tell me about the death of the actor who played Paul's father? There is a + by his name in the credits. Did he die before Heimat was finished filming or afterwards?

> I like the paradox between feeling safe in such an idyllic little village,  
> at the same time I know (because I was born in one) how horrible it can be  
> to live there, people always know about every step you take and even  
> worse... they talk about it! A town or city protects you much more although  
> a little village has the image of being protecting.

It fits with the paradox of Heimat and Fernweh. Although a big city can be awful to live in also.

It is so interesting reading the interpretations of others - each posting points out something new that I missed!

Susan

**Date: Thu, 6 Nov 2003 20:53:28 +0100**  
**From: "Theresia en Martijn" <theresia\_martijn\_onetelnet.nl>**

Dear Susan (and all the other people who are reading this),

When I was looking again at the family tree I found out that Marie-Goot actually died in 1960. So I wonder how could she visit Hermann's wedding in 1964? Is this a mistake by Reitz or did he decide to give himself the freedom in the Heimat story to let her re-appear?

As far as I know Paul's father (Mathias) died during filming Heimat. At some point Katherina speaks about him, telling that he is so very ill. We won't see him again. I remember I've once read (a long time ago) that his death was the reason why he didn't appear in heaven and I think they invented a brilliant excuse for this- he was blind and that's the reason why they couldn't see him.

Theresia

**Date: Thu, 6 Nov 2003 21:17:56 +0100**  
**From: heimat hoenemann.de (Thomas Hönemann)**

> I once heard that Katherina was an amateur actor as  
> well. Could anyone tell me whether this is true? If she was then she must  
> have played her own self, absolutely brilliant she is in every scene.

Dear Theresia, Susan and all others,

Indeed Katharina was played by an amateur actor, Gertrud Bredel. She lived in Bad Kreuznach and was discovered by Reitz as an actress playing in the Laienspielgruppe of the Volkshochschule Bad Kreuznach (= amateur-theatre, Volkshochschule is no kind of university but an offer of seminars nearly everybody can take part in). Even if Bad Kreuznach is not far away from the Hunsrück Gertrud sometimes had to work on the dialect, because the Bad Kreuznach dialect is quite different from the Hunsrück dialect. Even within the Hunsrück the dialect sometimes differs from village to village. Gertrud Bredel unfortunately died some years ago.

This is an extract of an article from DER SPIEGEL 40/1984, S. 263, concerning Gertrud Bredel (excuse me for not translating it, I am too tired):

"Als die Rentnerin Gertrud Bredel, 64, Dienstag letzter Woche in Bad Kreuznach einkaufte, kam plötzlich eine fremde junge Frau auf sie zu und überreichte ihr drei Rosen. Sagte dazu nur: 'Und meine Glückwünsche für ihre schauspielerische Leistung'. Auf der Bühne der Volkshochschule Bad Kreuznach war die begeisterte Laienspielerin von der 'dicken Pompanne' bis zur Marthe im 'Zerbrochenen Krug' schon in vielen Rollen zu sehen. Seit aber HEIMAT gesendet wird, merkt Gertrud Bredel, Darstellerin der Mutter Katharina, 'dass die Leute auf der Strafe mich irgendwie angucken'. Ihre Dachwohnung am Stadtrand von Bad Kreuznach, nur durch eine Kletterpartie über zwei steile Treppen zu erreichen, ist zur Anlaufstelle von Reportern geworden. Vom 'Stern' war einer da, von 'Hörzu', von der 'Welt am Sonntag'. Letzten Mittwoch sendete 'Radio Luxemburg' ein Telefoninterview mit ihr, in der Post fand die Rentnerin Autogrammwünsche. Gertrud Bredel erträgt den plötzlichen Ruhm mit Fassung. Ihr Alltag hat sich nicht verändert. Ihr Ehemann ist als Soldat in Russland verschollen; der einzigen Sohn, im September 1945 geboren, hat sie allein großgezogen; seit er verheiratet ist lebt sie allein. Nach wie vor probt sie zweimal wöchentlich mit dem Kirchenchor, fährt für Besorgungen mit dem Fahrrad in die Stadt, trifft sich abends mit Freunden von der Laienspielschar oder sitzt vor dem Fernseher, am liebsten bei 'verfilmten Theaterstücken'. Vor den Dreharbeiten zu HEIMAT ist sie 'nie aus Bad Kreuznach rausgekommen, nie in Urlaub gefahren'. Zu einer Kinovorführung in Berlin, wo die HEIMAT-Schauspieler dem Publikum vorgestellt wurden, bestieg Gertrud Bredel erstmals ein Flugzeug, in Vendeig, wo sie als Gast an den Filmfestspielen

teilnahm, wohnte ise zum erstenmal in ihrem Leben in einem Hotel. Als dann die Filmleute nach einer HEIMAT-Vorführung den Laiendarstellern aus Rheinland-Pfalz minutenlang stehend applaudierten, war sie 'ergriffen und stolz, das ist wahr'. Dabei hatte sie bei dem HEIMAT-Film 'eigentlich nur aus Neugier' mitgemacht und 'weil ich nicht wusste, dass die Rolle so groß wird'. Ihre 55 anstrengenden Drehtage empfindet die Kreuznacherin im nachhinein nicht als Arbeit: 'Wir hatten Freude daran, wir verstanden uns gut.' Nicht einmal die Gage, sagt sie, war ihr wirklich wichtig - sie hätte auch 'umsonst gespielt'.

Susan wrote:

- > Can anyone tell me about the death of the actor who played Paul's father?
- > There is a + by his name in the credits. Did he die before Heimat was
- > finished filming or afterwards?

Indeed Willi Burger who plays Paul's father died during the post-production of Heimat. That means: he finished playing his role but never saw the film, unfortunately.

Best regards to you all,  
Thomas

<http://home.t-online.de/home/th.hoenemann/heimat/index.htm>

**Date: Fri, 7 Nov 2003 16:44:10 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

Dear Thomas and all list members

I have been very interested by Thomas Honemann's contributions to our discussion and by the contributions of all those who speak and understand German, never mind the Hunsruck dialect!! I am ashamed to say that apart from "Noch ein Bier, bitte" und "Haben Sie ein Tassen Kaffee und Apfelkuchen mit Sahne" I am speechless. I am still puzzled, however, by what Thomas told us about what Edgar Reitz and Gernot Roll said in the documentary at the end of the German video-release. Thomas wrote:

"Generally the use of color and black and white-material was one of the most discussed topics after the first broadcasting of Heimat in 1984. Reitz and Roll decided generally to use black and white, because they thought color had no real relevance in people's memories."

I am not sure I would necessarily agree with this but that is perhaps incidental.

Thomas continues: "They decided to use color only while capturing impressions which they thought of that they would be remembered in color, for example the fiery iron, easter-eggs, the red post-car or the landscape - and: the fly trap."

The trouble with this is that it is a bit disingenuous. The use of colour becomes purely arbitrary. The director and cameraman can say "Yes, this part's in black and white because they would remember it that way" and "Yes, this part's in colour because they would remember it that way." And we the viewers cannot argue because it is done. This is reinforced by what Thomas now reports: "Reitz said about this discussion, that the most complicated theories were created of an aspect he and Roll did not spend much preparation on, often they just decided right before filming which material to use."

But what if we, the viewers, do see significances? A character remembers something in colour because it has some special significance for him. The colour of the fly-paper has significance because

of the emphasis on the reality and the symbol of the trap. Thomas remembers the dirty yellow of the fly-paper in his grandmother's farm kitchen. Why does he remember it in colour and not black and white? And this leads me onto another difficulty? Whose memory are we talking about? The fiery glow of colour from the iron horse-shoe, for instance. Is that from the Reitz memory or is it from the memory of Paul Simon eg. His happy childhood with the forge at the centre of it?? Artistically also, the use of colour becomes even more vivid set against black and white. I feel there are significances and it is interesting to see where they lead. Does Reitz tell us things about his characters and their consciousness, their memories, as well, of course, as his own through his use of colour?

I am aware that I am not explaining this very well but I hope you will all understand what I am trying to convey. This problem arises very strongly in the next episode!!

Regards  
Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Thu, 13 Nov 2003 18:29:50 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

Well, I think it's time to put FERNWEH to bed, don't you? The discussion dried up a few days ago. Tomorrow, I will post my introduction to Part 2. A big thank you to all our contributors without whom this would not be possible. I think we had 8 contributors including myself and there were some 27 posts in all. We discussed, amongst other things, the character of Paul Simon, the use of the Hunsruck dialect, the possible meanings of the title, Reitz's use of colour, some of the historical background, symbolism [ the flies and fly paper, the pine-marten and the animal trap ], the discovery of the dead woman in the woods and any significance, some of the actors and actresses, personal parallels and much more.

I would like to thank many of you for your kind words and express the hope that more will join us. In our discussions one small rule might be helpful. Please do not refer forwards to later episodes and events if possible, only backwards to what we have already seen. We, thus, put ourselves in the position of new viewers [we can refer to how we reacted to the given episode first time round] and it will also enable any newcomers to feel that they can catch up. I hope you agree.

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Fri, 14 Nov 2003 07:51:23 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

AN INTRODUCTION TO:

HEIMAT Part 2. DIE MITTE DER WELT. [ THE MIDDLE OF THE WORLD ]

After watching this episode through from beginning to end without stopping I found that I had written in my notes, "Why does Reitz move me so extraordinarily, because he does?" I will attempt an answer. It is not just that he interweaves so cleverly the history of Germany in these years 1928-1933 with the histories of his individual characters but also that he communicates their "felt life", to coin a phrase. We are made to feel their happinesses, their anxieties, their sense of fun, their aspirations, their forebodings. I could go for ever.

Take the character of Kath, who is central to this episode. She acts as the carrier of tradition from making the Easter eggs for Anton and Ernst at the beginning ["My grandma did this a 100 years ago"] to the making of the fruit[?] poultice at the end for the feverish child, Lotti. She is also the voice of truth. She sees the danger of the Nazis and Hitler. She makes Anton promise not to wear his military style uniform again. She sees the dangers of living on credit, and, lying in bed after a hectic day she utters words which have a chilling resonance: "One day we'll have to pay for all this." But she is also a loving, over-protective mother whose letter to Eduard in Berlin, to be conveyed by the French

horsewoman makes us smile at her naivety, but her genuine concern shines through. ["She has the evil eye.don't help her off her horse".] When she smells the bath salts used by this exotic Frenchwoman she is entranced. ["It smells of the big city. It's how I've always imagined it."]. She is a simple countrywoman and yet it is she who can see what Fritz's arrest in the early hours of the morning [for his Communist sympathies] will mean for others. She is a full human being and she made me cry!!

I seem to remember that Reitz was attacked for not making stronger criticism of the Nazis and the German people's involvement in Hitler's rise to power. I think he handles this difficult theme in a masterful way. We see how people are ashamed of their poverty and Germany's enfeebled state. Wiegand wishes that the French horsewoman could have come at a later time. Glassisch reports on the wealth he has seen in France [Gobelin tapestries, mirrors on the floors]. We see the growing prosperity of Germany, the coming of the telephone to Schabbach, new cars and so on. It is discussed when Kath goes to Bochum ["postal charges and rents are down.everything's getting cheaper"]. The National Socialist party brought "Bread and work for the German people", as the banner reads. Reitz shows us how good and decent people lent their support. Robert, Pauline's clockmaker husband is not a vicious man and sees that many of the Nazi marchers are "duffers in uniform" but he thinks his Jewish tenant will sell up because "Things are not so rosy for Jews now." Even Maria seems respectful towards the Fuhrer. When Ernst throws Eduard's Nazi cap she says to her little boy: "What if the Fuhrer saw. He sees everything."

The viewer remembers the strange, half-demented ex-soldier at the immigration centre in New York who warns Paul against -Isms, "Mammonism, futurism, Communism, symbolism, expressionism, nihilism, scepticism, Socialism, Zionism, egoism..." The 1930's was a time of ideologies. We see the Nazi at the bar in the brothel [we should notice the link with decadence] boring everyone with his views and quoting Hitler's awful words: "We'll deal ruthlessly with anyone whose opinions differ" and we see that ruthlessness in action with the arrest of Fritz and the words of the policeman bring a chill to the heart of anyone of my age. Fritz will be sent to "a concentration camp for re-education to exorcise that Marxist spirit." His words are meant to be re-assuring!!

There is comedy in this episode. Wiegand, Glassisch, and the inn-keeper trying to talk French is quite endearing. I loved Eduard's plaintive exclamation: "I just wanted to go for a walk." Mathias shaking hands with the city slicker, Lucie, the ex-brothel madam and now wife of Eduard, with his hands covered in dung is a nice moment. We see happiness amongst the villagers. [Maria and the boys carrying on their father's legacy with the radio, Mathias at the window, Eduard and Lucie amongst the beauties of the Hunsruck]. I do not have time in this introduction to deal with the Eduard and Lucie relationship and his time in Berlin. There are many things that can be said about Eduard amongst the prostitutes and we can return to this. City decadence versus rural simplicities. Was a false note struck by the fact that all the whores had hearts of gold? German romanticism? Eduard and Lucie seem happy with each other despite deceptions by both parties. Would someone like to comment on the title of the episode?

I think I have said enough for now!

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Fri, 14 Nov 2003 12:27:15 -0600**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Ivan and all,

I have only re-watched "Die Mitte Der Welt" just past the part that Eduard arrives back in Schabbach with Lucie and she meets his family. But here are my comments so far:

I agree with you that Kath is the voice of truth. She remains a stable character with common sense, she continues with tradition, she does what she believes is right.

What is the purpose of the French horsewoman? I can't figure this out. Does she represent the past? Her visit seems to be the only time that we see Wiegand acting like a normal person. In this scene he seems to let his guard down - he is at a loss for words with this woman. Here Wiegand interacts with Glassisch and the innkeeper as if they are fellow citizens of Schabbach.

I always have wondered - is the horsewoman's ride realistic for the time? Would a woman from an aristocratic background have traveled by horse alone so far?

I'm not sure about the meaning of the title. Perhaps it means that Schabbach is the middle of the world to the characters. I'm interested in other peoples' views on this. Reitz shows how Eduard really loves the village and area when he shows Lucie his favorite places. Lucie seems to have real feeling for Eduard, even though she starts out being a gold digger. Is Reitz trying to show that while some people want to leave Schabbach for the big city or the world, that some big city people (Lucie) think Schabbach/Hunsruck is a country paradise?

Susan

**Date: Fri, 14 Nov 2003 22:03:43 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

Susan and list members,

Susan wrote: "What is the purpose of the French horsewoman? I can't figure this out. Does she represent the past?" and "I always have wondered - is the horsewoman's ride realistic for the time? Would a woman from an aristocratic background have travelled by horse alone so far?"

It seems to me that the French horsewoman is a symbol, an emblem, not realistic at all. She symbolises all that is glamorous, exotic, dashing, wealthy, and sophisticated. When I look back at Reitz's film I think of all the realistic/naturalistic details but now I am studying it, so to speak, I find so much which is not naturalistic at all. Madame, or should that be Mademoiselle, Denise de Gallimasch symbolises everything that Schabbach is not. Germany and its people are in a period of depression. Weigand is ashamed of their backwardness and lack of sophistication. The villagers are then allowed to console themselves with the thought that they are at the centre of the world. One of the villagers, who argues with Weigand and says that she would have had to make a detour southwards, is correct, as a direct line from Paris to Berlin, as the rule on my atlas revealed, would pass thro' Bonn. Near enough!! But the argument that Schabbach lies on a direct line from the N-S Poles is obviously absurd. So does anywhere. It depends on which line of longitude you choose! But you must find consolation somewhere and the French lady's appearance out of nowhere does that. Psychologically true even if not realistic!!

Susan also wrote when commenting about Lucie's motives: "Is Reitz trying to show that while some people want to leave Schabbach for the big city or the world, that some big city people (Lucie) think Schabbach/Hunsruck is a country paradise?"

I think you are exactly right. I hadn't seen it quite like that before. Lucie is an interesting character, isn't she? She grabs Eduard because she thinks he is rich and the owner of vast estates. On arrival you see her face fall as she realises how humble the Simon house and farm are but she soon recovers her poise and decides to make the most of a bad job. I couldn't decide on the exact moment, as I was watching, that she makes this decision. But she soon becomes determined to advance in the world thro' her husband. See the scene in the bedroom. She is an amoral character, if not an immoral one, but I gradually found her quite endearing and likeable with a sense of fun. Comment anyone?

All for now,

Ivan.

**Date: Fri, 14 Nov 2003 12:27:15 -0600**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

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**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

Susan and list members,

Susan wrote: "What is the purpose of the French horsewoman? I can't figure this out. Does she represent the past?" and "I always have wondered - is the horsewoman's ride realistic for the time? Would a woman from an aristocratic background have travelled by horse alone so far?"

It seems to me that the French horsewoman is a symbol, an emblem, not realistic at all. She symbolises all that is glamorous, exotic, dashing, wealthy, and sophisticated. When I look back at Reitz's film I think of all the realistic/naturalistic details but now I am studying it, so to speak, I find so much which is not naturalistic at all. Madame, or should that be Mademoiselle, Denise de Gallimasch symbolises everything that Schabbach is not. Germany and its people are in a period of depression. Weigand is ashamed of their backwardness and lack of sophistication. The villagers are then allowed to console themselves with the thought that they are at the centre of the world. One of the villagers, who argues with Weigand and says that she would have had to make a detour southwards, is correct, as a direct line from Paris to Berlin, as the rule on my atlas revealed, would pass thro' Bonn. Near enough!! But the argument that Schabbach lies on a direct line from the N-S Poles is obviously absurd. So does anywhere. It depends on which line of longitude you choose! But you must find consolation somewhere and the French lady's appearance out of nowhere does that. Psychologically true even if not realistic!!

Susan also wrote when commenting about Lucie's motives: "Is Reitz trying to show that while some people want to leave Schabbach for the big city or the world, that some big city people (Lucie) think Schabbach/Hunsruck is a country paradise?"

I think you are exactly right. I hadn't seen it quite like that before. Lucie is an interesting character, isn't she? She grabs Eduard because she thinks he is rich and the owner of vast estates. On arrival you see her face fall as she realises how humble the Simon house and farm are but she soon recovers her poise and decides to make the most of a bad job. I couldn't decide on the exact moment, as I was watching, that she makes this decision. But she soon becomes determined to advance in the world thro' her husband. See the scene in the bedroom. She is an amoral character, if not an immoral one, but I gradually found her quite endearing and likeable with a sense of fun. Comment anyone?

All for now,

Ivan.

**Date: Fri, 25 Nov 2003 12:23:43 +0100**  
**From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder\_rustema.nl>**

It surprises me that there have been so few reactions to part two.

My guess is that many of you have the same reaction to part two as I had. Interesting, many story lines are set out, many openings, but no finished stories. Part one already introduced the characters and the Reitz' esthetics to us, so nothing new in that respect.

I watched the episode together with others who were new to Heimat and I had to be careful not to give away spoilers about how characters would be like later on. We agreed that you can sense that this is going to be a long story. We are still in the introduction stage, not much is happening yet. But how curious we become!

In this stage the viewer has decided wether or not to see the whole Heimat or not. We are looking forward to part three this weekend... One of the shorter ones, only 58 minutes.

-

ReindeR

**Date: Tue, 25 Nov 2003 10:49:14 -0600**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan\_jsbiedron.com>**

ReindeR,

I too, kept expecting more postings about part 2. Did the people who watched Heimat with you have any comments on Lucie?

I think in this episode we see Reitz's genius to show the characters with many facets. I think Mathias is flattered by Lucie's attention - you could almost say he flirts with her in his own way. A little bit of insight into the usually stern older man who is always seen hard at work - he still appreciates an attractive woman.

I guess part 2 is more "setting" for the rest of the story.

Susan

**Date: Tue, 25 Nov 2003 14:51:12 +0100**

**From: Th.Hoenemann t-online.de (Thomas Hönemann)**

Dear Reinder, Ivan, Susan and other friends of Heimat,

the discussion about "Die Mitte der Welt" really seems to need some dynamics, so I want to give emphasis to some of the aspects Ivan already mentioned and bring up some new thoughts.

First of all I agree with Ivan in his characterizations of Katharina. She is really a strong and realistic character, Schabbach's 'living truth' although she is a simple mind - maybe exactly this is what characterizes and make us love her most. She is not blinded by the light of the "new time". The role is played in an very impressing way by Gertrud Bredel, an amateur acteur as I already told you. Gertrud never left her village, Bad Kreuznach, before moving up to the Hunsr,ck and playing her role. So concerning the biography of Maria there is a personal parallel: she also will never leyve Schabbachof and die at the place she was born in.

So for these people Schabbach is the center of the world, the center of their own life. And they feel confirmed in this attitude by the rich and aristocratic horsewoman coming though their village and the simple "proof" of one of the inhabitants in the evening. They smell the great, wide world by smelling the perfume of the french lady. This all shows again how narrow peoples minds were and how restricted their geographic room to move was.

Maybe another point to diskuss is the soundtrack, the music of the film. I am no specialist in this so I will avoid trying an analasys of the musics harmonies and structure. But you will have recognized: Each of the main characters has a special music-theme wich is variated realtin to different situations of the film. Most impressing to me is the title-music, this pulsing and deep-going theme wich causes a gooseflesh [German: Gänsehaut] everytime I listen to it.

And another thing that is specific (not only) for this episode: the lot of comedy scenes. Reitz once said: Heimat is a comedy, but not a [German: Knallkom^die, wich is a kind of very offensive and obvious comedy]." Maybe we have to restrict the validity of this quote for the film as a hole, but there are lots of really funny scenes in every episode, and so in this one. I really love the scene in front of the store of Anton Jakob where Wiegand and Glasich are trying to explain that the Baldenau is an ruin to the french horsewoman (have an ear of the music in this scene: the wiegand-theme is presented in a very humorful way). Or Katharinas fear and dream about Eduard meeting the horsewoman. Or: Lucies arrival in Schabbach.

Maybe one of you feels like writing o comment on this?

Best regards to you all,  
Thomas

feel invited to visit my HEIMAT-pages: <http://heimat.hoenemann.de>

**Date: Wed, 26 Nov 2003 17:05:54 +0100**  
**From: "Theresia en Martijn" <theresia\_martijn\_onetelnet.nl>**

Dear all,

After watching the first two episodes, something has caught my attention for the first time. So many scenes are spiritual, so many people almost show psychic behaviour. Like Matthias who says he knows that Paul is still alive now the marten has been caught. He sees it as a sign. Katherina had her foreboding with her family in the Ruhr Gebiet. Sensible people with so much conventional wisdom (about the stairs in the cellar etc.) and spiritual 'knowledge'. Sometimes right sometimes wrong. Kath was wrong with her dream about the French lady and her warning that Eduard shouldn't help her descend from her horse. But in a way she may have been right because Eduard walked in a trap called

Lucie.

Whilst watching Heimat again I also see more and more magic realistic scenes. The film is about real life, real people but many scenes are like a fairy tale full of magic from another world.

It's also interesting that Paul really doesn't know why he has left exactly. He'll never give us the answer because he never got this question answered. We all can have our own thoughts about it but the only thing he knows is that he just walked and walked and walked.

The 'relation' between Wiegand and Glasisch has a funny moment in this episode. Wasn't there always trouble between them two? How come that we see them working together (!) just before the French woman arrives?! It's the hostility and camaraderie at the same time which you may only find in such a small village. It shows they don't really hate each other and that they sometimes even need each other. When the woman arrives, we would expect the east of Glasisch who seems the underdog of these three men but he's the one who's able to understand (well most of it) French. To me that's the most funny thing of this scene. The other two have more status as a mayor or innkeeper but they need Glasisch to understand what this woman wants.

What's that hanging, in Eduard's room in Berlin, above the table. Is it smoked bacon? And who were Schmeling and Ondra? Please Germans tell me!

When Eduard takes Lucie on the short Hunsruck tour and shows her the gold he has found, you see her eyes almost falling out. She doesn't listen to the story he's telling she's only interested in the gold. I think this scene says all about their marriage and especially about her expectations. The character Lucie must be so much fun to play for an actress!

I like the use of colour in this episode. Everytime when we get to see 'die Neue Zeit' we see coloured scenes. Like the Bayer factory and the use of electricity when the police switches the light on in Kath's bedroom.

Well I hope you enjoyed my thoughts on 'Die Mitte der Welt'.

Theresia

**Date: Thu, 27 Nov 2003 23:36:00 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

Dear All

I know I shouldn't take it personally but somehow the lack of response, especially in the week following my introduction, left me feeling a little disheartened. Things did pick up a little towards the end of our discussion period. Including myself, we had 5 contributors and a total of 7 posts, again including my introduction. Please feel free to e-mail me personally if you would like me to do something differently.

As no one has answered Theresia's query I will do my best. I am not German so please excuse me. Theresia wrote: "What's that hanging, in Eduard's room in Berlin, above the table. Is it smoked bacon? And who were Schmeling and Ondra? Please Germans tell me!" The latter part first, as it's easier!! Max Schmeling was the first European to win the world heavyweight boxing championship in the 20th century when he knocked out Jack Sharkey in New York in June 1930. His most famous victory was when he knocked out the famed Joe Louis in NYC in 1936. A great celebrity then and I believe he was also a Nazi sympathiser. I remember my father talking about him. Anny Ondra, his wife [Maria comments "a happily married couple"], born Ondrakova in Czechoslovakia, was a well known film star of the time [Lucie admires her dress sense, doesn't she?]. Her career was evidently cut short, after the advent of sound, by her strong Czech accent. She starred in 2 of Alfred Hitchcock's early films in 1929, Blackmail and The Manxman, neither of which I've seen, and settled in Germany in 1930. They were obviously a

glamorous couple and a good advertisement for the new regime.

As for the hanging object that is much more difficult. We are only offered a brief glimpse, aren't we? Just after the torchlight procession passes the apartment window. Back in Schabbach Eduard lies about what he was doing at the time and shares the joke with Lucie. I also wondered what it was. Do you know what I thought? Perhaps it's my mind <vbg>!! But I thought this draped object was a pair of ladies' knickers hung around the light bulb, red with black tassels [presumably Lucie's]!! However, going back to have another look, I am not so sure. Lucie seems otherwise attired in the underwear department!! This time I concluded it was simply a lamp-shade. Perhaps Theresia is right. Eduard needs his country foods. Anyone?

No one took up my point about all the prostitutes seeming to have hearts of gold. This seems to me to be a weakness or is it merely Eduard's sentimental and romantic memory? We do see some of the seediness of the building.

When thinking of Part 2 as I started writing this piece I remembered vividly the scene in colour of the women and children picking bilberries. I reflected that Reitz is able to make the ordinary and mundane somehow extraordinary. A great gift! [Did you note also Maria's extreme reaction to the recovery of the dead woman's blood-stained clothes? It paralleled Paul's extreme reaction. I do not understand the significance. A mother shielding her children from the horrors of life/death?]

Anyway, tomorrow to fresh woods and pastures new!!

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2003 17:38:24 +0100**  
**From: "Landzaat, MJ (Maarten)" <maarten.landzaat prorail.nl>**

Ivan, All,

I watched the 2nd episode just after Ivan's excellent introduction. I did not react directly because after reading everybody else's reactions, I wanted to see the episode again. And so I did, but only yesterday!

These are a few things that struck me:

- In one scene, a remark is made like "things are not so good for the jews these days".

A few sentences later, Eduard's letter is read. He writes something like:

"isn't it great that in these days, it doesn't matter where you come from".

Nobody seemed to pick up on this discrepancy, (because things were going so well? Lots of breads, new cars, etc.), which made me shudder.

- Even Katharina, the "nicest" woman in this episode, is xenophobic towards the french woman. Reitz trying to show us that it could happen to anyone? That we shouldn't be quick to judge?

- I felt the "center of the world"-theme was shown in a number of ways:

1 in the story itself: NY (Italians), Paris, Shabbach, Koblenz, Berlin.

2 "Hitler ist ein Columbus" on the banner, which to me refers to the arrogance of someone thinking he is the center of the world. The same arrogance of the nazi in the brothel.

3 Things and people going to and from the Hunsruck (French woman, Paul, Eduard, cars, guano (this particularly struck me as metaphorical: bringing manure to the homeland to make it better), Lucie, Katharina, the sick child, telephone wires.

- The intense scene of car cleaning done by Eduard in his nazi uniform. Metaphor for the nazis making things look brighter than they actually are?

- The illness of the child at the ending scene; meant as a metaphor for the illness of the political/economical situation? Anyway the disturbing end music under the scene made me feel that way!

- I tried to make sense of the colors, but I couldn't. The strange green light on the balcony of the brothel, the blues on the Shabbach hotel, the reds of the nazi flags, I don't know what to make of it, but it drew my attention.

Maybe I'm exaggerating with the metaphors, but even if Reitz didn't intend them, I'm still fascinated by them.

- I didn't check the "smoked bacon". I thought it was a hat. I will look up the scene again.

- I didn't understand one bit of the conversation on the leaving of Berlin. Thank you guys for explaining!

- I found it disarming and funny that both Eduard and Lucie regarded each other as being high in the social hierarchy. Eduard son of a rich land owner, and Lucie from the highest social ranks because she has a car!

- Ivan, why do you think that the prostitutes being portrayed with hearts of gold is a weakness?

- The entire village (well woman and children) in the woods picking the <some>-berries was also moving to me. Maybe because in these individual days we just don't do things like that anymore, but deep in our hearts we still want to???

Please let me know what you think of these remarks.  
On to the next episode!

Later,  
Maarten

**Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2003 11:32:43 -0600**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Ivan,

You're doing a great job!

I don't know how many other Americans than myself are in this list, but yesterday was our Thanksgiving holiday, so perhaps that accounts for some lack of response - people traveling to visit relatives, etc. So I hope you don't mind my late comment on Part 2.

I am also interested in the "prostitutes with hearts of gold" concept - but I really don't know what to say about that. Edward is definitely a "follower" type. He goes along with the program. It's kind of luck that he and Lucie find each other in Berlin. Does Edward really believe Lucie is from "the best circles"? Or is he just telling that to his family? It could be he believes this because he is incredibly naive. He is definitely thrilled that a country bumpkin like himself comes home with a car and a worldly attractive woman. Lucie on her part does not run off when she realizes Eduard is not a rich landowner - I think she likes being in the country where she can be important rather than stay in Berlin and be only a "working girl."

Maarten,

I like your comments regarding the comings and goings to Schabbach as the middle of the world. I also never thought about Katherina's bringing home the sick Lottie as a metaphor for society's illness -

good point.

But I don't agree with your comment that Katherina is xenophobic towards the French woman. Historically this was the attitude of Germans towards the French. She only shows a mother's concern about Eduard being seduced by the French women. Mothers always imagine all kinds of things happening to their children when they leave home. I think Katherina is basically a simple, straightforward, honest woman. What would she have thought if she knew Eduard went to a brothel!

Susan

**Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2003 22:44:54 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

Susan and Maarten

Thank you for your kind words.

Maarten wrote: "Ivan, why do you think that the prostitutes being portrayed with hearts of gold is a weakness?"

Susan wrote: "I am also interested in the "prostitutes with hearts of gold" concept - but I really don't know what to say about that."

It seemed to me that this was a weakness because basically prostitutes do not have hearts of gold. Prostitution is an exploitative and seedy business. It coarsens and brutalises those who participate in it and enriches the organisers of it. Literature is full of this notion of prostitutes as whores with hearts of gold. Surely, in real life, Eduard would have been more likely to have ended up in a ditch with his wallet gone than with the acquisition of a wife. This whole episode in Berlin seemed to me to be coloured by sentimentality and a kind of romanticism which does not accord with reality, although there is probably a hidden purpose here which has escaped me. Perhaps it is how Eduard wanted to see it but surely not Reitz.

I was certainly convinced by Maarten's concept of the metaphors lying behind the sick child and the car shining.

Susan wrote: "Does Edward really believe Lucie is from "the best circles"? Or is he just telling that to his family? It could be he believes this because he is incredibly naive."

I felt that Eduard was deliberately lying. He is participating in a kind of confidence trick on his family. He is, on one level proud of Lucie [her good looks, her car, her worldly sophistication] but he knows what she is really and what his family would think if they really knew her background and where he had met her. The city v. country theme is important here. Susan, did you notice exactly when Lucie decided to make the best of a bad job. I couldn't!! I try to analyze her character a little in the Intro to Part 3. She is a wonderful creation. I wonder if Reitz was drawing from real life in her depiction.

Regards

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Sat, 29 Nov 2003 12:34:34 -0600**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

> Susan, did you notice exactly when Lucie decided to make  
> the best of a bad job. I couldn't!!

Ivan - I "think" it is when she shakes Mathias' hand and he has manure on it. At this point, one would expect Lucie to give up on Schabbach and run back to Berlin. However, she laughs about it. Perhaps she finds Mathias refreshing.

It would be great if we could get Reitz's comments on Lucie.

Susan

**Date: Sun, 30 Nov 2003 11:10:18 +0100**  
**From: Thomas Höhnemann <heimat.hoenemann.de>**

Dear friends of Heimat, especially Reinder, Susan and Ivan, dear Joel,

Susan wrote on Ivans question:

> Ivan - I "think" it is when she shakes Mathias' hand and he has manure on  
> it. At this point, one would expect Lucie to give up on Schabbach and run  
> back to Berlin. However, she laughs about it. Perhaps she finds Mathias  
> refreshing.

I partly agree to this, but not completely in detail. First of all Lucie's change of mind is a process in my mind. It starts at the picknick looking down the Rhine-valley. This is the moment where Eduard lays his cards on the table by relativating everything he has said about his father and family until then (isn't it funny: they seem never have to be talking about this topic again - or Eduard kept up lying ...). I think Lucie is able to read between the lines and a kind of horror is coming up in her mind. This is toned down by her enthusiasm on the landscape Eduard shows her ("Eduard, I love your homeland"). She really seems to forget partly her aim of getting rich of money and influence - and this is intensified by the "gold" Eduard puts out of his jacket.

The next, maybe deepest depression reaches Lucie when entering the yard of the Simon-house. All her hopes and thoughts return back to hopelessness and desperation, all her hopes and illusions now break down concretely. Did you recognize? Shortly before they enter Schabbach they pass Mathias who is working on the field. As Eduard recognizes him from the far he points Lucie's attention to the landscape on the other side of the car ("Lucie, the woods!") so that she does not recognize Mathias.

For me the real turning point is the moment Lucie herself breaks the tense situation in the kitchen by stopping Eduard from his enthusiastic but helpless talking: "Eduard, jetzt sei doch mal stille" ("Eduard, so shut up now"). I think she made up her mind and, referring to her basic attitude, she got optimistic thinking about to make the best of her situation. To prove this let us see what she says later in the bed when she obviously got back her (physical and mental) courage, energy and motivation, she has overcome the shocks of breaking illusions of the day: "Edu, the Hunsrück is a virgin land, we can get something running here", and "isn't the Gauleiter Simon your uncle" (she is making plans and thinking about how to get more influence! - and for the moment she will be successful: in the next scene Eduard already wears the Nazi-uniform.). Surely Mathias' handshake is another point to make the situation less tense, but in my opinion she makes the decisive step on her own by stopping Eduard's monologues.

In a short introduction on Heimat I read: "The film is the story of love and death, of remembering and forgetting. Heimat is a story of those, who will ever be losers, and about the others, that - like the cat and Lucie - steadily will fall back on their feet again." I have never read a more fitting characterization of Lucie. (see the complete German text on the top of my site <http://home.t-online.de/home/th.hoenemann/heimat/index.htm>).

Besides: in my opinion the hardly to identify thing is a part of Lucie's underwear hanging over a lamp.

Best regards to you all, have a very nice Sunday,  
Thomas

**Date: Sun, 30 Nov 2003 20:12:49 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

Thomas's post prompted me to some further thoughts about Lucie and her decision to make the most of her marriage and the Hunsrück, except we don't see any decision, do we? I accept that it is a process and not one moment in time. Part of the difficulty lies in the nature of film itself, perhaps. In literature an author can convey the thought processes of characters. In James Joyce's *Ulysses*, for example, there is a famous scene where Leopold Bloom sitting on the outside lavatory muses on his wife's infidelity, his love for her, the odds on a horse at a race meeting that day, something he has eaten, an advertisement in the newspaper he has taken in with him and so on. We get inside the mind of the character, inside his "stream of consciousness". This is difficult to do in film, and, anyway, perhaps in *Heimat*, Reitz is not so much interested in the psychology of his characters but in their external behaviours and the effects of them. Paul Simon's motives in leaving Schabbach and his family are not introduced and analysed or "felt" but the results of his actions are vividly portrayed.

Just a little word about Eduard. In a way he is like a child with his earnestness and enthusiasm eg. the gold prospecting but he is quite likeable. In part 3 he is sensible, for instance in his treatment of Hans, and his love of recording old ways with his photography are admirable [Marie-Goot bleaching the clothes with a watering can]. Yet who can forget the betrayal of his father, which Thomas drew our attention to, when he tells Lucie to look the other way, and drives on without stopping. I was also moved by the thoughts of mortality when he has to exit the Xmas dinner with a coughing fit. His TB is still there. This somehow linked for me with the sense of waste and futility after the politicians depart without eating the grand lunch prepared for them.

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2003 07:36:30 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

....." to fresh woods and pastures new." [John Milton: *Lycidas*]

AN INTRODUCTION TO HEIMAT PART 3: WEIHNACHT WIE NOCH NIE [THE BEST CHRISTMAS EVER]

At the end of the episode, Lucie, in her despair at Eduard's lack of ambition, cries out: "But in the Hunsrück nothing ever happens." As I sit at the keyboard I realise how difficult it is to describe what happens in this episode. What is the "storyline"? What is the narrative thrust?

Lucie and Eduard are at the centre. The characterisation of Lucie is quite complex. She is an amoral, if not immoral, woman. She becomes almost grotesque in her pursuit of self advancement through her husband, whom she sees as a failure, because he is more interested in his hobby of photography than in rising up the Nazi Party hierarchy. Yet it is Lucie, who, when warned not to deposit money at a Jewish bank, retorts: "But they're people too." She shows herself to be resourceful and intelligent. In the scene at night where they stop at the site of their new villa she provides her powder case to house the gold and a stocking to keep the water out after it is buried in the foundations. A fairly obvious piece of symbolism is that it is "fool's gold"; deceptive but not valuable. Hardly a sound foundation! She seems ready to seduce Wilfried, and Reitz dwells on the erotic charge between the ex-brothel madam, mother, and power behind the throne for her husband, and the young, blonde SS man. See the scene in the Catholic church where they are constantly exchanging glances during the Xmas Mass.

She is seduced by power and he, perhaps, by her sexuality. She is also fun-loving and full of infectious cheer. We see her completing Weigand's tongue-twister, "A great golden goose gobbled with gusto is a good gift from God," to much laughter.

