

'HEIMAT' OF MEMORY, IMAGINATION AND CHOICE:

An appreciation of Edgar Reitz' *Heimat* films

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Preliminary Note and Acknowledgements:

This “appreciation” is not intended to be a summary of other people’s ideas and discussions, or a source of balanced information and commentary on all the films in the Heimat Trilogy. It is essentially a record of one person’s idiosyncratic response to the impact of the films. I have written it to explore my own understanding of the Trilogy as a whole work, rather than piecemeal as hitherto. What I have written will mean little to people who have never watched the films.

Having earlier participated in English online discussions of Heimat 3, I have freely incorporated here (often verbatim) some postings and articles of my own, previously contributed online. At the same time, I hope I have correctly attributed all references to material written by others. Like all English-speaking participants in the online discussions, I am very grateful to Reinder Rustema (<http://www.heimat123.net/>) and Thomas Hönemann (<http://www.heimat123.de/>) for opening their websites to our discussions and articles.

One of the joys of those online discussions of Heimat 3, led by Ivan Mansley, to whose guidance we were all indebted, was the way in which everyone had his or her own approach and interpretation. There were nearly as many ways of enjoying the films as there were participants. Everyone brought something of his own to watching each film, and many perceived in it something individual and special to themselves. The variety was illuminating, and stimulated us all to notice, think and write. Encouraged by that, I have since watched the films of all three Heimat series again over another winter, leading to these reflections.

It will be obvious that I have no professional background in commenting on literature, music or film. I know nothing about the art of film, I have come late to enjoying its products. I am just a spectator. My observations have no other value than that. I would hope others do not read what follows unless they have already seen the films and formed their own understandings.

In particular, it is easier to write about the more serious things, but all the films are filled with moments of warmth and laughter. Those moments are often delicate, and their humour unspoken. Words about them would be clumsy and obfuscating. Therefore, what follows is only a partial reflection of my experience of watching Heimat. Please do not let reading these pages distort your own enjoyment of the films.

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Introduction – How ‘Heimat’ is told:

Image and sound – and memory

Much has been written by scholars and reviewers, and by the film maker himself, about ‘Heimat’ as a concept in philosophy, in history and sociology, in politics and culture, and in film. I can add little to the discussion in those fields. For me Edgar Reitz’ *Heimat* film-‘epic’ is primarily a masterly work of art, to which such discussion, though at times enriching, must always be peripheral. The ‘Heimat’ of the films is not just a concept. For an audience, as for the characters themselves, it emerges as the root of a person’s emotional life, a nexus of relationships, a kaleidoscope of remembered images, a story. The defining question is not ‘what’, or ‘when’ or ‘where’ it is, but ‘how it is told’.

None of the three *Heimat* series is intended to be a single unitary work, with the clear dramatic shape of a conventional film, novel or play. Each *Heimat* is a tissue of interrelated stories, a tissue which has no defined edge or boundary, either in space or time. It is a bit like a map drawn on the surface of a globe. We may focus on one area of the map, but the lines of the seashores, rivers, roads, mountain ranges and so on are not bounded by our field of vision. So it would be foolish to seek within that field a whole, self-contained and designed structure that would fit neatly into a frame.

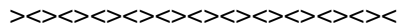
But at the same time there is structure – as land and sea, valley and hill, interact and define each other. And there is both direction and a dynamic variation in density of the information contained in the map – and also in intensity of vision as the focus changes. Ultimately the dynamic and density of the work come from the imagination, experience and thought of the author. He has given us guides to this in his interviews and writings, but as Anton says in *Heimat 3*, “A picture shows more than a thousand words”.

For me the image that contains the kernel of what the *Heimat* Trilogy is about and how it is structured comes in *Heimat 3* at Anton’s funeral. It 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 her cousin Hartmut (who caused the death of the child’s father) bearing his own father’s ashes to the grave. But each viewer will have his or her own defining image or images.

This kind of image, at the micro level of the individual stories and their interrelationships, is at the heart of Edgar Reitz’ intuitive gift, the root of his authenticity. But conceptually he sets it in a wide historical context, consciously interweaving and reflecting in each other the characters’ individual lives and the socio-economic changes of eight decades. At that level the broad structure of the the series is easy to follow.

Yet in depth these films are much subtler than a mere *roman-à-thèse*. The acute perception and recreation of individual life stories wholly integrated in their social and historical contexts, represented in loving accurate detail – this is a work not so much of the intellect as of memory and imagination, of profound artistry. Others have drawn parallels with the work of nineteenth century novelists, and for me it recalls that of Flaubert. *Madame Bovary* too has a cinematic quality, where precisely observed, experienced and remembered images of a place and a society are drawn in spare words to illuminate each moment of the story. And that story is a kind of dark ‘Heimat’, where the would-be ‘Weggeherin’ lacks the strength and depth of personality either to go alone or to stay and survive.

‘Heimat’ in this sense is recognised and configured initially in memory, not in deliberation, often not even in words. It is built of images and sounds (which may include words), of smells and textures, of emotions that may not be fully conscious. From these, memory detects some kind of story in the lives and personalities of other people, but only as they have been perceived by the person who remembers. It is in this way too that the *Heimat* epic is told.



The “Prologue”? *Geschichten aus den Hunsrückdörfern*

Geschichten aus den Hunsrückdörfern has been called a “Prologue” – but this is a misnomer. Although made while exploring the ground for the first *Heimat*, it is a very different kind of work. It stands as a small masterpiece in its own right. In spite of being a documentary, in which real people speak practically and unaffectedly about their lives and memories and skills, the film works in an almost abstract way, like a piece of music. It is a tissue of beautiful images, both visual and in sound, and the two senses are magically interwoven, light years from the self-consciousness of “multimedia”. There is an unforced interplay of image and sound, as when sparkling ice on a mill wheel “echoes” the crisp splashing of water turning the wheel.

The sounds are from the land: the streams, the wind, vehicles, the hollow shuffling of slates, and of footsteps though the galleries of the mines, a wild dance of fighter jets from Hahn airbase, the amazing instrumentation of tools and machinery working slate and stone. When the miners on a Sunday afternoon replay the games of their childhood, the energies of voices, laughter and movement play against a backdrop of specific evocative sounds – clicking of marbles, whirring of tops on a gritty road. Earlier there is one remarkable sequence which starts with the sight and sounds of blasting and heavy machinery in a quarry, picked up and woven into Mamangakis’ music. It leads to a great symphony of machines, each with its own sound and function, driven by a gemstone cutter’s water-mill wheel, as he demonstrates his work. Suddenly it falls into the stillness of his kitchen at home, where his aged grandmother is gently spinning, and a child plays at her feet.

Even the voices, long before I could understand much of the language, conveyed just in their sound so many nuances of feeling and personality, and the drama of events. A voice reading the young exile’s sad letter, the contrasting intonation of mother and daughter remembering their old family home, the teller of “Stückelscher” declaiming his tales, the cameo cutter handling antique examples of his art, Opa Molz, sick and journeying through the land he loves, to be greeted by old friends for the last time – it is an inexhaustible wealth of people in sound. And because these are real voices and their dialogues unscripted, they are at home among the natural sounds in a subtly different way from the voices of actors in a feature film. (Sadly, on the new DVD (as compared with an old video recorded from a TV broadcast) some voices seem to have been enhanced, or maybe there is some other technical difference, which has tended to alter the balance slightly between voices and natural sound. This is most noticeable in the sequence of the gem cutter’s water mill and kitchen.)

Much of the music too comes from the land. The slate miners’ bitter songs interweave with the darkness and materials of their hard working lives. A music teacher teaches her children

and leads a village choir, while telling of her own musical ambitions cut short by the war. Rousing folk songs tell the tale of Schinderhannes. A retired newspaper editor is an amateur musician, and the sentimental strains of his harmonium float with the mist over Hunsrück fields on screen. The inn explodes into football songs and laughter. The grandchildren of miners form a choir in the cavern of a mine, where one sings *Ave Maria* in her “bell-like voice”. All of this is constantly echoed, supplemented and woven together by Mamangakis into a mesmeric musical web shimmering among the images of the film.

The images themselves have their own magic. The black and white images have the subtle range of tone of Chinese ink paintings, “the colours of ink”. For instance, in the scene where two miners are trimming roof slates, the play of sunlight and shadow across a range of different moving surfaces and textures, sometimes sharply defined, sometimes softly emerging, is quite fascinating, and so is the way light falls on the shapes of objects hanging in Rudi Bast’s hayloft. Moreover the beautiful colour images, of the land in all weathers and all seasons, seem technically softer and subtler than the colour images of modern film, and so merge more comfortably with the black and white images in this film than they do on other modern DVDs.

There are moments of silent humour, small juxtapositions – after the tale of the great leap of a “royal stag” encountering a train, an image of little roe deer scurrying over the line; the many expressions, some unexpectedly tender, on the faces of men in a US Airforce strip club; two jet fighters thundering overhead cut to a pair of delicate vessels in an ancient grave; in silent movie tradition, a majestic figure strides by, oblivious of the willowy fellow-hunter curving himself out of the way.

Focussing like this on the aesthetic surface of the film should not distract from the human stories at its heart. They are stories told or shown by robust individuals, speaking simply, without artifice, in their own words. The film is built on fundamental themes in their lives, themes of hardship, skill and survival. Interwoven therein are images of change, loss, past trauma, present sadness or bitterness, though there are new buildings, plenty of children, and often laughter in remembering. In 1980 the memory of war is still very raw. Tales of bombardment, hot shrapnel, dramatic escape, injury and death are relived beneath the continuing war-dance of American jets. Work is a dominant theme, often involving skills and craftsmanship now in terminal decline. The intent faces and skilled hands of craftsmen illuminate some of the most intriguing passages, along with examples of their products – slates precisely sized for specific purposes, a stool developed through generations to ease an agate cutter’s work, an inner landscape at the heart of a gemstone.

We become aware of the love that the director and his team must have felt for these people, dedicated to their work and their land, richly endowed in immeasurable, immaterial ways, the endearing and fallible along with the awesomely skilled. We are tricked into an illusion of having known and loved them too. Fiction versus reality? We never knew them, but this is a documentary filmed in the real world. Their sadness and their laughter were alive in 1980. Toward the end of the film is a beautiful sequence of strong, living faces, one after the other slowly starting to smile. But the hardships and tragedies, the working lives they speak

of, the harshness and joys of lived life, were not immediate at the moment of filming. They were mostly in the past. The land was already on the brink of huge change. The world celebrated in the film was not even then the “real” world, it is a world recalled and constructed from memories, not those of the director himself, but those of all the people who tell them to him, who tell and show him a ‘Heimat’ which is both his and theirs, but for those of us from different backgrounds, not ours.

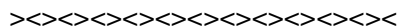
Fiction and reality? What is the place of the *Hunsrückdörfer* documentary in the fictional *Heimat* “epic”, aside from its value for the director and his collaborators in preparing for the first *Heimat*? I am tempted to suggest that it stands at the start of the whole framework of the “epic” rather like the kind of introduction the director’s grandfather used to make to his macabre and ghostly “Stückelscher”, sworn by “seven sacred oaths” to be true. In a lecture *Film und Zeit*, given in Perugia, Edgar Reitz describes his grandfather’s story-telling principle (www.edgar-reitz.de/cms/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=190&Itemid=97, now also published in *Edgar Reitz Erzählt (q.v.)*), roughly translated as follows :

“The locations had to be real and might not be altered. The characters in his stories, too, laid claim to have really lived. My Grandfather’s stories mostly began like this: ‘Now you all know the great old oak tree that stands on the left, just beside the railway line, on the way into the village of X...’ (general murmur of agreement!) ...’then too you’ll know big Hans, the innkeeper in the village of Y, who died in such agony last year...?’ (another general murmur of agreement, as everyone had known big Hans.) ‘So now I want to tell you how, early this morning as I was going to work, at 07.13 exactly, by the old oak tree, the dead man met me on the way...’ This kind of introduction could be varied a hundred times over, with different locations, waymarks, buildings, and more and more new people, dead or alive. Beginning a story in this way was a recipe for one hundred percent success. From no other model, either from literature or from the history of film, have I learnt so much about story-telling, as from my Grandfather.”

I do not imagine the audiences for Reitz’ grandfather’s stories had any problem in distinguishing fiction from reality! But maybe we in Reitz’ own audience sometimes do, and in this respect perhaps the documentary doesn’t help. It can be a little disorienting to find people interviewed in the documentary playing in small parts or as extras in the later films. Absorbed in the fictional film, I have caught myself thinking “There’s Albert Sulzbacher... was he really there when Paul found...?” That is of course very silly, but it does say plenty about the power of the fiction, its trueness to life. At the same time it may reflect the way in which the documentary rivals *Heimat* as a work of art, so that for a moment one fails to make the proper distinction. Nonetheless it is understandably galling to the director to feel that his audience are ready to treat his fictional creation as ‘mere’ documentary, to appropriate his memories as our own, and ignore the consummate art and skill involved in his creating the illusion that has so tricked us. But then, would Edgar Reitz’ grandfather have been at all dismayed if he found his listeners a little fearful of passing that old oak tree, on the way to work, early on the next dark winter’s morning?

For us, *Hunsrückdörfer* has a deeper effect. For a start, it is possible to visit the Hunsrück and see, however superficial one's visit, and in spite of the language barrier, that though it is a living and swiftly changing region, the land itself, of both documentary and feature film, still remains, and so do the warmth and strength of the people. I am not talking about the tourist trail (which threatens one's sense of the fictional "geography" of *Heimat*), nor the slightly embarrassing "graves" at the Nunkirche, nor even the villages which, as in all living communities, are being modernised, infilled and changed. But wandering for a brief afternoon in the woods and fields one seems to find the land unchanged, not just in the rolling views seen from the roads, but under one's feet. The stiff clay soil is still worked as agricultural land, even though by different means and by far fewer people. The woods are still harvested and hunted. Irregular corners of the great arable fields are still left rough and inhabited by butterflies and the last wild flowers, even in October, and by apple trees heavy with fruit. This is a personal and probably sentimental reaction, but it was unexpected. I was afraid that visiting the region would diminish any sense of the land transmitted by the films, but instead it enriched it.

But as a foreigner hampered by the language barrier and with no personal connection to anyone from the region, one is quite unable to appreciate the films as deeply as someone born and bred there. Basically, one lacks the memories by which the first fictional *Heimat* series is inspired. Those of us who are old enough have some memories of our own which help. For instance the Simon smithy replicates internally, in nearly every detail, an ancient smithy beside my grandmother's house in Somerset in the 1940s. The resemblance is uncannily close, and watching the first film of *Heimat* I can almost smell hot iron and singeing hooves. I am even troubled by small differences like the handle of the bellows. Otherwise however I remain mostly a stranger. Here the *Hunsrückdörfer* documentary performs a valuable function. It partially substitutes for our lack of the memories. Only from the documentary can we come to the fictional films with a feeling for the land, the people and their ancient industries which goes beyond the scope of the screened narrative itself, and yet all the time enhances it. In an odd and perhaps perverse way, after getting to know the documentary, it is the fictional film that sometimes feels like an appendix to that, rather than vice versa. Of course this is still a very pale shadow of how it must be for those long familiar with the Hunsrück. Yet as Thomas Hönemann has written (<http://www.heimat123.de/gadh.htm>): "Anyone who has seen *Geschichten aus den Hunsrückdörfern* will be able to develop an even deeper appreciation of *Heimat*", and from my own experience I know it is true.



The First *Heimat*

1919-1982

1.1 Episodes 1-4: Light and colour, memories of a recreated time.

Heimat 1, like *Hunsrückdörfer*, has a powerful soundtrack which works like a piece of music in its own right, not only the composed music, with its themes or 'Leitmotiven' for various characters and their moods, but the music of all sounds. In *Heimat* the rhythm of the film's "music" relies less than the documentary on natural sounds other than voices. Nonetheless, those sounds are many, and often beautiful. They serve to link passages of the story, and to fix them in a specific, authentic place and time. For anyone from a rural background they are intensely evocative – the blacksmith's hammer, hens cackling, pitchforks shifting straw, cattle lowing, wheels and boots on gravelly roads, ancient vehicles, and birdsong. As the decades pass the sounds change in recognisable generations, with the vehicles, the dance music, the politics, the progress into war and into peace, until peace is shattered by the scream of military jets.

But principally, in this film it is the rise and fall of human voices and the choreography of human movements that drive the "music", both creating and following the tension of the drama, for instance in the great first sequence of Paul's return. That sequence expounds the theme which the whole series will develop. It is grounded in the almost silent figure of Paul. For a little while his face is full of recognition and relief at coming home. Both he and we are moved by his parents' undemonstrative, almost wordless reception of him. There is so much love and pride in their faces, and in their practical actions.

But once seated in the kitchen, as family and neighbours gather, he is inwardly alone. He is the one who returns changed, to a world which is unchanged, like the piper stolen by fairies in the old tales. He seems to become oppressed by the deliberate, repetitive speech patterns of country people, maybe of close families everywhere. He is indifferent to most of the trivial gossip. As the scene unfolds, people still talk about Paul, but less and less to him.

The ground bass of the movement, as it were, is in Paul's still face and dazed eyes, and what we assume is in his mind, as he sits against the central pillar in the kitchen. Around him the voices, movements and personalities of the other characters interweave, rising and falling in a set of magnificent variations and silences. Briefly, very skilfully, we are introduced to a rich assortment of individuals, whose stories we will get to know more and more as the series proceeds. As again and again in *Heimat 1* and much of *Heimat 2*, the space of the room itself is created in a remarkable way by the direction of people's movements and glances, the increase and decrease of distances among them.

Paul's attention is taken only by those outside the room – he smiles at the one-eyed ragamuffin watching through the window. He listens to evil gossip about the “gipsy” girl with whom he will one day fall in love, and who like himself is an outsider.

Two people in the room share his sense of alienation: Glasisch is one – as he extends his scabbed hand to Paul, Paul reaches up to release a trapped fly, and maybe they both understand why. The other is the bereaved mother of his dead friend Helmut. There is a direct line of sight between Paul and that sorrowing figure sitting by the corner of the fireplace. It creates a tense space between them, generating Paul's vision of Helmut with his mocking comments on angels in white, dead soldiers ‘asleep’ on the battlefield and a heaven where they speak the Platt, finally closing the ‘trap’ on Paul.

Again, as in the documentary, sounds and visual images work together, in a web which is at once both “music” and film. The crash of Eduard's chair is echoed visually by the fall of Paul's head onto his arms at the end of the scene. But unlike the documentary, through the fictional series this web evolves into a whole invented story, a created drama, extending far ahead in time. The time of the documentary is nearly all in the past, though presented and remembered in the present, within the time of the film itself. But though introduced by Glasisch and his photograph album, *within* each episode the time of the *Heimat* story is not remembered time – the film time appears to march forward with the time of the story, though of course this too is an illusion. It is the time of an ongoing piece of music, as Reitz writes in his lecture *Film und Zeit*, not the time of the spectator who is going to switch off the TV and go to bed, and maybe watch the same episode all over again tomorrow.

Another contrast is thrown into relief by comparison with the documentary. In Schabbach as in the real world, the war memorial poses the unanswerable counterfactual question about the first world war – what if more of those changed by their experience in the war had returned home? How might that have affected the history of the 1920s and 30s in Europe and Russia? In the microcosm, would Glasisch and Paul be so alone? How would Schabbach have changed? Would Wiegand's influence have been more effectively challenged?

In the *Hunsrückdörfer* documentary the experiences of the second world war were still very much alive 35 years on in 1980. In Woppenroth almost the whole famous football team had returned from serving in that war. But in Schabbach the first war was little spoken of in the 1920s and 30s, other than on the day of Paul's return, and in the war memorial scenes. Few of the relatives of those listed on the memorial are individually depicted – Helmut's mother grieves, but Wiegand seems to have buried his loss under an armour of self-aggrandizing patriotism, while his wife and daughter do not outwardly mourn. Only the baker from Simmern, not Schabbach, who lost three boys, approaches the memorial half crazed with grief. Much later, in 1939, it is Wiegand who noisily proclaims the news of the next war in the village square, beneath that bowed stone figure on the memorial. If his elder son and the others had returned, would their lost memories have survived to silence him? But maybe one should not draw inferences from a fictional film story, in this way.

Famously, *Heimat* follows the documentary in the use of black and white film. As in the black and white films of Bergman, Satyajit Ray or Kurosawa, the beauty of the image can be agonisingly at odds with the content of a scene – and yet it can intensify both horror and humour in a story. For an instance of the latter, the hilarious scene where the three endearing gold diggers flounder in the Goldbach is played in black and white images of luminous, delicate beauty. Later in the evening in Simmern, as the light fades, the images turn into colour, and though this is also a splendid and very funny sequence it is less magical, reflecting perhaps the tawdriness of the small-town night, and one suddenly understands what is lost by the change. Also, one focusses more on the action, and less on the atmosphere of the scene itself. It is a kind of relief when the scene in the clockmaker's shop reverts once more to monochrome, now a soft sepia for the lamplight, and perhaps also for the characters' disappointment. The same sepia had been used for the scene where Paul returns to the claustrophobic Wiegand house, full of old ladies spinning, after his journey with Apollonia.

Black and white can intensify the drama in other ways too. For instance, in the third episode there is the apotheosis of Lucie and Wilfried as they emerge in a white radiance from an audience with their eminent Nazi guests, only to end up disconsolate in the kitchen with the remains of the uneaten feast. Colour returns as Lucie fantasizes ways of galvanising Eduard's career, but gives up in despair, to the sound of a dismal dripping tap.

Quite early in the second episode, there is a flashback to the Goldbach. This time it is in colour, in a misty light, equally luminous and lovely, threaded through with magical music, but the fun has gone – poor Eduard is still fruitlessly prospecting for gold, while racked with a tubercular cough. A change to colour accompanies a change of mood, for no explicable reason, but it works. Yet Eduard's hilarious story will continue (in colour) and with it the laughter returns.

Rich colour is used much more freely in this episode, indoors by lamplight and outdoors in the sun. Kath's face by candlelight, writing her daft, anxious letter, and she and Maria seen softly through a window pane in the pre-dawn light; the glowing interior of the brothel in Berlin; the majestic Rheinland and Hunsrück landscapes of Lucie's dreams and Edu's memories ... all scenes of fantasy, warmth and love (of one kind or another) and, for us, laughter .

Later, in the fourth episode, colour is used selectively to enhance Martina's exotic and hilarious arrival in the midst of an almost monochrome world where exiled Saxons are building the Highway. Then, after they have born her small red motor triumphantly off the site and push-started it, there is a lovely image, for just a second, in soft green, ochre and grey, where a plume of steam from a steam roller on the hillside is echoed by steam or smoke from a cabin lower down, reflected in turn in flood water on the road.

Next, a banal dance hall is transformed by glowing soft light, to stage the love of Otto and Maria. This is one of the most moving and famous scenes of the whole Trilogy, and yet so simple, intangible – made out of voices, music, movement and light – their truthful, unsentimental words, their eyes, and Otto's sweet ugly face.

The episode ends in a rich sepia lamplit sequence in the villa, where to Martina's delight an affronted Lucie is addressed by her maidservant as 'Frau Chefin', and Eduard longs for the moment to last for ever, so that no one will suffer from what may happen next, not even the disappeared Jewish banker to whom he is heavily in debt.

For under the warmth and humour, these ordinary rural lives, run sombre themes, sinister tremors in the narrative, where colour has a different function. On Kath's fateful visit to the Ruhr it picks out a pervasive blue electric light, and the fiery furnace of a factory or foundry, in the city where her communist nephew is taken away for "re-education" in a concentration camp. The red, white and black of Nazi insignia appear with growing insistence everywhere in the Hunsrück, even in the dance hall. The eyes of silver death's-head rings glint ruby red.

This kind of detail recurs throughout both the first two *Heimat* series, and will repay watching the films over and over again. There are always those breath-taking images, usually in black and white: the way light falls on a face at a moment of reflection or feeling, the way a bending figure is backlit against a window. I don't believe enjoying such detail detracts from the human content of the drama – any more than the detail of a Dutch portrait detracts from the life portrayed. It doesn't even matter if the effect is imagined, or incidental and not originally intended ... it's magic, and it works!



1.2 Episodes 5-8: Memories of wartime and its aftermath.

In the fifth and sixth episodes, clouds gather again over the Hunsrück. The ruin of Maria and Otto's delicately flowering relationship, and the children's distress, is interwoven with an uneasy drift into fascism and war. Schabbach is no longer the centre of the world, the Highway goes from bunker to bunker. Even the Simon family name is suspect. Robert makes light of his call-up, but Pauline has fear in her heart. Falseness infects the film-making with Anton's unconvincing moustache and unbroken voice, just as in Schabbach it infects the family's response to Paul's abortive, false return. Yet the exchanges among the characters at moments of warmth and of anguish remain so honest, and there is always the shadow and silvery light, even in bleak hotel bedrooms in Trier or near the Hamburg docks, even the gleam of the shell of a bomb, and the texture of the mud clinging to it. Those scenes have no right to be so beautiful. The incongruity pinpoints the pain.

In the sixth and seventh episodes some of the memories informing the tale are those of all our rural childhoods in the 1940s: military uniforms and vehicles on the roads, propaganda, paranoia about parachuting enemy pilots, the ominous roar of incoming bombers heading for industrial areas, search lights, ak-ak fire, a stick of bombs jettisoned at random over fields and

villages as a plane flees home. All the young men are absent, their distant loss mourned usually by older people, we hardly knew them. In the countryside, national shortages and hardships are mitigated by resources of the land, while the land reverts to the seeming peacefulness of older means of work and transport, in response to a dearth of petrol. But in England our government was not fascist, and we were never invaded.

In the microcosm of a German village the origins and influence of a Nazi culture and regime are ever more apparent. Lucie, still intently social climbing and unaware of any irony, enthuses over the “divine” performance of a pseudo gipsy tune, crying “What a culture!” Wilfried, insecure, authoritarian neurotic that he is, revels in his command of the “home front”, but the children will remember their suspicions of his cowardly deed. It remains safe, but only just, for Kath whom everyone loves and respects to speak her mind,. Otherwise the mood is that of the rather threatening song sung by Maria and Martha in the post van: “...whoever asks no questions and sets off undaunted, for him there’s no question marks until his job is done. Jawohl, meine Herren, that’s how we like it... from today the world belongs to us...” (until Martha thinks of Anton far away in ice cold Russia and weeps.)

At Lucie’s party the sinister truths are only half uttered and half heard, like the muttered horror stories we half-heard in childhood, withheld from us to shelter us. Should we call the silence of Schabbach complicity in guilt? Or should we recognise the strong reluctance to question dangerous issues openly, even today, among those conditioned in small rural communities to dread “making waves”? Only Eduard mourns the loss of Hans Betz, and feels responsible for having encouraged the lad’s sharp-shooting skills.

The momentum of the previous episodes reaches a climax in the seventh, where the war finally impacts on known and loved characters. Anton, white and shaking, witnesses the execution of Jewish prisoners in a Russian forest, at the periphery of his vision, as he focuses on a delicate technical repair to a lens. Maybe in later life a memory of this paralysis in the face of horror continues to inform his stubborn walk across the continent, the powerful obsession and effectiveness of his later career, his rigid and ultimately futile control of his family. Schabbach has already experienced fascist sadism in Wilfried’s “execution” of a helpless enemy pilot, but what may lie half hidden in the consciousness of Schabbach children is now something from which a young Schabbacher at the Eastern front cannot avert his eyes.

Back in the Hunsrück, Otto returns: “Look Pieritz, there’s Schabbach, like in peacetime” – and there follow scenes of extraordinary tenderness and visual beauty, set not in peacetime but against the constant drone of bombers. Then next day comes the shock of Otto’s death. Not long after, bombardment around Schabbach precedes the American invasion.

All through these wartime episodes there is still so much humour and warmth, Maria welcoming Martha, and their ensuing friendship, Kath’s provocative comments when the Wiegands take over the proxy wedding, Ernst and the red carnations, Otto and Pieritz teasing and joking. We love these people and care deeply about their fate. And there are always Lucie and Eduard – the vagrant feather in Lucie’s hat (remembered with delight by Eva Marie Schneider: <http://www.gemeinde-schabbach.de/content/view/802/98>), Lucie’s new religiosity

which in no way constrains her ambition, her panic when the situation crumbles under invasion. Her hard-won social standing in the Nazi world now places her in danger of losing all she possesses except what she stands up in. So as she tries to wear all her clothes at once, her son arrives chewing gum, and a new light dawns in her head. She turns to welcome two grinning black GIs.

The sinister wartime themes are all the more threatening because played among everyday relationships. In shocking contrast they invade the ordinary lives of everyone, the gentle and upright, the venal and foolish, the simple and the manipulative, all alike. The stories in these films are not historical records, they are the records of memory. This is what the people themselves, and probably their children, might have known. They are not even the same as the wartime stories remembered and recounted in the documentary, which treat more of adventures and events. The *Heimat* stories are memories mediated through the imagination of a mature artist, and in spirit are perhaps closer to the reality of our own childhoods in the period than any consciously reconstructed historical account.

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The eighth episode, by comparison with its predecessors, seems awkward and disjointed. One reason for that is the shock of encountering a middle-aged American Paul, played by an actor with almost nothing of the resonance of the young Paul. This is clearly not the same person, even though there is little in the dialogue that could not have been delivered by the original Paul as an older man. But that is not all. The film seems to reflect in its own construction something of the bewildered, shattered world of the first postwar years.

It starts with the story of the violent deaths of Pollack and Martina, skilfully and movingly told, but distanced in several ways. The footage seems to come from a different film altogether. It is set in Berlin, far from Schabbach, another world, almost totally destroyed, still under heavy bombardment and continuous street fighting. Martina and Pollack had entered the series rather briefly a few episodes earlier, and when first watching the films as a weekly TV series it was hard to recall who they were. Now, having become familiar with the characters, one finds the impact of the sequence much greater, but even so still distanced. There is a feeling, most unusually in *Heimat*, that it is a contrivance of the plot, aimed to link the story of Schabbach with that of the rest of Germany, rather than an organic development of the characters and the narrative. As far as we are told, it is not a memory for anyone in Schabbach, only a reminder of the collective memory of the country as a whole.

By contrast, Schabbach under American occupation is already quite peaceful, but numbed and disoriented. Gruesome reminders of the fighting remain, the invaders are objects of both fear and opportunity, the latter especially for Lotti (also played by a disconcertingly new performer). Anton is known to be still alive and somewhere distantly on the way home, but Martha can no longer remember what he looks like. Pauline is widowed. Lucie of course is working hard at her latest role as fan of the Yankees, and ingratiates herself with the returning Paul.

Paul himself, that great uncomprehending alien, retains almost nothing of his sensitive introverted earlier self apart from avoidance of his own and others' feelings. Consequently the conscious echoes of his original 1918 return remain rather unconvincing contrivances. Very briefly, in the attic with the remains of his old wireless, listening to his mother, a glimmer of himself returns. Also his inability to tell Maria why he had left, the admission that he truly doesn't know, is painful and rings true. Otherwise the character seems sadly to be a casualty of what must have been a difficult casting problem. In a world of memories, he brings few and generates none.

Maria has aged emotionally and physically. Her movements are stiff and her manner reserved and defended. She is clearly still mourning and under great strain, dreading the emotional demands that the stranger Paul might feel entitled to make. Klärchen arrives, and the house seems full of people milling around with no obvious ground or aim. Ernst, deprived of his magical purpose in life as a winged hero, embarks on a devious, free-wheeling self-centred course, carefully avoiding Schabbach. Finally Anton returns, equally a stranger, inwardly obsessed with a great project in his mind.

It is a world seen and remembered perhaps through the child Hermännchen's questioning eyes, a world of adults who have become bewildered, distant and incomprehensible, a loss of security and a loss of unconditional love. And then his beloved grandmother, the intuitive, all-knowing, all-supporting, unchanging heart of the household, repository of a century's memories, unexpectedly dies.



1.3 Episodes 9-11: The brothers – memories of a living generation.

Episode 9 is set in the time of the “economic miracle” when as Glasisch says, nothing over the past 200 years has changed so much in the Hunsrück as it has in the ten years since the end of the War. The almost standalone, feature length film, with great truth and sensitivity, follows Hermännchen's passage from young adolescence to young manhood through a love affair with a young woman a decade older than himself. It is famous as a masterpiece of cinema, funny, tender and heart rending. As with the story of Maria and Otto, I feel almost anything I try to write about Hermann and Klärchen (and Lotti their “guardian angel”) would sound banal and redundant to those who already know the film..

Instead it might be good to look at the place of this episode in the first series, and in the whole *Heimat* Trilogy. It is pivotal in several ways. In the Hunsrück the “new age” that Kath despaired of ever seeing seems at last to have arrived. This is becoming to us a more familiar West Germany. Some in the village, though perhaps not the traditional farmers, are prospering, including once again the objectionable Wiegands, and Anton with his flourishing

and honourable business. Maria's youngest son goes to the High School and will be the first member of the family to enter university, carrying forward the stories of leaving and return.

The story now focusses on Marias' three adult or near adult children. The memories are no longer recorded just in Glasisch's faded monochrome images, but living and colourful in the minds of a generation still only middle-aged in the year the film was made. So for the first time in the series, the greater part of the film is shot in unexpectedly lovely colour, rich and soft, not nearly so harsh as the colour of many modern films. (This is best appreciated from the Tartan DVDs. The version shown on British TV suffered from very poor colour reproduction, by comparison.) In this story, black and white film is reserved for the most inward, private, sensitive memories of the love affair. The black and white images are as luminous and ethereal as any in the earlier episodes of the series, and the contrast with the colour of the more public memories is moving and works well. The music too is changing, and Hermann's beautiful Klärchen Lied, which recurs in the second *Heimat*, is heard for the first time. There is coherent dramatic shape to the story. Tension builds towards the end, as when (foreshadowing Kieslowski?) a barking dog in the background ratchets up the suspense in a still moment before the family storm breaks.

The characters of the three brothers will develop as bearers of many of the stories of the second and third *Heimat* series. I want to think about these fascinating longitudinal life stories later, but already here their personalities are emerging with clear links to their family history and childhood, and will grow recognisably from this point throughout the rest of the Trilogy. But the Hermann written for this episode, and played by a very young actor, is probably the most subtle portrayal of the character, the one that we remember and care most about, the only one (I would argue) with the potential to produce artistic work comparable with that of his own creator.

In the same way, themes of the story of Episode 9 remain significant in the later *Heimats*. For a start, the generation conflict, in this case between the adolescent Hermann and his mother and elder half-brother, is revisited in many of the later stories. But in this first story there is a big difference: Maria and Anton are not pathological monsters like the parents in *Heimat 2*. With one or two exceptions, those parents too are probably not wholly "monsters", but in *Heimat 2* we see them mainly from the one-dimensional adolescent perspective of the students. The same perspective is naturally shared by young Hermann in *Heimat 1*, already at the start of Episode 9, and it is then reinforced with tragic consequences by his experience in the course of the story.

Yet we in the audience have come to know Maria and Anton as mature, complex people. We sympathise with Maria's loss and loneliness, and know how precious her youngest son is to her, and why. We know too that in her time she was open and relaxed and young, and that were Otto still alive neither of them would have reacted to the situation with such possessive anxiety. Similarly with Anton, we can trace his rigidity and over-developed sense of responsibility to what we have already seen of his childhood and wartime experience. It is natural that he should be jealous of Ernst's ready charm and uncaring disregard for traditional values, and of Hermann's youth, and of their relationships with Klärchen. The intuitive

portrayal of a family over time has made the story of Episode 9 even richer, if that were possible, than corresponding stories in the second *Heimat*.

The upshot of the story is indeed tragic, for it leaves Hermann fixed in a bitter rejection of his family and of his own capacity for love, and in dread of the consequences of commitment. A major theme of his career through the second *Heimat* is the gradual and only partial unravelling of the hurt done to him at this time.

The relationships among the brothers form another theme that continues to occupy the last two episodes of the first *Heimat*, and recurs powerfully in *Heimat 3*. Anton and Ernst, separated in childhood just before the war by their different responses to the trauma of Otto's departure and Paul's abortive return, now represent, each to the other, what most disgusts him. In this film Ernst is forced to turn to Anton for financial help and, almost weeping, is sent away as a feckless adventurer by his wealthy brother. Later he accuses Anton of fascism and jealousy in his behaviour to Hermann. The pattern persists for the rest of their lives. Yet at heart they need each other, both now returned to the Hunsrück for life, Anton from choice, Ernst with clipped wings. They make tentative moves towards reconciliation, none lasting, until their final tragic meeting in *Heimat 3*. At the same time, this film also sees the start of a good brotherly relationship between Ernst and Hermann, which becomes another moving theme of *Heimat 3*.

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A decade or so later, in Episode 10, the 'new age' is already showing cracks, as Kath would have predicted. The film is shot mainly in black and white. Some of its sequences are dark and cramped, just a couple of people hunched in a shadowy room – Maria with Pauline planning holidays abroad that will never happen even when she sadly sells the cow, Anton and Martha desperately telexing for help from Paul. The mysterious forest fails to protect the land. In Schabbach old-fashioned values of quality and solidity and worth are being challenged, and aspects of the confrontation are reflected in relationships among the brothers.

