

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 15minutes 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 Hunsruck 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 singlely (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 Germanys situaition in the 1950th.

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, Hermanns 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 said, all this story was not realistic, there are too much 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 Erst 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 Schabach - 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 Antons 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 struggling 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, philosophy 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, Hermann's 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 too 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 Hermann's physical
> development (even though she had two sons before) and struggling 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, philosophy 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, Hermann's 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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> 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.