This leads me on to the theme of city versus country, which is to be found in all the first 3 episodes. After their visit to Lucie, young Anton asks his mother, as they walk home, what is wrong with Lucie. She has been posing as an invalid to curry sympathy from Maria and as an act of self-dramatisation. Anton is not convinced that someone should take to their bed with worry but Maria replies: "But in the cities people do go to bed with worries." The shopkeeper does not like the fact that Lucie does not buy her stockings from the local shop. Maria defends her: "She's a city girl." City dwellers are different! They tell lies and name drop [Goebbels, Dr.Lernich]. In one very telling juxtaposition Wilfried, who is in Berlin learning to be an SS man, tells his father over the telephone that he has extensive views over the capital. We are shown his view of a dingy courtyard/stairwell. Lucie is from the city and she seems prepared to deceive her husband and commit adultery with Wilfried. The young god has the smell of the city in his nostrils and makes Lucie quite homesick.

Lying in the background there is always a sinister edge which Reitz skilfully does not allow us to forget. Although the episode of Hans, the one-eyed boy, shooting at and destroying the porcelain insulators on the telephone poles, has a humorous side and is presented quite comically we receive a sudden chill when the Nazi guard shows him how to sight the rifle by aiming at the prisoner with a pick on the work detail. I assume that the watchtowers we see in the distance guard a concentration camp like the one the policeman said Fritz would be sent to in Part 2. There we have the implied horror! When Eduard and Lucie leave the Gaulieter's we see a man in the shadows wearing a trilby in front of a wall, watching and listening intently. Who was he? I found something sinister in the red bonnet of the car [like a red dragon?] moving through the night with the contrast of Lucie's white fur and dark veil.

I liked the linking device at the beginning [also in Part 2] of the photo album with Glassisch as narrator. A question I had was in the English version shown on the BBC the words here are spoken in English but the voice appears to be that of the actor who plays Glassisch. Am I right? I take it that Reitz must have made these linking pieces for the English version. I was pleased that 2 of the points I had singled out were emphasised by Glassisch [Reitz].

A word about the depiction of Anton, Maria and Paul's eldest son. He has inherited his father's love of technical things. I liked the scene where his mother takes him to buy a new coat. Was I mistaken or was he trying on an ear-ring when his mother reprimands him? Are we being shown a sensitive boy with a feminine side? He cuts rather an absurd figure somehow; gawky and rather odd, surrounded by a kind of pathos. An old man before his time!! I found the scene in Lucie's house where he thinks of taking a sweet from the top of the piano but then thinks better of it quite touching. My young self identifies very much with him. Reitz focuses at one point, as he walks between the carpets, on his big boots and I could not help thinking of the importance of footwear in DZH but musn't look forward!

I found some of the images very arresting eg. The snow, the wet roads, the wintry trees, the high-ups leaving the villa with Eduard, Lucie and Wilfried peering through the kitchen door like naughty children, a hint of Lucie and Wilfried waking down the aisle as a couple about to be married [house corridor]..fanciful?

I hope the above will get you to watch and just as importantly comment on a rich episode indeed.

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Sun, 30 Nov 2003 23:20:27 +0100**  
**From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder\_rustema.nl>**

At 20:12 +0000 30/11/03, Ivan Mansley wrote:

> I was also moved by the thoughts of mortality when he has to exit the Xmas dinner

> with a coughing fit.

Perhaps his lung problems (and mother always shouting 'Eduard dein Lung!') make him such a big fan of photography for souvenirs of the life he lives. He feels it can be over any moment, after all. It is also a nice explanation for his Carpe Diem view on life and lack of ambition.

-

ReindeR

**Date: Tue, 2 Dec 2003 21:04:50 +0100**  
**From: "Theresia en Martijn" <theresia\_martijn\_onetelnet.nl>**

Dear all,

This is one of my favourite Heimat episodes. There are so many beautiful scenes and every scene fits smoothly into the next one.

I like the scene where Lucie empties her powder case to hide the 'gold' and puts it into her stocking. There has been some discussion about her already and I think what she says in this scene is crucial 'Ach Edu, wenn man nicht so genau hinguckt ist alles Gold, das ist meine Erfahrung im Leben'. Of course she means Eduard as well, the figurative gold she had expected when she married him and the disappointment which followed. At the same time she does have this ability to turn everything into gold. In this scene she's so aroused and cheerful and Eduard only complains that it's so cold whilst she's wearing only a thin evening dress! Still she does make him laugh and he is proud of her, you can see that!

Another beauty is the scene in which the shopkeeper can't stop her gossip when Maria buys her son a new coat. And did you see how miserable Anton feels in it!

The scene where Lucie lies on the sofa, deeply depressed is I think the best Lucie we can get, so much drama (handkerchief over her face, pff). The light in this scene is so totally different than in any other. It's hard to explain but the use of light makes the scene super realistic like we can almost touch Maria and Lucie. They are such different persons but Maria really tries to help and Lucie seems to feel better after she's invited for the Christmas meal. So touching how Lucie touches Maria's arm. The stained glass is stunning by the way!

Reitz shows us their villa through the eyes of Anton who walks around in all the different rooms.

So many beautiful details in part three....

The dog following Maria and Anton on their way back to Schabbach.

Kath sitting alone in the kitch in the dark.

The flirtations of Lucie and Wilfried are so very obvious and you really wonder whether Eduard 'sees' this or not. Does he know and accept or is he just too ignorant? The old Lucie from the brothel is back! Although Eduard got his own life and family he does tell his mother that 'Heim ist es doch am schönsten'. At home no one expected so much of him as Lucie does. He didn't need to become anything at home, his health was the main worry.

The last scene where Lucie and Eduard are sitting together in their kitchen is such another gem! The snacks they eat, the wine they drink out of coffee or tea cups. Lucie with her feet in the oven to warm them. There couldn't be a bigger difference between the two. He busy with his photos she thinking about how they could get higher up. She's so disappointed and depressed and she still tries to make most of it.

I wish this part could go on for ever...

Yes Ivan, you are right it is Glasisch who shows us the photos at the beginning of every episode. It's not only the English version but it is part of Heimat itself. At some point you hear lots of noise behind him and I think that Glasisch tells us the history of the village and the families at Maria's funeral party. That his story was cut into pieces and put in front of all the episodes. The last episode shows, instead of the photos, a family tree. Sometimes he gives us more information than the film has shown us. An example is when he tells us that Kath thought that only a fool would believe that Lucie came from such a good background. How clever (and right) she was!

Theresia

**Date: Wed, 3 Dec 2003 11:44:47 -0600**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Theresia and all,

> This is one of my favourite Heimat episodes. There are so many beautiful  
> scenes and every scene fits smoothly into the next one.

I agree! Especially seeing this episode this time of year.

> Kath sitting alone in the kitch in the dark.

Kath seems to be the only one who is worried about the seemingly good fortune of her family and village.

>The flirtations of Lucie and Wilfried are so very obvious and you really  
> wonder whether Eduard 'sees' this or not. Does he know and accept or is he  
> just too ignorant? The old Lucie from the brothel is back!

When I watched this scene again, I realized how much Lucie is coming on to the young Wilfried! Either Eduard is oblivious when he walks into the room with the wine, or he is doing a great job of overlooking Lucie's behavior.

Your comments on Lucie and Eduard:

>There couldn't be  
> a bigger difference between the two. He busy with his photos she thinking  
> about how they could get higher up. She's so disappointed and depressed and  
> she still tries to make most of it.

This is what makes Lucie's character so fascinating - you would think she would be scolding and yelling at Eduard, but she seems to accept him for what he is. ReindeR commented about Eduard's coughing at the Christmas dinner - maybe the cough is a reaction to the ambitions of Lucie. He's reacting to the pure and simple "air" of his home. He does stop coughing when he goes outside with Kath.

I am also fascinated by the church scene. Lucie is singing off key, totally transported by the beauty of the mass. Minutes earlier she was drooling over Wilfried. And then there is Wilfried with his Nazi armband sitting in the church. What a contrast. Does anyone think Lucie and Wilfried ever actually got amorous with each other?

>Yes Ivan, you are right it is Glasisch who shows us the photos at the

> beginning of every episode.

Glasisch, portrayed as the village idiot, is actually very observant and knows everything that goes on. He informs the villagers of the names of the officers who visited Eduard and Lucie. Does anyone know about this actor?

Susan

**Date: Thu, 4 Dec 2003 13:42:48 +0100**  
**From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder\_rustema.nl>**

At 11:44 -0600 3/12/03, Susan Biedron wrote:

> Glasisch, portrayed as the village idiot, is actually very observant and  
> knows everything that goes on. He informs the villagers of the names of the  
> officers who visited Eduard and Lucie. Does anyone know about this actor?

According to the Internet Movie Database Kurt Wagner played only one other role in a Tatort episode. Date of birth is 1 May 1953 in Saarlouis.

By the way, there are three Wagner's in the cast:

Kurt Wagner - Glasisch Karl     <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0905985/>  
Sabine Wagner - Martha         <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0906103/>  
Wolfram Wagner - Maethes-Pat   <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0906159/>

Are they related? Sabine and Wolfram Wagner have no other entries in the IMDb either. Amateur actors? Or is the IMDb not as actively updated by German volunteers as Americans?

-

ReindeR

**Date: Thu, 4 Dec 2003 19:53:28 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman\_dsl.pipex.com>**

Would I be right in thinking then that Kurt Wagner[Karl Glasisch], under Reitz's direction, recorded 2 voice-overs for the photo-album display at the beginning of each episode providing continuity, one in German and one in English? And maybe in other languages as well?

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Thu, 04 Dec 2003 20:57:54 +0100 (CET)**  
**From: Thomas Hönemann <Th.Hoenemann t-online.de>**

Dear Reinder and others,

indeed Kurt Wagner was (and is) an amateur actor who was discovered by Edgar Reitz and his team. That time he was a student in Saarbrücken. The role Glasich was originally planned in very small dimensions - nobody thought that it would get that important it finally got (it is the same with Marie Goot). I can't think him away from Heimat. I really love his introductions to the single parts. Sometimes his words really bring tears.

As far as I know Kurt Wagner is no relative of the two others you mentioned, Reinder. I am sure in the case of Wolfram Wagner who was (he died some years ago) the director of the Kirchberg (Hunrück) amateur theatre - so he was an original amateur actor from the Hunsrück. I am even quite sure in the case of Sabine Wagner. Wagner is a very wide spreaded german name. Not that frequent as Meier or Müller or Schmidt, but even often used.

There is another aspect wich is worth to be discussed in my eyes: In this part Reitz uses still frames (do you say so? - german:Standbilder) for the first time, I think. Did you recognise when Maria and Anton have left the shop in Rhaunen and are going to enter Lucies Villa? We see them standing in front of the villa and looking into the camera for some seconds, then they turn and enter the villa, like the cut of the film was at the wrong time. Reitz obviously uses this technique systematically and intentionally. There will be some more of such still frames in the film, just like posing for to take a photo. What does Reitz want to say us with this? I think this is just a great moment of art. Maybe Reitz will show us that life is not a movie, and his characters stand distant to all artifical plots by standing and staring at the spectators, from eye to eye. They seem to try to get in contact with us. These scenes really go very deep for me, I feel very close to the characters - closer as when they are "just" playing their great roles. Great, really great.

Have a nice weekend, kind regards,  
Thomas

**Date: Fri, 12 Dec 2003 07:47:53 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

Including myself we had 6 contributors this time and 14 posts including overlaps from Part 2. We discussed amongst other things the characters of Lucie and Eduard, Lucie's relationship with Wilfried, Glasisch's linking commentary, the identities of some of the actors, Reitz's use of "frames" and methods of characterisation.

Nobody picked up on my query about the man in the shadows in front of the wall as the group leave Gaulieter Simon's nor what it was that Anton was holding up to his ear in the clothes shop. Was my interpretation correct? Anyway on to Part 4 tomorrow. I still have my introduction to write and it's past 8p.m on Thursday night!! Wait for the next gripping instalment and pity the poor author!!

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Wed, 7 Jan 2004 23:47:32 +0100**  
**From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder rustema.nl>**

At 10:46 -0600 6/01/04, Susan Biedron wrote:

> My guess is that he is really bored shopping with his mother and is doing  
> something to be silly.  
>  
> Does anyone else have ideas about what Anton clips on his ear?

That's what people do when they are bored. A friend of mine was unemployed for some time, waiting for a research proposal to get approved at university. He told me he found himself watching ducks in the park and sitting on his balcony putting clips on his ears and nose as entertainment. Most people use television nowadays.

In case you're wondering, his research proposal got through and he is now doing historical research about merchant families in Amsterdam in the 16th century to back up his political science view on 'How violence and greed produced the conditions of democracy' he wrote as his master's thesis.  
<http://www.tpoell.dds.nl>

Just a side note on putting clips on your ear or nose.

-

ReindeR

**Date: Fri, 12 Dec 2003 09:00:18 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

"And so each venture/Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate/With shabby equipment always deteriorating." [ T.S.Eliot: Four Quartets]

HEIMAT Part 4. REICHSHOHENSTRASSE [The Highway]

My Introduction:-

I should like to begin this time on a very personal note. Reitz once said: "Anyway you can only really understand a film when you bring your own life experiences to it." Well, I can certainly do that now!! I know what I am about to say is only external and not what he really meant. Nevertheless, I was born on February 22nd 1938 [birthday presents, please!!] so I am now in the story. One minuscule step for mankind, one huge step for yours truly!! It does make a difference, believe me. Without boasting, my parents looked very like Otto Wohlleben and Maria Simon, nee Weigand. When I closed my eyes and opened them I could see them, my mother in a hair net and identical hair style [Maria] and my father in his Army greatcoat [Otto], perhaps putting me to bed or helping me to fly my kite in the fields. Forgive me!

This episode may be a bit fragmented and "bitty" but Reitz held me entranced. I think also that in this episode he conveys inner character better than previous episodes and the general psychology deepens. The central character this time is Maria, and her growth into full womanhood is done with great strength and delicacy. Her growing relationship with Herr Wohlleben convinced me with its authenticity and depth. She has become a fiercely protective mother to Anton and Ernst [see the quarrel with her brother, Wielfried]. "I am making sure they'll become something." She shares her children's triumphs and interests. Anton's photograph fascinates her, especially as pride of place is taken by Herr Wohlleben, and she shows all the excitement of a child when rushing for Ernst's glider. The love scene in the dance-hall held me spell-bound. It was magic. And the feeding of Herr Wohlleben with his meal of fried eggs is magic also. [ Cynical comment: Couldn't he use his left arm?] The operative word here is tenderness and Reitz conveys this in bucketfuls. This moves to real tears unlike the sentimental tears shed by the ladies in the cinema audience at the beginning.

The opening scene in the cinema and then back at Pauline's house is wonderfully managed. The words of Zarah Leander's song, of course, speak directly to Maria's situation. [I must confess that I have never heard of Zarah Leander but web site investigations reveal that "she was one of the great stars of the German film and she aroused enthusiasm with her cool kind of acting and especially with her fascinating and deep voice" ref: Thomas Staedelin. There is a reference to a bullfighter so was the unnamed film, La Habanera (1937)?]. I loved the scene back at Pauline's house. Pauline and Maria are like two giggly schoolgirls, trying out twiddly hair styles like the film star, drinking, confessing their innermost feelings, opening out to each other and to us, the viewers. Maria says at one point: "I wish I had the courage to start again from scratch. Somewhere far away in the world... Sometimes I think I've never really lived at all yet." Isn't that what her husband, Paul, felt but couldn't articulate? Isn't that what we all feel sometimes? That is why the film is universal and speaks to us all, because Reitz's characters are you and I.

Did anyone else feel there was a parallel between the opening of this episode and its ending? In the

opening scene we have two ladies giggling and sharing secrets, Maria and Pauline. At the end we have two ladies giggling and sharing secrets, Martina and Lucie. In the first Maria's longings are made apparent. She tells of many men, working on the highway, coming to the Hunsruck and mentions Herr Wohlleben, her new lodger, the engineer on the project. We can see her interest in new men, even if they are Saxons! I gathered from this episode that Germans see Saxons as rather stupid and slow, even if they like potato cakes! In the last episode Lucie's longings for Berlin and her old way of life are re-awakened by Martina's comments. She wants to be straight-laced but notice the wistfulness in her remark to Martina, after she warns her old friend not to lure men to the villa with a promise of potato cakes and further delights: "There's none of that sort of thing in the Hunsruck..It's not even thought of." [ Hidden thought: "I wish it were."]

There were nuances in this final scene which I think I missed. When Eduard says: "Those were marvellous times in Berlin with you, "who is he addressing? Lucie? Martina? "I thought I could bring a bit of that into my home - for ever." Those last two words convey a great deal of sadness. Nothing, of course, is for ever. And yet we all want it to be at times. Eduard, like a prophet, wants everything to remain as it is. He has an all inclusive vision. "Time ought to stand still"; a universal human wish! And it is not a selfish vision: "It ought to remain for ever, for everyone" and he explicitly includes Bleistein, the Jewish banker. Lucie, meanwhile, wishes to invite all the girls down from Berlin even though she knows how narrow the life is in the Hunsruck in relation to such things. Her old life has been re-awakened. There is an elegiac air at the end plus a strong hint of foreboding! Things will change and we know for the worse. Time cannot stand still, much as we may want it to.

This, to my mind is the best episode so far. Serious work and serious purpose!! I hope there will be much to discuss.

Ivan Mansley.

P.S I will not draw a conclusion to the discussion until the New Year. I will be returning to my Heimat, the Yorkshire Dales [between Harrogate and Skipton] from the 20th to the 27th December. Have a happy Xmas wherever you are. By the way, Zarah Leander apparently starred in a film called " Heimat" in 1938. I am sure Reitz and German viewers knew that!!

**Date: Fri, 12 Dec 2003 11:52:20 +0100**

**From: "Foerderer, Walter (MED)" <walter.foerderer med.ge.com>**

Hi there,

Here is my contribution to the Heimat discussion group.

It serves more the stomach than the brain ;-)

Martina is not serving an ordinary potatoe cake to the workers but the famous saxonian QUARKKEULCHEN which is in fact a very popular and delicious dessert in Eastern Germany and Poland. It's best enjoyed in these cold Winter days.

Here it is:

The original Saxonian Quarkkeulchen recipe !!!

That's what you need:

Ss = soup-spoon (sorry for that abbreviation but somehow it fits into the context...)

3 ss raisins (non sulphurized)  
500g potatoes  
a pinch of salt

200g low fat quark  
30g wheat flour  
3 ss dark cane-sugar  
3 fresh egg yolks  
3 ss butter  
3 ss sugar  
half a tea spoon of cinnamon

How to prepare:

Soak the raisins in some water for 10 min.  
Skin the potatoes and wash them.  
Boil the potatoes in salted water for 20 min.  
Drain the boiled potatoes and let them stand for 5 min.  
Mash the potatoes while they are still hot.

Beat together the quark, flour, cane-sugar and egg yolks using a whisk, then mix in the potatoes to obtain a smooth dough.  
If the dough is too soft and it sticks add some more flour.  
Form small balls from the dough and squash them flat.  
Heat the butter in a frying pan and fry the cakes from both sides until golden brown.  
Drain the cakes on kitchen paper towel.  
Serve immediately with a mixture of sugar and cinnamon.

Quarkkeulchen go very well with fried apple rings or stewed apples.

Enjoy!

Walter Foerderer

**Date: Fri, 12 Dec 2003 06:25:40 -0500**  
**From: wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>**

Quark is unknown in the US - and difficult to substitute. It's somewhere between cottage cheese and yoghurt.  
Wolfgang

**Date: Fri, 12 Dec 2003 12:44:57 +0100**  
**From: "Foerderer, Walter (MED)" <walter.foerderer med.ge.com>**

By checking my english dictionary Quark is also known as curd cheese, a kind of sour skim milk.  
Walter

**Date: Fri, 12 Dec 2003 11:50:59 -0600**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Ivan,

Thanks for the great introduction. Pauline reminds me of my mother, whose name was also Pauline. Her hairstyles, both as a young village girl and as a married woman are like the old photos of my mother. I think Pauline represents the child who has success in life - everything goes good for her, to contrast

with Maria or Eduard who have some problems. Pauline marries a successful business man, has a happy marriage and two children - everything is right with her life.

I love the opening scene with Pauline and Maria, giggling like two schoolgirls. Maria never really had a chance to enjoy life on her own, - she went right from her father's house to being a hardworking Hausfrau. Here at least she gets a chance to have some fun here and then states in later scenes that she wants her sons to have fun too. Really quite a modern thought for the 1930's! It is interesting that Pauline has not yet had the nerve to wear her glamorous dress or coat in Zimmern. How the women of the town would talk! Think of how life has changed today - no one would hesitate to show off a new dress.

Eduard indeed had his time in Berlin to have fun - he wishes his life could stay that way, unlike his new responsibilities that Lucie expects of him. This is the first time that I noticed Glassish's comment that "Lucie thinks only of her villa."

Walter, thank you for the QUARKKEULCHEN recipe! You can get Quark in the US, often at a German or Polish deli. OK, at least in the bigger northern cities. Myer's Delicatessen in Chicago and Kuhn's in the suburbs has it. I would not be surprised if one can order it online! My former German teacher used to substitute sour cream, but Quark is thicker and more solid.

Even after seeing this episode several times, I am still mystified about the Todt rings with the death heads. Why were they popular?

Susan

**Date: Wed, 31 Dec 2003 16:31:41 +0100**  
**From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder\_rustema.nl>**

hi everyone,

When I was catching up with watching parts three, four and five around Christmas at my parents place, I noticed that they had problems keeping track of who is who in Schabbach. I noticed the same thing when I was watching Heimat with a friend.

There is an official drawing with family trees published in colour in the Heimat book and on Thomas' website at <http://home.t-online.de/home/th.hoenemann/heimat/heim1inh.htm>

Thomas' scan is a bit small, difficult to read, but I have a greyscale scan (taken from my tv-guide) you can print from <http://reinder.rustema.nl/heimat/heimattree.jpeg> and keep together with your Heimat-videos.

best wishes for 2004,

-

ReindeR

**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan@jsbiedron.com>**  
**Date: Wed, 31 Dec 2003 10:29:40 -0600**

ReindeR,

When looking at your greyscale map, I see a third child of the Wiegand family - looks like Gustav. Although I have watched Heimat at least 4 times, I do not remember Gustav Wiegand at all! Or was he killed in WWI?

Thanks for the Heimat fix. I needed that!  
Susan

**From: Th.Hoenemann@t-online.de (Thomas Hönemann)**  
**Date: Wed, 31 Dec 2003 18:06:53 +0100**

Dear friends,

I just posted a bigger, coloured version under the following URL: <http://home.t-online.de/home/th.hoenemann/heimat/stammbaumgr.jpg> (732 kb).

The best wishes to you all for the coming year 2004. Stay (ore get) healthy and have much fun on Heimat furtheron.  
Thomas

**Date: Mon, 5 Jan 2004 18:34:36 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman@dsl.pipex.com>**

I think Christmas and the New Year must have overwhelmed everyone as there has been only Susan's posting of 12/12/03 on Part 4, The Highway which has discussed the film itself. A great shame, as I regard this episode, in many ways, as the best so far and would have been very interested in others' views.

Susan asked this question at the end of her post: "Even after seeing this episode several times, I am still mystified about the Todt rings with the death heads. Why were they popular?" I have been pondering over this question also. I think that they were popular as signifying death to Germany's enemies and were therefore popular with nationalists and, in particular, National Socialists and SS members, but I may be quite wrong about this.

As I remember it the subject of the death's-head rings arose 3 times in the episode and all were linked together through the dialogue. Whilst Maria and Pauline have been to the cinema Robert has been buying jewellery for the shop. The price and profit margin are discussed and Maria takes the tray of death's-head rings and stares at them, partly repulsed. The camera focuses on the ruby red eyes of some of them, which shine in a most sinister fashion. Maria: "They're frightening. Those red eyes seem to stare at you. Who buys stuff like that?" Reitz, thus highlights thro' a small symbolic detail, the evils of the Nazi philosophy. Maria is told that death's head rings are a best-selling item and that highway workers buy a great deal of this jewellery to give to their wives and salve their guilty consciences about being unfaithful. Note the linking, perhaps, of more than one kind of immorality. Maria is looking very troubled by all this [an honest, decent response?]. One person who has bought this kind of stuff we soon find is Otto Wohlleben. Maria notices such a ring on his finger when Otto is helping young Ernst to make a model aeroplane. Maria: "You've one of those rings too. Lots of people are wearing them. I didn't think I'd see you with one." And perhaps we, the viewers, share her opinion. Here are two people of integrity and decency. Otto replies: "They're alike but they mean something different to every wearer." And offers no further explanation. Does Maria think of infidelity here? [Otto's?]. The link has been made earlier.

Otto's words have left their mark. When Maria and Otto are seated at a table on the balcony of the dance-hall she remarks on Otto's ring again and mentions "Tod", the Death Organisation. I had to re-check the video for this. We have the following dialogue:

Otto: "No, it's Todt with a hard T at the front.. a soft D and a hard T at the end."

Maria: "Well now I know."

We need a German speaker for this [Thomas?]. Are there 2 different German words sounding alike and meaning different things? Or is he simply avoiding the issue of why he is wearing such a ring by being pedantic? Or is there some kind of joke/pun involved here. Then Maria expresses her surprise that a good man like Otto should be wearing such a ring:" Everybody's wearing these rings now. You too."She remembers the earlier exchange with Pauline and Robert and so do we. Then we have:

Otto: "The rings are private." [What is he hiding?]

Maria: "You said they mean something for everyone. [She remembers his words earlier. A sign of her growing love for him]. "What does it mean for you?" [Are you being unfaithful to another woman? Does it signify something about your character? Implied-I love you and want to marry you. Wonderful!!]

I noticed then that he changes the subject and does not answer. Thus, these rings symbolise much about the wider social and political scene but also tell us much about the lives and hearts of the characters. Just as Reitz' film Heimat does also! I probably haven't answered your question, Susan, but I have enjoyed writing this little piece of analysis. Please contribute anyone out there, especially German speakers.

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Tue, 6 Jan 2004 11:23:02 +0100**

**From: "Foerderer, Walter (MED)" <walter.foerderer@med.ge.com>**

"Tod" (death) and Todt sound similar in German. In HEIMAT the discussion about the death rings is about "Organisation Todt". I found an abstract in German and I tried to translate a part of it.

"Organisation Todt" (OT) belonged to the biggest mass organizations in the Third Reich. It differed from all others especially because most of the members were foreigners (Auslaender). In 1943 only 50000 out of 1 million men in duty for OT were Germans. The foreigners were recruited by force from civilians or prisoners of war.

During World War II the OT carried out a huge construction program which was described at the end of the war by the British Secret Service as "the most impressive since the roman times".

The OT was not the result of a definitive legislative or executive decision.

There was neither an order nor a law about its raising. Since Fritz Todt was in charge as General Inspector for the German Streets and Traffic in 1933, OT developed from the smallest beginnings to the most important organisation essential to the war effort next to Wehrmacht and SS.

The structure changed from year to year. It became adapted to the needs of the orders.

The name "Organisation Todt" was shaped by Adolf Hitler at the Reichsparteitag 1938 as he acknowledged OT for the participation on the construction of the Westwall. OT then became especially important during the battle against France (Frankreichfeldzug).

After Todt's death, when Speer came in charge, OT became part of the Reichs Ministry for Weapons and Ammunition.

OT had its biggest construction orders in the occupied areas: roads, plants, bridges, barracks, telecommunications network, minings and of course defense constructions. From 1943 OT workers had to take care as well for consequences of air raids, e.g. deactivating bombs etc..

Walter Foerderer

**Date: Tue, 6 Jan 2004 11:29:41 +0100**  
**From: "Foerderer, Walter (MED)" <walter.foerderer@med.ge.com>**

For a brief introduction in English see also:

<http://motlc.wiesenthal.com/pages/t057/t05789.html>

**Date: Thu, 8 Jan 2004 17:14:48 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

Because of the hiatus with the server matters have become a little confusing. I think there were 8 contributors in all including myself with a total of 20 posts. General critical discussion was a bit thin with only 3 contributors and 8 posts including myself. The other 12 posts with 5 contributors were on factual matters such as the Heimat Museum [?], the family tree, death's-head rings, and Saxon potato cakes. Nothing wrong with a good potato cake but can I have Martina to serve it to me?!!

If you have any feedback at any time about the introductions you can send to the list or e-mail me privately. Is there anything I'm not doing that you want done? Is there too much detail? Not enough? Comments would be most welcome. Introduction to Part 5 tomorrow so must up and away!!

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Sun, 11 Apr 2004 21:07:57 +0200**  
**From: Raymond Scholz <rscholz zonix.de>**

On Jan 06 2004, "Maarten Landzaat" <gijs@xs4all.nl> wrote:

> In the last scene, the time stand-still was also in the acting,  
> wasn't it? There were some awkwardly silent few seconds, which  
> gave the viewer time to think about what the future would bring.  
> I will watch the scene again.

Sorry for the late reply on that last scene of part 4 where we see Lucie, Martina and Eduard. I totally agree with your interpretation - we see a set that would fit on a theater stage. Martina and Lucie in the front on the sofa and Eduard coming from his desk behind into the foreground. Note that the few seconds of silence are disturbed by the ticking clock we see all the time. So yet another reference to changing times...

Heimat has a lot of those theater like scenes, I didn't like when I watched Heimat first because they don't seem to fit into the cinematic quality of the rest film. They felt a bit overemphasized to me. But after watching Heimat again during my personal marathon (I'm not finished yet...) I'm starting to like them. They slow down the tempo of the film and give the viewer some extra time (that's what you wrote, Maarten).

Cheers, Ray

**Date: Fri, 9 Jan 2004 08:15:44 -0000**

**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

"I sit in of the dives  
On Fifty-second Street  
Uncertain and afraid  
As the clever hopes expire  
Of a low dishonest decade:  
Waves of anger and fear  
Circulate over the bright  
And darkened lands of the earth,  
Obsessing our private lives;  
The unmentionable odour of death  
Offends the September night." [ September 1, 1939:W.H.Auden]

HEIMAT Part 5: AUF UND DAVON UND ZURUCK [Up and Away and Back]

I found the beginning of this episode rather slow and perhaps a little repetitive, especially the long scene in the cinema, where Reitz seemed to be paying some sort of homage to a film with the same name [Heimat starring Zarah Leander]. We had a very similar scene at the beginning of Part 4 with the camera showing some of the film but concentrating on familiar faces in the audience. I wondered why Reitz dwelled on the film so long and I kept trying to find parallels/significances between the Heimat in the cinema and Reitz's film. A little girl asks an old man: "Do you still know me?" on the screen. Is this a forerunner of the question Paul Simon later puts to his family? Anton and Ernst do not know their father. The film seems to contain the idea of return which is to be important to us later in this episode. I noticed in the film some characters take apples from a shelf, Martina and her new boy-friend are eating apples whilst watching the film, and later when Robert goes to his cellar to get more wine he eats an apple from a store of apples on a shelf. What this signifies I have no idea!

What I did find interesting was a continuing thread related to sight and watching. Lucie crashes her car and kills her parents because she is driving inattentively, not watching! As the funeral procession passes through the village, looking on and commentating like a Greek chorus from classical tragedy are the inn-keeper and now grown-up Hans, the boy with one eye [his other having been put out by a fork]. Lucie has been injured in one eye, we learn, and her dead parents will never see Schabbach, says Hans. Then we move to the cinema, where the audience are watching images. When the postman arrives in the village with Paul's letter Glassisch is fixing broken windows/ glazing... seeing thro'. fanciful? Ernst observes his mother in the arms of Uncle Otto from the half-opened door and is very watchful of his movements, isn't he? Oh, I almost forgot, Mathias'eyesight has gone and he cannot read his son's letter.

The centre of this episode is, of course, the love affair between Otto and Maria and the awful shadow cast over it by the impending return of Paul Simon. The arrival of his letter is wonderfully done as we see the postbag at the station, the postman on his bicycle [notice the switch into colour revealing the bright red forks], the music hammering away in the background [dung,dung,dung] indicating something portentous/important. It is quite clear to me that Reitz is directing our sympathies away from Paul and his expressed intention to return. There is not one word of apology or explanation in his letter to his wife and children for his actions in deserting them. The tone is totally egotistical. "I am worried about Anton and Ernst"...I,I,I. He seems to have no conception that their lives can have developed and gone off in different directions without him.

The episode now develops strength, intensity and raw emotion. Marita Breuer acts the role of the anguished Maria quite beautifully. Her intensity with her tear-filled tragic eyes almost frightens us. "That man, that stranger.And that corpse writes a letter after 12 years. He's dead for me". In a later scene, in the hotel bedroom, Maria expresses her sense of betrayal and anguish. A great welcome is planned for Paul but as she cries: "And the whole time nobody's asked me.. how I feel about it, what I think about it." Otto's anguish is well done also. This normally self-restrained man is in

torment: "Do you still need me, Maria?" and shakes her in fury for an answer. Their tragedy is at the hands of a selfish man. Later on the telephone from the ship he sounds cold and domineering. Maria becomes consumed by guilt like one of Thomas Hardy's tragic heroines. Anton, who has grown into a sensible young man, remarks: "I don't know my father at all."

I thought a little about the relevance of the title. The only character to whom it literally applies is Ernst. Wilfried enrolls him in the Hitler Youth Air Corps and in a short, self-contained sequence, we see him soar into the air in a glider and return to earth. Up and Away and Back in fact. Paul Simon has upped and left and gone away to America and now tries to come back. Any other possibilities? Earlier, of course, he had enlisted, fought on the W.Front and walked back home.

On the political level Reitz clearly depicts the folly of basing a whole political programme on notions of racial purity. The search at the local library for proof of Paul Simon's Aryan roots and the fear that there may be Jewish blood in the family becomes almost comic as Wilfried and Eduard squabble about who is the most German. Otto has been dismissed from his job as engineer on the highway because his mother was Jewish. I thought the declaration of war at the end of the episode was very well-handled. It was done with great economy and showed many differing emotions ranging from pride to bewilderment with the church bells adding their note of doom and melancholy. I noted too how the camera suddenly pulled back and showed us the whole of the Hunsrueck region. Was it Hitler's actual voice that was used in the broadcast? It sounded like it. Another very memorable image for me where the camera suddenly pulls back was the scene where Anton goes to get Ernst who has run off and they fight, two lonely troubled boys, and as the camera pans back the figures diminish and we see the landscape of river and frozen fields and banks. "I don't want to see him, neither does mother." And Reitz makes us feel the same.

I shall end with a couple of small questions. Had we seen Herr Pollack before? Why was Martina intent on capturing him in marriage? Perhaps because he did not know her past. We see her calculating the possibilities, yes, watching him!! He does not seem much of a catch. Interestingly no one uses his first name, not even Martina after the shotgun engagement. Why was Herr Pollack so moved by Heimat 1938 with tears streaming down his face? Perhaps because he was in exile from his Heimat, Sudetenland.

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Sun, 11 Jan 2004 11:30:00 +0100**  
**From: Lars Stjernestam <lars.stjernestam.com>**

A couple of words about Zarah Leander

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Well, this subject is perhaps not really that much connected to Edgar Reitz films, but he chooses to name his film to the same name as one of Zarah Leander's films, and also to include a few seconds of Zarah Leander in his own film, so I would not say it is unimportant. Also, as a Swede, as one of the few (if not the only) reference to Sweden in Heimat.

Extract from the Swedish National Encyclopaedia:

Zarah Leander, singer and actor 1907-1981. Started working together with the two leading names in show business, Ernst Rolf and Karl Gerhard, in the late 20's and early 30's in Stockholm, mostly doing operettas and records. She moved to Germany 1936. In Berlin she became one of the greatest stars in film, in for example:

Zu Neuen Ufern 37  
Premiere 37  
La Habanera 37  
Heimat 38  
Es War Eine Rauchende Ballnacht 39  
Die Grosse Liebe 42

Damals 42

Leander then moved back to Sweden 1943. Due to her nazi connection she did not perform in Sweden until 1949. In the 50'ies and 60'ies she had a career in film and records in both Sweden and West Germany. So far the Encyclopaedia.

Zarah sat at the same table as Adolf when there was party in the film studio. She also was given the opportunity to become a German citizen by Joseph Goebbels, but she turned that down.

Zarah originally came from the town Karlstad in Sweden. As late as mid december 2003, 22 years after her death, a statue of Zarah was finally erected in the grand theatre hall in Karlstad, where she had her debut 1927 and held her farewell concert 1974. My personal memories (I'm born 1957) of her is seeing her on TV in the 60'ies as "that strange women with a man's voice". My father always turned off the TV with the words "that nazi w...e". Zarah is still a very controversial person in Sweden.

Best Heimat Regards

Lars Stjernestam, Sweden--

**Date: Sun, 11 Jan 2004 18:05:26 +0100**  
**From: Th.Hoenemann t-online.de**

Dear Reinder, Ivan and other friends of Heimat,

Ivan, thank you very much for your great introduction again. You always discover and express a lot of things I just dealt with unconsciously, so you help me (and surely others, too) to think more systematic, maybe even in scientific categories about Reitz's work.

Today I just want to follow one of your thoughts, namely the deeper meaning of the episodes title, because in this case I disagree with you.

In my opinion the title "up and away - and back" is focusing the development of Maria's life. Her love to Otto seems to bring her back to youth, seems to open her new ways in life. For the first time ever Maria thinks about having fun in her life (watching a car race, visiting the cinema, go dancing etc.) - and about travelling: in part 4 she says when greeting Otto in the morning with a sound of longing: "Yes, a nice day, a day one should be able to travel." (in original: "Ach ja, da müsst mer mal so richtig schön verreise könne."). This is a real new thought for Maria who never had left Schabbach before - and will not until the end of her life. Even Katharina recognizes Maria's change of mind: In part 4 she says "Mathias, we have to care more for Maria's children. The girl needs more time for herself. Life was so hard for her all those years.". So Maria is one step before changing her whole life, she is going to get up and away.

Paul's letter brings her BACK on the base of reality and destroys all her dreams and aims, all her longing and hopes to have a new life with Otto.

Did you recognise that Reitz is quoting the scene the letter arrives from the scene Paul is getting back from war (the first scene of the whole film)? The way through the village, Glasisch repairing the Tanzsaals window, th fiery iron (colour!) - and the music: Paul's theme! I like this sequence very much because of Riezt facility to express with pictures and music the destinating meaning for Maria and for the whole movie.