As Anton battles to defend his business against a hostile takeover, Ernst in bright white daylight peddles worthless "modernisations" in exchange for priceless antique furniture and building materials throughout the region, capitalising on local trust of his brother's name. Then Anton re-encounters the foolish caricature of American Paul, and an unrecognisable incarnation of Hermann, who can cut Lotti after his concert without a flicker of acknowledgment. The scenes involving these versions of Paul and Hermann render artificial a thread of the plot that in spirit is very powerful. Dedicated, down to earth Anton is rejected by Paul in favour of Hermann (whose "art" Anton despises). Yet Hermann's music in this episode is beautiful, and (as only Glasisch understands) fulfils the creative talent of the boy in the previous film.

Colour returns to the film when Anton drives back to the Hunsrück in the early morning light. He pays a civil but bemused visit to Ernst's business premises and goes home with new resolve. In front of his whole workforce Anton rejects the takeover bid and vows that the

quality of his business and the prosperity it brings to Schabbach will continue as long as he lives (which in *Heimat 3* it does).

In the Simon house Ernst, the unscrupulous dealer, encounters Ernst, the small boy whose first plane still lies in the attic. Movingly, in spite of a quarrel with Anton, the child wins out, and Ernst ends up on the muck-heap playing with his plane. But the episode ends with Maria's loneliness, and the grief that Hermann is beyond her reach and her understanding, while in the square outside the war memorial is unceremoniously removed to the graveyard, to make way for the traffic.

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At first the final Episode (11) seemed confusing and disappointing, when viewing the series in weekly TV instalments. There were so many characters to cope with, some smaller parts forgotten, some new. The whole Kirmes section appeared to dissipate the momentum of the series, and the idea of re-encountering the dead seemed sentimental and alienating. But having grown far more familiar with the characters and the story, and watching with enhanced image reproduction on DVD, I can now recognise this episode as a powerful and wholly fitting way of bringing the series to an end.

It is in fact a great tapestry, interweaving their memories with the story of the brothers who remember, at the time of their mother's death. The contemporary story is told in colour, softened and greyed in some scenes of the funeral and storm, rich in the interior of the Simon house, almost garish in the Kirmes scenes. The memories are told in flashback, a technique rarely used anywhere else in the *Heimat* Trilogy. With one brief but notable exception, the flashbacks are filmed mostly in black and white, perhaps because they may have been outtakes from earlier in the filming schedule – but anyway it is very effective.

Opening with the funeral is a shock, Maria is the heart of the series, one cannot imagine another whole film continuing without her. We have not witnessed her illness and death, we never know what she died of, it is disturbing. But then we are drawn into the interactions of the funeral party. There is anxiety that Hermann will be late. Paul in very old age looks curiously like Anton nearing his end in *Heimat 3*. The storm, Hermann's frantic drive, the iconic image of the abandoned coffin, all mark this funeral as exceptional, and in a way distance it too, though as always in these films sadness and laughter (and Glasisch) humanise the symbolism. Two jet fighters screaming over the burial jolt us into the 1980s, the Hunsrück of Hahn airbase and the cold war, and then sweep us on a swift flight over the beloved landscape. The wild ride goes on and on, and is moving and strange beyond understanding. Organ music recalls Hermann's anguish at the end of Episode 9.

At the funeral meal, the two old men, Glasisch and Paul, think of Maria, and are overcome by their memories. Perhaps too they think of Apollonia and their ancient rivalry. Glasisch thumbs through his photograph album, saying "All dead, all dead", like Opa Molz in the documentary. Who buried Wiegand's motorbike in the dung heap? He knows but will not

tell, as his eye falls on an image of Paul. Paul too, challenged by Glasisch to say why he walked away, can only shake his head. Memories buried and lost for good.

Hermann in the graveyard finds it full of his relations, and the old man Wilhelm rekindles his memory of the Hunsrück Platt. Later he and Paul, the two 'Weggegangener' who have returned in such unrecognisable form, share regrets and memories, only half listening to each other, but both weeping, and bringing home to themselves the rootlessness of their own lives. "We never knew how beautiful it was until she was no longer here"... but there seems something maudlin and inauthentic about them both that undermines the scene, or maybe that is the point of it.

Eventually the brothers converge on the Simon house. Anton, unwell and convinced Ernst intends to raid the house, has crazily boarded up the door. Ernst feeds the rabbits, climbs in round the back and wanders about, no longer with an eye just for the value of things, but treasuring the memories they raise. In flashback he remembers peering round the kitchen door and seeing Maria and Otto embracing, with Otto's arm in plaster, and then the model glider flying in his grandfather's field. This is the only flashback that is filmed fully in colour, fitting, because it is a warm, happy memory, not tinged with regret like some of others.

Anton's memories of the house are monochrome, of times when he tried and failed to meet his mother's emotional needs, and she lives for us again as he revisits them: the colour TV that frightened her with thoughts of loneliness and death, when she wished only that he would visit her more often; the flowers he brought for her 70th birthday, when he had forgotten the party was to be in the hall at the inn, arrived there very late, and was ignored. His memories are rich too with other familiar characters now long gone, not least the irrepressible Lucie. Hermann's memory, mostly monochrome but with a touch of colour, is of Klärchen – but still so brief and censored.

Then hilariously Ernst and Hermann encounter an embarrassed Anton in the process of carrying off an antique mirror, which defuses the mutual hostility for a while. Paul grandly arranges the installation of the famous marble plaque, commemorating himself as donor of the house to the village. Old Wilhelm tells him "In a year or two you'll get another plaque – for nothing ...". In unison for once, the three brothers roll down the street towards the beer tent at the fair, like uneasy cowboy 'pardners' in a Wild West movie. With their grief laid deep inside, and the tensions among themselves temporarily relieved, their world dissolves into the noise, gaiety and craziness of Kirmes.

The Kirmes section has a magnificent soundtrack, with the strong country voices and laughter of the revellers, and many loud sounds and music of the fairground, interwoven with rousing music from the band. The band leads an interminable conga sweeping almost the whole village into its train, which winds repeatedly, happy and stupid, through a cowshed. At the end of the evening the redundant musicians play sad jazz, revolving slowly on a carousel.

The villagers intent on a brief night of revelry and escape are Hunsrückers of the contemporary 1980s world. All through this episode there have been a few faces familiar from

the documentary, and Hermann at the fair meets two of the slate miners called Hans. The tarts, hilarious even if rather overplayed, are clearly shown as incomers, not caricatures offensive to a Hunsrück audience. But they echo words spoken in the documentary by respectable local employees at the airbase, when they lament the old days in Lautzenhausen when the Ami were loaded with dollars, and note that nowadays it is just the farmers who frequent the brothel. This is no longer the world of memory.

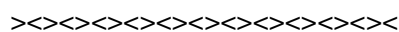
The brothers find relief in the *mêlée*. By and large they make fools of themselves, like everyone else, but each on his own, no longer together, and in the end they go their own ways. Meanwhile Paul encounters his own huge shadow on the wall of the inn, and, as though already dying, seems to relive his clumsy attempt at reconciliation with Maria, before the vision is shattered. Glasisch follows the train of revellers who beat in vain on the doors of the locked and empty hall, clamouring as it were at the door of death. They think him foolish when he tells them to go to a door round the back. Going himself, he too staggers into his own shadow on the wall and falls, before passing through the mysterious door.

The encounter with the dead in the empty hall is not as I first thought a sentimental contrivance to cobble together the end of the film. I see it now as celebrating the lives of the two who have just died, a poetic representation of the web of memories in their hearts before they died, memories that span the whole course of the first *Heimat*.

When Glasisch enters the hall, his memories are those of an observer, undervalued and affectionately ignored by his community, his awkward love rarely returned. The figures are stiff and strange, like zombies in a fantasy fiction (*Céline et Julie vont en bateau?*), obsessively recreating their own scenarios, each ignoring all the rest, and ignoring him. But when Maria descends among them, carrying her white bedclothes, they all fall silent, and gather quietly to receive her. Slowly, with love and wonder, she greets each by name, and in her presence they smile and become fully human again. This scene is deeply moving, and so is her shy reunion with Otto. Then together with Kath and of course Glasisch and Marie-Goot they crowd to the window to spy indulgently on the brothers and the fading absurdities of Kirmes in the living world.

This is not quite the end of the film, but it feels like an affirmation that the memories of these characters' lives will live on in the work of their creator, and in the hearts of his audience. The love they have felt for each other in the fictional story, and in any remembered lives they may partially reflect, gives them back their life. It will stay with the author and with us, the love among and for these imagined people. That may also be a sentimental idea, but so be it.

After Hermann's new composition has celebrated his Hunsrück roots from the depths of the Herrenberg slate mine, the credits roll against a wide landscape. In the sky, two short vapour trails, maybe from jet fighters, dwindle towards the horizon.



The Second Heimat

1960-1970

The Second Heimat is built from the memories of one decade in the lives of a single, still living generation. Older and younger generations (except in one or two cases) are seen simply through the eyes of those who were of student age in the early 1960s, and in their memories. But perhaps because some of us still identify with being young, however old we really are, it has a peculiar power and depth for many of us, we understand it with laughter and some pain, and learn from it, even now. At the same time, as with the first *Heimat*, those of us who are not from Germany and did not live through the post war decades there, watch also with curiosity, as strangers.

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2.1 *Episodes 1 – 2: Hermann and Juan: memories of ‘Sehnsucht’ for a new ‘Heimat’; “the mixture of passion and fear”.*

After the first few scenes in the Hunsrück, shot in the colour of everyday, which serve to establish the new actor of Hermann as an incarnation of the teenage Hermännchen of *Heimat 1*, we plunge with him into an alien world. Still wounded and embittered by the loss of Klärchen, he embarks on the search for a new ‘Heimat’, a fantasy world of music in which man can be free.

In the great city, images in daylight are once again shot in subtle black and white, while at night they glow with rich colour among the shadows (the secret metropolis of Hermann’s dreams, “with its thousand colours in the nights”). Spaces are defined by the movements and glances of the characters. Striking close-ups are too numerous to mention – among others, Jean-Marie backlit leaning on a piano; shadow and light on Clarissa’s face, listening and no longer listening, during a cello lesson; her teacher’s bow attacking and caressing a string. Each film is a constant stream of beautiful images. Take the scenes of Hermann’s first visit to the drama school, for example. Pause on any frame at random, and find a finely constructed still, exquisitely lit, a portrait of a person, or a space, or people in a space, their shadows and reflections. But these are not just stills. Sounds echo, movement and light flow through them, and so does the story. Olga smiles and makes a face through a window, Hermann swiftly grins back, and struggles on with his elocution lesson. The stiff, disabled teacher gets his whole class moving fluidly round him, intent and absurd, mouthing their tongue twisters. The interlude is brief, and barely advances the story, and yet it is perfect, like a small poem. I lack the technical knowledge to describe it adequately, I can only register my own enjoyment.

Watching the films for the first time one is, like Hermann himself, bewildered by the proliferation of people and places. Characters appear and disappear. There are tentative meetings, wandering eyes, movements towards and away, people absorbed in their practice or their project, people watching them, people ignoring them. People get to know each other, learn from each other, or misunderstand and make mistakes. There are many reflections, in mirrors, windows, marble walls, the polished case of a piano. Many moods, elation, anticipation, fascination, anxiety, loneliness, shift endlessly through the first two films of the series. Many journeys, short and long, on foot, by bicycle, in cars, buses, trams, trains. This constant movement and change, constant newness, constant mirroring, is the antithesis of life in Schabbach.

The characters inhabit a confusing variety of apartments. There are so many rooms, some so narrow, some so cluttered with fascinating objects, some filled with the personality of their owner, some empty. Later from the documentaries one learns that all these apartments are genuine real-life habitations, painstakingly selected to suit characters and action, and in turn modifying both. The windows often look onto real streets, lovingly filled with 1960s vehicles and street furniture, but appearing natural and lifelike. It perhaps helps that the urban costumes and hairstyles of the early 60s seem paradoxically less old fashioned to us than those of the seventies and eighties. So one is not that aware of these being authentic period reconstructions, unless one knew the city at that time, or has a particular interest in how the effect was achieved. It just feels right, nothing jars. I suppose we don't examine our own memories for authenticity, our clothes, our vehicles, our crockery and furniture were like that because they were ours and we were like that. But if someone were to recreate our memories inauthentically it would immediately feel strange.

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Seeing the films again, I am mesmerised by the ceaseless sounds – vehicles in the street, rain, voices, music, and footsteps. Hermann, remembering his first night in Munich, in Renate's lodging, remarks: "All around me was the presence of strangers, all coughing, snoring, blowing their noses. This was the big city I'd dreamed of, too". Everywhere there are footsteps, on many different surfaces, on many different pavements and passages and stairways, each with its own acoustic. The most overwhelming "soundscape", as it were, is that of the Musikhochschule (*Conservatoire*). This resonant building is full of sounds and their echoes – people practising and performing on many instruments, along corridors, behind doors that echo as they open and shut, students walking, running, talking, laughing, singing, footsteps and voices everywhere, in the hall, up the grand stairs, round the gallery. Famously, Hermann first sees Clarissa at the foot of those stairs. In the gallery he meets Juan, appearing with his bamboo *quena* like a shy gargoyle over the balustrade. In the great concert hall, under an array of huge silver organ pipes, Juan plays his work for marimba and other percussion, and ends laughing with a deliberate false note (I think?).

The film music is famous and fascinating, but I am not competent to describe it adequately. It has been interestingly reviewed in an article by Mehrnoosh Sobhani: *Avant-garde music and the aesthetics of film. On Edgar Reitz's 'Die Zweite Heimat'* unfortunately currently

unobtainable except in a Google Books “preview” [See ‘Sources’]. There is also a good outline in Alan Andres’ article *The Music of Heimat* (<http://www.heimat123.net/music.html>), which originally appeared in *Film Score Monthly* No. 51, November 1994. In it, Alan reviewed a 4 CD set of music from *Heimat* of which three whole disks were devoted to *Heimat 2*. These also are no longer available as new (but see the links from <http://reinder.rustema.nl/heimat/videoncd1-7-2004.html>). Alan writes an informative, succinct description of the music (slightly revised version):

“The three Bella Musica discs devoted to DIE ZWEITE HEIMAT are an odd mix: original film music by Mamangakis; concert compositions by Mamangakis and others performed in the film; performances of works by Beethoven, Ravel, Schoenberg, Flotow, Chopin, Gershwin, etc. heard in the film; and snippets of dialogue (in German, naturally). The result is a bit fragmentary and many of the cuts are very short. The pieces are presented in the chronological order of the film, making for very uneven listening. Still there are some wonderful pieces by Mamangakis: Herman's Poulenc-like high school graduation cantata; the plaintive strings and alto cry as Clarissa is rushed to the hospital; the lied set to a text by Nietzsche ("Die Krähen schrein") that introduces the character of Alex, the perpetual philosophy graduate student; the filmmakers' imperial waltz; an organ toccata first heard in HEIMAT; a grotesque percussive interlude, among many others. Oddly missing are some of the highlights of the film: cello concerto written by Herman for Clarissa; the movement from Messiaen's Quartet for the End of Time (1941) that accompanied Reinhard's trip to Venice; the Foxhole requiem; and the improvisational percussion jam session in the university cafeteria.

“Instead we are given many odds and ends including a number of works by or featuring the leading actors. Some of these are quite pleasant, particularly a lullaby by Salome Kammer (who plays Clarissa the cellist), a percussion prelude by Daniel Smith (who plays the multi-talented Chilean Juan); and Peter Fischer's setting of Kurt Tucholsky's "Zwei Fremde Augen" sung by Salome Kammer. However, I would have sacrificed some of the minor performances, incidental songs and dialogue for the startling omissions.”

I would disagree with him that Juan’s electrifying performance on drums and marimba, which is at the heart of the film for me, is no more than “quite pleasant”, but that is just personal preference. "Zwei Fremde Augen" is also memorable for dramatic relevance in its context. Clarissa’s lullaby is delightful and is perhaps in a setting by Orff. (But Alan redeems himself in his intriguing contributions to discussions on the English website, eg extracts at <http://www.heimat123.net/references.html>, where he admits Juan’s ‘Preludio’ is “a wonderful piece”.)

He is right that the soundtrack is a constant feast of music, of hugely varied origins. As such it recalls and represents the multitudinous variety of people and sets, emotions and plots that form these films. Moreover, and again famously, the actors who are seen studying and giving performances are in real life also professional or very good amateur musicians

themselves and perform live on the screen. Performing together, they watch and listen to each other, as mere actors might not have done, and there are lovely moments like Volker's smile at Clarissa during the Polonaise Brillante. This creates a world of music and of young serious musicians that to a lay viewer feels convincing and probably true to life, at least in the sixties. This is the new 'Heimat' that Hermann set out to seek. As Juan keeps telling him it is at heart a world of "Sehnsucht", longing, and also, for both of them, a longed for world. It is no coincidence that many of the lyrics of the songs are full of longing (<http://www.heimat123.de/> - page on "Lyrikzitate in *Die Zweite Heimat*").

But the score is all the time interwoven with voices and natural sounds, as it is in *Hunsrückdörfer*. When Frau Moretti chats up Hermann in the attic, sly gipsy music follows the rise and fall of her dramatic speaking voice, accompanying a delicate shadow play behind hanging white laundry, so that her whole scene fittingly becomes a haunting, comic, semi-operatic performance. During Volker and Clarissa's performance, small conversations become part of the texture of sound, as Juan speaks again of "Sehnsucht", and the young filmmakers record the work. In the next film, Kohlen Josef's wood chopping provides the beat for Hermann's guitar. Visually too images and music combine – the lead in to the students' impromptu percussion session in the cafeteria, with slapping hands, cutlery and anything else around, is a zoom across a pattern of empty tables and huge windows that mirrors the daring and rhythm of the sounds. *Heimat 2* rivals and almost surpasses the work of *Hunsrückdörfer*, on a much larger scale. Images, music, voices, and natural sounds form the material of a huge composition that ebbs and flows throughout each film, between the pillars of the *Heimat* theme.

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These first two films introduce a confusing number of characters. We have initially no idea which of them will become the lead characters of the series, though in fact most of those have appeared by the end of the second film, in which the patterns of their relationships are already emerging.

There are also some memorable figures who will not play any large part in the later episodes. Early in the first film Hermann encounters Herr Edel, played by a real-life eccentric of the same name from Frankfurt, an actor renowned for playing his own multi-faceted self. At first it looks as though he might inherit the mantle of Glasich, as the outsider, a humorous observer and purveyor of oddly wise sayings. But unhappily he was written out, or wrote himself out of the series at the end of the second film. We remember him though, for the fun, the wit and the sadness of this self-confessed alcoholic - "but a *controlled* alcoholic" - who tells the students "the first of you to free himself from ideology... will succeed". Staggering through the pub he announces "The greatest mysteries arise just when we think we know everything... ..We are all made in the image of God", and the camera lingers on a lovely close-up of his face breaking into a smile. Shortly afterwards, he lies dead in the snow, claspings his bottle and glass.

The Hungarian singer, Frau Moretti, is another fascinating tragi-comic creation. Like Hermann's own fantasy of music and Munich itself, she first enchants him, flatters him, offers him a lodging. Then she disappoints and deceives him, sends him away with his belongings stolen and his deposit withheld. When he has given up hope of recovering his trunk and his manuscripts, even by force of law, she returns them to him with yet more flattery, as though innocent of any treachery. Once again she bolsters his own sense of destiny, maybe not insincerely: "You're a genius, you must believe it, never lose ideals, you must fight and dream. I know the world." As she turns away to hide her distress, he starts to realise she too is a musician who has come to terms with hardship and loss.

Clemens, a jazz drummer from the Hunsrück, is an attractive character, also beautifully played. He is a good foil for the emotional young 'geniuses' who surround him. He is more mature than they are, easy-going and grounded, with firm boundaries and a warm smile. He looks and sounds far happier in his own skin and also in his dialect, unsurprising since the actor is a genuine Hunsrücker. Hermann, desperate to lose his regional accent and dissociate himself from his origins, looks down on Clemens as a country bumpkin, playing in the pubs and clubs. Yet it is Clemens who takes him in when he is homeless, who tolerates, scolds and teases him, cares for him when he is ill, and generally acts the older brother. There is a lovely moment at the Fuchsbau, when Hermann, somewhat ill at ease and abandoned, sees a sophisticated senior student (Volker) deep in conversation with Clemens.

Then there is Kohlen Josef, rough of accent and appearance, a man of few words, but kind and sensitive to his young lodger. Towards the end of each film he spends with him a still, healing moment. The scene where he shows Hermann the radiant painting of his mother is one of the most touching in the whole series. Moved almost to tears, Josef thinks of his mother, lost when their house was bombed, recognising how the artist focussed on the moment of the painting. It is still so acute to him now, that he takes refuge in describing the exact feeling of the weather that day, before the Föhn. Something of his emotional generosity starts to melt even Hermann's defences. As Hermann invites him to the future performance of his new piece, saying that the cello will be played by "a very beautiful woman", we suddenly hear the warm voice of his father Otto: "Eine sehr schöne Frau".

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The first two episodes of *Heimat 2* are formed from the memories of Hermann and Juan. Each tells part of his story in a series of voiceover passages. Hermann and Juan in my eyes are complementary figures, almost two aspects of the same person, an idea which I want to explore a little more towards the end of this document when tracing the lifelong portrayal of Hermann over all three series.

Juan is one of the most creative characters in the Trilogy. There must have been an extraordinary meeting of author and actor here. At some level he is an ageless, mythical figure. He often seems very young and vulnerable, anxious and hurt, but in the moment we first see him, playing the *quena*, his face as he blows is the face of an old man. Hermann and most of the first year students are strangers in Munich, but Juan is "the stranger". To

Hermann, Juan often feels “like a being from another planet, invulnerable, alien”. He has the shamanic ability to intuit, share and mirror the feelings and situations of his companions. He voices their fears (to Hermann: “Beware of beautiful women!”; to Clarissa: “We’ll forget love”). He sees them as they are, and loves them for it, and they value him as a friend. Hermann remembers: “he had the broadest vision and he believed in love, yet he was alone.” Juan is often sad, and his sadness, even his suicide attempt, is cathartic for the others. He is often very funny, and his humour is cathartic too. He is ambivalent, maybe sexually, certainly in many other ways: a gymnast, an entertainer, a confidant, a mask. Always, “blindly”, the acrobat’s smile. He is needy, but he gives more of himself than many of the rest. In Episode 10 he moves on, as all their lives are moving on and apart.

As Juan repeatedly says, he, Hermann, Clarissa, and their contemporaries are driven by ‘Sehnsucht’, not for a ‘Heimat’ in past memory, but for one in imagination of the future, still un-lived. They represent it in their fantasy in terms of their music, glittering careers, companions who should be mirrors of their inner selves. Yet already from the start their teachers, as artists perhaps more perceptive than some academics, know there are deeper roots. There is the lovely passage where simultaneously both Hermann and Clarissa are gently reminded by their professors (both in real life renowned musicians and teachers) that, as Mamangakis says, great composers wrote best when they wrote for a person they loved. At this stage the students cannot listen. “I love my ‘cello... I know what I need”, says Clarissa. After their lessons, comically, they collide in the passage. But weeks later in the jazz club they are still enthusing that “death and eternity” are the inspiration for great music.

Juan is already aware that studying music was not all he sought when he came to Germany. He has remained here even after being rejected by the Conservatoire. He sees that all the young faces in the concert hall are bewitched by the Chinese Emperor’s clockwork nightingale. This imagery, of the nightingales, is rendered more complex in German than in English, because in English there has grown a greater dissociation between the ideas of “art” and “artifice”, between “artistic” and “artificial”, whereas German seems to have preserved in language a stronger sense of the original identity of the concepts. It gives a very subtle dimension to the story of the Emperor’s nightingale, which is less clear in the English version.

Gradually the insufficiency of their fantasies and defences dawns on Hermann and Clarissa too. Hermann receives the farewell letter from Klärchen, loses his longed for new lodging, his money and his precious manuscripts. Comparing himself with the senior students, his faith in his own talent dims. He has to earn money, Renate pursues him, Clarissa avoids him, he is tormented by jealousy, and by his own fear of falling in love again. He and Juan discuss Renate and Clarissa. In the beautiful snow-swept Englischer Garten (another sequence of exquisite images), to the sound off screen of his own *quena*, Juan somersaults like a child, and speaks with wisdom. Juan has become close to Clarissa, but she has run away from him too. His attraction to Clarissa is always ambivalent. Early on he said : “The more I think Hermann loves her, the more often she appears in my own dreams”. Now he sees and shares their predicament: “The mixture of passion and fear... it clings to us, the Catholic mixture... and what’s worse, we pass it on to others... Clarissa is like you...”

During the visit of his old school teacher and a pretty schoolgirl, as truly and illicitly in love as Hermann and Klärchen had been, the recurrence of a childhood illness leaves Hermann in delirium calling for his mother and his home. He sees himself now as no more than a third rate provincial musician. The great dream has altogether faded. But later, as he gets better, Clarissa tentatively returns to him. In the scene of their kiss on her stairway, Hermann starts to ask her to play in his piece for cello but she stops him with the truth: "If we pretend this is about music, we are both lying". They are both "hedgehogs full of prickles", and their prickles go inwards. But after the kiss, Hermann runs away.

In voiceover memory, he reflects on what Juan had called the "mixture of passion and fear" in which all three of them were entangled: "...Had Clarissa known I would run away? Had Juan known that she would?" The pattern is to dominate the stories of Hermann and Clarissa, and of some other relationships too, throughout the rest of the long series. In later memory, it has become a defining constituent of the new 'Heimat'.

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Another theme pervading the memories of these first episodes, and later affecting most of the leading characters, is the streak of cruelty in nearly all their childhoods. Normal family conflict has been exacerbated by the century's history. So many of the parents have lived stern lives under a controlling regime, through war and economic disintegration. Some have condoned or collaborated with shameful deeds. So many young people have grown into a world where the old society has crumbled. They do not need to repeat the tainted patterns that dominated their parents' lives. The rigidity and possessiveness, the emotional dishonesty, inflicted on Hermännchen is reflected in the experience of most of his student contemporaries, in some cases to a monstrous degree. The damage done is traceable in their fear of commitment, avoidance of their true feelings, and for a few, in tormenting sado-masochistic relationships, political violence, and perhaps suicide. This makes *Heimat 2*, for all its humour and beauty, a much darker series than the first *Heimat*, in which the darkness was less explicit.

Apart from the rich, boorish father of Angelika the harpist, of whom we see nothing more, the first of the difficult parents is Mutter Lichtblau. She is shown in a more rounded way than many of the others, a little of her history as a deserted single parent from Protestant Pomerania is sketched in, and through Juan's eyes we see her as a complex person, quite human and warm, as well as devouring and controlling. She is not a 'monster', though some of her behaviour to Clarissa in later episodes will be monstrous. Meanwhile it is a strange scene, in which Mutter Lichtblau and Juan, two smiling masks, wait for Clarissa to return from Dr Kirschmayer's, one knowing, one intuiting, where she has been.

A fascination with death and dying figures at times in the students' conversations. Hermann plays with the idea, in a young person's way. It sounds as though "death" for him is a kind of metaphor for his frustration and hurt, his sexual memories and loneliness, and his insecurity. But Ansgar's bitterness is much deeper and more intractable, and when he says: "We're always in danger of death" he means it. In the next episodes it will be evident how

damaging his family life has been. Now, in the film store, his face appears in close-up, half in warm light, half deathly cold.

Juan too talks of death and suicide – it is always hard to know whether he is speaking for himself, or half consciously mirroring others and offering a perspective on their moods, or both. But he clearly has his own depth of sadness and insecurity, and appears to attempt suicide in a later episode. We know very little about his earlier life. His accounts are fragmentary and may or may not be invented. It is not clear why he has travelled so far away. His father died in an accident, and he sounds to have remained close to his mother. We never learn why the longed for letter from her did not come, or whether he ever heard from her again.

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Heimat 2 chronicles with authority the intense creativity generated in this decade. The young people who break away from their families and disown their origins say, with Juan and Hermann, “let’s forget the fathers... we gave birth to ourselves... so we are gods!”. Famously, “Papa’s Kino ist tot”. The result is a stream of experimental work in music and film. There are examples of it throughout the films, some more successful than others, maybe. And there are the remarkable portrayals, at once affectionate and very funny, of young filmmakers and young musicians, actors, a cabaret artiste, at work, which, although I can be no judge, feel entirely authentic. These passages reflect the memories of the director and his team, they ground the characters in a real time, and in the real-life experience of that generation. Few of the young characters will reach the heights attained by the director himself, but the whole story is about their finding their level and coming to terms with it. This aspect of *Heimat 2* is endlessly fascinating, and has been well documented by those who know more than I do about the background.



2.2 Episodes 3 – 4: Evelyne and Ansgar: a ‘Heimat’ lost, recreated and destroyed again; and the Fuchsbau, a house of dangerous memories for the new ‘Heimat’.

The magnificent figure of Evelyne brings a new strong energy into these two films. She emerges majestically from behind a group of family mourners as they disperse in diagonal movements across the screen. She is shocked and silent with grief. She has lost her father and with him everything that had been her seemingly happy childhood ‘Heimat’. Always close to him, stronger than him, protective of him, she has suddenly learnt after his death that his wife is not her mother. From one of the “fragments” in the ‘Epilogue’ this (step)-mother turns out to have been yet another clinging, anxious, insensitive parent. Only the elder of her brothers (himself maybe rather like her father) understands Evelyne.

The first part of her story is partly remembered by herself in voiceover, as she leaves the house in Neuburg that is no longer 'home' and goes to Munich to discover who her real mother was. Evelyne, though so strong-willed and adventurous, has not long emerged from childhood. She packs her dolls as part of the 'Heimat' she carries with her. Meeting her Aunt Cerphal she curtsies, like a well-behaved German child of the period. Yet she follows her intuition and interacts without hesitation with what is happening in the moment. She responds directly to Ansgar, in the shadowy night of the Fuchsbau library. She respects his own directness, and is not cowed (or attracted) by his depression and savage, affected cynicism. Their passion is the antithesis of his sadistic entanglement with poor Olga.

In a strange way, Evelyne wants to realise a new 'Heimat' in replicating with Ansgar the happy passionate affair which she imagines and hopes her father had with her mother. Her true mother had looked exactly like herself: "The more I look for my mother, the more I find myself. And the more I find myself I find Ansgar... ..I was conceived in love... when I say 'I love' it's like remembering". Not surprisingly, Ansgar rejects the idea. It is all the more distasteful to him in that he, the only child of elderly parents, sees his own parents as monsters – pious, hypocritical, self-sacrificing, guilt inducing, devouring. As they appear later in the film, they are indeed a grim couple. He burns his creative work, so that they shall not appropriate it when he dies. In truth, the relationship of Evelyne and Ansgar is no replica, but alive and warm in its own right. Yet tragically, Ansgar's parents return to hound him with their sick "love", his demons cannot be assuaged, and he is already back on drugs the day of his last accident. Evelyne is no more able to protect him from the death he has sought all along, than she could protect her own father from an early death.

After the fourth film we see little more of Evelyne, with her commanding presence, her honesty, her tenderness, her musicianship and her glorious voice. There are a few clips of her among the "fragments": a lovely practice performance of *Das Irrlicht* with Volker; her return, angry and grieving, to Neuburg where she finds no solace; and a brief meeting with Clarissa in Paris. We hear in a later episode that it was she who recommended the abortionist to Clarissa, and when she returns so briefly to Neuburg she needs money. Is there a lost story line in which her grief is compounded by a pregnancy she cannot bear to bring to term? That is the end of her speaking role, but there are also two performances in Episode 7, one of Herman's setting of a poem by Ansgar, one of a fragment of an aria from the Christmas Oratorio. She makes a token appearance at the wedding in Episode 8, with a magnificent African boyfriend for whom earlier she had sung the aria. There is nothing in the story to explain why she should disappear from the cast so soon, maybe the actress was unable to continue. Whatever the reason, like Gunnar at the end of *Heimat 3*, she is very much missed.

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The other lead character of Episodes 3 and 4 is the Fuchsbau villa itself. The beautiful house, from basement to attic, is the setting for scene after scene. Hermann in voiceover remembers how it became the refuge and stage for this elite group of students. Inside and out, empty or crowded, in every light and every season, in all moods from gaiety to tragedy, it

enfolds their lives, and moulds the action of the films. It is not just the physical house and its contents, however fascinating and exquisitely filmed, that has such power, it is also its dubious history, and that of its owner and her household.

Frau Ries, the loyal retainer, first introduces Evelyne and us to the story of this influential Munich publishing family, so influential that, at least in their own eyes, without the private, patrician support from themselves and their kind, the vulgar Nazi regime would have foundered. Yet, as we later discover, their own survival was at the expense of their Jewish business partner and family friend whom they helped to escape, while appropriating his house and share of the firm. Frau Ries is a lovely, paradoxical character, wilfully but also somehow innocently blind to the implications. Her loyalty is personal, to the individual members of her employers' family, who are in fact the only family she has, and who in the end will let her down. In the big "Trilogie" art book, though not in the film itself, there is an unbearable image of Frau Ries after the Fuchsbau is sold, polishing a floor in the Cerphal publishing house, on hands and knees like a charwoman.

Less innocent is Fräulein Cerphal. Silly, venal, vulnerable, emotionally at sea, brilliantly portrayed and played, and very funny, she is so finely and empathetically observed, she could be any one of ourselves. She has collected the students, for company and entertainment, and for a veneer of culture, and she is possessive of her favourites, like Stefan and Juan. It will be easier to think about her in Episode 9, which is devoted to her story, but meanwhile there are nice echoes of another, far less exalted, villa and its owner. Now the proud politically correct memories are of entertaining Brecht and Feuchtwanger and Thomas Mann, instead of "der Rosenberg, der Frick und der Ley".

Gattinger personifies a type, but he is also a complex man, intuitively portrayed. As a former Nazi, from an elite SS division, in hiding from his past, he is rejected out of hand by the students (apart from Helga who enjoys the attention he gives her). It is indeed obscene, if he reads aloud from *The Last of the Just* only to foster a false impression that he sympathises with the Jews. In his youth an artist, he is now recreating an acceptable persona for himself, at first with some charm and grace, and rather frightening self control. His relationship with Fräulein Cerphal goes back a long way and is sustained by mutual need. Its whole nature is apparent from their glances and gestures in the first few minutes of Episode 3. She has the money, but they are co-conspirators in a world that has become foreign to both of them. He is clearly more intelligent than her, and seems not only bored, but probably lonely. At the Fasching party he joins in with absurd gusto, as though wanting, like Cerphal herself, to roll back the years to a more innocent time. In Episode 11 he will appear to make a genuine if limited attempt to come to terms with his past. As he says to the accusing students "You have no idea who I am".

The students use the house to work, practice, perform, and party. Activity in any one place is often carried on in a context of sounds and interruptions from elsewhere. The scene in the library where Evelyne learns her mother's story from Frau Ries, for instance, is intercut with clips from the young film makers' short about the ruins of Munich, being "premiered" in the room next door. The music from the film is in the background throughout. With dramatic

effect, the story of the bombing in which the mother died coincides with the moment in which the unseen film describes the fire-bombing of the Opera House and strafing of the city, to the sound of Gluck's 'Furies'.

After the film show there is a summer night party and the audience breaks into shifting groups, all through the house and garden. Everywhere there are small conversations, or someone singing or making music. Invisible threads of attraction, jealousy and pride draw people into and out of the groups, and the camera turns with them or follows them. Juan loses an outburst of genuine anger against an intruding Hermann. For once the mask slips and Juan's smile disappears. "Jealousy!" he shouts after his retreating rival. Which it is, for both of them. In the darkened library among patterns of shadow, Evelyne and Ansgar meet, with distant voices in the background and somewhere a guitar. At the piano, Hermann and Helga are joined by Evelyne, and a group gathers to listen. First Olga, then Clarissa watch through the rainy windows of their jealousy. Later, in the garden again, the patterns continue to evolve, as someone plays Chopin, and Evelyne finds the wine glass on Ansgar's upturned foot. The whole evening is a rich texture of movement and colours, of voices and musical instruments and light, and of complex emotions, sparking round the groups like the "word-cats". It is as though the action were happening everywhere in the house and garden, fluidly, with no boundaries, and the particular focus of camera and screen is almost incidental. Perhaps this is something peculiar to *Heimat*, and maybe to the work of Reitz and Gernot Roll.

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With the advent of Evelyne and Ansgar, so strong and direct, and the power of their stories, it becomes harder to watch the shadow play between Hermann and Clarissa. By the end of Episode 4 they are still making each other jealous and running away from each other and creating misunderstandings. Even when they do get physically close to each other it seems to happen only in situations where they are likely to be (hilariously) interrupted.

