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HEIMAT 3 - Episode 1: The Happiest People in the World [1989]

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

Date: Thu, 19 Jan 2006 23:33:52 -0000

HEIMAT 3: Part 1: The Happiest People in the World

An Introduction:

As Hermann and Clarissa make love in his Berlin hotel room we hear from the television the words of a politician, "We Germans are now the happiest people in the world." These words are echoed by Jana, Udo's wife, on the Zugspitze, as she runs and kisses her husband in a moment of great happiness for all the characters, although there is one troubling undercurrent, not yet realised. I just wanted to say right at the beginning that I felt a very happy Englishman when I first saw this episode of Heimat 3 in the spring of 2005 and again during my present viewing in preparation for writing this analysis. Trying not to be too sentimental, I felt great joy at being reunited with Reitz's characters from Heimats 1 & 2, a feeling of huge appreciation for the vividly drawn new characters, and an overwhelming happiness at once again being immersed in Reitz's created world and following his captivating story lines. Critics and analysts may find weaknesses in Heimat 3 compared with the first two film sequences but none are so profound as to wreck or even spoil the achievement of his latest work. At least not in my eyes!!

One of the things I love about Reitz's films is the very careful delineation of character. In this first episode of Heimat 3 we are introduced to new East German characters. Clarissa recruits two stage-hands, Gunnar and Udo, from the Gewandhaus in Leipzig, after her concert has been cancelled because of political demonstrations, to rebuild the ruined half-timbered house, the Günderröde house as it is known after Karoline von Günderröde, a German Romantic poet, who was supposed erroneously to have lived there, which she has bought as a "love-nest" for herself and Hermann. Gunnar, played by Uwe Steimle, approaches her in the cafeteria. He is marvellous! He is garrulous, impetuous, chaotic in his private life, often his own worst enemy, and yet he has a heart of gold and is utterly endearing. In the Fleiss interview [F] Edgar Reitz talks of Gunnar as a "highlight" of the whole film and how much he owes to Thomas Brussig, his co-author, in his creation. I heard a marvellous story about the recruitment of Uwe Steimle for the part whilst I was in Germany. He was known for his Honecker impersonations and a friend persuaded him to apply for the part. He performed his impersonation over the telephone to Reitz and was immediately recruited. This may be apocryphal!!

Let us follow Gunnar through a number of scenes. When asked by Clarissa if he can work for her and go to West Germany he replies, "Tomorrow?" On the morning of his departure he is quarrelling with his wife, Petra. The apartment is in chaos, all his DIY work is unfinished, his children, Jenny and Nadine have heard it all before, as they sit on the stairs and block their ears. Yet he is shown as a very good father in many ways to his children. He is kind and understanding to them. One of them crawls on to his lap as he demonstrates his piano playing abilities in Mrs Loewe's apartment; he asks one child to say his own name to Reinhold instead of being introduced, although he perhaps frightens little Nadine with his demonstration of the workings of the animal trap.

Our hearts eventually go out to him as he is left alone after his happiness on the summit of the Zugspitze where he does an ironic imitation of Honecker and hoists his green potato bag up the flagpole in a mock patriotic gesture to the now defunct DDR. All the time a love affair has been blossoming between Petra, his wife, and Reinhold Loewe, Hermann's bachelor agent and assistant. Gunnar realises the truth when they belatedly arrive at the foot of the mountain several cable cars later. He drives off, in anger, in his newly acquired ancient yellow Volkswagen and the episode ends with him sitting alone on the scaffolding of the Günderrode house on New Year's Eve, as one desultory firework lights up the sky momentarily above Oberwesel. He has become, at least temporarily, almost a tragic figure. This scene is cleverly juxtaposed with wild celebrations by the populace with a multitude of fireworks at the Brandenburg Gate.

Did you notice an echo here that Thomas and Theresia did not pick up? [Huge apologies if I'm wrong!!] We see Gunnar driving his yellow Beetle alongside the train in which his wife and children are travelling with Reinhold. The children are banging on the window and shouting, "I want to be with Daddy". Compare this with the scene in Part 13 of DZH where Hermann is on the train and his wife, Schnüsschen, is driving alongside the train with their daughter in the car. The roles are reversed as it were!

Gunnar's friend, Udo, is an entirely different character. He is portrayed by Tom Quaas as having genuine presence and is undoubtedly a leader of men. He is, moreover, sensitive and intelligent. He understands fully why Hermann has returned to his ancestral home and remarks, "You don't need to explain who you are. To them, you were never gone. You were just travelling." And he is spot on, as we have already witnessed. We are shown Hermann walking alone into Schabbach and being greeted by Rudi Molz and a crowd of villagers as if he had just been "gone for a bit". Did you notice the change to black and white from colour just as Hermann draws level with the marker board for Schabbach? Reitz himself has remarked that in Heimat 3 blocks of black and white "only appear when the scenes take off into the sphere of universal validity or contemporary history". [F] Perhaps further comment is required here. Returning to Udo perhaps you noticed him delicately close the door when Hermann and Clarissa are embracing and kissing on the stairs leading to Hermann's old Munich apartment. He does not wish to pry on this moment of passion and intimacy.

I also enjoyed very much the scene where Gunnar and Udo make fun of the rather priggish and repressed young Tillmann Becker, another recruit from East Germany who is responsible for the electrics. It might seem a bit cruel with jokes about Tillmann's sexuality but it is not pursued to the bitter end, and Udo is perceptive enough to think that in Tillmann's briefcase is a clarinet and that the young man is a talented musician. We then cut to Tillmann playing a mournful tune on his clarinet and the arrival of Moni and her dog, having come up the slopes from Oberwesel. Another amusing scene involving Tillmann is the one where he is shown rushing to fetch Hermann [Mr. Günderrode as he calls him, not knowing his real name] from the Hotel Schönburg as his house is "floating". His excitement; his naïvety; his desire to impress his new employer, are all beautifully conveyed. As he drives, he becomes quite breathless, blurting out all his educational qualifications and his great experience as an electrician! He really wants this job!! Hermann has to quieten him down.

The third East German workman to arrive had been Tobi. Udo had sent for him from Dresden, realising that they needed someone expert in historical reconstruction. Another sign of Udo's good sense! Tobi is remarkable in appearance with thin spindly

legs and flowing red hair. Reitz describes him as "a late East German hippy". [F] However, Tobi is also remarkably skilful. Moments after arriving on the scene of the restoration of the house, he has sent for car and lorry jacks and in a brilliant piece of improvisation raises the house from its foundations so that new ones can be put in. A masterstroke!! The viewer feels the excitement as the house is raised and shares in the happiness of all those involved in the work. What an achievement by Reitz! Build what looks like a ruin for a film and then film it being restored! Tobi does not occupy the screen for much of this episode but he is a wonderfully observed character, as are all the East German workmen; Gunnar, Udo, Tobi and Tillmann. Moreover, Udo is an excellent judge of the characters of others. He tells Tobi, "That's Gunnar. He talks too much but he's a good man."

Let us now turn to Hermann and Clarissa. Reitz has remarked, "Hermann and Clarissa are not really the lead characters in the story" [F] but they certainly are the hinges of the plot development in Episode 1. What a handsome couple they make!! Reitz pays tribute to the film's make-up artist, who, not only makes Henry Arnold and Salome Kammer look their supposed 50 years of age, but also makes them glamorous and distinguished. Some critics have argued that their meeting in Berlin which gets the narrative going is too contrived a coincidence, too engineered to be credible, but I did not have any problem with this. After all, they say if you stand in Piccadilly Circus long enough you will see someone you know, sooner or later. And Hermann and Clarissa are in the same line of business as it were and both are celebrities living out of suitcases and frequenting hotel lobbies and restaurants. I find it remarkable in the circumstances they had not met before. What seemed somewhat less credible was the speed with which they fell into each other's arms, and the fact that they were free to do so. Where were the emotional entanglements with others, the mistresses, lovers, toy-boys and so on that most people seem to acquire as they move, uncommitted, through life. In addition, they both appear eminently desirable!!!

Another more serious criticism, perhaps, of *Heimat 3* in general, and of this episode in particular, is that Reitz has had to abandon his usual leisurely rhythm of film making and has had to rush things because of the financial constraints imposed by the TV companies who were funding him. I think I do see some evidence of this. For instance, consider the scene where Hermann re-visits his childhood home. He walks past the smithy, approaches the door of the house, and sees the open barn door. He makes no mention of Klärchen or of what happened afterwards or of his vow never to love again. I feel that if Reitz had had more time such recollections would have come flooding in. He shows no sorrow at the death of his mother or memory of the behaviour of Anton or any memory connected with Paul whose plaque is on the wall of the Simon house and with whom he had earlier conducted experiments in electronic music. The references backward were perfunctory.

Mention should be made of Anton and Ernst Simon, Hermann's half-brothers, who are played by the same actors as in the first two *Heimats*. Matthias Kniesbeck gives a wonderfully bravura performance as the ageing, rich, indomitable patriarch, Anton. He swaggers and domineers, sometimes behaves abominably, but is never daunted. There is a marvellous scene around the dining table when Clarissa arrives with Udo and Gunnar. The ensemble playing is perfect. We have noticed before how Reitz excels at large groups around a table, eating and reacting. Anton, proud of his roots and his achievements boasts of the food and even names the butcher from which the sausages came. Did you notice that his glowering eldest son, Hartmut, never says a word, not even to reply to his own wife, Mara. There is by-play with Udo's hat worn at table, Lothar's suspicions about the E. Germans' credentials, Gunnar's socialist principles and much more. Did you notice when Hermann visits Anton's factory the chauffeur polishing Anton's car with the personalised registration plate, SIM A1? He

is saying, "I am the top dog and I want you to notice." He loves to be the master of ceremonies on all occasions! Michael Kausch is more restrained as the anarchic, free spirit, Ernst; "the seeker after meaning." [F]

I noticed these echoes, references back to the earlier Heimats, to add to Thomas and Theresia's list:-

1. Udo carrying the rifle to scare the pigeons reminded me of Reinhardt with the rifle which Juan uses to attempt suicide [DZH Part 8: The Wedding]. 2. Reflections in mirror or TV while love-making at Hotel Schönburg and in Berlin. In many different scenes in DZH, ending in the image shattering in the hotel in Amsterdam. 3. Gunnar and Udo lying on their beds at Rudi Molz's. Udo, trying to sum up their bewildering day, comments, "They're all so friendly. I wish it could be like this for ever." Do you remember Eduard had wanted time to stand still in his villa in Heimat Part 4: The Highway? 4. Car/train/children..dealt with earlier.

There is a strand in the Hermann/Clarissa relationship that I wanted to touch on. There is an element of self-centredness / selfishness in their desire to build a love-nest and retreat from the world which can never be fully successful. I noticed that when Hermann is accosted and hugged by a total stranger his first instinct is to pat his pockets and make sure he has not been mugged and his wallet stolen. A nice bourgeois touch. Watching the celebrations of the people he declares to Clarissa, "This is all just for us", which, of course it isn't. Throughout they debate whether happiness is possible, whether they can have success and love, and yet they are a rich and privileged couple. Despite Hermann's involvement with the peace movement there is an inward look, an indulgent introspection. Neither of them seems to have had the slightest inkling that political change was coming. We become aware that there is "something rotten in the state of Denmark"!! As Reitz himself puts it, "Many of the apparent idylls depicted prove to be deceptive, including Hermann and Clarissa's being happily alone together." [F]

I shall finish with 2 questions:-

1. Throughout the renovation of the house Rudi Molz is hanging about commenting on this and that. Why isn't he back home running his guest-house? Has he been appointed Hermann's agent/overseer or is he just being "nosy"?
2. A good deal of fun is had showing the reactions of Gunnar and Udo to the "golden West". I enjoyed the scene in the DIY store. Why was Udo so amazed at the blue-lit filling station? Was it meant to be just the contrast with the drab East or was there something more specific?

There is much more to write about but over to you. I apologise for the bitty nature of this piece but I couldn't bang it into any more coherent shape.

Ivan Mansley.

P.S. Places marked [F] refer to the Fleiss interview with Edgar Reitz so ably translated by Angela Skrimshire and Wolfgang Floitgraf to be found on ReindeR's web-site.

From: "Gert Jan Jansen" <gertjan.jansengouda.demon.nl>
Date: Fri, 20 Jan 2006 20:14:24 +0100

Dear Ivan and all,

Thank you very much for your introduction: the show has begun. I'm at home for just a moment, so I can't give a reaction now. I waited for the starting signal of the great Maestro to tell you I also did some homework. Related to the feeling there happens so much in so few days in this first part, I made a sort of time-schedule of the film: the actions classified by (per) day. I hope it will be a support to your introduction, Ivan. Reinder told me it's not possible to put a schedule /table in "Word" on the list, without losing signs, so he has put it for me directly on the site [see below – Eds]:

Bye,

Gert Jan Jansen

The happiest people in the world (Heimat 3, part 1): Reconstruction of the time-schedule and the places of action

by Gert Jan Jansen, 18-01-2006.

day	date	events
Thu	09-11-1989	Just before 11 pm: Hermann leaves the Berliner Philharmonie (Kemperplatz / Tiergarten) and walks via Savignyplatz to the Kempinski-hotel on the Kurfüstendamm. (a walk of at least 4 km.) In the lobby he meets Clarissa. They stay at the Kempinski
Fri	10-11-1989	(According to synopsis, not in the film): Reinhold Loewe, the assistant of H. is looking for him everywhere, because he didn't arrive in his room. Reinhold organizes a spontaneous concert for H + C both. Willy Brandt is there.
Sat	11-11-1989	H + C are leaving Berlin and the DDR by BMW. At dusk they reach Oberwesel (St. Martin's procession). H. awakes when the car stops at the Günderode-house, they look around (Titanic-imitation at the top of the rock), drive back to Oberwesel and check in at the Schönburg-hotel.(world-famous since the visit of Ivan Mansley) Meeting with Mr. Wallauer, hotel-owner and owner of Günderode.
Sun	12-11-1989	H + C visit the Günderode ruin with Wallauer (+ Pitt) and buy it. They walk around and discover the church tower of Schabbach. Clarissa: "Until Christmas I have still 14 concerts". Hermann: "after Wednesday my free days are rare" Clarissa has to leave for her concert on Monday in Leipzig. She's driving Hermann's Munich BMW. Hermann walks on to Schabbach and goes around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He meets Rudi Molz, the peace-movement and vicar Dahl. • He looks around at his birth-house (behind are the horses of Mara Simon) • He meets Ernst at his home near the Goldbrook;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He meets Anton and his household • He visits Simon Optische Werke with Anton (perhaps some of these visits occur on Monday)
Mon	13-11-1989	Clarissa in Leipzig (Gewandhaus), the concert is cancelled because of the Monday protest walk. C. meets Gunnar and Udo and contracts them
Tue	14-11-1989	Clarissa drives back to the Hunsrück; 2 passengers: Udo + Gunnar They all have dinner at Anton's, where C + H stay to sleep. Udo + Gunnar will sleep at Gasthaus Molz in Schabbach
Wed	15-11-1989	Udo + Gunnar go –accompanied by Hermann- to the Globus Baumarkt in Simmern. Clarissa picks them up with a little truck of Simon Optik. The restoration of Günderode is starting. The couple H + C stays again at the Schönburg hotel
Thu	16-11-1989	??
Fri	17-11-1989	The restoration is in full speed. Hermann is in Zürich to rehearse the 5 th pianoconcerto of Beethoven
		??
Mon	20-11-1989	H+ C bring a brand new concrete mixer. Due to the wish to use historic methods; they decide to get Tobi from Dresden
	21-11-1989/ 30-11-1989	??
Fri	01-12-1989	Images of the Brandenburger Tor. In the Konzertsaal Berlin Clarissa sings international folksongs with the "Leipziger Avantgarde"
Sun	03-12-1989	H+C together near Günderode house. There's is a telegram. C has to go to Hamburg immediately, for her son Arnold (who lives in the house of his grandmother) has been arrested for hacking the Deutsche Bank
Mon	04-12-1989	C in Hamburg to join Arnold in the court-room. The judge is mild; Arnold is a free man. He celebrates it in a Hamburger billiardbar. H. has a concert in Basel

Tue	05-12-1989	<p>Hermann writes a letter to Clarissa on a trainstop at Köln Hbf =Central Station (coming from Basel, he is on his way to a concert in Hamburg)</p> <p>Gunnar drives his yellow 23 years old VW, bought from Rudi Molz. When they arrive at the Günderode house, also Tobi is there with his Trabant. Soon he discovers that the actual restoration method will last several years. He has an idea and goes –with Rudi Molz as guide- to the van workshop of Wiegand</p>
Wed	06-12-1989	H + C for a short moment together at the airport Köln-Bonn. H. is flying to Amsterdam, C to Paris. They expect not to see each other before Christmas.
Thu	07-12-1989	<p>H. plays pianoconcerts of Beethoven and Schubert in the Concertgebouw Amsterdam. (NB The publicity cloth shows the announcement: Hermann Simon concert 22 November.) He is visited by Frau Lichtblau, Clarissa's mother. Reinhold brings her via the Prinsengracht to a hotel.</p> <p>Clarissa that evening writes a letter to H in the empty dining room of hotel Ambassador in Paris. She started the rehearsals of the role of Dido (Dido and Aeneas, Purcell)</p>
Fri	08-12-1989	Mrs. Lichtblau travels from Amsterdam to Paris
Sat	09-12-1989	<p>Tobi produces a construction of 20 hydraulic levers to lift the Günderode house to facilitate the renewing of the foundation: "It floats". Tillmann , the electrician, arrives from Dresden.</p> <p>H. arrives by car from a concert travel in the Schönburg hotel. There is a letter from Clarissa.("I can't believe we met only six (????) weeks ago".) Clarissa has promised Arnold to be in Hamburg at Christmas Eve.</p> <p>Tillmann drives to the Schönburg hotel to pick up Hermann to look for his "floating house". Rudi Molz: it took three days together with Tobi to collect the levers. Tobi: is there someone who has old materials for the house: doors, door handles etc. H: Yes, my brother Ernst.</p> <p>H. puts some photographs of the restoration in an envelope an addresses it to Clarissa in Paris.</p>
Sun	10-12-1989	<p>H. in Vienna, Saal des Konzerthauses, conducts Mozart's Prager Symphonie.</p> <p>On Sunday the labourers don't work at the Günderode-house. Gunnar and Udo are kidding Tillmann with his suitcase</p>
Mon	11-12-1989	<p>Moni climbs up the wine mountain to the Günderode-house and discovers the clarinet playing Tillmann (Love at first sight)</p> <p>Hermann is sitting in the Pavilion and writes a letter to Clarissa.</p> <p>When the night is falling Hermann joins the peace movement, who is demonstrating before the Pydna rocket base.(long chain of people)</p>
Tue	19-12-	Clarissa sings the role of Dido in Paris (première)

	1989	
	??	Hermann has a concert in Brussels (Reinhold: 3000 spectators)
	??	<p>It starts snowing, but right in time the workers can close the Günderode building for wind and snow.</p> <p>Hermann is very proud and donates extra money to the DDR-labourer.</p> <p>The wives and children of Udo and Gunnar come in from Leipzig. The two families are invited to travel to Munich, where they can stay in the house of Reinhold's mother in Bogenhausen. Reinhold and Petra like each other. Tobi and Tillmann stay behind.</p>
Sun	24-12-1989	<p>At Christmas Eve the two families + Hermann and Reinhold enjoy the warm hospitality of Mrs. Loewe (who has a concert-agency)</p> <p>Clarissa is in Hamburg to celebrate Christmas with her son Arnold. When Hermann makes a phonecall to her, but the number is always occupied. Arnold introduces her for hours in the world of internet. In the old times of the modem connection that was blocking the normal telephone-line.</p> <p>Tillmann and Moni are together in the Günderode-house and show their love</p>
Mon	25-12-1989	<p>In Munich the company travels to the Zugspitze, the top of Germany. Gunnar discovers that he will loose his wife Petra to Reinhold. In his own he drives back to the Günderode-house.</p> <p>When the rest of the company is back in Bogenhausen, Clarissa arrives. She has fever, she couldn't play in the theatre.</p>
	??	
Sun	31-12-1989	<p>On the last day of the year Gunnar is sitting in the chestnut tree at Günderode and looks for a lonesome firework rocket.</p> <p>Near the Brandenburger Tor in Berlin are 100.000 people celebrating the first free new year: at that moment the Germans are the happiest people in the world.</p>

Sources:

- Heimat 3DVD Disc 1, www.lumiere.be, 2005;
- Edgar Reitz : Heimat 3, Chronik einer Zeitenwende, Albrecht Knaus Verlag München 2004
- Edgar Reitz: synopsis of Heimat 3, www.erfilm.de (2003)
- Maarten van Bracht, Gezocht: Heimat, Edgar Reitz voltooit zijn trilogie, VPRO-gids 25 december 2004.

From: "Gert Jan Jansen" <gertjan.jansengouda.demon.nl>

Date: Sat, 21 Jan 2006 15:31:26 +0100

Dear Ivan and other participants

Thanks for your introduction; it was a treat to read. I admire your capacity to make such wonderful characterization of the principal figures, in this case Gunnar and Udo, Tobi and Tillmann. You take attention not only to the big storyline, but also for events in the shadow. You saw the bow related to the title of this episode, from the start (TV in the lobby of the Kempinski-hotel) to the end (Jana at the Zugspitze). I'm sorry that there is nothing in your introduction that's leading to extreme opposite opinions.

I have seen the film for the third time now (cinema, tv, dvd) and my appreciation is still growing. I realize however that my opinion is not objective any more. If you are extra interested and you get background information by this discussion or from the site of Thomas Hönemann, no wonder that your efforts will be followed by greater score. That's why I'm interested too in the opinion of list members, that saw this film for the first time; if possible for whom this was the first Reitz-Heimat film they ever saw. Or do I refer to people who don't exist. Are we all recidivists? Do we all belong to a small Heimat-incrowd??

As a summary of this episode I see four headlines:

1. The reunion of both Clarissa & Hermann and West- and East-Germany;
2. The restoration of the Gänderode-house
3. The introduction of new figures that will dominate the story of Heimat 3
4. Some forecasts about the themes in the next episodes (relation problems between Anton and Hartmut, between Hartmut and Mara, between Ernst and the village

I also had feelings of personal reunion with the fictive world, created by Edgar Reitz. Like old friends they appear on the screen. At first Hermann and Clarissa, later on his (half-) brothers Anton and Ernst, who we have missed for almost twenty years. Perhaps it's a pity that there is no further feed-back to Die Zweite Heimat (DZH). No one of the many friends of the Munich decade is even mentioned. Even Volker Schimmelpfennig, Clarissa's ex husband and father of Arnold, has disappeared in the air.

I agree your words about the limited credibility of the speed Hermann and Clarissa fell into each other arms. By looking to DZH we have suffered for 10 years (13 episodes) how they weren't able to establish a relation and now it is fixed in 3 minutes!

Also I recognise your remarks about the fact that- when Hermann walks around in Schabbach- there are no references to his feelings in the past (Klärchen, his mother Maria, his step-father Paul and his Plaque). Yet there was a reference before. At the Gänderode-house Hermann told Clarissa a rather frumpy story about a sleigh ride with blond Gertrud, who we never heard of.

The description of the scenes at Anton's I like very much. As a supplement a question about Hermann's entrance in the household. Did Reitz forget that Hermann and Anton's daughter Gisela were lovers at the end of episode 12 of Heimat 1. ("Your mother is my grandmother") Her slight laugh is not enough to confirm the connection.

You better recognized than I the self centredness of Hermann and Clarissa. You're absolutely right. They belong to a (modern, white) bourgeois world in which the personal wants and needs stand central; not the idea you belong to a community,

society, in which you have your duties. Perhaps I didn't want to recognise the signs, because I myself feel too often ashamed about the things I could have done for the household, the street and the city.

A reaction to your 2 questions:

1. The role of Rudi Molz has some artificial sides. I think we never saw him before in H1, not even at Maria's 70th birthday party or on her funeral in 1980. I've read somewhere that his figure is a tribute to the real Rudi Molz, from the Gasthaus with the same name in Woppenroth. He became a friend of Rudi and Marga Molz (Marga: "wir sind auf 'du'") but he died before the recording of H3 started, assumed by wrong treatment in hospital after a fall in the barn. The real Rudi Molz, guesthouse keeper and farmer, surely would not have had the possibilities to join the restoration as a supervisor.

2. I think your supposition about the contrast is right. Did you recognise that even the prices at the Aral filling station were the actual petrol prices of that moment: 1,05 DM for 1 litre unleaded. Reitz's attention for such details is famous. That's why I can't understand he situated Hermann's Amsterdam-concert (by subtitle) on the 7th of December, whereas the publicity cloth on the Concertgebouw shows "Hermann W. Simon, 22 November 1989, 20.15 uur".

At the end of my contribution I perhaps may take your attention to the time-schedule I constructed of episode 1: The period between 9 November 1989 and 1 January 1990 [See *previous posting* – Eds.] In the German discussion moderated by Thomas a year ago much emphasis was put on the tempo of this part, related with shallowness and the message: everything was better in Heimat 1. Someone wrote: It's like getting unprepared in a rollercoaster; the feeling any moment you can get a speed penalty". I don't agree. It's absolutely exaggerated, although I have admitted that some things proceed rather quick in my opinion: not only the love of Hermann and Clarissa also the restoration of the G nderode-house. Germany must be a country where there exist no bureaucratic circumstances. There is hope.

Gert Jan Jansen

From: Wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>

Date: Sat, 21 Jan 2006 13:22:48 -0500

Hello all,

first, a little strange problem: I didn't receive Ivan's Introduction through the mailing list, only saw it referenced in Jan Gert's email below. I checked my Junk folder (God forbid!) but nothing in there either. I received the "preamble" on Jan 17th and all the replies from yesterday so what might have happened?

It is not easy to describe one's feelings about each individual episode of the Heimat 3 cycle separately. At the second viewing, you know the entire series. Ivan, I agree: A lot has been said, posted, transcribed, translated and actually experienced in person (!). And I too need to remind myself NOT to compare the three sets of films, that would lead to inevitable disappointment. Everything was different when we encountered the first Heimat films, their success will be forever unmatched because they came at the right time, at least for most viewers, myself included. If it's Die Zweite Heimat set you saw first, it probably struck a chord with your own life experience and made you curious about what happened before Hermann left for

Munich. I wonder if we have any members in this group who started with DZH and then searched for ways to get the tapes of Heimat, which was not so easy back in 1995. I think that's how Reinder and Alan started their conversation and the web site. And if you are now watching Heimat 3 first, you probably are aware of the BBC broadcasting of the entire Trilogy and the DVDs. Now, with vastly improved video and audio, they can be more appreciated, much better than the early "archived" or duplicated, sometimes several generations, VHS tapes.

I am repeating Ivan's and Gert's comments when one general impression for me was that the six films were much too short. The individual storylines have this feeling to them that they should have been a lot more drawn out, extended by at least two more films, maybe four. Most of us (I think) know how this came about, the TV sponsors contracted six 90 minute shows (actually 87.5 min) for television, but somehow even the film versions have this abbreviated, almost hectic feeling to it. That seems to be not so much a result of the filming itself, but of the editing. Edgar Reitz remarked in one of the interviews how much faster we see and absorb things today, how much shorter the attention span has become. So in some ways, the films are as if in fast forward quite often, I have to assume that is intended but for me it is annoying. There is a good German review online that Angela and I will translate shortly. It speaks of the "TV-chopping-aesthetics" which permeate the current times, i.e. life imitates art imitates life. Reitz and Brussig were aware and talked about their need to show the new times as disjointed, fast moving, never resting.

Having said all that, to me the first episode didn't feel all that short, simply because it was more documentary than drama and the pace was just right to set the time and places for the series. I did, however, suffer some serious confusion about movie time versus time passed. There were almost no clues that the house was going to be finished in four months, it felt like it was done in three days, which, of course, is unrealistic. I seems that Gert Jan suffered from the same problem so he created this time line, very useful indeed. This confusion improved at the second viewing. Sometimes different scenes occur on the same day, even, it appears, in parallel, and sometimes it felt as if months went by between the action. A lot of the snippets of action had no connections between them, they just happened, something here and something else there. Added to the confusion were the narrative by different people, not, as in Heimat by the one narrator Glasisch, sometimes even superimposed on actual dialogue with the same people. So, even with some "family background", so to speak, it wasn't easy to keep the storylines in order. The question is: does it matter? Or was the intent to feed us a smorgasboard of little bites in Episode 1 so we wouldn't go hungry but afterwards we have no recollection what we had for dinner?

Some other observations or comments:

Where did Hermann and Clarissa cross the border? If they met in Berlin and were driving to West Germany, they would have crossed the border on the Autobahn and not on this remote forest path. Maybe that was not dramatic enough because people were just driving past all the old control points on the Autobahn. I am also not sure what was actually possible on the morning of the 10th of November 1989. The "surprise" of Udo and Gunnar at the view of the ARAL filling station is probably related to this first day in the West, when everything they saw seemed exciting and curious, particularly large, well lit, colorful places in the middle of nowhere. As a small kid I was always drawn to the blue ARAL stations and remember my first toy truck, which was a ARAL tanker (back in 1954!) - Like Gert, I found small things that were spot on regarding accuracy (Reitz' trademark) and then a couple of scenes, driving along the Rhine with the view of the Marksburg before crossing the river in

Koblenz, which should have been reversed. Picky, picky.... Twice, somebody comes up to the house and keeps yelling a name over and over. Why aren't these people answering immediately? It is impossible not to hear someone's name called out at that small place. Rudi Molz provided room and board at his Gasthaus for Gunnar and Udo and it seems pretty natural that he "keeps an eye" on the guys while Hermann is on the road, more out of curiosity than to supervise. Remember, in the film, the construction site is only a couple of miles from Schabbach. But it is clearly the role that Reitz added in memory of his old friend Rudi.

Ivan referenced the Ingo Fliess (pronounced fleece) interviews in his introduction. Mr. Fliess is also listed as the "Lektor" and agent in the credits of the films which is kind of curious. I'm not even certain what a "lecturer" does in publishing business. Alan?

And one last thing: The dinner "Bloodworscht und Stampes" - the word Stampes comes from the German "stampfen", to mash.

so long- Happy Weekend everybody! -
Wolfgang

**From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan jsbiedron.com>
Date: Sat, 21 Jan 2006 12:28:40 -0600**

Ivan and all,

I'm really happy that we are finally beginning the H3 discussion. I am currently watching Episode 1 for the second time. As there are no subtitles on my copy, it will take a few more times to understand all the dialog. Thus I am really grateful for the commentary!

One of my favorite things about H3 is the view of the Rhine von Hermann and Clarissa's house - it is breathtaking. I too am happy to see Anton and Ernst again. As Anton ages he has become even more self-important than before. You can see his son Hartmut cringing at Anton's bragging about the food when the Clarissa brings the two east Germans to dinner. In DZH I always thought Ernst was an annoying character - now I feel that way about Anton. Am I correct to assume that Anton's wife is deceased?

I did think Hermann and Clarissa's meeting was a little contrived, but the event is necessary to get the story going. I agree with Gert's comment that "they weren't able to establish a relation and now it is fixed in 3 minutes!" Yes, Hermann and Clarissa are very self-centered like many successful creative people - have they really changed much since their student days?

I too wondered about Clarissa's ex husband Volker.

Perhaps someone can help me out regarding Clarissa's mother Frau Lichtblau. What is she saying to Hermann after his concert that seems to upset him?

Susan

From: Chuck Wheat <fateofgold yahoo.com >

Date: Sun, Jan 22 2006 04:41:36 CET

At 11:28 AM 1/21/2006, you wrote:

>*Perhaps someone can help me out regarding Clarissa's mother Frau Lichtblau.*

>*What is she saying to Hermann after his concert that seems to upset him?*

>

>*Susan*

I think I found the dialog you are asking about in the Heimat 3 book:

Lassen Sie Clarissa aus diesem unsinnigen Hausbauunternehmen raus. Das muessen Sie mir hier und heute versprechen. Schauen Sie mich an, ich werde im kommenden Jahr 76 Jahre...

Let me know if it was something else you were looking for.

Enjoy -

Chuck

From: Wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>

Date: Sun, 22 Jan 2006 08:30:21 -0500

Hi Susan and Chuck,

Hermann realizes that Clarissa's mother has not changed one bit over the years, which caused much trouble in DZH. She is still protecting her daughter (mother knows best) and keeps "leaning" on her not to give up (or even alter) her career for Hermann. There is another scene earlier in Hamburg, when she reminds Clarissa: "Diese Jugendliebe am Rhein, was sind denn das für Hirngespinnste?" and "Dein Leben gehört der Kunst!" to which Clarissa replies: "Mutter, kannst Du mir nicht einmal Luft zum Atmen lassen".

Wolfgang

From: JoelOYoung at aol.com <JoelOYoung aol.com>

Date: Sun, 22 Jan 2006 15:36:55 CET

Gert Jan,

Your outline is terrific. Thanks ever so much.

joel

From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan.jsbiedron.com>

Date: Sun, 22 Jan 2006 19:13:39 CET

Thanks Wolfgang and Chuck for clarifying the dialogue,

Now I know my posting got through. I did not receive a copy in my mailbox, but now I know from ReindeR's suggestion that I can fix that.

Frau Lichtblau is a typical Pomeranian mother - very bossy and in need of being in control of her daughter - just like my father, aunts and uncles. (With apologies to any list members of Pomeranian descent.) However, the poor woman did have a hard life which revolved around raising her daughter and promoting her career, so she takes each change in Clarissa's life personally.

At least now Clarissa and Hermann can ignore her attempts to interfere. One wonders if Clarissa's son Arnold was mostly raised with his grandmother?

Susan

From: Thomas Hönemann <th.hoenemann.freenet.de >

Date: Sun, 22 Jan 2006 21:38:07 +0100

Dear Ivan,

thank you so much for your enlightening, thoughtful, well-founded and sensitive (not hyper-sensitive! ;-)) introduction. Besides your scientific profession it is obvious that you are writing from the base of a very deep reflection and knowledge of the film and its backgrounds, and your words really are of great quality and dedication.

Your analysis is so deep in many points that I never would assume having something to add. So I am going to react only on your questions, and then will pick up some additional aspects.

First to your question about Rudi Molz. Indeed his part is not easy to understand. To approach to it you have to know that there was a real Rudi Molz. When Edgar Reitz started working on HEIMAT in the early 1980s he lived in Woppenroth, which is a small Hunsrück village with roughly 300 inhabitants. Rudi Molz was the inn-keeper in Woppenroth. In his "Bauernstube" (the name of his guest-house) Edgar Reitz and Peter Steinbach wrote parts of the script of HEIMAT and collected stories by talking to the village people. Edgar and Rudi became friends, and if not the real Rudi Molz had died after an accident in his barn in January 2002, only four month before the filming of HEIMAT 3 started, he would have played himself in H3 (and also his wife Marga had). Edgar Reitz decided to set a memorial for Rudi Molz with H3. He tried to find actors to play the roles of Marga and Rudi in a way that was close to the originals, and he succeeded with Berthold Korner (who is an professional actor from Freiburg) and Christel Schäfer (who is an amateur actor from Ellern/Hunsrück).

[Check out <http://www.heimat123.de/h3actors.htm> and

<http://www.heimat123.de/whftfg.htm>

to find photos of Christel Schäfer and Marga Molz together.]

When returning to Schabbach Rudi is the first person Hermann meets. From the off he comments: "Rudi Molz. He was the Schabbach inn-keeper, and, in my opinion, the soul of the village. He knew about everything, about what happened in the past,

and what would happen in the future. My homecoming occurred within only a few minutes. Nothing romantic or dramatic. Someone could have rounded the whole world, in the mind of the Schabbach people he only had been away for a short while." Reitz is arranging Rudi Molz with a certain aura of prudence, life-experience and wisdom from the beginning on. He will not be a central character of the film, but he will be there in central scenes to comment on them as an authority, as a wise man, as a Hunsrücker. And his death will have quite a symbolical meaning for the whole film, but later on that, I am not going to spoil again ...

Besides: All the scenes in the inn were shot at the original location, and if you go to Woppenroth today you will meet Marga Molz in her "Bauernstube", and if you want you can sleep in the same beds as Gunnar and Udo did (for contact check <http://www.heimat123.de/heimtour.htm>). Marga is a very nice person. I know her since my first Hunsrück tour in 1998, and I also knew her husband Rudi. Both very kind and sensitive people with a lot of life experience and a clear view for the reality of life. From my point of view those two are shown in a very realistic way in the film, and I especially love the scene in their kitchen after Lenchen (Marga) tried to bring some tea to Gunnar and Udo who had just arrived but already were sleeping. Rudi is going to look for the cattle because it is disquiet, and Marga says "all right, so I will warm your bed for you, it will be pretty warm when you arrive." This scene still brings tears to me, because it is so close to Rudi and Marga who really were a great couple, an archetype of a harmonic and caring marriage.

By the way, there is another authentic role in H3: You will have recognized the priest who is a leader of the peace movement demonstrating against the deployment of cruise missile rockets on the Hunsrück. All this is no fictional story, and the priest, Karl August Dahl, who plays himself, really was the leader of the protest in the 1980s.

Reitz is processing lots of personal experiences in H3 again. For example when he and Salome Kammer rebuilt their Munich home, they (after having had lots of trouble with resident workers) also engaged three young workers from the east which Salome got to know when visiting her godchild in the DDR in November 1989. And there will be some more examples later.

To come back to the whole episode: I am still ambiguous about it. First of all also for me it was a pleasure to return to the Schabbach world, to meet old friends and structures. But on the other hand: Imagine watching the whole trilogy in once - there will be a strong break between the last part of H2 and the first of H3: In H2 Hermann and Clarissa were longing for each other so long and, finally, without success. Now they are not only meeting again (having sex then is not an inadequate behaviour in my eyes ;-)) , but already deciding to buy a house together - and all this only took three minutes ... (I developed my thoughts about this more extensive and authentic a few days after the Munich and Simmern (Hunsrück) premiers in September 2004, see <http://www.heimat123.de/h3prembere.htm> (in English!)).

Ivan already pointed on the difficulties in financing and even realising H3. Reitz negotiated with the German broadcasting company ARD (Das Erste) for five or six years, created and changed concepts and whole scripts again and again until the German financiers finally supported the project. But the price was high: With the funds he finally received he had to make drastic reductions of what he originally planned, the shortage of money influenced the making of H3 very deep, as Salome Kammer pointed out in an Interview at the Amsterdam Goethe-Institut in November 2004 (listen to it on Reinders site: <http://heimat123.net/interviews/index.html>).

In the German discussion someone asked: What is wrong with Edgar Reitz? Did he lose all his roots and ideals? I would like to turn the question the other way round: What is wrong with the German culture? What times are, that a well known, successful author and director is not able to realise his ideas in his way? In the end Reitz did a great tightrope walk with 3: constrict himself at any time without losing his conviction of film making. The remarkable thing about that is that in the end he found back to his very own rhythm of telling stories, you will understand what I mean when having seen part 4. But in the end the German broadcasters humbled Edgar Reitz again by forcing him to cut each of the episodes down to 90 minutes to make them fit into their program schedule - really embarrassing.

One last thought: The title "Das glücklichste Volk der Welt" (The happiest people in the world), a quotation from Walter Momper who was the Berlin mayor that time (Ivan mentioned the scene on the TV), already seems to show ironical features at the end of the episode. Superficially the title relates on the euphoria of the German reunion (most clearly to see in the scene on the Zugspitze which Ivan also already mentioned), but also on the destiny of the characters, particularly Herman and Clarissa. In the following we can observe how the fortune is going to unhinge. The motive of losing fortune or the question, what fortune would mean for somebody, is drawing as a thread through all six parts of H3. Especially for the Germans, who once were "the happiest people in the world" and "The world champions" (title of part 2) suffered hard from the economical and social crisis of the 1990s (and still today), H3 is like looking in a mirror, and while looking in this mirror each of us has to think about the own pretensions, decrees and ambitions. And maybe this is one of the reasons why H3 was not a great success in Germany. H3 came at the right time to point on the ailing German self-conception, it is no slight fare, but a film we all had to engage with, a film we had to let reach our hearts and minds.

So, that's it for today. I hope my poor English will not cause too much problems or even worse misunderstandings, feel free to ask if some of my thoughts are incomprehensible.

Best regards to you all, I am looking forward to your reactions,
Thomas
<http://www.heimat123.de>

From: Alan <alan wmedia.com>
Date: Mon, 23 Jan 2006 12:52:39 -0500

Alan Andres here. After a very long silence on this list, I've managed to find a little time to join the discussion. Whether I'll be able to stick with this throughout the H3 discussion remains to be seen. As a few of you know, my life has become a bit more busy recently!

I regret that I missed the Heimat and DZH forums as I greatly admire both films. My feelings about H3 are more ambivalent. Here are some random notes and reactions after a second viewing of Part One.

Ironically without the unrequited tension between Clarissa and Hermann, I found the narrative energy of their story quickly lost its appeal. I would liken the narrative thread in DZH to an unresolved chord in music, which propels the listener towards wanting a resolution. However in H3 the resolution is a minor detail. Yes, it was good to see these characters again. But once they are together, they seem less interesting. And without the tension between them, it is difficult to sustain a compelling narrative.

Rather, for the first episode, which ideally should stand alone as a separate film, restoring the house becomes the unresolved story. Perhaps DIY fanatics who can't miss an episode of "This Old House" found great suspense in this narrative, but for me the story of the house was of passing curiosity.

Secondarily, I suspect keeping Herrmann and Clarissa's concert calendars very busy was also supposed to build the narrative toward longed-for reunions, but they really didn't seem that much apart. And watching Gunnar and Udo in the West and how it transforms their lives is a secondary developing narrative, but not terribly compelling to this viewer. Whereas I had no problem immersing myself in the narratives in Heimat and DZH.

I found it curious that the Berlin Wall falls with no foreshadowing. Of course, in the days immediately prior to the Fall of the Wall, cracks were appearing all over the old Soviet Block and Eastern Europe was in crisis. While it happened very quickly and most of us were astounded it also occurred so relatively peacefully, Hermann doesn't seem to have a clue that the world was changing in the days before November 9. Perhaps this was intentional, yet another indication that Clarissa and Hermann are in their own little world.

I was unfamiliar with St. Martin's Day, November 11. For anyone else similarly ignorant, here is a brief description I found on the web:

"Like so many other Christian celebrations, St Martin's Day coincides with pagan rituals from the pre-Christian era. This falls at the same time as the early winter festivities of light and fertility celebrated by the pagans. The Christian Church, very early in its history, saw that there was a problem with holidays. Many people, even though they had become Christian and given up their pagan ways, didn't want to give up their holidays. The Church, being smart, put Christian Holidays around the same time. The people kept their holiday, they just celebrated something different. In Germany, St Martin's Day is used to mark the beginning of the Carnival season. It is mainly celebrated by children. The children buy or make lanterns, and form a procession through the streets singing special lantern songs. Quite often at the end of the procession, they have a bonfire. After the parade and bonfire, the children form smaller groups and go from door to door singing their songs. Much like trick or treating in the [United] States, the children are given candy, money and other goodies for their efforts. Quite often the lanterns are used to store the goodies until the children reach home."

I assume the white horse and costumed rider that Hermann and Clarissa see is someone dressed as St Martin of Tours, who was once a Roman soldier before becoming a monk.

There are a few interesting biographical details about Karoline von Günderode [misspelled Günderröde in the BBC subtitles] (1780-1806) that may be worth noting. According to the *Oxford Companion to German Literature*, she was a romantic poet who was "deeply in love with Professor Fredrich Creuzer [1771-1858]; she took her life when Creuzer decided against dissolving his marriage." Creuzer contemplated divorce, "but became reconciled with his wife after she tended him during a serious illness. This change of intention was followed by the suicide of Karoline." I thought this worth noting considering what takes place in the Günderode House later in the film.

In the discussion of Karoline von Günderode, there is a passing mention of Clemens Brentano (1778-1842), German romantic novelist and poet. With Achim von Arnim

and J.J. von Gorres, Brentano was one of the primary Heidelberg Romantics. He and Arnim collected folk-songs which they published as *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (1805-8), 12 songs from which were later set in a cycle for orchestra and vocalist by Gustav Mahler (1899).

In the film there are a number of visual allusions to images from German Romantic paintings by artists such as Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840) and the Austrian Moritz von Schwind (1804-1871). Note the ruined castles overlooking the Rhine, the full moon illuminating bare trees and church steeples in the morning mist. Legends of the Rhine were also common subjects of the German Romantic artists and poets.

Some notes on the character of Gunnar. Ivan writes that Gunnar is "utterly endearing" and is "almost a tragic figure." My reaction was far different. I found him manic, hysterical, petty, egotistical and selfish. Rather than finding him "a good father in many ways to his children" I noted that Reitz twice called our attention to two very thoughtless things he did regarding his daughters: quarrelling with Petra in front of the kids (the kids' fed-up facial reactions and hands covering their ears, told us that this is a familiar side-show in that household) and demonstrating the animal trap to one of his daughters who appears appalled at the cruelty of the device. Empathic is not the word I would use to describe Gunnar. Personally, I also found him irritating, although I sensed Reitz was trying to show his colorful, endearing side. Alas, this escaped me.

The relationship between Reinhold and Petra confounds me. From the above you can understand why I have no trouble believing that Petra has lost affection for Gunnar. (He also lies to her, leaving her in ignorance about his trip to the West.) However why does Petra feel drawn to Reinhold? Their backgrounds are vastly different. Petra and Gunnar live the life of working-class East Germans, while Reinhold comes from the upper-middle-class, or perhaps even higher. (His mother's apartment has a library and very large paintings, suggesting old money and taste. And since both she and Reinhold are involved in a symphonic music management enterprise, I conclude this stems from personal love and enthusiasm rather than business necessity. Reading between the lines, I quickly concluded that the family is independently wealthy. I may be totally wrong, but these are the visual signals.) Petra undoubtedly wants more for herself and her two girls and probably dreams of finding a better partner. But why would Reinhold be attracted to someone so far removed from the world of art and music that he seems to inhabit? And even if there is an initial physical attraction, what makes either think they have enough in common to sustain such a relationship? There are major pieces of the puzzle missing here. I assume there was further background about both characters that clarifies this mystery. (For instance maybe Petra came from a formerly aristocratic family that was dispossessed after the war or was initially an academic with an interest in concert music.) I have a suspicion that this may be another element of H3 that was lost due to time and budgetary restrictions. Does anyone know more?

Did anyone find it odd that Ernst talks to Hermann about "what father and mother intended for us?" Paul was absent during most of Ernst's childhood and even after Paul's "return" there wasn't much indication that he had great affection for Ernst. In fact, since Paul became closest to Hermann (who wasn't his biological child) during his early career as a composer, I always suspected Ernst was jealous of Hermann's relationship with his father.

No one has mentioned a fascinating footnote regarding the "Dido and Aeneas" performance. When he was in Boston last month, Reitz told a fascinating story: When making *Heimat* in the early 1980s he had cast a young actor to play Hermann.

The young actor was from a small German town and also had some musical ability. However before the filming began, the teenager's parents removed him from the role due to the sexual nature and nudity involved in the story of Hermann's relationship with Klarchen. Instead Peter Harting was cast in the role and appeared in the final film. Reitz had lost all contact with the original actor until very recently. It turns out the original actor's real life almost mirrored the fictional life of Hermann. He left his small town and studied music in college and has since gone on to become a conductor of classical music. And he is the conductor who appears in the long-shot with the orchestra in the "Dido" performance.

Scott Joplin. Gunnar's performance of Scott Joplin's "The Entertainer" is in marked contrast to the musical world of Hermann and Clarissa. One gets the impression from the faces of those listening to Gunnar's recital at Rienhold's mother's apartment, this is the first time Joplin has been played on that piano. I assume this was supposed to emphasize Gunnar's low class taste. Sort of like going into MOMA and asking where the Norman Rockwell gallery is located. Ironically, in America since the 1970s, ragtime and Joplin's music are included in most serious music survey courses. Do I conclude in Europe this is not the case?

Did anyone find the background score to *Heimat 3* much less effective than in the previous two films? I really missed the emotional depth given to the narrative by Mamangakis's contribution, despite the use of his signature title music throughout. The additional music by Michael Reissler I found relatively uninspired and did little to embroider or articulate the emotions on screen.

Many thanks to Gert for his timeline. On my initial viewing I wasn't following the timeline closely and allowed for the narrative to progress at its own pace. Gert's exercise makes one view the film's content through a very different lens. I also thought the narrative seemed hurried. Ironically, I need to quote the following line from Leslie Felperin's review in *Variety*: "It's a massive achievement, but longueurs may frustrate newcomers used to the wham-bam style of contempo serials and movies."

When I saw part of H3 theatrically in Boston, I noted that the subtitles were slightly different than the subtitles that appeared on BBC4. I would be curious to know from anyone in the UK who has the Artificial Eye DVDs whether these use the BBC4 subtitles or another translation.

Finally, Wolfgang asked:

- > Ivan referenced the Ingo Fliess (pronounced fleece) interviews in his
- > introduction. Mr. Fliess is also listed as the "Lektor" and agent in the credits
- > of the films which is kind of curious. I'm not even certain what a "lecturer"
- > does in publishing business. Alan?

This is a mystery to me as well. Is it possible that "Lektor" has an alternate translated meaning in English? I used to have a number of colleagues at a Munich publishing house and I would love to pose this question to them, but it's now been nearly 9 years since I worked with them on an international co-publishing project.

Apologies for having fallen silent these many years!

Cheers,
Alan

From: Raymond Scholz <rscholz zonix.de>
Date: Mon, 23 Jan 2006 23:38:04 +0100

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

> Am I correct to assume that Anton's wife is deceased?

She died in 1984 according to her tombstone. I'm not going give you a link to a picture of it because it contains some spoilers...

Cheers, Ray

From: Raymond Scholz <rscholz zonix.de >
Date: Tue, 24 Jan 2006 00:06:46 CET

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

> As Hermann and Clarissa make love in his Berlin hotel room we hear
 > from the television the words of a politician, "We Germans are now the
 > happiest people in the world."

There should be put some emphasis especially on the TV archive footage, where Walter Momper, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Willy Brandt and Helmut Kohl are trying their best to intone the German national anthem (the "right" strophe, not the one Gunnar sings in the car with Clarissa and Udo...). Regarded from the current point of view, this scene became a symbol for those who think the German reunification proceeded way too fast or for the fear of nationalism. The situation at the Schöneberger Rathaus wasn't all friendly. On certain TV extracts you'll notice boos and even someone giving a finger...

Reitz shows us these scenes in a way most of us will have experienced the fall of the Berlin wall: via TV. Sometimes in ironic, mocking way through a mirror or as a reflection. There were other movies dealing with the fall of the wall that directly dive into the scenes at the wall. I like the reserved point of view, the Heimat 3 takes. Watching all this on TV made the whole event feel surreal for me during the first days and the Heimat 3 characters aren't equipped with the benefit of having experienced this in another, more exciting way.

Also note the music during all these scenes ("Nacht Tag" on the CD). Disturbing and menacing - in contrast to Hermann's, Clarissa's and probably most of the people's feelings during this night. I agree with Thomas on the impact of this feeling for the whole Heimat 3 and probably Germany in the late 90s.

> Trying not to be too sentimental, I felt great joy at being re-united with
 > Reitz's characters from Heimats 1 & 2, a feeling of huge appreciation
 > for the vividly drawn new characters, and an overwhelming happiness
 > at once again being immersed in Reitz's created world and following his
 > captivating story lines.

This was my feeling when the light was dimmed at the Prinzregententheater in Munich. Great expectations of new characters and stories but even more a reunion with the well known characters and their lives we virtually attended for years.

I'm still not convinced whether those not knowing Heimat 1 and 2 will be caught by the "old" characters at all. I'd really like to know what they think of Hermann and Clarissa (and later the grumpy Simon clan). Though, this mailing list is probably the wrongest place to find someone not knowing H1 and H2...

Reitz gives the viewer a kick start with the first episode, very nervous, touching the main characters, constructing some future doom. Knowing (loving!) the detailed characterisations from H1 and H2 I felt uncomfortable with this beginning. I remember ReindeR, Thomas and me after watching the first episode in Munich in a confused state of mind where our thoughts could be best described with "Well, ...". This state didn't completely pass during the first day (1-3) [Reports telling that we lost our Heimat and our orientation on that first day that much, so that we ended up at McDonalds for finding some food are all wrong!!] But with every episode (especially the fourth as Thomas pointed out before) you'll get more accustomed to Heimat 3.

Another word on Hermann and Clarissa. Not only to new viewers of the Heimat trilogy they look like strangers in the rural Hunsrück (in fact, they are!). Think of their elegant clothing, the BMW, their profession ...

- > One of the things I love about Reitz's films is the very careful delineation
- > of character. In this first episode of Heimat 3 we are introduced to new
- > East German characters. Clarissa recruits two stage-hands, Gunnar and Udo,
- > from the Gewandhaus in Leipzig, after her concert has been cancelled
- > because of political demonstrations, to rebuild the ruined half-timbered house,
- > the Günderrode house as it is known after Karoline von Günderrode, a German
- > Romantic poet, who was supposed erroneously to have lived there, which she
- > has bought as a "love-nest" for herself and Hermann.

Knowing the bureaucracy and the financial problems the "real" Günderrodehaus ran in after the shooting of Heimat 3, Wallauer's warning words when Hermann and Clarissa buy the house seem prophetic...

Less stunning but still noteworthy: the woman at the gate of the Gewandhaus in Leipzig complaining about people becoming uninterested in cultural events. I can hear Reitz' sigh during these lines...

- > Another amusing scene involving Tillmann is the one where he is shown
- > rushing to fetch Hermann [Mr.Günderrode as he calls him, not knowing his
- > real name] from the Hotel Schönburg as his house is "floating".
- > His excitement; his naivety; his desire to impress his new employer,
- > are all beautifully conveyed. As he drives, he becomes quite breathless,
- > blurting out all his educational qualifications and his great experience
- > as an electrician! He really wants this job!! Hermann has to quieten him down.

I'd declare this my favourite scene in the first episode. Besides that there are lots of funny quotes probably owing to Thomas Brussig (not denying Reitz a distinguished sense of humour!).

Udo at the table with the Simon family: "Alle ham eenen Dialekt, nur wir haben geenen." (all are speaking with dialect, except us).

Or Udo arriving at the rural Schabbach: "Ist ja wie bei uns".

Something I disliked: the computer hacker story about Arnold seemed superfluous, unrealistic and annoying to me. The strong Hamburger accent of the judge bugged me.

- > 2. A good deal of fun is had showing the reactions of Gunnar and Udo
- > to the "golden West". I enjoyed the scene in the DIY store. Why was Udo
- > so amazed at the blue-lit filling station? Was it meant to be just the contrast
- > with the drab East or was there something more specific?

Eastern filling stations used to close at 7 p.m. and the illumination was far less impressive.

Hopefully, this time I'll be able to attend the discussion to the end. I somewhat disappeared from the list during the H2 discussion - something I really, really would have liked to take part in. But I decided not to discuss with almost no time to watch the movies and read the interesting post, since my appreciation of DZH is too high. All or nothing :-)

Cheers, Ray

From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan.jsbiedron.com>

Date: Tue, 24 Jan 2006 11:20:51 -0600

It's great having so many informative postings to the H3 discussion.

Thanks to Thomas and Wolfgang for explaining the financial and television constrictions that Reitz was forced to work with. I am convinced that if given a "blank check" Reitz would have covered the story with his usual depth.

Regarding Alan's comment

- > Perhaps DIY fanatics who can't miss an episode of
- > "This Old House" found great suspense in this narrative, but for me the
- > story of the house was of passing curiosity." –

I think the house restoration represents Hermann and Clarissa's new relationship. They're building something new based on a structure from the past. Hopefully for them the foundation is strong and not a total ruin. The house is more obviously a device to bring in the east German characters. Heimat has always tried to reflect the Germany of the times and it would not be complete without some story about former DDR citizens coming to the west.

And on Gunnar Alan wrote:

- > "Rather than finding him "a good father in many ways to his children" I noted
- > that Reitz twice called our attention to two very thoughtless things he did
- > regarding his daughters: quarreling with Petra in front of the kids (the kids'
- > fed-up facial reactions and hands covering their ears, told us that this is a
- > familiar side-show in that household) and demonstrating the animal trap to
- > one of his daughters who appears appalled at the cruelty of the device.
- > Empathic is not the word I would use to describe Gunnar. Personally,
- > I also found him irritating, although I sensed Reitz was trying to show
- > his colorful, endearing side. Alas, this escaped me."

I think that again there was not enough time to fully develop Gunnar's character - that he obviously has dreams to better his and his family's life is left to our imagination. As to quarrelling with his wife in from the girls - they lived in a small apartment - hearing disagreement is an unavoidable fact of life! I assumed that by showing his daughter the animal trap he was instructing her on how dangerous it was. I immediately thought of the scene in Heimat when Anton and Ernst were little boys. But look at the scene when Gunnar plays the piano and his daughter climbs on his lap - she would not do that if he was not a loving father. Gunnar is also torn between the two worlds - his playing Scott Joplin shows his love for the west, but his raising his potato bag on the flag pole indicates he also retains affection for his old Heimat.

I do however agree with Alan that Reinhold's attraction to Petra is somewhat mystifying. And thanks Alan for contributing the background on Karoline von G nderode and the commentary about Reitz's original choice to play Hermann.

Heimat 3 does move quickly and jumps from one theme to another. But perhaps this is also a mirror of today's society.

Susan

From: Alan <alan.wmedia.com>
Date: Tue, 24 Jan 2006 21:53:42 CET

A quick reply to Susan's comments.

- > I think the house
- > restoration represents Hermann and Clarissa's new relationship. They're
- > building something new based on a structure from the past. Hopefully for
- > them the foundation is strong and not a total ruin. The house is more
- > obviously a device to bring in the east German characters. Heimat has always
- > tried to reflect the Germany of the times and it would not be complete
- > without some story about former DDR citizens coming to the west.

Agreed. The house is clearly a metaphor for both Hermann and Clarissa's relationship as well as for the rebuilding of Germany. However sometimes a metaphor in itself is not enough to satisfyingly propel a narrative. I was looking at the film and the theme of house restoration in terms of dramatic development, and whether the rebuilding progress as it is told in the film is sufficient to engage the viewer. There is an attempt at dramatic suspense when the frame is raised with the auto jacks, but this seemed a little forced to me. Much ado about an interesting, but minor technicality. (Aside: Isn't Tobi orchestrating the many workers with the auto jacks a sly metaphor for what Hermann does on the podium when conducting an orchestra?)

Ideally, I would hope that each segment of H3 could stand alone as an independent film, with its own dramatic structure and development. I realize this is a very high standard on which to judge parts of a much larger film, but I think Reitz himself set the bar very high with a near perfect model in many parts of Heimat and DZH. I guess I would pose it this way, if you had not seen any of the earlier films and "The Luckiest People in the World" was a stand-alone film, how would you judge it dramatically?

Re: Gunnar. Susan wrote:

- > I think that again there was not enough time to fully develop Gunnar's
- > character - that he obviously has dreams to better his and his family's life
- > is left to our imagination.

This seems pretty evident. More detail could help, but I had little difficulty understanding Gunnar and Udo's motivation for picking up Clarissa's invitation. And, yes, they are clearly doing it for their families rather than personal gain.

- > As to quarrelling with his wife in front of the girls - they lived in a small
- > apartment - hearing disagreement is an unavoidable fact of life!

That doesn't make it any less thoughtless and cruel. I'm probably overly sensitive on this subject as I've known people who have been raised in small apartments by quarreling parents, and the experience of seeing parents quarrel at close quarters has not been without emotional scars. I agree this is all too common, however I don't find it very forgivable. I thought the scene in the film was very revealing and I especially appreciated the shot of the two girls as they endured the parental fireworks. I also got the impression the sisters probably emotionally support each other when the fighting takes place and they realize it's "just Mom and Dad going at it again." That's a lot to convey in one wordless shot, yet by showing his concern for the kids in this situation, I think Reitz is telling us a lot about both the homelife of Gunnar and Petra, and the endurance of the kids. This is the rare touch of a thoughtful, caring and masterful filmmaker. Something seldom seen in contemporary film, I would contend.

- > I assumed that by showing his daughter the animal trap he was
- > instructing her on how dangerous it was. I immediately thought of the scene
- > in Heimat when Anton and Ernst were little boys.

Yes, me too. I'm sure Gunnar meant well and he thought he was teaching his daughter about nature "red in tooth and claw," but his daughter justifiably looks rather horrified. And I got the impression Gunnar was oblivious to her empathy for the marten.

- > But look at the scene when
- > Gunnar plays the piano and his daughter climbs on his lap - she would not do
- > that if he was not a loving father.

I have no doubt Gunnar loves his daughters and vice versa. There are many indications of this. But I contend that he is also short tempered, thoughtless, careless and often selfish. That wouldn't erase the feelings his daughters have for him when he is a caring and good parent. A great trait of any great author or filmmaker (and I would certainly include Reitz in their company) is the creation of well-formed characters with both virtues and flaws. Somewhere - Reitz himself may have said it - I read an observation that all the characters in the Heimat films are imperfect, human beings. Like all of us.

Cheers,
Alan

From: Wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>
Date: Wed, 25 Jan 2006 00:00:04 CET

Hi,

I am not sure (as usual) if this has been posted somewhere already but Christian Reitz has an interesting web site about his own work, including cameraman on Heimat3

<http://www.christian-reitz.de/>

Wolfgang

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire zetnet.co.uk>
Date: Wed, 25 Jan 2006 00:28:09 -0000

After the magnificent and very perceptive contributions by Ivan and Thomas and everyone else that have already appeared in the Discussion, it's difficult to know what else to say. Maybe it would be worth reflecting about how one's first impressions change on seeing the film again.

It was frustrating that the timing of the DVD release put an end to spontaneous discussion when the films were fresh in our minds, and a number of people were eager to participate. Any one unable to video them all then, or to afford the DVDs now, may no longer feel so keen to contribute. On the other hand it is interesting to think about the first film again in a different context, though as Ivan said in his Preamble, reading and hearing more about the Heimat films in the interval also affects one's own perception and ideas.

I understand how people who have loved the Heimat films for many years, and have met the author and some of the cast, hate to see the work criticised by those of us who come new to it and may not initially have the same protective feeling towards it. However, Heimat as a whole is a masterpiece, and Edgar Reitz is a very great artist. His work is great enough to survive thoughtful and honest criticism - to suppress it or water it down would be almost an insult to him wouldn't it?

Some of this comes from watching all of the first "Heimat" for a second time shortly before Christmas, when I reacted again to the appearance of American Paul in Film 8 with much the same consternation and distress as I had originally felt over Episode 1 of Heimat 3. But it became clear that because these great films are the work of an individual artist and his team, they cannot be homogeneously satisfying, like a commercial product - but that the work of a great artist in any medium is bound to be uneven, because he is constantly developing new ideas and methods, within the constraints of the medium, his resources, and the world beyond, and in the process, his inspiration may spiral through many troughs and peaks. But unevenness in no way invalidates the work, and Heimat 1 is not "spoilt" by the characters and episodes that are less convincing, eg the older Paul and the tiresome Hermann of films 10 and 11. In the same way, the fact that many of us were disappointed with the first two or three films of Heimat 3 does not mean that the whole third series was in some sense "unsuccessful".

Edgar Reitz has been compared to the "great 19th century novelists" ... if one thinks of someone like George Eliot for example (the range and depth of her experience and work seem to present some interesting parallels with those of Reitz), even her

best work is at times uneven, and yet the richness of "Middlemarch" for instance is not lost because of the rather unsatisfying "happy end".

However, returning to first impressions: consternation and distress were the dominant reactions to H3 episode 1, for me, and apparently for a number of others who have by now recorded here and elsewhere what they felt. What I wrote then seems now rather harsh and a bit arrogant – but it was what I felt. I'm going to repeat it so as to see what has changed. On 21.09.05 I wrote to the mailing list:

- > *I respect Thomas Hönemann's request that we should respond "not looking for*
- > *what is lacking or not perfect, but what is present and the way it is done"...*
- > *but sadly, for me the disappointment is too big - looking at the first episode of*
- > *H3 that way would seem a kind of disrespect to the first two "Heimat" series...*
- >
- > *It's likely that being English I can't properly appreciate the impact of the events of*
- > *1989 and their celebration in this episode, and what it must mean for a German*
- > *audience. However, Heimat 1 and DZH were emphatically not just superior*
- > *drama documentaries. They were subtle authentic films of the highest order.*
- >
- > *In episode 1 of H3, it seems the Sorcerer has gone away, his magic is lost, he no*
- > *longer loves his characters (with the possible exception of Ernst and the lad with*
- > *the clarinet). Most of the characters seem curiously two dimensional, as though*
- > *constructed to represent one or two themes or ideas, and unlike in the earlier*
- > *series, the actors seem unable to subtly transcend the script.*
- >
- > *So Hermann and Clarissa meet again with barely a hint of their multi-layered*
- > *enigmatic relationship in the past. Schnüsschen's is the only name of an adult*
- > *from DZH that I heard them mention, tho I may have missed others. Hermann*
- > *is still a sensitive and competent musician, but when the young clarinetist plays*
- > *while Hermann reads a letter, he appears not to listen or notice. Clarissa sings*
- > *Dido in a voice that my TV set rendered shrill and harsh - none of the tenderness*
- > *and subtlety of das "Wölfelied". There are so many dimensions missing. The two*
- > *could have been any couple written to portray the near impossibility of combining*
- > *their careers as professional musicians with a fulfilled home life..*
- >
- > *The new characters from the East, too, are in this episode somehow written from*
- > *the outside, as interesting and amusing strangers, not in depth from within, as*
- > *were the known and remembered family and friends in the earlier series. (I*
- > *suppose this only represents their role both in real life and in the film). And the*
- > *turns of the plot seem perfunctory and merely instrumental to a theme, in*
- > *particular the mutual attraction of Loewe and Gunnar's wife.*
- >
- > *This docudrama use of character and plot appeared only with the least convincing*
- > *characters of the previous series, eg Esther, and the Helga of the later episodes*
- > *of DZH, and maybe "American" Paul and the older Hermann in Heimat 1.*
- > *And even in the Esther/Reinhard episode, as well as the endearing Reinhard*
- > *himself, there were the many beautiful images of Venice. So far little to*
- > *match the cinematography of the two earlier series in the present one.*
- >
- > *I'm sorry, this is all very negative, and maybe hurtful to people enjoying the new*
- > *series. - but from trying to read the good German discussion of H3/film1 on*
- > *Thomas' website, it's clear that others have reacted in the same way and that*
- > *the underlying cause may have been the constraints of modern ratings-obsessed*
- > *TV production and the financial backers' ludicrous "lack of respect ... in the*
- > *presence of such a great artist". Also, we are promised the magic will*

- > *return in the fourth and later episodes, so let's look forward to that...*
- > *Angela*

1. One thing that has definitely changed is my attitude to the characters from the East, especially Gunnar, and also Tobi. After seeing the whole series they have become friends, as it were, and are no longer intrusive "strangers". They are still observed more simply and more from outside than the subtler "Reitzian" characters of H1 and H2... but I can now appreciate all that Ivan writes about them in his Introduction. If it still does at times seem that (to be a bit pretentious) Dickens has collaborated with George Eliot or Flaubert – I can now feel "so much the better for that!"

2. The rapid rather perfunctory reunion of Hermann and Clarissa : Well a lot has now been explained about the wearying constraints on the budget and time for this series, the ignorant and insensitive demands of the "TV-bosses", etc. I've just been fascinated by re-reading the excerpts from a Dutch interview, that Gert Jan Jansen translated for the German discussion on Thomas' website at <http://www.heimat123.de/download/heimat3mld.pdf> (pages 95-97). *Might we ask Gert Jan to translate them into English too for our discussion here? [There is now an English rendering at <http://www.heimat123.net/interviews/cinema-nl241204.html> - Eds]* There Edgar Reitz says that he actually shot a whole hour more of film for the first part, which would have meant that Hermann and Clarissa would not have arrived at the G nderode Haus till right at the end of the episode. The missing part would have covered a whole day during which they rehearsed and performed together for a concert by musicians from both East and West, attended by Willy Brandt, which might have let them seem less oblivious of what was happening in the world around them, and also made their eventual decision to rebuild the house together a bit more plausible. (As it is, Clarissa's evident delight at the happiness of the people they encounter on the road from Berlin does anyway rather undermine the idea that they were oblivious of what it all meant...) Dwelling longer on the events of that day might also have enhanced the sense of the significance of the fall of the Wall for the whole following decade, which Reitz emphasises so much in his interviews about H3, but which the shortening of the films has tended almost to trivialise.

3. The music: well there first impressions haven't really changed. I agree strongly with Alan Andres (23.01.06) about having "missed the emotional depth given to the narrative by Mamangakis's contribution". It was interesting also to see an email on the list from Kev Hopper on 30.10.05 about the music, as he too found Clarissa's professional voice far less convincing than her amateur singing of the beautiful W lfelied in H2. Again, in H3 I still miss the enjoyment in H2 of Clarissa's work as a student of cello. Her musicianship and the fun, the anxiety and seriousness of her approach felt then somehow very real. Hermann's having gravitated to a more conventional form of music making may be realistic, considering the constraints of the market on concert programming. As the great "maestro" he still seems a bit unconvincing, though it is very good to have an actor capable of working with the orchestra rather than just flapping his hands. But all this really is rather beside the point - they may not actually be "world class" musicians but they do come across as serious musicians, performing and not miming their parts.

One very small point though – when Clarissa sings in the car while driving to Leipzig, she is given a piano accompaniment. Somehow (unless I misunderstood and she is meant to be playing a tape) it is very unlike Reitz to use sound in a way that destroys the illusion of immediate reality. Is it possible that, because of the constraints on filming in a car, for once she had to mime the singing?

4. The cinematography: I am entirely unqualified to comment on this, knowing nothing about camera work and filming. However, re-watching H1 and H2 only emphasised the sadness of the loss of Gernot Roll to the Heimat films. There is nothing in H3 to match his work. I don't understand how, but he seemed able to create and light entirely believable spaces in a house or street, that became strangely familiar. One knew exactly where the characters were and how they related to each other and to the rest of the space, where they came from and where they were going, even when it was out of shot (or maybe in reality somewhere else altogether). His spaces subtly enhanced the way characters related to each other within them. Foreground characters remained in balance with those further back, and kept free spaces for the interchange of reaction and communication. One was aware of the reactions of characters one couldn't actually at that moment see. I am unable to analyse or elaborate on this. I am thinking for example of scenes inside the Simon house in H1, or in Dorli's attic in H2 film 5. There are many beautiful shots in the later parts of H2 and in H3, but the lighting and the positioning of the characters on the screen seem somehow more conventional. I can't explain why. I could even be imagining it, or more likely half remembering it from something read elsewhere?

5. The loss of the "magic": this hit so hard when first seeing the film, but it is really difficult to talk about now. Everything one has since read or seen about the film emphasises the dire effect of the conditions under which Reitz was forced to work. In fact the trouble began far back, with the late evening scheduling of Heimat 2, and the changed media and audience culture which meant that in simplistic commercial terms H2 was not rated a great "success". It can only be imagined what we have lost because he was not able to get funding to start work on a another series straightaway while still enthused with the spirit that induced him to make H2 out of "love for life". The years of struggle and the unwelcome degree of compromise required before he could get the filming under way clearly took a toll.

The book "*Dreht Heimat*" gives a few extracts from the production diaries of all three "Heimat" series. The extracts for H3 have at times a darker and wearier tone. Since the filming was not done chronologically, one can't usually relate them directly to particular episodes. A couple of months into the filming he was questioning whether he would be able to recover in this series the surging current of the narrative that had born him up through "Heimat" and H2. A little while later he felt what he calls the "narrative magic" was about to return, but traces of the weariness persisted. About half way through, he describes how the original magical guidelines that had stayed with him since he started writing, had deserted him, and that the script had become soulless. "It is all professionally resolved and completely disenchanting." Again this was probably only a temporary low patch, but then he was faced with having to cut the films to 87.5 minutes to fit the TV schedules, when it was already clear that Episode 1 needed to be 100 minutes long to develop the magic of the narrative he dreamed of.

The loss of magic and what seemed at first viewing like a loss of the author's love for characters like Hermann and Clarissa in this first episode may reflect this weariness. It may also reflect the sense that he describes in many of his interviews that the experience, knowledge and ideals of intellectuals of his own generation are no longer valid or valued in the world today. He deliberately presents Hermann and to some extent Clarissa as bearers of this uncomfortable consciousness, and attributes Hermann's "passiveness" to it. All this may contribute to the flatness and disappointment one feels when first meeting them again in Episode 1 of H3, though it has to be said that Hermann was always the "intellectual, eternally failing to arrive"

even in H2, but he seemed somehow more complex and understandable then, and full of energy, and funny, and young.

But even in Episode 1 there are many moments of true magic – for me there was a wonderful sense of relief in the short scene when Hermann visits Ernst – Ernst has everything, the ambiguous, sensitive, stubborn, way-out personality that Reitz delights in, and there is a quietness in this scene, which plays out in huge contrast to all the technicolour clamour of most of this episode. There were also grateful moments like the tenderness of Rudi and Lenchen which Thomas describes – and which look back to moments in the first “Heimat” with Kath the Grandmother, or with Maria and Otto. Here perhaps is the secret, unmapped side of Schabbach that Reitz believes has survived into the modern world. And then there are the children. Reitz must be one of the very best directors of small children in film. Ivan mentions Gunnar’s daughter creeping onto his lap as he played the piano, and I think it’s Udo’s son who slips between Hermann and Clarissa as they embrace, the child they have never made enough room for in their lives, whom now they will never have together. And they are so gentle to him.

O dear, this has become much too long. There are many things I’d like to respond to in other people’s contributions – but no time now. There is just one thing that bugs me a bit – it’s the rather politically correct point made by almost everyone that Hermann and Clarissa are hopelessly self indulgent and self centred not to be more aware of and involved in political and social issues. It’s interesting, because the whole group in the Fuchsbau in the sixties were already very self-absorbed, and it seemed to me, as I said a while ago on the list, that only Juan had the kind of fascination with and love for the others, and an intuitive, magical way of interacting with them, that I felt Reitz himself must have had to be able to create these characters. However, that’s something rather different from being “socially and politically aware”. If Reitz had been able to use footage of the day in Berlin after the Wall fell, Hermann and Clarissa might have appeared far more in touch with what was happening. However, surely as world class musicians they are likely to be already giving as much to society and the world as anyone else who struggles for a lifetime to develop their talents as far as they can, to produce work that others value and hugely enjoy. At least they are not trying to solve or avoid their deeper personal conflicts in social or political activity for which they have no real aptitude.

After which rather smug remark I don’t deserve to be forgiven for having written too much.

Angela

**From: "seymouralexander" <seymouralexander onetel.com>
Date: Thu, 26 Jan 2006 14:11:46 -0000**

Dear All

It is a real pleasure to read your mailings; amongst my family and friends I am the only Heimat addict so it is good to see that there are plenty of others around the world. Having seen H3 last year at the Renoir cinema in London I noticed on viewing the A/E DVD that there are whole chunks missing; unless I dropped off in the middle, all the stuff about Gunnar's contract with Warner Brothers for the supply of bits of the wall is gone from episode 1 (or whichever). The bonus is a great couple of documentaries about Hunsrück and the 'making of the movie' film. Also

an interview with Reitz and some beautiful shots of the old blacksmith's. A question: was the Gunnerode house really built for the film, is it a real house and if so is it still standing? And one question about H1 (sorry I haven't downloaded all the archive stuff yet): does anybody remember the scene where a wasp or bee drops into a glass of beer at an open air bar in Schabbach, sometime in the 40s or 50s? I didn't find the scene, which I recall from the ARTE showing back in the 80s, in the A/E DVD of H1 which leads me to suspect that there are more cuts in that release also. DZH is my favourite.

Thanks

Seymour Alexander
(Scotland)

From: Elizabeth Garrett <david.garrett4 ntlworld.com>

Date: Thu, 26 Jan 2006 21:35:42 -0000

Ivan and all - How wonderful to be back with Heimat! As a new member of the mailing list I just have a few things to say about episode one of H3 (and thank you Ivan for the very interesting introduction).

I was riveted by the scenes showing the fall of the Berlin wall, as I well remember sitting glued to the TV in 1989 on "that night, when the world held its breath".

I loved the scene at the house on the night of the full moon, when the knight on the white horse rode by. It was magical - and it reminded me of the Frenchwoman who rode through Schabbach in Heimat, a being from another world, as are Hermann and Clarissa.

Now on to the East German characters - yes, I too found Gunnar annoying at first but I have grown to like him. He was so frustrated living in that tiny flat in East Germany, and I can imagine him hammering away all night at that ridiculous panelling, just because he desperately needed an outlet for his frustration. Poor Petra, poor children. And poor Gunnar.

Why, in Anton's house, does Gunnar leap up and demand if they ever go on strike? Were strikes not allowed in East Germany? And did the propaganda tell them that the lazy Westerners went on strike all the time?

One last thing that puzzles me - why is Hartmut so cross when Gunnar and Udo arrive? He obviously doesn't get on with his father Anton, he may feel overshadowed by his brilliant wife Mara, and he is probably jealous of Hermann's success. But why frown so at the East Germans, when everyone is so welcoming?

I look forward very much to future episodes of Heimat 3.

Elizabeth Garrett
England.

From: Wyn Grant <wyn_grant@hotmail.com>

Date: Fri, 27 Jan 2006 10:20:09 CET

I have not watched the first episode of Series 3 again yet (partly because I have been away in Germany) but I was pleased to be alerted by someone on the list to the fact that the DVD contained a film about the making of the series and the Hunsrück and also an interview with Reitz. A few comments on these:

1. I was struck by Reitz's comments that for series 3 Schabbach was moved closer to the Rhine so that it was in walking distance of the rebuilt house, permitting the evocative shot when the church spire looms over the horizon. I was also interested to hear that the house was built at the interface between the Rhine, with its warmer climate, and the Hunsrück with its cool climate. Once the vines stop, he said, you are out of the Rhine and 100 metres on you are in the Hunsrück.
2. I was interested to see how much the smithy in Gehlweiler was surrounded by modern housing. It must have taken some clever camera work to provide the images of the past in series one.
3. In his interview, Reitz said that DVD technology permitted films to be approached in the way that one would read a book, an interesting observation.

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

Date: Fri, 27 Jan 2006 13:22:56 -0000

Wyn Grant wrote:

- > I was struck by Reitz's comments that for series 3 Schabbach was moved
- > closer to the Rhine so that it was in walking distance of the rebuilt house,
- > permitting the evocative shot when the church spire looms over the horizon.

When I was in the town museum in Simmern last September there was an exhibition containing props and costumes used in the making of the Heimat films. There was a cardboard replica on a wooden frame used to represent the Schabbach church spire in the filming. In Part 1 Of Heimat 3 when Hermann and Clarissa walk up to the brow of the hill Reitz challenges us to notice the deception/illusion, as when Hermann points out Schabbach Clarissa exclaims, "That close!" Schabbach is indeed everywhere!! As Eve-Marie Schneider [Marie-Goot] was fond of remarking on our tour of Heimat sites, "All film is an illusion".

Ivan Mansley.

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

Date: Fri, 27 Jan 2006 16:51:52 -0000

I was wondering if someone with much more musical knowledge than I possess could identify all the songs that Clarissa sings and the pieces of music that Hermann plays/conducts. I assume that the latter are mainly standard works in the classical repertoire [Beethoven's Emperor Concerto?] and many are familiar to, if not identifiable by, me. Clarissa's songs, apart from the performance as Dido in Purcell's "Dido & Aeneas", are a different matter.

I assume also that many of the songs are making a comment on the situation and scenes around them. I will give one example. As Clarissa drives to Leipzig she sings as follows:-

From here
 Behind the flashes of red
 Clouds are drawing near
 But father and mother are long dead
 No one here knows me any more.
 How soon, how soon
 Will that stillness come
 When I too shall rest
 And over me will rustle
 The beautiful forest's loneliness.

The words seem to have more application to Hermann who is shown walking alone through the morning mist into Schabbach. The words seem ironic in a way [No one here knows me any more], as Hermann is immediately surrounded by villagers and greeted by everyone ["Haven't seen you for ages"]. Are the words perhaps a German folk song?

I tried to make sense of the choice of the Purcell opera. Obviously it deals with love and desertion and death but Clarissa is not deserted nor does she die tho' she does become ill. Perhaps I am straining much too hard for connections! I also felt that too much time in the film was given to Clarissa's stage performance as Dido, but maybe if Salome Kammer was my partner I would have done exactly the same!!

Ivan Mansley.

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire zetnet.co.uk>

Date: Fri, 27 Jan 2006 18:22:15 CET

Ivan,

I'm not knowledgeable enough about music to have known this otherwise - but the lovely song that Clarissa sang in the car is also mentioned in an interview in the Süddeutsche Zeitung that Thomas suggested we translate In it, Edgar Reitz says it is a poem by Eichendorff, set to music by Schumann.

I was trivially bothered by it though in the film, because there wouldn't have been a piano accompaniment if she was really singing in the car... but perhaps the problems of filming inside a car meant that for once she had to mime it. But it was lovely all the same.

Angela

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>

Date: Fri, 27 Jan 2006 19:07:56 CET

Ivan,

I've just noticed that my rather clumsy draft translation of a bit of the poem in that Süddeutsche Zeitung interview is a bit different from the English version you quote - Wolfgang hasn't finished checking mine yet, and it may well be wrong, but the whole passage may be relevant to your comment on it. It comes in the context of a discussion of the word "Heimat", after Reitz has spoken of the idea that "'Heimat' is something that everyone of us has lost....."

SZ-Magazin: That is a romantic theme. Weren't you afraid of looking old-fashioned?

Edgar Reitz: It works in every period. There is a poem of Eichendorff's that Robert Schumann set to music: "Out of the Heimat beyond the red lightning/ the clouds come over to us/ But father and mother are long dead/ No one knows me there any more" In this magical distance that we have all lost, lies in truth that which we call "Heimat". I said to myself, if I call the film that, and if the film manages to purify this word and simply exorcise the false associations from it, then it has succeeded.

(I'll give the German too, then anyone who knows the language can check on my draft version:

SZ-Magazin: Das ist ein romantisches Motiv. Hatten Sie nicht Angst, altmodisch zu wirken?

Edgar Reitz: Es funktioniert zu allen Zeiten. Es gibt ein Gedicht von Eichendorff, das Robert Schumann vertont hat: "Aus der Heimat hinter den Blitzen rot/ Da kommen die Wolken her/ Aber Vater und Mutter sind lange tot/ Es kennt mich dort keiner mehr." In dieser magischen Ferne, die wir alle verloren haben, liegt in Wahrheit das, was wir Heimat nennen. Ich habe mir gesagt, wenn ich den Film so nenne und wenn der Film es schafft, dieses Wort zu reinigen und ihm die falschen Assoziationen einfach auszutreiben, dann ist er gelungen.)

So I suppose in this sense the poem could apply to Clarissa too, or anyone or to Hermann's feelings before everyone rushed up and recognised him...?

Angela

From: Wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>
Date: Sat, 28 Jan 2006 01:16:56 CET

Ivan,
 if I'm not mistaken, that was not a replica, that was the actual prop church steeple that they hauled around whenever they need "Schabbach" to be in the viewer's mind.

Wolfgang

From: Ivan Mansley <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>
Date: Sat, 28 Jan 2006 10:33:37 CET

That's what I meant by replica! An actual prop made to look like a real church steeple and used in filming.

Ivan.

From: Wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>
Date: Sat, 28 Jan 2006 01:34:44 CET

I have to pick up on that last comment, I know we're getting ahead of ourselves a bit here but let me just say that from a person who has tried for many years to play Scott Joplin's Entertainer perfectly, and failed, Gunnar could not possibly have played the Entertainer that flawlessly. It is VERY difficult. So he might be an imperfect character but a perfect piano player. When you see Clarissa or Hermann play, you also see the occasional struggle with difficult passages, here Gunnar just spools this off like a machine. Of course, in this case, Gunnar wasn't actually playing the piano, the only actor who could perfectly imitate Erich Honecker but had no musical talents, I guess that's asking a bit much.

Wolfgang

>> *But look at the scene when Gunnar plays the piano and his daughter climbs
 >> on his lap - she would not do that if he was not a loving father.*

>

> *I have no doubt Gunnar loves his daughters and vice versa. There are
 > many indications of this. But I contend that he is also short
 > tempered, thoughtless, careless and often selfish. That wouldn't erase
 > the feelings his daughters have for him when he is a caring and good
 > parent. A great trait of any great author or filmmaker (and I would
 > certainly include Reitz in their company) is the creation of
 > well-formed characters with both virtues and flaws. Somewhere - Reitz
 > himself may have said it - I read an observation that all the characters
 > in the Heimat films are imperfect, human beings. Like all of us.*

>

> Cheers,
 > Alan

From: Thomas Hönemann <th.hoenemann@freenet.de>

Date: Sat Jan 28 16:13:57 CET 2006

Another detail referring to the choice of music in H3 which indeed is really carefully done: As Maarten Landzaat (Maarten, where are you?) already pointed out in the German discussion, Reitz uses the combinations of music and the places where Hermann conducts it in a symbolical way:

- > "The east goes to the west: not only the workers, but also the music:
- > 1 a Rhein(land) piece is played in Amsterdam
- > 2 A Prague piece is played in Wien
- > 3 A Russian song is sung in Berlin (I got this information from the subtitles, BTW)" (Maarten Landzaat on 17th Dec. 2004 on the German Mailinglist)

The details about the pieces of music are:

- 1: Robert Schumann: Symphonie Nr. 3, "Rheinische" (in Amsterdam)
- 2: W. A. Mozart, Symphonie in D-Dur, "Prager" Symphonie, KV 504 (in Vienna)
- 3: Luciano Berio: "Aserbajjan Love Song" (aus Folk songs, Nr. 12) (in Berlin)

But there are also exceptions from the rule: ON 17th of Nov. 1989 he plays a Beethoven piece (Klavierkonzert No. 5) in Zürich (Suisse).

Best regards to you all, and have a very nice weekend,

Thomas

www.heimat123.de

From: Gert Jan Jansen <gertjan.jansengouda@demon.nl>

Date: Sat, 28 Jan 2006 17:48:30 CET

I've tried to "seduce" Helma Hammen to join the discussion, for she is an expert in many H3-details and..... she wants to learn English, so she told last September. But Helma answered: "Aber so schnell geht es leider nicht!!!! (so quickly is not possible). Two weeks ago she moved over from a normal course for adults to a "Sprechschule", where you have to talk the strange language very often. So, if there are members in this group that can't resist the temptation of visiting the world of Heimat-illusions, in some months Helma Hammen is ready to welcome you in English.

Some of us already met her during a Heimat 3-tour. Helma conducts them wonderful; it's like you are a member of the family. Helma is living in Schlierschied, one of the many Schabbachs in the Hunsrück. During Heimat 3 Edgar Reitz made her responsible for the appointments of the smaller figures and the walk-on parts.

Although she didn't know more than 3 English words at that time, and some of us didn't know more than 10 German words, the communication went very well. You can visit her website at www.heimat-reise.de

Greetings

Gert Jan Jansen

From: Amanda Jeffries <amanda.jeffries virgin.net>

Date: Sun, 29 Jan 2006 21:28:23 CET

Thanks to Ivan for his thoughtful and observant introduction to the first episode, and to others for adding rich layers of interpretation. I have only now had the time to add to the discussion and find myself in agreement with many contributors and with little to add. I too was intensely disappointed by the rushed tempo of the episode when I first watched it last year. However, like others, I watched it a second time more indulgently, knowing that in later episodes the narrative was to slow down and the camera to linger more intensely over certain moments, as in the previous two series; and perhaps because I had already got to know the new characters so much better in the meantime.

One thought did occur to me, and that is whether the frustrations over the tempo that many of us felt (especially the hastiness of the reunion between Hermann and Clarissa, their decision to buy the house, the break-up of Gunnar and Petra's marriage and the establishment of the new family with Reinhold) were at least in part deliberately provoked by Reitz, and not mere financial constraints. Perhaps we are supposed to feel unease at the rashness of these events - the way the past is so easily discarded and forgotten in a wave of optimism in which anything and everything suddenly seems possible. As we know from later episodes, not everything will turn out as rosy as they hope. Even though at the time there are brief moments of misgiving (Clarissa asking Hermann 'are you afraid?', and Petra wondering 'is this the right thing to do?') I was struck by the whole-heartedness and sheer audacity of the new projects. Buying a haunted and decaying house on dodgy foundations and at a dizzily exposed height, and then floating it in the air! In the same way the fall of the Berlin wall is presented as a sudden event (which it possibly wasn't) as well as an extremely bold one (which it certainly seemed to be), succeeded by a party atmosphere and feelings of unreality, represented by the defiant and to me slightly ominous firework display. I am not an expert on German history; I wonder what others feel that Reitz is saying about the new project of reunification, the foundations on which it is built, and the tempo at which it all happened? Perhaps too Petra and Reinhold's sudden coupling is a metaphor for the precipitated political events; 'reunification will come sooner than you think' someone says at the top of the mountain. It is also interesting the way Clarissa and Hermann keep referring to their 'dream house'. 'Dream' can mean ideal, aspiration, fulfilment of hopes and wishes; but it can also be something far removed from reality - how far are they sleep-walking into something that hasn't been consciously thought through?