What do you think?  
Best regards to you all,  
Thomas

**Date: Mon, 12 Jan 2004 10:07:42 -0600**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Here are some of my thoughts on Part 5:

In the opening scene Glassisch, one-eyed Hans and others are discussing the roads. Glassisch, always very perceptive, comments that the new roads do not connect the towns - they connect bunkers. Then we see Lucie driving her parents in the car, there is an accident and Lucie's parents are killed. Perhaps this is too dramatic but I interpret this to illustrate that Germany's new roads are actually roads to death and destruction. Innocent people (Lucie's parents) go along for the ride and are killed. Lucie, who takes advantage of the new order for her advancement, is disfigured for life. She is driving the car, but is not completely attentive to what she is doing.

Ivan's comments on eyes are interesting - I did not notice this before. Germans turning a blind eye to what is happening in the country?? This is just a wild guess.

I feel so sorry for Maria. Paul is indeed a selfish man who ruins her life. He starts out in Part 1 to be likeable, but that is the last time he ever gets my sympathy. After that I do not like him at all. In Germany of the time, if a husband was missing for a number of years, could he officially be declared dead? I also wonder even if Maria had obtained a divorce, given the times, would she have been allowed to marry Otto because of his Jewish mother? Is anyone knowledgeable about this?

Ivan's comments:

> Had we seen Herr Pollack before? Why was Martina intent on capturing him in marriage? Perhaps because he did not know her past. We see her calculating the possibilities, yes, watching him!! He does not seem much of a catch.

On the contrary - Herr Pollack is a respectable person. I think Martina has seen that Lucie had done very well for herself by becoming respectable. Martina is looking for a secure place in society. She sees that Pauline's husband is prosperous. Herr Pollack works for him, so he may become prosperous also. I think she just wants to fit in with the other couples.

The apples: I have no idea about what the apples mean, but I found it very interesting how the apples were stored in the cellar - in single layers, spaced well apart. It does make sense, but I had never seen apples stored that way.

The other thing I must comment on is Pauline's 2 children left alone when their parents were at the movie. This was a common practice in the past. Parents went out when their children were asleep. I can remember being home sick as a small child - 5 or 6 - and my mother went to the store. Today a parent would be put in jail for doing that.

Thomas's comment:

> This is a real new thought for Maria who never had left Schabbach before - and will not until the end of her life.

This thought has been mentioned several times that Maria never leaves the village. She does leave at least 2 times that we see - 1, when she goes to Trier to meet Otto, 2, when she goes to meet Paul's ship.

Susan

**Date: Mon, 12 Jan 2004 22:25:38 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

Thomas wrote:

"Today I just want to follow one of your thoughts, namely the deeper meaning of the episodes title, because in this case I disagree with you. In my opinion the title "up and away - and back" is focusing the development of Maria's life."

I don't think there is any disagreement, Thomas. I felt that the only character to whom it applied literally was Ernst and then thought about its relevance to Paul. I then asked for suggestions. You have given me one and I agree with you. Maria struggles to find a new life and is "up and away" but her duty to the father of her children, to her marriage vows, to the climate of the times, force her "back". I had not made the link with the title. I wrote also: "Maria becomes consumed by guilt like one of Thomas Hardy's tragic heroines. "She is like Tess in "Tess of the D'Urbervilles", the tragic late 19th century novel by Thomas Hardy. Convention and orthodox morality force her back to her original husband. Tess ends by killing her worthless husband and is hung from the gallows. The novelist comments: "The President of the Immortals had finished his sport with Tess". Maria is not Tess but there is much tragedy in her life as well.

Thomas also wrote: "Did you recognise that Reitz is quoting the scene the letter arrives from the scene Paul is getting back from war (the first scene of the whole film)? The way through the village, Glasisch repairing the Tanzsaals window, the fiery iron (colour!) - and the music: Paul's theme! I like this sequence very much because of Reitz facility to express with pictures and music the destinating meaning for Maria and for the whole movie."

I must admit that I had not recognized this. You are so right. What a clever man this Edgar Reitz is!! The "quotation" is so skilful and subtle but when you compare the two moments the parallels are indisputable. I noticed in Paul's return the lady is cleaning the windows and Glassisch is annoying her but with the arrival of the letter Glassisch is putting in new glass. A reformed character!!

In her post Susan wrote about my comment on Herr Pollack as "not much of a catch": "On the contrary - Herr Pollack is a respectable person. I think Martina has seen that Lucie had done very well for herself by becoming respectable. Martina is looking for a secure place in society. She sees that Pauline's husband is prosperous. Herr Pollack works for him, so he may become prosperous also. I think she just wants to fit in with the other couples."

I thoroughly agree that Herr Pollack is a respectable person and is appealing to Martina in that respect with her dubious past. That is what I was implying by my remark: "Why was Martina intent on capturing him in marriage? Perhaps because he did not know her past". She is not certain though, is she? You can see her calculating the odds. Is he worth it? I agree with everything else you say here about Martina's motives, Susan. When I said: "He does not seem much of a catch. Interestingly no one uses his first name, not even Martina after the shotgun engagement" I meant that he appears lacking in character and in the kind of good looks Martina might have found attractive. For instance, after the announcement of the spurious engagement, all he can say is: "Well, I'm not so sure." Rather feeble, don't you think? In the good looks department he is certainly no Cary Grant or even Brad Pitt! [Got to show myself up to date!]. Martina is, perhaps, sacrificing a great deal, by her standards.

Susan also wrote: "Then we see Lucie driving her parents in the car, there is an accident and Lucie's parents are killed. Perhaps this is too dramatic but I interpret this to illustrate that Germany's new roads are actually roads to death and destruction. Innocent people (Lucie's parents) go along for the ride and are killed. Lucie, who takes advantage of the new order for her advancement, is disfigured for life." I hope this does not sound patronising but I found this very perceptive and illuminating. For instance, I have always had it drummed into me that Hitler had the autobahn built not to improve the lot of German motorists but in order to more successfully mobilize troops and transport supplies and munitions to the front. Certainly "roads to death and destruction." Mind you, here in the bumbling, inefficient UK we didn't manage to open a single motorway until November 1959!! What a contrast! Susan also commented how perceptive Glassisch is. It seems to me that Reitz uses him as a kind of "mouthpiece" to voice his own more modern thoughts, as Glassisch is not so much a direct participant in, but more a commentator on, the action.

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Mon, 12 Jan 2004 23:37:08 +0100**  
**From: "Maarten Landzaat" <gijs xs4all.nl>**

Hi,

I watched part 5 just after Christmas, because it was originally scheduled on Dec 26. I apparently didn't save the new schedule. I watched the episode this evening again. After the first viewing I saw "things" regarding the title, and the strange apple scenes. After the second viewing, I saw some more title-related scenes, and a man/woman-thing (maybe). Elaborating on the "things":

#### Title

After my first viewing, I felt (and still feel) I see the title everywhere! I looked up "auf und davon" in my dictionary since I had the feeling it was an expression. It translates into Dutch as "ervandoor", which is similar to "gone", or "off" (in the "gone"-meaning). So we have "gone and back". To and fro. The interesting thing is that EVERY occasion of "back", everything goes terribly wrong.

#### My list:

1 In the most abstract meaning, I think the title refers to the war, which is an important subject of this episode. The "auf und davon" refers to the start of the war, enthusiastically welcomed by Hitler, and many men. The "Zurueck" is not filmed in this episode, but we all know that the Germans come back after the war, and all is not good.

2 Lucie goes auf un davon zu Berlin (?) and returns back and a terrible accident happens. The new generation kills the older generation?

3 Paul left and comes back. It goes wrong on two levels: 1 he's not allowed to enter the country. 2 He wrecks Maria's life.

4 Maria left the village to pick up Paul, but does not succeed in bringing Paul back (at least not as planned).

5 Otto leaves Maria's house, and promptly loses his job. He cannot return to Maria because Paul is coming and Maria has all her thoughts with Paul.

6 When Pauline and Robert left for the cinema, but when coming back the kids were awake and doing some mild mischief.

7 Robert takes the car (and maybe himself?) away. We do not expect the car back anytime soon.

8 Ernstchen flying. I didn't get this one first (I watched it before Ivan's introduction), but Ivan made me see it. This is the most literal explanation of the title, and oddly, about the only one that ends well.

9 Now I'm probably exaggerating, but I felt the title also refers to the trembling of the earth just before the war, to the trembling of Maria (in bed with Otto), and of the flags during Hitler's speech.

#### Apples

Like Ivan, I noticed the three apple-scenes, and like Ivan I have no idea of the significance. My girlfriend immediately said that the apples were there to dry. I will ask her again why she thought that.

#### Man/woman

I noticed that when we were shown all the children from the army unit during the speech, all the boys were looking quite tough, but the last two were girls, and they were breathing heavily, much more

excited. This also seems to be the case in the village, where the women are more open about their dismay and worries about the war than the men.

Ivan wrote:

>What I did find interesting was a continuing thread related to sight and watching.

The list you provide is very impressive. I didn't pick up on it, unfortunately I forgot to pay attention to it in my second viewing. It must signify something. Maybe the question is "who sees (or wants to see) that a terrible tragedy is coming"? Some (like Maria) have their thoughts somewhere else. Just guessing here...

Thomas wrote:

> Did you recognise that Reitz is quoting the scene the letter arrives from  
> the scene Paul is getting back from war (the first scene of the whole film)?

No, I didn't, but it makes perfect sense! I will look up this scene in part 1 again.

Please react!

Maarten

**Date: Tue, 13 Jan 2004 23:32:50 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

Because of the difficulties with the server I did not see Maarten's post before commenting on Thomas' and Susan's points and I do not think he had seen my contribution before his posting!

I have read with care Maarten's definition of the title and found it interesting that "Auf und Davon" has the force of a proverbial/colloquial expression. I did have a little difficulty with some of the "things" in your list, Maarten, where you might be stretching matters a little far. For instance, you wrote: "1 In the most abstract meaning, I think the title refers to the war, which is an important subject of this episode. The "auf und davon" refers to the start of the war, enthusiastically welcomed by Hitler, and many men. The "Zurueck" is not filmed in this episode, but we all know that the Germans come back after the war, and all is not good."

However, we do not see the return of soldiers in this episode and the film's focus is on the declaration of war rather than any "up and away". I like your points 2, 3, 4 & 5. For point 6 we did not see Pauline and Robert leave for the cinema, did we? So there is some stretching there. My biggest difficulty was with your Point 9, Maarten. You wrote: "9 Now I'm probably exaggerating, but I felt the title also refers to the trembling of the earth just before the war, to the trembling of Maria (in bed with Otto), and of the flags during Hitler's speech."

I'm afraid I cannot see this as related to the title. Please explain more fully.

Returning to the apples! I am sure Robert stored them in the cellar so they would not spoil. He takes one and munches it reflectively while staring at his wine. Does he have some forebodings about the future? When I was watching the scene in the cinema and Martina hands Herr Pollack an apple from which he bites I started reflecting on the story of Adam and Eve in the Bible and the eating of the apple from the tree of knowledge and the coming of sin but I had to reject this as merely fanciful and probably would not fit.

As regards the air cadets lined up for the declaration of war I made a note "callow youth" and saw the scene as a comment on old men sacrificing youth in war. I did notice that in Schabbach, exactly at the time of the declaration of war, a baby is born, given the name of Sieghild. Reitz seems to be saying life

goes on come what may.

Maarten wrote at the end of his post after some kind words: "Maybe the question is "who sees (or wants to see) that a terrible tragedy is coming"? Some (like Maria) have their thoughts somewhere else. Just guessing here..." I am also just guessing. Maybe Reitz, through this thread, is indicating the necessity of all of us to see clearly our own situations and what our leaders are doing. Lucie kills her parents thro' not being attentive, the older generation's sight is fading [Mathias cannot read his son's letter] but Hans and Glasisch are watchful. Was Wiegand or was he blinded by nationalism. Were the people of the thirties sleep-walking their way towards doom? We are in agreement here, Maarten.

Was it Hitler's actual voice in the declaration of war or an actor's? I could not see from the sub-titles.

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Wed, 14 Jan 2004 16:52:05 +0100**  
**From: "Theresia en Martijn" <theresia\_martijn\_onetelnet.nl>**

> Was it Hitler's actual voice in the declaration of war or an actor's?  
> I could not see from the sub-titles.  
>  
> Ivan Mansley

Dear Ivan,

As far as I know (and I think I've seen this speech in documentaries) this is Hitler's own voice and real speech. Why should they make a new tape with someone else's voice? It's much cheaper and easier to use the real one and for a film like Heimat I'm sure it's not difficult to get permission to use it.

I'm sorry I didn't give any reaction on part 4 and 5 so far. I was in the middle of moving house and had no time. I hope you'll allow me to write some things about both episodes soon.

Theresia

**Date: Wed, 14 Jan 2004 21:52:19 +0100**  
**From: "Maarten Landzaat" <gijs\_xs4all.nl>**

Ivan wrote:

> Because of the difficulties with the server I did not see Maarten's post  
> before commenting on Thomas' and Susan's points and I do not think he had  
> seen my contribution before his posting!

That's true.

> My biggest difficulty was with your Point 9, Maarten. You wrote:" 9 Now I'm  
> probably exaggerating, but I felt the title also refers to the trembling of the earth  
> just before the war, to the trembling of Maria (in bed with Otto), and of the flags  
> during Hitler's speech." I'm afraid I cannot see this as related to the title. Please  
> explain more fully.

Maybe it's because I'm Dutch: one of the possible translations of the title would be "Heen en weer", which is a word-by-word translation (auf&davon=heen, zurueck=weer). But in Dutch it mainly denotes a \_repetitive\_ to and fro movement, like a ferry, like trembling, like waving etc. Maybe the German natives can tell us if the original title also has this meaning in German?

> ... I started reflecting on the story of Adam and Eve in the Bible and the eating  
> of the apple from the tree of knowledge and the coming of sin but I had to reject  
> this as merely fanciful and probably would not fit.

I'm not too biblical but didn't the apple eating in paradise signify the start of all evil? If so, that would sort of fit.

> Was it Hitler's actual voice in the declaration of war or an actor's? I could not see  
> from the sub-titles.

It definitely sounded original to me.

Maarten

**From: Susan Biedron <susan jsbiedron.com>**  
**Sent: Thursday, January 15, 2004 9:54 AM**

Regarding Herr Pollack:

someone asked if we had seen this character before:

Is he in the crowd that helps when Martina's car gets stuck? I did think it was strange that she addresses him as "Herr Pollack" after they became "engaged." Does his not having a first name show that he is not important as a person, but only as a concept of respectability for Martina?

Maartin and Ivan's comment on the apples:

> "I'm not too biblical but didn't the apple eating in paradise signify  
> the start of all evil? If so, that would sort of fit."

> I started reflecting on the story of Adam and Eve in the  
> Bible and the eating of the apple from the tree of knowledge  
> and the coming of sin but I had to reject this as merely fanciful and  
> probably would not fit.

This crossed my mind also, and then I immediately dismissed this as being too obvious -- but perhaps you both are right. Robert goes downstairs to get a bottle of wine. His well stocked cellar is a sign of his prosperity - everything has gone exceptionally well for Robert and Pauline in the past few years. He looks over his wine bottles - the camera makes a point of this, then he selects a simple apple. He takes a bite like Eve. At the end of this episode, Robert goes away. But - and this is where I may be making too much of this - Robert is not an evil character - he is only a good man who has been successful.

Wiegand and Eduard's search in the archives:

I found this scene very amusing. Wiegand is going on and on about his name being pure German. Then Eduard says it sounds French - Wiegand does not like that comment!

Does anyone have comments on the misunderstanding of the telegram? Is it Lucie who misinterprets the message incorrectly or was the error in the telegram?

Susan

**Date: Thu, 22 Jan 2004 17:38:44 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

I think we had a more lively discussion this time. We had 7 contributors with 11 posts relevant to Part 5. We discussed amongst many other things the relevance of the title, the characters of Maria, Paul, and the role of Glasisch, children left alone [Did you see in the papers the story about two English parents who left their baby in a car whilst they took their small child to the toilet in a New York shopping mall and were arrested when they returned to the car 10 minutes later?], apples, the theme of "seeing", use of film "quotations" and Hitler's voice in declaration of war. Please contribute on Parts 4 and 5, Theresia, whenever you have time, tho' don't leave it too long or we might be immersed in another topic.

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Fri, 23 Jan 2004 08:40:41 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

HEIMAT Part 6: HEIMATFRONT [The Homefront]

It seems to me that Reitz confronts quite directly the evils of Nazism and the question of how much was known about the atrocities of the Holocaust and the concentration camps in this episode of Heimat. He does this, of course, through his depiction of Wilfried Wiegand. I found Wilfried's cold-blooded and ruthless killing of the injured British airman quite shocking on first viewing for this discussion, and, on second viewing, was able to concentrate on how Reitz achieves this sense of shock cinematically speaking. Wilfried's gun is directly aimed at us, the audience, and as we cringe, the camera returns to the stricken airman, falling back with a bullet through the head. At the end of the episode, during Lucie's musical soiree, he unburdens himself [not very discreetly as he is heard by Pauline and her son Robert] to the other officers: "The final solution is being executed mercilessly. Between ourselves, we all know anyway 'Up the chimney' I mean the Jews" [the last phrase is to Pauline]. I took the "we" to mean at least all the military and SS, and, if a fairly small time functionary like Wilfried knew, then it must have been pretty widely known. That is what Reitz seems to imply. As an aside, although it did point up Wilfried's wickedness, I found the running quarrel between him and Kath perhaps a little "stagey". I did like the way his pompous and windy speech, concerning the virtues of the telephone system in linking Anton and his wife, was punctuated by the sound of Glasisch slurping his soup.

On the subject of Glasisch it was really quite touching how he twice had to ask Eduard to be included in the wedding photo and then had to have his "scabby hand" removed from the elder Wiegand's shoulder. The outsider cries to be let in! It was interesting at the end to see Glasisch outside in the snow with his mocking cry: "Put out that light."

There were moments of great tension in the film, weren't there? The filming of Otto defusing the bomb was quite brilliant. The camera focused on the huge metal pliers and the careful ratcheting of the fuse. One felt at any moment that the thing would explode, blowing Otto into "the stratosphere", as he put it. I liked Otto's idea of the bomb as female "gurgling away" and being relieved of its fuse. The other moment of tension and excitement was Ernst's low-flying exploits over Schabbach. I kept thinking that he would crash at any moment, especially after a dramatic roll manoeuvre. The sudden splash of colour with the falling red carnations was most dramatic.

Many of the transitions and contrasts in this episode were very interesting. For instance, when Martha and Maria are together in the Post Office van, we have feminine conversation with Maria comforting the crying Martha, and talking of "My Anton and your Anton" and "Our boy" who was always "a sensitive boy, really gentle." This inclusive, warm, maternal talk with the two women building their relationship is in beautiful contrast to the cynical, slightly earthy, mocking tone of the masculine conversation of Otto

and Pieritz a little later by the side of the volcanic lake. Also, we have the sudden contrast between the talk about the gentle Anton as the van proceeds down the narrow, winding lane and the sudden appearance of the arrogant and cruel Wilfried, strutting through the barn door into the French P.O.W. centre.

I have a number of questions. I hope they can be answered. Shortly after leaving the station in the post van Maria and Martha start singing in a totally tuneless way, or so it seemed to me, some dreadful wordy song. What was it? A folk song? A military song? Both women are happy together. Martha has a vision of Anton in Russia and begins to cry. Maria appears to be quoting when she refers to him "in that vast, terrible country." What is she quoting?

We see Hermann in the yard with the geese and he is observed by Mathias, Maria and Martha. "What a sweet little boy!" We will remember these words. I was rather disappointed by the casting of the grown-up Anton and Ernst. They looked nothing like their previous selves, particularly the former.

Having become immersed in Reitz's Heimat I am beginning to see cinematic quotes everywhere!! Thomas will be pleased! Old Wiegand talking to Anton on the telephone in a crowded room referred back to his call to Wilfried in Berlin. The telephone lines stretching across the snow-covered landscape referred back to the scenes with Hans shooting the porcelain insulators and forward to Eduard's discovery of Hans' death on the Eastern Front, a discovery which affects him deeply. When taking a photograph he remarks to Glasisch, I think that "Airmen are the true heroes. They don't suffer." An enigmatic remark that he has made before, I think.

As an Englishman I liked Otto's words about the precision of English engineering which ironically helps to preserve his life [vbg] but Reitz, the German director, is showing us that there is no room for narrow nationalism amongst the intelligent. What else? Look at Reitz's attention to detail. In the scene at the station when Martha arrives we see a departing soldier kissing his girl-friend, we hear the train whistle as it is ready to depart, and we see Maria's van enveloped in steam for a few moments. It is artifice but it appears authentic. We can see Reitz's interest in film techniques with the filming of Anton on the telephone by the Propaganda Unit and such detail as the use of a tape measure from Anton's head to get lighting and focus correct.

I would just like to return to Lucie's musical evening once more to finish. She is behaving outrageously and flirting with virtually all the men. She has her new protégé, the talented violinist Herr Zacharias. She addresses him by his first name, Helmut. There seems to be something between them! What is the music he is playing after the sheet music has dropped to the floor and been picked up? I am hopeless at recognizing music but it seemed very familiar. My wife tells me we have it on CD. Is it Mozart? I take it that it is by a German composer. My old headmaster at school was always saying something to the effect of how could a nation produce not only Bach and Beethoven but also Belsen and Buchenwald! I think Reitz may be making the same point. On one side of the room we have music being played divinely [Lucie's description but true] and, on the other, a murderer talking about sending Jews "up the chimney."

As usual, there is much to appreciate in this episode on all levels, intellectual and emotional, thematically, cinematically, as a narrative and character study. It is about us all. I look forward to our discussion.

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Fri, 23 Jan 2004 15:39:38 -0600**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Ivan,

Once again, thanks for your great introduction. As to your comments on "The Homefront"

> It seems to me that Reitz confronts quite directly the evils of Nazism and

> the question of how much was known about the atrocities of the Holocaust and  
> the concentration camps in this episode of Heimat. He does this, of course,  
> through his depiction of Wilfried Wiegand."

I always wonder myself how Maria and Wilfried could have come from the same parents. But then your comment at the end of your posting sums it up:

> and My old headmaster at school was always saying something to the  
> effect of how could a nation produce not only Bach and Beethoven but also  
> Belsen and Buchenwald! I think Reitz may be making the same point...

I agree with you on two points:

1) Yes, Katharina's constant ragging of Wilfried is a bit overdone. But I do like the part where she calls him a coward and voices her doubts that soldiers have enough to eat and are not freezing on the eastern front. I wonder if she does listen to allied radio broadcasts! Perhaps she is confident that Wilfried will not report her.

2) The casting of the grown-up Anton and Ernst. I wholeheartedly agree on that. After watching Heimat several times, by now I have gotten used to the grown up Anton, but when I first saw "Homefront" I could not believe how a thin faced dorky boy turned into a good looking young man with a rounded face and big brown eyes. There is no similarity at all.

My comments:

Does Glasisch have a Hitler mustache? Or is that a scab under his nose?

Lucie at the wedding: Why does she keep urging Martha to go to church? Has Lucie found religion?

Sometimes Old Wiegand serves as comic relief.

As a female, I don't like this comparison - but then this was 50+ years ago:

> Otto's idea of the bomb as female "gurgling away" and being relieved of its fuse.

More on Lucie - she is a fascinating character, but I think she is getting a little carried away with her telling how the violinist eats slowly and doesn't wolf his food like the other soldiers. It points out she is a shallow person.

But Eduard is not. Eduard is very upset by the death of Hans. But wasn't Hans practicing shooting the insulators by himself before Eduard went with him? I thought it was the guard at the quarry who first tells Hans he would make a good sharpshooter. But perhaps Eduard blames himself because he encouraged Hans.

I can't recognize the song Maria sings or the melody the violinist plays either.

Susan

**Date: Thu, 29 Jan 2004 21:04:15 +0100**  
**From: "Theresia en Martijn" <theresia\_martijn\_onetelnet.nl>**

Dear all,

It took me some time to write this message but here are my notes made whilst watching episode 4 and

5.

The first scene in 4 when Maria and Pauline go to the cinema together is one of the few scenes of Heimat where I bore myself. It takes so long, too long. It's the same with the cinema scene in 5 and also Ivan writes this in his introduction to part 5. Anyway in this scene it's the first time that we see there's a real friendship between Maria and Pauline.

There are many poetic suggestions in part 4. Example: Otto who speaks about a dragonfly on the theodolite (did anyone actually see one?).

And Kath she's so wise and seems to get wiser and wiser.

"Those were marvellous times in Berlin with you," who is he addressing? Lucie? Martina? Ivan writes this in his introduction.

Well Ivan, Eduard speaks to both women. In English you've got two personal pronoun forms of you, the singular one and the plural one. You don't have this in German, there you have two different forms, for the singular it's 'du' and for the plural it's 'euch'. This can be confusing when you translate into English because then it may be hard to understand whether they mean du or euch. And you can get a totally different meaning of the sentence. Here Eduard used the word 'euch' so you in plural form.

When Eduard says that "Time ought to stand still" you see this big clock next to him. Which makes his wish even more dramatic. And Lucie who finally longs to see her parents. The only thing we knew about the contact with her parents was that she didn't speak to her mother anymore. Of course we don't know the exact reason for this, it could be that her parents were aware that she worked as a prostitute with an own broddle in Berlin. Now she's become a 'decent' lady the contact with her parents can be renewed again.

This brings me to episode 5.

Lucie wishes to see her parents, takes them to the Hunsrück and kills them in a car accident. So much tragedy. No contact for 5 years and then this.

Someone asked whether we'd seen Herr Pollack already before but I don't think we did. He suddenly appears as Robert's helping hand in the shop. My opinion is that Martina's so desperate for a relation and a man that it's just one of her tricks. Pollack is shy and the whole situation makes it just impossible for him to deny their 'relation'.

I like the detail, when you get a close up from Maria's weddingring on her finger when she starts the pick-up. It's just before Otto and Maria declare one's love for each other. And just before that moment Reitz makes us aware of the difficult situation for Maria as a married woman.

When I watched the long cinema scene I imagined how much work the stylists of the film must have had! A whole cinema full with people, all these clothes, all the make up, all the hairdo and accessories! That takes ages to dress all these people!

Does anyone agree with me that Anton and Ernst look a bit too young now for the age they've reached? And especially Anton's moustache on that children's face looks slightly weird (when he's in Hamburg with Maria).

And doesn't Maria look totally drugged when she's in Trier with Otto? In which world is she?

Now you all need to help me with something I'd never seen before. It's only a detail but it's a strange one. We've many kitchen scenes in Heimat. You've this beam in the middle of the kitchen and the cooker on the left. Next to window on the right side we see a chair most of the time. But in the scene where Maria is helping Otto with his sling we suddenly see a bed standing in that corner. It's the first time I see this and I think it's the only scene where we see this four-poster bed in the kitchen. The kitchen scene before and after this scene is without the bed again. Who saw this too and who can explain this?

Someone also spoke about the telegram. If the mistake of 3 days was in the telegram or made by Eduard. It must have been in the telegram because they read it aloud a few times and everytime they read the same, namely three days.

I would like to end with a personal note to Ivan. I enjoy your introductions so much! Your style, ideas and parts of Eliot and others makes it really special. I lived in England for a few years (in Cheshire) and came back to Holland last year. The style of the English is a style you won't find anywhere else. I sometimes miss that very much on the continent. Your elegant style of writing brings back so many memories to good old England. Watching Heimat 'together' is special but your writing makes it so much more to me. I would like to know if you know the 'Pre-Raphaelites' (19th century English art movement), I expect you do. Everyone talked about the appearance of the apples in part 5, 3 times apples what could that mean? William Holman Hunt was one of the Pre-Raphaelites and he made three paintings which together are a kind of trilogy. The Light of the World (Keble College-Oxford and St. Paul's London), The Hireling Shepherd (Manchester City Art Galleries) and The Awakening Conscience (Tate London), these paintings are full with symbols of moral decay. In the first two Hunt has painted apples, especially in The Light of the World the apples are symbol of temptation. Maybe I dwell too much and go much too far with writing this in a message about Heimat but these apples seem to intrigue us all. Hunt did paint these apples on purpose did Reitz do the same in his film?

Thanks for allowing me to write this rather long message so much later than the whole discussion took place. But I'll try to stick to the schedule again now! (Although I haven't watched part 6 yet, oh dear, oh dear).

Theresia

**Date: Thu, 29 Jan 2004 21:32:52 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

Thank you for your kind words, Susan. You wrote, concerning Otto's comparison of an unexploded bomb with a female: "As a female, I don't like this comparison - but then this was 50+ years ago". I did not express myself properly or clearly when mentioning this and I apologise if it sounded anti-feminine. What I should have said was, not that I liked Otto's idea of the bomb as female, but that I liked Reitz's depiction of the two brothers-in-arms [Otto and Pieritz] and the way they, as soldiers engaged in a hugely dangerous task, talk of their work and their raw material [unexploded bombs] in a self-deprecatory and affectionate way. Their slightly coarse talk reflects their camaraderie in the face of mortal danger. I meant no insult to the female sex, far from it.

You ask: "Has Lucie found religion?" It would seem she has!! Or perhaps more likely a deep desire to either be, or thought to be, "conventional"; a desire to shake off her past and do everything by the book, as it were. You also comment that Lucie's remarks about the violinist's eating habits show that she is "a shallow person." Yes, I certainly agree. She is also a snob, isn't she? She remarks to a group of officers that she normally only invites officers to her home but she has made an exception for Herr Zacharias, who, although he is only a "common soldier" [her words], has the soul of an artist ["he's got a sort of inner nobility"].

I noted how deeply Eduard was affected by the discovery of Hans Betz' death and you make a telling contrast between Eduard and Lucy. You wrote: "But wasn't Hans practicing shooting the insulators by himself before Eduard went with him? I thought it was the guard at the quarry who first tells Hans he would make a good sharpshooter. But perhaps Eduard blames himself because he encouraged Hans. "Don't you remember the scene in Part 3 where Eduard prevents Officer Martin from charging Hans with sabotage, after he has continued firing at and destroying the porcelain insulators, and, with a wink to Hans, takes the gun and obviously returns it to him, because, as he is photographing Marie-Goot bleaching the clothes with a watering can [recording traditional ways], he is suddenly interrupted by the crack of a rifle and the disintegration of an insulator above him. Racing across the fields Eduard

joins Hans on a flat roof and tries his hand. He misses but Hans does not, of course, and Eduard is so excited he throws his hat in the air and exclaims what a crack shot Hans is. He certainly encouraged his "talent" and now Hans is dead! Eduard is portrayed as a sensible and sensitive man with perhaps a slightly comic side at times.

Enough!!

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Fri, 30 Jan 2004 14:26:54 -0600**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Ivan,

Yes, I understand! Something like the Allied fighter pilots had pictures of girls on their planes. (Did Germans do that?)

> I liked Reitz's depiction of the two brothers-in-arms [Otto and Pieritz]  
> and the way they, as soldiers engaged in a hugely dangerous task, talk  
> of their work and their raw material [unexploded bombs] in a self-deprecatory  
> and affectionate way. Their slightly coarse talk reflects their camaraderie in  
> the face of mortal danger. I meant no insult to the female sex, far from it.

and on Eduard feeling guilty about Hans' death:

> He misses but Hans does not, of course, and Eduard is so excited he throws  
> his hat in the air and exclaims what a crack shot Hans is. He certainly encouraged  
> his "talent" and now Hans is dead! "

I had forgotten about that. I think I was too busy noticing Maria Goot bleaching wash on the ground.

Theresia on Part 5:

> Does anyone agree with me that Anton and Ernst look a bit too young now for  
> the age they've reached? And especially Anton's moustache on that children's  
> face looks slightly weird (when he's in Hamburg with Maria)."

Yes, I thought the same thing - Anton looks too young to grow a mustache.

I don't remember the bed in the kitchen at all, so I will have to look again at Part 5. This is what I like about this discussion - everyone notices different things!

Susan

**Date: Fri, 30 Jan 2004 23:00:45 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

Your message was a very welcome tonic, Theresia. I must admit that I was getting a little downcast after there was only one response to my last introduction. I thank you warmly for your kind words. I do appreciate them. Reitz' film certainly repays close attention and if I can bring people closer to it then I am happy, and if they contribute their thoughts I am even happier!

I would like to respond to some of your very interesting points. When I am watching the film and responding and concentrating on the sub-titles I hardly hear the German dialogue. For instance, I did not hear anything about a grasshopper [there was no sub-title] and I didn't see one! I am pleased you explained about the singular and plural "you". I didn't hear the plural word and probably/certainly would not have recognized it if I had. I re-visited the scene, and so quiet was it, you could hear the grandfather clock ticking. ["An angel flew by".] As you say, both a dramatic and effective device.

It was me who asked if we had seen Herr Pollack before. I certainly could not remember doing so. When Otto and Maria meet in Trier they are two souls in torment, aren't they? Maria is struggling with guilt about Paul, torn by her love for Otto, and babbles about the actions of Paul's parents and how she has pressed his old suits. Otto exclaims: "Maria, you're not really here at all." Anton has learnt a poem to recite on Paul's arrival, she says. Does anyone know what it is?

Getting characters to age convincingly is difficult, isn't it? You either have to use make-up and disguise or use different actors. Neither of these routes is entirely successful in the case of Anton and Ernst, is it? I mention the problem in my intro to Part 6. I couldn't see the bed you mentioned. Perhaps I wasn't looking at the right scene.

I found it difficult to decide whether there was a mistake about the time available to settle Paul's Aryan ancestry. On the telephone he says we leave "tomorrow at 3a.m." Lucie reads the telegram to Eduard in the street which states 3 days as time limit. Perhaps the idea of 3 has got carried over! There also seems to be some confusion about the length of Paul's absence. He left in 1928 and his letter arrives in 1938, making an absence of 10 years. Yet Maria weeps: "And that corpse writes a letter after 12 years.." Such mistakes, if that's what they are, would not be noticed in the cinema at all. Shakespeare's plays are full of such things, which are only noticed in the study not in the theatre! One famous anachronism is the reference to "striking clocks" in "Julius Caesar". Date of the invention of such a clock?? No one in the 16th century audience would have noticed the discrepancy.

Your references to the paintings of Holman Hunt interested me very much. The use of apples as a symbol of temptation obviously relates to the Biblical story and I know the Pre-Raphaelites used a good deal of Biblical imagery. I have looked at the pictures you mention on the internet, Theresia, but I am not familiar with them. My favourite from this period is Ophelia by John Everett Millais with Shakespeare's "Hamlet" obviously as its ultimate source. I wonder who was tempting who in Reitz's "Heimat". Martina tempting Herr Pollack but nothing obvious about Robert and Pauline? Perhaps dreams of wealth leading them astray? On a personal note, I visited the house of John Ruskin overlooking Coniston Water last year and a few years ago discovered a wonderful gallery in Surrey housing the works of George Frederic Watts, an artist loosely connected with the Pre-Raphaelite Movement. Were you an Art student, Theresia? You will have to help us out on artistic references.

Best wishes

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Mon, 2 Feb 2004 0:52:47 +0000**  
**From: <david.mascall ntlworld.com>**

Dear Ivan and group

In response to Ivan's comment:

> I must admit that I was getting a little downcast after there was only one response  
> to my last introduction. I thank you warmly for your kind words. I do appreciate them.  
> Reitz' film certainly repays close attention and if I can bring people closer to it then I  
> am happy, and if they contribute their thoughts I am even happier!"

Ivan - Thank you for your well-expressed thoughts and opinions. Please don't feel that you are commenting into thin air: I have been one of the "silent ones", though I only joined this list just in time to see your introduction to part 6. I didn't know of the discussion group before that point, and I'm finding it difficult to make time to reply fully as most of my internet access at present is via public-access PCs.

Anyway, it gives a great incentive to re-view my stored tapes of Heimat (complete except for instalment 2), and to read the comments - I've found it difficult in the past to share my fascination with the films - especially "Die Zweite Heimat".

I hope to add to everyone else's comments very soon.

Regards

David Mascal

**Date: Thu, 5 Feb 2004 23:26:12 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

Strictly speaking other than myself only Susan contributed to discussion of Part 6. Theresia weighed in with a back review of Parts 4 & 5. Thus, we had 3 contributors and 6 posts. We discussed some of the characterisation [Lucie and Eduard, Wilfried, Maria and Martha] and the nature of the evils of Nazism.

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Mon, 12 Apr 2004 12:02:27 +0200**  
**From: Raymond Scholz <rscholz zonix.de>**

Sorry for digging out this old mail on part 6 again but I'm still in the midst of my Heimat marathon...

· On Jan 29 2004, "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman@dsl.pipex.com> wrote:

[Lucie begging Martha of marrying at the church]

> You ask: "Has Lucie found religion?" It would seem she has!! Or perhaps more  
> likely a deep desire to either be, or thought to be, "conventional"; a desire  
> to shake off her past and do everything by the book, as it were.

Watching this scene another possible explanation came to my mind: We never get to know whether Lucie and Eduard did marry at a church. Maybe Lucie feels herself doomed in that "boring Hunsrück" and in her desperation she explains this by not having married at the church. Foreseeing the same destiny for Martha she pleads her for going there.

[Zacharias]

> She remarks to a group of officers that she normally only invites  
> officers to her home but she has made an exception for Herr  
> Zacharias, who, although he is only a "common soldier" [her words],  
> has the soul of an artist ["he's got a sort of inner nobility"].

Maybe I missed a response during the discussion but nobody mentioned that Helmut Zacharias was a famous violonist, often called "Der Teufelsgeiger". He died in 2002 at the age of 82.

<http://www.gema.de/engl/communication/news/n165/kurzmeldungen.shtml#08>

<http://www.gema.de/kommunikation/news/n162/zacharias.shtml>

Cheers, Ray

**Date: Fri, 6 Feb 2004 14:34:40 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

"Death, be not proud, though some have called thee  
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so...  
...Thou'rt slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,  
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell;"  
[John Donne 1573-1641]

#### HEIMAT Part 7: DIE LIEBE DER SOLDATEN [SOLDIERS and LOVE]

For the sake of convenience we can divide this episode into four acts and I shall say something about each in turn.

Act 1. Anton and the propaganda film unit somewhere in Russia on the Eastern Front. Somehow I had the feeling in this section that Reitz was more concerned with a private debate about the role of the film-maker than about the narrative drive of the film as a whole. We see troops watching a film with Anton doing the projecting and the soldiers singing and swaying along with the female lead. Was it Marlene Dietrich? There is the conflict between the artistic imagination and reality; this is brought sharply into focus by the captain arranging the branch of a tree in what he hopes is an artistic manner whilst villagers are being executed into a mass grave. Anton is shown as a sensitive soul who jerks violently at the sound of gunfire, but, of course, he cannot intervene. There was one very memorable image where the barrel of the telephoto lens turns into the barrel of a machine gun belching fire and bullets, but, to be honest, I found this section somewhat contrived and ultimately confusing, especially back in the processing lab, where two films seemed to be showing simultaneously; one a murder mystery based on the story of Dr. Crippen and the other documentary footage of refugees being herded down to a river.