Hermann appears more shallow and self centred as the films go on. When poor Kohlen Josef tells him that he is to lose the coal yard which his family has held for three generations, Hermann can think only of the loss of his own lodging. Remembering their relationship in the first two films, it hurts to see that. Even his friendship with Frau Moretti is largely based on what he hopes to get from it. His music is suffering too, along with his confidence. He is wounded by the fact that the reviewers focussed on Clarissa's performance of his cello concerto, and did not mention the composer by name, or say much about the music. His next piece, written to pose a riddle to Clarissa, is comparatively lightweight. He blames her for his own insecurity and hurt, and is insensitive to hers.

Clarissa gives an impression of overwhelming fragility. She is at once stressed out and elated by the demands of her music, the competition, the concert, and its success. And we now see how she has all along been crushed by the adults who profess to love her – her mother's controlling drive, and the emotionally blackmailing, abusive involvement of Dr. Kirschmayer. It is no wonder that she runs away and creates obstacles to a relationship she

really wants. There is no ground for her to trust it, and Hermann in his current state is incapable of “waiting” and giving her space.

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The succession of beautiful images continue through these two films. Some of the most memorable include the scenes of Evelyne and Ansgar walking through the streets to her aunt’s dairy shop, and then in an old graveyard. As they move along, and vehicles and passers-by appear and disappear, there is a sense in which the silvery spaces of the streets and the parks open out around and beyond them, leading out of the frame of the screen towards an unseen but imagined world. In the graveyard there are wonderful moving portraits: Evelyne and Ansgar sharing the milk; the old woman and her goose; Ansgar in sunlight looking down at Evelyne; the textures of skin, clothes, hair, feathers, the tenderness of their faces. Even in the most dreadful scenes, like the encounter of Evelyne with Ansgar’s mother after his death, the black and white images are startlingly beautiful. Like the images of Otto’s unexploded bomb, they have no right to be so, and yet there they are. The colour too in the night scenes becomes even richer – Frau Moretti’s room, the Fasching party scene, and the preparations for it. And when Evelyne grieves, bent over Ansgar’s pullover in the library, her bright hair falls with the brushstrokes of an Expressionist painting.

The students’ idyll of the Fuchsbau is already fading into everyday light. The following autumn, in the huge city cemetery, there is another visually very beautiful passage, silent apart from the natural sounds of footsteps crunching leaves and gravel, a distant train, rooks in the trees. By Ansgar’s grave, Hermann confronts the fact they have had their first death, and that “it feels like the village at home, you go into the graveyard and there lies someone you knew”. Perhaps the new ‘Heimat’ is not so far from the old, after all. They have been wasting their time for months. Juan as usual recommends suicide: “One shot. Poom! The end. When *I* want.” As they walk away from the grave, and the credits start to roll, with a jaunty step he glances defiantly up at the towering crucifix.



2.3 Episode 5: Memories of “Playing with Freedom”, by-ways.

This film is about a stormy summer week of playing at being free, whose outcomes are both enriching and destructive. Near the start, it depicts the Schwabinger riots of 1962, represented as the game of free-wheeling student life and protest on the streets, met with violence and injustice by ex-Nazi elements in the police force. By the end of it no one was playing games any more. This and later episodes of the films will suggest that it crystallised the politicisation of the young with both creative and destructive effect, further polarising inter-generational conflict until the debacle of 1968.

As in *Heimat 1* the political events are not reconstructed historical records, they are reconstructions of memories. In this case the memories, staged with such skill and apparent authenticity, are those of Hermann and Helga. Neither of them is yet particularly aware or involved politically. Both independently find themselves by accident on the fringes of the action. They get swept into the violence because they happen to be there, and are in fact trying to escape it. Their immediate reactions are anything but revolutionary. Hermann becomes enraged because the police smash his guitar. He feels they acted solely out of hatred and fear of young people and their street music. He is then beaten up when he goes innocently to the police station to seek compensation. To escape pursuit, he flees Munich for the summer. Helga gets an hysterical kick out of the excitement and her own fear and rage, but she too flees to her family home in Dülmen. Yet for her, the events of this week will kickstart the process that gradually, over the years, channels her frustrated emotional energy into the bitter, singleminded, vengeful activity of a terrorist.

In provincial Dülmen, Helga, Dorli and Marianne push the boundaries of freedom in play with Hermann. Helga is still shackled to a childhood role as fond rebel daughter of an authoritarian father, still embroiled in hopeless altercation with a narrow conventional home. She is desperate for sexual experience, but her need turns relationship into something to be demanded and manipulated, and her anxiety means she always has to be the one in control. She feels fantasy is “much bigger” (and safer) than reality. Dorli, for all her bubbly down to earth physicality, and her splendid strip tease act at the Fasching party, is also still very young, still fantasising and experimenting. Together she and Helga have giggly girly conversations beautifully rendered in the “Fragments” in the “Epilogue”. In the “Fragments” too, Marianne, treacherous “mother confessor” to the two girls, describes the desperation of the young mothers in a small town where no one can be invisible, chain smoking by the playground sandpit “...sitting there with their gaze passing right through the infants, far into the distance ...You know, Dorli, we are like gunpowder. You simply need to hold a match to it. If a guy just goes past...”

Hermann wanders into this keg of gunpowder and has a great time. It seems that at this age Hermann’s reputation for being attractive to women may still lie partly in his passivity. Except when incited by rage or jealousy, he is someone “safe” to play games with. In a way this weakens the erotic charge of the evening in Dorli’s attic. Perhaps the music, the power he creates in his performance of the “Tempest” sonata, substitutes for what he cannot otherwise personify. Anyway, it is touching that Marianne, whose only fear is of the vengefulness of small town life, is attracted exactly because he is “gentle” and “shy”, and she is tender to the hurt that underlies that.

Dorli’s attic is another location built by light and sound and movement into a magical, unforgettable scene. Once more it is impossible to write anything that could do it justice. The figures move in a dance, both constructing the space and constrained by it. Watching again, it is clear that though it is an ensemble piece, the leader is Marianne. The scene is structured round her silent initiatives, her hands on Hermann’s shirt and body, the glances that pass between them. The younger girls are turned on as much by this as by their own

participation, but they cannot compete. Dorli takes refuge in cream cakes, and Helga in ecstatically reciting Nietzsche, until emotion and anxiety overcome her and end the game. Hermann later remembers that “for a little while I had the idea that everything might be possible. ... Was it the start of something completely new? Freedom! Then I got frightened.”

In the Aufschrey household, images epitomise Helga’s background: her bedroom full of stuffed toys, a brief reflection of the whole family in their TV screen, and a long passage of silent feeding during the birthday party. At the party, Hermann, still intensely aware of Marianne, is suddenly confused by a memory of home and Hunsrücker potato dumplings. He is then tantalised by Marianne’s note, as the evening degenerates into a confrontation between Helga and her family. The bedroom scene with poor Helga is funny and painful in equal measure. Probably doomed from the start, it is subject to the volcanic intrusion of Oma Aufschrey. Oma Aufschrey is a true monster, hilariously portrayed, but at the same time she personifies both a destructiveness and, in the family name, a “scream” for help within Helga herself. Tragically, the dreadful humiliation of that night can only reinforce all Helga’s fear of letting go, fear of invasion, domination or rejection, the fear and need to be in control that block her way forward. There is no one to comfort her, to help her to laugh, nothing but the figure of Oma squatting on the lavatory. From now on “the mixture of passion and fear” will gradually congeal into bitterness and sadism. Oma is the precursor of the young terrorist of the final film.

Meanwhile Hermann has found a brief freedom with Marianne, an un hoped for reliving of how it had been with Klärchen, at last an affirmation that that was after all permissible. The scene is beautiful, finally relieving him and the film itself from the grim Aufschrey house. Marianne’s intuitive understanding of his past hurt, her healing tenderness (like the ointment she had smeared on his wounds), are a gift that might have turned his life around, only it does not. For it too comes with the message of its own impermanence, it is permissible, but it must not last. For Marianne as well the moment is transient. He finds her crying, because it is so good, and because she herself must send him away.

When he reaches Sylt he sees the sea for the first time and feels he understands as never before the power of the longing for faraway places that has driven him to run away from home, and now from both Munich and Dülmen. He has the sense of a goal hidden deep within himself. But when he reaches the house of Tommy and his parents, he looks up from Tommy’s girlie magazine to see a butterfly fluttering on the window sill. Does he think of Marianne? But he makes no attempt to set it free.

Returning to Munich, where his friends are eating a cake sent him by the three girls from Dülmen, he finds that even a brief note from Marianne seems very distant. So for a moment does Clarissa, standing with bandaged wrists outside the door. Has she been practising too hard? She asks how his, er, work has gone, and he replies that he lost his way and got side-tracked. So much for “freedom”.

This whole fifth film has again been full of wonderful images, constantly unfolding, constantly interacting with the action and the sound. A few fleeting examples: Near the start,

when Hermann plays the piano after Tommy's lesson during a storm, rain lashing the window pane pours flickering shadows over the semiquavers on a sheet of music as he plays them, and over himself. In Dorli's attic, light touches Helga's hair as she sits holding her wine glass, on the point of responding when Hermann calls her. Later, very briefly there is a beautiful image of Marianne, standing under an outside light against a white wall, while Helga is swallowed into her family house. When Hermann goes to Marianne, the wind moves her lampshade in a cascade of white shells. Finally, the credits roll against a lovely background of the Fuchsbau verandah in early autumn, furnished with soft brown garden chairs. It seems to be the last image for *Heimat* from Gernot Roll's camera.



2.4 Episodes 6 - 7: Memories of comedy and pain, 'Heimat' for the song of the wolves.

Episode 6 breaks the continuity in more than one sense. In the story, the student group has dispersed since the senior students finished their course, and they have not all gathered at the Fuchsbau for over a year. The mood of the film has changed – a dark undertone is dramatically contrasted with a lead story line of brilliant comedy. And the magic has gone out of the images.

On that last point I am just recording a subjective impression. I assume that it is due to the change of cameraman, but I am not competent to understand how or why. As a naïve viewer, I would say that the composition of the images, in terms of placement and interaction of characters, and choice of location, is not so different after film 5. It is still satisfying and effective. The overwhelming difference seems to be in the quality of light. In all the previous films, the light and the focus created very subtle distinctions of tone and texture, and thereby of depth, in individual objects and figures, and in the whole of a scene. There was an intense physicality, a tactile quality. Colours glowed out of shadow, a space was moulded out of them. The images were luminous and resonant, in a way that no one aspect of technical skill could achieve. For me, that is what is lost after the fifth episode.

In Episode 6 one no longer wants to keep revisiting a breathtaking image or sequence. Figures in the foreground tend to be lit with a flat, rather dull light, while the background is often comparatively featureless and unnaturally bright. It may be relevant that all the action of this episode takes place on one rather dreary November day. But the mistiness in the streets and gardens does not feel quite natural. It is too bland and too clearly blown from somewhere close off-screen, and it does not substitute for the mysteriousness of real shadows. The shifts between black/white and colour film are less intuitive than before – on occasion they seem consciously gimmicky. At times it works and is suitably comic, as when Alex watches Renate and Juan through the bevelled glass panes of a door, or when he, in black and white, tells how he sees himself in his memories of a scene which forms a background in

muted colour. The colour throughout this film is nearly always either muted or rather banal. There is much play with coloured filters in the location where the young film makers are working – but this only emphasises the unreality of the ‘natural’ colour elsewhere in the scene. Even a magnificent location like the cinema where *Cleopatra* is showing, becomes, when the lights go up, a flat backdrop with almost no shadows. The entrance hall and stairway of the Musikhochschule too is shown with banal lighting and loses its grandeur. When at the end the students gather once more in the Fuchsbau, the light everywhere is monotonously bright and the whole atmosphere of the house seems to have evaporated. Maybe that is again only a subjective impression, or perhaps it is an intended effect, given the story line.

In fact it is possible (though I am not persuaded) that this disturbing dearth of magical images may actually enhance the story. The drab colouring works well in the scene where Clarissa visits a sordid abortion clinic. She is miserable herself, and dreading the painful humiliating procedure, and in the early stages of pregnancy she is exceptionally sensitive to pervading unpleasant smells. Both images and words combine to convey that feeling. Again, Alex’s overriding memory of his visit to the film location is that he “...was so wet and hungry that the scene turned into a dream”, which may account for the unreality of the colour. Anyway that is all “a film about a film about a film” and as Bernd says, “life is always there where the film makers aren’t”. Moreover, there are still the beautiful iconic images of bare branches and rocks, in the tradition of Caspar Friedrich, that introduce the episode and recur at intervals. Together with the music, setting Nietzsche’s words (sung off-screen), their recurrence binds the varying moods of the film to the romantic bleakness at its heart.

In the next film, Episode 7, the changed style of camera work finds a new authority. Most of the action takes place in the evening and night time, so the film is shot predominantly in colour. Early on there is a shot inside the Musikhochschule with the marble glowing as we have not previously seen it. The colour is now quite rich again, though often lit clearly and plainly, without detail and depth, and the backgrounds are still often simple, and very bright, as in the hospital, or very dark as during the concert. The contrasts are sometimes dramatic and the whole composition is often beautiful, though very different from what we had grown used to before. The new style is more one of surfaces and outlines and the mood of overall light, less one of subtle light, tone and texture. It is effective as a narrative style – maybe it is more conventionally cinematic than the earlier style. It works better in movement than in stills, but there are a few breathtaking images again, like the ones of Clarissa’s face hidden in her hair, a memory maybe of Marianne’s in film 5. Where the backgrounds and sets are more complicated the clear bright light works less well. It can’t create a space within the screen, in the same way as in the earlier films. The detail is immediate and piecemeal, the effect at times almost two dimensional. This is most noticeable in rooms already familiar from previous films, Renate’s room for instance, and Hermann’s in the Fuchsbau.

The new style seems less suited to black and white film. Where distance is already built into the scene, as on the snow mountains, there is no problem, but elsewhere the absence of depth and texture can be oppressive. For instance the conversation of Volker and Jean-Marie is overpowered by the great white cliff of Jean-Marie’s father’s house, with its insistent brightly lit detail. But the beautiful “Wölfelied” scene triumphantly survives, acquiring depth from a

few features of the foreground figures, picked out by faint shafts of light from the window above and behind them, as is the arch of the recess overhead.

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The “romantic bleakness” underlying the sixth episode is itself sent up in heartwarming comedy which tumbles through the story of Alex. The humour of this film is perhaps less subtle than in some of the earlier films, where trying to write about it would be hopelessly heavy handed. But Alex, the improvident “victim of individualism”, is a wonderful character, almost comparable to Eduard. Also, like Edu, he is lovable – as Olga tells him “.. you are touching because you’re not envious. You have a kind of generosity”. He has some splendid lines, for example, when dripping wet and hungry, but trying to console himself with the *Tractatus*: “What Wittgenstein forgot was to consider the conditions for observing any facts...” Or, to comfort Helga the poet who fears she is going mad: “Think of Hölderlin. His poems kept getting better and better...” His story is a perfect foil for the growing anguish of Clarissa’s, on this dismal day which ends in shock with the death of President Kennedy. Also very good is the comic routine for the two “fifty-fifty fathers” of Clarissa’s pregnancy. Its formal, farcical elements heighten rather than mask the pain of Clarissa’s situation, and emphasise a poignant contrast between the responses of the two men. Renate bounces back as well, still in pursuit of love and desperate to become an actress, and at heart still depressingly realistic about her chances. Another rich vein of laughter is provided by the young film makers and their location. Poor Rob the cameraman tries in vain to hold the ring between Director and Scriptwriter (“two directors in charge, that’s hell”), but at the end he manoeuvres a rather touching, sheepish reconciliation over a pot of goulash. Finally there is Schnüßchen, still as young, funny and bubbly as she appears in some of the precious “Fragments” in the ‘Epilogue’.

There are “Fragments” from this stage of the stories of both Helga and Olga too, and sadly some of the laughter in the “Fragments” is missing from the episode itself. In the main film, Helga becomes increasingly neurotic, a textbook “hysteric” and very trying, and also genuinely vulnerable. Her self-dramatizing suicide attempt is apparently seriously intended, there is no indication that anyone had planned to visit her that evening. Olga, now less depressed but still vulnerable, is sharply intuitive about her friends, and comes out with some interesting home truths about the disintegrating clique of arrogant young male geniuses. She tells Helga she has no hope of getting Hermann unless she wants to be a little homebody who idolises him, which is of course how Schnüßchen succeeds. In the next episode, the legacy of Oma Aufschrey bears fruit in Helga’s vicious tormenting of Stefan. Their sado-masochistic relationship is a mirror image of the one between Ansgar and Olga in the past, but this time it is the woman who has the power.

Hermann comes out of Episode 6 quite badly, the nights in Dülmen seem long gone. He is strangely insensitive to Clarissa’s distress. He remains piqued by her abandonment of his new cello piece, and misses the chance to hold and comfort her (though she might not have let him). He seems unable to see and feel for her as herself, rather than the tricky, insubstantial

anima figure of his own fantasy. When Kennedy's bereft "children" gather for comfort in the Fuchsbau for the first time for over a year, it is Schnüßchen who is lying in Hermann's lap.

In Episode 7 he remembers that out of his hurt and anger he wanted his concert, with the figure of the "absent cello", to be a "gesture of... pride" aimed at Clarissa, but now she doesn't even attend it. He has no idea that she is sick. Instead, Schnüßchen comes bubbling in, fond and possessive, to make a fuss of him. His other friends arrive and appear to enjoy the performance, but afterwards they drift away.

It is not clear why none of them comes to his celebratory party. Are his friends deterred by Schnüßchen's naïvety and possessiveness? Do they feel the couple should be allowed to spend the evening alone? They seem fond of her, but do they sense that she threatens to draw him away from the group and from what they consider their true goal in life? Are they embarrassed by the crude "absent cello" symbolism which looks so vengeful towards Clarissa? Or by not wholeheartedly admiring the music? According to Jean-Marie it is the work of a sorcerer's apprentice, "derivative but talented." Some are preoccupied with their own relationships, which the ties that bound the group in the past may have become too weak to counter. But whatever the reason it is a turning point in the disintegration of the group, that began when the senior students graduated, and will be more or less complete after the wedding next summer.

It propels Hermann into the arms of Schnüßchen. He is hurt and angered by the lack of response from his contemporaries whom he had wanted to impress. Not only Clarissa but the whole new world he had set out to conquer is rejecting him. He has had enough of "intellectual" women and creative people, and he finds refuge in an unchallenging, physically good relationship with this cheerful girl who shares his childhood memories and food and language, who loves him and comforts him, and idolises even what she doesn't understand in his work.

Ironically he is quite unaware of Clarissa's situation. At the start of the episode she recalls a time in limbo after the traumatic visit to an abortionist when nothing seemed yet to have happened: "I didn't want a woman's life. I wanted to do things myself, not merely be done to". Then follow many days at the mercy of illness, medical procedures, the threat of legal action, the sentimentality of a hospital Christmas, and the unforgivable behaviour of her mother. She is aware too of her dependence on the two men originally responsible for her condition, Jean-Marie who paid for the illegal abortion but is now desperate to extricate himself from the consequences, and Volker who loves her deeply and whose love she finds oppressive.

The friendship of Jean-Marie and Volker belies the gulf between their social origins. They are both gifted musicians, and share a fastidious, sophisticated appreciation of their art. Among the most distinguished of the former students, they with Clarissa form according to Alex "the Holy Trinity" or, less kindly, "Jules et Jim". Jean-Marie is a lonely intellectual, cynical, quite possibly gay, and once more from a troubled, though this time wealthy, family background. Volker is his only close friend. Jean-Marie is fascinated by Clarissa and even

attracted by her blatant use of them both to provoke Hermann, but he has little sympathy for her predicament. He is nonetheless rather touchingly concerned that the situation should not damage his relationship with Volker.

Volker seems a simpler person, warm, understanding and in love. He is reduced almost to tears when Clarissa tells him she does not love either of them. Finding her ill, he gets her to hospital and will not leave until she is out of danger. His face is worn and weary in the car as the two men wait in the cold for news overnight (“We two prophets of the New Music, sitting here like this!”) However he is not blind to the fact that he comes from the same everyday world of struggle as Clarissa herself and lacks the mystery and ambiguity that might leave her free.

In hospital Clarissa seeks to recover her sense of herself, tasting the words in her book, hiding behind her hair from the family cheer round a mother and baby in the next bed. Escaping to the corridor she wanders through kitschy Christmas lighting and recorded music, and sees her own face reflected in window glass, strangely masked and distorted by her hair. She goes to cut her hair, wash and change, and returns, herself again, to find her mother in the room. Then comes the moment where she happily greets her mother and is met with the demented accusation: “You murderess!”

Fleeing the mother, the hospital, the city where all her friends are away, she turns up doubly reflected in the window glass and in a wall mirror at the Fuchsbau. She and Hermann huddle together in the cold, his hand bleeding from tearing wood from the fence, both trying to get the stove alight. They start to talk from their hearts, and then, in fear and love, repel each other with the words they least want to say. When she crawls into the bed they hold each other, weeping, trying to understand that they both love each other and always will, but will both always run away. They are crippled with fear, she of losing her freedom, he of losing her and, in that hurt, himself. Two sides of the same coin. In the cold early morning they play and sing the tender “Wölfelied”.

This beautiful scene contains the iconic “Janus-faced” image, but on watching again that now seems self-conscious and contrived, in comparison with images from the earlier films. Most of the time, at least prior to the “Wölfelied” sequence, the power of the scene lies not so much in the images, as in the dialogue and performances. The simple truthful words, what is said and not said, done and not done, the humour and the pain, are on a level with the scenes of Otto with Maria, or Hermännchen with Klärchen, and leave nothing more to be said.

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### **2.5 Episode 8: “The Wedding”: the second ‘Heimat’ has not escaped the first; loss of the house.**

The first part of Episode 8 traces Hermann’s almost absent minded drift into matrimony. It follows Schnüßchen, homely, lively, energetic, as she revisits her beloved family in Schnepfenbach, tries to console Juan with her own warm energy and some inappropriately practical suggestions, and hunts for a flat. She is unable to understand why Hermann has cut himself off from the Hunsrück and tries to persuade him to go back for a visit. The beautiful Jugendstil apartment, where she takes him to babysit for her colleague, is a revelation. A new location, presumably chosen and designed for the current style of camera work, shows that it too can produce a lovely scene of light and movement. The simplicity of the space and the Japanese furnishings, the huge window with delicately coloured stained glass, the high ceiling, all in white, allow subtle lighting to work in a new and quite different way. The couple’s night there is delightfully scripted, heartwarming and funny, they are so comfortable with each other. Hermann plays along with Schnüßchen’s sense of fun, feels alive and empowered, and lets go of his inner conflicts. But when he sleeps it is Clarissa he dreams of, while at the same time, travelling through the night to study in Paris, Clarissa is dreaming of him, and in the film their dreams become entwined.

Hermann is now quite content with his lifestyle, working quietly alone by day in the Fuchsbau, where his friends can come and go and talk half the night. For once he does not feel a need to run away. But Schnüßchen is bent on finding themselves a flat, and to impress an estate agent, she persuades him to pretend that they intend to get married. Afterwards, as it becomes ever clearer to them both, even to poor Schnüßchen, how little she understands about him, in some confusion and uneasiness he says speculatively: “What if we really did it?” In retrospect he reflects that a thought is merely a fantasy until it is expressed, but then it becomes a reality. From then on, Hermann, passive as ever, goes along with it, almost as though it were a game.

The rest of the film is the story of the wedding. It is a strange story in which nothing is as it seems. It is summed up by Alex, when he announces: “Everything is meaningless but nothing happens by chance”. For a start the festivities at the Fuchsbau appear way over the top for a student wedding. It seems as though they are being hosted by Fräulein Cerphal. Frau Ries in one of the “Fragments” is full of delight because once again she is able to cook a great meal of thirteen courses as she did in the old days, when the family was prosperous and influential. The scale of the meal, the elaborate preparations and expensive staffing for it must be costing a fortune. It looks like the swansong of the *haute bourgeoisie* whom the students so despise, though they are happy to enjoy the feast. But in fact the person actually paying for it is Schnüßchen’s father, the laughing, unassuming Hunsrück farmer.

For this is not a rich bourgeois wedding, but that of two young Hunsrück villagers. A few of their relatives come, and there is an uncomfortable social gulf between the Hunsrückers and Herman’s circle of Munich friends, an awkward encounter of the old ‘Heimat’ with the new. Schnüßchen, entirely unselfconscious and without social pretensions, welcomes her father with delight when he (alone of her huge family) arrives cheerful and late, and she is

very happy too to meet Marie-Goot, Pauline and Jacquelinchen from Schabbach. But Hermann squirms with embarrassment at what his relations say and do, and is not helped by the obvious condescension of Jean-Marie and Volker and the rest. Pauline loudly presents the couple with two rings from the shop in Simmern and insists they wear them. Marie-Goot notices the funny way Hermann's friends look at him sometimes, and as Kath would have done in the past, warns him about it and reprimands him for never coming home: "Someone has to say it to you... It's not easy for us either". With the arrival of Schnüßchen's father, the Hunsrück contingent gains confidence, and Hermann in shock perceives that his new 'Heimat' is now under occupation from the old. Only his mother is absent. Her presence there is almost unimaginable. By the end of the evening all the Hunsrückers, including Hermann and Clemens, are gathered in the kitchen, helping with the washing up and singing an uncomfortable song about "Klärchen from the Sahärchen". Later they come crowding into the new flat with the bride and groom, heaving furniture, and needing help to find their lodging.

The supercilious reaction of Hermann's Munich friends is not just snobbery. They are unhappy about this marriage, saddened by the falseness in Hermann's situation. The mix of moods and cultures is reflected in the music – the elegant harpist engaged by Hermann, the band playing Volker's teasing wedding-present composition blown off course by the wind, Renate's 'Tango d'Amore', Jean-Marie's stylish act, the Hunsrück songs, the Beethoven played quietly by Volker to Jean-Marie, when everyone else has dispersed through the house and garden, rock music for dancing at the end. Fräulein Cerphal's wedding present (to a musician and composer) is a beautiful antique musical box, mechanically producing tunes that delight the bride. One wonders if the irony is unconscious or intended, on Fräulein Cerphal's part.

The party breaks up into small groups and couples, installing themselves in separate corners of the location. Unlike the party in Episode 3, this one does not give the impression of flowing through space and time regardless of where the camera is focussed. Relationships start to crumble. Early on, Renate, overconfident, loses Dr Bretschneider to a triumphant Frau Moretti, and Juan loses Anniki to Rob. Stefan finds Helga with a gorgeous trumpeter with a romantic Russian name, and starts a drunken fight. Even Schnüßchen's "perfect couple" of friends depart in the throes of a fierce marital row.

Now and then scenes of the wedding have been intercut with glimpses of Clarissa. In Paris she is competing for a Californian scholarship. She performs for the Professor in a great glass studio where the black and white images regain luminescence. Light gleams softly on the cello, as it will later glance from the drum of Frau Cerphal's musical box. Clarissa can only play the lightness of French music with German sadness. She returns to Munich and arrives at the Fuchsbau late in the day. Just Volker and Jean-Marie notice her. Hermann, Volker tells her, is "in Hunsrück heaven". But then the happy couple appear and she is able to give them a present of soup spoons, with a note saying literally "good luck with dishing out the soup", which can mean "facing the music". Playing the musical box she murmurs "Long live the music", as Hermann watches her, speechless. Hermann and Schnüßchen are going home and their relatives leave with them. In the small bare spaces of their little flat, the camera finds beautiful images.

Volker continues to play Ravel, Clarissa has over a month before taking up the Californian scholarship, he wants her to spend a couple of days with him but she fends him off. She finds something to eat, from the left over wreckage of the meal: "So that was Hermann's wedding. Now it's already past history." As Clarissa and Volker talk by the piano, their faces are delicately portrayed, Volker's face showing every movement of his feelings, as subtly as his fingers touch the keys. Trapped between Volker's jealousy and her own loss, Clarissa briefly loses control and throws crockery. No one notices.

All this time Juan has been on his own out in the garden, even after it started to rain. His face grew grim during the meal, and afterwards he more or less withdrew. He has played a while with the clockwork songbirds in a cage, another antique musical box belonging to the house. Once again people round him, even he himself, are treasuring the artificial nightingale, a bird with no soul. Ostensibly he is unhappy because Anniki, who came with him, has deserted him for Rob. But his sadness goes back a long way. He sees his friends very clearly, recognising their pain, and when he voices it, they turn away from him, like Renate in the previous episode, to keep their illusions. He remains alone, watching what is happening to the others, especially to Hermann and Clarissa. "This land is without pity and without joy", he told Schnüßchen earlier in the year, and would not let her comfort him. He has no family, no one to rely on, who knows who he is. "You are special", said Schnüßchen at that time, but he replied: "Ah, I'm a Nobody. A wine without a label. No one notices if I disappear." He is the opposite of herself, the person her bright warmth cannot reach, like Hermann, someone whose darkness she does not understand.

Now, he becomes a kind of lightning conductor for the energies sparking around him. His suicide attempt releases a storm among the others. Helga screams and clings to her new man. Stefan and Reinhard fall into the violent fight that has been pending between them for months if not years. Clarissa rushes to help Juan. She calls to him desperately, almost as though it were Hermann, whose virtual self destruction too she has failed to prevent. Volker tells her he loves her, she replies: "Volker, please never use that word again..."

Olga unexpectedly finds the strength to stay calm and comfort the "dreamer", Juan, saying to both him and Alex: "Why do you talk about everything else, but not about yourselves, you stupid guys? ... Philosophy yes, but just look at yourselves!". Alex, revealing all the poverty of his intellectual defences, screams at poor Juan: "...It's impossible, it's a personal attack on me! ... We're rational human beings, it's immoral!" But Olga holds and protects Juan.

Stefan is utterly beside himself, he reloads the gun, Fräulein Cerphal siezes it and delivers her ultimatum. She has had enough, she wants them all out of her house and garden, for good, she never wants to see them again, they have all let her down. Alex too, who was hoping to inherit Hermann's room, is expelled. Stunned and distraught, the group file past the deserted dining table and gather silently beyond the house, like chastened children.

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2.6 Episode 9: “The Eternal Daughter”: guilty memories destroy the house.

From the first frame of this film we are back in the world of subtle light and focus and depth of distance, not Gernot Roll this time, but Christian Reitz who trained with him. The light falls on the house, in the leaves and trees, on Juan, on Fräulein Cerphal herself in close up, and on Frau Ries’ gentle face though the window of a car. It shines through petals of a white rhododendron. Again we have the texture of skin on a face, the complex structure of a face half in sunlight, the sheen of silky clothes. Cerphal’s voice when she speaks quietly is beautiful too, a kind of music. At one point in a conversation with Frau Ries in the hall, they almost sing to each other, though what they are saying is quite harsh. Her father has not long to live, but she brightly ignores the warning. “You’ve stayed a right child”, Frau Ries wearily tells her.

Fräulein Cerphal watches Juan in the garden, building his mosaic along the path. She has let him, alone of the student group, stay on at the house, and wants to care for him. But as the story progresses it is no longer clear who is caring for whom. Juan’s mosaic is a great Inca-inspired deity, set to keep ironic watch over the house and its inhabitants. But later, when Juan wanders the city at night with his slightly bow-legged walk, it seems that the image also represents himself. It is the jester, the tumbler, a dancing spirit. There is a scene where Juan in meditation performs a headstand on the head of the image, so that for a moment they are one.

Seen for the first time, this film about Fräulein Cerphal felt like a distraction from the stories of the young people. But watched again, it emerges as very powerful. This middle-aged woman has “lost” twenty years of her life living in the shadow of her father and of her own unexamined complicity in his wrongdoings and ill-gotten wealth. She has remained inwardly a child, unable to do without the “protection” that he offered her from knowledge that she nonetheless could not avoid. And all along it has been to her neediness, tolerance and generosity that the students have owed the life of their second ‘Heimat’. Her house has been their refuge for years, where they have talked half the night, and discussed all manner of wild questions of art and politics, protest and freedom. The guilty legacy that has stunted her life has moulded the society they are growing up in, and they in turn have brought new and turbulent life to it. Now she has expelled them from the house, to which in this film the lovely shadows have returned, and it is empty, the gate locked.

She is herself a victim as well as a perpetrator of the evil that was done. She lived at a time when “ordinary” jealousy or betrayal of others could lead not only to their emotional hurt but to their death in Dachau. Her life reflects something of the mechanism of collaboration. Infantilised by her dominating father, she is now seeking to identify with a young generation to whom her complicity and denial are anathema. Rather movingly the students who know her personally do not reject her out of hand, they respect her as another human being, in spite of their suspicions about her past. To them the issues seem unequivocal, but she is already at

an age to know the complexity and confusion of cowardice, and sometimes the futility of courage. Those of us who did not live as adults at that time, and are not German, and who are courageous only in words, have no right to judge.

Her habitual strategy of avoiding unpleasantness has meant refusing to accept that her father has not long to live, leaving Frau Ries as his only faithful visitor. Going now to see him in his luxurious nursing home, Fräulein Cerphal becomes the anxious, rather incompetent child that he treats her as. It seems to be a lifelong pattern that neither wants to break. He is preoccupied with putting his affairs in order, and impatiently gives her peremptory directions, but at the same time he is quite gentle to her when it occurs to him. Again there are beautiful lighting effects, the daughter's rich dark dress and black hat, the old man white among his white sheets, until suddenly the angle changes along with his mood and his face emerges in dark, strong lines. We see him as she sees him, frail and formidable, feared and loved. Later, following his order to go to the publishing house, her movements are eager and anxious, she keeps breaking into a run, like a child, and she is fascinated by the mirrored pendulum of a clock. Throughout the film, the part is brilliantly played, a whole character in every posture and movement, in each facial feature, the petulant mouth, the little anxious frown, and especially the eyes.

Her hilarious adventure "burgling" his old company offices, being picked up by security staff and the police, and disbelieved, ends with her being politely escorted home in a patrol car. She finds Juan at the gate. As they walk to the house, she reflects that she owes everything to her father, and had never thought that one day she could lose it all: "...I was taken for a criminal today, can you imagine?" "Yes," says Juan.

Returning next day to the publishing house for an official appointment, she is a little more dignified, and is treated with courtesy, if patronisingly. The new management are curious to meet a member of the founding family, and can see it as a publicity opportunity. However, when she wishes to be alone she adopts an adult stance and firmly and effectively dismisses them from her father's office.

Leafing through old photographs, she remembers how her father had not allowed her to acknowledge the tragedies that happened: "Child, you don't need to worry" – about deaths and cancer, or about the fate of the Jewish friend of her childhood and youth. But the "foolish" forbidden thoughts are still there: "The way Edith smelt of sweat when they took her to Dachau. Edith was my best friend for 20 years..." "Won't you help me, Vati, ...say something!" she pleads to the great empty chair. On the way home she tries to cheer herself with shopping, and then sits on the floor in her bedroom like a ten-year-old, eating chocolates and reading her childhood diary. "I'm missing 20 years, I've mislaid them somehow."

In the soft coloured light of her father's room that evening he makes her tear up the "sham" contract that records the true ownership of the house, she must remember the house belongs to her alone, and there is nothing for her to worry about. Yet again, she clutches at the reassurance, and complies. His only stipulation is that she should complete her studies, she must earn what she possesses. This she does try to resist, but ignoring her protest he starts to

write his will. The camera lingers on his old face as he smiles at his mother's portrait, and on his wasted hands, the right one paralysed, the left struggling to write. This is not artificial ageing, the actor of this part must himself have been very old, and it is a powerful performance.

The left hand, the hand "near the heart" says Fräulein Cerphal, figures more than once in this film. Above all, the music of the film is dominated by Volker's lovely performance of Ravel's concerto for the left hand. Volker emerges as not only an impressive musician, but a warm, attractive man, with rather more maturity and emotional depth than Hermann. Even Clarissa is susceptible to this and they become closer, though her dream of the F-holes of Hermann's "absent 'cello" hovers in her consciousness, and she is shaken to meet Schnüßchen with Hermann's child ("And mine", Schnüßchen reminds her). Her mother is embarrassingly sycophantic to Volker, now that the former "sex fiend" has become a well-known concert pianist.

Clarissa returns from America to the arms of her mother and the pathetic and dreadful Dr. Kirschmayer. Distraught by damage to her cello on the flight, she is dependent on the doctor for the cost of its repair, and owes him gratitude too for arranging a concert and an agent for her, as well as for a gift of jewellery. For the sake of her music she still feels unable to walk away from the emotional trap he holds her in, which in a way parallels the stranglehold in which Fräulein Cerphal is bound by her father.

Hermann is struggling to continue composing, in the tiny flat with Schnüßchen and the baby, and a lodger to help pay the rent, but no piano. He deeply misses the Fuchsbau and all their friends, but is nonetheless devoted to his small family, and fascinated by the baby. This, with his sense of humour, is keeping him afloat, though their life changes are clearly creating severe strains for both Schnüßchen and himself.