I was also struck by the contrasts between East and West like the 'high art' of Hermann conducting the orchestra, and Tobi's more rustic and practical conducting of beams, straw and plaster. But everyone seems amazed at their luck - Hermann and Clarissa for getting the cheap labour for their house, and the East Germans for getting their incredible hourly rate. How can that all add up?! You feel it can't last in the long term. And it has such a contemporary feel as well, with growing numbers of people from poorer countries entering richer ones as 'guest workers' and earning what seems a pittance but which represents riches for them.

Amanda Jeffries

From: Reinder Rustema <reinder.rustema.nl >

Date: Mon, 30 Jan 2006 12:48:11 CET

Before I write about my experiences of viewing the first episode again, I would like to apologise about all the things I promised to do. List issues, things I promised to upload to the website and so on. Sooner or later I will do it, but tonight I felt like watching a DVD. I ignored the pile of borrowed DVDs, downloads people gave me and so on and watched Heimat 3 instead, finally. I hooked up a borrowed video beamer, connected audio and video to my laptop and it was cinema time!

Just like the premiere in Munich just one year and four months ago. To my surprise, my emotions during the opening scenes were exactly the same. It starts with Hermann with his grey hairs. And quickly it was again like watching a train crash head on and there is nothing you can do...

I could not accept Hermann at all as the older man he was supposed to portray. It was a young actor with dyed hair. Immediately there was a voice-over. The acting of Henry Arnold irritated me, as it sometimes did before, but now to the maximum. The shortcomings of his acting were already annoying in contrast with the actor playing the East German in the street who can not believe his senses, walking around in, recognising parts of Berlin he has not seen in years. While this character was not much more than an extra!

In the second minute I could not believe myself how low we could go with this rollercoaster ride. Downwards. With the works of Heimat and Zweite Heimat on proverbial Mount Everests behind me, this ride was going down way below sea level when Hermann meets Clarissa in the hotel lobby:

"Clarissa, is it you?"

"Hermann, what are you doing in Berlin? I want to know."

It took them about 15 seconds to recognise each other! How is that possible?

I admit that I quickly recognise faces. Walking around in Amsterdam for 30 minutes and inevitably I recognise at least one face: someone I studied with at university a decade ago, a former co-worker I haven't seen in 4 years or one of my students. Remembering the names is another issue, but in a split second I recognise people, sometimes even across the street. This may be atypical, but these two characters go to the other extreme, completely unbelievable for me. After all, Hermann and Clarissa have been quite intimate, to say the least, and they are standing next to each other. Clarissa looks Hermann completely blank in the face for some 10 seconds... The things they say remind me of really bad television, soap operas without any pretension.

Next scene, they are in bed together. Just whatever. Hermann jumps off the bed very lightly, when he walks he sort of bounces a bit, fitting the age of the actor, not Hermann's supposed age.

But exactly at the right moment, when I was about to get up and walk away at the premiere in Munich, I was immediately thrown back in my seat by the image of the customs official who sat down at an improvised check point. Beautiful images that might go by unnoticed...

The man in the uniform just finished adjusting the day in his stamp and was ready for processing the entire line of waiting travellers. This was going to be the day of his

life, stamping all the travel documents of his fellow-countrymen crossing the border. In spite of the improvisations you can see that he is determined to perform his task to the best of his abilities. This is to be a glorious day in his professional life, never before did he have this privilege to let so many people travel. He was ready. Before he looks up to help the first in line he adjusts his hat. But there was no one there, they did not leave their car to get his stamp. They completely ignored him and drove off through the fence that was just cut open. He was astonished, this was not going to be his party-time. For as far as his impatient fellow-countrymen were concerned, he did not exist, he became irrelevant. Now this is evidently difficult to grasp for someone with the job description to prevent illegal border crossings at all cost.

In this tiny detail, this little scene that lasted perhaps half a minute, maximum authenticity was suggested. So much more than all the television images on the television-set in the hotel room preceding this scene could have ever shown. This is the hand of the master. Watching it again showed me how carefully the entire scene was constructed. You see the man in the uniform carrying a chair and a table on his head, delaying the impatient people waiting to get out. His colleagues help him to set up the table and chair and are cutting the fence open at the same time. Much of all this happens in the background, as unimportant illustrations to the dialogue between the protagonists in the car, but exactly those details are the most telling. In the news footage we saw just before there is nothing of this powerful detail. Instead, like news-cameras do, the spectacular is put on center stage.

These details can only be shown in fiction, only after the master re-enacts it. Did Reitz witness this himself at the time I wonder? Did he imagine it when watching the news-footage or afterwards? Or did he reconstruct this based on the anecdotes he read or heard from people who crossed the border at the time? However he did this, much thought was put into it, which makes it look so much more true than an enormous collage with hours of news-footage could have ever achieved. I am afraid it is exactly this the television bosses are blind to. Their reasoning would go that such a scene is an expensive luxury and the crossing of the border could have been told much more 'efficiently.'

This promised many more great scenes like this to come and I decided not to leave the theatre and continue watching. If only there would have been just one scene more like this in the whole of Heimat 3, it would have been worthwhile the trip to Munich. The rest of the episode served to fix the shattered expectation I had from Heimat 3.

It is way after midnight and I have only seen the first 6 minutes and wrote much more. I will try to see more of episode one this week, before Ivan sends us the second introduction.

ReindeR

From: Wyn Grant <wyn_grant@hotmail.com>

Date: Mon, 30 Jan 2006 13:23:18 CET

I thought that the scene with the border guard was very well done. But there were certainly no exits from West Berlin, even closed ones, that entered on to the equivalent of a farm track. The cars then were seen on an autobahn, one was carrying a picture of Honecker, presumably an ironic touch. I enjoyed the first episode more on the second viewing because one had more sense of what to come, although Clarissa's comments about living less in hotel rooms (said in a hotel room) and leading a less rushed life are not to be fulfilled and become a source of tension with Hermann. Interesting that when Hermann was at Anton's, one of the brothers who had 'stifled' him, he said hardly anything apart from perfunctory greetings. What is the significance of Rheinhold's nose bleeds? Do they make Petra feel protective towards him? Clarissa's mother seems close to a caricature to me. Difficult to add much else to the cogent comments already made.

From: JoelOYoung at aol.com <JoelOYoung@aol.com>

Date: Mon, 30 Jan 2006 14:05:08 CET

Wolfgang,

You are correct. That was the real steeple that was built as a prop by Werner Litzenberger who owns the Anzenfeldermühle. It was hauled around whenever they needed it, and set in the proper perspective so that it appeared the correct size.

Joel

From: JoelOYoung at aol.com <JoelOYoung@aol.com>

Date: Mon, 30 Jan 2006 14:09:19 CET

There have been several pieces written which concerned Gunnar, and his green potato sack that always seems to be with him has been mentioned too. But so far no one has come up with what Gunnar so carefully carries around with him all the time in that bag. I am sure that it's not potatoes. Did I miss that somewhere along the line?

Joel

From: Ivan Mansley <ivanman@dsl.pipex.com>

Date: Mon, 30 Jan 2006 14:21:13 CET

I already replied to Wolfgang via the list on 28/01/06. I knew that the prop was hauled around and placed in perspective. By using the word "replica" I meant that the prop was a replica of an actual church steeple!! Not that the museum prop was a replica of another prop if you catch my meaning!!

Ivan.

From: Ivan Mansley <ivanman at dsl.pipex.com>

Date: Mon, 30 Jan 2006 15:22:19 CET

I am very pleased, Amanda, you found the time to add to our discussions. I might add that I found your argument about possibly Reitz having provoked the feelings of haste in order to reflect on the sudden political developments and to comment on the rashness and abrupt decision making of several of the characters, very persuasive, and, the more I reflect on it, the more I find myself in agreement.

You wrote:

> One thought did occur to me, and that is whether the frustrations over the
> tempo that many of us feltwere at least in part deliberately provoked
> by Reitz, and not mere financial constraints. Perhaps we are supposed to
> feel unease at the rashness of these events - the way the past is so easily
> discarded and forgotten in a wave of optimism in which anything and
> everything suddenly seems possible. As we know from later episodes, not
> everything will turn out as rosy as they hope. Even though at the time there
> are brief moments of misgiving I was struck by the whole-heartedness
> and sheer audacity of the new projects. Buying a haunted and decaying house
> on dodgy foundations and at a dizzily exposed height, and then floating it
> in the air! In the same way the fall of the Berlin wall is presented as a
> sudden event (which it possibly wasn't) as well as an extremely bold one
> (which it certainly seemed to be), succeeded by a party atmosphere and
> feelings of unreality, represented by the defiant and to me slightly ominous
> firework display. I am not an expert on German history; I wonder what others
> feel that Reitz is saying about the new project of reunification, the
> foundations on which it is built, and the tempo at which it all happened?
> Perhaps too Petra and Reinhold's sudden coupling is a metaphor for the
> precipitated political events; ' reunification will come sooner than you
> think' someone says at the top of the mountain.

That was Udo.

You also wrote:

> It is also interesting the way Clarissa and Hermann keep referring to
> their 'dream house'. 'Dream' can mean ideal, aspiration, fulfilment of hopes
> and wishes; but it can also be something far removed from reality - how far
> are they sleep-walking into something that hasn't been consciously thought
> through?

Without going into any detail about events in forthcoming episodes you are absolutely spot on. Reality does bite back!!

I just wanted to mention a little scene where things are left unexplained [haste/lack of importance??]. I was re-reading the Fliess interview again and Reitz was being asked about his portrayal of technological developments. Remember the telephone coming to Schabbach and the auto-bahn by-passing the villages in Heimat. Reitz talks of the "computer and the cellular phone" [UK usage mobile phone]. You have the computer thread with Arnold and Tillmann. Did you notice Clarissa with Udo and Gunnar arriving by night in Schabbach? In the lead car was Horst, Anton's chauffeur, played by Karl-Heinz Kaiser [he sang a duet to us above the Loreley rock with Helma Hammen and drove our little bus last September] who tells them, as they draw up alongside, "This is Schabbach". Presumably Anton has sent Horst out after a call on

a mobile from Clarissa and the two cars have linked up using mobiles. I didn't notice one though! I know it's trivial!!

But the wider point is not. As Reitz says, "The mobile becomes a new dramatic device when the characters can telephone and change the plot wherever they just happen to be." No need to get anyone to a phone box. "Today by means of the mobile that one can pull out of one's pocket without fuss, any kind of cross connection between characters can be produced." [F]

Ivan Mansley.

From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder.rustema.nl>

Date: Mon, 30 Jan 2006 16:36:46 CET

At 14:22 +0000 30/1/06, Ivan Mansley wrote:

> "This

> is Schabbach". Presumably Anton has sent Horst out after a call on a mobile

> from Clarissa and the two cars have linked up using mobiles.

It is difficult to find the little villages in the Hunsrück... Do you remember the big Mercedeses coming from Brussels with the business men from the multinational with the intention to buy Simon Optik? They get lost in the woods nearby. From their advanced luxurious cars they even witness a wild animal on the road.

ReindeR

From: Susan Biedron <Susan.sbiedron.com>

Date: Mon, 30 Jan 2006 17:48:58 CET

I don't remember any scene in which the contents of the green potato bag is revealed. But perhaps someone else does? Any speculations as to its contents?

Susan

From: Susan Biedron <Susan.jsbiedron.com>

Date: Mon, 30 Jan 2006 18:44:09 CET

ReindeR,

After reading your description of the border guard I had to go back and watch the first 6 minutes again. I had watched Episode 1 twice and while I remembered the guard carrying the table, I did not remember him getting his stamp ready and then his astonishment at the cars driving past him. It is such a short time frame and the details of this little scene did go unnoticed twice by me!

Hermann's grey hair did not bother me - in real life I've noticed a number of grey haired people with very young faces. To me, Hermann looks alike a typical "artist."

He hasn't put on weight like his older brothers - but then some people don't.
Apparently all the touring and eating in restaurants has not yet caught up with him!

Susan

From: Elizabeth Garrett <david.garrett4 ntlworld.com>

Date: Mon, 30 Jan 2006 22:31:08 CET

Some people have found it strange that Rheinhold, an intelligent, educated, much-travelled man with an important and fulfilling job, should fall for Petra, who had never left East Germany. I would like to have found out more about him, and probably Reitz would have liked to show us more had there been time. I suspect that Rheinhold, despite his worldly success, is lonely, perhaps shy of women, and perhaps dominated by his mother. As Wyn pointed out, he gets nose bleeds and this may make Petra feel protective towards him. Poor little Petra - she is ripe for love after having been cooped up with cocky, insensitive Gunnar And yet one has to feel sorry for him too.

Elizabeth Garrett.

From: Jan Westhuis <Jan.westhuis inter.nl.net>

Date: Mon, 30 Jan 2006 23:16:26 CET

It is not what was in the Bag but what you can put in it.
It is typical a question from the West Germans.
Every former DDR citizen carries such a bag before De Wende
If there was something in the shops for example Oranges you must have something to put in it.
When the film was in the East German Kino's the Ossies applaud when Gunnar came up with his bag they recognised the scene

Jan Westhuis

From: Thomas Hönemann <th.hoenemann freenet.de>

Date: Tue, 31 Jan 2006 08:59:54 CET

A little detail: The border-guard Reinder describes is played by Thomas Brussig, the co-author of the script of H3 (he is not an professional actor, but Reitz dedicated him this guest-role).

Best regards,
Thomas

From: Seymour Alexander <seymouralexander onetel.com>
Date: Wed, 1 Feb 2006 00:37:56 CET

Herman and Clarissa might have jumped very quickly into bed this time but they have had a good few years to ponder the missed opportunities of their youth and unlike most of us they have been lucky enough to have had a second chance. Thank goodness that we didn't have to go through another entire series of will-they/wont-they hesitations. They should make the most of the short time they have ahead (assuming that is that the characters are based on the Daniel Barenboim/Jacqueline du Pres couple which they so strikingly resemble; I would guess that Clarissa won't survive very long into H4 if it is ever made). It is interesting to compare Wolfgang Becker's (Goodbye Lenin) take on the collapse of the GDR with that of Reich [*Reitz – Eds*]; many similarities, both having their beautiful Russian emigrees and giant statues of Lenin on the move. I prefer Becker's choice of background music, though. And his characters' sense of humour. Did Hermann ever really laugh once throughout the entire work?

Seymour

From: JoelOYoung at aol.com <JoelOYoung at aol.com>
Date: Wed, 1 Feb 2006 08:32:18 CET

Dank U

Thanks, Jan. Ans and I figured that was the meaning of the bag, because we knew that in the east back then, if something was in a shop, you had to get it right then and there, because later it would not be there. But Gunner always seemed to have "something" in the bottom of his bag, maybe not knowing that western shops generally are always in stock, or you just go to another shop and get it. It's probably the symbolism that Reitz was looking for, not the exact contents. I was wondering if I had missed his buying and putting something in the bag.

Best regards,
Joel

From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>
Date: Thu, 2 Feb 2006 19:47:58 -0000

Well, the contributions have now dried up and a new intro is due tomorrow so we mark the end of discussion of Episode 1 of Heimat 3. I think we had 42* posts to the discussion [I have not counted factual/admin type posts] from 16* separate contributors. It was heartening to see some new names and disappointing that a number of previous contributors have not bothered this time. I am sure you will all be welcome back!! It is always possible to refer backwards to Episodes already discussed under present arrangements.

I have one suggestion. If you read a post and it has a question in it and you know the answer please respond. It is quite frustrating to ask a question and then not to hear anything more. Of course, no one may be sure of the answer!

Ivan Mansley.

* [*in the end there were 52 posts from 18 contributors – Eds.*]

From: Roel Kooister <roel.kooister xs4all.nl>
Date: Fri, 3 Feb 2006 23:48:30 +0100

Hello everyone,

I'd like to join the discussion. I am a new member of the list. But for those who were on the Heimatreunion of the fall of 2005, I am the partner of Maarten and the mother of Stijn. The boy who was fascinated by the magnificent view over the Rhine in the diningroom of the Rhinehotel at the Sunday-lunch. All the little trains, boats, ferry's etc. etc.

My contribution to Heimat 3 part 1 is a bit late, but I like to write it down because they have been spinning in my head ever since I've seen part 1 again.

By the way, viewing part 1 on dvd and stopping and slowing every scene I wanted to see more in detail gave me a strange feeling of being a voyeur. Seeing things, hearing phrases that shouldn't be analysed to the bone, but experienced on a certain not-too-conscious level. But looking for details is also fun to do. I always realize there was someone who deliberately put every detail in the script and in the scene and that makes it fascinating.

I was triggered by the questions of Ivan in his introduction, two weeks ago. While viewing I was focussed on the role of Rudi and the Aral petrol station.

First there is the blue. At second site there are so much blue things: the Aral petrol station, the coat of Clarissa, much blue light especially in the enlightenment of the Amsterdam canal houses in the scene with Frau Lichtblau and Rheinhold, the blue balloon floating in the canal (a bit hidden behind the subtitles) in the same canal-scene, the blue van with the building materials... Maybe I am looking for too many connections (hi Ivan), but the blue reminds me of Kieslowsky's blue in bleu, blanc, rouge. His bleu film is about freedom. Maybe Reitz uses this colour metaphor for the freedom for the East Germans. I did not join the discussion on DZH, but I was a kind of co-watcher when Maarten was looking and reading and reviewing all the episodes. Reitz certainly had a meaning with using colour and non-colour.

Question: does anyone know more about Reitz and colour and colour symbols? And why the balloon? Is a balloon a Reitz thing? Maarten remembered some balloons in the hands of nuns in a DZH film. Which one? And why is Clarissa's surname Lichtblau? I have always thought this to be a strange name

About bonds: I think this film is about ' what is it, that makes bonds' . Rudi is the one who knows the old fashioned but enduring (for over centuries) building material (the Lehm). He is also the stable person in the village who is faithful, thoughtful, full of knowledge of the simple but ever so true things of life. The Gunderode house has to become a bonding spot for two too dynamic lives of Hermann and Clarissa, like the quiet eye in the middle of a tornado (restless travelling between opera houses, hotelrooms, concerthalls, trainstations, Lulu in Koln, Arnold in Hamburg etc.). The long chain of people from the peace-movement, the bond Frau Lichtblau says she has with Clarissa, Arnold and herself right after the war when they were very poor (also the Amsterdam canal scene). The family ties of Gunnar and Udo. The relationship with Gunnar and his daughters, especially the eldest one. Rudi and his wife (like Thomas, I am moved when Marga says she warms the bed when he's taking a look at his restless cattle). Rheinhold and Petra. The internet, as a

connecting-the-whole-world-thing, introduced by hacking Arnoldchen. The Beethoven symphony that Hermann is conducting (Eroica? by the way, Hermann has a twinkling little laugh here) and the funny folksong and the Dido-aria of Clarissa are used as two musical themes in shots of peeling of the old Gunderode haus. That gives me the feeling of weaving a cloth with music and a house (a skeleton of a home). Schabbach as a Gemeinschaft, still center of the world for those who live in it. There are many more little and larger bonding (and not-bonding) things.

Maybe it is that symbolic structure of this film that I like. The very short time for character building, the incoherencies of e.g. Rudi not working in his Gasthaus but being a kind of Glasisch at the Gunderodehaus, it didn't bother me. But maybe I am not just ready for being a Reitz critic instead of a Reitz admirer. But I think one can do both at the same time. I like very much to read all the listmembers' remarks and thoughts, it broadens my Reitz-horizon

Roel

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

Date: Sat, 4 Feb 2006 14:31:57 +0100

Hi everybody,

first my apologies for being late again. I'll first repost the message I wrote on the German mailing list, see below. I'm currently watching episode 1 again, so hopefully I'll post some more observations later.

My wife Roel posted a message which Reinder received, but we did not receive it back from the list.

Did anybody NOT receive Roels message yesterday evening?

Bye,
Maarten

-----Original Message-----

Sent: Friday, December 17, 2004 11:17 AM To: heimat123-de reinder.rustema.nl

Subject: RE: heimat123-de: Enttäuschung über Heimat 3

(Entschuldigung fuer mein Englisch, aber Deutsch schreiben kann ich nicht so gut. Ich hoffe sie verstehen es ebenfalls.)

Martin Minges wrote:

- > Normalerweise sagen
- > Inhaltsangaben wenig über gute Filme oder Bücher. Hier
- > passiert nicht mehr, als das, was sich in einem Satz
- > zusammenfassen lässt.

Although I can understand your disappointment with the acting and the fast pace, I do not entirely agree with this. There's a lot more stuff going on under the hood, and on symbolic levels.

For instance:

- the fence-removals (on an arrival to the Gunderode haus, and at Ernst's house), refers to the fall of the Berlin wall. - the flying of the Gunderode house skeleton (=happiness of the German people), while the foundation is being renewed (=the foundations of the German nation).
- the happiness on the highest mountains, the disappointment (Gunnars eifersucht) when coming down again (symbol for German reunion)
- the east goes to the west: not only the workers, but also the music:
 - 1 a Rhein(land) piece is played in Amsterdam
 - 2 A Prague piece is played in Wien
 - 3 A russian song is sung in Berlin
 (I got this information from the subtitles, BTW)

These are just the ones that I (and my girlfriend Roel) noticed. There must be many more references/symbols.

For instance, I'm still wondering about:

- the nosebleeding (there's a Dutch expression "doen alsof je neus bloedt" (act as if your nose is bleeding), meaning to act as if you have done nothing wrong, while in reality you HAVE done something wrong. Is this German as well?)

Like Thomas, I hope that you will have the patience to watch the other parts. The rhythm of the story, as well as the acting, really gets better.

Bye,
Maarten

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

Date: Sun, 5 Feb 2006 15:23:13 +0100

Dear listmembers,

here are my observations on episode 1. I guess it's the 4th or 5th time I watched it, but to my delight I still discovered new little things, I was never bored! Many thanks to Ivan again for organising, and for the inspiring introductions!

To start with the negative feelings: I agree with Alan that the basic story about the house isn't that compelling. And I agree with Reinder that the acting by Hermann and Clarissa really gets in the way of believing in the scenes. Their acting in the beginning are a far cry from e.g. Tobi, Udo, and in fact most others!

But I definitely agree with Ivan that this doesn't spoil the joy of being immersed into Reitz's world again.

The un-Reitzian speed was kind of a shock for me at first, but not a negative or positive one. And I do think that Reitz means something with this speed, apart from trying to impress (tongue-in-cheek) the TV network finance people: the unnatural speed of Hermann & Clarissa's reunion is a parallel to the unnatural speed of the east&west German reunion. I think this is one of the major themes of Heimat 3: many changes in a very short timespan, and how that affects people.

I viewed episode 1 after Roel again, so I was keen to watch for more "blue"s. In fact the very first color in the movie is blue: in a the B/W scenes from the hotel, the

camera watches the Astor cinema, and only the billboard of the "Mystery Train" movie is blue. (checked imdb: a very good Jim Jarmusch movie, Reitz probably likes it. The year is of course spot on.) In the next scene in the same hotel, the B/W TV screen is shown as blue, in a further real B/W scene.

On the blue balloon: the colors of the balloons in DZH were the same as the clothes of some female characters. So I think the blue balloon definitely is blue because of Clarissa, who is the subject of the scene, although not present.

In the hotel scene, we see the faces of Hermann and Clarissa looking up, but their feet are in opposite directions so to speak. This reminded me of a similar janus-like scene in Heimat 2.

Also, many reflections again in mirrors and windows etc, which have been discussed earlier.

There were many twilight scenes in the beginning. Would this signify anything? The many moons are probably a forward reference to the solar eclipse in a future episode. Come to think of it, when Petra is on the train, separated from Gunnar, we look directly into the sun, the sunlight flickering because of the trees. This may parallel the first cracks in the happiness of the happiest people in the world.

Then there were the opened fences:

- the Berlin wall, of course
 - the fireplace fence being removed by the Gunderode house owner Wallauer (0:15)
 - immediately after: the fence being removed by Bauer Pitt
 - the gate being opened by Ernst and Hermann (0:24)
 - the breaching of the bank's digital security gate by Arnold
- Too many to be coincidental!

When Ernst lands, the scene is B/W, apart from a horizontal strip of green trees. Why would this be?

Gunnar loves numbers:

- 10 Mark west?
- 1:12 exchange rate
- 29,95 Meissel
- if you find a treasure, let's split it 50-50
- he's the one who found out about the numbers on the wooden house frame. (we'll see more of his mathematical skills in later episodes!)

I think I found an error in the Amsterdam concertgebouw scene: a bus passes by bearing the name "Connexxion". While this is quite appropriate if to illustrate the bonds/connections theme, Roel and I are pretty sure that Connexxion was still non-existent in 1989 in the Netherlands!

Some insect crawls over the building plan. This reminds of earlier scenes where insects were foreboding bad times ahead.

There's much death in Clarissa's songs, isn't there? Why?

On the emotional side I was most moved by Petra-Gunnar breakup, because it was caused by people with good intentions (Petra and the "smug" assistant really don't mean any harm, their love looks real to me), and by the happy event of the Berlin wall having fallen. Good things inevitably have bad side effects. There are many more examples of this theme in future episodes.

- > Did you notice an echo here that Thomas and Theresia did not pick up?
- > [Huge apologies if I'm wrong!!]
- > We see Gunnar driving his yellow Beetle alongside
- > the train in which his wife and children are travelling with Reinhold. The
- > children are banging on the window and shouting, "I want to
- > be with Daddy".
- > Compare this with the scene in Part 13 of DZH where Hermann
- > is on the train and his wife, Schnüsschen, is driving alongside the
- > train with their daughter in the car. The roles are reversed as it were!

Yes, I noticed I had seen something like this before. Reitz must love the idea somehow.

Ivan wrote:

- > Another more serious criticism, perhaps, of Heimat 3 in general, and of this
- > episode in particular, is that Reitz has had to abandon his usual leisurely
- > rhythm of film making and has had to rush things because of the financial
- > constraints imposed by the TV companies who were funding him. I think I do
- > see some evidence of this. For instance, consider the scene where Hermann
- > re-visits his childhood home. He walks past the smithy, approaches the door
- > of the house, and sees the open barn door. He makes no mention of Klärchen
- > or of what happened afterwards or of his vow never to love again. I feel
- > that if Reitz had had more time such recollections would have come flooding
- > in. He shows no sorrow at the death of his mother or memory of the behaviour
- > of Anton or any memory connected with Paul whose plaque is on the wall of
- > the Simon house and with whom he had earlier conducted experiments in
- > electronic music. The references backward were perfunctory.

I agree with you here. And what about Anton's low-down behaviour towards Klärchen: expelling her and making sure she could not work anywhere else. Maybe one can forgive something like that after 30 years, but certainly not forget!

Ivan wrote:

- > 2. A good deal of fun is had showing the reactions of Gunnar and Udo to
- > the "golden West". I enjoyed the scene in the DIY store. Why
- > was Udo so amazed at the blue-lit filling station? Was it meant to be
- > just the contrast with the drab East or was there something more specific?

If Roel's right (and of course I believe she is) he is thrilled with his newly acquired freedom!

Bye,
Maarten

From: "Gert Jan Jansen" <gertjan.jansengouda.demon.nl>
Date: Sun, 5 Feb 2006 22:02:27 +0100

Dear Ivan,

I'm sorry if I'm wrong, but didn't you close the discussions before (in relation with Heimat and DZH) with an analysis as regards the content of the contributions? This time you counted the amount of posts and the amount of contributors and we can conclude your introduction was a success. But the more posts there came, the bigger the problem became to oversee them. Which theme has been discussed already and how and which aspect has not? What was the level of abstraction of the reactions? Are there statements possible about the subjects that were discussed and the art of discussion.

In my memory you did not just "close the curtain" and say "Tomorrow there is an new introduction". Perhaps I'm asking too much, and don't you have the time (so I would say myself) In that case, my sincere apologies.

Gert Jan

From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan.jsbiedron.com>
Date: Mon, 6 Feb 2006 10:37:59 -0600

[Reply to Roel – Eds:]

Welcome to the list! Your comments on the color blue are interesting and something I had not noticed before. You asked about Clarissa's name:

> And why is Clarissa's surname Lichtblau? I have always thought this to be
> a strange Name

Clarissa discusses her last name in DZH. I believe she is questioned about it when interviewing for a musical tour, before she became famous. She says Lichtblau is a Pomeranian name and her mother's father was a sea captain.

Yesterday I looked up LICHTBLAU in the International Genealogical Index (IGI) and was surprised to learn it is a real surname - most of the Lichtblau's in the index were from Schlesien, Prussia. There were 68 entries with this name, another spelling is LICHTEBLAU.

One wonders if Reitz knew someone with this name.

Susan

From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder.rustema.nl>
Date: Sat, 18 Feb 2006 12:31:04 +0100

At 15:23 +0100 5/2/06, Maarten Landzaat wrote:

- > I think I found an error in the Amsterdam concertgebouw scene: a bus passes
- > by bearing the name "Connexxion". While this is quite appropriate if to
- > illustrate the bonds/connections theme, Roel and I are pretty sure that
- > Connexxion was still non-existent in 1989 in the Netherlands!

I noticed that also. I vaguely remember to have said to Reitz after the premiere that his fans on the internet will surely track all the little errors he made and document them on the web. Referring to the tradition of adding 'goofs' to IMDb entries.

While at it, the poster with Marietta Petkova on the walls backstage in the Concertgebouw is also a 'goof.' I remember the poster on billboards in Amsterdam a few years ago, around the time when Reitz was in Amsterdam shooting scenes for Heimat 3, but it is certainly not a poster from 1990. It is exactly the same as the picture on her CD from 2002, the third one shown on the page <http://www.marietapetkova.com/discografie-rechts-nl.htm>

ReindeR

From: Raymond Scholz <rscholz.zonix.de>
Date: Sun, 19 Feb 2006 17:25:38 +0100

· On Jan 23 2006, Alan <alan.wmedia.com> wrote:

- > Finally, Wolfgang asked:
- >> "Ivan referenced the Ingo Fliess (pronounced
- >> fleece) interviews in his introduction. Mr. Fliess is also listed as
- >> the "Lektor" and agent in the credits of the films which is kind of
- >> curious. I'm not even certain what a "lecturer" does in publishing
- >> business. Alan?"
- > This is a mystery to me as well. Is it possible that "Lektor" has an
- > alternate translated meaning in English?

I'm not sure whether this has been solved in the meantime, but "Lektor" should translate into "editor".

Cheers, Ray

HEIMAT 3 - Episode 2: The Champions [1990]

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

Date: Fri, 3 Feb 2006 00:07:12 -0000

HEIMAT 3 - Episode 2: The World Champions
An Introduction

Love him or loathe him, like him or dislike him, irritated or amused by the character of Gunnar, I guess that the way you respond to him will condition your response to the episode, as the character of Gunnar and his adventures and responses occupy so much of the screen-time of this episode.

Before an examination of his character, however, I would like to explore the theme of family as expressed in this episode. In the Fliess interview Reitz expresses the view that it becomes clear in Heimat 3 that "the family has a stronger bonding power than we had all supposed" and in an interview with Michael Seewald he says, "The family is a force. It possesses an astonishing ability to survive as a cultural achievement. We have lived through a time in which it has been viewed unbelievably critically. Since Freud it has been considered the cauldron of the neuroses: Everyone in the family bears psychic scars from it. But we have no concept of anything else. We know nothing that is more binding and reliable."

Well, what struck me most about the opening scenes concerned with the celebratory party for the completion of the restoration of the G nderode house was the way Hermann is drawn back into the bosom of the Simon family, and he appears to accept this. All the years of exile, since the breaking of his affair with Kl rchen in Heimat, are over. This drawing back into the family fold reaches its culmination with the arrival of the family patriarch, Anton, at the party.

He arrives bearing gifts. His first gift to Hermann is a horseshoe; a horseshoe forged by the hands of his grandfather, Matthias Simon, shortly before he died. In fact, the last one he so forged. Hermann is instructed to fasten it over the threshold of his new house in order to bring him luck. It is as if Anton had specially preserved it all these years for this very occasion. When Mara, his daughter-in-law objects that he does not really believe in such superstitions, Anton sternly rebukes her ["I'm not talking about superstition"] and we know he is not. He is talking about ancestry ["Our grandfather, who we descended from], family and tradition. He allows her to have her own way that it should be inside the house, but Hermann will have a visible reminder of his family past. He also presents Hermann with the telescope he used as a boy of 15. Anton is very gracious in his compliments. "You always felt the urge to strive for higher things." And then in a scene that will live long in my memory Anton embraces Hermann and declares, "I'm happy that you have come home." And he is too. There is not a shred of cynicism in this. And it worked for me!! In a strange way I was happy too!!

What about the other brother, Ernst? Quoting from Fliess again Reitz says, "Ernst is the exact opposite of Anton and his clan: He is the eternally unattached, someone who has no family... In the family he is the seeker after meaning." But I think he wants a family!! He offers Tobi the magnificent sum of 3,500 DM per month + room and board to be his "right-hand man" with his training as a curator, his knowledge of Russian, his ability to work hard and say little. I liked this scene between the two men. What Ernst really wants is a son and Tobi will be that son!! That is my

interpretation! I would compare it with Leopold Bloom looking for a son in Stephen Dedalus in James Joyce's "Ulysses".

This offer leads on to their flight to the DDR which is now disintegrating where they land at a military airfield. There is much of documentary interest here. I was struck by the words of Major Gies to Tobi, when defending himself, that the E. German Army kept quiet at the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall and so averted civil war. I had never thought about this before. Perhaps Reitz is reminding W. German viewers of some uncomfortable truths. I will leave others to comment. Ernst eventually flies off to Russia alone, Tobi having decided that their plans have been uncovered and refuses to continue. He is left with the statue of Lenin which becomes a bizarre image of the breakdown of socialism after 40 years and ends up back in the Hunsrück, eventually. There is a haunting and melancholy scene of Tobi, disconsolate, driving away from Ernst's house, with the statue poking over the trees under the darkening skies. Ernst has not returned from Russia!

There are outsiders within the family though! They are the new generation. Clarissa tries to draw her son, Arnold, into the general merriment and meet all the guests. She is very proud of him but he is having none of it. He does not want to be manipulated by his mother and be embarrassed by her praise in front of others. I wish we could have seen his father, Volker, in Heimat 3. Anton has problems with his eldest son, Hartmut, who is desperate to take over his father's business. He is a brooding presence; he is fine when talking to Udo's boys about the 1934 Horsch ["His identity is completely bound up in the car": Fliess] but otherwise he is tight and aloof. Anton beckons him over ["Hartmut, you too"] but he will not join the family embrace.

There is one character who has lost his family completely. And now we must turn to Gunnar. Undoubtedly, Gunnar is his own worst enemy and he has many, many faults but he also has many virtues. My original phrase about him, "utterly endearing", is probably an exaggeration but he can certainly be endearing at times. In the Fliess interview Reitz pays tribute to his co-author Thomas Brussig for bringing to life a figure like Gunnar who is a "highlight in the whole work" and continues that he loves "over the top" characters and compares Gunnar to Lucy in Heimat and Renate in DZH. "I keep coming across individuals who just get it wrong by a hairsbreadth and yet pour huge passion into everything." [F]

Gunnar can behave like a petulant child. When he sees Petra arrive at the house with Reinhold and his children he hurls the satellite dish he has been erecting on the roof, so they can watch the World Cup football, to the ground and sits up there and sulks, despite Clarissa coaxing him to come down. "You will impress us all, including Petra, if you just act normal." It is easy to say but hard to do. And Petra does behave very insensitively. The separation and humiliation is well done through images, as Hermann presents the bonuses. Udo has crept up behind his wife with his rose and they embrace. Petra stands alone! There is a shot of 3 other happy couples in the little summerhouse; Tillmann and Moni, Lena and Rudi, and Hermann and Clarissa. When Gunnar arrives, both Clarissa, with a pat on the shoulder, and Udo, with a chuck to the cheek, try to comfort him. He exclaims at the size of the bonus but breaks off as he realises it is to no purpose now or that he is saying something embarrassing.

Later he observes Reinhold in passionate embrace with his erstwhile wife in the garden and then whilst watching the football his little girl, Jenny, climbs on his lap and gives him a little present of a sea-shell. He is overcome and breaks down in tears. We feel for him, I think. Even Jana is upset by Petra's lack of understanding for her former husband and his situation. Then, of course, Gunnar lets himself down by

using foul and abusive language and coming to blows with Reinhold. He departs in a rage. Note that Petra wants it all; her new found wealth and opportunities and her children. Gunnar is not offered access to his children nor is he ever!!

I enjoyed the E.German scenes with Gunnar. He occupies an abandoned flat in a dilapidated tenement building and makes contact with a young lady, once in very unfortunate circumstances. Gunnar: "I didn't mean any harm"!! She does take pity on him and washes and irons his stinking T-shirt. Later, after he has been rejected by Petra finally, as she clears out their old flat, he returns, red eyed and distraught, to find his kitchen thoroughly cleaned and re-stocked with food. I take it that it was the girl downstairs! With Petra he claimed to have changed. I believed him! Did you? "Petra-if you change your mind and decide to come back I will always have room for you. Always." Were you convinced by this, ladies?

Gunnar has an eye for the ladies, however. The young lady at the telephone kiosk thinks he stinks and can't speak proper German. He tries, unsuccessfully, almost to undress Miranda who is making the little memento boxes for him. He gets his come-uppance! He almost slavers over the vampish coffee girl in the Warner Bros office. Altogether an unreconstructed male!! He is still obsessed with Petra as can be seen when he draws her outline on the concrete of the Wall and exclaims, "You destroyed the family." See its importance! He is still self-deluded: "When you come crawling back." She never will.

But he cannot be kept down. He is like a rubber ball. He bounces back. He organises the Wall memento thing brilliantly and looks well on the way to have made a fortune. I liked the buying of the piano and the playing of Scott Joplin to the Asian [Tamil?] workers he has recruited and perhaps also to impress the lady downstairs. In reaching any final estimation of the character of Gunnar, as with all of Reitz's other characters, we will bring to bear our own lives' experiences to bear. I hope you will not be harsh moralists. Reitz was not. Here is a quotation from an interview with Thomas Schmidt, "The joy of telling a story goes kaput if one is forever controlling it morally. A story is always a reconstruction out of the ruins of a lived life, and that can only work if motivated by joy. I feel in myself this desire to tell stories, but to do so I must first lay aside moral controls."

I enjoyed the comedy of the American Warner Bros executives with their hip-swaying choreographed farewell, repeated just for the fun of it and the glib but persuasive, Herr Nothe. I hope you find much to enjoy. I must say it was this episode that gave me most trouble when I saw it first. I felt it had longueurs but I have changed my mind after viewings for this piece. It has a lot to offer. Reitz still communicates his joy; to me, at any rate!

Ivan Mansley.

1. Ingo Fliess interview.. as before

2. Interview by Michael Seewald in Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung.
Translation drafted by Angela Skrimshire and edited by Wolfgang Floitgraf.

[Angela wishes me to make it clear that she is not a professional translator, so this amateur film critic acknowledges an amateur translator]

3. Interview with Thomas Schmidt in Die Zeit. Translated by Angela Skrimshire with the help of Wolfgang Floitgraf and Robert Cran.

[These interviews are on the web-site at <http://www.heimat123.net/interviews/> Eds.]

From: Richard Rees-Jones Richard. <Rees.Jones CTBTO.ORG>

Date: Fri, 3 Feb 2006 09:28:11 +0100

I repost the message that I sent to the list when the episode was first broadcast.

Richard Rees Jones.

'The Champions' centred around the character of Gunnar. After taking a bit of a dislike to him last week, I began to warm to him somewhat last night, partly because of his passing physical resemblance to Luke Haines of the Auteurs, and partly because of the perma-lugubrious expression on his face. He reminds me of Glasich. Throughout the episode he wears a West German football shirt with his surname, Brehme, on it. The episode takes place against the backdrop of the 1990 World Cup, which Germany won, and at which Gunnar's namesake Andreas scored the decisive penalty. This alignment leads to a lovely moment at the end. Chipping industriously away at the Berlin Wall, Gunnar seems to be the only person in Germany not to be watching the football on TV. When Brehme scores, the whole city erupts in fireworks and spontaneous joy, and a group of fans, seeing his name on the shirt, pick him up and hold him aloft in celebration. It's no more than Gunnar deserves after the trials of his personal life.

That shirt is at the centre of another, typically Reitzian moment earlier on. Gunnar returns home to his bachelor pad, dirty and fed up. He wants the shirt to be clean - understandably, since he's just been rebuffed by a girl whom he tried to chat up and who accused him of stinking. What's more, the shirt indicates, both to him and to the world, that he belongs to the West now, even though he is from the East. So he shouts through the letterbox of the woman who lives downstairs, pleading with her to wash the shirt for him. He stuffs it halfway through the box, and she pulls it through. In the morning, there it is, hanging on his door, clean and ironed. The stark b&w of the scene is relieved by a flash of colour on the stripes of the shirt, and then the whole screen is engulfed in colour, as though the football is energising the whole city.

The unravelling state of Gunnar's marriage brings several fine moments filled with pathos. He takes his wedding ring off and tries to throw it away, but can't bring himself to do so. He goes around to their house, where his wife Petra is packing up to move out. Her smug, lazy boyfriend is conspicuous by his absence, leaving her to pack her things alone. Gunnar offers to help, and that is heartbreaking. Most memorably, he paints a picture on the Wall of him, her and their children, together as a happy family (he's wearing his beloved football shirt in the picture). He then systematically destroys the picture, although it's hard to tell whether that's done in satisfaction or in rage.

From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan jsbiedron.com>

Date: Fri, 3 Feb 2006 16:18:37 -0600

Ivan,

Thanks for another good introduction. To me, Episode 2 appears to be more in the "Reitzian" manner of Heimat and DZH, than was the hurried "catch-up" mode of Episode 1.

Some of my favorites:

The camera focuses on Gunnar's new white western-style gym shoes as he is about to start chopping at the wall.

The scene where he goes into the piano showroom carrying a packet of cherries - at first the salesman appears very concerned about the juicy cherries near the expensive pianos. But Gunnar is oblivious and even offers him some.

I also liked the scene of Hermann and Clarissa standing outside by their river overlook after the World Cup. Hermann is holding out his microphone to record the sounds of celebration - like old times in DZH.

But back to Gunnar and Ivan's question:

> With Petra he claimed to have changed. I believed him! Did you? "Petra-if you
> change your mind and decide to come back I will always have room for you.
> Always." Were you convinced by this, ladies?

No, I was not convinced. While Gunnar is ambitious and hard working, he is also often childish and cannot control his temper. I believe he truly loves Petra and of course the girls, but he did not show maturity in his actions at the house party. I suspect that in his previous life with Petra in the DDR, he jumped from one project to another, whichever found his interest at the moment. He left projects unfinished in their apartment and probably ignored his wife. Petra most likely found in Reinhold a man she can talk with and who treats her like a person. On the other side, Petra is very insensitive to Gunnar at the house. One can see that Gunnar and Petra are somewhat similar.

Gunnar has turned into a complex character. One minute I empathize with him, such as when he returns to the DDR and talks to a little girl on the street in east Germany, until her mother yells out the window.

But then he acts like a complete pig with Miranda when she is making the boxes - I suppose he was in need of some loving, but that is no excuse.

Hermann is welcomed by his family, Gunnar is rejected by his.

A few questions:

Why did Gunnar pick such a dilapidated apartment to live in? The building looks like something from an old German war movie. Surely he could have afforded better with the money he made in the west.

Why is Clarissa's son Arnold always on the floor, sometimes under the desk?

I would also like to comment on Richard Rees Jones' posting:

> He goes around to their house, where his wife Petra is packing up to move
> out. Her smug, lazy boyfriend is conspicuous by his absence, leaving her to
> pack her things alone. Gunnar offers to help, and that is heartbreaking.

It appears that Petra has a man there to help her pack. I don't think Reinhold is lazy, he is just used to hiring someone to do such things rather than do it himself.

Susan

From: "Wyn Grant" <wyn_grant@hotmail.com>

Date: Sat, 04 Feb 2006 10:33:56 +0000

Ivan has given us a very comprehensive introduction and I would very much agree with what he has said. This episode is about a family coming together again after much pain in the past, but also another family (Gunnar's) disintegrating.

Gunnar would be a very difficult person to live with, but one feels sympathy for his treatment by Petra at the party. Incidentally, I think Rheinhold pushed Gunnar before Gunnar went for him. I still don't find Rheinhold very sympathetic and one interpretation of Petra's behaviour is that she wants a more prosperous life style. But, equally, one could say that she is looking for the best future for her daughters. The real triumph here is that Gunnar is presented to us a complex, contradictory and flawed human being.

I like the episode of the goat. Hermann's mother was eventually persuaded to get rid of her cow so that she could go to Florida. Hermann and Clarissa have to read a book to find out how to milk the goat, not the easiest task. Who will milk the goat when they are away?

I was interested to see a brief view of the Schabbach church tower prop when Tobi goes to the bar for the world cup game. And it is interesting that Clarissa starts with no knowledge of football, but is an enthusiast by the end of the World Cup - but Arnold is still wrapped up in his own world.

Susan asks:

> Why did Gunnar pick such a dilapidated apartment to live in? The
> building looks like something from an old German war movie. Surely
> he could have afforded better with the money he made in the west.

Well, there were certainly a lot of such buildings in the old DDR. And I think that Gunnar is always looking for a short cut that will save or make him money. But he is 'penny wise, pound foolish' as he splashes out on the piano. But this is consistent with the theme of music as a source of joy.

From: Alan Andres <alan.wmedia.com>
Date: Sat, 4 Feb 2006 09:55:14 -0500 (EST)

I have some random observations on H3: Episode 2 "The World Champions" which I'll post on the list at a later date, but I wanted to concentrate here on what I found the most problematic narrative thread in this episode, Gunnar's business venture with Warner Bros. Berlin office.

The first time I viewed this segment of HEIMAT 3, I found the story about Gunnar and the Warner Bros. executives amusingly entertaining, but very out of place in tone and subtlety. Upon watching it a second time, the whole narrative thread seemed even stranger and disconcertingly unlike the more nuanced approach of both the earlier Heimat films and most of HEIMAT 3.

As we know, Reitz is a stickler for detail and carefully crafts his characters. Yet while watching the episode of Gunnar and his enterprise selling bits of the Berlin Wall to the American executives I noted the following details, which seemed quite atypical from the film surrounding it:

- * The Warner Bros. executives are optimistic, energetic, vapid and non-reflective stereotypical Americans. They are amusing, yet are not to be taken seriously. (Their money on the other hand.) I would have expected a bit more depth in the depiction of their character, some small details that gave us a better indication of who they were inside. (This is not to say that European stereotypes of such Americans are not based in some reality. But the execs here are more like characters in a cheap sit-com.)

- * The executives talk about giving away 1,000,000 souvenir chips of the Wall as corporate Christmas gifts. The number is unbelievably fantastic. I can imagine a large international media corporation purchasing 10,000 items as corporate premium gifts, but more than that seems quite unrealistic.

- * The executives make this deal with a street vendor about whom they know nothing, and then depart with a hilarious double wave goodbye, which is reminiscent of something out of a comic skit or music video.

- * To pursue the deal, Gunnar arrives at the Warner Bros. offices dressed in a business suit and carrying an attaché case, which we assume he has purchased for just this occasion. In the office the executive assistant is a pert and clearly sexually distracting young woman whose primary job appears to be to serve coffee, milk and sugar. She acts like a character out of a bad vaudeville sketch from the 1940s. (She is supposed to be working in American office in 1990! The very idea of a female office assistant serving coffee to her male boss was anathema by the early 1980s in American corporate offices. I would assume this attitude eventually reached international offices as well.)

- * Gunnar engages the use of a factory that formerly manufactured boxes for Lenin medallions to create the gift boxes containing his chips of the Wall. The factory now appears to employ only one worker, who is yet another young, pert and clearly sexually distracting woman, and who is hardly dressed for working on an assembly line in a formerly East Berlin factory. (She is wearing a loose summer dress, which slips off enough to bare a breast when Gunnar makes his clumsy pass at her.)

- * Gunnar also wanders into a West Berlin piano store and looks over the merchandise. Even though he clearly makes the salesman uncomfortable, carelessly

places the package of cherries on the top of the piano and breaks into his signature Scott Joplin rendition, he is now not to be ignored as he announces he can afford a grand piano of his own.

* We later see Gunnar's assembly line of workers toiling in his flat breaking apart bits of the Wall and cementing them into gift boxes. These mysterious workers appear with no introduction in the film and give the impression of being happy third world laborers, lucky to be employed in Gunnar's Berlin Wall enterprise.

Add this one small historical note. In 1989, what was once called Warner Bros. was actually called Warner Communications. During that year, in one of the most trumpeted media mergers of the time, Warner Communications merged with Time Inc. In early 1990, the new corporation unveiled their corporate name of Time Warner Inc. (In other words, no German office of Warner Bros. existed in 1990, because the name of the company was Time Warner Inc.)

If we take all of the above at face value - as I did upon the first two viewings of the film - this whole narrative thread is jarringly troublesome. It just doesn't seem believable, nor do many of the supporting characters appear to be more than rather embarrassing (and sexist) stereotypes. Rather these details seem like bits from a fantastic fantasy dreamed up by someone pining for easy riches from Americans with dollars spilling out of their pockets.

I propose that Gunnar's sudden windfall and deal with Warner Bros. is nothing more than the rather desperate fantasy of a man whose life has fallen apart and needs to believe that he can remake himself with the labor of his own bare hands and become a man of respect and wealth. What's more mundane and simplistic than the fantasy of rubbing shoulders with Hollywood celebrities ("Clint Eastwood, Tina Turner!")? These scenes also shed some light on Gunnar's troublesome attitudes toward women: the sex objects appear to be enticingly available, yet he is not allowed to touch. Even in his sexual fantasies, Gunnar is all too aware of his inadequacy.

This is a rather radical reading of this section of the film, especially since traditionally filmmakers usually give some visual indication when a narrative veers into subjective non-reality. Here, I think Reitz is letting viewers read this section of the film as they wish. Read it as a rather fantastic narrative about Gunnar's great success, or, as I contend, a reflection of Gunnar's inner mental state: his simplistic wishes, aspirations and desire to overcome social alienation and inadequacy as a male. I only came to this conclusion after watching the film a second time, and trying to understand how a filmmaker like Reitz would choose to include such atypical and unbelievable stereotypes and disconcerting scenes.

I suspect I maybe alone in this reading, but it makes a great deal of sense to me and actually increases my estimation of this episode of H3.

Cheers,

Alan

From: Wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>
Date: Sat, 04 Feb 2006 10:54:49 -0500

Alan, I'm glad you bring up showing stereotypes of Americans in the Heimat films. Let's rewind to Paul's return to Schabbach. At the time this whole scene offended me tremendously, for the same reasons you describe here: Paul with a Stetson hat, black limousine and matching driver right after WW2 is not believable and, frankly, totally unrealistic, just as this scene.

There are a few possible explanations: First, and I tend to think the most plausible: This is intended to be over the top, stereotypical writing and acting and the average viewer will just not know and "misunderstand" the scene but be entertained (why is Gunnar playing "the entertainer"?)

Or, and I rather hope this is not the case, Reitz just throws in some prejudice to align himself with the German viewers, maybe the TV powers told him to. Because of the constant influence of Hollywood movies, CNN news and magazine articles, most Germans think they are intimately familiar with American life and this stereotype fits this picture precisely.

Third, Reitz is just telling another story and didn't pay attention to historical detail. This contradicts his usual modus operandi, when he carefully crafts the German surroundings of each era.

Wolfgang

alan wmedia.com wrote:

> I have some random observations on H3: Episode 2 "The World Champions"
 >.....

From: "Gert Jan Jansen" <gertjan.jansengouda.demon.nl>
Date: Sat, 4 Feb 2006 18:17:05 +0100

Heimat 3, episode 2 Timeschedule and summary

Friday 8th of June 1990:

It's the day of the inauguration of the G nderode-house and the opening day of the World Championships Soccer in Italy.

- In the morning Ernst Simon returns with his Skyhawk II from a painting-hunt in the Baltics. He makes a dive above the G nderode-house. His friend Tobi picks up the sign and drives to Ernst' home at the Goldbrook.
- Gunnar Brehme finishes his work at the G nderode-house, erecting a dish aerial at the roof. The contribution of the East-German labourers is closed by the distribution of a rose (by Clarissa) and a bonus (by Hermann). To help a hand at the party Rudi und Lenchen Molz are there (Rudi will prepare an original "Schwenkbraten") and also Moni, girlfriend of Tillmann. Arnold Schimmelpfennig, Clarissa's son, lives in the half-timbered barn, but he prefers to stay at his own. The guests for the initiation of the house arrive: successively the family of Udo with a brand new Ford Fiesta, the family of Gunnar together with Petra's lover Reinhold (their coming was not planned, they are driving back to Munich after a two weeks holiday in Bretagne). Further guests are Anton Simon and

his household: Hartmut and Mara, Marlies and Lothar and Anton's driver Horst. Finally we see Mr. Wallauer, neighbour, former proprietor and would-be goat-hunter.

During the party the tension between Gunnar and Petra/Reinhold grows, until the stress is too much for Gunnar. Evil he leaves the premises to go to Berlin; the sign for most of the guests to go home. At that moment Hermann and Clarissa are still in the vineyards below the house to celebrate together they have a new wonderful home.

Before we looked to the football game Argentina-Cameroon (ends 0-1) and we should have recognised that there was a short heavy thunderstorm.

- Meanwhile Ernst is trying to contract Tobi as his second man (is that English?). He wants to fly to Russia to get much more paintings of impressionists very cheap. Tobi is interested in the paintings, not in the money. He will accompany Ernst by his next flight.

Saturday 9th of June 1990

- Early in the morning Ernst and Tobi fly away.
- At the G nderode house all is still quiet. When Hermann is awake, he has something new to celebrate: he has become the order to compose a national reunion-symphony.
- We see Gunnar on his way to Berlin at a parking place near the Motorway
- Lack of fuel forces Ernst to make a touchdown. He lands at the National Peoples Army Airport (NVA-Flugplatz) of Marxwalde (in the same year renamed to Neuhardenberg) With help of commander Herzog Ernst is making plans to fly to Russia unseen by the authorities (when the soccer game Russia –Argentina is on the telly. Tobi humiliates his former military boss major Gies, who injured his leg on purpose. They buy a big Lenin-statue and place it in the garden of major Gies' home. Tobi and Ernst are sleeping in a Marxwalde boarding house.

Sunday 10th of June 1990

- Meanwhile Gunnar has reached Berlin. In the eastern part he looks for his old friend J rgen Senge, but he is not at home, so the timid woman next door tells him. Gunnar moves into an apartment that seems to be deserted.
- When they awake Tobi and Ernst discover the Lenin-statue is now standing besides their pension. Tobi recognizes the warning. Ernst has to fly on his own to Russia. Tobi drives the truck and the Lenin-statue back to Dresden, his place of residence.

Monday 11th of June 1990

- Gunnar gets an idea to earn money, selling little pieces of the Berlin Wall. When he is cutting the first pieces, a press photographer takes a picture of him, because he wears a copy of the shirt of Brehme, a player of the national German soccer team. Gunnar has cleaned up "his" apartment, the TV is working again (we see the soccer game Italy- Austria) All the apartments have a collective toilet. When Gunnar wants to throw away some mouldy food, he frightens his neighbour by surprise. *[GJJ's corrections 9th to 11th made here – Eds.]*

Wednesday 13th of June 1990

Tobi arrives in Dresden-Neustadt with his military-truck and statue. His home is a "Wohngemeinschaft", a community of several families, for instance Biggi (the girlfriend of Tobi) and her daughter Anna (with Down-syndrome) He's asking for the day Russia will play their first soccer game at the FIFA-WC, but no one is interested.

NB The game Argentina- Sovjet-Union was indeed played on the 13th of June 1990 in Naples. Argentina won 2 goals by nil.

Thursday 14th of June 1990

(my 44th birthday)

We change to Udo who is back in Leipzig. He wants a job at the Leipzig-community as a specialist in redevelopment house-building. He's been judged by an inspector for hygiene, who will be weakened by the politeness of Jana and her new car (in three days it has become a licence plate of Leipzig, applause for the absence of bureaucracy)

Sunday 17th of June 1990

Gunnar tries to sell the stones of the Berlin Wall on the Kurfürstendamm, but he has to drop the price. But then arrives the group of leading people of Warner Brothers and they ask Gunnar to make an offer for one million pieces as a Christmas present. At home Gunnar asks his shy woman next door (unseen because of the closed door) to clean his football shirt.

Monday 18th of June 1990

The tricot has been washed very well. Gunnar starts hacking and breaking on the Wall. Because it is a part without graffiti he makes his own drawing: the once lovely family of Gunnar, Petra and their two daughters. Back in his apartment he discovers that he will never be able to store one million pieces of average 59 grams.

???????th of June 1990

Gunnar (perfect in suit) visits the headquarter of Warner Brothers Berlin with some samples and an offer. The boss Mr. Nothe is not enthusiastic, but Gunnar has another idea: a piece of stone together with a Karl-Marx decoration. They make a deal. Gunnar gets 35 % in advance.

???????th of June 1990

Gunnar is the last client of an East Berlin manufactory of cardboard boxes. There's still one labourer: Martina. Gunnar thinks he is in the position for unpunished sexual intimidation.

Sunday 1th of July 1990

It's the day of the "Währungsunion", the monetary reunion of east and west-Germany Toby, Biggi and Anna make a walk in a big town park in Dresden (der Grosse Garten). Anna wants to buy a soft ice.

In Western-Berlin Gunnar buys cherries and a piano. When the shy woman next door is coming home that day she can hear Gunnar playing "the Entertainer" and indeed he entertains four (illegal) Tamil labourers who are filling the cardboard boxes at the rhythm of the music.

Monday 2th of July 1990

Petra is in Leipzig to get some things of the house (hold) she wants to use in her new life with Reinhold. Gunnar is also there to help her (Reinhold not)

??????? xth of July 1990

Hermann is conducting "Till Eulenspiegel" in a concert house in Munich.

?????? xth of July 1990

Hermann and Clarissa try to milk the goat. Arnold is looking the WC-game Cameroon- Sovjet Union.

NB In reality this game was played in Stadio San Nicola in Bari on the 18th of June 1990. Result Soviet Union won 4 goals to nil, but had to leave the tournament by reaching the last place in the group.

Sunday 8th of July 1990

- Tobi and his truck arrive at Ernst's premises near the Goldbrook. No one is there. Tobi takes the truck and drives to Guesthouse Molz in Schabbach. The whole village is united to look for the final of the World Championship: Germany against Argentina. No one wants to talk with Tobi about Ernst. He drives back to the house of Ernst, drops the truck and the statue.
- The films ends with an explosion of cheers on different places, because of the winning goal for Germany, an penalty shot by Andreas Brehme. At the Berlin Wall Gunnar Brehme is put on the shoulders of enthusiastic Berliner. In the G nderode house even Arnold loses his phlegmatic attitude. Hermann makes a soundtrack of the shouting of joy Udo, Jana and their sons are jigging in Rome. Meanwhile there are pictures of Hermann conducting Beethoven. But the last pictures show Tobi and his old Trabant , sad leaving the premises of Ernst.

Gert Jan Jansen, 04022006

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>

Date: Sat, 4 Feb 2006 18:38:22 -0000

Like Alan, I want to think a bit more about Episode 2 before posting general comments on it. However, Alan's and Wolfgang's postings are both intriguing .

Thinking back to other dream or fantasy sequences in H1 and H2, they have a very different feeling ... especially episode 13 (the last) of H2, which has at times the logic of a dream, and yet seems to be almost factual. Who knows where the joins (if they exist) are, and anyway it doesn't matter ... but that episode makes poetic and psychological sense and doesn't (for me at anyrate) jar with the rest of the H2 series. It fits and illuminates Hermann's situation and self.

If Alan's interpretation is right, Gunnar's "fantasy" sequence is understandably quite different from Hermann's, being bizarre and extravert, like Gunnar himself ... I wonder?..

The "double wave" of the 4 US execs could be a clue - for a moment while watching it I wondered if it was a conscious reference by Reitz (or Brussig) to Denis Potters' work, eg "Pennies from Heaven" - (I mean the UK TV series of 1978, not the later American film version which I haven't seen). Is this possible, is Potter's work known in Germany? For anyone not knowing it, there's an entry for it in the IMDb at <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0077060/> with links to various comments etc.

It is also involves fantasy (in the form of acting out songs from the 30s) and in the words of two of the commentators on the IMDb site the songs' "up-beat denial of misery is what makes their use so powerful as they counterpoint the characters'

despair", and "one feels great empathy for the characters, even though they are flawed, because one can easily identify with their wishes and frustrations". Could Alan be right, and, on top of that, could Gunnar's "fantasy" even be a conscious parallel to Potter's TV series?

If so, this could also be a kind of answer to Wolfgang's question "why is Gunnar playing the entertainer?" ... since this is essentially what Potter's characters do in their "lip-syncing" of the old tunes.

Maybe this is all hopelessly far-fetched - but Alan's is a fascinating idea . It will be interesting to see how it works when we watch again the final episode of H3.

But Wolfgang is right too, that there is a precedent for a (not very comic) stereotyping of US characters in American Paul of H1. Like him, I hated the intrusion of that figure. But is it possible that Paul's problem comes as much as anything from the difficulty of casting an American-speaking Hunsrücker? I tried imagining the same script played by the original actor of the young Paul, as an older man – with the resonance of the person he had seemed to be in the first film, though now, like the actual American Paul, masking his natural introversion with an assumed extrovert persona. In fact there seemed to be nothing in the script itself of that episode that jarred. (This might be less true for the script of H1 films 10 and 11 – as maybe by that time the new actor had himself interacted with and influenced the later scripts)? this is all somewhat fanciful, but I found it interesting... any comments...?

Incidentally, did anyone else see a parallel between American Paul's getting the plaque fixed on the Simon house in H1, and Anton's presenting of the horseshoe? Anton unlike his father, was the stayer, not the returner, but there was something of the same feeling, though Anton's was more warm and respectful of the real situation, and of Hermann himself.

Angela

From: Wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>

Date: Sat, 04 Feb 2006 14:59:44 -0500

Can I ask our German readers, who actually still has a piece of the Wall? Did you think this was a nice souvenir or was this another "American" idea that nobody else cared about? I collect model toy fire engines and on one of my trips to Koblenz, I found this little case with a Trabbi (from the East Berlin Fire Brigade) and a small piece (presumably) of the wall for about DM 3,95 so I bought it. Of course this was all symbolic, I really didn't care if the little piece of blue painted concrete was an actual chip of the Wall or not. However, these "Mauerspechte" did a brisk business for some time. Amazing, how quickly almost the entire structure disappeared, making room for new development or simply dismantled. Today they preserve short sections as monuments and there are some interesting web sites that show "before-and-after" pictures of certain places. Since I'm also interested in stamps, some friends in the East and I used both East- and West German stamps on the same cover and added some historical text because for a short while, both types were valid for the entire country. I remember well this "anything is possible" feeling which most people shared. The scene at the ex-DDR airfield is probably one that Brussig wrote and it captures this sentiment perfectly. Before, you couldn't even visit a Fire Station without being questioned and nobody dared to take pictures for the fear of

being shot. I still wonder how East Germans managed to keep going with their lives once the oppressive and ever-present authorities had vanished. From a historical point-of-view, Germans were used to and actually liked authority and this vacuum caused all kinds of strange things to happen, like somebody traveling down the road with a statue of Lenin on an NVA truck. A great scene...

Wolfgang

From: Gert Jan Jansen <gertjan.jansengouda.demon.nl>
Date: Sun, 5 Feb 2006 00:58:11 CET

Sorry, I made a mistake in the time-schedule episode 2. The last paragraph under Saturday the 9th should be placed under Sunday the 10th and the last paragraph of Sunday the 10th should be placed under Monday the 11th. I will send a corrected version later on.
[Schedule corrected – see Gert Jan's posting on 04 Feb above – Eds.]

Gert Jan

From: "Jan R." <dasfestistzuendeaus yahoo.com>
Date: Sun, 5 Feb 2006 04:46:56 -0800 (PST)

--- Wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com> wrote:

> Can I ask our German readers, who actually still has a piece of the
> Wall? Did you think this was a nice souvenir or was this another
> "American" idea that nobody else cared about?

Let me put it this way: I had contacts to some Prenzlberg underground artists during the eighties, and 1989, when they visited me here in Hamburg, they brought a brick from one of the wall's darkest places: from Bernauer/Eberswalder Strasse. I have it still and wouldn't throw it away. But it has to be said that I **never** would have paid just one penny for such a thing.

BTW, there was a question about Gunnar's flat recently: In 1989 there was a kind of anarchy at least in East Berlin for a couple of months. A lot of East Berlin people left their flats and never came back. If someone moved in then, nobody cared about it. He just had to give a message to the housing association (I just don't remember the name of that organisation) to get an official rental contract after a while.

(Switching back to lurk mode again)

Best wishes

Jan

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>
Date: Sun, 5 Feb 2006 23:20:54 -0000

Re my last post about Alan's idea that Gunnar's adventures in Part 2 could be largely fantasy ...the idea resonates with me, as I said but I have remembered that, in the big interview by Ingo Fliess, Edgar Reitz says:

"Gunnar's life history contains turns that are not at all typical for me. The story of his becoming a Wall-pecking millionaire springs from the most original Brussig imagination. All along it's been a joy for me to transpose this story of Thomas' into film, although it did not stem from the world of my ideas."

So no hint there that he was treating it as fantasy but then, the same sequences could be understood in different ways without falsifying either interpretation - and that double wave by the 4 executives does suggest something beyond simple realism

In *Drehort Heimat* (p.291), in one of his production diary entries for Heimat3, Reitz writes (if I have understood the German) that:

"Storytelling always has a melancholy undertone, as it portrays the transience of all happiness and all sufferings..... The true depth of narrative opens itself up only to those [listeners] who are patient..... Only when stories in this respect "lie" and overstep the bounds of reality does cheerfulness arise, which makes [both] his readiness to be patient and the hidden melancholy of all life endurable to the viewer."

So maybe, after all, Gunnar's adventures, whether fantasy or fact, are indeed intended as the same kind of gift to the viewer as the songs in Denis Potter's 'Pennies from Heaven' ? does this make sense to anyone else ?

Angela

From: Alan <alan@wmedia.com>
Date: Mon, 6 Feb 2006 15:12:30 -0500

A few moments to respond to Wolfgang and Angela's thoughts on my rather unorthodox reading of Gunnar's adventures as a Warner Bros. "rock [cement-chip] star."

Angela wrote:

>Thinking back to other dream or fantasy sequences in H1 and H2, they have
 > a very different feeling ... especially episode 13 (the last) of H2, which has
 > at times the logic of a dream, and yet seems to be almost factual.

Indeed, most filmmakers in the past have tried to clearly demark oneiric or subjective fantasy sequences in films from conventional narrative. To cite a famous example you brought up, in the opening episode of Dennis Potter's PENNIES FROM HEAVEN, when Bob Hoskins suddenly breaks into song for the very first time, the director, Piers Haggard and producer Ken Trodd made a conscious choice to alert the viewer that something very different was going on by suddenly drastically altering the lighting in the bedroom set.

As I noted, Reitz does not follow these usual conventions in "The World Champions," but rather drops little hints that things are a little off-kilter. (Or perhaps as he said "over the top.") I believe he did it this way so that one can read the film two different ways. (Perhaps one for mass audiences, and the other for Š himself?)

> Who knows where the joins (if they exist) are, and anyway it doesn't matter ...

Agreed. It really doesn't matter as long as the way you read a film seems coherent and makes sense to you. Writers, artists, composers, filmmakers want to be understood, but the longer they put work out for public consumption they learn that they can't control how others interpret it, as much as they might wish. [Recall that, alas, there were a few critics who read the original HEIMAT as a nostalgic view of Germany where the Holocaust didn't take place.] The New Critics, and later the deconstructionists, pretty much dismissed the importance of authorial intent anyway.

> If Alan's interpretation is right, Gunnar's "fantasy" sequence is
> understandably quite different from Hermann's, being bizarre and
> extravert, like Gunnar himself ... I wonder?..

That is how I read it. It just makes more sense to me. It also explains things like the sexist stereotypes of the corporate secretary and factory worker, which are so out of place in Reitz's work and the Heimat films in particular. These were as jarring to me as any other aspects of this sequence.

> The "double wave" of the 4 US execs could be a clue - for a moment
> while watching it I wondered if it was a conscious reference by Reitz
> (or Brussig) to Denis Potters' work, eg "Pennies from Heaven" –
> (I mean the UK TV series of 1978, not the later American film version
> which I haven't seen). Is this possible, is Potter's work known in Germany?

I love the fact that you made this connection. It didn't occur to me and, ironically, I know Potter's work very well. (I organized one of the very few Potter retrospectives about ten years ago, which was held over a month at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. It played in the very same auditorium where H3 had its American premiere in December.) Potter is best known for his use of old pop music as emotional soliloquies in PENNIES, THE SINGING DETECTIVE and LIPSTICK ON YOUR COLLAR. But he also played around with subjective fantasy sequences, sometime to the extent that the viewer can lose their bearings. A good example is the seldom seen 1976 TV film DOUBLE DARE, which is a fascinating narrative game, which works on many levels. (And if you ever encounter the story of how this TV play came to be, the levels are even more astounding. The film is largely autobiographical and the actress who appears in the TV film was also the actress who played the role in real life.) So bringing up Potter is particularly apt, and I suspect that my familiarity with his entire body of work unconsciously may have affected by reading of H3 as well.

>It is also involves fantasy (in the form of acting out songs from the 30s)
> and in the words of two of the commentators on the IMDb site the songs'
>"up-beat denial of misery is what makes their use so powerful as they
> counterpoint the characters' despair", and "one feels great empathy for
> the characters, even though they are flawed, because one can easily
> identify with their wishes and frustrations". Could Alan be right,
>and, on top of that, could Gunnar's "fantasy" even be a conscious
>parallel to Potter's TV series?

Exactly. Interestingly, Potter also was guilty of writing fairly one-dimensional women's roles. Crudely, they tend to be either prudes, whores or madonnas. This is a serious weakness in his work, but provides for very interesting interpretations of his work as a whole. (There is a Freudian psychotherapist who I've met who is fascinated with Potter's work.)

- > If so, this could also be a kind of answer to Wolfgang's question
- > "why is Gunnar playing the entertainer?" ... since this is essentially
- > what Potter's characters do in their "lip-syncing" of the old tunes.

I like that theory. I had read the repeated use of "The Entertainer" as a reflection of Gunnar's playful nature, despite his rather dire personal life. But it also acts as an emotional objective correlative for Gunnar, in the same way Potter's use of old sappy tunes gave his characters amazing depth and pathos.

- > But Wolfgang is right too, that there is a precedent for a (not very comic)
- > stereotyping of US characters in American Paul of H1. Like him, I hated
- > the intrusion of that figure. But is it possible that Paul's problem comes as
- > much as anything from the difficulty of casting an American-speaking
- > Hunsrück?

It's been years since I've viewed the later episodes of H1, but I recall not being as bothered by the American stereotype of Paul as I was with the Warner Bros. executives. Paul reflected an America of another era. He had left both the Hunsrück and what he witnessed in World War I far behind and immersed himself in the world of American business when the jingoistic (and anti-Semitic) Henry Ford was viewed as a national icon, optimism and pep were cardinal virtues, and Reader's Digest was a source of knowledge. I accepted Paul as a self-made American who consciously killed off his former self as a form of psychological cleansing. The trauma of World War I was replaced with a naïve optimism that refused to acknowledge the dark aspects and guilt in his own past. For me Paul was quite believable. Then again, I've also known people like this!

- > I have remembered that, in the big interview by Ingo Fliess, Edgar Reitz says:
- >
- > "Gunnar's life history contains turns that are not at all typical for me.
- > The story of his becoming a Wall-pecking millionaire springs from the
- > most original Brussig imagination. All along it's been a joy for me to
- > transpose this story of Thomas' into film, although it did not stem from
- > the world of my ideas."
- >
- > So no hint there that he was treating it as fantasy but then, the same
- > sequences could be understood in different ways without falsifying either
- > interpretation - and that double wave by the 4 executives does suggest
- > something beyond simple realism ...

See above. I think Reitz is playing it two ways. On the one hand this is Brussig's tale, but Reitz is also putting it into the larger context of the Heimat films by framing it as "over-the-top" or as I would contend, a fantasy that reflects Gunnar's wishes as well as his feelings of inadequacy.

- > In Drehort Heimat (p.291), in one of his production diary entries for Heimat3,
- > Reitz writes (if I have understood the German) that:
- >
- > "Storytelling always has a melancholy undertone, as it portrays the

- > transience of all happiness and all sufferings..... The true
- > depth of narrative opens itself up only to those [listeners] who are patient.....
- > Only when stories in this respect "lie" and overstep the bounds of reality
- > does cheerfulness arise, which makes [both] his readiness to be patient
- > and the hidden melancholy of all life endurable to the viewer."
- >
- > So maybe, after all, Gunnar's adventures, whether fantasy or fact, are indeed
- > intended as the same kind of gift to the viewer as the songs in Denis Potter's
- > 'Pennies from Heaven' ? does this make sense to anyone else ?

Very well put. Thank you so much for your thoughts. This has been a fascinating exchange.

Eventually I'll get to a few other things in the episode.

Alan

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>

Date: Mon, 6 Feb 2006 23:17:28 -0000

First, a response to Alan's latest post: Thanks Alan, it is fascinating, isn't it. I'm a bit worried about your repeatedly quoting "over the top" from our translation though, as the word Edgar Reitz actually used was "schrill" which could just be "shrill" or "strident" – but somehow "over the top" fitted the context, hope we did right – German speakers please comment!...

Now, more general thoughts on Episode 2: Again, so much has already been said, that I agree wholeheartedly with . Seeing the film again, I felt much warmer towards the East Germans, especially Gunnar – for all the reasons that other people have remarked on. Warmth and exasperation, and protectiveness and fury, all mixed.. (familiar enough feelings maybe)... also much the same as his friends in the film clearly felt – it was moving the way Udo and the others unsentimentally tried to help him, or at least let him know they felt for him.

Difficult for Petra too – though behaving insensitively (especially by bringing Reinhold with her to the party), she would have known that Gunnar had no boundaries and if she showed him any warmth he'd totally overreact and misinterpret..

Reinhold seemed a bit naïve in many ways, probably oblivious of the effect his presence would have on Gunnar, though that's not an excuse...

After first seeing the film I noted "Gunnar – anguished and comic too ... but some of it still just documentary?" but now it becomes clearer that, as Ivan and Wolfgang say, the more "documentary" aspects (the military airfield etc) will have a special resonance for a German audience, especially perhaps in the East – being English one probably misses a lot of the significance.

But then there was Ernst's open-hearted delight at being allowed to sit in the cockpit of the military jet – it links right back to the famous scene of his buzzing Schabbach with a bunch of red roses for the proxy wedding in H1, and to himself as the lad in H1 who was so fond of Otto and so hurt when Otto had to leave, that he could no longer stay in the family home. Ivan's parallel with Bloom and Stephen in 'Ulysses' is

moving – Bloom had lost a son, Ernst (long ago) lost first a father then a beloved stepfather ... and something of himself at the same time too. And throughout Heimat 3 he is in one way or another playing the father himself, without quite knowing best how ... still disconcertingly adolescent... perhaps more the conspiratorial elder brother, as he was once for Hermann in H1. Maybe even an erotic undertone in his attraction to Tobi.

On the other hand he is the devious, reclusive hoarder of dubiously acquired wealth, at the same time mischievous, cocking a snook at authorities and sober citizens. At least he is more appreciative of his pictures than of the lovely old houses he profitably stripped and “modernised” in H1. Ernst is one of the greatest creations of H3 and his scenes are among the very best.

Tobi is another wonderful character – though way out and laid back, he is nonetheless acute and grounded – more so than the much older Ernst. His life under the regime of the GDR has matured and toughened him in a way that Ernst may never have known in the West. In spite of the bitterness from that time, he has also a lot of gentleness, and the scenes with his partner and their daughter with Down’s syndrome are both ordinary and extraordinary. Ernst (typically) lets him down, but in a way he knew that would happen. It becomes really sad that we see so little more of him in the later episodes. In a full 11- part Heimat 3 he might well have merited an episode of his own.

Lenin also has a grand part – the one real belly laugh in the the whole series, that I can remember... but still a sinister undertone – the end of the episode leaves one wondering if he is really safely earthed in that paddock in Schabbach.

Some lovely moments with the children at the party and with Gunnar.. Also Tillman and Moni – again sad that we don’t see very much more of Tillmann after his delightful eruption into the first episode (I believe their wedding is one of the sequences shot but not screened).

Some things that are very uncomfortable:

The falsity of Clarissa’s brittle, bright manner and obsession with the house – is she still trying to impress her impossible mother (reduced to a two-dimensional caricature in Heimat3) even in her absence? The Clarissa of Heimat2 would never have behaved that way, would have had difficulty being a charming hostess to Anton and his family and wanting to be accepted by them. She must have left her son Arnold for years in the care of her mother, knowing only too well what that would be like for him – and can’t really make up to him for it now ... there is something very painful and anxious about their relationship, over and above his normal adolescent only-child behaviour...

One wonders all over again what has happened to Clarissa since the sixties – though an accomplished performance, it is still not the same person at all – even more than Hermann she has become someone else... the mystery and strength and creativity have gone and the vulnerability is half hidden... Again as in Episode 1 the feeling that the sorcerer has withdrawn his love and enchantment from his creations, as it were... maybe this is just a stupid thing to say.. anyway in later episodes it changes a bit ...

Then there’s the house – though perhaps unavoidably as it was almost a complete ruin, it has become horribly over-restored, almost twee, its surroundings

suburbanised and in this episode full of opulent motors. It looked much better when it was tumbling down and hidden in a tangled wood by a country lane.

I suppose this only reflects Reitz' expressed intention to avoid suggesting a return to some idyllic romantic "Heimat", by placing the house above the Rhine, "the river that connects the peoples – with all the darker sides of the modern world: noise, traffic, destruction of nature"....

Anyway, seeing this film for a second time reveals so much more, it is much richer than it seemed the first time. It may sound silly to be writing about the characters as though they were real people, but they are such subtle creations, it doesn't seem too inappropriate, I hope?

Angela

From: Gert Jan Jansen <gertjan.jansengouda.demon.nl >

Date: Tue, 7 Feb 2006 01:26:51 CET

Episode 2 has a wonderful beaming start and a precarious, melancholic end.

In the first minute the leading figures of this film are introduced to the spectator:

1. Ernst Simon in his Cessna
2. the G nderode house, representing the new family relation of Hermann
3. Gunnar Brehme in his soccer T-shirt
4. Tobi with his long red hair.

At the there are beautiful pictures of Tobi's Trabant driving away at dusk from Ernst's premises, where nobody is at home.

Between those moments we reach the top of the euphoric thoughts that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall. For the happiest people in the world it's no problem to become the World Champions. Four decades of guilt and penalty have been closed. The German people dares again to be proud of itself.

Let's start with the G nderode house, a story in its own. Build up for the film as a ruin, it's now completely restored. It will take over the place of the Simon house and smithy in Heimat 1: an operating base for the overall headfigures, an anchorpoint for the story. Hermann and Clarissa will enter a new stage in life: together but also apart. I like the scenes on that sunny day in June very much. Almost everyone we know is coming to the inauguration of the G nderode-house. It reminds me to the start of the Godfather I, the marriage of the daughter of Don Corleone.

NB / Besides :We saw Gunnar on the roof troubling with the dish aerial. It was not quite logic that Gunnar did this job, for Tillmann was the professional in this case. There must be a reason for Reitz to do it this way, because Helma Hammen told us on the Heimat-tour that Uwe Steimle (the actor playing Gunnar) has extreme fear of heights. The film team had to take special provisions to give the illusion Gunnar is standing on the roof.

Episode 2 is undoubtedly the most "east-German" part of the six. Both the story of Ernst & Tobi and the rise of the Gunnarian empire take place in the former DDR: Marxwalde, Berlin and Dresden, plus the sideline in Leipzig with Udo. There have been comments enough on the role of Gunnar I roughly can agree. You start to like him, although he has very bad qualities (in extremis the indecent assault of Martina) But we love Gunnar because he is the only looser in a big group of happy people. Perhaps our feelings are also based on the behaviour of Petra. Her character is perhaps too much unisono. She has radically chosen for the wealthy western world and cuts off all the relations with the past. Look at the way she gives orders to the man of the removal firm in the lift. She has to play a new born arrogant type, that will dominate the weak Reinhold. Reinhold is after several years still unable to take over the concert agency of his mother Frau Loewe. His job is to carry the suitcases of Hermann.

There have been said some words on the influence of co-author Thomas Brussig . I presume that his role was limited to the couleur-locale, to the details of figures and requisites. The stories must be from the hand of Edgar Reitz himself, for Thomas Brussig is not a storyteller. I recently read his bestseller "Helden wie wir" (Hero's like us) and was rather disappointed. It's an annoying story of a young man (with the stupid name Klaus Uhltscht: 8 consonants) who unsuspectingly becomes adult, becomes contributor of the Stasi and opens the Berlin Wall with his penis. Of course there are moments you can laugh, but there is little movement. In place there are long descriptions of thoughts, that mostly oversized turn into the wrong direction. Perhaps some German list members can contradict me, but I was not delighted by so called THE novel of the "Wende".

I was far more delighted by this episode of Heimat 3, that still increased by the introduction of Ivan Mansley. Untill this moment I also read the very valuable contributions of Alan, Wyn Grant, Richard Rees-Jones and Wolfgang Floitgraf.

-- In my opinion Ivan gave an own interpretation to the words of Anton to Mara "Über aberglauben red Ich mit dir gar nicht". You used the words "I'm not talking about superstition" (but about ancestry) , but I think the translation should be "About superstition I absolutely don't want to talk with you". The next question is about what he likes to talk with Mara in case.

-- There was a curiosity in the speech of Anton to Hermann: He referred to "our grandfather Matthias Simon", but Matthias wasn't the granddad of Hermann at all. He is the son of Maria Simon- Wiegand and Otto Wohleben.

-- Did you recognize why "even" Jana was so upset by Petra's lack of understanding? When they are watching football Petra and Reinhold are making love upstairs, but you can hear it downstairs.

-- At a certain moment I saw Hartmut standing in the door-opening- embracing Mara. In episode 1 we only saw him gaze angry to his wife. Which circumstances are changed? Is he delighted because his father has had his first heart-attack?

Alan draws attention to an interesting question. To which extent and under which circumstances a story should be logic and authentic. In his contribution Alan is "dismasking" the sequences related to Gunnar's business venture with WB. His remarks will be absolutely correct in a technical way; it was a pleasure to read them. Still I have to confess it didn't influence my positive evaluation of the story. At the moment you realise the reality-degree of a case is possibly not very high, you

automatically drop your wish of 100 % authenticity and logic. When a story becomes a surreal or symbolic character, no one will ask for absolute reality. But in other cases I am on Alan's side: when it's possible to make things logic, do it, also because Reitz himself sets high standards on authenticity. That's why I will go on making remarks when (for example) the football game Italy-Austria is situated in the film on Monday the 11th of June, when it in real life was played on the 9th of June. Roel perhaps will say it's trivial and she is right, but still my question will be: Why he did it this way? Are there cinematographic specialists that can say something about this?

In some cases there will be another reason. There are some sequences at the G nderode house, that in my opinion have been "replaced" in the montage (assembling?) room: Hermann & Clarissa are trying to milk the goat and her son Arnold is watching the game Soviet Union- Cameroon. That match was played on the 18th of June in Bari, but the scenes before were already situated in July!! What could be the trouble if the sequence also in the film was situated at that date ?(the Monday that Gunnar starts his hacking for WB). Does anybody know? Perhaps it had been better for our relationship with Hermann and Clarissa. By replacing the scenes to the end of the film and situating them in July, we haven't "seen" the couple for four weeks and its difficult to understand the meaning of the only concert during this episode, followed by the lamentation "How wonderful it would be, being at home for three weeks". How did we know they didn't?

Some other questions regarding these sequences.

-- Is it logic that Hermann hasn't the slightest idea how to milk a goat? He grew up with cows.

-- Did someone hear the reason why Arnold removed from his grandmother in Hamburg to the G nderode-house? What happened to Frau Lichtblau who (in episode 1) was so upset by the idea living alone? Even her name wasn't mentioned, although we know she's quite alive at the end of episode 6.

Gert Jan Jansen

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

Date: Tue, 7 Feb 2006 17:01:05 -0000

In two posts entitled "Gunnar Signs with Warner Bros" Alan Andres argues that what we are watching in these scenes is Gunnar's "desperate fantasy" as he "pines for easy riches" and he posits two different interpretations, one for "mass audiences" taking matters at face value and one perhaps for Reitz himself which Alan interprets for us. Well I will go along with the mass audience!!

Alan wrote:

>"Even in his sexual fantasies Gunnar is all too aware of his inadequacy"

in that he is not allowed to touch the sex objects of his fantasies. That sounds very much like having your cake and eating it. A sexually inadequate man would surely fantasise about being the all-conquering hero. A Walter Mitty figure perhaps! Gunnar meets rebuff after rebuff. Yet he keeps coming back for more! He is told that he stinks and that he cannot speak proper German; he is slapped by Miranda,

embarrassed by the coffee girl, and humiliated to find the downstairs lady on the toilet. These, surely, would be most peculiar fantasies!

Alan finds the facts that the Americans are presented as stereotypes, and that there are mistakes in the naming of the company and in the organisation of the office, support his hypothesis. To me, the mistakes are simply mistakes. There are others of a far more serious nature in the Heimat films, such as whether Hermann attended his mother's 70th birthday party or not, or whether he knew he was lying when he said he had never visited his mother in 20 years [We saw him do so with two young females in his sports car]. We, as detailed analysts notice such things, but would cinema audiences as the hours slip by?

Regarding the American executives being presented as "optimistic, energetic, vapid and non-reflective stereotypical Americans" [Alan's words] I have a slightly different take on their presentation. The primary thing about them is not really that they are Americans but that they are advertising men; the glad-handers of the capitalist system to a tee!! They are smart, glib, meretricious, but so are such men the world over. They coin slogans and catch-phrases. Notice how Herr Nothe subtly alters the final slogan from German to World History: "A Chip of World History from Warner Bros".

What I saw in this episode was an opposition being set up between the evils of rapacious capitalism and the constancy of honest, human values. Hermann is an exceedingly wealthy man and is led into selfishness. The tyranny of East German Communism has collapsed but one notices how nice so many of the Easterners are. Gunnar buys cherries before going into the piano emporium. He gets extra cherries at a reduced price. What a nice cherry-seller! The ice-cream seller treats Anna, the Downs syndrome girl, with great courtesy. Tobi [is he her real father?] is paternal and kind and he and Biggi go to have a coffee because the waiter hasn't got many customers. There is a kind of sentimentality here [left-wing?] which would seem to be Brussig's doing. Thus, the advertising executives are in opposition to Tobi, Udo, and other good honest folk. Just as Herr Böckle is later. It is not his nationality that is important but that he is a rapacious asset-stripper. The same opposition again. It is not the nationality of the Warner Bros executives that is important but what they do and how they do it.

Ivan Mansley.

From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan.jsbiedron.com>

Date: Tue, 7 Feb 2006 11:26:34 -0600

Gert and all,

You wrote about Petra:

- > She has radically chosen for the wealthy western world
- > and cuts off all the relations with the past.

One thing I noticed about Petra is that she changed her clothes after she arrived at the House. When she gets out of the car, she is dressed in a dark skirt and red blouse. For the party she is shown in a bright red cocktail dress, which I would think is a little too much for a house warming party and watching a game on TV. The other

women, including Clarissa and Mara, are wearing very nice dresses, but they are subdued in color. Does the bright red dress indicate that Petra is a whore?

Another thing I noticed is that when Petra is standing on the terrace with the others, waiting to be thanked and rewarded by Hermann and Clarissa, it shows Gunnar peering over the roof, then the camera flashes to Petra who gives a little wave - at first you think she is waving at Gunnar, but then the camera focuses on Reinhold who has come out on the porch. Which man was she waving at? I also could not understand why Petra is standing with the others, since she is no longer with Gunnar and had nothing to do with finishing the house.

> Some other questions regarding these sequences.

>

> -- Is it logic that Hermann hasn't the slightest

> idea how to milk a goat? He grew up with cows.

I would guess that when Hermann was growing up in Schabbach, he wanted nothing to do with the cows. It was stated in Heimat that Hermann's mother sent him to the best schools, paid for music lessons, etc. Hermann was too busy studying and practicing. He couldn't wait to escape to the city.