Act 2. Otto and Pieritz in Schabbach. Reitz certainly makes up for things with this wonderful section. Otto and Maria find true happiness, although, I think, we know it is doomed. The hesitations of the two at first meeting is handled beautifully. They talk of externals; their true emotions are being suppressed. The scene in the bedroom is done with great tenderness. I noticed the way we see first Lotti's Corporal open the window, which then elides into Otto upstairs, looking out at the bombers droning above them, with their intolerable weight of iron. In the moon and candlelight, with the illumination on the faces of Otto and Maria, the scene has a painterly quality. Who does it remind you of? Rembrandt, perhaps? Otto tells Maria: "You've become more beautiful than before", and she certainly has! I was reminded, at times, of paintings of the Virgin Mary. I wonder if this was intentional. One particular moment, where I felt this intently, was when Maria puts a log into the stove, and the flames, with a blue tinge, light up her face, giving it an unearthly radiance. I was very impressed by the way the camera focus came from directly behind the head of either Otto or Maria into the face of the other. It makes us, the audience, feel the presence of both characters. Maria explains why she sent Otto away [I shall not attempt to put this into words and spoil it], and in the background, all the time we have the droning of the bombers, rising and falling, which orchestrates their intimacies. In colour, we see the household asleep, including the cat on the stairs, and as Otto and Maria finally sleep their scene changes to colour. When Otto departs the next day his misinterpretation of a remark by Maria and the favourite gloves hanging in the windscreen prepare us for what is to come. This section, I thought, was touched by genius.

Act 3. Tragedy of Bomb Disposal. This section is overwhelming in its power. We know Otto is going to die. The bomb is like a giant slug, lying under a railway turntable. There is an elegiac note from a flute,

as Otto and Pieritz march towards the turntable, and then, Otto alone, moves into the mist. We have the excruciating slowness of the donning of the gloves, the clearing of dirt and debris from around the fuse, and the slow ratcheting of the giant spanner. We are waiting with a huge sense of foreboding! Now I wish to be fanciful. The figure, who appears, inspecting the line is not a railwayman! He is Death, the Grim Reaper!! His hammer is the sickle/scythe; he is dressed in an old cap and scarf which envelop his features [the hood]. When he is lifted up after the explosion his face momentarily looks like a skull. He speaks to Otto: "I used to check this stretch", and then very significantly: "I'm always on duty." Death is always with us and he has come for Otto!! [see Durer's engravings. He was German, wasn't he?]. I noticed, on second viewing, that he only has one arm. I am not sure if this signifies anything. The association of death and maiming perhaps. The act finishes with the lonely figure of Maria on the rain-swept road [she knows what has happened] and Otto's explosion leads to the explosions of jettisoned bombs and raging fires. Corporal Specht is dead and the end is in sight. We have the birth of Martha's baby to show us life goes on. This section is also a masterpiece in its own right.

Act 4. Eduard and Lucie and the arrival of the Americans. The scene begins with a clever elision between Eduard taking a photograph of the villagers around a water-filled crater and the actual photo mounted in an album with a note beside it: "Entry of Americans into Schabbach on 18th March, 1945" and rather grimly: "H. Much & H. Specht killed in action 12.3.45." Death is everywhere! Lucie is obsessed with losing her possessions [dresses in particular] and is desperately calculating how to ingratiate herself with the Americans. She even demands that Wilfried leave in order to save her own skin. Only Eduard has the good sense to see: "Thank God it's over". The arrival of the two negro American military policemen is given great emphasis. They saunter up to the window with nonchalant ease, grinning, chewing gum, and talking lazily to each other. What a contrast with the demented Wilfried, making the Nazi salute and screaming "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles" just before they get there. The credits roll over the faces of the two black soldiers, which become frozen in mid-conversation, and the film stock has changed to colour which heightens our concentration on this last, abiding image. Reitz is saying, "Here is the new order, which will be totally different from the old, in every way imaginable."

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Tue, 10 Feb 2004 11:13:24 -0600**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Hello Ivan and all,

My comments on "Act 1"

Yes, I agree that Reitz here lets his own interest in film making get in the way of the plot. But it is amazing when you realize how much WWII was filmed. I have heard statistics on this but cannot remember - was this the "most filmed war?" The part about the film editing is very confusing, but I guess that Reitz is trying to show the horrors of war.

Act 2. The scene returns to Schabbach where everything is peaceful. I like the part where Maria comes from upstairs carrying the heavy comforters, sees Otto and then continues to hold on to the comforter (what is the German word for those heavy covers on the beds?) even when she finally sits down at the kitchen table. Then when Kath brings in little Hermann, one can really see the resemblance he has to his father Otto. This was good casting.

I was happy that Maria and Otto finally had a chance to talk and explain their feelings. It makes what comes later a little easier to bear.

Ivan wrote:

> In colour, we see the household asleep, including the cat on the

> stairs, and as Otto and Maria finally sleep their scene changes to  
> colour."

This is also one of my favorite scenes. The house is an island of peace in the middle of war. But after this part about the peaceful house, as they say in German "alles ist los".

Act 3. Tragedy of Bomb Disposal. Ivan wrote:

> This section is overwhelming in its power. We know Otto is going to die."

I think Otto knows it also. You can see it in his face when he comes to the railroad yard. He pauses and looks.

Ivan:

> Now I wish to be fanciful. The figure, who appears, inspecting the line is not a  
> railwayman! He is Death, the Grim Reaper!! His hammer is the sickle/scythe;  
> he is dressed in an old cap and scarf which envelop his features [the hood].  
> When he is lifted up after the explosion his face momentarily looks like a  
> skull. He speaks to Otto: "I used to check this stretch", and then very  
> significantly: "I'm always on duty." Death is always with us and he has come  
> for Otto!! "

Yes! Ivan this is great. It never occurred to me before.

Unfortunately, I originally saw DZH before I watched Heimat, so I knew from comments that Otto was killed by a bomb. Yet everytime I watch this scene, it is very tense when Otto starts to clear the debris away from the bomb. I don't want to watch it. But even a new viewer would know the bomb is going to explode. You can feel it.

I also think that when Maria is shown riding on her bicycle, stopping, knowing in her heart that Otto is dead, she suddenly looks much older. Perhaps it is the daylight, but she has aged since the still beautiful woman of the previous night.

Act 4. Eduard and Lucie and the arrival of the Americans.

What happened to Wilfried? He has dark circles under his eyes, he looks ill. Did he suddenly age because he knew Germany was losing the war? It's not like he suffered the hardships of the soldiers on the front. And here is Lucie again, "changing her stripes" to make good with whoever is in power. You have to admit it, Lucie is a survivor. Earlier she idolized Wilfried, now she throws him out of the house.

I hope someone besides me makes some comments on Part 7.

Susan

**Date: Tue, 10 Feb 2004 21:50:26 +0100**

**From: "Foerderer, Walter (MED)" <walter.foerderer@med.ge.com>**

Hello,

Just to let you know that I would really like to post my comments on the episodes but I do not have access to them and I do not remember them that well.

I really enjoy reading the introductions of Ivan and Susan's remarks and the discussions about Heimat. Keep on going!

Susan, the german words for comforters is - at least in the area where I live - "Oberbett" or - funny enough - a french expression: "plumeau"

Regards  
Walter

**Date: Thu, 12 Feb 2004 06:36:50 -0800 (PST)**  
**From: ANASTASY TYNAN <evlogite sbcglobal.net>**

> (what is the German word  
> for those heavy covers on the beds?)

In the western part of Germany, they are called (after the French) Duvet-- otherwise we always called them Federbett (feather beds). Wouldn't sleep without one.

Cheers,  
Anastasy Tynan  
San Francisco, CA

**Date: Fri, 13 Feb 2004 13:29:15 +0000**  
**From: <david.mascall ntlworld.com>**

Thanks for your efforts again, Ivan.

I have only made time to see part of this episode, but can recall more from memory. Was the John Donne quote used as an introduction to the film itself? I can't remember.

> Act 1. Anton and the propaganda film unit somewhere in Russia on the  
> E.Front. Somehow I had the feeling in this section that Reitz was more  
> concerned with a private debate about the role of the film-maker than about  
> the narrative drive of the film as a whole.

I'd agree in general but would like to make the following off-topic observations:

Film was a very influential medium in WW2 for all of the combatant nations. The German film industry itself is particularly interesting, as they sometimes seemed to be trying to outdo Hollywood, albeit in a very European way. Sometimes the role of the film-maker or even extra as part of the propaganda machine was almost as real as the war itself.

Some pre-war and wartime German cinema production was pure propaganda - like the historical film "Kolberg" on the subject of sacrificial struggle (a common fascist theme), for which Goebbels ordered significant numbers of troops to take part as extras in the battle scenes. This was sanctioned despite the desperate military situation on the Eastern front at the time (late 1944). There was a very interesting programme on the subject of Goebbels and Nazi propaganda as part of a BBC2 series shown around the time of "Heimat" ("We have ways of making you think"?), which examined this and other German films of the time.

By contrast, the 1943 adaptation of "Baron Munchausen", very rarely seen, is a real colour gem, and could be described as an act of resistance by its creators, despite its occasional "inserted" propaganda themes. It is interesting to compare this with "morale-raising" material produced by Hollywood or the English film industry at the time. Despite the authorities' intention to show the superiority of a German figure, it comes across as more of a success for the creators of this very imaginative film, some of whom were distinctly anti-Nazi.

Popular media in wartime is a subject that fascinates me - for example, the items of popular culture that crossed battlefronts with ease - songs like "Lilli Marlene" and some jazz music, for example. I have seen a claim that the Gypsy Jazz musician Django Reinhardt owed his survival and freedom of movement in occupied Belgium and France to a Luftwaffe "patron".

>

> Act 2. Otto and Pieritz in Schabbach. Reitz certainly makes up for things  
> with this wonderful section. Otto and Maria find true happiness, although, I  
> think, we know it is doomed..... This section, I thought, >was touched by genius.

>

I too think this is a brilliant evocation of the temporary and fragile nature of happiness in wartime. On this theme I also found the scene which features the "Zwei Beine" poem very moving, where the unfortunate soldier has sent his poem which uses the device of comparing his lover's legs and the legs of his machine gun. The soldier is gone: the poem and his lover remain. Forgive me if I'm misplacing this from another of the wartime sections.

> Act 3. Tragedy of Bomb Disposal.....

Not much I can add here - except to say that I had never thought of the old man as "death" before. Otto seems distinctly annoyed by him, as if he's too preoccupied with his work to see the danger in what he's doing.

On the other hand, we don't get an explanation of why Otto chose to do this work if I recall correctly - perhaps someone can correct me on this point? Or was it his Jewish connections that forced him to take up this role?

> Act 4. Eduard and Lucie and the arrival of the Americans. Reitz is saying, "Here is the  
> new order, which will be totally different from the old, in every way  
> imaginable."

>

> Ivan Mansley.

I think Lucie is the most interesting figure here - as others have commented, she turns from one extreme to another almost instantly. Perhaps she's meant to represent a certain kind of person who will find prosperity and success whatever the circumstances - but whose determination to be so overcomes all moral scruples. I seem to recall that Eduard first met her in a Berlin brothel, though this may be my memory playing tricks on me. I do not have the relevant episode of Heimat on tape - and can still recall being very annoyed that I failed to record it at the time!

It may be a case of all change - Stunde Null - but for Lucie it's more a case of "The King is dead, long live the King!".

**Date: Fri, 13 Feb 2004 10:02:31 -0600**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

David,

I believe it is in the bedroom scene with Otto and Maria, Otto tells Maria that when she sent him away, he felt he did not want to live, so he volunteered for the bomb disposal squad. Ironically, he then states he could ask for a transfer - that engineers are so in demand that no one cares about "the size of your nose."

> On the other hand, we don't get an explanation of why Otto chose to do

> this work if I recall correctly - perhaps someone can correct me on this  
> point? Or was it his Jewish connections that forced him to take up this  
> role?

Your comments on the German wartime film industry are very interesting. I will have to see if I can find a copy of "Baron Munchausen" to rent.

Susan

**Date: Fri, 13 Feb 2004 17:37:50 +0000**  
**From: <david.mascall ntlworld.com>**

Dear Susan

Thank you for your answer to my question. As usual, my memory seems to be at fault!

As for Munchhausen, I saw this ten years ago or more, and was surprised because it was a quite lavish spectacle for the time and place - a feast of Aftacolor rather than Technicolor. My mother-in-law, who grew up in the UK during WW2, saw it at the same time that I did and described it to me as "more fun than what we used to see in the cinema at the time".

You may find it difficult to rent or buy, but you can get a flavour of the film from the entry in [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com), or other comments on the internet. It's a little racier than Hollywood films of the time, as you'll see from the comments in IMDB. But do bear in mind there are a few numbing propaganda moments, like nearly all films produced in Europe or the USA at that time.

Regards

David

**Date: Fri, 13 Feb 2004 22:22:44 -0000**  
**From: "Neil Jeffery" <neil\_jeffery98.freerve.co.uk>**

Baron Munchhausen, starring Hans Albers and a host of SS men as flunkies, is available to buy on DVD in Britain.

I get mine from [www.play.com](http://www.play.com)

Neil

**Date: Fri, 13 Feb 2004 23:52:07 +0100**  
**From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder@rustema.nl>**

At 14:34 +0000 6/02/04, Ivan Mansley wrote:

> Otto tells Maria:  
> "You've become more beautiful than before", and she certainly has! I was  
> reminded, at times, of paintings of the Virgin Mary. I wonder if this was  
> intentional. One particular moment, where I felt this intently, was when  
> Maria puts a log into the stove, and the flames, with a blue tinge, light up  
> her face, giving it an unearthly radiance.

As I wrote in the news-section of the website today, the Die Heimat series will appear on DVD this year,

it is definitive.

This scene made me wonder whether Reitz will digitally enhance the film. In this scene the flames are in colour while the rest remains in black and white. Also in some other scenes similar colourations are done. But these colourations are not very precise, probably due to the technology of film on celluloid rather than an artistic decision by the author. Are there any technicians present who know more about this? Digitally it could be very precise, I am sure.

The news item as mentioned on the website:

> 13-2-04

>

> It is definitive, there will be a DVD release of Die Heimat end of 2004! More details  
> will follow here as soon as they are known. Meanwhile you can subscribe to the DVD  
> e-mail newsletter by signing the petition for the DVD release. In the next newsletter  
> there will be as much detail about it as possible. The newsletter will appear when  
> there are 900 or 1000 responses, probably in one or two months time (currently  
> 840). E-mail me your questions regarding the DVD release you would like to have  
> answered in the newsletter and I will try to get an answer to it and share it with all of us  
> in the newsletter and on this website.

<http://reinder.rustema.nl/heimat/news.html>

BTW, Ivan, I felt the Grim Reaper also in the scene with Otto and the bomb, but I didn't realise it was him until you read what you wrote. Thank you!

-

ReindeR

**Date: Sat, 14 Feb 2004 13:57:11 -0600**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

So far all I can find in the US is the Monty Python "Adventures of .." from 1989. As far as I know (perhaps with new technology I am mistaken) British or European DVD's won't play in the US.

By the way, a belated thank you to Anastasy and Walter regarding German words for those wonderful German "comforters"/Duvet/Federbett/Oberbett/Plumeau.

I have one, here called a Duvet, and I can't sleep without it either! There are a few scenes in Heimat that shows the front of the house and a Federbett is airing out the window. A familiar scene in Germany.  
Susan

**Date: Mon, 16 Feb 2004 23:38:16 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

David wrote:

> I have only made time to see part of this episode, but can  
> recall more from memory. Was the John Donne quote used as an introduction to  
> the film itself? I can't remember."

David, may I pay great respects to your phenomenal memory. I watched the original screening of Heimat on BBC 2 in 1986, I think, almost 18 years ago, and when I watch now, never having seen it again, it is as if I am watching it for the first time! I do not remember, as far as I can tell, anything at all from my first viewing. Over what period of time are you exercising your memory, if I might ask? The quotation is not part of the original! It's only me showing off! As a retired ex-teacher of Literature, if I can think of an apposite quote, I throw it in at the beginning of my introductions. Maybe some of them are not very apposite!

You also wrote:

- > There was a very interesting programme on the subject of Goebbels and Nazi
- > propagand as part of a BBC2 series shown around the time of "Heimat" ("We
- > have ways of making you think"?), which examined this and other German films
- > of the time.

I didn't see this but was very interested in your remarks.

On the subject of Otto and Maria you wrote:

- > I too think this is a brilliant evocation of the temporary and fragile nature of happiness in
- > wartime. On this theme I also found the scene which features the "Zwei Beine" poem
- > very moving, where the unfortunate soldier has sent his poem which uses the device
- > of comparing his lover's legs and the legs of his machine gun. The soldier is gone: the
- > poem and his lover remain. Forgive me if I'm misplacing this from another of the
- > wartime sections.

It seems to me to be even more universal than you put it. It is a "brilliant evocation of the temporary and fragile nature of happiness" full stop. At any time! My only reservation about the death of Corporal Specht was that I felt I didn't know him very well. When he read his poem to Lotti I was very surprised at his poetic sensibilities! Your memory was absolutely spot on.

As it was when you wrote:

- > I think Lucie is the most interesting figure
- > here - as others have commented, she turns from one extreme to another
- > almost instantly. Perhaps she's meant to represent a certain kind of person
- > who will find prosperity and success whatever the circumstances - but whose
- > determination to be so overcomes all moral scruples. I seem to recall that
- > Eduard first met her in a Berlin brothel, though this may be my memory
- > playing tricks on me. I do not have the relevant episode of Heimat on tape -
- > and can still recall being very annoyed that I failed to record it at the
- > time!

Eduard did meet her in a Berlin brothel. She has disguised these antecedents with great skill. Did you notice how she had disguised herself as the maid, to Eduard's horror, in the hope of making the Americans think she was not the mayor's wife but a person of no importance?

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Thu, 19 Feb 2004 22:27:21 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

Well we had better put Part 7 to bed now, perhaps under one of those German comforters that were talked about. The discussion got off to a rather slow start [I thought everyone had vanished!!] but picked up. There were 7 contributors offering 11 posts. Good news about the DVD later this year.

Must go now and finish off my intro to Part 8. No peace for the wicked!!!

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: dinsdag 17 februari 2004 12:50**  
**From: david.mascall ntlworld.com**

Thank for your for kind reply, Ivan.

I made recordings (albeit not very good ones) of nearly all of Heimat, and all of "Die Zweite Heimat". Thinking about it, this was probably at the time of the second TV showing for "Heimat" in the UK - the early 1990s. I've watched the tapes at various times since, so my memory is somewhat "assisted" - and not as phenomenal as you suggest....

I thought that you had selected the John Donne quote - but I feel it is very appropriate for the episode. Many congratulations on your choice. I'm always pleased to be reminded of the life and work of this very interesting man whose art and life are both very worthy of study.

As for the "Zwei Beine" poem, perhaps it is too polished for Corporal Specht to have produced, though servicemen (especially conscripted ones) have produced some very profound poetry. Perhaps it is early appearance of one of Reitz's favourite themes - the relationship between Art and life - which he develops much further in "Die Zweite Heimat" with Herman and his circle. Of course, it's a matter of debate as to whether DZH has universal themes, or more rarified ones!

I will now have to watch my tapes to remind myself whether Lucie appears very much in the forthcoming episodes, which I cannot remember very well, except that they concentrate on Maria's children and their relationship to Schabbach as they grow or return from the war.

I am certainly looking forward to the beautiful guitar music which accompanies the "Herrman" episode. Perhaps that's looking too far forward for the moment, though.

Regards

David

**Date: Sat, 21 Feb 2004 18:52:41 +0100**  
**From: "Maarten Landzaat" <gijs xs4all.nl>**

> Well we had better put Part 7 to bed now

I'll be quick then! I have watched the episode a little late; I didn't have it at first, but Reinder was very kind to send me a DVD! (to avoid questions: it is no DVD quality but a copy of a VHS tape).

Things that struck me:

- many number 2/duality issues:
  - swallow (the forked tail)
  - the legs/beine poem

- the title: the contrast between liebe and the soldiers' business: war
  - concentrate on technique or contents (in the photo lab)
  - love and death (of Otto)
  - stick to your beliefs or be opportunistic (the last scene)
- why did Maria ask Otto to bed so many times? Does it mean anything? Does she want to save him from the cold/death?
- How the title is present throughout the entire episode (sorry if I start boring you with my title obsession :-). I found it in:
- "Soldat" Otto loving Maria (the sound of the planes is "used" for their romance)
  - The love of Otto for Maria, and her rejection of him when Paul came along, made him enlist the Bomb defusing service, which eventually led to his death.
  - "Soldat" Anton loving his optics (the shooting is "used" for his filming)
  - The focus on the child of Soldat Otto, the product of his love for Maria.
  - The focus on the child of Soldat Anton, the product of his love for Martha.
  - Corporal Specht and Lotti.
  - The (twisted) love of the photodienst captain for "higher art".
  - The interest of soldiers in the movie about love (first scene)
  - Wilfried keeps on loving nazism even in the face of the Americans
  - The love (or lust) of the American soldiers for chewing gum and maybe Lucie?
- The extreme beauty of Maria's and Otto's love scene!

Thank you all for your observations (especially the grim reaper!), it makes watching so much more interesting!

Maarten

**Date: Fri, 27 Feb 2004 11:07:49 +0100**  
**From: Bradnsj aol.com**

Hello everyone

Part 7

A very, very late and brief contribution as I have only just caught up with viewing the previous 6 episodes.

\*I thought the introductory piece on the use of film was very interesting and obviously full of irony. Not at all boring.

\*No, it's not Dietrich on the film.

\*The whole sequence on the crater and the photo was too hurried-how did we get from that to the American arrival??

\*A general point here, how does Reitz get these performances out of his actors? Do they spend months building up an ensemble and improvising around the script? The scenes between Otto, Maria and Pieritz are SO natural. And what about Hermännchen?

\*the Die Biene scene reminds me of another John Donne reference; his poem below has the allusion to the legs of the compass following each other, or am I being too fanciful?

## A VALEDICTION FORBIDDING MOURNING.

As virtuous men pass mildly away,  
And whisper to their souls to go,  
Whilst some of their sad friends do say,  
"Now his breath goes," and some say, "No."  
So let us melt, and make no noise,  
No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move ;  
'Twere profanation of our joys  
To tell the laity our love.  
Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears ;  
Men reckon what it did, and meant ;  
But trepidation of the spheres,  
Though greater far, is innocent.  
Dull sublunary lovers' love  
-Whose soul is sense-cannot admit  
Of absence, 'cause it doth remove  
The thing which elemented it.  
But we by a love so much refined,  
That ourselves know not what it is,  
Inter-assurèd of the mind,  
Care less, eyes, lips and hands to miss.  
Our two souls therefore, which are one,  
Though I must go, endure not yet  
A breach, but an expansion,  
Like gold to aery thinness beat.  
If they be two, they are two so  
As stiff twin compasses are two ;  
Thy soul, the fix'd foot, makes no show  
To move, but doth, if th' other do.  
And though it in the centre sit,  
Yet, when the other far doth roam,  
It leans, and hearkens after it,  
And grows erect, as that comes home.  
Such wilt thou be to me, who must,  
Like th' other foot, obliquely run ;  
Thy firmness makes my circle just,  
And makes me end where I begun.

\* Is the Simon household Protestant or Catholic? There are so many crosses and paintings and I'm not sure that they were used to going to a Roman Catholic church (all the references from Lucie at the proxy wedding).

\*Yes, the over the shoulder shots in the bedroom between Maria and Otto - PERFECT!! It seems so natural - how much freedom does Reitz give actors within the confines of the script?

\*Otto doesn't know what to do - he's so confused. "Come to bed... ? But why did she send me away?"

\*Are Otto's gloves just a bit over-emphasised, or wouldn't I have noticed them otherwise?

\*What is the literal translation, on the railway wagon, of Röder in the phrase "Röder müssen rollen für den Sieg".

Right on to look at Episode 8

Best wishes

Neil Bradley

A very, very late arrival on the scene who watched the original showing on BBC in the '80's

**Date: Fri, 27 Feb 2004 11:21:59 +0100**

**From: "Foerderer, Walter (MED)" <walter.foerderer med.ge.com>**

> what is the literal translation, on the railway  
> wagon, of Röder in the phrase " Röder müssen  
> rollen für den Sieg".

It's not "Röder" but "Räder" = wheels

"wheels must roll on for the victory"

Walter

**Date: Fri, 27 Feb 2004 11:23:49 +0100**

**From: Jack.Woollven telekurs.com**

Neil asked:

> what is the literal translation, on the railway  
> wagon, of Röder in the phrase " Röder müssen  
> rollen für den Sieg".

Without looking at the film again, I suspect you misread it. It probably said "Räder müssen rollen für den Sieg", i.e. "Wheels must roll for victory"

Jack Woollven

**Date: Fri, 20 Feb 2004 08:02:02 -0000**

**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

HEIMAT Part 8. DER AMERIKANER [1945-1947]

This episode is something of a loose, baggy monster gathering up innumerable threads and strands of the narrative and shaking them about. It is very concerned with arrivals, departures, arrivals and departures, and reunions, both successful and unsuccessful.

We have the following final departures to the next life, that is to say, death. Mathias has died before the episode opens on 23/1/1945, as his tombstone indicates. Robert is presumed dead by his wife, Pauline. We witness the deaths of Martina and Rudolf Pollack [at last we learn his first name] in the shattered remnants of Berlin just before its final fall. Kath dies just as Paul is about to return to America. We have two arrivals and departures. Paul arrives from America and returns eventually, and poor, old Pieritz arrives from the Eastern Zone and departs on his bicycle, after being asked to leave by Maria. The following arrive; Anton walks home from Turkey; Klarchen arrives out of nowhere and Ernst is in the vicinity with a new lady, Frigga, in tow. Paul has successful reunions with his brother and sister, Eduard and Pauline, and his mother, Kath. Ernst refuses to acknowledge his father when he could have done [we shall return to this later], and his wife, Maria, sees through him and in many ways remains distant and cool, if not contemptuous. Martina and Rudolf are reunited in death.

The episode begins with a kind of prologue. We have a vision of Hell as Berlin suffers its final onslaught. Herr Pollack, I must call him that, is lying dying on the floor of a shattered building. He has sent for Martina who arrives through the smoke and flames. She can do nothing for him. He does not even feel her warm breast. She tries to keep him awake and conscious by pretending to be a radio announcer and even imitating Hitler's voice in a very convincing way. She sits at a piano and plays an Ilse Lerner song about flowers and the Spring as the bombs rain down. He finally expires. He has never spoken but I thought I noticed a slight flicker of a smile cross his face at one point during Martina's antics. Reinder remembers this scene very well! It is dramatic and tragic. Martina is instantly shot as she emerges into the street by unidentified troops. I heard a shout. Were they German or Russian, not that it matters?

Despite some of the above I thought I would focus on some of the characters as a way into the episode. I must issue a word of warning to myself here. As the film has progressed many of the characters of Heimat have become just as "real" as real people. That is one of the delights of such a film. But we must not forget they are "constructs", played by actors, even if maybe based on people Edgar Reitz has known. One may remember the furore over "Who shot JR?" in the soap Dallas. Of course, in reality, no one shot JR. The actor went home for his tea. I know this is elementary, but it is Reitz's skill as a director which can make us believe totally in his people and their actions. However, the unsophisticated response is very widespread. For instance, all over the UK in the summer one can see fetes and bazaars and charity shows opened by characters from soaps such as East Enders and The Archers. Not such and such an actor but such and such a character as if he/she really existed. I will write of the Heimat people as if they were real even when I know they are not.

The arrival of Paul in Schabbach with his big, black car and black chauffeur is very striking. He wears a kind of Stetson hat and strides, self-assured, into the village. On the soundtrack his theme music thumps away. I was reminded of many an American Western, such as High Noon or Gunfight at OK Corral. I am sure this was deliberate. He sees himself as the saviour of the people in their time of hardship. He throws a party for the village with a military band playing tunes a la Glen Miller. He makes a pompous and vainglorious speech. When they are dancing Maria who sees through him says: "You like this, don't you Paul? A homecoming after 20 years paying everything with dollars. A pretty daughter-in-law. A car with a chauffeur. And everybody applauding." That night he goes to Maria's room but is rebuffed. She thrusts a blanket into his hand to prevent him climbing into her bed. Maria speaks with real vehemence and her face is set: "20 years, Paul. You can't just dispel them by being cold." She stares at him with contempt and the scene breaks.

The scene in the kitchen before the party repays study. The characters are carefully grouped. We have been waiting and waiting to see how the first meeting between Paul and Maria will go. Maria slips silently into the room and stares at him. He is on the other side of the room surrounded by women and children. He is discomfited and doffs his hat but says nothing to the wife he betrayed. Lucie babbles incessantly and all we want is for her to shut up so that the two can encounter each other. It is noticeable he does not speak to her but asks after Eduard. The scene in the graveyard continues the theme of two strangers. Maria puts the question to him: "Why did you leave us, Paul?" It is what we want to know too. He has no answer. Maria is totally dismissive, isn't she? "Forget it, Paul." She rejects his offer of help and does so again as he leaves, saying coldly: "Don't say things like that." She reminds him that he left secretly before and that now he is leaving properly.

Should Maria have the last word? Paul is able to relax with his brother, Eduard, and can confide in him. He says, "Maria's become like a stranger to me." He does have some insight into himself. There is a moment of great honesty when very slowly and deliberately he tells Eduard, while they are sitting at the bar in Wiesbaden, that "Life in America is even now a fight for life." Ernst is in the bar with his new lady, Frigga. He sees and recognises his father and his uncle but is determined to ignore them. There is a nice moment, as Ernst pays his bill at the bar, when Paul turns and looks directly at his son but there is no hint of recognition. It is through Paul that Reitz can say something about homeland and memories of the past.

His mother talks to him about a time when he was ill as a little boy and supplies details he never knew. He remembers buying radio parts in Boppard and going on to Koblenz, now in ruins. His life-story is piecing together. It also seems to me that there is a new hardness in Maria's character brought on by her life experiences. I was quite shocked in a way at her asking Pieritz to leave. She is under great

pressure, and, presumably he reminds her all the time of her beloved Otto. I remembered the scene when Pieritz brings Otto back to the farmhouse after his accident and goes to his lonely room. We saw him looking at photographs of his wife and now we learn all his family are dead. I noticed that Maria seems to have little time for her father. She ignores him when he is having his nationalist outburst. She is very suspicious of Klarchen, isn't she? She speaks quite directly and doesn't mince her words. So perhaps as a witness to Paul's character she is not one hundred per cent reliable.

One scene that I found quite notable was the scene in the old railway station where Ernst is in hiding after being shot down and parachuting from his plane. The attention to detail is enormous. There was a swallow flitting through the hole in the circular window; the camera focused on the wooden floorboards in the sunlight, on the mug and bowl on the little table, on socks, lavatory paper, a bolt in the bed-head and so on. We could feel the particularity of the room. Then, in an audacious move, Reitz moves completely away from "naturalism", and introduces an allegorical figure, in the shape of a uniformed airman, who, standing in the sunlight, announces: "Heil Hitler, I'm homesickness." He describes in a haunting voice and with no little poetry Ernst's escape. He tells him that he hung by his parachute ropes from a French fir tree "amid the smell of blood and resin." There is a contrast between this uniformed figure, now on a bench next to Ernst, and the white -bandaged escaped airman. He then mysteriously leaves. Allegory and naturalism in one strange, memorable scene.

I felt that the human dimension was stronger in this episode than the political, but we are kept up to date with the different zones of occupation [French roadblock, Pieritz from the E-Zone, night club in American zone and so on]. We see the hardships suffered by the German people post-war, the Americanisation of everything, the adulation of some [Lucie], the hostility of others [Alois Wiegand]; we learn that Wilfried is in prison, that refugees from the towns are selling all their possessions and so on. We do have a report on the state of the nation as a backdrop.

Finally, I would just like to report that at the end of the episode I found myself with tears rolling down my face and I didn't know why. On second viewing I realised I was responding to man's initiative and inventiveness in the face of whatever fate throws at him. Anton has walked over 5,000 kilometres and on the day of his arrival he is planning the establishment of an optics factory in the clear Hunsruck air. Hope springs eternal in the human breast! And the very last shot carried another theme. Anton and Martha walk down the wet road, past the same telegraph poles that Hans shot at, etcetera, etcetera. The music thumps and the credits roll. Thus, does Reitz emphasise the continuity of past and present and future in a life story.

Ivan Mansley.

P.S. 1. When Ernst tells Frigga not to look at the two men at the bar he says that one of them's an uncle. How does Frigga know that his uncle is the thin one, as she asks who the fatter one is?

2. Why has Ernst sent Klarchen to his home in Schabbach? He denies this to Frigga, of course. What are his motives? They are unclear to me.

3. I didn't much like the stylised scenes showing the stages of Anton's walk. They seemed out of place. We have two arrivals and departures. Paul arrives from America and returns eventually and poor, old Pieritz arrives from the Eastern Zone

**Date: Sat, 21 Feb 2004 13:11:22 -0600**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Ivan and all,

I have only re-watched part of "8" DER AMERIKANER, but thought I would comment on that to get the conversation started. Ivan, as you wrote, there is much happening in this segment to advance the plot.

>The episode begins with a kind of prologue. We have a vision of Hell as

> Berlin suffers its final onslaught. Herr Pollack, I must call him that, is  
> lying dying on the floor of a shattered building. He has sent for Martina  
> who arrives through the smoke and flames. She can do nothing for him.

.....

> Martina is instantly shot as she emerges into the street by unidentified  
> troops. I heard a shout. Were they German or Russian, not that it matters?

I wondered about which side the soldiers were on too - but Martina is wearing some kind of helmet so perhaps even if they were German they shot at anything that moved and looked like a soldier. Is Martina some kind of airraid warden or is she wearing the helmet for protection? Last year I read Anthony Beever's "The Fall of Berlin" so seeing this segment now has more meaning. My aunt (80's) had a close friend who had immigrated from Berlin - she survived by disguising herself as a boy. Better for Martina that she was shot.

> The arrival of Paul in Schabbach with his big, black car and black  
> chauffeur is very striking. He wears a kind of Stetson hat and  
> strides, self-assured, into the village. <<

I wondered about the hat - Paul has been living in Detroit, not Texas. It also looks as if his coat or jacket has a bit of a western cut. Did Reitz have Paul dressed this way to make him look like a cowboy? Paul gets out of the car to walk into his village - he did walk away from it, but even so, one is struck by the difference in his return.

> The scene in the kitchen before the party repays study. The characters are  
> carefully grouped. We have been waiting and waiting to see how the first  
> meeting between Paul and Maria will go. Maria slips silently into the room  
> and stares at him. He is on the other side of the room surrounded by women  
> and children. He is discomfited and doffs his hat but says nothing to the  
> wife he betrayed. Lucie babbles incessantly and all we want is for her to  
> shut up so that the two can encounter each other.<<

Yes, I noticed the groups - Pauline and Lottie are close to Maria, supporting her. Maria is quite sharp with Lottie, but I think she is disturbed (naturally so) that everyone is flocking around Paul like a hero. Just at this time Klarchen appears - 2 dubious characters arrive about the same time. I, too was waiting for Lucie to shut up - but this is just like real life - you want to talk to someone important and an annoying person is taking up your time.

Yet later after Maria has sent Lottie and Anton's wife off to settle her in, Maria joins them to look at Klarchen's photo album. From Klarchen's story (and I had not noticed this in previous viewings) I get the distinct impression that she never had a relationship with Ernst, but overheard him on the train and needed a place to stay. Ernst does not appear in any of the photos - "he is behind the wheelbarrow" or some such excuse. Since Klarchen apparently had a camera to record recent events, she would certainly have a photo of Ernst if he were really her fiance/boyfriend. Yet Lottie and Martha seem immediately taken with Klarchen.

> Why has Ernst sent Klarchen to his home in Schabbach? He denies  
> this to Frigga, of course. What are his motives? They are unclear to me.

Ivan, I wonder myself - did Ernst really send her? The first time I saw this part, I thought Klarchen was the daughter at the French railroad station. But that was a different girl - wasn't it?? Ernst is a bit of a mystery - so different than the Ernst who flew over the village to drop roses.

Comments on Lottie: She doesn't look too much like the young thinner Lottie who was in love with Specht. I am also a little surprised that Maria and Pauline accept Lottie's methods to get coffee from the Yanks. Marie Goot makes a comment on Lottie's behavior, but Maria seems happy at the prospect of real coffee.

Comments on Hermann, particularly the scene where he and his mother, etc., walk by the abandoned military vehicle: What a little brat! He must really be spoiled by Maria. He doesn't listen to his mother at all. Not too typical for that time for a child in a German family.

More comments later, after I watch the rest of Part 8.

Susan

**Date: Tue, 24 Feb 2004 15:53:59 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

You wrote: " I wondered about the hat - Paul has been living in Detroit, not Texas. It also looks as if his coat or jacket has a bit of a western cut. Did Reitz have Paul dressed this way to make him look like a cowboy? Paul gets out of the car to walk into his village - he did walk away from it, but even so, one is struck by the difference in his return."

It seemed to me that Reitz was saying here is the individualist, capitalist, robber baron almost [like a cowboy] as opposed to the more communal values, perhaps, of Schabbach. Paul had also walked into his village before, hadn't he? At the end of the 1914-18 war, in very different circumstances!

Concerning Klarchen you wrote: "Yet later after Maria has sent Lottie and Anton's wife off to settle her in, Maria joins them to look at Klarchen's photo album. From Klarchen's story (and I had not noticed this in previous viewings) I get the distinct impression that she never had a relationship with Ernst, but overheard him on the train and needed a place to stay. Ernst does not appear in any of the photos - "he is behind the wheelbarrow" or some such excuse. Since Klarchen apparently had a camera to record recent events, she would certainly have a photo of Ernst if he were really her fiance/boyfriend. Yet Lottie and Martha seem immediately taken with Klarchen."

I also felt that Klarchen might be an opportunist and had not been sent by Ernst at all. Lotti and Martha seem taken with her, as you say, but Lotti asks, "Did Ernst really send you here?" Maria is quite sharp when she reminds Klarchen that she is being looked after, before going upstairs and retiring to her room where, anguished and distressed, she leans back against the door. I noticed that excuses were made about the absence of any photo of Ernst also.

You also wrote: "Ivan, I wonder myself - did Ernst really send her? The first time I saw this part, I thought Klarchen was the daughter at the French railroad station. But that was a different girl - wasn't it?? Ernst is a bit of a mystery - so different than the Ernst who flew over the village to drop roses."