Renate has set up her 'U-Boot' night club with Bernd, and is in her element at last. It is an ideal stage for her courageous personality and bizarre talent, and the remnants of the Fuchsbau group gather to patronise it. Alex carries Juan away from his solitary pursuits to introduce him there. On another evening, Juan wanders like a ghost through the city, literally a shadow at the edges of his friends' lives. Hermann, helping to bath the baby, feels watched and, from a grill opening onto the stairs, sees a shadow disappearing below. Juan arrives at the concert hall at the moment Volker's concert ends. During the ensuing celebrations, Clarissa's mother glimpses him through a window pane, but when Clarissa looks for him, he is gone. Is he really, as they believe, desperately lonely, or is he just watching? In the course of this episode Juan appears in many guises, all possible, none mutually exclusive. He can seem very grounded, working quietly on his mosaic, or small and helpless, hunting for his dropped key in a puddle. He looks lonely and depressed in the city night, but becomes a powerful truth-teller over the Tarot cards in the Fuchsbau.

Meanwhile Fräulein Cerphal has dutifully gone to the University, trying to choose yet another course to study. Her hilarious conversation with an embarrassed professor takes place in a great classical gallery, where once again, as in the streets in Episode 3, the action

seems to flow through the space while they walk, as students and others pass in and out of the screen, from and to unseen lives elsewhere. When the professor departs in some disarray, he disappears down a huge staircase, with the camera following for what feels like minutes on end, able to encompass a vast space of magnificent architecture, in which, when looking up, Cerphal is seen to remain alone. It is visually one of the most striking sequences in the whole work.

It is followed by the scene in the terrace-room at the Fuchsbau where Juan manipulates the Tarot cards for Fräulein Cerphal. This is the high point of the film. Again it is beautifully shot in the tradition of Gernot Roll's episodes, and rivals the work of the master. The action takes place before the arch of the window recess and is reflected in a shining polished table in the immediate foreground. The figures are dramatically back lit, but not so as to lose the illusion of texture and depth, which is preserved in all its delicacy in the close-ups. Cerphal has to change her cigarette holder to her right hand, in order to use her left (again) to cut the cards, before Juan interprets the cards to demonstrate all that he has learned or intuited about the past of the "eternal daughter". He pretends to no esoteric knowledge, only to have "reconstructed" what he knows from questioning and observing Cerphal and Gattinger. Her face grows sharper and older as he speaks. She claims to have been unimportant, just the "grace-note" in the family, to whom her father told nothing. She tries to sidetrack him, or to stop him. But he accuses her: "You knew it all, the story of your friend in the concentration camp..., you know whom your house belongs to... You loved Herr Gattinger... I think perhaps you love me too." Cerphal briskly rises and departs, only to collapse on her bed, sobbing desperately: "Daddy, don't die, don't leave me alone...!" Juan is left mirrored in the round polished table, starting again to consult the cards – who for? for himself?

Curiously, in all this Juan seems to speak without passion. Unlike Esther in the next episode, and unlike most of ourselves in such circumstances, he shows no sense of personal hurt, no sadistic need to confront someone with what they insist on denying, no envy, no Schadenfreude, no need to torment or take revenge. Cerphal is in no sense his victim. He seems to speak from a kind of naive anger in the cause of truth, and from deep sadness for a life that has been stunted by guilt and wilful denial. Maybe he too is suffering from the lonely responsibility of knowing a truth that others cannot bear and continue to deny. And he does not have the skills to help them. In the end his words change nothing, or not enough.

Maybe there is a kind of change. Back in her father's office, Fräulein Cerphal toys with the revolver she has found in a desk drawer, and fires it at her father's empty chair. A dim anger at what he had done to her life? Or at him for being about to die and leave her? By one of those strange coincidences that do happen at such times, it is the very moment at which, far off in the nursing home, her father dies. Meanwhile the Fuchsbau has been invaded by a horde of socialist students for a protest meeting. She is in the midst of all this bewildering anarchy, half laughingly protected by Juan, being harangued about the pending emergency legislation by Helga and Alex and their friends, when Frau Ries returns with the news: "Your father is dead. And for me there will soon be nothing left to do. You see, Fräulein Cerphal, that is the end for us, for you and for me." The daughter's face reflected in a window foreshadows Lulu's at the end of *Heimat 3*.

The death bed scene in the nursing home starts in silence, apart from distant birdsong, footsteps and the creak of floorboards. Everything is stark black and white. Everywhere there are straight lines – the wall panels, the dead body on the bed, the erect black figure of Fräulein Cerphal at the foot of the bed, reflected at an angle in a rectangular mirror, while Frau Ries also in black approaches the bed at right angles, followed in a more relaxed way by the nurse. After they have left, Elisabeth Cerphal sits curled on the floor by the bed, a living child, reading a letter in which the dead man stipulates that the house is hers but she will only come into the rest of her inheritance when she has obtained her degree.

Finally, guided now by Gattinger for his own interests, Cerphal rejects this last attempt to control her life. There is to be no restitution to the Goldbaum family, but nor will she resume her studies, or keep the ill-gotten house, even though her father wanted to be buried near it and her. The house is to be sold and demolished for development. She and Gattinger are to travel and live off the proceeds. “Some day there has to be an end to all this past”. Nonetheless, asked for her occupation, she still says “Student”.

The lawyer leaves the house, whistling artificial birdsong. The house and garden are as beautiful as ever. Juan is still building his mosaic. There may seem no point in continuing with it, but he has not finished yet, and the credits roll over the unyielding dancing figure.



2.7 Episode 10 : *“The End of the Future”*: the house itself is a memory, but older memories still claim victims.

The house has been demolished, it is just a hole in the ground. With it the longed for second ‘Heimat’ of an imagined future has gone for ever. The young generation is scattered into an everyday world of hard work and compromise. Reinhard’s shock at arriving there, after a year’s absence, with fistfuls of ice cream cones for his friends, to find no house, the friends all dispersed, and Hermann pushing a baby in a pram, is a starting point for the film.

Hermann in his cramped flat has written a motif from the “Wölfelied” into his “Requiem” for the house. His friends reluctantly come together to play it for him – unrehearsed student performance art, in which both he and they have lost faith. They reject this gesture made for them “out of friendship”, to show them that “the Fuchsbau was just a place... everything is still possible for us... nothing is lost”. His optimism seems less than convincing, like his polite invitation to Clarissa (“Schnüßchen would be so happy”), and they desert him again.

Clarissa is heavily pregnant and due after all to marry Volker: “...we are like ships on the high seas that have to sail under someone’s flag”. How has she arrived here, from fear of

losing her “freedom”? She and Hermann meet at the demolition site, painfully aware, but not directly speaking, of what they have both relinquished. Perforce, her music is “resting”. “Can it be?” asks Hermann, and she replies only: “I am a woman”. Little Lulu watches, and the conversation is filmed from her eye level. Later comes the very moving scene where Clarissa’s waters break and she turns for help to her mother: the child will be a stranger, she does not love Volker, she is trapped in a world without choice. Mother Lichtblau only half understands, but is unexpectedly gentle.

Juan is going back to South America. He looks sad, and is pale under the makeup for the ‘Requiem’, sitting by his fierce ruined mosaic and making music for the ‘spirits’ of the old house. “Your land has brought me no happiness”, he says. He is still a catalyst for a flash of understanding between Hermann and Clarissa, and he tells them both: “I love you.” After they have all left the site, he stays on into the night, playing a farewell on the *queña* in the ruins. Clarissa and Volker return to wander past as he plays, and it starts to rain. Then in Wasserburg heavy rain on the window pours watery shadows all down the walls inside Clarissa’s room and over her face, as her waters break – reminding of the time she gazed with streaming eyes through the window of the Fuchsbau – maybe that was her dream?

This episode is threaded with references to South America. Reinhard and Rob have shot a commercial documentary there and are full of their memories and images. Reinhard is debilitated by amoebic dysentery (“Montezuma’s revenge”), and puzzled at finding Juan’s mosaic on the Fuchsbau path. The image is still powerful in its disintegration, but little Lulu plays with its stones. It transpires later that, by a kind of poetic justice, Fräulein Cerphal and Gattinger are travelling in South America before they lose all their money.

Unlike his friends who have stayed in Munich, Reinhard, travelling and filming abroad, has still been living the free-wheeling student dream. Now he is doubly depressed, by his illness, and by the desolate, workaday Munich reflected in the opening images of the film. Even star-struck Trixi with a teenage crush on him is comfort for the loneliness, and her suggestion of making a film about the Cerphal inheritance takes root. In these Munich scenes with Rob and with Trixi, Reinhard comes across as endearing and open-hearted but somehow at a loss. He is generally a good friend, but without taking much responsibility for anything beyond his work as a film maker, which he takes very seriously indeed, quarrelling fiercely with his colleagues when they disagree. Now he has a soft spot for Trixi, enjoying her adulation, but with no idea of the impact of his behaviour on her, feeding her fantasy and then betraying it. They are both vulnerable to each other, but his is the responsibility, and it is disturbingly unclear how far he lets their relationship go.

Trixi is beautifully written and played, funny, sad and very photogenic. There are some lovely portraits of her in this section, and some great ones too of Reinhard himself, in the fine white light of his rooms high in a block of flats. Her fantasies and behaviour are teenaged, but her empathy is that of a woman, and it is touching how they share their sadness. Earlier, there were other lovely images at the site of the Fuchsbau, of Reinhard wandering round bewildered, the old neighbour dappled under the trees, Rob’s mobile face sad and concerned by his friend’s illness, or charmed by Hermann’s child. In the “U-boot” there is a sad-eyed

close-up of Alex, listening to the Beatles' "Yesterday", and a scene evocative of dismal bars in other films, where Alex and Reinhard drunkenly smash their beer glasses, and a girl with a plastered leg slowly hobbles away through the broken glass, past Renate and Bernd, both too exhausted to react at the end of the night.

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However it is in the second half of the film, in Venice, and especially on DVD, that the cinematography surpasses itself. [I am indebted to Robert Cran for an interesting discussion of this section]. The camera slides along the canals, the water and the buildings, in the rich tones and delicate detail of breath-taking unpeopled images. The gleaming reflections in moving water, the scum on its surface when stagnant, flickering light under bridges and up walls, the many textures of stone, the many meanings of the shadows. At one point there is a brief glimpse along a narrow street with sharp formal diagonal shadows thrown by the light, as in an old print. I don't have the words or the technical knowledge to record any of this. The sounds are simple: footsteps, distant voices, children playing, the water, the distant sound of canal traffic, an Angelus bell, lovely music for cello and piano interpreting the shadows. Only at night, the moonlight and a half-moon look contrived, perhaps ironically as sometimes in the first *Heimat*, though they may be genuine.

Reinhard reaches his *pensione* through a garden of sun and soft shadows. Indoors it is dark, with a few patches of light, until he opens a window into the blazing sunlight. In the lovely house of Esther, the photographer, the stunning imagery continues, in colour as well as black and white. Esther herself is strangely beautiful, whether in rough working overalls, or elegantly dressed for her exhibition. There is the moment when she bends protectively over her mother's photograph, and the camera follows her arms and her hands. This ends a scene already containing lovely portrait sequences of both her and Reinhard. As the passion and anxiety of the couple intensify, there is brilliant use of the colour red – in the darkroom, and in the scene before Reinhard leaves. That is a scene of great power, very theatrical, but in no way false to the characters.

Esther is a fascinating character. The loss of her mother, the slow understanding of its hideous nature and cause, and of her father's part in it, has driven her to abjure all sentimentality, all falseness. Her need to confront the world of denial and guilt with the "ice-cold" truth has a sadistic element but transcends that. In one of the most beautiful "Fragments" she says of her photography: "One should always seek out what is ugly. Hideously difficult. Simply bear down on it without hate, without disgust, ice cold. There sometimes the tears come, and then for days it's all over with work. Is there ugliness without hate? Does the word [*häßlich*] come from hate?"

Her bullying assault on Reinhard with camera and physical force achieves its object of overcoming his physical inhibitions, in spite or because of its sado-masochistic overtones. Later, in the darkroom, working on an image that she has forcibly made of him, she speaks tenderly about the vulnerability of the back of his neck. Perhaps it is understandable that he

responds with a violent fantasy of being beheaded and disappears behind the beam of the projector.

She is drawn to tell Reinhard her life story for his film script out of need for the relief, no one has listened to her like that before. At the same time she is exposing all her own vulnerability. In the light of the half-moon she recognises his fear of her, and tells him not to be afraid of her because she is giving him her life. Later he bullies and offends her about her love for her Nazi father, but then as he more humbly recites the Grillparzer "Half-moon" poem ("Born half good and half evil, and inadequate in both forms") she recognises him, perhaps them both, in it and creeps onto his lap. Again this scene is so delicate and subtle that words are useless.

Reinhard challenges her love for the father who betrayed her mother, but he also has ambivalent feelings for his own Nazi father. It is part of the inheritance of this post war generation, what Edgar Reitz has called "the tragedy of loving someone whom at the same time one judges on moral grounds" [Ref: see *Hartlieb* p.75]. Reinhard admits this to Esther, torn as she is when Gattinger and Fräulein Cerphal appear at her flat, and she clings to him with relief, for comfort.

The tenderness and ambiguity of their love is shot through, as are so many of the couple relationships in *Heimat 2*, with the juxtaposition of need and fear of closeness, and fear of the inevitable pain of loss. They both know that they are using each other. For Reinhard there is always this split between his love for Esther as a woman and his fascination with her as a character for his script. She is aware and afraid of it, telling him: "You've already started to misrepresent me, it's much too romantic, much too German!", and again: "Reinhard, what do you want to make me into? ...that's kitsch and exaggeration. I'm me, I'm me, I'm me!..." But in the dark-room he tells her: "Your story is my story now".

When the script is finished, he intends to go back to Munich, provoking her hysterical attempt to keep him locked in ("You were my prisoner the whole time!"), and her physical attack on him and his script. In the end this only drives him to mumble: "I'm coming back again!", just as he had to Trixi on the railway station. By this time they no longer recognise each other – Esther needs him, she has given him her story and in a sense her life, she owns him, she is terrified of losing him. For Reinhard, her real vulnerable self is at the moment subsidiary to his need of her as an anima figure, inspiring his art, his filmscript. He is in flight from both his own vulnerability and from hers. When he walks out, Venice is already underwater.

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The encounter of Reinhard with Esther and the story he makes out of her story, raise many questions. Whose story is it? Who is a figure in whose story? How far is the story a flight from the real person? Does it falsify, or can it, if it is just a story? Esther feels it is her story, that her story is her own life, and that he is both falsifying it and appropriating it. "Have you got me now?" she screams, "Is your curiosity satisfied? Have you finally got me?" Reinhard

believes that her story as he has written it now belongs to him, that she is a figure in his story, and that ultimately his story is “more beautiful than reality”, as he tells the printer back in Munich, in one of the “Fragments”. But as her lover he has become part of her story. And one thing that is missing for us is the ending he has written for the “beautiful” story.

In fleeing back to Munich Reinhard is at once being faithful to his creativity as a writer, and unfaithful to Esther. They have both loved and used each other, he maybe sees his use of her as *quid pro quo* for her use of him as a confidant, though stated explicitly that would no doubt shock him. But if he were unable to create the story in film, there would be no film to give her. He has promised to make her story into a film, as reparation due to her for what she suffered at the hands of the Nazis and the Cerphals. But at this moment the loss of him is the greater suffering for her, and contains all the rest.

Several times in this episode there have been discussions about the nature of art and film. At the site of the Fuchsbau Reinhard and Rob fail to film the greedy speculation, the laying waste, the spirits of the place driven out, the emptiness of the space. “All this damn glass eye can do is goggle. Without hope and without compassion. Nothing is stupider than a camera!”. In the cutting room Dagmar tells them that they can forget all their memories of South America as those are nowhere in the pictures. “What do you mean,” says Rob, “That journey was the greatest time of my life, every day was a jewel.. it’s all in my head”, but not on film. But with Esther’s story, Reinhard comes to grips himself with the reality of hope and compassion. Is his screen play truly “more beautiful than reality”, or is his own eye too another “glass eye”? Does art need to be “more beautiful than reality” to preserve and convey the reality of hope and compassion? Or is that reality distorted and betrayed by the beauty, as much as it is by the “glass eye”? In the “Fragments”, the printer shows Reinhard and Olga the racks of film scripts all newly printed to compete for funding. The room is full of birdcages, and he says proudly “those are Chinese nightingales”.

Reinhard seems to have put Venice behind him, in spite of the scratches on his face, but then he gets Trixi’s tongue-lashing. She is just a fantasy-ridden teenager with a crush on him, but he has confided in her, made unrealistic promises to her, and broken them. Guilty of hurting her, maybe now he can no longer avoid confronting the ambiguity and extent of his love and his guilt towards Esther.

Perhaps it is at this point that he writes the postcard which Esther receives after his death: “Your face is still always before me. All the time I hold my heart in check. Sometimes it’s more than I can bear, and I want to give up the film and run straight back to you. But how could I face you without having told the story of Esther? It’s my way of loving you, isn’t it?”

It is loving, painful and conflicted, and perhaps self deceiving, but not suicidal. Maybe the conversation at the printer’s forces him to look at what he has refused to contemplate, namely that he might fail to get funding for “Esther”. Maybe, reflecting on the script in the boat, he concludes that it is inadequate, both as art and as a way of loving, and that his love for Esther demands a deeper and more stifling commitment than he could bear.

There is another strange thread in the film linking Reinhard's fantasy of being beheaded with the statues of a beheaded martyr bearing his own head, in the church by the Ammersee. Clarissa remarks: "He looks as if he could have put his head back on again". Reinhard is 33 ("Christ's age"). Does he, in his depression, see himself as a martyr to his art, or to Esther, or to their conflicting demands? Could he not have put his own head back on? But poor Reinhard was ever out of his depth and swimming against the tide.

His death remains an enigma. People in the online discussions have commented that it seems odd that his body would let a strong young man just drown without struggle or noise, without automatic self-preservation, whatever his conscious intention. I suppose he could have deliberately swum till overcome by exhaustion. Maybe he had an unsuspected heart condition. It is after all only a story.

As it is, in the story, his death and the mystery surrounding it has a heavy impact on his Munich friends, especially Rob, and it lays an undeserved burden of guilt on both Esther and Trixi, which will compound their grief, for which there can be no closure.



2.8 Episodes 11 – 12: “Time of Silence” and “A Time of many Words”: ‘Heimweh’ for the lost ‘Second Heimat’ and ‘Fernweh’ for the future.

It is strange to come to these films after the previous two episodes with their strong story lines focussing on one or two lead characters. In contrast, films 11 and 12 return to the episodic style of the earlier parts of the series. Episode 11 is quite low key and on first viewing the two episodes are rather confusing, with the piecemeal introduction of new characters and locations. However the overall themes of both episodes are clear – the changing life styles of the original characters are leaving them emotionally adrift. Their marriages are crumbling, and most of them are losing or changing direction in their artistic lives. At the same time they are getting swept into much wider movements in society – fascination with technology in music and film, the lure of big business, and the seductiveness of militant ideologies.

Episode 11, the “time of silence”, picks up threads from the preceding film. One “silence” is the unexplained disappearance of Reinhard, which generates myths and rumours, but nothing more is heard of him. In memory of him, Rob, now perforce “become the author”, creates “a kind of cinematic *perpetuum mobile*” whose themes are “the secrets that lie on the floors of lakes, utopias, dreams, the last ideas of the drowned.” But he has to use words to explain this.

Rob is a cameraman, because unlike Reinhard, the screenwriter, he has no faith in words. In the beautiful sequence where Rob and his father go hunting on the wooded shore of the Ammersee, Rob in quiet voiceover reflects that in his family “nothing much was said, we

always knew exactly what the other person was thinking". The silent understanding between himself and his father (played by the actor's own father, a forester in real life) is moving, and resembles that between Paul and Mathias in the opening scenes of the first *Heimat*. In fact Rob is the kind of person Paul might well have become, had he been born in a later generation.

In time, the excitement of working for a big commercial company goes to Rob's head, he is new to the sense of power and achievement and becomes rather arrogant (again perhaps like Paul), without Reinhard and Stefan to counterbalance his ideas. He is impatient with the envious Herr Zielke, the established film maker for the company, whom he is displacing in their employer's estimation. "Seeing goes deeper than thinking. Seeing is perceiving the truth. When I see, I see the truth," he says, but Herr Zielke replies: "Yes, but which truth, Herr Stürmer. There is false truth too, very, very bad false truth. I am the expert there." Rob witheringly dismisses this as a reference to the tricks of wartime propaganda films, but Zielke is no doubt haunted by far more hideous images. He was captain of the propaganda company on the eastern front where, by coincidence, the young Anton was his assistant, when they shot terrible footage to record the "achievements" of the Nazi troops.

Rob and Hermann continue to rile Herr Zielke, by their arrogance as much as by their skills with the new technology. Finally Rob, under the tension of setting up his experimental installation, comes out with unapardonably offensive remarks: "The difference between us, Herr Zielke, is that I'm not afraid". Zielke takes his revenge in another "silence", by concealing an electrical fault which eventually ruins the whole public presentation of the two young creators' work on the "Varia-Vision" project, and leaves Rob terrified and temporarily blinded. In the final scene the young man, hitherto totally reliant on the accuracy and honesty of his vision, gropes his way to the bank of the lake and tries to lift the bandages for the first time. For a moment he is blinded all over again by the light, and then gradually perceives the boat from which Reinhard died, with someone in it. Watching with him, at first unbelieving, we realise that the person is Esther in her red coat, taking silent leave of Reinhard's "grave".

Esther too meets silence, when she turns up in Munich grieving for Reinhard and seeking traces of her lost Jewish family. "Everything in this land is hiding something from me. Germany is a book with pages torn out!" She is pathetically changed, a small figure wrapped in heavy winter clothes, the fire and subtlety have gone, just the bitterness remains, and tears are never far away. Her first appearance, "borrowing" Rob's father's boat from a shore apparently pathless and densely forested, is surprisingly implausible. Rob and his father accept her almost wordlessly, this girl whom his mother later sees as "a person of ill-luck", or misfortune. The lake, though getting rougher, remains "grey and harmless and Bavarian".

In Dachau, now a clean and tidy tourist attraction, she finally gets the truth, as far as it goes, from Gattinger: her mother was never in Dachau, but in Ravensbrück and then, through family influence, transferred to a work camp in Moringen where she would have survived had the camp not been closed in 1944. After that he does not know what happened. He is able to admit his part, but seems still impervious to its enormity. Alone with her camera Esther sees that: "All traces of her are lost, and so are the traces of all the people who were tormented

here and tortured to death without mercy.” Back in a restaurant in the town, Gattinger offers her soup, gently putting the spoon in her hand, and she weeps. His face shows love and pity, if not remorse. Had he looked like that at her mother in the past? And if he had not betrayed her mother, what would have happened to them all? It is unimaginable, what memories he must have amputated to be able to live with himself. No wonder he cannot bear to risk full comprehension now. This moment of unspoken insight, raising such questions, lifts the whole passage from near “documentary” drama into another realm.

In the old house at the core of the Cerphal publishing works, hilariously Esther finds Fräulein Cerphal asleep clutching a wine glass, while two graduate students research her dissertation for her. It seems she has had to resume her studies, at least nominally, in order to access the rest of her inheritance. Fräulein Cerphal is all warmth and disingenuous welcome, but Esther removes her aunt’s dark glasses and accuses her: “...what do you really look like? What are you hiding from me? This whole house - why is there no trace of my family? ...where was my mother when they came for her?” Cerphal replies shortly that there is a glass case upstairs for the Goldbaum mementos. Running upstairs, Esther shouts: “Yet another memorial! You’ve got a pigeon-hole to fit everything, or else it’s at the bottom of a deep lake!” Loss of her family and loss of Reinhard are merged in grief. Cerphal stays sitting on the stairs, her head backlit by the window, until she droops sideways helplessly against the banister and the image dissolves in a blaze of sunlight.

Gattinger makes one more crass, rather desperate attempt at restitution, still unable to grasp why Esther rejects it. She appears briefly at Isarfilm during the disastrous public opening of Rob’s installation (Rob’s mother’s warning was not misplaced), and finally rows in across the lake as the credits roll. This is a heart-breaking place to leave the story of a character we had got so close to in the previous episode, a story that, as in life, could have no resolution.

Another victim of Reinhard’s disappearance is Trixi. She stands silent and alone by the lake on the anniversary of his death, angrily rejecting her sister’s sympathy, and in the next episode she appears as a young drug addict “rescued” by the well-meaning Schnüßchen, fleeing when Hermann phones her sister, only to return with her boyfriend to burgle their flat. After an overdose she ends up in hospital and is found to be pregnant. Again the sense of waste and tragedy is disproportionate to the brief appearance of a fictional character. That these imagined stories are represented so realistically, in such depth, so open-ended and unresolved, and without judgment, and have such power to sadden us, is a measure of the artistry of *Heimat*.

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The disintegration of the marriages is drawn in an interwoven tapestry. Both couples suffer the ordinary stresses of making a living and advancing in a career, and of relationships between people who do not seem very well suited. In addition, for the three musicians there is the specific challenge of trying to combine homelife and childcare with professional life. On parallel paths both Hermann and Clarissa are troubled by their memories and longings for the

lost "Second Heimat" at the Fuchsbau and also still by the original "Fernweh" for a far away future time of achievement and freedom with like-minded friends.

At the start of Episode 11 Hermann has been reduced to borrowing money from the patient Clemens and earning a little by playing with Clemens' band. Since Reinhard's death there are no more commissions for film music from his friends. There is still love and humour in his relationship with Schnüßchen, but they are lonely, with few friends. There are heart-warming scenes (Schnüßchen's dress, the fish) at dinner with Volker and Clarissa, but under the friendliness there is stress, for Hermann who envies Volker's relative success, and for Clarissa, oppressed by a domestic life with no time even to practise.

Even when Hermann is taken up by the Director of Isarfilm, with the prospect of a well paid job, the freedom of a new electronic studio and the support of its technician, there is still something missing. He returns to find his flat invaded by Helga and her friends, haranguing Schnüßchen, smoking pot, and demanding a signature on yet another petition. Schnüßchen is distraught, but the encounter with Helga brings back to Hermann a homesickness for the Fuchsbau, and also perhaps memories of Dülmen. There is a "Fragment" seemingly from this scene where Helga tells him her child is with her parents in Dülmen. "I often think of Dülmen", he says wistfully. When Schnüßchen throws his alien friends out and asks again about the new job, he no longer wants to talk about it.

Nonetheless, Hermann like Rob is swept off his feet by the opportunities offered by his new position. As Rob says, experimentation becomes their "new elixir of life". Hermann, now truly a sorcerer's apprentice, is overwhelmed by the power of the technology available in "his" electronic sound studio. He spends all hours of the day and night there, eventually embarking on a carefree, casual affair with the secretary, Erika, and trying to cover his tracks with ridiculous subterfuges. For a while this work and way of life seem another path to the longed for goals of the lost "Second Heimat", freedom and a glittering career.

Volker, as a rival composer, is made to feel redundant to this setup and returns home hurt and envious. He and Clarissa too are drifting ever further apart. Seeking Hermann, he finds Schnüßchen deserted in the silent flat. The ensuing encounter is very delicately written, as an erotic tension between them is first set up and then broken by Schnüßchen, and Volker has to leave.

A scene where Clarissa sings a sad lullaby to her child, in a delightful, still untrained voice, is beautifully lit and costumed. Clarissa has perforce given up the 'cello, and in memory romanticises life in the Fuchsbau before Schnüßchen came. Schnüßchen, who had little time for the Fuchsbau friends, now knows that "in his heart" Hermann left her long ago, and is convinced that it is because of her lack of education: "I long so much for that other kind of love with songs and poems and dreams, but everyone sees me as just practical...". Rather touchingly, as their children play, the two women admit they have never liked each other, and why, and confide their unhappiness.

Returning home with a squalling child, Clarissa finds her mother disapprovingly cleaning the house and reproaching her for the dust on the 'cello. She promptly returns the instrument to Dr Kirschmayer's house. Perhaps fortunately, he is not there. It looks like an hysterical gesture marking the end of her career and of any kind of artistic life, but in fact it is the first step to freeing herself from both her mother and the unsavoury doctor.

In episode 12, Camilla, the American trombonist, says of the departed 'cello: "Good, it was a bummer anyway. It was more for your mother than for you ... we must find our own way for ourselves." Clarissa's taking refuge in a vaguely lesbian relationship with the American is very moving – for the first time since small childhood there is someone to hold and comfort her, who seems initially to demand nothing and to have no power over her, whom she can allow herself to love without fearing loss of freedom. Hitherto, her only memory of such comforting has been of something lost. In one of the "Fragments" she returns to Wasserburg (probably much later, already in middle age) and remembers a time when as a child she nearly drowned in the river: " I was seven. But the green water spat me out again. My mother warmed me endlessly in her arms, endlessly in her arms." Now for the moment the American plays the mother, and offers genuine love and understanding. Singing with these women musicians, Clarissa can develop the voice which is her own instrument, and a new career which will outlast whatever may later happen to the hippy, feminist group.

A year into his new job, Hermann's life is also once again in flux. His creativity, and Rob's, and the magnificent new sound studio are all still being used only for commercial advertising projects. He longs for the freedom to compose "New Music" of his own, and "time is passing". His boss, foreseeing the future value to the firm of his creativity, gives him a two months' sabbatical, with full use of the studio. But his announcement of this to Jean-Marie and Volker is trumped by Volker's prestigious achievement of a commission from the orchestra of SWR.

At the same time his home life is heading for the rocks. Schnüßchen, in an attempt to make up for her lack of sophistication, has bravely launched herself into the life of a mature student of psychology and social work. Now it is her turn to invite student friends to the flat, and endearingly to buy a pile of dense sociology classics to bolster her new academic status. This new Schnüßchen is once more the independent feisty girl who first came to Munich to be a tour guide, she has so much courage and openness, and is so bright and warm, so ready to become a student in this "new age – an age of women". She picks up all the clichés of the time, and is enthusiastic for all the correct causes. But her desire to help and work for people who are suffering is real.

Sadly, some of her friends are aggressive and disorganised, and her good heart and naïvety leave her vulnerable to the dubious characters whom she invites in and tries to help. Hermann finds their new comfortable middle-class flat filled with strangers, who do not respect his piano or himself, sleep in his bed, and threaten his privacy. In their attempts to discuss the situation the couple talk past each other, without understanding. After the debacle with Trixi, Schnüßchen faces up to the reality of the new tasks she is setting herself, and of her helplessness: "Hermann, the city is so cruel, I don't want to live here any more." Hermann's depression has not lifted with the start of his sabbatical leave. On the contrary, he

finds that he is unable to compose as he had hoped. He fails to respond to Schnüßchen's distress, and instead provokes the furious, ridiculous row which leads to them both throwing their wedding rings out of the window and Hermann slamming out.

Like his uncle Ernst, his first reaction is to take refuge in flight. He remembers that this was driven not by the row at home or the problems with his work, but by a kind of "Fernweh", the feeling he had as a student that life was really all going on somewhere else, and a sudden longing to be part of it. "There was an unbelievable unrest in the air" and he was drawn to it like a moth to the flame. So he boards a plane to Berlin, to join Helga's beautiful bisexual girlfriend Kathrin, in a commune.

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For this is 1968, and Episode 12 is dominated by an exhausting profusion of more or less militant groups stirring and stirred by the turmoil of the year. Their cacophony constantly drives the story, and gives it a rhythm. The young people who invade Hermann's flat, or the lecture halls of the University, or the villa near Berlin where Stefan is trying to shoot a film are very different from the students of the Fuchsbau era, even though they include some of the same individuals, like Helga. They are harder, angrier and narrower in their understanding, seeming to have externalised all more subtle and painful feeling and experience into one or another unidimensional ideology. They talk and shout, endlessly, in more and more words, and the hollowness of the words is repeatedly demonstrated by contrast with who the speakers are and what in fact happens. The film makes dramatic, sometimes quite comic, use of such juxtapositions.

Even Stefan, who belongs to an older generation and ends up playing the invidious role of the reactionary, starts out from a basis of fashionable theory. He insists on changing the title of Reinhard's screenplay from the simple "Esther" to the abstract "The German Fear", because Reinhard "had no sense of political or historical reality." ("But his characters have blood in their veins", protests Olga.) He sees the lovely villa where the film is to be shot in terms only of its social origins. But when his film set is taken over by the crew, led by Helga, early in her Baader-Meinhof phase, demanding "democratisation" and collective decision making in directing the film, he is torn. He has sympathy with the ideal that everyone in the team should have a voice, and also is anxious not to lose politically correct credentials for the film in the eyes of the critics, so he permits the discussion to continue. On the other hand, since the film is at this stage supported by public money, the argument is that it must be directed by and for "the people", not by an "auteur" film maker. At that point Stefan resists. The endless discussions and attempts to rewrite the screenplay and collectively control the filming mean that production is effectively halted, at huge cost. Stefan, abandoning ideals and reasserting his authority, ends up "selling out" to the commercial sector by negotiating re-financing of the film by an American film company. As a result he loses the friendship of Rob and others of his team. Even apolitical Olga laments that: "Now it'll all be back to normal... no questions, no discussions, no mystery". Stefan is a character whom his creator admits he found hard to love, but, and only up to a point, he is bearer of the role forced on Edgar Reitz in the making of *Cardillac*.

Helga now speaks only the language of revolutionary socialism. She lectures Stefan about the content of his film: “...(Its themes) are social and historical facts... you can’t describe those with feelings”. But Stefan replies sarcastically that no one was ever so restrained in their feelings as she, and it is not long before her own feelings re-emerge as sharply as ever. She is jealous that Hermann is with Kathrin, and riled by the casual irresponsibility of the commune, whose members have failed to provide care for her son. Collective film-directing may be a great revolutionary ideal, but collective childcare is proving a dead loss. Then right-wing terrorists fire-bomb the nursery where her child goes, and in shock, Helga’s certainties are challenged. When a reporter tries to elicit her views on violence, she can only reply, with unaccustomed honesty, “that’s difficult”, and “there’s always another side to it”.

Schnüßchen enthusiastically joins a student sit-in at the university. Her simple attempt to describe how her family, who were all “workers”, experienced the rise of Fascism in the village at home, only shows up the mindless militancy of her fellow students. They jeer her because she speaks naïvely without the trendy jargon. The mature student leader Dirk (who once arrived with Alex at the Fuchsbau expounding a philosophy of revolution, but afraid to jump the locked gate) kindly explains that “the concept of Fascism can only be applied in the context of an analysis of the class system. That is, only then can it become synonymous with the unmasking of the rulers in late-capitalistic society”. Poor Schnüßchen feels crushed, and leaves with his recommendations for a huge reading list.

Rob supports the “revolutionaries” but with a very different understanding, and being a man of few words, he expresses himself quite briefly. Unlike Helga, he has learnt, since his temporary loss of sight, that Reinhard was right, and that “the camera is a machine, incapable of any feeling... to approach the truth, the cameraman must get his feelings into the picture. Reality is not truth.”

Kathrin is a person of contradictions too – she can be as aggressive and hostile as Helga, and yet write eloquently if simplistically for *Stern* about the “fascism of feelings” and the family interactions that engender it. At the same time she can be warm, open and laid back, but so indiscriminate that Hermann leaves her, fleeing the nightmare of a druggy communal love-in.

Hermann’s flirting with the heady world of revolution has ended in disillusion. Back in Munich, he finds that Schnüßchen, distressed and deserted, has left home. Once again he takes refuge in flight, this time in a trip up the Zugspitze in a cable car with a delighted, wondering Lulu. Kathrin’s article in *Stern* belongs to another world. But the flight has to end.

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### **2.9 Episode 13. "Art or Life" : Taking leave of ten years of life; return to the beginning?**

This final episode must have been hard to write. The story so far is as open ended as life itself, the map of its telling has structure but no natural edge. The lead characters are still young, and one day another series of films will be based on their future lives. The episode has a sense not of finality, but of confronting a need for change, and seeking a way out of a blind alley. Refreshingly, it offers absolutely no answers.

As a film, however, it is not so satisfying, especially when watching it for the first time. It takes a while to adjust to the elements of dream and fantasy. Also after all the hours of watching the films and living with the characters, it was difficult not to expect a conventional romantic, or at least dramatic, resolution of some kind, and it is only in watching again and understanding better that the lack of one becomes a relief.

The film opens with magnificent shots of the huge fair which constitutes the "Oktoberfest". The movement, the noise, the glowing rich colours, the sheer scale of the sequence, the spectacular images, are overwhelming. Hermann and Herr Gross wander through it to the vast entertainment tent where Consul Handschuh of Isarfilm is hosting a party for his firm. Handschuh radiates a manic bonhomie, there is too much noise, too much drink and too many people, the good cheer is exhausting. Hermann reflects that Schnüßchen, used to her huge family, would love it. He re-encounters Erika, now married, while Herr Zielke arrives late and clearly uncomfortable in the surroundings. Finally, the party is invaded by drunks, and dissolves into the night.

These scenes must have cost a fortune to stage, involving so many costumed and directed extras, and so much organisation. The Oktoberfest is a hugely inflated version of the Schabbach Kirmes, and serves a similar function. Hermann says, "All real feeling is crushed with everyday banality." As with similar set-piece celebrations elsewhere in *Heimat*, the Kirmes, Hermann's wedding, the Millenium party at the end of *Heimat 3*, nothing is as it seems, and there is darkness behind the masks. Consul Handschuh is mortally ill, Herr Zielke is plotting to split up the company and build a rival one round the studio with Hermann's youth and talent, and Hermann himself is depressed. He is thirty years old and has still achieved nothing of what he hoped. He is suffering more and more doubt about himself and his talent. His thoughts of the past ten years revolve round his friends, who are now out of sight.