>-- Did someone hear the reason why Arnold removed
> from his grandmother in Hamburg to the
> Günderode-house? What happened to Frau Lichtblau
> who (in episode 1) was so upset by the idea
> living alone? Even her name wasn't mentioned,
> although we know she's quite alive at the end of
> episode 6.

If there was a reason given I missed it - but perhaps Clarissa decided she should keep an eye on her son and keep him out of trouble. Perhaps she thought her mother wasn't doing such a good job. I'm not sure how old Arnold is supposed to be at this point.

Susan

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>

Date: Tue, 7 Feb 2006 17:51:56 -0000

Ivan, don't you find it exciting and satisfying that there could be several different ways of interpreting or relating to the same bit of film? I do!... In a way both Alan's and your ways could be valid at the same time like those holograms of the same face from different sides depending how you hold it..... Both interpretations have strong arguments on their side! I agree "one for the masses and one for the author himself" sounds a bit elitist - actually it's like that just for the same person (ie me) at different moments...

I know what you mean about the "left wing sentimentality" etc ... but actually Brussig himself in a couple of short articles I've managed to read is anything but sentimental about the GDR ... though maybe it's something of his own version of "Heimat" that creeps into the scenes with Tobi and Biggi and Ana ..

But there is nothing sentimental about those scenes - they're so ordinary and simple and recognizable, they are as much Reitz as Brussig, not distinctly either.... Ana I suppose is just quietly playing herself..

As for Hermann - there's nothing "selfish" about working very hard at being a talented musician with little time for anything else ... and his wealth is not conspicuous and doesn't bring him anything of deeper value than he had back at the end of the 60s.....

what was that bit about "laying aside moral controls" when telling stories?

Perhaps I've misunderstood...

Angela

**From: "Gert Jan Jansen" <gertjan.jansengouda.demon.nl>
Date: Tue, 7 Feb 2006 21:38:24 +0100**

Susan,

> One thing I noticed about Petra is that she changed her clothes
> after she arrived at the House

The change of clothes of Petra I didn't observe while watching. Interesting, but your conclusion about the colour red is too extreme for me. There was another woman that had to change clothes (Clarissa), but in her case for obvious reasons: the goat had pissed on it. Your observation of the standing position of Petra during the thanking ceremony is also quite right. What did she do there, when she no longer had a relation with Gunnar. Before I had no doubt about the man she was waving at: Reinhold.

> when Hermann was growing up in Schabbach, he wanted
> nothing to do with the cows.

Your remarks about the non-agricultural past of Hermann, due by his mother, will be right. Next time watching Heimat 1 I will look for indications that after all he had to help sometimes in the cowshed.

> I'm not sure how old Arnold is supposed to be at this point.

Arnold Schimmelpfennig is supposed to be born in 1968. So during episode 2 he was 22 years old; no longer a boy you should keep an eye on. Perhaps there you see a reference to a troubled youth. In the Hamburg-sequences in episode 1 it became clear that Arnold is quite clever, from the conversation between Clarissa and Arnold in the dependance / barn of G nderode we have to understand that he still has to do his "Abitur", the final examination of the secondary school, but also that afterwards he is going to study informatics in the States.

Good night
Gert Jan

From: Alan <alan.wmedia.com >
Date: Tue, 7 Feb 2006 23:40:11 CET

Some thoughts on Ivan's response to my rather radical reading on Gunnar and Warner Bros.

First, I am delighted to read such a spirited response. I'm actually surprised no one had written in kind earlier. Yet, many of the points Ivan raises I had considered in my own mind after my second viewing, and had no trouble finding answers to support my reading. Whether they will persuade others, I leave open to you.

In general, I am not too fond of very liberal creative readings of texts as pioneered by the deconstructionist critics, many of whom appear to play clever games to subvert the seemingly overt meaning of a text. Yet, opening a work of art to multiple interpretations is in itself a creative act, and a text, film, novel, or art work that offers multiple readings is often one that continues to resonate on many different levels over time. Frankly, I found the first two episodes of HEIMAT 3 less personally resonant than nearly the entire body of the first two HEIMAT films, and I was puzzling why this was. The story seemed too simplistic, less ambiguous and less rich in character and detail. Parts of the Gunnar episodes being the most troublesome for me. By considering the alternative reading, I found the film a richer experience. I suspect this is entirely subjective. Everyone reacts to a film in subtly different ways, even though the shared experience appears to be universal. This is one of the great mysteries of the art of cinema.

To Ivan's points:

> In two posts entitled "Gunnar Signs with Warner Bros" Alan Andres argues
 > that what we are watching in these scenes is Gunnar's "desperate fantasy" as
 > he "pines for easy riches" and he posits two different interpretations, one
 > for "mass audiences" taking matters at face value and one perhaps for Reitz
 > himself which Alan interprets for us. Well I will go along with the mass
 > audience!!<<

I plead guilty of employing provocative language. Yet, my proposition that there may be multiple readings of one work of art for different audiences isn't too radical. Many great works of 20th century literature, film and art work on multiple levels, and many were created to appeal to both mass and alternative audiences. (The films of Hitchcock are a good example.) As a child I can remember being greatly entertained by films that I saw with very different eyes as I grew older.

I suspect Reitz was saddled by market restraints while making HEIMAT 3, and he talked a bit about his travails when he was in Boston in December. I wonder if what I feel as the difference between H3 and the earlier HEIMAT films isn't a reflection of these market necessities. (I don't want to jump ahead, but there is a scene in a coming episode of the film that dramatically makes little sense to me, and appears to be a scene of action and suspense that was added only to make the film more exciting. I hope I'm hopelessly wrong here and someone can provide a richer reading when this comes up in a few weeks.) Because of this, I suspect he was making a film for mass consumption that also worked on additional levels.

> Alan wrote: "Even in his sexual fantasies Gunnar is all too aware of his
 > inadequacy" in that he is not allowed to touch the sex objects of his
 > fantasies. That sounds very much like having your cake and eating it. A
 > sexually inadequate man would surely fantasise about being the

- > all-conquering hero. A Walter Mitty figure perhaps! Gunnar meets rebuff
- > after rebuff. Yet he keeps coming back for more! He is told that he stinks
- > and that he cannot speak proper German; he is slapped by Miranda,
- > embarrassed by the coffee girl, and humiliated to find the downstairs lady
- > on the toilet. These, surely, would be most peculiar fantasies!

A very logical point. And I wondered the same thing as well, but then I concluded that the encounters between Gunnar and the woman in the phone booth and downstairs lady are probably not figments of his imagination. In my reading, there isn't a clear demarcation on what is subjective and what is objective. Rather, like Reitz's shifting use of black and white and color, we slip back and forth without an overt code that indicates that "this scene is fantasy, this scene is reality." I think Reitz likes to make the viewer do a little work.

Gunner is a man who has been abandoned by his wife. When he tries to make friends with a little girl on the street a woman treats him as if he is the reincarnation of Peter Lorre in *M*. He is humiliated by the encounter with the woman in the phone booth and scares the lady downstairs. His self-esteem as a father and husband has been destroyed. The only thing he still believes in is in the power of his own hands.

Were this a simplistic Walter Mitty type fantasy, yes he would be a sexual Casanova. But I think he is mentally wounded to such an extent that he finds it impossible to relate to women. His fantasy isn't to be a lover. Rather he consumed by sexual desire, impotence, confusion and anger. I would point to the very important scene where he paints a picture of his wife and children on the wall and then hacks into it with the chisel. I found that scene chilling and frightening - a physical manifestation of naked anger and aggression. (And I won't even get into a Freudian reading of the chisel weapon.) When I saw this scene I was glad that Petra and the two girls were living far away. Needless to say, my reading of Gunnar is quite dark. I see him as wounded and very, very troubled.

- > Alan finds the facts that the Americans are presented as stereotypes, and
- > that there are mistakes in the naming of the company and in the organisation
- > of the office, support his hypothesis.

Actually I only added the Warner Communication/Time Warner note as a footnote. I certainly don't believe that Reitz assumed the audience would pick up on it. But as he is a stickler for details, I thought it curious that he used the name of an actual film production company in H3, rather than, say, Colossal Pictures or something. So this does seem to be a clue of some sort, but I take it as a playful in-joke. (Sort of like the shot of Joris Ivens's grave in DZH.)

>To me, the mistakes are simply mistakes.

Possibly. But Reitz is such a stickler for accuracy in the earlier films it's eerie. He reminds me of Stanley Kubrick in his obsessive attention to detail in DZH (something that might explain Kubrick's enthusiasm for the two earlier HEIMAT films as well). After carefully researching a number of details in DZH many years ago, I have come to be very dubious about "mistakes that are simply mistakes."

- >There are others of a far more serious nature in the Heimat films,
- > such as whether Hermann attended his mother's 70th birthday party or not, or
- > whether he knew he was lying when he said he had never visited his mother in
- > 20 years [We saw him do so with two young females in his sports car]. We, as
- > detailed analysts notice such things, but would cinema audiences as the

> hours slip by?

These were very clearly conscious choices on Reitz's part. I remember noticing them immediately the first time I saw DZH, as did many others. Why he made these decisions can be opened up to another discussion.

>Regarding the American executives being presented as "optimistic, energetic,
> vapid and non-reflective stereotypical Americans" [Alan's words] I have a
> slightly different take on their presentation. The primary thing about them
> is not really that they are Americans but that they are advertising men; the
> glad-handers of the capitalist system to a tee!! They are smart, glib,
> meretricious, but so are such men the world over. They coin slogans and
> catch-phrases. Notice how Herr Nothe subtly alters the final slogan from
> German to World History: "A Chip of World History from Warner Bros".

Having worked in the media business and having once worn the hat of marketing director of a major American publisher, I beg to differ. And having worked with many people in the advertising business in America, and with corporate media and advertising people in the UK and Germany, I can't agree. I've never seen people like the Warner Bros. characters who are taken seriously. Like I wrote earlier, these reminded me of figures from a sit com. (Remember Mr. Hamilton, the American tycoon played by Bruce Boa who orders the Waldorf Salad in Fawlty Towers?) Like all stereotypes, there is a bit of truth in them, but I expect so much more from a filmmaker of Reitz's subtlety. That's why I can't help but see them as a manifestation of Gunnar's fantasy.

>What I saw in this episode was an opposition being set up between the evils
> of rapacious capitalism and the constancy of honest, human values.

Absolutely! I greatly appreciate your exposition on this.

> Just as Herr Böckle is later. It is not his nationality
> that is important but that he is a rapacious asset-stripper. The same
> opposition again. It is not the nationality of the Warner Bros executives
> that is important but what they do and how they do it.

Interesting. I agree this is a very valid interpretation. (Dare I say, one of manyŠ) Nevertheless, the way Herr Böckle is presented and the way the Warner guys are portrayed is very different. Böckle is a wonderfully drawn character, and one of the highlights of H3.

Thanks Ivan. And thanks to all who are indulging in this discussion.

Best,

Alan

From: Alan <alan.wmedia.com>
Date: Wed, 8 Feb 2006 15:05:37 -0500

One small note on an observation by Gert:

>-- There was a curiosity in the speech of Anton to Hermann: He
 > referred to "our grandfather Matthias Simon", but Matthias wasn't
 > the granddad of Hermann at all. He is the son of Maria Simon-
 > Wiegand and Otto Wohleben.

True, Matthias Simon wasn't Hermann's birth grandfather, but he was his grandfather in every other sense. (I'm probably overly sensitive to the semantics here as I adopted an infant within the past year. Within the adoption community - and much of society - the words "parents," "grandparents," etc. refer to the legal caregivers that form a child's daily family, as opposed to "birth parents.") I think Anton's words were carefully chosen to emphasize and solidify the family connection with Hermann, especially after Hermann long absence.

A

From: Elizabeth Garrett <david.garrett4 ntlworld.com>
Date: Thu, 9 Feb 2006 21:39:04 -0000

Hello everyone. Once again we have a wonderful introduction from Ivan, and many interesting comments from others on the list. Thank you all. Of course, a lot of things I have thought of have already been said by you! So here are just a few ideas, mostly about Gunnar.

Somebody on the list wondered why it was Gunnar on the roof doing the satellite dish installation, rather than Tillman the electrician. Well, from the point of view of the story it needed to be Gunnar who dropped the dish in his surprise and rage at seeing Petra. It produced a moment of shock, disturbing in a generally pleasant atmosphere. Actually, I think Gunnar could turn his hand to anything.

Back in East Germany, he stupidly starts to talk to the little girl in the street, just because he misses his own daughters so much. As for the frightened young woman in the flat downstairs, I am surprised that she washed his shirt. Has he a future with her, one wonders? There is a telling shot of a bird in its nest, on the staircase inside the building - and Gunnar has lost his own nest.

We see a classic shot right down a staircase in some other building - perhaps in Leipzig? I have been noticing similar shots in films for years, and can never decide whether they are a complete cliché or really rather beautiful. I always enjoy them.

Finally, a word about the blonde in the scarlet dress who serves coffee to Gunnar at Warner Bros. She is surely a direct reference back to Petra at the housewarming party, though the secretary is more over the top and more glamorous. She might well be a fantasy of Gunnar's.

Looking forward to episode 3!

Elizabeth Garrett.

From: Michael Beck <bmichaelbeck gmail.com>
Date: Fri, 10 Feb 2006 11:28:54 +0200

Just a small addition on Gunnar throwing the satellite dish off the roof: the dish was mainly to be able to see the football matches. Gunnar himself seems to be the biggest football fan. Later on you also see him watching a very bad quality image of the match. This seems to me to be an obvious symbol of Gunnar being his own worst enemy, a fact others have already remarked. Michael Beck.

From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan jsbiedron.com>
Date: Fri, 10 Feb 2006 15:23:28 -0600

.....
 There have been so many interesting viewpoints that I can't add anything, except to say each posting brings out a new way to view the film. But I will comment on:

Alan wrote:

> To pursue the deal, Gunnar arrives at the Warner Bros. offices dressed
 > in a business suit and carrying an attaché case, which we assume he has
 > purchased for just this occasion. In the office the executive assistant is
 > a pert and clearly sexually distracting young woman whose primary job
 > appears to be to serve coffee, milk and sugar. She acts like a character
 > out of a bad vaudeville sketch from the 1940s. (She is supposed to be
 > working in American office in 1990! The very idea of a female office
 > assistant serving coffee to her male boss was anathema by the early 1980s
 > in American corporate offices. I would assume this attitude eventually
 > reached international offices as well.)

In 1994 I was between jobs and worked for several months as a temp. One of the jobs was at Motorola (supposedly a progressive company) and I was asked several times to bring coffee to the boss in the morning. So even if it was not "supposed" to exist, this practice was still there in the mid 90's.

> The executives talk about giving away 1,000,000 souvenir chips of the
 > Wall as corporate Christmas gifts. The number is unbelievably fantastic. I
 > can imagine a large international media corporation purchasing 10,000
 > items as corporate premium gifts, but more than that seems quite
 > unrealistic.

This number does seem high but perhaps they are exaggerating for Gunnar's benefit. I vaguely remember pieces of the Berlin Wall sold in catalogs or advertised in newspapers. I did not know anyone who bought them.

(Angela) >So maybe, after all, Gunnar's adventures, whether fantasy or
 > fact, are indeed intended as the same kind of gift to the viewer as the
 > songs in Denis Potter's 'Pennies from Heaven' ? does this make sense
 > to anyone else ?

I am not familiar with Pennies from Heaven, but I think if we look at Gunnar's actions as Angela suggests, perhaps it is meant to mirror the confusion and uncertainty faced by people from the DDR at this time.

I will also add that another scene I liked was when Ernst and Toby check into their "Zimmer Frei" and there is a heart shaped pillow on the bed.

ReindeR I hope you will have time to comment on Episode 2 - your criticism of Episode 1 as far as it went was intriguing, I would like to hear more. And Ivan, I hope you will make more comments at the end of the discussion as you did with Heimat and DZH.

Susan

From: "Amanda Jeffries" <amanda.jeffries virgin.net>

Date: Sat, 11 Feb 2006 11:54:19 -0000

The discussion of levels of fantasy in Episode 2, amongst other themes, has been rich and thought-provoking. I like the idea of different scenes being coloured (sometimes literally) by the subjective viewpoint of the character so that one can interpret the tone of different shots as the expression of the character's inner world. I was also struck by the similarity of the 'coffee girl' and Petra - almost exactly the same red dress (like a whore, as Susan suggests), which seems to confirm the point (also Petra turns up in a red leather jacket at the end). Incidentally, Clarissa changes from a bright red to a more sober blue dress at the party - this surely can't be an accidental detail. Gunnar's dazzling newly-washed football shirt marks a glorious new start.

The discussion of Gunnar has also started to unpack layers of complexity. Alan writes:

- > Rather he is consumed by sexual desire, impotence, confusion and anger.
- > I would point to the very important scene where he paints a picture of his wife
- > and children on the wall and then hacks into it with the chisel. I found that scene
- > chilling and frightening - a physical manifestation of naked anger and aggression.
- > (And I won't even get into a Freudian reading of the chisel weapon.)'

I agree that Gunnar's 'tool' carries heavy symbolic meaning. Having used tools all his life to construct, Gunnar finds it more profitable to use them to knock down. Tools are sophisticated but expensive in the west. At the party Gunnar takes up a hammer in a fit of anger (we wonder who he is going to bludgeon to death) but impotently lays it aside (a gesture later paralleled by his inability to throw away his wedding ring - recalling a similar scene with Hermann and Schnusschen in Series 2). Then when he paints his family on the wall he approaches them menacingly with a chisel, but we don't actually see him lay into them. He hesitates and then the scene finishes. The anger is there but it seems he can't act on it even in fantasy. Gunnar is certainly consumed by frustrated anger and desire; however there is some sort of vicarious release at the end perhaps? "Brehme scores! Goal, goal goal!!' ...

Angela writes:

- > One wonders all over again what has happened to Clarissa since the sixties
- > – though an accomplished performance, it is still not the same person at all –
- > even more than Hermann she has become someone else... the mystery
- > and strength and creativity have gone and the vulnerability is half hidden...
- > Again as in Episode 1 the feeling that the sorcerer has withdrawn his love
- > and enchantment from his creations, as it were...

I agree that Clarissa has become a different person. In some ways she has matured to become more sensitive of others, and kind - I don't think the self-absorbed Clarissa of the previous series would have noticed Gunnar's distress at the party, let alone pretend that she didn't understand the rules of football in order to distract him. From being an angry and reluctant mother she has become (though perhaps a bit sentimentally) proud and doting. But she does seem to be, like Hermann, a rather pale and two-dimensional figure, in contrast with the colourful East Germans who bounce in with exuberance and panache. The shot of Hermann and Clarissa milking a goat is reminiscent of a sitcom - you almost wait for the sound of canned laughter and the goat to kick over the bucket. No mystery or tragedy here. Can it really be that the sorcerer has withdrawn his love and enchantment? Ivan suggests that somehow Hermann has 'sold out' (and as we later see his muse does seem to have deserted him). Has he in fact buried all his memories deep deep within and reconstructed himself like Paul? This is the price you pay, perhaps - the world of success and crowded schedules leaves no time to dwell on deeper things or for real creativity.

I also think that Tobi is an interesting character - the thoughtful grounded outsider, reminiscent of some ways of Juan. There is a scene where Ernst seems to be tempting him with worldly wealth in a way that is reminiscent of Christ's temptation by the devil. His eyes glitter for a moment. But then he drives back, without a job, to the simplicity and authenticity of his crowded flat and little family in the East.

Amanda

From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder.rustema.nl>

Date: Sun, 12 Feb 2006 10:20:20 +0100

At 00:07 +0000 3/2/06, Ivan Mansley wrote:

- >Ernst eventually flies
- >off to Russia alone, Tobi having decided that their plans have been
- >uncovered and refuses to continue. He is left with the statue of Lenin which
- >becomes a bizarre image of the breakdown of socialism after 40 years and
- >ends up back in the Hunsrück, eventually. There is a haunting and melancholy
- >scene of Tobi, disconsolate, driving away from Ernst's house, with the
- >statue poking over the trees under the darkening skies.

I found some time to watch episode 2 last night, finally.

What I did not understand about the Lenin statue was why major Gies (I have heard the name Gies before in Heimat-context somewhere, did Reitz make a reference I don't understand?) received the statue as a prank in his front yard, but the next

morning Tobias wakes up with Lenin staring him in the face. Why did they not get immediately out of town after pulling the prank? They risk some repercussion from major Gies, don't they? And then Tobias takes the statue with him, presumably taking it out of the front yard again. He even drives to Dresden and further with it, while he has bad memories of that thing. Ernst must have asked him to bring it back perhaps? Or did it just happen to be on the truck and Tobi did not bother to leave it behind somewhere? Perhaps a crucial scene about this is cut on the request of the tv-bosses to speed things up?

BTW. I also found some time to upload more translations from Angela, see <http://heimat123.net/interviews/> The page is getting a bit messy, there is too much up there.

ReindeR

From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder.rustema.nl>
Date: Sun, 12 Feb 2006 10:38:17 +0100

At 16:18 -0600 3/2/06, Susan Biedron wrote:

>A few questions:
 >Why did Gunnar pick such a dilapidated apartment to live in? The building
 >looks like something from an old German war movie. Surely he could have
 >afforded better with the money he made in the west.

He just found the abandoned apartment because the door was open is what I understood. Is he even paying rent? I heard that quite a few apartments were abandoned overnight when the occupants left for the west. It certainly looks like such an abandoned apartment with the remnants of the party just before leaving.

ReindeR

From: "Wyn Grant" <wyn_grant@hotmail.com>
Date: Sun, 12 Feb 2006 10:12:53 +0000

There is an identical scene in Goodbye Lenin.
 A trivial point, but I can say from personal experience in the past that goats are difficult animals to milk by hand.

>From: ReindeR Rustema

>He just found the abandoned apartment

>

From: "Gert Jan Jansen" <gertjan.jansengouda.demon.nl>

Date: Sun, 12 Feb 2006 16:08:49 +0100

It's a dark drizzling Sunday afternoon in Gouda, even wet snow is falling down. On TV the Olympic wintergames try to get our attention. We stay inside the house and continue the remarks on the remarks on the remarks on Heimat 3 episode 2 until referee Mansley whistles for the end.....

Angela and Amanda wrote about Clarissa being a different person and Ivan wrote that Hermann somehow has 'sold out'.

Thanks for the analysis's. I have to admit that before I accepted without reflection the fact that they were not the headfigures all the time, for that happened in DZH too. In episode 2 they are even more wings, than in episode 1. But now I realise that they are no longer fighting for the life they want. After rebuilding the G nderode house they are in a new stage of life. It more and more occurs to them. Hermann and Clarissa were producers, now they are (also) consumers. Of course their age will be an explanation, but it's also possible that Reitz needed them no longer to carry the story.

Does someone remember the reason why Clarissa so radically dropped the cello (that she had studied and played for so many years) and changed to a solo song career? Has it something to do with it?

In relation to this subject I can also refer to an aspect of the German discussion of H3, more than a year ago. Several German spectators were critical about the performance of Salome Kammer and even more of Henry Arnold (unreliable, pathetic, artificial, they play like someone reading from the autocue). I don't agree with that, for I can live with the idea they became sadder and wiser (and greyer) Still I think the playing of Hermann contains too much 'wooden' arm movements and his laughing could have been conducted better (didn't someone remark he doesn't laugh at all?)

ReindeR wrote about the Lenin-statue:

>Ernst must have asked him to bring it back perhaps? Or did it
> just happen to be on the truck and Tobi did not bother to leave it behind
> somewhere? Perhaps a crucial scene about this is cut on the request
> of the tv-bosses to speed things up?

You are right, there are some mystical parts in the relationship between Tobi and Ernst. There is no reason shown why Tobi should bring along the statue from Marxwalde to Dresden (in the film a 3-day journey) and from Dresden to the Hunsr ck, a symbol for a system he hated so much himself. Was it a warning to Ernst: do not only believe in the meaning of possession? Or was it just for the beautiful pictures of truck and statue he could take, so wonderful described by Ivan, or to put a smell mark for an next encounter between Ernst and Tobi?

Ivan, Alan and Susan used the name "Miranda" for the girl that was the last labourer in the Berlin manufactory of cardboard boxes.

It's absolutely irrelevant, but I noticed the name "Martina" for her, so is the Dutch subtitling too. She is the second Martina from Berlin, possibly a reincarnation of the Martina Bender, the colleague of Lucie, who died in 1945. Is it possible the English subtitling office made a mistake?

Wyn wrote:

> I can say from personal experience in the past that goats are
> difficult animals to milk by hand <<

I showed that scene to my father in law (82, who milked both cows and goats) and he confirmed your remark in general. But he had also his doubts about the treatment of the goat. If you're not used to milk a goat you should not practise on the beast herself. It's much better to use an artificial udder, for example a plastic kitchen glove, that you - inside out- fill with water. Another problem is the fact that a goat is a herd animal. Two goats is the absolute minimum, so tells my father in law. He also asked if the goat had an outlet /run. Had Clarissa had demanded for a certificate of the Office for Animal health, because it can have several diseases. I'm sure she didn't , but I realised again that there are boundaries to get authenticity. You can't know everything.

Gert Jan

From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>
Date: Sun, 12 Feb 2006 17:43:48 -0000

Hello Gert Jan

You wrote:

> Ivan, Alan and Susan used the name "Miranda" for the girl that was the last
> labourer in the Berlin manufactory of cardboard boxes.

>

> It's absolutely irrelevant, but I noticed the name "Martina" for her, so is
> the Dutch subtitling too. She is the second Martina from Berlin, possibly a
> reincarnation of the Martina Bender, the colleague of Lucie, who died in
> 1945.

>

Is it possible the English subtitling office made a mistake?

From a dark and dreary UK also!!

I am afraid I made the mistake! I have Martina in my notes. Miranda must have come out of my subconscious!! What sharp eyes you have!!

Ivan.

From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder.rustema.nl>
Date: Sun, 12 Feb 2006 19:28:16 +0100

At 09:55 -0500 4/2/06, alan.wmedia.com wrote:

>I propose that Gunnar's sudden windfall and deal with Warner Bros. is
 >nothing more than the rather desperate fantasy

If we see this whole sequence as a dream by Gunnar it all makes sense!

When I first saw episode 2 I became quite disgusted by the entire character of Gunnar. Again, at the time, I was hesitating whether or not to stand up and leave the Prinzregententheater in Munich...

Although my objections were not consistent. I had the same problems as Alan with the Warner Bros. part, but all scenes with Gunnar in and around the Günderröde house are perfectly acceptable.

Actually, when I would put a sticker on the Heimat 3 DVD box with the warning "consider the Warner Bros. scene as a dream sequence" I can finally lend the box with much more ease to friends as 'yet another good Heimat series.' Perhaps I should put a flashing sign on the frontpage of the website with 'viewing instruction' and then explaining "be warned that there is one long dream sequence in part 2 that is not presented as such."

At 23:20 +0000 5/2/06, Angela Skrimshire wrote:

>in the big interview by Ingo Fliess, Edgar Reitz says:

>
 > Gunnar's life history contains turns that are
 > not at all typical for me. The story of his
 > becoming a Wall-pecking millionaire springs from
 > the most original Brussig imagination. All along
 > it's been a joy for me to transpose this story
 > of Thomas' into film, although it did not stem
 > from the world of my ideas.

Perhaps Reitz was not even perfectly aware at the time that certain contributions by Brussig, like this one, can perfectly well be considered a dream sequence within Reitz' work. By doing so we save the 'integrity' of his world of ideas, while at the same time we, as readers of his work, 'allow' Reitz a little dream he could not have come up with himself or would dare to write.

When Gunnar is spray-painting his family on the Wall (with obvious studio lighting and slow-motion! how un-Reitz!), we see him mumble an entire monologue with his reflections on his relation with Petra. Reitz usually uses a voice-over for a 'monologue interieure' when he wants to let Hermann or Clarissa share their thoughts with us. Other characters don't have this 'right' for as far as I can remember, but I could be wrong. This could be more 'evidence' as it being a dream sequence. Actually, the ending of the 'dream' is quite distinctly 'marked' with the factory girl dumping all the golden boxes on him. Quite a break with the scene after that one.

But there is one (big) thing that might conflict with this entire 'dream sequence' theory, which we will find out in the last scenes of the last episode. Let us discuss it

then, to avoid a spoiler now for those reading this discussion while watching Heimat 3 for the first time. It certainly is good to keep in mind while watching the rest of Heimat 3 if there are situations or characters that are in conflict with Alan's hypothesis.

So far we can say that the following could all be made up by Gunnar: - The Warner Bros. executives - the sexually distracting young woman whose primary job appears to be to serve coffee, milk and sugar. - a factory that formerly manufactured boxes for Lenin medallions - with yet another young, pert and clearly sexually distracting woman - the Tamil workers in his apartment

The piano is something he could have bought from the bonus he received (we should track how much he spends from this bonus) but could easily have been dreamed by him also. After all, there are no 'witnesses' in this scene of this purchase by characters that are not made up by Gunnar. Petra never sees the piano for example. The woman next door washing his shirt could very well be part of his dreamworld also! Perhaps her existence also, although it seemed realistic when they first meet, but at least the washed shirt is a dream then. That in particular was to me equally unlikely as the entire deal with Warner Bros., if not more unlikely. As a dream it is likely though... But maybe that is just me.

BTW. I just caught up with reading all the contributions, I am sorry for my redundant reply earlier today. I should have read everything first.

ReindeR

From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder.rustema.nl>
Date: Sun, 12 Feb 2006 19:40:05 +0100

At 23:17 +0000 6/2/06, Angela Skrimshire wrote:

>One wonders all over again what has happened to Clarissa since the sixties
 > though an accomplished performance, it is still not the same person at all
 > even more than Hermann she has become someone else... the mystery
 > and strength and creativity have gone and the vulnerability is half hidden...
 > Again as in Episode 1 the feeling that the sorcerer has withdrawn his love
 > and enchantment from his creations, as it were... maybe this is just a
 > stupid thing to say.. anyway in later episodes it changes a bit ...

Perhaps we should consider how autobiographical the work of Reitz is here.

The character Clarissa in Heimat 2 was partly inspired by the women Reitz had known (and divorced) at the time. During the filming of Heimat 2 Salome Kammer and Reitz met and started their relationship (as mentioned in the Carole Angier documentary broadcast by the BBC). While Clarissa was supposed to have a much smaller part in Heimat 2, it grew bigger along the way, I read somewhere or someone told me.

The Clarissa we see in Heimat 3 is obviously much more inspired by Salome Kammer. Something I think I witnessed at the premiere in Munich and the one in Amsterdam, when I spoke quite a lot with her. Little resemblance with Clarissa from Heimat 2, quite a lot with the one from Heimat 3. Travelling a lot, a professional

singer and when they are together they are having a good time. That is nice for Reitz and Kammer, but in the film a bit boring, dramatically spoken. "Kunst oder Leben?", art or life, is the title of the final DZH episode. The character of Clarissa in Heimat 3 is less dramatic than the patchwork of memories of women Reitz broke up with (by definition dramatic) into one fictional character in Heimat 2.

Imagine if Reitz wrote a lot of drama into the Clarissa character in Heimat 3... That would have demanded a lot more of the professional qualities of Salome Kammer as an actress to separate fiction from real life (if possible at all in such a position). As she explained to me, she is first of all a singer, not an actress. It was fun to do, an honour again, but only for Heimat 3, no more acting besides this. Therefore it was not a surprise to me that the drama for the Clarissa character came from the outside world (the illness) rather than from her and her relation with Hermann.

ReindeR

From: Thomas_Höнемann <th.hoenemann freenet.de>

Date: Sun, 12 Feb 2006 21:05:13 +0100

Ivan, you are right. I found a quite funny parallel about these two Martinas: Our first Martina (H1) in fact was a prostitute, and Gunnar says to our second Martina, after she told him that her friend knew how to make some money: "I hope he won't send you to walk the streets".

Have a nice evening,
Thomas

From: Barry Fogden <barry.fogden1 btinternet.com>

Date: Sun, 12 Feb 2006 20:12:19 +0000

Greetings, Everyone. I'm sorry I haven't been at home enough to take a full part in the discussions, but I have read all the contributions with enjoyment.

I'm interested in the problems some people have with, for example, what happens to Gunnar. Is it reasonable to have us believe that this single guy, represented to us as generally a loser (albeit a well-meaning one) should suddenly strike it rich? Well, probably not. But does this make him any less believable as a character? I don't see why it should.

While we always resist seeing the H123 characters as stereotypes, clearly they are in all sorts of ways representative of facets of all of us. They're not stereotypes because Reitz is too good to allow them to be.

As many have said, we do think of the H123 characters as real people, more or less. But this is drama, after all. The Heimat version of reality has to be subtly manipulated. Again, I don't see why this should detract in any way from our involvement, or from our willingness to accept the situations, and characters, and everything that happens.

Despite what ER says, Gunnar's story is not entirely a Brussig thing. Go back to the very first episode of H2. When Hermann arrives in Munich for the first time, in no

time at all he ends up in a strange girl's bed, finds what promise to be ideal lodgings against all the odds, spots the girl of his dreams, and on top of it all sails through his viva voce exam at the Conservatoire by being able to see a reflection of the piano keyboard! How likely is this?

Well, all those things are perfectly likely. It's just that they're not likely to happen to the same guy at the same time in the same place! But I don't have a problem with Reitz putting them all together as he does. This is narrative genius. You have to know how works of fiction are constructed. Even works that are said to be autobiographical are always a patchwork of things that happened to the author at the given time and place or at other times and places, things that happened to the author's friends, things the author heard about and which could be given relevance, and things that are simply made up to make a point, etc., etc. (You can drive yourself crazy trying to pinpoint all the ways in which, for example Clarissa is or is not like Salome Kammer: the character, like all characters, is a composite.)

I'm sure this is what Reitz does. I don't think it's necessary to put yourself through the extra discipline of seeing Gunnar's story as a dream! Guys from the DDR did get lucrative work in the west: their marriages did break up when their wives got a better offer: they did make money in all sorts of ways connected with the fall of the Wall: and no doubt some of them ended up very rich, though not necessarily very happy. How long a drama do you want?! What I mean is, if ER can create a single character like Gunnar who, with all his frailties and irritating ways, still has enough complexity and humanity to command our belief and sympathy, while having all sorts of things happen to him, we don't need another character for every story-line!

As for Hermann and Clarissa, certainly criticisms could be made. As a musician, I don't think Hermann has the right sort of gravitas (or, if you like, serious self-importance) to be believable as a top conductor! His wig is certainly dodgy in H3. He has no discernible sense of humour in either H2 or H3, but then I know people like that! I don't find Clarissa very credible as a singer of the kind of material the character is said to have a career doing: the voice just isn't there. And she is not a laugh-a-minute character either. Does this make the characters or the actors wooden? Maybe they're not as smooth as what we regard as top actors. But do I care? Not really. It's a bit late now to start retrospectively re-casting! They just are those people to us now. I seem to have lived with them forever. I'm happy. . .

Best wishes,
Barry

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>
Date: Mon, 13 Feb 2006 11:39:24 -0000

Gert Jan asks:

- > Does someone remember the reason why Clarissa so radically
- > dropped the cello (that she had studied and played for so many years)
- > and changed to a solo song career?

There seemed to be two aspects ...

One: despair at feeling "trapped" by marriage and childcare and her disapproving mother – but hysterically rushing away to return the cello to Dr K seems, as Thomas wrote in the English discussion of DZH pt11, "no act of liberation at all, but an act of

desperation, of getting deeper into the capture of her family and life that she never wanted to live that way.”

But two: as Camilla the American trombonist said when Clarissa told her she'd given away the cello, “Good, it was a bomber anyway. It was more for your mother than for you... we must find our own way for ourselves..” Clarissa's taking refuge in a relationship with the American woman has both lesbian overtones and at the same time as Thomas again wrote “shows a very very deep longing for security and emotional warmth”. The DZH script says “Camilla is like a mother to Clarissa”. Giving up the cello was also rejecting the intrusive, emotionally abusive demands of her own mother and the creepy Dr Kirchmayer. As she told the press conference, after performing the (rather dreadful?) “Hexenpassion” in Amsterdam, “Right from the beginning my heart said “yes” to this project, for the first time”.

Yet in H3 the flight with Hermann to the Günderrode house might almost be a repetition of the pattern...

Angela

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>

Date: Mon, 13 Feb 2006 19:43:15 -0000

Very interesting contributions at the weekend including those from Amanda, Gert Jan, ReindeR and Barry Fogden:

- > Amanda says: I agree that Clarissa has become a different person.
- > In some ways she has matured to become more sensitive of others,
- > and kind -

But I can't help feeling that if she and Hermann had remained less “mature” in this sense, and more mercurial and unpredictable and self willed, even (God forbid) “selfish”, they might have been more convincing and less “two-dimensional” as creative characters... though probably a pain in the arse to those close to them ...

ReindeR's comment is interesting:

- > The Clarissa we see in Heimat 3 is obviously much
- > more inspired by Salome Kammer. Something I think
- > I witnessed at the premiere in Munich and the one
- > in Amsterdam, when I spoke quite a lot with her.
- > Little resemblance with Clarissa from Heimat 2,
- > quite a lot with the one from Heimat 3.

But for those of us who have not met the actors, it is an illusion, and a bit intrusive, to feel that we know them from the characters. Recently watching some of the documentaries about DZH and H3 (thank you, Mundy and Wolfgang!), it's quite disconcerting to see them as themselves ... At the time of filming DZH Salome Kammer comes across as more confident and much happier than Clarissa, and Henry Arnold as much more funny and attractive than Hermann - interesting in view of the general feeling that Hermann

- “ > Has no discernible sense of humour in either H2 or H3” (Barry Fogden) or
- > “Didn't someone remark he doesn't laugh at all?” (Gert Jan)..

However, I think I disagree a bit with ReindeR when he says:

- > Imagine if Reitz wrote a lot of drama into the
- > Clarissa character in Heimat 3... That would have
- > demanded a lot more of the professional qualities
- > of Salome Kammer as an actress to separate
- > fiction from real life (if possible at all in
- > such a position). As she explained to me, she is
- > first of all a singer, not an actress.

In spite of her own self estimate, on the evidence of both H2 and H3 she is a very talented actress.

Gert Jan focusses on the realisation that Clarissa and Hermann may no longer be the lead characters, and are themselves "in a new stage of life". He says:

- > "I can live with the idea they became sadder and wiser (and greyer)"... and again
- > "Of course their age will be an explanation, but it's also possible that
- > Reitz needed them no longer to carry the story."

He probably doesn't need them to "carry the story" in the way they did in H2, but I think he still consciously uses them to carry one of his main themes in H3:-

Forgive me for repeating myself, but in the discussion of Episode 1 I suggested that

- > The loss of magicmay also reflect the sense that he describes
- > in many of his interviews that the experience, knowledge and ideals of
- > intellectuals of his own generation are no longer valid or valued in the
- > world today. He deliberately presents Hermann and to some extent
- > Clarissa as bearers of this uncomfortable consciousness, and attributes
- > Hermann's "passiveness" to it.

[This is especially clear in his Dutch interview in VPRO-gids with Maarten v. Bracht on 24.12.04 that Gert Jan partially translated for Thomas' German discussion group – Gert Jan is there any chance you could translate it for us too? The point is also explained briefly in the interview of 16.12.04 in Die Zeit, now translated on ReindeR's website] *[As is now the interview with Maarten v.Bracht too – Eds.]*

Re: Alan's idea about Gunnar's fantasy : ReindeR says

- > If we see this whole sequence as a dream by Gunnar it all makes sense!
- > Though as he points out the test will be when we watch Episode 6.

Amanda is intrigued, saying :

- > The discussion of levels of fantasy in Episode 2, amongst other themes,
- > has been rich and thought-provoking

And I certainly agree.

But other people are understandably less happy with the idea. Barry Fogden says:

- > I don't think it's necessary to put yourself through the extra discipline of
- > seeing Gunnar's story as a dream!

I take his point that there are parallels with other rather improbable conjunctions of individually quite realistic events in DZH, though I think Alan's point is that the events of Gunnar's adventures are individually unrealistic and inaccurately portrayed.

But I wish I could explain that for me "seeing Gunnar's story as a dream" is in no sense a "discipline" – but rather a mind-freeing and intriguing game, like the first time one encountered the old textbook cliché of two facing profiles that could be seen, not quite simultaneously, as the outline of a vase...

The alternative interpretations don't rule each other out. There is some support for Alan's idea in the 1993 Arena documentary where Edgar Reitz says "Just as music is composed with many voices, film can tell a story along many lines and paths, with many narrative threads. I'm very interested in telling stories on many simultaneous levels".

Which of course doesn't mean to say that Gunnar's adventures really were intended to be understood as a fantasy...

Angela

From: "seymouralexander" <seymouralexander onetel.com>

Date: Mon, 13 Feb 2006 22:33:12 -0000

Regarding the discussion on the unwelcome American elements in H1 and H3, there is an interesting remark in a review of 'No Place Like Home: Locations of Heimat in German Cinema' by Johannes Von Moltke' (the review was by Gerd Gemuenden) to the effect that the nearest Hollywood equivalent of Heimat film would have been Robert Wise's The Sound of Music. We have to thank our lucky stars at least that we didn't get Julie Andrews playing Clarissa.

Seymour

From: Wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>

Date: Mon, 13 Feb 2006 18:13:08 -0500

Holy cow! While I would leave it to Alan to tell us which American movie in his opinion comes closest to the Heimat idea, it is true, the Sound of Music is the embodiment of what Americans think of German Heimat (never mind that it plays in Austria). One of the least played and known movies in Germany. I used to tell my friends back home: Not all Americans wear Cowboy hats and not all Germans wear Lederhosen!

Wolfgang

From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder.rustema.nl>

Date: Tue, 14 Feb 2006 00:18:28 +0100

At 22:33 +0000 13/2/06, seymouralexander wrote:

>the nearest Hollywood equivalent of Heimat film would have been
>Robert Wise's The Sound of Music. We have to thank our lucky stars
>at least that we didn't get Julie Andrews playing Clarissa.

In the exact same cinema where Reitz en Kammer gave their Q&A after the Dutch premiere of Heimat 3 there was a 'sing-a-long' showing of The Sound of Music some years earlier.

It was in the time when I was suffering from RSI, away from my keyboard, I could only work in a cinema, checking entrance tickets. I was on duty that evening and witnessed a master of ceremony who explained when the audience should sing and shout what and when to make certain gestures with which of the items they were given at the entrance. Say "Aaahhh" when Maria appears and "Amen" when the nuns appear. And wave with the supplied handkerchief or something.

Unlike during the showing of Heimat 3, all the 529 seats in Cinerama 1 were occupied. They came from far, for many it was one of those rare visits to the capital. Mostly mothers and their daughters, but not the Theresia & Banty kind... These had carnivalesque outfits and painted faces, resembling the characters from the Sound of Music.

There was even one man with the uniform and the helmet of a German soldier from World War 2. He would stand up in the scene with the Nazis so the entire crowd could go: "woooooooo... bad guys!"

The Singalong Shows still exist I just found out on the web. "Sing along with the original film and become intensely happy!" <http://www.soundofmusic.nl> Check out the pictures, they are pretty.

Sort of like the joys of an Oktoberfest without buying a ticket to Munich. I bought a ticket to Munich to see only glimpses of the Oktoberfest but the world premiere of Heimat 3 instead...

Now think back of Hermann on the Oktoberfest in Die Zweite Heimat. When I saw the crowd joyfully shouting 'nazis! bad guys!' with so much pleasure it gave me the joy of recognition. Didn't the students in Die Zweite Heimat think there was a kind of fascism in such silly entertainment? Anyway, in this postmodern age 1% of the audience there probably has seen Heimat broadcast by VPRO on television. Or maybe not.

ReindeR

From: Theresia Martijn <theresia_martijn_onetelnet.nl>

Date: Tue, 14 Feb 2006 08:59:31 +0100 (CET)

Hi Reinder, so funny to read what you write about mothers and daughters and to compare it with me and my mum. What a relief and what a compliment!

I think this is also my chance to say hello again to all of you. I do read all the contributions and do enjoy it very much. But for some reason I don't have much to say about H3. I did contribute some things at Thomas' site last year. Ivan you may feel very disappointed by me, sorry for that. Just know that I do enjoy your writing very much. And when I feel the urge to respond on something I will certainly do that.

Still hope for a second Reitzian Reunion some day.

Lots of love to all of you!

Theresia

- > Unlike during the showing of Heimat 3, all the 529 seats in Cinerama1
- > were occupied. They came from far, for many it was one of those
- > rare visits to the capital. Mostly mothers and their daughters, but
- > not the Theresia & Banty kind... These had carnivalesque outfits and
- > painted faces, resembling the characters from the Sound of Music.

From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan_jsbiedron.com>

Date: Tue, 14 Feb 2006 11:06:51 -0600

ReindeR's description of the Sound of Music sing-a-long reminds me of an earlier American cult favorite: The Rocky Horror Picture Show. This played at some movie theaters for years. People would dress up in costumes of favorite characters - transvestites, etc., and do things like throw pieces of buttered toast when a character mentioned a "toast."

My opinion as an American, is that the best American "Heimat" movie is "Gone With the Wind." The main character Scarlett can never go back to her home in the south as it used to be - her Heimat is gone forever.

I know this is off topic but I can't resist - what makes the *movie* version of Sound of Music a classic in my opinion is the beautiful Austrian scenery. I have two good friends who are amateur actors - a few years ago they appeared in a local amateur production of the stage play. Without the scenery, The Sound of Music is a really silly and boring play. But worthwhile to see my friend's husband in Lederhosen! :)

Susan
Chicago

From: Julia Anne Bourne <gypsy mindspring.com>

Date: Tue, 14 Feb 2006 15:07:39 -0500 (GMT-05:00)

As a child of the American deep south -- from Atlanta -- I agree with Susan's comparison of Heimat to "Gone with the Wind." The nostalgia for the post-feudal order of the Civil War South might have resonance with that of Post-war Germany. The South was once a place where all folks knew their place. There was a strong sense of values that included: church, family, home, and a deep love of the land. The accents and dialects (Gullah) of the south marked the region as different from the rest of the county, as did the literature (Faulkner, Welty & Wolfe "You Can't Go Home Again.")

I love the scene in "Gone with the Wind" where Scarlett clutches a fist of red clay after friends and family have died and her home is destroyed. She vows to start over and claims that land is the only thing that endures.

> I know this is off topic but I can't resist - what makes the *movie* version
> of Sound of Music a classic in my opinion is the beautiful Austrian scenery.
>

And Julie Andrews' fresh talent. The Sound of Music is the best PR the Austrian government could have hoped for. Because of the beloved movie, I grew up thinking Hitler was from Germany, the Austrians mostly resisted the war, and Austria was all about Mozart. It's interesting that Maria Von Trapp disliked the movie and said it made her struggles appear superficial! It's also ironic that legal problems kept the movie from being shown in Austria until recently, and most of my Austrian friends still haven't seen the film, including those who work in the tourist industry in Salzburg!

Cheers,

Julia Anne Bourne

From: Raymond Scholz <rscholz zonix.de>

Date: Tue, 14 Feb 2006 23:38:52 +0100

· ReindeR Rustema <reinder rustema.nl> wrote:

> What I did not understand about the Lenin statue was why major Gies (I
> have heard the name Gies before in Heimat-context somewhere, did Reitz
> make a reference I don't understand?) received the statue as a prank
> in his front yard, but the next morning Tobias wakes up with Lenin
> staring him in the face. Why did they not get immediately out of town
> after pulling the prank? They risk some repercussion from major Gies,
> don't they?

Well, after their triumphal landing on the air base and the successful confrontation with Gies, they must have been in high spirits. They behave like colonial rulers! A way that some East Germans have seen the 'Wessies' invading the DDR.

Gies isn't in the position to put some direct pressure on Tobi after their confrontation at the military base. The man fetching the radiograph of Tobi's broken leg (or arm?) said, that the prosecutor could be interested in that material.

But Tobi and Ernst certainly overlook that the military relationships may strike back.

> And then Tobias takes the statue with him, presumably taking it out
> of the front yard again. He even drives to Dresden and further with
> it, while he has bad memories of that thing. Ernst must have asked
> him to bring it back perhaps? Or did it just happen to be on the
> truck and Tobi did not bother to leave it behind somewhere? Perhaps
> a crucial scene about this is cut on the request of the tv-bosses to
> speed things up?

I could find more on this in the script either. Maybe the Lenin statue driving through the country just made such a perfect picture...

Cheers, Ray

From: Raymond Scholz <rscholz zonix.de>

Date: Tue, 14 Feb 2006 23:53:57 +0100

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

> ReindeR's description of the Sound of Music sing-a-long reminds me of an
> earlier American cult favorite: The Rocky Horror Picture Show. This played
> at some movie theaters for years. People would dress up in costumes of
> favorite characters - transvestites, etc., and do things like throw pieces
> of buttered toast when a character mentioned a "toast."

If you ever happen to visit Munich (presumably for the Heimat 4 premiere), you could visit the Museum Lichtspiele.

http://www.museum-lichtspiele.de/cms/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=33&Itemid=16

They show RHPS for 30 years now. You could even buy accessories there to throw with when I was there (four years ago) :-)

Cheers, Ray

From: Raymond Scholz <rscholz zonix.de>

Date: Wed, 15 Feb 2006 00:06:32 +0100

· On Feb 03 2006, "Ivan Mansley" <Ivanman dsl.pipex.com> wrote:

> Well, what struck me most about the opening scenes concerned with the
> celebratory party for the completion of the restoration of the Günderode
> house was the way Hermann is drawn back into the bosom of the Simon family,
> and he appears to accept this.

He even speaks broadest Hunsrück dialect in this opening scenes. But that's not the reason why I have difficulties with the party scenes. Watching this in Munich for the first time and now again on DVD these scenes still feel "wooden". One can sense strict choreography of characters moving around the house, passing the attention of

the viewer. But all this is done without the virtue and easiness we all liked of the great Fuchsbau scenes. I don't like the light in these scenes too. You can sense the heavy spot lights the film crew must have been used (e.g. Gunnar on the roof top). It looks unreal and... somewhat cheap.

I felt great relief when the story moved on the military base scenes shot in black and white. They were such much better.

Cheers, Ray

From: Raymond Scholz <rscholz@zonix.de>

Date: Wed, 15 Feb 2006 00:10:34 +0100

· On Feb 03 2006, "Susan Biedron" <Susan.jsbiedron.com> wrote:

> The scene where he goes into the piano showroom carrying a packet of
> cherries - at first the salesman appears very concerned about the juicy
> cherries near the expensive pianos. But Gunnar is oblivious and even offers
> him some.

Any significance here that there is a German proverb "Mit ihm ist nicht gut Kirschen essen"?

"It's best not to tangle with him" - translation by dict.leo.org

Cheers, Ray

From: Wolfgang <wolf@flloitgraf.com>

Date: Tue, 14 Feb 2006 18:50:33 -0500

interesting, very interesting, Ray - the "connection" is a bit far fetched but certainly fits, doesn't it.

I had no idea where this saying comes from, looking it up in ceryx.de it says: from the middle ages, meaning not to get along with somebody very well.

The original proverb was: "you can't eat cherries with high nobility, they throw the stones and stems in your face"

Cherries were a rare fruit in those days and only grown in monasteries and gardens of the rich. The meaning back then was not to mingle with the noble because they could harm you in their exuberance to live life to the fullest.

Too bad Edgar can't read these messages, he would love it how we "get to the bottom of this"

Wolfgang

From: "seymouralexander" <seymouralexander.onetel.com>
Date: Wed, 15 Feb 2006 20:07:10 -0000

Gone With The Wind does make a fascinating contrast to Heimat 3: Clarissa Light-Blue with Scarlet O'Hara, her famous last words 'Tomorrow is another day' with Lulu's 'No money, no home, no job...etc' and the sumptuous Tara with the more modest and picturesque Guenderrode house.

Seymour

From: Mikko Meriläinen <mmerilai.stc.cx>
Date: Thu, 16 Feb 2006 08:54:13 +0200

Aren't those over-the-top sequences with Warner executives in episode 2 suggestive of Billy Wilder's cold war screwball comedy 'One, Two, Three' (1961)? In this film James Cagney plays managing director of Coca-Cola company's West Berlin office, East Germans are there too, the Mauer is about to be erected...

Cheers,
Mikko Meriläinen

From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman.dsl.pipex.com>
Date: Thu, 16 Feb 2006 21:20:24 -0000

Hello Gert Jan! Here is the referee blowing the whistle. I hope you have all had the opportunity to have your say. Compared with Episode 1 the number of posts increased by 16 making 58* in all and the number of contributors increased to 22*. I was pleased to see some familiar names return. You know who you are!!

It seems to me that the quality of the discussion is very high. I cannot possibly do as Gert Jan suggests and make a detailed summary of all the arguments. Time constraints prevent it and also when one is involved in the arguments it is difficult to be objective. If anyone out there would like to do a summary as the discussion on each particular episode ends please let me know. I would be very happy for someone else to take this on.

>From memory Alan Andres and Angela Skrimshire advanced the idea that the E.Berlin sequences involving Gunnar are often the fantasies of a desperate and inadequate character. I remain to be convinced and am in some ways resistant to the idea. I have always been clear in my own mind when fantasy is involved in the Heimat films and I did not find it here. I was supported in my views by Barry Fogden's post or at least I found myself in agreement with him. How we came to be discussing The Sound of Music and The Rocky Horror Picture Show towards the end I'm not quite clear. I think it had something to do with my old friend, Wolfgang!!

Thank you Gert Jan for the invaluable time lines.

Ivan.

**[Finally only 50 posts from 20 contributors were directly relevant to Discussion 2 (a few relating back to Discussion 1 came in late) - Eds]*

HEIMAT 3 - Episode 3: The Russians are Coming [1992-93]

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

Date: Fri, 17 Feb 2006 08:31:43 -0000

HEIMAT 3: Episode 3: The Russians are Coming [1992-93]
An Introduction

I am going to start my introduction by taking the bull by the horns, as it were. The stand-out scene in my memory and once more after watching the episode through again, is the scene between Hermann and the unnamed stranger on the train. [He is named later, of course]. It lasts barely 5 minutes and yet it grabs the viewer by the throat and will not let go! There are those who feel the scene is a "clumsy device" and others who feel that the scene is such a tour de force that it unbalances the whole episode. I do not share those views! My mind turned to the much acclaimed Alfred Hitchcock film "Strangers on a Train". One reviewer on the IMDb site had this to say about Hitchcock's film and I quote: "a gleeful melange of vicious black comedy, exciting suspense, mocking manipulation and astonishing flights of fancy." You can see all these elements in this scene and knowing what a film buff Reitz is it made me wonder if it was not some kind of homage to Alfred Hitchcock.

I remember after my first viewing of this episode at the Goethe Institut in London in the Spring of 2005, my companion, a lady of German origins, immediately began to discuss why Hermann had not informed Hartmut of the identity of this Herr Böckle, as he is called, and of the nature of his amazing and appalling words. I had thought then that it might have been because of Hermann's selfish introspection but I have since changed my mind. More on this later! Let us now have a look at this scene in some more detail.

Hermann is travelling to Leipzig at the invitation of Udo. Opposite him, in what looks like a first class carriage, sits a sharply dressed business man playing with an electronic toy. He wants to talk. And talk he does. From his lips, beginning with the words "Picture this" pours a tale of depravity delivered with the most amazing frankness. He is the villain; the "business terminator" who has driven at least one struggling industrialist to his death along with his wife and children whilst at the same time being his friend. Hermann is fascinated but repelled and uncommunicative. We, the viewers, are appalled at this man's lack of scruple. The camera plays back and forward between the faces of the two men. The actor, Rainer Guldener, obviously relishes his cameo role and plays it with gusto. What a wonderfully expressive and reptilian face he has!! The character becomes so disgusted with his role as asset-stripper and breaker of men's lives that he breaks down in tears at the memory of past actions and declares that he dreams of planting a "large crap" outside the door of his bosses' office and taking "elegant leave" of his employment and finding "sweet freedom".

It may be of interest to note that when asked about this scene Edgar Reitz declared in London that the scene was modelled on a real encounter with such a man in his own life. One might also notice that there is an anti-capitalist, anti-American strain here as well. Herr Böckle dare not take a holiday or he will be replaced by a younger man; "the American system", he declares. The no-holds barred, red-in-tooth and claw, capitalist ethos is replacing the old notions of family business and patriarchy, as exemplified by Anton and the radiator manufacturer. Whose side is Reitz on?

There are many side issues in this long episode but it seems to me that its real theme concerns the family. Reitz illustrates through his stories the forces that are pulling families apart, including powerful inter-generational conflict, and attempts by fallible participants to effect some kind of reconciliation, however feeble, and bring harmony and some kind of peace to this division. We can link Herr Böckle to this theme which I shall do shortly.

Let us look at some of these forces and see how they are depicted in Reitz's stories. Infidelity is an obvious one. The story of Hartmut and his desire for Galina, the attractive Russian immigrant, does not, as far as we can tell destroy his marriage but it does lead, however indirectly, to the death of the father of Lulu's unborn child. A scene that sticks in my mind is when Hartmut spies Galina breast-feeding her child and Reitz shows him becoming sexually interested. His wife, Mara, meantime has become "broody" for a child and expects Hartmut to do his duty in that respect. She reclines naked in the jacuzzi, breasts prominent, but what Hartmut sees as he undresses is an image of Galina. This is certainly fantasy and clearly marked! Later, in the erotic scene where Hartmut and Galina's affair is brought to fruition, I noticed that the camera dwells on two or three occasions on photos of Mara on the shelf next to the fan that Hartmut operates electronically as he shows off. It just reinforces how Hartmut is betraying his wife through his pursuit of Galina.

A second force leading to the destruction of family and relationships is male stubbornness and obstinacy and the desire for revenge. Reitz illustrates this through the actions of Yuri, Galina's Kazakh/German husband and through Anton's desire to outwit his own children, especially his eldest, Hartmut. Whether it is because of the pain caused by his injured leg or because of the strain of perpetually watching a young and pretty wife it is difficult to say, but Yuri is portrayed as a suspicious, sullen and brooding man. Right from the very beginning he seems disapproving of his wife's innocent actions. When they are at the Hahn airbase getting household possessions he looks on disapprovingly as Galina talks to a black American family. Whether it is because they are black or because they are American is not clear. Or perhaps both.

Galina acquires some perfume from the black American woman and in a memorable scene later on the train, as they are going to Mainz University Hospital for treatment to Yuri's knee, she sprays herself with it in an innocent desire to please and in her enjoyment of her new life. Yuri is enraged beyond all reason, declaring that the perfume stinks and that she is behaving "like a slut". Of course, there are difficulties in adjusting to the new world of the "golden West" but Reitz makes it quite clear that Yuri is being quite excessive. He is only at home in the bosom of his family with his brother and his parents. [Is "Postovitch" meant to be his brother? I mean the man who Hartmut shoves out of the way on the street. It is the same man that Rudi calls Postovitch, isn't it?] It is obviously a very male-dominated society.

Yuri destroys his own marriage despite Galina's flirtatiousness being an element in that destruction. He brings destruction upon himself. She is depicted as a young woman who needs love and yet all she gets is hostility and insults. Just before she leaves for her fateful encounter with Hartmut she is shown at the dinner table, isolated, facing total silence after she has talked about a job for Yuri. It is as if she has made a foul smell by her very presence. Yuri violently overturns his plate and appears to be consumed by jealousy. He could have saved his marriage. When Galina leaves finally, after Hartmut returns for her, Yuri is left on the pavement alone, crying. I think Reitz does it like this to indicate that Yuri understands what he has lost; now it is too late.

Now consider Anton. We can also look at the inter-generational conflict with his eldest son, Hartmut, here. The first scene to really draw me in during this episode was the one between father and son where Anton shows his authoritarian leanings ["Look at me when I talk to you"] and his dismissive attitude towards his spoiled eldest son. There is no love or affection in the air. "What are you trying to teach me now?" exclaims Hartmut. You see two determined men, poles apart. Anton is not prepared to have his son as a business competitor. In this desire Anton pulls the house down around his ears, like Samson; in his obsession to keep the business out of Hartmut's clutches he will brook no opposition. Mara has produced a male child [Hartmut did his duty after all] and you have the wonderful scene of the baptismal feast and Anton's bombshell. This dynastic struggle might be a bit Dallas-like with its soap opera elements but it held my attention, and I always admire how well Reitz handles numerous actors and actresses around dinner tables.

Reitz draws in the Herr Böckle thread here. Hermann recognises the man on the train and he knows he has been rumbled. Why doesn't he tell Hartmut about what he knows? I had thought at first that Hermann was so wrapped up in his own affairs that he simply forgets, but on renewed viewing you can see that Hermann is so outraged by Anton's decisions that he wants no further part in this dreadful affair ["I want nothing to do with all of this. Let's go {to Clarissa}, come on".] Outrage at Anton's behaviour causes him to leave. And this is why he does not tell Hartmut what he knows. He has other things on his mind. Sorry, Gabriele [my companion at the Goethe Institut] I can't do any better than this!! Anton's stubbornness and desire to be revenged on his eldest cause hatred and schisms in his family; all his children and grandchildren, except one, presumably, become enemies. It is Anton's own doing.

Yet I have soft spot for Anton, and so I suspect does Edgar Reitz. Matthias Kniesbeck gives a wonderfully rounded performance, full of panache, bravura and authority. Anton is shown repeatedly trying to effect reconciliation. He goes to Ernst's homestead and invites him to a meal with some good wine and a friendly chat. He wants to "bury the hatchet", as he says. Notice the way Reitz presents the two brothers separated by the wire-netting fence through which they talk. Ernst rebuffs Anton in what I thought was a very cruel way. Anton has done his best. My sympathies were all with him in this instance. We might also observe here that Ernst fails to find a family/a son. Tobi has rejected Ernst's repeated offer!

Anton does try with Hartmut also. After the Xmas service he invites Hartmut to dinner with these conciliatory words: "Hartmut, come here. Christmas is the time of reconciliation. Peace. We don't live forever." The dinner turns into an absolute disaster, of course, although I think Hartmut over-reacts for his own purposes and that Anton is not really trying to humiliate and patronise Galina. He is unthinking, if anything. My view!!

We have the same father and child conflict again when Lulu arrives at her father's house with her two boyfriends. Hermann is delighted that his daughter has come to visit but he is met with sullenness and resentment. He simply asks her what her friends do for a living. She reacts with distaste and hostility. Reitz shows us the curl on her lip. Notice the seating arrangement. Hermann sits with his back to his daughter and has to turn to speak to her. It symbolises their division, like the wire-netting fence between Anton and Ernst. Hermann apologises to her but she then introduces Lutz and Roland with all kinds of unnecessary details such as their exact income levels down to the last Deutschemark to rub in her view that her father is mercenary. For once, I thoroughly sympathised with Hermann. I do not find Lulu a very easy character to warm to but her prickliness is typical of many an adolescent

student. Thus, we have more mutual misunderstanding that could pull this family apart.

The final force that can wreck families and lives that this episode concentrates on could be said to be unexpected fatal tragedy. We see this as the Hartmut/Galina story converges with the Lulu/Lutz relationship resulting in the car smash and the ultimate death of Lutz. Lulu is carrying his child. It will be born without a father. The sequence has melodramatic elements, perhaps, but, as Hartmut's car and the taxi travel through the night, we as viewers know somehow that a collision is coming. I especially liked the way the camera focuses on the fallen apples. The taxi hits an apple tree. The apples shower all over the roof of the taxi and the injured Lutz lies among the scattered green and red apples. May we symbolically say that a bitter harvest/fruit has been reaped!

Human carelessness certainly plays a part in the accident. The taxi driver's attention keeps being diverted by the canoodling of Lulu and Lutz behind him. Reitz shows the man's eyes semi-turning at least twice. Hartmut is driving with one hand on the steering wheel and the other is embracing Galina. If Roland had not prevented Lutz from driving and called a cab with the best of intentions then the smash might not have happened. Such are the ironies of fate and the culpabilities of humans Reitz seems to suggest. Hartmut, if not heroic, redeems himself. He shows himself to be practical and accepts responsibility. He calls the police and takes Lutz to hospital. He is not a villain!

Ivan Mansley.

P. S.

1. 4 different characters explain themselves by saying words to the effect of "I am just what I am". Only from memory who are they? There are, unfortunately, no prizes!!

2. Thomas and Theresia I have some more echoes for you. Perhaps they are a bit tenuous? Clarissa and Lulu coming downstairs with bedding and pillows reminded me of Maria doing the same for Otto [Heimat Part 7?] Talking of "damn family clan" Galina remarks "I am a wolf too." Remember DZH Part 7: Christmas Wolves. Hermann and Clarissa are singing how the wolves were tender to each other. Strands of Galina's hair lit from below in seduction scene. Compare strands of Clarissa's hair lit in same way in the hospital post-abortion [DZH Part 7].

3. Hermann and Clarissa are childless in their union. There are 3 births in the episode if you count Galina at Moscow Airport; child, Niko. Mara; child, Matthias Paul Anton Simon. Bianca, the goat; children, 3 little unnamed goatlings/kids.

From: Richard Rees-Jones <Richard.Rees.Jones CTBTO.ORG>

Date: Fri, 17 Feb 2006 09:39:26 +0100

I repost the message that I sent to the list when the episode was first broadcast.
Richard Rees Jones

While watching this episode, I was beginning to wonder if Reitz hasn't lost his previously unerring instinct for the dramatic and watchable. There were times when I felt the film was aimless and unsure of itself - there were longueurs to be sat through, something I've never previously experienced in watching Reitz. By the end, though, the film had utterly redeemed itself with a tragic and symmetrical conclusion.

I should also add that my grasp of the niceties of the plot may not be all that it should be, so please forgive me if I have got any of the details wrong.

Ernst returns to Germany after two years in a Russian prison. Have we been told why he was there? If so, I missed it. He's treated with some interest by the media, having been released after strenuous diplomatic efforts. But of greater interest to him and us, though sadly not the media, is a raggle-taggle group of Russians that arrive with him, carrying all they own. One of these is a young family with a newborn baby. The wife, Galina, is employed as a maid by Anton and slowly begins to have an impact on the people around her.

Hermann and Clarissa continue to lurk in the background somewhat, as benign, somewhat aloof presences. The 'city slickers' joke from 'The Champions' continues, as they get a male goat to mate with their female - the predictable result being a litter of disarmingly cute babies. More distressingly for Clarissa, she appears to be developing some kind of tinnitus - a fairly desperate (although not at all uncommon) condition for a musician.

The main subject of the episode is a family conflict in some ways reminiscent of Thomas Vinterberg's great 'Festen'. Anton's restless son, Hartmut, wants to get hold of some of the money that will be due to him when Anton dies. When Anton refuses, enmity is born that will have far-reaching consequences. Anton spitefully writes Hartmut out of his will, intending to leave everything to his new grandson, Hartmut's son. Anton announces this decision at a party, causing uproar and outrage.

Meanwhile, Hartmut embarks on an affair with Galina. I found this relationship to be both strange and touching. Hartmut is a complex yet likeable character, married with a newborn son yet obviously besotted with the delectable Galina. There's a wonderfully tender scene where they kiss for the first time, only for her to get upset over her husband Yuri's bad knee. Hartmut defends her stoutly when he sees Anton exploiting her around the house. He helps Yuri to get his knee treated, and gives her the love and tenderness that the possessive Yuri won't. Galina reciprocates, apparently prepared to leave Yuri and their baby for Hartmut. The first time the couple make love is a beautifully shadowy, erotic scene.

Another arrival on the scene is Hermann's daughter Lulu. There seems to be tension between the two of them. She's celebrating the passing of her engineering exams, and is driving at night with her fiance Lutz when their car crashes into one containing Hartmut and Galina. One of the occupants of the car is killed. A little too much of a coincidence, perhaps, but then again I've never thought that believability should be allowed to get in the way of a good dramatic situation. The fact of the matter is, this is another two hours of dense, knotty and intractable cinema from Reitz.

From: Jansen.G.J <GJJansen ismh.nl>

Date: Fri, 17 Feb 2006 13:10:54 +0100

Heimat 3, episode 3 Time schedule and summary

To make a time schedule of episode 3 is difficult. The film covers a far longer period than the episodes 1 and 2 : about a year from September 1992 till September 1993, whereas episode 1 covered less than 2 months and episode 2 just a month. A second factor is that there are only a few indications about a concrete data. The starting date (the arrival of Ernst at Frankfurt airport) is clear: Saturday 5 September 1992. But the last sequences (the accident) cannot be dated exactly, only that it is one of the last summer days of 1993, probably a September Friday. (it's not a day in the weekend, because Lulu and Roland got their architect certificate earlier that day). Another hint / starting point are the wine-feasts and the firework festival "Rhein in Flammen. In Oberwesel that festivities take place on the second weekend of September. That means that the events from the start till then cover a period of 8 days.

The only further exact dates mentioned are 24 December 1992, Christmas Eve and the 12th of July 1993, the birth of Matthias Paul Anton Simon.

The first sequence in 1993 is situated in "spring". Hints for the date: the rape fields are yellow, (is it Brassica Rapa or Brassica Napus?), but the horse chestnut is not yet blossoming,. Mara is pregnant (I presume since the 11th of September), but she is still riding horses. Is that possible in the 7th month? I think April is more plausible than May. Further indication: there have been born 3 little goats. They are older than 2 months. The gestation period of goats is 142 till 159 days, so they are born ultimately on the 20th of February.(This is not CSI???)

So this third time schedule is not only based upon my second viewing of the film, but also upon suppositions and on close reading of "Heimat3", the book of Edgar Reitz. (ISBN 3-8135-0248-1)

Saturday the 5th of September 1992: Rhein-Main-Airport / Schabbach / Ernst premises / G nderode house

- * Arrival of Ernst Simon at the airport of Frankfurt with an Aeroflot plane from Moscow after a two years detention. In the same plane a group of so called Russian-Germans from Kazakhstan. Between them Juri and his wife Galina, whose son Nikita / Niko is born just before in Moscow.
- * Together with Ernst the group travels to Schabbach by bus. There it is divided. The family of Juri and Galina will stay at Ernst's premises at the Goldbrook.
- * At dusk the peace movement conducted by vicar Dahl is standing at the end of the runway Hahn Airbase to see the departure of big Galaxy transport aircrafts. They are celebrating the leaving of the American army and their cruise missiles, etc. .
- * In the village of Schabbach they are looking too.

* In the house of Ernst the Russian family is praying. They are frightened by the noise.

* In the Günderode house Clarissa not only hears the roaring engines of the Galaxy, but there's also a sonorous sound in her ear. Later on we understand that Hermann & Clarissa enjoy a "creative" (sabbatical?) year, without concerts.

Sunday the 6th of September 1992/ Hahn Airbase

* Hahn Airbase is -after the depart of the last Galaxies- free to visit for the Hunsrückian people. Vicar Dahl is the guide.

Monday the 7th of September 1992/ Schabbach

* Mara is rehearsing with her best dressage horse; the Russian-Germans are watching and clapping. Vicar Dahl arrives and takes them along to the village.

* In a barn there are electric machines and furniture of the Americans stored, that the Russians can buy at low prices. Opposite the street an American black family is leaving their apartment. The woman likes Galina and her child: no problem that Galina and her family moves in.

Tuesday the 8 th of September 1992/ Ernst premises/ Dresden -Neustadt / Dresden -Laubegast

* The Russians remove from Ernst's house to their house in the centre of Schabbach. Ernst is sad and lonely again. For the first time since he's back, he looks for his airstrip and discovers the military truck and the Lenin-statue. He finds a message of Tobi and gets in his old jeep to drive to Dresden.

* Ernst has some trouble to find the house of Tobi in Dresden, but only Biggi and Anna are at home. Tobi is undertaking a new project on a shipyard in Laubegast (at the river Elbe): a modern art mobile with Trabants. He doesn't want the job as the second hand man of Ernst any more.

Wednesday the 9th of September 1992/ Hahn Airbase / Anton's Villa

* Hartmut and an engineer are driving to Hahn Airbase. He's looking for a building where he can start his own enterprise.

* Galina wants to see a doctor, for her son Niko is ill. She finds the doctor at Anton's villa. Anton has to take rest, but Hartmut is also there. He wants money of his father to start a competing firm. Their discussion ends with an in breaking *[interruption? - Eds.]* It's not quite clear if Galina in the same moment is offered a job in the household by Mara (because she likes the little Niko and wants to hold a child in her arms) or that she already was kitchen maid (so tells Hanni to the doctor).

* Hartmut drives to the house of Ernst, who is back already from Dresden. He is trying to unload the Lenin-statue. Hartmut asks if Ernst will be guarantor for a loan from the bank. After some hesitation Ernst agrees.

Thursday the 10th of September 1992 / Ernst premises / Gunderode house

* At the Günderode house a check-up is held by "radio-esthetical specialists" to measure geo streams of electro smog. Clarissa still has a sound in her head. The divining rod is shaking extremely near the bed of Clarissa and Hermann. The old horseshoe falls down on the head of the specialist, that seems to be a charlatan.

Friday the 11th of September 1992/ Intercity train / Leipzig/ Hartmut's Villa

* Hermann visits Udo in Leipzig, who is working now as a broker, especially for apartments with a view. Hermann has become (much?) money from the musical authors authority and the advice to invest in east German immovable. In the train he meets Mr. Böckle, the so called firm destroyer. In Leipzig Hermann visits a project of Udo, but Udo's new behaviour (f.e. his ignorance of neo-nazi-boys) makes him decide not to put his money in this business.

* Hartmut is very glad because Ernst signed the security bond. Mara is glad with the child Niko around her. She is 42 and likes a child of herself. She succeeds in getting Hartmut in bath and bed. While he is thinking of Galina, their son is created.

Saturday the 12th of September 1992: Günderode house /Oberwesel

* The sound is still in Clarissa's head. For derivation she is making a song of her illness, (supposed to be "Tinnitus"). Suddenly Lulu arrives, together with two friends. They want to see "Rhein in Flammen", the firework show above the Rhine. This is the first time Clarissa meets her 'stepdaughter'. The trio will sleep in the barn. They see how the goat Bianca is covered by a he-goat.

* It's a sunny day in Oberwesel, when the wine feast is starting. The Russians are there and also Lulu and her friends. She flirts with both, but decides to choose for Lutz, because he's the one that dares to make a bungee-jump with her. At night all from Günderode enjoy the fireworks, but Hermann is disappointed because Lulu is only interested in his money and his lodging, not in his fathership. Hermann admits that he has no longer inspiration to make compositions.

Thursday the 24th of December 1992/ Schabbach / Anton's Villa

On Christmas Eve the Simon-clan, the Russian-Germans and other Schabbacher inhabitants are together in the church and afterwards the Simons have their supper in Anton's villa; including Hartmut. Galina is serving as a waitress. In Hartmut's opinion Anton is insulting Galina and he takes her out. He wants to protect her, but afterwards he realises himself she can lose her job by his behaviour.

Spring 1993, April / Günderode house / Schabbach

At the Günderode house three little goats are born

Hartmut is driving around in his new Porsche cabrio. He wants to show it Mara, who is -7 month pregnant- at her dressage horse, but she asks him when he will be an adult.

Hartmut drives away and takes Galina in the car to impress her. On the ex Hahn Airbase he is kissing her, but she tells him that she is thinking all time of her husband Juri, who always feels the pain in his wounded knee. Together they go to Juri and Hartmut makes a phonecall to a friend who is a surgeon. He will look to the knee the same week. Juri doesn't trust the situation: why should Hartmut do so much trouble for him?

A week later / Railwaystation Koblenz / University clinic Mainz

Juri and Galina are going to the clinic by train. They don't understand each other no longer. She, the pure Russian has become a German woman; he, a Russian-German turns out to be a traditional Russian. He is suspicious, is Galina naïve?. The surgeon, professor Petri , assures Juri, he can walk without pain in some months.

Wednesday the 14th of July 1993:/ Ernst premises

Mara has give birth to a son on Monday the 12th of July 1993.(after a pregnancy of ten months?!) Anton is walking to Ernst's premises to make an end to their disagreement. Although he knows Ernst has helped Hartmut to found a competing optic firm, he wants to invite his brother for the baptizing of his grandson. But Ernst ignores Anton's attempt to reconciliation, although if Anton had waited another second.....

Sunday the 18th of July 1993/ Hunsrückdom in Ravengiersburg / Anton's manufactory

The young Matthias Paul Anton Simon is baptized by vicar Dahl (a protestant vicar in a roman-catholic church) The whole company drives for the baptize party to the fabric hall of Anton. There we meet Mr. Böckle again, the "firm destroyer" Hermann recognizes him but he doesn't tell Hartmut a thing. Anton is holding a speech in which he makes his grandson to his one and only heir. The surprise and shock are great. Later at home Anton is unconscious for a moment. His heart is protesting again.

September 1993 / Günderode house/ Simmern / Schabbach

Exactly one year later Lulu, Lutz and Roland visit the Günderode house for the second time, this time in a FIAT 500. Lulu is graduated that afternoon as architectural engineer and she wants to celebrate that with her father, also because she is

pregnant. But Hermann and Clarissa have a concert in Bonn, they are not at home. Lulu has booked a table in Restaurant Römerhof (in Bingen?) She is still flirting with Roland too.

In Schabbach Galina is coming home from her new work at Hartmuts manufactory. She is nervous because her husband Juri did arrive from hospital that day . The Russian family is celebrating that, but they are angry too, because Galina stayed at her work so long (Overtime for the boss). Galina understands that her family is believing she paid the operation and all the other things with her body. Galina leaves the house and there is Hartmut in his Porsche. She gets to him in the car. They discover they are both wolves and in Hartmuts office for the second time they are kissing and then make love.

The dinner in the Römerhof is over. The trio takes a taxi to the GÜnderode house.

Galina returns to her family and Hartmut to his house, but he can't go inside. The Russian family and Galina are quarrelling and Hartmut asks her to come with him and she does, leaving her child to his father and his parents.

Than the accident happens: the quickly driving Hartmut doesn't see the Mercedes taxi , that gets out of the way. They all seem not badly injured, but then they see that the slightly laughing Lutz, who was sitting nearest the driver, doesn't move anymore. He is taken to hospital, but reanimation is not possible.

In the middle of the night the police brings Lulu and Roland to Hermann and Clarissa.: there are no words to say.

The last pictures show us Hartmut and Galina walking along a motorway. They are sitting down and now Galina wants to support the crying Hartmut.

Gert Jan Jansen Gouda/ 060217

From: Jansen.G.J <GJJansen ismh.nl>

Date: Fri, 17 Feb 2006 13:21:41 +0100

Thank you Ivan for your introduction again. I see you place the sequences with Mr. Böckle in the centre. Interesting, for I didn't . I will react later. At first I'd like to make some remarks of my own.

BTW. The Time schedule and summary to this episode is "being held until the list moderator can review it for approval". The message body was too big. I am sorry.

Heavy, emotional, desperate, that were the first options to characterize episode 3, just after watching in cinema. When you see a film again on TV or on your PC the feelings are lowered, but they didn't change fundamentally. The consciousness after the accident makes it difficult to return to your daily world (for a second).

The leading themes I can determine:

- * The changes in world history, put on screen by the coming Russian-Germans and the departing Americans and their weapons. These voluntary folk removals are due to the end of the cold war. In times it was not likely to be used, confederation chancellor Helmut Kohl had promised everyone in the world with German blood, he was welcome to return to Germany. How wonderful again Reitz transfers world history to local facts.
- * The changes in human atmosphere: senses of cooperation and collective responsibility are overwhelmed by needs to personal possessions and jealousy. Strange enough it is the wealthiest man of Schabbach, Anton, who is discovering: possession is not all there is. The specimen of the capitalistic wave are Hartmut, Herr Böckle, Udo and even Hermann, who wants to invest his money without paying taxes.
- * But there is also (as Ivan already referred too) fertility: Nikita, born in Moscow at the airport, Mara who becomes pregnant, the goat and Lulu idem ditto.

The leading characters in my view are Hartmut and Galina, whose love-story is starting prudent, but cannot be stopped by any what. It lasts almost a year before they conclude they have so much in common (being a wolf) that they will ignore the society rules and then make love for the first time. Of course the question will be : is their love plausible? I think it's doubtful. She is not described as a heartless woman, that only rationally is looking for the most efficient way to reach her personal purposes. Still that seems to be the best explanation for her behaviour. She is not so naïve that she not recognizes the desire of this good looking rich man, but still she goes on. How could she know Hartmut wouldn't drop her after "the victory"? Is his decision influenced by the accident?

But Anton also has a central position. He participates in two great sequences: his conversation with Ernst on both sides of the "iron curtain" and (my personal favourite) his speech to the guests of the baptism party for his grandson. I think Anton realizes his life won't last long any more. He takes the first step to a reconciliation, although his brother gave Hartmut the opportunity to start a competing firm. What, if he had waited one second more? But there are boundaries to his will to end with good family relations. He strikes back to Hartmut and his other spoiled children in favourite to the people of Schabbach . Their employment seems him to be safe for several years, when all his money goes to the new born family heir. He is sweating due to his heart-weakness, but as he stands on the stage he is the one and only Hunsrück tycoon. He is telling it once and for all.

We "lost" the head figure of episode 2 Gunnar this time. His colleagues and adherents are all visible for some time. Tobi & Biggi + Anna, Udo & Jana, Tillmann & Moni, but no sign of Gunnar, Petra and Reinhold.

There also came in an old acquaintance from Heimat 1 and DZH: the old "Willem" who is greeting Hartmut stepping out of his Porsche to see Mara behind the old Simon house. Willem played also himself on the cemetery in 1980, when Hermann

went around in Schabbach after the funeral of his mother Maria.(H1, part 11). Thanks to Joel Young we know it's Wilhelm Gräf , about 85 years now and living opposite the Maria house and blacksmith in Gehlweiler. In DZH he is to be seen when Hermann leaves the house and Schabbach.

New in this episode were Lulu and her friends who came up the Siebenjungfernblick twice: by bike and one year later by a FIAT 500. The explanation of her behaviour was not quite extensive. And of course the Russian-Germans are now introduced in Heimat 3.

And then the chapter trivial questions about authenticity: (OK, OK I'll never do it again)

- * Is it possible that Galina gives birth to a baby on the Moscow airport and after the flight arrives beaming in Frankfurt?
- * Is it plausible that Hartmut in July announces his manufactory has been ordered for millions of D-marks at the Spring Bourse of Leipzig, when this firm still had to be established in April?
- * Isn't Mr. Böckle a bit early to destroy a well selling factory?
- * Is my calculation of the pregnancy period of Mara (from September 11 till July 12 = 10 Months) correct?
- * Why Moni and Tillmann opened the door of the Günderode house to Lulu standing in their pyjamas? It's before dinnertime. Of course it's possible they took the opportunity of being together in a nice bed, but being disturbed, should you put on your pyjama suit?
- * Did Lulu and friends have dinner in "Römerhof" in Bingen or in "Römerkeller", Schloßstrasse 7 in Simmern?

Gert Jan Jansen

Gouda / 060217

From: Susan Biedron <Susan jsbiedron.com>
Date: Fri, 17 Feb 2006 22:31:50 CET

Ivan,

Thank you for your super introduction – one of your best so far. Gert Jan, thank you for the time schedule. I have not had time to re- watch Episode 3 yet, but before I do I can comment on two of Gert Jan's queries:

> Mara is pregnant (I presume since the 11th of September), but she is still
> riding horses. Is that possible in the 7th month?

And

>Is it possible that Galina gives birth to a baby on the Moscow airport
> and after the flight arrives beaming in Frankfurt?

I consulted my experts, my two daughters who both had babies last year: " I guess it depends on whether you are an avid and experienced horse rider, and on a tame horse who you knew & knew you well. I would think by that time, if you have no problems and are not galloping, then it would be ok." She then pointed out that one of the skeleton (Olympic) competitors is 2 months pregnant.

As far as Galina smiling – she would be experiencing the natural euphoria following a healthy birth – she not only just had a baby, but is also out of Russia – and – she would have been resting on the plane for a few hours.

Susan

From: "Robert A D Cran" <chinherb att.biz>
Date: Sat, 18 Feb 2006 14:02:20 +0200

Susan and Gert,

I can never forget a woman who worked at the same large institution as I did 30 years ago. I never noticed that she had been pregnant. One day she walked in looking as spectacular as always, but this time with her baby in a pouch on her back. She had given birth that morning.

Nature works when you flow with it!

Robert Cran.

From: Elizabeth Garret <david.garrett4 ntlworld.com>

Date: Sat, 18 Feb 2006 16:44:59 -0000

Thank you as ever, Ivan, for your stimulating introduction. You mentioned echoes of the earlier Heimat films, and I would like to mention some more, which were probably obvious to everyone.

Lulu has two boy friends, just as Herman had two girl friends when he visited Maria in, I think, 1969. Anton, wearing a big hat, walks in front of his car just as Paul did upon returning to Schabbach - and both scenes were in black and white. Finally, I remember another beautiful scene of Christmas and the village church in the snow.

These are small points. I am about to switch off the computer before I go to Spain for two weeks in search of sun. I shall be thinking of Heimat while I am there, and comparing the settings. The idea of heimat is still there, even with different scenery!

I look forward to episode 4.

Elizabeth Garrett.

From: "Wyn Grant" <wyn_grant hotmail.com>

Date: Sun, 19 Feb 2006 09:19:18 +0000

Ivan's introduction is superb and there is little I disagree with and not much that I can add to. When I saw the falling apples, what I thought of was the loss of innocence in the Garden of Eden and thus a reference to the affair Hartmut has just begun with Galina, but maybe that is stretching a point.

Ivan rightly emphasises the theme of family. Once again I was struck by how little Herman smiles - only when Lulu first arrives with her friends, an atmosphere soon dissipated by her surly behaviour (she thinks her father is mercenary, he thinks she only sees him when she wants money) and again briefly when she arrives trembling after the crash, a smile that soon fades. Does he smile so little because of all the family problems he has had, the way he had to wrench himself away to establish his own identity?

Just before the crash there is a momentary glimpse of a combine harvester working at night. For me this referred back to the scene in Heimat 1 where the tractors spraying insecticide threatened the operation of Anton's factory. I see it as a reference to a theme about the mechanisation of agriculture and the change in the agricultural character of the Hunsruck which Reitz refers to in an interview (industrial parks in the villages, people travelling 200 km to work).

A couple of interesting references to the past were the appearance of the Ever Greens at the christening party who featured in the 70th birthday party in Heimat 1, and also the priest recalling the sound of B-52 bombers when he sees a wall painting at the American airbase.

When Hermann says to Clarissa 'I have no ideas' is this a reference to Reitz's interest/concern in the role of the intellectual in a contemporary world?

I think that Ernst's restlessness comes across strongly, he wishes that he could keep Galina's child with him as he lacks the roots that his own family would provide.

Perhaps this also explains his rebuff to Anton. Ernst tries to compensate through acquisition. So Tobi says of the piece of art he is working on, 'You can't take it with you. Maybe that's what bothers you.'

Anton says to Hartmut, 'You were a child born in good times', reflecting the fact that Hartmut grew up in the post-war BRD while Anton suffered a great deal - and successive generations have perhaps had a harder time as one contributor has reminded us.

One last question. When Ernst went into Tobi's apartment there was a brief glimpse of a piece of graffiti, a crocodile with a slogan that I translated (rapidly with poor German), 'The wall is our suitcase/trunk'. This doesn't make sense, so perhaps I misread it.

From: Raymond Scholz <rscholz zonix.de>

Date: Sun, 19 Feb 2006 23:43:58 +0100

· "Wyn Grant" <wyn_grant hotmail.com> wrote:

> One last question. When Ernst went into Tobi's apartment there was a
> brief glimpse of a piece of graffiti, a crocodile with a slogan that I
> translated (rapidly with poor German), 'The wall is our
> suitcase/trunk'. This doesn't make sense, so perhaps I misread it.

It reads "Die Mauer ist in unseren Köpfen" ("The wall is in our heads")

Cheers, Ray

From: Raymond Scholz <rscholz zonix.de>

Date: Mon, 20 Feb 2006 00:19:50 +0100

· "Jansen.G.J" <GJJansen ismh.nl> wrote:

> * The changes in world history, put on screen by the coming
> Russian-Germans and the departing Americans and their weapons. These
> voluntary folk removals are due to the end of the cold war. In times
> it was not likely to be used, confederation chancellor Helmut Kohl had
> promised everyone in the world with German blood, he was welcome to
> return to Germany. How wonderful again Reitz transfers world history
> to local facts.

I strongly agree with that. Having had the expectation of Reitz addressing the arrival of the German Russians within the context of a chronicle of the Nineties before, I was pleased how their story was interwoven with the Simon clan's story.

The Russians arrive at Ernst's court on a tractor, like refugees. I'm not sure whether there is a similar picture in H1, but it would fit. Despite this, the German Russians aren't refugees at all. They're returning home! But not all residents encounter them as sincere as Ernst does. "Postovich" says that in Russia they were the fascists and in Germany they are the Russians. A quote that matches the experiences of many immigrants from Eastern Europe.