Great minds think alike!! That was my feeling at first; that Klarchen was the daughter at the French railway station. But no! They are different young women, as you say. What intrigues me tho' is Ernst's reply to Frigga when she asks him whether he has a woman waiting at home for him. He replies: "I don't think so." [that is the English sub-title]. That reply is somewhat ambiguous. If he had not he would just have denied it completely saying something like, "No, don't be so ridiculous" or words to that effect, wouldn't he? What does the German soundtrack say?

Concerning Hermann you wrote: "Comments on Hermann, particularly the scene where he and his mother, etc., walk by the abandoned military vehicle: What a little brat! He must really be spoiled by Maria. He doesn't listen to his mother at all. Not too typical for that time for a child in a German family."

So our first impression of Hermann is that he is a mischievous and somewhat rebellious little boy who does not take much notice of his mother. Very important for later developments!! I noticed he has no fear of asking for sweets and chocolate from Paul and others. I didn't really understand why it was so important to him that it was a German finger he had obtained from the burnt-out vehicle as opposed to any finger!

I look forward to reading your further thoughts on Part 8 when you have completed your viewing, Susan.

Maarten had commented on Part 7, after spotting many interesting dualities, "why did Maria ask Otto to bed so many times? Does it mean anything? Does she want to save him from the cold/death?"

On one level, at any rate, I took it that Maria was anxious for full sexual intimacy, a moment of fleeting happiness, which was difficult if he wouldn't get into bed!!

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Wed, 25 Feb 2004 13:26:55 +0100**  
**From: Jack.Woollven telekurs.com**

Ivan wrote:

> What intrigues me tho' is Ernst's reply to Frigga when  
> she asks him whether he has a woman waiting at home for him. He replies:  
> "I don't think so." [that is the English sub-title]. That reply is somewhat  
> ambiguous. If he had not he would just have denied it completely saying  
> something like, "No, don't be so ridiculous" or words to that effect,  
> wouldn't he? What does the German soundtrack say?

I checked in the script on the erfilm.de site and the lines are:

Frigga: Oder wartet da eine Frau auf dich?

Ernst: Ich glaub nicht.

Now, "glauben" can mean "believe", but also "think" or "suppose" (equivalent to German "meinen" or "annehmen"). If we translate Ernst's line as "I don't suppose so", then I think it probably makes sense, in that he had given Klärchen the address but probably doesn't really expect that she would make her way there and that he would see her again.

Jack Woollven

**Date: Wed, 25 Feb 2004 11:41:31 -0600**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Ivan, Jack & all,

I finished watching Part 8. I agree with Jack's comment on Ernst's "Ich glaube nicht." I guess we will really never know for sure if Ernst gave Klärchen the address or not. It does mystify me as to why he would give his address to any woman since he is not interested at all in settling down with anyone in particular.

ERNST:

We learn early in Part 8 that there has been a rift between Maria and Ernst. This probably stems from her sending Otto away, the only father figure Ernst could remember. Previously Ernst did not want to live at home anymore after Maria sent Otto away. He was sent off at a young age to join the glider corps (I don't remember the exact term). His comrades and fellow pilots, his commanding officer became his family at a crucial point in his life, which is why I believe he tries to hold on to his former Luftwaffe connection.

The scene with in the attic of the railroad station with the wounded Ernst and the "Homesickness" figure didn't do much for me. It reminds me a little of the scene when Paul returns from the war and sees the figure of his former friend. Somehow, the scene with Ernst is not as effective as that in Part 1 with Paul. I suppose Reitz is trying to show that Ernst subconsciously thinks of his Heimat but outwardly stays away from home.

PAUL:

In spite of the fact that Paul is now a rich American, he is very nice to Glassisch, who is sorry to see him leave. Paul resumes his close relationship with Edward. Edward, who has been to Berlin, sympathizes with his brother for leaving. Edwards comment that "you just up and left" seems to momentarily disturb him - you can see it in his expression and then he quickly suggests that he and Paul continue their journey.

I love the part where Maria hands Paul the blanket! Considering that Paul left her, she is quite civil to him.

When Paul throws the party for the village, he has the American band play "Stars and Stripes Forever." This reminded me of my visit to Oktoberfest in 1991. We went with a group of Germans that my husband worked with - a great time, except that a group of Americans kept asking the band to play this same selection not once, but several times! I like Sousa marches, but we wanted to hear German music.

One thing I noticed in the kitchen scene when Lucie is talking to Paul - on the side, Hermann and one of the little girls (Pauline's daughter?) are making fun of Lucie or perhaps her silly hat with the flag.

REFUGEES:

Reitz always inserts typical events of the time into the story. Outsiders were not welcome after WWI (Appolonia) and perhaps were more unwelcome after WWII when Germany was flooded with refugees from the east. My paternal grandfather's family came from Pommern, so I have read quite a few books and articles on this subject, as well as having heard stories from people. Germans did not want to share what little they had with Germans from the east. Pieritz lost everything and was refused sanctuary even from people he knew. Of course, Maria is totally stressed by everyone descending on her, but even without that, her reaction to Pieritz was not unusual.

There is a parallel between Appolonia and Klarchen - 2 beautiful dark haired strangers who cause problems.

I was happy that Katharina was able to see her three children together before she died. You have to love Marie Goot - almost everyone has a neighbor or aunt like her who says exactly what she thinks.

Susan

**Date: Wed, 25 Feb 2004 20:51:57 +0000**  
**From: <david.mascall ntlworld.com>**

Dear Susan, and other contributors

I'd like to add to the debate. I haven't seen Episode 8 as I can't find my tape, so I'll have to work from memory again.

> PAUL:

> In spite of the fact that Paul is now a rich American, he is very nice to  
> Glassisch, who is sorry to see him leave.

I'm not surprised that Glasisch should be the object of Paul's attention, and hence used by Reitz as a foil and contrast for Paul.

Firstly, Glasisch is more unchanged than any of Paul's other contemporaries; secondly, though Glasisch is a village "character" he is something of an "outsider" too, due to his strange manners; thirdly, I suspect that Paul could have an admiration for Glasisch as he doesn't compromise and seems unaffected by criticism from others.

It seemed to me from the early episodes before Paul's flight that he felt constricted and frustrated by the village, the village people and their attitudes, which eventually drives him to run away. On the other hand he also feels driven to return from time to time.

The theme returns with Herman in DZW, though in a different way...

> REFUGEES:

>

> There is a parallel between Appolonia and Klarchen - 2 beautiful dark haired  
> strangers who cause problems.

Can anyone remind me of the problems Appolonia caused - though I suspect they had to do with a man....

> I was happy that Katharina was able to see her three children together  
> before she died. You have to love Marie Goot - almost everyone has a  
> neighbor or aunt like her who says exactly what she thinks.  
>

Yes, I know exactly what you mean..... from experience.

Regards

David

**Date: Sat, 28 Feb 2004 11:06:27 +0100**  
**From: Bradnsj aol.com**

Thanks again to Ivan for the excellent introduction.

The first image that got me thinking was the shadow on the wall in Berlin, as Martina enters the building to find Rudolf. Doesn't it remind anyone of a similar scene from 'Nosferatu'?

As Paul dismounts from the car and enters Schabbach he passes the house of Hans' family but doesn't speak.

Paul expects to walk straight into the Simon house; is this arrogance? We are shown from the beginning what his attitude is.

Paul realises straight from the start that his father must have died because of the flowers in the forge etc.

This is obvious, maybe, but Anton sitting in the parlour on his return parallels and echoes that of his father. Two wars - father and son - nothing changes.

Lucie's stumbling, but ingratiating apologies (in her case), reminds me of dozens of young Germans I met in the 60's in my travels. Almost the first thing they wanted to say was that they were ashamed of

their parents' generation. Many of them chose volunteering as a diversion from doing national service.

How is it that Kath lets Maria make all the decisions? She doesn't say a word when Maria decides who will stay and who won't.

Why are the characters of Eduard and Maria played by the same actors but not Pauline and Paul?

I didn't find the scene in the cemetery between Paul and Maria at all natural, convincing or satisfying.

Best wishes

Neil Bradley

**Date: Tue, 2 Mar 2004 10:48:31 -0600**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Neil's comments:

- > As Paul dismounts from the car and enters Schabbach he passes the
- > house of Hans' family but doesn't speak.
- >
- > Paul expects to walk straight into the Simon house; is this
- > arrogance? We are shown from the beginning what his attitude is.

I also expected Paul to speak to the basketmaker's family, but maybe after so many years, Paul wasn't sure, or he was waiting for Han's family to speak first. Then when Paul sees his house, he seems happy that everything looks the same. Probably when Paul lived at home, the villagers never locked doors. He is a little surprised the door is locked, but then is reassured when he finds the key in its usual place. (Some things never change.) I think also that he is a little arrogant to use the key and walk in - I wouldn't want my relatives to do that!

- > How is it that Kath lets Maria make all the decisions? She doesn't
- > say a word when Maria decides who will stay and who won't.

It is obvious now that Kath is in failing health - she has trouble getting around and Maria, her dutiful daughter-in-law is in charge of running the house. Kath lets her family take care of her now and lets Maria make daily decisions. Perhaps others have different view of this?

- > Why are the characters of Eduard and Maria played by the same actors
- > but not Pauline and Paul?

I thought Pauline was portrayed by the same actress! Perhaps I am missing something and need to read the cast list at the end. Eduard has the kind of face/body type that could be a young or old man. Perhaps the makeup people could not effectively age the actor who played the young Paul. Or perhaps they want to emphasize that the "good life" in America has changed Paul. The new older Paul doesn't bother me - he looks very American.

The change that really bothers me is Lottie.

- > I didn't find the scene in the cemetery between Paul and Maria at all
- > natural, convincing or satisfying.

No, I didn't either! The viewer thinks "finally an answer." Maria gives up too easily in her questions to Paul. His response that he "doesn't know" is not acceptable. Maria says she understands why he wanted to leave Shabbach, but when she specifically asks him if he wasn't happy with her or their

beautiful children - he doesn't say anything - what a cad.

I think - that years ago Paul felt pressured to get married and have a family, to do what was expected of him. But deep down he really wanted to see the world and seek opportunities not available in a little village. This is understandable, but he still owes Maria an answer for ruining her life.

Susan

**Date: Thu, 4 Mar 2004 21:57:53 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

We seemed to have picked up some new contributors. Welcome David Mascal, Neil Bradley, and Jack Woolven to our little group. Thank you to Jack for the reference to the [erfilm.de](http://erfilm.de) web-site. Even if you don't read German, as I don't, at least you can pick up who it was who said something and their name. It helped me in Part 9 with the names of 2 of Hermann's friends! But what has happened to some of our older loyal contributors?!! Where are you Thomas, Theresia, Joel, Maarten, Wolfgang and others?!! Give us the benefit of your thoughts.

With direct relevance to Part 8 Der Amerikaner we had 5 contributors and 8 posts. Where would we be without Susan?!! She had 3 posts.

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Sat, 6 Mar 2004 13:33:42 +0100**  
**From: "Maarten Landzaat" <gijs xs4all.nl>**

Ivan:

> Where are you, Thomas, Theresia, Joel, Maarten, Wolfgang and others?!!  
> Give us the benefit of your thoughts.

Sorry to jump in after your conclusion. I did watch the episode 2 weeks ago, but I was very busy with my job, birthday parties and the birth of two of my best friends' children, so I didn't have much time.

I felt this episode illustrates that after the war, the American way of life came to Europe (Paul came to Schabbach). The narrative fact that Paul is not a real American but is also originally from Schabbach illustrates that the American way is not forced onto the Europeans, but this way of life was already dormant inside the Europeans, they were ready for it, and it is now coming out.

I remember Kath describes the Americans as something like "Mensche die wisse was sie wolle", and the economy as "everything on credit". She disapproves of these matters. And then she dies, along with her opinions.

It struck me that "People who know what they want" is obviously meant as pejorative, whereas in these days "knowing what you want" is widely regarded as a virtue.

Even Maria knows what she wants now (for the first time?) when she sends poor Pieritz away.

About the last scene, on Anton's visions of an optics factory in the clean Hunsruck air: Ivan became emotional watching this scene, and I had similar feelings. I know this is the one scene that stuck with me for about 15 years. The strength and hope that people can show after the hardships of war or other disasters, is somehow very comforting and beautiful. I don't know if I'm describing it correctly now, but I think I know what you mean.

Ivan:

> P.S. 1. When Ernst tells Frigga not to look at the two men at the bar he  
> says that one of them's an uncle. How does Frigga know that his uncle is  
> the thin one, as she asks who the fatter one is?

Good question! She has no way of knowing, has she? A real script error?

Ivan:

> 3. I didn't much like the stylised scenes showing the stages of  
> Anton's walk. They seemed out of place.

I Agree. They were caricatures, and missed subtlety.

About Klaerchen/Ernst:

I believe that Ernst must have really told her to go to Maria. Because if not, then her false story would immediately become apparent when Ernst would arrive. Would Klarchen have taken that risk? I don't believe so.

Neil:

> Why are the characters of Eduard and Maria played by the same actors  
> but not Pauline and Paul?

I think Eduard's actor does a good job, but Maria as an older person is not very convincing to me. I think she overacts: she talks and walks just a little too slow.

Neil:

> I didn't find the scene in the cemetery between Paul and Maria at all  
> natural, convincing or satisfying.

I did not have trouble with that scene. OK, it wasn't satisfying, but that's what's the story is about. I could sense the trouble they both had with discussing this in an open way. How could they after so many years? Talking about your feelings was not something people were used to in the forties/fifties I think.

Bye,  
Maarten

**Date: Fri, 5 Mar 2004 04:16:37 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

"Jesu, Jesu, the mad days that I have spent! And to see how many of my old acquaintance are dead  
We shall all follow, cousin...  
We have heard the chimes at midnight Master Shallow."  
[Shakespeare: Henry 1V Part 2]

"When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets."  
[James Joyce: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man]

"Where shall I begin, please your Majesty?" he asked. "Begin at the beginning," the King said, gravely,

"and go on till you come to the end: then stop."  
[Lewis Carroll: Alice in Wonderland]

#### HEIMAT Part 9: HERMANNCHEN 1955-56 [LITTLE HERMANN]

The first thing that strikes one, looking back on this episode, is its extraordinary length; over 2 hours 15 minutes in all. Secondly, one should notice that chronologically, there is the largest time gap between episodes so far. Eight years have passed since *Der Amerikaner*. Thirdly, there has been a change of style, I think, making this episode closer to the style of *Die Zweite Heimat*. Perhaps it is the content, being mainly concerned with Hermann and his associates, as is the later film. The central theme might be seen as a study of adolescence and all its joys and pains; the striving for intellectual, sexual, and social maturity. Reitz unerringly puts his finger on all the intellectual posturing and gaucheness of the adolescent, teenage years, and also on the distancing from family and parents. He does it so well, in fact, that we can become uncomfortable, looking back on all the dreadful fumbblings and mistakes of our own teenage years. I think Hermann is 16 years old, although I am not 100% sure; [I was 17 in 1955 so the episode links very directly with my own life story, although these rites of passage are, of course, universal.]; he is certainly a minor legalistically.

I am going to ignore the King's advice in the quotation I have chosen and plunge in to the middle, in *media res*, as it were. For me, unfortunately, there is an absolute implausibility about the central scene, which dictates everything that follows. I am referring, of course, to the scene of Hermann's sexual initiation; his seduction / rape by Lotti and Klarchen. It seems utterly unbelievable that any mother, let alone an over-protective one like Maria, would allow her teenage son, his body flush with the male hormone, testosterone, to sleep in a room next to the bedroom of two, exceptionally pretty, nubile young women who are not family related in any way; not only that, but in a room whose dividing wall allows everything that is said or whispered next door to be clearly heard and finally in whose dividing wall there is an interlinking door, which cannot be locked. At first I was not sure about this, as I seemed to remember a large metal lock, with a huge iron key. A second viewing, in order to make my notes, revealed that this was on the outside door of Hermann's bedroom, leading on to the corridor. The camera focuses on this lock, as both Maria and Anton try to gain access to the distressed Hermann. It also does when Lotti brings up a meal for him and Hermann actually walks through his old room and unlocks the door for her. Reitz is thus even pointing up the contrast between the outer and inner doors which makes the circumstances even more incredible. No mother in her right mind would have done this. Any adolescent boy would have been driven crazy! He would not have been able to sleep! Lest it be argued that Hunsrück farmhouses were arranged like this, making any alternative impossible, I would point to the attic, where later Hermann reads his poetry to and makes love with Klarchen. Clearly this could have provided an adequate bedroom! It looks quite snug! This lack of credibility troubled me when I first saw this episode all those years ago, and, having watched it twice in preparation for this piece, it troubles me even more. There is no doubt it is brilliantly handled but I cannot accept the circumstances that give rise to it. What do other viewers think?

One might notice that in this episode virtually all the intensely emotional scenes are in black and white and the more relaxed ones are in colour. Perhaps not what we might expect! For instance, when Lotti and Klarchen return home after the works' entertainment, excited and perhaps a little drunk, certainly elated, we are in colour. We remain in colour as Hermann sets his alarm, goes to his room, hears the girls' laughter and voices through the wall, and peers through the crack in the interlinking door on the hinge side. When he opens the door and asks what they are doing he is told, "It's not for little boys" but Lotti observes as he departs, "He's not so little any more." We can make a direct reference to the title. There is an obvious irony. I observed a Christian picture over the girls' bed. It looked like Christ on the shores of Galilee. This adds a certain irony to what is about to happen. As soon as Hermann enters the room the stock changes to black and white. I cannot attempt a full analysis of the scene. It is erotic, I think, not just for Hermann! He is a more than willing victim, isn't he? Both girls are fully complicit in what happens. Notice Klarchen's nod of agreement to Lotti before Lotti begins to manipulate Hermann to climax. Notice Hermann's pleasuring of Klarchen through the movements under the duvet. Lotti escapes all repercussions, doesn't she? I wondered if that was why Reitz has her entering the church at the very end, as Hermann hammers at the organ in his anguish over his separation from his beloved

Klarchen. She is acknowledging her responsibility, her guilt, for the subsequent events perhaps. Did you notice the fly on Lotti's hand [remember Part 1] and its buzz as it settles on Hermann's eyebrow? It can also be seen with a fellow on the pillow on either side of Hermann's head. Is it because there are flies in Schabbach farmhouses or is it acting as a symbol of something unsettling [see later]? "Now you can go", Hermann is told and the next scene, the following morning, is in colour. The whole scene is beautifully acted and managed and repays close study.

Someone once wrote that the essence of drama is "conflict" and there are some memorable quarrels, aren't there? After the interception of Klarchen's letter we have the scene in the kitchen where Ernst, now a financially broken man, accuses Anton of tyranny and despotism whilst pretending to search for answers to crossword clues. He asks his stricken mother to observe Anton: "Eyes popping, face twitching, hands trembling he's beside himself." In the course of this exchange of bitter words Anton says to Ernst, "Besides who introduced her [K] into this house?" and there is no reply, so Ernst obviously was responsible for sending her [see our earlier discussion]. Our sympathies swing to Ernst, who later reveals his humanity, by taking letters from Klarchen to Hermann. Did you notice the fly buzzing around Ernst's head, which he tries to swat away, as he and Hermann wait for the arrival of Anton. We should also note that it is shot in black and white, even though Hermann's arrival by cycle is shot in colour.

Another excellent dramatic scene is the confrontation between Anton and Wilfried over the latter's experimentation with the large scale use of insecticides which covers Anton's lenses with dust and stops production at the factory. Anton leaps into his car in a fury and drives the short distance to Wilfried's house. I said I would mention the car, which features again in the final scenes of New Year's Eve celebrations in Boppard, after Hermann has "borrowed" it. It is apparently a Mercedes 300 which is quite rare, certainly in the UK. I will include a web-page at end of my introduction where you can read more about this car. It certainly shows what a prosperous business man Anton has become. When Hermann arrives in Boppard Klarchen comments, "I thought it was the Federal Chancellor". Anton hurls wonderful insults at Wilfried [SS-peasant and Farmers' Fuhrer] and in a series of remarks, punctuated by "Unds" from either Wilfried or his father, I couldn't tell, yells that first of all Wilfried was with the SS, then he was the Regional leader of the Farmers' Union, then the Chairman, and now was acting as a "testing ground for BASF Chemicals, and then you got in to the C.D.U." In fact, there is very little if any political background in this episode which makes it different from earlier episodes.

"I think you were born to be something special", says Klarchen to Hermann. How far are we convinced of this? There is a conventional aspect to Hermann's teenage angst and a certain desire to pose as an alienated intellectual. For instance, when learning of Ernst's domestic discord, he exclaims: "To hell with all families." At the Rhineland carnival he claims to be an existentialist and rebuffs Schnusschen for her coarse remark: "You're just like all the others." But he has genuinely grown apart. His mother notices: "You never tell me anything nowadays." Partly jocularly he tells Frau Gerlof: "Art must hurt." He has an insight into artistic creation. He tells Klarchen that his song was originally for her but that "composition took over." He is sensitive. The appalling details of Klarchen's abortion lead him to exclaim: "How vile!" He writes poetry, translates from the French, quotes Rilke, and is trying to create a new metaphysics. Not at all your average 16 year old, and I speak from experience! He feels his mother is "one of the mass", and, in a partly absurd teenage way, an adopted melancholy, struggles to fashion a vision: "Maybe all this is the beginning of the end. Maybe the atomic mushroom will destroy all of us too." I believe Hermann is the younger Reitz. I hope I will not be thought too pompous but there is a little of the younger Ivan there too!! And probably all of you too!

As a lover of all Reitz's work all his scenes are memorable. For those with a quirky sense of humour please pay attention to Eduard, Pieritz and Glasisch bemoaning their lost past and the scene on the little railway station where the teacher, leaning on the fence, "breaks wind" before discussing Hermann's future. As the King suggested I will now just stop!!  
Enjoy.

Ivan Mansley.

P.S. Web-page concerning car:

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/stuartlamb/MB300/mb300filmtv.htm>  
<http://www.mercedes300.co.uk>

**Date: Fri, 5 Mar 2004 16:06:49 +0100**  
**From: Bradnsj@aol.com**

Thanks again to Ivan for the latest introduction and thanks also for the welcome for my first two contributions.

As to part 9, yes the length was the first thing that I noticed. It's important of course for the integrity of this piece, chronicling an intensive period in Hermännchen's life that we see the episode in one go, but it is a marathon.

In my notes, whilst watching, I wrote of the scene between Hermann, Lotti and Klärchen, that I wondered why the young women (well into their 20's - K is 27!) would bother with a sixteen year-old. Not only that, but one they lived with and to whom the familiar axiom probably applied (familiarity breeds contempt. Forget the last word as it happens, as K does BREED!)

Next, I too identified with that once-and-for-all-time moment in a young person's life when the physical, intellectual and emotional awakening and arrogance all come together with such force.

Hermann is precocious and probably gifted. We are shown his arrogance, distance from others and his anger. He is lazy at times and only bothers with the things he identifies with and which he knows he's good at. We see the books he reads and we know the music he plays and listens too. We also see and hear the music and lyrics he is already writing. Surely better than some of our own adolescent fumbblings; was Reitz this precocious? Does anyone know?

Now some little snapshots:

We see the ceiling support in the parlour with yet another head leaning against it; not Paul or Anton but Hermann.

Why does Anton employ Pieritz?

I think Klärchen knows that Lotti has told Anton about her affair with Hermann. Why did she?

Yes, we see the contrast between the two brothers over the H&K affair. Anton is smug whereas Ernst is resigned, beaten and more human. Ernst has lost his cockiness. There is a contrast with how the boys and young men used to be; Anton was the quiet one and Ernst the opinionated one. Does this change-around ring true?

Later as the letter is torn up, it dissolves into the snow flurry.

Just some early thoughts.

Best wishes

Neil Bradley

**Date: Mon, 8 Mar 2004 11:03:11 -0600**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Ivan, Neil and all,

I have only watched part of this long episode, but I already have several questions. Like Neil I wonder why Lottie and Klärchen would bother with a teenager. I know after the war there was a shortage of men but it seems there is a number of candidates in Anton's firm. Yes, perhaps they had too much to drink and Hermann was available. And I agree with Ivan in questioning the room arrangement - Maria should be concerned about Hermann having access to these women.

Isn't Lottie a distant cousin of Hermann? I hope someone can answer this. I was under the impression that Lottie is the daughter or granddaughter of Kath's brother(?), that she brings home before the war. This would make Lottie related to Hermann. Shame on her! I feel like Maria Goot here :)

Back to Hermann and Maria - After the above episode, Hermann oversleeps and misses the train to school. Why didn't Maria wake him up? This is a major duty of mothers to wake their children and send them off the school on time. This bothers me - it doesn't seem like it would be typical of Maria.

Another question: Lottie and Klärchen seem to have good jobs at Anton's factory - so why are they still sharing a bed in Maria's house? They complain about Maria "probably waiting up for them with a rolling pin." This seems ungrateful if they are living in her house. Or is this to indicate to the viewer how Maria has changed. Has she become a bitter disappointed in like woman?

Still another question: What is exactly Klärchen's role in the household? At the company variety show one gets the impression that Klärchen is employed there. Yet the morning after the "event" with Hermann, she is shown scrubbing clothes. Is she also a part time maid for Maria?

"Alles für heute",

Susan

**Date: Mon, 8 Mar 2004 18:36:49 +0000**  
**From: <david.mascall ntlworld.com>**

At the risk of belittling Reitz - and sounding a little too simplistic - may I suggest that he already had one eye on his next project when scripting and constructing this scene.

Hermann is brought up in female company, yet has a "complex" relationship with the women in his life - well, he certainly does in "Die Zweite Heimat"...

I'd totally agree it's hardly a likely thing to happen, but it sets a pattern where Hermann finds himself obsessed by, pursued by, and important to the women in his life, but still a little bemused by it all....

**Date: Tue, 16 Mar 2004 22:22:04 +0100**  
**From: Thomas Hönemann <Th.Hoenemann t-online.de>**

Dear Heimat-Fans,

After a long time I found some time to participate in your interesting discussion again. The last months were very busy for me, I was ill for some time, even preparing the garden of the house we bought last year, working for school and family duties took a lot of time, sometimes my time did not long just to read your comments ...

First of all - before referring to your questions and comments - I want to say that the Hermännchen-episode was one of them that moved me most when watching it for the first time. I was 15 years old then and had my first girlfriend, a classmate (a peer), and that rose strong conflicts between me and my mother who was not able to "let me go", to leave me to another woman. So she treated me in a very restrictive way, forbid me to meet the girl etc. Nowadays the Hermännchen-episode is still one of my

favourites, not only because of my personal relationship then.

Most of all 11 parts *Hermännchen* could be seen and treated as an autonomous movie, and today sometimes broadcasters really pick this part out of the 11 and broadcast it singly (Reitz also got some prizes for this special episode). Referring to this the length of the film may seem acceptable. I myself still forget the time while watching it.

Reitz had two intentions when writing and filming this episode:

- one is very personal: Reitz himself had, at the beginning 50th when he was a teenager, a relationship to an 11 year older woman. So all the trouble and conflicts with the parents or mother he is describing are things he experienced personally that time.

- the other is caused conceptual: Reitz wanted to draw an authentic picture of Germany's situation in the 1950s.

He decided to pick up the Klärchen-story as an example he could arrange these two intentions in an adequate way (a different thought of Reitz was to make a different film from this story...)

Indeed, Susan, you are right: Lotti is the daughter of Fritz Schirmer, whose father Hans is a brother of Katharina. You will remember the episode where Katharina is travelling to Bochum to join Hans 60th birthday, the other night Fritz is arrested because of his tendency to Communism. That time Katharina takes Lotti to Schabbach, and her sister Ursel will follow her during the wartime. So to answer your question: they indeed are relatives, exactly said distant-half-cousins, as far as Otto, Hermann's father, is not

related to the Simon-family.

Just to say some short words referring to Otto: he is one of the characters which I really love most (next to Maria, Katharina, Eduard, Mathias, Robert, and all others ;-)). Jörg Hube who played the role was the only actor who had some experiences with film that time. Even Gudrun Landgrebe who played Klärchen was not publicly known when *Heimat* was produced. But when it was broadcast she already was an erotic-star because of her main-role in Robert van Ackerens "Die flambierte Frau" which was produced in 1983 and broadcast before *Heimat*. By the way: some of the actors became famous and started a great career because of *Heimat*: Michael Lesch e.g., who played the early Paul (parts 1 and 2), or Karin Rasenack who played Lucie, Michael Kausch (adult Ernst), Hans-Jürgen Schatz (Wilfried), ... I am going to publish some information on my website <http://heimat.hoenemann.de>, I will let you know then.

Back to *Hermännchen*. Lots of your contributions are asking about the circumstances of how something like that could happen. As I understood it right even some of you would say, all this story was not realistic, there are too many things that could not happen. I don't agree with that.

Let us have a look about the historical circumstances. Firstly, as Ivan pointed out right: in the after war time many things were quite rare, especially food, clothes, houses - and men! Let's say that all these things are suitable to satisfy people's basic needs, so at last they are things people can't exist without. We surely cannot compare the situation of those times with today where we are living in material abundance.

So just let us believe Reitz who lived in the Hunsrück that time that people gave relatives and even other people a home that time (I can remember from telling that my own grandma had a man from the Ruhr-area where even Klärchen comes from in her house that time). So I do not wonder that Klärchen stayed there (after Ernst invited her to wait there for him, there is no doubt in my eyes), especially because the misery was harder in the (big) cities and industrial regions (as the Ruhr-area is) that time. You can see this in the scene where people from the town are changing their possessions for a sack of potatoes in Schabbach - people in the rural regions were in advantage because of their ability to grow their food themselves. Wiegand, the big farmer, is taking most profit from that - he makes the big deal that time as you can see on the things he has stored in his living-room. And so there is even no wonder in Klärchen participating in the houseworks or, later, in Ernst's factory.

We also learned that the capacity of Maria's house comes to borders, so she lets Lotti and Klärchen share the only available room. All others, often much smaller rooms, are occupied (be aware that now six persons are living in this really small house. Sure, if we see this correctly, there had to be a free room, namely the one that Otto lived in before. But this is the room Maria slept in before Otto came and she does it now again, so she changed the room that time... but there had to be a room for Pieritz, too, which should be free now... So surely Reitz constructed the poverty of rooms which leads Klärchen and Lotti to share the room next to Herman to make the story work.

There is one point that was not discussed in all of your contributions so far, and which may be the key to answer the question how realistic the story would be: it is about the sexual moral and communication of that time. I know, this is a not simple theme, especially not for a younger person like me who did not experience the different steps of how society is dealing with sexuality at all. But maybe all this topic is not about basicall structures and needs but only about society's communication about it, I think. Even in former centuries mankind reproduced itself, and even that times there were not-marital childs and so on. But I really think Maria was not conscient about Hermann's physical development (even though she had two sons before) and struggeling of Hermann and the "danger" which is caused by the two attractive girls sleeping the room next to him. Her problems with Hermann indeed are different: She feels to loose all understanding, all relationship to him (who is her most loved son), because his interests are focussing things she is not familiar with: not even mathematics, but more than that literature, philosphy and music. She feels getting strange, to loose contact to her own son. She really is desperate! We can see this directly in the scene in the kitchen when Maria is going to control Hermann's homework: he is not ready to explain all that to her, maybe even with some arrogance he denies to explain to her what trigonometry is. After that Maria struggles to find the key to Hermann with remembering former times, here: the (last) visit of Otto, Hermanns father, she is hardly trying to wake his memories (very expressive, nearly "beschwörend" (I don't know the English word for that, maybe Joel can help?) "Hermann, weisste denn dat nicht mehr?" - Hermann, don't you really know this anymore) - and Hermann reacts in a very cold, distant, bored, nearly angry way ("ach Mutter, da war ich doch noch so klein ..." - Mother, I was so young then ...) ... He really is so far away from his mother - intellectually but even emotionally - than a son can be. All that time Maria obviously does not even have a suspect on what is going on with Hermann and Klärchen, otherwise she would not be that upset when having read the letter. So maybe for her the thought that her son could have an eye on any woman is far, far away...

So, now my children are waking up and I want to watch for them. I hope my English was again not to hard for you all, excuse those lots of mistakes and unusual ways to express some things, I hope not to provoke misunderstandings because of my poor English.

I am looking forward to your comments.  
Have a very nice Sunday, kind regards,  
Thomas Höneman

**Date: Wed, 17 Mar 2004 10:19:31 -0600**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Thomas,

Thank you for your comments that answered many of my questions - especially putting the "living conditions" of the Simon household into historical perspective.

Aha! So Hermann's affair with an older woman is based on Reitz's personal experience. Not surprising because the feelings of Hermann come through so intensely to the viewer of this episode.

Your comment on Maria is especially interesting:

> But I really think Maria was not conscient about Hermanns physical  
> development (even though she had two sons before) and struggeling of Hermann  
> and the "danger" wich is caused by the two attractive girls sleeping the  
> room next to him. Her problems with Hermann indeed are different: She feels  
> to loose all understanding, all relationship to him (who is her most loved  
> son), because his interests are focussing things she is not familiar with:  
> not even mathematics, but more than that literature, philosphy and music.  
> she feels getting strange, to loose contact to her own son. She really is  
> desperate! We can see this directly in the scene in the kitchen when Maria

> is going to control Hermanns homework: he is not ready to explain all that  
> to her, maybe even with some arrogance he denies to explain to her what  
> trigonometry is. After that Maria struggles to find the key to Hermann with  
> remembering former times, here: the (last) visit of Otto, Hermanns father,  
> she is hardly trying to wake his memories (very expressive, nearly  
> "beschwörend" (I don't know the english word for that, maybe Joel can help?)  
> "Hermann, weisste denn dat nicht mehr?" - H., don't you really know this  
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> way ("ach Mutter, da war ich doch noch so klein ..." - Mother, I was so young  
> then ...) ... he really is so far away from his mother - intellectually but  
> even emotionally - than a son can be.  
> All that time Maria obviously does not even have a suspect on what is going  
> on with Hermann and Klärchen, otherwise she would not be that upset when  
> having read the letter. So maybe for her the thought that her son could have  
> an eye on any woman is far, far away...

This is a different way of looking at how Maria views her favorite son. It shows a real turning point in the story. I had not looked at it this way before. I assumed that because Maria was watching her son intensely, she would see what was going on. But perhaps she was too close to him. I suppose like some mothers today, Maria cannot imagine her son not following the rules of society. She loves him and tries to do her best by him, thus he must be a good and obedient son. I can imagine that Maria was very devastated by Hermann's growing distance to her, after all, Hermann is all she has left of Otto. It must have hurt her very much that Hermann does not remember his father. I always think that if Otto had lived, he would have been a good and understanding father to Hermann.

I will be away from "Heimat" until March 29 - visiting family in Georgia, where I hope there will be some sunshine. For the last 3 days we have snow here in Chicago.

Susan

**Date: Thu, 18 Mar 2004 17:49:49 +0100**  
**From: "Theresia en Martijn" <theresia\_martijn\_onetelnet.nl>**

Neil wrote:

> I think Klärchen knows that Lotti has told Anton  
> about her affair with Hermann. why did she?

I really don't think Lotti has told Anton about the affair. When K's letter arrived at the Simon's house, as far as I can remember, Maria has informed Anton and has asked him to come over and help her to deal with the problem. It shows Maria wasn't capable herself to deal with her youngest son and she needed Anton as the father figure. If Lotti would have told Anton about a relation between Klärchen and Hermann I'm sure he would have broken her (K's) legs immediately! Hermann is completely innocent according to Anton. Imagine what Anton would have done if he found out that Lotti played her part in this story as well! I really think Lotti was wiser and didn't say one single word about it.

Theresia

**Date: Thu, 18 Mar 2004 17:40:01 +0100**  
**From: "Theresia en Martijn" <theresia\_martijn\_onetelnet.nl>**

Dear all,

Sorry but I haven't had time to watch part 8 and 9 yet. The only thing I do is reading all your messages which I still enjoy!

Susan wrote:

> Lottie and Klärchen complain about Maria "probably waiting up for them with  
> a rolling pin." This seems ungrateful if they are living in her house. Or is this to  
> indicate to the viewer how Maria has changed. Has she become a bitter  
> disappointed in life like woman?

My opinion is that Maria HAS changed a lot. After Otto's death she has become so much older, more difficult, less flexible, maybe even a bit of a bore. When her first two sons were young she was young herself but to Hermann she is a much older mother. She tries to keep him the little boy, he's the only thing left now there are no parents (Matthias and Katherina) anymore to look after, now other women have taken her role of doing almost everything in the household (Klärchen does the washing I remember). So Maria completely focusses on Hermann and I think she almost suffocates him. There's only one thing he can do; go away as far as possible -> München!

Because Maria can only see him as the little boy she couldn't imagine at all that this 'little' boy was in fact already quite grown up. I also think that he's much more progressive than his other two brothers. Anton had Martha when he was very young, married and he never ever thought of another woman (I guess). Ernst has the same problem as Hermann, that he can't commit himself to one woman or a relationship, but he's not that extreme. The pressure on Hermann (by Maria, by the Hunsrück, by Anton etc.) must be enormous and I think he never really grew over what they 'did' to him in his teenage years. Well, who knows maybe in Heimat III.

Love to all,

Theresia

**Date: Thu, 18 Mar 2004 22:04:40 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

Perhaps the quality of the episode [Thomas told us it had won prizes in its own right] helped the quality of discussion which was very good, I thought. I think we had 7 contributors who sent a total of 10 posts on Part 9 + 1 missing contributor on Part 8!! I understood your post perfectly, Thomas, by the way, and welcome back. We need you in order to keep us informed on German language issues and German social, historical, and cultural matters. After all Heimat is a German film set against a backdrop of German history and social change.

Several people have suggested links with Reitz's own life-story and there must be many instances of links between incidents in the film and Reitz's biography. Often the urgency and intensity of scenes reinforce this but I am afraid I cannot help. There must be people out there who could.

Neil asked, "Why does Anton employ Pieritz?" Anton is shown as a model employer and finding a man down on his luck and yet having something to offer, even if it is only to cheer everyone up, gives him a job in charge of the despatch department. Klärchen works under him in the same department. See the scene where Pieritz muses on going to Paris. Anton has also given a job to Glasisch. See my comments on Part 10 tomorrow!! Pieritz hadn't got very far on his bike, had he?

Susan asked, "What does Wilfried have in the jar?" I took it to be an insect of some kind on whom Wilfried was experimenting with various chemicals to be used in insecticides.