Afterwards, Zielke and Gross take him to a bar for a drink. Zielke speaks of his wartime role as one of Goebbel's directors, of a shady deal struck with Handschuh to their mutual advantage at the end of the war, and the power the Consul has had over him ever since. His dizzying financial proposition for a new company leaves Hermann feeling unreal and mistrustful. He sees Jean-Marie and Volker in the crowd leaving the bar and runs out after them.

Of the next scene Edgar Reitz has written: “In the last part [of *Heimat 2*] it is never quite clear whether a scene depicts Hermann’s fears and wishes, his memory, or a real story” (*Drehort Heimat*, 2004, p. 160). He explains that to mark this the scene was set unrealistically in a glass-roofed court of the Palace of Justice, and in a light that could be either indoors or out. Presumably there are many ways to see it – perhaps as a dream inspired by a real conversation, or maybe reflecting Hermann’s envy of his successful fellow musicians. The next evening Mutter Lichtblau says that Volker is indeed in Avignon. Maybe his two friends have become linked in Hermann’s dream with the corrupt dealings of Handschuh and Zielke, though in fact Volker’s part is only to acquiesce, under protest. Is Hermann simply projecting his anxiety about allowing his own talent to be used for commercial purposes? His words at the end suggest that it is anyway a nightmare that he wants to wake out of, and in the following scene he is wandering round his apartment in his dressing gown.

Homesickness hits him at last, and he starts trying to write to his mother, haunted by images of familiar places at home and comparing his own ten year absence with Paul’s. He is interrupted by a dishevelled Alex, who drunkenly cadges more alcohol and fantasises that he will write seven books about women, whose century this now is.

Next day comes the unexpected and moving offer from Consul Handschuh and his wife. Handschuh is an interesting character – his Nazi past does not sound so evil as Zielke’s, the deal he had with Zielke was to protect him after the war in return for illegal appropriation of cameras and equipment, with which to set up the business. A creative businessman himself, Handschuh idealises artistically creative people whom he wishes he could emulate, he understands them, and recognises the value of their work at Isarfilm. Now, gravely ill, and out of his great sadness, and that of his wife, that they could not have children, he is offering to make Hermann their substitute son, and the heir of the business. The couple are portrayed with all the sensitivity with which Reitz draws even relatively minor characters.

There is a lovely black and white image in which Hermann’s face is seen through a window, with the Ammersee reflected in its panes. Numbed by his depression, he talks on and on about the future of the studio, without believing what he is saying. His music means nothing anymore: “I heard myself talking and was sad.” Later Handschuh asks him: “Haven’t you ever wanted a father?”, and Hermann replies, perhaps remembering Anton: “Yes, sometimes, one that I can hate.” But if he is willing to stay and devote himself to working on the Consul’s behalf – “you can hate me too if you wish” – he will inherit the whole firm. “But I am a musician, Herr Konsul”. Hermann cannot decide and asks for time.

In shock at receiving two huge financial offers, for the sake of his youth and idealism, in the course of twenty four hours, Hermann needs advice. In the Hunsrück he would have asked his grandmother. He imagines that Kath would have told him not to disappoint the rich Consul, but only to promise not to forget his mother and grandmother however much money he acquired. This might have been true of Marie-Goot or Anton or Pauline, but it does not sound quite like Kath. Is it just romanticism to think that she might have intuitively recognised that his heart was still in his music and with Clarissa, and that he should follow it?



Anyway, Hermann is not about to be “a good little Schabbacher Hermännche” and promise anything.

Renate’s bar has closed down, but a light comes on in Clarissa’s apartment. Her mother tells him she is on a successful European tour with the *Hexenpassion*. Tomorrow she is in Heidelberg. Next day Hermann takes his free railcard and sets out with the idea of travelling in whatever direction he may feel like, without any goal to arrive at, “to keep moving, far and wide, without rest and endlessly”, where no one should find him and he might finally stay silent. Another flight. When he reaches the station there happens to be an announcement that an express for Heidelberg is about to depart. The image as he chases down the platform after it recalls Kieslowski’s *Blind Chance*.

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From here onwards to the end of the film it is indeed “never quite clear whether a scene depicts Hermann’s fears and wishes, his memory, or a real story”, as the director writes in the passage quoted earlier. One cannot be sure that anything more one learns now about the familiar characters “really” happens to them. It seems that Hermann travels for about four days through Germany and Holland, following the trail of Clarissa’s concert tour, catching up with it in Amsterdam and then returning to Schabbach for the first time in ten years. Even that may be a fantasy. On the long hypnotic train journeys, with vistas of railtracks and flying landscapes and half-seen reflections in the windows, he dreams and fantasises about some of his friends and significant acquaintances of the past ten years. They appear in very concrete form, but at times in bizarre or inexplicable circumstances. It is a kind of leave-taking of them all, and of the whole decade, before returning to his starting point in order to set out all over again.

The selection of characters re-encountered may have been decided as much as anything by availability of the actors, but anyway the logic of this journey is the logic of dream. For a long while Clarissa is there only in her absences, as she seemed to be throughout most of the time he has known her. A single hair in a hotel bedroom in Heidelberg, a tattered poster for her performance the day after it has taken place. Always “Today is yesterday”.

Retracing the journey from the Rhineland that he made ten years ago, with his own reflection blurring in the window glass, mesmerised by the speeding railway lines, he smiles at an image of his past self, the young Hunsrücker travelling solemnly towards a new life in Munich. Then his consciousness is invaded by Renate, the first woman he met on arriving there, now transforming into one after the other of her most bizarre manifestations from the ‘U-boot’, with all her manic warmth and friendship. As he jumps out of the train at Heidelberg he leaves her in a weird mermaid costume, waving from the luggage rack.

Everywhere there are posters for the *Hexenpassion*, but he is too late (did Mutter Lichtblau deliberately mislead him?) The performance was yesterday, the singers have left town, and today the theatre is showing *The Beggar Student* instead. So Hermann begs a hotel room,

which turns out to be the one where Clarissa had slept the night before. In front of the Hotel zum Ritter (the Knight or Cavalier) a man leads a riderless horse.

Next morning on the railway station there is a "Wanted" poster for the Baader-Meinhof gang. One of those pictured is Helga. Has she finally abandoned the difficulty and complexity of her own understanding, which two years earlier in Berlin had been re-awakened by the attack on her child's nursery? Is she now trapped in the icy simplicities of extremism? In so far as the character is supposed to have been partly inspired by the life of Ulrike Meinhof, this seems likely to be a "real" development of her story.

Hermann travels on towards Cologne. Along the Rhine valley, below the edge of the Hunsrück, he sees his own car down on the road, driven by Schnüßchen, with Lulu beside her. Apart from this strange but not impossible coincidence, their encounter at first seems to happen in the "real" world, but it gradually acquires dream-like features. Hermann seems to have got out at the next station, which happens to be Bacharach. When he finds Schnüßchen and Lulu watching a small circus, on the bank of the river, he becomes aware that one of the performers is Juan. Afterwards, Lulu cries and runs away from him. Schnüßchen, quite changed, and no longer her usual warm bubbly self, is delivering an intense monologue about her own "intellectual" struggles and achievements, to which Juan listens in silence, with his strange fixed smile. She is startled to see Hermann, and rattles on, while he becomes increasingly uncomfortable. She refuses to talk to him about Lulu, and moves away. Juan has welcomed Hermann, but now his smile disappears and he watches with infinite sadness the gulf grown between the couple, and Hermann's distress. Hermann leaves, and Schnüßchen pushes past Juan as though he were not there. Perhaps he is not, except in Hermann's dream. Juan sometimes spoke of an ambition to become a circus performer, it was never clear how seriously he meant it. But I don't think one can conclude from this episode alone that he "really" ever did.

Dream or synchronicity, this sad little scene is the last we see of Schnüßchen and Lulu in *Heimat 2* and also the last we ever see of Juan. There is a feeling that somehow the whole story reflects Juan's faraway sadness at the loss of his friend and at all that is now happening to him, and Hermann's reciprocal sadness, and that their dreams still connect them. This is no doubt a sentimental idea. The accompanying music is now powerful and full of sorrow. Hermann walks back along the river bank, past a lonely Bactrian camel, and meets a loose colt or pony cantering freely in the other direction, as he had himself ten years before. But he no longer feels free.

On the train again, Hermann encounters someone whom both he and we have forgotten, Dr Bretschneider's companion who once commented on the manuscript he brought with him to Munich, of which he had been so proud. The train is held up by an alarming force of heavily armed police and helicopters, in search of terrorists. One of the helicopters swerves away to a roadblock taking place on the nearby highway, in which Stefan is delayed.

The story of Stefan and Helga, which is intercut with the story of Hermann's night in Cologne, looks like a conscious "homage" to political thrillers of the period, but I would not be

able to identify a model. Ironically, one of the big posters in Stefan's flat is for *The Conformist*, but that is set in an earlier time. Stefan's clothes and hairstyle (1970s fashions now appearing), the heavy spectacle frames, the spiral staircase to his Munich apartment, the shadows of the police on its walls, and Helga's clothes, especially her disguise with wig and heavy glasses, all seem vaguely familiar, almost stereotyped. Maybe the scene is partly as Hermann would have imagined it, on reading the press reports. The one illuminating moment is when Stefan says: "My God, Helga, how can you live like this?" and she replies: "At last I'm needed".

Cologne also has posters for the *Hexenpassion*, some with stickers saying "Only today". But when Hermann goes to the theatre it is closed and he is met by a cleaner looking remarkably like Oma Aufschrey who says aggressively "Today is yesterday". Looking up at the cathedral spires against the sky, Hermann revolves until he gets dizzy. At the same time back in Munich, Alex, drunk in his digs, staggers and falls face down among his stacks of tumbling books, felled by a fatal stroke.

When Helga tries to phone from Stefan's flat, the phone is engaged. Kathrin in Berlin at the same moment is speaking to Hermann in Cologne, and they sing Schubert's "Der Wanderer" to each other over the phone. Kathrin seems gentler, there are traces of tears on her face, and the scene is beautifully lit on both sides of the conversation. Touchingly, she shares Hermann's mood, until "the Revolution" needs the phone. Next morning, after reading the news about Stefan, Hermann travels further. On the journey there are more dreams or fantasies which add little to what has gone before. "Magically" he is presented with a pile of photographs of his wedding and all his friends, including a sad Juan and a young Helga. Nightmare takes over the logic as he finds the lavatory occupied by Oma Aufschrey. In horror he leaps off at the next station which happens to be Dülmen. Phoning Mutter Lichtblau, he learns Clarissa is in Amsterdam. Marianne passes unaware.

Hermann travels swiftly to Amsterdam, and there are lovely images of the canals, recalling, but very different from, those of Venice in Episode 10. He arrives late for the *Hexenpassion* and only gets into the hall itself halfway through the spectacle. The text of the work is a literal seventeenth century account of the torturing to death of a "witch", which in its simple agonised repetition is to me much more powerful than the performance itself, but that is a personal reaction. The music grows with repeated listening. The words and music are enough, the movements, lighting and staging are of their time, and seem now unnecessarily melodramatic and pretentious. Hermann is once more overwhelmed, and for a moment seems to see seven of "his" women, led by Marianne, advancing on him from the stage, but this passes. After the concert the musicians troop away to their hotel.

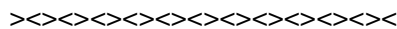
The beautiful scene in the Hotel Acacia is again dreamlike, and full of silences. Its gentle humour brings it to earth but I am still not convinced that this, too, is not a dream or a fantasy, Hermann's, or Clarissa's, or both. They lie initially in a pose reminiscent of a Matisse. The scene is strangely lit, very beautifully, but in the style of another film, reflecting the light in the last "chorale" of the *Hexenpassion*. For me this has a distancing, unreal effect.

I know that might trouble people who want to think of the scene as “real” in the context of the story, but watching the whole film late at night in something of a dreamlike state myself, I had the illusion that most of the lines spoken here had been spoken before, either by the couple themselves or by other couples in the series – Evelyne and Ansgar, or Reinhard and Esther. Some of them actually were. The scene is full of echoes of all the love stories in the first two *Heimat* series, and as such is very moving.

Clarissa’s note and the intrusion of the chambermaids in the morning brings it all into the light of a normal day. Hermann has to wait. In one of the “Fragments” Martha, waiting endlessly for the return of Anton, asks the child Hermann: “Do you know what that is, Hermann? To wait?” and the little boy, who has watched her crying, says “Yes”. But as a young man he has announced that “Waiting makes you stupid”, and now he fails to wait. Smashing the mirror, he only multiplies his own image. His leaving Amsterdam has something of the wretched, unconscious self-selection that causes us to desert the scene we most want to be part of, because we are not yet ready or adult enough for it. He has failed to ask the right question.

Nonetheless once more, in dream or in life, he has known “the moment where the whole heart says ‘yes’”. Clarissa too echoes these words, showing up the absurdity of the attitudes implied around her at the press conference. Asked why she performed the *Hexenpassion*, she replies: “In this project right from the start my whole heart said ‘yes’, for the first time.”

Back on the train Hermann is again in flight, this time to that “repressive, narrow, limited, hopeless, shit-stinking place we call home”. But he plans to write to Consul Handschuh that he has gone back to the beginning, and bids him farewell for ever. “My dreams are different, what they are I will find out here. I have to learn to wait.” Somehow it is hard to believe that he will, for a very long time. Glasisch tells him he hasn’t changed at all. He walks and walks towards Schabbach, dwindling in the distance, we never see him reach his home.



## *Heimat 3*

1989-1999

The role of memory in the creating of *Heimat 3* seems profoundly different from its role in either of the two earlier series. It is very recent memory, generated entirely within the eleven years up to the Millenium. It is memory structured by intellect, and imbued with the mood of today. The experience that it records is adult experience. It was subjected at the same time, or soon after, to analysis in a language of politics and social history, as well as simple recognition in the language of immediate personal response. Since 1989 change has been so rapid and radical that the memory even of recent experience is getting lost. Now, at the time of making the film, it is rescued and interpreted retrospectively from within a state of mind to which the experiences themselves have given rise. For most of the period it is a long way from the sepia-toned memory of family tradition, or intuitively recreated memory of the intense feelings and perceptions of being young, long ago.

At the same time, the “third ‘Heimat’ ” is like the second, in that it is a ‘Heimat’ of choice, located in an imagined future. But it is also very different, in that the choice is a flight from the actuality of the second ‘Heimat’, and the imagination is inspired by an idealised memory of the first. Its reality rests on the survival of older members of the generation who have remained in the nexus of the first ‘Heimat’ and changed with it, but as a ‘Heimat’ of choice it remains a fantasy that dissolves around those who have chosen to “return” to it.

Henry Arnold says [*interview in VPRO television documentary 19/12/04*] , “It is characteristic of *Die Zweite Heimat* and *Heimat 3*, and probably *Heimat 1*, that Reitz is telling the story of a decline or dismantling [*Abbau*]”. So the action goes from the euphoria of the fall of the Wall and of the reunion of Hermann and Clarissa, to the high point on the Zugspitze. Then, even as Germany rejoices in winning the World Cup, a deterioration gradually sets in, so that relationships start to crumble, dreams go sour, brutal economic and social realities start to intrude, change becomes a source not of joy but of anxiety, and individual lives are challenged by financial failure, sickness and death. At the Millenium there is a frantic need to recover hope and faith in yet more change, but the series ends in a mood of disillusion, realism grounded in the family, and maybe tentative hope. Alan Andres [*personal communication*] describes this succinctly as “the human journey most of us make from idealism to realism, and often, to resignation, with family being a regenerating constant”.

In parallel with this world view, goes a sense of despondency at a personal level, so that Hermann “the idealist” is a bearer of the concept “that applies to all intellectuals these days, they are at a loss in a special way... they cannot turn back and make their way again, despite all their experience, knowledge and ideals... Hermann increasingly lacks language, ... his

character becomes steadily less outspoken, more a rather pale character, ... finally he is almost like anyone else" [Edgar Reitz in an interview with Maarten van Bracht (24/12/04)]. This is the mood within which the memories of the past decade are rescued from oblivion and interpreted.

## §

We hear plenty about the nefarious influence on *Heimat 3* of the TV editors and the financial backers, who are reputed to have curtailed the original 11-part design of the series and maybe instigated the introduction of the "Hollywood-style" catastrophe in Episode 6. Everything one has since read or seen about the film emphasises the dire effect of the conditions under which Reitz was forced to work. 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, *Heimat 2* was not rated a great "success". It can only be imagined what we have lost because Reitz 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 *Heimat 2* out of "love of 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 loss of magic and what seemed at first viewing like a loss of the author's love for characters such as Hermann and Clarissa, at least in the early episodes of *Heimat 3*, may reflect this weariness. One of the most disconcerting aspects of the series, especially the first half, is that Hermann and Clarissa have both become quite different people from their incarnations in *Heimat 2*, as the actors of their parts describe in the VPRO documentary. That may also reflect the sense that Edgar Reitz 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. As we have seen, 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 *Heimat 3*, though it has to be said that Hermann was always the "intellectual, eternally failing to arrive" even in *Heimat 2*, but he seemed somehow more complex and understandable then, and full of energy, and funny, and young. In the VPRO documentary quoted earlier, Henry Arnold says of his character in *Heimat 3*: "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."

One wonders too throughout the first half of the series what has happened to Clarissa since the sixties: though still an accomplished performance, it is not the same person at all, even more than Hermann she has become someone else. The mystery and creativity have gone and at least until the end of Episode 4 the vulnerability is half hidden. She has acquired a kind of brittleness in shallow social situations, and a bright, enthusiastic practicality which does not accord with the person we knew in the earlier series. At the same time, paradoxically, the need for care for her son has placed her once more at the mercy of her mother's emotional blackmail. But she has kept another freedom, attained at the end of *Heimat 2*, the freedom

from fear of losing her “freedom” in relationship, and her conflicts are much more now those of everyday life.

*Heimat 3* lacks the enjoyment there was in *Heimat 2* of watching 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. But there is no counterpart to that in what is represented of her life as a singer, we see simply the stress of combining professional and home life. Hermann's having gravitated to a more conventional form of music making may be realistic, considering the constraints of the market on concert programming, but he too is less convincing as the great "maestro" than he was as the young experimental composer. However this really is unimportant – they may not actually be "world class" musicians but, in the scenes of their public appearances, they still come across as serious musicians, performing and not miming their parts, and this enriches *Heimat 3* just as it enriched *Heimat 2*. Sadly, in *Heimat 3* there is much less film music contributed by Mamangakis, and one deeply misses the constant delight of his score. However as time goes by, Riessler's intriguing music for bass clarinet becomes very effective at giving ground and voice to the tensions that arise in the story, though by the end of the fourth episode it is starting to annoy. But that whole episode is also haunted by two contrasting interpretations of Schumann's *Dichterliebe*, a straight romantic version, and an ironic, but unfortunately rather fatuous (to my ears), “crossover” one.

## §

The greater part of the series is shot in bright colour, and there are beautiful images in the first episode, including the great panorama from the Zugspitze. Black and white film is used for historical reconstructions of Berlin and Leipzig in 1989, and for Hermann's return to Schabbach, which maybe he was still seeing through the eyes of memory. The black and white images have a lovely silvery light, but again lack the texture and depth of the work of Gernot Roll or Christian Reitz, and the lighting and the positioning of the characters on the screen seem somehow more conventional. There is not the same flowing of movement through the scenes, nor the spaces carved out of light and shadow, and no sense of the movement continuing beyond the frame of the screen. The same applies in some degree to the colour images in the first four films of *Heimat 3*. In Episodes 3 and 4 particularly there are many beautiful scenes, maybe with only two or three characters, with clear living light from windows, or elsewhere, often from a luminous background, pervading a whole space, but not creating it in the way of the earlier *Heimats*. Depth is created more by planes of placement of characters and scenery, and rather less by focus and light. The landscape images are also often beautiful, but somehow more static than in the first *Heimat*. They stay flatly within the frame of the screen and do not lead you through and beyond themselves. The sense of space comes only from the movement of the camera, it is not suggested in the image. This changes in the last two episodes, with Christian Reitz' cinematography. Once again, scenes have light and texture and depth, and the flexibility and sweep of his camera crane allows the landscape and vehicle shots to flow. I wish I had the technical knowledge and language to describe this naive impression better.

There are a number of very beautiful close-ups in the second episode, striking images both in black and white and in colour, especially of Ernst and Tobi, and also of Gunnar. In that episode there are, as well, many black and white sequences. Reitz has explained that “they only appear when the scenes take off into the sphere of universal validity or contemporary history. These are for example scenes dealing with the fall of the Wall, historical flashbacks or people in borderline situations, moments detached from the plot” [*interview with Ingo Fliess*]. However there seem to be other subtleties at work too.

When in Episode 2 black and white film marks the movement of characters back into the East, not only does it announce that these scenes are historical, that by the time we view the film the old GDR no longer exists, but it also suggests two opposing meanings – representing on the one hand the idea that from the West the East looked merely dingy, backward and oppressed, but on the other possibly something like nostalgia and humour among those now looking back who lived in the East through those times.

At the same time, black and white film seems to be associated with a kind of anguish, the dark places we look back at from the daylight of “normal” life, the cracks in the surface of things. It appears when Gunnar drives off in angry distress, contemplates throwing away his wedding ring, and sets out to survive in a dilapidated part of Berlin. Colour only reappears for him with the newly washed T-shirt, the first gesture of warmth that he has received, which then irradiates the whole dingy tenement. There is something the same in Episode 5 where the scenes of Clarissa’s illness in hospital are all shown in black and white, until the day she is discharged. And in Episode 3 the agonising archetypal confrontation of the elderly brothers is also filmed in black and white.

## §

The constraints on the making of the third *Heimat* series drastically affected the way the story was told. Often the actors themselves, in their faces, their silences, the energy of their personalities, manage to substitute for whole passages that have had to be excluded from the truncated text. In the first episode, in particular, the narrative is rushed, and there are few opportunities for the film to explore subtle byways in the development of characters and their interactions. In the early episodes there are hardly any sequences of such beauty that one wants to replay them repeatedly for sheer delight. Also, on first viewing the whole series, the shapes of the individual episodes are not always very clear. Episode 4 sweeps you along with the current of the narrative, and some of its sequences have a space, coherence and power that remain with you long afterwards. But some other episodes move rapidly through events, in a rather breathless way, or contain disjointed sections of very different character and mood, so that it is hard to discern the basic design and identity of each film. The work as it now exists is the 6-part version on the DVDs, so there is no point in attempting to re-construct notionally an 11-part “original” that was never filmed. All the same, watching the films again and thinking about them more deeply, I have found that if one or other of them seems in places disjointed and uneven, it sometimes helps to imagine it as a combination of separate episodes, each with its own mood and dynamic, that had perforce to be compressed into one film. I will attempt to explore this further in the following pages.



I hope it is clear that I am definitely not trying to reconstruct a fantasy version of *Heimat 3*. That would be stupid. I am simply recording how I found a way into the shape of the narrative within the six episodes, a way which helps me follow and remember the mood and dynamic of each part of the story.

Meanwhile, it is worth reflecting that because these great films are the work of an individual artist and his team, they cannot be homogeneous, like a commercial product. The opus 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, because it is a living thing. The fact that many of us were initially disappointed with the first two or three films of the third series does not mean that *Heimat 3* as a whole was in some sense “unsuccessful”. It grows in stature and in the power to fascinate, each time one watches it again.



### **3.1 Episode 1: “The Happiest People in the World”: Turning point and reunion; ‘Heimat’ as a new-built dream? Or a family and place refound?**

It is probably not possible for an English audience to appreciate what the memories of 1989 recreated in this episode mean for Germans, both in the West and in the East. So it may well be that we completely underestimate the true impact of what is being portrayed. We tend to focus on the rather perfunctory re-encounter of Hermann and Clarissa, and our distress that they meet again in this way with barely a hint of their multi-layered enigmatic relationship in the past. Yet we know from his interview with Maarten van Bracht that Edgar Reitz shot about an hour of film that was never used, which covered a whole day in Berlin celebrating the fall of the Wall, and gave more depth and credence to the reunion of Hermann and Clarissa, so that “the two would not have arrived in the Hunsrück before the end of part 1.” The missing part would have depicted an extra 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 more plausible. Dwelling longer on the events of that day might also have enhanced understanding of the import of the fall of the Wall for the whole following decade, which Reitz emphasises so much in his interviews about *Heimat 3*, but which the shortening of the films has tended almost to trivialise. It could have given a quite different balance to the series, the significance of the “Wende” might have become more accessible to non-German audiences, and we might even have felt less of a sense of loss and disbelief in the new incarnations of the leading characters.

After that, it might have been less disconcerting to start a new film for the scenes of speedy housebuilding, full of the energy of the recent upheavals, with perhaps more space to develop the skillfully interwoven individual stories. As it is, it was not till after having watched the whole series that one came to understand and appreciate Brussig's new East German characters in depth, as much more than figures in a kind of docu-drama. Having been followed through the subsequent episodes they have now 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 *Heimat 1* and *Heimat 2*, but even if it does at times seem that (to be a bit pretentious) Dickens has collaborated with George Eliot or Flaubert – it finally feels "so much the better for that!"

Nonetheless even in Episode 1 as it now is, there are moments of true magic – 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 the technicolour clamour of most of this episode. There are also grateful moments like the tenderness of Rudi and Lenchen, 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. Some of the new minor characters are subtly drawn and played too, like Tillmann and Moni. Then there are the children. Reitz must be one of the very best directors of small children in film. Gunnar's daughter creeps onto his lap as he plays the piano, and it is 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. They are so gentle to him.

The culmination on the Zugspitze, with its sad and funny aftermath, is a delicious mix of Reitz and Brussig, which again is easier to appreciate after watching the whole series, and reading a little about the significance of the scene in Germany. At first Gunnar's antics, imitating Honecker and running his little green bag up the flagpole, meant nothing, and the story of Petra and Reinhold had had such small space to develop that it seemed no more than an awkward contrivance for the sake of the plot. Now, however, Gunnar's behaviour in this scene is all of a piece with everything that is both exasperating and endearing about him. He stubbornly remains himself throughout all the changes of the decade, and equally stubbornly represents his half of the country, with heart warming, clear-sighted humour. At the same time, in personal life, he does everything wrong, antagonises everyone he cares about most, and yet at heart he is loving and lovable, and impossible. It is touching too in both this and the next episode how his friends, Hermann and Clarissa as well as Udo and Jana, unsentimentally try to support him and shield him from the situations he gets himself into. It seems they feel for him much as we do too, in the audience. Also, even the relationship of Petra and Reinhold has subtle moments in the all too few and brief scenes where they appear together, in the first two episodes. Their faces show more than the truncated script allows them to develop.

The 'Heimat' that Hermann and Clarissa seek, and the 'Heimat' that they find, are already contrasted in this first episode. The pair are seeking an escape from their exhausting

professional lives which perhaps now are offering them less that is stimulating and new, their creativity has maybe reached a plateau. They are both tired of constantly travelling, they want to “unpack for ever.” “What is this great freedom we’ve been seeking?”, asks Clarissa, “It’s all a mistake, there’s no love, no home, nothing firm for our children, nothing to hold on to. Things have to change.” For Clarissa, it will be a new imaginary ‘Heimat’, a romantic ruin with a spectacular view, a place to be quiet and alone with someone she remembers as the love of her life nearly twenty years ago, but even then never managed to be quiet and alone with, beyond a few brief hours. For Hermann the idea starts in that way too, but rather hilariously turns out (by “blind chance” again) to be a return to the physical ‘Heimat’ of his own youth. The romanticism of their dream is emphasised in so much of what they say and do, and in the lyrics of the songs Clarissa sings by the ruined house, or later in the car, already driving away again alone, next day. Very unusually for *Heimat*, her singing of Schumann in the car unrealistically has a piano accompaniment, which somehow jars a little, or maybe is intentionally a comment on the lack of realism in her situation. There is also unspoken humour in the image of a huge romantic moon, ornamented by delicate bare branches, lighting the couple’s wandering round their “haunted” ruin.

In reality the dream soon comes into conflict with the demands of both their concert schedules, and in Clarissa’s case with the needs of her son. Meanwhile Hermann is seamlessly re-absorbed into the ‘Heimat’ he had thought to leave for ever. “You could have travelled all round the world, but for the people of Schabbach you’d just have been ‘away for a little while’”. Udo tells him that the thing about your ‘Heimat’ is that “you don’t need to explain who you are”, and to start with that sounds attractive. But when Hermann re-encounters Anton, now a wealthy *paterfamilias* whose whole family, gathered in his opulent bourgeois bungalow, are self-consciously preserving their Hunsrück dialect and identity, he is swept into a world where he does not feel so comfortable. He finds himself being given an instructional tour round the premises of Simon Optik, like the young Hermännchen, and Anton tells him: “You went away, but you will always be one of us”. “I longed for Clarissa,” Hermann remembers. Then he discovers that the site of the dream house is inside the security zone of an American nuclear base, in what is still the “cold war”, and he is recruited into the local peace movement. The ring of people holding hands to “embrace” the airbase looks computer generated and artificial, which is somehow a bad omen for this future ‘Heimat’.

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3.2 Episode 2: “Champions of the World”: East and West, fortunes rise and fall

Like the previous episode, Episode 2 on first viewing still seemed to contain elements of docu-drama, and the scenes in the East remained hard for an English viewer to appreciate. However when watched again, a much clearer and richer impression emerges. The narrative has more space, and there are many small delicate moments of glances and dialogue, between

Ernst and Tobi, for instance, or Udo and Jana. There is accompanying music, much of it on guitar, and some lovely images, often with just one or two characters, maybe Gunnar by the television, or Ernst and Tobi awaking to the looming presence of Lenin. More broadly, there seem to be two major themes: one is of movement back and forth over the former border between the West and the East; the other is of ups and downs in the fortunes of individual characters.

For the Easterners, especially Udo and Jana, and Tillmann, and in material terms apparently also for Gunnar, this is a time of rising fortunes, new business, new cars, travel. Udo and Jana buy a new car and set up a business back in Leipzig. Tillmann is going to settle in the West with Moni and set up his own business in Oberwesel. It is sad that we do not see very much more of Tillmann after his delightful eruption into the first episode. Gunnar cannot bear to return to Leipzig without his family, but goes to Berlin and seemingly becomes a Wall-pecking millionaire.

For the Westerners, there are shadows on the horizon. Hermann and Clarissa, hoping to regain their initial "faith" in the dream house, are still torn between their professional lives and their romantic ideal. Already at their house-warming party it is clear that the dream is starting to fade. The house itself looks unavoidably over-restored, with the grounds and mysterious woodland suburbanised, and, for the party, invaded by opulent motors. Maybe 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 shadow sides of the modern world: noise, traffic, destruction of nature...." [*Interview with Ingo Fliess*]. Clarissa's bright manner and obsession with the house is uncomfortable as well. It is hard to imagine the Clarissa of *Heimat 2* making a such a success of being a charming hostess to Anton and his family and seeking to be accepted by them.

This party too, like so many others in earlier *Heimat* films, has its dark side. There are family tensions. Anton's family make a self-important entrance. Anton himself has had his first stroke, and, looking not unlike his father Paul in old age, he grandly presents the last horseshoe ever forged by Mathias. The Günderrode house is to be stamped as another Simon house, it seems. His son Hartmut is sulky, his rebellion already stirring. Clarissa's son Arnold is under her supervision after a conviction for hacking into bank accounts. In the past she must have left him for years in the care of her mother, knowing only too well what that would be like for him, and she does not know how to 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. There are even echoes of her own mother in the intense way she behaves to him.

Then there is the plight of Gunnar, uncontrollably distressed because Petra and the children have arrived unexpectedly with Reinhold. The scenes of his family conflict are beautifully scripted and performed, and it is heart-rending when he is moved to tears by his small daughter. Petra and Reinhold should not both have come, their behaviour is unforgiveably insensitive, but it is also difficult for Petra. She would know that Gunnar has no boundaries and that if she showed him any warmth he would totally overreact and

misinterpret the signals. By the time the whole situation blows apart amid angry words and frightened children, and Gunnar roars off for the last time in his yellow VW, Hermann and Clarissa have slipped away together into the neighbouring vineyard and only return when the house is still and at peace. Next morning Hermann learns that he has been commissioned to write a “Re-unification Symphony”.

Meanwhile Ernst has found a kindred spirit in Tobi, and the pair take off in the plane to the East, to prospect for valuable hidden works of art in Russia. Ernst with typical over confidence misreads the signals, underestimates political realities that the Ossies know only too well, ignores Tobi’s warnings and is taken prisoner beyond the Russian border. Tobi has the sense not to accompany him further than the redundant GDR military base at Marxwalde.

Ernst is one of the greatest creations of *Heimat 3* and his scenes are among the very best. He is the devious, reclusive hoarder of dubiously acquired wealth, at the same time mischievous, cocking a snook at authorities and sober citizens. There is a lovely image of Ernst’s open-hearted delight at being allowed to sit in the cockpit of a fighter jet at Marxwalde. It links right back to *Heimat 1*, to the famous scene of his buzzing Schabbach with a bunch of red carnations for the proxy wedding, and even earlier, to himself as the lad who was so fond of Otto and so hurt when Otto had to leave, that he could no longer stay in the family home.

Tobi is in many senses a borderline figure, rejecting the material values of both the Simons in the West and Gunnar in the East. Though “hippy” and laid back, he is nonetheless a highly skilled craftsman, astute 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. There is a short, very powerful scene where he confronts an officer who assaulted him as a conscript years before in the GDR. In spite of the bitterness from that time, he is gentle, and the scenes with his partner and her daughter, Anna, with Down’s syndrome, are touching. Ernst typically lets him down, but he half 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. His brief reappearance with Anna at the Millennium party in Episode 6 is a delight.

In Episode 2 black and white film may help to enhance the distancing effect of the comedy in some places. There is plenty of comedy in this episode, the prime example being the progress of Lenin, to which conscious homage has been paid more recently in *Das Leben der Anderen*. Lenin affords the one real belly laugh in the the whole third series, that I can remember, but there is still a sinister undertone – the end of the episode leaves one wondering if he really is safely earthed in that paddock in Schabbach. There are other comic passages: the situation of the redundant GDR army and its equipment, and (mostly in colour) Gunnar’s adventures as his luck appears to turn. Whether or not pure fantasy on Gunnar’s part, as Alan Andres [*Online Discussion of Heimat 3 (pdf) pp.57-58*] intriguingly suggests, the sequences of the double wave, the pneumatic secretary, the Elton John piano and so on, are intentionally comic, but rather less subtle than the tragicomedy of Gunnar’s predicament in Episode 6.

Alan Andres' idea, that Gunnar's adventures in Episode 2 could be largely fantasy, resonated with several of us in the English online discussion group, but was disturbing to others. It is true that in the interview with 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 there is no suggestion there that he was treating it as a fantasy. Nonetheless, the same sequences could be understood in different ways without falsifying either interpretation, and that double wave by the four “Warner Bros.” executives does suggest something beyond simple realism. In the 1993 Arena documentary, 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”.

In Episode 4, Gunnar is attracted to the concert in Berlin both by Clarissa’s presence and by the title of the performance: “This Life is Only a Dream”. Is his new-found wealth really “only a dream”? Or does it just feel like that because it has done nothing for his emotional life?

In *Drehort Heimat* (p.291), in one of his production diary entries for *Heimat 3*, Reitz writes 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 [viewers] who are patient. ...Only when stories in this respect "lie" and overstep the bounds of reality does light-heartedness arise, which makes [both] his readiness to be patient and the hidden melancholy of all life endurable to the viewer."

So after all, could it be that Gunnar's adventures, whether fantasy or fact, are indeed intended as the same kind of gift to the viewer as for instance the song routines in Denis Potter's *Pennies from Heaven*?

It is disturbing that Gunnar relieves his rage and loneliness by scrawling bright childish images of his family on the Wall, and sadistically chiselling into them. But when the episode ends, with Germany’s win in the World Cup being celebrated by both West and East, his chisel is absurdly diverted by uproarious fans, tossing him shoulder high because he shares a name with the man who scored the victorious goal.

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### **3.3 Episode 3: “The Russians are Coming”: in a changing world, power and rivalry grip the refound ‘Heimat’, last meeting of the brothers; cousins bound by tragedy**

Episode 3 is preceded and followed by big gaps in time and in what we learn of the characters’ stories. On first viewing it seemed chaotic, with too much material and too many story-lines to absorb. If only there had been resources to spread this material over two films, instead of just one.

