

**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 Hunsrueck 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 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. Lernerich]. 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 mustn't look forward!

I found some of the images very arresting eg. The snow, the wet roads, the wintry tree 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 kitchen 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 a 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 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 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 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 which 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 Lucie's 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 artificial 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 Gaudieter 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.