I agreed with Maarten's comments about Maria over-acting in her depiction of old age. Even more so in Part 10! I found the scene in the cemetery in Part 8 between Paul and Maria to be, in fact well-done. Paul struggles to give an answer to Maria's question about why he did what he did and cannot find

one, because really there isn't one! Maria, for her part, realises that she does not love and may even despise this man, who was once her husband and exclaims, "Forget it, Paul." This man has wronged her. She cannot forget and nor should she! Am I being too moralistic in my interpretation? I also agreed with Susan that Lotti had not told Anton of Klarchen's affair with Hermann nor, of course, did she ever let slip her role in the affair. Nobody commented on my question about Lotti entering the church whilst Hermann was playing thunderously on the organ. Was it an acknowledgement of her own guilty participation?

By the way I knew nothing of the downfall of the server and was constantly looking in my Inbox for posts only to be disappointed. You all saved the day, however.

Until tomorrow!!!

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Fri, 19 Mar 2004 08:58:53 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

"Happy the man, whose wish and care  
A few paternal acres bound,  
Content to breathe his native air,  
In his own ground." [Alexander Pope: Ode on Solitude c.1700]

#### HEIMAT Part 10: DIE STOLZEN JAHRE 1967-9 [The Proud Years]

The word "proud" in the title puzzled me at first, and maybe still does. I came to feel that the adjective referred to the German economic miracle and the ability of the country to look forward not backwards. This is perhaps symbolised by the removal of the war memorial at the end of the episode, enabling the school bus to turn without reversing, as Glasisch points out. Other villages have already done the same as Schabbach and voices murmur: "Thank God that thing's going" and "About time too." Ernst is proud of the business he has set up and resentful that his brother, Anton, has never visited, but it is the story of Anton that is central to this episode and it is his campaign to save his business that makes his wife, Martha, twice exclaim, "I am proud of you", and ultimately makes us proud of him too. Anton is a man who knows his "heimat" and heroically struggles to save it. Reitz very cleverly turns the man who was an autocratic bully in the last episode into an eloquent and unlikely hero. I shall return to this. I am interested in other ways in which the title appears relevant to all of you.

Let me confess, and this is the direst heresy, that at times I found this episode a little hard-going. It seemed to lack emotional intensity and involvement. This might partly be because of an air of melancholy that hangs in the air. Times are changing! I have an abiding image of modern machines, large motor cars, telex machines clattering in the night, Ernst asset stripping the old farmhouses of the Hunsruck, the old order and certitudes shattered, new electronic music, multi-nationals, the selling of the family cow and so on and so on. But cometh the hour, cometh the man! A man for all seasons! Anton! I would like to consider his story and his role further because his role in this episode has so much to say about the central theme of the whole film; the concept of "heimat".

The episode begins with two large limousines, initially lost, gliding along the forest roads outside Schabbach. They are representatives of a multi-national corporation which seeks to take-over Anton's business. They are outsiders; one of them Flemish, I think. There appears on the road in front of one of the cars, a huge stag, carrying enormous antlers. "What a peculiar place!" exclaims one of the men. I see Anton as the stag; a stag at bay! He will be no easy catch! He is offered 60 million [Deutsche Marks?] but asks for time to reflect. He takes his wife's advice and decides to consult his father, Paul, who it turns out is no longer in the States but in Baden-Baden. We know not why. Decisively, Anton decides to drive there and we have the camera paying great attention to the speed and opulence of

his car and the modernity of the autobahn and its different exits. At his father's hotel there is an interesting scene at the reception desk. The receptionist is explaining to Anton how to find the broadcasting studios where Paul has gone, when they are both interrupted by a man, who I took to be an American tourist [at any rate speaking English], who demands his concert tickets. Earlier, when Willi Brandt had switched on the new national colour TV system Anton had exclaimed "typically American" and looked distinctly unimpressed at the fare on offer. Now he has his anti-American feelings further fuelled by the man's impatience. Another outsider! And then, to cap it all, he finds his father ensconced in a recording studio, dressed in a flamboyant Miami-type beach shirt and later a baseball hat.

Anton is treated very shabbily by his father who really has no time for his own son, but is completely besotted by his new darling, Hermann, "a very clever boy". Later he has to be reminded that Anton is waiting to speak to him and his response is "My God, Mr. Anton, I'd forgotten him". Anton is made to feel an outsider by his semi-American father. Paul's advice is shallow and dismissive. He is full of himself and his own vainglorious ambitions. In his imagination he says he can see the plaque at the university of Karlsruhe reading: "To our benefactor, Paul Simon, the pioneer of electronic sound installations." His vanity knows no bounds: "Look at me", he says at one point, and you know that is his real motivation for helping Hermann, which has come as a complete surprise to us. He has sold up and advises Anton so to do, asking for almost double the amount offered, but in a semi-mocking, almost unfriendly way. Anton, bewildered and angry, decides to leave. Later he tells Martha: "Typical American. He's playing trains with Hermann and is never at home." He follows this with a very significant remark which I shall return to.

Anton leaves the hotel in the middle of the night and returns to the Hunsrueck in the light of a beautiful summer dawn. There follows a very moving scene; for me, anyway. Anton stops the car, a cock is crowing to welcome the day, and he has a bite to eat and looks out over the beautiful Rhineland landscape. The camera lingers on a field of growing wheat and on the sunlight on Anton's face. Anton knows and understands his roots. He does not have to travel to find his "heimat"; it is right there in front of him and within him. I was immensely moved by this. Anton has made his decision. He tells Martha, after declaring that Paul is "never at home", that "A man must know where he's at home. At least we know it." He calls his workers to a meeting in the meadow, reminding Lotti not to forget Karl [Glasisch] in the boiler room. Anton has a care for all his workers and remembers small details. Glasisch is obviously a man of many talents, as in the last episode, we saw him as a kind of night watchman. Anton has found work for him.

We have seen him as a model employer ever since the concert party. He then delivers a wonderful call to arms, rejects the buy-out offer, flatters and praises his workers, and makes a plea for mutual trust. Anton is eloquent and moving. He has found a voice and I am sure Reitz is endorsing it. He uses this voice to good effect when he finds Ernst in their mother's attic. He has seen straight through Ernst's meretricious business and his rapacious methods. He accuses him of having no soul, of selling off his history, his youth, his traditions, of leaving nothing to any future generations. "You haven't a spark of culture under your dirty fingernails. I have always wanted to tell you that." How I loved those words! Anton is now a man with a mission; no stag at bay, but a man with new strength and belief. Great!

What else should I mention? I noticed many echoes of earlier scenes. When Pauline arrives at Maria's house with Robert's hidden money, we are reminded of the scene after the cinema, when the two ladies were confiding in each other and having a drink. "We ought to be content", says Maria but we know they are not! Do they still intend to go to America, even though Paul is not there? I ask this because later we see the cow being removed with a couple of hefty smacks to the head! We see Ernst entering the family home [his mother is asleep] moving from the forge to the attic in a similar manner to Paul's entry earlier. It makes it seem like an intrusion. "Our house is a treasure trove." I take it that it was Ernst also, flying over the war memorial at the end, as it is winched away. We are reminded of Ernst's earlier flight and the dropping of the red carnations at Anton's proxy wedding. It is, perhaps, through these echoes of earlier, happy times that Edgar Reitz adds to the feeling of change and time passing.

A few words about Hermann. I think my favourite Hermann is Jorg Richter in the last episode. Peter Harting in this one, with his beard and dark glasses, and moody stares, felt unconvincing or perhaps

too much of a departure from the previous incarnation. Glasisch's response to the music was interesting, wasn't it? He is awakened and fulfilled and haunted by it. He can hear the nightingales better than the middle-class critic at the actual performance. He hears a stream conveyed by the sound of the music. He exclaims: "Hermann, where did you get it all?... So foreign and so beautiful, as if from other lands." Who would have thought he had such a sensitive soul! Oh, another echo! As a kind of coda we see Hermann visit his mother with two girl-friends in the summer of 1969, en route from Paris to Berlin he says. [Remember the French horsewoman from Part 1, was it?]. He is travelling in an endeavour to find his "heimat", unlike his half-brother, Anton, who has found his. Enough! Enjoy!

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Fri, 19 Mar 2004 14:24:46 +0100**  
**From: Bradnsj aol.com**

Thanks once again to Ivan for a very detailed intro.

Yes, the TWO cars in the forest - what happened to the other one after they split up? Did it arrive at Schabbach also, and I missed it?

I was very taken with Ernst's first appearance in this episode. He drives in his VW with its sunroof as if he is in the cockpit of his plane; looking all about him as if he is hunting for other victims. Not aircraft this time, but gullible, naive Hunsrückers. He really has no compassion or feeling for the good things of his Heimat, only what he can make out of it.

I really took exception to this 'new' Paul. Why is he short-changing Anton but pandering to Hermann? Yes, Ivan, I think you're right, he's just thinking about posterity; imagining the latest plaque on the wall! Why didn't Paul even tell people he was in Germany? Surely, if, as we suspect and if the gossip is true, Paul did give Anton money to help with the start-up costs of the factory, then you would think he would want to visit and keep his eye on his investment. Does Anton still owe Paul anything? Perhaps not, as there is no mention in the conversation over whether to sell up or not. What a surprise that Paul had sold up, himself. Is Anton dismayed because Paul is spending the proceeds on Hermann rather than leaving it in his will?

Is it a generational thing (because of the age gap) that Anton works hard to make money out of his ideas, but Hermann needs money to make his ideas work?

I too enjoyed Anton's return journey. You could really feel his pride, but also a little apprehension. The camera work from different perspectives. I especially enjoyed the sequence where the camera runs parallel to Anton and then gets ahead at the fork in the road.

Ernst's ideas on the faking of things seem very modern, even for 1984, let alone 1967. Also his ideas on quality - almost Japanese.

Ernst's business is all about the new convenience versus the old traditions. We see this in the houses and the cow that's "too much trouble".

I was touched by Glasisch's reaction to the music on the radio, but thought a little simplistic an image on the part of Reitz. I know the point he's trying to make, that Glasisch, the 'idiot savant', is the only one who can 'hear' the music. The irony is that we don't know whether he gets the chance to tell Hermann, or even whether Hermann would take any notice, if he did...

That's all for now.

Neil

**Date: Thu, 25 Mar 2004 21:53:06 +0100**

**From: Thomas Hönemann <Th.Hoenemann t-online.de>**

Dear Ivan, Neil, Reinder and others,

Ivan, let me first thank you again for your brilliant analysis of Part 10 of Heimat. Yes, we are approaching the end of this first part. Here are some comments on Ivans and Neils thoughts and questions:

Ivan wrote:

- > Let me confess, and this is the direst heresy, that at times I found this
- > episode a little hard-going. It seemed to lack emotional intensity and
- > involvement.

Yes, that is what I feel, too. But this is really no wonder: after having seen and discussed the most emotional episode, Hermännchen, the intensity of emotinality just has to decrease, one could say, for mathematical reasons. But even though there is one scene which is very emotinal in my eyes, not from its direct content, but from its meaning: Without knowing before we have to say goodbye to two characters I really love very much, this is Eduard and Pieritz. We see them both at night, standing in front of Ernsts Helicopter, and talking about their good old times, about searching for gold, about the plane that landed on their field, and while talking about this we all can recognise how sentimental and even final this scene is. While watching the scene I really feel like loosing very good friends, and they in fact will never appear again, at least not in the real live (see episode 11 to understand what I mean with this ...).

[After having read this again I recognised that the scene I was talking about could already have been a part of episode 9!? Nevertheless, nobody mentioned it before... .]

Yes, the appearances of Ernst and Paul, even Hermann are very strange. They have left the Hunsrück, all emotionally, or even practically. They seem like outsiders wich do not fit in the story, in the rythm of peoples lifes in Hunsrück.

Ivan wrote:

- > Anton leaves the hotel in the middle of the night and returns to the
- > Hunsrück in the light of a beautiful summer dawn. There follows a very
- > moving scene; for me, anyway. Anton stops the car, a cock is crowing to
- > welcome the day, and he has a bite to eat and looks out over the beautiful
- > Rhineland landscape. The camera lingers on a field of growing wheat and on
- > the sunlight on Anton's face. Anton knows and understands his roots. He does
- > not have to travel to find his "heimat"; it is right there in front of him
- > and within him. I was immensely moved by this. Anton has made his decision.

I have no comment on this, but I want to say again, what a brilliant analyst Ivan is. I ever knew about this, but I never found such clear an poetic words to express it. Really, really a great job, Ivan.

Glasisch indeed is a very interesting character. First, Reitz and his co-writer, Peter Steinbach, did not intend to let this role develop to become such an important one, but as they recognized the talents of the (amateur-)actor, Kurt Wagner, the worked on the plot again extending his role. Like Maria Glasisch accompanies us through all of the episodes, and we could not imagine what Heimat would be without him. On the one hand he is kind of the village idiot, on the other hand he is a very intelligent and sensitive man - as we also can see in the scene when Hermans radio-concert is broadcast. And the first part of each episode where he resumes what had happened until then - who could do it in a better way?

Ivan:

- > A few words about Hermann. I think my favourite Hermann is Jorg Richter in
- > the last episode. Peter Harting in this one, with his beard and dark
- > glasses, and moody stares, felt unconvincing or perhaps too much of a
- > departure from the previous incarnation.

I completely agree with this. I think the older Herman was a really failed casting - no one can really imagine that this sensitive and intelligent boy became such a cold and arrogant one. This is really not convincing, no way (from my point of view).

Neil asked:

> Yes, the TWO cars in the forest - what happened to the other one  
> after they split up? Did it arrive at Schabbach also, and I missed it?

The second car did not reach Anton's factory that day, in fact. The business-men meet again at the Schabbach guesthouse, we see Lotti leading the first car to it (after the negotiations at Ernsts) with her BMW Isetta, and when they reach the yard of the guesthouse the other car is already standing there and the men are sitting at the table eating.

On last thought, just a little piece of art: do you remember the scene when Ernst and his family are watching TV and Willy Brandt is going to start the German colour-TV? When he pushes the button even the hole scenes turns from black and white into colour (not only the tv-picture). I really like these original; witty little pieces, done with very much love for the detail and with kind of artistical humor. Really nice.

Best regards to all of you, please excuse my poor English again,  
Thomas

**Date: Sat, 27 Mar 2004 23:06:51 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

Thomas, you have no idea what a lift to my spirits you provided with your post. I think Susan is on holiday so we have not heard from her as yet and when you wrote Neil was the only one who had followed up on my introduction. You stopped me from feeling lonely and gave me great encouragement. It's strange, isn't it? You praised my description of Anton returning to his "Heimat" that summer morning. While I was writing that section I felt like Anton a bit, happy and elated, and the words really flowed. They don't always!!

I was very pleased you were able to deal with Neil's point about the second car. I had looked in my notes and found nothing and had completely forgotten about the little scene outside the guesthouse.

I had not realised that the scene where Eduard, Pieritz and Glasisch were reminiscing was the last time we would see Eduard and Pieritz alive as it were. Like you I feel a great sense of loss. They were both portrayed in their different ways as endearing and slightly eccentric characters. The scene is in Part 9. I had written in my introduction to this episode: "As a lover of all Reitz's work all his scenes are memorable. For those with a quirky sense of humour please pay attention to Eduard, Pieritz and Glasisch bemoaning their lost past". It was with this scene in mind that I included the first quotation taken from Shakespeare's "Henry 4 Part 2. In the scene quoted from, 3 old men, Falstaff and Justices Shallow and Silence, are reminiscing about their wild days as students in the Inns of Court in London, about their whoring and drinking. They have heard "the chimes at midnight" but that was all in the past. All their old friends and acquaintances from those days are now dead [Shallow: And is old Double dead?]. The moods of this play and of "Heimat", as it draws towards its close, are remarkably similar. This can clearly be seen in Part 11, the final episode. But even here, in Part 10, we can see the mood darkening, a growing sense of melancholy, of ageing, of time running out. Just one little example; Pauline can't sit on the pouffe because her knees hurt. Pieritz will never walk down the Champs-Élysées with Klarchen. That's two!!<vbg>

I loved the little trick as well, Thomas, when the whole scene changes to colour as Willi Brandt presses the button to inaugurate Germany's colour TV service. One of those "moments"!!

All for now. Any more thoughts on Part 10?? Stop hiding wherever you are!!

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Mon, 29 Mar 2004 00:01:33 +0200**  
**From: "Maarten Landzaat" <gijs\_xs4all.nl>**

Ivan,

Hiding no more, I just watched the 10th episode. Ivan, without your beautiful and insightful intros, this collective watching would not work. PLEASE keep it up!

If I were forced to describe this episode in one sentence, it would be something like "deals with positive and negative effects of pride."

The positive aspect is of course mainly embodied in Anton's love for his Heimat and his actions that come from this love. But there's also the proudness of mothers Maria and Pauline of their sons. Ernst is proud of his business. Hermann can do his music thing because of Paul's questionable motives, one of which is (anticipated) pride. The entire village is proud that Hermann's piece is broadcast on the radio (Not very long though :-)

The negative aspects are there too: I can sense Anton's underlying feeling that he may have put off the deal now, but that trouble has only just begun. Then there's the obvious damage that Ernst's business is doing to the buildings. Paul's pride directs him towards a nice marble plate instead of helping his real son. Paul and Hermann do not take the time to visit Maria. Pride stands between a normal relation between the brothers Anton and Ernst. The family is torn apart. I also felt that pride was the main motive of all beautiful girls around Hermann. They seem more like groupies than real admirers.

Nice metaphors:

- the big Mercedeses from Brussels being lost in the woods.
- the school bus (future) not having to turn (be hold up) anymore by the monument (past).

Some general thought about Heimat up till now (I've had two amarettos so excuse me if I go astray):

- Only now I really feel the importance of the music. I figured that the music is so very non-German, so foreign, so strange, that you are forced to watch the picture with a distance. Why else would I shiver at the mere sight of aluminum doors being installed?
- Another thing that struck me: the fact that each scene is quite boring by today's television and movie standards, makes it all the more interesting to watch just because of this discrepancy. But this boringness is also a means to make you watch for the more "emergent", more abstract messages. It is this restraint that makes the higher art happen.
- The previous Hermännchen was really an exception in this respect; there the principal powerful message for me was the story itself.

Some replies to Ivan:

> But cometh the hour, cometh the man! A man for all seasons! Anton!

I agree that Anton is depicted as heroic, and I could sympathize with him for that, but I still felt very little sympathy for him for the way he met with his father and Hermann, and how he looks down on Ernst. Admittedly, they are not easy on him either, but Anton more than earned that treatment by his actions in the past.

- > The episode begins with two large limousines, initially lost, gliding along
- > the forest roads outside Schabbach. They are representatives of a
- > multi-national corporation which seeks to take-over Anton's business. They
- > are outsiders; one of them Flemish, I think.

Strange, they are supposed to come from Brussels, but the Dutch being spoken is not Flemish; the accent is much more northern, from the Netherlands.

> There appears on the road in front of one of the cars, a huge stag, carrying enormous  
> antlers. "What a peculiar place!" exclaims one of the men. I see Anton as the stag;  
> a stag at bay! He will be no easy catch! He is offered 60 million

Brilliant! You're right!

> ...Decisively, Anton decides to drive there and  
> we have the camera paying great attention to the speed and opulence of his  
> car and the modernity of the autobahn and its different exits.

Just imagine how much trouble Reitz has gone through for just these few seconds.

> Anton leaves the hotel in the middle of the night and returns to the  
> Hunsrück in the light of a beautiful summer dawn. There follows a very  
> moving scene; for me, anyway. Anton stops the car, a cock is crowing to  
> welcome the day, and he has a bite to eat and looks out over the beautiful  
> Rhineland landscape. The camera lingers on a field of growing  
> wheat and on the sunlight on Anton's face. Anton knows and understands his  
> roots. He does not have to travel to find his "Heimat"; it is right there in  
> front of him and within him. I was immensely moved by this. Anton has made  
> his decision.

Yes I was moved too. And those colours! On my bad VHS copy, they looked like an impressionist painting! This is the place and time where the REAL birds sing, not in a town in a park during the night.

> We have seen him as a model employer ever since the concert party. He then  
> delivers a wonderful call to arms, rejects the buy-out offer, flatters and  
> praises his workers, and makes a plea for mutual trust. Anton is eloquent  
> and moving. He has found a voice and I am sure Reitz is endorsing it. He  
> uses this voice to good effect when he finds Ernst in their mother's attic.  
> He has seen straight through Ernst's meretricious business and his rapacious  
> methods. He accuses him of having no soul, of selling off his history, his  
> youth, his traditions, of leaving nothing to any future generations. "You  
> haven't a spark of culture under your dirty fingernails. I have always  
> wanted to tell you that." How I loved those words! Anton is now a man with a  
> mission; no stag at bay, but a man with new strength and belief. Great!!

Although I agree with you (and Anton), I felt sorry for Ernst, and for the fact that these two brothers cannot get along. And isn't Ernst also restoring his old junk? He is also interested in it. His interest MAY be only economical, but it only shows that the interest is broader in society. Ernst is depicted as the bad guy, but he is just a small part of the entire economy of demand and supply.

Maarten

**Date: Tue, 30 Mar 2004 12:14:48 -0600**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Ivan, Neil, Maarten, Thomas and others,

I am 2 days back from holiday and after deleting all the spam from my in-box, it was delightful to read all the wonderful insights and analysis of Part 10. Wow, this group is good!

First, I agree with Ivan in that I do not like Peter Harting as Hermann. He does not strike me as the sensitive character Hermann is supposed to be. Jorg Richter even looks like the future Hermann in DZH. However, Ernst and Anton really do look like brothers in spite of their different sizes. The side view of Ernst driving in his car, with a similiar mustache looks just like Anton.

It was very interesting to learn about the expansion of Kurt Wagner's role.

Anton is definitely a "hero" in this episode. He may seem overbearing at times, but he has the interests of his employees and "Heimat" at heart. We should have more bosses like him today - the world would be a better place.

I was struck by the comment of the man in the Mercedes when the stag appears in the road. Most people from the city would react "Look! A stag!" as something exciting to see - but the visiting executive just comments that this is a strange place. He sees the stag as out of place on a business trip.

I like the way Lotte is running around like a "busy bee" with her glasses - she has matured and seems to be dedicating her life to the business. No more fooling around as in the old days with Klärchen. Almost as if she is serving penance. I was rather amused when she is talking through the window to Anton and Marta, to tell them about the telex. From Anton's side you could hardly hear what she was saying. Why didn't Anton open the window?

Paul is shown in this episode as becoming a very self centered and rather unpleasant person. And Hermann's calling him "Daddy" is annoying to hear. Some of the sound on my tape is poor quality and I relied more on the subtitles - did I imagine that Hermann actually says "Daddy" ? I thought Paul was very rude to Anton. True, Paul and Hermann were working and Anton arrived unannounced. But Paul clearly wants to deal with Anton quickly and get back to his music work with Hermann. Reitz even has Paul dressed to look like an obnoxious tourist - even shorts when all the other men are wearing long pants. I am glad Maria is not there to hear Hermann call Paul "Daddy" - how that would hurt her.

Maria and Pauline: It is very sad to see Maria - she even seems old compared to Pauline. Pauline dresses more modern, is peppy and interested in modern things. It looks to me that Maria has given up on life and klings to the old ways. Yet you see the affection between the two women and I was happy that Maria still has her sister-in-law as a friend.

I, too was horrified to watch aluminum siding (and ugly siding at that) put over the old fachwerk house. At least Germany was quicker to stop this than here in the US! I think Ernst represents change, even if it is not always good. Anton is his counterpart - he tries to preserve and protect his hometown, but with his own kind of progress. The scene in the local tavern really shows how bitter Ernst is towards his brother. Perhaps he is jealous of his success. The one farmer states he is willing to deal with Ernst because of Anton's reputation.

All through this we can see the older characters relegated to smaller and smaller roles. Paul tries to hang on to being part of the new order and Glassisch continues on as before, but now with a little more respect.

There is so much to comment on in Part 10 - I've only watched about half of it.

Tchuss,  
Susan

**Date: Tue, 30 Mar 2004 20:38:18 -0500**  
**From: wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>**

Hello,

I have not had the time to contribute to this ongoing "viewing reviewing" but I would like to offer some comments or explanations to Heimat 10. I am watching the films without subtitles and I understand (and speak) the dialect. It is difficult and I hope you don't mind me jumping in at the very end but here goes:

I guess, Mercedes Benz must have sponsored this episode since there were so many of them. A nice symbol of the "Stolzen Jahre" since if you drove a big MB you had made it. Although I'd like to argue that that large Opel sedans and BMWs were more prominent in the region at that time. Opels were made in Rüsselsheim and many people bought local cars. In Germany, we said that Mercedes cars were driven by butchers (so they could haul their little trailers), taxi drivers and the politicians, so the image of wealth was somewhat muted.

The comment of the business man about the stag was meant to say: "What on earth are we doing here?" In context, he was surprised that this company they were supposed to purchase was located in this remote area. Nothing unusual with that.

My feeling about Anton is that he is genuinely moved by the offer but can't see himself giving control to a foreign owner while the going is good (and his wife tells him "what are we going to do with all that money while standing around in the street"). So, from Anton's point of view, limited as it is, he's doing the right thing to press on with the new invention of a movable photo lens that can prevent distortions for architectural photography. Yes, he also has his responsibility to the local employees in mind. He wants them to succeed and bring the "economic miracle" as it was called to Schabbach. He has the technological know-how but not the business experience to know when it's time to sell. These years were extremely optimistic in Germany. Everybody wanted to build bigger and better things. When they meet, Paul is trying to explain to Anton that he made his cut selling out to IBM and retaining control of the R&D department and he got a good deal. It is also very easy to understand why Paul likes to support Hermann, both have broken the mold and gone their own ways. It seems to me that Paul is giving Anton the right advice. It would not have meant to give up his Heimat but relinquish control to an unknown entity. Germans didn't like that in the 60s. I wondered, though, why he is saying "good bye" at the end of their meeting in Brenner's Park Hotel instead of "see you later"; that is a bit strange.

As far as the village people's reaction to the radio broadcast is concerned, I sympathize. I think, most German viewers sympathized with them when they saw the film in 1984! It was meant to be "far out" - over the top. Glasisch is able to discern the nightingales in the distorted tape broadcast and that makes him, as the person who really is telling this story, the only one with the insight of what is going on. I liked that.

The fact that people were ripping off their old facades and replacing them with some "brick-master" look was the idea of modernization those days. Ernst was able to take advantage of it and everybody was happy. 20 years later did it occur to many people that the historic look was much more genuine and desirable, but those old windows and doors were very drafty and needed replacement!!

So long -  
Wolfgang

**Date: Wed, 31 Mar 2004 10:35:47 -0600**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

I have two more comments on the Simon family relationships after watching the end of Part 10:

Although my sympathies were with Anton in the first half of the episode, I thought Anton was unnecessarily harsh with Ernst when they meet in the attic of the old house. It really is not fair that Anton attacks Ernst and calls him lazy. Ernst did build his own business. Sometimes it seems Ernst

wants to have a better relationship with his brother - especially when his old model airplane flies and he wants Anton to see that. Even Ernst has some pleasant childhood memories.

Of course Hermann has not been a "good son" at all - dropping in on Maria after two years of not seeing his mother at all. She had trouble understanding his beard (it's 1969!), his music and his two girlfriends. Parents back then were not as accepting of change as parents are today - they wanted their children to be like them and Maria is no exception. Yet I think both Ernst and Hermann do love Maria in their own way. Ernst smiles when he sees Maria sleeping at the table. Hermann does stop off at home and helps with the wine. Yet both sons feel (correctly!) their Mother does not approve or understand them.

Wolfgang - thank you for the German perspective on the "new changes" -

Susan

**Date: Wed, 31 Mar 2004 23:00:28 +0200**  
**From: Thomas Hönemann <Th.Hoenemann t-online.de>**

Dear Heimat-friends,

During our discussion I recognised that it would sometimes be interesting for many of you to get more detailed information about some of the actors in Heimat.

Concerning this I did some research about the actors - amateurs and professionals. Eva Maria Schneider from Kirchberg (Hunsrück), who played Marie-Goot in Heimat and nowadays (among her multiple other activities) is leading the Heimat-Bustours (me and Joel - best regards - and our wives took part in one last October) supported me to get many information you won't find in literature or anywhere else. As the result I published the actors-page yesterday, containing all names of the players of important roles, further personal information and links (unfortunately all in German, but maybe this could be interesting for you, nevertheless). You will be surprised about the number of amateurs who even played central roles, e. g. Katharina, Mathias, Marie-Goot, Robert Kröber and many others.

Please feel again invited to visit my Heimat-webpages. I am looking forward to your comments and guestbook-entries.

Heimat Main-page: <http://home.t-online.de/home/th.hoenemann/heimat/index.htm>  
Heimat actors-page: <http://home.t-online.de/home/th.hoenemann/heimat/actors.htm>

Best regards  
Thomas

**Date: Thu, 1 Apr 2004 19:27:41 +0200**  
**From: Bradnsj aol.com**

Susan

I'm afraid I can't agree.

I feel pretty sure that Reitz wants us to identify with Anton, as he does himself. I don't have any sympathy with Ernst; I don't find him a sympathetic character, at all. I'm right with Anton when he rounds on him for what Ernst is doing to the culture and heritage that is his, Anton's, as well as those people that are selling to Ernst.

Best wishes

Neil Bradley

**Date: Thu, 1 Apr 2004 19:29:05 +0200**  
**From: Bradns aol.com**

Wolfgang  
thank you so, so much for these insights.  
Very useful to have the cultural context.  
Best wishes  
Neil Bradley

**Date: Thu, 1 Apr 2004 10:03:08 -0800**  
**From: <jkadvany@sbcglobal.net>**

All:

It's useful to see Ernst, Anton and Hermann as responses to different kinds of technological change, themselves mixed up with historical events, a theme which begins with Paul's electronic obsessions at the start of Heimat, and is reflected in many changes to the village over the years. Specifically, Ernst takes up a simple business based on new housing materials that disrespects the past (eg buy up old doors and windows on the day of Maria's funeral, then replace the work of centuries in an afternoon); Anton's lens factory is disrupted by crop dusting, I believe using pesticides, itself a reminder of poisons used during the war (the farm is owned by the former Nazi boy and his father); and finally Hermann who goes electronic-modern in his music (though of course that's also a reminder of the bond between himself and his adoptive father Paul). Paul is the techno-wizard par excellence, having moved to Detroit to make a fortune, but then sells it off, and advises Anton to do the same, with total lack of feeling for a traditional role for the craft of lens-making in Schabbach. And again, where did Anton learn to be a lens-wizard?-- on the front during WWII, and he conceived of his lens-patent idea while walking back a thousand miles, in reverse of Paul's leaving the village by foot one day in the early 20th century.

So, it's not so much whether we identify or not with Anton vs. Ernst, they're both caught up by changing technologies which shape their lives. By the way, in terms of Anton vs. Ernst, don't forget (I guess this only appears in 2nd Heimat) that Anton acts horribly to Hermann once his love affair with Klarchen is discovered, while Ernst helps Hermann communicate secretly with her by mail afterward.

Cheers,  
John Kadvany

**Date: Fri, 2 Apr 2004 00:05:22 +0100**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

I have only just finished writing my introduction to Part 11. I will post it tomorrow, Friday, April 2nd, 2004. It has been a long labour of love!! After a slow start discussion certainly livened up on Part 10. I would like to welcome one newcomer, Jack Kadvany. We had 7 contributors and 12 posts in all, plus one abject apology for falling right behind. Apologies accepted, Theresa, and hope you will be joining us again soon. We miss you!

I am afraid I have had an idea!! Our great leader, Mr. Rustema, has not provided any more time than usual on the published schedule, but, as this is the last episode coming up, I would like every person who has contributed at any time before, to write something on the film "Heimat" as a whole. It does not have to be a full length critique, although, of course, it can be. You could just tell us all which scenes have stuck in your memory or which of the actors or actresses gave the finest performances. Did the film have any special meanings for you? Ivan expects every man/woman to do his/her

duty!!<VBG>

Therefore responses to Part 11 should reach the list by the end of Good Friday, April 9th and responses to "Heimat", the whole film, by the end of Thursday, April 15th. We begin DZH on April 16th. This is a unilateral declaration! No excuses will be accepted <VBG>.

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Sat, 10 Apr 2004 02:09:57 +0200**  
**From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder\_rustema.nl>**

At 23:06 +0000 27/03/04, Ivan Mansley wrote:

> Any more thoughts on Part 10?? Stop hiding wherever you are!!

A late one...

I just watched part 10 and I am now catching up with my reading. Remember the scene in which Pauline arrives with the box she found in the cellar? The box with the pre-war money Robert had hid in 1939, completely worthless... A silence... A memory of the clocks ticking. Dreams of the past, of travelling to Lake Garda. Then, the music becomes light (that theme we start to recognise when a character's dreams are unfolded). "Our travels are with one finger on an atlas, isn't it?" What then happens is a feeling from their youth. Remember that night in 1938 when Maria went to the cinema around the corner, visiting Pauline in Leipzig? She allowed herself to feel young then, with dreams. They were imitating the filmstar Zarah Leander (Banty, thanks for sending the newspaper clipping about her, what coincidence you had saved it) in front of the mirror. Feeling far away in the world. That same feeling, but now they allow themselves to dream about going to Florida, where the sun always shines! But first get rid of her cow she has to milk every day (just like Robert at the time couldn't leave his shop for a day), so Maria can finally leave Shabbach, what she has been dreaming of all her life! Later on we see her tears when the cow is pushed in the truck of the butcher without any love. When I shared her tears, I realised she is not going to Florida. Maria is NOT going to leave the Hunsrück, this is her Heimat, she will stay here until the end of her time... Sad.

So there really was a touching scene in part 10, it was just a bit hidden.

**Date: Mon, 12 Apr 2004 21:50:15 +0200**  
**From: Raymond Scholz <rscholz\_zonix.de>**

· On Mar 25 2004, Thomas Hönemann <Th.Hoenemann@t-online.de> wrote:

> The second car did not reach antons factory that day, in fact. The  
> business-men meet again at the Schabbach guesthouse,

Yet another detail on those two business men later negotiating with Anton. The slim, short haired one is played by Bernd Eichinger (<http://us.imdb.com/name/nm0251536/>) who is a well known producer in German cinema and has recently started to work on international productions and directing films himself. You see him almost constantly smoking during his scenes, which is told to be one of his favourite passions (others are cinema and women...). Eichinger and Reitz appear to be good friends, the cover sleeves of the absolutmedien VHS of Heimat contains a transcript of a talk between Reitz and Eichinger.

Telling from the credits, the other business man is played by Laurens Straub (<http://us.imdb.com/name/nm0833713/>) who appears to be a film producer too. But I didn't know him until now.

> On last thought, just a little piece of art: do you remember the scene when  
> Ernst and his family are watching TV and Willy Brandt is going to start the  
> German colour-TV? When he pushes the button even the whole scene turns from  
> black and white into colour (not only the tv-picture). I really like these  
> original; witty little pieces, done with very much love for the detail and  
> with kind of artistic humor. Really nice.

Another detail that may be of interest on this historical footage. I'm quite sure that Reitz - being a perfectionist - corrected some tiny glitch from the past that erupted some discussion in 1967. The button Willy Brandt pushed was a mock-up, not at all wired. So when Brandt pushed the button some technician behind the scenes (perhaps hundreds of kilometres away) had to turn over the real switch. He must have been so much excited about colour TV entering German homes, that he pushed that switch about 2 seconds before Brandt actually pressed down the red mock-up button. But only very few households in Germany noticed that little error since almost no one could afford a colour TV.

I couldn't find the original video of this on the web to finally proof that Reitz is manipulating historical events by delaying the moment the colour enters the screens... We should remember that Heimat has been completed in 1984 :-)

I'm now going to watch the final part 11 on my private Heimat Easter marathon which has been an exciting experience so far. Thank you all for your insightful contributions that made watching the films even more interesting! I'll be back in sync then for Die Zweite Heimat which I'm really looking forward to.

Cheers, Ray

**Date: Fri, 2 Apr 2004 08:00:06 +0100**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

"The personal experiences of the public, the audience, or the reader of a book, or of somebody who looks upon a painting, together with the memories that he carries with himself, are set in motion by the work of art. In this way the encounter with the work becomes an observation of himself. You get a key to your inner workings, to the secrets of your own soul. That's where the message is actually hiding. The work itself gives no answer whatever, but the observer gives himself answers. The work gives him time and again the key to unlocking those secret rooms." [Edgar Reitz]

HEIMAT: Part 11. DAS FEST DER LEBENDEN UND DER TOTEN  
[1982]. [The Feast of the Living and the Dead].

I must confess to feeling daunted by the task ahead of me. I do not know how I am going to do justice to this most amazing and complex episode which finishes the film. Back in 1986 when "Heimat" was first shown on BBC 2 I felt rather cheated and disappointed by this episode, certainly by its ending. When I watched it straight through last week I felt a sense of disappointment again plus a certain amount of confusion. These feelings probably arose because I felt that characters whom I had come to know so well, whom Edgar Reitz had created and breathed life into, so that they were more real to me than many real people, had been wrenched away from me without me having had a chance, so to speak, of bidding them farewell. However, after watching again and making detailed notes in preparation for writing this introduction, my feelings have changed again. I feel I am now much closer to understanding Reitz's intentions and purposes in this episode and have a fuller and deeper appreciation of the underlying themes and resolutions of them, although there are still many aspects that puzzle me. I no longer feel disappointment with the ending. I shall try to explain!

I cannot find the numbers of the original German TV audience but more than 2 million people watched each episode on BBC 2, I believe. I have often wondered what the general reaction to this episode was, as we move well outside the normal confines of soap-opera and family saga. Age and death are

everywhere in this episode and we can become afflicted with melancholy in the presence of all this dying. Lucie exclaims, "What a life this is with all this dying!" and Paul lying ill in bed confesses to Hermann that life is "no fun anymore". And yet we are shown an after-life, a next life, where the dead can watch the doings of the living, and the living go on with new hope and new aspirations and adventures. I have no idea what Reitz's religious beliefs in real life are or were, and I base all my comments on what we are shown in this episode of this film, "Heimat".

The episode is very cleverly constructed and uses flashbacks to emphasise the importance of memories in the lives of his characters and in the lives of all of us. They become the stories we tell ourselves. A good example of this, for instance, occurs when Anton goes back to his mother's house which he had boarded up to keep out Ernst and his men and any others like him. In the barn he finds, under a sheet, a dust covered TV which he had originally bought for his mother so that she should not feel bored living alone as she does. In flashback we are shown him arriving with the TV and Maria rejecting it as she never feels bored she says. Reitz is exploring through memory the nature of this mother/son relationship and Anton's feeling of rejection: "Mother, I never know how to please you." We can feel the hurt still there! Reitz also brilliantly arranges matters so that all 3 brothers are in their old house at the same time, unbeknown to each other, locked each in their own private memories which have helped to make them what they are.