The episode as we have it focusses mainly on the effect of Reunification on the West. Social changes (vacation of the US airbase, settlement of the refugees, threat to small businesses from predatory asset stripping and globalisation) combine with complex family and cultural tensions among both the incoming Russian-Germans, and the Simons. The convergence of these factors in the story of Anton, Mara, Hartmut and Galina should make for a taut and moving episode. The dramatic incident of Lutz’ death, irrevocably linking Lulu with the story of Anton and Hartmut, is a powerful ending to the episode – but at the same time it points to something unsatisfying in the structure of the 6-part series. We have seen Hermann and Clarissa starting to face the failure of their romantic dream, but neither in this episode nor in the remaining ones, do we see enough of Lulu, who is another pivotal character in the family drama. Somehow in this rather diffuse third episode the two parallel and equally powerful stories of Hartmut and of Lulu have been cut and pasted together, at the expense of Lulu’s.

There is no more than a bare outline of what has happened to Ernst and Tobi. I believe somewhere it is told there was footage of Ernst’s meeting with the “Russian-Germans” in Russia, which might have enriched our understanding of his relationship with them, and smoothed the awkward transition between the episodes. These bewildered people are doubly “refugees”, who on the bus sing a Russian song about the homeland they have left, which in their minds was never truly their own, and a German one from the much more distant and quite strange “homeland” they are arriving in. One knows their hearts are never going to be in modern Schabbach – ironically, they might have felt far more at home in the Schabbach of *Heimat 1*. Then there is the huge culture clash over Galina’s attempt to accommodate to this new world. In a moment far beyond docu-drama, her young husband Yuri sits weeping in grief on the doorstep after he and his family have uncomprehendingly driven her away.

Galina herself is a fascinating character, sensitively played by a beautiful actress. As ever, one wishes there were more space for her part in the whole series. She is innocent and vulnerable, but also strong and willing to adapt and make a life for herself. Her husband’s peasant family test her love and loyalty to destruction, and in becoming involved with Hartmut she is not a victim, but a woman who, even in a time of anguish and indecision, knows who she is and what she is doing. “I wolf too”, she tells Hartmut. Their “wolf” conversation recalls the “Wölfelied” of *Heimat 2*, though it only serves to emphasise the contrast between that slow scene and its lovely music, and the brief almost perfunctory treatment of the exchange in Hartmut’s speeding Porsche. But the seduction scene that follows is given more space. Beautifully lit and performed, it shows Hartmut as the weak, irresponsible, needy partner, and Galina as the one who is both simple and strong. There is

another moment in Episode 4, showing Galina's 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 [Wiesbaden]". We see her face when he leaves and she turns sadly and alone to her child, knowing herself emotionally older than the man she loves. In the final episode, and in a delightful "Fragment", she has found herself another man, a master chef with whom she is excitedly planning to open a high-class restaurant in St. Petersburg. "You're only young once, isn't that true?" she tells Lulu. She is a courageous and lovable survivor.

There are touching scenes of Ernst's gentleness to his temporarily adopted "Russian" family. We get an overriding sense of his loneliness. We see him return embarrassed to the two-year-old mess in his deserted house, and then his delight in housing the family and Galina's baby. While they are preparing to leave he sits talking to the baby, until Galina steals tenderly back, and as they go he runs after them to give them the beautiful antique cradle. He would not be able to bear the room once it was empty again.

Of Tobi we learn only that, having been let down by Ernst in the West, he has re-established a materially unrewarding but creative and satisfying life in the East. Now Ernst follows him to the commune in Dresden, finding Biggi and the endearing Anna. The commune recalls the one in Berlin where Hermann found Kathrin in 1968, but it is different. These people are older and have struggled for a life of hard-won freedom under assault from first the communist regime and now a corrupting western capitalism. Tobi has worried for Ernst and waited eighteen months before taking another job, but he remains angry that Ernst ignored his warning two years before. Moreover Ernst now derides his crazy but somehow grand Land Art installation, as valueless by market criteria and not "collectable". The partnership offer is still open, but Tobi rejects it, he will not desert his own new colleague who needs and depends on him. Ernst stands rebuked, and great sadness shows in his face and in the accompanying music.

Later we see Ernst alone behind his wire fence, tackling the huge lopsided statue of Lenin, or, clearly ageing, laboriously changing wheels on his jeep. No one has visited him since his return from two years in a Russian prison, until Hartmut comes to seek financial backing for his breakaway company. Ernst agrees, seemingly to spite Anton, who in similar circumstances had once refused to help him. Then, in the black and white film of dark, painful moments, comes the epic last meeting of the two brothers, through the fence. They speak intimately, in their familiar dialect. They are so alike, stubborn, proud, clumsy, and at heart lonely. Anton, for all his autocratic arrogance, has made the great gesture of coming in person to visit Ernst, genuinely seeking reconciliation, though it is not clear why. Ernst rebuffs him and turns away. There is the long minute of self-doubt and anguish in which Ernst almost relents, but Anton too turns away, and tragically the chance is lost.

The story of Anton's family, with their vulgar, glossy houses and lifestyles, fast cars, the dreadful christening party, and the family dynamics – autocratic father, playboy son, and so forth, seemed at first something of a soap opera, contrasting sadly with the much funnier and exquisitely portrayed social climbing of Lucie and Eduard in *Heimat 1*. But once again, first impressions soon dissolve on rewatching the episode. In the dialogues, Anton is true to his



earlier incarnation in *Heimat 1*, it is just that old age has made him more rigid and defended, and even less sensitive to the needs of others. Like old Cerphal in *Heimat 2*, after years of emasculating his children by imposing his own power and judgement over theirs, he now despises and envies their relatively irresponsible lives. He tells Hartmut: “You’re a child of the prosperous years... that’s why I don’t trust you”. He is right that his experience has taught him so much more than Hartmut has the discrimination to understand, but then his own behaviour has invited rejection of his wisdom. Like Herr Edel, he is left to pronounce wise sayings unrespected: “He who marries the *Zeitgeist* will be widowed early”. It is no accident that striding ahead of his chauffeured car to the encounter with Ernst, he recreates the image of uncomprehending, insensitive American Paul. Materially, he has been far more successful in life than the “children” of the 1960s, or than his own children can hope to be, but emotionally his family life is no less disastrous than theirs. His way of love is to bestow the fruit of his own mastery on those he loves, but it is a bitter fruit.

Mara, not his own daughter, has retained her independence and dignity, and relates to him on an adult level. Their relationship is moving but has disturbing elements, and is yet another blow to Hartmut’s self-image. Her child is christened, no doubt at Anton’s instigation, “in the name of his grandfather, great grandfather and great-great grandfather”, as Rudi comments irreverently. And then the whole family is shocked and dishonoured by Anton’s announcement that all his wealth will pass directly to his new grandson. But it is too late to save Simon Optik. Hartmut’s rival company is already caught in the toils of the devious Herr Böckle, and after Anton’s death the original firm will go the same way.

Herr Böckle, asset-stripping Schinderhannes of the late twentieth century, is a mysterious figure. His part is beautifully scripted and played, but his encounter with Hermann on a train to Leipzig is surreal. I know that Edgar Reitz has said [*Q&A London Goethe Inst. 2005*] that the conversation is based verbatim on a real encounter he himself once had. But in the context of Hermann’s train journey it emerges like one of the dream or fantasy passages on similar journeys in *Hemat 2*. It is shot in black and white, and starts with Hermann gazing at his own reflection, and then perceiving the reflection of the man opposite him – who speaks like a projection of his own guilt at travelling to exploit the property market in the East. The conversation ends on another note that is near to the bone, when Böckle says: “You’re a musician? ...I’m full of unfulfilled dreams, too”. When, by “blind chance” again, Böckle turns up at the Simon christening, and disgust at Anton’s announcement happens to send Hermann away before he can warn Hartmut, one has to take the train encounter as having been “real”. But it is also a conscious symbol of the predatory profiteering that characterised the epoch after Reunification, in both West and East. The ambiguity is rather fascinating. The figure himself perhaps feels like a “homage” to some other film, possibly *Glengarry Glen Ross*, but it is too long since I saw that magnificent film to remember.

Hermann and Clarissa have with difficulty organized themselves a year’s sabbatical for Hermann to compose his “Reunification symphony”, and Clarissa to prepare new work and look after the goat. They tell themselves that they are enjoying it, but they are not at ease. Clarissa wakes full of anxiety, troubled by a mysterious sound which may be tinnitus, or perhaps the “house of dead poets” does not want them there! They have fun playing with the

synthesizer, while Tillman tries to fix the electronics, but Hermann laments that: “We are in the most beautiful spot on earth, but we can’t find our peace.” He can no longer compose, he has run out of inspiration. But when Lulu arrives she is refreshing and convincing, and immediately involving, and Hermann and Clarissa in their efforts to communicate with her become more complex and alive themselves. By now one is getting over the “loss” of the original Clarissa, and starting to appreciate the charm of her new incarnation.

Lulu could have equally found a place in *Heimat 2*, with her stropy attitudes to the older generation, and all the undertones of the complex triangle with Lutz and Roland. Their relationship echoes the triangles that formed around Clarissa in her youth, with Hermann and Juan, or Volker and Jean-Marie. But Lulu and her friends have a more positive energy, reminiscent perhaps of Evelyne’s, and the wild bungy-jump has an unforgettable strange resonance. In spite of the shortness of their scenes, the three young actors, just by their energy, and the subtlety of what they show on their faces, in unspoken interactions with each other and with Hermann and Clarissa, manage to suggest a whole story that might have been developed, had there not been such tight constraint on the production of the films. It is all the sadder that the story does not exist, because there is something particularly heart warming in seeing Lulu still so happy and full of life and love and enthusiasm, when we know that for the rest of the series she will remain effectively in mourning. For me, the absence of such a story creates a grave imbalance in the structure of *Heimat 3*.

Lutz’ death at the hands of Hartmut is an accident that is not so unlikely as it might seem, given the small size of the community in which both families live. In its causes, it is yet another example of Reitz’ fascination with the interconnectedness of things, and the “small banal links” in the chains of causality, that repays much further thought. The accident itself is a link in another chain which intertwines Lulu’s story inextricably with those of others in her Schabbach family, and determines the course of the rest of her life.



#### **3.4 Episode 4: “Everyone’s doing well”: collapse of the ideal ‘Heimat’, no ground is secure, a pillar of the old ‘Heimat’ falls, but “a brother is still a brother”.**

Episode 4 raises the work to another plane. Dramatically and emotionally it is the centrepiece of the whole series. It seems the most coherent, integrated film of the series. It is not exactly in the middle of the existing eleven hours of film, but that makes no difference. Its powerful sequences have more space and depth than is accorded to the earlier episodes, and they all interweave around the central themes: the decline and dismantling of a society, a way of life, a complex family, and also of an ageing intellectual’s sense of his place in the world. As the title suggests, the overriding challenge for everyone is a confrontation with denial.

There is a rhythm that runs right through the film. Everything is balanced, everything is just right. All the silences are there, nothing is rushed, nothing is inserted merely to bridge a gap in the plot. There are few awkward transitions, where something has had to be left out. The film moves in a great arc from start to end. The stories have all of Reitz' intuitive subtlety, and the themes are fully developed by the stories alone. The characters grow and act from their inner roots, as it were, and there is no feeling here, as at first in the earlier more compressed episodes, that they are merely figures in a docu-drama.

There is an increasingly clear distinction between the interrelations that form a still living 'Heimat', and those that do not. The relationships among the three brothers are part of what they and those in the community around them experience as 'Heimat' – it is born of shared memory, going back to their childhoods, but it is real to them now, and they are still living it. Physical places for it still exist where they live – the Simon house, Gasthaus Molz, Ernst's mill house, Simon Optik, even Anton's modern family house, the football ground, and the churchyard of the Nunkirche.

But Hermann and Clarissa's 'Heimat' of choice still does not exist outside their imaginations, and even there it is crumbling. As yet their relationship is not their 'Heimat', and nor is the Günderrode House its place. By the end of the series, in Episode 6, however, their relationship will have become a kind of living 'Heimat', and even the house may be for the moment an adequate place for it. Episode 4 tells, as it were, how the anvil for its forging is prepared.

The first step is the collapse of the artificial situation, perilously constructed on the edge of two real lives that do not have space or energy for it. During their parting row, Hermann tries to remind Clarissa of "all the things here we have seen through together". Although the previous films have shown only glimpses of their life at the house, he means presumably the fraught time of building it, and of trying to make space in their busy schedules to be there together, and also perhaps their "sabbatical" of two years earlier, when they struggled with their inability to "find their peace" there. But there is a lost story in the gap of around two years between the third and fourth episodes, which may well have been even more stressful. We learn later that Lulu, always stropic, and now distraught with grief and anger, stayed with them during her pregnancy, and that they cared for her at least until her baby was born.

By the start of Episode 4, Clarissa has returned full-time to her career as a musician, being too young and creative to retire, but Hermann is still absorbed with his own lack of inspiration and inability to write. There could not be a greater contrast than the one that symbolises their relationship throughout this film: the contrast between his straight rendering of "Im wunderschönen Monat Mai", and Clarissa's "crossover" send up of "Ich grolle nicht", both from *Dichterliebe*. He has not noticed, or has avoided noticing, what is happening to Clarissa, he is continuing fondly to play a passive role as house-husband, the realisation is a shock. It is compounded by Clarissa's own anxiety and defensiveness about what she is doing, and the silly, tense brittleness of her behaviour. Everything goes wrong from then onwards, the idyll has turned into a vicious trap. Lying in agony, Hermann reads Clarissa's honest and painful letter: "Sometimes I think we made a mistake – the lovely house, our home for ever and ever,

never to part, each the only sustenance of the other's life – isn't the outcome of that alien to life?" As if to prove her right, the shock and distress of her seeming desertion, and of his injury, unblock Hermann's creative energy so that he finishes the "Unification Symphony" and writes his "Günderode Songs" – for Clarissa. They come as easily as though the melodies have been "hovering round the house for 200 years". The earthquake in his life is paralleled by a real tremor (with epicentre in the Eifel) that shakes the house and bizarrely sets all the lights flashing on and off. This may seem a superfluous piece of symbolism, but it has a resonance later in the film.

Meanwhile Anton's family has been torn apart in a bitter and complicated pattern of litigation involving all its members. Anton, whose own action has caused this disintegration, feels it a threat to his dominance, and leans on all his children to patch it up, however superficially, for the sake of the family honour that he himself has disgraced. Nonetheless he is still the rock on which the family is founded, and also the firm, and the economy of the village. His energy and his obsession with the quality of his factory's products are still invincible, as the firm celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> year. For a moment, the family conspire to paper the cracks and take part civilly in the triumphal photograph. Even mutinous, undermined Hartmut joins the group. The finest lens produced by Simon Optik records "every pore" of the smiling faces, but not the pain and the grudges they hide. Everyone is doing well.

On the football pitch, Schabbach FC wins a trophy, and the players chair their huge patron shoulder high in celebration. Once again, Anton triumphs, in a world he feels he has created. Afterwards he stands alone on the field, savouring his glory and maybe contemplating his own mortality in the midst of it. Hermann limps out to join him. The bitter memories of Anton's destruction of his first love affair have faded. Hermann's own world has collapsed, and he seems to be seeking some ground in what survives of the old Schabbach, Rudi and Lenchen, and his own family. He is depressed and at a loss in a changing world, he sees Anton standing as a bastion of the world that is about to disappear. Anton proudly expounds his faith in old-fashioned values of quality in football and industry, but for Hermann the world is not like that today. "Hermann, tell me who is the world?" asks Anton, and Hermann, admiring and half laughing, replies: "Anton, people like you". Out of brotherly concern, and perhaps also the wish to re-establish order in his family, Anton prompts Hermann to talk about Clarissa. Hermann wordlessly acknowledges the sympathy but does not pursue it, and departs with Horst in Anton's car. On the way home he leaves his walking stick in the car. Anton stays gazing across the field, "a man alone, comfortable in his world, but his world is vanishing... looking out over the village and the hills of the Hunsrück. He is taking his leave," as Ivan Mansley movingly writes [*Online Discussion of Heimat 3 (pdf)*, p.146].

## §

Roughly in the middle of this "central" fourth episode comes the scene with the old Russian-German by the Rhine, obsessed by the number four, the foursquare number of standstill and power (Anton again?). Hermann wanders down to the river at Oberwesel, in one of Reltz' "moments detached from the plot". It has a dreamlike logic. The film becomes black and white, and winter seems to have already arrived. Trees are nearly bare and the river banks

are inundated. The images are beautiful, against the gleaming silver light of the flood. The old man, through his slightly crazed apocalyptic millennialism, touches on central themes of *Heimat* 3. Will he live to the Millennium? Maybe the world will end first. He loves “the wide river that flows on and on and takes all our filth with it”. Will everything change, and the Rhine flow in the other direction? “It’s all the same to the river”, replies Hermann. The old man speaks of the earthquake: “The earth is mightily beautiful, but it is not secure”, and Hermann sings the lines of Schubert back to him. “That’s how they announce themselves”, says the old man mysteriously, and walks away. After a few yards he grasps the handrail and starts to limp, just like Hermann, seeming to mirror the despair from which Hermann, having now abandoned his walking stick, will one day emerge. It is a kind of suspended point, between the earthquake in the small hours a few nights before (was it first meant to have been at 4 am this day, when the old man woke to find he was 94?), and the death of Anton at 4 am the next morning. Of who or what have “announced themselves” we can only dream.

## §

There are powerful scenes in the house where Anton lies dead. They are full of silences, no music, just natural sounds of footsteps, quiet voices, a clock ticking, the occasional door chime. There are moments of humour – the captain of the football club gets a word just wrong, like just missing a goal; and the sisters and their partners agonise absurdly over the merits of cremation versus burial, until the question they are all dying to ask is finally put by Dieter: “Is there a Will?” There are also moments of great dignity. Mara makes a big impression – her 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, while the rest were shuddering about “flames” and “worms”, or wanting the most modern and fashionable option. Yet it is Mara who takes it on herself to decide against a religious funeral, leading to loss of the grand ceremony that Anton himself would surely have wanted. She tends to gravitate to Hermann, as someone more adult and sensitive than the rest of the family. Once or twice I have thought to detect the shadow of a lost subplot of mutual attraction between Hermann and Mara.

However much Hartmut hated his father, he was also very close to him, and defined his own life in opposition to him. So also did Ernst. 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 is shocked, but cannot stop himself saying that Anton was “Someone with clods of clay on his feet and in his head” – yet at that moment it is Ernst himself who is wearing heavy boots. “You’re the boss now” he reminds Hartmut, and he must get on with it, life is short.

Then the wild geese pass overhead, sounding like a pack of hounds in the sky. Their flight has a sudden effect on Ernst – as a countryman he could be hearing the “Wild Hunt” said to collect the souls of those recently violently dead and to foretell death. He may think of the nearness of his own death, and his stubborn rejection of Anton, perhaps he even hears a threat of revenge – and reaches at the wire with which he fences himself in. “But for now we’re doing well, aren’t we, Hartmut”, he announces as he recovers himself. Hartmut, who with the loss of

his father has lost access to his own sustaining anger, wipes the clay off his shoe and climbs into the Porsche.

Hartmut is overcome, he cannot play the "boss". He drives straight to Wiesbaden to weep in Galina's arms, and only returns to the family house two days later when Mara has arranged everything and Anton's coffin is taken away by the undertaker. In the empty room, he picks up his mother's photograph and curls up with it on the sofa, sobbing like a small child. Shortly afterwards, Frau Weirich calls him "Hartmutche (little Hartmut)" as she ushers him into a meeting with his workforce as the new head of the firm. After a disturbingly uninformative speech to his employees, still hesitant to sit in his father's chair, he is waylaid by Herr Böckle, who will ensure that he can buy out his siblings and merge the two firms, ready to be devoured by the asset stripping company "Food and Non-Food". Simon Optik will not long outlive its founder.

Hermann too is very shaken by Anton's death, coming as it does on top of his own loss and confusion. By the death bed, when Gisela says "You travel all over the world and father is still father, sister is still sister, uncle is still uncle..", Hermann adds "Only love is not still love". He leaves as soon as is decent, past the silent grieving figure of Horst outside the door, and starts driving in no particular direction. He happens upon Ernst at a filling station, and the two remaining brothers, always closer in spirit to each other than to Anton, return to Ernst's house to commiserate with each other in moving passages of the main film, supplemented by a couple of the "Fragments".

The family in the Hunsrück is "like a hunchback that you carry round all your life". Anton's death leaves them both aware that theirs will be next. They tell each other "Everything we believed in – has made us sad – am I right?" The wine, vintage 1961, sets Hermann reminiscing about his days in Munich: "My God, we had no idea, back then, young geniuses that we were ... The fantasy of power. Freedom for love. A life for music." But now he is not at home anywhere. Ernst's house "reeks of loneliness", according to Hermann, but Ernst protests that it is just the smell of his antiques. He started collecting just for something to do, it did not really suit him, but now it has become an addiction. He envies Hermann his wife and child and his career, but to Hermann his family is "a heap of ruins", and it all adds up to nothing. But Ernst rebukes him: "Now just listen: Death we've known about ever since we've been in the world. But the slow disappearing without trace, after one has had no more success for years, that is new."

Ernst's art collection in the old slate mine is his whole life, "bolted and barricaded, deep down in the cavern". He again proposes a partnership, this time to Hermann, showing him a model of the museum he hopes to build, and promising a concert hall for Hermann alone, in the great cavern of the mine. The number 4 crops up again in the dimensions of the new plans. "Ernst, in a few years it'll be the Millennium. Do you want to be even lonelier?" asks Hermann. "We have to set the biggest goals ourselves", replies Ernst. "Clarissa has left me.." confides Hermann.

Here in these scenes with Ernst, Hermann comes closer than ever before in *Heimat 3* to a living experience of 'Heimat'. He and Ernst truly do not need to explain to each other who they are. They don't agree, they are never going to be partners, but they share a deep understanding, which began in childhood and out of which they can still communicate. They can and do support each other, in this moment of family loss, far more solidly than they could at the time of Maria's funeral. This is at the heart of what the *Heimat* Trilogy is about.

## §

Hermann's attempt in Cologne to tell Lulu about Anton's death is a classic parent-child disaster. There is 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. In spite of his part in caring for her through her pregnancy and the birth of Lukas, Lulu remains bitter towards her father, conflating her long standing resentment of him with the attempt by Anton and Hartmut to "compensate" with money for the death of Lutz. She is not short of money, but she has all the other stresses of living as a single parent in a big city, on top of the grief and raw anger of traumatic bereavement. She refuses to understand why Hermann had to break into her flat, and pours out a lifetime of hurt and resentment: "You never worried about me for twenty years... since you and Mum separated, since I was six years old." Hermann tries sadly to defend himself, but she is past reason. At last, as he is leaving, she notices his lameness and asks about his foot. He says simply: "Anton is dead. That's what I wanted to tell you". She watches him go, silent now, but too late. There is nothing he can offer here, he is helpless and without consolation.

The strip club and brothel he visits is an updated version of Lucie's establishment, but much harder and more cynical and no doubt more realistically portrayed. There are no golden hearted tarts here. Maybe he uses the name "Anton" for the brief banal encounter because it is the first to come into his head, but there is a bizarre moment when the girl says: "You see Anton, that's how you wake the dead." And when he says "Jesus, Anton, you poor sod", he may not know himself which Anton he means.

From his hotel window he sees Cologne cathedral, mysteriously blue, as it was on his wandering flight at the end of *Heimat 2*. "Im Rhein, im heiligen Strome..." – is Clarissa's performance of *Dichterliebe* already in his mind before he hears her message on his answerphone? In the end we never learn why she has "a very great need to see him again" after next day's performance in Berlin. Once again, as in *Heimat 2*, he is journeying wildly round the country to catch up with her, and arriving late, clutching the "Günderrode Songs". Once again their meeting is wrecked by the chance intrusion of someone else (Gunnar), by the jealous flouncing out of her singing partner, and by Hermann's own suspicions. Is David really her lover? It is hard to believe, he is portrayed throughout as such a wally. Finally she is left on her own, sobbing. Next day Hermann drives home alone, his head full of the ironic, alien "crossover" performance of "Ich hab' im Traum geweinet...", to find he has forgotten a concert engagement, for the first time in his career.

The famous scene of Anton's funeral starts with a surreal yellow bush with legs – a wreath from "Food and non-Food". Mozart from Hermann's concert accompanies the first moments, as the family inspect the "perfect" family photograph. After that, mercifully, there is only natural sound for these scenes – a single dog barking, a rook, cars on the road, crunching footsteps and quiet voices. For a long while bathos rules, as people stand in desolate groups, making self-conscious small talk and waiting for the delayed urn, which, according to a shrill mobile phone call, is even now being raced along the highways in an undignified fashion. Everyone is oppressed by the massive absence of all that would have made this a fitting ceremony for Anton. One need only think of the lavish christening ceremony at Ravengiersburg to imagine what he might have expected. Instead, the family exchange tips on stocks and shares, or proudly inspect the clever gadget for lowering the urn. No one there is old enough to remember Eduard's contraption for unveiling the Schabbach war memorial.

Ernst stands away from the family, with Rudi and Lenchen, and the captain and trainer of the football club. Hermann is surrounded by the wreckage of his life. Schnüßchen, arriving with her devoted "LG", has not changed. She is still warm and outgoing and good hearted, still self-consciously do-gooding, still making Hermann feel a negligent father, still characteristically avoiding the truth that it was after all Hermann and Clarissa who found time to support Lulu through her pregnancy. Lulu comes too, silently holding her place among the family responsible for her partner's death. There is the strange moment when she walks, carrying Lukas, behind Hartmut who bears Anton's urn, in the inescapable nexus of the generations. Hermann's tentative gestures to his grandchild are rebuffed. Clarissa, as so often before, is present only as her absence, when someone says there would be music if Clarissa were there to sing.

During the ludicrous rise and fall of the urn on its little pedestal, does Hermann wildly say to himself: "You see Anton, that's how you wake the dead"? But outwardly hilarity is suppressed, and then Ernst shames them all with his great angry stumbling speech. "Anton, you didn't deserve this..." With his voice alone, and his passion and remorse, he provides "the music that would make it a bit solemn and remind us that we all have to die". It is an elegy for the degenerating Simon dynasty, and for the whole way of life that was their 'Heimat', in his generation. His honesty at the end almost redeems his rejection of Anton in life: "Anton, you know we never saw eye to eye, from childhood we never saw eye to eye, but now they have burnt you and let you blow away in the wind, we suddenly do."

From the unaccompanied sonority of his language, the film cuts perhaps too quickly to Hermann's car, while the bass clarinet starts up again, suddenly tiresome and repetitive. At home, Hermann finds Clarissa. She is almost speechless with her dreadful news, he holds her silently, and as the credits roll they look out at the river from a home which has lost all its romance.

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3.5 Episode 5: “The Heirs”: the last older brother, his failed plan for a future, his death; greed and weakness destroy the family and claim an innocent victim; a homecoming from illness and suffering.

After all the space and subtlety of Episode 4, Episode 5 seems another casualty of the TV ratings and programme schedules. It has many fascinating aspects and a remarkable new character in Matko, the tragic story lines are involving and deeply moving, but as in the first episodes, the story feels rushed. There are many short scenes and busy cuts, at least one quite unforgivable. The individual scenes are often very satisfying but there is too little time to savour them. There are not enough silences and spaces. The story becomes cluttered and over compressed. A disproportionate amount of time is given to Herr Meise, a character crucial to the plot but not developed in any depth, having no roots in a story of his own. And there is too little time to dwell on the loved and more significant characters.

It becomes helpful to watch the episode again as though it were simply two consecutive films, closely related, but with different energy and mood. If there had been no constraint on the number and length of episodes, I feel that the story of Ernst’s museum plans, his fondness for Matko and search for a son, his death and funeral and its personal impact on Hermann, Lulu and Matko, would have been enough for one film. Then for a following episode, the greed of the heirs, Hartmut’s bankruptcy and the tragedy of Matko would have made another moving film, with a different quality of sadness, especially in Matko’s story. Two such “episodes” would not have needed to be of equal length, nor to be as long as the previous ones, were it not for the demands of the TV schedules.

Nonetheless the film, just as it is, is a joy to watch, not least because with Christian Reitz as cameraman it has recovered the subtle lighting that carves spaces out of the shadows, moulding faces and figures, creating depth and texture, tactile details of fabrics and hair. This is especially noticeable in the indoor scenes, in particular the evening sunlight in Tante Hilde’s cottage and Matko’s attic. In the group scenes too, like the debate among the “heirs”, the way characters move in a space is perhaps more fluid again. There are also wonderful closeups, even subtler than those in the earlier films of this series – images especially of Ernst, Matko, Clarissa (very painfully sick), and the young hospital nurse. Lulu’s face too has become more mobile and softer, partly maybe reflecting her changed state of mind. Ernst’s face while he watches Matko releasing the pigeon is radiant and gentle, a side of him often lost under his stubborn, suspicious exterior. Landscape scenes, and (with Christian Reitz’ camera crane) the passage of vehicles, are starting to acquire a new freedom – especially the final image behind the credits, which shows the view from the Günderrode House with a breadth and spaciousness not seen before. The film music too, except in tense moments, is mostly gentle guitar music, that merges with natural sounds like the wind.

All the scenes of Clarissa’s sickness in hospital and convalescent home are shot in luminous black and white, until the last day when colour returns now she is well enough to be taken home. It seems to denote that this dark period is an abyss that will be left behind, relegated

deep in memory, once she is home and starts to get back to living normally again. It forms an agonising substratum to the rest of the film, and links it back to the previous film, albeit with a time lag due again no doubt to the constraints on length and number of episodes. There seem to have been about twenty months between Clarissa's diagnosis at the end of the fourth film, and her operation near the start of the fifth.

Hermann and Clarissa are curiously distanced in this episode. They are seen more than before from the outside, which is a big contrast with the treatment of Clarissa's abortion and illness in *Heimat 2*, for instance. Yet the images are still very painful to watch. Clarissa's face becomes ugly in her sickness, but her dignity is beautiful. It must have taken considerable courage to portray this. We do not 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. Hermann has become "almost like anybody else", as Reitz says in the interview with Maarten van Bracht – an attentive grandfather, the anguished partner of a very sick woman, and, too briefly seen, the bereaved brother. Lacking Mamangakis, we never get to hear the Reunification Symphony – it is easy to forget that Hermann is also a world-class musician and composer. It is interesting though that in this episode the actor seems to have become more at ease with the chronological age of his persona. He moves and looks more like a man in his late fifties, and perhaps also the make up and hair are more convincing. This may reinforce the impression given in the film that Hermann, in spite of relinquishing much of his career in order to care for Clarissa, is maturing also as a person during the traumatic course of her illness.

I have a serious problem with the envious, almost sadistic interpretation which is sometimes advanced, that Hermann and Clarissa's misfortunes are a kind of nemesis, because they have been "having things too good". It is naive, at best, to accuse successful middle-class musicians, absorbed in pursuit of their difficult, very demanding art, which gives pleasure to thousands, of being "selfish" and "having things too good" because they are well off financially, and not at the same time immersed in family and community responsibilities.

All the same, there is something particularly uncomfortable about the symbolism of Clarissa's being overcome by cancer after leaving to renew her career. But of this, Edgar Reitz has said [*VPRO TV documentary 19/12/04*] that it changes the couple's perceptions of their relationship and re-introduces mystery into it, so that "love can arise again". That seems a long way from the disturbing notion that she might have been somehow "brought low" by her illness in retribution for her illusions.

On reflection, there is a significant difference between on the one hand allowing that suffering has occurred, has been endured, and has changed people, and on the other, moralising about "nemesis". Looking through some of Reitz' interviews, I do not see there much moralising, just a recognition that the ideal self-image of his own generation could not last, simply because it was unrealistic. Merely observing the causal connection in a chain of attitudes and events does not amount to labelling it as retribution. This point will be revisited in the context of patterns of causality in Reitz' stories, in the "Afterword" section.

Lulu's reconciliation with the couple is touching. It appears that in the gap between the films she has recovered from her crippling grief well enough to live at the Günderrode House on good terms with her father, while working on Ernst's museum project. Her moving conversation with Clarissa near the end shows her able once more to feel warmth and even love for this side of her family. Her evident fondness for Ernst and identification with his project may have helped there. Unfortunately there is no space in the film for a full account of her story from within her own experience. She appears brisk and practical in her professional life, like Schnüßchen, and like Ernst quite arrogant, impatient of the necessary diplomacy. We see her closeness to Lukas, and the start of Delveau's attraction, but not nearly enough of herself and her own perspective, though there is a gleam of fire in her telling Hartmut: "Whenever I come across you, something in my life goes kaputt". There is little of her personal, as opposed to professional, relationship with Ernst, for whom she, as well as Matko, might have become surrogate "posterity", and we see nothing of her reactions to yet another painful loss when he dies. If only there had been more time for this material.

The first part of the film chronicles 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? His work is undermined by his typically stubborn undiplomatic failure to connect with the outside world for which he purports to be doing it. In fact the museum project, like the compulsive collecting that dominated his life before, is an expression of his own inner creative drive, in which need for recognition and for a kind of immortality outweighs the altruism.

His instinct to seek for a son is awakened by his growing affection for Matko. In this young lad he sees himself at a similar age, and finds someone who can uncritically share his enthusiasm, for flying at least, if not for art collecting. The gift of the glider appears symbolic of trying to be to Matko another "father" like Otto. Ernst and Matko are kindred spirits. Matko, having no father, and a mother he has not seen for five years, is even more alone than Ernst was after Otto's death, though perhaps no more so than Ernst has now become. In their conspiratorial relationship there is also something of Eduard's friendship with Korbmachers Hänschen. Matko has need of both a mother and a father. Ernst in his rough and ready way provides for him emotionally, if not materially, as a father, but he cannot be the mother that the lad so much needs too. Ultimately his concern for the boy has its limits.

There is also an element of compulsive self-interest in Ernst's obsession with securing his own posterity. It remains strange that he should go to the lengths he does to find just any blood descendant, while he is at the same time introducing Matko to the hidden treasure as though already prepared to treat him as a surrogate heir. If Meise's researches had turned up some other child, one wonders how that would have affected Ernst's relationship with Matko? The interview with Meise is hilarious, but curiously unconvincing. Like Meise himself, it is largely a plot device. When the museum plans are rejected, Ernst knows that in his state of mind he should not take Matko with him, and maybe anyway wants to be alone, but he seems no longer to have thought of Matko or anyone else when launching into his last fatal manoeuvres.

Ernst's death is yet another instance of a person's death being traceable to what Reitz has called "a chain of banal links, entirely coherent with his own character". It is satisfying that any question of a self-destructive impulse should be left entirely open, as that is how it can be in real life. Ernst's angry flight through the gorge of the Rhine looks like a gesture of defiance and bravado and risk-taking, which falls far short of predetermined suicide, but is all of a piece with his refusal to heed Tobi's warning, or his spontaneous angry rejection of Anton's overtures, in earlier episodes. He is a proud man, with low tolerance of frustration, who has just received a deeply disappointing and humiliating rebuff, but his energy and anger are much too alive for suicidal hopelessness. It is not clear whether the malfunction of the plane's engine is a result, foreseeable or otherwise, of the crazy way he flies it, or simply a tragic coincidence.

After his death there is a very moving second or two, in which Hermann weeps bitterly in Clarissa's lap, but then comes the shocking, unforgivable cut, plunging straight into heartless discussions among the "heirs". We see no other mourning at all, until Matko's ceremony with the red carnations. There is nothing more about this huge loss to Hermann of his last brother, through whom latterly he had found again the support of a family 'Heimat'. We learn more of his loss of Rudi, in the next film, than about his loss of Ernst. There is nothing about Lulu's reaction, just as there has been little about her feelings for Ernst in life. In her work at least she had identified with him, grief for his death might well have become conflated with her grief for Lutz, and re-ignited her mourning. And for the moment there is nothing about Matko. Ernst was his only confidant, but perhaps he would have spoken to Tante Hilde? Or maybe just to the pigeon? Above all, Ernst's funeral is not depicted. There are of course two other funerals in *Heimat 3*, so maybe a third would have been too much for the ratings-conscious sponsors. But this one would have had to be different again – more traditional than Anton's, but more sparsely attended than Rudi's. Would Tobi have come for it? All we know of it is the gravestone with the flying bird (would Matko have had a voice in that choice?), of which there is a glimpse in Episode 6. To simple minds it might be unacceptable to end more than one film with a funeral, but in the current of the whole narrative the end of Ernst's story is as significant a stopping point as the end of Anton's, and would have been a natural close to an episode.

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We learn later something of the guilt felt in the village about Ernst's death. The village of Schabbach plays a greater role in this film than hitherto in the third series. It is interesting, because there were only minor references to reaction in the village to the wide social upheavals of Reunification in the earlier episodes. Now Bürgermeister Toni Bast has made clear that it was not the Eco protestors who swung the balance of the local committee against Ernst's plans, but general resentment in the village against Ernst's unsociability, his arrogance, flying overhead and looking down on people, his parading of support by the regional Prime Minister and other authorities and experts from outside the immediate community. The Simon family too, maybe for decades objects of some envy, have become very unpopular as their firm, so crucial to the village economy, slides into bankruptcy. There are a number of scenes set in the Gasthaus Molz, and the villagers there provide a kind of Greek chorus for the

misfortunes of the Simons. Always good sense and balanced insight are purveyed by Rudi, to whom both Ernst and Hermann have turned for support. Rudi, like old Wilhelm, remembers the days of Matthias and Maria, and preserves something of the wisdom of Katharina's generation. He has seen how village opinion has vacillated with the times over half a century or more, and confronts people now with their current, remorseful change of attitude to the museum. It becomes clear that the fortunes of all the Simons, and of Matko, are still intimately interwoven with the fortunes of the village.