I'll contribute some more about the German Russians in reply to Ivan's introduction tomorrow.

Some words on the leaving US army:

In my former home town the British army had a large garrison, supplying almost 5000 out of 25000 inhabitants of that town. When they left their housings were partly occupied by German Russians like this episode shows.

Sadly enough they didn't leave with their huge transportation airplanes. Their mumbling sound made me shiver during the Munich premiere of H3 (remember the bombers of H1 and Otto and Maria in bed?). Maybe because I sat too close to a loudspeaker... Some of the aircrafts are surely computer generated images - is this the first (and only) time, Reitz used this technique? At least they look convincing to me.

I very much liked the picture of the peace activists at the Hahn airport with all their crosses stemmed against the lit runway (the runway forming another cross, the airplanes cross-shaped too and shortly before a huge cross of vapour trails and power supply or telegraph lines!) Since I'm a sucker for blinkenlights and these images and sounds really caught me.

Cheers, Ray

From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder.rustema.nl>

Date: Mon, 20 Feb 2006 09:17:04 +0100

At 00:19 +0100 20/2/06, Raymond Scholz wrote:

>Some of the aircrafts are surely computer generated images -
> is this the first (and only) time, Reitz used this technique?

I remember that in Munich I was also a bit disappointed by those aircrafts. On the big screen you can see they are generated by a computer. But last weekend, when I saw episode 3 it was not so obvious anymore. They now seem fake mostly because these machines were flying in perfect lines in relation to the camera standpoint and the actors were not looking up afraid when the huge machine is flying over their demonstration.

Reitz did mention the possibilities of digital manipulation in an interview once, I forgot where. He said that during the filming of Heimat they have spend a lot of time and money asking people to remove the TV-antennas from their rooftops because they might end up in the image. Now they can erase them in post-production with the computer, which saves a lot of time.

ReindeR

From: Raymond Scholz <rscholz zonix.de>

Date: Mon, 20 Feb 2006 21:55:00 +0100

· Richard Rees-Jones <Richard.Rees.Jones CTBTO.ORG> wrote:

> Ernst returns to Germany after two years in a Russian prison. Have
> we been told why he was there? If so, I missed it.

Ernst has been held off by the Russian air defence on his way to the East. Intrusion in foreign airspace without permission has been and still is a crime.

There are some clearly drawn parallels to the story of Matthias Rust, who landed on the Red Square in Moscow in 1987 with his Cessna. Note the "Stern" cover (at Tobi's flat in Leipzig) with "Russland-Flieger Simon". Rust was postulated the "Moskau-Flieger" or "Russland-Flieger" in the media. While Ernst wanted to trick the air defence by flying during a match of the Russian football team, Rust intruded while the air defence was on holidays (well, most of them...)

Rust's coup caused lots of media attention in the late eighties.

Just like Ernst Simon, Matthias Rust can be regarded as a restless character, not easy, not having lots of friends, sometimes getting in trouble with the law.

Wikipedia has more on Rust: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mathias_Rust

Cheers, Ray

From: Raymond Scholz <rscholz zonix.de>

Date: Tue, 21 Feb 2006 00:28:40 +0100

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

> I noticed that the camera dwells on two or three occasions on photos
> of Mara on the shelf next to the fan that Hartmut operates
> electronically as he shows off.

Remember the scenes shortly after this when he arrives at the Simon estate? Playing with the gate's remote control and switching the head lights of his Porsche several times on and off? What is the meaning of this? Is Hartmut believing / imagining that everything in his life is under control? Which certainly isn't.

I was struck by Hartmut's bad taste for clothes which cannot be solely explained by a different style in the early 90s. Trying to raise attention he doesn't receive from his family? His yellow coat awfully complements the purple Porsche special edition. He wears the same coat for almost the whole episode. Even the German Russians seem to own subtle variations of their everlasting knitted pullovers!

At least Galina opens the (toy car) door for him... Very metaphorical and seducing too. Lots of nipples in this episode...

I had difficulties with Christian Leonhard's acting when watching H3 in Munich. He appeared to me too lustful and clumsy. But in some way that's what Hartmut's character is, so it wasn't that bad at all.

- > A second force leading to the destruction of family and relationships is
- > male stubbornness and obstinacy and the desire for revenge. Reitz
- > illustrates this through the actions of Yuri, Galina's Kazakh/German husband
- > and through Anton's desire to outwit his own children, especially his
- > eldest, Hartmut. Whether it is because of the pain caused by his injured leg
- > or because of the strain of perpetually watching a young and pretty wife it
- > is difficult to say, but Yuri is portrayed as a suspicious, sullen and
- > brooding man. Right from the very beginning he seems disapproving of his
- > wife's innocent actions. When they are at the Hahn airbase getting household
- > possessions he looks on disapprovingly as Galina talks to a black American
- > family. Whether it is because they are black or because they are American is
- > not clear. Or perhaps both.

Well, I think he is suspicious because he cannot accept Galina as an independent person. The same goes for the scene where Galina returns at night offering Yuri a job at the Simon factory. The society Yuri is grown up with sees the male caring for the wealth of the family. Soon after their arrival in Germany, Galina breaks up with this tradition and turns towards a western style of life. When she returns at night the first thing to do is to change her clothes (jeans, leather jacket) into an apron dress!

Due to his injury Yuri has become weakened, probably humiliated and desperate which may increase his anger. Galina loves him for sure and flirts with Hartmut with a certain hope, Hartmut could help Yuri. After being cured Galina's honest job offer must make him feel ultimately superfluous.

- > Anton does try with Hartmut also. After the Xmas service he invites Hartmut
- > to dinner with these conciliatory words: "Hartmut, come here. Christmas is
- > the time of reconciliation. Peace. We don't live forever." The dinner turns
- > into an absolute disaster, of course, although I think Hartmut over-reacts
- > for his own purposes and that Anton is not really trying to humiliate and
- > patronise Galina. He is unthinking, if anything. My view!!

Galina obviously doesn't feel humiliated but Hartmut is right when he shouts out that the whole scenery resembles a circus show. With double bottom (no soup in the dish!).

- > Human carelessness certainly plays a part in the accident. The taxi driver's
- > attention keeps being diverted by the canoodling of Lulu and Lutz behind
- > him. Reitz shows the man's eyes semi-turning at least twice. Hartmut is
- > driving with one hand on the steering wheel and the other is embracing
- > Galina. If Roland had not prevented Lutz from driving and called a cab with
- > the best of intentions then the smash might not have happened. Such are the
- > ironies of fate and the culpabilities of humans Reitz seems to suggest.
- > Hartmut, if not heroic, redeems himself. He shows himself to be practical
- > and accepts responsibility. He calls the police and takes Lutz to hospital.
- > He is not a villain!

Well... After staring back at the accident for a long time his first worry is the correct placement of the warning triangle (some may find this a very German attitude...). But yet another task he fails.

- > 3. Hermann and Clarissa are childless in their union. There are 3
- > births in the episode if you count Galina at Moscow Airport; child, Niko. Mara;
- > child, Matthias Paul Anton Simon. Bianca, the goat; children, 3 little

> unnamed goatlings/kids.

I suffered from a severe hiccup for about 10 minutes caused by an unannounced laugh here :-)

Some unrelated thoughts at the end:

- Little Niko in the cradle is certainly one of the cutest little babies, Reitz could have found. So cute that even Anton shows a picture of him to Ernst at the fence, claiming it to be his grandchild! Or did my eyes betray me here?
- The Hahn airbase has in fact made some late career as the main spider for no-frills airlines in Germany ("Frankfurt-Hahn" as in "London-Luton" which must be located somewhere in Southern Scotland according to factual reports of survivors of adventurous expeditions from Luton to Piccadilly Circus...)
- Galina with her sick little Niko searching a doctor reminded me of Maria and Lotti in H1. Both find him by looking for his car.
- The skin head rock band. Well, what to say? Some unmotivated remark? I don't know - if the statement was that at that time right wing extremists were gaining strength, I've understood.
- Lulu and her friends arriving by bike from Cologne reminded me of Hermann and his school friends in H1 (heading 70km for the party at the Mosel to meet Ernst).
- The huge pink "11833" advertisement at the railway station caused some sighs in Munich. How could this sign of the late 90s have escaped Reitz' eagle eyes?
- I see some emotional connection between Mara and Anton (not only when she is massaging his feet...). Is this because she also stems from northern Germany (Hamburg) like Martha does? Although she hasn't that distinct dialect Martha had, you may perceive this.

Cheers, Ray

From: "Robert A D Cran" <chinherb att.biz>

Date: Tue, 21 Feb 2006 09:22:58 +0200

"Yuri is

- > portrayed as a suspicious, sullen and brooding man. Right from the
- > very beginning he seems disapproving of his wife's innocent actions.
- > When they are at the Hahn airbase getting household possessions he
- > looks on disapprovingly as Galina talks to a black American family.
- > Whether it is because they are black or because they are American is not
- > clear. Or perhaps both."

The way I saw Yuri was that the issue was not only, or even principally, a question of gender positioning or of a painful leg. In the scene at the Hahn airbase, where Yuri

seems not exactly over the moon about his new fridge, he does finally cast a momentary, small smile at Galina's naïve relationship with the Americans, as if to say 'Ach, there goes little Galina with her dear ways again'. To me this suggested that his sullenness is more to do with a deeply ingrained distaste for consumerism with which he has suddenly been confronted - he is perhaps a rather deeply committed communist. The way the American woman takes hold of Galina's baby, having babbled effusively - the fine distinction between innocent enthusiasm and overselling your sensationalist civilisation - reads to me like an illustration of babies as consumer items to be "enjoyed", a phenomenon of the accelerating pace of consumerism at that time and even moreso now. I don't think Yuri liked what he saw there. And later, assaulted on the train by the strong whiff of consumerism, the perfume which the American had given Galina, he puts his foot down. Certainly not a "new man", but in any case I think primarily driven by his preferences in materialism.

Looking back to the arrival at the airport of Ernst and the Russians, Yuri is not impressed with the material gloss and media attention all around. Galina, on the other hand, is very much interested in gloss and readily presents herself and her baby for full consumption by the TV audience.

> Galina with her sick little Niko searching a doctor reminded me of
> Maria and Lotti in H1. Both find him by looking for his car."

Galina's predilection with gloss (Hartmut's seduction of her with his car is a reflection both on Galina as well as Hartmut - stereotyped for consumption) is apparent here in other ways too. In addition to her red dress, there is the rather large expanse of red that constitutes her lips and the red nail varnish that alights on the top of the gate she is opening. I noted that red seems to be used a lot to symbolise sexual passion. When Galina opens the toy car door in front of Hartmut the gesture is completed by the fleshy pink of the upholstery inside.. In episode 2, apart from Petra's red dress, later mirrored by that of the coffee-bearer in Warner Brothers, there is also the red roses given away at the party at the newly finished house, red roses in turn alluded to in Clarissa's dress, and, and. And If blue is an allusion to Clarissa, as someone has commented previously, it seems not the only colour she is given. We will see more of that later.

Totsiens,

Robert Cran.

From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan jsbiedron.com>

Date: Tue, 21 Feb 2006 12:08:12 -0600

I agree with Ray about little Niko in the cradle:

I really like the scene in which Ernst is "talking" to Niko. The camera goes back and forth between Ernst and the baby - my reaction was that the faces of Ernst and Niko are very similar! This is another instance where Reitz shows Ernst's longing for a family. I am sure he is thinking that little Niko could have been his son or grandson.

It is also interesting that Galina, a Russian who married into an ethnic German family, is more enthusiastic about being in Germany and adapting to western ways than her husband and in-laws. She does make an effort with Yuri, which is more than he does.

Perhaps Galina and Hartmut feel a bond because they are both at odds with their own families. Or - Galina finds immature men attractive. There are behavioral similarities between Hartmut and Yuri.

Susan

From: Angela Skrimshire <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>
Date: Wed, 22 Feb 2006 10:47:38 CET

Even after seeing it again, this remains for me the least satisfactory of the 6 episodes. There still seem to be some "mere documentary" passages in places, and awkward plot transitions, eg Ernst's time in prison in the USSR, hardly referred to again, probably once more due to the constraints of the TV contract.

But there are also some lovely moments – eg Ernst returning embarrassed to the year-old mess in his deserted house. And then his delight with the "Russian" family and Galina's baby, and the sadness when he got them to take away the beautiful family cradle. Again Ernst behind his wire fence, tackling the huge lopsided statue of Lenin, and then (clearly ageing) laboriously changing wheels on his jeep – and his still moment of self-doubt and anguish (or was it just stubbornness and paranoia?) after rebuffing and turning away from clumsy, autocratic, needy Anton. Also the intimacy with which the brothers spoke to each other in their dialect, but then the sadness that the moment was lost. In the German discussion (p.31), Thomas quotes a passage from Reitz' reworked book of the script, where he says Ernst "needed only one more minute to open his heart and accept Anton's gesture of reconciliation. But his big brother gave him no more time."

Tobi too, saying rather pointedly that after 18 months of unemployment he was working with someone who depended on him and whom he would not desert (as Ernst had deserted him). The crazy but somehow grand installation that his friend and he were building ... which seemed valueless by market criteria to the collector Ernst.

Hermann and Clarissa in their new rather bourgeois/middlebrow incarnations are as unconvincing as ever – (though in the goat episode, Clarissa's wry half-amused face maybe relates back to her persona in DZH). But Lulu is refreshing and convincing, and immediately involving – she could have equally found a place in DZH, with all the undertones of the complex triangle with Lutz and Roland, and the wild bungy-jump. Also Hermann and Clarissa in their efforts to communicate with her become more complex and alive themselves.

The "Wolf" conversation between Hartmut and Galina harked back to the heart-rending "Wölfelied" of DZH but only serves to emphasise the contrast between that slow scene and its wonderful music, and the brief almost perfunctory treatment of the scene in Hartmut's speeding Porsche. Again the pressure of time and TV scheduling?

I too find Anton's family and their misadventures in this episode a bit too much of a soap-opera, "a bit Dallas-like" as Ivan says, with their vulgar glossy houses and lifestyles, fast cars, the dreadful christening party, and the relatively obvious family dynamics – autocratic father, playboy son, etc... This contrasts sadly with the similar social climbing of Lucie and Eduard in H1, who are such strong and original characters, nothing like a soap opera. It remains hard to understand how Anton, the

“brooding inventor” of the early days of Simon Optik, the shrewd, principled, sober rather puritanical entrepreneur, should have embraced this vulgar opulence – maybe just one aspect of his singlemindedness that he lacks interest in his material surroundings?

But the relation of Anton and Mara is an intriguing complication, both moving and disturbing – widowed Anton’s emotional need, his envy of his own son to whom he had given everything that didn’t matter and nothing that did, who disappointed him by not being able to break the emotional chains he had himself imposed. This is where H3 transcends soap opera. Richard Rees-Jones’ parallel with the much darker and more explicit *Festen* makes sense.

Galina is touching and sensitively played, though at first viewing I thought of her husband and his family more as cyphers than original characters. But this changed on seeing it again These bewildered people were doubly “refugees” – who on the bus sang a Russian song about the homeland they had left, and a German one from the much more distant and quite strange “homeland” they were arriving in... somehow one knew their hearts were never going to be in modern Schabbach - ironically, they might have felt far more at home in the Schabbach of Heimat 1. Then there was the huge culture clash over Galina’s attempt to accommodate to this new world. Again a moment far beyond soap opera when her young husband Yuri sits weeping in grief on the doorstep after he and his family have uncomprehendingly driven her away.

From Ivan’s interesting account of it, it’s clear I’ve really missed out on the Herr Böckle encounter. Other people too, here and elsewhere, have repeatedly seen far more in it than I can. Also as Ivan remembers, this encounter actually happened to Reitz himself in real life – so I don’t know why my own reaction is so uncomfortably different.

But even on second viewing I can’t honestly disown what I felt after seeing it the first time:

At first viewing, it seemed a strange artificial parody of the dream-like train encounters in DZH. It started with Hermann gazing at his own reflection, and perceiving the reflection of the man opposite him – like a kind of projection of his own guilt at travelling to exploit the property market in the East. It wasn’t until Böckle turned up again at the christening that I realised he was “real”. Then I thought it just a “docu-drama” attempt to illustrate and humanise the predatory profiteering that characterised that epoch. Not just unconvincing, but also not necessary to the plot - it would anyway have been clear from the way Böckle slunk out of the christening party that Hartmut’s high hopes of the contract were shortly going to be dashed. The character in the train felt somehow out of place, lifted from some other kind of film or another director’s consciousness. I’m thinking maybe of “*Glengarry Glen Ross*” – but it’s too long since I saw that magnificent film to remember precise parallels. Ivan suggests a homage to Hitchcock – that may be a better way to think of it.

Ivan’s analysis of the events leading to the fatal accident have a strong resonance, in view of Reitz own profound reflection in *Drehtort Heimat* (pp61-69) on how “small banal events . . . seen as a series represent a chain of causality that leads to the death” of a person. His thoughts, recorded in the production diary of the first *Heimat*, were prompted by the death in a car crash of a close friend and colleague, led up to by “a chain of banal links, entirely coherent with his own character”. Ironically, this friend had been intrigued by the possibility of such a causal chain as material for film, in place of lofty notions of Fate and atonement. And Reitz went on

to reflect that neither high moral ideas nor any scientific method, but only "magic" can detect the patterns of this everyday interconnectedness, and to claim that film is in this sense a magic medium though it had so far developed no form for such a representation. All that was back in 1981, but maybe over 20 years later in the intertwining stories of cousins Lulu and Hartmut he was still working on those lines. He often uses this concept of "magic" – I don't think one should analyse it really – but it seems to range from his dead friend's mother's ability to find lost objects through deep concentration or meditation, to what I understand as a profound intuitive relationship and response to people and their lives, represented by, for instance, characters like the grandmother Kath in H1, or Juan in H2.

Angela

From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder.rustema.nl>
Date: Wed, 22 Feb 2006 11:03:33 CET

At 09:47 +0000 22/2/06, Angela Skrimshire wrote:

> Ernst behind his wire fence

We did not mention the symbolic meaning of this fence, did we? The fence is always quite prominent in many scenes with Ernst. This time he comes from the prison in Russia to voluntarily go back to his own, chosen prison with high fences. He leaves his family behind the other side of the fence most of the time. He tries to get people, surrogate family perhaps, inside (Tobi and the Russians so far, more to come) but they never stay long. The lonely wolf detached from the pack.

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ReindeR

From: "Wyn Grant" <wyn_grant@hotmail.com>
Date: Wed, 22 Feb 2006 11:03:08 +0000

Interesting reflections. As far as the 'vulgar, glossy houses' are concerned they reminded me of the houses surrounding a golf club resort in Western Australia I stayed on a few years ago. But there in Anton's house is one of those ornate German stoves, totally non-functional of course and occupying a great deal of space. It is a 'link' to the past, a symbolic 'celebration' of it in the way that Ernst used to fit out retro bars, but totally without meaning unlike the horseshoe which falls on the head of one of the 'electro-smog' inspectors or whatever they are (perhaps the falling horseshoe implies that they are charlatans). Clarissa's illness (hearing a tone) to me seems to be psycho somatic in origin, particularly given that the hum seems to be loudest when she is close to Hermann.

From: Alan <alan.wmedia.com>
Date: Fri, 24 Feb 2006 12:07:21 -0500

It's fascinating to read the responses to Part III so far. On my initial viewing, I found this a much stronger segment than the previous two parts. Unlike the first two segments, Part III seems structurally more unified and it conforms to a more classical dramatic form. It was only with this segment of H3 that I sensed Reitz's sure hand. While dramatically it centers around Hartmut and Galina, I must agree with Ivan that the encounter with Herr Böckle sits at its center. And without those essential five minutes, what appears to be another variant on the dysfunctions of a rich and powerful family (i.e. "Dallas") takes on a much darker political point of view.

After my proposal for reading Gunnar's fantastic adventure with Warner Brothers last time, I was almost tempted me to slyly construct an elaborate exegesis proposing that Anton is the biological father of Matthias Paul Anton Simon. However, I'll leave that to someone else, as it is not my interpretation of Part III. (There is a lot to work with to make this case, and it is an interesting idea to play with. And there is that comment by Ernst, who says when looking at a photo of the newborn, "He even looks like you.")

Some random odd observances that I don't believe have been touched upon yet regarding Part III:

In the temporary bedroom of Galina, Yuri and Niko there is a reproduction of Victor Vasnetsov's (1848-1926) painting of 1898 "Bogatyr's" which hangs in the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow. The picture depicts three legendary Slavic heroes who guard the Russian homeland. In this case, they are literally watching over Niko. I thought this a wonderful detail, as Ernst probably was studying Russian painting in preparation for his flight East, and Galina and Yuri would be familiar with this often-reproduced image. Here's a link for anyone who wants to see it in color:

<http://www.russianartgallery.org/famous/bogatyri.htm>

The very prominent use of Charles Ives's "The Unanswered Question" in the "Rhein in Flammen" fireworks scene prompts some questions about its choice. It is one of the very few nondiegetic uses of an established piece from the classical repertoire in H3 as part of the dramatic score. (Diegetic music is played on-screen and is part of the world depicted in the film; nondiegetic music is used by a filmmaker as a dramatic underscore to emphasize emotions, mood or emphasis.) A pivotal work of early 20th century modernism, "The Unanswered Question" features a horn that asks a question six or seven times, which is then transferred to "the answer" (the wind section) and "the universe" (the strings). Significantly, this excerpt is played just before Hermann confesses to being at a loss for musical ideas.

There appear to be possible allusions to Kristof Kieslowski's BLUE (1993). Note that in Part II, Hermann is given a commission to compose a piece to celebrate the unification of Europe. This is the same programmatic subject of a composition by the deceased composer in BLUE. The composer is killed in a car accident that, for me, has distinct echoes to the car accident in Part III. (In BLUE the accident happened when brake fluid leaks from one of the wheels and the car fails to make a turn on a country road.)

A major theme in many of Kieslowski's films is random fate. Angela mention's Reitz's interest in how "small banal events seen as a series represent a chain of causality that leads to the death of a person." This was the central idea behind many of Kieslowski's films, especially BLIND CHANCE (1987), in which the action of catching

(or not catching) a train leads to three different outcomes. (Also the theme of the 1998 Gweneith Paltrow film SLIDING DOORS, which many consider a rip-off of BLIND CHANCE.)

I think Reitz wants us to wonder about the intimate dynamics of Lulu, Lutz and Roland's threesome. However viewed with the knowledge we have about Roland in a later episode, I think it becomes clear in this episode Roland is a sort of mascot, adopted by Lulu and Lutz. Lulu is also exploiting the mystery of her relationship with the two men in her conversation with Hermann. I think this is just her own form of trying to "shock the bourgeoisie" (i.e. her father). The relationship between Lulu, Lutz and Roland is quite refreshing to see on screen, as filmmakers tend to confine themselves to relationships that are socially acceptable, rather than reflecting the rather diverse and sometime ambiguous linkages that occur when we are young and defining ourselves.

No one has written at length about the marriage of Hartmut and Mara. I see their union as a "society marriage." Mara was likely a socially acceptable match. She probably came from a wealthy family (having been able to afford riding) and Hartmut was motivated to marry less by what he had in common with Mara than by the pressures of family and society. (Not uncommon in upper-middle class society.) It's difficult to determine exactly what Mara and Hartmut have in common. (Certainly not dressage.) Mara considers Hartmut immature, and his life appears to be defined by his relationship with his father. When Anton gives Galina the playful, yet rather patronizing directions at the dinner, Hartmut explodes because he identifies with her as another victim of Anton's authority. This forms the bond Hartmut feels for Galina, following his physical attraction.

A very minor quibble. Vicar Dahl when conducting the tour of the airbase makes reference to B-52s, but during this line of dialogue, the painting on screen shows a squadron of B-29s, the aircraft that dropped the atomic bombs on Japan. (At least the BBC4 English subtitles make reference to B-52s. Can someone confirm the German dialogue?) All indications are that Dahl is well informed regarding Cold War armaments, so I can only assume this is just an error when the film was edited and the wrong insert was cut in. B-29s are propeller engine bombers that came into service at the end of World War II. The B-52, which we all know well from DR. STRANGELOVE, came into service in the early 1950s and were the backbone of the U. S. Air Force for a half-century.

Richard Rees-Jones noted that the car accident might be "a little too much of a coincidence." Perhaps, but consider the chances of accidentally speeding through a stop sign and colliding into another car which just happens to be driven by your former boyfriend, and killing him in the accident? That happened to First Lady Laura Bush in 1963 when she was 17. Here's a press account:

<http://www.freerepublic.com/forum/a3910b26e685a.htm>

Life is full of coincidences if you look for them.

And responding to Gert's "trivial questions about authenticity" regarding Mara's pregnancy. We need not presume that a) either the hot-tub coupling was literally in chronological sequence (i.e. Friday Sept 11) or b) this was the only time Mara and Hartmut made love that fall. I never assume a film is literally in chronological sequence, as a filmmaker tells a story in his or her own narrative time which the artist controls (unless the audience is watching it on home video and playing with the fast forward). I think it is logical to assume a literal time sequence, however all narrative film is an illusion and there are never hard and fast rules. (Thank goodness.)

Alas, I've yet to write up my comments on Part II, which cover a number of subjects that were not mentioned in other posts. I've wanted to write a little about why Tobi might be so interested in the anti-war etchings of Otto Dix and what might have attracted Ernst to the paintings of Otto Muller; why in Part II Reitz seems to emphasize an number of odd catalogs of facts, inventories and engineering details, and more on the erosion of Gunnar and Petra's marriage. I hope to get to these and a few other observations eventually.

Alan

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>

Date: Fri, 24 Feb 2006 23:55:17 -0000 (later re-sent)

Alan, Thank you for the parallel with Kieslowski – like Reitz huge parts for the music and the magic – not only Trois Couleurs but also La double vie de Véronique.. the haunting music, the “magic” in many senses – including coincidence, synchronicity, – what you will – On first seeing DZH I wondered if Mamangakis was also the composer for Véronique – but not so, it was Preisner, who wrote the music also for the Couleurs.

Probably no connection really – but Reitz' friend who died in a crash in 1981 was Alf Brustellin (whose films I have never seen). At the time of his death he too, ironically, was preoccupied with the "causal chain" idea for a film for which he was scripting a story by Stanislaw Lem, Polish writer (author of “Solaris”). Could there be a link there with Kieslowski – 5 or 6 years before “Blind Chance”? After reading your email, I've just watched Blind Chance again (thank you!) , but twice still not enough to pick up all the cross references and links across the parts. Witek could be a character from DZH (Ansgar? Reinhard?) – and his stories mirror Reitz' phrase re “a chain of banal links, entirely coherent with his own character”.

More ideas are surfacing following that contribution of yours, but will have to wait till tomorrow ..

Angela

From: "Robert A D Cran" <chinherb@att.biz>

Date: Sat, 25 Feb 2006 08:27:12 +0200

Alan, in the narration/screenplay, published version, Pfarrer Dahl says: "Da ist ein B 52-Geschwader, die kenn ich noch, die hab ich noch im Ohr." = "That's a B 52 squadron. I still recognise them; still got them in my ears."

Robert.

From: Angela Skrimshire <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>

Date: Sat, 25 Feb 2006 10:31:58 -0000

Re my reply today to Alan, and also my longer post of 22.02.06 which may not have got further than the Archive (tho it is included in Wyn Grant's reply) :

Googling now shows link between Lem and Kieslowski is not way out, just obvious to anyone knowing more than I do about them both...

Incidentally, googling reveals "Katar, (Der Schnupfen, the Cold)", the book by Lem that Brustellin was hoping to make a film of when he died in the car crash (prompting Reitz' reflections on causal chains of banal events), has the English title "The Chain of Chance" . sorry - this is all getting a bit nerdy ...

Angela

From: Alan <alan.wmedia.com>

Date: Sat, 25 Feb 2006 13:26:22 CET

Angela Skrimshire said: >

>On first seeing DZH I

> wondered if Mamangakis was also the composer for Véronique - but not so,

> it was Preisner, who wrote the music also for the Couleurs.

Fascinating. I am also a great admirer of Preisner's film music, however he doesn't appear to have had much success (or interest in) writing pure concert music. Rather he has created wonderful "segments" of what could be parts of actual larger compositions.

> Probably no connection really - but Reitz' friend who died in a crash in
> 1981 was Alf Brustellin (whose films I have never seen). At the time of
> his death he too, ironically, was preoccupied with the "causal chain"
> idea for a film for which he was scripting a story by Stanislaw Lem,
> Polish writer (author of "Solaris").

I had not read this before. During the early 1980s, I read everything I could find in English by Stanislaw Lem, including the detective thriller CHAIN OF CHANCE (that's the English translated title). Coincidentally, I was thinking about that book when I wrote my email yesterday. It's actually one of Lem's more conventional and lesser novels, but I can see why a filmmaker might be attracted to adapting it. I have not seen any films by Brustellin either. It was hard enough tracking down Reitz's early films, which are worth searching out, by the way. (Reitz told me in Boston that he considers them inferior work and gave me the impression they will not be released on DVD. A shame, especially for many of us who have watched HEIMAT so closely. I see a number of parallels between ZERO HOUR and Part V of H3, but that's for a later discussion. And Nikos Mamangakis wrote the score to many of the earlier films too.)

Alan

From: Alan <alan.wmedia.com>
Date: Sat, 25 Feb 2006 17:02:51 CET

And a correction on my earlier posting.

I just looked at that segment again and the painting in question shows a formation of B-17s, not B-29s. The B-17, known as the "Flying Fortress," was the bomber that did much of the allied bombing of Germany during World War II. I should have double checked this before I posted yesterday. Apologies.

The B-17 is still vastly different from the B-52, however. So Pfarrer Dahl's comment is still very odd.

Thank you Robert for confirming this in the published screenplay.

Alan

Robert A D Cran said:

> Alan, in the narration/screenplay, published version, Pfarrer Dahl says:
 > "Da ist ein B 52-Geschwader, die kenn ich noch, die hab ich noch im Ohr."
 > =
 > "That's a B 52 squadron. I still recognise them; still got them in my
 > ears."
 >
 > Robert.

From: Angela Skrimshire <angela.skrimshire.zetnet.co.uk>
Date: Sat, 25 Feb 2006 20:49:05 -0000

A couple more possible references to Kieslowski's "Blue" - :

the bungy jumping on Julie's mother's TV - but in a desperate desolate terrifying way - completely different spirit from Lulu and Lutz..

and Julie's silent weeping face at the end - but again in a quite opposite sense to Lulu's - for Julie there is warmth and release and letting go ..

Maybe the differences are too great for these scenes to make sense as "references"... Roland/Lutz/Lulu - I don't remember "the knowledge we have about Roland in a later episode" - but from episode 3 I assumed he was moving towards coming out as gay, and meanwhile finding a kind of safety and identification in relating to the couple.... even a repetition of childhood dynamics ... but perhaps this is quite off the mark .. Also there is an echo of the almost as ambivalent triangle of Jean-Marie, Volker and Clarissa in DZH.

Mara and Hartmut... you're probably right that it was a marriage of convenience - in the big Fliess interview, Edgar Reitz says of Anton's children that they "are deeply rooted in the local region, and have entered marriages with other industrialist families, as is the custom in those circles" .

Mara and Anton - I too wondered if Anton could have fathered Mara's child - but decided that it wasn't necessary to spell out an actual physical relationship between

them, it would add virtually nothing to the dynamic of the closeness they seemed openly to have... tho if similar ideas had crossed Ernst's mind it would be typical of him to make a double-edged remark.....

Re "Zero Hour" - I believe Gernot Roll was the camera man too - and from a clip in one of the documentaries it looks anything but "inferior work" ... hope it does become obtainable again ...

Angela

From: JoelOYoung <JoelOYoung aol.com>

Date: Sun, 26 Feb 2006 13:50:14 EST)

I need to correct myself. There was never a B-52 Squadron stationed in northern continental Europe. There was, of course, B-52 squadrons stationed at Torrejon and Zaragoza Air Bases in Spain, and they used either Lakenheath or Mildenhall Air Bases in southern England as starting points too, but not from Germany. The runways at almost all of the bases in Germany are way too short for a B-52 to take off fully loaded. So this was a misconception that was written into the story line. Here is some history I found on line:

Toward the end of 1978 Hahn was again affected by a USAFE-wide aircraft realignment. Although not involving the transfer of a large number of aircraft, the moves made resulted in Hahn's primary unit, the 50th TFW, being composed of two squadrons of PAVE SPIKE laser guidance/Maverick missile capable F-4Es and one squadron of TISEO (Target Identification System Electro-Optical)/Maverick F-4Es by early 1979. Since Hahn was selected as one of four bases for the ET&E of the General Dynamics' F-16 all-weather multi-role aircraft, the base had to host three F-16s and the associated support personnel during April and May 1979.
Inactivated with the 50th Tactical Fighter Wing Sept. 30, 1991.

So the aircraft located there at the end were F-4E and or F-16 fighters, small aircraft compared to the B-52, but still capable of delivering tactical nuclear weapons.

The plane that we see taking off from Hahn in the first part of episode three is a C-5 transport aircraft. This was probably entered into the film digitally, as I remember Edgar mentioning somewhere that they had a helicopter fly by so that the actors had the feeling of a real aircraft flying overhead and would have something to direct their attention to. The American troops stationed at the base did not leave via military aircraft, but mostly left on civilian aircraft from the Frankfurt International Airport, as they still do to day, and or were transferred to other locations within Europe. the depictions of the C-5 are quite good, actually, as I can identify the aircraft immediately from the shape, the wings, and the tail, but not from the sound, which is very very different for this aircraft.

All considered I know what we saw was not true, but you have to look into the meaning of it all, and get the feeling of what Edgar was bringing to us. Rev. Dahl is a real person, a great person, I know you would all enjoy talking to him (he speaks great english too) and played himself in the film, doing what he was so very good at a few years earlier.

Best regards to you all,
Joel

From: JoelOYoung <JoelOYoung aol.com>
Date: Sun, 26 Feb 2006 13:58:41 EST

Hi Gentlemen, I think your new analysis is right on. That is the aircraft that was painted on the wall, and their tasks. I believe, however, that during the screen play writing there must have been some confusion by the writers giving Rev. Dahl a line with B-52. The last tenant at Hahn was the 50th TFW, and they had F-16's. If you do not have, nor have had a lot to do with the USAF, the terminology can be confusing and this could have cause this mixup. Joel

> And a correction on my earlier posting.
 >
 > I just looked at that segment again and the painting in question shows a
 > formation of B-17s, not B-29s. The B-17, known as the "Flying Fortress,"
 > was the bomber that did much of the allied bombing of Germany during World
 > War II. I should have double checked this before I posted yesterday.
 > Apologies.
 >
 > The B-17 is still vastly different from the B-52, however. So Pfarrer
 > Dahl's comment is still very odd.
 >
 > Thank you Robert for confirming this in the published screenplay.
 >
 > Alan
 >
 > Robert A D Cran said:
 > > Alan, in the narration/screenplay, published version, Pfarrer Dahl says:
 > > "Da ist ein B 52-Geschwader, die kenn ich noch, die hab ich noch im Ohr."
 > > =
 > > "That's a B 52 squadron. I still recognise them; still got them in my
 > > ears."
 > >
 > > Robert.
 >
 > --

From: Raymond Scholz <rscholz zonix.de>
Date: Mon, 27 Feb 2006 00:08:54 +0100

· "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire zetnet.co.uk> wrote:

> Alan, Thank you for the parallel with Kieslowski - like Reitz huge
 > parts for the music and the magic - not only Trois Couleurs but also
 > La vie double de Véronique.. the haunting music, the "magic" in many
 > senses - including coincidence, synchronicity, - what you will - On
 > first seeing DZH I wondered if Mamangakis was also the composer for
 > Véronique - but not so, it was Preisner, who wrote the music also for
 > the Couleurs.

Getting nerdy here too, I must state that some parts were written by the recently discovered musician Van den Budenmayer!

Add me as a Kieslowski admirer... I always wondered whether I'm so attracted to both - Kieslowski's and Reitz' work. My first homepage in 1998 merely consisted of information on Reitz' Heimat and Kieslowski's trilogy (nothing has changes since then...).

It must be more than the remarkable music and the visual style. Whenever I try to sort out the characteristics of Reitz' and Kieslowski's work they turn out to be quite different. Kieslowski's language is far more symbolic than Reitz'. You can find Christian motives all over his stories while Reitz seems to be an atheist. Kieslowski's characters are so unreal, burden with symbolism while Reitz' portray of the Hunsrück people is very natural. These comparisons are certainly overdone, but I'm still wondering, why I like both, Reitz and Kieslowski.

Cheers, Ray

**From: Angela Skrimshire <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>
Date: Mon, 27 Feb 2006 22:09:02 CET)**

Replying to Ray Scholz who wrote: :

> the recently discovered musician Van den Budenmayer!

According to the IMDb this was just a name that Preisner sometimes assumed... and rewatching *Trois Couleurs: Rouge* just now, I noticed that Valentine was listening to a CD of music by "Van den Budenmayer")

>I'm still wondering, why I like both, Reitz and Kieslowski.

So am I - but not sure I'll ever really know ...

There are some perhaps obvious things - the way they use music, and light ... Kieslowski's use of colour pervading a whole film (filters?) in *Véronique* and the *3 Couleurs*, has something of the subtle depths of light and shade that Reitz and Roll achieve with black and white in the earlier *Heimats* ... or with lighting in the night time scenes of *DZH* - eg Dorli's attic...

> Kieslowski's language is far more symbolic than Reitz'. You can find
> Christian motives all over his stories while Reitz seems to be an atheist.

Both use symbolism of a kind (the fall of the Wall? the Zugspitze? Ernst's plane?) - whether religious or not is immaterial - religious symbolism is only potent in so far as it is honestly grounded in human experience... the words of the chorus at the end of "Blue" for instance move because of the human situation they accompany.

But I personally don't often respond to consciously introduced "symbolism" anyway ... if I even notice it while still watching a film..

Both Reitz and Kieslowski are, as Reitz said of himself in the *Die Zeit* interview of 16.12.04, "not ashamed of feelings", so that their films are disturbing because "one lets oneself be moved without exactly knowing why ...and one can't immediately theorise about the feeling of being moved". But this authenticity can only work because both R and K have a deep intuitive understanding of the roots of emotions..

Ray writes that

> Kieslowski's characters are so unreal" ...

But I don't think I agree... they sometimes come from unusual and extreme social contexts and encounter events that border on magic realism, but this does not invalidate the authenticity of their feelings and behaviour. However bizarre the circumstance (thinking perhaps of 3 Couleurs: Blanc) they interact with great subtlety and truth.

One thing Reitz and Kieslowski have in common with each other (and with other film makers like Satyajit Ray, Fellini, Truffaut, Ozu, Koreeda) is that the structure of their films are often not so much consciously designed "plots" (apart again from "Blanc") , as "stories" that develop their own inner logic through sequences of events that seem just to have naturally accumulated ... (that "seem" of course hides a lifetime of art and skill on the director's part). As Reitz said, his characters take on a life of their own, and "insist so stubbornly" on their lives and personalities.

Don't know that this is saying very much - it's the delicacy and originality of the work, the absence of cliché or easy effect, the mixture of surprise and recognition .. the absence of self-regarding "cleverness" and conceptual display ... that Reitz and Kieslowski share...

Angela

From: "Seymour Alexander <seymouralexander onetel.com>

Date: Mon, 27 Feb 2006 21:41:07 -0000

And don't forget the theatrical curtain calls: all 3 surviving couples turning up together at the sinking of the Herald of Free Enterprise (Red) and the final reunion at the millenium party (H3).

SA

From: Munda Bow <mundab yahoo.com>

Date: Mon, 27 Feb 2006 15:11:36 -0800 (PST)

Dear Heimaters

After having the privilege and pleasure of watching Heimat 3 at the Goethe Institut in London last year (I sat in the same row as Ivan but on the other side of the cinema) I looked forward to a discussion of the film. Unfortunately I was abroad for a month when the discussion was launched so was unable to participate in the previous episodes' discussions. I have now 'caught up', watched the dvds and feel ready to contribute. I hope our 'ref' does not mind if I refer, briefly, to scenes from previous episodes.

I have thoroughly enjoyed reading Ivan's introductions and the resulting discussions which have covered some really interesting themes. I would just like to add some of my own ideas/observations as most of the main characters/plots appear to have been covered.

Although Reitz is no historian I think he brilliantly captures the impact of the fall of the Berlin wall and German Unification on the 'ordinary' German. I remember at the Goethe Institut Q and A where Reitz mentioned his interest in the 'byways rather than the highways' of history. Although major events are in the background they have a profound impact on the lives of the Hunsrueckers and all associated with them.

I noticed the lack of joy on the faces of the prosperous guests at the Hotel Kempinski (part one) when GDR citizens were given permission to travel and the wall was made redundant. (A premonition of the less than enthusiastic attitude which later existed between 'Ossis' and 'Wessis?'). Like Clarissa I prefer the GDR national anthem (written by Johannes R Becher, composed by Hanns Eisler) which has very optimistic lyrics and melody.

Reitz appears to have a strong interest in all things Saxon or Leipzig-related. Udo and Gunnar are not the first Leipzigers to visit the Hunsrueck. Wasn't Pieritz (Otto's colleague) from Leipzig? There were also other Saxons in the shape of Lucie's colleague Martina and men from the Organisation TodT building the roads. If anyone has seen Reitz's earlier film 'Stunde Null' they might know that the film was set in a village near Leipzig in 1945.

Part three deals extensively with Hermann's family and the arrival of ethnic Germans who had been sent to Kazakhstan during Stalin's rule. Ernst flying to Russia also reminded me of Matthias Rust landing on Red Square in the mid-1980's. Although Rust didn't spend two years in the Soviet Union his exploits inspired a single 'Fly to Moscow' which I remember hearing in Germany.

The ethnic Germans, like Hermann, return to their 'Heimat' but are they really at home? When the 'Russian's' coach travels along the Rhine the new arrivals are all singing in Russian (a song about longing for home) until Ernst points out the Lorelei rock and they start singing the Lorelei song (in German, of course). The Rhine is an important symbol of 'Heimat' for Reitz; this scene reminded me of the first Heimat when Paul Simon encounters the patriotic students singing at the 'German Corner' part of the Rhine. Galina is reminded by her mother-in-law that she is only in Germany because she married an ethnic German. She later finds consolation in the arms of Hartmut.

Hartmut regards his father Anton as an "antique". Anton's reply to his sons 'modern' business venture represents the old, established ways of the Hunsrueck: "He who marries the Zeitgeist will be widowed at an early age". Anton's grandmother Kath Simon was similarly sceptical of "die neue Zeit" i.e. all the 'new epochs' she had witnessed.

Hermann's encounter with Herr Boeckle and all that he witnesses in Leipzig appear to put him off Udo's investment proposition. Udo's transformation into a budding capitalist comes as a surprise. In the same scene we see neo-Nazis running up the stairs and an old lady complain that her gas has been turned off (a tactic employed to force poorer tenants out so that a house can be gentrified and sold to the highest bidder) two features of post-unification east Germany.

Clarissa says, "We really enjoy being at home at last". Despite this Hermann feels restless, admitting he is out of ideas and can't compose. Perhaps the two main characters were more creative when their lives were less settled.

I hope this first contribution was not too long but I was determined to write something before Ivan's fourth introduction.

Mundy Bowers

From: JoelOYoung <JoelOYoung aol.com>

Date: Tue, 28 Feb 2006 03:58:58 EST

Robert,

Ans and I went back last night and reviewed the entire episode with a lot of pauses, back and forth, to clarify some things that had been discussed by several persons. Since I did my time as Fuels Officer in the Air Force, I had a lot of time on the flight line and know a lot of these planes just by the profile.

The large plane flying out of Hahn a couple of times, and the large plane that flew low over Schabbach was a digitally superimposed C-5A Galaxy. This aircraft is the second largest transport aircraft in the world, right below a larger Soviet aircraft. By doing frame by frame of those shots its pretty easy to see that they were digitally inserted in the film. These aircraft have enough space inside for 4 large buses, and more, and there is a passenger compartment in the top, but very sterile and uncomfortable. Families and airmen were moved out of Hahn in the traditional method, commercial flights out of Fankfurt International Airport, not via these military aircraft. The pullout took about a year to complete. Look at www.hahn-air-base.de

The other plane seen flying from left to right on the screen is a real C-5A shot, either from archives or if made here in Germany, probably near Ramstein Air Base, where they come and go daily.

In any case they were not B-52's and either Dahl's dialogue was written by someone not totally in the know about what was at Hahn, or it has another meaning which is not clear. There were never any B-52's at Hahn, not even for an Air Show as far as I know, since the runway is not long enough for them.

The other aircraft painted on the wall was an assortment. Of course the B-29 was the airplane that was used in Hiroshima, and that is the larger 4 propeller aircraft in the lower left hand corner. The "fighter" with the red stars painted on the delta wings, is some sort of a MIG, as far as I can see, and the other fighter you mention is a stylized F-16, which was in the 50th TFW, the last tenant at the Air Base. Snoopy is a mascot from some units, and the plane he's flying is an F-4, probably the C version.

The F-16's make a horrible racket when they take off, and that's what should have been in Pfarrer Dahl's "ear", unless he spent time on a SAC base like I did.

Some other information about Hahn,

The building that Helmut was using as his company was the old base Chapel. At least the outside shots with the sign were on that building (not the nice chapel in the housing area, but the one near the barracks buildings on the central base). The inside shots were of course not in the old chapel, as the long bar is very visible in the background. That must have been shot in either the old NCO club or the old Officers club. I can't remember how they looked inside, but I can't imagine a bar that size being in another building, particularly in the chapel.

All of the streets on base that they were using in the film, are still accessible, even with all of the new construction around the terminal building.

Best regards,
Joel

> From Robert Cran to JoelOYoung 26-Feb-06

>

> Thanks Joel. Actually this is the first time I have ever taken an interest
> in war planes. But when Alan mentioned it I did look on the web for
> pictures. Am I right in understanding that the big monsters that fly
> out of Hahn near the beginning of episode 3 are B52s? If so then they
> must be misplaced. If not what are they?

>

> B17 I can now recognise and the B29 is the big one that was used in
> the far east. What is the last one that Pfarrer Dahl looks at, the jet with
> the flaming fuselage. Looks sort of like a Thunderbird, but the bits at
> the end of the wings..??

>

> Robert.

>

> From: JoelOYoung to Robert Cran February 26, 2006

>

> But there were never any B-52's ever stationed at Hahn. In
> fact there were never ever stationed in Continental Europe.
> Only Fighters were in Hahn.

> Joel

> (I am ex-Air Force)

>

> From Robert Cran 25 February 2006

>

> Alan, in the narration/screenplay, published version, Pfarrer Dahl says:
> "Da ist ein B 52-Geschwader, die kenn ich noch, die hab ich noch im Ohr." =
> "That's a B 52 squadron. I still recognise them; still got them in my
> ears."

>

> Robert.

>

>

From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan jsbiedron.com>

Date: Tue, 28 Feb 2006 10:53:19 -0600

Hello,

I've been reading the postings with interest but have not had time to reply until now.

Father and child relationships:

Regarding the Hartmut-Mara-Anton relationship, I seriously doubt Anton is the father of Mara's child. First of all, he has a serious heart condition and he is too conservative a person to consider having relations with his daughter-in-law. I also think that his late wife Martha was the love of his life. However - even though Mara seems shocked when Anton makes the announcement about the inheritance at the baptism party, afterwards she is shown in Anton's house rubbing his feet. If Mara and Hartmut had a normal loving relationship, I would think she would be angry with Anton for treating her husband so shamefully. I just now noticed the similarities between the names of Anton's daughter-in-law Mara and wife Martha. Mara is not quite Martha? Anton's action is also a slap in the face to his many granddaughters.

Hermann has become the conservative father who questions if Lulu's boyfriends are good enough. It is rather amusing when one thinks of his anger after his mother and Anton sent his "non suitable" lover away years ago.

Clarissa and the goats:

What is the purpose of the scene with Clarissa and the baby goats? Why is she scrubbing her teeth outside while watching them? Is the purpose of this scene only to show that spring has come? The beautiful scenes of the Hunsruck fields in bloom does that quite well without the goat scene..

Finally, Mundy's comment:

> The ethnic Germans, like Hermann, return to their 'Heimat' but are they
> really at home ? When the 'Russian's' coach travels along the Rhine the new
> arrivals are all singing in Russian (a song about longing for home) until Ernst
> points out the Lorelei rock and they start singing the Lorelei song (in German,
> of course).The Rhine is an important symbol of 'Heimat' for Reitz ;this scene
> reminded me of the first Heimat when Paul Simon encounters the patriotic
> students singing at the 'German Corner' part of the Rhine.

Ten years ago, before I knew Heimat existed, I visited my great grandmother's village in the Schwabisch Alb. A very sweet lady from the village volunteered to be our "tour guide" and when showing us around, commented to a distant cousin about the "refugees" who had opened a disco/night club establishment that was often noisy. These "refugees" had come from the east after the wall fell. The comment was something like "they're not real Germans, most of the time they don't even speak German."

> Galina is reminded by her mother-in-law that she is only in Germany
> because she married an ethnic German. She later finds consolation
> in the arms of Hartmut.

At first I did not really understand Hartmut and Galina's relationship. After reading the various comments about them, I realize they are both outcasts from their families.

Susan

From: Alan <alan wmedia.com>
Date: Tue, 28 Feb 2006 12:27:01 -0500

This IS getting a bit nerdy all right, but I find it fascinating which subjects get a lot of discussion and which pass without further comment.

And as someone who built hundreds of plastic model airplanes during his youth, I am also following this discussion with great interest.

Since Schabbach is fictional, I have no trouble with Reitz extending the runway of the nearby air base to accommodate a C-5A. Maybe the fictional base near Schabbach is supposed to be something closer to Ramstein than Hahn...

> *In any case they were not B-52's and either Dahl's dialogue was
> written by someone not totally in the know about what was at Hahn,
> or it has another meaning which is not clear. There were never any
> B-52's at Hahn, not even for an Air Show as far as I know, since the
> runway is not long enough for them.*

This is where I am still puzzled. We know from the past films that Reitz is a perfectionist regarding the smallest details and that he also has a fascination with flying and aircraft. That's why Dahl's mention of B-52s while shining a flashlight on a painting of a squadron of B-17s is so odd.

I also looked at this portion of the film yet again. The painting of the squadron of B-17s has them flying through anti-aircraft fire, so we have to assume this is a depiction of a bombing raid on Germany during World War II.

Another trivia query: Were the paintings that we see Dahl and his associates looking at filmed at Hahn? I assume so. This gives them some disturbing historical resonance as well. They do look like the kind of decorations that might appear on the wall of a pilots rec room or canteen.

Ironically, besides assembling plastic models of B-17s and B-52s in my youth, I also grew up near Pease Air Base, which housed a B-52 bomber wing equipped with nuclear weapons. Because B-52s flew very high, I recall the only noticeable noise was heard during take off and landing. Not unlike a international commercial airport. (After Pease was closed down in the early 1990s the airstrip was used to divert commercial aircraft. Once returning from Paris or Frankfurt I ended up sitting on the runway at the old Pease Air Base while we were waiting for the fog to clear at Boston's Logan airport. On the airstrip next to us were about a half-dozen other 747s that has just flown in from London, Edinburgh and Rome.)

Alan

From: Alan <alan wmedia.com>
Date: Tue, 28 Feb 2006 12:51:31 -0500

Mundy wrote:

>Clarissa says, "We really enjoy being at home at
 > last". Despite this Hermann feels restless, admitting
 > he is out of ideas and can't compose. Perhaps the two
 > main characters were more creative when their lives
 > were less settled.

Thank you for making this observation. I think this is yet another pivotal moment, which passes rather quietly. As I wrote some weeks ago, for me, once the tension between Clarissa and Hermann disappears, the dramatic narrative also loses the momentum created in DZH. Perhaps Hermann's "writer's block" (for lack of a better term) is in fact a symptom of his relatively comfortable existence.

There is a theory, that gets dusted off every so often in many guises, that the greatest art is created under difficult circumstances, because that's when things really matter the most. It's probably a bit too simplistic and romantic a theory, but I suspect there may be a grain of truth in it. And it seems this may apply to Hermann.

I think this is also why Reitz's quotes Ives's "The Unanswered Question" on the soundtrack, and thereby musically calls attention to Hermann's creative conundrum.

Mundy also wrote:

> Hermann's encounter with Herr Boeckle and all that he
 > witnesses in Leipzig appear to put him off Udo's
 > investment proposition. Udo's transformation into a
 > budding capitalist comes as a surprise. In the same
 > scene we see neo-Nazis running up the stairs and an
 > old lady complain that her gas has been turned off (a
 > tactic employed to force poorer tenants out so that a
 > house can be gentrified and sold to the highest
 > bidder)two features of post-unification east Germany.

Many thanks for calling attention to that small detail. I had missed its illuminating significance.

Alan

From: Alan <alan wmedia.com>
Date: Tue, 28 Feb 2006 13:06:46 -0500

And while we are still on Episode III, does anyone have a narrative explanation for the closing image of Hartmut and Galina walking by the busy highway? Artistically, it's a striking image of two outcasts trying to make their way under dangerous circumstances. I was just wondering if anyone had concluded a narrative reason why Hartmut was not driving and was traveling with Galina on foot.

Alan

From: "Wyn Grant" <wyn_grant@hotmail.com>
Date: Tue, 28 Feb 2006 18:44:47 +0000

It puzzled me. Perhaps the police wanted to look at Hartmut's car because of the fatal accident, that would not be unusual. But surely he could afford a taxi? And where were they going anyway? One shouldn't be too literal about this, of course. The scene was, as I saw it, meant to convey a sense of despair and desolation, the hopelessness of two people who not so long before had found a closeness (of a kind) with each other. Roads are a theme that runs through Heimat - the building of the autobahn, the crash in Heimat 1, the scenes on the autobahn from the east in Heimat 3, and a scene later in Heimat 3 which is just a clip of a very busy autobahn, as I recall. There are quite a few train scenes as well though, many of them quite crucial.

From: Thomas Hönemann <th.hoenemann@freenet.de>
Date: Tue, 28 Feb 2006 20:01:56 +0100

I completely agree with Susan that Anton is surely not the father of Mara's son. Of course Hartmut is. Do you remember the scene, where Mara cares for Galina's child which obviously rises the wish in her, to get a child herself (which she tells her friend on the phone before Hartmut arrives - very excited - telling her that Ernst would accept the guaranty, with her not caring at all for that - she is that much engaged with the idea of having an own child). In the next scene we can see Mara lying in the whirl-pool going to seduce Hartmut - there is no doubt that she will have had success (each male reader of this will understand why ...)! And so she is gonna realise her plan - although she is already 43 years old at that time (this leads to the question why they did not at all think about having children before!)

There is - besides the similarity of the names - a further parallel between Mara and Antons wife Martha which will not be planned, but Martha is a woman coming from Hamburg, and the actress who plays Mara, Konstanze Wetzel, also lives in Hamburg. But as I said: this is doubtlessly for coincidence.

I recently asked Edgar Reitz for why he let Martha Simon die before the decade of HEIMAT 3 started, and he answered it simply was because the actress who played Martha in HEIMAT, Sabine Wagner, gave up acting, and he did not want to look for a different actress to play the role. I really can understand this, Martha for me is unique, and every other actress would have been a source of irritation.

Another detail referring to Mr. Boeckle who, in my opinion (and obviously in Ivan's, too), is brilliantly played by Rainer Guldener (who in real life is a really kind person as we experienced at the Munich premier). I guess it was at the Amsterdam showing of HEIMAT 3, where Reitz told the audience that he had experienced this situation in real when travelling by train. He was so impressed, also shocked, that he immediately wrote the dialog down after the trip. (You can download a recording of the Amsterdam interview session on ReindeR's site, see <http://heimat123.net/interviews/index.html> or directly use <http://heimat123.net/audio/cinerama14nov04.mp3>). You will find the recording of the London Interview there, too.

A little detail about the scene where Galina and Juri are travelling by train and Galina is using the perfume the American lady gave her as a present to appeal to him. After a short dispute in German Juri is lapsing into Russian language, saying not very kind things about Galina: A friend (who had someone he could ask what the Russian word would mean) told me that Juri called her a "bitch", which shows that he is not able to cope with the situation and all the impressions of the new country they are living in. He is full of distrust, self-doubt and bitterness, he is jealous, he fears to lose Galina who is obviously enjoying the new options, and arranging with them. Showing this behaviour Juri really is the active part in destroying his own marriage.

Logically seen indeed the last scene, Hartmut and Galina walking along the rainy road at night, is arguable, Hartmut's car had not been damaged at all (we could discuss if the police did confiscate it, but this would lead to nothing). In fact I think that Reitz chose that way to show their loneliness and desperation. They found each other, but for a very high price.

I am looking forward to discuss part 4, because it is my favourite part, even though I will even have some more work the next weeks, so I hope to find some time.

Best regards to you all,
Thomas

**From: "Robert A D Cran" <chinherb att.biz>
Date: Wed, 1 Mar 2006 08:33:01 +0200**

Apart from the fact that Anton is suffering from stroke sequellae and not very agile, and apart from the fact that it would seem devious and out of character of Mara to have contrived such a disturbing scenario as to bear Anton's child, in a later episode she will use words which make it absolutely clear who is the father of Matthias Paul Anton.

I noticed that the turning point for Hartmut in deciding to get closer to Galina was shortly after Mara showed little interest in his business grand plans, being more concerned with her own womanly desire to have a child. Hartmut is a man who places more importance on his machines and machinations than on human values and more wholesome feelings. In fact it was rather he who had failed to show interest in Mara's more real and human feelings. Not long after this little incident, he persuades Galina to enter his car (his mechanism contrasts with Mara's living vehicle) and seems rather to force a kiss on her, although at that stage she is already perhaps a little ambivalent. Here Galina cries, because she is concerned about Juri while Hartmut is more concerned to have his way and uses Juri's pain as leverage in the relationship by offering to get his knee attended to..

The lack of sincere human care on Hartmut's part is something I find very significant in this episode. Looking at his position on a bigger canvas, he contrasts dramatically in abilities and personality with the powerful figure of his father. Some sons of strong fathers fail to find a satisfactory place for themselves in or beside the paternal shadow and Hartmut certainly comes across to me as one such. In Heimat many years before Anton was confronted, as Hartmut is in Heimat 3, with the prospect of capitulating to industrial productivity at the expense of human wholesomeness and relevance, or of sticking to ethics based on quality and human relevance. At that time there entered the cold and ruthless counterparts of Herr Böckle. In that situation Anton spent much time deliberating and circumambulating the golden boot. On

Martha's advice he asks his father, Paul's advice and he decides not to take that advice. Instead he places greater importance on quality, not only of lenses but of the relevance to the people around him of his business. Had he not taken that decision Schabbach might have turned into a very different place. Hartmut, on the other hand, not only ignores humanistic relevance of work and action but also shows himself to have a reckless business judgement and rather flabby powers (he fails to complete orations more than once in H3). This time around Anton does not need to circumambulate the golden boot; his matured and finely honed instinct for business and for people allow him to anticipate the consequences of his son's personality, including the possibility that Hartmut might make a wrong decision if faced with the same dilemma he himself had faced all those years before. Hartmut on the other hand is not the one to even ask for, let alone heed his father's potential advice. He takes his own decisions, but he has not the genius of his father.

And so the party, with the comical bad timing of its fanfares (look out for that later), comes to a disorderly end. Reitz seems to use parties and love scenes with disorderly endings - that uneasy sense that fun never lasts forever.

I agree very much with Ivan's very penetrating observation that Böckle's part is pivotal in this 3rd episode, for it is Böckle who provides Hartmut with the same dilemma that Anton had faced before and provides the viewers with another movement on the canvas of mechanistic life versus human quality. Anton has foreseen what a mess Hartmut is capable of and has taken precautions to save what can be saved and pass it on to his grandson who may do better. The bigger issue is that of the relentless march of technology and productivity at the expense of human relevance; the turning point has passed for some people when they could choose to behave as humans or machines. Hartmut has chosen, at least for the moment, to behave like a machine. Rather than relate warmly to a wonderful wife he chooses to seduce girlish Galina with his machine, providing her husband with a mechanical limb while Galina in turn seduces Hartmut with a toy mechanism and where? In a factory!

As for Hartmut wandering Porscheless in the dark after the accident that he has caused by his immature recklessness..... his obsession with his machines has resulted in the death of a living being and it is perhaps a good thing that he walk the harsh roads, with their steel barriers and impersonal, racing traffic, with nothing to drive, so that he can experience what it is like to lose everything he mistook for important. This incident is a significant indication of the difficult lessons Hartmut is unwittingly learning, and will continue to learn, about human interactions and of the inevitable need for surrender to a more real quality of love. Maybe he really does need to lose everything to learn this.

The way it seems to me is that the joyful atmosphere of love, especially provided by the Günderröde house and all that red and by the loving and generous presence of Hermann and Clarissa in their current harmony in the first three episodes of H3, (no, I cannot agree that they have become boring! - goodwill is worth more than anything else and here, far from being undramatic, is building up a continuo that will flourish inevitably) is the backdrop for even deeper tests and efflorescences of love in the field of human life and action. Where they have come to now is an extraordinary achievement after years of passionate drifting and seeking. It is particularly beautiful to see Clarissa blossom in her current life of human warmth (that passage where she brushes her teeth outside is such a beautiful tract with her face coming so naturally alive that I wonder if the camera just happened to be there at a fluke of a time and the scene was just kept because it is so delightful); she has had a hard path to follow, the merciless path of fear of commitment and of driving production. Having begun

with the passionate search for deeper meaning in life through art and having harnessed technology (electronics, planes, phones, musical instruments and even orchestras) in the service of their art, they had reached a point where the technology had begun to take over the art. Faced with the choice of racing on the productivity railtrack or of creating the warmth of a home with love in it, they have chosen the latter and have even turned down engagements. Hermann has even turned down his creativity, at least for the moment. Clarissa's path from DZH was particularly difficult, but I think it was a profound choice when she forsook the mechanism that was her cello, which she played so brilliantly, for the human voice.

I am very grateful for Angela's observation in her rather superb posting earlier that:

- > One thing Reitz and Kieslowski have in common with each other (and with
- > other film makers like Satyajit Ray, Fellini, Truffaut, Ozu, Koreeda) is
- > that the structure of their films are often not so much consciously designed
- > "plots" (apart again from "Blanc") , as "stories" that develop their own
- > inner logic through sequences of events that seem just to have naturally
- > accumulated ... (that "seem" of course hides a lifetime of art and skill on
- > the director's part). As Reitz said, his characters take on a life of their
- > own, and "insist so stubbornly" on their lives and personalities."

I just wish I had said that myself! :)

Robert.

From: "Wyn Grant" <wyn_grant@hotmail.com>

Date: Wed, 01 Mar 2006 08:16:02 +0000

I am very impressed by the quality of the debate on this list and the knowledge displayed of cinema and music, areas in which I am relatively ignorant. Robert says in his posting:

- > Hartmut, on the other hand, not only ignores humanistic relevance of work
- > and action but also shows himself to have a reckless business judgement and
- > rather flabby powers.'

I would not disagree with this analysis of the son who has grown up in the shadow of a strong father (there are so many examples of that, not least in politics). However, later on Robert talks about the relentless march of technology and productivity and perhaps this has to be related to the contested idea of 'globalisation'.

In H1 it was possible to start up the factory with money from Paul. Later, in what I thought was a very accurate portrayal (given that I was somewhat involved with these issues in Germany in the 1980s) the factory becomes more reliant on subsidies from Bonn. The post-war German economic miracle was in part dependent, not least in manufacturing, on the Mittelstand of small and medium-sized firms. Whilst these firms have not disappeared (I visited one near Kiel last month) they have been buffeted by economic internationalisation and in this respect I think that H3 is very effective even if the story is (quite justifiably) viewed through the prism of Hartmut and his weakness. One would have to be a very astute decision-maker to cope with these problems in a hi tech sector.

From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder.rustema.nl>
Date: Wed, 01 Mar 2006 11:00:35 +0100

At 08:33 +0200 1/3/06, Robert A D Cran wrote:

> Reitz seems to use parties and love scenes with disorderly endings
> - that uneasy sense that fun never lasts forever.

Film nerds like to make lists:

The Feast of the Living and the Dead
the wedding of Hermann & Schnüsschen
the filmpremiere in the Fuchsbau
Hermann at Clarissa's student dwelling, on the staircase

please add more...

ReindeR

From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan.jsbiedron.com>
Date: Wed, 1 Mar 2006 11:54:14 -0600

[Re: parties and love scenes with disorderly endings – Eds]

>From Heimat: Lucie and Eduard make their villa available for a meeting of 3 important Nazi officials. They prepare an elaborate luncheon to follow the meeting, but the officials leave when their meeting is over. Lucie and Eduard are shown sitting in the kitchen and drinking the wine, all their preparations for naught. And of course the results of the meeting are most likely something evil.

>From DZH: Hermann, Juan and some fellow music students are invited to the home of a wealthy fellow student, to play for her father's birthday party. The home is in an exclusive suburb. They assume they will be paid in money, but after hours of performing, their only pay is a supposedly good bottle of wine, which ends up broken.

Susan

From: "Robert A D Cran" <chinherb.att.biz>
Date: Thu, 2 Mar 2006 21:33:20 +0200

[Re: parties and love scenes with disorderly endings – Eds]

"Ansgar ist tot"

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

Date: Thu, 2 Mar 2006 21:02:05 -0000

I hope everyone has had their say. I thought the discussion was very wide ranging, thoughtful and sensitive, and a credit to all concerned! How's that?

We had some 48* posts from 16 different contributors.

Ivan Mansley.

**[though up to 2 March some were not relevant to Discussion 3, the final tally for this Discussion eventually reached 49 – Eds.*

From: JoelOYoung <JoelOYoung aol.com >

Date: Fri, 3 Mar 2006 23:13:27 CET

Alan,

In my case it only had to do with my having been a Captain in the USAF, and having been stationed at Rhein-Main Air Base in Frankfurt. Therefore this was a subject more dear to me than some of the musical topics that had a lot of discussion recently, of which I have never ever heard of; therefore I could not comment.

That's why I know a B-52 would not fit at Hahn, but a C-5A most certainly would.

Was there not some comment in H1 referring to the Hahn Fliegerhorst? I kind of remember that once when a noisy F4 was flying around overhead, but I am not sure. I don't have my discs with me this week.

Joel

From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder rustema.nl>

Date: Fri, 3 Mar 2006 23:48:12 +0100

>At 08:33 +0200 1/3/06, Robert A D Cran wrote:

> > Reitz seems to use parties and love scenes with disorderly

> > endings - that uneasy sense that fun never lasts forever.

>

>Film nerds like to make lists:

>

>The Feast of the Living and the Dead

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>Hermann at Clarissa's student dwelling, on the staircase

At 11:54 -0600 1/3/06, Susan Biedron wrote:

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>Lucie and Eduard make their villa available for a meeting of 3 important

>Nazi officials. They prepare an elaborate luncheon to follow the meeting,

>but the officials leave when their meeting is over. Lucie and Eduard are

>shown sitting in the kitchen and drinking the wine, all their preparations

>for naught. And of course the results of the meeting are most likely

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> >From DZH:

>Hermann, Juan and some fellow music students are invited to the home of a
>wealthy fellow student, to play for her father's birthday party. The home is
>in an exclusive suburb. They assume they will be paid in money, but after
>hours of performing, their only pay is a supposedly good bottle of wine,
>which ends up broken.

>From Episode 3: Everyone Is Doing Well:

- Anton's funeral
- the party in the restaurant after Clarissa's performance in the Staatsoper
- perhaps also Hartmut's speech about the future of Simon Optik?
- and the funniest of them all, Hermann's 200DM visit to the nightclub!

ReindeR

From: JoelOYoung <JoelOYoung aol.com >

Date: Sat, 4 Mar 2006 11:14:04 EST

Alan,

Ans and I was wondering about that too. We discussed this ending scene and could not find a reasonable solution as to why this was shown like this. It did not make any real sense, like they were searching for something? Where they were is not really allowed, and to be there, there must have been some reason, which was not revealed after the titles had run by.

Thomas,

Did you ever discuss this in the German group? I can't remember.

Joel

From: Robert A D Cran <chinherb att.biz>

Date: Sat, 4 Mar 2006 17:46:50 CET

Joel,

You said:

> We discussed this ending scene and could not find a reasonable solution as
> to why this was shown like this. It did not make any real sense, like they
> were searching for something? Where they were is not really allowed, and to
> be there there must have been some reason, which was not revealed after the
> titles had run by."

Here is a comment I made on the issue of Hartmut and Galina wandering the road after the accident a few days ago. It was rather a long posting, for which apologies, and so the following could easily be missed:

> As for Hartmut wandering Porscheless in the dark after the accident that he
> has caused by his immature recklessness..... his obsession with his
> machines has resulted in the death of a living being and it is perhaps a
> good thing that he walk the harsh roads, with their steel barriers and
> impersonal, racing traffic, with nothing to drive, so that he can experience

- > what it is like to lose everything he mistook for important. This incident
- > is a significant indication of the difficult lessons Hartmut is unwittingly
- > learning, and will continue to learn, about human interactions and of the
- > inevitable need for surrender to a more real quality of love. Maybe he
- > really does need to lose everything to learn this.

In episode 5, the way I see it, Hartmut has another look at this road

Robert.

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

Date : Sun, 12 Mar 2006 13:04:05 +0100

Herr Boeckle:

About him telling about his job and how unhappy he is:

It's funny that again, Reitz tells us that bad things (in this case, Bockle's job description) are inflicted upon us by the system, and not by inherently "bad guys".

It's the same case for e.g.:

- Anton: ruins all family relations despite longing for one big family
- Hartmut: ruins his own and his father's businesses, his marriage, Galina's family, but certainly not out of bad motives.

Galina/Yuri:

It's not only Yuri's jealousy that destroys the relationship, but also the traditional values of the entire family: brother 'Postovich' and mother. They also become dead silent, and do not take Galina's side. It's ironic that she is not of German origin, but adapting quicker to the German way of life than her German-rooted family.

Galina/Yuri:

Only after Galina leaves, Yuri cries out "Gala", not belittling "Galina", finally acknowledging, but too late, that she is an independent woman, not his possession.

Bockle/Hermann:

I agree with Ivan that Hermann not telling Hartmut about Bockle is a deliberate act; he just does not want any involvement.

Ivan wrote:

- > ..Hartmut over-reacts for his own purposes and that Anton is not really
- > trying to humiliate and patronise Galina. He is unthinking, if anything.
- > My view!!

But it IS humiliating and patronising, isn't it? And doing it unthinkingly makes it even worse in my opinion.

And Galina knows it; she says she takes anything with a smile, she just wants to work. She almost cries here, but this could also be because her chances of working for Anton have now been diminished.

So I was more on the Hartmut side here...

Maarten

HEIMAT 3 - Episode 4: Everyone's Doing Well [1995]

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

Date: Fri, 3 Mar 2006 08:12:12 -0000

HEIMAT 3: Episode 4; Everyone's Doing Well [1995]
An Introduction

Back in October 2005 when BBC4 was screening Heimat 3 Richard Rees-Jones provided us with an excellent summary of this episode. I will try not to simply repeat his views but I do find myself in agreement with virtually everything he wrote in that summary. Doubtless, he will be forwarding it to us again.

Everything revolves around the "damn Simon clan". I am including Hermann as part of this clan, although, of course, he is not a Simon but a Wohlleben; half-brother to Anton and Ernst. They all have to face death, the death of Anton, and, in addition, Hermann has to cope with serious injury and what seems like the collapse of his "marriage" to Clarissa [inverted commas used as they are not officially husband and wife, but only "life partners", a silly expression, as Schnüsschen admits at Anton's funeral].

I agree with all those commentators who find this episode to be a vast improvement on its predecessors. Edgar Reitz really hits his straps, as they say. The episode fizzles with raw emotions and locks the viewer in. Maybe it is no accident that this is the longest episode of the film. Reitz certainly appreciates time to develop his narrative themes and draw us in to the lives of his characters. That there is hardly a false note in over 2 hours of film is certainly a tribute.

I would like to begin with a scene that sticks in my mind and says a great deal to me about Reitz's ideas about the modern world. Hermann is recovering from his accident and walks to Schabbach alone, like he did the first time, along the same deserted road swirling with autumnal mist and colours, past the village sign and on to the forge and his old home. After pausing there and greeting the horse in the barn he finds his way to the football field and watches Schabbach F.C., managed by Anton, defeat Eintracht Bad Kreuznach. [There is a funny story connected with this. In fact, the local team, hungover from a hard night's drinking, could not defeat the opposition, however hard they tried, and for the filming Reitz had to get the two teams to exchange shirts].

All this leads up to Anton and Hermann alone on the pitch. Both are walking with sticks; Anton is recovering from his stroke and Hermann from his accident. [In a strange way I was reminded of Volker and Jean-Marie with their umbrellas and choreographed movements in Clarissa's flat when she declares she loves neither of them in DZH]. It will be their last meeting! Anton is very proud of his team's victory and reflects that his team is comprised of locals. "Every kind of talent is here in the Hunsrück", he declares. Ironically perhaps, he bemoans the fact that in the modern world money counts for everything. However, he is sure that quality always succeeds and that talent will be recognised. He is also talking of his own success and the success of his workers; farm workers with fat fingers turned into skilled engineers!! Hermann is not so sure. He thinks the world is changing. And so does Reitz. The machine men are taking over [see post by Robert A D Cran]. Could a man like Anton succeed again in the modern world? The answer seems to be in the negative. People

like Herr Böckle, who soon makes a re-appearance, are the future! The serpent is inside the garden, with allies such as Hartmut and his faceless brothers.

I liked Anton's defiance. "Who is the world?" he demands. Hermann replies, "People like you." Anton is a man alone, comfortable in his world, but his world is vanishing. In his heart of hearts he knows he is a dinosaur, and that was my impression also from the image of him looking out over the village and the hills of the Hunsrück. He is taking his leave. I was deeply moved by this. There is a deep melancholia here which is sounded again at the very end of the film. I shall certainly return to this issue then.

Anton is thoughtful. Horst is instructed to take Hermann home. His final remark where he tells Hermann not to take it "to heart" and adds that he was referring to his injured foot, has wider significance, I felt. It could refer to Hermann's loss of Clarissa but also to the blows provided by fate. In the following scene where Hermann meets the mysterious Russian there is a further illustration of this theme of the rottenness of the modern world and its capitalist system. You see a rail transporter laden with new cars move by [products of the capitalist, consumer, mechanistic world] and the aged man talks of the Rhine sweeping away "All our filth". The old man quotes this line: "The Earth is beautiful but it isn't safe". [Does anyone know the origin of the quote?] Hermann sings it! Hermann knows the truth of this sentiment after stepping into the animal trap! Finally, the old man utters the very cryptic comment, after talk about the small nocturnal earthquake: "That's how they announce themselves" and refuses to explain himself. What dark forces are at work here??

Let us now turn to Hermann's accident caused by stepping into the animal trap left by Gunnar, set behind the garden outhouse to catch the pine-marten which had been gnawing the car leads and since forgotten about. Were the keys on the hook the keys to the front door? I wondered why Hermann turned to the rear of the outhouse as he had approached directly from the balcony at the back of the house. In my original notes made contemporaneously with my first viewing almost a year ago at the Goethe Institut I wrote: "Was this accident in any sense a punishment?" I had written the word "hubris" which is defined by the OED as "Presumption, insolence, [orig. towards the gods]; pride, excessive self-confidence." The dictionary illustrates its usage by a quotation from the author, Aldous Huxley: "Hubris against the essentially divine order of Nature would be followed by its appropriate nemesis." Have the "they" talked of by the ancient gentleman by the flooded Rhine exacted an awful revenge? Hermann certainly encounters his nemesis!

Has he been too selfish? Has he been so wrapped up in his own affairs and in the creation of his own love-nest with Clarissa that he has neglected the outside world and his social obligations? I fancied that maybe his failure to inform Hartmut of the true nature of Herr Böckle was evidence of this but I have since changed my mind about that, as mentioned in my introduction to the last episode. I asked Mr. Reitz about this at the Q&A session following the screening but all he would say was that Hermann "had been having things too good." You may care to comment! One further piece of information I gleaned was that the iron trap was the same piece of machinery used in Parts 1 & 2 of Heimat. It had obviously been stored in case of future use!!

The episode crackles with tension from the outset. Hermann may not have been animated before but he quite definitely is here, as he exchanges bitter words with Clarissa about "cross-over kitsch", gesticulates in passion to the very walls and windows of the house and finally storms out after her dreadful words to him: "Do you want me to become a failed artist like you?" There is certainly support for the hardship theory of artistic creation in the episode, or rather the "oyster" theory as I

prefer to call it. Just as an oyster encircles a piece of grit that troubles it with a thing of beauty [the pearl] so the artist creates writing/painting/music/whatever to alleviate and come to terms with his torture and distress. So, Hermann abandoned, injured and living in bachelor semi-squalor, completes his Reunification Symphony plus a cycle of 33 Günderröde poems set to music. Tillman is amazed but Hermann asserts that he has never been so creative.

He is bitter about what he sees as Clarissa's desertion of him. He declares it should have been called the Separation Symphony. Later, when he learns of Anton's death he visits the house and is brought face to face with death and stares for a long time at the dead body of his elder brother. When Gisela talking of the "family clan" insists that "Father is still father, sister is still sister" and so on, Hermann ruefully reflects, "But love is not still love". His total distraction is shown by his car rolling down the slope towards the Rhine and his completely forgetting his concert date.

I was very struck by Hartmut's reaction to his father's death. There is a scene where he curls up like a wounded animal on the sofa and howls with anguish. This is despite all their previous bitter recriminations. Family is what binds! "A Simon is always a Simon", as Anton had said to him. The emotion is raw, as it is when Ernst, in a passionate outburst, reproaches those who arranged Anton's funeral in such a cold-blooded manner. It was interesting to see that Mara was the prime mover in much of this. She seems to be very anti-clerical. Ernst's emotion is genuine and heartfelt and Reitz makes us share it. "Anton, we never saw eye to eye but now when your ashes have blown away we suddenly do."

Hermann's relationship with his daughter is powerfully done. We learn she is 28 but she talks like a sullen teenager and she never gives an inch. By the way, why does everyone including Edgar Reitz himself, call her Lulu when she wanted to be called Simone, as her mother wished. Lulu is "a tart's name" according to her. It was a very pleasant surprise to see Schnüsschen re-introduced at the funeral. I also enjoyed seeing Gunnar again very briefly at Clarissa's concert of dreadful [?] music, although he ended up being rebuffed again for his mindless "jabbering".

I have some questions:-

1. Why does the camera linger for so long on Galina's stockings and suspenders as she and Hartmut fall to the floor, observed by her little boy?
2. Why does Hermann use Anton's name when he accompanies the prostitute? Was it the first name that came to his lips or was it some form of comment on his brother?
3. When he mutters, "Jesus, Anton, you poor sod" was he talking about himself or his brother? What a loveless and joyless encounter it was!!
4. What was the significance of the strange bird formation that flies overhead when Ernst is informed of Anton's death?
5. Did you notice the actual words of the title are repeated 3 times in the episode?
6. Did you notice the echo where Hermann sees a ghost-like cathedral in sepulchral blue from his hotel balcony? See DZH.

Just to finish! Your hardened critic was moved by the opening moments of Anton's funeral where Mr. Schwartz shows the mourners the family photograph taken earlier. "Look at the clarity. No one will ever make such a lens again. It will never happen again." I felt a great sense of loss! Just like losing a member of my own family! Not many artists can do that.

Ivan Mansley.

From: Richard Rees-Jones <Richard.Rees.Jones CTBTO.ORG>

Date: Fri, 3 Mar 2006 09:28:34 +0100

I repost the message that I sent to the list when the episode was first broadcast.
Richard Rees Jones

--

In this episode Hermann, who for most of the film so far has been a hovering, incidental presence, finally takes centre stage. The episode is a long, searching and at times harrowing inquiry into the pressures of love, work, loyalty and the family.

Hermann meets Clarissa off the train. He's evidently elated to see her, but his joy is not reciprocated - she can only stay for a few hours, and her words are devoid of tenderness for him. She can only talk about her current concert tour. It's obvious that she's unhappy in their relationship. Hermann, too, seems to realise that something is wrong. Distracted, he forgets to park the car with the handbrake on, and it rolls down the hill and is damaged.

Touchingly, Hermann has made a special effort to welcome Clarissa home - he's cleaned the house and put flowers in every room - but she's oblivious to his efforts, concerned only to chat and flirt on the phone with her concert buddy. Finally the tension erupts as it becomes clear that she is leaving him. He sneers at her for playing jazz and blues, which he clearly regards as debased music, and she taunts him that he is a failed artist. Unable to take any more, he storms out of the house.

An extraordinary scene follows, replete with dramatic shock and urgency. Coming back to the house from the town where he has been shopping, Hermann discovers that Clarissa has left and locked up. He finds the key in its usual hiding place, but on his way up to the house his leg is trapped by a metal animal trap (there was something similar in H1, I seem to recall). This is a shocking, agonising moment for the viewer. Bleeding profusely, he manages to call for help, but the old woman who answers his cries seems intent on calling her husband rather than the emergency services. I sat watching transfixed as she finds Clarissa's farewell letter to Hermann propped up against the phone, and for some unfathomable reason thinks it appropriate to hand him the letter while he lies there in agony. As he reads it, there is a blindingly unreal moment when Clarissa appears to him, her face haloed and shimmering.

When he returns from hospital with his leg in plaster, he finds the shopping still strewn outside the house where he left it. In a moment of bitter irony, he listens to a phone message from Clarissa, in which she complains that her change for the payphone is running out. The irony being that she has no mobile phone - Hermann picked one up for her in the town after storming out of the house, but she never received it.

Lame, desperate and alone, Hermann is now a virtual prisoner in the house. Reitz' majestic camera follows him around, swooping in and out of windows and doors. Unshaven, wild-eyed, he has a renewed urgency to compose, and finally manages to complete his Unification Symphony. Manuscript paper litters the house as evidence of his insane creativity.

Hermann's leg recovers sufficiently for him to be able to walk with a stick. An austere piece of free improv plays on the soundtrack to accompany his perambulations. He briefly rediscovers the joys of socialisation, going to watch FC Schabbach (sponsored by Simon Optik) play football.

His experiences continue to veer between shock, urgency and pathos. In a powerful scene, he visits his daughter Lulu's flat - she's not in (how much this film is about absence, the missing), but he can hear her son Lukas crying within. With the help of her unfriendly neighbours, he breaks in and comforts the distressed boy. When Lulu returns, she is unapologetic, explaining that she had to go and sort out her accommodation (she is about to be evicted). A sad state of affairs, but no reason to abandon a child, even if he was sleeping.

Craving friendly human contact, Hermann visits a strip club/brothel and has a deeply unsatisfactory coupling with an initially welcoming but finally distant whore. He goes to watch Clarissa's frankly terrible avant jazz cabaret, and tries to talk to her afterwards, but she is too wrapped up in herself and her friends and he quickly leaves. 'Frankly terrible', by the way, is my view of Clarissa's music, and not necessarily the film's. Indeed, Reitz sets up a contrast between her free jazz stylings and Hermann's tight-arsed classicism that seems to privilege the former over the latter.

Tragically underpinning the entire latter half of the episode are Anton's death and the repercussions from it. We first see him beaming in a group photograph (the photographer's nudging cry of 'Freundlich!' recalling Eduard's similar, often repeated plea in H1). At the football match, Anton is a hearty, exuberant presence, revelling in his team's victory. (The uncertain future of Simon Optik is laid bare in Hartmut's short, stiff speech to the workforce. Hartmut has his own business interests, and it's clear that the company will not survive Anton's death in its current form.)

Tragedy mutates into black comedy at Anton's funeral. The urn containing his ashes is late; the hearse is stuck in traffic. Some kind of mechanical gadget is proposed to lower the urn into the earth. Unsurprisingly, it malfunctions, and the urn farcically rises up again. There is no music, no priest and no farewell eulogy. A haggard, emotional Ernst is the only one to speak up and condemn this travesty of a funeral.

Back at home, Hermann is astonished to find Clarissa there, the presence of her suitcases indicating an intention to stay. But she is distraught and tearful as she tells him her awful news: she is ill, and may never sing again. This revelation concludes a deeply unsettling, unflinching, emotionally devastating film.

From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder.rustema.nl>

Date: Fri, 3 Mar 2006 23:48:21 +0100

I could not help noticing that our friend Gunnar drops by in the Staatsoper attracted by and fully agreeing with the slogan for Clarissa's performance, 'Das Leben ist only a Dream.' Later on he also says that for all the big events one should turn to Gunnar...

Perhaps this is yet another hint that his life is a dreamt up by him?

Gunnar: "Isn't it all only a dream?"

Hermann: "Depends on how you see it." *)

Let us stick with Hermann's wisdom for the moment.

*) I don't watch the English release, so the translation is mine.

ReindeR

From: Thomas Hönemann <th.hoenemann@freenet.de>
Date: Sat, 4 Mar 2006 08:01:10 +0100

I was late with reacting on the comments on episode 2, but now there is another chance to take a stand: From my point of view neither the story of Gunnar becoming a millionaire because of his deal with Warner Brothers nor his appearance in part 4 is meant as a fictional sequence. Look at how Gunnar is dressed and styled - not looking like a victim of the economical system at all. For real after the fall of the Berlin wall lots of people made money with chiselling fragments of the wall and selling them (the so called "Mauerspechte" - wallpeckers) - most of them (if anybody at all) of course not in that big style like Gunnar is practising it. Reitz is distending a kind of character who is developing from kind of social loser to an (economical) rich man - without getting social acceptance at the same time (besides - what irony - the short moment he is celebrated by the soccer fans because his name is the same as the one of the soccer-player who shot the winning goal in WM-final 1990).

To emphasize and resume: From my point of view the Gunnar-chapter is not a dream-sequence but a social study of a character in the area of conflict between economical prosperity and social isolation.

Have a very nice weekend, Thomas

From: Gert Jan Jansen <gertjan.jansengouda@demon.nl>
Date: Sat, 4 Mar 2006 21:37:18 CET

Heimat 3, episode 4 Time schedule and summary

It's clear that this episode starts on Monday the 9th of October 1995, but it's difficult to say on which date the story ends; the day of the funeral of Anton Simon in the autumn of still the same year 1995. Perhaps some research could help:

- Of course I took a look at the stone on the Nunkirche grave-yard, but that didn't help me.
- Then I looked for the earthquakes in Germany in October 1995 (with epicentre in Daun / Eifel) no indication at www.seismologie.bgr.de .
- Is there any sign of celebrating All Saints' Day on the first of November: I didn't see it.

- How long do you have to stay in hospital with a shattered foot and how long lasts the recovery afterwards? I really don't know. I only know in the world of Edgar Reitz everything goes rather quick.
- And the 50-years jubilee of Simon Optik? I looked back Heimat 1 episode 8, when Anton came back from Novosibirsk in Russia, walking via the half of Europe. At the end of that part we see him showing Martha the pasture, where he will start his firm. But it is than 1947 already. His arrival in Schabbach is dated on Saturday the 10th of May 1947.
- An absolute hold (for the day before Anton's death) could have been the announcement of the mysterious man at the Rhine: 40.000 hours to go to the millennium. I calculated on which day that was: miss, it was on the 6th of June 1995. Perhaps the man was confused.

So, admitting that real dates in a fictive story are of no means, I'd still like to know why Reitz in this episode only used one exact date, as he strew them in other parts.

I'm sorry , this time there are more estimations than facts that build the time schedule.

Monday 9th of October 1995: Koblenz / G nderode / Oberwesel / Simmern

- Hermann welcomes Clarissa at the railway station of Koblenz, after a concert tour of two-and-a-half months. But she can only stay for some hours. A new experimental Schumann-program is going to start. The premi re is in Berlin and the next 8 weeks the group will go to Scandinavia, Spain and the program will even be exported to the States. Clarissa has to get extra clothes, she is "back in business".
- At the Gunderode house we are witness of the first big quarrel between Hermann and Clarissa; for some moments interrupted by an unwelcome visit of Hartmut and Galina. Hartmut wants an advice about the vocal possibilities of Galina; some hours earlier officially divorced of Yuri. Hermann tells them he can't do anything for her and Hartmut and Galina leave the premises. The discussion between H & C can continue. Hermann thinks it's a crisis in their relation, but when Clarissa says that she doesn't want to drop off as artist like him, he angry walks away.
- Down in Oberwesel, he takes the bus to Simmern , where he does some shopping without thinking. Back in Oberwesel, he meets Tillmann, who asks him to be witness at the wedding with Moni.
- Meanwhile Clarissa has left the G nderode house and Hermann didn't take the key with him. Looking for the reserve key he get in a marten- trap. (left by Gunnar in episode 1). He is found by his neighbour Mrs. Wallauer and Hartmut and saved at dusk by the fire brigade.