If I may, and perhaps rather feebly as a method, I would like to run through the episode paying special attention to the latter part of the episode from the arrival of the 3 brothers at the fun-fair. We shall see quite clearly the emphasis on death and dying. It certainly does not make comfortable viewing necessarily, but truthful and honest it is. Glasisch's opening commentary provides us with a few surprises, as others have commented [Marie-Goot is his mother], but he mentions Horst, the son of Lucie and Eduard, having died young after picking up a landmine. He perhaps proudly announces, "A big family, the Glasisches, the Simons, and the Wiegands" but continues, "A lot of them are dead now". We then move straight into the day of Maria's funeral. The whole scene is orchestrated brilliantly and beautifully acted. I wondered if Reitz was setting up a deliberate irony when he makes the priest, during the funeral procession, chant these words. "Thou hast shed thy light on the darkness of the world and of death. Give us the strength to follow that light" and all around them is the blackness of the impending storm, which eventually causes the coffin to be dumped in the road as they all take shelter from the thrashing rain. Drenching rain obscures everything. Hermann manages to stop his car just short of the coffin. Are we being invited to think that in the face of death we do not see clearly? At the actual burial two jets scream overhead leaving vapour trails and there follows a view of the Hunsruck in the beauty of its Autumn colours taken from the aircraft. Was it the new ousting the old, annihilating distance? Does it provide a contrast with the lumpen earth being shovelled in to the grave and to the body which can soar no more?

We then literally have the funeral feast. Glasisch has a high fever of 40.3 degrees C and collapses. Paul falls forward and collapses and is then revived by his nurse. Philipp[?] carries a plastic bag containing 120 gallstones removed from his wife. Age and death and illness are all around and yet we see newcomers too. The Vilsmeiers have adopted two little Vietnamese children. Glasisch is meant to be old and confused ["When you get old you get so stupid, so stupid"] but he is able to walk over to Paul's table and challenge him as to why he walked out of the village, and, once more, Paul has no answer.

There follows the scene in the graveyard, where Hermann walks among the gravestones, after a conversation with the grave-digger/attendant. He finds the graves of Pauline 1904-75; Robert killed on the Eastern Front 1945; Eduard 1897-1967; Lucie 1906-75; Alois and Martha Wiegand; Wilfried Wiegand, only 57 muses Hermann; Horst; Katharina and Mathias; Marie-Goot and Mathes-Pat, and his mother, Maria, of course. He has a vision of her coffin almost afloat in the rain. What is the significance? We did not know of at least 6 of these deaths before, as far as I am aware. Hermann then visits "Daddy", who is lying, close to death, in a flat attached to Anton's factory. There seems to be a genuine affection between the two men, but both are consumed by guilt about Maria's death. She was their anchor and both had rejected her in life! Both left their heimat and have not found another. They are self-pitying. [Hermann: "Now the two of us no longer have a home anywhere/Paul: We travelled around the world and didn't know it/Hermann: We didn't know how beautiful it was when she was still here." How universal such feelings are! They have a shared memory of when Hermann, as a 4

year old, asked Paul for a chocolate. Both men break down in tears.

Anton is not well either. The camera focuses on the sculpture of boots he wore on his epic walk back from Russia, but now he has a heart problem and all his old bounce and sparkle has gone. He is applying for a government subsidy. He does not know what to do now; this is symbolised by his endless walking in a circle around his courtyard. This idea of circularity is to return later.

Let us return, for a moment, to Maria's empty house. It is a repository of the individual and shared memories of the 3 brothers, Anton, Ernst and Hermann. Ernst is the first to arrive at the boarded-up house. He had quarrelled mightily with Anton at the funeral feast, after Anton had found Ernst's men in his mother's house. Ernst has his defenders in our little discussion group, but Reitz seems to present him with an ambivalence which makes it hard to decide about him. He certainly had sent Karl-Heinz to Schabbach in search of antiques. He acknowledges the man whilst in the funeral procession and mouths at them not to go to the forge. He is obviously ashamed of what he is doing and does not want to be directly linked with them. His defence of himself and his threat of dismissal of his employee, however, did seem genuine. Reitz gives Ernst a touch of humanity when he stops to feed the rabbits, left forgotten and hungry. He finds his old construction set, and noticing a sampler, containing a poem about love, is reminded of the time he observed his mother and Otto, arm in plaster, embracing in the kitchen. We have a flashback in colour to this memory and another to the glider Otto had helped him to build. Anton has now arrived and sees that someone has fed the rabbits. His memories are aroused by a basket which causes him to remember a time when he had bought flowers for his mother in a basket and found no one at home. Hermann arrives, after walking through fun-fair bubbles. All three are in the house together, unknown to each other. Hermann looks closely at a flagon of coloured liquid which, I think, reminds him of the sloe gin his mother was making on an earlier visit. He finds a photo of himself and Klärchen in the tent. We see it again in flashback with details I did not remember. Anton finds the photo of Otto he took on the highway. Ernst reflects on his childhood with further examination of the construction set. We, in turn, remember incidents from the earlier episodes and are caught up in their memories. This is very skilfully done. When they finally bump into each other Anton is discovered trying to remove from the house a piece of furniture, a mirror; the very thing he was trying to prevent Ernst from doing! This is all resolved by Paul, who, typically without asking anyone, has affixed to the house a plaque donating the house, as a kind of museum, to the village presumably. Throughout this he cackles with self-satisfied, maniacal laughter.

There was one long flashback during the brothers' visit to the house, which I have overlooked. At first, I thought it was connected with Anton's gift of flowers but now I don't think so. We go to Maria's 70th birthday party in the village hall. Anton does arrive with flowers at the end but they are not in a basket and if it followed directly from the earlier incident it would mean he had not been invited. Not likely! I think the connecting idea was "flowers". We see all the colourful bouquets Maria has received, but the emphasis is on age, decrepitude and death, memories and regrets. Pauline never went to Lake Garda as she had wanted; Lucie, now like an old witch remembers her Eduard and her old profession. "And now I sit here and he's lying in the graveyard. Next to my Horst. And 3 graves away lie my mama and papa." Brandishing a knife, and demonstrating how and where the slits in her skirt were made, she becomes almost frightening. The elderly singer, who boasts of being 80 years old, rather pathetically, but to much applause, does a handstand against the wall to demonstrate his physical prowess.

When the three brothers arrive at the fun-fair, my memory took me back to the scene in "Hermännchen", when the three boys go to the funfair. There are many such "echoes" in this episode but I do not have time to analyze them. There are two prostitutes, Daggi and Marion, drinking at the stall. When I watched the episode last week they irritated me immensely and I wished they had been cut, but I now see how they fit into the thematic whole. They have their regrets and memories and talk of death. A man, troubled by a memory from the war, writhes on the ground. Music plays, trumpets blare, and a conga dance goes round and round and in and out endlessly. Merry-go-rounds twirl and circle. The dance and the roundabouts are all symbols of human life, as is the noise of the music and the shouting. A twentieth century English writer, Anthony Powell, has a sequence of novels entitled "A Dance to the Music of Time". That is how he sees life. It is a cacophony of noise, with us in the midst, meeting and re-meeting as our lives go on. This might help to make sense of this scene. We see Glasisch following the conga. A door has been shut. There is a battering on the doors and there is great hubbub and commotion. I did not quite understand why they were so desirous of entering the

building. Glasisch seems to be having some kind of seizure. Paul and his nurse come into view. A giant shadow of Paul is cast on to the front wall of the building. Is Reitz having a kind of cinematic joke/reference here? It looked like the shadow of Dracula from the film, "Nosferatu"! He cries out, "Maria, I'm so cold." Do you remember these very words from the scene where he wishes to climb into her bed? He is Death or has been marked by Death. We have a shot of trumpet players revolving in the mist. Lotti and her young family appear on the balcony and Paul struggles back as if he has seen something [youth/warmth/real love?] and collapses with the words, "I think I'm dying." I presume he does, though we don't actually witness him dying.

It is now that Reitz produces his most audacious stroke. We return to Glasisch, who tells the revellers to gain entrance by the back door, and we then see him dodging his own shadow, cast on the lighted wall of the building behind a kind of picket fence. He moves towards a lighted door. Mamangakis' thumping music is heard. The door is rather like a church door. It is surrounded by a yellow brickwork arch. As he approaches the steps, they suddenly turn an incandescent yellow. He climbs them and enters the after-life. It was late in the day when I realised all this. There is much Biblical imagery here. Are these steps the stairway to Heaven? Inside the hall Glasisch, who has now become a young man again, finds all the characters who have died in the course of the film. They are all young again, and, in the course of their conversations repeat lines and phrases we have heard before. They are lit from below by a light box which gives them a strange, ethereal quality. We see, for instance, Martina handing out potato cakes and the French horsewoman being handed into her bath. Maria appears on the stage carrying duvets, as she had appeared to Otto on his return to Schabbach. She is given the appearance of an angel, the duvets looking like an angel's wings. Maria names in turn those she recognises [I will leave out the complications of not seeing Grandad as he was blind]. The dead look through the window and see the living in the square. We have not lost the characters. They are now watching over us. I wonder if Edgar Reitz knows of a play by the American dramatist, Thornton Wilder, named "Our Town" where we have virtually the same idea [first performed January 1938].

Is Reitz saying this is Heaven? I noticed that Paul was not there! Perhaps he has gone to the other place or perhaps he is not dead? Glasisch is certainly dead, as his body is found by the fence and carried inside. Otto and Maria, symbols of true love, join the living unseen and watch over Hermann and Gisella embracing in the mine. He has found another totally unsuitable woman. She is Anton's daughter. What of Anton? He is drunk. The loud music of the fair and the noise of the conga coalesce into his irregular heartbeat. This becomes very dramatic. He collapses, cries out, and cannot hear. His daughter holds up a message hastily written in felt-tip pen: "Dad, don't worry its temporary deafness, caused by stress and lack of vitamins." I think he has also died but I may be completely wrong on this. The words on the paper, if genuine, seem unbearably flippant. Ernst, on the other hand, looks as if he has found happiness. His hideously convoluted proposal of marriage to Irene seems to have been accepted.

There follows a short scene of the empty road with a few bubbles blowing away and the noise of flies and the chirp of birds. The significance of this escaped me. We then have the final scene of the performance of Hermann's latest composition from within the mine. It is a kind of polyphonic chanting. We see ultra-modern cabling emerging from the ground running into a kind of portakabin. Hermann is standing in the doorway. The camera suddenly pulls back along the road and we have the final credits set to Hermann's music. The suddenness of the ending feels quite shocking. We have views of a ploughed field on a gloomy day. So we have a new venture by one of the young ones. Hermann's music incorporates the old Hunsruck dialect for after all "Yes, in Heaven, as you'd expect, they speak the Hunsruck dialect". The old heimat is still there. There was an old dog in the road scratching itself. The old telegraph poles were still there despite the modern cabling. The earth lies waiting.

Whose deaths have we seen during the episode? Maria, of course; Glasisch; Paul and Anton maybe. Who is left alive? Ernst, about to marry; Hermann; Anton perhaps and Martha. What has Reitz revealed to us in this episode? He has revealed or reminded us that human narrative to be complete must end in death. This is uncomfortable and shocks us but there is no other way. We all have our memories, Reitz says, and this makes us what we are. And there is an after life where we can be young again. Let us hope so!!

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Sun, 04 Apr 2004 08:24:44 -0400**  
**From: wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>**

Thanks very much, Ivan, for the summary and introduction to Episode 11. I chose to combine the two things, some comments on this episode and my feelings about the series.

The conclusion of this first series converges the themes and ideas and brings them into focus:

1. We just don't know where our fate will bring us but we humans need family to feel at home.
  2. Leaving family and geographical bond in search of a better life makes us long for our roots sooner or later.
  3. The "remote" village is not so remote after all, national events do effect the lives of the people.
- And I would like to add a fourth observation: For me as a post WW2 German, it was comforting to see the German history of the last 100 years through the eyes of these families, what really mattered to them, and thus presumably to so many families (including mine) and then move on. Family life was terribly disrupted in the turmoil of this century that it was necessary to separate this from the front page news and cliches of so many other films. Germans should be allowed to be patriotic not because they follow propaganda particularly well but because they love their country.

I felt the same sense of loss and disappointment as Ivan when I watched this last episode for the first time. I don't think anybody can keep all the relationships and events in their heads in just one viewing. You want to know more, understand better, be part of that family a little longer. However, to give us a clear understanding of the entire family relationships is not the goal of the series. The goal is that we can identify and relate to some of the characters and events just as in our own families - we are selective in who we spend time with, who we like and who we rather ignore. That makes the series so compelling.

Having said all that, I really just plain enjoyed the story as told when this series was first broadcast on WGBH in Boston. It was about my own Heimat (I left the area in 1978 for Boston, Massachusetts) and so many things were so incredibly familiar. Of course, the language plays a major role in this film, that's why I was rather surprised when I found out that people from all over Germany enjoyed the series, let alone people abroad. Question is, are we all feeling the same thing? So what is the common bond of the viewers?

A few comments: In the English introduction by Glasisch, very well translated by the way, we see the painted family tree and can actually see the years of death for everybody in the story. No entry for either Paul or Anton so presumably, they stay alive. I think a "normal" ending would have been the two jets roaring over the cemetery while the credits are rolling. But this was different, in fact the two jets moved me to tears. These Phantoms from the German fighter-bomber wing JG35 in Pferdsfeld used to skim the Hunsrück hills all the time and fly mock attacks over my home town Koblenz. It reminded everybody that there was a cold war going on and they were training in very small air spaces to stop a Russian advance. Hermann refers to the extravagant Government Bunker built near Bonn, where the entire Administration would find shelter for weeks while the German people presumably figure out how to deal with nuclear fallout. As somebody observed during the fair: "those jets fly along the entire Hunsrück range in about three minutes". In this scene they instantly evoked the picture of two angels with flaming swords descending and taking Maria along for the ride. She who had never left the village, was able to see the entire area in a matter of seconds. The story doesn't end here as expected but we get treated to the supernatural part, the "festival of the dead". I found it strangely serene and uplifting actually. When Maria eventually shows up at this assembly and is asked "where have you been", she smiles: "hey, it's Kirmes" (the annual parish celebration of the day the church was consecrated) as if to say "I had better things to do than join you yet for good". And, of course, the ultimate pun was that grandpa can't be seen because he was blind. Whether this was written into the script because the actor was no longer available or sick or dead (really dead), I don't remember. When Hermann returns to the cemetery the undertaker asks him if he still speaks "Platt" the German name for dialect ("Flat German vs. High German) and reminds him of the local nursery rhymes, which Hermann then uses for

his composition at the end of the film and records them in the caves. I completely missed that connection at the first viewing.

I was wondering why Anton put his soldiers boots that meant so much to him, outside, in the weather, and probably bronzed. Is it to have space to walk around them when he needs to think and find answers? He needs to walk in order to come up with ideas. His government subsidy, by the way, was presumably granted, Lotti mentions that the people in Bonn had not yet made a decision but to start cooling the champagne. You do that to celebrate.

Why did everybody try to get into the guest haus and pub? Does it have something to do with the "afterlife" and the festival of the dead that is going on inside? It could just be that the owner locked up late in the night but this part is a bit strange anyway because what follows is Glasisch actually entering the house as he dies.

The scene with Anton loosing his hearing is dramatic but factual and I didn't think that the scribbled message of his daughter is flippant. I'd rather assume facts here rather than "message" because Reitz is still telling a story, although reality does seem distorted. The message is that the dead stay in people's memories in a village like Schabbach, they don't just fade away and disappear if you will.

Wolfgang

**Date: Sun, 4 Apr 2004 23:34:04 +0200**  
**From: "Gert Jan Jansen" <gertjan\_jansengouda.demon.nl>**

Dear contributors to the discussion,

This is my last chance to participate in the discussion about Heimat 1. So I will join.

If you have read the introduction of Ivan Mansley -and you have seen the film before once or twice- it's not an absolute condition to see part 11 again. Thanks to his words most scenes appear automatically before your eyes. Still I searched for the old videotape and I played it again.

Some remarks:

1. I wondered if there were some signs in part 11 of a concept for the next chronicle of Edgar Reitz DZH. The answer is yes and no.

In the first place "Das Fest der Lebenden und der Toten" is the 'grand finale' of the series, the end of nearly a century development in the world, contracted on a rather rural local level. For me it is the cinemactical working out of the idea of TIME. In a grand finale you see all the players back on stage, also the figures who in earlier episodes went off through the sidedoor. In the name of the public Maria greets them all, the living and the dead.

But it's not the end of the chronicle! It's followed by some scenes that still take place at the same (Saturday?) fair day: the finding of the dead Glasisch and the hearing- problems of Anton. And after that the film ends with the singing of Hermann's new local inspired music in the cave, recorded in a car at the well known end of the village. What does this mean? Perhaps Reitz wanted to express that the film had an open end, for the recorded symphonic poem does not represent a resumé of the foregoing 82 years. It's more the acceptance by Hermann of his roots, that he had execrated at the end of his schooltime.

With these last scenes Reitz closes the era of Maria and Glasisch and wants to say to himself: perhaps Hermann should be the principal figure in my next project.

2. Heimat has an undertitle: a German chronicle. That has hit me to reconstruct the film chronological. Maria Simon died on the 18th of september 1982. That was on a Saturday. The funeral has probably been taken place on Thursday the 23rd., perhaps on Wednesday. All the guests of the funeral afterwards had lunch or dinner at Gaststätte "Zur Linde". Sepp Vilsmeier, the husband of Lotti takes a photograph in front of Zur Linde. At that time there is nothing to see of the fair that will take place at the square before.

Hermann's visit to the cemetery takes place on a Friday. When he walks back to the Simon-house, he meets a young woman who keeps clean the steps to her house. She asks if Hermann has plans to go the kirmesse. He says yes and asks back if she's cleaning the steps (really intellectual) and then she answers: I do this every Friday before  $\Sigma\Sigma$ ..(kirmes ?)

That means it is Friday the 24th of September and some moments later we see the building up of the fair in front of Zur Linde.

In another scene we hear Hermann say to "daddy": On Sunday evening I'm flying to Boston; for conducting my new concert". This means that "the fairscenes and the "grand finale" are situated on Saturday the 25th of september 1982. The closing scene of the song concert must have taken place some weeks later; it is still autumn. One technical problem: Marlies Simon, the oldest daughter of Anton and since that Saturday the new love of Hermann, wears the same clothes as on that remarkable 25th.

3. Perhaps another little error. Glasisch introduces (in the middle of the film) the family tree of Simon/Wiegand/Schirmer, that is painted bij Sepp Vilsmeier. (BTW he explains that Glasisch is a "Hausname", a housname that in rural areas often is more used than the legal name).

But as you look at the family tree you see by Glasisch himself "1900-1982", but he is not yet dead at that moment!!!!

Gert Jan Jansen.

**Date: Mon, 5 Apr 2004 09:31:56 +0200**  
**From: Th.Hoenemann t-online.de**

Dear Ivan and others,

Ivan, thank you again for your brilliant analysis of the last part of Heimat.

Well, how can I start? When watching this last episode once with some of my neighbours I put on black clothes, saying it was because we are going to participate in a funeral, and I said it with a smile, just as if I was joking... I indeed was not. This last part for me feels like losing good friends, and I guess many of you feel the same.

Ivan wrote: We, in turn, remember incidents from the earlier episodes and are caught up in their memories. This is very skilfully done.

Reitz is playing with or appealing to our memories in this episode, indeed. There are so many deja vus, so many links to things, actions and people we got close to by watching the film.

For me personally this is a very sentimental episode. Already the first few scenes (Maria in the coffin - by the way not the real actress but only a mask - Marita Breuer denied to die as Maria), and Glasisch, old, ill and very lonely, is going to cook a poor meal (potatoes, in Hunsrück dialect: "Krummbeere") get me very melancholic.

This last episode has a special filming background as it is improvised mostly. Reitz and his team did not work regarding the script consequently but did a lot of things without having planned them for years. In fact: this episode differs structurally from all others very obviously. For example the use of flashbacks: we never had this in such a dominant, sensegiving and consequent way. Of course, since the last episode 15 years have gone, and in this time lots of things happened (especially many people from the family died, e. g. Eduard, Marie-Goot, Pauline, Lucie, Eduard), as Glasisch already resumes at the beginning: "all dead, all dead ..." (to translate this adequately, with emotion, is not easy, you have to listen to it to get his melancholy). These flashbacks even represent scenes which already existed in the original plot, I guess.

In my eyes the quality and deepness of the different sequences of this episode differs very much. There are some things I really dislike about this episode, mostly scenes belonging to the Kirmes: the two prostitutes are like strangers to Schabbach and so to us watchers, what is their message? What do they want to learn or feel us? And those endless scenes with village people singing and doing their Merry-go-round. What quality difference this is to the other parts and sequences of the whole film. (What do you think?)

Let us consider that those two prostitutes originally were planned as leaders through the whole film, they were part of a frame of the film and all the historical sequences should have been told us as flashbacks - so far the original script which - in my eyes - was changed for good (thanks good!). These two figures seem not to fit in the whole milieu, scenery and rhythm at all - and I guess they would have brought us away from getting so familiar with the Simon family. Regarding this this last episode is - concerning her structure - a reminiscence towards the original plot.

Some words about the scene with the coffin standing on the road in the rain. (When I first saw it I was afraid Hermann would not see it early enough and crash his car into it - not to imagine what strange thoughts one can have ...) I already wrote about this referring to a former scene/episode: when writing the script Reitz and his co-author P. Steinbach lived in a small wood-house in Woppenroth. They often went to the local bar, Gasthaus Molz (I spent my holidays there more than once and found good friends), and talked to the inhabitants. They both were very curious about village stories and anecdotes - and did get a lot of them. They worked these stories into their script, and the most important one of these stories is the one with the coffin left behind on the street because of a rainy storm. This really had happened in Woppentoth a couple of years ago. And in fact. I think nobody's fantasy could long to invent such a scene.

The scene at the "Feast of the death" is another one which rises my sentimentality. Meeting again all those really lovely people causes memories. We have accompanied all those persons through their lives (within 15 hours until then). What strikes me most about this is that Maria mentions all names of her relatives, except her own father. Ivan: [I will leave out the complications of not seeing Grandad as he was blind]. That Mathias is not there could be caused by the fact that Willi Burger, the actor, already had died that time. In the credits you can see that cross behind his name.

Ivan: I noticed that Paul was not there! Perhaps he has gone to the other place or perhaps he is not dead? and: I think he [Anton] has also died but I may be completely wrong on this.

In fact: Both of them do not die in this episode. Referring to the gravestones that were used in Heimat 3 Paul will die one year after Maria did. And Anton will play a central role in Heimat 3 before dying in 1995.

Ivan wrote: We then have the final scene of the performance of Hermann's latest composition from within the mine. It is a kind of polyphonic chanting.

Well, indeed, this choir is a very strange combination from modern, atonal music (written by Nikos Mamangakis again) and Hunsrück dialect. The whole text consists of very typical dialect words, not making a real contextual sense - except the last sentence: "Die Goot un der Pat, im Himmel schwätze se Hunsrücker platt!" (Goot and Pat, in heaven they are talking Hunsrück dialect.) You remember: "Die Goot" is Marie-Goot, and "der Patt" her husband, Mäthes Pat. Goot and Pat - these are very

convenient names for those second-degree relatives in Hunsrück dialect. So this last sentence reflects both: family and dialect - at last HEIMAT.

Originally the title of the film should have been "Geheischnis" - a further word in Hunsrück dialect wich means kind of trust, home, feeling warm and familiar. The producers convinced Reitz to change the title into Heimat because they where afraid a title which can't be understood or translated by most of the (even German) people would keep them away from watching. But from this we even learn wich understanding of the word Heimat we are expected to have or we are learning to have while watching the film.

One last thought: I really not informed about Reitz's religious attitude, but I am sceptical: the artificial use of the thought of life after death is no prove for any religious attitude.

Let me say some personal words at the end: I really enjoyed this discussion (and will enjoy the discussion of DZH, too). Even if I am dealing with Heimat for a long time, your comments and questions brought new light in some aspects I saw with different eyes ore not that deep going before. Special thanks again to Ivan, who did a really great job, and to Reinder for providing this service. I sure will print out the whole documentation of our discussion.

On April 21st I am going to start a Heimat-project in my school (you might remember that I am working as a grammar-school teacher). The idea was born when I watched a single episode of Heimat with my pre-graduate-class (22 pupils, 17 or 18 years old - I obviously talked so much about Heimat in my lessons that they got curious of it). They really were filled with enthusiasm after watching and asked to watch the whole film. So we worked on a concept. Since a couple of years we have a seniors academy: our pupils are teaching seniors from 55 years up in languages, using computers and different things else (for more deetails about this see my schools homepage: <http://www.nepomucenum-rietberg.de>, choose "EULE"). We decided to integrate the generations by inviting them to watch and discuss the film with us. I hope this will be a success. Your discussion-inputs will help me to prepare short introductions to each episode. So thanks again to all who participated.

All the best for you,  
excuse my poor English again,  
best regards

Thomas

Feel again invited to visit my Heimat-webpages:  
<http://home.t-online.de/home/th.hoenemann/heimat/index.htm>

**Date: Mon, 5 Apr 2004 14:15:31 +0200 (CEST)**  
**From: theresia\_martijn onetelnet.nl**

Dear all, a few comments:

Wolfgang wrote: we see the painted family tree and can actually see the years of death for everybody in the story. No entry for either Paul or Anton so presumably, they stay alive.'

I never got the impression that Paul died or is almost dead in this episode. He's just an old man who is confronted by the loss of one of the most important persons in his life. Maybe he feels guilty that he left Maria, now she's dead there's nothing to say nothing to change. I think this is why he gets such reactions. I also think that Paul can't bear to be confronted with death, it's too close to him personally and he doesn't want to face it. At the same time he gets the pleasant treatment from a nurse, which I think is very American. There's also a deja vu, Paul was steaming in his mother's kitchen, now after all these years his nurse is bringing him a bowl to steam. We know that Anton is still alive as he also plays a part in Heimat III.

W: I think a "normal" ending would have been the two jets roaring over the cemetery while the credits are rolling.

The two jets are so brilliant, the speed, the energy, the whole Hunsruck in a flash. As fast as life they are before you realise it all stops. Together with the music the scene has so much strength.

W: When Hermann returns to the cemetery the undertaker asks him if he still speaks "Platt" the German name for dialect ("Flat German vs. High German") and reminds him of the local nursery rhymes, which Hermann then uses for his composition at the end of the film and records them in the caves. I completely missed that connection at the first viewing.

Is this really an undertaker? I never thought of the man that way, I thought he was just another cemetery visitor.

There's one more connection. In the first part we see Helmut's ghost in the kitchen, he says the same nursery rhymes. It completes the circle where Heimat began and now ends.

W: I was wondering why Anton put his soldiers boots that meant so much to him, outside, in the weather, and probably bronzed.

I always thought that they are bronzed and that he has put the boots outside as a sculpture (horrible!) so he can see them every single day.

Theresia

**Date: Mon, 5 Apr 2004 16:24:51 +0200**  
**From: JoelOYoung aol.com**

Everyone,

I have read a lot of messages and discussions from everyone as to the dates of death of the various characters in Heimat. There seems to be some confusion, and in some cases differences. I have taken photos of each gravestones in the cemetery. They are now all located in one cemetery, which is on the hill in the churchyard at the Neuenkirch which is located just outside of Sargenroth (at least they were in the fall when I took the photos). Each stone has a small white sticker on it indicating that the stone is a prop and property of Reitz Productions but they are all real gravestones and are engraved and the lettering gold plated. To clear the air on dates perhaps Reinder could post them on his site and everyone could take a look at the dates? I also have a great shot of Maria Goot standing next to her gravestone.

Regards,  
Joel

**Date: Fri, 9 Apr 2004 22:12:56 +0200**  
**From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder@rustema.nl>**

At 16:24 +0200 5/04/04, JoelOYoung aol.com wrote:  
> To clear the air on dates perhaps Reinder could post them on his site

Done. <http://reinder.rustema.nl/heimat/picsnsndsdh.html> or  
<http://reinder.rustema.nl/heimat/pictures/graveyard/> to be more precise.

**Date: Fri, 9 Apr 2004 22:20:55 +0200**  
**From: "www.Heimat-Fanpage.de" <info\_heimat-fanpage.de>**

Hi everyone.

Pictures of the gravestones I took at the erfilm you can see in Heimat 1 you can find in the [www.Heimat-Fanpage.de](http://www.Heimat-Fanpage.de)

Hyperlink:

<http://www.heimat-fanpage.de/temp/horst.jpg>

<http://www.heimat-fanpage.de/temp/mathias.jpg>

<http://www.heimat-fanpage.de/temp/wiegand.jpg>

<http://www.heimat-fanpage.de/temp/lucie.jpg>

Pictures of the gravestones in Heimat 3 :

<http://www.heimat-fanpage.de/h3/drehbuch/grabernst.jpg>

<http://www.heimat-fanpage.de/h3/drehbuch/grabanton.jpg>

Best regards

Stefan Gies

Heimat-Fanpage-Team

**Date: Sun, 11 Apr 2004 18:38:04 +0100**

**From: "Ivan Mansley" <[ivanman\\_dsl.pipex.com](mailto:ivanman_dsl.pipex.com)>**

First of all I would like to mention a few points which I made note of but did not have space to include in my introduction to Part 11 of Heimat. I noted that Glasisch in his introductory commentary was quite emphatic that Mathes-Pat was not his father? Do we know who was? He was quite insistent so is he glorying, perhaps like a Shakespearean villain, that he was a bastard?

I completely accept that Anton does not die. Obviously my surmise was totally wrong. I cannot remember him in Part 3 of DZH but look forward to meeting him again there. If the words written by his daughter on the piece of paper and held before his eyes: "Dad, don't worry it's temporary deafness caused by stress and lack of vitamins", it certainly wouldn't have re-assured me in the grip of some kind of seizure or heart attack. On the subject of Anton's daughters I cannot remember which one wrote the words, but in my notes I have recorded that Hermann is embracing and kissing Gisela in the mine. One of our contributors, Gert was it, said that it was Marlies Simon. Have I got it wrong? The point is that once more Hermann is involved with a totally unsuitable female; in this case a very close relative ["My mother is your grandmother"].

Contributors were quite certain I was wrong about Paul dying in the episode. I am quite ready to accept that I was wrong again, BUT if you go to the pictures of the gravestones at <http://reinder.rustema.nl/heimat/pictures/graveyard> one can clearly see in Pictures 1 & 5 Graveyard in Sargenroth on the Familie Simon gravestone that Paul's dates are given as 1898-1981. That would mean he had died before the episode opened as it is set in 1982. Clearly there is some confusion. I would welcome the evidence being given as to when exactly he did die. Any comments with my comparison with Nosferatu? Perhaps Paul is the living dead!

One significant little moment is when Ernst, inside his mother's house and his old home, picks up a little plaque with what I took to be Hitler's head in relief and the words, "Until Victory is ours". I interpreted this as Reitz showing us that ordinary, decent Germans like the Simons felt patriotic and supported the war effort. Mind you Maria was a Wiegand. Perhaps Wilfried or his father left it with her or forced it on her. Anyway, Ernst taps it and decides it is worthless, as it is only made out of plaster. That's how I read it.

I noticed that in the life after death scene Maria greets her mother. We had never seen her actually in any of the episodes, had we?

I would just like to take up two contributions which really added to my understanding. Thomas, as

always, made so many interesting points. [I have been looking at your web-site, Thomas, and doing my best to piece together the German words. Quite superb!!] You asked what was the message of the prostitutes. I had failed to make properly clear that I thought their role was to give another dimension to the idea of death, decay, mortality and change. One is diseased [psoriasis]; they talk of cremation, throwing one's ashes in the sea, taking your money in the shape of gold teeth to the grave; one says, "When I kick the bucket", another reflects on how farmers go to the brothel now, and so on. Like you, however, I don't think they really add anything and would have been better off on the cutting-room floor. You wondered about the "endless scenes with village people singing and doing their merry go round". I felt that Reitz was offering us a symbol of life. Humans go round and round in circles, history repeating itself maybe; we are born, become active and die, and this is repeated endlessly. I feel sure that this idea is being reflected, even if it is rather depressing in a way. We have the musicians twirling around as well in their merry-go-round chairs, playing in the mist. [Shakespeare:Twelfth Night: "Thus the whirligigs of time brings in his revenges".] Lastly Thomas, I thought Glasisch was cooking the potatoes for a poultice to cure his fever. Perhaps it was for a meal as well.

Gert Jan Jansen wrote very convincingly on Hermann's music at the end of the episode ["an acceptance of his roots that he had execrated at the end of his schooltime"]. Welcome Gert, I think you are a new contributor, which is always nice to see. I did not make enough of this. In the graveyard scene, where Hermann converses with the attendant, they talk about dialect words for cherries and whortleberries which Hermann remembers. I think there is a scene in the mine where Hermann, clicking his fingers, syncopates the words and then finally in the music he returns to and acknowledges his "Heimat" or "Geheischnis". Have I got that right?

Ivan Mansley.

P.S. Time is running out. I hope that some of you will send in your "overview" of "Heimat" before Friday. 4 days left. Don't make me be the first!!

**From: Susan Biedron [mailto:[susan\\_jsbiedron.com](mailto:susan_jsbiedron.com)]  
Sent: 11 April 2004 17:44**

Hello all,

The concluding episode is, as Ivan writes, very complex and it is hard to decide where to begin and what to comment on. There are also so many interesting contributions this time from different people. I will just list my observations on various parts. I really liked the opening scene where Glasisch explains the family tree. I rewound and played it twice. And still I apparently missed the Glasisch "1900-1982" comment from Gert Jan. I have become quite fond of Glasisch and of course don't want him to die!

There have been some comments about Maria not being totally convincing as an elderly lady. But isn't Glasisch wonderful as an old man? Kurt Wagmer's performance was superb - I especially like the scene where he dances with Lottie at Maria's party. Lotte is a good sport to put up with him. I was amazed to learn he was not a professional actor!

> Age and death are  
> everywhere in this episode and we can become afflicted with melancholy in  
> the presence of all this dying. Lucie exclaims, "What a life this is with  
> all this dying!" and Paul lying ill in bed confesses to Hermann that life is  
> "no fun anymore". And yet we are shown an after-life, a next life, where the  
> dead can watch the doings of the living, and the living go on with new hope  
> and new aspirations and adventures.

Does this mean the "old village life" is coming to an end - a new version is beginning?  
This episode could easily get one depressed. I too, was rather worried that Hermann was going to run

his car right into the coffin. Does this mean he has to face that his mother is really dead? By the way, I am continually finding comparisons to Heimat characters and people in my family. I am sure others find this true also. I have a cousin who is always late. I learned just last week when visiting her sister, that she was late to my aunt's (her mother's) funeral. Then I watched the funeral guests comment on Hermann's punctuality. My first reaction to the jets flying overhead was as if they were in honor of Maria - or could be to indicate that now Maria's soul is free. It reminds us of Ernst's fly-over at the wedding and shows us the great progress made in a short time. The old slower life is gone, the faster life is here. Young people take the place of the old. Soon after Maria's funeral the town is having a fun fair or festival. Life goes on.

Maria's house represents the old ways. It not only looks like a museum inside, it becomes one in a way, when Paul puts a plaque on it, preserving it as a historical building. Of course Paul's intention is the preserve himself - even though he left the house and the village.

I think Ernst represents progress in a strange sort of way. Of course it is bad to demolish or change old historic houses - but at the time some people wanted new things. Just think of getting rid of all that wonderful heavy dark furniture. Yes, it is really despicable that Ernst had his scavengers going after furniture during the funeral and Anton has a right to be angry at that. Yet people, once they had some extra money to spend, wanted new modern things. Even Ernst, at the end, wants to hold onto some of the old memories - he feeds the rabbits, looks at his old construction set - even some of his childhood memories are pleasant. In the Fair scene he talks about settling down to what seems to be a local woman. Anton may represent what is the right thing to do - but even his wife Marta thinks he is a little harsh in boarding up the house.

- > The episode is very cleverly constructed and uses flashbacks to emphasize
- > the importance of memories in the lives of his characters and in the lives
- > of all of us.

We learn some things about Anton, too. Anton appears to be the perfect son - successful, respectable, produces grandchildren, etc. Yet the flashbacks indicate that even he feels he does not know how to please his mother. But - can Maria be pleased by anything in her last years? Even at her party, she states she invited everyone because she wanted to know who will walk behind her coffin. Rather a morbid thought at a birthday party.

I also wanted to comment on the "Volkslied" that is sung at Maria's party by the band: It went something like "Im Hunsruck steht ein Bauernhaus so hubsch und rein..." I have heard this same song many times but with the variation of a different location inserted in the lines.

I thought it was odd that Anton did not seem to know about his mother's 70th birthday party. He is very upset that she is not at home, where he expected her to be. Yet his wife Marta is at the party - so how could he not have known about it?

Reitz's scene with the 3 brothers together in the house is brilliant. You can see each reliving childhood memories - and they seem to be pleasant - as they find toys or other mementos in the house. Of course, Hermann's memory is the bed. What is it with Hermann and women?

- > Anton is not well either. The camera focuses on the sculpture of boots he
- > wore on his epic walk back from Russia, but now he has a heart problem and
- > all his old bounce and sparkle has gone. He is applying for a government
- > subsidy. He does not know what to do now; this is symbolized by his endless
- > walking in a circle around his courtyard. This idea of circularity is to
- > return later.

Wolfgang commented on the sculpture of the boots. I think the boots remind Anton of when he was young and vigorous and developed his ideas on his march home. I think Anton tries to hold onto that part of life when he had everything ahead of him. Now he is getting older and has problems.

- > ... Paul, who, typically without asking anyone, has affixed to the house a
- > plaque donating the house, as a kind of museum, to the village presumably.
- > Throughout this he cackles with self-satisfied, maniacal laughter.

I thought it was very funny when the unnamed man standing by the car tells Paul that soon he will have another plaque with his name on it. I am sure this is not what Paul has in mind.

I find the next part confusing:

- > Hermann and Gisella embracing in the mine. He has found another totally
- > unsuitable woman. She is Anton's daughter.

I would love to have seen a scene where Anton finds them together! Why does Hermann continually pick unsuitable women? Fortunately Anton is drunk. This is the only time in the whole series that we see Anton cutting loose and acting improperly. All his life Anton has worked hard, done what is expected of him - but even good behavior does not stop death, change, problems - so he decides to get drunk. Perhaps he is just overwhelmed by all that has gone on.

As to the addition of the prostitutes in the story - I am not sure what to think. Perhaps the prostitutes are added because they are so out of character with Anton's usual respectable self. It shows he is apparently having some kind of personal crisis.