Anton's family had little contact with Ernst in his lifetime, due to the rift between the brothers, so it is probably not surprising that now their main preoccupation is how to use their share of his estate to recover their own standing in the village. Their acrimonious discussions impact like the start of a new episode. This second part of the film is almost totally downbeat and as a standalone would probably have horrified the sponsors. But if Reitz had had the opportunity to give an episode of their own to the parallel dramas of Hartmut's downfall and Matko's tragic destruction, it might have had the power of the equally tragic episodes in the first two *Heimats*.

The plight of Hartmut and Mara receives no sympathy from the siblings, Hartmut's mismanagement is after all responsible for the failure of their company. They have lost their patriarch, and remain bitterly divided. Meanwhile Lulu is fiercely determined to preserve Ernst's collection intact, for the sake of her own career, and presumably also for the sake of his memory. Two events erupt into the gathering. First Böckle and his team arrive to start taking over and closing down the bankrupt company. Two expensive black cars sweep into the village, in an echo of the time when Anton had to fight off a hostile takeover forty years earlier. Like Lotti before her, Frau Weirich valiantly tries to hold the fort, but there is no Anton to lead the defence. Hartmut can manage no more than a foolish physical assault on Böckle as he tries to assert ownership of Mara's horses, which are not assets of the firm. Hartmut seems to imply that there has been something between Böckle and Mara, but it would be very out of character for her to be fooled by that weird man, his methods trade on weaknesses that Hartmut possesses but she does not. Hartmut sees her as hand in glove with Anton in disinheriting and humiliating him, his father still haunts him after years in the grave.

The other event is the reappearance of Meise, telling Hermann in a tediously roundabout way that Matko may be a rival heir. Anton's family close ranks in horror, only Hermann foresees and fears the effect of their greed on poor Matko. There is a different quality to Matko's tragedy: unlike Ernst and Hartmut, he has done nothing to bring his distress upon himself. He is resilient and trusting and so young, rebuffing attention for an abscess, harbouring a crush on the Wine Queen, making a fool of himself to attract her attention, an endearing, not very streetwise teenager. With the help of Tante Hilde, he has made a life for himself in a strange country, his use of a foreign language made harder by a speech impediment. The scenes with the pigeon seem to be a conscious homage to *Kes*, and similarly avoid sentimentality. To the village, and to the Simon siblings, Matko is the stranger, the intruder, and he becomes the prey of the greedy rest of the world. He is also tragically a victim of the death of Ernst, the one person who would have provided a refuge for him, and who failed as Otto had failed. Sorrow for Ernst, incomprehension of his loss, must have

numbed his mind. The sad dignified way he throws the carnations over the rock totally transforms Meise's grubby gesture in supplying them. Briefly Matko finds another kindred spirit in Hartmut, as abandoned now as himself, who, in a crazy state not so far from Ernst's, nearly kills them both on a wild last ride in the vintage Horch. For a moment they console each other with the cry "Tomorrow doesn't matter!". Finally, Hermann's well-meant befriending is undermined by his passiveness and inability to replace the staunchness of his brothers. He fails to shield the boy from threatening conversations in the clinic, and simply assumes that he will turn up again back at the house.

The last part of the film is filled with the unbearable hunting down of this poor child by Meise, by the administrator handling the inheritance dispute, and by the rather racist police, not to mention the school children and teenage yobs. Appallingly, the village collaborates with the persecution. He hears it said that if he were the true heir the whole village would hate him. Terrified, distraught by the death of the pigeon, he flees from one unsafe refuge to the next. Matko's grief for Ernst (largely unspoken, as once he started running, who else was there for him to confide in?) seems most likely the fundamental reason for his death, all the other factors contribute, but the loss of Ernst would have undermined his ability to cope with them. Nonetheless, as Amanda Jeffries [*Online Discussion of Heimat 3 (pdf)*, p.222] whose beautiful and very perceptive piece about Matko echoes through these pages, has written: "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." The arrival of his "unrecognisable" mother is the last straw. For years he must have nursed a memory of her, which is invalidated, now she has aged and been scarred facially by some violent event in the Bosnian war. It remains an open question as to whether she really is his mother. From being his refuge, Schabbach has become a living hell that he cannot escape, except by following Ernst. His death is hideously unnecessary, and Schabbach and the Simon family should have been deeply ashamed of themselves, but once again the film ends before that can be shown.

Instead, the episode finds some kind of compensation and resolution in the stories of Hartmut and of Hermann and Clarissa. With Mara and her horses, the last Simon leaves the old Simon house, some time before the persecution of Matko intensifies. It is a little corny that it is beside the shrine to Lutz that Mara finds Hartmut, more or less down and out. This does not detract from her rescue of him, very dignified, even tender, almost wordless, and his humble response. Finally, Hermann takes Clarissa home to the Günderröde House, and together they relish their home coming, gazing at the wide free view, as the credits roll. There is a feeling that they have returned from the "strangest terrors" of Clarissa's illness, like the dove in Rilke's poem, except that we, who unlike them already know what has happened to Matko, must remain sceptical even of that.

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**3.6 Episode 6: “Farewell to Schabbach”: in Munich - eclipse and tragi-comedy; the refound ‘Heimat’ is just a story now; the Millennium party is not what it seems. Realism – “Ithaka”?**

The dire influence of the constraints on TV productions persists – episode 6 once again feels like a series of deeply felt and magificently realised sequences pasted together without enough space to develop each one fully. It seems to contain the kernel of material for at least three episodes, each with its own emotional energy: the sections centred on Munich, Rudi’s funeral, and the Millennium party. There is also the collapsed mine and flood sequence which remains as unconvincing and intrusive as it seemed at first, however many times one watches it, which is sad, given the skill and effort involved in creating it. Some commentators assume that the director developed it against his better judgement, to satisfy a naïve demand for melodrama from the TV editors.

The first part, in Munich, starts with one of the most spectacular landscape images of the whole cycle: a huge white cloud above the city. The film moves from the strange elation of the eclipse, the joy of Clarissa’s newfound health and voice, to Lenchen dumb with grief at Rudi’s deathbed. These images foreshadow later sections of the episode. But the rest of this first part focusses on Gunnar’s wild tragi-comedy, which has a mood all of its own, generated by the powerful scripting and acting of the role. Laughter, exasperation, and tenderness, all in one half hour or so.

The eclipse is a tour de force. Reitz has explained that the eclipse in Bavaria in 1999 gave him an explanation for bringing a number of characters together in Munich on the same day, as he has “never otherwise taken chance meetings on the street to be a good dramatic device”. So, much later, he “laboriously staged the solar eclipse of 2003 for the film with countless extras on the streets of Munich” [*Interview with Ingo Fliess*]. The unworldly, eery light, the dark sun, the uncanny tension of the crowd, are quite authentic, according to those who have had the experience, and it is enhanced by beautiful, equally strange film music. Then the sun starts to reappear as a flashing diamond, before everyday life resumes.

Gunnar’s return to the scene is surprisingly welcome, and it is easy to empathise with his predicaments, in the family and in prison. The faithfulness of his elder daughter, Nadine, along with the way the younger one, Jennifer, gradually warms to him, is moving. In one nice moment, Clarissa and Hermann’s concert performance of “Hermann’s” (Rihm’s) “Günderrode Songs”, a performance gifted to each other as an expression of their mutual love, cuts straight to Gunnar playing “The Entertainer” as a gift to Nadine, in memory of their shared love of his playing it when she was a small child.

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: “No one knows what I feel, except Nadine, Nadine senses it.” Yet 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 Episode 2 in Berlin, but it later becomes clear that he has not confided in her either. He is still an extraordinarily lonely person, who now has a “magical time” with his new-found children. The “magic” is enhanced by the rich lighting of the set, and the delicacy of the dialogue. But when Petra returns, he overdoes everything and creates an emotional confrontation.

Petra and Reinhold seem increasingly shallow now, fooling about in the restaurant while Hermann and Clarissa are preoccupied with the news of Rudi's death. Pointedly, Clarissa says “Rudi and Lenchen made it to the end without great fuss... I think not everyone is made for love”. Back in the flat, Petra treats her ex-husband very insensitively, but on the other hand, it is frightening 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.

The children are disturbed by the tension between their parents, it must have reminded them of times when they sat with hands over their ears during family rows ten years before. Initially, when Petra and Reinhold leave for the concert, taking Gunnar with them, the two girls sink to the floor and sit side by side against the door, much as they had crouched on the stairs in Leipzig when Gunnar first left for the West. Now, after the concert, as Gunnar aggravates Petra, Nadine slips away and watches her parents through the distorting bevelled glass of the door, in which their two faces are also reflected. Jennifer sits tearing up her sunglasses. 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 she witnesses her mother's taut defensiveness. It is a painful experience for both girls, and makes Nadine's loyalty to Gunnar and her gesture at the Millennium all the more poignant.

The persisting cultural contrast between East and West is deliberately emphasised, with Gunnar's use of words that the girls do not understand, and their failure to recognise his impersonation of Honecker. In the VPRO television documentary of 19.12.04, Reitz comments on the effect this has on Gunnar: “One can sympathise when something that was important, even if it was negatively important, is suddenly no longer understood.”

In prison, Gunnar launches into a nostalgic spiel about drink and driving in the old GDR. 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 does not seem to have become the sort of person one would imagine a successful “millionaire” contractor with “Warner Bros” to be. 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. It is not entirely clear how much money actually exists. When he tries to impress a prison officer with a phone call to arrange Chinese fireworks for the Millennium party, these are said 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. Later Gunnar says to his cellmate: “Money isn’t everything in life. It’s the interest that counts,” and claims to have made his fortune from investments. But seemingly he has nothing he can do with it, except to throw an extravagant Millennium party for all his friends, which he will not be able to attend.

On being admitted to prison he jauntily presents himself 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. How much of this is fantasy? The long walk down sporadically lit corridors as he rattles on to a silent warder is both funny and disturbing. In the first corridor they approach us, but as they turn a corner yet another corridor appears and they head away. The lighting is beautiful, the walk symbolises all the forlornness of prison life. He enters the cell still talking, then his face falls as he finds the one-sided conversation ended and himself locked in. When confronted by his threatening cell-mate, the jauntiness immediately disappears, and he becomes anxious and compliant. But then and for months afterwards he continues to fantasise that he will be released in time for New Year.

Although both tender and painful, a lot of this section of the film is also very funny indeed – 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 for a day by half-blinding himself gazing at the sun, and only he could survive six months with his rabid skin-head cell-mate by a mixture of obsequiousness and airy advice about the Stock Exchange. Only he would imagine he could impress his new-found children and their mother when roaming round their flat in nothing but a pair of orange underpants, or arrive for breakfast brandishing a “medicinal” brandy bottle complete with large spoon. It must be the performance of Uwe Steimle’s life – it is brilliant.

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Before leaving Munich, Hermann and Clarissa clear out Hermann’s old flat. Hermann is unexpectedly nostalgic, and in philosophical mood: “The old stories are packed away in boxes and will follow us ... Our life together began as an experiment and it still is... ...when you sing

the songs I wrote for your voice, then I feel safe.” Clarissa is more matter of fact: “Since my illness I know we are never safe”.

Thereupon her mother turns up in an hysterical state and demands to be rescued from the comfortable care home in Wasserburg, where 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, after going back with her to Wasserburg to arrange the move.

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.”

It is difficult to be “glad” about that. The woman is presented throughout *Heimat 2* as being almost pathologically manipulative and emotionally dishonest, she has persistently dominated Clarissa's life from childhood onwards, while claiming and probably genuinely believing herself to be a devoted and selfless mother. In her defence it can be said that her earlier life was hard, she cared devotedly for her daughter in childhood and more recently for her grandson, and now she is frightened of dying far from her daughter. In the first episode of *Heimat 3* she was depicted as a one-dimensional character, but here the actress playing the part skilfully shows each glimmer of glee at the success of her dramatic manoeuvre to blackmail Clarissa into this situation. It is hilarious, but truly horrible. Does “taking responsibility” really demand that Clarissa subject herself and Hermann to this degree of manipulation? If the story had continued, maybe some compromise would have been found, perhaps another comfortable care home near Oberwesel. But of course it is only a story.

Hermann's return alone to the Hunsrück, in spite, maybe even because, of a shocking near miss with a great red articulated transporter approaching the motorway, awakens a sense of belonging. The events of this part of the film, his dreams under the “magic” tree, Rudi's funeral, and the collapse of the mine, all belong in Schabbach and its surroundings, and involve a mood in which Hermann is uncomfortably revisiting memories and feelings once rooted in this place, now outworn. The landscape is full of placenames and stories. Now even Rudi is a story. The feeling will persist throughout the film, even if disturbed by what follows later. Though it feeds directly into the oppressive dreams, it still points beyond, towards the ending of the cycle.

Apparently it really was a hot sultry day when the scene under the twin trees was shot. Hermann is already a little disoriented, the church tower of Schabbach advances and recedes, even before he sleeps. His empty black suit hangs eerily over his head. In his first dream, he finds himself outside the Simon house as it was just after Maria's funeral, when Anton had roughly boarded up the door. Rudi's image trembles in the water butt, like the reflected faces in train windows that have signalled earlier dream sequences. Rudi's line about the young of

today hearing with their eyes and seeing with their ears recalls a conversation that Hermann could not have overheard: when Hartmut 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 proceeded to demonstrate, nearly precipitating his own version of an open-ended “accident”. But Hartmut is a good example of exactly what Rudi seems to mean.

The red artic-transporters bearing away Ernst’s art collection reflect Hermann’s near accident a few hours before he slept. However, the question arises whether these scenes in his dream were originally intended as an alternative to the melodramatic collapse of the slate mine. Sequestration by the Inland Revenue, after maybe some official enquiry into the provenance of Ernst’s collection, sounds a far more satisfying scenario, though with less “Hollywood style” appeal for the TV ratings. In a first version of the plot, Rudi did not die, and his presence and comments would not then have needed to be “ghostly”. (Incidentally the “cuckoo” he speaks of is slang for a bailiff’s seal). The dream of exporting the collection reflects a recurring theme in Reitz’ interviews, that globalisation results in the movement of wealth and productivity away from European nations to the Far East [*Ivan Mansley in Online Discussion of Heimat 3 (pdf), p.247*]. If not a dream, could it have been a realistic and politically significant reason for the Simon museum enterprise to fail, instead of the watery Götterdämmerung, complete with collapsing bridge?

Hermann’s second dream is also set at the time of Maria’s funeral, revisiting the famous abandoned coffin scene. The memory of his mother is still very potent in his life. It will have been reinforced by all the memories shared with Rudi, as well perhaps as by Clarissa’s encounter with her mother. The power of the dream comes from the deep intuitive personal memory that informs the first two *Heimat* series, rather than the intellectually mediated memory that underlies *Heimat 3*. The vision of those who have died, standing in the doorways, recalls the “Feast of the Dead” at the end of *Heimat 1*, but without its symbolic meanings. It is only a personal dream – so many of the people significant in Hermann’s recent life in Schabbach are dead. However there are some strange things – for instance the ghostly figure of a person wearing glasses, standing behind Rudi, revealed for an instant by a lightning flash. It just might be Marie-Goot, but is too unclear to distinguish. Then Lutz is straining to re-emerge into life but is being held back by Lulu and Lukas, who are actually still alive. Could he be trying to escape Lulu’s unresolved mourning, which is preventing her and Lukas from letting go of him, and returning fully to life themselves?

Rudi’s funeral, in great contrast to Anton’s, is traditional and reverent, and honest. With the pastor’s true story about the childhood photograph, it must be hard to watch for people who knew the real Rudi Molz, it is moving enough even for us who are strangers. Hermann contemplates the Simon gravestones, as he did after Maria’s funeral (in a different graveyard). Now they include Ernst’s, with the bird, which almost brings tears. Like himself, it is his own stone, set apart from the rest. The grief and dignity of the funeral service is shattered much too soon by the roar of the collapsing mine. Would Rudi himself have seen humour in the disarray that results? There is a kind of irony in that he had formerly ridiculed predictions that building work might cause the mine shaft to cave in.

There are so many questions about that catastrophe. The whole sequence is out of character with the rest of the *Heimat* cycle – is it intentionally funny, a kind of homage to a hundred B-movies? Could it be an elaborate way of ridiculing the sponsors who may have demanded it? Who knows? It leaves a sour taste though, an almost total suspension of belief, until Lulu wearily returns to scold Lukas and his young Russian nanny for their faithful, hazardous candle. Even then she must undergo further adventures underground next day.

But in the restaurant with Delveau, for once there is a chance to see a gentle and unsure side of Lulu. Delveau tries to comfort her, his French dropped “Hs” perhaps an affectation or game, since when she was in danger in the mineshaft he had no problem with pronouncing “Lulu, hörst du mich?”. He quotes from “Der Zeitgeist” and says he loves Hölderlin because “he saw a new beginning in everything and was enthused by it”, but Lulu replies that she has lost too much – it was “more than just any job... it had to do with my family... No Hölderlin can help me now”. When he asks her to marry him she is very gentle in return, but cannot answer. 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”.

Lulu herself says “I’m at a loss”, when she is at the crossroads by Lutz’ shrine, once more leaving Schabbach, not knowing what to do, having to persuade a protesting Lukas that they should not stay, and then slipping back to overturn the vase of flowers they had just set up. Does she abandon her shrine for Lutz in despair, or is she at last moving beyond her mourning?

## §

Then immediately there is another disconcerting cut, to Gunnar from prison ordering megabucks’ worth of fireworks. Again this feels like dipping into a different episode. However Clarissa’ return to the Günderröde House with Mother Lichtblau is more like a bridge. It consolidates the fundamentally unromantic nature of the homecomings and departures in the episode so far, and at the same time foreshadows the final moments of the film. It also leads into Tillmann’s announcement of Gunnar’s party plans.

After that there is a gap of several months, until the artificial winter of the Millennium party. This is a fascinating episode, with its shifts and balances, its undertone of illusion and disappointment, the hurt of Gunnar’s absence. There is something nightmarish about the party, in spite of the warmth of individual scenes. Some characters, like poor Jana, are uneasily aware of this, others seem blind to it. There is the frenetic sense that, as Udo says, when it ends everything will *have* to be different. And for his family, in particular, the difference will be a sad divorce. This party is the last of those festivities in the *Heimat* cycle in which nothing is really what it seems.

To start with, just a quibble: this is supposed to be midwinter, but, apart from the big chestnut (was it deliberately stripped?), most of the trees and bushes near the house are still heavy in leaf under artificial snow, and the view along the Rhine was clearly shot in the

autumn. This is particularly sad when one thinks of snow scenes in *Heimat 2*, which are either genuine (the English Garden), or lovingly and convincingly created by Franz Bauer (the “Wölfelied” scene). Once again, if there had been fewer constraints on time and funding, perhaps it would have been possible to shoot these scenes later in the year.

The party is in Hermann’s house, but he and Clarissa are not “giving” it. Clarissa again momentarily assumes her bright social manner, so alien to the character she presented in *Heimat 2*. 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 there had been place 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. Near the end, her choice of “Maybe this time”, to welcome the new millennium, is perhaps sentimental, but the bitter-sweet lyric suits the mood.

Hartmut and Mara have an awkward meeting with Galina and Christian, her “new German husband”. Clarissa appears to ignore Galina while welcoming Mara, tactfully leaving Hartmut free to talk to Galina. Mara continues to watch them through the window. Galina as ever is very direct and simple in such a situation, though she has to give a clumsy summary of Hartmut’s life story since they last met, just so the viewer can learn what has happened to him. Their feeling for each other is still alive in their faces and movements. Absurdly, Hartmut and Christian find they are business acquaintances, and amuse Udo’s sons by their wine-tasting antics. At one point later when we see Galina and Christian talk but cannot hear their words, it would be easy to imagine Galina is telling her husband who Hartmut is. Christian’s face grows solemn as he looks back across the room. The camera does not follow their gaze, we do not know if they are indeed looking at Hartmut. But Hartmut is now attentive only to Mara. Galina and Mara are so different, yet each in her way is a woman of both beauty and strength. Hartmut does not deserve either of them.

The grim Dieter also turns out to have been all along very different from what he seemed, as he publicly “comes out”, in the company of his “other family” of transvestite gays. The party goers take this as just part of the entertainment, though some of his siblings are highly embarrassed. But Hartmut is inveigled into a funny and rather touching reconciliation with his brother.

The absence of Gunnar pervades the whole evening. 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 his friends are upset and confused by it. The “timid lodger”, who once washed Gunnar’s football shirt in Berlin, wanders around like a ghost, knowing no one, and unable to find out what has happened to him. Although Hermann knows that she is seeking Gunnar, strangely neither he nor anyone else makes any attempt to talk to her and make her welcome. She haunts the images of the party, glimpsed again and again in the background, a

personification of Gunnar's own loneliness and absence. I wonder what happens to her when she leaves her present on a table and slips away alone. How and where will she go, in that midnight of other people's jubilation? She may be or have been Gunnar's girlfriend, but he has not confided even in her. Like Ernst, without meaning to, Gunnar lets everyone down, however close to him a person may be. 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 over-the-top absent from his own party – it is like another Schabbach funeral, all over again .

All the time, behind the convivial party lies the silent prison cell, 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 scenes in the whole of *Heimat 3*. She is so young, and courageous, and the gesture so simple and loving. Gunnar is a tragic figure, but at the same time he is also very funny – who else through sheer exuberance and over-optimism would get himself in the position of missing his own party? As with Falstaff - you don't know whether to laugh or cry. Then finally, Tobi and Anna appear, and at first viewing this was a moment of delight, like the brief reappearance of Juan in the final episode of *Heimat 2*.

The Millennium party is skilfully orchestrated. As in the summer evening party in the Fuchsbau in Episode 3 of *Heimat 2* the camera tends to follow the glances and movements of the characters, knitting groups of people and points of the location together. There are some lovely unspoken moments, like the disapproval shared by Mother Lichtblau and Udo, or the glance of understanding between Hermann and Mara, as she sits in her errant husband's arms. But there is not the same illusion of the movement just flowing all around, off screen as well as on, while the camera wanders through it, in the way it seemed to be at the Fuchsbau. There is something searching, even frantic, about these party-goers, the characters are not interconnected in a net of their sparking emotions like the Fuchsbau friends, they are not held in the same space, they are older and have less to share among themselves. The energy and excitement are contrived, like Tillmann's lighting displays. No wonder Hermann takes refuge by the piano, teaching Lukas to play Mozart. The Millennium is not what it seems.

## §

Then after the party everything changes and becomes more grounded and free of illusion. In the frosty field, high behind their house, Clarissa makes her loving and impossible promise to Hermann. Together they have found in their family and in themselves something intangible they did not have before and it is precarious. We do not know whether they can achieve a true creative happiness as musicians, in the family, in the house, stay together or, as she "promises", stay well. For them just now, 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 tender personal and private symbol of their own.

The scene on the bank of the Main in Frankfurt is comparable with the best and most open and authentic parts of *Heimat 2*. The artificiality of the winter in the images no longer



## The “Epilogue”: *Heimat-Fragmente: die Frauen*

*Heimat-Fragmente: die Frauen* is a beautiful, enigmatic film, which can be understood in different ways. It is truly an “epilogue”, in the sense that it was created to append to the Trilogy, and refers back to it at all points. Unlike *Hunsrückdörfern*, it does not stand alone as a complete work in its own right. It would probably make little sense to anyone who has not seen the Trilogy, though the beauty of the images and the subtlety of the small scenes might compensate for lack of overall context. It seems to have sprung from a combination of very practical circumstances: lack of resources to continue Lulu’s story after the end of *Heimat 3* in a conventional sequel, and the existence of cans of unused material, outtakes from the filming of the three series of the Trilogy itself. The result is a poetic work, with many levels of meaning.

Some viewers value it most as a way of preserving and presenting the “fragments” themselves. That is understandable, since the context in which they are set, a flow of images, on digitally processed video, with many surreal elements, has a very different quality from most of the Trilogy. It is often beautiful, but lacks the rich physicality of the old footage. It contrasts strongly with the images and language of the original work and the apparent realism of the familiar narrative, revisited in the “fragments”. The “fragments” are a treasure trove, for their visual delight, and the way they enrich the characters and supplement their stories. The majority are on black and white film, and there are some especially beautiful sequences, for instance the first outtake from *Heimat 1*, in which Hermännchen waits in the wash house for Klärchen. In a few seconds it becomes a microcosm of their whole story, one of those scenes to be watched again and again. Also, for sheer delight in the cinematography, there are many other “fragments” of equal power – such as Clarissa’s encounter with Juan and Hermann in the Musikhochschule, or the extraordinary scene between Esther and Reinhard. The quality of the light and texture, the detail of the way people pass through spaces, for example Dorli and Helga entering Helga’s lodging from the street, have everything we have learnt to expect from the best work in the Trilogy.

The outtakes on colour film, however, at least on the DVD, have been modified, no doubt to make them easier to distinguish from new material forming the context. Whole images have been darkened, and parts of them have been flooded with intensified colour, often blue, green or yellow, sometimes vivid red, or whitened light, so the balance of light and colour and depth is seriously distorted. It is disturbing, and very disappointing, once one has grown to recognise the beauty of so much of the original work. I do not remember the effect being so noticeable in the cinema, the small screen may make it worse. It is hard to believe it was really necessary – the “fragments” from their content alone are surely distinguishable from the



new footage, and there is no need to make them look “unreal” to suggest they are images in Lulu’s mind. Our own imaginations can do that.

The “fragments” throw new light on some of the familiar characters. The child Hermännchen learns what waiting is, from seeing Martha wait, weeping, for Anton to return from the war. Maria in old age becomes young again, dancing with Ernst, and asserts her independence, travelling to France to look for Apollonia. Glasisch hints at an ancient village suspicion about Paul. Clarissa in Wasserburg remembers a time when her mother rescued her and cradled her in her arms. We learn more about Galina’s plans for a new life with Christian, and one significant, moving scene supplements the brotherly conversation of Hermann and Ernst, after Anton’s death. Evelyne returns briefly and very painfully to Neuburg, in another powerful sequence. In Munich we see the first, brutal encounter of Ansgar with Olga, the spark of their sado-masochistic attraction. Later there are scenes, both touching and very funny, that fill out the character of Olga, and also several with a delightfully young and feisty Schnüßchen. There are the precious passages throwing more light on Esther and Reinhard, their feelings about film and reality. Among the most fascinating and fully realised sections is the story of Dorli’s visit to Helga in Munich on the day of the Fasching party at the Fuchsbau, followed by more fragments of the days in Dülmen. It is wonderful to see so much more of Dorli, whose part was tantalisingly truncated in the main film, especially since this was an early appearance of a remarkable actress. There is also the hilarious story of Helga’s visit to the Registrar in Munich, which counterbalances the grim development of her personality in the main series.

Most of the “fragments”, these and others, are so subtle and moving, they rival anything in the films of the Trilogy. They probably do not make major changes to the images one has formed of the characters and their stories, but they revive them in one’s memory, with delicate detail that justifies every minute of the “epilogue”, and also rewards watching it again, many times.

## §

But this is not the only way to enjoy the film, there is more to it. Unfortunately, spelling out my own reflections on it will be as clumsy and intrusive as trying to analyse someone else’s dream or poem, and maybe as pointless. Most people will have their own ways of thinking about it. But on the other hand, if what follows helps anyone else to value the film as a whole work of art, as more than the sum of its parts, then it might be worth risking it. In these pages I have gone into perhaps unnecessary detail, for the sake of English readers for whom there is as yet no subtitled version of the film.

One object of the film was somehow to continue the story of Lulu. Since sadly there were no resources to film a continuation of her lifestory in the “real” world of the Trilogy, this epilogue is a way of allowing her a kind of resolution of her situation through contemplation, reliving and understanding of her memories. They are memories both of her own early life and of what she has heard or imagined of the lives of her forebears and their contemporaries.

At the same time, she reflects, and the film itself is a reflection, on the nature of memory and the art of film.

It was saddening to hear after the film first appeared that some viewers were wishing they could make themselves a version of the *Fragmente* from which Lulu's part had been excised. That was probably not a serious intention, but as a crude scissors and paste job on the film as we have it, it would have been vandalism! However, Daniel Kothenschulte, in one of the very few intelligent reviews of the film [*Frankfurter Rundschau: FR online 04.09.06*], made a reference to another film, Jonas Mekas' *As I Was Moving...*, in which "unsimulated and raw as the moment created them, the snippets run past one after the other like a patchwork rug many hours long. The form of these *Heimat-Fragmente* could have been just like that: no form." I have not seen the Mekas film, but this is a tantalising thought. All the same, Lulu's journey through the images gives them a form which must have a special resonance for their author, and which projects illuminating interpretations back into the original films.

It's not that I have not myself at times felt impatient with poor Lulu when, after a delicate, funny, beautiful "fragment", she tramps over the screen with her spade and assortment of drills. She so rarely smiles. It would be nice if she could sometimes share the joke of those self-conscious lapses into a looking-glass world. At the first two or three times of viewing I found her words hard to absorb while watching the film, due to the language barrier. Even now in places they seem to verge on truism and cliché. But written down, and translated into my own language, and reflected on in conjunction with the "fragments" themselves, they give rise to a pattern that might start to do justice to the complexity and depth of this elusive film.

## §

At the dawn of the new millenium Lulu starts from a fixed, deeply depressed place: she cannot escape from the past. This appears graphically in her face, more diffusely in her words. She is "without work, without plans, without money, without security." Youth has ended for the children of the permissive '68 generation. She sees and experiences only the past. "The present towers like the peaks of icebergs out of the sea of the past". Nonetheless, she will go and start work at the metaphorical building site, "where life begins". "Houses are built to outlive us, the dead are shadows in the walls."

Starting her "work", she "sees", imagines, builds stories about, the old when they were young, and the many aspects of their love, picturing the old as children and young lovers. Only our bodies get old. The ages of our lives are weightless and evanescent, like a thought or a glance. "Soul knows no time." For Lulu, in the flux of these still present images, the fixity of her situation starts to dissolve. "Each of us is manifold", we have as many bodies as we have lost dreams. She pictures Lucie in old age, who has lost her old dreams, is obsessed with death and dreams only of heaven, still scheming hard how to get there.

Lulu asks: How does remembering work? "The memory goes on keeping bits and pieces that will never make a whole... From the disordered fragments I am putting it all together again. Remembering is hard work". Maria becomes young again, dancing with Ernst.

Painfully, she lets the cow go, and travels at last to seek Apollonia, maybe to unravel something hidden in her memory of Paul. She too is remembering, “digging for the fossils, for the true stories... deep under the ground.” In contrast, Anton and Martha are rigidifying in their middle age. Only the policemen find a fossil, and are not sure what it is, while their dog follows a false scent.

Again in imagination the old are still young. Lotti is the guardian of all dreams, Hermann and Klärchen tenderly inspect each other’s navels, once, and at the proper time, but no longer, the gate of life. Lucie confronts Hermännchen with an image of death, Horstchen’s fatal discovery in the ground, but Hermann’s mind is young and elsewhere. For Lulu, “suddenly there is no passage of time anymore. Time and logic have ceased to rule us. That makes me happy. Just me again”.

### §

Lulu finds a new energy. She strikes the anvil. She wants to encounter the generations for whom the ring of the anvil was heard daily in peace and war, by the living and the dying. In each previous generation, women became old at a younger age than their daughters. All heard the anvil. Once weapons were forged on it, and in war, Anton is taken prisoner.

Men are unreliable. Lulu’s father kept altering his face (so it is no accident that he is played by several actors?). People “took their names from their houses, not from their fathers... If the men ran away, went to war or were unfaithful, the house remained. The house of many mothers.”

At Maria’s funeral, there are so many people from all over the world, “...all come because of Maria. As though she had been our mother.” Glasisch asks Paul: “What really happened back then with the naked dead woman in the forest, in 1927?” Lulu knows “time does not heal all wounds.” The monstrosity of things people do to each other reappears like a water stain, when they are all dead.

### §

Lulu reflects that those who go away from their roots, the dreamers, the obsessives, the ideologues, “the undaunted elucidators of all mysteries,” become vulnerable in their dreams to a deeper reality, with which the Hunsrück has never lost touch. Or is it to an unreality, with which the Hunsrück has no truck? Hermann has more strange dreams.

The ideologies are crumbling: “If faith is lost it is beyond redemption”. Lulu imagines Udo phoning his employers back in the collapsing GDR, and the inventory of redundant machinery at Marxwalde military base. She thinks of the sinister statue of Lenin being unloaded in a Schabbach field by Ernst, as booty from his far away adventures. She remembers: “Little onion bounced over the field and said: ‘the world is round’... My grandmother always said that, when I wanted to run off.”

Lulu imagines Clarissa, “travelling in a dream that others have dreamt”, and singing “Aus der Heimat”. Clarissa returns to Wasserburg. In voiceover she says: “Nothing is strange here. I am a stranger.” She remembers nearly drowning in the river and her mother holding her “endlessly in her arms”. But she will never come back.

§

The future is entirely problematic for Lulu, she no longer understands what people feel about it. Had it been up to her she might never have had a child, but now the story will go on, and she has no new way to offer Lukas. Yet other people, even the childless, even Ernst hoarding his treasure for a next generation that it never reached, believe the future is something that can be made. Galina is off to make a new future: “You’re only young once. Especially as a woman. Isn’t that true, Lulu?” But Lulu sometimes feels that everything has already happened, she alone is unfulfilled and unused. It is a feeling her father and uncle would recognise, as they support each other after Anton’s death.

Working for Ernst, Lulu had seen herself as “guardian of the family treasure. At last no more separation. No running away from relationships. No more need to explain who I am. A burrow for ever.” But then the water came. She rescued her child but lost her future, “the old future of childhood days.”

§

Could there be an answer? In Lulu’s mind there is now a glimmer of hope: “If I could find out what engendered me, then perhaps... I would know where the journey is leading.” She pictures her parents, long ago, at a time before they met. “But apparently there were only accidents by which Hermann became my father, and my mother from the Hunsrück ran into him in Munich.” She sees Schnüßchen, bright and charming, practising her tour guide routine, and imagining herself at the Opera. In the students’ canteen, Hermann reproves Helga, with the cynicism of an emotionally damaged and very young man. Helga, “all or nothing – or both!”, writes defiantly “I want to live”. Angry and needy, she is already contemplating a marriage that would transport her to Africa, but this melodramatic solution runs hilariously into the sands of bureaucracy.

“Suddenly... I am a child again in ’68 who has to play with the grown-ups”. Lulu starts to relive her lonely, permissive ‘60’s childhood. She reflects: “City of my childhood... I wasn’t there, in childhood. ...I was only on theatre sets. I inhaled the air and felt the shadows of highly strung parents, as they whisked past, always in search of something...”

§

In the “present”, Lulu visits the Musikhochschule, for the first time. Her mother associated it with a bad smell of music and other women, and instilled her own bitterness and revulsion in Lulu too. Now Lulu phones Lukas from this “house with a thousand smells,” so he can “hear” them... It is full of sounds and footsteps from the early period of Hermann’s time there.

In an imagined past, Clarissa - “music and nothing else” - quarrels with Volker. Hermann, the newcomer, is fascinated, and follows her away. Meeting Juan, they play with language exercises. Hermann sits an exam, with a wonderfully over-the-top Professor (played by Mamangakis), whose mobile face is illuminated with all Gernot Roll’s skill.

Lulu reflects on “Life or art. An everlasting tale of suffering. ...Especially for women, art always stands in the way of life.” Evelyne looks heavy with sadness, and possibly pregnant, as she sings “Das Irrlicht”. Jean-Marie, furling his umbrella, casts a gigantic shadow onto the organ pipes, and, along with Volker, badgers her for news of Clarissa, from the “Odyssey” of their weary concert tour. Still contemplating their painful lives, Lulu observes bitterly: “I belong to the happy childhood generation. All difficulties, all injustices and struggles for existence, they wanted to keep far from me, my clever, enlightened, unfaithful parents. But life...” .

Clarissa is sick after her abortion. Her landlady brings a picture of Kennedy and his small son. What will happen to the world now? At the moment, says Clarissa, it’s all dead quiet. Evelyne, still grieving and distraught, pays a disastrous visit to her family. Her step-mother exasperates her, her brother is a helpless witness of her pain. Much later, Clarissa – “wounded, troubled and alone” – in Paris is given refuge by Evelyne, now at last herself seemingly happy.

## §

Next, Lulu explores her ambivalent, changing feelings for her father: “Don’t ask if you may, but be able to do what you wish. A stupid saying of my father’s... So I was glad when he left me and my mother... What did all those chaotic Schwabing folk have to do with me?”