Another day: Wiesbaden

Hartmut is in Galina's apartment in Wiesbaden. She will now be educated as beautician. Hartmut is her first customer.

Another day: Anton's Villa Schabbach

Simon Optik, Anton's factory exists 50 years. There is a feast for the family at home; even Hartmut is there. Anton promises Hartmut he can take over the firm, when he comes back to Mara. A photo of the family has to be shot.

Monday the 23rd of October 1995: Günderode

After a stay of some weeks in hospital Hermann is coming home on crutches. The good thing is: he started to compose music again. That night there is light earthquake in the Hunsrück.

Some days later: Günderode

Tillmann finds Hermann wasted, but he has finished the reunion symphony and the Günderode hymn cycle. Tillmann installs a new computer and in the early morning a Program for printing Hermann's music is working.

Another day: Wiesbaden

Hartmut stays in Galina's apartment. Together with Niko they seem to be a happy family, but Galina realizes she has to make the future alone.

Sunday the 29th of October 1995 ; Günderode / Schabbach Oberwesel

- The new inspiration was good for the recovery process of Hermann's leg. He starts to walk in the surroundings and of course he arrives in Schabbach.
- All inhabitants are in the football "stadion" , where FC Schabbach is playing a match against "Sportgemeinde Eintracht 02 e.V. Bad Kreuznach", the actual number one of the regional league. Some moments before the final signal there is a goal for Schabbach. Hermann meets Anton, the proud president of the winning club, in the mid circle of the pitch.
- Anton's driver Horst brings Hermann back to Oberwesel, where he meets a strange man at the border of the Rhine (40.000 hours till the new millennium, the Rhine is very high, but the trees have lost their leaves).

Monday the 30th of October 1995 : Günderode / Anton's Villa / Ernst's house / Wiesbaden / Parking Place Hunsrück-West on BAB 61/

- · A telephone call at seven makes clear that Anton died that night at four.
- · Mara informs the members of the family.
- · Hartmut cannot speak to anyone, except to his uncle Ernst. "For the time being we're doing well, isn't it Hartmut?". They both lost an enemy, but they are sad about that.
- · Hartmut wants to see Galina and drives to Wiesbaden.
- · In the early afternoon Hermann visits the villa of Anton for condolences. There are more visitors: some members of the football team, Anton's secretary, vicar Dahl and all the daughters and son-in-laws. A wry discussion is starting about the method of the funeral: to bury or to cremate. Hermann doesn't want to stay any longer
- · The motorway is a symbol for possibilities to flee. At the parking place of Hunsrück-West Hermann drinks a cup of coffee and discovers his brother Ernst in his jeep, also consuming some fast food. Together they drive to Ernst's premises. They lost a brother.
- · Ernst shows Hermann his collection of paintings in the rock -safe. It's in the evening.
- · In Gasthaus Molz the people of Schabbach talks about the death of Anton. A photo taken after the last football match , showing Anton on the shoulders of the players, will get a place of honour in the pub. They don't understand why Anton should be cremated.

Wednesday the 1st of November 1995: Anton's Villa / Simon Optik /Lulu's Apartment / Bar and hotel Köln

- · Hartmut comes home after two nights in Wiesbaden, leaving all the work that belongs to a funeral to Mara.
- · Hartmut has to go to the firm of his father, for he is the new boss. He makes a vague speech to the labourers about the future of the two enterprises, but he can't answer the question when the funeral is. His secretary is "saving" him: the funeral will be in the family circle only..
- · In the office of Anton Hartmut meets Herr Böckle again. He makes him an offer to make a fusion of the firms possible, including the buy off of his brother and sisters.
- · Meanwhile Hermann's travel to nowhere has lead him to Cologne. Suddenly he wants to visit his daughter Lulu and his grandson Lukas. He kicks in the door,

- hearing the crying Lukas, being no one else at home. But then Lulu arrives and they are quarrelling. Hermann just can say Anton is dead, before his disillusioned disappearing.
- Defeated he visits a nightclub hostess. Back at his hotel near Cologne central station he looks for his answering machine at home. He can hear the voice of Clarissa, asking if he can join her next evening for the last concert in Berlin, before leaving to Spain.

Thursday the 2nd of November 1995 : Berlin Staatsoper Unter den Linden/ Bar Prenzlauer Berg

- Hermann desires to see Clarissa and goes to Berlin. With him he takes the music of the G nderode songbook, dedicated to Clarissa. The audience is wildly enthusiastic about the "no grudge" music, especially about the main performers Clarissa and David Moss.
- Hermann meets Gunnar again and together they go to the bar where the music company celebrates their success. But a new disillusion is waiting for all, including David Moss and Gunnar.
- Hermann drives back to the Hunsr ck at night.

Friday the 3th of November 1995: G nderode house/ Landau

- A taxi is waiting at the G nderode house. Hermanns assistant Reinhold is searching for him, because they together should travel to Landau for a concert.
- They arrive just in time in the Jugendstil Festhalle.

Saturday the 4th of November 1995 : cemetery at Nunkirche / G nderode house

- It's time for the "grande finale" of this episode; the sequence of the burial of the ashes of Anton at the Nunkirche graveyard. We see the nearest family, including Ernst en Hermann. There is a wonderful guest appearance of Schn sschen. There is the beautiful speech of Ernst about the undignified circumstances, the ridiculous spectacle with the urn in the lift.
- But the last scene is in the G nderodehouse: Clarissa is back, because she is badly ill. She's afraid she won't be able to sing again.

Gert Jan Jansen

From: "Gert Jan Jansen" <gertjan.jansengouda.demon.nl>

Date: Sun, 5 Mar 2006 12:54:43 +0100

1. In general

The words heavy, emotional and desperate, placed in my contribution for episode 3, were meant for part 4. The appreciation in our group no doubt will be great, for at least two reasons.

1. For the first time in Heimat 3 the leading character of DZH and Heimat 3, Hermann, is the real central person. His relation to his love Clarissa and to his brothers and family is shown in all the emotional varieties. It's not a hero. He shows us his weaknesses, that's why we still like him.

2. We are in some way back in the atmosphere of Heimat 1 Schabbach (50 years Simon Optik f.e.) , but also in DZH (Schnüsschen). The headlines of the trilogy begin to interfere.

The central story is the crisis in the relation between Hermann and Clarissa. You can't stay happy for years and years in the same circumstances, even if your home is so wonderful. Some things have to happen, to change, new impulses have to come. The weakness of Hermann is his tendency to stay a spectator and to forget to seek the possibilities to influence the future. He isn't thinking about his personal goals, nor of the objectives of Clarissa and others. He prefers to be passive, as shown for example at his visit at the woman of pleasure in Cologne. At the start of the episode we see him delighted for Clarissa is coming home. We are warned that his emotions will change, for he is singing the wrong song: about the wonderful month of May, while driving in an autumn scenery. At the end there is the new fact that will change their lives, although not wanted: the illness of Clarissa.

Between the beginning and the end we are witness of the death of the old Schabbach community, symbolised by the patriarch Anton. The old values, although not always honest and fair, are exchanged for individuality and personal profit. Modern times have begun, also in Schabbach.

2. The marriage of Tillmann and Moni

Tillmann and Moni are asking Hermann to be witness at their marriage . It will be performed in the near future. As we know from Marga Molz, Reitz has made wonderful recordings of the marriage in Woppenroth, but for some reason he didn't or couldn't use them.

Does someone know in which part this marriage originally was situated ? In episode 4 or 5? I can imagine that a lovely marriage party didn't fit in the tense atmosphere of part 4.

3. The oracle of Oberwesel

Somewhere I also have heard or read that the mysterious old man, standing at the Rhine board, is in the church during the wedding of Moni and Tillmann , but he is falling dead in the church banks. Does this fact give more meaning to the appearance of the "oracle of Oberwesel". Was it just a gibberish talking old man, that couldn't count till 40.000, or was he the anchorman of the metaphysical news in Heimat 3 , as we had the old man at Ellis Island in Heimat 1 (played by the same actor) and Herr Edel in DZH (with his cauliflower- theories).

4. Differences with the synopsis

This question brings me to another change in the production. Before the filming started there was a so-called synopsis published. There is some remarkable shifting of scenes:

In the synopsis Hermann travels at first to Berlin (to reach a decision about their relation) and on the way back he visits Cologne: Lulu and her boy and afterwards the prostitute (that robs his money and his last piece of self-confidence) Only after that

scene Hermann meets Ernst at Raststätte Hunsrück-West. For the first time after Anton's death he can talk about his relation to his brother and about their own position in life. In my opinion this would have been a better transition to the cemetery scenes.

5. Football

I presume there will be a very few football experts on the list, for otherwise my comments on the world championships in episode 2 would have got more reactions. In episode 4 there is football again, now on a lower level, the German regional league. I don't quite understand the meaning of the match. It looks like a decision match for promotion to a higher division, but that would be rather uncommon in October or November, right after the start of a new season. Why are they so ecstatic with joy after a midseason narrow victory. The start of the hooligans culture in Schabbach?

Did you notice that the cups and beakers of FC Schabbach not only are collected in Gasthaus Molz, but also in the office of Anton.? Sure the football club must have a rich past, as Rudi Molz told Hermann on the stand.

6. Lulu-Simone

I agree with Ivan that Lulu's character is irritating in some way. I think she's not convincing, because Reitz had not the possibility (time, money) to deepen the role. We met her only a few encounters: 2 in episode 3 (together with Lutz and Roland) and two in episode 4 : the Köln-sequence and her late appearance at Anton's funeral. But of course there must have been more relations, as we can hear in spoken text:

- Lulu has lived for four months at the Gänderode house during her pregnancy; Hermann and Clarissa brought to the clinic for the birth and they did help her "each time she needed something".
- After the accident in part 3 Lulu recognised her nephew Hartmut, but we – spectators- had no idea they ever met before.
- Twice we get an indication that she has no financial problems, for it is Anton that pays her 1000 DM each month for the child, because Hartmut was responsible for the death of his father Lutz. So we can understand why Lulu so contemptuous can say to Hermann she doesn't want to be related only to money.
- Lulu and Lukas are visited each Saturday by Schnüsschen and her LG

The Köln-scene contains another indication about the exact dates in this episode (I forgot to mention it in the time-schedule) , but again it is a miss. Hermann is in Lulu's apartment the day after her 28th anniversary. The next question is to find out when she was born. I watched again DZH episode 9 (The eternal daughter) and saw (DZH sequence number 915) the happy family in their roof apartment in München. It's a year after the famous marriage that took place on 22th of July 1964. So Lulu-Simone was born in June or July 1965 and not in the autumn of 1967 [*Gert Jan's small typo corrected here at his request – Eds*]. Another fact : her official names were "Lulu Simone", see the nameplate near the door: L.S. Simon. So can anyone blame Hermann to call her Lulu? Certainly not Schnüsschen, because she herself never used her official name Waltraud.

I think the problem with the characters of Hermann and Lulu is that they are identical in many ways. They are not primarily interested in the things other people move, but at last they understand the signals. That is symbolised by the last pictures after the leaving of Hermann in Köln and by the appearance of Lulu and Lukas at the funeral.

8. The questions of Ivan:

1. The camera lingering on Galina's stockings: I didn't observe it;
2. Why did Hermann use the name of Anton? I think because he was thinking all the time of his dead brother and the consequences of that for his own life. The book "Heimat" tells that Hermann asks himself why he should mention his real name, and the first other name he could invent was Anton.
3. By muttering "Jesus, Anton you poor sod" he meant himself, I think.
4. The strange bird formation? No idea. Had it something to do with the little robin bird in the G nderode house, when Hermann came home from hospital?
5. The title was 3 times repeated? You must help, I only remember Ernst (after the death of Anton) "For the time being we are doing well, isn't it Hartmut".
6. The echo when Hermann sees the "blue" K lner Dom? I didn't notice, so I'd like to know the meaning of your reference to DZH.

Gert Jan Jansen

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

Date: Sun, 5 Mar 2006 15:41:56 -0000

Hello Gert Jan

You wrote:

> 6.The echo when Hermann sees the "blue" K lner Dom? I didn't
> notice, so I'd like to know the meaning of your reference to DZH.

Try DZH Part 13 Art or Life. Hermann arrives in Cologne. He has missed Clarissa again! He sees a placard which reads "Today Only". A charlady tells him "Today is Yesterday". And here are my notes written at the time:-

>Maelstrom. Hermann swirls around in the darkness - gothic towers seem to
> revolve and invert themselves. Image of mental confusion. "All is
> subjective". Weird blue light from moon - filtered thro' clouds.

In the margin I have written 1:10:03 [1hour 10 minutes into the tape]. I haven't been back to consult. It might be somewhere else but this seems most likely!! Interesting that the place is the same!!

Ivan.

From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>
Date: Sun, 5 Mar 2006 15:51:50 -0000

Hello Gert Jan Again!

You wrote:

> The camera lingering on Galina's stockings: I didn't observe it.

Go to 1:02:18 on DVD. Hartmut wants to tell Galina of his father's death; Galina wants to tell him that she has got into beauty college. They fall into each other's arms and then to the floor. Observe the scene. She does try to push her skirt down, to no avail, when her little boy rides in to the room in his toy car. He has a slightly knowing look!

Ivan.

From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>
Date: Sun, 5 Mar 2006 16:04:49 -0000

Hello Gert Jan Again Again!!

I can't go on meeting you like this! You wrote:-

> 5. The title was 3 times repeated? You must help, I only remember Ernst
>.(after the death of Anton) "For the time being we are doing well, isn't it Hartmut".

Please see the unemployed couple who help to break into Lulu's flat. See DVD @ 1:30:21

The rather thuggish looking man says, "I'm doing well". His wife echoes with: "Yes, we're doing well."

And they obviously aren't!!

At 21:43 when Galina is "beautifying" Hartmut she says to her little boy: "Everyone will think he's doing well".

Ivan.

From: Raymond Scholz <rscholz@zonix.de>

Date: Mon, 06 Mar 2006 00:05:55 +0100

Well, that was the episode that finally reconciled me with H3. And probably many others of us think the same way.

For me the main reason of my pleasure wasn't Hermann or the Simon clan in the centre of the plot or the sheer length but the smooth flow of the story. Irresistibly, less volatile following one main character on his way from his disintegrating current relationship, facing the death of his half-brother, caring for his grandchild and finally meeting again his former wife at the funeral. It's like Hermann is travelling through the history of his life, the Simon's life and thus: the Heimat life.

As Ivan was deeply moved by Anton's death, I was deeply moved by the surprising arrival of Schnüßchen at the funeral. I felt sooo glad to see her happy with her "LG". She looked confident, settled (and still as attractive as in DZH...). What a wonderful guest appearance, that made me feel my solidarity for Schnüßchen.

The funeral and the former laying out of Anton brought some real punch lines and black humor with real good laughs at the Munich premiere. I wonder how some of the puns got translated for the subtitles (e.g. "aufbewahren -> aufbahren").

A scene I particularly liked: Hermann and Ernst meeting at the Autobahnraststätte both eating "Pommes". The half-brothers as travellers, noticing that they have something more in common.

A quote I particularly liked by Ernst about Anton: "Einer mit Lehmklumpen an den Füßen und am Gehirn".

Already mentioned before but not in combination: Play with names - Lulu doesn't want to be called Lulu anymore while Hermann calls himself Anton.

Some words on the music of the fourth episode, which is quite different than the music of the former episodes. Alan noted that the music by Michael Riessler doesn't add much - I've to disagree especially for this episode. The bass clarinet play of Riessler perfectly accompanies the "heavy, emotional and desperate" (Gert Jan) mood. It is haunting and pushing Hermann through this episode, spreading a feeling of uncertainty. Besides that the live performance by Riessler at the Heimat book premiere (luckily caught by Thomas, ReindeR and me) was simply astonishing. Reitz was asking himself, whether Riessler actually did take a breath during his play...

One thing that puzzled me. The last scene could be seen as a classic cliffhanger. Did Reitz ever use something like this before?

Cheers, Ray

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

Date: Mon, 6 Mar 2006 12:04:26 +0100

A cold forces me to stay home, so finally I have time to catch up a little. Yesterday I watched episode 4 without reading Ivan's introduction first to stay "clear".

Episode 4 effectively conveyed a great deal of uneasiness to me. Everybody's life is wrecked, relations break, people die or get ill, there's misunderstandings, bad music, jealousy. And the stifling, circular breathing bass clarinet music leaves the viewer no time for breathing pauses.

The title: already in the Herman/Clarissa/sunflower/train scene we know the title is meant ironically. Many people say they're doing well, while they clearly are not.

Many doors are closed in this episode, very much in contrast to episode 1, where gates got opened all the time. The bird gets trapped, and so does Hermann.

Jealousy is a central theme again. And the jealousy is targeted at the (perceived) well-being of the other (Hermann->Clarissa's success and happiness, Ernst->Hermann's "higher circles", Hermann->Snusschen being a better parent etc.). The "Allen geht's gut"-attitude CAUSES the opposite!

There was bad music (in Hermann's perception at least): Galina's singing, Clarissa's crossover music.

Like some of you, I'm not too impressed with Hermann's acting qualities, but I felt his cry after being trapped to the bone!

When things got really rough, the tree leaves were trembling, and so was the earth. This reminded me of the trembling flags/vanes in Heimat 1 just before the war broke out. I thought this was far-fetched then, but now I see it repeated here, I think Reitz did it intentionally in both cases.

The unification symphony consists of 6 parts. Is Reitz referring to his own Heimat 3 here?

All the great modern inventions (Windows 95, Pentiums, mobile phones, soccer clubs with foreign players, fast food, answering machines, cremation, ...) are displayed, but do not add a great deal to everyone's happiness, to say the least.

The enigmatic old man near the Rhine: he talks about Gewalt (violence?, does he mean the earthquake?), the number 4 gets mentioned a lot (why? episode 4?). And with Hermann, I don't understand who or what the old man means with "So kündigen sie sich an". Does anybody?

With Anton, the old Heimat values die. What is left, is only absurd modernities, insecurity, a scattered family.

Hermann in the brothel is so sad, the prostitute is so ugly, Hermann calls himself Anton. It's very funny and very sad at the same time.

Gunnar says something like "for big events, you need to call Gunnar". This I guess is a reference to episode 6?

Gunnar's life a dream? While I was in the sceptics camp on Alan's intriguing hypothesis that Gunnar's depicted life is not "real", I am now not so sure after I heard Gunnar say that "life is only a dream" in this episode.

Both Hermann and Clarissa get wounded: Hermann in the foot, Clarissa in the head.

So much for my own observations.

Ivan wrote:

- > In the following scene where Hermann meets the mysterious Russian there is
- > a further illustration of this theme of the rottenness of the modern world
- > and its capitalist system. You see a rail transporter laden with new cars move
- > by [products of the capitalist, consumer, mechanistic world] and the aged
- > man talks of the Rhine sweeping away "All our filth".

Ah, it's starting to make sense to me now! Thanks for this observation!

- > Has he (Hermann) been too selfish? Has he been so wrapped up in his own
- > affairs and in the creation of his own love-nest with Clarissa that he has neglected
- > the outside world and his social obligations? I fancied that maybe his failure
- > to inform Hartmut of the true nature of Herr Böckle was evidence of this but
- > I have since changed my mind about that, as mentioned in my introduction
- > to the last episode. I asked Mr. Reitz about this at the Q&A session following
- > the screening but all he would say was that Hermann "had been having things
- > too good." You may care to comment! One further piece of information I
- > gleaned was that the iron trap was the same piece of machinery used in Parts
- > 1 & 2 of Heimat. It had obviously been stored in case of future use!!

I think not only Hermann, but most all characters (as the title suggests), and the world, is having things "too good".

This in itself causes a counterreaction (the trap, Simons Optik firm going down, the river flowing in the other direction?).

- > I was very struck by Hartmut's reaction to his father's death. There is a
- > scene where he curls up like a wounded animal on the sofa and howls with
- > anguish. This is despite all their previous bitter recriminations. Family is
- > what binds! "A Simon is always a Simon", as Anton had said to him.

I was also struck, it was very well acted. I thought he would be very happy to take over his father's business, but he does not seem happy at all, on the contrary.

- > 1. Why does the camera linger for so long on Galina's stockings and
- > suspenders as she and Hartmut fall to the floor, observed by her little boy?

Just as Hermann in the brothel, sexuality and sadness are bound together. I don't know what Reitz is trying to say here.

- > 2. Why does Hermann use Anton's name when he accompanies the
- > prostitute? Was it the first name that came to his lips or was it some
- > form of comment on his brother?

I would guess both. It fits narratively to not use your own name, and it says something about the dead state of Hermann's soul.

- > 4. What was the significance of the strange bird formation that flies overhead when Ernst is informed of Anton's death?

I don't know. I'm going to look that up again. When viewing, I had a similar question, but not with the birds, but with the strange star formation over Ernst's house. Maybe they're the same??

- > 5. Did you notice the actual words of the title are repeated 3 times in the episode?

Yes I noticed it got mentioned a few times.

- > 6. Did you notice the echo where Hermann sees a ghost-like cathedral in sepulchral blue from his hotel balcony? See DZH.

I must have missed that. I will watch it again!

Richard Rees Jones wrote:

- >... I sat watching
- > transfixed as she finds Clarissa's farewell letter to Hermann propped up against the phone, and for some unfathomable reason thinks it appropriate to hand him the letter while he lies there in agony.

I thought this was also very funny and sad at the same time!!

You cannot believe someone would do that, but still you know those people do exist.

Maarten

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

Date: Mon, 6 Mar 2006 16:16:59 -0000

ReindeR wrote on 03/03/2006:

- >.I could not help noticing that our friend Gunnar drops by in the Staatsoper attracted by and fully agreeing with the slogan for Clarissa's performance, 'Das Leben ist only a Dream.' Later on he also says that for all the big events one should turn to Gunnar...
- >
- > Perhaps this is yet another hint that his life is a dreamt up by him?
- >
- >> Gunnar: "Isn't it all only a dream?"
- >> Hermann: "Depends on how you see it."
- >
- > .Let us stick with Hermann's wisdom for the moment.

As you all know, like Thomas, I strongly resist the notion of the Gunnar sequences being fantasy. In this little scene in the foyer of the Staatsoper where Gunnar recognises and accosts Hermann we have a masterful little contrast of characters. Gunnar is delighted to see Hermann and wants to explain at length why he is there. Hermann is pre-occupied and wants to make himself known to Clarissa, who disappears with her co-singer and would-be lover [as his abrupt stalking out of the

restaurant in a fit of jealousy indicates] David Moss. Gunnar is like a child in many ways and of limited intellectual powers.

Gunnar: "And the more I think about it, that's how it is...."

Notice how hard he has had to think about it! We wait for the revelation!!

Gunnar: "It's all about that topic. [Ah, so now we know!!]. Everything's only a dream, isn't it?"

Gunnar so desperately wants re-assurance, but, of course, he doesn't get it. Hermann is hardly listening anyway. His face is a study in condescension. Please take this childish, irritating, shallow, garrulous person away. The reality is that meantime Clarissa is being whisked away. This is not a dream, he is experiencing. If you were experiencing what I am experiencing, Gunnar.....Therefore, a brusque, dismissive "It depends". Even Gunnar cannot help noticing that Hermann is a "little out of sorts".

Two mutually conflicting worlds.
Ivan Mansley.

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

Date: Mon, 6 Mar 2006 16:51:25 -0000

Being somewhat Gunnar-like I can never get everything I want to comment on into my introductions!! Here are a couple of further points.

When the family photo is being set up Anton starts to boast about his lens saying that it was the best ever made and they said it wouldn't work. He continues, "It can photograph every single one of your pores so precisely that it can read your mind". Obviously an exaggeration but there was then a close-up of Anton's face. Now what lens was used I don't know but you could count the pores on his neck and cheeks.

A little earlier, after Galina has given him a facial and other beauty treatments, there had been a close-up of Hartmut's face. It had the same detail and he certainly looked handsome. Was it my imagination?

Returning to the photo session there was a piece of dialogue that caught my attention. Anton is insisting to Hartmut that "Facts are facts". Referring to Lutz's death and the payment to Lulu he states the obvious truth: "We can't bring the dead back to life". Remember the prostitute's words to Anton/Hermann: "You see Anton, that's how you wake the dead...."!! She is, of course, referring to Hermann's limp penis which she has just brought to orgasm.

Ivan Mansley.

From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan jsbiedron.com>

Date: Mon, 6 Mar 2006 11:27:19 -0600

It seems that someone is always getting in the way of Hermann and Clarissa's relationship. People want time with Hermann at the most inconvenient moments.

First Hartmut and Galina stop by the house when Hermann is trying to talk with Clarissa in the few hours before she departs again.

Then he runs out of the house and walks to town where he is waylaid by Tillmann who wants him to be a witness to his wedding. Perhaps if this had not happened, Hermann would have made it back home before Clarissa left.

I got the impression that Hermann was buying warm clothes so that he could accompany Clarissa on tour. Did anyone else think this?

Next, the animal trap is a real obstacle!

And then Ivan wrote about Gunnar getting in the way:

- > Gunnar is delighted to see Hermann and wants to
- > explain at length why he is there. Hermann is pre-occupied and wants to make
- > himself known to Clarissa, who disappears with her co-singer and would-be
- > lover . . .
- >
- > Gunnar so desperately wants re-assurance, but, of course, he doesn't get it.
- > Hermann is hardly listening anyway. His face is a study in condescension.
- > Please take this childish, irritating, shallow, garrulous person away. The
- > reality is that meantime Clarissa is being whisked away.

Susan

From: Alan <alan wmedia.com>

Date: Mon, 6 Mar 2006 17:31:11 -0500

Everyone's comments on Episode IV have been illuminating and I concur with 95% of them. I had some additional thoughts that may be of some worth, or interest.

Part of aging is an inevitable sadness that occurs when things previously held in high esteem or of value are dismissed or ignored by the next generation. Ivan and others have written valuable comments about how this theme runs through much of this Episode. I would only add one small observation: the shot of the video arcade that Hermann passes when he is shopping I took to be a comment on the debasement of culture.

In addition to being about the passing of old values, I see this episode as an essay on two kinds of maturity - how one changes and evolves after painful life-altering experiences. A friend of mine once remarked that "one does not truly become an adult until one has experienced the death of both parents," a statement both startling and provocative. (I think he intended it that way.) I was repeatedly reminded of this comment when watching Hartmut's despair, as he finally had to deal with the absence of Anton, the man who defined his life since the day he was born.

The more detailed maturity is seen in Hermann, as he progresses in the course of this episode. In the opening scene Hermann acts like a lovesick teenager singing songs, mischievously bringing huge flowers and eagerly awaiting his beloved. I think Reitz is clearly framing this moment in Hermann's life as the equivalent of adolescent love: dotting, intoxicated and full of poetry. Of course, as in real life, this moment does not last for long and disillusionment, bickering and jealousy arise within the opening moments of the film. The next stage is cynicism: note what Hermann says when meeting his nieces and nephews at Anton's house: "Love isn't still love." And Hermann reaches the depths of cynicism in the Köln red light district. (I was thinking of another quotation during this part of the film, the title of an old Harlan Ellison book "Love Ain't Nothing but Sex Misspelled.") And in those dire surroundings, Hermann realizes that this is a dead end and is shaken out of his melancholy. This leads to the final maturing transformation of love when he finds Clarissa in dire need of him upon his return home at the end of the film. In other words, in this episode Reitz is dramatically chronicling the progress of love that often evolves over the course of years.

From a dramatic standpoint, it's very interesting to observe that once again, when tension is established between Hermann and Clarissa, the narrative energy works in the film's favor. Susan Biedron observed,

> It seems that someone is always getting in the way of Hermann
> and Clarissa's relationship. People want time with Hermann at the most
> inconvenient moments.

Indeed. Yet this frustration works wonderfully from a dramatic standpoint, as we, the audience, have a desire to have his tension resolved. (Not unlike an unresolved chord in music.) Reitz used this throughout DZH to wonderful effect, and it works again in this episode.

* The family photo session: I was reminded of many other films that include scenes of family photo portraits, most particularly of Ozu's 1941 film *BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF THE TODA FAMILY*. In this early Ozu talkie, the film opens with the wealthy Toda family gathering outdoors for a formal family portrait. The occasion is much like that in H3. In this case I think it is the patriarch's birthday. However behind the smiles, there is trouble within the dysfunctional Toda family, which comes to the surface with bickering and squabbles following the patriarch's death. This is a seldom screened Ozu title, due in part to the poor quality of the surviving print, yet I wouldn't be surprised if Reitz wasn't thinking of this scene when making H3.

Regarding the Simon family portrait, the lens is as important as is the exposure time. I believe precision lenses like the one used in the Simon portrait require a slightly longer exposure. Writers on photography sometimes mention that photographic portraits with longer exposure times give the impression of capturing a sitter's thoughts. This is part of the allure of daguerreotypes and old glass plate photographs. (It's worth noting that formal painted portraits created when the subject is sitting in the artist's presence often contain a psychological element that is missing from either photographs or painted portraits done in the absence of the sitter. Of course in the situation of an artist and sitter, the length of time can extend to many hours during which it is not uncommon for the artist and sitter to engage in conversation, thus coloring the insight the artist has into the sitter's personality. In the case of photographic portraits with longer exposure times, we are only dealing with a matter of second, but the effect is fascinating.)

* The score. Ray Scholz wrote:

- > . Some words on the music of the fourth episode, which is quite
- > different than the music of the former episodes. Alan noted that the
- > music by Michael Riessler doesn't add much - I've to disagree
- > especially for this episode. The bass clarinet play of Riessler
- > perfectly accompanies the "heavy, emotional and desperate" (Gert Jan)
- > mood. It is haunting and pushing Hermann through this episode,
- > spreading a feeling of uncertainty. Besides that the live performance
- > by Riessler at the Heimat book premiere (luckily caught by Thomas,
- > ReindeR and me) was simply astonishing. Reitz was asking himself,
- > whether Riessler actually did take a breath during his play...

I must agree with Ray here. I was thinking about my earlier comments regarding the music when I was re-watching Episode 4, and I concluded I should amend my thoughts. In this episode Riessler's subtle music works wonderfully. (I do miss the presence of Mamangakis throughout the film however.)

* The scene in the Köln red light district. Ivan wrote:

- > Referring to Lutz's death and the payment to Lulu he states the obvious
- > truth: 'We can't bring the dead back to life'. Remember the prostitute's words
- > to Anton/Hermann: 'You see Anton, that's how you wake the dead...!! She is,
- > of course, referring to Hermann's limp penis which she has just brought to orgasm.

I suspect Reitz is also employing an ancient pun here. As far back as Shakespeare, orgasm has been referred to as "death" in many languages. (François Ozon has an award-winning short dramatic film called LA PETITE MORT from 1995, which may be one of the most recent manifestations of this theme.)

Extrapolating on my comments above about how Hermann's actions in this film chart the progress of love, I should note that Reitz's depiction of the red light district in this episode stands out as the antithesis of the common Hollywood idealization of the oldest profession (i.e. the hooker with the heart of gold in PRETTY WOMAN et al.) However, even within this rather seedy and sad scene, I had to admire Reitz's mastery of brutal comic details, such as the prostitute wiping off her hands after the job was done. Little details like that are rare and unforgettable.

* Following from this I also must note the many dark comic moments in this episode. Perhaps my favorite is when Anton's urn arises from the grave on the improvised lift looking like a miniature warhead coming out of missile silo. For me, this was an inspired moment, almost as good as the former fighter pilot with the metal plate in his head that picks up the hitchhiking Hermann in DZH.

* Does anyone find a connection between the bird that was trapped in Hermann's home and the bird nesting in the hallway of the Berlin apartment building where Gunnar ends up in Episode II? I haven't discovered one, yet it is interesting that there are two birds living within homes in this one film. Actually, I guess we can also add the birds that were originally living at the the GÜnderode house, and those living in the attic of the apartment building that Udo was hired to exterminate. Curious.

* Susan also wrote:

- >I got the impression that Hermann was buying warm clothes so that he could
- > accompany Clarissa on tour. Did anyone else think this?"

I'm afraid this didn't occur to me. I seem to remember Clarissa saying she needed summer clothes for the American leg of the tour. (I was wondering where they were going to perform. Florida? Seems unlikely.)

*And finally ReindeR's comment:

.>I could not help noticing that our friend Gunnar drops by in the Staatsoper
> attracted by and fully agreeing with the slogan for Clarissa's performance,
> 'Das Leben ist only a Dream.' Later on he
> also says that for all the big events one should turn to Gunnar...
> Perhaps this is yet another hint that his life is a dreamt up by him?
> Gunnar: "Isn't it all only a dream?"
> Hermann: "Depends on how you see it."
> Let us stick with Hermann's wisdom for the moment.

Thank you, ReindeR. I had completely forgotten this exchange when I proposed my rather controversial reading of Episode II. I found nothing in Episode IV to dissuade me from my reading of Gunnar's exploits in Episode II. Yes, he is wearing a suit and tie, however this is entirely appropriate attire for a concert and meeting the lead performer.

It isn't my desire to convince others that some of the Gunnar scenes in Episode II are a fantasy. Rather, as I said earlier, for me this reading makes the film much more coherent and illuminating. (I do think that any rewarding film or work of fiction can be viewed - or read - a number of different and interesting ways.)

Alan

From: Thomas Hönemann <th.hoenemann freenet.de>

Date: Tue, 7 Mar 2006 09:09:09 +0100

> I got the impression that Hermann was buying warm clothes so that he could
> accompany Clarissa on tour. Did anyone else think this?

No, I think this interpretation does not fit. To me it seems that Hermann meandering through stores (by the way, in the "Globus"-Store Simmern, which is the county seat of the Rhein-Hunsrück-Kreis, the administrative district of the region), buying things just to distract himself. He is not interested in everything, he is trying to avoid to face the pile of broken glass of his life lying in front of him.

Edgar Reitz explains it this way:

"Und wohin jetzt? Gewiss nicht zurück nach Hause. Er friert, weil der Oktobertag schon recht kalt ist.

Da steht ein Bus, der zu einem Einkaufszentrum in die Kreisstadt fährt. Hermann steigt ein.

Im Supermarkt irrt er planlos umher. Was Frustkäufe sind, erfährt der berühmte Künstler, der er doch ist, an sich selber. Kummerverloren lässt er sich durch die Regalreihen treiben und probiert wahllos Winterjacken an. Dann sieht er Kinder bei ihren stupiden Computergames zu.

Der Bus bringt ihn zum Marktplatz zurück. Hermann hat sich auf sinnlose Einkäufe eingelassen, die ihm in großen Plastiktüten von den Händen baumeln.

Es ist schon halb sechs. Clarissa muss längst abgereist sein. also ist der

Rückzug ins Haus ohne Stolzverlust möglich."
(quoted from the plot of H3: Edgar Reitz, Heimat 3, München 2004, S. 317)

Maybe someone (Angela or Wolfgang or Joel or Ray?) whose English is better than mine is ready to translate - for me it is difficult to translate words like "Frustrkäufe" (would literally be something like 'bargains of frustration') without destroying the atmosphere Reitz is describing with these words.

Best regards to all of you,
Thomas

From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder.rustema.nl>
Date: Tue, 7 Mar 2006 11:59:27 +0100

Related to the scene of Hermann and his funshopping experience is this quote from the Reitz interview. He distinguishes consumptive thinking versus art.

<http://www.heimat123.net/interviews/vprogidsen.html>

Our language would have never achieved the same cultural level if it wouldn't have been for the written word. Thanks to that there is literature, and literature gives the spoken language a cultural basis. This all goes lost. It gets lost because of that purely material thinking. Consumptive thinking also in the reverse meaning: For the mediamakers the program is only decoration for the advertising. Advertising is the real reason. The real goal. And the program, the 'editorial', only serves the advertising message. And therefore the spectator is finally merely a consumer. It is entertainment in the meaning of true consumption, with what applies to most consumer goods: Once you've bought them, they're worthless. That's why the society produces practically nothing but junk. Stuff we can't leave behind for our children. Only throw away. A TV-set, a VCR, a car - everything on which we spend our money is dumpwaste after five years. Ready to dump. The things we think of to make stuff that's all junk. We produce nearly nothing that we can leave our children. Nearly all TV broadcasts are worthless the next day, or even the moment the next commercial appears. That's the throw-away society, and in this society a 95 percent-society evolves). It's in an emergency situation.

A sort of Frankfurter Schule thinking combined with Culture & Civilisation theory.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frankfurt_School

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_and_Anarchy

As Alan has argued, a good work of art allows multiple interpretations. It is not required to follow the intended meaning(s). One can easily ignore some and reinterpret others. I find Reitz' criticism on consumer culture a tad old-fashioned, however valid it may be, and ignore it in this scene.

Instead, I do appreciate the way Reitz deals with computers for example. The arrival of that famous computer operating system is sort of glorified because it empowers the artist to do his work better. The technology serves the artist. *)

Reitz obviously debases the use of a computer when the user is sealed off in an extremely limited rule-based system in which you can only manipulate a given character to move up and down and gain points along the way. The videogame Hermann witnesses in the shop.

My students are writing about computer games in which the user designs his own character or various forms of role playing. They also work on something called 'Machinima', using a computer gaming engine to stage the scenes for a movie. A team of computer users go into a virtual environment and position the characters according to a prewritten script. They perform scenes just like actors would do for a film. Other players go in the game to record what can be seen, much like a cameraman would do. The recordings are then dubbed and edited with the usual cinema conventions and equipment. You can download Machinima films at <http://machinima.com> "Anachronox: The Movie (2003)" is the classic in its genre.

But I am digressing, let us get back on topic.

*) I think Tillmann gives Hermann the Cubase sequencing software from Steinberg. It probably was not released together with Windows 95 (the marketing hype was in the autumn of '95, wasn't it?) because it needed to be adapted to 95. A friend of mine just confirmed that he saw Cubase working in 1996 at least, although it might not have been under Windows. In 1996 I also accompanied another friend buying a secondhand Texas Instruments Travelmate 3000 laptop from a musician. The musician was switching to another operating system. As Reitz predicted in the interview, the laptop is already recycled.

--

ReindeR

**From: Richard Rees-Jones <Richard.Rees.Jones CTBTO.ORG>
Date: Tue, 7 Mar 2006 12:10:20 +0100**

I was very surprised to read this in the synopsis of the episode on the official H3 website:

"On his way home [Hermann] seeks out anything that seems to be left to him. But even his daughter Lulu turns against him. In a panic and out of wrongheaded helpfulness he has her Cologne flat broken into to save his crying grandchild Lukas. Lulu, who had only been out quickly for shopping, is horrified. She had often had need of Hermann's help, but not today and not in this ridiculous way."

I don't think so! The idea of leaving a small child alone in a house, even if only for a short time, is unthinkable. What exactly is 'wrongheaded' about Hermann's action in breaking into the flat? Hermann did exactly the right thing.

Richard

From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder.rustema.nl>
Date: Tue, 7 Mar 2006 12:37:10 +0100

At 12:10 +0100 7/3/06, Richard Rees-Jones wrote:

> The idea of leaving a small child alone in a house,
> even if only for a short time, is unthinkable.

This might be to demonstrate that Lulu prefers to behave like her father than her mother?

The exquisite, sympathetic, empathetic, sensitive and intelligent Schüsschen. Reitz gave this character even a profession to match her qualities.

Lulu instead wants to stand out and seeks recognition with her work. There will be an interesting parallel with Hermann and his stepfather from the USA. Both Hermann and Lulu have an absent father and a caring and loving mother (Maria and Schnüsschen respectively). In their thirties they find a surrogate father they work with professionally. Hermann with Paul and Lulu with Ernst.

--
ReindeR

From: "Robert A D Cran" <chinherb.att.biz>
Date: Tue, 7 Mar 2006 14:23:53 +0200

Thomas and all,

I hope the following is reasonable. Any corrections please notify - Angela?
Wolfgang? Joel? Ray?

"And where to now? For sure not back to the house. He is freezing; this day in October is already jolly cold.
Over there, there is a stationary bus which is going to a shopping centre in the county town. Hermann gets in.
In the supermarket he wanders aimlessly around. The famous artiste, for that is what he is, now experiences for himself what "binge shopping" is. Lost in sadness he lets himself drift through the stacks and indiscriminately tries a winter jacket on.
Then he watches children at their fatuous computer games.
The bus brings him back to the market square. Hermann has got himself tangled up in mindless purchases which dangle from his hands in outsize plastic carrier bags.
It is already 5.30. Clarissa must have left some time ago. So it is possible to withdraw into the house without loss of face."

"Und wohin jetzt? Gewiss nicht zurück nach Hause. Er friert, weil der Oktobertag schon recht kalt ist.
Da steht ein Bus, der zu einem Einkaufszentrum in die Kreisstadt fährt. Hermann steigt ein.
Im Supermarkt irrt er planlos umher. Was Frustkäufe sind, erfährt der berühmte Künstler, der er doch ist, an sich selber. Kummerverloren lässt er

sich durch die Regalreihen treiben und probiert wahllos Winterjacken an. Dann sieht er Kinder bei ihren stupiden Computergames zu. Der Bus bringt ihn zum Marktplatz zurück. Hermann hat sich auf sinnlose Einkäufe eingelassen, die ihm in großen Plastiktüten von den Händen baumeln. Es ist schon halb sechs. Clarissa muss längst abgereist sein. also ist der Rückzug ins Haus ohne Stolzverlust möglich."

Robert.

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>

Date: Thu, 9 Mar 2006 01:00:58 -0000

H3 Part 4

It's a rich and complex episode, but once again there is a brittleness and staginess about Hermann and Clarissa, especially now Clarissa, and a sense of their not being in their own skins, as it were. It was interesting to see in the VPRO documentary of 19.12.04 (linked from Thomas' website) how uncomfortable Henry Arnold felt with this incarnation of Hermann in H3, though Salome Kammer was more comfortable with her character in H3 than in DZH (as ReinderR describes too in an earlier mailing).

To some extent their brittleness etc is a natural expression of the plot, their unrealistic attempt to live an "idyllic" adolescent dream, and the denials underlying the claim that "Everyone's doing well". Hermann by the end of the episode has settled more into his ageing role, his passiveness and up-tightness fit the character's predicament, and his occasional outbursts bring him alive again. And Alan's interpretation of his maturing in love through the episode is also significant, and continues to evolve, I think, right to the end of the H3 series.

But I have a problem with the envious, almost sadistic interpretation that their misfortunes are a nemesis on their "hubris", because they "had been having things too good". In so far as Edgar Reitz' own replies and interviews suggest this, it seems to come from a kind of weariness, a depressed acknowledgement of how an intellectual of his generation feels "at a loss" in today's world - but the element of Schadenfreude may be not his, but rather something we bring to it as viewers? But then again it might reflect the sense that somehow the director really has less "love" for his two leading characters in H3 than in H2, almost a distaste for them as bearers of his own vulnerability. One has only to see how differently he presents the accidents and illnesses of characters in DZH - Clarissa's abortion for instance, or the death of Ansgar - events deeply consistent with their personalities, but no smug sense that "it serves them right". There is something particularly uncomfortable in H3 about Clarissa's being "brought low" by cancer in that way. though the sadistic element I perceived in it may not really be there, and may anyway be dissipated in the next episode - what do other people think?

Could there be another instance of directorial cruelty towards the character of Clarissa, in juxtaposing the brothel scene with her concert in Berlin - almost suggesting a parallel between the two tacky events - as though she were prostituting her talents. Richard R-J suggests that:

- > Reitz sets up a contrast between her free jazz stylings and Hermann's
- > tight-arsed classicism that seems to privilege the former over the latter"

which is an interesting thought. However, I find it a bit hard to reconcile with this one truly dreadful concert, in which Clarissa's performance partner is obviously such a wally, and a subject of ridicule. But I'm sure Richard has a point, as in episode 6 she sings a beautiful blues at a party.

Why did she so insistently invite Hermann to that Berlin concert? I wonder what she hoped that either of them would learn from his being there - understanding? reconciliation? acceptance of separation? .. but what ever it was, it was unintentionally thwarted by poor old Gunnar.

The story line of Hermann and Clarissa's relationship provides the framework for a series of very moving scenes mostly involving other characters. These have been powerfully described and commented on by Ivan and everyone else - I agree strongly with most of what has already been said about Anton and his family, the "dark comic" episodes around the death and the funeral, Ernst's speech, and so much more, and enjoy the insights offered, especially Ivan's moving description of Anton "taking his leave".

But there are still some surprises on seeing the film again. Mara for instance this time made a big impression after Anton's death - her dignity and deep genuine grief, her stillness, relative to the rest of the family, her loving recognition of Anton's kindred fiery spirit inclining her to choose cremation, whereas the rest were shuddering about "flames" and "worms" or favouring cremation as the modern and more fashionable thing. Also her tending to gravitate to Hermann, as someone who was more adult and sensitive than the rest of the family. Once or twice in H3 I've thought to detect the shadow of a subplot of mutual attraction between Hermann and Mara - but it's clearly not really there, at least in the final version.

Then there is that extraordinary unspoken counterpoint of continuing life and death, love and rage, when Lulu at the funeral bleakly carries her living child through the churchyard directly behind Hartmut (responsible for the death of the child's father) bearing the urn with his own father's ashes to the grave. As Anton said earlier, "A picture shows more than a thousand words".

I don't quite agree with Gert Jan that the character of Lulu is "unconvincing", though it's true it is very sad there was no more time in H3 for expanding her story. But I get a strong sense of her hurt and bitterness and the constraints on her natural warmth and positive energy, and a clear impression of how her history might have produced this. The pain of both Hermann and herself in their scene together at the flat is horribly recognisable.

As for Schnüsschen, well she hasn't changed, still warm and outgoing and good hearted, still self-consciously do-gooding, still characteristically avoiding the truth that it was after all Hermann and Clarissa who found time to support Lulu through the birth of her child - or as Maarten suggests maybe just envious that they could afford it?

Galina - though only marginally part of this episode, she, like Hermann, is maturing in love. Her wisdom in refusing to take part in Hartmut's wild plan to defy his family (and hers) in Schabbach, telling him "My new life is beginning here in this town", and her face when he leaves and she turns sadly and alone to her child, knowing herself emotionally older than the man she loves.

Again as in the previous episode, the brothers Anton and Ernst, both capable of so much sensitivity, both stubborn in pursuit of their own self-determination, in mutually antagonistic ways. Anton the "footslogger" needs success for his children, for his workforce and for his footballers, and reconciliation of couples within his family - not only for their sakes, but as affirmation of his own mastery and his own world view. This dominance is also genuinely his way of love, witness his sensitivity to Hermann's situation. Only Mara is free enough from the history of his dominance to love him in a dignified and adult way, as simply who he is, without hatred or ambivalence at the same time.

Ernst the "flyer" who evades boredom and difficulty by jumping into his plane, has none the less shackled himself to Schabbach by his obsessive collecting mania, that as he says did not really suit him, but which he started just as a sharp way of making money. His scenes in this episode are extraordinary - not only the overwhelming speech at the funeral, but also when Hartmut comes to tell him Anton is dead. Both of them in a strange inverted way replay the tragic meeting between the brothers in the previous episode. Ernst cannot stop himself saying, as Ray quotes, that Anton was "Someone with clods of clay on his feet and in his head". yet at that moment it is Ernst who is wearing heavy boots. And Hartmut who has wept for the loss of his father and lost access to his own sustaining anger, weakly wipes the clay off his shoe before it muddies the Porsche.

Then the geese pass overhead - Ivan and Maarten query the significance of their flight formation - watching it again it could almost be the outline of the Indian subcontinent - but what would that mean? (Actually geese went overhead here today in much the same way - one could easily read patterns into their formation -). But the flight had a sudden effect on Ernst - could he as a countryman be thinking of the ghostly "Wild Hunt" that collected the souls of those recently violently dead and foretold death, the North European tradition that is thought to have originated in geese flying overhead at night, sounding as some kinds do, like a pack of hounds in the sky? It seemed to remind him of the possibility of his own death, and probably also of his stubborn rejection of Anton in the last episode, even a threat of revenge? .. as he clutches again at the wire with which he fences himself in. Is there a particular Hunsrück tradition associated with the Wild Hunt or with geese?

The mysterious old man at Oberwesel: Hermann has just abandoned his walking stick - is he beginning to take back control of his life without it? The film becomes black and white - heralding something of "universal validity" (Fließ interview). The old man seems preoccupied with a kind of millennial mysticism, with apocalyptic overtones. The number 4 has among other things an apocalyptic reference, eg in Revelations (the Apocalypse) there are the 4 Beasts of the Throne (stability?), the 4 Horsemen (violence?), 4 (becoming 7) Angels, along with numbers like 24 and 144 thousand. He is 94, and woke that day at 4 am. Next morning, 4am will be the moment of Anton's death.

Hermann is in the throes of a personal crisis, he is depressed and at a loss in a changing world, he has just seen Anton standing as a bastion of the world that is about to disappear. As Maarten writes

>With Anton, the old Heimat values die. What is left,
> is only absurd modernities, insecurity, a scattered family.

Ivan writes of the

> theme of the rottenness of the modern world and its capitalist system.

Who might "announce themselves" with an earthquake? The 4 Horsemen of the Apocalypse - or is that too literal and over the top? "So kündigen sie sich an" - has overtones of romantic or mystical verse - Rilke's "Angels" of the Duinese Elegies, Holderlin's gods and divine powers - the elemental powers (natural, social, psychological, supernatural - whatever) that they signify - maybe anyone in Germany would know? - or maybe it just doesn't matter, no need to know..

One thing I did notice - when the old man wanders away, after a few yards he grasps the handrail and starts to limp, just like Hermann . a personification of Hermann's vulnerability and depression?

Hermann shopping: Thomas asks for a translation of "Frustkäufe" etc - I couldn't possibly better Robert's translation of the whole passage in his last mailing - though I suppose one might also say "compulsive shopping" - or something like that - but Robert's "binge shopping" is probably more natural.

Angela.

From: Tony Robinson <Colneis aol.com>

Date: Fri, 10 Mar 2006 10:48:24 EST

With thanks to Thomas Hoenemann for his clear directions to the house, my wife and I were in Oberwesel last week and were able to make a highly atmospheric visit.

The weather was very snowy. Because the cafe into which the house has been converted was still closed for the winter, the whole site was deserted and we were able to wander through the grounds, look through the windows and sit in the gazebo.

The house is indeed well signposted from Oberwesel with brown tourist signs showing both the route for cars and a public path for walkers up through the vineyard. A very well produced interpretation board - numbered 20, is positioned at the access point to the house from the road up to Urbar. All the other 19 Heimat sites of interest in the Hunsrück are also displayed on the board.

I am now starting my second viewing of Heimat 3 and have found Ivan's stimulating introductions (and others' responses) to be of much value. I shall desist from nerdy criticism of Reitz's occasional lapses of strict accuracy in his portrayal of SIM (Simmern/(Simon) car number plates!!

Tony Robinson

From: "Wyn Grant" <wyn_grant hotmail.com>

Date: Fri, 10 Mar 2006 18:02:07 +0000

Thanks for this E mail which conveys the atmosphere you found very well. I hope one day that I will make the visit. Pressure of work has stopped me watching the episode so far, but I hope to find time this evening. I am not sure there is much to say after Ivan's introductory comments and all the interesting contributions so far, but we shall see.

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>
Date: Sat, 11 Mar 2006 09:21:50 +0100

Ivan has pointed out that

1. the "VPRO documentary" of 19.12.04, in which Henry Arnold spoke of his role as Hermann (see my last email), must be distinguished from
2. the Dutch interview of 24.12.04 (also originating from the broadcasting company VPRO) of which ReindeR has just uploaded a translation [*at <http://www.heimat123.net/interviews/cinema-nl241204.html> -Eds.]* Both are very interesting, but they are quite different!

The documentary referred to in my last email is not in text, but on video. It is available as video from the following page of the VPRO website:
<http://www.vpro.nl/programma/ram/afleveringen/19615742/> The program was called "Over Heimat", and can be watched as video if one clicks on the link labelled "R.A.M 19 december 2004" to the right of the page.

I found this documentary thanks to Mundy Bowers who first told me to look on Thomas' website for the above link to VPRO . Thomas calls it "a wonderful hour-long documentary on Heimat 3mostly in German with Dutch subtitles". The introduction and short bits of commentary are also in Dutch, but the interviews (with Edgar Reitz, Salome Kammer, and Henry Arnold) are all conducted in German. [*A roughly translated transcript of the interviews is now available in English at <http://www.heimat123.net/interviews/vprotv191204.html> - Eds.]*

My listening comprehension is not brilliant, but I've made some notes on it which I will try to improve by watching the video again - Then, would someone else (Wolfgang? Mundy? Robert?) have time to check the notes very quickly for serious omissions and misunderstandings? It would be a lot quicker than making a proper transcription and translation, which might now take too long to produce in time for the remaining discussions?

Angela

From: "Wyn Grant" <wyn_grant@hotmail.com>
Date: Sat, 11 Mar 2006 09:22:56 +0000

In general I wish to endorse much of what has been said already, particularly the powerful nature of the scene in the cemetery with Ernst and the symbolic fact that this is the first time that the Hunsruck tradition of burial has been broken in the family, also Mara's genuine grief. The form of burial, with the failure of the inappropriate technology, is significant given that one character says 'To me your brother was Hunsruck.' With Ernst, the theme of the loneliness of his solitary life is emphasised with Hermann saying 'It smells of loneliness in here' in his house and asking of his museum plans, 'Do you want to be even lonelier?' For Ernst, a family is a hunchback you carry all your life, while other characters display the more positive aspects of family at a time of difficulty.

I also want to endorse the comment (made I think by Susan) that David the singer comes across as a 'wally'. What is a beautiful and talented woman like Clarissa

doing with him and his kitsch music? It must reflect the extent of her disillusionment with Hermann who, as Gert says, comes across as a very passive person. And why take tall sunflowers to greet a lover off a train? Totally unsuitable as is evident from Clarissa's grimace. Interesting that when David calls she says that her train leaves at 5, but she gives Hermann the very precise time of 5.08 (or rather 17.08). I thought that Hermann's remark that the walls are asking you questions was a reversion to a very traditional view that houses are real, living things.

Gert Jansen asked about the football match and if there were any experts on the list. I wouldn't claim that, but I am vice-president of my local club which plays at about the same level, I would guess, as Schabbach and I also do some television and radio work on football as well as running a couple of web sites. This scene came across as very choreographed to me, particularly in terms of the enthusiasm of the crowd. You don't get such sustained and synchronised enthusiasm even when you are about to win the championship as we did last year. I assumed that it was a needle match with a rival team, but unless the structure of German football is very different, you wouldn't have a title decider in the autumn. In Britain it could be a play off between the winner of the league and the winner of the cup, which usually happens quite early in the season, but cups are less significant in German football.

The role of one minor character, Horst, is of some interest. He is always reluctant to enter the house as he does not see himself as a member of the family and Hartmut gives him a lot of embarrassing information about family matters. In the end he responds with a simple dignity, 'I just like to drive'. At the football match he lost all restraint and the way he was depicted there was quite convincing. For me he represents someone who leads a relatively simple life, who takes satisfaction in doing defined tasks well, and derives pleasure from his local football team, compared to the cosmopolitan, complex and sophisticated lives of many of the characters. Incidentally, of other minor characters, I found the undertaker rather scary.

The theme of the shift of capital away from family ownership which will be so important later is introduced with the reference to 'the laws of the market' and the merger of the two companies with backing from Food and Non-Food - who provide an excessively large bright orange wreath for the funeral.

There is much more I could say, but this is clearly a very powerful episode.

From: Thomas Hönemann <th.hoenemann@freenet.de>

Date: Sat, 11 Mar 2006 11:36:18 +0100

Dear friends on the list, now for me it is time to express my general feeling on this 4th part of H3, but first I am going to relate on a special subject:

Gert Jan and Win discussed the soccer-theme. Indeed the timing of the story seems not to be coherent. All German soccer leagues - from the "Bundesliga" down to the "Kreisklasse C" - have their season starting in August/September and ending in May/June. So if the match really was the deciding one for ascending a higher league it only could happen at the end of the season, in spring. So for sure here is an inconsistency of the plot.

But if we take the dialogue between Hermann and the fan literally, there is nothing said about that the match was a final one:

Hermann: "Where is the other team from?"

Fan: "SG Eintracht Bad Kreuznach, they are No. 1 in the league."

Hermann: "So the match is about make-or-break, am I right?"

And the fan agrees.

Later Hermann congratulates his brother Anton, as he says, for his success - no word about ascension to the higher league (which would be the Landesliga, by the way. The structure is as follows: Bundesliga, 2. Bundesliga, Regionalliga, Verbandsliga, Landesliga, Bezirksliga, Kreisliga A, B, C). I myself grew up in a village with about 900 inhabitants, which historically was (and still is) quite successful in soccer (see <http://www.rwhorn.de/> , only in German). Right now they are playing on the top of the Landesliga (see <http://www.fussball.de/?/dbc/21/05-06/13/32/210/verein/mannschaft/145/tab>), which is quite high for such a small village. In difference to Anton and "his" club there are unfortunately only a few natives in the team ...

Besides: There is a quite funny story about the genesis of the soccer-scenes: Edgar Reitz obliged two real soccer teams for the shooting, the Kirchberg (was it really Kirchberg or another Hunsrück village, Joel?) soccer Team and - for real - Eintracht Bad Kreuznach (see <http://www.sgeintracht-badkreuznach.de/> , only in German). Within the first attempts the Kirchberg team took the role of the Schabbachers. But the evening before they have had a party and were not very fit that day. So after a time of trying to get some scenes for the film demonstrating the strength of the Schabbach team - without any success - Reitz advised the players to change the shirts, so the Bad Kreuznachers overtook the role of the Schabbachers, and the Kirchberg Team played the role of Bad Kreuznach. After this it was no more that hard to get filmed the match the way it had to be.

Win also wrote:

> There is much more I could say, but this is clearly a very powerful
> episode.

It is the same with me, too. I am just trying to write down why I love this episode most of all, and maybe I will find some time to comment it more intensively later.

First of all: For me this part contains the most impressive scene of the complete works. This is - from my estimation - the scene on Anton's funeral, where Ernst is taking the word, accusing the ignoble way of disbanding from Anton. In this scene he feels (and indeed is) so close to his brother then never in life before. In an interview ER said: "A brother is a brother" (see <http://www.heimat123.de/download/FAZ041215.pdf>), pointing out that nobody is able to choose his relatives. But the relationship of Anton and Ernst never was good, they are too different, remember HEIMAT 1, the scene where the letter from Paul arrives, with Ernst breaking out (part 5), the different reaction of the two brothers when the affair of Hermann and Klärchen became public (part 9), or the scene where Anton (coming back from visiting his father Paul in Baden-Baden) and Ernst meet in the early morning per accident, driving together to Ernst's property (part 10), or the conflict about the house and the legacy after Maria had died (part 11). Remember Ernst calling his brother "Fußgänger", characterising him as boring, conservative, slow, and Anton accusing him to betraying the whole Hunsrück, and being a "Hazardeur".

It seems that they can only harmonise with each other from the distance: When Anton was in war in Russia, Ernst was flying over the village, throwing down flowers

to congratulate for the marriage by proxy, and now the second example: Anton has died, and Ernst is the one who is taking heart to speak some true words. I ever wished the cut after this scene would not be so close in time, so soon. I would have liked having had some time to digest this great scene, to swallow and clean up tears.

What also convinces me very much of this part are two structural attributes:

One is, that in my opinion Edgar Reitz found back to his rhythm of telling stories, which we all are used so much from HEIMAT 1 & 2, with this part. There is that slowness and precision of the story I often missed in Heimat 3 before, especially in part 1.

The other is, that the plot is concentrating more on the persons and places we are used from HEIMAT 1. So for me this part seems much more close and familiar than the others who sometimes (most of all part 2) use Schabbach only as a launch pad without getting back to it through all the film. So, to create a new word which all of you will understand at once, what I really like about this film is, that it is very "schabbachian".

So now I have opened my HEIMAT 3-heart to you, and I would really be glad if someone would respond.

Have a very nice weekend,
Thomas
<http://www.heimat123.de>

**From: "Gert Jan Jansen" <gertjan.jansengouda.demon.nl>
Date: Sat, 11 Mar 2006 16:39:31 +0100**

Dear Thomas and all,

Thanks for the possibility to look into your opened Heimat 3 – heart . I think it's beating very well; it doesn't need a bypass. You gave words to the most of my feelings too, although in my posting I put some more emphasis on the fact that the relation between Hermann and Clarissa was the thread of the story. But you are right: in episode 4 we arrived in the Heimat of Heimat. You saw it symbolized in the in the speech of Ernst to his dead brother. Indeed, you can't choose your own brother and sister, even not your own mother and father; you have them. Most people are "on familiar terms" with them, but in some cases family feels like a hunchback; you always have to take it with you (Ernst at the Aral Raststätte Hunsrück-West).

In my turn I'd like to put some questions too:

1. Does somebody have an idea why the order of scenes of Hermann's travelling after leaving Anton's house of mourning, was changed in the assembling room?
the synopsis: 1. Berlin / Gunnar & Clarissa 2. Cologne / Lulu 3. Motorway / Ernst.
the film: 1. Motorway/ Ernst 2. Cologne/ Lulu, 3. Berlin / Gunnar & Clarissa.

2. Isn't there anybody who knows where the (not used) scenes of the marriage of Tillmann and Moni were planned?

3. Could there be some regularity in the "internal time mistakes" in Heimat 3.?

- Lulu celebrated her 28th anniversary in episode 4, but according tot DZH episode 9 she is 30 years old at that moment;
- The family is celebrating in 1995 the 50-years jubilee of Simon Optik, but according to Heimat 1 episode 8, the firm is started in 1947.
- Hermann, meeting Clarissa at the Kempinski hotel in 1989, says." For seventeen years we didn't see each other", but we know their last meeting (in the last episode of DZH) was in 1970 in the Amsterdam hotel Acacia.
- Maria, Hermann's mother died (in the last part of Heimat 1) in 1982, but when we look at the tombstone at the Nunkirche graveyard we see the inscription: 1900-1980.

Were it just little errors, made by a too busy script girl, or is there a message behind?

Gert Jan

From: "Wyn Grant" <wyn_grant@hotmail.com>

Date: Sat, 11 Mar 2006 18:17:46 +0000

Just a couple of small points in response. One of the plaques I saw seemed to commemorate Anton's walk from the Soviet Union in 1945 as the real foundation of the firm rather than its being set up legally in 1947. The reference to the Kempinski reminds me that Hermann was staying there when he went to try and see Clarissa in Berlin (he gives the address to the cab driver). Was this for sentimental reasons? It's not the cheapest of hotels, the only time I stayed there someone else was paying.

From: Thomas Hönemann <th.hoenemann@freenet.de>

Date: Sat, 11 Mar 2006 20:16:59 +0100

Dear Gert Jan and all others,

first of all thank you for the medical advice, I am quite glad to know that the rhythm of my heart meets how you are feeling about the films.

You asked:

- > 2. Isn't there anybody who knows where the (not used) scenes of
- > the marriage of Tillmann and Moni were planned?

I am not sure if you mean the place or the time they were planned.

Place: In the Utz Kastenholz documentary we saw some pictures from the shooting of the marriage which took place in the Woppenroth (Schabbach) church with Tillmann and Moni driving away with a carriage drawn by two horses.

Time: In the beginning of episode 4 Tilmann informs Hermann of the marriage and asks him if he and Clarissa could be the witnesses to their marriage. He mentions no concrete date, he just says "in absehbarer Zeit" (soon). I've got no information at which point of the plot this would have taken place, if already in part 4 or in part 5, because of the development of part 4 I would guess more presumably in part 5

Gerd, you are really very accurate with re-organising the time schedule of the whole story. It was a question of time when you would discover the two hands full of not fitting dates. They are neither an accident nor something which contains a deeper message. It is just a fact that Reitz did not care that much for these time shifts, he just planned H3 the way it would fit temporally without looking for every chronological detail being determined with the plots of HEIMAT 1 & 2.

I am not sure if you also discovered one of the most obvious time-shifts: When Hermann arrives at his parents house for the first time in 1989 in part 1 he says from the off: "I haven't been here for 20 years." But we know from the end of HEIMAT 1, that he for sure had been there for Maria's funeral in 1982 (which is the year the last part of H1 takes place, the gravestone-inscription (see <http://www.heimat123.de/h3drehort.htm>) indeed differs from that).

Have a nice evening,
Thomas

**From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan.jsbiedron.com>
Date: Sat, 11 Mar 2006 17:12:28 -0600**

Hello,

I agree with Thomas, Win and others that this is the most powerful episode so far. All the comments up to this point have pointed out some wonderful insights and I cannot improve on these.

Clarissa and music:

I really was taken by Angela's comment comparing the scenes of Hermann visiting the prostitute and Clarissa's terrible singing. Yes, Angela, I agree! - I did not notice this myself, thanks for pointing this out. I am not knowledgeable about music other than as a listener, but in my opinion her concert was indeed dreadful. Angela is the one who made the comment about her partner being a "wally" - how could Clarissa find this person attractive, especially when she has Hermann? I was also surprised that she introduces Hermann as "her husband." Did they legally marry or is she just using this term because they lived together?

I think, with the musical differences, that Reitz is just showing that Hermann and Clarissa are two very different people.

Angela wrote:

- > Could there be another instance of directorial cruelty
- > towards the character of Clarissa, in juxtaposing the brothel scene with her
- > concert in Berlin - almost suggesting a parallel between the two tacky
- > events - as though she
- > were prostituting her talents. Richard R-J suggests that
- >
- > > Reitz sets up a contrast between her free jazz stylings and Hermann's
- > > tight-arsed classicism that seems to privilege the former over the latter"
- >
- > which is an interesting thought. However, I find it a bit hard to reconcile with this
- > one truly dreadful concert, in which Clarissa's performance partner is
- > obviously such a wally, and a subject of ridicule.

Anton's death:

One thing I am surprised about regarding the funeral: I would think that a person such as Anton would have left a plan of what he wanted done at his burial. Or is this not common in Germany?

We can see that Anton's chauffeur and his housekeeper - both of them long time employees - are very saddened by their boss's death. This is one of the typical Reitzian touches that other directors would ignore.

Sunflowers:

I too thought it was a little strange that Hermann is carrying a sunflower plant when he meets Clarissa. He is acting like an adolescent in love - it looks like he plucked the plant from some field. It seems even stranger when one sees the beautiful bouquets he has arranged around the house.

Clarissa is very self centered in this episode and only returns to Hermann at the end when she is ill. Would she have returned to Hermann otherwise?

As for Lulu:

Richard Rees wrote:

> The idea of leaving a small child alone in a
> house, even if only for a short time, is unthinkable. What exactly is
> 'wrongheaded' about Hermann's action in breaking into the flat? Hermann did
> exactly the right thing.<<

I could not agree more! I don't know about Europe, but in the US they could put a parent in jail or take the children away for such action. Sometimes it may be unavoidable with an older child, but not a baby/toddler. She could have put Lukas in the stroller and taken him with. Perhaps Lulu is not ready to be a parent. And what must Schüsschen think about her daughter's apartment? What a mess!

Thomas wrote:

> So, to create a new word which all of you will understand at once,
> what I really like about this film is, that it is very "schabbachian".

I like this word!
Susan

From: Wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>
Date: Sat, 11 Mar 2006 18:23:09 -0500

I guess we're all a bit "under the gun" these days, busy people who try to focus collectively on Heimat.

I missed out on the discussion about the last episode but I would like to say something on Ep 4 because it was my least favourite film. Maarten is "uneasy", Ray is "reconciled", Thomas loves it, I am angry. In a sentence: too much chaos and catastrophes, nothing goes right and the two people who are supposed to "work this out" between them go separate ways. This was the breaking point where I said to myself: There's really nothing positive in this film so why bother. Even the little bit of

humour from the earlier films is gone. And then that overbearing base clarinet sound track. So they succeeded: I felt the pain in my ears. Actually, Clarissa's "cross over performance" was even more painful. I have never heard of such a thing and now I wonder if Reitz (and Kammer) made it up because this is where Kammer excels in real life. Well, it is for somebody else to admire....

So why does Reitz "rub it in", why does he heap pain upon pain? Is this supposed to be the irony because of the title and the repeated mentioning that "we're all well"? Does anybody really enjoy watching all this chaos? So we have a "shocker" and Reitz can build up the mood from here on. Oh well. I really hate to sound so negative and realize that as Ep. 4 progresses, especially with the dialogues with Ernst (with Hartmut and later with Hermann) things get better but let me explain something rather personal.

I lost my mother in 1996, she lived in Koblenz and I had to fly over from the US to make sure things were happening correctly. She was cremated which was very difficult. I had a lot of pain during that time so seeing it all again in a movie brought back some memories. Not funny at all. We had the same stupid discussion about a will (with my stepsister and stepbrother) because they thought they would inherit something (which they didn't). By the way, I can't believe that Anton did not indicate more clearly if he wanted to be buried or cremated, there is only a vague reference that Mara makes. Somebody that meticulous would have made this very clear during his lifetime. But let's get back to the beginning:

When Hermann's BMW rolls back and gets stuck on the stairs he says nothing at all, looks, shrugs it off just like "Oh, so we have a problem with the car" and then more or less casually asks Clarissa "don't you first want to arrive, why are you so uptight?" (watching without subtitles). I thought swear words were allowed and common on German TV, this would have been the time! The whole scene between Hermann and Clarissa is just not believable (or the acting is really bad), that kind of dialogue just doesn't occur that way. Hermann in his wooden way to impress Clarissa with his cleaning up job and his smirks comes across as a little boy, not a seasoned conductor and composer. Clarissa is just bitchy, period. I can't see her being THAT insensitive as a musician, even being obsessed with her career. But it is worse than that. It's played wrong, as if they read the dialogue from a teleprompter. Then Tillman telling Hermann about the new "Handy" that was ordered in America. How wrong can you get? US cell phones were not GSM compatible until much later, the "latest technology" really came from Hongkong or Germany. At least he and Moni have some good news for Hermann but he is not in any mood to dwell on the proposition that he and Clarissa be their witnesses at the wedding.

The following "trap scene" is actually pretty believable because Mrs. Pitt wants to call her husband, because that's what she does when something difficult is happening. That's how these people are! But the firemen standing around with their lights instead of helping Hermann only serves as a backdrop to Clarissa telling Hermann he should follow her example to get invigorated by all the new possibilities and travelling the globe. There were probably huge edits that make this scene as short and abruptly ending as it is. Leaves me hanging and wondering what happens but we jump to Hartmut and Galina instead. Cut!

The photo session in Anton's house is good. Anton tries to convince Hartmut that family comes first so it is strange that Hartmut tells Horst, the driver, that he can just "keep smiling" while in that house but then flies off the handle when Anton tries to reason with him. By the way, there was a comment earlier about the "Kachelofen", the tiled German stove. These things are not only very efficient but work very well

and are certainly not "wasted space" in a house. I like Anton in his role as patriarch. "Don't just look happy, think happy" he encourages everybody in the picture. If his reasoning clashes with everybody else, then that's not his fault. We all know that this will become that last picture of a "happy" family because once Anton is gone, it all falls apart. Pretend as long as the old generation is still alive. I felt that way many many times.

Nice product placement with the Korg electronic piano, except that a composer like Hermann would not use a Korg but a Kawai or Yamaha and Clarissa doesn't play electronic keyboard, does she? Maybe it was a present.

There is a shot of a "messy kitchen counter", the exact same shot is used here and also in Ernst's house when he returns from Russia. Amazing Grace on a trumpet at a German football match? Very "different" indeed. After the match, Anton asks Horst to bring Hermann home but then they end up on the valley floor in Oberwesel for the next scene at the flooded river.

There was a "century flood" in 1995 but it happened in January not in the fall. The "Oracle" loves the river, growing up at the Wolga would do that, but he is very concerned about the remaining 4 years to the millenium. His experience through wars and crises leave him suspicious. He is afraid that the date 1.1.2000 is a bad omen, the river flow reverses and brings all the crud and problems back. He thinks that the "earth is beautiful but never safe" and that bad things are preceded by earthquakes. And so it happens, Anton dies the next night.

The scene with Hartmut and Ernst at the fence is one of the best in the film, genuine confusion and bewilderment on Hartmut's part, wise words from Ernst and as if to highlight that "time flies", the migrating geese are seen overhead and he suffers from a mild dizzy spell.

The following scene at Anton's house is classic Reitz, while we see the two "lower class" members of the football club talk about dress code and enjoying a Schnapps the rest of the family is busy with a different ritual and Mara tells the vicar that she always felt threatened by the church as an institution, a sign of things to come at the funeral as this will be a funeral without the church. The key sentence "only love doesn't stay love" is also Reitz speaking, something he mentioned when we talked with him in Boston in December. Hartmut is overcome by his emotions because of the sudden vacuum of one of his burdens and perceived limitations and, on the other hand, by the responsibility for the two companies, that is now resting only on him. First big mistake: he doesn't answer the question about the funeral because he knows that the plans are for a small congregation of family only. So he is still a slave of family decisions. This leaves the employees, who adored their boss, out of the picture. In Mr. Böckle we just see more anti-American sentiment, certainly believable but doesn't add a whole lot, Hartmut has enough to worry about with or without Mr. Böckle's "help". Then we have Ernst's eulogy of sorts, this was shown as a teaser clip on German TV because it is so good. I don't think Ernst and Anton were that far apart because they did have that "brotherly love" that can be very harsh at times. And now Ernst just continues Anton's reasoning and tells the family what a bunch of self centered people they are. But there is no resolution, just confrontation.

I do like the H3 films in general but this wasn't it. I am looking forward to the Footnotes that are supposed to fill in a lot of gaps and give us more of the stories Edgar really wanted to tell.

Wolfgang

From: "Wyn Grant" <wyn_grant@hotmail.com>

Date: Sun, 12 Mar 2006 08:41:02 +0000

Wolfgang wrote,

> "Kachelofen", the tiled German stove. These things are not
> only very efficient but work very well and are certainly not "wasted space"
> in a house.'

Although trivial, I find these things interesting, particularly as the 'German way of life' was my least good paper when I took my German exam many years ago. I had one of these stoves in my apartment in Berlin, but the central heating was so fierce that I never used it.

Odd that Anton did not leave any instructions about his burial/cremation, but perhaps that kind of personality would find it difficult to contemplate his own death?

Sorry for mixing Angela and Susan up, but we agree that David is both a poor singer and an unconvincing lover. It says something about the state of the Hermann-Clarissa relationship. Does Clarissa refer to Hermann as her husband to make a point to David? Or is the term 'partner' (or 'life partner') used less often in Germany than the UK.

BTW, I know that Welsh first names cause problems but its 'Wyn' not 'Win'.

From: Thomas Hönemann <th.hoenemann@freenet.de>

Date: Sun, 12 Mar 2006 09:53:52 +0100

Dear Wyn (from now on everytime with "y", I promise!),

a short comment on what you, Susan and Angela wrote about David Moss: The first time I watched the film and also listened to such kind of music was at the HEIMAT 3-premier in Munich. I sat next to ReinderR for that episode and he told me afterwards, that this kind of music had been very popular a few years ago, if I remember correct also the name David Moss was nothing new for him (a funny detail besides: when we went out of the theater after that episode David Moss crossed our way, really appearing like in the film - from his clothes but also from his way of moving and looking). Here an abstract about Moss (in English):

<http://www.traumton.de/moss.html> [*link now obsolete - Eds*], and you will (besides the H3-soundtrack) also find some CDs he produced on Amazon or anywhere else.

So what I am trying to say is that Moss was kind of a "star guest" in H3, not only an actor who was forced to make terrible music together with Clarissa ...

Of course the choice of this kind of music, "crossover-versions" of classic music, is no accident, but indeed a symbol for the differences between Hermann and Clarissa.

Have a nice Sunday everybody,
Thomas

From: Elizabeth Garrett <david.garrett4 ntlworld.com>

Date: Tue, 14 Mar 2006 22:29:15 +0000

Thank you Ivan for your stimulating introduction, and thanks to the other contributors too. Episode 4 obviously moved many people, myself included.

It has been mentioned that there are some mysteries or discrepancies in the history of the Simon clan. For instance, Hermann says that he has not been back to Schabbach for 20 years, when in fact he visited Maria with his two girl friends, and also returned for her funeral. Perhaps he just finds it simpler to forget about all that, and also to forget the occasion when he kissed Anton's daughter Gisela in the mine, laughing because his mother was her grandmother. I wonder if that kiss went any further? Certainly the Gisela in episode 4 does not seem particularly interested in him. On another occasion I believe that a villager was not sure whether Anton was Hermann's brother or his uncle.

I am not bothered by these discrepancies, because we viewers feel almost part of the Simon clan by now, and at any family gathering there are always discussions about who is related to whom, and at what date did such and such an event take place. And was it really true about so and so...?

Concerning the music, one of our contributors did not like the buzzing bass clarinet music which accompanies Hermann during much of this episode. I, on the other hand, did like it, and thought that it represented the buzzing of Hermann's inspiration, which is trapped and later released. Perhaps that sounds a bit pretentious! But what an excellent clarinettist anyway.

The black and white used for the scene on the bridge was a very welcome change from the colour, and brought back that sense of mystery which we often experienced in Heimat and DZH.

Finally, I must comment on Lulu leaving her baby. Of course this was a dreadful thing to do, and I cannot believe it would be legal in Germany in 1995. I know Pauline left her children when she and Maria went to the cinema, but that was years ago and was still dreadful even in days when laws were perhaps less strict. Hermann did the right thing to break in. Lulu shows herself as irritating and ungrateful, and we wonder how Hermann and Clarissa put up with her living with them.

Hermann is a supportive grandfather. Is he starting to grow up at last...?

Elizabeth Garrett.

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

Date: Thu, 16 Mar 2006 20:28:04 -0000

Well, there was general consensus that Episode 4 was the strongest episode so far. An interesting and well-informed discussion.

15 people made contributions to the discussion and there were 35 posts in all.

Ivan Mansley.

HEIMAT 3 - Episode 5: The Heirs [1997]**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>****Date: Fri, 17 Mar 2006 00:16:40 -0000**

HEIMAT 3 - Episode 5: The Heirs [1997]

An Introduction

Despite two very dramatic deaths and the recovery from cancer by Clarissa, the bankruptcy of Hartmut at the hands of Herr Böckle, and the re-union of Hermann and Clarissa as a loving, "married" couple, I felt there was a slackening off after the emotional power of Episode 4. I tried to analyse my slight feeling of disappointment and eventually came to the conclusion that the problem was one of repetition.

Ernst is becoming lonely as an older man. He seeks a family. We had seen this before, as he tried to enlist Tobi as a surrogate son. Much of this episode is concerned with the same search, but this time it is Matko Mistic, the 16 year old son of his old cleaning lady, who makes a sudden appearance in the film and plays an important role in the episode, who becomes the object of his desires. Ernst makes him a present of the model glider he built as a small boy with the help of "Uncle" Otto. He is quite explicit about his desire for a son like Matko who likes flying but we learn nothing new about Ernst's character from all this. It has already been established in the film.

It is the same with the rapaciousness of Anton's children over their inheritance and the possible thwarting of their desires by the activities of Meise, the private detective, first employed by Ernst to establish whether he has fathered children and who later acts out of personal greed in trying to prove that Matko is Ernst's son. Hermann manages to stay distanced from the greed of Anton's children, but, of course, he is a very rich man by normal standards and doesn't have to worry too much anyway. ["So much greed. all of them."] My point is, however, that this scrabble for Anton's fortune had already been laid bare in the previous episode and much of this is repetition.

I would like to write about the deaths of Ernst and Matko. I have used the word "deaths" advisedly. I think that Reitz shows us Ernst committing suicide, but many people, whose opinions I respect, reject this and say that he dies as the result of an accident. If readers will allow me, I wish to move outside the film and report what I was told in Germany last September. When we were on top of the Lorelei rocks I asked Mrs. Helma Hammen, our guide who worked on the film as a local casting director, through an interpreter, whether Ernst died as the result of suicide or an accident and she told me that Edgar Reitz deliberately wished it to remain "open", capable of either interpretation according to our own judgement. As I write I am not quite certain in my own mind why he would have done this. What has been gained or what is signified about leaving the cause of his death ambiguous? I must leave a more conclusive answer to better minds than my own!

I will now examine the scene in detail and give my interpretation. I am sure many people will disagree!!! Lulu telephones Ernst with the news of the rejection by the council of his plans for a museum. Planning permission is refused. He takes off in his Cessna pursued by a pack of reporters. Notice that he refuses to let Matko accompany him. He tells him that he is going to France to look for a house and will be away for at least 3 days. Do we believe him? It seems more likely to me that he has pre-meditated his death and cannot as a result take Matko. He overflies Hermann's house in a way that makes Hermann wonder what on earth he is up to.

Would he really have done this if he was on his way to France? He flies along the Rhine and then turns towards the cliff walls. He seems to pick his spot, close his eyes and wait for the inevitable!! When I watched carefully for a third time I did notice that the engine could have been misfiring - there was some white smoke - and that he looks down at the controls at the crucial moment. Would an experienced pilot like Ernst have done this? Why was he flying straight towards the rocks anyway? Was it just a piece of dare-devilry that went wrong? That would have been rather out of character.

Why does Reitz want two interpretations? Suicide for me fits the character and the circumstances. Ernst is a lonely old man. His plans have been thwarted by those to whom he hoped to give a voice. Collecting art works, which had become an addiction and an obsession, no longer satisfies. Hiding his treasures underground has led nowhere. His elder brother has just died, and was interred, in his eyes, without dignity and honour. He is an outsider who has become a loser. He has nothing more to live for. Later, in the Gasthaus Molz Rudi tells Toni, the mayor, "He [Ernst] would still be alive if you [Toni] hadn't kissed Eva's arse and rejected building permits". Would he have said that if it had simply been an accident? Perhaps, Reitz wants to suggest that Ernst had been pre-occupied and not paying proper attention. That seems too feeble for me. Over to you proponents of the accident theory!

Matko's death is indubitably suicide. He cannot bear the pressure put on him by his fellows, the supposed inheritance, the appearance of his "mother", and the authorities represented by the police and Dr.Kuhn. His friend and protector, Ernst is dead. His pigeon is killed by the bully boys. I was quite moved by this and thought of the British film, "Kes", in which a small undernourished boy has his kestrel killed by his older brother and is persecuted by the authorities also [very funny scenes with the games' master]. The pigeon had its leg broken on the runway and couldn't fly. When it did, it returned to its home where Matko loved it. The parallels are a mite obvious, but I was moved by the shots of the pigeon strutting along the floor of the loft cooing gently and then meeting its tragic end.

The scene of Matko's suicide is well-handled. There is the contrast between Matko standing stock still and silent and the bustling and well-meaning psychiatrist, the hysterical mother, if mother she was, and the self-interested Herr Meise gradually realising everything is going wrong. We were shown how the actor, Patrick Mayer, was held by steel cables on top of the rock. One of them or its securing point is said to be visible in the film but I didn't notice. Up on the hillside apparently, while this scene was being shot, sat the real boy's parents, almost too petrified to watch. Myself, I only got as far along the rock as Meise, and I was petrified!! Matko raises his arms as he had done in Hartmut's car [a good scene: two small boys having an adventure; Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid!!]; the waters of the Rhine glisten invitingly below; he flies to freedom or rather plunges to his death accompanied by the screams of his mother. His torments are over. Very effective!!

I think it was Alan who talked about Hermann as a young lover at the station with his gigantic sunflower. In this episode he shows true tenderness for Clarissa. After her operation his present of an apple brings back memories of his mother and her early-ripening apple tree. His character is becoming whole again, re-uniting itself with his past and present. He sobs unashamedly on the death of his brother, Ernst, and shows compassion for Matko. By the end of the episode Clarissa is home again and the couple are embracing as the result of the blood test on Matko is revealed on screen in words. The love of Hermann and Clarissa seemed much more significant than the fact that Ernst was not Matko's father. I never thought he was anyway. The tension was largely spurious. Hermann has become whole and Clarissa has

recovered, and they are "right for each other" as Lulu declares in a moment of female tenderness. Contrast the male world of cars and machinery and exact scientific measurement [99.9% accuracy of DNA test].

I would now like to pick out a number of scenes/dialogue/incidents that interested me:-

1. I noted during my final viewing but not before that Ernst lets Matko win the race to his Schabbach landing strip. He arrives first by the statue of Lenin, but soars into air again before coming back to land. Desire not to crush the youth.
2. What a pretentious fellow Delveau is! "Horizontal surfaces are divine, vertical surfaces are human". Mind you, sometimes I think all architects talk like that.
3. I noticed in Ernst's photo-album that he gives to Meise a picture of girl friend whom he brought to the Hunsrück [see Part 8 of Heimat]. Picture rather of a stockinged and suspended leg! Name of girl? Answer = Frigga.
4. Art can immortalise! Ernst tells Matko that Otto Müller's Gypsy Boy will never get any older and will not die. Just as Reitz has now immortalised the Hunsrück.
5. Women and weddings! Did you notice that whilst watching the video-tape of Arnold's wedding in the USA Reitz has a little tear trickle down the face of the nurse looking after Clarissa. Very telling little detail that Reitz is so good at.
6. The female TV presenter outside the council meeting is the same woman as at the airport who interviews Ernst.

I now would like to ask a number of questions:-

1. Does Matko have some sort of a speech defect? I know he has toothache and a swollen face for some of the time, but his speech seems hesitant and awkward. Or perhaps he is meant to be intellectually challenged?
2. Why does Lulu stop her car and observe through its sun-roof Matko flying his glider in the meadows?
3. Aunt Hilde shows Ernst some photos of Anca and others. She says, "Here he is with his girl-friend" and shows a picture of what looks like 2 women. Did I get that wrong?
4. Did you notice Matko concentrating on a nude painting rather than Gypsy Boy? The male hormone rages!
5. When Hartmut storms out of his office and wrestles with Böckle who is having Mara's horses rounded up, he cries: "First you mess around with my wife, then you ruin me?" Has there been some sexual impropriety? We haven't witnessed anything, have we? Perhaps something has been cut?
6. When Hermann demands to know how much detective Miese earns, does he hope to shame him? If so, he doesn't appear to succeed? Does Dr. Kuhn suspect Lulu knows more than she is revealing?

Finally, a few words about the title.

Back in September 2005 Gert Jan wrote:

- > One surprise there is already. I've
- > seen that the title of part 5 in
- > Britain is "Follow me", a funny translation of "Die Erben". According to my
- > dictionary it should be "The heirs". I'll wait and see your explanation on
- > the 30th of December.

I have no idea! My Artificial Eye DVD reads "The Heirs" but the BBC4 timetable reads "Follow Me"!! I noticed that Matko had the slogan "Follow Me" on the back of his jacket but I am not certain if you were interested in preserving your life whether you would want to do so! Where this confusion, if that is what it is, crept in, I cannot say.

Happy viewing!

Ivan Mansley.

From: Thomas Hönemann <th.hoenemann freenet.de>
Date: Fri, 17 Mar 2006 09:45:01 +0100

Dear Ivan and all,

thanks again, Ivan, for your very thoughtful and sensitive introduction. You may know, I am one of those maintainers of the accident thesis, and for me the most important point is the existence of Matko and Ernst's hope to find a son in him - also from the biological point of view, not only, as he has already achieved, from their relationship (which is much more important, by the way!).

You wrote:

> I now would like to ask a number of questions:-

here are my answers:

> 1. Does Matko have some sort of a speech defect? I know he has toothache
 > and a swollen face for some of the time, but his speech seems hesitant
 > and awkward. Or perhaps he is meant to be intellectually challenged?

Indeed, Matko is stuttering a bit, and this is part of the way Reitz describes him: as an lone wolf, an outsider, who is not really integrated in society. This it what makes Ernst and him brothers in mind, both are kinds of maverick, socially isolated, with their own ideas and preferences. In real life Patrick Mayer, the great amateur actor (that time he was a pupil not having acted at all, especially not in front of a camera), is not stuttering at all, he had to practise it and he did it together with Michael Kausch, the actor who played Ernst. Those two became friends, not only in fiction, but also in reality.

Helma Hammen (who was responsible for the casting of the Hunsrück actors that time - you already mentioned her name, Ivan) discovered Patrick on a birthday party of one of his relatives where he made some kind of performance. Later, at the casting, he prevailed against some competitors, some of them even drama students.

> 2. Why does Lulu stop her car and observe through its sun-roof Matko
 > flying his glider in the meadows?

Because the glider crossed her way so close that she had to stop to avoid a crash! The way she looks behind the glider has something irritating for me. I could imagine that the scene, which obviously relates on the scene where little Ernst is starting the glider with Otto and Pieritz watching, is stored in her genes somehow, seems to me that she's got a deja vu without being able to reconstruct it. What do you think?

- > 3. Aunt Hilde shows Ernst some photos of Anca and others. She says,
- > "Here he is with his girl-friend" and shows a picture of what looks like 2
- > women. Did I get that wrong?

Seems that way. Tante Hilde is not articulating very clearly, with a very strong (original!) dialect, and so the error may have arisen. (Did you get the line from the subtitles?)

- > 4. Did you notice Matko concentrating on a nude painting rather than
- > Gypsy Boy? The male hormone rages!

Indeed!