- > The loud music of the fair and the noise of the conga coalesce into his
- > irregular heartbeat. This becomes very dramatic. He collapses, cries out,
- > and cannot hear. His daughter holds up a message hastily written in felt-tip
- > pen: "Dad, don't worry its temporary deafness, caused by stress and lack of
- > vitamins." I think he has also died but I may be completely wrong on this.
- > The words on the paper, if genuine, seem unbearably flippant.

There must be some meaning to this scene, but I am unable to figure it out.

- > What has Reitz revealed to us in this episode? He
- > has revealed or reminded us that human narrative to be complete must end in
- > death. This is uncomfortable and shocks us but there is no other way. We all
- > have our memories, Reitz says, and this makes us what we are. And there is
- > an after life where we can be young again. Let us hope so!

Ivan, I like your conclusion. I also like the conclusion to Heimat.

Susan

**Date: Sun, 11 Apr 2004 21:18:30 +0200**  
**From: Raymond Scholz <rscholz zonix.de>**

Did you ever notice that sounds in the background when Glasisch reflects the past episodes using the old photographs?

Glasisch role as the chronicler of Heimat has been discussed before I think. His viewpoint is the one from the outside, neutral but always present and knowing.

The background noise sounds to me like coming from a party going on Glasisch has (yet again) not been invited to. I see him sitting in a private place digging through old photographs...

Don't be disappointed, I told you that this seems rather unimportant to me :-)

Cheers, Ray

**Date: Sun, 11 Apr 2004 22:36:46 +0200**  
**From: "Theresia en Martijn" <theresia\_martijn\_onetelnet.nl>**

Dear all,

I like to comment on many things others have written before I write a few things which were important to me in this final part.

Thomas wrote:

> There are some things I really dislike about this episode, mostly scenes belonging  
> to the Kirmes: the two prostitutes are like strangers to Schabbach and so to us  
> watchers, what is their message? What do they want to learn or feel us? And those  
> endless scenes with village people singing and doing their Merry-go-round. What  
> quality difference this is to the other parts and sequences of the whole film. (What do  
> you think?)

Well what I think? I totally agree with you!

> Thomas: All the best for you, excuse my poor English again.

Oh stop it! We foreigners make mistakes but I'm sure nobody cares about that in this discussion! What would happen if we were all forced to write in German! So remember your English is far better than our German! Anyway your email was very touchy.

Ivan wrote:

> I noted that Glasisch in his introductory commentary was quite emphatic that  
> Mathes-Pat was not his father? Do we know who was?

No we don't know who is father is.

> BUT if you go to the pictures of the gravestones at one can clearly see in Pictures  
> 1 & 5 Graveyard in Sargenroth on the Familie Simon gravestone that Paul's dates are  
> given as 1898-1981. That would mean he had died before the episode opened as it  
> is set in 1982. Clearly there is some confusion. I would welcome the evidence being  
> given as to when exactly he did die. Any comments with my comparison with  
> Nosferatu?

I remember in the beginning of the discussion I wrote about the fact that many dates were changed. I also had some correspondence with Joel about the subject. For instance at the gravestone you can see that Pauline died in 1984 but in Heimat I she was already dead before Maria (in 1975), on the gravestone Maria died in 1980 but in the film in 1982. And there are many more dates changed. What I think is that they needed to change them for the script of Heimat III because I really can't believe that Reitz makes such mistakes! And yes the shadow reminds me of Nosferatu, I have had the same thought about this scene.

Ivan:

> I noticed that in the life after death scene Maria greets her mother. We had never seen  
> her actually in any of the episodes, had we?

Oh yes we have! In the first episodes we can see her in many scenes. At the Baldenau for instance.

Ivan:

> I think there is a scene in the mine where Hermann, clicking his fingers, syncopates the  
> words and then finally in the music he returns to and acknowledges his "Heimat" or

> "Geheischnis". Have I got that right?

Yes you are absolutely right, the same words as in episode 1 where Helmut's ghost speaks to them in the kitchen of the Simon family.

Ivan:

> Lucie, now like an old witch remembers her Eduard and her old profession.

It's her coming out! Imagine that she had told the Simon's such stories when she had just arrived in the family.

Susan wrote:

> I was amazed to learn he [Glasisch] was not a professional actor!

I didn't know that either! And it is hard to believe that his man was an amateur actor, what a talent! In the book 'Heimat eine Chronik in Bildern' there's a photo with the Heimat crew. If you see how Kurt Wagner looks in real you get another shock! He looks so different.

Susan:

> can Maria be pleased by anything in her last years?

My opinion on Maria changes so much from the beginning of Heimat, the early years, to the end. First she's adorable, sweet, caring, but later on she becomes such a bore. Is it because she's so disappointed in life? Was she hurt too much? When she's dead and back with Otto she's good young Maria again.

Now my own thoughts; this last episode is really an end. The end of a life, the end of a film. And I very much like that. It's shocking that Maria is dead but at the same time it's the normal end of a life. We can't say she lived her life to the full but maybe in her own way she did. When I watch this part I always feel like I've lost someone myself, I felt the same when my grandparents died. This feeling of losing, many memories, being together with your family, is exactly like the way Reitz portrays it.

One of my favourite scenes in this part is the sample with the saying. 'Einmal im Jahr blüht die Monat Mai, nur einmal im Leben blüht die Liebe' (Thomas I hope my German is alright because I write this down from memory).

When Glasisch dies and enters heaven (just to keep it simple let's call it heaven) I always shiver. You hear a voice saying 'Von dem Dunkel in die Klarheit' (from darkness into the light) you see everybody back again which gives us, viewers, the chance to say goodbye to all the ones we know so well by now. And then Maria arrives, beautiful and sweet again and back she is with Otto. I can only wish that Reitz view is the right one. Imagine that you can see everyone back again, all the ones you've known and loved! But at the same time this seems impossible because where would it end? As everyone knows different people! You can see that already in this film. The french woman who only stayed overnight in Schabbach is there too in heaven. It's nice to see her back for a moment but what's her real connection to Maria?

I once heard that the script of Heimat was much longer but because they ran out of money they needed to cut out many parts. Could it be that the flash back scenes in this final part where actually meant for other episodes? From part 9 they really run through time and sometimes it feels to me that things are missing. Am I the only one?

Theresia

**Date: Sun, 11 Apr 2004 23:45:51 +0200**

**From: Thomas Hönemann <Th.Hoenemann t-online.de>**

Dear Heimat-fiends,

Here some replies to your multiple contributions:

Ivan:

- > I completely accept that Anton does not die. Obviously my surmise was totally
- > wrong. I cannot remember him in Part 3 of DZH but look forward to meeting
- > him again there.

I am quite sure that the only (main) Heimat-characters that appear in DZH are Marie-Goot and Pauline as guests of Hermanns and Schnüsschens wedding-party at the Fuchsbau. So Anton in my memory will not appear in the third part of DZH. I can't find his name in the cast of DZH, either.

Ivan:

- > Contributors were quite certain I was wrong about Paul dying in the episode.
- > I am quite ready to accept that I was wrong again, BUT if you go to the
- > pictures of the gravestones at
- > <http://reinder.rustema.nl/heimat/pictures/graveyard> one can clearly see in
- > Pictures 1 & 5 Graveyard in Sargenroth on the Familie Simon gravestone that
- > Paul's dates are given as 1898-1981. That would mean he had died before the
- > episode opened as it is set in 1982. Clearly there is some confusion. I
- > would welcome the evidence being given as to when exactly he did die. Any
- > comments with my comparison with Nosferatu? Perhaps Paul is the living
- > dead!!

Well, there is a kind of mystery concerning this gravestones that were used in Heimat 3: some dates changed, especially Maria's year of death which certainly was 1982 in Heimat, but is now 1980, so even in this new version Maria died one year before Paul whose heimat-3-year of death is 1981.

Ivan:

- > I noticed that in the life after death scene Maria greets her mother. We had
- > never seen her actually in any of the episodes, had we?

We certainly did, for example at the Baldenau-radio-scene she is included in the group, even in the films first scene she is cleaning up the Wiegands living-room with Maria or later when Paul is constructing the radio at the Wiegands and all the villages women come there. We meet her more often in the following episodes, e. g. at the Christmas-evening, the Ferntrauung and other family meetings at their house. But generally you are right: this woman does not play an important role at all - quite different from her husband. Relating on the Heimat-Gravestones Marias mother died in 1948.

Ivan:

- > Thomas, as always, made so many interesting points. [I have
- > been looking at your web-site, Thomas, and doing my best to piece together
- > the German words. Quite superb!!]

Thank you very much. If I could find some time anywhen I promise to work on the English versions of some of the sites.

Ivan:

- > Lastly Thomas, I thought Glasisch was cooking the potatoes for a poultice to
- > cure his fever.

You are right.

Susan:

- > My first reaction to the jets flying overhead was as if they
- > were in honor of Maria - or could be to indicate that now Maria's soul is
- > free. It reminds us of Ernst's fly-over at the wedding and shows us the

> great progress made in a short time.

Thank you for pointing on this scene again. Fact is, that in that time the whole Hunsrück was used as a training-camp for American jets that were based on Hahn-Airbase (today well known as a civil airport with very cheap flight offers). So the sounds of the American tornados where quite usual in that area. Reitz picked this impression up and used it maybe indeed as a symbol of modern, fast running times. The Hahn Airbase is more concretely located near a small village Lautzenhausen. This village became a area of pleasure with lots of bars and prostitutes. Even the two prostitutes from the last episode had their place at Lautzenhausen.

It is quite strange to drive though that village today. The whole buisness broke down when the Americans left the base, but you can see some old signs which seem not to fit in this area at all...

Ray:

> Did you ever notice that sounds in the background when Glasisch  
> reflects the past episodes using the old photographs?

Yes, I did notice it. In my opinion this noise sounds like a bar-scenery: people talking very diffusely. I am quite sure that Reitz adopted this noise from the coffee after Maria's funeral, when Glasisch is even looking through the old photo-album.

Theresia (who already answered some of the questioned I answered again above ... I did not recognize early enough, sorry)

> One of my favourite scenes in this part is the  
> sample with the saying. 'Einmal im Jahr blüht die  
> Monat Mai, nur einmal im Leben blüht die Liebe'  
> (Thomas I hope my German is alright because I  
> write this down from memory).

Completely correct. This quotation is very good fitting for Maria. She had one real love in life: Otto, but not Paul.

Theresia:

> When Glasisch dies and enters heaven (just to  
> keep it simple let's call it heaven) I always  
> shiver. You hear a voice saying 'Von dem Dunkel  
> in die Klarheit' (from darkness into the light)  
> you see everybody back again which gives us,  
> viewers, the chance to say goodbye to all the  
> ones we know so well by now. And then Maria  
> arrives, beautiful and sweet again and back she  
> is with Otto.

I really agree with your feeling towards this scene. Seeing all that people back again really touches me very much, like meeting again lost old friends. A really nice thought - "... im Himmel schwätze se Hunsrücker Platt!" (in heaven they are talking Hunsrück dialect) - lovely done!

Theresia:

> I once heard that the script of Heimat was much  
> longer but because they ran out of money they  
> needed to cut out many parts. Could it be that  
> the flash back scenes in this final part where  
> actually meant for other episodes? From part 9  
> they really run through time and sometimes it  
> feels to me that things are missing. Am I the  
> only one?

I am not really sure about this. In fact the script differs very much from the real film in its structure, but not in the contents itself. Originally the concept was to have a frame level in the actual time, focussing Maria's funeral, and all the past should have been presented in flashbacks (so the last part gives a good idea on how the script originally was). But before realising the script Reitz changed this concept, maybe because he saw that a chronical structure was easier to be followed concerning that voluminous material. But to say it again: I am quite sure that no historical essentials from the script had been left out, but only the originally planned frame (Rahmenhandlung).

Thats it for tonight. Have a nice second easter day.  
All the best to you, and on Theresias special demand I won't apologise for my poor English today ;-)

I am very proud to be able to participate in such a friendly and intelligent group. Hope we all will meet some day.

Thomas  
<http://heimat.hoenemann.de/>

P. S.: On my website I quoted from the Heimat-fanpage Newsletter from 31st of March, that there would be a DVD release of all three parts at the end of this year wich could be bought singly or as a "Trilogie-collection". After having corresponded with Reinder about that I really doubt if this information can be correct. I guess it is not. Reinder will find out and inform all of us soon.

**From: "Maarten Landzaat" <gijs\_xs4all.nl>**  
**Date: Mon, 12 Apr 2004 14:30:59 +0200**

Everybody,

Thanks for all your insightful comments!

With some of you, I shared the feeling of disappointment, not with the Edgar Reitz' effort, but with the fact that so many people died, leaving me with only memories from previous episodes. The cold "kirmes", with its whores, beer, drunk "dancing", depressing music, only contributed to this feeling. The prostitutes do indeed create a sense of distance to the story, which clearly has its function in this episode. I agree with others they were quite irritating, so I'm happy they were not part of every episode!

Title

The title refers to many things again (or at least I like to think so):

- Maria's burial
- Maria's seventieth birthday party, where everything seems to be revolving around death, sickness and disappointment
- the simultaneous sound of birds (=good) and flies (=bad)
- the kirmes with the living outside and the dead upstairs in the pub
- the insights that some people get after these deaths: (e.g. the scene with Paul and Hermann talking about Maria)
- the feast of the predators: people die, other people want their belongings (even Anton takes a mirror!)
- the fact that the 3 brothers came together. Anton takes the mirror and looks caught, Ernst and Hermann smile. They are not so different after all.
- The finale: the music links (maybe even reconciles?) death (Pat/Goot-quote, use of platt) with the living (the modern music, modern recording techniques)

### Maria-Glasisch

Only now I realized that Maria and Glasisch play the most important pivotal roles in the series. They're both born in the same year (1900) and die in the same year. Maria's inside the story, Glasisch is always an outsider, an observer. Maria is clean and good, Glasisch is dirty and (regarded) unadapted to the customs. Maria's female, Glasisch is male. They both stay in Schabbach for their entire lives. Of all deaths, Maria's and Glasisch's deaths are given the most attention. I think they both represent the entire century up until 1982.

### Coffin in the rain

Apart from being a historical fact, was this about Maria being left again? Just like all the other occasions (Paul, Otto, all her three sons).

### Cemetery

I noticed the WWI-statue moved here.

### Circularity

Lots of it, like Ivan already mentioned.

- the dancing in circles
- the merry-go-rounds (e.g. with the band playing "sentimental journey")
- bubbles (with and without smoke)
- Anton walking in circles
- Anton's story on "left-to-right" growth and the reversing of this process.

### Animals

- the song about the pig being slaughtered and made to a nice sausage.
- the man impersonating a dying donkey on the kirmes.
- the forgotten rabbits

Clearly these animals did not have a good time!

### Shadows

The shadows to me are a mystery. There were at least three instances:

- the plaque on the Simon house
- Paul during the kirmes
- during Glasisch's death

Can anybody distill any meaning from this?? Maybe the shadows just mean "death"?

### Up/down

The feast of the dead was upstairs, whereas the musical performance was down in the mine.

### Blind grandfather

Grandfather wasn't there "because" he was blind. They also looked down (literally) on the living. So maybe that's the only supposed role of the dead: to look on/watch over the living.

Sorry if these are only shattered observations. Maybe I will muster enough confidence to answer Ivan's request to write something on the entire Heimat chronicle, but as usual, I let others go first!

### Maarten

**Date: Mon, 12 Apr 2004 22:19:55 +0200**

**From: "Gert Jan Jansen" <gjjansengouda@hetnet.nl>**

Some reactions lead to new reactions:

1. Ivan wrote:

> Gert was it, said that it was Marlies Simon. Have I got it wrong?

No, you are absolutely right. In the cave Hermann didn't kiss Anton's eldest daughter Marlies, but his youngest daughter Gisela.

2. Susan wrote:

> I rewound and played it twice And still I apparently

> missed the Glasisch "1900-1982" comment from Gert Jan.

I played it also again to be sure there are no problems with my eyes. Is it possible that we have different copies/ versions? I heard and saw it again: Glasisch gives (at the start of part 11) an explanation to the familytree. Above his own name you see the years 1900 (born ) and 1982 (death). Perhaps the family tree is to see on the website of Thomas Hoenemann, or Stefan Gies.

(Besides: the name and photo of Maria you can find two times in the family tree; one time as part of the Wiegand-tree; one time in the Simon-tree. In the first case there is only one year: 1900; in the second also Maria can read to be dead at that moment : 1900- 1982)

I must confess it is rather strange to reconstruct in detail the history of a family that did never exist, but it's difficult to stop. The dates, the places, the seasons, we expect everything to be correct and clear.

I have a little problem with the first scene of part 11; the funeral day. We see the entrance of Lotti, Sepp Vilsmeier and their two Vietnamese children. They are welcomed by a woman that belongs to the family.

Vilsmeier says: << My name is Josef Vilsmeier>>;

The woman answers: << It's good we make acquaintance>>

Vilsmeier: << But it's a sad occasion>>

My problem is: Sepp was already a guest at the 70th anniversary of Maria, as we see later in the flashback.

Another question of this species is the return of Hermann at the end of Die Zweite Heimat. It's 1970 and before entering Schabbach he meets Glasisch, who says: I presume you're coming back for your mother's 70th anniversary?.

But: looking back the flashback: Hermann wasn't there in 1970!

3. Ivan wrote:

> I noticed that in the life after death scene Maria greets her mother.

> We had never seen her actually in any of the episodes, had we?

We have seen Maria's mother for several little moments in part 1 (Fernweh). It's the first scene of Paul's coming home in 1919. Maria is cleaning up the windows inside the mayorhouse of her father and sees Paul walking down the street. Her mother is in the same room, sees Paul too and curious joins the window. Maria says: <<Wasn't that Paul Simon?.>> and her mother answers <<No it is Garfunkel >> (Sorry this is a joke)

Later in part 1 Paul is preparing his first radio in the kitchen of the Wiegand family. I think the family sings a German folksong and Martha Wiegand, the mother of Maria tries to impress Paul by showing him the roll of linen Maria spinned "for eternity".

When it is 1923 and Wiegand shows his first car in Schabbach misses Martha Wiegand is proudly sitting in the car.

You see Martha Wiegand another time in the famous scene at the Baldenau-ruine. She gets out of the car and goes with a basket and bread to the family sitting in the grass. In that scene she is saying some words to her son Wilfried, to Marie-Goot and to her husband

4. Ivan wrote:

> In the graveyard scene, where Hermann converses with the  
> attendant, they talk about dialect words for cherries and whortleberries  
> which Hermann remembers. I think there is a scene in the mine where Hermann,  
> clicking his fingers, syncopates the words.

Yes indeed, the words come back in the symphonic poem, but did you realize that the words of the attendant were a copy of the words said by 'the dead soldier /the angel of death ' (terms of Ivan in his introduction to part 1), a ghost in the Simon-kitchen, only seen by Paul. The ghost is Helmut Legrand, the best friend of Paul, who did not return -like Paul and Glasisch- from the battlefields of WW1; the man that was seriously in love with the mysterious Apollonia. Helmut speaks a "welcome home" to Paul by saying: <<Oben, unne, vonne, hinne, due, drunne, drausse.....in heaven we speak the dialect of the Hunsrück>>.

Isn't it remarkable that Reitz used the same words to feel at home for Paul (at the start of Heimat 1 in 1919) and for Hermann (at the end in 1982). At the beginning Paul is his favourite protagonist, but when Paul is americanised he changes to Hermann.

5.

The funeral-scene ends with the two jetfighters flying above the Hunsrück. The music you hear (an organ) has -in my opinion- quite a similarity with the organmusic, that is played by Hermann in Simmern, when he decides to quit and never come back to the Hunsrück. If it's right, what does it mean?

6.

To end something else. In the Rhein Zeitung I've read the new dates of the Heimat tours of the Tourist Board in Simmern: Saturday 8th May, 26th June and 25th of September. The bustour starts at 9 in Simmern (Castle) or at 9.15 in Kirchberg (Market Place). The tour goes to the places well known from Heimat 1, but also to the Gänderode-house in Oberwesel (Heimat3). It's guided by someone who participated in Heimat 1, f.e. Eva Maria Schneider (Marie Goot).

Reservation and info Tourist Information Simmern, telephon 0049 6761 837106, fax 0049 6761 837120; e-mail tourist-info@gvsim.de

Perhaps we meet.

Gert Jan Jansen.

**Date: Wed, 14 Apr 2004 09:01:46 +0200**  
**From: Jack.Woollven telekurs.com**

Hello everyone

Ivan mentioned the viewing figures: "I cannot find the numbers of the original German TV audience..."

There is some information on this in Michael Kaiser's dissertation on the Heimat series (pages 354 - 355). (Document is in German, can be found under the link:) [http://elib.uni-osnabrueck.de/publications/diss/html/E-Diss162\\_HTML.html](http://elib.uni-osnabrueck.de/publications/diss/html/E-Diss162_HTML.html)

He says that Heimat won an average viewing audience of 26%, i.e. 9 million viewers, and this figure was fairly consistent during the showing of the series in 1984.

Just for interest, the figures he gives for DZH are an average audience of 6,3%, i.e. 1,72 million viewers, for the first showing in 1993. Unlike Heimat, the percentage dropped during the series, starting at 13,5% and finishing at 5,1%.

Best wishes  
Jack Woollven

**Date: Wed, 14 Apr 2004 17:07:50 +0200**  
**From: "Theresia en Martijn" <theresia\_martijn\_onetelnet.nl>**

Dear all,

First of all I would like to thank my mother (Banty) who recorded all the Heimat episodes in 1987 (I was only 16 then) when they were broadcasted on Dutch tv. We always kept the videos (as Reinder knows) and I watched it many many times. Sometimes I watched the entire film sometimes only a single part. I cherish many good memories whilst watching Heimat. Starting back in the mid 80s when I saw the first scenes on German tv together with my parents. Sometimes when I had a flu and lied on the sofa I watched it. Sometimes I used Heimat as a try out when I had a new boy-friend. If he didn't like Heimat I knew gaps in our taste could be too big to survive the relationship. So no suprise that my husband likes Heimat too (although I think he prefers DZH as I'm more the Heimat type). When we lived in England and his mother visited us we talked about Heimat and she wanted to watch it too. I remember that it was cold and that we were sitting in front of the fire and that we created our own Heimat in that old English house. I've written before that Heimat has been very good for my German. I did my exams in German and Heimat really helped! (There're German words in the film which I like, for instance Eduard who wasn't 'transportfähig'.) So after 17 years of Heimat (more than half my life!) Heimat is not only a film to me but it means so much more. I never saw Heimat in the cinema and that's still one of my wishes.

What Reitz has given us is a film in which real people act, normal day life, like our lives with our own emotions and that's why it moves us. These people are like us, they've their good and bad sides, they're beautiful and ugly, rich and poor and some are more intelligent than others. We can imagine that these people are family or friends to us. We think we know them very well because we get the impression that we know them already their whole life. After watching the entire film it feels like I have lived an entire life. The film also proves to me how short life is and how time flies.

One of the reasons why Heimat means so much to me is because you see a whole century in front of your eyes. We were all born in that century but when Heimat starts in 1919 the world was completely different. Our grandparents and for some of us our parents where living at that time. And we can see how they lived, in what kind of world. I often think of my grandparents when I watch Heimat and their youth comes closer to me. It's unbelievable how their lives have changed within 50 years of time. And still the world changes quickly, ten years ago this discussion would have been impossible because something like internet didn't exist the way it does now. Ten years ago we wouldn't have got the chance to know each other, the world gets smaller and smaller.

I like the time until the war the most, also in Heimat. There's a kind of melancholy in the air with intrigues me. It's also very nostalgic and I think that's what I like most. After episode 8 the world in Heimat gets too familiar to me, I know that world myself and the nostalgic feeling becomes less.

Heimat also has a very important society element. I was born a long time after the second world war but both my parents were born during the war. This war is still so important in Holland, much more than

WWI in which we didn't take part. To Dutch people all the Germans were the bad guys (and girls) and just ask the Dutch man in the street what he thinks of Germany and the Germans... you won't hear many positive things. So the general impression of Germany and its population is still a very negative one in my country. What Heimat shows us is that the Germans suffered as much as 'we' did, like 'us' they had nothing to eat, their soldiers died just the way 'ours' did. On both sides the effects were exactly the same, the same horror was also going on in Germany and we always seem to forget that. Heimat shows that Germany had people like Katherina and that this country didn't exist only out of Wilfrieds. I think that's an important lesson we can learn from the film.

My favourite characters are (of course) Katherina her wisdom and kindness makes her a true heroine, Glasisch because he's wise in his own way. And Lucie for being such a whore, such a strong woman and because she can be so irritating.

It's hard to choose a favourite scene because there're so many. One scene I like very much is in part 8, when Lucie is busy re-arranging the poem Horst should perform to Paul, she's thinking aloud and at the same time she smokes a ciggie (she didn't smoke before, remember that Maria told the shopkeeper that she didn't, when they were talking about the 'Rauchzimmer' in Lucie's villa?) and strikes her hands through Horst's hair. There're no words for that kind of intimacy.

Scenes I didn't like or like less are easier to remember. I don't like the long cinema scenes (I've to confess I always forward them), I don't like the start of episode 7 and although the last part of Heimat is one of my favourite episodes there're parts I like less but I'm not the only one I've discovered through all your discussion.

It's unbelievable that after more than 20 years this production is still not out of date. Of course the scenes in 1982 are oldfashioned now (look at the clothes!) but because it plays in 1982 it looks the way it should. What I mean is that it's amazing that through the whole film, so when it plays in the 20s, 30s, 40s and so on, you don't see a 80's sphere at all. The stylists did a very good job with the props, clothes, make up and hair. When you look at other series or films you'll know that it could be totally different. A good example (Ivan will know) is the Forsyte Saga made in the sixties, look at the thick eyeliner on the eyelids and the beehive hairdos. Because you don't see such anachronisms in Heimat it's a very good historical film. And I think it's also the reason why it feels so much like real life to us. Let's see if I'll think the same in another twenty years.

Well it has been great fun to do this. I didn't have the time and chance to watch every single part during the discussion but I know the whole film by heart so I always knew where you were talking about. I would like to thank you all, Ivan for his superb job, Reinder for making this all possible, Thomas and Joel for all the behind the scene facts and facts about Germany, Susan who was always there, the only other woman who takes part. And all the others who I don't mention here.

As you will have understood DZH is not really my thing, I think it's good but it doesn't touch me the way Heimat does. And the sixties are just not my era. I never watched it as often as Heimat so I don't know it as well. Now don't worry, this is no goodbye, I'll read all your emails and I will take part in the discussion again but I don't think I'll have as much to say as with this masterpiece. WHICH IS THE BEST THING I'VE EVER SEEN!

Theresia

**Date: Wed, 14 Apr 2004 10:34:56 -0500**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Theresia,

Yes, this gravestone is very confusing - obviously a big mistake! Apparently whoever carved the stone was only thinking of Wilfried!

> The gravestone I've attached is really confusing! As we know Maria was  
> born in 1900. According to this gravestone her father was born in 1890 and  
> her mother in 1898 so only two years before her daughter was born. How did  
> they manage?  
>  
> Theresia

Gert Jan,

Regarding Glasisch's death, I probably missed it. After, all I appeared to be brain dead when I wrote that I hoped Glasisch did not die. What was I thinking? I had not finished watching the last part when I wrote my answer. Your other comments:

> My problem is: Sepp was already a guest at the 70th anniversary of Maria,  
> as we see later in the flashback.

Yes, I agree with you - Sepp was indeed at Maria's party and I had the same reaction.

> Another question of this species is the return of Hermann at the end of  
> Die Zweite Heimat. It's 1970 and before entering Schabbach he meets Glasisch,  
> who says: I presume you're coming back for your mother's 70th anniversary?.  
>  
> But: looking back the flashback: Hermann wasn't there in 1970!

Yes, this is also strange. But I suppose we are not supposed to consider the overlapping events from DZH. After all, there is no mention of Hermann's wife Schnüsschen or his daughter in the later episodes of Heimat. It does bother me that Hermann comments to "Daddy" Paul that he is sad his girlfriends have both left him. No mention of his ex-wife or more importantly his daughter. Of course, I supposed that at that time, Reitz had not yet created Hermann's future family.

I also agree with your statement that Reitz changes his allegiance from Paul to Hermann. Paul has not only left his Heimat, he has completely metamorphosized into a foreigner! Reitz portrays Paul as very unlikable after he returns, with the exception that we do feel some sympathy for him when he finally admits that his Heimat is not the same without Maria. Although Hermann leaves, deep down he is still attached to Schabbach.

Susan

**Date: Wed, 14 Apr 2004 11:49:40 -0500**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Theresia, I really enjoyed reading your summary of Heimat. I feel the same way - although DZH is a masterpiece, Heimat is definitely my favorite for some of the same reasons. It has been wonderful these past months to discuss Heimat. Previous discussion in this group has been primarily on DZH.

Heimat shows a time of great historical change and progress. I am a long-time fan of history, especially of Germany and northern Europe. Both of my grandfathers and the parents of both grandmothers were born in Germany and since I have become rather obsessed (just ask my family) with my ancestors, I have enjoyed seeing history from the German perspective.

At the beginning of Heimat, Schabbach is a simple country village. The inhabitants are living their lives pretty much the same way their ancestors did for the past century (1800-1900). It is also a story, as several members in the list have pointed out, of leaving home and coming back again. Some of the characters are effected by leaving more than others.

The first change is brought about by the First World War. Young men like Paul go off to war and then

return home changed - whether by battlefield experiences or seeing faraway places. After returning, Paul is obviously not completely "at home." He seeks to learn new things in the village - building radios - but it is not enough. He finally decides to follow local conventions and settles down with Maria. We can see he is never completely happy. Paul takes a rather drastic step and leaves by himself for America, abandoning his young family. Although the largest waves of German emigration peaked in the 19th century, Paul represents the many, many Germans who went to the "New World". Another son of the village, Glasisch, was also changed by the war. He stays and narrates the story. Glasisch is always there, the one villager who does not change much.

After this major leave-taking, others in the Simon family also leave and return. Some are changed more than others. Some, like Maria, always stay in their Heimat.

What fascinates me about Heimat is that it seems to realistically portray a time period that I have only read about in books or seen in in old German films. After the bad times of war, it is a story of hope. Some of the characters rebuild their lives and are successful (Anton). Others suffer and loose loved ones (Maria, Pauline, Lucie).

Hermann, the new protagonist who takes Paul's place, is another symbol of change. He is the child of a wartime love affair and becomes almost a free spirit. His mother Maria spoils him, gives him the best, but he still leaves her like Paul. Yet Hermann seems to be much more attached to his Heimat than he realizes and eventually returns. Can we assume at the end that Hermann acknowledges his Schabbach roots and values? Does he think it wasn't so bad after all to grow up there?

I like most of the characters, so it is hard to choose. I would have to pick Katharina and Glasisch. Katharina, though a simple village woman, has strong values and always sticks to what she believes. You can see how she loved her family. Who would not want to have a grandmother like Kath? I think that Glasisch has a lot of courage. Life has dealt him some tough blows - he suffers from a skin disease from a gas attack (?) in WWI, so none of the girls want anything to do with him. Yet he works and goes on with his daily life - he actually is a survivor.

I have several favorite scenes. Two are actually snippets - first, the view of road leading to the village by which the characters leave and return - with the music playing - is always stirring. The scene where Otto Wohlleben looks through his telescope and sees Maria bringing lunch to her father working in the fields. The other is in "Die Liebe der Soldaten" - the Simon household at night in 1944, the lovers snatch some last time together, air raids and danger in the outside world, the Simons are sleeping in their beds, the family cat asleep on the stairs. A family just like anywhere in the world.

Which character do I like the least? It would be easy to say Wilfried, but I would choose Klärchen. I find her seduction of Hermann and Hermann's heartbreak very painful to watch. I am sure Reitz intended it that way. Even though she is a refugee without family, she should not have taken advantage of the Simons who took her in. If she truly loved Hermann, she would have left for his own good.

Paul does one good thing at the end by setting up a foundation to preserve his father's forge and the family house. Perhaps his motives are selfish but it does the job. I have visited the villages of 2 of my ancestors in Germany, and as an American I am always amazed in Germany (and other places in Europe) that some buildings stay the same for centuries - the village tavern, the church, the ancestor's house. Schabbach has old buildings and Anton's new factory. Some Heimat characters stay the same, some change. Just like true life.

Thank you everyone for the wonderful discussion,  
Susan

**Date: Wed, 14 Apr 2004 17:35:39 -0400**  
**From: wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>**

Hello all,

When I was thinking about a summary of Heimat, I found myself looking back through the book that accompanied the first series to find out how Edgar Reitz himself explained what he did and why. He wrote the introduction ("Sichtbares und Unsichtbares") and I was wondering if this has ever been translated or posted on one of the web sites that you know of. I can probably do it after I return from London (I hope to meet with Ivan next week).

I sincerely hope that the Heimat DVD will contain the pictures and the text from this book as it is done as a kind of family album with all the pictures (that Glasisch shows during the film) and a few fantastic double page color photos of the Hunsrück area throughout the seasons. The fact that Edgar Reitz Productions was looking for help in digitizing pictures makes me very hopeful.

Just one point that I think was mentioned before but Reitz confirms this in the introduction: He himself left the "farmers" land of his ancestors, as he thought, for good and found his way back to make the movie.

He also writes (and I am translating this pretty liberally): "The film shows the invisible by taking a manic approach to show the visible, by screaming for the visible and triggering pilgrimages to the locations of the visible motifs. But there are no visible stories, they only exist at the seams between the pictures, not only in the movies but in life itself. ... Because our themes are often invisible and inaudible stories that can't be grasped with our senses, we must be committed to use the strongest of pictures. Only the most impressive and multi-layered picture creations have the power to capture our senses so that they can be controlled in their quest to devour everything and we become liberated to ask our memory and reassemble the stories that we are told in a new way."

... and he quotes from "Sans Soleil" by Chris Marker: "I will be asking myself all my life how remembering really works, it is not the opposite of forgetting but rather the other way around. You don't remember, you rewrite your memory".

Wolfgang

**Date: Wed, 14 Apr 2004 23:59:52 +0100**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

HEIMAT: THE FILM

Gentlemen, we have been put to shame! The ladies have beaten us to it! If I had known how knowledgeable Theresia and Susan were on the subject of "Heimat" before I started writing my introductions, I think I would have been too frightened ever to begin. Thank you both for your fascinating overviews. I also have another problem at this stage of proceedings. My memory is not what it once was and I find it difficult to summon-up and retain an overall view of the complete film. It is not any fault of Edgar Reitz's film but a problem I bring to the contemplation of it.

I have no doubt in my mind that "Heimat" is a masterpiece. It creates a rich, concentrated world; it has the texture of a great novel; it creates a lived-in world, familiar to say readers of Charles Dickens or George Eliot or Tolstoy. In a way we do not want the film to end. We know the characters so well that we feel cheated when they are gone. Why couldn't we say good-bye to them? Some contributors to our discussion wrote to me and expressed amazement that someone who was not German and could not speak German could have such insights into the film. Whether I had any insights is not for me to say, but what I was responding to, was the universality of Reitz's characters. We have all lost loved ones, responded to political events outside our control, fallen in love, rebelled against restrictive conventions, felt melancholic and nostalgic and so on and so on. Reitz makes us share in the lives of his characters.

The strength of the film lies, however, not just in its universality but also in its honesty and integrity. This is a film made by a serious person with serious intent. We do not get, as we do now in the UK, in nearly all dramas on TV, great dollops of gratuitous sex and violence, with the aim of increased

audience numbers. There is no attempt here to keep the audience in a state of perpetual hysteria. The film is quite content to move leisurely, according to the rhythms of everyday life, when that is what is demanded. We see the traditions of the people and of the Hunsrück, this rural corner of Germany, exposed to all the cross-currents of history.

Like Theresia I liked the episodes before the outbreak of WW2, where the pace of change was slower and the strength of rural communities was stronger, than in more recent times, even though dissatisfied rebels such as Paul were thrown up. I have tried closing my eyes and seeing what images from the film rise up into my brain even then. I can see the bilberry picking, Ernst throwing the red carnations from his aircraft as he overflies Schabbach, Otto's giant wrench as he turns the bomb's fuse, Hermann and his friends swooping down to the Rhine on their bikes with a flag flying [?], Katharina taking the boiled Easter eggs from the pan, and many more. My favourite scenes include, like Susan's, the scene in the Simon household in 1944 where they are all asleep, and also the scene between Otto and Maria where her face is lit by the stove and the Allied bombers constantly drone in the background. I remember vividly the scene of Otto's death, the seduction of Hermann, the arrival of Paul's letter announcing his impending arrival, Otto with his arm in plaster being fed by Maria, etcetera, etcetera. What a cornucopia of riches!!

Do I have any favourite characters? I loved Eduard's endearing quirkiness, Hans' mischievous twinkle, the anonymity of Herr Pollack and...

My wife is calling me to come to bed now, so good-bye for now.

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Thu, 15 Apr 2004 22:01:08 +0200**  
**From: "Theresia en Martijn" <theresia\_martijn\_onetelnet.nl>**

My mother has asked me to translate the following for you. Talking English is no problem for her but writing is much harder, hence this translation from Dutch.

Theresia

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Dear all,

I would like to let you know how much I've enjoyed the discussion and all the extra information on Heimat. I agree with many things.

Looking back to the past is a beautiful thing, especially when you look back on your youth. When you remember things you thought you had forgotten and that came back, in a pleasant way, because of Heimat.

The most impressive scene for me is still the moment when Ernst throws the red carnations over Schabbach out of his plane. [It's the first scene my mother ever saw from Heimat. She watched it on her own, late at night on tv. When she saw this scene she thought this was something really special and from then we watched the whole series.] Another scene which is special to me is when Katherina visits her family by train, one can see from the trainwagon the Bayer logo which shines bright. I remember that about 40 years ago you could see the letters Bayer (horizontal and vertical in a round circle) from a far distance when driving on the German Autobahn.

When I read the discussion the most special thing to me, as a mother, is to see that our daughter became such a conscious young woman, partly because of Heimat. And that she remembers the past and her grandparents with so much love and such respect.

It was such a pleasure to read all your messages and to reread them. Reinder, thanks for sending all

these messages through to me.

Until DZH. Best wishes for you all.

Banty

**Date: Thu, 15 Apr 2004 23:42:49 +0100**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

Well, we have come to the end of the discussion of "Heimat". I have found it fruitful and I think many of you have found it so as well. I have learnt a great deal.

7 contributors sent in 12 posts on Part 11. There were 5 Overviews of the whole film and quite a large number of factual posts on various subjects. Tomorrow we will begin a new journey with the start of DZH. My introduction to Part 1 will be a little later than usual as rather than beginning writing now I will get some rest and start in the morning. Please excuse me.

Ivan Mansley.