- > 5. When Hartmut storms out of his office and wrestles with Böckle who
- > is having Mara's horses rounded up, he cries: "First you mess around with
- > my wife, then you ruin me?" Has there been some sexual impropriety? We
- > haven't witnessed anything, have we? Perhaps something has been cut?

Your quotation is correct, no doubt, although I have to admit that I did not notice this detail before. Indeed we never heard something about an affair between Mara and Böckle, maybe the "Footnotes" will reveal this?

- >6. When Hermann demands to know how much detective Miese earns, does he
- > hope to shame him? If so, he doesn't appear to succeed? Does Dr. Kuhn
- > suspect Lulu knows more than she is revealing?

Three times: Yes. He indeed seems not to succeed, Meise is just too much a professional bloodsucker, trying to reach every (financial) advantage he can gather. He is cold-blooded and reckless. Money is his only motive for all the efforts he is doing after Ernst's death.

- > Finally, a few words about the title.
- > Back in September 2005 Gert Jan wrote:

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>> Britain is "Follow me", a funny translation of "Die Erben". According to
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- > timetable reads "Follow Me"!! I noticed that Matko had the slogan "Follow
- > Me" on the back of his jacket but I am not certain if you were interested
- > in preserving your life whether you would want to do so! Where this
- > confusion, if that is what it is, crept in, I cannot say.

Indeed the working-title of this 5th episode was "Follow me", relating on the scripture on Matkos jacket (which by the way is an American bomber jacket he found on the deserted Hahn Airbase, as Edgar Reitz describes in the plot). I really prefer this title much more than "The Heirs", because it is much more symbolical and ambiguous (the main interpretation could be Matko following Ernst into death, but I am sure you all will have lots of more, much more profound interpretations?) Later, maybe because of an intervention of the TV-bosses, Reitz (had to?) change(d) it.

So far for today, have a very nice weekend,

Thomas

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>

Date: Fri, 17 Mar 2006 11:46:26 -0000

Thank you Ivan and Thomas for already introducing so much to enjoy thinking about re this episode... the opportunity to join these discussion is exciting and a lot of fun, if that doesn't sound too stupid .. thank you very much anyway..

I should probably not answer off the cuff like this as I haven't had time to think clearly and the sun outside's too good to waste sitting in here .. however can't resist it..

I agree with Ivan that this episode is a bit "disappointing" in spite of having a lot of fascinating and beautifully observed moments. This may partly be because it directly follows Ep 4 which is so powerful. Also Ivan is right about the "repetition" effect - though getting more of the wonderful character of Ernst is a huge bonus. And he does change and deepen in this episode.

But is the problem also once again a result of the constraints imposed by the TV bosses? I feel there are in fact two films in this episode which have a different dynamic and could have made two separate episodes...

1. the first is the development of Ernst's attempt to "redeem his life" by in a way taking the place of Simon Optik in the life and economy of Schabbach through his museum ... could there be a belated feeling of reparation towards Anton as well here? And his typically blunt, undiplomatic, failure to connect with the outside world for which he purports to be doing it - though actually it is an innerly driven creativity, not primarily a response to the perceived needs of Schabbach

(though nonetheless potentially creative for that.. except in its ultimate failure... this is complicated, can't think about it clearly enough just now... many aspects of creativity , the drive, the inspiration, the ability to work with the material of the rest of the world to make it effective - we've had already had this discussion a bit re Juan and Hermann in H2)...).

Connected with it too is his need for a posterity, plus his growing affection for Matko which is complex and very touching - especially in the sense that he is recreating for Matko all that he himself as a boy received and lost from Otto in H1 (viz the model plane etc). I loved Thomas' bit about Lulu getting "a deja vu without being able to reconstruct it".

And finally his death - It's great that Reitz leaves this open - so he should - things in life are open - even a "successful" suicide is often really "open" (tho not always of course). Ernst's behaviour in the plane is somehow very recognisable , and far short of the kind of determined premeditated suicide that is much less open. Surely many of us when younger have had that angry hysterical desperate moment when one starts to drive off very fast with self-dramatic carelessness in no particular direction, while one's basic inner self knows only too well that it's hysteria and one's instinct for self preservation and hopefully concern for others sort of puts out a sheet anchor.. I think Ernst's angry flight had a strong element of that in it - a bit like his spontaneous angry rejection of Anton's overtures in Part 3. He knew well enough that in this state he shouldn't take Matko with him - and it doesn't necessarily mean that the malfunction of the plane's engine wasn't a direct result of the way he flew it ... I think he was both a "loser" (as Ivan says) and also angry and gambling .. and may well

have regretted it too late... who knows? Ivan this is not, repeat not the "more conclusive answer" of a "better mind" - it's a reflection born of a lot of personal muddle! May not make too much sense to someone else...

2. the second part of the film is almost totally downbeat and as a standalone would probably have horrified the "ratings junkies" of ARD. It is the genuine tragedy of Matko's destruction by the greed of the "inheritors" and of the shark Meise (who is a less subtle character than Herr Böckle and in a way not much more than a plot device...)... But if Reitz had had the opportunity to give it an episode of its own it might have had the power of the equally tragic episodes in H1 and H2..

As it is it's almost unbearably painful to watch , as I think someone else said somewhere earlier on the list... not least for the envy and incomprehension of the other children and local jobs.. Matko was the stranger - and the intruder .. and the prey of the greedy (and in Hartmut's case the needy) rest of the world. He is also tragically the victim of Ernst's failure ... the one person who would have provided a refuge for him - and who failed as Otto had failed, but for very different reasons. Hermann's weakness and inability to replace the staunchness of his brothers is also painfully evident here. His own desperate weeping collapse after Ernst's death is very moving ...

There's also something of the tragedy (in a very different sense) of Hartmut here - and this time round I found Mara's hesitant rescue of him (under the tree where Lutz was killed - not sure that wasn't a bit OTT) very moving (on first viewing it seemed just perfunctory, but I was wrong) ... I agree with Ivan that there seemed to be a hint of something between her and Böckle, at least in Hartmut's mind - but it would be very out of character for her to be conned by that weird guy... his methods trade on the kind of weaknesses that Hartmut possessed but she didn't seem to..

The pigeon - agree it's moving and manages not to be sentimental ... analogy with "Kes" struck me too .. and it too is (initially) a victim of Ernst's plane ... On both viewing it's reminded me of the beautiful poem by Rilke that starts "Taube die draussen blieb..." ("Dove that stayed outside...") I'm not qualified to even read Rilke without a crib, let alone talk about his work - but I'd like to come back to it another time as it's about "Heimat" in a sense that might seem just romantic and mystical and that Reitz would probably completely reject - and yet ... I don't know ... it's still something hidden and lost inside H3 - I think ...

Another source of "disappointment" for me in episode 5 is the relative side-lining of Hermann and Clarissa in this episode.. the way in which they are seen primarily from the outside - big contrast with the treatment of Clarissa's abortion and illness in DZH - there is a lot to say about this - perhaps later, probably other people will say it better...

Better stop now,
Angela

From: Gert Jan Jansen <gertjan.jansengouda.demon.nl>
Date: Fri, 17 Mar 2006 23:34:48 CET

Heimat 3 episode 5: Time-schedule and summary

Explanation. It was even more difficult to make a time-schedule of episode 5 than of episode 4, because there's only mentioned one concrete date. When the film starts it's been printed on the screen: (Friday) the 18th of July 1997, a summer day on Hahn airport. Later on we are at the Weinfest in Oberwesel, that normally takes place during the second weekend of September. The case of the broken down Horch takes place on a Saturday. Hartmut has to pay 875 DM in cash. He is furious: "Saturday of all day, when every respectable bank is closed" (cashomats still had to be invented in 1997?) That must be Saturday the 13th of September 1997.

Further no more indications. Reitz just wants to suggest the story takes place during a nice warm summer. So I'm far away from the idea that caught me watching episode 1, when the mass of events and concrete dates were dazzling me. Why should I continue? But then I remembered the message of Susan Biedron who told she has to watch the German version without under titling. So there will be some people on the list that get some extra information by this strict "scene by scene" summary in poor school English.

Gert Jan.

Friday the 18th of July 1997

- At Hahn Airport we meet a new head figure, Matko. Ernst is buying a second hand Cessna on the air fair. The two play a game: who's will be the first in Ernst's house, flying by Cessna or driving a moped.
- -Ernst allows Matko to win and offers Matko the model aeroplane he constructed with Otto Wohlleben, the father of Hermann.
- -At the G nderode house Hermann and grandson Lukas are leaving to visit Clarissa in the university clinic in Mainz. Lulu and Lukas are staying at the G nderode or a while. Lulu has become the performing architect of Ernst's museum project.
- -On the way to Ernst premises Lulu hardly can avoid a crash with the model aeroplane Matko got from Ernst.
- -Hermann and Lukas arrive in Mainz. He brings her "August-apples" (?) from Wallauers tree. Clarissa is loosing tufts of hair.

Friday the 12th of September 1997

Ernst has organised a party on his home-ground according to the presentation of his museum project by the architect Delveau and his assistant Lulu. There are highly

placed persons like the prime-minister of Rheinland-Pfalz, the mayor and the wine queen of Oberwesel and one tiny problem the building licence is not yet been applied for ("it will be done next Monday") and the environment opposition is alert. Matko falls in love with the wine queen, but she does not take him serious. Delveau and Lulu seem to have some relation.

Saturday the 13th of September 1997

- ·Matko is jumping down with his moped to Oberwesel to see the Wine queen again.
- ·Encounter with Hartmut , who wanted to join the Old-timer rally during the Wine-festival, but his Horch has broken down.
- ·Matko brings a message to car centre Pullig. His new meeting with the Wine Queen ends by a throw away by the "impresario".
- ·The Old-timer has been repaired, but Hartmut is not able to pay in cash.
- ·Hartmut and Matko both can't enjoy the firework "Rhine in Flammen". They have been drinking too much Oberwesel wine.

Monday the 15th of September 1997

- ·Near the house of Ernst the preparation of the building has begun. Lulu and Tillmann are there. Two feminine spies from the village walk around.
- ·Lulu is bringing the plan for the building licence to Toni, the mayor of Schabbach. It's clear that the villagers are grudging Ernst his cultural success.
- ·Ernst is visiting the house where Matko is staying with his aunt Hilde. There is a photograph of Anca, Matko's mother who worked 14 years ago as a cleaning woman for Ernst, before she went back for sometime to Yugoslavia.

The next day?

- ·Ernst has an appointment in Frankfurt with a private-detective, Herr Meise. He wants an investigation: is there perhaps a descendant born after one of his short love affairs all over the world?
- ·As long as the building licence is not provided by the local council, Lulu can do other things. In the Mainz clinic they show Clarissa a video film of the wedding of her son Arnold in California. Clarissa has a break down, due to the last treatment.
- ·On the way home Lulu and Lukas visit the crossroad where the accident took place in which Lutz died.

- ·Matko is driving to Ernst with a birdcage. Together they set free the pigeon, Matko found wounded at the day of their first meeting. Ernst shows Matko his paintings in the rock safe and the place where the key is hidden
- ·But at home the pigeon also is returned to Matko.

Another day

- ·In connection with the demonstrations against the museum, the local council has organised a hearing in Gasthaus Molz.
- ·Ernst is flying to France together with monsieur Delveau to look for an alternative piece of building land that's offered him for the museum.
- ·When Hermann visits Clarissa this day, for the first time she is singing

Another day

- ·Lulu visits the meeting of the local council. The decision : refused. Lulu tells it Ernst by a phone call. The collected press will get his comment on the decision, but Ernst is jumping in his Cessna and flies away.
- ·Lulu drives back to the Günderode. Together with Hermann she is observing a strange manoeuvre of Ernst Cessna and some seconds later Ernst has lost his life on the Spitznack rock near the Loreley.
- ·In half an hour Hermann arrives at the place of the accident, but he can't do anything.
- ·Hermann is looking for comfort. Clarissa is able to give some.

Some days later:

- ·The family Simon is together in the Günderode house, except Mara and MPA. Dieter Simon tells them what the rules of inheritance mean in this case.
- ·Two cars with a licence number of Düsseldorf enter the village and drive on to Simon Optik. Herr Böckle wants to make a stocktaking of the assets. Simon Optik has to pay back the loan of "Food & Non-Food AG" in one month; that won't be possible.
- ·The secretary of Hartmut warns her boss at the Günderode, where the family is still talking about the inheritance. The value of the paintings collection is unknown as long as nobody can get inside the slate cave. Lulu and Hermann want to let the collection intact.
- ·At the firm Hartmut hits Mr. Böckle, who wants to take Mara's horses right away. (He cries that Böckle seduced Mara!?)

- ·Back in his villa he looks for his 3-years old son, owner of 15 Million D-Mark on a blocked bank account.
- ·In the Günderode house the struggle for the Ernst millions is going on, but Lulu seems to have found arguments to convince the family Then Hartmut comes in again, together with Mara and their son. He wants just one thing: money. Sharp quarrelling in the family is the result.
- ·Hermann leaves the house after a phone call of a certain Mr. Meise, who will meet him down in Sankt Goar. Meise shows him a letter from Anca, Matko's mother. She wants to have dropped 14 red carnations on Ernst's grave. According to Herr Meise Matko is the son of Ernst. So, he is one of the heirs, perhaps the one and only. Herr Meise wants 15 percent.
- ·In the meantime Matko is going to the Spitnack-rock, indeed with 14 carnations; It's his 14th birthday today. He throws them in the air and they fall down on the rock.
- ·Herr Meise is looking up Aunt Hilde, suggesting Matko is the son of Anca and Ernst
- ·At dusk the discussion at the Günderode house has changed its character. The museum is O.K., Hartmut has put the family to shame, but now there's a new enemy: Matko.
- ·In the evening Herr Meise drinks his beer in Gasthaus Molz.

Some weeks later

- ·Going down the road to the Mosel for a last drive in his Horch Hartmut meets Matko , who has a puncture. They belong together, Hartmuts says, for they both have big trouble with the Simon family. He drops the moped in the Horch and they enjoy a reckless ride along the Moselle.
- ·Hartmut and Mara have lost all their possessions. Only the horses of Mara are private property. Mara and the animals will go back to Hamburg, after a stay in the Hunsrück of 20 years. Old Willem and Rudi Molz are witness of the departure.
- ·Hartmut has no car anymore. He is sitting aside the road, when Mara comes along with their son. She invites him to go with them. Hartmut picks up the thread of hope. He's leaving Schabbach too. (NB the wheat is standing unreaped on the field, like in July)
- ·The Simon Contact buildings at Hahn Airport are ruined already. Driver Horst and secretary Frau Weirich still go there everyday and drink a cup of coffee in silence.
- ·Lulu doesn't know how to manage her job. The court of law wants to make an inventory of Ernst's inheritance. But she really can't tell the legal trustee, Mr. Kuhn, where the key is.

- ·Dieter Simon and Mr. Kuhn visit the house of aunt Hilde and Matko. They want Matko for a blood test, but noticing that Matko disappears. The jurists call the police to get him.
- ·Matko goes to school in Kirchberg as he used to do. But now he is treated very unfair by his schoolmates, being a heir of millions. He is allowed to stay at home for some days, but when he drives home , the police is one moment too late to catch Matko.
- ·In the meantime Hermann and Lukas are visiting Clarissa, now staying in the ReHa clinic in Bad Salzig (ReHa= rehabilitation) She's singing one of Hermann's G nderode songs.
- ·The next night the terror of the village against Matko reaches a new height. Some youth is throwing stones at his room at home. The pigeon is dead.
- ·The same night Matko goes unseen to the guarded house of Ernst. He knows where the key is. In the cavern he is safe.
- ·At that moment some mayor Toni makes a confession in Gasthaus Molz: when the council could vote again about the building licence, there would be another result.

The next day

- ·When Matko leaves the cave in the early morning, he is seen by a guard. A wanted notice is given out. In Schabbach the police is catching him, but they don't want the boy, they only take the key.
- ·Coming back from the ReHa clinic Hermann wants to fuel some petrol at the motorway parking place Hunsr ck West. He discovers a skittish Matko and takes him away to hide at the G nderode house.
- ·But there Herr Meise just arrived, accompanied by Anca, Matko's mother, but Matko doesn't recognise her after she lived five years in war circumstances in Bosnia, with burns in her face. The two drive away, without a reunion between mother and son.
- ·Clarissa will return home soon. Lulu thinks it's time for her and Lukas to return to Cologne. Lulu tells it on her last visit to the ReHa-clinic. For the first time she tells she's admiring the relation between Hermann and Clarissa.

The next Monday

- ·Hermann has convinced Matko he can better cooperate with the legal trustee by doing a test of fatherhood. His mother Anca is also at the serological institute. Dr. Kuhn is warning: when the test is positive the whole Hunsr ck will be against him. Some moments later Matko has disappeared. Hermann thinks he 's gone to the G nderode house.

- ·Hermann is driving Clarissa from the clinic to the Gunderode and tells her about Matko, who will be their guest for a while.
- ·But Matko, who can trust no one anymore, has gone to the place where he dropped the flowers for Ernst. He is standing on the top of the rock. The police has blocked the road. A police psychologist, mother Anca and her Meise try to reach him from above, but her words can't stop him: he jumps like a bird.
- ·Clarissa is back home. They still don't know the end of the story of Matko. It's the end of the episode, except a short message: According the blood test Matko wasn't the son of Ernst.

From: Wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>

Date: Fri, 17 Mar 2006 21:14:38 -0500

Thanks, Ivan, for the summary of Episode 5, "The Heirs".

First let me offer a rather simple explanation why the title changed. Obviously, there is a lot of "following" in this episode and I like the word play Reitz is using here. It reminds me of the T-shirt of the bomb squad technician where the back reads: "If you see me running, try to keep up". Of course there are much more subtle hints in "Follow me" on Matko's aviator jacket. He loves his moped and adores Ernst's airplane, he is always "on the move". "Try to keep up" would probably not fit on the jacket. Maybe "I know the way", would be another hint to Matko's desires. So if the title was updated to "The Heirs", it probably just means that somebody had second thoughts about this multi-purpose title and chose a stronger, simpler one. Like everything else, I prefer to think of a simple explanation than second guessing a decision we really know nothing about.

The second subject: the airplane crash. I thought that Helma Hammen's explanation (and therefore Reitz' intention) was spot on. The bottom line is: it doesn't matter. When you write:

>I am not quite certain in my own mind why he would have done this.
> What has been gained or what is signified about leaving the
> cause of his death ambiguous?....."

we have to ask this very question in general. Maybe this is the right time to remind everybody in this group that Reitz has a very difficult time with those who turn his stories into reality. Between the last episode and this one, I read the speech that he gave on February 21st at the University of Mainz on the occasion of receiving the honorary doctorate degree. The German text is on Stefan Gies' web site and I am paraphrasing a few passages here that really made me rethink my own attitude towards the Heimat cycle but H3 in particular, especially since I was probably guilty of linking fiction with real experience with some rather unpleasant results (see my previous "contribution").I must admit, now I don't know what to think anymore. Are we supposed to relate to the films or not? Somebody explain this to me please.

Reitz said that.....

".....what has been a very subjective story in my eye, one that only rarely was based on facts but more on wishes, anxieties and vague memories, the public thought of as a movie about realitythe way people think of Schabbach, the Simons, the Guenderodehaus or other figures from the film, like Clarissa, Kath, Glasisch or Klaerchen has frequently annoyed me....

....let me be a proponent of film poetry and look at the demarcation between film and reality, because these lines are transgressed all the time and the TV pictures force themselves in a fatal way between us and our perception of reality.....

....so, how does film depict life? This is the central question that accompanied me during my film-maker's life. As we have seen, it is a different, "translated" reality that film is using and not the immediacy which might be suggested by the film pictures.....

...storytelling has some kind of movement too. It moves from the known to the unknown. The fascination of the unknown originates from the secrets that surround things and people in a story. Poetry comes from the unknown. A good storyteller starts his stories from well known perspectives and follows his figures on their roads into a foreign realm.....

...although produced with cameras and lenses, film is not about real things. Only the locations, persons, costumes or props might be real. The story itself is invisible. There are no visible stories. That's why I always told myself: don't let your own directing fool you. Close your eyes before you start the day of shooting and re-invent your memory all over again. Allow the story to emerge in front of your inner eyes....

...so as far as this goes, the relationship between film and reality would be clear to me, but now I am confronted with a reversal of the problems after this trilogy: Hordes of "home-sick" viewers have come to visit Schabbach, to stand and pray at the graves or to find the Guenderode-Haus in Oberwesel....

...it shows me that the fictitious people from Heimat have escaped the aesthetic connection to the film and have become part of viewer's lives. Even the dead have left the film and float around in the heads of the viewers.

...now I wonder if the dear Lord makes a difference between prayers for the dead living or the living dead.....

...so when they made this documentary at the end of our shooting of H3 with the title "Schabbach is everywhere" I was furious. I thought it was preposterous and a typical expression of TV-shalowness to interpret a movie as a true event. They attempted to switch the history of the Hunsrueck with the history in the film.(ed.note: Reitz actually concludes the documentary to say: "Schabbach is nowhere")

....the attempt to reverse film pictures into reality remains an affront against an aesthetic basic law. However: it is a fact that a film can have this dual effect: reality is converted into fiction and this turns back into reality. TV shows us this

scary reversal on a daily basis...."

>>>> back to Episode 5: As "real" as many scenes appear, we must resist attempting to interpret them as reality, that's understood now. Everybody will come up with different results. That's the purpose of the film! We can compare notes and impressions, we don't have to agree, that would be fatal in this discussion and too close to that demarcation line we are not to cross. Is this possible? I think so.

Personally, I feel a little overwhelmed by the depth and detail of this discussion at this point but that is not to say that I don't enjoy reading it. It's just that when I look at Episode 5, I have a difficult time following all the different threads. Right now it seems that all these themes in the stories aren't particularly interesting to me. A vacuum after the "shocker" of Episode 4? Certainly the character of Ernst leaves the strongest impression on me. And the rest? Maybe I am not a good Heimat Fan and just one of those shallow TV consumers. Oh, Dr. Who is starting again tonight, Series 2 on US TV...

Wolfgang

From: "Gert Jan Jansen" <gertjan.jansengouda.demon.nl>

Date: Sun, 19 Mar 2006 00:09:41 +0100

What a pity, Ivan and Angela and Wolfgang, you couldn't enjoy episode 5 as you did the chapters before. Fortunately I didn't have the same feelings. I consider "The Heirs" as a very well composed compact story, in which the tempo of events is crescendo. The summary of the second half took twice as much time as the first half. Nearly all the developments in some way are a contribution to the peculiar relation between Ernst and Matko and the fact they both (have to) die. Clarissa and the scenes in hospital are the only outside this playing field. Even the bankruptcy of Hartmut, of which the reasons have been forecasted in former parts, play a role in the fate of Matko.

Ivan's problem was one of repetition:

- > we learn nothing new about Ernst's character from all this. It has already
- > been established in the film.
- > ...this scrabble for Anton's fortune had already been laid bare
- > in the previous episode

This time I can't agree. I have seen totally new aspects in the character of Ernst. He changed again, for we knew him from Heimat 1 as an illicit worker (part 8), an adventurous but rich (married!) helicopter pilot of tree-trunks (part 9) and a doubtful merchant in old Hunsrück furniture and doors (part 10 and 11). In Heimat 3 we see him as a hermit who collects paintings, but who wants to have nothing to do with the village and his family; although he has become a social face (the Russians). In this part he wants to do good for the village and for the family (Lulu) and even more important, he wants to survive in one way or another in the world he belongs to. Nothing new?

And the continuing of the scrabble for Anton's fortune was minor to the unexpected scrabble for Ernst's (also unexpected) fortune. The cruel remarks about the living money-box MPA Simon were a contribution to the unpleasant unity of the rest of the family.

Ivan wrote:

- > I noticed in Ernst's photo-album that he gives to Meise a picture of a
- > girl friend whom he brought to the Hunsrück [see Part 8 of Heimat]. Picture rather
- > of a stockinged and suspended leg! Name of girl? Answer = Frigga.

You referred to the scene in Heimat 1 part 8 when Ernst and Frigga are sitting at the bar in Wiesbaden, when also his father Paul and his uncle Eduard come in, but Ernst doesn't want to be seen by his uncle and doesn't recognise his father. I'd like to quote the book Heimat 3 (page 439 440):

“The last photo in the album shows Ernst's first girlfriend, an attractive blond in a postwar dress. Her name was Frigga. Together with him she went through the American Officers clubs in Wiesbaden. In those times Ernst got his money by illicit work; that's why he could found his art collection”

Thomas is

- > one of those maintainers of the accident thesis, and for me the most
- > important point is the existence of Matko and Ernst's hope to find a son
- > in him also from the biological point of view”.

My impression (after second viewing) was also: it's an accident. This conclusion is influenced by Ernst's gestures in the cockpit and the smoke coming from the helicopter. But I also like to put emphasis on the right of everyone to come to another conclusion. I have absolutely no problem with the fact that an author the cause of an event leaves ambiguous (I hope to return to this theme in relation with Wolfgang's posting). But – I know it's dangerous- I have a little doubt about the reason Thomas gives, i.e. Ernst should have the feeling he is the biological father of Matko. In my opinion Ernst is not seriously thinking about that possibility. Already during there first meeting at Hahn Airport Ernst became the knowledge that Matko was the son of Anca, who was his cleaning woman 14 years ago and with whom he had one of his many love-affairs, he knew for sure. In that case – and also because he liked Matko for other reasons- it's incomprehensible that he gives order to Herr Meise to look for all his loves in the past. He should have given order to follow the trace of Anca. Let us count: Matko has his 14th birthday somewhere in “the summer of 1997”. Then he must be [*conceived – Eds.*] at the end of 1982. Aunt Hilde (also not stupid) asks Ernst when Anca was working for him: in 1983 he answers. They both know enough.

Wolfgang reminds

- > everybody in this group that Reitz has a very difficult time with those who
- > turn his stories into reality.
- >I was probably guilty of linking fiction with real experience”

Wolfgang refers to an interview in which Reitz tells :

“Film is not about real things.(...) Only the locations, persons, costumes or props might be real. The story itself is invisible. I am confronted with a reversal of the problems after this trilogy: Hordes of "home-sick" viewers have come to visit Schabbach, to stand and pray at the graves or to find the Guenderode-Haus in Oberwesel(.....) .the attempt to reverse film pictures into reality remains an affront against an aesthetic basic law.”

Wolfgang's conclusion:

- > we must resist attempting to interpret them as reality, that's understood now”

Thank you for bringing in this interview, Wolfgang. Perhaps this is a theme to discuss at the end of this interesting Heimat 3-discussion, but I can't resist the need to react right now.

I don't think there's anyone on the list who considers Heimat as reality . It's fiction, it's illusion, of course. During the three series and during each episode Reitz is telling us

stories on different levels, stories in which we often recognise parts of our own world, told in a way only Reitz can. To enjoy it even more, some of us try to get more anchor points to our own lives and so we're searching for explanations: why did he show it, the way he did, when it's not logical, what could be the reason. Are mistakes in time or place just mistakes, don't they no meaning or is there an extra message? But we never approached Heimat like a reality-soap, did we?

So nobody in this group will be touched by Reitz' sigh about "those who turn his stories into reality". Still I'm alarmed by the sentence about the hordes of home-sick viewers. Have we, Ivan, Wolfgang, Joel and many others, to be ashamed, are we guilty, because we were on a Heimat-tour guided by Helma Hammen or by Eva-Maria Schneider? I plead : not guilty, your honour.

But even when spectators like to treat the stories as reality, like something that happened, or perhaps even they could influence, I don't quite understand the words that Reitz should have said. For at the moment you finish your artistic work and you give it to the public, you have to step aside. You are no longer the owner of the work in every way . You should be thinking about your next work. If asked you can something explain, but you have nothing to say about the interpretation of your work by your admirers. No one has to tell us, how we should go through. We live in a free country. If you don't want that: stop the public distribution of your work and show it only to people you can trust they will interpret it the way you like.

I hope I'm on the wrong track; will some one call me back?

BTW: why did we lose Galina this episode?

Gert Jan

From: Thomas Hönemann <th.hoenemann freenet.de>

Date: Sun, 19 Mar 2006 13:27:44 +0100

Dear Gert Jan, dear others,

many thanks for your very thoughtful contribution. I agree with you in most of the points, so I am going to pick up just two of them to give some emphasis or amend them.

First: the estimation of this episode.

From my point of view this part indeed does not reach the deepness and quality of the fourth one, which is the one I like most of all six parts. But nevertheless: I also like this one very much. As Wolfgang already pointed out: it is an story inherently, which also could be seen as a standalone film (it is the same with Hermännchen, part 9 from H1). The characters, especially Matko, are interesting, and the story works with the traditional build-up of tension (which some of you may see as a disprofit). What strikes me about it is the lacking of stronger connections to the other parts. We get to know some characters we have never met before, not only Matko, but also Tante Hilde, Meise, Matko's mother, and we will not meet them again in part 6 (which is, in the Matko case, no surprise, so please don't accuse me of spoiling). On the other hand some lines of the story are interweaved with the story, especially the story of Clarissa's cancer - which I find very burdensome and well done - I ever asked me how a director could show his own wife that way, in the end it of course is an attribute of big professionalism. In the German discussion somebody accused Reitz of using

the elements of soap opera, he said: If the story remains static, if nothing happens, someone becomes ill or something like that. My reply that time was: Reitz is indeed using themes of a soap opera, but not its methods, which makes a big difference in my eyes. And what should be wrong in telling stories which are relating to real life, so the audience is able to identify with?

Second: Edgar Reitz's speech at Mainz.

After having read the speech for the first time I was quite irritated. I asked myself if presenting the places where H1 and H3 were shot on website would already relate to that problem of mixing fiction and reality. On the other hand Edgar Reitz told me severally how he would approve my efforts of putting together all that information about his work online. If we look more carefully on what he his saying there is - in my eyes - a way of combining these two points of view: Reitz is not disagreeing with people visiting the Hunsrück and treating the locations as places where his film was shot (like in museum), but he is worrying about people losing their sense of reality, and he gives an impressing example with the people visiting the graveyard and praying for the Simon families members.

I think, Gert Jan is completely right with pointing out:

- > I don't think there's anyone on the list who considers Heimat as reality.
- > It's fiction, it's illusion, of course.",

and it really makes a difference taking all these stories for real or just enjoying it which not rules out to develop feelings about it, e. g. having tears after Ernst's speech at Anton's funeral, or being affected by Clarissa's disease. But the main thing about this: The feelings don't rise because of Ernst or Clarissa or anyone fictional, but they rise because in our own lives we had similar situations and watching the film wakes the feelings we had that time. And I think this is what Reitz is relating to: We all have our own biography, and we may find parallels in fiction, but what we really should try to avoid is to take the films for real as a part of our biography. Of course HEIMAT influences our biography (otherwise I would not sit here now and write such things), but at last we have in our own hands to decide how we develop and which piece of art is stimulating us when developing.

So far for today, I hope I achieved to express my thoughts about this difficult second topic in an understandable way (if not don't hesitate to ask), best regards to you all,

Thomas

From: Wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>

Date: Sun, 19 Mar 2006 09:31:08 -0500

Hello,

thanks for your replies and the points you are making, Gert Jan and Thomas. We can discuss more on these subjects at the end, after we're done with the Episodes. My apologies of interrupting the flow of the reviews.

Wolfgang

From: Chuck Wheat <fateofgold yahoo.com>

Date: Sun, 19 Mar 2006 10:09:43 -0700

Hi everybody -

It has been mentioned that episode 5 seems somewhat disconnected from the previous episodes. Maybe now is a good time for me to mention a thought that I had, stemming from the discussion on the German list. One of the criticisms leveled at H3 in that discussion was the lack of a unifying theme or thread. In H1, Maria's life and the history of Schabbach itself provide very linear themes that easily lead the viewer through the episodes. DZH is more complex, but there is still no lack of unifying themes. For me, it's the gradual shift from the easy collegiality of youth, to a kind of isolation that comes with adulthood. But there are other possibilities. You could even look at it as simply a linear history of Hermann's life. In any case, again there is no lack of themes to carry the viewer along.

So what are the unifying themes in H3? Maybe that's more of a question for discussion at the end. But I'm going to suggest an answer now, since it addresses this lack of connection between this episode and the others. When the lack of unifying themes was mentioned in the German list, I felt a need to find an answer, because I didn't really agree with this criticism. So mulled it over, but that discussion was over before I had an answer!

I see a structure in H3: There are three brothers who are familiar from earlier series. With each brother, there is associated a new, major character in H3. For Hermann, it is Lulu. For Anton, it is Hartmut. For Ernst, it is Matko. These new characters tend to intersect with each other in various ways, especially in episodes 5 and 6. In addition to the many obvious connections between these characters, there are a few odd, incidental ones. For example, I remember scenes which pan from Lulu to Matko. Sometimes they are not interacting, but they are connected cinematically. These could be simple segues, but I guess I'm reading a little more into them.

So, in place of the linear structures in H1 and DZH, I'm suggesting a more complicated structure consisting of three brothers, connected to three other important characters, constantly being brought into various interactions. The brothers are able to draw on the viewer's emotional connections to the earlier series. The new characters drive us mercilessly forward into the present, maintaining connections to the past even while destroying it. That's as far as I'll go right now, because I'm not trying to sum up the series. I just hoped to point out unifying elements of the story that weren't obvious to me until I thought about it.

Enjoy -

Chuck

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

Date: Sun, 19 Mar 2006 20:03:43 -0000

Gert Jan wrote on 18/03/06

> This time I can't agree. I have seen totally new aspects in the character
> of Ernst In this part he wants to do good for the village and for
> the family (Lulu) and even more important, he wants to survive in one way or
> another in the world he belongs to. Nothing new?

Gert Jan, I think, if you look again at what I wrote in my Introduction, you will see that I was NOT saying that we learn nothing new about Ernst in the whole episode, only that we learn nothing new in the relationship between Ernst and Matko and his desire for a son, especially after the offers to Tobi.

It seems to me that we might interpret Ernst's character differently than Gert Jan does if we are so inclined. Although he shows kindness and thoughtfulness towards Matko as a boy/young man he is primarily concerned with his own psychological needs not Matko's. Indeed, it is his own action in hiring Meise that leads to Matko's death.

His plans for a museum and concert hall are shown as coming from suspect motives. Collecting is no longer satisfying, so what can he do with his Niebelungen hoard? He hits all the right official notes/EU Commission and Brussels, regional government of Rhineland-Pfalz, US art expert, but there is something "hollow" about it all. I noted Toni's wife mutters "pompous ass" after one of his speeches and later Toni himself comments on Ernst's arrogance. "He flew over us and looked down on us like Negroes." He employs Delveau, a man of empty windy rhetoric, and Lulu, a woman completely without experience [an act of nepotism]. We could notice her tactlessness and total lack of diplomatic skills [see her treatment of Pastor Dahl]. Ernst chooses not to use the diplomatic skills and charm he does possess.

Look at the hollowness of his rhetoric. "Did my seed take root in the garden of lust?" I know how hollow and overblown that sounds in English. What about German? So with this interpretation Ernst, a one-time attractive figure becomes a hollowed out shell, with suicide as the only escape route. And this is what he chooses.

Ivan Mansley.

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire zetnet.co.uk>

Date: Sun, 19 Mar 2006 21:07:00 -0000

Since drafting some of this earlier today there have been several more contributions so I'm afraid this may repeat what others have now said better,... and also, though I know that the interesting questions that Wolfgang raised might be left to the final discussion, I'd still like to add a bit on them here...

Replying to Gert Jan who says:

> What a pity,Angela, you couldn't enjoy episode 5 as you did
> the chapters before.

No, Gert Jan, it's OK - I did enjoy it or at least deeply appreciate it (a bit too painful to 'enjoy' really) - it's just that this episode as a whole didn't have the concentrated impact of the previous one. Not very important really - but I still think the impact could have been more focussed if Reitz had been given the space and time to develop it in two related but different episodes (as he did in DZH for instance with the stories of Evelyne and Ansgar).. like 2 movements of the same piece of music. And perhaps also the less fully worked out characters (eg Anca) could then have had more depth and life.

I agree strongly with Gert Jan about the development of Ernst's story - and it's good to hear him say:

> I have absolutely no problem with the fact that an author leaves
> the cause of an event ambiguous”

and I also agree that Wolfgang's email about Edgar Reitz' speech in Mainz was fascinating – and like Gert Jan I can't resist adding a bit on that now...

There seem to be several different ways of treating the Heimat characters as if they were real people, and I don't think the speech is necessarily aimed at all of them. The important thing is the “as if” ... there's a big difference between thinking of them “as if” they were real, and treating them as real people.

1. Discussing the personalities and circumstances of the characters “as if” they were real is no more than a recognition of their authenticity, and a tribute to it. We do it for every good novel, play, film etc – it's a natural reaction to the work. Reitz in his interviews does it himself, when he discusses Hartmut's relationship with Anton, for example, or empathises with Hermann's “helplessness”. It may be irritating to an author to get this kind of stuff from other people, especially if it seems to him naïve, redundant or plain wacky, and of course there's always the truism that: Those who can create, do, and those who can't (like me), just enjoy commenting on other people's creations ... mmm ...

2. Responding emotionally to experiences of the characters “as if” they were real people... Thomas has now put this really well when he says:

> But the main thing about this: The feelings don't rise because of Ernst or
> Clarissa or anyone fictional, but they rise because in our own lives we had
> similar situations and watching the film wakes the feelings we had that time.”

I suppose one could also say that about spectacles of public mourning for a national figure, like Princess Diana. It's not the feelings that are false, they have a deep origin, but they are displaced. Hasn't it in fact always been a function of the theatre to provide an arena where deep, threatening feelings may safely be acknowledged and shared? Surely it's acceptable for a film to provide this too?

3. Visiting the film locations. Personally I wouldn't want to visit the locations myself, especially if they are all tarted up for the tourists, with signs and waymarks etc. It makes no more sense to me than trying to revisit places where I lived as a child, where the rooms and gardens etc have all changed or gone and the people they belonged to are long dead. Those places still live in memory and even more acutely sometimes in dreams – but they aren't there any more. And in the case of Schabbach they never were.

However, there are other reasons for gatherings in the Hunsrück, such as meeting up with other people who love the films, and people have obviously enjoyed it very

much, and it is fruitful for the tourist industry in the region. And loving the films, one hopes to love the countryside and people as well, even if it and they have hugely changed. Another reason is to learn how locations and props are found and used, and what authenticity in that sense entails – the documentaries are also interesting about that. Also like the documentaries it could show what it means to a place and its people to be part of a great film. I certainly enjoyed reading Ivan's emails about the visit people made there last year, though I don't feel moved to go there myself.

For non-Germans also it could be a way of getting a better feeling for the culture and language of the films – except that the Hunsrück of Heimat 1 is now history – wouldn't one probably need more than a brief visit to get in touch with the traces of it?

4. Prayers for the dear departed Schabbachers... This is no longer "as if" – it's ersatz experience. The famous example in the UK is when "Grace Archer", a character in a nationally loved radio soap way back in the 1950s, was killed in a fire. There was a huge public reaction, flowers and messages of condolence and general shock-horror which did wonders for the ratings - of course it was the first of many such reactions to soaps.

Maybe this was all Edgar Reitz was getting at in his speech – but I'm not so sure.

Could it be that because the Heimat films are so close to the director's personal experience, in some ways even semi-autobiographical, he might feel that by becoming involved in discussing and sharing reactions to the films we are intruding into something very personal, like a dream or memory, and preying on it to fill an emotional vacuum of our own? This worries me, I do question why I'm spending time on all this – but then, why not? Not worried enough to stop doing it yet ...

Angela.

From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder.rustema.nl>

Date: Mon, 20 Mar 2006 00:40:10 +0100

Nice contributions from everyone already, thank you.

At 09:45 +0100 17/3/06, Thomas Hönemann wrote:

> Indeed the working-title of this 5th episode was
> "Follow me", relating on the scripture on Matko's
> jacket (which by the way is an American bomber
> jacket he found on the deserted Hahn Airbase, as
> Edgar Reitz describes in the plot).

The famous BBC course to learn English as it is broadcast in 70 countries around the world can still be bought from the 'BBC shop'.

<http://www.bbcshop.com/invnt/1854970895&bklist=icat.5..6.22.179> For only 323 pound! But you'll get 60 units for it. Probably it is targeted at libraries and schools.

Perhaps the BBC did not want any confusion with their famous 'Follow Me' series and this episode? With the title 'Follow Me' in the Radio Times many viewers would be delighted and then disappointed finding out that it was not the real 'Follow Me' series.

I remember watching it when I was a teenager because there was nothing else on the few television channels broadcasting in the afternoon. Even when switching to the three German channels you would sooner or later find the 'Follow Me' series if I remember correctly.

The opening sequence of the 'Follow Me' series shows a scene from an airport somewhere, with a view from a cockpit while taxiing over the runway. Following ground personnel with the sign 'Follow Me.' For me it was the sign to turn off the tv-set completely, it would be pointless to continue watching television.

I agree with Thomas that the 'Follow Me' title is much better. Who is following who? Is Ernst looking for some pedestrian on the ground to show him where to go with his life? There can't be, he made too many choices going up and away, he is not able to attach to anyone.

Like in part 4, Ernst is again the most interesting character. Nevertheless, I could not help but thinking for a split second "two Simons down, one to go."

PS. 100% trivial: how are wine queens elected?

--

ReindeR

From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder.rustema.nl>

Date: Mon, 20 Mar 2006 00:40:15 +0100

At 00:09 +0100 19/3/06, Gert Jan Jansen wrote:

> In Heimat 3 we see him as a hermit who collects
> paintings, but who wants to have nothing to do
> with the village and his family; although he has
> become a social face (the Russians).

Actually, it was also Ernst who directed Klärchen towards a new home in Schabbach, just after the war. If he is out in a disorderly world and meets people he can point towards a new 'Heimat', he wants them to go to Schabbach. And he even wants Mlatko to stay there when he takes off once more restlessly. Yet he himself can not find any rest there. He has a build-in destructive urge. If he is to accept this truly, the consequence is to take his own life...

--

ReindeR

From: Wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>
Date: Sun, 19 Mar 2006 19:04:48 -0500

Hello,
ReindeR, the German title of Episode 4 is "Die Erben" so the English is simply the translation. Why it was first "Follow Me" which was a better title, who knows.

Alright then, I have to get this off my chest:
I thought about this "reality-soap" reference too. Reitz claims that people are capable of seeing the difference or he implies that if you are a "thinking" sensitive person and not a "TV-Zombie" (in his mind), you will "get it". That's problem number one because most people don't. What percentage of viewers have the kind of affinity with the entire trilogy and are able to track back story points all the way to a series of movies that were aired 20+ years ago. Very, very few. Heimat 1 was the big success. That's why some people still remember it! If it wasn't for the DVD sales, Heimat 3 as a TV show would be forgotten by now. My point? We, those crazy fans who take every scene and interpret it, relate it, discuss it, talk about how these characters behave, are the ones who will buy the next DVD, and anything that comes after that. But Reitz is somebody who realized HIS dreams, not ours, so in that sense, he succeeded, with those hard fought-for funds, to produce those six H3 films. What happens now is that he is looking forward and we are looking backwards. I wonder if after 25 years of his life working on and with the subject, he feels any emotion towards his characters. Essentially writing their biographies must have had some effect. He is careful not to make this too personal though, for example, when he says: "I worry about Lulu's future". But maybe he just stops typing, turns off the computer and leaves all that behind. Maybe he's jealous because they are HIS characters, not ours. Anyway, enough of that.

Secondly, Reitz is increasingly mistaken for a philosopher, I can't tell if he likes that role or not. Because he is reflecting on the general Zeit-Geist with his films, a side effect is that people ask him about how he sees society and the situation in Germany, Europe, the arts etc. His answers are usually wise and observant and he doesn't shy away from saying "I don't know". But he refuses to give people any comfort or guidance, to find any meaning in all of the past historical events or where this is heading. It's all wide open and unresolved and he seems to have a rather pessimistic view. He wrote how surprised he was after the editing and this dark and foreboding atmosphere emerged.

The third subject is the Heimat-Tourism. Since I come from that area but had not been at the filming locations, I wanted to see it. In panoramic, 360 degree view, not through a camera lens, not interpreted by a director's mind but superimposed to my own reality. If you like the movie vistas, the real places are even more breathtaking and just wonderful to visit, period. There is this huge, old, knurled tree near the Nunkirche (the Sargenroth graveyard) that was never shown in the film but fascinated me nonetheless. A few yards east is one of the old "Bismark Towers", also not in Heimat 3 but their purpose was closely related to the original Heimat feelings of a century ago ("auf allen Höhen der Heimat errichtet werden sollten, graniterne Feuerträger, einfach und prunklos - 1899" engl: on all heights of the Heimat, granite bearers of fire shall be erected, simple and unadorned"), but then abused and raped by the Nazis. I made these trips many times on my own, completely unrelated to the films. Meeting some of you was another good reason to travel. But then, in Boston, Reitz made that same remark during the Q & A session, about some Heimat crazy people coming from all over to visit the fake grave stones and how this somehow was a surprise if not a nuisance to him. How those people in the Hunsrück exploited their

newly found fame by setting up signs and tours. I felt embarrassed, he got a good laugh from the audience.

So, the way I see the crash on the Lorelei Rock, that most romantic of German places is: Reitz makes a symbolic statement that warns all those who like to live in the past and remember the good old days, that it is all gone; Ernst is allowed to blow it all up (and let it all cave in for that matter) because he is next in line and Matko is learning to fly the hard way. So neither the old nor the young have any hope or future. How poetic!

Wolfgang

From: Wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>

Date: Sun, 19 Mar 2006 21:08:08 -0500

Wine queens are elected the same way beauty queens are elected. There are election evenings held in the wine villages that select a wine queen based mainly on her knowledge about wine growing, her wit and sense of humor, ability to represent and good looks. The selection process is pretty intense, the candidates are quizzed by experts in the field. Jurors come from the media, tourism industry, and other local representatives. Each wine growing region has it's own queen and each year there is also a German Wine Queen who travels to circa 250 events around the globe to represent one of Germany's most famous export product. The election is broadcast on German television, this year (2006) the show will be broadcast from Dresden on October 6th. Usually this event takes place in Neustadt on the German Wine Road. Oberwesel, the location of the G nderodehaus, doesn't elect a wine queen but a wine witch, one of only two such personalities in Germany.

Wolfgang

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire zetnet.co.uk>

Date: Mon, 20 Mar 2006 12:26:25 -0000

I'm afraid what I said in my last post about visiting the Heimat locations could have sounded rather snobbish and prissy, and upset people who have done it themselves and enjoyed it a lot. The point is, my reaction is purely personal - I feel the same sort of reluctance as one might feel about seeing the film of a book one really loves... afraid that it will destroy the images the book has already made in one's mind. There is no matter of principle in this - and by not seeing the film of a book one could sometimes miss something equally good - eg *The English Patient*, of which the film in its own right I enjoy a lot, even though it loses some of the subtlety of the book and the written language ... In fact sometimes the film or TV series of a book can enhance one's enjoyment of the book too (maybe not in the case of *The English Patient*, but eg Alan Bates' performance of Henchard in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is unforgettable, and sent me straight back to the book after many decades...) Visiting the Hunsr ck could have a similar effect for many people, I just don't know.

Does this make sense?

I'm sorry anyway, if I've caused offence....

Angela

From: "Wyn Grant" <wyn_grant@hotmail.com>

Date: Tue, 21 Mar 2006 08:36:20 +0000

I haven't had time to watch it yet with the end of the financial year looming, but hope to do so at the weekend and add if possible to the interesting discussion. Last Friday I went to a lecture in London in which the speaker was talking in part about the Culm Measures, a high and cold plateau like area in West Devon extending into North Cornwall (although the agriculture is grazing rather than what seems to be mainly arable in the Hunsrück). The speaker also started to talk about Gemeinschaft, the concept developed by the German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies which may have some relevance to discussion of the changing Hunsrück as captured in Heimat.

In Gemeinschaft individuals are as much oriented to the larger community as their own self-interest and the community polices their behaviour through mores and norms. Personal relationships and families are strong. Indeed, Tönnies thought that the family was the best example of Gemeinschaft. Such communities are ethnically homogeneous. Of course, they are often also rather narrow in their outlook which is why innovative individuals seek to escape (but never completely).

In Gesellschaft shared norms are largely absent and individuals pursue their own self interest. In other words, it is more like a market society. Ethnic conflicts may occur.

So one can see a transition from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft in Heimat except that the family remains normatively very important to Reitz. Did he ever read Tönnies?

From: "Gert Jan Jansen" <gertjan.jansengouda.demon.nl>

Date: Tue, 21 Mar 2006 23:36:27 +0100

Angela was afraid what she

- > said in her post about visiting the Heimat locations could have sounded
- > rather snobbish and prissy, and upset people who have done it themselves
- > and enjoyed it a lot."

Well Angela, you can be sure it didn't hurt any of the Hunsrück tourists. You gave some very reasonable reasons why you wouldn't do it yourself. You're not the only one. After the Heimat-tour of last September also ReindeR described his embarrassment as follows:

- > Usually I prefer not to visit places, situations, people I know from films
- > because it is always a disappointment, I prefer the fiction. Reitz has succeeded
- > to make a kind of collage of 'true stories' that together make one fictional story
- > that becomes more true than any documentary. Visiting there makes you feel
- > how interwoven the place and the film is."

Personally I can say that my admiration for a (good) film or book will be rising by visiting the places of proceedings and vice versa. I like to smell the atmosphere of Venice, Berlin, the English countryside of Kent or Devon, by reading novels that take place in that city or area. (And then I want the details to be right). The book (and TV-film) "Jahrestage" by Uwe Johnson inspired me to look for maps of Güstrow /

Jerichow in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Sheerness on Sea and to the Riverside Drive in New York, perhaps some German members of the list can follow me.

The landscape of the Hunsrück is an independent reason for me to get back there: those wonderful (low) uplands, suddenly falling down in steep valleys with wood and those thousand Schabbachs, absolutely different from the Eifel in the north and the Pfalz in the south.

I'd like to thank Angela for her very clear explanation of "as if reality" and "if reality".

Reinder and Ivan gave some very good arguments for their suicide thesis (according to Ernst), but I'm still not in that camp. Ivan came to it at the end of a wonderful construction of reasoning arguments leading to the conclusion I didn't read his former words good enough. Ay,ay, Sir.

Gert Jan

From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan jsbiedron.com>

Date: Wed, 22 Mar 2006 14:15:54 -0600

Heimaters,

I agree with Ivan on his assessment of Ernst and his suicide. I was shocked when Ernst flew his plane into the side of the Lorelei. I realized this was going to happen as soon as I saw Hermann notice the plane from Gunderode House and I was thinking "oh no ... ". My first reaction (or hope?) was that it was possibly an accident. But when you think about events leading up to his death, I can come to no other conclusion but a planned suicide.

Until the plane crash I viewed Ernst as a caring but misunderstood person who desperately wants someone to love. My opinion of him had risen more when he criticized the Simon family at his brother's funeral - even if he and Anton were estranged, he wanted his brother to be buried with respect. But at the end he only thinks of himself. If he truly cared for Matko's well being, he would have known that his suicide and abandonment of the boy would be devastating. His suicide is a very selfish act.

I laughed out loud when I read "Niebelungen hoard" - it is an apt description. He even crashes over the Rhine! (Please forgive me, I attended Wagner's Ring Cycle last year.)

And Angela, you did not offend anyone - please continue to contribute. Different views are what make this list so interesting. Every time I read the postings I learn something new.

I have a question for some of you who are apparently knowledgeable about airplanes and flying: Is it realistic that Ernst could take off and fly whenever he wants in a crowded country like Germany? Wouldn't he have to file a flight plan?

Susan

From: Wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>
Date: Wed, 22 Mar 2006 18:08:34 -0500

Hi Susan et. al.

about Ernst's flying stunts. He would not be allowed to do that in that area. He has to remain on the radar screens of the DFS (the German FAA) and flying below the rim of the valley would make him disappear. I have a friend check on the exact rules. Ernst could violate those rules, once, of course, but then this kind of airplane would not be able to make the tight turns of the river at the Lorelei, especially not from the south. So what you see in the scene, him flying over the G nderodehaus is about as tight as it is possible. Did he try and failed? The official H3 web site says in the German summary <http://www.heimat3.de/inhalt.html> : "steigt Ernst in sein Flugzeug und verungl ckt t dlich an der Loreley". The literal translation would be "has a deadly accident" but the English version reads: "Ernst gets into his light aircraft and crashes to his death on the Loreley rock" So, I'm afraid, we're back to where we started.

Wolfgang

From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan jsbiedron.com>
Date: Thu, 23 Mar 2006 17:27:13 -0600

Wolfgang and all,

Yet right at the end, before he hits the rock, Ernst closes his eyes. If he did not intend to crash, wouldn't he have a look of panic on his face?

Susan

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire zetnet.co.uk>
Date: Fri, 24 Mar 2006 15:44:02 -0000

Thank you to Gert Jan and Susan, and (off list) Wolfgang and Thomas for encouraging words! I'm afraid what follows may again be a bit way out – I'd be interested to know whether or not it makes sense to people who have a better grounding than I have in German culture.

As I said in an earlier posting, both times that I've watched Episode 5, the pigeon reminded me of the beautiful poem by Rilke that starts "Taube die draussen blieb..." ("Dove that stayed outside..." – see end of email for German text*) I'm not qualified to even read Rilke without a crib, and googling quickly I haven't found a particularly good translation of it on the web – so I'll copy here a prose interpretation of it from Erich Heller's book "*The Disinherited Mind*" (Penguin edn 1961, p 253-4, based on American edn of 1957), which of course doesn't have the word-music or economy of the poem itself. Also I read Heller's book too long ago to remember his own thesis well. But Heller writes:

"The poem was written for 'the feast of praise', and the praise is for exploration and poetic creativity. Its first stanza speaks of a dove that stayed outside the dovecot, an adventurous and 'creative' dove; but now the dove is back in the dovecot, united with the rest of its fellows in the routine of day and

night, and only now, after all its exploits, has it come to know what it means to be at home, for only now is the movement of its wings truly felt and realized, enriched as it is by the assimilation of strangest terrors. Among doves, the second stanza continues, the most protected creature, never exposed to terrible dangers, knows not what gentleness is – as it is the recovered heart that is richest in feeling, and as power rejoices at its greater freedom won through renunciation. Above Being Nowhere, says the third stanza, extends the Everywhere (and the German word *‘überall’* – everywhere – also carries the associations of ‘above everything’). The ball, jeopardized in the most daring throw – does it not fill your hands with a new sensation of return? Has it not increased by the pure weight of its home-coming?”

Everyone by now will be thinking what on earth is she on about, Matko’s pigeon came to a sad end. So much for mysticism.

But the poem is also about a kind of Heimat, an inner kind, capable also of a religious interpretation though I don’t read it that way. I suspect it is a kind that a lot of people would reject. Most of Heimat 3 is demonstrating that this kind of Heimat is as unattainable as the concept of “Heimat” externalised in a place or time or idealised relationship. Not only the pigeon, but also Ernst and poor Matko are adventurous and creative, but end up smashed on the rock.

But there are still Hermann and Clarissa. Episode 5 chronicles their passage through the “strangest terrors” of Clarissa’s illness, though in a curiously distanced way, when one compares it with the account of her illness in DZH. Yet the images are still very painful to watch. Thomas questions “how a director could show his own wife that way”. We don’t know enough about her relationship with her son to identify with her feelings while she watches the wedding video, but it is easier to feel for her when she tries to start singing again. Lulu’s reconciliation with the couple is touching. Hermann has become “almost like anybody else”, as Reitz says in the interview with Maarten van Bracht – an attentive grandfather, and the anguished partner of a very sick woman. Lacking Mamangakis, we never got to hear the Reunification Symphony – it’s easy to forget that he is also a world-class musician and composer.

Only at the end of the next episode will it be clearer where they as a couple are heading. But already in Episode 5 there are indications that, as Ivan puts it, Hermann’s “character is becoming whole again, re-uniting itself with his past and present”. Am I right to see here something of the inner Heimat of the Rilke poem?

I said of Hermann and Clarissa in Episode 4,

- > I have a serious problem with the envious, almost sadistic interpretation
- > that their misfortunes are a nemesis on their ‘hubris’, because they had been
- > ‘having things too good’,
- and
- > there is something particularly uncomfortable in H3 about Clarissa’s being
- > ‘brought low’ by cancer.

This discomfort persists in Episode 5, but maybe there is another way to understand it.

I suspect an element of sado-masochism and Schadenfreude in myself when I identify with the language of “renunciation” or “redemption”, and with the idea that creativity and maturity has to be reached through suffering. I believe it is language that can only legitimately be used by someone who has experienced it himself, and no one has the right to prescribe it for another. A “comeuppance” approach to other people’s loss of their apparent good fortune can be equally nasty.

The Rilke poem may suggest another way of looking at it, even though Heller's paraphrase speaks of enjoying "freedom through renunciation". (In fact the word in the poem is "Widerruf", which feels more like "taking back something one has said" rather than "renunciation" – though I suppose "recantation" would be equally moralistic.)

On reflection, there is a difference between on the one hand allowing that suffering has occurred, has been endured, and has changed people, and on the other hand getting satisfaction from seeing someone meet with a comeuppance. Naturally we all do both – but there is an important difference. Looking again through Edgar Reitz' interviews, I don't see there much Schadenfreude, or moralistic stuff about nemesis.

[This email is getting too long. I'll split it here and continue in another mail.]

*German text of Rilke's poem
from <http://www.rilke.de/gedichte/taube.htm>

Taube, die draußen blieb

Dreizehnte Antwort

Für Erika

zum Feste der Rühmung

Taube, die draußen blieb, außer dem Taubenschlag,
wieder in Kreis und Haus, einig der Nacht, dem Tag,
weiß sie die Heimlichkeit, wenn sich der Einbezug
fremdster Schrecken schmiegt in den gefühlten Flug.

Unter den Tauben, die allergeschonteste,
niemals gefährdeste, kennt nich die Zärtlichkeit;
wiedererholtes Herz ist das bewohnteste:
freier durch Widerruf freut sich die Fähigkeit.

Über dem Nirgendssein spannt sich das Überall!
Ach der geworfene, ach der gewagte Ball,
Füllt er die Hände nicht anders mit Wiederkehr:
rein um sein Heimgewicht ist er mehr.

Aus: Die Gedichte 1922 bis 1926 (Briefwechsel mit Erika Mitterer, dreizehnte Antwort, Ragaz, 24. August 1926)

From: Angela Skrimshire <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>
Date: Fri Mar 24 16:47:35 CET 2006

This is a continuation of my email re "Matko's pigeon, and Rilke's poem"
 There are links to the interviews I quote from on ReindeR's site at
<http://www.heimat123.net/interviews/> .

People who too readily accuse successful middle-class musicians, absorbed in pursuit of their difficult art, of being "selfish" and "having things too good" should consider whether they would include successful film-makers in this category! But seriously – Edgar Reitz' interviews suggest that his own view of the modern world and of his characters, though often despondent, is not moralistic or eager to invoke nemesis on others.

The Dutch interviewer, Maarten van Bracht (24/12/04), tackled the issue of Schadenfreude directly, and received some good replies. He asked

In part 4 "Allen geht's gut" prosperity brings greed, vanity, paranoia, unfaithfulness and loss of tradition with it. It seems you take pleasure in handing out mishap and unhappiness.

To which Reitz replied:

"Well, I merely describe them. It is difficult to say something about this; it is painful. When I observe and describe things like these, it hurts, but at the same time it is comical"

He gives Anton's funeral as an example, and adds:

".....it is sad and nobody can help laughing. That is the feeling I kept having, tragic and comical at the same time. And astonishment about how stupidly man can behave."

The same interviewer then asked:

For Hermann and Clarissa happiness, homeliness and creativity do not go together. They need unrest, unhappiness and physical distance for that. Is it unavoidable that creative people suffer more than normal ones?

Reitz replied at length, concluding:

".....I prefer a form of happiness – not the banal kind of the consumer, happy with material possessions – in which one remains creative. Now, you build a house in a lovely spot, you go and live there with a woman you love, in the expectation that you will *have* to be happy. However, I do not think that Hermann will rediscover his creative power because of being unhappy, but because he is liberated from this incorrect, this wrong kind of, happiness that consists of superficial matters. So I do *not* think that happiness and creativity are mutually exclusive, provided that the happiness is real because of a spiritual dimension."

Similarly, in the Q & A session at the London Goethe Institute (17/04/05), Ivan asked, re Hermann's accident:

.....Was that accident meant to signify in any way a punishment, for his attitude, his selfish attitude, perhaps his introverted attitude, his turning away from the problems of others, was it a kind of hubris, a punishment by the gods, or just was it sheer chance, as it were ?

Retiz' reply, as interpreted at the time, was:

"Yes, when we were writing the script we felt that Hermann simply had it too good. In life it can't be that good, something bad always happens in that kind of circumstance, Clarissa leaves, and he gets creative, but that was just a little bit too - it was too little for me, that didn't add up, it was too simple, your love leaves, and then you become creative, no, in that circumstance you fall

into a trap. And for that reason, yes, of course that trap is to some extent symbolic. That's what happens in that situation."

I think this reply needs to be understood in the context of Reitz' observations elsewhere. For a start, he is not one to consider an "introverted attitude" as necessarily "selfish" – in the *Die Zeit* interview of 16/12/04, for instance, he says:

"A new kind of politics can only be conceived from private experience: When I understand myself, I will be understandable to others. These days, what is purely personal has a reactionary taint and is unjustly suspected of evading responsibility."

At the same time, however, he constantly maintains that (In the family) "...one HAS to solve the problems, one must always find a social solution or a solution with other people. One's own happiness must be reflected in the happiness of other people. There is no happiness alone – that's what family teaches us." (VPRO video documentary 19/12/04)

It is this ability to handle complexity and ambiguity that makes Reitz' work so rich and authentic. Most of the time he is observing rather than judging, and when he judges, it is as much himself as other people whom he judges.

Again in the London Q&A he describes Hermann and Clarissa's predicament in terms of

"..... a new kind of Romanticism the romantic idea that life is a journey without an end but what I believe is that concrete experiences ARE needed, one does need stability, you need to arrive, in the sense that you need a house – a place, a house, a landscape and a family....
.....

And this is what's so important for Hermann and Clarissa, they try to find something else,they want to find a place of stability for their love, they want to realise a kind of romantic ideal, and this precisely leads to the problems that they confront, and what it really does is that it relativises everything, it reminds you that life is short and that dreams won't have a reality for very long.

But in the *Die Zeit* interview, after a similarly despondent critique of Romanticism as "the source of individualistic modernism, the dreams of love, of being an artist and also of growth and mobility, of this idea of being always at the beginning, and seeing life as a journey into unknown distances, artistic, or simply just personal" ,

he continues:

"My generation and that of '68 is very strongly caught up in these questions. I am looking for a story-teller's answer to our idea of a life-image, to the question: What is left of all that I have wanted in my life? It is still legitimate to want to save something from one's dreams."

So when his characters confront a kind of nemesis, he is only observing and judging a vulnerable aspect of himself, which he sees as responsible for his present despondency, and which nonetheless is still a deep source of his own inspiration. Again, a fascinating, creative ambivalence...

This also informs the character of Hermann. The actor Henry Arnold confirms the Hermann of *Heimat 3* "has become a quite different man" from the Hermann of *DZH*:
" It's not just that he's a bit older than I am, but his view of the world, what he formerly expected from himself, his life, and also his music and his art, is so

changed that I had to invent him as a new man.” (VPRO video documentary 19/12/04)

Hermann in H3 has become the bearer of one of Reitz' most pessimistic observations. Reitz told Maarten van Bracht (24.12.04):

“Hermann was the person with ideals. He, as the central figure in *Die Zweite Heimat*, ran away from his village. He, unlike his brothers, went to find a richer, more fulfilling, life somewhere else. When back in Hunsrück he accidentally stumbles on his family, but he thinks he can keep his distance. Then he finds out that his brothers are better able to cope with life, have stronger characters than he does. They have an “anchor point”, they have answered certain questions for themselves. But Hermann is in fact at a loss – and that applies to all current intellectuals, they are at a loss in a special way. The problem is that they have long thought that they followed the just, the better way. With hindsight that is clearly not the case, but they cannot turn back and make their way again, despite all their experience, knowledge and ideals. This makes them speechless. Hermann increasingly lacks language, text. Compared with the others his character becomes steadily less outspoken, more a rather pale character, (smiles) finally he is almost like anybody else. I struggled with that, because I was not sure anymore how I had to place Hermann over against the others. I am not happy that he, the artist, has become a “discontinued model”. I am of the opinion that artists need a different form of self consciousness, that they have to think freely and aggressively, that they have to influence society.”

But at almost the same time, in the *Die Zeit* interview (16.12.04), he ends a similar though much briefer description of Hermann with the words:

“..... today the intellectual is remarkably helpless. All the same, I sympathise with this helplessness.”

Again in judging Hermann, he judges himself.

About Clarissa's illness, he speaks in a very different way (VPRO video documentary 19/12/04):

“The love of Hermann and Clarissa is for me a quite central theme, it starts in DZH. The most important thing is that both partners, the man and the woman both remain a mystery to each other. The particular stimulus for love is that the other, the You, the opposite, in Hermann's eyes Clarissa, is someone who can never be entirely known.”

The interviewer asks: *Is that a precondition for the relationship to continue?*

Reitz replies:

“Yes, that actually happens, a dreadful thing happens. She has left him and then she comes back and she is ill. She has a severe illness, she had it inside her for a long time and didn't know. He has always seen her as stronger than him, with the freedom to go away. Then suddenly he sees that his beloved wife is sick and needs his help, and then everything is turned upside down and becomes strange to him, and thereby she again becomes strange to him and love can arise again.”

One wonders how this very male response would sound to Clarissa, especially as it was she not Hermann who left the relationship. However it is moving, and a long way from the disturbing notion that she might have been somehow “brought to heel” by her illness, which I thought to detect while watching Episode 4.

So maybe we can lay to rest some of the stuff about hubris and nemesis etc (and I should ditch my hypersensitivity to Schadenfreude), and focus on the rich, complex, ambiguous and authentic material in the film, the work of a director whose self-knowledge goes parallel with his understanding of and empathy with others.

When the *Die Zeit* interviewer asks “*What is left then?*”, Reitz replies:

In the end, it seems as if we must start all over again from the beginning.
That, and also because I know of no final answer, is why I have set the image of the family at the end.

Discussion of that must wait till the next Episode – but in that concrete family situation, with all its compromises, might the older couple at least have arrived at something approaching the inner “Heimat” of ‘Rilke’s poem? However, that may well be a cringe-making conclusion to anyone who knows more than I do about Rilke and German culture in general... Probably way off the mark.

Angela

From: "Wyn Grant" <wyn_grant@hotmail.com>
Date: Sat, 25 Mar 2006 09:26:20 +0000

Although it is not as powerful as Episode 4, I very much enjoyed watching this episode again. As far as the plane crash is concerned, I think that an English coroner's court would record an open verdict. My interpretation would be that Ernst tries to release his frustrations by some dare devil flying, the plane develops a fault and he closes his eyes in horror just before the crash - but equally that could be someone committing suicide and realising in the last seconds what they have done. Ernst is a complex and flawed character, but also a very interesting one.

Ernst says, 'Things change in Schabbach once the world takes notice of you.' He is at odds with the innate conservatism of many of the villagers. But it is interesting that a well portrayed group of NIMBYs as they are called in England (Not In My Back Yard) spearhead the opposition to the museum. A supremely ironical comment is that 'it is funny that we newcomers have to defend country life.'

As Simon Optik disappears, there is an effort to boost cultural tourism in the Hunsruck which, of course, is very much part of the EU's 'Pillar 2' vision for such regions. Interesting that the Priest says, 'perhaps the real danger is tourism ... making natural beauty a commodity' which is almost a straight lift from Polanyi. One of the things I think that the whole series does very well is capture economic and technological change and the challenges that it presents.

Ivan asks,

> Why does Lulu stop her car and observe through its sun-roof Matko
> flying his glider in the meadows?'

Interesting. An off the wall comment would be that perhaps it is some kind of unconscious link with her grandmother observing something similar, a subtle observation that she shares much with her grandmother.

Ivan asks,

- > When Hartmut storms out of his office and wrestles with Böckle
- > who is having Mara's horses rounded up, he cries: "First you mess
- > around with my wife, then you ruin me?" Has there been some sexual
- > impropriety? We haven't witnessed anything, have we? Perhaps
- > something has been cut?'

This would suggest that something has been cut. I note that Hartmut also says to Mara in anger, 'Why didn't you marry my father?' This doesn't imply anything between them other than a deep emotional bond, but Hartmut makes it clear that he feels that his father and his wife colluded to run him down. He does look pretty preposterous in his Toad of Toad Hall outfit when he is towed through the wine festival on a breakdown truck, waving sheepishly to the crowd.

BTW, I was not at all offended by Angela's remarks even though I hope to visit the Hunsruck someday. Isn't there a kind of argument that in post-modernity 'reality' and constructions of reality become blurred? Reference was made to the Archers, the BBC radio serial, and you can actually buy maps of Ambridge. Perhaps a match [*map?-Eds*] of Schabbach next? :-)

From: "Robert A D Cran" <chinherb att.biz>

Date: Sat, 25 Mar 2006 12:10:00 +0200

I can't see what the doubt is:

Ernst buys a second-hand plane.

As Wyn says, he does some dare-devil flying. Yes, why not?

The engine of this second-hand plane is leaving a trail of smoke long before he crashes. I have never seen such planes leave trails like this, and it wasn't happening in earlier flights in 5. Joel, Wolfgang, any technical observations?

However, towards his last moments, the engine, without any shadow of a doubt, stalls and is visibly smoking now at the front. Ernst notices and tries to restart without success.

He sees the crash is inevitable within seconds. He doesn't need or want to watch the impact. Ernst is a highly experienced war pilot. He has seen "last moments" before.

He knows what to do. He has avoided crashing into others. He closes his eyes.

There is no horror that I can detect on his face - he is too occupied with the reality of the moment to indulge himself in any more psychology than closing his eyes.

In addition to all that: look, Ernst just has never come across as someone who might commit suicide anyway. Oder?

Robert Cran.

From: Ralf Eigl <RalfEigl t-online.de>

Date: Sat, 25 Mar 2006 11:33:31 +0100

I agree with Robert - Ernst's flight was only meant to give vent to his frustration - a few daredevil operations in his plane to get rid of all the disappointment, aggression, frustration that had built up inside him, not an attempt to kill himself. People DO get into their cars and drive around for an hour like madmen sometimes because they are frustrated but not meaning to kill themselves... If Ernst HAD tried to kill himself, why the surprised look when he noticed the machine didn't work properly, why an attempt to restart the machine??

And: what a very strange coincidence it would be if just seconds before Ernst would try to commit suicide, the plane had a fatal engine failure - not very credible...

Ralf

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

Date: Sat, 25 Mar 2006 10:40:37 -0000

If the suicide theory is not very credible please explain why Edgar Reitz wanted to leave the matter open!

Ivan.

From: "Robert A D Cran" <chinherb att.biz>

Date: Sat, 25 Mar 2006 13:33:17 +0200

Ivan, sorry about that slip of the key that resulted in three copies with no reply in them.

> If the suicide theory is not very credible please explain why Edgar Reitz
> wanted to leave the matter open!
>
> Ivan.

Good question. Leaving it open for others and feeling it is open for oneself could be two very different things.

From: "Amanda Jeffries" <amanda.jeffries virgin.net>

Date: Sat, 25 Mar 2006 12:24:52 -0000

Episode 5 has been perhaps my favourite one of this series. and that is because of the sensitive and unhurried portrayal of the tragic life of Matko, beautifully acted by Patrick Mayer. As others have said, it is in one way a kind of stand-alone much in the same vein as some of the episodes of Heimat 2. Why should a young boy of thirteen, as he is at the beginning of the episode, with his life apparently opening up in front of him and 'with everything to live for', take his own life at the end? We see him right at the beginning starting to find his freedom and independence (symbolised by his moped on which he is weaving around happily, to the tender and optimistic background music); showing a childlike wonder at Ernst's plane and Hartmut's cars

("Wow!"); taking his part enthusiastically in the wine festival ceremony; and with the onset of adolescent sexual feelings (falling in love romantically with the fairy-tale wine queen, and ogling at the painting of the nude). But Matko is the product of a troubled background. In common with so many of the Heimat characters, he has been deprived of a father; and more than that, he has been abandoned by his mother (who turns out to be an inadequate and dysfunctional person herself when she appears at the end of the episode). He is the wounded bird who is waiting to fly; hence his fascination with the plane, and the gesture of taking flight, with outspread arms, which he enacts hopefully in Hartmut's car, and then despairingly from the mountain (and perhaps the gesture also parallels that of crucifixion). His tenderness towards the bird is tenderness towards the deeply wounded part of himself. When the bird is killed, it is the moment where Matko's hope for his own life also dies.

As well as being a stand-alone, though, what is interesting is how Matko's fate is woven in with that of others, including the Simon family, and how everyone in different ways fails him and uses him, culminating in his final suicide. And how this sheds light on aspects of their character and of the society he lives in. Matko represents innocent and vulnerable sectors of society. Effectively an orphan, an immigrant from the Bosnian conflict, and an adolescent (and perhaps the speech defect also represents a mild 'disability'), he is seen generally as a nuisance, literally pushed out of the way. No wonder he falls in love with the wine queen, who shows just a little kindness towards him. Ernst notices his interest in planes, and from that moment conceives a selfish desire to impress him, and to possess him as a son and heir. It is also a pursuit of immortality - if he has fathered Matko, he will never die, like the gypsy boy in the painting. He probably does see himself in Matko - a fatherless outsider - but he pays little heed to Matko's own needs, and the pursuit of his own need for an heir through legal channels ultimately destroys Matko. He could have been a real father to Matko, but instead he commits suicide (in my view!). At the very least, he fails to take him with him to France. And the suicide also sets a precedent for Matko - we know how this can be passed down from generations - at the same spot, and by 'flying'.

The next member of the Simon clan to brush with Matko is Hartmut, who uses him as an errand boy, and as a means of obtaining easy flattery through Matko's admiration of his cars. Hartmut is in many ways still just an overgrown boy, and the daredevil 'easy rider' sequence in which Hartmut almost has both of them killed, shows his immaturity and his inability to take responsibility for anyone else, including himself (and Mara, the factory, his own son, perhaps even Galina). He says to Matko 'we're related' but shows no desire or ability to relate to him in the way Matko needs. Hartmut's death wish ("a lot of people would like to see us both dead") maybe rubs off on Matko too. But Hartmut does survive.

As for the other squabbling heirs of Ernst, Matko is simply an impediment, an impudent outsider. How can someone so unimportant stand in the way of their access to Ernst's wealth? The full weight of the law is brought in to prevent this unthinkable eventuality taking place. There is a stark contrast between their attitude, and that of Matko who simply doesn't want to inherit, and whose only concern is the fate of his bird.

Matko then becomes the object of hate and envy, bullied and attacked by his peers. He has every reason to feel paranoid! He tries to escape to Ernst's cave, and is oblivious to the great wealth he has gained access to, seeking only sanctuary. When he emerges, he is a 'suspicious person' who is mistakenly seen as trying to trick the guards. He is pursued through the woods, and told to go back to where he came from - the victim of racism too.

Next Matko is taken under Hermann's wing. Hermann sees him at that service station that keeps popping up, and sees in Matko his own younger self that wanted to flee Shabbach. But Hermann is now out of tune with those feelings, and brings Matko back. Though well-intentioned, ultimately he betrays Matko's trust, delivering him to have the blood test (where he is told 'everyone in Shabbach will hate you now'), and letting him slip away from the clinic. He does not pursue him but goes to pick up Clarissa (whose recovery is tellingly juxtaposed with Matko's suicide). Naively he imagines Matko will go back to his house, but of course he goes to the mountain and it is then too late.

Finally 'the mother' is brought in as Matko stands on the ledge. 'The mother' usually works in these situations. But it is many years too late. Matko said to Ernst right at the beginning 'I don't know if she's my mother'. He fails to recognise her when she is produced at Hermann's house, where she shows a remarkable lack of affection for him. When she wails 'How can you do this to me?', it is the final impetus for him to jump. In the end her only interest in him, like the detective's, was the inheritance. Perhaps he sees this, sees the weight of his deprivation, and jumps to punish her and because there is no hope left.

In a soap opera, Matko would probably have been saved at the end. But Reich makes this a psychological drama in which the flaws of the whole community end in the tragic death of an innocent.

Amanda Jeffries

From: Thomas Hönemann <th.hoenemann freenet.de>

Date: Sat, 25 Mar 2006 15:17:45 +0100

I do agree very strongly with you, Robert!
Thomas

> From: "Robert A D Cran" <chinherb att.biz>
> Sent: Saturday, March 25, 2006 11:10 AM
> Subject: heimat123: Ernst's last flight
>
> >I can't see what the doubt is:

From: Thomas Hönemann <th.hoenemann freenet.de>

Date: Sat, 25 Mar 2006 15:40:49 +0100

Ivan, there is no written hint, no authentic source for what Helma Hammen (who I really hold in high regard and do not want to characterise as untrustworthy at all!!!) told you - the cause could be her own helplessness. I just asked Edgar Reitz personally for this and will inform you as soon as I get an answer (the result of course could be that he validates what Helma told you). I also will contact Helma to ask her in which context Edgar Reitz told her so.

=== Sorry for using this direct (and unimaginative [Eds.] way, I am aware), but I feel the suicide-topic is exhausted and blocking the view for other interesting topics. ===

Best regards, Thomas

From: Thomas Hönemann <th.hoenemann freenet.de>

Date: Sat, 25 Mar 2006 16:06:37 +0100

Dear Amanda, many thanks for your thoughtful analysis of Matko. I really enjoyed reading.

Another Detail about him: Do you remember, that in H1 each of the main characters had his/her personal music theme?*

In H3 it is quite different, here (simplified said) music from my point of view is more often used to characterise ambiances - especially think of part 4 - with one outstanding exception: Matko. His theme reminds us strongly of the former H1-Ernst-Theme which we also sometimes find "recycled" in H3. This illustrates and emphasizes again that those two are brothers in mind.

Thomas

* (If not: check out the German Amazon site for it:

<http://www.amazon.de/exec/obidos/ASIN/B0006FNI94>, you will not only find the title list with proofs of my following thesis, but also pieces to listen to - please notice that the tracklists of H2 und H3 were permuted, so e. g. if you click the first song of H2 you will listen to the first song of H3 the other way round).

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire zetnet.co.uk>

Date: Sat, 25 Mar 2006 17:06:49 -0000

Like Thomas I love Amanda's mail about Matko - very perceptive and convincing. (Like Thomas too, I agree strongly with Robert re Ernst's death - his energy and anger were much too alive for suicide from hopelessness, even if his deliberately angry risk-taking caused a mechanical malfunction - but I also agree it's time we let that one drop).

The relationship between Matko and Ernst is very moving and genuine - I don't think Ernst was only "selfishly" seeking posterity for himself in his fondness for Matko - - as Gert Jan said, if Ernst had seriously thought Matko was his son it's unlikely that he would tell Meise to trace all his past girlfriends. He would simply have told him to trace Anca. I feel it's more the other way round - fondness for Matko awoke Ernst's instinct to search for a son . Also, in the performances there is probably a strong reflection of the friendship of the two actors - since Thomas said:
> Those two became friends, not only in fiction, but also in reality.

Amanda says Ernst "pays little heed to Matko's own needs" - I'm not quite sure about that - dear Amanda, I think it's a mother speaking! Matko had need of both a mother and a father - and I think Ernst in his rough and ready way was providing something emotionally, if not materially, as a father - but he couldn't be the mother that the lad so much needed too.

Also, Matko's grief for Ernst (largely unspoken, as who else was there for him to confide in?) was most likely the fundamental reason for his death - all the other factors contributed, but the loss of Ernst would have undermined his ability to cope

with them. The sad dignified way he threw the carnations over the rock totally transformed Meise's grubby gesture in supplying them.

Anyway, It's a fascinating email, Amanda, and great to read.

Angela

From: Thomas Hönemann <th.hoenemann@freenet.de>
Date: Sun, 26 Mar 2006 08:48:31 +0200

Dear Angela and others,

first of all: Angela, thank you so much for your deep and profound analysis. For me as a person who is not very well-educated in literature, it was really interesting to read about the Rilke-poem and the parallels to H3 you interpreted from it. It was very interesting to read and think about, and not way out at all in my opinion. Also thank you so much for all your efforts of sourcing your point of view with the quotations from the interviews. You did a real labour of love with your contributions, I am deeply impressed.

You asked:

> Am I right to see here something of the inner Heimat of the Rilke poem?"

I think you are. I strongly agree with what you and Ivan wrote about the change of Hermann who indeed made a significant development during these two episodes 4 and 5. Remember him running away without any ambition after the argument with Clarissa in the beginning of part 4. Or him sitting next to Ernst in Ernst's house, drinking red wine, thinking about their lives (a very significant dialogue, yes a key scene for the whole film, which was not discussed until now):

Hermann: "Alles wovon wir geträumt haben ..." Ernst: "... hat uns traurig gemacht." (Hermann: "Everything we dreamt of ..." Ernst: "... did made us sad.")

How strong these few words are! And how much they express that feeling of bitterness and resignation, facing the pile of broken glass of their lives (do you use this metaphor in English language at all????).

And now see him as an confident, cautious and active (!!) husband, an engaged relative (who nevertheless tries to avoid being involved in family matters too much!) and responsible and spirited proctor [*protector? – Eds*] of Matko. But we have to admit: his change is based on Clarissa's change, who peeled off the image of her restless teenage behaviour and her enthusiasm for musical experiments. Note: she was born in 1942, so she is 55 years old then. Hermann on the other side from his behaviour often before seemed to be older than he is, he is 57 now (even though I have some difficulties with Henry Arnold playing a man in the fifties ... how do you think about this? [*Small corrections to above ages made at Thomas' request – Eds.*]) (Please keep in mind: Of course I am no expert at all to judge about the acting skills of Henry Arnold or anyone else, I never would presume to do so, I only can tell you how I feel about it, without beeing able to concretise!)_

Hermann and Clarissa were longing for a home since the beginning of H3. Why else should they built a home, far away from the big cities and centers of art? In part one Clarissa (not Hermann!) says: "All my longing for love and security aroused. I felt it was also Hermann's aim to arrive somewhere finally. Stop living out of suitcases, a life we got used to as well occupied musicians. We found ourselves in the middle of

our lives, and our love needed a home." (quoted and translated from Edgar Reitz, Heimat 3, p. 21).

But we learned that the house they built, the place is not their inner home at all, especially not for Clarissa who is not filled out with growing flowers and milking the goat. But in the final scene of episode 5 we find her development proved: After having conquered cancer her attitude towards life has changed. She seems to be lucky and satisfied to be back at their house, lying in Hermann's arms, watching the scenery. She apparently has found her inner Heimat, relating not (only) on a place, but also (and most of all) on her husband. Of course: it is adequate and necessary to doubt if this feeling would persist, if they really would live in prosperity until the end of their lives from now on, but Angela already mentioned it, we will find this thesis supported by what Clarissa says in the end of episode 6 soon.

Finally (and completely off topic, sorry for that): I was surprised to find the word "Schadenfreude" adopted directly from the German language - there are not so many examples for that, I myself only can remember "Rucksack", "Kindergarten" (Kindergarden), and (not very complimentary) "Blitzkrieg" - and of course "Schabbach" ;-)). Are there more examples?

No answers from Edgar Reitz and Helma Hammen relating on the suicide-topic so far.

Have a very nice Sunday everybody, Thomas

From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder.rustema.nl>

Date: Sun, 26 Mar 2006 11:55:00 +0100

At 12:24 +0000 25/3/06, Amanda Jeffries wrote:

- > Next Matko is taken under Hermann's wing.
- > Hermann sees him at that service station that
- > keeps popping up

This service station by the way, is a nice metaphor of being lost. Designed for people on the move, it can be anywhere, in spite of the word 'Hunsrück' on it. It belongs more to the autobahn (episode 4 'Reichshöhenstraße', 1938) than to the region around it.

It is a home for nobody, people are just passing through. They can 'feel at home' because it looks like anywhere else. It is no surprise that Ernst and Matko hang around there. Good choice Reitz!

By the way, we made a restroom break on the Heimat-tour at such a service station. It was conceptually one of the highlights of the trip for me. I did not get off to visit the service station though, because I sensed I might feel at home there, in such a Heimat-less place I already know well. After all, I was trying hard to act like a real tourist there, seeking to discover places and people that are authentic and new to me. While waiting for everyone to return I noticed the young couple with us in the bus reading the gossip in the Bild Zeitung tabloid. The kind of post-modernity and irony one will not find in Reitz' work. Did you?

In http://www.heimat123.net/pictures/Looking_at_Gatshof.jpg you see the couple next to 'Marie-Goot', in front of the man we called 'the brother of Reitz'. They were from around and saw Heimat 3 on television and then decided to join the tour.

ReindeR

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>
Date: Sun, 26 Mar 2006 12:02:16 +0100

Dear Thomas and everyone,

Thank you Thomas for such a welcoming response to my earlier email - I was quite anxious about posting it, as I am far from "well-educated" in German literature myself - have read hardly any, apart from some poetry. It's great too that it prompted such a long and thoughtful reply from yourself about Hermann and Clarissa.

Re borrowed German words in English - I've written a bit more to you off-list about that - but could also add here that the Anglo-Saxon origins of English make it a semi-Germanic language - many of the strongest words in English are of Germanic origin.

In response to Amanda's post yesterday: A bit more re Ernst and his surrogate "sons"/"young brothers" ie Tobi and Matko - - he let both of them down (Matko tragically) - but I don't think it was through "selfishness" - it was more his impatient, angry, embattled over-confidence that led to imprisonment in Russia, rejection by the community of Schabbach and the planners, and ultimately his own death.

Angela

From: "Jan R." <dasfestistzuendeaus@yahoo.com>
Date: Sun, 26 Mar 2006 03:28:07 -0800 (PST)

--- Thomas Hoenemann <th.hoenemann@freenet.de> wrote:

> Finally (and completely off topic, sorry for that):
 > I was surprised to find the word "Schadenfreude" adopted directly from the
 > German language - there are not so many examples for that, I myself only can
 > remember "Rucksack", "Kindergarten" (Kindergarden), and (not very
 > complimentary) "Blitzkrieg" - and of course "Schabbach" ;-)). Are there more
 > examples?

Hi Thomas,

have a look at

<http://www.englisch-hilfen.de/vokabeln/lehnwoerter.htm>

And btw, I'm happy that I'm not the only one who doubts this strange suicide theory ...

All the best
 Jan

From: Thomas Hönemann <th.hoenemann freenet.de>
Date: Sun, 26 Mar 2006 20:56:27 +0200

Just got a mail from Edgar Reitz answering yesterday's question about the cause for Ernst's death, clearly verifying the accident-thesis. I'll do my best to translate it in an adequate and authentic way, please feel free to correct me if I fail (on the bottom you will find the original message).

"(...) According to the script Ernst's death is an accident caused by a technical defect of his Cessna [airplane]. Fortuity? Within a fictional (novelistic) narration there naturally can be no fortuity (different from life!!!), because the author decides everything. In arts everything is following the way of sense-making the author intends. The spectator may and shall decide on his own, if Ernst's death additionally implies an answer to his current hopeless personal circumstances. I am surprised over and over, how intense the spectators' necessity is, to take the stories that are told in HEIMAT for real and to ignore the difference between arts and life (also see my speech at the honorary doctors celebration in Mainz). Kind regards, Edgar Reitz"

Bye,
 Thomas

----- Original Message -----

To: "Thomas Hönemann" <th.hoenemann freenet.de>
 Sent: Sunday, March 26, 2006 7:56 PM
 Subject: Re: HEIMAT 3 - Ernsts Tod

> Lieber Herr Hönemann, Sie haben die Frage nach Ernsts Tod schon
 > beantwortet: Laut Drehbuch ist es ein Unfall aus Gründen des technischen
 > Versagens seiner Cessna. Zufall? In einer fiktiven (romanhaften) Erzählung
 > kann es natürlich keine Zufälle geben, (im Gegensatz zum Leben!!!) da ja
 > der Autor alle Entscheidungen trifft. In der Kunst folgt alles einer von
 > ihm gewollten Sinngebung. Der Zuschauer mag und soll selbst entscheiden,
 > ob Ernsts Tod auch noch die Antwort auf seine momentan aussichtslose
 > Lebenssituation enthält. Ich bin immer wieder ´erstaunt, wie groß das
 > Bedürfnis der Zuschauer ist, die in HEIMAT erzählten Geschichten als bare
 > Münze zu nehmen und den Unterschied zwischen Kunst und Leben zu
 > ignorieren. (s. hierzu auch meine Rede zur Ehrenpromotion in Mainz)
 > Herzliche Grüße, Edgar Reitz

>

>

> ----- Original Message -----

> From: "Thomas Hönemann" <th.hoenemann freenet.de>
 > To: "Edgar Reitz" Sent: Saturday, March 25, 2006 4:28 PM
 > Subject: HEIMAT 3 - Ernsts Tod

>

>

>> Lieber Edgar Reitz,

>>

>> in der englischen Mailinglist-Diskussion ist eine heftige
 >> Auseinandersetzung darüber entbrannt, ob Ernst aufgrund eines technischen
 >> Versagens des Motors seines Flugzeuges stirbt, oder Selbstmord begeht. Im

>> Drehbuch ist von einem Unglück die Rede, was die erste Variante
>> unterstützt (die mir persönlich aufgrund der Darstellung auch näher
>> liegt). Dennoch - und mit guten Gründen - gibt es eine Reihe von
>> Selbstmord-Theoretikern. Könnten Sie bitte kurz Stellung zu diesem Thema
>> beziehen?
>>
>> Herzliche Grüße, auch an Ihre Frau, und noch ein schönes Wochenende (bei
>> endlich frühlingshaften Temperaturen!),
>> Ihr
>> Thomas Hönemann

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

Date: Mon, 27 Mar 2006 12:51:31 +0100

I am not trying to have the last word. It may be that this subject has been "done-to-death" as it were. Simply to say that I acknowledge, as I must, of course <vbg> that in the script Ernst's death was an accident.

I quote Reitz's words as translated by Thomas:

>.According to the script Ernst's death is an accident caused by a
> technical defect of his Cessna [airplane].

For me, of course, and another very big grin, the crucial words were:

>The spectator may and shall decide on his own, if Ernst's death additionally
> implies an answer to his [I take it this means Ernst's not the reader's!!]
> current hopeless personal circumstances.

So this spectator [Ivan] and others who shared my view [I think there were one or two!] have decided "on our own" that Ernst's death was the result of his "current hopeless circumstances" [suicide!]

I hope my/our interpretation is not seen as mere word twisting. That is my/our judgement/interpretation.

Thanks for reading.

Ivan Mansley.

From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan jsbiedron.com>

Date: Mon, 27 Mar 2006 09:31:37 -0600

Another German word that I see very often in American newspapers is "Zeitgeist."

Susan

Thomas wrote:

- > Finally (and completely off topic, sorry for that): I was surprised to find
- > the word "Schadenfreude" adopted directly from the German language - there
- > are not so many examples for that, I myself only can remember "Rucksack",
- > "Kindergarten" (Kindergarden), and (not very complimentary) "Blitzkrieg" -
- > and of course "Schabbach" ;-)). Are there more examples?

From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan jsbiedron.com>

Date: Mon, 27 Mar 2006 10:12:22 -0600

Thomas,

Thank you for your efforts to resolve this question!

In my opinion, with the words "According to the script . . ." Reitz avoids a definite answer from himself and furthermore states that " The spectator may and shall decide on his own" which is apparently what Reitz wants us to do.

I take issue with one thing he wrote (and also from an interview that was posted earlier about reality: Reitz mentions his surprise of the need of the spectator to take Heimat for real. For myself personally, I definitely KNOW Heimat is not real but nevertheless I want to understand the fictional character of Ernst. I don't think inquiring into what "really happened" means I/we think Ernst is a real person. In this case I am just trying to understand the story. But maybe there is no black or white answer - as with all art, each individual interprets the film as he or she sees it.

My question is "What is Reitz trying to tell us with the death of Ernst?"

There has been some comment that the theme of Ernst's death has been over discussed. Yet the topic has a powerful pull that I can't avoid. Why would an experienced flyer like Ernst attempt to let off some of his frustration by flying his plane in a space he knows is too tight to make such turns? That's my final statement on this subject.

As to Hermann, yes I agree that he has matured and developed in Episode 5. I have seen this in real life when people or a close family member come close to death by illness or accident. They suddenly "grow up". Clarissa and Hermann now seem to realize that life, love and family are important. So maybe Episode 5 is about life and death.

I also notice that Hermann has aged more in this episode and I think this time he does look and act older.

Susan

From: Thomas Hönemann <th.hoenemann@freenet.de>

Date: Tue, 28 Mar 2006 13:12:30 +0200

Dear Susan, Ivan and others,

sorry, I really do not want to overstress this topic and I also do not want to appear dogmatic or have the last word, but I understand Reitz's words a different way than Susan and Ivan do (which not assures that I understand them the *right* way - feel free to contradict!). I am also aware that it was me whose aim was to finish the topic, but in fact Edgar Reitz's comment may have caused more confusion than clarification, as far as it is verbalised quite abstractly, forcing us to read between the lines (which is very hard to do based on an amateur-translation ...).

In opposite to Susan I understand Edgar Reitz's reference to the script as a very clear information: Ernst's death definitely was an accident caused by a technical defect. To emphasize this, he points on that himself as the author of the script made a very clear and explicit decision to let Ernst die because of an accident (Susan, the question *why at all* he had to die would indeed be very interesting to discuss). No fortuity, no coincidence, he points on!

Now the sentence Susan and Ivan are relating to:

> The spectator may and shall decide on his own, if Ernst's death additionally
> implies an answer to his [indeed, Ivan, Ernst's!] current hopeless personal
> circumstances."

I have to admit, if we account this sentence isolated from the next one we can indeed get the impression that Reitz does want our phantasy to gain momentum. But - as far as I understand it correctly - with the following sentence Reitz convicts this as something he does not understand, even more: he does not approve.

To be honest: I myself have difficulties to understand what this "taking-for-real-topic" actually is about. None of us, as Susan, Wolfgang and others already pointed out, is that naive to take HEIMAT for real, and none of us would pray at the Simon's graves. The whole topic in my eyes is lacking of a clear differentiation between taking something fictional for real *or* trying to understand and retrace (which also may include sympathy) situations that are shown in a film and which relate on real life, on things each of us already has experienced in a more or less identical way. Discussing if Ernst died because of an accident or committed suicide is not about reality and personal identification, but about understanding and retracing the story Reitz tells us, nothing more. So please let us go on trying to understand these stories and find out what we love about them!

Best regards,
Thomas

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>
Date: Tue, 28 Mar 2006 14:59:19 +0100

Dear Heimaters,

I'm hesitant to add anything more to the current discussion re Ernst's death etc - but I've just come across a lovely (and apparently famous) quote from John Keats, the English romantic poet, who wrote to his brothers in 1817:

"I had not a dispute but a disquisition with Dilke, on various subjects; several things dovetailed in my mind, & at once it struck me, what quality went to form a Man of Achievement especially in literature & which Shakespeare possessed so enormously - I mean Negative Capability, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts without any irritable reaching after fact & reason "

A "disquisition" - is a lengthy discourse... I guess it's long enough now?

Angela

From: Elizabeth Garrett <david.garrett4@ntlworld.com>
Date: Tue, 28 Mar 2006 21:35:25 +0000

Dear Ivan, Thank you again for your thoughtful introduction. And thank you everybody else I shall miss this mailing list badly when it finishes. Let us hope that Reitz makes another Heimat film, perhaps in a documentary form. I have so many queries! For instance, I would love to know more about how they filmed the devastating happenings on the Lorelei rock. There must have been so many people scrambling around there, camera crew, producers and all the other essential helpers, all terrified. How could the actor playing Matko have been held on by steel cables? Where were they attached? Couldn't there have been some trick photography - well, there obviously was for the boy's final plunge.

Another query - who was Tante Hilde? A relative, or a foster mother? And who paid her for Matko's upkeep? And how did his mother come to be in Germany in about 1983? Would she have been allowed out of Bosnia? Please forgive my ignorance.

I found this episode painful and compelling to watch. One contributor to this list mentioned how viewers, while acknowledging that the film is all fiction, cannot help but be touched when they watch situations that they have experienced in their own lives. I have a close relative who some years ago was desperately ill with cancer like Clarissa. Happily she, like Clarissa, has made a complete recovery.

Moreover, I have four grandsons coming up to Matko's age, and of course I could not help comparing their lives, so happy and secure, with the life of that poor lonely boy in a country where he had never been accepted. The young louts from his school made me shudder.

A happier note was the reconciliation between Hermann and Clarissa, and Hermann's growing tenderness and maturity, which were beautiful to see.

Please keep writing, everyone!

Elizabeth Garrett.

From: Wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>

Date: Tue, 28 Mar 2006 18:18:58 -0500

Elizabeth,

well, now I can tell you one advantage of having made the trip last September: When we visited the Anzenfelder Mill, which served as the backdrop to Ernst's house and the entrance to the cave (which doesn't really exist there), we saw this piece of painted plywood "rock", that obviously was used as the prop from where Matko actually jumps (presumably into some air cushion), so no tricks except he didn't jump off the actual rock. The scenes on the actual rock outcrop (called Spitznack - pointed neck -, one "turn" south of the river before the Loreley) were done with a crane and boom for safety. But, as Thomas said, the parents of the actor who played Matko were nearby, not very relaxed about this setting. I don't think there are clips in the documentaries about this (Thomas?) but I can email you a few pictures we took at the locations.

You and others said it right, we relate with our own life experience to many of the scenes. I personally found this troubling, at least not very entertaining and you seem to agree that you feel pain when watching this episode. You can attribute this effect to Reitz' accurate way of storytelling. And that's the reason we are actually discussing the characters. It is difficult to remain indifferent with any of them. We realize that we are watching a movie but the events and scenes "could have" been real, or as Angela put it "as if". This conundrum that we know it's a movie but we feel as if we are watching reality defines the quality of Reitz's work. So he can't possibly be faulting us for living "with" the characters, that was the whole idea in the first place! Going back to Heimat 1, I felt like watching my own family history because I didn't know, on a daily basis, how my parents and grandparents lived, felt, spoke, looked at world affairs. One of the challenges for Reitz, as the "stories" got closer and closer to our present, to find the typical settings and events that actually provoked these feeling in the viewers.

You shudder at the school scene? I felt it was pretty accurate and not even all that bad, these things happen every day and kids learn to develop a way to fit in with the others. It was Matko who didn't want to fit in. It's when you see them huddled together and dealing drugs you need to shudder.

Wolfgang

From: Alan <alan wmedia.com>

Date: Wed, 29 Mar 2006 01:50:15 CEST

I've finally had time to write up my notes on Episode 5. The exchange has been rewarding once again. I especially enjoyed the thoughtful reflections of Angela and Amanda, which I hope to respond to later.

Ambiguity and the Death of Ernst

The discussion about the circumstances of Ernst's death prompts me to write a few words about ambiguity in art, authorial intent and the expectations of viewers/readers. Much of early 20th century literary criticism confronted these issues, especially after ambiguity became fairly common in modernist literature and art. I don't want to rehash a century of criticism here (especially as I am quite rusty on it and haven't the time to research it in depth), however, suffice it to say ambiguity has

been an acknowledged part of nearly all serious art, literature, music and film for the past 90 years.

The fact that exact cause of Ernst's death is not spelled out in black and white is hardly unusual (albeit no less frustrating if one is looking for clear answers), and leaves the film open to multiple interpretations, as I assume was the creator's intent. (I certainly read the English translation of Reitz's response quoted by Thomas as leaving the door open, as was noted by Susan Biedron in her note of earlier today.)

Nevertheless, even more controversially, the creator's intent cannot be considered the final answer either. It is often assumed that the "director's cut," "authorized edition" or "recording under the direction of the composer" is the definitive version of a work, but as anyone who has studied the work of Francis Ford Coppola, Walt Whitman, Igor Stravinski or thousands of other artists knows, this is open to dispute, as are countless statements by authors and filmmakers about their own work. Most artists will freely admit, the creative act is a mysterious process, and often major aspects of a story, composition, painting or drama alter as the work evolves through different drafts, editing or revisions. And sometimes aspects change after the work has been presented to the public (cf. the many variant forms of famous works changed after they have been initially released).

Alas, the acceptance of ambiguity in art during the past century has also allowed many "creatively challenged" or foggy minded artists to release a lot of very poor work on the public with the assumption that audiences (and critics) will easily allow such muddled-headed work to be embraced as the creation of a visionary. Time seems to be the greatest leveler. (I remember when it was fairly common to run into people who accused Stanley Kubrick of "willful obscurity" in *2001: A Space Odyssey* or of the opinion that Picasso was an incompetent draftsman, arguments seldom encountered today, now that their work has entered the mainstream.)

Personally, when I first saw Episode 5, I had assumed Ernst had killed himself. Now I embrace both interpretations. Both can be defended. I find ample reason to accept both, as I conclude is the author's intent in this case, despite the fact that he said the original script was created with this incident as an accident.

And Ernst's death is hardly the only ambiguous plot element in this episode for me.

The true identity of Matko's mother remains ambiguous for me based largely on Matko's reaction when he meets Anca at the Guenderodehaus. Yes, dramatic detail focuses on Anca's past and the photos of her shown by Hilde seem to support the view that she is his mother, but there is certainly room for doubt. Again, a black and white truth matters little, but the question is raised and it is never fully resolved.

Ernst's Collection

Also very ambiguous for me are the details of Ernst's art collection. We learn very little about it. On my initial viewing I accepted the fact that he had assembled this astounding collection, a treasure trove that major museums would fight over. I was frustrated that we never saw much or heard about it in greater detail save a couple of Otto Muellers, an Otto Dix etching and what might be a Kirchner oil. I wanted to learn much more, just as I wanted to hear some excerpts from Hermann's Unification Symphony. Obviously these are mere details in the larger story that the film relates, however I also note that in Episode II we got a pretty detailed inventory of all the hardware at the East German airbase and a rather involved explanation of the wiring box of the Guenderodehaus. So it seems odd to me that so little is detailed.

And then I looked at the specifics we are given and what we don't know. We know Ernst is a scavenger who finds value in pieces of the discarded past. We hear that an appraiser from New York has spent weeks looking over the collection and has given it his seal of approval. We also learned in Episode 4 that in 1995 Ernst's art collection in the cavern contained about 1600 important pieces; two years later in 1997 the cavern collection numbers 6000 pieces. This prompted some questions:

How did the collection grow in such size? If he was picking up all this art in the past two years - and if it was as distinctive as the works we've seen - he must have become one of the world's leading art collectors. Yet he did so with a very low profile. If so, how did he finance such an extravagant acquisition? And if he financed this by selling other works of art, then he must have been one of the world's leading dealers as well.

Following from the above, Ernst was collecting notable German artists who are hardly out of fashion. One would have thought he would have been investing in under-priced names of the past or emerging artists of the present rather than going after name brands. To finance a collection centering on the Expressionists would involve a lot of capital.

How did he finance the architectural plans or the elaborate vault-like cavern?

Why is the expert who looks over his collection from New York? Very unusual since America has never been noted for collecting 20th century German painters (with the exception of the exiles who settled here like Max Beckmann and George Grosz). The leading authorities would be in Germany, and since the Ludwig Museum isn't that far away in Cologne, one wonders why this appraiser was selected.

These nit-picky questions bypass the much bigger issue that the film raises about Ernst's wish for a family and how his energy was sublimated by a desire to surround himself with things. But they also leave open for speculation how much of Ernst's collection was what it was presented to be. In Episode II when Tobi and Ernst arrive at the East German air base we see that Ernst is adept at pretending to be somebody who he is not, and has the natural ease of a con man. (And if one wants to play this game, possible reasons for suicide do suggest themselves. I'm not proposing this in total seriousness, but it's an interesting area of speculation.)

A few other observations:

Ernst collects Otto Mueller (1874-1930). According to some biographies, Mueller's parentage is a mystery. He was the adopted son of the sister of Robert Hauptmann (Gerhart Hauptmann's father), but it has been speculated that he was born of gypsy parents, thus explaining why he became so interested in them as subjects of his later work. Ernst makes the direct connection between Mueller's painting of the gypsy boy and Matko. Considering both Matko and Mueller's biographies this is hardly coincidence. After World War I Mueller traveled in Eastern Europe - primarily in Hungary and Romania - to paint his gypsy subjects. He is probably better known for his angular female nudes, which are nearly always pictured lounging outdoors.

When I first saw Episode V, I was struck by how much Matko reminded me of Paul, the teenage protagonist in *Stunde Null* (Zero Hour), Reitz's film from 1976. They seem brothers in many ways: they are both refugee loners away from home, both wear American flying jackets, travel country roads on motorbikes and are betrayed by adults who should be helping them.

And I also thought that Ernst's ceremony announcing his museum was not unlike the public event in which a demonstration of the flying machine is a turning point in Reitz's *Der Schneider von Ulm* (1978). Both are events attended by provincial politicians that eventually end in humiliation for the man at the center of the attention. And that both men are lone flyers only reinforced the connection.

And speaking of stylistic connections with earlier films by Reitz, did anyone else note:

The flowers dropped in slow motion by Matko in memorial for Ernst echoes Ernst dropping the bouquet from the Messerschmitt during World War II in *Heimat*?

The mob that terrorizes Matko by throwing rocks at his window mirrors the anti-Semitic mob terrorizing the Jewish shop owners in *Heimat*?

Angela has written a wonderful post about Matko's pigeon and Rilke's poem which deserves a separate reply, however I note that Matko's pigeon is yet another bird within the confines of human living space that appears in *Heimat III*. (The others are: the bird trapped in the Guenderodehaus upon Hermann's release from the hospital in Episode IV; the bird nesting in the hallway of the Berlin apartment building where Gunnar resides in Episode II; the birds living within the Guenderodehaus when it is being fixed up and those living in the attic of the apartment building that Udo was hired to exterminate.)

Finally, and most trivially, I want to note two instances in Episode V where I found the cinematography so distracting it removed me from the drama being told. This is a very subjective reaction, and I suspect I am the only one who had this experience (see aside below), but in both instances I was jolted out of the film to note the camerawork.

The first was the moment of Ernst's suicide. There is a subjective shot of the rock wall filmed through a zoom lens. This stylistic cliché reminded me of a shot from a film made in the late 1960s when rapid zooms were included in nearly every conventional Hollywood movie. This stylistic trope was so overused it nearly disappeared a decade later. You very seldom see rapid zooms any longer, thank goodness. The second shot was one of Hermann and Clarissa in their car returning from the hospital. The shot opens with Clarissa and Hermann seen through the windshield conversing. This appears to be a standard shot filmed with Hermann's car sitting on a flatbed truck with the camera pointed backward. However, mysteriously, the camera suddenly becomes stationary as the car passes to the right of the screen and drives off. I still can't understand how the shot was accomplished. (It must have entailed a rather new highly mobile steadycam boom ensemble or some sort.) But I found the shot so startling that the first time I watched it on video, I had to stop and rewind the tape to make sure I saw it correctly. Alas, this means I was suddenly removed from the drama to contemplate how it was made.

Aside: Such moments are a problem for filmgoers who happen to have knowledge in any area, something filmmakers can never avoid as much as they might try. I admit that whenever a film takes place in a library with easily readable book titles I scan the titles out of curiosity. (It's my background as both a bookseller and publisher. I usually can deduce quite a bit from which books have been chosen to decorate a set.) In college a friend of mine was the son of an eye surgeon. He used to tell me that going to the movies with his father was awful as he was always noticing and commenting on the particular physical conditions of actors when they appeared in close-up. (I recall that he found Joan Hackett's eyes so distracting he couldn't sit still.

It seems she had some rare ophthalmological condition that 99.9% of the audience failed to notice.)

These days, art directors are usually very careful to keep things historically accurate. However there was an amusing article in the New York Times a few weeks ago about what happens when type designers go to the movies. The example they cited: In George Clooney's *Goodnight and Good Luck*, much attention was spent on capturing the smoke-filled atmosphere of CBS's New York newsroom of the mid-1950s. However the huge lettering on the wall that says "CBS News" appears in Helvetica type, now one of the most common sans serif fonts, but not created until a few years after the film takes place. For some type designers in the audience, this anachronism was as glaring as wristwatches on the arms of Roman gladiators.

Alan

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

Date: Wed, 29 Mar 2006 14:39:22 +0100

Alan Andres wrote on 29/03/2006:

> The second shot was one of Hermann and Clarissa in their car returning
> from the hospital. The shot opens with Clarissa and Hermann seen through
> the windshield conversing. This appears to be a standard shot filmed with
> Hermann's car sitting on a flatbed truck with the camera pointed backward.
> However, mysteriously, the camera suddenly becomes stationary as the car
> passes to the right of the screen and drives off. I still can't understand how
> the shot was accomplished. (It must have entailed a rather new highly mobile
> steadycam boom ensemble or some sort.) But I found the shot so startling that
> the first time I watched it on video, I had to stop and rewind the tape to make
> sure I saw it correctly. Alas, this means I was suddenly removed from the
> drama to contemplate how it was made.

Alan, you may have missed this. In the course of the Ingo Fliess interview Edgar Reitz pays tribute to his son who was the cameraman for Episodes 5 & 6 of *Heimat 3* and remarks on his development of a camera swinging on the arm of a crane to film scenes in cars, so your supposition was correct. The interview is on the web-site, but I have taken the liberty of pasting the relevant extract below. I hope you do not find this information superfluous. I wish I had your ability to notice such things.

Ivan.

Excerpt from Ingo Fliess interview:

"Most dialogues in cars are filmed on a low loader (US: flat-bed truck), on which both the vehicle the actors are in and also the camera and lighting equipment are driven through the area. Car and camera stand on the same mobile base, the actors just pretend to be driving, and therefore the feeling of travelling in the filmed image is never natural. Christian has now developed an apparatus that lets the camera swing on the arm of a crane over the vehicle with the actors, and allows us at the same time both to film through the windows into the vehicle and also to swing over the bonnet of the car and to film through the windscreen from every imaginable perspective at full speed, without being connected to the vehicle. Thereby we get an

unbelievably real sense of travelling, because the actors are driving the vehicle themselves, and unevennesses in the road are detectable, without everything undergoing horrible vibrations. With Christian I have achieved sensational camera movements, that up to now I had never thought possible. Another example: Christian had the ten metre arm of a crane mounted on the bucket of a digger, and swung like that over precipices, deep pools of water or through thickly overgrown ground. Suddenly we had complete freedom of movement. Travel and camera movements in three dimensions became possible, which can follow the performance of the actors with incredible accuracy. It no longer felt as though the camera was moved by apparatus. All the possibilities of a hand-held camera were available, without any of the famous "Dogme wobble" to spoil the fun. And finally, Christian is master of the whole know-how of computer technique and digital reworking."

From: Alan <alan wmedia.com>

Date: Wed, 29 Mar 2006 11:21:47 -0500

Many thanks, Ivan for calling my attention to the excerpt from the Ingo Fliess interview. (Angela also wrote me yesterday suggesting I look at it.) It certainly explains why this particular camera shot looked so odd to me: I guess I had never seen anything like it because it was a first in the history of cinema. I hope Christian Reitz patented this invention as it may prove to be influential in the history of cinematography.

Alan

From: JoelOYoung <JoelOYoung aol.com>

Date: Thu, 30 Mar 2006 04:57:55 EST

I agree completely with you two too. In any case, those Cessna's don't smoke at all, at least the ones that I have flown in did not. So that was supposed to be a sign that there was some problems with the plane, and of course then the engine stopped. Although the 150 and 172 are very manoeuvrable, even as gliders, there are limitations to what one can coax out of the aircraft, but obviously the story line dictated that something had to happen eventually to remove the character of Ernst. It will be interesting to hear if we can really find out what the intention was, accident or otherwise, eventually.

Joel

> In einer eMail vom 25-Mar-06 06:18:17 Pacific Standard Time schreibt
> th.hoenemann freenet.de:

> > I do agree very strongly with you, Robert!

> > Thomas

>

> From: "Robert A D Cran" <chinherb att.biz>

>Sent: Saturday, March 25, 2006 11:10 AM

>

> > I can't see what the doubt is:

>

From: JoelOYoung <JoelOYoung aol.com>
Date: Thu, 30 Mar 2006 05:10:48 EST

The service station that Reitz used in the film is on the A61, between Rheinbollen and Bad Kreuznach, south side (I think it's really called Hunsrück West), in any case southbound side of the autobahn. There's a picture of him sitting in the director's chair in the grass under the bushes out between the autobahn itself and the parking lot, hanging in the Heimat Museum in Simmern.

Joel

 In einer eMail vom 26-Mar-06 01:57:16 Pacific Standard Time schreibt reinder rustema.nl:

> At 12:24 +0000 25/3/06, Amanda Jeffries wrote:
 > >Next Matko is taken under Hermann's wing.
 > >Hermann sees him at that service station that
 > >keeps popping up

From: "Amanda Jeffries" <amanda.jeffries virgin.net>
Date: Thu, 30 Mar 2006 13:43:31 +0100

Just a couple of remarks to add before this extremely fascinating conversation on this episode ends.

Angela writes:

> The relationship between Matko and Ernst is very moving and genuine - I don't
 > think Ernst was only "selfishly" seeking posterity for himself in his fondness for
 > Matko ... I feel it's more the other way round - fondness for Matko awoke Ernst's
 > instinct to search for sonMatko had need of both a mother and a father - and
 > I think Ernst in his rough and ready way was providing something emotionally, if
 > not materially, as a father - but he couldn't be the mother that the lad so much
 > needed too.....Also, Matko's grief for Ernst (largely unspoken, as who else was
 > there for him to confide in?) was most likely the fundamental reason for his death.

I agree that 'selfishness' (just like 'selflessness') is never simple, and relationships normally have elements of both. You could be right that Ernst's latent desire for a son (seen in his attempt to 'adopt' both Tobi and the Russians) was awoken by his encounter with Matko - and I plead guilty to mistakenly looking to Ernst to supply his maternal needs! If Ernst's death was indeed an accident, this also rather lets him off the hook with regard to providing Matko with a living role model and the other kinds of fatherly support that Matko needed. I must admit that up until this discussion I had never assumed that his death was anything other than suicide. I was perhaps influenced by the remark of Rudi (who often seems to act rather as a Greek chorus, emitting a homely and common sense commentary on events) that if the decision about the museum had been different, Ernst would still be here today. That could perhaps be interpreted as at the least reckless and potentially suicidal anger at the decision, which blinded him to the foolishness of weaving around ostentatiously in his plane in the Rhine valley. So at the very least, Ernst's flawed character deprived Matko of a father. (Why was his character flawed, we might ask? I can't help thinking back to the seminal act of Paul walking out of Schabbach in the very first episode

and abandoning his family - influenced himself perhaps by the atrocities of war ... the sins of the father visited endlessly on subsequent generations).

I'm less convinced that it was Ernst's death that precipitated directly Matko's suicide, though it certainly massively contributed. I think it was the bird's death that drove him to the ledge - at least that is the poetic logic (and Angela has made some very interesting connections here with poetry). And it was his mother's remark that made him jump. Alan asks whether Anca really was Matko's mother - another interesting question, and one that I agree is left ambiguous. Perhaps again we are mistaken in looking for a 'realistic' explanation. Certainly on a psychological level, she never was his mother.

Alan also raises the question of the value of Ernst's art collection, which again I had never really questioned. On a realistic level, it is indeed hard to see how Ernst could have acquired all this. Perhaps he was taking everyone (including us) for a ride here. Certainly the art collection is worthless in a number of ways - it is absurdly hidden from view, it leads to squabbles and division in the community, contributes to the deaths of Ernst and Matko, and leads to further events in episode 6. Is this a comment on the dangers of the commodification of art? In this series Reitz does seem to issue repeated oblique warnings about the dangers of wealth. I wonder if he in some ways sympathises with Tobi who pursued his own vision of art whilst eschewing Ernst's millions. And wealth does not seem to have enriched Hermann and Clarissa. In my view they become paler and less interesting in every episode.

This episode has also given rise to very interesting discussion on ambiguity, realism and authorial intent, which I hope has not been exhausted (and thanks to Alan for his very illuminating commentary on this). I agree that one of the most valuable purposes of a discussion such as this one is not to reach consensus on a definitive interpretation of any given event, but to share multiple perspectives that derive from different people's personal experience of the world. Certainly I have found it very enriching to have read interpretations that had never occurred to me. Thanks everybody!

Amanda

**From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>
Date: Thu, 30 Mar 2006 15:10:05 +0100**

Greatly enjoyed both your contributions!
Re ambiguity (of which in poetical language, "there are, we are told, as many types ... as deadly sins" (Heller - referring to Empson)) - it's an inexhaustible topic and fascinating to think about - tho' maybe painful in real life too...

I too enjoyed Alan's speculations about Ernst's collection - and Amanda's mention of "the dangers of wealth" are a reminder that the hidden collection was mythological in another sense, given the self-conscious references in the film to the Niebelungen hoard, its effect on the Simon family, and its ultimate fate, to be reburied like the dragon's hoard in Beowulf, "as useless to man as it was before"...

And Amanda's final paragraph just about sums up all that we are indebted to Ivan and ReindeR for making possible

Angela

From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan jsbiedron.com>
Date: Thu, 30 Mar 2006 08:41:41 -0600

Now that I have read the comments from some of the flight experts, I can see that there is indeed the possibility that Ernst's death was an accident. What an interesting discussion - I even learned a new English word - Angela's "disquisition."

I think that what Thomas wrote, below, sums it up best. I am also glad to hear that I am not the only one who is somewhat confused about the "taking-for-real-topic"!

Susan

Thomas wrote:

- > To be honest: I myself have difficulties to understand what this
- > "taking-for-real-topic" actually is about. None of us, as Susan, Wolfgang
- > and others already pointed out, is that naive to take HEIMAT for real, and
- > none of us would pray at the Simon's graves. The whole topic in my eyes is
- > lacking of a clear differentiation between taking something fictional for
- > real *or* trying to understand and retrace (which also may include sympathy)
- > situations that are shown in a film and which relate on real life, on things
- > each of us already has experienced in a more or less identical way.
- > Discussing if Ernst died because of an accident or committed suicide is not
- > about reality and personal identification, but about understanding and
- > retracing the story Reitz tells us, nothing more. So please let us go on
- > trying to understand these stories and find out what we love about them!

From: Alan <alan wmedia.com>
Date: Thu, 30 Mar 2006 09:56:58 -0500 (EST)

At 09:10 AM 3/30/06, Angela Skrimshire wrote:

- > Amanda's mention of "the dangers of wealth" are a reminder that the hidden
- > collection was mythological in a another sense, given the self-conscious
- > references in the film to the Niebelungen hoard, its effect on the Simon family,
- > and its ultimate fate, to be reburied like the dragon's hoard in Beowulf,
- > "as useless to man as it was before"...

Like flying, this seems to be a fascination for Reitz. Of the few films of his that I have seen, a number deal with treasure and its consequences. In Cardillac, a jeweler surrounds himself with a hoard of hundreds of pieces of jewelry he designed, which he has stolen or murdered to reclaim. In Trip to Vienna, the two women happen upon a stash of hidden money, setting the story in motion. In Zero Hour, the protagonist uses a secret treasure map (made of string!) to unearth the valuables of an SS officer who has buried a strongbox in a graveyard. In Heimat, Eduard is obsessed with a fabled treasure hidden in the river. And -- this is a stretch -- in DZH, Rob, Stefan and Reinhard delve into the hidden archive of Nazi-era films.

In the case of Cardillac, the film also raises a lot of questions about ownership of art, commerce and the role of the artist in a commercial world.

A

From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder.rustema.nl>

Date: Thu, 30 Mar 2006 17:31:55 +0200

Like Susan, I am now also quite convinced that Reitz' original intention was to show Ernst die in a tragic accident. Thank you all for your contributions about this. The alternative interpretation though, gives more interesting insights I think, and is left open by Reitz for those who wish to explore it. It is indeed the most sensible position for the author to welcome all alternative interpretations.

Recently I attended a screening of the artwork of a friend (I recommend his videos at <http://www.roofvogel.org/test/work.html> by the way) and afterwards he explained me he is always amazed what his audience with the black-rimmed glasses come up with. He usually politely replies something vague, about him collecting all the interpretations and this one in particular is very interesting. The audience would become nasty when he does not 'allow' a certain interpretation. All the different interpretations are indeed quite interesting usually, it is part of the fun in his profession.

About the 'taking-for-real' topic I remember a brief discussion I had with Reitz in the lobby of Cinerama in Amsterdam, after the Q&A. He feels quite ambiguous about what his work means for the people from the Hunsrück. His ambition is to tell a universal story, that also appeals to people who have never been there. The praise Heimat 1 and 3 received in the Hunsrück contrasts sharply with what Heimat 2 does for them. On a visit there Salome Kammer was more or less ignored by the locals, because they obviously did not see die Zweite Heimat.

I am very curious on how Heimat 3 is received in Paris, where it is showing in theatres this week. I am collecting all the reviews and when I discover new perspectives in them I will report it.

It is a pity there are only 6 parts to discuss and tomorrow Ivan will introduce the last one. On the other hand, there are still many questions by Ivan and others that are left unanswered, so we could easily extend the discussion a little to pick up all the loose ends. After that we can start the entire Heimat 3 series and how to place it in the entire trilogy?

By the way, I apologise for my habit to become anecdotal. Quite out of tune with your splendid contributions.

--

ReindeR

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

Date: Thu, 30 Mar 2006 21:22:25 +0100

I hope you have all done! Ernst's final flight probably provoked the most interest. The final consensus seemed to be "Let all theories bloom" with die-hards, including myself, still clinging to either the accident or to the suicide theory.

We probably had a record number of posts to the public discussion, some 55* in all from 15* different contributors.

Ivan Mansley.

**[in the end 60 posts from 16 contributors – Eds]*

From: Elizabeth Garret <david.garrett4 ntlworld.com>

Date: Thu, 30 Mar 2006 21:22:37 +0000

Wolfgang, thank you very much for your message with the interesting information. You kindly offer to e mail me some photos you took at the location - I would love to see them please.

Of course I agree that kids dealing drugs would be far worse than playground bullying. That would indeed make me shudder. We all keep a close eye on our own kids.

Thank you again!

Elizabeth.

From: JoelOYoung <JoelOYoung aol.com>

Date: Fri, 31 Mar 2006 16:40:41 EST

Sorry I have been out of country a lot the last couple of weeks and was not able to ask my questions.

1. How could a poor farmer's son, like Ernst, who other than collecting old doors and house parts, with no other visible means of support, afford an airplane, and be able to assemble such a large collection of art. Art is not cheap. It all seems far beyond his means.
2. Ans and I consider the "fancy door" to the treasure cave a little bit over done. Rather like so much kitsch. A foot thick steel, bullet and bomb proof door, that shudders when opening and closing, is not realistic, nor is all of the what we consider a little over done steel boxes inside the cave. Sure art work needs protection, but what we see looks a little overdone, and out of reach of a person of Ernst's position. Am I totally off key here? Or does anyone agree? This was never discussed as far as I can remember.
3. For those of you that were here for the Reitzian Reunion, and know my wife Ans, did anyone recognize her in Part 5?

Best regards,
Joel

From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>
Date: Sat, 1 Apr 2006 20:28:49 +0100

Hello Joel!

You asked how Ernst could possibly have afforded his art collection as described in the film.

- > 1. How could a poor farmer's son, like Ernst....with no other visible means
- > of support, afford an airplane, and be able to assemble such a large collection
- > of art. Art is not cheap. It all seems far beyond his means.

Alan has a very interesting post called Episode V dated 29/03/06 in which he discusses Ernst's art collection and shows how he would have had to be one of the world's leading art dealers to increase his art collection from 1,600 pieces in 1995 to 6,000 pieces in 1997!! On a realistic/naturalistic level the more incredible it seems. Somehow I had not paid attention to the figures which occur in the dialogue and had assumed he had acquired the most valuable works during the chaos at the end of WW2.

You commented:

- > Sure art work needs protection, but what we see looks a little overdone,
- > and out of reach of a person of Ernst's position. Am I totally off key here?
- > Or does anyone agree?

I certainly agree with you that all the stuff about the door, the electronic code key, and the titanium type safes is just part of the gung-ho boys-own-adventure heroics of the flooding of the slate mine. Perhaps we should not enquire too closely. I accepted it first time round!

Finally, you asked:

- > For those of you that were here for the Reitzian Reunion, and know
- > my wife Ans, did anyone recognize her in Part 5?

I was at the Reitzian Reunion and to my shame I didn't recognize Ans! I haven't had time to go back to the DVD. Was she at the protest meeting against Ernst's plans in Gasthaus Molz?

Ivan.

From: JoelOYoung <JoelOYoung aol.com>

Date: Sun, 2 Apr 2006 15:10:38 EDT

Ivan,

Quite honestly I wrote my question before I had read Alan's posting. His posting was very good and coincided with my questions a lot. He also gave me a great answer back, so we were thinking along similar lines.

If you want to see Ans, she and I were in Oberwesel during the Winefest Parade. We were standing right below Christian Reitz and his camera, which were up on a pedestal, for the filming. When Hartmut rides by in his car on the back of the flatbed truck, as the camera follows him going left, at the very last moment before the scene is cut, you can see Ans standing there in the very lower left hand corner of the picture. You have to be quick and hit the pause button, or if you can go frame by frame it's easier, but I think you will recognize her. I am just out of the picture in front of her (she was facing back towards the camera actually). Afterwards Christian moved his location to in front of the stage for the filming of the Wine Princess scene. They did 5 takes before Edgar was happy with the way it went.

Regards, Joel

HEIMAT 3 - Episode 6: Farewell to Schabbach [1999]

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

Date: Fri, 31 Mar 2006 08:26:02 +0100

HEIMAT 3: Episode 6 - Farewell to Schabbach [1999]

An Introduction

This final episode is for me the best of the six episodes. It moves along so seamlessly and with such attention to detail, intertwining all the various narratives, and arriving at a conclusion which, although it is ambiguous and a little enigmatic, is strangely satisfying and reveals Edgar Reitz's true perspective on much wider matters than just his film. As I watched my emotions were stirred by the knowledge that this was the end of his great Heimat trilogy and all the events and insights were affected by this knowledge.

I am not quite sure where to begin. We have all commented how Hermann regains his "wholeness"; how his personality becomes reintegrated and re-composed. One little scene struck me very much in this regard. Driving back from Munich alone, Hermann identifies with the Hunsrück, with the familiar names of towns and families and roads and so on; he does not see the Hunsrück as a "hunchback" like Ernst did. He is not in self-denial any more; he does not reject his home or his past. He is no longer trying to escape. ["My sense of locality speaks to me. It's like a dog which remembers with its nose."] This is beautifully illustrated in the scene afterwards in the photography shop where he reminisces with the proprietress about his old Latin teacher, Herr Oertel, who also taught her brother. He talks of the two linden trees [depicted in the photograph of Rudi and Lena] which he would see on his way to school and conjures up small details of how they were on the right in a meadow and how the farmer mowed around them. None of this seemed contrived; Rudi and Lena become symbols of eternal love like Philemon and Baucis in Ovid's "Metamorphoses". This comparison does not seem far-fetched when we learn that Herr Oertel knew Ovid by heart and had taught Hermann about these two aged lovers. Such are the intimacies that can be shared if we possess a "Heimat"; schooldays, memories and teachers are shared!!

I promised myself that I would write about the dream sequences that occur as Hermann sleeps under the aforesaid linden trees. Before he pulls off the road we notice there is still a farmer with a tractor, but there are also wind turbines all around. Modernity is everywhere! Hermann is on his way to Rudi's funeral and he is early, so he can kill some time. He takes a suit from the boot of the car and hangs it from a branch. I remember he had a suit in the boot of his car when he went to his mother's funeral. Taking off his jacket he falls asleep upon it. We see him murmuring in his sleep; he awakes, sets off across a ploughed field, arrives in Schabbach at the old Simon forge, drinks from the water butt and then the outside tap. If we had not realised we were in dreamland we do now, as the reflection of dead Rudi's face shimmers in the water. The figure speaks contrasting the struggles of their youth with the ease of the present and its false values.

Earlier Hermann had nearly collided with a huge red articulated lorry. Now escorted by green-clad police outriders there appear three of these lorries, bearing away the metal safes that had guarded Ernst's treasures. They glitter in a rather strange, alien way. The dead and ghostly Rudi demands to know, "Why is the entire Niebelung

treasure passing us on its way to Mainz and Frankfurt and then on to Kuwait and Japan?" The lorries are trundling over the bridge. In one fell swoop Reitz has united recent memory [red transporter] with childhood memory [Simon forge] and made a wider political point. The symbolism might be seen as crude, but it is certainly striking, both visually and as a metaphor for Germany's economic decline and the rise of the countries of the East. Financiers and taxmen have assessed and confiscated Ernst's wealth says Rudi. In one interview Reitz talks about wealth disappearing from Europe, but I cannot locate it; consumerism and globalisation are ruining us perhaps.

Under the linden tree rain is beginning to fall. Hermann awakes and drives to Schabbach in the howling rain. We are in the second dream sequence. In the street lies a coffin marked "Mutter". The viewer and Hermann have a kind of *déjà vu*! His mother's funeral took place during a cloudburst. Then he sees the dead/those who have died during *Heimat 3*. They wave to him; Anton and his housekeeper, Hanni [I didn't know she had died], Ernst and Matko [father and surrogate son], Rudi from barn door, and Lutz supported by Lulu and their son Lukas. There were 3 figures in the doorway of *Gasthaus Molz* that I couldn't recognize. The same technique was used in Part 11 "The Feast of the living and the Dead" in *Heimat*. I thought it was very effective, even for the second time.

Did you notice the little rainbow when we move back to the tree? It shows how Reitz concerns himself with even apparently unimportant details. Another was the spoon clicking in the brandy bottle after Gunnar has taken his morning "medicinal" breakfast and Petra looking at her watch to see when she can get rid of him. Was the Harry Potter book in his suitcase meant as a present for his daughters or was he reading it? I was surprised that in Germany you can be left to turn up yourself at the prison gates to serve your sentence or is this mythic? I liked the portrait of Gunnar's cell-mate; the tattooed racist thug who could have felled him with a single blow but doesn't! And how abominably Petra treats her ex-husband!!

I want to write a little about Reitz's handling of the Millenium Eve party at the Gundersröde house. It is brilliantly done. Reitz handles his huge numbers of actors with skill and aplomb; he captures exactly that mixture of chaos and order so typical of large parties. There was inter-reaction and interest everywhere. I have to confess that it was not until I read David Parkinson's DVD booklet and had watched the film for the third time that I realised that the unknown woman clutching her present which she finally leaves on a table [she appears 6 times in all, according to my reckoning] was the lady from East Berlin who originally washed Gunnar's shirt. I am sure if we fast-forwarded into the future of our fictional characters she would be the new Mrs.Gunnar!!

I cannot believe my own stupidity either. It took 3 viewings and Mr. Parkinson's help to realise that it was Dieter who is the leader of the transvestite group that makes its way on stage. Before that I had not recognized him!! Parkinson writes that he grabs the microphone and announces he is gay. I didn't hear that, but I liked his dancing with Hartmut and the attempted kiss. He gets slapped in return! Did you notice the looks of utter disapproval which unite Mrs.Lichtblau and Udo at this behaviour? A wonderful touch!! Galina looks ravishingly beautiful but protests too much her happiness with her new husband. Udo's marriage is falling apart! I must admit I had forgotten all about Tobi when he appears, young-looking and minus beard, with Anna at the gate on the stroke of midnight.

Clarissa pays homage to Gunnar and sings a brilliant "Maybe this time" from "Cabaret". Hermann is so proud of her and leads the applause. Parkinson speculates that Reitz might have been ending the story "on an uncomfortable comparison between the new dawn and the nightmarish end of the Weimar" republic or perhaps "the victory of hope over experience" [page 75]. I must admit I had not considered either of these alternatives but just enjoyed the panache of the singing.

And now for the controversial ending! On first viewing I did feel a little let down, but subsequent viewings have changed my mind. Reitz has commented at length upon his ending. After her walk along the river in Frankfurt with Roland who is dying of AIDS she returns home [the same or next morning?]. She has rejected Delveau's proposal of marriage and begins the new millennium with "no job, no plans, no money, no security", as she explains to Roland and his friend. She witnesses her son, Lukas, playing the piano; a Mozart sonatina, I believe. He is a childhood prodigy as well as being a typical little boy. He is a hope for the future. Perhaps he will be the new Hermann. And yet Lulu stares at him through a glass door pane and her eyes fill with tears. The camera holds her face and eyes and a blue filter is introduced. The credits roll with this as the final image.

It is a fear about the future, for the future. Melancholy is in the air. Reitz relates this melancholy, felt by Lulu because of her individual circumstances, to the wider political scene. At the Goethe Institut he talked of Germany's economic situation, that she was no longer one of the world's richest nations, and that there was a crisis of identity in Europe; a kind of vacuum. A whole continent uncertain and afraid of its economic and social failings, just as Lulu is afraid and uncertain. Whether we would pick all this up at a first viewing I don't know, but it is easy to see the ambivalence of this ending. Is it happy or sad, hopeful or uncertain, pessimistic or optimistic or both? Lulu and Lukas carry the burden of the ending.

Having said "Farewell to Schabbach" I am bereft and feel a huge sense of loss. The BBC told me to say "Goodbye" and the DVD "Farewell". Perhaps the latter is more poetic!

Ivan Mansley.

P.S.

1. How did Reitz film the scenes of the solar eclipse? Were the scenes re-created or actually filmed during the eclipse? He certainly captures the eerie feeling of semi-darkness and fear. I was in a little café in a small French village at the time. No organised sun-glasses there!

2. Some of the scenes involving action and adventure e.g. struck me as melodramatic and I will leave others to examine + all action Lulu as "Superwoman"!!

From: "Gert Jan Jansen" <gertjan.jansengouda.demon.nl>

Date: Fri, 31 Mar 2006 12:16:32 +0200

H3 episode 6: Time-schedule and chronological summary

Wednesday the 11th August 1999: Munich.

- Opening with some shots of the city of Munich: a panorama photo (!?) with the tv-tower, the Ludwigstrasse in direction Siegestor, the Monopteros in the "English Garden"
- Gunnar arrives at Munich Central Station. He has to go in jail for some months due to driving after drinking alcohol.
- Meeting with Tillmann and the Schabbach theatre group.
- Eclipse, Gunnar does look without eye-protection.
- Also Clarissa and Hermann arriving in Munich
- Gunnar becomes one day delay, because of his eye troubles.
- He visits his ex-wife Petra, now married with Reinhold, and daughters. He can stay the night.
- Petra and Reinhold visit the G nderode-concert of Hermann and Clarissa in the Cuvilli  theatre.
- After the concert, outside the quartet meets the Schabbach bus; Mayor Toni tells them they just became the message: Rudi Molz is dead. Hermann makes a phone call to Lenchen
- Short shot of Lenchen sitting beside the deathbed.
- Petra and Reinhold go home after a dinner with Hermann and Clarissa, who go to the English Garden.

Thursday the 12th of August 1999: Munich

- Gunnar goes in jail,
- Hermann's and Clarissa are vacating Hermann's apartment in Munich; his first home with Schn sschen in 1966. A desperate mother Lichtblau comes in.
- Clarissa is bringing back her mother to Wasserburg; she has to stay with her for two weeks.

Friday the 13th of August 1999: Simmern / Schabbach / G nderode

- Early in the morning Hermann is driving to the Hunsr ck. He likes it to be back at his roots.
- In Simmern he buys flowers and a portrait of Rudi and Lenchen Molz
- On his way to the funeral he stops for a moment at the double lime tree, he knows so well from his youth. He falls asleep and is dreaming of Rudi Molz, who tells him the Nibelungen treasure of Ernst will be confiscated. In his dream Hermann returns to the moment (17 years earlier) he had to stop for the coffin of his mother, standing in the rain. He recognizes all the "new" dead people: Willem, Anton, Hanni, Ernst, Matko, Lutz and finally Rudi Molz again.
- Hermann is just at time for a wonderful funeral of Rudi Molz.
- It feels like a little earthquake; Schabbach becomes an enormous crack in the ground, right above the cave in which Ernst's picture collection is hidden.
- At Ernst's premises water is steaming out of the steel door to the cave.
- Lulu has to save Lukas in a would-be Hollywood disaster scene.
- The building of the museum has to stop.

- In the evening Lulu comes home at Günderode and is frightened again because Lukas is sleeping with a burning candle.

Saturday the 14th of August 1999: Schabbach / Günderode / München

- The villagers of Schabbach dump concrete in the crack.
- In the cave Lulu discovers the picture safe never can be opened.
- Lulu has dinner with Delveau ; she doesn't want to marry him.
- Together with Lukas she is at the crossroad of the Lutz accident again.

Another day: Munich

In the Munich prison Gunnar is ordering for 110.000 DM fireworks in China for the millennium party at the Günderode house.

Thursday the 27th of August 1999.

- Clarissa succeeds in leaving Wasserburg, but she has to take her mother with her. She will stay for longer at Günderode.
- Tillmann is coming up with a letter from Gunnar. He has ordered a mobile party home with a connection for power stream (itce?) He paid already 50.000 DM.

Another Day: Munich

Another time Gunnar in prison, hoping to be free before the millennium.

Friday the 31st of December 1999: Günderode / München

- Grand finale at Günderode: Hermann & Clarissa, her son Arnold, daughter in law Gemma and their two little twins, Tillmann and Moni, Clarissa's Mother, Lulu and Lukas (from Cologne) , the woman next door of Gunnar in Berlin (episode 2), Hartmut and Mara from Hamburg, Galina and her husband Christian Beisiegel, Udo and Jana and their two sons Torsten & Jacques, the rest of the Simon clan: Dieter, Gisela , Helga & Hans, the neighbours, dignitaries fom Oberwesel and the Hunsrück and –at last- Tobi and Anna (from Dresden).
- During the party the camera changes two times to the Munich prison. The first time daughter Nadine is bringing a music card to her father in prison. The second time Gunnar is crying because he's lonely at the moment of millennium-change.

Saturday the first of January 2000. Günderode / Frankfurt am Main

- At the Günderode after the new year we see Hermann and Clarissa for a moment together. They think about their past and their future: stay healthy!
- In the early morning Lulu, Roland and his friend Claudio walk along the river Main. Roland has AIDS. Lulu is desperate: starting in a new millennium without a job, without plans, no money, no protection.
- Around noon Lulu is coming back to Günderode, She can hear Lukas playing Mozart. The others all are still sleeping. Lulu is staring through the window.

THE END

From: "Gert Jan Jansen" <gertjan.jansengouda.demon.nl>

Date: Fri, 31 Mar 2006 21:53:10 +0200

Ivan, Thanks for the last Post(ing), You are able to colour a comment so wonderful. Some reactions before sending some of my own remarks

You started with:

> *This final episode is for me the best of the six episodes*

In that case I 'm the lucky one: for me the last episode I saw is always the best.

About Hermann:

>.....*his personality becomes reintegrated and re-composed.*

My feelings are the same (although the little skip in his walking irritated me again). Hermann is not coming back from Munich, he's coming home. He accepted his roots lie in the Hunsrück. In episode 1 there was an overture, when he- just coming over after (17 or 7) years remembered the sleigh riding with blond Gertrud, but at that time it didn't seem natural.

Had our earlier remarks to do with the actor himself, Henry Arnold and his relation to the role he had to play?. In the German discussion a year ago much (negative) emphasis was laid on his performance. That's why I 'd like to quote an interview in (I'm sorry I didn't note down): [VPRO television documentary 'Over Heimat' 19.12.04 at <http://www.vpro.nl/programma/ram/afleveringen/19615742/> A roughly translated transcript is at <http://www.heimat123.net/interviews/vprotv191204.html> - Eds.]:

Henry Arnold: The character of Hermann in H3 was quite a discovery for me. I didn't have much help from the fact I played the same part in DZH, for -in my opinion- he totally became another man . Not just because in H3 he is now older than I am myself, but because his vision on (look to?) the world has changed so much. I had to imagine myself into the personage once more. The new Hermann particularly is a dreamer, someone who stays outside the daily tossing and turning. He doesn't want to show who he is. This Hermann is signed by the fact that he wants to get rest, that he wants to establish somewhere. He has lost his drive to come forward in the world; to have success in art , in music. I had to accept it, because the story has to be told like it has been meant, but it is far away from my own mentality. I really hope I am not like that, when I'm 50 or 60 years old.

Thanks Ivan for your description of the dream sequences: very nice to read. You wrote also.

>....*the entire Nibelung treasure (is) passing us on its way to Mainz and Frankfurt and then on to Kuwait and Japan".*

I missed until now an explanation of the Nibelungen treasure and its meaning to the film. Is it true Tolkien used the saga for "The Lord of the Rings"? In Wikipedia I've read that the owner of the Nibelungen ring was doomed to die (at a moment he didn't want himself) Is that a late explanation of Ernst's death? Is there someone who can tell more about it. Is the (dreamed) export of the paintings to Japan the same as the destroying?

I noticed that Hermann in his dream had a forecasting and a "backcasting" part related to personal danger. Entering the Hunsrück he had to make an emergency stop because of the long lorry. In his dream it became clear the role of the flatbed trailer: the end of the paintings collection and of the job of Lulu. Later on in his dream

he became a warning: Lulu and Lukas will be in danger soon. They were the only persons in his dream that weren't dead. They didn't belong there.

> *There were 3 figures in the doorway of Gasthaus Molz that I couldn't recognize.*
One of them was Willem, I think, the old neighbour living opposite his birth house. The two woman I didn't recognise too.

> *And how abominably Petra treats her ex-husband!!*
Absolutely, hard to believe, what a serpent. It's unbelievable she never accepted arrangements concerning parental access. What's the use of putting this figure down so disagreeable? On the other hand, the love between Petra and Reinhold is after 10 years not damped. That pleads for them.

> *Galina looks ravishingly beautiful*
I have to confess I had those feelings more when I saw Mara. Beautiful, strong and mysterious, for there are only slight indications about a relation with Mr. Böckle and with her father in law Anton. I hope indeed the new annex film will give us some answers.

> *The unknown woman clutching her present which she finally leaves on a table*
Was it a present the timid woman next door brought along from Berlin ? It reminded me to the little box Rob showed in DZH, episode 8 (the marriage) We'll never know what was inside , but the Finnish girlfriend of Juan and the waitress looked inside and they were frightened very much. Some film experts described it as a "MacGuffin".

Oh, Ivan why this cycle has to come to an end?

Gert Jan Jansen

From: Gert Jan Jansen <gertjan.jansengouda.demon.nl>
Date: Fri, 31 Mar 2006 22:39:04 CEST

Separately I posted the 6th part of the time schedule and summary. Comparing with the episodes 4 and 5 it was rather easy to make. There is no doubt about start and finish: the eclipse on Wednesday the 11th of August 1999 and the first New Years day in the new millennium: Saturday the first of January 2000. In between there is one other day with many scenes: the day of the dream sequences of Hermann, overseeing his life in the Hunsrück and the funeral of Rudi Molz. I presume we can date it on Friday the 13th of August. (Toni says: Rudi will be buried in two days)

One of the good points of this episode is the storyline between two world-famous events. The trilogy culminates at the last day of a millennium, (almost) all the figures that are still among us reunited at Günderode headquarters. The shortest summary of Heimat 123 is perhaps the word "Time". Reitz made it visible. The change-over of the millennia is the best symbol. In fact nothing changes in that pure second, but take more of them and everything in life is changed. Reitz joins a sauce of culture-pessimism to the film, I personally can understand, but I rather liked to see a more positive future.

Of course I'm also grateful for the memories of Heimat 1 and DZH. How wonderful to be back for a moment in the "Englischer Garten" in Munich, where we still can imagine Hermann and Juan walking with a bike in the snow. The same Hermann, but

a complete different person in a wasted time. There are beautiful similarities with the last episode of Heimat 1, this time as a dream scene.

The story of episode 6 is "carried" by Gunnar , for he introduces us in the series of events and he is also the director of the end; the millennium feast at G nderode. Ironically Gunnar himself is not present at the final presentation of the "tableau de la troupe". His personal "Goodbye to Schabbach" already took place 9 years earlier, after the inauguration of the G nderode house. After that we only saw him in Berlin (episode 2 and episode 4). No doubt, he's a rich man, he can afford the organisation of a big party. How did he get it? Not from dreams about a super contract with Warner Brothers, that's for sure. The book "Heimat 3" explains that Gunnar speculated on the stock exchange at the right moment. Reasonable?

The co-headfigures are Lulu and Hermann and -at a abstract level- Schabbach. On Lulu and her son Lukas the future is projected; sadness and some hope. Hermann, nearly 60 years old, is symbol for the past. His artistic nature is canalised; he is a normal person like you and me, married, belonging to a family, a job, with disillusion in his head because he could have influenced the world more than he has done, but after all not unhappy.

As ever there is a minor role for Tillmann. I believe he is the only "East German" character that makes once appearance in every of the six parts of Heimat 3.

Placed in scheme:

	Appearances in episode 1 -6					
Gunnar	1	2	-	4	-	6
Udo	1	2	3	-	-	6
Tobi	1	2	3	-	-	6
Tillmann	1	2	3	4	5	6

Tillmann appears to be the right man at the right place to benefit of the technical wants of various customers: Hermann, Ernst/ Lulu, Gunnar. By marrying Moni and take over the store of his father-in-law his integration in the west is integral.

Just before I wrote about "the series of events" in this episode. There is something peculiar on these major occurrences: they are all not implied by a conscious human action. We start with the eclipse, then we have the death of Rudi Molz, the collapse of the slate cave and -at the end- the new millennium. It all has a natural base. Compare with episode 5: the starting party of Ernst's museum, the bankruptcy of Hartmut, the death of Matko (and perhaps) of Ernst. Is this the suggestion that in the future no longer we will be able to arrange our own lives, our own society? We don't live, we are being lived?

I'd like to show you two remarkable differences between the synopsis of episode 5 (published in 2002 before the recording started) and the film you can watch at home. Of course I wonder what could have been the reason.

1. In the synopsis it was not Rudi Molz who died, but his wife Lenchen. I presume the change had to do with the fact that the real Rudi Molz from Woppenroth, who had become a friend of Reitz, had an accident in the hayshed and died in hospital some months later. Heimat 3 is in some way a tribute to Rudi Molz.

2. During the millennium party there should have been a direct connection, made by Tillmann, with Santa Catharina in the south of Brazil where an amateur theatre group is playing "The wonder of Schabbach". The group contains members of the Simon family that leaved Schabbach a very long time ago. Also Moni is there at that moment, enjoying that she belongs to the Global Village, that also includes Saint Petersburg , where Galina will open a restaurant and Massachusetts, from where Arnold Schimmelpfennig and his family comes over.

I didn't see the Brazil sequence, so I presume it has been cut off, because the Brazil -connection could not easily be re-introduced so late in the series. We all remember the Brazilian family members, Edmundo and Joao Simon, who appeared at the funeral of Maria Simon in 1982, didn't we? (In our discussion about Heimat 1 part 11, two years ago, those ten seconds were totally ignored).

Some other remarks:

1. Also this time there was a mystification in the indication of dates. At the photo-shop in Simmern Hermann buys a wonderful portrait of Rudi and Lenchen Molz, with the double lime tree on the background. According to the edited script (in the book Heimat 3) it was made three months earlier for the occasion of their "Goldene Hochzeit" : golden marriage. In Germany, just as in the Netherlands, golden in this case means: 50 years. Conclusion 1: they married in May 1949. But remember episode 1: Rudi Molz has sold his old yellow "Beetle" to Gunnar and tells him he purchased the car on the 15th of June 1966 in Simmern on the occasion of the 14th anniversary of their marriage. Conclusion 2: Rudi and Lenchen married in June 1952.

I'm still looking for a better reason for the slips of this kind than the remark of Thomas it didn't bother Edgar Reitz, for it is fiction he shows. There are other aspects in which Reitz has the name to be a perfectionist, why not in this date questions? It could have been prevented easily by ordering a volunteer to close reading one or two times the Heimat123 scripts. In insolent remark : is Reitz perhaps a discalculus?

2. At the Photoshop we also get the ultimate proof of Hermann's domestication in the Hunsrück. Again he is talking warmly of memories of his youth in the Hunsrück, even about his daily ride to school and about Herr Oertel, teacher in Latin. We didn't know better (DZH episode 1) than that Herr Schiller, teacher in Music, was the only one he could get on.

3. When Lulu after the collapse of the cave is back on the building place, she is warning for the possibility that (by pumping) the water gets under the level of the groundwater. The concrete tub will than swim away "Then we get the same thing as happened to the "Schürmann Bau in Bonn". Lulu is referring to one of the biggest building problems in Germany: a new bureau of the members of the House of Commons, designed by the architect Schürmann from Cologne. Costs: 500 millions

DM. Due to high level of the Rhine in 1993 water gets in the building place and the rough construction is lifted at some places for 70 cm.

4. In my summary I wrote about "the would-be Hollywood disaster sequence". I have to confess it didn't bother me this time so much. I actually had to laugh, because of the explanation of Helma Hammen during our Heimat 3 tour in September. Outside the screen I saw those firemen from Gemünden and other villages nearby producing the biggest water mass they could imagine.

5. Theories about the title of the episode? No sorry it's enough. I'm in some way proud of myself I could manage it to write about each episode. I remember it was so frustrating that I could not find the time to join every time during the discussion of Heimat 1 and DZH. I said to myself: that won't happen again.

Gert Jan Jansen

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>

Date: Sat, 1 Apr 2006 00:31:46 +0100

Dear Gert Jan ,

Just a short note for now, in reply to a couple of points.

I agree so much with what you say about Ivan's introduction - and thanks for your time schedule too - thanks to you both I've watched the film yet again today for some of the things mentioned by one or other of you that I'd missed.

A brief reply to your point about the Niebelungen treasure and Hermann's dream - it's best if someone German explains about the myth, I'm not qualified, I don't know anything about the original sources, only the version as in Wagner' s *Ring* cycle ...

However it's an ancient myth, and even in Wagner far stronger and more profound than the literary fairytale/fantasy written by Tolkien, who was just a 20th century academic who wrote it basically for kids ... though like all good "children's" books his work appeals to many other people too. It must have influenced him, however.

You ask:

> Is the (dreamed) export of the paintings to Japan the same as the destroying?

Maybe it is ..? I'd been starting to wonder if some of the sequences in this first "Dream" were originally intended as an alternative to the melodramatic collapse of the slate mine ... sequestration by the Inland Revenue, (plus maybe some official enquiry into the provenance of Ernst's collection) sounds a far more likely scenario, somehow, though with less Hollywood appeal for the TV ratings. Does anyone else think this might be possible?

Interesting too what you said about Hermann getting a kind of "warning" about danger to Lulu and Lukas in the second dream.... they were looking very sad and serious too, whereas most of the other figures, including Lutz, were smiling ...

Incidentally, the interview with Henry Arnold which you quote is on the VPRO television documentary "Over Heimat" of 19/12/04, which is still watchable on the web - the link is on both Thomas' and ReindeR's sites. Wolfgang helped me do an English rendering (also on ReindeR's site) of the German parts of it, but we couldn't cope with the Dutch commentary!

Had same idea as you re the "shy lodger's" box and Rob's box in DZH part 8 - but the whole feeling was very different - was it you or Ivan who suggested it was a present, presumably meant for Gunnar? ... all rather sad really - he obviously hadn't told her where he was, the only person he'd been able to confide in was his daughter Nadine.

Agree strongly with what you said about Mara - and have more to say re Petra and Galina, also lots more in response to Ivan's great Intro - but too late at night now ...will leave it till the weekend...

Angela

From: "Wyn Grant" <wyn_grant@hotmail.com>

Date: Sat, 01 Apr 2006 08:07:24 +0000

I found this to be a fitting end to this wonderful trilogy, my appreciation of which has been greatly enhanced by the insightful comments on this list.

If the eclipse scenes were not shot at the time, it would have involved a lot of extras and some first rate technical work (although we have seen that throughout). There was even one person in the crowd who also had watering eyes, a nice touch if staged. I notice that Gunnar's petulant daughter tore up her protective glasses.

Why did Gunnar not call in on his daughters when he came to Munich for the beer festival? He comes across as a very primitive, unformed person in many ways, still doing his dated Erich impression. But Reinhold must get the award for prat of the series and Petra for one of the least sympathetic characters. Why doesn't he see a specialist about his nose bleeds? He could afford to.

Quite a poignant remark by Clarissa: 'Not everyone's made for love.' Hermann says, 'Our life together began as an experiment and still is'. Yet, as has been pointed out, he now seems very settled as his sense of belonging in his Heimat speaks to him. Incidentally, when he was going across the field in the dream sequence, he seemed much older.

When he speaks to the lady in the photo shop, she says that her brother was taught by a particular teacher. My recollection was that the Gymnasium was single sex anyway, so why expect her to be taught by him? Nice to see some scenes in Simmern from H1, e.g., the steps where Hermann was given one of his illicit letters and the cinema with its Heimat poster.

Rudi's farewell is so much more traditional and dignified than Ernst's. Hermann is once again late and with his tie askew. Did he know the family so well that he could push to the front to comfort them? And when his eye glances to the family graves, it is Horst he comes to first. Never quite saw why he was killed off as he could have made an interesting character in later life.

The villagers are more worried about cracks in their kitchens than the fate of what is supposedly a valuable art hoard. Ernst was what we call in England a 'wide boy' People who become very rich often have lucky breaks or at least know how to seize them. The dream sequence hints that he wasn't too scrupulous about paying his taxes. So it is just about plausible that he could have acquired quite a valuable art collection.

So a sense of loss at this marvellous series which works on so many different levels coming to an end.

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>

Date: Sat, 1 Apr 2006 12:59:59 +0100

Dear Gert Jan, My last email which replied to some points of yours was written before I'd read your very latest one, which I've only found today on the Archive (it didn't reach me on the list) ...

You say:

> In the synopsis it was not Rudi Molz who died, but his wife Lenchen" ...

This could also fit my suggestion, following a hint in your own earlier mail, that the scenes with the big lorries transporting Ernst's collection might have been intended as a "real" event rather than a dream ... since Rudi's presence and comments would not then have been "ghostly". Much more convincing solution too than "the would-be Hollywood disaster sequence"!

Also if the failure of the museum project had "really" (rather than just in a "dream") involved exporting the collection - that would have more directly reflected Edgar Reitz' dominant theme re globalisation, being as Ivan says: "a metaphor for Germany's economic decline and the rise of the countries of the East", instead of merely being (as you point out) the result of a natural occurrence like an earthquake... either way of course there is powerful symbolism...

Just ideas...

Angela

From: Thomas Hönemann <th.hoenemann@freenet.de>

Date: Sat, 1 Apr 2006 18:15:58 +0200

Dear Angela and Gert Jan, dear others.

I was very surprised that Gert Jan found out about what Reitz planned first referring to the Molz-family. To understand why this change was made, we have to make, sorry Edgar Reitz, a reference to real life. Because Rudi and Lenchen Molz, those two roles, have two very real archetypes, namely Rudi und Marga Molz, who were the inn-keepers in Woppenroth (see <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woppenroth> , in German), a village with less than 300 inhabitants, which most of all Hunsrück-villages can assert to be "Schabbach" (but as we know: Schabbach is everywhere ...). Reitz made their acquaintance in 1979 when he started working on the plot of HEIMAT there.

So Rudi Molz (who also appears in "Geschichten aus den Hunsrückdörfern", the semi-documentary sequel of HEIMAT) and his wife had a guest-house in Woppenroth, and Reitz and his co-writer Peter Steinbach often went there that time to meet the village people and to listen to their narratives to integrate them into the film (the most famous example for this is the coffin that was left behind on the street because of a thunder-storm - did you know that Stanley Kubrick loved this scene so much that he put the picture on the wall of his workroom?).

When writing the script of HEIMAT 3 Reitz integrated those two persons in the story, and indeed he originally planned to let Lenchen (I do not know if Reitz originally planned to call her Marga), the wife, die. Reitz did already engage Rudi and Marga Molz to play their roles in person, and also agreed with them on using their inn as a filming location (which was really done), but unfortunately Rudi Molz died on 30th of January 2002, only a few months before the shooting of H3 started, after having had a tragical accident in December 2001 (he fell down from a hayloft in his barn). Rudi's death (I learned!) changed things. Reitz had to find actors to play the roles (as far as Marga naturally was not able to play the role at the side of an actor playing her dead man), and he succeeded. But how to compass with the friend's death? Reitz decided to set Rudi Molz a memorial with H3 (that is what he literally said!), and so he did with extending his role much more than usually planned, making him kind of a thread of the whole plot (I remember someone asking if Rudi did not have to care for his inn and farming, or why he has been able to be at the Günderdehaus-lot most of the time). Edgar Reitz brought a chaplet (do you say so?) for Rudi Molz's funeral, with a label saying "Your friend Edgar".

I myself was lucky to make the acquaintance of Rudi Molz in 1999, and we met again two times in 2000 and 2001. He indeed was a very friendly, experienced and wise man, we often sat in his inn in the evening, drank some wine, philosophising on life, history, education, and, of course, on HEIMAT. Him and Marga really were a special couple, so much really deep love and understanding, just the way Edgar Reitz is presenting Rudi and Lenchen in H3. Rudi Molz is the only person I will ever know who has two different graves, his real one on the Woppenroth churchyard, and the film-grave at the Nunkirche graveyard near Sargenroth (see <http://www.heimat123.de/h3drehort.htm>, you will also find a picture of the Gasthaus Molz there).

I am aware that this contribution may cause another discussion on fiction and reality, and this aspect of integration real persons and places in H3 really reminds me of what Angela presumed Reitz to have in mind, namely to avoid people intruding too deep into his personal life:

- > Could it be that because the Heimat films are so close to the director's
- > personal experience, in some ways even semi-autobiographical, he might feel
- > that by becoming involved in discussing and sharing reactions to the films
- > we are intruding into something very personal, like a dream or memory, and
- > preying on it to fill an emotional vacuum of our own? This worries me, I do
- > question why I'm spending time on all this – but then, why not? Not
- > worried enough to stop doing it yet ...

(written by Angela on 19th of March)

Nowadays Marga Molz still keeps her inn in Woppenroth, and if anyone of you will get there, please tell her the best regards from me.

So far for today, I hope to find some time to reflect on your comments and write down my own impressions on part 6 soon, best regards, and excuse all the linguistic mistakes I fear having made,

Thomas

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

Date: Sat, 1 Apr 2006 21:19:49 +0100

Gert Jan, you asked:

>Is it true Tolkien used the saga for "The Lord of the Rings"?

I have never read the book but some interesting facts about him. He was Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford University from 1925 and was an expert in the sagas, myths and legends of Northern Europe including Old Norse, Old English and Gothic languages. Apparently his name derives from German: Toll-kühn meaning "foolishly brave" or "stupidly clever" and his family had migrated from Saxony in the 18th century. I am sure he knew all about the Niebelungen treasure!

I liked your comments on the dream sequence:

> I noticed that Hermann in his dream had a forecasting and a "backcasting"
> part related to personal danger.....Later on in his dream he became a
> warning: Lulu and Lukas will be in danger soon. They were the only persons
> in his dream that weren't dead. They didn't belong there.

I had thought that Lukas and Lulu were holding and supporting Lutz because he had not been dead long but your interpretation makes much better sense.

In your description of the time schedule and the compression of Episode 6 I was reminded of discussions about how Shakespeare did not keep to the so-called "unities" of time, place and plot. However, the more dramatic time is compressed the more intensity and concentration can be achieved. In Christopher Marlowe's play Dr. Faustus the clock chimes the quarters as Faustus delivers his final speech whilst waiting for the devil to collect his soul. The speech only takes a few minutes to actually declaim but what drama for Faust's final hour. This has probably got nothing to do with the topic in hand!

Congratulations on contributing to discussions on every episode. Now you know what it feels like to be me <vbg>!!

Ivan.

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>

Date: Sat, 1 Apr 2006 22:34:35 +0100

I'll try now to respond to Ivan's Intro and to organise my reactions to the episode:

I find Part 6 a strange episode that certainly improves on second viewing. However the dire influence of the TV companies persists – the film feels like a series of deeply felt and magnificently realised sequences pasted together without enough space to develop each one fully. This was already the case in previous episodes, eg in Episode 5 the sharp, awkward jump from Hermann weeping in Clarissa's lap after Ernst's death, to the acrimonious family gathering of the Simons some days or more later, which might well have signalled a break between two distinct episodes. It needed something more, maybe Ernst's funeral which we never saw... though it is moving to see his gravestone in Episode 6, with the bird (dove?) flying across it. But in episode 6 there is the kernel of material for at least 3 episodes, each with its own emotional energy: maybe Munich, Rudi's funeral, and the Millennium. If this email gets too long again, maybe I'll split it on those lines.

MUNICH:

I loved the first shot of the city under that wonderful sky of huge clouds.

The eclipse: Edgar Reitz explains in the Fliess interview how he used the eclipse, and how he filmed it. The interviewer says: "I know that long before the start of the filming, you had shot the eclipse anyway, so that you could use it in the film. So how do the real events relate to the drama?"

Reitz replies: "In 1999 when the eclipse in Bavaria really happened, we had already got quite far on with writing the script. We only lacked a good idea with which to explain in the film why the main characters turn up on exactly the same summer's day in Munich. The eclipse then presented itself as a good reason. The cosmic event that was played out only in south Germany would be a reason for my Hunsrückers to travel to Munich. Not only are Hermann and Clarissa in Munich that day, but so also is Gunnar. I have never otherwise taken chance meetings on the street to be a good dramatic device. As an exception during an eclipse the story might nevertheless be believable. So 4 years later I laboriously staged the solar eclipse of 2003 for the film with countless extras on the streets of Munich."

Gunnar: His return to the scene is surprisingly welcome, and it's easy to empathise with his predicaments, in the family and in prison. The faithfulness of his elder daughter, Nadine, and the way the younger one, Jennifer, gradually warmed to him, is very moving.

When alone with Nadine, he is able to give an honest account of his drinking, the loss of his licence, his accident when driving illegally, and the resultant prison sentence, and confesses to "being a complete failure". Nadine, who has kept her early memories and early love and trust of him, seems to be the only person he can confide in. But when she tries to find out whether he has a girl friend or partner he twice evades the question. Maybe he is still together with the "timid lodger" of Film 2 in Berlin – but it later becomes clear that he has not confided in her either. He is still an extraordinarily lonely person, who then has a "magical time" with his new-found children. But when Petra returns, of course he overdoes everything and creates an emotional confrontation.

The persisting cultural contrast between East and West is deliberately very marked, with Gunnar's use of words that the girls don't understand, and their failure to recognise his impersonation of Honecker. As Wyn Grant says, he is "still doing his dated Erich impression." Edgar Reitz comments on this in the VPRO television documentary of 19.12.04 (see ReindeR's website for a rough translation of this [<http://www.heimat123.net/interviews/vprotv191204.html> -Eds]). He says of the effect on Gunnar of his children's ignorance:

"One can sympathise when something that was important, even if it was negatively important, is suddenly no longer understood. I get the feeling my whole life has become unimportant because of that."

In prison, Gunnar launches into a nostalgic spiel about drink and driving in the old DDR. In the same documentary, the interviewer asks whether the East Germans wanted to go back to the two Germanies. Reitz gives an interesting reply:

"It's quite ambivalent. If you really took people at their word they wouldn't want to go back. Today they have so many opportunities and so many things they didn't have before ... that they really don't want the Wall back or to be shut in again. But there was perhaps a feeling of a greater closeness among people, people were not so alone as they are today, they were closer together in their work and their homes, and talked to each other more, and there were many more friendships. Outside it was a totalitarian state that watched people, but not all the people were Stasi, most of them weren't, there was still a private world to withdraw to, this cosy atmosphere in the private world is lost."

And he goes on to regret the loss of memory, our tendency to live only in the present and to lose our consciousness of history.

Gunnar certainly does not seem to be as one would imagine a successful "millionaire" contractor with Warner Bros would have become. As Wyn Grant says:
> He comes across as a very primitive, unformed person in many ways

He has no mobile phone, and has not heard of texting ... (this was 1999 – had we?). He is surprised that the obviously very comfortable family flat has a guest room. What has life been like for him in Berlin since 1990?

He keeps saying "money is no object" - (which becomes a kind of refrain in this episode). In Gert Jan's words:

> How did he get it? Not from dreams about a super contract with Warner
> Brothers, that's for sure. The book "Heimat 3" explains that Gunnar speculated
> on the stock exchange at the right moment. Reasonable?"

On being admitted to prison he presents himself (fantasizing?) as someone so rich and famous that not only did he pay for all the damage to the butcher's shop he crashed into, but the butcher then put up a poster of him in the shop. But near the end he also says sadly to his cellmate "money is not everything".

It's not entirely clear how much money actually exists. Gunnar tries again to impress a prison officer with his phone call to arrange Chinese fireworks for the Millenium party. These are to cost DM 110,000 "West". The officer is not impressed. But the only money that definitely changes hands is the DM 50,000 received by Tillmann to organise the party and set up the lighting and control system etc. Could this have covered the fireworks too? How much was DM50K in sterling or dollars in 1999?

Petra and Reinhold seem shallow, in way that I had not felt before, though other people noticed it in the earlier Episodes. The contrast with Hermann and Clarissa is made very obvious while the older couple are preoccupied with the news of Rudi's death, and Clarissa says "Rudi and Lenchen made it to the end without great fuss.. I think not everyone is made for love..".

As Ivan and others say, Petra treats her ex-husband very insensitively. But on the other hand, it can be really scary to feel emotionally at the mercy of someone so needy and with no boundaries, as she must have felt when under pressure from poor Gunnar. One can understand her maintaining rather cruel barriers.

Jennifer tearing up the sunglasses: Wyn Grant sees her as "petulant" – but I can understand only too well how, after having started to warm to this strange intrusive "real father", she is then confused and embarrassed that he seems to have overstepped the boundary and is upsetting her mother, and witnesses her mother's taut defensiveness. It's a painful experience... and makes Nadine's loyalty to Gunnar and her gesture at the Millemium all the more poignant.

Although very sad, a lot of this section of the film is also very funny – Reinhold's nosebleed, for a start, but all the way we laugh at Gunnar's adventures at the same time as empathising with him... only he would manage to delay his sentence by a day by half-blinding himself gazing at the sun – and only he could survive 6 months with his rabid cell-mate by a mixture of obsequiousness and airy advice about the Stock Exchange. It must be the performance of Uwe Steimle's life – it's brilliant.

Enough for one email.

Angela

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>
Date: Sun, 2 Apr 2006 01:25:58 +0100

Dear Ivan and others,

FUNERAL AND CATASTROPHE

You have already written so fully and movingly about this part, there's not that much more to say.

Before leaving Munich, Hermann and Clarissa are moving out of Hermann's old flat, where he was living with Schusschen and little Lulu through times of difficulty and break-up of his marriage. As he (I think?) says, "the old stories are packed up and will follow us".

And so, for Clarissa, they do, quite literally. Her mother turns up in a hysterical state and demands to be rescued from the old people's home in Wasserburg, Clarissa's childhood 'Heimat', where it later becomes clear that she had herself originally insisted on returning. Clarissa, exchanging desperate glances with Hermann, gives in and promises to take the old woman with them to the Günderrode House.

In the VPRO television documentary Salome Kammer says of this scene,
 “Clarissa has to take responsibility..... This conflict with the mother is a very difficult thing - it can disrupt the life of a fragile relationship. Her mother is very strong and dominant Clarissa can't refuse... the story ends with the conflict still unresolved, but I am glad at least that Clarissa has taken her to live with them in Oberwesel.”

I'm afraid I am not mature enough myself to see this as anything to be glad about. The woman was presented throughout DZH and H3 as being almost pathologically manipulative and emotionally dishonest, she had persistently dominated Clarissa's life from childhood onwards, while claiming and probably genuinely believing herself to be a devoted and selfless mother ... the actress playing the part skilfully showed each glimmer of glee at the success of her dramatic manoeuvre to blackmail Clarissa into this situation. It was hilarious, but truly horrible. Will Clarissa ever be able just to laugh at it too? What was that about utopia...

Meanwhile, Hermann's return to the Hunsrück, and his feeling of coming home – I agree with Ivan this is a lovely bit - ... even if disturbed by what follows later. Though it feeds directly into the uncomfortable dreams, it still points beyond towards the ending of the film.

The twin trees and the dreams... the hot sultry day (apparently it really was...)

Rudi's image trembling in the water (like the reflected faces in train windows that have signalled earlier dream sequences) - the line he speaks about the young of today hearing with their eyes and seeing with their ears... does anyone remember ...had he said that in an earlier episode too? Or was it just Hartmut who said to Matko “do you know why a person has ears? to see with - without ears his cap would fall over his eyes” ... and then proceeds to demonstrate, nearly precipitating his own version of an open-ended “accident”... in collision with a truck ...

Interestingly, somewhere in Episode 5 Rudi had also warned about the danger of a collapse at the mine, I think during the public presentation of Ernst's plans to the politicians etc.

Rudi's funeral – the great contrast with Anton's – the gravestones, including Ernst's with the bird .. I wonder what sort of funeral they gave him ... and Matko? Is there any hope that there will be some footage of that in the promised follow-up DVD one day?

In my emails yesterday, I asked whether the sequestration of the art collection and its export to Japan might originally have been intended as a realistic and politically significant reason for the museum plan to fail - instead of the melodramatic, watery Götterdämmerung complete with rainbow bridge (collapse of) ...

Does this strike a chord with anyone – Alan ... over to you...? It's speculation – but I think it's justifiable given that the melodrama is so alien to Edgar Reitz' other work, and that we know he was under pressure from the TV bosses etc.

So many questions about that catastrophe episode – eg why is Lulu the only person who knows where in the mineshafts the containers with the pictures are? and what is the significance of poor old Hermann's swim being in fact redundant, since it is Lulu who achieves the actual rescue with the remote controlled crane. (Can't have just been for the Mr-Darcy-wet-shirt moment as he emerges?)

Lulu and Delveau in the restaurant – (the affectation (or game) of the dropped “Hs” – earlier when he was shouting to Lulu to come back out of the mine he had had no problem with ‘h’: “Lulu, hörst du mich?”) ... Delveau quotes from “Der Zeitgeist” and says he loves Hölderlin because “he saw a new beginning in everything and felt enthusiastic”, but Lulu replies that she has lost too much – “No Hölderlin can help me now”. So Edgar Reitz says in his interviews that “romanticism”, “this idea of being always at the beginning, and seeing life as a journey”, has become useless, and now like poor Lulu, people are “at a loss”?

When Lulu again says “I’m at a loss”, before leaving the “shrine” at the tree where Lutz died, and starting out for Köln with a protesting Lukas in the mini, she goes back and deliberately overturns the vase of flowers that they have just left at the tree... is it despair, or renouncing her mourning for Lutz, or just that she won’t be back to renew the flowers?

Angela

PS – Correction to last email re Gunnar , he did say “money isn’t everything in life” but then he added “it’s interest that counts!” ...

From: Wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>

Date: Sat, 01 Apr 2006 21:06:43 -0500

So this is the conclusion of the family drama, of which we were able to witness 81 years in the Trilogy. The last episode mends a lot of rifts and opens new ones, so to speak. Schabbach finds a way to prevent the entire village from dropping into the sinkhole that opened up over the cave with Ernst's art collection, Hartmut learns about Galina's husband, who is also the owner of a wine delivery service that Hartmut is using. Many other mini-reunions, Tobi shows up just at the right moment, what does he mean by "the beard is gone"? Udo telling about his new girlfriend and Tillman and Moni with the "small happiness". And, above all, Herman and Clarissa find to each other, accept their own "family" (9 members are now living in the Günderoode house) with Hermann remarking about family having the best chances to survive, even in the new millennium. But Rudi is gone, this time with a proper funeral at the same graveyard where the Simons and Wiegands rest. Wonderful, reminiscent scenes of Hermann at the two trees, reconnected with the past and the village. It's what he will remember, the people in his life from Schabbach, his home and his dream of driving back to see his mother's casket in the street during the rain storm. I now wonder about the title "Farewell to Schabbach" because in the end, Clarissa and Hermann continue their lives just beyond the village, with a view to the Rhine river, always ready to carry them to other destinations, downstream to Amsterdam, upstream to Munich. That's how I feel when I stand at that place, the river gives me an excuse to leave but always asks me to come back. The river says: "Just go and take a look around, I'll be here when you get back".

For me the Episode, and Heimat3, ended happily, first with Clarissa's exceptional song "Maybe this time" on New Year's Eve, and then with Clarissa and Hermann walking through the field in early morning and Clarissa asking: "so, what do you think about me as a grandmother?" and Hermann asking Clarissa to promise to "Stay healthy!" That was wonderful. I felt the following scene at the Main riverbanks in Frankfurt was from a different movie, as if I had inadvertently flipped the channel. This time I didn't let Reitz spoil my fun and satisfaction about the "old" couple and I

ignored the rest of the movie, it didn't talk to me at all since I never cared all that much for Lulu in the first place.

Strange, when you have met people how they jump out at you in the movie: Helma Hammen singing with the Schabbach choir in the Munich pedestrian area, for example. But I could not find Ans anywhere, Joel?

Wolfgang

From: Robert A D Cran <chinherb att.biz>
Date: Sun, 2 Apr 2006 08:43:35 CEST

Angela,

> The book "Heimat 3" explains that Gunnar speculated on the stock exchange
> at the right moment. Reasonable?"

It was a bull market then. If he had used just under half the capital he had earned from the Warner Brothers deal to invest in the stock market in 1990, by just sitting on blue chip shares without trading any highs and lows along the way, he would in 1999 have been worth around DEM 3 million, say, £1 million:
<http://www.stoxx.com/StoxxChart?width=460&height=350&period=all&date=today&norm=first&symb1=SX5P&symb2=SX5P> If he had played the interim highs and lows properly he would have been worth considerably more. If he had been savvy enough to ride more inspired shares than standard blue chip there is no telling how much more he could have been worth by that time; he would have been comfortable.

> How much was DM50K in sterling or dollars in 1999?

Just short of £16,000 or about US \$26,600 at the interbank highs of 31 December 1999:

<http://www.oanda.com/convert/fxhistory>

Robert

From: Thomas Hönemann <th.hoenemann@freenet.de>
Date: Sun, 2 Apr 2006 09:30:47 CEST

Dear friends on the list,

there are so many interesting posts on part 6 - of course including Ivan's very well done introduction - thank you so much everybody! Indeed reading your posts helped me to get a more sophisticated opinion about this part, which I still have some problems with. Within this post I am sometimes going to quote (and translate) the impressions and analysis I posted in the German discussion in the beginning of 2005.

First of all: There are very nice scenes and takes in part 6. I most of all love the scenes with Gunnar and his daughters. They were written and played so lovely in my

eyes, and the atmosphere of the whole situation seems so intensively to me, just to be turned when Petra and Reinhold come back from the concert.

The combination of the different story-lines and characters in Munich is very well done I think, finishing with the message of Rudi's death.

Besides: a take I love very much is when Lulu and Lukas get into their car and leave the place where Lutz's accident took place. The shot is done in the back light of the going-down sun, and if you look closely you can see the dust of the street that is dispersed by the accelerating wheels.

I also love Hermann's return to the Hunsrück, he is talking so gently from the off, no one could think that he does not come home now, maybe for eternity? The Simmern scenes are great, passing the stairs he met Ernst on decades ago (very well observed, was it you, Gert Jan?), the Pro-Winzkino (<http://www.pro-winzkino.de/static/structure/index.php> they worked very close with Edgar Reitz, and had the Rheinland-Pfalz-premier there, see photo-gallery on their page) with the HEIMAT-posters outside, and then the photo shop. I was surprised that nobody wondered about the shop having displayed the photo of Rudi and Lenchen in their showcase. In fact it is usual for German photo-shops to show examples of their work publicly, with having asked the shown persons before, of course (is it the same in your country?).

On the way to the funeral Reitz develops some very clear parallels to HEIMAT within the second dream-sequence, we meet again all those who had left in H3, and the coffin that was left behind on the road actually is a classic motive as Stanley Kubrick loved it so much.

Rudi's funeral brings tears, as Karl August Dahl is telling a very heartbreaking story of small Rudi and Lenchen, which actually describes the relationship of real Rudi and Marga (see my yesterday's post) very well. Hermann indeed is shown as a very close friend of the family, and this is what Edgar Reitz was/is towards the real Rudi and Marga (sorry again for mixing fiction and reality - for me the trilogy partly is a semi-documentary-film!).

At this point, Rudi's funeral, for me the film could be finished. Hermann has lost the last real friend he had in the Hunsrück, Rudi's death is like a loss of HEIMAT for him, and we could discuss how he is going to cope with this experience. But before we all are able to start to think about it the whole film turns leaving behind the silent and smooth rhythm of story-telling, mutating to kind of a pseudo-Hollywood-action movie. Angela already denoted, that this part may be emerged by the influence of the financiers, wanting to get a "modern" piece of film (who ever tells us what actively modern is!!???), and I am not sure if Edgar Reitz himself would have chosen this way of continuing the story without any influence from the financiers.

Nevertheless, for me a central question is: Why has Edgar Reitz *again* to disturb these moments we feel sympathy with such sobering, also trashy scenes (as he already did in H1)? In HEIMAT it was the polonaise through the cowshed which took us off, now it is the crash of the gallery ... Gundolf Hartlieb, a German author who wrote about Reitz and Heimat in his book "In diesem Ozean von Erinnerung" (see exact reference on <http://www.heimat123.de/heimlit.htm>) comments on this very appropriately:

"The deconstruction of Heimat is continuing the same degree the older generations are surrendering from the stage of life. They meet - symbolically

inflated - in a surreal-naive counterpart of the fair at the "Feast of the Living and the Dead" in the village hall, from where they can watch the living, those, who seem (although they are feasting) to be more morbid than the dead people are themselves." (p. 85)

And he goes on, referring to Carsten Witte, the reviewer of the German newspaper "Die ZEIT":

"The turning of the last part for Witte is no failure of the plot. He correctly understands it as an intended, efficient unsettlement* of the spectator, who just started to feel very comfortable with that subscription for the sympathy for the rural area. The good and the bad energies present as indivisible, Witte writes, and assesses the 'sadness of perception' as the strongest effect of the film. What was valued as egregiously by some critics, is the quality of HEIMAT, namely to achieve the awkward sleight of hand to think Ernst Bloch and Zarah Leander at once, as glittering moments of German history."

But, this question may be permitted, does Edgar Reitz indeed achieve to create that "sympathy for the country", the deep sympathy with the characters, within those 6 parts of HEIMAT 3 he finally was allowed to produce? What if the unsettlement* Hartlieb points on does not meet up our cosiness (we maybe did not have the chance to develop), but meets itself? Unsettlement* squared??? To say it in different words: In HEIMAT actually the fair ripped us all out of Schabbach. But what feeling could the crash of the gallery rip us of??? And is this pseudo-Hollywood-tribute an adequate final for this great trilogy?

The party on New Year's Eve compensates my irritation partly. It is again very well done, and we meet lots of characters again, persons having acted in front but also behind the camera (e. g. the camera passes some people from the Pro-Winzkino). The circle is closing, except Gunnar, who again is going to be the tragical hero, as he was from the beginning on and will ever be, presumably.

What is left in the end? Kind of helplessness and perplexity, we all are coming back to real (!!) life. But anyhow: In my opinion, despite of all differences we have to concede when comparing H3 with the former parts, HEIMAT 3 is going deep to the heart without depredating our illusions, without spreading melancholy or resignation. The film creates, in spite of all taken up fears and risks of civilisation, a deep love of live.

Excuse again if I did not achieve to express orthographically correct or (even worse) coherently every time, do not hesitate to ask if aspects of my contribution are presented not clearly enough.

Best regards to you all, I am really looking forward to your comments,
Thomas
<http://www.heimat123.de>

* I am using the word unsettlement to express a loss of confidence, security, and home. Hope the meaning fits with the word, alternatives could be uncertainty or confusion. Irritation is too strong I think. *[In an off-list email Thomas explains: "the German word I tried to translate with 'unsettlement' is 'Verstörung' ".- Eds]*

From: Thomas Hönemann <th.hoenemann@freenet.de>

Date: Sun, 2 Apr 2006 13:55:35 +0200

[in reply to Wolfgang – Eds.]:

- > I now wonder about the title "Farewell to Schabbach" because in the end,
- > Clarissa and Hermann continue their lives just beyond the village, with a
- > view to the Rhine river, always ready to carry them to other destinations,
- > downstream to Amsterdam, upstream to Munich.

I can suggest two ways of interpreting this title:

1. With losing his friend Rudi, after all family members had died before or went away, there is nothing left linking Hermann with his old Heimat Schabbach. So for him there is no relation to it anymore, it is time to say farewell.

2. A quotation from a Reitz-interview, taken from the documentary "Schabbach ist überall " (Schabbach is everywhere) by Utz Kastenholz:

"Of course for me it is a radical experience to say 'this is the last part of Heimat'. And I spent nearly 25 years of my life on this project, so that this project itself is kind of a Heimat for me. To finish it is painful. I am not lacking of ideas to tell stories within a great narrative work called Heimat, I could continue eternally and as long I am healthy and able to work. But to argue about the budget with the people from German television, having to justify every single syllable of the script, this I do not want to do again, that is for sure. Therefore it is farewell to Schabbach."

- > I felt the following scene at the Main riverbanks in Frankfurt was from
- > a different movie, as if I had inadvertently flipped the channel.

I completely agree with you, Wolfgang. This scene appears really strange and seems not to fit in the context at all - even though it gives Lulu an adequate occasion to reveal her schemes of life.

Did you notice? The scene must have been shot in summer, all of the trees on the opposite bank of the Main (river) are full of green leaves (it is similar when Clarissa's son Arnold arrives at the Günderodehaus with his family for the New Year's Eve party, he enters the terrace with his wife and shows her the Rhine. The contrast between the trees close to the house, covered with artificial snow, and the summerly valley could not be bigger...)

Obviously colour-filters were used to make the Frankfurt-scene look more winterly, and maybe this is the main reason for it coming across so strangely, like from a science-fiction movie (even though a bad one ...).

Best regards,
Thomas

From: Alan <alan.wmedia.com>
Date: Sun, 2 Apr 2006 09:00:24 -0400 (EDT)

Gert Jan wrote:

- > The unknown woman clutching her present which she finally leaves on a table
- > Was it a present the timid woman next door brought along from Berlin ? It
- > reminded me to the little box Rob showed in DZH, episode 8 (the marriage)
- > We'll never know what was inside, but the Finnish girlfriend of Juan and
- > the waitress looked inside and they were frightened very much. Some
- > film experts described it as a "MacGuffin". "

I believe the scene in DZH is an allusion to a film by one of Reitz's favorite filmmakers: Luis Bunuel's BELLE DE JOUR. Here is a link that some may find interesting: <http://www.deep-focus.com/flicker/belledej.html>

Rob pulls off his prank in 1964; Bunuel's film appeared in 1966. Makes you kinda miss the 1960s...

From: Wolfgang <wolf.floitgraf.com>
Date: Sun, 02 Apr 2006 13:17:15 -0400

Hello Thomas,

agreed, there is more than one interpretation of "farewell". In the film, Hermann now lives only two miles away from Schabbach but inside he has moved a lot further.

We know that Reitz was probably as shocked and saddened by the real Rudi's departure in 2002 than Hermann was. Since Reitz is telling the story and explaining his own feelings, maybe the farewell has something to do with his own distance to his Heimat, physically and emotionally. There is only this small problem that as he is making every effort to distance himself from Schabbach (the story place), more and more people discover the real places and identify themselves with it. Not all those folks have seen the films!! It is a nice place, to be sure, but for different reasons! I remember that tourist executives were elated when it became known that Heimat 3 would play in and around Oberwesel. Otherwise, Reitz would have never gotten permission to build the Gnderode house in this formerly restricted location on that hill. The tourist board knows an opportunity when they see one. The building and keeping of the film house changed some long standing building codes for the entire town and they might end up regretting their decision. And moving the town of Schabbach almost right next to Oberwesel in the film gives both communities the benefit of fame. I would not be surprised to see a banner some day: Schabbach Lives!!!

So there is the "idea" Schabbach which is everywhere (and supposedly universal) and the film locations which happen to be Woppenroth and all the other places we learned to like so much. While Reitz has left the place we'd love to move in. Lets see if his Footnotes will succeed in weaning us off the locations or will strengthen our connection to the places. I am really curious.

Wolfgang

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>
Date: Sun, 2 Apr 2006 18:21:28 +0100

Robert,

Thanks for your reply -

That's interesting - it clearly would be possible for Gunnar to have become as rich as he claims .. and I had also made a mistake in my email - He didn't just say "Money isn't everything" - he added "It's interest that counts"... and he probably wasn't saying it "sadly" either ... - it was while he was trying to impress his cell-mate, I think - (even making notes, these things are hard to remember clearly without watching again ...)

But like Gert Jan whose words I was quoting in the bit you replied to .. I'm still a bit doubtful, it's hard to believe just from his behaviour as I tried to explain ...

However, the figures you give for sterling and dollar equivalents would be big sums for us, but not fantasy megabucks these days - though the DM110K would have been about £35K or \$57K - a lot to fritter on fireworks obviously, - and if he really did he must have been more than "comfortable", as you say ...

Clearly it's possible that he was indeed very rich, as well as rather lonely and given to exuberant but not fantastical accounts of his wealth ... it would be nice to think so, poor old Gunnar...

Angela

From: JoelOYoung <JoelOYoung@aol.com>
Date: Sun, 2 Apr 2006 15:22:08 EDT

Gert Jan,
Is not the "unknown woman" the lady from Berlin, that had the flat under Gunner, whom he surprised on the WC that one time?
Joel

From: "Gert Jan Jansen" <gertjan.jansengouda.demon.nl>
Date: Sun, 2 Apr 2006 22:15:58 +0200

Thank you all, Angela, Ivan, Thomas, Wyn, Robert, Joel, Wolfgang, Allen '(I hope I don't forget someone) for your contributions that made this rainy and windy weekend comfortable. And except reading I needed time to see and hear Salome Kammer on Dutch television this morning. She sang 3 short songs of the Hungarian composer Gyorgy Kurtág, accompanied by Carolin Widmann, violon. It were musical interpretations of sentences from letters and diaries of Franz Kafka.

Did I like it? No sorry I didn't and I'm sure Ivan would have had the same feelings. But my wife assured me that it was very difficult to sing.

On the other hand I liked her radiation very much; very attractive again. In episode 6 in my vision Clarissa became more and more a mixture of queen Beatrix of the Netherlands and my mother in law (Two woman I highly respect).

Gert Jan

From: Wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>
Date: Sun, 02 Apr 2006 16:41:47 -0400

Hi,

we can probably agree that this role of that lady from Berlin was one of the least developed characters, a "stub" that could have made a major difference in Gunnar's life, had he been at the New Year's Party. I think this is one of those cases where Reitz hints at a story line that was not to be or whatever happened that encouraged her to come to Oberwesel to the Party (did Gunnar invite her?) is up to the viewer to contemplate. What makes the character even more mysterious is the present she brings to the party, but we already know from DZH that this effect is typical Reitz having fun with the "what if's" and you can look up McGuffin in Wikipedia: "A plot device that motivates the characters and advances the story, but has little other relevance to the story itself.", there are lots of examples, some quite interesting. Thanks Alan for the hint.

Wolfgang

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire zetnet.co.uk>
Date: Sun, 2 Apr 2006 23:57:45 +0100

THE MILLENIUM:

Ivan's was a very rich account of the Millennium party, with so many details that had escaped me on first two viewings – so one goes back yet again to find and enjoy them. As he says, the direction of the whole sequence was "brilliantly done". I was also very interested in his quote from the booklet by David Parkinson accompanying the DVD (wonder if it will ever be separately published?) He writes:

> Parkinson speculates that Reitz might have been ending the story "on an
 > uncomfortable comparison between the new dawn and the nightmarish end
 > of the Weimar" republic or perhaps "the victory of hope over experience".

There certainly is for me something "nightmarish" about this party, in spite of the warmth of individual scenes. There is the frenetic sense that (as I think Udo says) when it ends everything will *have* to be different. And for his family, what a difference ...

Gert Jan says:

> "The shortest summary of Heimat 123 is perhaps the word 'Time'. Reitz made
 > it visible. The change-over of the millennia is the best symbol. In fact
 > nothing changes in that pure second, but take more of them and everything
 > in life is changed."

And Ivan's interesting note on dramatic time has everything, not "nothing", to do with the topic on hand, in this Millennium sequence.

The party is full of illusions and disappointments, nothing is really what it seems. Some characters are uneasily aware of this, eg poor Jana, others entirely blind to it.

To start with, there is Thomas' observation about the artificial snow and the inappropriate season. This is particularly sad when one thinks of snow scenes in DZH, which are either clearly genuine (the English Garden), or lovingly and convincingly created by Franz Bauer (the WölfeLied scene). To create it for a whole house and garden would have been very hard, but as it was I too found it quite distracting, and wished that Arnold had not shown his family the view along the Rhine, so obviously shot in the late summer or autumn – and even without that there was much too much foliage around under the "snow".

Then the party is in Hermann's house, but he and Clarissa are not "giving" it, and have had, not unwillingly, to go along with it. Also I hope those fireworks really are paid for and don't get charged to Tillmann..... (and that Robert's right that Gunnar could be as rich as he claims..) Clarissa again assumes her brittle social manner, so alien to the character she presented in DZH. But in the midst of it all there is her delight at seeing her new grandchildren and tenderly singing to them, and welcoming her daughter-in-law for the first time. I wish again that there had been time in the series to develop her relationship with her son, so that this scene and the one of the wedding video in hospital could have had more space and depth.

The absence of Gunnar pervades all of it. In the Fliess interview, Edgar Reitz says:

"When in the sixth episode New Year is celebrated, when everyone comes together once more, and Gunnar is missing because he is in jail, then that really hurts. We miss him, as parents might miss one of their children."

It does really hurt, and some of the party-goers clearly are upset by it. The "timid lodger" who once washed Gunnar's football shirt wanders around like a ghost, knowing no one, and unable to find out what has happened to him. I wonder what happens to her too, when she leaves the present on a table and slips away alone ... how? And where will she go? She may have been, or still is his girlfriend, but he can't confide even in her. Like Ernst, without meaning to, Gunnar lets everyone down, however close to him they are. None of those at the party, not even Tillmann who is organising it for him, have any idea where he is. Someone so exuberantly alive and OTT absent from his own party – it's like another kind of Schabbach funeral all over again .

All through, as well, there is this counterpoint of the frenetic "time" (in Ivan's sense) of the party, with the "time" that stands still in the prison, where Gunnar sits tearful and alone with his daughter's musical card. Nadine's tentative visit to the prison to hand in the card is one of the most moving parts of the whole of H3. She is so young, and courageous, and the gesture so simple and loving ... O dear, sentimental old bat, me, no doubt.

Then the awkward meeting of Hartmut and Mara with Galina and her "new German husband". Clarissa appears to ignore Galina, while welcoming Mara – but this is probably just tactful, as it leaves Hartmut free to talk to Galina. Galina as ever is very direct and simple in that situation – though she has to give a clumsy rehearsal of Hartmut's life story since they last met, just so that the viewer can learn what has

happened to him. But we never really learn what happened to her after he left her, and how she and her son felt and lived. The malign constraints of the TV schedules again. Ivan could well be right that she > protests too much her happiness with her new husband.

The hilarious bit where Hartmut and the new husband find they know each other, and amuse Udo's sons by their wine-tasting antics - then we see Galina apparently tell her husband who Hartmut is, and his face changes and hardens as he looks back at Hartmut now away across the room.

Galina and Mara are so different, yet each in her way a woman of both beauty and strength. Hartmut doesn't deserve either of them...

Udo and Jana – again nothing will be what it seems – Udo's anticipated 6-times-a-night new life least of all.

Dieter – like Ivan I failed to recognise him – also not clear he really “came out” – or whether it was all part of the fun and a way of winding up Hartmut... but he did seem a lot more relaxed and happier than before.

Tobi and Anna – at first viewing this was a moment of delight, like the brief reappearance of Juan in the final episode of DZH. I wonder if there will be any more footage of Tobi on the promised DVD.

Then after the party everything changes and becomes more grounded and free of illusion. Wolfgang writes about the moving exchange between Hermann and Clarissa in the (frosty but not snowy) field. A while before, when leaving the Munich flat, Hermann had said “Our life together began as an experiment, and it still is” and added “So long as you sing my songs, I feel safe”, but Clarissa replied “Since my sickness I know we are never safe”.

But now in the field he says “Promise me one thing – stay well!”, and with both of them knowing she can promise no such thing, she replies “I promise”. Together they have found in their family and in themselves something intangible they didn't have before and it is precarious. We don't know whether they can achieve a true “creative” happiness as musicians, in the family, in the house, stay together or stay well. For them too, as for all of us, the future is for a while possible, and open. Then the rider on the pale horse canters over the field – not an apocalyptic visitant, just a personal and private symbol of their own.

As Wolfgang says, now the scene changes as if we “had inadvertently flipped the channel” – but my reaction was very different from his and Thomas' – this richness of the films that enables them to appeal in such different and genuine ways to all of us is wonderful. It doesn't matter if we hate one bit and love another bit, each in our own way - thank goodness!

Anyway, for me the scene change was like going back to one of the best and most open and authentic parts of DZH – and I didn't notice the artificial winter this time. It was moving to find what had happened to Roland, and see Lulu with friends of her own age and experience – even sad experience – some of the hardness of her bitter, defensive shell seemed to have given way, and her friends could endorse and value her decision not to go with Delveau when she didn't really love him. Together in their sadness, these young people, insecure, afraid, and “at a loss” in the material

world, had a very deep sense of love and friendship, so that when Lulu later stands weeping at the window it is truly an "open" end, and not entirely devoid of hope.

Mail too long again.

Angela

From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder.rustema.nl>

Date: Mon, 3 Apr 2006 11:21:43 +0200

The last one to add to the list of parties with disorderly endings:

The Millenium party seems to lack an explicit disorderly ending, although Angela observes:

At 23:57 +0100 2/4/06, Angela Skrimshire wrote:

> The party is full of illusions and disappointments, nothing is
> really what it seems. Some characters are uneasily aware of this, eg
> poor Jana, others entirely blind to it.

But in the end Gunnar does not show up. We see him in jail listening to the musical postcard he received from his daughter Nadine. This can be considered as a disorderly ending taken to the extreme.

--

ReindeR

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire.zetnet.co.uk>

Date: Mon, 3 Apr 2006 11:54:02 +0100

Dear Thomas,

I missed your splendid email about 'Unsettlement' yesterday - it was on the Archive but I must have overlooked it there...

Wish I had read it before writing mine last night re the Millenium etc...

It makes so much sense of the last episode of the first *Heimat* - which always was 'unsettling' but also surprisingly satisfying too. The quote from Hartlieb's book is fascinating, sounds like something to get hold of and read.

I agree strongly that the collapse of the slate mine and gallery has nothing like that resonance, and ruins the atmosphere and feeling of Rudi's funeral. Is is arbitrary and inappropriate.

One might argue that the Millenium party and its aftermath provide 'unsettlement' - though from episode 4 onwards nothing has felt 'settled' in H3...

But in DZH too it was the Wedding episode (#8) that 'unsettled' the Fuchsbau group - .. this actually comes back to ReindeR's point about "parties and love scenes with disorderly endings"... fascinating how ideas link up...

Gunnar as the "tragic hero" yes exactly, but at the same time he's also very funny - who else through sheer exuberance and over-optimism would get himself in that final position of missing his own party? It's like Shakespeare's Falstaff - you don't know whether to laugh or cry ...

Gunnar is great writing and great acting - I totally underestimated and misunderstood the East German characters, especially Gunnar, on first viewing of H3 last autumn - that's why this opportunity to watch again and think and discuss the films in Ivan's Discussion is extraordinarily valuable...

I love and agree strongly with your conclusion that in spite of all the anxieties and uncertainties,

> The film creates ... a deep love of life"

Angela

From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan.jsbiedron.com>

Date: Mon, 3 Apr 2006 11:45:50 -0500

I just finished watching Episode 6 - I waited to read all the postings, including Ivan's introduction until I had seen the end.

I liked seeing the Munich skyline at the beginning. I saw DZH before I watched Heimat, so to me, Munich with the powerful theme music represents the series.

GUNNAR: even though he has made a lot of money, he is still a child at heart. He takes action without thinking. i.e. his drunk driving, and I could not believe he looked at the eclipse without protective glasses. Then there is the Harry Potter book in his suitcase - I think he packed it to read himself. If he has not called ahead to visit his daughters, he probably has not thought ahead about buying them a gift. But I am happy that his daughters still love him. He is a very likeable character.

PETRA in my opinion still looks out of place in her wealthy life with Reinhold. The evening dress she wears does not fit her very well and those black gloves make her look like a girl playing dress-up.

I too wondered about the title, GOOD-BYE TO SHABBACH - but perhaps it is us - the viewers - who are saying good-bye?

TOLKIEN, WAGNER & ERNST - last year I read that Tolkien did not like Wagner and vehemently denied that LTR was influenced by Wagner's Ring. Yet the similarities are undeniable.. There was a whole website on this comparison, but I can't find it at the present time. It is interesting to consider that Reitz had this ancient theme in mind when he wrote about Ernst's hoard. I agree with Joel that the heavy security door is overdone and I too wonder about his money source.

HORST'S GRAVE - Herman looks at the Simon graves at Rudi's funeral and sees Horst's grave (I can't remember who posted about it). But, yes, Horst would have been a very interesting character - the only son of Lucie and Eduard - he was not like them at all - a smart, shining star killed by a land mine he found in the woods - perhaps a statement from Reitz about all the children whose lives are snuffed out by remnants of war. Interesting that this was focused upon after so long. But I suppose

looking at the graves was Hermann's way of saying good-bye. Now Hermann is the Simon patriarch.

My favorite scene at the NEW YEARS PARTY - Udo's two sons, drinking beer and watching Hartmut and Galina's husband tasting and spitting out wine. You can almost hear them thinking "why are they wasting good alcohol?" A difference between generations.

Thomas asked in the Photo Shop scene if such shops in other countries exhibit good photos by customers - yes, this is common in the US.

Hermann and Clarissa end up with an extended family at their house - just like the Simons at the house with the forge. With LULU Reitz illustrates the problems that many highly educated Germans have finding jobs - but her son Lukas shows hope that life goes on and children are the future. Will Christian Reitz make a film in the future about Lukas?

Susan

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>
Date: Mon, 3 Apr 2006 18:42:21 +0100

Dear Gert Jan,

That was interesting about hearing Salome Kammer on the radio. I was disappointed too with her voice in the TV broadcasts of H3 - but then in the VPRO documentary "Over Heimat" it was at times much more beautiful, even in clips of the same pieces like "In der Fremde" and "Dido"... so presumably the quality of sound reproduction makes a difference. Personally, I don't enjoy her performances of the cabaret stuff, even in the documentary, but no doubt her audiences do. Also in the same documentary she talks about preferring the acoustic of a church to that of a theatre.

Angela

From: Wolfgang <wolf@flotgraf.com>
Date: Mon, 03 Apr 2006 16:50:21 -0400

Dear everybody,

the VPRO documentary [<http://www.vpro.nl/programma/ram/afleveringen/19615742/> rough transcript at <http://www.heimat123.net/interviews/vprotv191204.html> - Eds] with the clips and interviews explain a lot about three people, Reitz and particularly Kammer and Arnold. It was the first time that somebody (the VPRO team) really captured the writer and the actors at the right moment. Salome Kammer explains why she likes to "push the envelope", so to speak. Her "experimental" vocal music is the niche she sought and found as an artist and she is very good at it and recognized as an extraordinary performer. She explains that:

"A classical singer quickly starts worrying that the voice may suffer a lot of people say you shouldn't do that or you'll hurt your voice. But if one sings without anxiety, one is so involved that it all goes well and the voice is not destroyed. One must keep collecting new experiences for oneself, things that

move me, where I don't have to control myself but can get out of the nineteenth century corset where one has to do everything right".

Whether this is something we would enjoy in a concert or explore further (who writes, who performs etc) is another question. But then we see Kammer in the traditional singing environment, a church. And this kind of singing "mends the soul" after hearing some hair raising pieces from her. Of course, performing art is subjective, whether it is above reproach I don't know.

If I remember correctly, Reitz and Kammer are in the planning stages for "something completely different"....so we will see.

Wolfgang

From: "Jan Westhuis" <jan.westhuis inter.nl.net>

Date: Mon, 3 Apr 2006 23:13:15 +0200

It is possible to see and hear Salome Kammer and Caroline Widman at this site

<http://www.vpro.nl/programma/vrijegeluiden/afleveringen/27321133/>

The interview is in English language

Jan Westhuis

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire zetnet.co.uk>

Date: Tue, 4 Apr 2006 00:01:38 +0100

Thank you for the link - some wonderful music in the first half - Toumani Diabaté with clips of Ali Farka Touré - the kora an extraordinarily beautiful instrument too - a very hard act to follow. However Salome Kammer's voice in the second of the 3 short pieces was still beautiful, the other 2 pieces not music I can understand or enjoy, at least on first hearing ... never mind, she spoke well, looked good (still so much younger than her age and very much younger than in the film), and it was interesting.

Many thanks. VPRO is a very impressive TV station, wish I understood Dutch.....

Angela

From: Alan <alan wmedia.com>
Date: Tue, 4 Apr 2006 16:06:34 -0400

There has been a lively and detailed discussion of Episode VI. I have a few further notes and observations, which touch on some of the topics that have been explored as well as a few additional items of interest.

I find episode VI the most uneven of the six parts of H3. Parts are wonderful, others fail to live up to Reitz's past heights, and one segment appears to be mysteriously added from a routine melodrama.

For me the sublime moments include the eerie documentation of the total eclipse. (I've experienced two total eclipses in my life and the film does capture the uncanny nature of those brief moments.) Greatly abetting this scene is the score. Once again I am eating my earlier comments, complaining about the background score. This is one of its finest moments. The other wonderful segment is Hermann's trip to Rudi's funeral and his two dreams. I wish the rest of the film lived up to these sequences.

Much has already been written about the return of Gunnar. Yet, here are some additional details that only raise more questions.

We learn from him that he is serving time for drunk driving. His version of why he must report to prison seems plausible, but I had to wonder if that was the whole story. If alcohol has given him trouble in the past, he certainly isn't demonstrating to his children that he has reformed. We hear from his youngest daughter that three bottles of wine were consumed during the evening. Even if Nadine also had a glass, that still makes about 11 for Gunnar.

Then there is that exchange with Nadine when Gunnar asks her if she has a boyfriend, and she surprises him by asking him "Do you?" What is that about? Is Nadine just teasing her father, or does she sense something else? A little while later, when Petra and Gunnar are quarreling, Gunnar says something about Nadine understanding him better than anyone else in the family. I'm surprised this hasn't been mentioned earlier. (Also there is a stylistic allusion to DZH in the scene between Gunnar and Petra, as one of their daughters looks at them through the beveled glass of the French doors. This appears to quote a visual moment in DZH, episode 6 "Kennedy's Children" when the camera is positioned to look through the beveled glass French doors in the parlor of "Foxholes.")

Every time I am tempted to feel a bit sorry for Gunnar he just becomes a bigger irritant. He has only himself to blame for the stupidity of looking at the eclipse without the aid of a viewing device.

(Does anyone think that Reitz may be making a comment about Gunnar's persistent blindness to everything around him, somewhat like the experience of Rob in DZH?) And as he tells his daughters he wants them to be proud of him, he simultaneously strips down to his ridiculous red underwear, striking a figure more pathetic than admirable.

I am one of those who remain dubious about the size of Gunnar's fortune, and his lifestyle. Not only is he unfamiliar with cell phones and is surprised that the apartment has a guest room. Also note his suitcase: it's a pretty worn, old plaid valise. We have no indication that he has any friends. No one comes to see him in prison. Is it possible he is spending his accumulated fortune on the millennium bash?

Gunnar's constant yapping puts off all the guards, and leads to the grimly comic scene in which he meets his cellmate. I think Reitz leads us to believe Gunnar's skinhead roomie has a short fuse and pretty soon something is going to set him off. Personally, being with Gunnar would drive me around the bend after an hour. I think his cellmate wins a medal for good behavior judging from Gunnar's physical condition on New Year's Eve. The darkly comic sense of menace in those scenes between the two cellmates maybe my favorite Gunnar moment.

Regarding Hermann's dream and the watery demise of Ernst's horde, Angela wrote:

- > In my emails yesterday, I asked whether the sequestration of the art collection and
- > its export to Japan might originally have been intended as a realistic and politically
- > significant reason for the museum plan to fail - instead of the melodramatic, watery
- > Götterdämmerung complete with rainbow bridge (collapse of) ...
- > Does this strike a chord with anyone ? Alan over to you? It's speculation, but I
- > think it's justifiable given that the melodrama is so alien to Edgar Reitz' other work,
- > and that we know he was under pressure from the TV bosses etc."

Personally, I would have preferred such a conclusion. However, when I reviewed the film yesterday I noted that the scenes with the lorries was definitely filmed with wide-angle lenses, so I don't think there was any doubt it was intended to be a dream when the cameras rolled. Whether it was the conclusion of an earlier draft of the screenplay seems a likely possibility. (If only I could convince myself that the earthquake and flood were actually a dream sequence!)

As to the scene I call "Lulu in Peril," I am confounded at its inclusion. Wolfgang, didn't you ask what all those construction workers were doing just standing around as Lulu guided the remote boom to save Lukas and Natasha? (And what about Natasha? Is she another of the Russians who found work as an au-pair?)

I wish the millennium party lived up to the suspense. Yes, it was good to find out what became of everyone. (And it took me a second viewing to figure out it was Dieter under the wig and make-up. And thanks everyone for identifying the mystery woman with the box. After two viewings I hadn't placed her.) But, for me, this was a pale finale compared to the ending of the original HEIMAT.

What I found truly astounding and a highlight of the episode was the close-up of Lulu at the end. This was like an unresolved chord at the close of a symphony. It was chilling and, yet, for me it made sense. However, my reading of that shot is especially subjective. I see it as Lulu looking into the new century and seeing a world more troubled than the one she is living in at the moment. From the hindsight of the past six years, I see the year 2000 as a time of blissful ignorance. The changes both in America and the world during the last six years don't make me the most optimistic person at the moment.

If I don't get a moment to write this later, I must thank everyone for making this group viewing an extremely rewarding experience. I now regret I was unable to partake in the earlier group viewings. Finding the viewing time was indeed difficult, but I'm delighted I was able to stick with it. I hope this idea has a future, if not here then elsewhere on the internet.

Cheers,

Alan

From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman@dsl.pipex.com>
Date: Tue, 11 Apr 2006 15:01:47 +0100

The last post from a list member I have seen was Alan Andres' post timed at 21.08, sent on 04/04/2006. Exactly a week ago! I take it there have been posts since then unless the server has dropped my e-mail address from its distribution list!! Can someone advise?

Assuming there have been no posts then discussion would seem to have dried up. If members would like to discuss Heimat 3 as a whole or pick up on anything from an individual episode let us start now. Please do not wait for me as there will be no introduction! If the demand is there we can keep going until April 28th as originally scheduled.

If you can remember back to the final episode I have recorded 31* posts from 11 contributors. This seems fewer than usual. Are there missing ones, at least for me?

Ivan.

[In the end there were 33 posts from 14 contributors - Eds.]

From: Elizabeth Garrett <david.garrett4 ntlworld.com>
Date: Thu, 13 Apr 2006 20:04:15 +0000

Hello everybody. Once again I shall try to send my contribution about H3 Episode 6. Last time I tried it vanished completely.

Thank you Ivan for your thoughtful and enlightening introduction. And thanks to all the other contributors. I have a few comments, as follows:

The Eclipse. I loved this scene, and thought it captured very well the eerie feeling I experienced on a bright summer day in the South of England, when everything became cool and dim and silent, as the world held its breath.

Gunnar's Visit to Petra. There she was, in her hideous pink dress, and there was poor old Rheinhold with his nose bleed. He would have done better to lean his head forward and pinch the soft part of his nose, rather than leaning back and risking vomiting on the blood. Or so my doctor informs me. And oh dear, Gunnar! Why on earth does he prance about, in front of teenage girls, wearing only those awful red underpants? He is such a clot.

The dream sequences were wonderful, and worth watching several times. When the motor bikes swooped round the corner I was reminded of Death's outriders, the motor cyclists in Jean Cocteau's Orphée. Now there's a marvellous film! And I believe it now forms part of a DVD called The Orphic Trilogy. I wonder if there's a discussion site for it....

I did not care for the melodramatic mine collapse. As several people have remarked, it seems to belong to a different film.

I feared for Clarissa and Hermann's future happiness when her mother demanded to live with them. What a dreadful, manipulative woman the mother is! And what an

excellent actress. In fact, I admire all the actors in the whole trilogy, without exception. And of course, Edgar Reitz, who gave them life.

The party scene also was worth watching several times. There are so many untold stories there - the shy young woman, the two young men drinking beer, stupid Udo who always used to be so sensible. And I would have loved to see more of Tobi, tough yet cultured, always bare armed even in the snow. Clarissa was in good form, though actually I preferred her singing before she turned to jazz and crossover, and I miss the cello she played in DZH. She and Herman are fine musicians.

It would have been easy for Reitz to finish there, on a high note, to marry Lulu off to Delveau and to tie it all up neatly. But life is not like that. What will happen to Lulu, so bright yet sometimes irresponsible - how could she let a child carry a cigarette lighter in his pocket? And will she be able to get Lukas a good musical education? And will she repeat the mistakes made by Clarissa's mother? The possibilities are endless.....

And now it's goodbye to Schabbach, and to you all. How can I thank you enough - Ivan, our wise leader, Reinder, who has solved my computer problems, and Wolfgang, Joel and Angela who have helped me in various ways. And all the others whose contributions I have read with great interest.

Auf Wiedersehen.

Elizabeth.

From: "Michael Yaroshevsky" <yaroshevsky gmail.com>

Date: Thu, 25 May 2006 23:11:40 -0400

H3. Final scene. Lulu at the window. Music: was it Stravinsky: Apollon Musagète: Apothéose?

Trying to remember from screening. Think it's my imagination.

Anybody?

M

HEIMAT 3 – Final Thoughts

From: "seymouralexander" <seymouralexander onetel.com>

Date: Tue, 11 Apr 2006 18:39:45 +0100

Just to add my thanks to everyone who posted for a really interesting and informative discussion. Personally I disagree with the consensus on a couple of points: I thought the dramatic flood scenes at Ernst's cave were superb, I especially liked the way Herman jumped into the torrent, even though he could do nothing, exactly what I would have hoped to have done in the same circumstances; I thought Clarissa's singing was as magnificent in the crossover works as in everything else she did; finally for me, her rendition at the millennium party of 'Maybe This Time' was my favourite scene from the entire Heimat series, makes me cry every time I watch it. Bravo Mr and Mrs Reitz!

From: "Robert A D Cran" <chinherb att.biz>

Date: Tue, 11 Apr 2006 21:14:05 +0200

Well said, Seymour. I second every word of that!

I found Salome Kammer's performance throughout the entire DZH and H3 to be a tour-de-force of both music and acting. What comes out so clearly in her singing is the enormity and power of her actual personality. This contrasted with the need to portray Clarissa also in the at times joyful, at times painful realities of her passage through this life towards repose within her self, so that it often appeared that she had had to suppress this wonderful personality - I found this to be an incredible achievement of acting in itself.

The same goes for the performance of Henry Arnold: Hermann likewise was passing through strenuous growth within himself particularly during H3. His devotion to his wife, his care of her during her illness, his seeking for some sort of goodness in being - a yet deeper movement on from the creative electricity of his younger life. Anyone who has witnessed such experiences in real life will understand the depth and difficulty of what was being portrayed here: the subordination of self to something bigger than oneself and the ability to live through storms with full awareness of them yet somehow stay centred around the tonic - the clarinet music of Episode 4.

Just as our great director's energies and genius have been surrendered to these masterpieces and will live with us as great experiences in our lives.....

Robert.

From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan.jsbiedron.com>

Date: Wed, 12 Apr 2006 09:59:26 -0500

I too thought that Henry Arnold and Salome Kammer gave very good performances, especially in the last 2 episodes. Hermann got the "ageing" bit down better in these episodes. If he had an occasional spring in his step - I don't see that as a problem. There are "older" people who stay active and fit. Hermann and Clarissa faced her illness together and become a stronger couple because of it - this has happened in my family.

I had some doubts about the spectacle of the flood scene, although when Hermann jumped in the water I was worried that he would drown - my thought was "Please don't kill off Hermann!" I did think it was a typical Hollywood ending that only Lulu could rescue her child.

There is something about Heimat 3 that I cannot quite explain. I don't really want to re-watch the episodes. I don't have this problem with Heimat and DZH that I have viewed multiple times. Perhaps it was the time constraints placed on H3.

A few Friday nights ago, I was sharing a bottle of wine with my husband and I brought up the subject of Ernst's death. My husband has never watched Heimat, although it was he who gave me the Heimat and DZH videos as a gift years ago. When I described Ernst closing his eyes before he crashed, John's comment was "he was an experienced pilot who realized what was happening and accepted his destiny." I was impressed.

I liked the way Reitz integrated the "Ossies" into the Simon saga. But for me, the best was the ending with Lulu looking through the glass at Lutz. This scene had the spirit (Zeitgeist) of the earlier 2 series.

The H3 discussion has been the best of all. Thank you Ivan for your thoughtful introductions and thank you to everyone who have submitted so many interesting viewpoints.

Susan

From: Wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>

Date: Wed, 12 Apr 2006 17:12:00 -0400

This can't be the end, surely not! Wasn't that the exact same feelings after viewing Heimat and DZH? Sadly, Heimat 3 reached its end even sooner after being squeezed into six 87.5 minute straightjackets. The fact that the pace was accelerated didn't help either. Was it a good conclusion of the Trilogy? Edgar Reitz said he is worried and shows it in Lulu's face. As far as we can tell, there is really no conclusion, no happy end, no possible "recovery" with the current setting (refusal of Reitz to ever work with the TV "culture" bosses again). It will be an open end, as in all of our lives, but the possibilities are endless.

We can see now, after over 20 years of storytelling, filmmaking and film viewing, everything is indeed different and WE have changed as well. I routinely popped in the DVD and quickly checked on a scene or sequence in the past few months, back then the VHS tape had just appeared and I felt as if I had to record every single TV show that was interesting, which led to a rather large collection of tapes that are completely

useless now and have to be thrown away. I also remember my first attempts to write to a mailing list back around 1985, with a 1200 baud modem, no web, wireless or Gigabyte size disks. Just the jumbled screechy sound of the carrier tone was exciting. It wasn't for Heimat either. Now the "world is flat" to speak with Thomas Friedman, an almost level playing field for collaboration and communication outside of time and space, any individual with an internet connection can participate. Will the next round of discussions be with people from India, China, Singapore, Taiwan once they see the Trilogy or google the word "Heimat"?

For the conclusion of this discussion, I like to paraphrase and translate some of Edgar Reitz's own words from the Trilogy book, for two reasons:

1. The book is the perfect companion to the films and a lasting treasure in itself, bringing back the memories, as a seamless family album that spans 82 or so years, that of our adopted family we all shared. A picture is worth a thousand words and there are about 2700 pictures in this book! Amazing!
2. Edgar Reitz explains his intentions and work very well. He is and remains the authority because these are his stories and characters:

It's about his style of storytelling:

...I was interested in re-telling biographies, the traces of certain people within their historical time period. My style does not involve dramatizing but a respect for the persons, identifying the characters but never making them instruments for tension, effects and moral statements. I was most satisfied when the characters started to develop on their own and all I had to do is watch and record. Chronicling is to record the course of time, to do this it can be sufficient to observe a character breathe. Landscape and people can take turns moving to the foreground or into the background and emerge as parts of a microcosm...

...This goes back to the editing of "Der Schneider von Ulm". Watching the unedited, roughly assembled versions, everybody became involved and, sometimes after 10 hours, went home happy, never bored but fascinated about the times of first human flying attempts during the 18th century. This feeling could never be duplicated with the completed edits, the more we cut, the more tedious it was to watch. Once you focus on a subject, in this case the dream of flying, the film material lives, it was happy, scared, it resisted, became a chronicle of a time and place...

...Life creates millions of potential beginnings for stories in all of us, we assemble our own life story that turns into our destiny. It appears that we have no choice because we live only once, although we could choose an infinite number of lives every day....as we get older, this turns into something of a one-way-street, there seem to be effects of our deeds and restrictions that interfere ever stronger with our choices...

...The storyteller does not feel these restrictions. ...when I tell a story without a predefined goal, I always have an enormous number of choices and I prefer to plant those seeds that emerge from seemingly unimportant beginnings into a new story I can watch and record.

...as passionate storytellers, however, we (ed: the writers) don't just watch this story unfold but we can come along with the character and go places and make choices that we could not or would not make in our own lives. You

almost never have to resist any temptation. You can live a thousand years, become poor, rich, sick, strong, ugly, pretty, passionate or foolish, without changing your own life. You can be a magician, you can lie, tell the truth, exaggerate, abbreviate, play or calculate. When you feel this freedom, the infinite story emerges that moves your heart...

...The storyteller is not satisfied just with the truth, especially not if the story is "like real life". The risk to follow the story down an unknown path instead of the normal options is limited only by the phantasy which doesn't have to be truthful. When we found during our story that a predictable course was going to take over, we did everything to dissolve it again. When one of our favourite characters had disappeared for too long from the screen, we hurriedly tried to bring it back. This is probably best compared with the mother instinct, never to lose track of your children. She will always try to know their fate and bring them back to be surrounded by them. Using this style of storytelling, almost as a side effect, the image of Heimat emerges...

We, those interested and fascinated viewers, who were so profoundly touched by the films, chose to follow a new path to more information, interaction, travel, friendships, and our own storytelling. It was time well spent and we learned a lot. I am closer to my own roots and Heimat than ever before. Thank you, Mr. Reitz, all members of the production team and actors of Heimat 3!

Thank you, Ivan for your thoughtful introductions and pulling it all together, thanks Reinder and Thomas for the web pages with all those lovingly assembled background pieces and thanks to everybody who shared the knowledge, dared to express feelings and to speak up in this forum.

Wolfgang

**From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>
Date: Thu, 13 Apr 2006 13:57:38 +0100**

Wolfgang,

Those are lovely quotes from the big Heimat book - maybe one day it'll be available in a library or somewhere accessible, with all its 2.7K pictures! ... meanwhile, thanks for posting them on the list for us ..

Re video tapes - you say they are completely useless - won't it still be possible to use a VC player in the US indefinitely? I've got a big collection too, some really precious to me, including the 3 Heimats ... am hoping that they'll still be watchable for the next decade or two to see me out!...

I'm writing some final thoughts too but they've turned into rather a ponderous essay as usual - will have to consider whether they're fit to post or not...

Meanwhile, re the music: I've just noticed something other people have probably been aware of all along, ie. that "Hermann's" lovely Günderröde Lieder were not original compositions for the film (by Riessler or Mamangakis) - but were composed in 1990 by Wolfgang Rihm - see eg <http://www.ulrichroman-murtefeld.de/workshopsprojekte/wolfgangrihmdasklavierlied/index.html>

Also did anyone notice that in their concert in Ep 6 (I think) there was a moment when Clarissa and Hermann stood with their heads back to back, movingly reminiscent of their double profiles in the Wölfelied scene of DZH?

Angela

**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman.dsl.pipex.com>
Date: Fri, 14 Apr 2006 17:59:11 +0100**

Through his use of the sub-title "A Chronicle of Endings and Beginnings" Edgar Reitz obviously wanted to draw our attention to the importance of new departures, new dawns, new relationships as well as terminations, partings, separations, and collapses in his narratives. I shall attempt to make a list of all those I can think of. It will not be exhaustive so please feel free to add ones of your own that I miss.

Where will such a list lead? I am not sure of the answer. Basically, all we can say is that "life is like that"! Ideas and ideologies are formulated; they grow and flourish; they become part of the "zeitgeist"; they become stagnant and finally disappear into history, only to be replaced by a new set of ideas. And then sometimes they re-emerge under a different label, but are fundamentally the same! On the more human or individual level we are born, develop, forge new relationships; they may well decay, and we form new ones; finally we die!

We can see all this in Heimat 3! Here is my list:-

No, before I begin I should just note that some of these endings and beginnings happen off-stage, as it were, during the course of the film and others are pivotal and depicted on-screen.

ENDINGS

A. Ideological Level:-

1. The ending of Communism in the East, the collapse of the GDR, the fall and dismantling of the Berlin Wall.

So complete is it, for example, that Nadine and Jennifer, Gunnar's daughters, no longer know who Erich Honecker was and do not understand their father's impersonation.

B. General Endings:-

1. Death of German family firms [Simon Optik/ Hartmut/ "proud middle class of craftsmen"[F] and rise of conglomerate corporates [Food and Non-Food / Herr Böckle].

2. Departure of Americans and their missiles from Hahn air-base. End of Cold War.

3. End of Twentieth Century / Millennium.

C. Individual Endings:-

1. DEATHS - Anton, Ernst, Lutz, Matko, Rudi, Hanni, Willem, Roland [dying of AIDS], Matko's pigeon.

2. Relationships / Situations:-

- End of Galina's marriage to Yuri
- End of Gunnar's marriage to Petra
- Self-announced end of Udo's marriage to Jana
- End of Lulu's security and employment/ "her job, love and family ties"[F]
- End of Ernst's museum scheme and art collection
- End of Hermann's tenancy of Munich flat [Symbolic ending of marriage to Schnüsschen / "old stories are packed up"]
- End of Clarissa's career as a cellist and as a "cross-over" artiste

BEGINNINGS

A. Political / Ideological

- The Re-Unification of Germany with one currency

B. General Beginnings

1. The 21st Century
2. Germans Come Home / Arrival of Russian émigrés
3. Arrival of E. Germans in the West / Gunnar, Udo and Tobi
4. Restoration of Günderrode House / Re-building of Germany as one nation

C. Individual Beginnings:-

1. BIRTHS - Niko, Matthias Paul Anton Simon, Lukas, Arnold and Gemma's twins, Bianca's three goatlings

2. Relationships / Situations

- Clarissa's illness
- Clarissa's new career as a singer
- Clarissa's venture as a "cross-over" artiste
- Clarissa as grandmother
- New life for Mrs. Lichtblau
- Hermann and Clarissa's new-found love and "marriage"
- Hermann's acceptance of his "Heimat" / re-joins Simon family
- Hermann's new creativity
- Marriage of Tillmann and Moni
- Relationship of Hartmut and Galina
- Marriage of Galina and Christian Biesiegel
- "Marriage" of Petra and Reinhold
- Gunnar's new wealth
- Gunnar's prison sentence
- Arnold's life in USA, marriage to Gemma, birth of twins
- Dieter's "coming-out"

We are all familiar with the idea of life as a journey with doors opening and closing. Reitz has talked about romanticism and the "idea of being always at the beginning, and seeing life as a journey into unknown distances, artistic, or simply just personal" [Die Zeit, December 2004]. He bemoans the commercialisation of this idea but claims that "In Germany...it is always deep in our hearts". I would say in the hearts of all mankind. Who has not dreamt of throwing everything away and starting out again, clean and refreshed and unburdened?!! How we deal with all the endings and beginnings we experience, just as the characters in Reitz's Heimat films, make us what we are!!

Ivan Mansley.

From: "Gert Jan Jansen" <gertjan.jansengouda.demon.nl>

Date: Sat, 15 Apr 2006 12:22:30 +0200

Hallo Ivan,

Thank you for your new way of introducing the discussion of Heimat 3 as a whole. Very well structured.

Very interesting what a translation can do. The subtitle of the English version "A Chronicle of Endings and Beginnings" is not a literal translation of "Chronik einer Zeitenwende" . It should /could have been: "Chronicle of a turning point in history". You need a (very little) step in mind. to conclude it has to do with endings and beginnings. I hope to find the time next days to comment on the difference.

Greetings
Gert

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire.zetnet.co.uk>

Date: Sat, 15 Apr 2006 13:13:54 +0100

To contribute to this final Discussion, I started thinking about the overall shape and structure of H3, wondering why it seemed hard to grasp and remember the mood and story of each episode of H3, compared to the episodes of DZH for instance.

However what I wrote got too long and unwieldy for a contribution to the mailing list, so ReindeR has very kindly uploaded it to a temporary page on the website, at http://heimat123.net/introduction/final_thoughts.html

If anyone has the patience to go there and read it, please comment as though it were an ordinary email, I'd be very grateful for feedback - I'm not really sure whether or not it's saying anything that isn't rather obvious, or just repeating what has already been said in the Discussions..

Angela

PS I've already noticed a silly mistake - I've said Matko threw red roses, but of course they were carnations.....

[A revised version of Angela's essay will be uploaded shortly, and is already available on Thomas' site at <http://www.heimat123.de/download/h3essay.pdf> - Eds.]

From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan jsbiedron.com>

Date: Sat, 15 Apr 2006 12:23:15 -0500

Ivan,

I haven't been able to come up with any more endings or beginnings - I think you got them all.

Does anyone know if Clarissa's mother has a first name? She is always referred to as Frau or Mother Lichtblau.

Susan

From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan jsbiedron.com>

Date: Sat, 15 Apr 2006 12:33:58 -0500

Angela,

Thank you for writing your very thoughtful "dissertation." It brings up many interesting points. You and Ivan make quite a team!

I agree that it does indeed hurt, that Ernst is hardly mentioned after Episode 5. He is a very complex and even mysterious character that I would like to understand a little better. I was hoping for some "voice over" comments on Ernst by Hermann.

I also wish more of Matko's background was explained – but you are right, we should not ponder too much about the parts of the story that were cut out or never filmed.

I have never really understood the source of the disagreement between Anton and Ernst, but perhaps someone could elaborate on this.

Frohe Ostern an alle!

Susan

From: Julia Anne Bourne <gypsy mindspring.com>

Date: Sat, 15 Apr 2006 22:29:22 -0400 (GMT-04:00)

An article in "Der Spiegel" recently mentioned 3 contemporary novels of note that are multi-generational sagas in the style of Thomas Mann's "Buddenbrooks." Such novels, which have fallen out of favor for a long time, are now considered trendy. I wonder if these books will also rekindle an interest in the "Heimat" films?

jab

From: "Robert A D Cran" <chinherb att.biz>

Date: Sun, 16 Apr 2006 09:14:39 +0200

Susan,

This may not be the whole story, but I remember three aspects of the tension between Ernst and Anton, stemming from Heimat 1.

The first was when Ernst was running his logging business, expensively using helicopters to shift the logs and needing financial help. Anton perceived a flaw in the high-flying optimist's business strategy; flying by the seat of the pants was anathema to the Fußgänger. It was also anathema to Ernst's wife and her family. This is echoed in H3 when it is Hartmut's turn to be refused by Anton and to ask Ernst for a financial guarantee letter which Ernst, however, grants. When Hartmut is found lying on the seat of his pants on that road, Mara is kinder to him than Ernst's wife had been.

The second was the way that Ernst then made his living by dealing in antiques. I had the impression that Anton thought this not a great contribution to society; Ernst's methods (eg. selling modern windows in order to cash in on the "antique" ones they were to replace) were not always straightforward. This came to a big head when Maria died and, even as she was about to be buried, Ernst and his knockers were sizing up the contents of his own mother's house for profit. This outraged Anton, naturally. By the way, I think we are all clear that the dictum "Where there is a will there is a relative" embodies itself a couple more times in H3!

The third aspect showed the finer side of Ernst, which surfaces again in H3, namely the compassionate eye with which he was able to view Hermann and his friends in their youthfulness and Hermann's awakening to love. Anton, as patriarch now that Paul was no longer around, took a stern approach to Hermann's love, an approach which now Ernst considered not such a great contribution to society; it was Ernst who facilitated the transmission of letters between Klärchen and Hermann after she had fled Schabbach. It was left later to Paul, Anton's own father, to be the beneficent father to what Anton referred to pejoratively as the "Künstler", Hermann as young composer. As has already been observed in recent discussions here, Ernst again looks with a similarly avuncular eye, this time upon Tobi and Matko in H3.

By this time Hermann too is able to extend the same kind of kindly, facilitating presence where it is deserved, eg. on the uncontentious, but still beautiful love-story of Tilmann and Moni.

I find this thoughtful, rhythmic ebb and flow of action and reaction in all the Heimats so satisfying and true to reality.

Robert.

PS. Ivan and Angela, your list of endings and beginnings and final thoughts are such immensely worthwhile documents to have. I just feel I have to express how valuable I find them.

From: Angela Skrimshire <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>

Date: Sun, 16 Apr 2006 11:33:29 CEST

Dear Robert and everyone,

Thanks Robert and Susan for kind words about my "Dissertation" - But when Robert says:

> I find this thoughtful, rhythmic ebb and flow of action and reaction in
> all the Heimats so satisfying and true to reality

I realise that's a great way of summing up exactly how one feels about the Heimats! Much better than my long essays!

Similarly, Ivan's Endings and Beginnings makes very clear the constant ebb and flow of Reitz' story telling - it's really fascinating to have this chance of thinking about it like this.

Re Ernst and Anton ... Even before the events you describe, there was that bit in Episode 5 of the first Heimat where Ernst couldn't bear to accept the loss of Otto and the threatened return of Paul, the scene where he and Anton quarrelled a bit in the meadow, both distressed about it but showing it in different ways ... then sometime soon after (not quite sure when) Ernst took off to the flying school, unable to bear staying at home after Otto left, but Anton the elder accompanied his mother through the traumatic abortive return of Paul and loss of Otto (which he also felt as deeply), and I think didn't leave home till the war started. There's already a kind of pattern there which they repeated later?

Angela

From: "seymouralexander" <seymouralexander@onetel.com>

Date: Sun, 16 Apr 2006 21:30:41 +0100

There was a compilation film produced in 1987 (referred to in Anton Kaes' book "From Hitler to Heimat") which contained contributions by Fassbinder, Reitz and others. Apparently the segment directed by Edgar Reitz featured a border guard looking up and dreaming of becoming an aviator (a trial-run for Ernst perhaps, in H1 - wasn't that in the Blue Max as well?). Is Germany in Autumn available in DVD, does anyone know?

From: Mundy Bowers <mundab@yahoo.com>

Date: Sun, 16 Apr 2006 16:11:47 -0700 (PDT)

Dear Heimaters

Well all good things really do have to come to an end but as Reitz shows an ending is followed by a beginning of one kind or another.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading Angela's structural analysis (for want of a better description) and Ivan's brilliant concept for his final introduction by looking at all the 'Beginnings and endings' chronicled by Reitz. As I read Ivan's exhaustive list many of

the films themes, characters and events came to mind. The original German subtitle for the film 'Chronik einer Zeitenwende' so ably translated by Gert seems to refer initially to 'Die Wende' i.e. the events of November 1989, the so-called 'turn' and eventual German unification. A unification of another kind occurs with the chance meeting of Clarissa and Hermann and of course the changes/turn Reitz chronicles so brilliantly affect his nation, region and all the characters portrayed. I liked the image of the east Germans helping Hermann and Clarissa to build their house above the Rhine; a metaphor for the unification and reconstruction of the all German home/Heimat ?

There are hundreds of other scenes and events I enjoyed in these films and my only regret is that work and home responsibilities left me with little time to contribute to these constantly fascinating discussions. Although this particular discussion is drawing to a conclusion I am sure the discussions of all things Reitz-related will continue at least until the promising DVD 'Footnotes' project. Thanks to all participants for making my evening internet sessions so illuminating and particularly to Ivan and Angela for all their time and effort. They not only make a great team but are the main pillars of the discussion.

It is worth noting that aside from the impact the three Heimat films have had on film audiences they have had a very positive influence on film and television makers.

UK members might have seen the recent repeat showing on BBC4 of the 1990s series 'Our Friends in the North'. It is a sort of 'Newcastle Heimat' although on a different scale but it too (arguably) captures the changes in UK society from the 1960s to mid-1990s. In February 2002 the writer of 'Our Friends in the North' had a retrospective discussion with the series' two directors and producers. The discussion can be viewed as an extra on the DVD of the series. The executive producer, Michael Wearing, when discussing the creation of 'Our Friends' said :

"The other thing that happened was something purely to do with drama...was that there was an amazing production in Germany of 'Heimat' (other producer nods head) which actually had the effect of restimulating ones idealism about what scale television could approach. The fact that there was great television being made of the scale which we were idealistically aspiring to, albeit being made by another country, but it was happening and it was happening on our own screens."

I'm sure Reitz would be gratified to know the positive influence of his films on tv producers at the BBC in the early 1990s. It is a pity that tv producers in the UK are not as adventurous today as a decade ago. This development is also reflected in Germany as witnessed by Reitz who fought for five years just to get funding and when he got that far was told by the tv companies he would have to cut each episode of an already drastically revised film script. Heimat 3 is nevertheless still great and a tribute to Edgar Reitz's artistic vision.

Finally, Seymour mentioned 'Germany in Autumn'. The film is indeed available on DVD but only in Germany and without subtitles. It is released by the same people who made the German Heimat DVDs ArtHaus in Leipzig.

Best wishes

Mundy Bowers

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>
Date: Mon, 17 Apr 2006 12:46:49 +0100

Mundy,

Thanks for kind words, but I'm really not a "pillar" in the sense that Ivan is! Most of what I write is just generated in response to what Ivan and other people have written ... I'd never have produced much without that stimulus ... and it's only because I have the luxury of being nearly 70 and retired and having lots of time, and the weather up here being too lousy to do other things most of this winter, that I've been able to put my otherwise idle mind to it like this...

Whereas without Ivan to write those great Introductions and to lead the discussions, we'd never have been able to have the discussions at all! so thank you Ivan! and ReindeR and everyone else!

Angela

From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan.jsbiedron.com>
Date: Mon, 17 Apr 2006 10:06:11 -0500

Robert,

Thank you – I had forgotten about the incident in Heimat when Ernst was trying to acquire his mother's furniture while the funeral was going on. This was probably the main reason (among the others you described) for the rift between the two older Simon brothers. Family emotions run high at funerals.

Yet, in spite of their differences, Ernst stays in the Schabbach area, living not far from Anton. When Anton dies, Ernst is angry about the lack of proper funeral arrangements. "rhythmic ebb and flow"

Susan

From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman@dsl.pipex.com>
Date: Tue, 18 Apr 2006 22:22:48 +0100

Earlier in the discussion Wolfgang gave us a translation of a speech Edgar Reitz made to an audience at the University of Mainz on receiving an honorary degree and a lively discussion followed. I would like to add my two penn'orth now!

Reitz expressed his annoyance at people confusing reality with the fiction of his narratives as expressed in his films. I will re-quote some extracts of what he said to remind you:-

.....what has been a very subjective story in my eye, one that only rarely was based on facts but more on wishes, anxieties and vague memories, the public thought of as a movie about realitythe way people think of

Schabbach, the Simons, the Guenderodehaus or other figures from the film, like Clarissa, Kath, Glasisch or Klaerchen has frequently annoyed me....
A good storyteller starts his stories from well known perspectives and follows his figures on their roads into a foreign realm.....
although produced with cameras and lenses, film is not about real things. Only the locations, persons, costumes or props might be real. The story itself is invisible...
Hordes of "home-sick" viewers have come to visit Schabbach, to stand and pray at the graves or to find the Guenderode-Haus in Oberwesel....
it shows me that the fictitious people from Heimat have escaped the aesthetic connection to the film and have become part of viewer's lives. Even the dead have left the film and float around in the heads of the viewers.....
now I wonder if the dear Lord makes a difference between prayers for the dead living or the living dead.....
so when they made this documentary at the end of our shooting of H3 with the title "Schabbach is everywhere" I was furious. I thought it was preposterous and a typical expression of TV-shalowness to interpret a movie as a true event.....
However: it is a fact that a film can have this dual effect: reality is converted into fiction and this turns back into reality. TV shows us this scary reversal on a daily basis...

It seems to me that Reitz is being somewhat disingenuous, to say the least. Take the case of the graves of "fictitious" Heimat characters in the graveyard of the Nunkirche in Sargenroth, scattered amongst the graves of real people, now deceased. They were originally placed there, one presumes, to catch Hermann's eye during Rudi's funeral and make him reflect on the deaths within his fictive Simon family. They could have been removed after the finish of the film but they were not. I presume Mr. Reitz gave his permission for them to remain!! I believe others were also introduced later. Again presumably permission was given for all this.

As I remember from my visit there the gravestones are indistinguishable from the "real" ones apart from a small logo which the casual eye can easily miss. Indeed, I cannot see the logos on my photographs. What is the effect of all this? It encourages tourists / visitors / genuine mourners to believe that members of the Simon family actually lived and breathed and were not played by actors and actresses at all. And their bodies lie in the ground in the churchyard! And Mr. Reitz gave his permission! Someone please contradict me if I'm wrong.

I remember remarking to a companion [Wolfgang?] that I found it bizarre and also that I didn't think it would be allowed in the UK. Not that that makes it wrong!! Is Edgar having his cake and eating it?

Ivan Mansley.

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>

Date: Wed, 19 Apr 2006 12:31:46 +0100

Dear Ivan,

I'm hesitating about writing this, but I feel that due to the language difficulty we are in danger of seriously misunderstanding what Edgar Reitz is saying in his Mainz speech, and possibly causing some offence...

For instance, you say about the "graves" of the Simons:

- > They could have been removed after
- > the finish of the film but they were not. I presume Mr. Reitz gave his
- > permission for them to remain!

Ironically, in the Mainz speech itself Edgar Reitz gives this story as one of

"hundreds of similar events, which showed me that the fictional characters from Heimat had cut themselves loose from their aesthetic connection with the film and were now spooking around in the lives of the viewers....."

Somewhat tongue in cheek, he tells that one day an English family turned up in Woppenroth looking for the Simon family graves ...

"Now the man they asked, the local innkeeper, wised up by Schabbach tourism, explained to them that the graveyard was unfortunately already shut, but he'd got nice guestrooms where the visitors from Britain could spend the night. During the night the lads from the village were mobilised to fetch the polystyrene gravestones, left behind in a barn, out to the graveyard. So next morning the Heimat-seeking English people could offer their quiet prayer at the graves of the film characters. (What I want to know is whether the good Lord distinguishes between prayers for the dead [formerly] living or for the living dead!)"

It doesn't sound as though he personally gave permission!

But much more seriously - the whole tone of the speech is very thoughtful and dignified, and also expresses a sense of pain and affront at the intrusion of people like ourselves into the world of his creative imagination. Personally and aesthetically this offends him, and I can understand why.

To give some sort of feeling for what I mean, here is a rough translation of the first paragraph of the Mainz speech, just for the purpose of this correspondence. He speaks in places of "Poesie", by which I think in this context he means not just "poetry", but something more like "poiesis" in the sense of "poetic and dramatic creativity", though I may be wrong about that ...

Edgar Reitz starts the speech as follows:

“Film and Reality”

“I have a number of important reasons for reflecting on this theme. The kind of way in which the Heimat Trilogy has often been taken as real by the public throws my original views about film and reality onto the scrapheap. What in my eyes was once an extremely subjective narrative, concerned only rarely with facts, but far more with wishes, fears and vague memories - this was often understood by the public to be a film about real life. My stories have been assigned to the world of fact, and even stimulated and substituted for viewers' own experiences. I am not talking here about the popularity that a film can achieve, because this arises more from the myths that it introduces into the world, through the creative power of its characters and the identifications it offers. I find all that wonderful. But I'm talking much more about the fatal confusion of film and life, about attempts to conceptualise the locations, characters and their stories outside the aesthetic form of a work of film, about attempts to take the narrated stories at face value, for real. I must maintain my conviction that a film is at best a reflection of life, but can never

be a substitute for or a reduplication of reality. I am often irritated and offended [ist mir oft ein Ärgernis gewesen] by the way people relate to Schabbach, the Simons, the Günderrödehaus or the many characters in the film, like Clarissa, Kath, Glasisch or Klärchen. Therefore I want to try here to defend the art of film against its own power of suggestion. I believe it's necessary because in every acknowledgement accorded to the narrative realism of Heimat, there is the problem of a loss of poetic creativity in the business of its successful reception. Hence I am allowing myself here for once to stand up for the poetic and dramatic creativity [Poesie] of film and to throw a little light on the boundary region between film and reality, especially as these boundaries have been permanently damaged by the media so that the TV pictures have intruded fatally between us and our perception of reality."

Ivan, and everyone, please forgive me if I'm taking all this too seriously, but I think we really must acknowledge and respect Edgar Reitz' feelings about how his work is treated ... I've already written in the discussion earlier (19 March) what I think about the difference between reflecting on the films and the characters "as if" they were real (ie recognising their authenticity), and treating them "as" real ... and also admitted that in participating so intensely in the discussion of Heimat we could be

> preying on it to fill an emotional vacuum of our own".

If so, O dear, I'm sorry ...

Angela

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

Date: Wed, 19 Apr 2006 13:06:55 +0100

Angela, you wrote:

>.But much more seriously - the whole tone of the speech is very thoughtful
> and dignified, and also expresses a sense of pain and affront at the
> intrusion of people like ourselves into the world of his creative
> imagination. Personally and aesthetically this offends him, and I can
> understand why.

It seems to me that once a director's work is out in the public domain then to respond to his work is not to intrude into his creative imagination but to interpret and react to his finished and public offering, in this case the film Heimat 3. He has invited me and you and countless others to respond, as published authors and film makers have done in the past. No one would deny that Edgar Reitz is a thoughtful and dignified man.

By the way, I don't think the graves I saw were made from polystyrene!!

Ivan Mansley.

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>
Date: Wed, 19 Apr 2006 13:35:49 +0100

Ivan, Thank you for the reply to my mail - and for taking it in the spirit it was meant!

You wrote:

- > It seems to me that once a director's work is out in the public domain then
- > to respond to his work is not to intrude into his creative imagination but
- > to interpret and react to his finished and public offering, in this case the
- > film Heimat 3. He has invited me and you and countless others to respond, as
- > published authors and film makers have done in the past. No one would deny
- > that Edgar Reitz is a thoughtful and dignified man.

Yes of course I agree with that, and I think and hope that the way we've discussed the films has been legitimate and would by and large be acceptable to him - though I don't suppose he'd ever be wanting to read it!...

However I think I can understand what he feels about the whole business of going public with something that has such deep personal roots. Maybe that's all I was trying to say ...?

Angela

From: Wolfgang <wolf.floitgraf.com>
Date: Wed, 19 Apr 2006 17:55:03 -0400

The DVD is on www.amazon.de under "Deutschland im Herbst"

Wolfgang

seymouralexander wrote:

- > Is Germany in Autumn available in DVD, does anyone know?

From: Thomas Hönemann <th.hoenemann@freenet.de>
Date: Sun, 23 Apr 2006 15:16:28 +0200

Dear friends on the list,

finally I found some time to write down my final thoughts on HEIMAT 3.

For me personally thinking of H3 causes ambivalent feelings: On the one hand I have never been so close to a film production before: I tried to support the project before it started by informing people about it on my website, I visited two premiers of H3 (in Munich and Simmern, see <http://www.heimat123.de/h3prembere.htm>), I made the personal acquaintance of people who were directly involved in the production, and so I got related to that films, places and persons very strongly. On the other hand we all know that H3 does not reach the quality of the first two parts of the trilogy - although there are lots of really lovely aspects to find in H3, referring to the plot, to

actors or to the technique of filming (which we already mentioned during the discussion).

HEIMAT 3 is not only a film, but also a story about people's use to watch TV, about the changes in media during the last 20 years (especially the appearance of private TV-stations, financed by advertising), and about the lacking courage of the (German) TV-bosses to swim against the current. Of course, one could say, the German financiers gave Reitz a chance, but with their restrictions they also made sure that he would fail. They took influence on the plot in a disrespectful and selfish way, attaching more importance to business than to arts. And then - in German television - they forced Reitz to shorten each of the episodes down to 90 minutes, yes, right, also part 4 which most of us love so much, and which originally is 132 minutes long.

Of course there also were critical aspects in our discussion, but finally we should be aware that an average Reitz-film is much better than anything else that is shown on TV today. I was very glad that the discussion on this list is and was straightened to discover the good things of the film, and to try to get deeper into the matter. It is a basic decision to interpret the water glass as half-full or half-empty, and in this group the glass was half-full every time - quite different from what happened in the German group (I am aware that I mentioned this before, take the repetition as an indication for the fact that I am unsatisfied with this till this day).

I am looking forward to the release of the "HEIMAT-footnotes", as you will know Reitz is opening his treasure chest for us, putting lots of unused scenes from Heimat, DZH und H3 together to a new film which will lead us into the stories yet deeper than before. I am afraid the Footnotes will not be released with English subtitles, but I am sure we will achieve to make them understandable for everyone on the list. And maybe there will also be a discussion on this list? What do you think, Ivan and Reinder?

Finally, many thanks to all of you for your lovingly contributions, especially to Ivan for the wonderful introductions, and Reinder for providing this virtual discussion-room.

I hope this list won't fall into sleep again, but I think HEIMAT at the same time is a timeless and endless topic.

Best regards to you all,

Thomas

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

Date: Sun, 23 Apr 2006 17:45:32 +0100

Maybe it's a bit like flogging a dead horse but I have a few things left I want to say about Heimat 3 and the discussion so far.

At several points in Heimat 3 one can notice a dark undercurrent of anti-consumerism, anti-globalisation and what I shall call melancholia. It can be seen particularly in the ending. Edgar Reitz has made it quite clear in numerous interviews and contributions to discussions that the plight of Lulu is related to what Reitz sees as the plight of Europe. In one of the special features of the DVD set Reitz is interviewed and talks about German social attitudes. He remarks that in the 1980's and 90's there was a kind of euphoria over social awakening and new living concepts

were developed. Germans believed that a new societal happiness could begin within "the borders of our country" but that this idea began to change in an undiscernibly slow way to a perception that this could not be limited within national boundaries. He concludes like this:

"We learned to become Europeans. But we didn't become Europeans because Europe's boundaries do not create an identity. So today we live in a real vacuum. [The Brussels bureaucracy should take note!!/ My comment] There's a melancholy mood in Germany. I'd say so. And Heimat 3 reflects that. The end of Heimat 3 has this atmosphere of melancholy and through that a certain romanticism. I think this mixture is typical of the German character."

Lulu is left at the end uncertain and alone with no job and little to look forward to. She becomes a symbol of this new Europe Reitz describes above. One can see this undercurrent in Hermann's dream with Ernst's wealth vanishing overseas, with Hermann's encounter with the old man by the Rhine with his strange warnings, with the young's obsession with computer games [shop in Simmern] and so on.

I happen to share most of Reitz's views and this made me ask whether this attitude could have anything to do with age. Reitz was born in 1932. He developed his ideas and made Heimat in his late 40's [comparatively late in life for such a creative outflowing!]. He worked out his ideas for DZH between the ages of 53-59 and I think the film was premiered when he was about 60. He started raising capital for Heimat 3 aged 62. Shooting began when he was almost 70 and Reitz was almost 72 by the time it was premiered. I hope I have done my calculations properly! Ideas change over 25 years and as we age, whatever our dynamism and creativity; a certain world-weariness creeps in. I think I am allowed to say this, as I am only a few years younger than Mr. Reitz himself. A little older than the fictive Hermann and a little younger than Edgar Reitz, to be accurate.

Hermann is a wealthy consumer as well as an accomplished artist and musician. In my introduction I used the terms "hubris" and "nemesis" when writing about Hermann's accident with the animal trap in Episode 4. I had also used the term "hubris" when asking Mr. Reitz my question at the Goethe Institut. It was with some surprise that I came across Angela's article on the web-site which is really a thinly-veiled attack upon my use of these terms. Neither ReindeR nor Angela informed me of its presence so I could have the opportunity to rebut the arguments nor was it sent as an item to the discussion. I have to admit to being a little disappointed about this.

Angela, you end your piece, after some carefully selected quotations, with these words:

> So maybe we can lay to rest some of the stuff about hubris and nemesis etc,

I would just refer you to Edgar Reitz's interview with Die Zeit published 16/12/04 which you yourself translated!!! Reitz talks about Hermann and Clarissa as romantics but adds:

The attempt to turn their expectation of happiness into reality cannot go well.....I would like to describe people's Ego-Ideal in confrontation with reality. How does life knock people off the pedestal of this Ideal-Self?

Reitz is asked how these ideas and experiences transfer to the post-'68 generation, in the film Lulu's generation? Reitz replies:

I can see that HUBRIS [my capitals] is not so strongly marked in the next generation.

You did not quote this, Angela! Hermann and his generation are guilty of hubris in Edgar Reitz's eyes! Would you class this as "stuff"? Let our readers make their own minds up.

Ivan Mansley.

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>

Date: Sun, 23 Apr 2006 18:57:18 +0100

Dear Ivan,

This is dreadful - my article on the website at http://www.heimat123.net/interviews/angela_skrimshire260306.html was submitted as a standalone essay at ReindeR's specific request, and is only a very slight adaptation of my contribution to the mailing list on 24th March, subject: "heimat 123: h3 episode 5 Nemesis and Schadenfreude etc".

If you look on the Archive for that date, you will find it there - however I did not receive it back from the Archive, so maybe you didn't ever receive it in the normal way either. If so, I'm sorry, but that's not my fault. Several other people did receive it, and replied to it on the List over the next few days.

It is certainly not a "thinly veiled attack" on your use of the words "hubris" etc, it is a direct and honest disagreement in which I reference and attribute your position, which I don't entirely agree with, for reasons I explain both in my contribution to the Discussion, and in the article derived from it.

I'll forward you now the original email which you may never have received... and if ReindeR or other people wish I can also forward it again to the list, though I don't know that that's necessary given that most of it is also in the standalone article derived from it....

But dear Ivan, why get so upset, it's good that we all have different ideas and interpretations, and don't always agree with each other - why else do we have this wonderful discussion which has been such a good experience. Please don't let's spoil it now ..

I don't mind at all if people disagree strongly with what I write and argue against it - I enjoy it hugely - but certainly not if people are going to feel "attacked" by it ...

You are quite right that Edgar Reitz uses the word "hubris" in the context you quote - I missed it when writing that email and article - it's a very fair point. I would still want to argue though, as I tried to do in the article, that he doesn't see either Lulu or anyone in his own generation as "deserving" their ill-fortune, melancholy or loss of direction, - merely that there is a causal connection does not mean that it is retributive justice, as it were...

I'm not putting this very well - will try again later maybe, have to get to see someone leaving on the boat shortly,

Ivan for heaven's sake, please don't misunderstand - and have another look at my original email contribution and at the Archive too ...I promise I wasn't making a "veiled attack", etc, just openly arguing a point...

I'm sending this one directly to you and to the list and CC-ing it to Reinder so please Reinder make sure it gets to people who may wonder what the hell is going on!....

I'm really upset and sorry about the misunderstanding...

Angela

From: "Wyn Grant" <wyn_grant@hotmail.com>
Date: Sun, 23 Apr 2006 18:53:24 +0000

I'd just like to respond to the first part of the posting. How far has this 'melancholy mood' in Germany got to do with the state of the German economy, the failure of the 'German model' to deliver growth and reduced unemployment? Just recently there have been a few signs of revival in the German economy. I wonder if that will affect the national mood (perhaps a German victory in the World Cup would be the real tonic!)

One might separate out anti-consumerism and anti-globalisation. I grew up in a period when consumption was actually rationed which is a big contrast with what my grandchildren have today. I am not saying those were 'good old days'. But is it also so healthy to define someone's worth in terms of what they consume, their 'lifestyle'? Note the lavish house in which Anton lives. And Ernst, with his obsessive collecting, is another kind of consumer, one who hoards.

The issues about globalisation are much more complex. As a young friend of mine has written, globalization is a 'system which relies on differential modes of insertion of economies, states, regions and societies into structures of production, finance and trade'. Or to put it another way: the global, the European, the national, the regional (Hunsrück) and the local (Schabbach) can co-exist and even mutually reinforce each other.

One thing that seems to bother Reitz is the status of the intellectual in German society. Yet in some ways that status seems more secure and embedded in Germany than in the UK or in the US (where people with unpopular views are under attack). Maybe my view is coloured by my involvement with the Max Planck Gesellschaft, but the existence of that is in itself indicative. Or perhaps Reitz thinks that the intellectual speaks and no one listens. But the existence of this list is by itself evidence to the contrary.

For all its faults resulting from budget constraints, I enjoyed Heimat 3. It's a long while now since I have seen DZH but in some ways I liked this least of the three, but perhaps I became too attached to an image of the Hunsrück.

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

Date: Sun, 23 Apr 2006 21:29:44 CEST

Dear Angela

You wrote:

- > This is dreadful - my article on the website at
- > http://www.heimat123.net/interviews/angela_skrimshire260306.html
- > was submitted as a standalone essay at ReindeR's specific request, and is
- > only a very slight adaptation of my contribution to the mailing list on 24th
- > March, subject: "heimat 123: h3 episode 5 Nemesis and Schadenfreude etc"
- >
- > If you look on the Archive for that date, you will find it there – however I
- > did not receive it back from the Archive, so maybe you didn't ever receive
- > it in the normal way either. If so, I'm sorry, but that's not my fault.
- > Several other people did receive it, and replied to it on the List over the
- > next few days.

I did not receive your e-mail dated 24th March entitled "Nemesis and Schadenfreude etc". I have looked back and see only one mail entitled "Matko's pigeon and Rilke's poem" on that date so I knew nothing of your later post or of it being on the web-site. I stumbled upon it by accident!

I am unable to open posts in the Archive although I have tried many times. I do not doubt it is there! I agree none of this is your fault and nor is it mine. Thus, a huge part of my annoyance is removed and it must be heaped upon the vagaries of ReindeR's distribution system.

- > It is certainly not a "thinly veiled attack" on your use of the words
- > "hubris" etc, it is a direct and honest disagreement in which I reference
- > and attribute your position, which I don't entirely agree with, for reasons
- > I explain both in my contribution to the Discussion, and in the article
- > derived from it.

But Angela I hope you can understand how I might have felt by putting yourself in my shoes. You say it was not an attack and that it was a disagreement, and that you were just openly arguing a point. Would you not agree that the beginning of your final sentence is incredibly dismissive?

- > So maybe we can lay to rest some of the stuff about hubris and nemesis etc,
- > and....

And it appeared to be behind my back and without my knowledge.

You continue:

- > But dear Ivan, why get so upset, it's good that we all have different ideas
- > and interpretations, and don't always agree with each other - why else do
- > we have this wonderful discussion which has been such a good experience.
- > Please don't let's spoil it now ..
- >
- > I don't mind at all if people disagree strongly with what I write and argue
- > against it - I enjoy it hugely - but certainly not if people are going to
- > feel "attacked" by it ...
- >

> You are quite right that Edgar Reitz uses the word "hubris" in the context
> you quote - I missed it when writing that email and article - it's a very
> fair point.

And you admit that your use of quotation was very selective. So I was hurt that my views were being misrepresented and dismissed as "stuff" which should be laid to rest, especially when there is much evidence to the contrary! I felt and still feel that I must defend my views in such circumstances.

You wrote:

> I'm really upset and sorry about the misunderstanding...

Yes, and I am also. But let us hope that the air has cleared! And we understand each other's position.

Ivan.

From: "Angela Skrimshire" <angela.skrimshire@zetnet.co.uk>

Date: Sun, 23 Apr 2006 22:16:35 +0100

Dear Ivan,

Thank you very much for your latest reply, which I've just found posted on the Archive at 21.29.44 - ironically and I know quite co-incidentally it didn't reach me directly on the list!... I hope it has reached everyone else on the list. I hope this one now of mine doesn't stick too, but I'll send it to your own address as well as to the list. I don't know enough to understand why things don't always reach us, but I know we are advised to register a second email address - which I haven't yet done as I am able to access the archive regularly now

You say

> "I did not receive your e-mail dated 24th March entitled "Nemesis and
> Schadenfreude etc". "

I'm glad if that helps to explain why you were so upset by the article on the website ...

Also I'm really sorry that you felt your views were being misrepresented and dismissed - I didn't understand that it would sound arrogant and feel like that to someone else.

You end saying :

> "let us hope that the air has cleared! And we understand each other's position."

Yes I think we do - thank you for that!

Best wishes,
Angela

From: "seymouralexander" <seymouralexander onetel.com>

Date: Mon, 24 Apr 2006 00:54:04 +0100

Interestingly in France where H3 has just getting its first cinema release (at the same time as the H1 DVD is in the shops), Herve Aubron in the March issue of Cahiers de Cinema says (my very free translation):

=====

With Heimat being so unknown in France it is a strange idea to attempt to whet the appetite of the public for this feast with such a tasteless hors d'oeuvre ... it is strongly recommended to start off with the Heimat 1 DVD in which Reitz creates a land for Germany - 'without referring to the Nazi tree which grew there'.

=====

(From my recollection the Nazis took quite a prominent role in several of the films of H1, even if Reitz did decide not to make the Shoah the central theme of the story, however much the Israel lobby might have preferred it).

Seymour

From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan jsbiedron.com>

Date: Tue, 25 Apr 2006 10:04:11 -0500

Seymour, You are correct, the Nazi regime took a very prominent role in H1. Apparently the reviewer did not watch very much of H1. Unfortunately this is often the case with movie and book critics.

" tasteless hors d'oeuvre" -- Mon Dieu!

I have a friend in France who is a German teacher. I'll ask her if she has seen Heimat.

Susan

From: JoelOYoung <JoelOYoung aol.com>

Date: Thu, 27 Apr 2006 06:13:43 EDT

[Re Fiction and Reality –reply to earlier posts of 19.04.06 - Eds.:]

That's just part of the problem you have when you write so well, film in such detail, a fictitious story that way too many people can see was based on "some" real experiences. They start reading too much into the story that was not intended. :-)

Incidentally, the gravestones are made out of granite and marble.

joel

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

Date: Thu, 27 Apr 2006 12:38:58 +0100

Thomas wrote on 23/04/06:

- > I was very glad that the discussion on this list
- > is and was straightened to discover the good things of the film, and to try
- > to get deeper into the matter. It is a basic decision to interpret the
- > water glass as half-full or half-empty, and in this group the glass was
- > half-full every time - quite different from what happened in the German group

Well, for this viewer the glass was at least 95% full!! Some may say or feel that I lack critical discrimination, but for me, Heimat 3 was a very fine piece of work. It is certainly far better than anything shown and made for TV today, as Thomas argues, and if there were no Heimats 1 and 2 to constantly compare back to, I am quite convinced that Heimat 3 would be much more highly rated than it is.

Basically, I have only two criticisms of the film. Firstly, I would have liked those characters who carry over from Heimats 1 and 2 [Anton, Ernst, Hermann, Clarissa, Gisela and Schnüsschen] to have been given more in the way of memory of previous events and circumstances. For example, Hermann could easily have recalled Klärchen and his vow never to love again as he visits the Simon house and forge. I remember Gert Jan correctly noticing that when Hermann arrives at Anton's house for dinner there is no glimmer of recognition between himself and Gisela and of their previous relationship. Secondly, and less importantly, the scenes of the collapse and flooding of the slate mine and the entombing of Ernst's art works seem to come from a different type of film, but it does not cause me major upset.

Indeed, there has been one line of argument about the film which I do not fully accept. Some contributors find numerous so-called flaws and weaknesses and then ascribe them all to the German TV companies, thus exonerating Edgar Reitz. I would just like to suggest that Edgar Reitz is a man of integrity and that he released the film in its present form. [Note, I am talking about the film as it appears on the DVD, and NOT the drastically shortened version shown on German TV.] If he had felt his film was severely compromised by his financiers he would have pulled it and not agreed to its release at all. May it not be, also, that a certain amount of imposed discipline may have helped the focus of the film and prevented a luxuriance and self-indulgence? After all it is over 11 hours in length.

I am a great admirer of all 3 Heimat films and as William Shakespeare said:" Comparisons are odorous"!! [word play on "odious"]

Ivan Mansley.

From: "Susan Biedron" <Susan jsbiedron.com>

Date: Thu, 27 Apr 2006 12:06:56 -0500

Ivan and Thomas, (and all Heimaters)

I agree that H3 was much better than most television today. Yet there was something missing that I cannot pinpoint or describe, but then I do not have the film expertise of many of you. It just did not move me as much as H1 and H2. I don't think memory flashbacks would have helped.

Then there is the issue of background music - I can't even recall the background music of H3, if I noticed it at all. In Heimat, specific music would play for certain characters. When one heard that music, you would think of the character or past event. The only music that I remember from H3 is Clarissa's singing - whether you like it or not, it must be agreed she is very talented.

I did like the way Reitz incorporated the East Germans into the story line, as well as the "globalization" concept. I agree with Wyn Grant's comments on this - perhaps I too am too attached to the Hunsrück!

Maybe we should not compare - but once you have seen H1 & H2, it can't be helped.

As an aside to the "reality" discussion, we have a TV program here about government corruption and terrorism, "24" that I enjoy. It has been reported that the actor who plays the evil US president gets scolded by people in his private life - not much different than people who look for the Simon grave stones!

Susan

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

Date: Fri, 28 Apr 2006 15:09:50 +0100

Well, it's April 28th 2006! We have arrived at the date on which we conclude the on-line discussion of Heimat 3. Like Tillmann I think I am better at beginnings than endings.

I think everyone would agree that the quality of the discussion has been very high. At times, it has been like "a university of the air". Probably no one will be entirely satisfied but we have discussed, analysed, and shone our collective torches into as many corners and crannies of Edgar Reitz's final Heimat film as we could muster.

I valued Thomas's comment:

- > I was very glad that the discussion on this list
- > is and was straightened to discover the good things of the film, and to try
- > to get deeper into the matter.

I think we did that. There was good traffic throughout, although the discussion of the whole film was a little disappointing perhaps [37* posts from 13* contributors] compared with those for individual episodes. Thank you to all our contributors and to ReindeR whose server we use [it maintained its reputation for erratic distribution right to the end!!] and a special pat on the back to the tiny elite who have been with us from the very beginning of discussion on Heimat back in October 2003 and have contributed right the way through. [It includes me, of course <vbg>].

Thomas has kept us informed about "Footnotes":

- > I am looking forward to the release of the "HEIMAT-footnotes", as you will
- > know Reitz is opening his treasure chest for us, putting lots of unused
- > scenes from Heimat, DZH und H3 together to a new film which will lead us into
- > the stories yet deeper then before. I am afraid the Footnotes will not be
- > released with English subtitles, but I am sure we will achieve to make them

> understandable for everyone on the list. And maybe there will also be a
> discussion on this list? What do you think, Ivan and Reinder?

I look forward very much to its release. It should prove fascinating and instructive to see what Reitz decided to leave out. I was a little surprised to learn that it will be released without English sub-titles. If I can be provided with some kind of a translation, on paper perhaps, I will be delighted to write some material as a lead-in to another discussion if people would like me to do so. How expensive would it be to have a professional translation maybe transcribed as sub-titles on to a DVD?

I would also like to thank all those who have offered me words of support and encouragement. It is very heartening to read such words as the "job" can get a little stressful at times.

Until we meet again!

Ivan.

** [Excluding one relating belatedly to an earlier episode, there were 36 posts from 12 contributors – Eds]*

From: "seymouralexander" <seymouralexander.onetel.com>

Date: Fri, 28 Apr 2006 20:28:18 +0100

Many thanks and kind regards
Long Live Schabbach!
Seymour --

From: Gert Jan Jansen <gertjan.jansengouda.demon.nl>

Date: Mon, 15 May 2006 23:07:59 CEST

The discussion about Heimat 3 is over. During the last weeks we had the time to overcome the symbols of withdrawing. I have to confess I was out of breath. The interval of two weeks really gave a problem when you are in full business. I can understand that we lost some H1 and DZH-commentators during the discussion. If you don't succeed getting into that treadmill at the start, you quickly find yourself confused standing aside. That were my own feelings during the former discussions.

So it was really a great success that so many contributors found so many times the opening of the list. It must be based on the quality of course of the product of Edgar Reitz, his stories, his characters and the landscape of the Hunsrück. But also we were triggered by our moderator.

I can't close the discussion series without thanking Ivan another time for his wonderful introductions. You have some unique skills to summarize a story at different levels. Your ability to cross over from the things you saw to the things you know, the general developments in mankind, is great. I'd like to say that also because a discussion of a superb quality ended not crescendo in every way. During the review of the film as a whole, it started to flag. Maybe because we fell dizzy out of the treadmill; perhaps it was also influenced by the more or less personal discussion between Ivan and Angela. I didn't quite understand the reason and I'm sure both Angela and Ivan will regret the incident.

The memory of Heimat was so strong for me, that I drove to the Hunsrück by car the first weekend of May. This time not especially to visit the film locations, but to enjoy the countryside with all that flowers that came together this year. I made a bike-tour on the Schinderhannes Soonwald-path from Emmelshausen via Simmern to Gemünden vice versa. It's on the track of an old railway! And I had the possibility to renew the acquaintance with Joel O Young, with whom I had a very good dinner in Schwarze Adler in Simmern. Also I spent some time at Gasthaus Molz in Woppenroth. I liked it to talk with Frau Marga Molz . I was the only guest that sunny Sunday at noon, and she made me that traditional weekend "Vesper". There are several similarities with my parents in law, who had a farm

With Joel I had a discussion about the footnotes, that will be published some day by Edgar Reitz. Of course I will buy and see this annex, but I'm not so enthusiastic as I was before H3 came out. What can we expect? There will be no new stories. I'm afraid it will be interesting for a diminishing incrowd of Heimat adepts. New spectators won't join the extra pictures of stories that have been told already.

And I'm afraid we will discover still more things that can't be put together logically. By publishing the unused materials Reitz puts emphasis on the aspect of the "reality" of the family story. I'm far more interested in new stories: a new film with totally new headfigures. Reitz is not obliged to keep Hermann and Clarissa " in life". I doubt if there will be a market for the footnotes.

There's another thing that struck me, overseeing the three film series. Heimat takes place in a rural neighbourhood. DZH shows us a big city-background. In H3 we are back in rural surroundings, but it's clear the differences are disappeared mostly, an aspect of the history of the last century that we all recognise so well.

Thank you all for your contributions. Maybe we will meet again. When the footnotes give reason, I will moan on.

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