In the past, in a café at night, while Ansgar offensively chats up Olga, a very young Hermann gets off on the idea that “Beauty and Reason are one and the same”. He is no longer interested in women. He wants to become immortal. A few years later, after his concert, Schnüßchen waits, and they go home for their first night together. Schnüßchen – “everything just like home” – is radiantly happy: “Hermann... how can one single day be so beautiful!”

Lulu concludes: “Fathers remain our secret heroes. From my mother I have a sense for what is real. But from my father a sense for what is possible.” A magically enhanced Fuchsbaugarden becomes “the sunlit father-garden, bright as day, (where) everything is possible... I can hear the voices of happy guests, who have danced here many times... A rift can occur in time... and under the gravel buried treasures become visible...” (This scene suffers by comparison with the unseen images it recalls, of the unsurpassable summer night party of “jealousy and pride” in *Heimat 2.*)

In Lulu, something has changed. We do not see it, but maybe she smiles, as in her mind’s eye Hermann and Schnüßchen enjoy luscious cream cakes.

The fabled Fuchsbau was the starting point for her own life. The villa lives on in memory and imagination, though Elisabeth Cerphal tells Alex that it is about to be demolished. Alex protests that it is an historic place, but Fräulein Cerphal now has grave doubts: "Do you believe that anything of historical importance ever happened here?"

For Lulu it did: "So here I was conceived. Both of them have told me that, the Realist and the Dreamer. But like all historical events, it is enshrouded in mist." Lulu reflects that "Houses too have a childhood, a youth, and golden years of maturity. Then later the smell of old age... The house will never again display its original splendour".

Lulu contemplates the Fuchsbau flourishing briefly for her parents' wedding. Frau Ries revels in the chance to show the students how life there had once been. Marie-Goot, Pauline and Jacquelinchen from the Hunsrück are thrilled and overawed by the grandeur. But Jacquelinesche weeps, and Marie-Goot comforts her: "Ah child, I can understand you very well. It's exactly the same for me. I want to go home too." It dawns on Lulu that: "What was found here and begot me, that was the Hunsrück, and once again the Hunsrück. I come from two ends of one and the same cord. One end swings high up like a Fakir's rope, wanting to conquer the air. The other creeps like a snake seeking a hold on the ground."

The DVD has a "chapter heading" here: "Secret Wishes". Whose? Are they Schnüßchen's, for a city life with new, exciting friends, and an apartment with every modern gadget? Or the bus driver, Herr Ludwig's, for more lively female company than he finds at home? If so, Olga, "a picture of a woman", is briefly an answer to his prayer. Above all, there are Olga's unfulfilled wishes, not exactly "secret", that her friends would recognise her talent, and the "Young Film" makers among them would offer her parts.

Ludwig, bowled over by Olga, racks his brains to remember when he saw her on TV. "Recognised at last", she has to confess to a humiliating appearance as a woman with a cyst on her womb, in a TV documentary. It remains unclear whether she was acting, or was a patient in real life. Ludwig's importunity causes her distress.

Hermann and his friends perform their sad, absurd "Requiem" for the demolished Fuchsbau, once the home of all their dreams and wishes. By now, Lulu imagines, watches, and says little. Has she a "secret wish" to be again the small child, carried by her father, who pushes the hair out of her eyes and asks tenderly: "Lulu, what is it then?" If so, she tells it only to the stone bear on the verandah of the Fuchsbau.

## §

Lulu thinks of the "Young Film" makers who were her parents' friends. She reflects on the elusive, deceptive nature of images in film. They are "dream images". The art of the film maker is one with the work of memory and of the imagination. Maybe she recognises that it is the art of illusion, and yet nearer to truth than any work of the intellect alone. It is the art that she practises now as she works on images in her mind, formed of her memories.

Have images of Reinhard in Mexico been artificially inserted into much older film? Are they illusions? Dagmar tells Reinhard and Rob that their image is banal: "It's all in your heads, but not visible in the film material."

Rob has rearranged Reinhard's set to achieve "a dream of a shot". "Yes, but it's not mine", says Reinhard. Stefan wants to break up a scene with cuts. Reinhard and Rob protest that the scene is not meant to be realistic. "They are dream images and in dream there are no cuts."

In Venice, Reinhard is seeking a "beautiful" dying end to the story of "Esther". Esther herself challenges him: "One should always seek out what is ugly. ...Without hate, without disgust, ice cold. There sometimes the tears come." Again this scene is a microcosm of their relationship, as visually beautiful and moving as anything in their episode in *Heimat 2*. Back in Munich, Reinhard with Olga collects his film script and tells the printer "It's more beautiful than reality." He cannot face the possibility that his beautiful script may fail to get funding. The printer shows them his bird cages: "Those are Chinese nightingales....."

Lulu comments: "From what does one really know about one's own life? Remembering is only one part of it. ...I am surrounded by dreams, by projects, that never reached fulfilment. By the beginnings of big stories that seeped away into the quicksand of time. Life is not one broad current. It arises from thousands of beginnings. Never weary, always unsatisfied." In the background, a cinema advertises a "Day of films that were never made".

Hermann tentatively invites Frau Moretti to the cinema. Graffiti in Munich, with shadows of Stefan and Helga on the wall, say: "Be realistic... do the impossible." In Renate's nightclub: "Beauty passes, Renate soldiers on", an hilarious, sad, singing clown.

## §

In the cinema, contemplating the three girls in Dülmen, also in a cinema, Lulu has a Borges moment: "Dreaming in the cinema. Not me dreaming of the film, but the film dreaming of me. Where is my Self? Where am I... Then?"

A film within a film within a film? The solid sense of a Self has slipped, and in the flux she can sit still, as the stories of those other young women in the past flow by. Now, saying little, she can at last laugh, for one moment, at her father's antics. "They say one can never be sure of the fathers. For me it's different. I am the woman with many mothers. They have a hundred names and are always looking for happiness."

The scenes with Dorli, Helga and Marianne are a high point of the film, they are perfectly scripted and played, in spite of the modified colour film. It is sad that they had to be cut from Films 4 and 5 of *Heimat 2*. The long story of Dorli's visit to Helga might perhaps have unbalanced the flow of the narrative leading up to the Fasching party and Ansgar's death. But anyway, it is a bonus to have it here now, so that it can live in one's imagination while thinking of the original film.

In these images of her father's women, so resented in retrospect by her mother, Lulu sees Hermann enjoy himself as the focus of all their energy and fantasy. "Marianne – mother confessor and snake" is the one mature enough to live a fraction of her dreams. Dorli, not yet, but soon, will arrive there too. Together they reawaken Hermann's warmth towards women. But poor Helga creates a Hermann in her own image: "Hermann is exactly like me. He is always seeking something... Hermann is absolutely unable to love, because he is untouchable." Maybe she is not so far from the truth, about both him at that time, and herself.

## §

"What I am really looking for," announces Lulu, "is a story with a way out. But the way out doesn't lead outwards. It leads into the bowels of the machinery." The machinery is the mechanism of film making, which has all along been the mechanism of her work of remembering and imagining. With a sly nod to her actual existential status she adds: "My life arises from a movement of cogwheels that is chopped up in time, into about 24 images per second." In mirror image, the young Hermann again carries little Lulu and comforts her.

In the "Through the Looking Glass" sequences that follow, Hermann and Rob work with the VariaVision team, energetic and creative, bouncing ideas around. Lulu watches, gradually participating more actively in her own imagination. She joins in the brainstorming session in Konsul Handschuh's car, where the team roll their 'Rs', picking names for the company. "Round is the world" mocks Lulu, as her grandmother used gently to laugh at her. Rolls of film tumble over her head.

Hermann suddenly asserts himself to take command of the discussion in the car. For a moment, on the way to the premiere reception, he seems to look straight out at Lulu. She believes: "...At that moment he recognised me. He's thinking of me. He already foresees that I will come." At the reception, Hermann and Erika are drawn to each other, and slip away from the busy falseness, to be together. Lulu murmurs fondly: "I must concentrate. I'll disturb them... Hermann, can you hear me?" – but really she no longer needs him to.

Hermann re-encounters Helga, now with Kathrin, having left her child with her own disastrous parents in Dülmen. As they talk, Lulu leaves them: "I'll close the lid quietly, they won't notice. And the Genie in the bottle is caught for the next thousand years."

"End of the cinema. How do I get out of here? I don't belong to you. ....I want to become invisible." Whom is she addressing, to whom does she want to become invisible? To her parents and their friends? To her own obsessive imaginings? To her creator and his crew? To us, the spectators? She herself is a cinematic image, someone else's creation, and she does not belong to us.

## §

Lulu is back at the Günderrode House, with all the old photographs and stills, strewn on the floor in patches of irritatingly surreal orange light. She repeats what she said almost at the





## Imagined lives: The telling of whole life stories

The *Heimat* epic, stretching over eight decades, is unusually dependent on the ability to portray a whole imagined human life in film. The biography of a fictional lifetime is most often the province of the novel. But in *auteur* film a single author can oversee the whole process of realising his character's story throughout a long life, developing through many circumstances and experiences. In *Heimat*, the process is not always successful, but it is realised memorably for several of the characters. These figures are imagined and portrayed with a deep intuitive logic. They develop through the series, not arbitrarily to support interesting plot developments (as in a soap opera), but organically, as living people grow. They remain living and believable, not only as individuals, but as recognisable members of successive generations of the same imagined family. In turn they embody the 'Heimat' of each generation and in the films are the instruments through which 'Heimat' is told.

To a naïve observer like myself, there seem to be at least four major elements in the outcome of such a process: the skill and intuition of the actor, the skill of the make-up artist, often the challenge of casting more than one actor in the role, and, perhaps above all, the continuity of the author's fascination with his character, the continuity of what the character means for him.

### ***Maria***

In the whole epic, Maria is probably the most magical and satisfying of these longitudinal portrayals, while other masterful examples include Ernst and Anton. Figures such as Eduard, Lucie, Marie-Goot and Glasisch age physically through the first series, and change in some ways, but their personalities do not really grow. Though magnificent creations, they are "character" parts, very funny and moving, but observed less completely in the long term. Lucie's scheming and resilience for instance are there from the start, we just see their increasingly elaborate results. Her acquired religiosity is simply another facet of them, as it were.

Maria is a triumph of the director's imagination and the actress's skill. She grows all through the first series and yet she remains believably the same person throughout, there is almost nothing that jars. The changes wrought by age and circumstances, joyful, distressing, even tragic, are entirely consistent with her personality, as are the paths she takes. Less unquestioning and satisfied with traditional rural life than Katharina, and lacking Kath's heritage of ancient intuitive instincts (she is after all by birth a Wiegand), she too suffers some of the frustrations of a 'Weggeher'. She dreams at times of travel and a new life. But all her emotional energies go outwards to other people, to the family and to Otto. She is bound by

the strength of her love for them all, by recognition of their needs, and her need of them. Her conflicts and grief are generated not in an inner life, but in her relationships. She intuits the inner creative drives that propel Paul and her sons, but she does not share them.

She enters as a warm, sensitive, inexperienced girl, already realistic and intuitive enough to recognise quite soon that she will always be second to Apollonia, and able to allow that. Faced with the gradually closing door of Paul's withdrawal, she is bewildered, yet when he disappears she retains enough understanding at a deep level to recognise that he has truly gone. At first there is just raw hurt, the dead marten, the dead woman's clothes found in the woods, Maria's hysteria – what horror is hovering at the edge of her consciousness? After a while she adopts a stubborn resignation, dedicating her life to the children. She is firm but gentle with them, defending them from a harsh world, and from the growing fascist culture. Her movements become rather stiff and controlled, and she is sharp with Wilfried and the gossiping shopkeeper. But she has a gentle empathy with Lucie, seeming to identify with her frustration.

Then after ten years, Maria is young and alive again, laughing with Pauline, drinking a little more than she is used to, wishing she could start her life again, somewhere far away in the world, "sometimes I feel I've never really lived at all". For Otto has come as the new lodger, and for a moment, feeding him with ham and eggs, Maria is once again the young girl who offered chocolate to Paul. She flowers in this relationship, the tenderness and understated intimacy. Suddenly there is the bitter shock of Paul's letter. She does not know what to do, she becomes hard on herself and on Otto, out of duty, out of fear of "undeserved" happiness, of conflict, of social pressure. "No one asks me how I feel", she says. She no longer hears Otto. Her intuition is crushed. This is the first moment of true tragedy in the series. "I did everything wrong."

She finds too late that she is pregnant, gives birth to Hermann, and soldiers on through the years of war, working as a postwoman. Her friendship with Martha is touching, they are more like sisters than daughter- and mother-in-law. Then comes Otto's all too brief return, and there is a glimpse of the maturity and generosity of the love they could have had if he had lived. This is Maria as we will always remember her, and as she appears among the 'dead', at the end of the last film of *Heimat 1*.

But from then on, bereavement and grief, the absence of her older sons, the war and its disorienting aftermath, are ageing her. She becomes harder and more tensely defended, suspicious of Klärchen when she arrives, unable to bear the presence of poor Pieritz. When her privacy and self-possession are intruded on by American Paul, she is honest with him and not unsympathetic, but firmly sets her boundaries. He cannot give a straight answer to the question that torments her: why did he leave her? "No", she says, "Don't try to explain..", and hears the truth: "I don't know". Finally Katharina dies, and Maria is beyond tears. We do not see her weep.

After the war, we begin to see her see her more through the eyes of her children. First Hermännchen as a small boy watches his mother withdraw into that altered adult world.

Later as an adolescent he is oppressed by her possessiveness and devotion. She clings to him, the last of her sons at home, and all she has left from Otto. Had Otto lived, they might together have been relaxed and open towards the boy's relationship with Klärchen. They are shown to be so, perhaps as reconciling figures in Hermann's own mind, when he is with the equally "unsuitable" Gisela in the final episode. Even as it is, Maria nearly softens towards Klärchen's letter, but she has turned to Anton to help defend her child from the woman who has seemed to betray her trust, and he is only too ready to do so. Yet she is clearly conflicted when she sees the effect of their heavy-handedness on Hermann.

The tragedy is that it is not, as Anton and Maria believe, Klärchen who "wrecks" Hermann's life. It is his punishing and premature loss of her, which they precipitate, that scars his later emotional life and alienates him from his mother for ever. In the following years this distresses her deeply. She sees him very rarely, and cannot face attending his wedding in Munich. She remains unable to make sense of his music or his lifestyle: "He is so far away from me... what really hurts is that we can't listen to music together anymore".

For Anton, Maria will always be the mother he had tried and failed to protect from the trauma of Paul's abortive return in 1939. He accompanied her to the docks then, and no doubt gave her support in the following years until he was called up. During the war he knew she would befriend Martha on his behalf. After her death his memories again are of failing to meet her emotional needs. He remembers her refusal of a splendid colour TV: "But Anton, I'm not bored. That's just for people who want to die..." She sees the old people in the village sitting in front of their televisions, and thinks: "...one day they'll all die in front of the box all alone... It frightens me... Take it away Anton, and come and see me a bit more often." He has another flashback to Maria's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday party, where we (but not he) see her joking happily among her friends and family that now looking around she can see who will be there to follow her coffin. But poor Anton arrives very late, and crestfallen.

Ernst has a special place in Maria's heart. She houses him when his marriage and business fail and Anton refuses to help him. She is tender to him, as Katharina might have been. Years later, through his eyes we see his mother in old age dozing over her lonely meal, leaning against that pillar in the kitchen. He smiles, and for a moment abandons the pursuit of his unscrupulous trade. In one of the precious "fragments" in the "Epilogue", he dances with Maria at her 70<sup>th</sup> birthday party, and in his arms for a moment she becomes young again, in a wild memory of Otto, until Martha disapproves and stops them.

We have other glimpses of Maria in old age. We see her loneliness, her household work like bottling fruit, her sense of duty, and her frustration at being unable to escape from Schabbach. She and Pauline still plan the journeys they never took when they were young, and now never will. Nonetheless she sells the cow, the one practical impediment to travelling, and feels pain and guilt when the poor beast is roughly removed. Again in the "Epilogue" there is the splendid "fragment" in which Maria at last travels off on her own, to the consternation of Anton and Martha whom she does not tell. No doubt she realises they would try to stop or accompany her. She goes to France to find Apollonia, maybe still seeking closure to her ancient questions about Paul. Apollonia has died, but her daughter comes back

with Maria for a visit. Returning to be reproved by her children, Maria finally asserts her independence: “Now just stop that, Martha, I can do and leave undone what I want. I’m an adult, after all.”

We see little else of her before her funeral, and nothing of her last illness. At the funeral, Lotti, in another “fragment”, is touched that there are so many people: “And they’ve all come because of Maria, as though she had been our mother.” “So she was, too!” mumbles Glasisch.

Although the truth of the characterisation lies in the rich, intuitive script, the part gains immeasurably from being played by the same person throughout. In later years the make-up is at times a little heavy in closeup, but otherwise the performance itself is almost totally believable, and very moving. It was a great achievement for a young and relatively inexperienced actress to perform and live with this role into old age. She becomes the living heart of the whole first series.

### ***Anton and Ernst***

Anton and Ernst remain throughout their lives recognisably sons of Paul and Maria, and grandsons of Katharina, in their different ways. Both have suffered from the loss first of Paul, then of Otto, and from the start reacted in ways that each resents in the other. Both are capable of so much sensitivity, both are stubborn in pursuit of their own self-determination, in mutually antagonistic ways. Together they bind the world of Heimat 3 to its roots in the world of the first Heimat. The “Footslogger” metaphorically and the “Airman” literally both have clods of Hunsrück clay on their boots – it’s only Hartmut in the next generation who weakly wipes it off his shoe before it muddies the Porsche.

Nonetheless, the brothers quarrel fiercely throughout their adult lives. Reproached, with good reason, by Anton during the funeral meal, Ernst shouts “Don’t take that tone with me, you’re not my father. Since we were children you’ve been trying to order me around!”. Years earlier one touching effort at reconciliation ends with Anton saying: “Ernst, man, I don’t understand you”, and Ernst replying: “No wonder, I often don’t understand myself”. Not only are Ernst’s attitudes to life the antithesis of Anton’s, not only does Ernst behave shockingly in trading for his own unscrupulous ends on Anton’s reputation, but there is a history of bitter envy between them, which from Anton’s side at least is unacknowledged. By the 1950s, when all three brothers are living in the Hunsrück, though Glasisch still says Anton was always Maria’s favourite son, in cruel fact both Ernst and Hermann have become easier for her to love. To compound the injury Anton’s own father, Paul, who shares and at first underwrites his entrepreneurial skills, later has little time for him, and prefers “playing toy trains” with Hermann, the mere “artist”.

Anton’s life is more single track and predictable than Ernst’s or Hermann’s. As a child, skill with a camera becomes his main channel for communication with other children, and a talent fostered lovingly by his mother, maybe in memory of Paul. Eduard too is something of a role model in this respect. Anton is devoted to Otto, yet he stays close to his mother when Otto leaves, sharing but unable to alleviate her distress. The child actor of Anton is quite

convincing as a childhood version of the mature man, but the actor of Anton the young soldier is a very different person. However, his experiences still make sense in the history of the character: a helpless witness of barbaric executions, he takes refuge in the intricacies of the camera. In later years, it is only in technology that he like Paul will have the confidence to venture and succeed. His way will be one of craftsmanship, probity, responsibility and control. On the stubborn walk home across the width of Europe he obsesses over his plan for Simon Optik. His temporary dissociation from his family on return is not so different from the young Paul's, except that the world has changed, and he will be in a position to realise his ambitions, and not in a foreign land, but in Schabbach. Anton will never voluntarily travel away again. His flight is into his 'Heimat', not out of it.

Even so there are mysteries. It remains hard to understand how the "brooding inventor" of the early days of Simon Optik, the shrewd, principled, sober, rather puritanical entrepreneur, should have embraced the vulgar opulence of his house and lifestyle in *Heimat 3*. Maybe it is just one aspect of the singleminded focus inherited from Paul, that he lacks sensitivity to his material surroundings?

The relation of Anton and Mara is another intriguing complication, both moving and disturbing – widowed Anton's emotional need, his envy (once again) 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. 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. Anton 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, on the football field the day before he died.

Ernst is one of the greatest creations of the *Heimat* films, full of contradictions, unfulfilment, and mystery: generous, open-hearted, mischievous, angry, retentive and devious. He is a "Weggeher" who never got away, shackled to Schabbach, first by failure to make his mark elsewhere, finally by his dubiously acquired Nibelungen hoard.

As a twelve-year-old, distraught with hatred of the unknown father who has driven Otto away, Ernst fights with Anton in the meadow and refuses to stay at home. He finds his ideal life too soon, as a fighter pilot in the war, and is unable to accept its loss. Various ventures in the black market, a buccaneering helicopter business and the upwardly mobile marriage which subsidises it, all fail. However Ernst is a survivor, and years of unscrupulous dealing in antiques lead to his last incarnation as a reclusive and very wealthy art collector.

Beneath his deviousness and self absorption there remains a child, and a warm heart. In middle age, a glimpse of his mother and the rediscovery of his first toy glider can transform this cynical antique dealer into a small boy leaping onto the muck heap after his plane: "Did you see, Anton, it still flies!" As we have seen, he probably remains closer at heart to his mother than either of his brothers.

He is a loner, despising others, mistrusted by them, flying away from mundane situations, yet lonely and seeking family ties, but only on his own terms. He wants to be a father, but is in fact more of a conspiratorial elder brother to the young Hermann (and latterly, and movingly, the old one), to Tobi, and of course to Matko – but though he loves them, he lets all of them down. His growing affection for Matko is complex and very touching – especially in the sense that he is recreating for Matko what he himself as a boy received and lost from Otto, and then, like Otto, he is gone.

Scornful of authority, but in the end an unsuccessful entrepreneur, he is too much like his own father, lacking antennae, misreading signals, inward looking, even arrogant. In old age his creative and adventurous ideas fail through his impatient, angry, embattled over-confidence. So he comes to grief in the East by not heeding Tobi's warnings, and his museum plan is rejected because of his blunt failure to connect with the village – though actually the plan stems from an innerly driven creativity and will to redeem himself, not primarily a response to the perceived needs of Schabbach .

In the busy first half of *Heimat 3* there are several grateful interludes of stillness, humour and open-heartedness around the appearance of Ernst – his first meeting with Hermann at the mill, his delight at being allowed to sit in the cockpit of the military jet, the splendid progress of Lenin, the tender gift to Galina of his family cradle.

At the epic last meeting of the two brothers through the wire fence – so intimate, so alike, so angry, so clumsy, so stubborn – Ernst has another still moment, now of grief and self-doubt, but tragically it is lost. And then in the strange inverted replay of the encounter, when Hartmut tells him of Anton's death, Ernst is shaken by the flight of the wild geese – in his grief and guilt, does the grandson of Katharina hear the 'wilde Jagd'? Later, too late, there is his great redeeming speech at Anton's grave, mourning from the heart and reproaching the loss of so much that with his own death would finally be gone.

Finally comes the angry risk-taking that leads to his crash, his death the outcome of a causal chain "entirely consistent with his own character" as Edgar Reitz once wrote of another man's accident. Though an accident, it is also a way out of what he would see as the worst fate of all, "the slow disappearing without trace". But after that, almost complete silence. There is no footage of his funeral, and very little mourning, apart from the anguished clip of Hermann weeping in Clarissa's lap, and poor Matko's ceremony with the carnations.

These figures of the brothers are the anchors of the epic. Like Maria they are drawn with great truth and intuitive depth. One can watch their scenes again and again, and find ever more detail. The richness of both characters owes much to the presence and experience of the two actors who play them in maturity. They stand like bastions against the pressures imposed on the production of *Heimat 3*. Though they do not appear in *Heimat 2* the older brothers are no less significant to the work as a whole than Hermann himself.

In a documentary about *Heimat 2* (Robert Busch's *Up to the Moment of Truth*) on the "Bonus" DVD, Edgar Reitz speaks about the process of casting:

"It's always such a remarkable thing, one writes, and thinks that one has the characters clearly before one's eyes. While writing, I live with the characters as though they exist. But as soon as I look for an actor for the casting, I realise that is all an illusion... ..In the moment before you get to know an actor who inspires you in some way, the imagination starts to transform the character into the actor. In the process I meet the character for the second time, quite differently from how I do when I am writing, in a way that is unmistakably individual and personal."

The complexity of casting in this intuitive way must be multiplied when more than one actor is needed to portray the same character at successive ages through a long life.

There are a few uncomfortable discontinuities in important supporting roles in *Heimat*. We miss the personality of the young Pauline after the first two parts of *Heimat 1*, although the older actress is not really so dissimilar. On first viewing there is another jolt in part 8, when the latest version of Lotti emerges, but by the time one watches it again it is this older Lotti who has endeared herself to us and become identified with the part. The Schnüßchen of *Heimat 2* is nothing like her predecessor in *Heimat 1*, but then the latter is such a tiny part that it is not a problem, and the same applies to Gisela in *Heimat 3*, though the dissimilarity is a little more noticeable in her case. Among the leading long-lived characters it is of course Paul who suffers most from the difficulty of casting.

### **Paul**

Paul is an intriguing and mysterious character, especially as played by the young actor in the first part of *Heimat 1*. We understand that maybe in the War he has had experiences that set him apart from his family and village, and his best friend has died. In the overall structure of the Trilogy he is a bearer of the concept of the one who goes away, who is "homesick" for unknown distant places. He has absences, as when for example a fly walks over his face in a clip in the *Fragmente*. Like his mother he is intuitively in touch with another dimension of reality, seeming to see a vision of his dead friend Helmut, but he lacks Katharina's strong down to earth ability to trust her own intuition. Attractive to women, and probably hungry for relationship, he is torn between Apollonia and Maria, and takes refuge in his fascination with wireless technology. Maybe shocked by discovering the dead woman, and perhaps sensing the unspoken reaction of the village (as betrayed by the ancient Glasisch in another clip in the 'Epilogue'), unsettled by the incident of the pine-marten and the trap he sets for it, he walks away – from what? From the demands of home and family and work on the land, the intensity of his inner hunger and maybe murderous anger, his feeling trapped – who knows? The strength of the characterisation is that one knows no more about this fictional figure than about any other person in real life, and no more than maybe he knows about himself, and yet one is entirely convinced by its authenticity.



Then in part 8 of *Heimat 1* there is the disturbing discontinuity of Paul returning as quite literally another man. The problem appears to come as much as anything from the casting. There seems to be nothing in the script itself that jars, if one imagines it played by the original actor as an older man, with his original presence and resonance. This might be less true for the script of episodes 10 and 11, as maybe by that time the new actor had himself interacted with and influenced the later scripts. It is hard to see anything of the original Paul in the brash, foolish American tycoon who rejects Anton and all he stands for in Episode 10. Yet Paul as a very elderly man looks and even behaves in some ways like Anton himself in old age. When Anton, for instance, grandly presents Hermann with a horseshoe from the old smithy, to be fixed to the Günderrode House, there is a conscious echo of Paul overseeing the fixing of his plaque on the wall of the Simon house. Both father and son have become strong, authoritarian men, justly proud of their self-made success, and it would make sense for that to have moulded them in similar ways. In the last episode of *Heimat 1* Paul seems to have returned to the Hunsrück to stay with Anton, just for Maria's funeral. He speaks of having travelled the world without ever knowing where he was at home. Although he is very frail and appears to be nearing death during the Kirmes, we do not know when or where he dies. For the purposes of *Heimat 3* he is assigned a place on the Simon family "gravestone" at the Nunkirche, with a date in the year following Maria's, which could imply that he is supposed to have remained in Schabbach and died there.

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In the passage from Robert Busch's documentary quoted earlier, Edgar Reitz continues: "There are always actors in whom there is an inner mystery. The character is in a mysterious way miscast, and in the actor there lives a mysterious kind of opposition to the whole thing, or an endless depth of undeclared or undeclarable motives. And to guess at that and to work with it is truly beautiful." This seems to have been the case with both Hermann and Clarissa. The actors of both parts have spoken about it too.

### ***Hermann and Clarissa***

Hermann himself is another enigmatic character whose earliest hopes are largely unfulfilled, in spite of his eventual material success. Again the role is played by different actors – but except in the case of the 40-year-old Hermann towards the end of *Heimat 1* this is not necessarily a problem, since Hermann of *Heimat 2* is in many ways a very credible reincarnation of his younger self. But some of the light and warmth has gone out of the person, perhaps not because it is another actor, but through the pain inflicted on the younger Hermann in the previous series. In the documentaries, the actor himself has a funnier and more positive personality than his character. On film, Hermann has consciously rejected and lost access to an open, vulnerable part of his creative self, which was so badly hurt. For a long while he is in flight from falling in love, and when he almost accidentally slides into marriage, it is too soon and to the wrong person. There is something shallow about this Herman: he looks down on Clemens, he would choose the clockwork nightingale "with no soul". Always in *Heimat 2* there is the hope that the open-hearted creative Hermann of the time with Klärchen will re-emerge, but except in small glimpses, as in his night with Marianne, it does not. With

him has disappeared the only one of the Hermanns who could convincingly have become a "world class musician". Meanwhile a more complex, funnier, sadder, less secure, more self-centred, and ultimately rather passive person stumbles through to adulthood. Throughout *Heimat 2* he is functioning and maturing, becoming an effective musician, "successful" in the conventional sense, at the level of the "sorcerer's apprentice".

At the same time there is the complementary figure of Juan. As well as being played by an intriguing actor, Juan's character is a masterly creation, potentially the most gifted "artist" of the group, in the clarity, humour and profundity of his perception. His responses to people and situations are spontaneous and creative, often mirroring and sometimes healing or changing them. Juan is the one person in the group who is acutely aware of the others and of their pain, watching them screw up their lives under layers of hurt and damage in their past and emotional dishonesty in the present. As he says, before taking his leave, he loves them. Is it possible that Juan represents the Sorcerer, the Shaman, without access to whom within himself Hermann can never attain his full stature? Whereas Juan, with no Apprentice, no recognised practical achievement, remains in some eyes a failure?

After watching *Heimat 2* one hoped that in *Heimat 3* Apprentice and Sorcerer would integrate and Hermann would produce work musically at the level of *Heimat* itself. But the Hermann of *Heimat 3*, though played by the same actor, is, as Henry Arnold himself has said, now a quite different person:

"It didn't help having played him in *Heimat 2*, because he has become a quite different man... What he has rather lost is his forward drive to want to go further with his music and composing. I accepted it because it was the storyline, but it was strange to me - ...I had to find another way of thinking myself into it, a different tempo, a different way of moving" [VPRO television documentary 19/12/04].

We can only mourn the circumstances that prevented the production of another *Heimat* series directly after the end of *Heimat 2*, which might have bridged the disconcerting gap.

All through the second and third series Hermann is the person to whom things happen, rather than the one who makes them happen. On the other hand many of the stories in the films are told as his memories. In a sense, though not literally, he is the invisible "I" of the narrative, and too many of what might have been his more interesting characteristics seem to have been given to other figures. He is seen as a "riddle". "That's because he is an artist, that always makes one a bit of a riddle, he is always having to look for his artistic inspiration... he is always in development, always in search of himself" [Edgar Reitz, in the same TV documentary].

Clarissa is another figure whose actress was uncomfortable with the character. In the same Dutch TV documentary, Salome Kammer says:

"The Clarissa in *Die Zweite Heimat* always gave me a problem because she was always hiding in a cocoon and not coming out, always in flight... By the end of the filming I was really unhappy with this character... she was so closed in, and she doesn't know

where she wants to go or what she wants. She couldn't trust herself to let her feelings flow, that really tormented me."

But the actress says she was much happier with the older, more cosmopolitan Clarissa of *Heimat 3*, where she could build up a character that was different from herself.

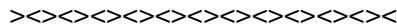
One of the intertitles in *Heimat-Fragmente* sums up Clarissa as "travelling in a dream that others have dreamt". This is a fair description of her in *Heimat 2*. She has been oppressed all her life by her mother's ambitious drive to make her a great cellist, and by the unsavoury attentions of the wealthy local doctor, whose patronage she sees as indispensable for furthering her career. She is beautiful, highly intelligent and intuitive, and insecure. She loves her cello and her music, and is a very gifted musician, but ultimately abandoning the cello altogether is the only way to escape the emotional blackmail from the mother and the patron. Her marriage is also a way of travelling in another person's dream, that of Volker, who is a warm person and in many ways more mature than Hermann, but all too solidly present to fulfil her need for someone as elusive as herself, who would leave her "free". Temporarily at least, she finds an unconditional, sustaining relationship with Camilla, the American trombonist. The combination of fear of loss of freedom and fear of loss of love dominates both Clarissa and Hermann in *Heimat 2*, leaving them deeply connected but agonisingly unable to commit to each other except as muses and anima figures.

Nearly twenty years later, at the start of *Heimat 3*, the "magic" has gone, Hermann and Clarissa as their actors explain, have radically changed, they seem at first little more than bearers of the concepts of the intellectual at a loss in a changing world, and the musician struggling to reconcile the demands of the art and of a stable relationship. Hermann is still rather passive, with a wry humour, but all the energy and enthusiasm for experimentation are lost. Clarissa has acquired an outgoing social manner and organising ability, and shows great charm and empathy and no little humour. The fear of deep feelings has gone, but inwardly she is still vulnerable, and they are both under stress in their working lives. Rather unconvincingly, Hermann is the great "maestro", Clarissa "almost like a diva", they give performances, but music no longer occupies their minds and their life at home. They were far more believable as dedicated musicians when they were students.

The attempt to make a life together in the Günderrode House is a flight into travelling in each others' dreams, and their own. Its predictable failure leads both of them once again into flight, Hermann into a passive unproductive house-husbandry, and Clarissa into touring with a form of "crossover" performance, and maybe a fling with the gormless David. After Anton's death, and a renewal of brotherly intimacy with Ernst, Hermann finds Clarissa and himself repeating ancient patterns from the Munich days. She is absent and elusive, he is racing round the country to catch up with her, and their attempt to meet is frustrated by third parties. An old, familiar sense of inadequacy and despair has returned to haunt their new 'Heimat'. But by the end of the series they have lived through experiences which bring them to a very different kind of 'Heimat'.

Even before Clarissa's illness, both she and Hermann have responded valiantly and together to the needs of Arnold and Lulu. In his distress after Clarissa seems to have left him, Hermann becomes briefly absorbed in his music once more, completing successful compositions. At the same time he rediscovers what remains of the living 'Heimat' of his brothers and Rudi, and already starts to lose it again, with Anton's death. Then the horror of Clarissa's illness occupies something like two years, during which Hermann effectively relinquishes his career. Reconciled with Lulu, he runs the house for her and Lukas, while caring for Clarissa in, and perhaps at times, out, of hospital. Worn down by her illness, and shaken by the death of Ernst, and his own failure to protect Matko, he and Clarissa settle again at the house, both of them changed and seeming indissolubly together.

In the final episode they have started performing again, but are still based firmly in Oberwesel. Rudi's death removes the last living link with Hermann's newfound Schabbach 'Heimat', and heavy responsibilities are placed on them by Clarissa's mother and the loss of the museum project and of Lulu's career. The space of their small house is no longer sacrosanct. But in the final analysis they find that "Family – seems to be the strongest thing, after all", and Clarissa tenderly makes Hermann the promise which is not in her hands to keep, that she will "Stay well". They have for the moment arrived at something approaching the grounded everyday inner 'Heimat' that Hermann's step-grandmother would have known.



## **Afterword: 'Chance' and 'magic' in the telling of *Heimat*.**

The telling of 'Heimat' is illuminated by Edgar Reitz' own reflections in the book *Drehort Heimat* (pp.61-69) 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, Alf Brustellin, led up to by "a chain of banal links, entirely coherent with his own character". Ironically, Brustellin had been intrigued by the possibility of such a causal chain as material for film, in place of lofty notions of Fate and atonement. At the time of his death he was scripting a story by the Polish writer Wladislaw Lem (author of *Solaris*), the English translation of which is entitled *The Chain of Chance*. Similar concepts famously inform the work of Kieslowski. In the last film of *Heimat 2* Reitz seems to pay direct homage to Kieslowski's *Blind Chance* in the scene where Hermann wanders into the station on a journey to nowhere in particular, when there happens to be a train departing for Heidelberg which he runs to catch. Chance and dream also pervade much of Hermann's subsequent odyssey in search of Clarissa.

There are a number of other examples in the Trilogy. The outcomes are not in any way predictable, yet the chain of events is "coherent" with the person's character, and in retrospect there is a pattern which makes sense. Events immediately preceding Paul's disappearance are, as far as we know, chance events – his finding the dead woman in the forest, the attic raided by a marten for whom he sets a trap – yet they could be triggers for someone like Paul, living for years with a secret inner fantasy of escape. Ansgar's accidental death is foreshadowed in his depressive intention of one day taking his life as vengeance on his parents and escape from them, and his carelessness is precipitated by use of drugs. Reinhard's death is a mystery, but the events leading up to it originate directly in the person he is, his relationships and his work.

Hermann's arrival back on the edge of the Hunsrück at the start of *Heimat 3* is an outcome of what seems like a contrived chain of events, rather than 'chance' – and yet – the Hunsrück and its dialect would have had meaning for Clarissa when she found the house, the fall of the Wall draws a crowd of hotel guests together by the TV, and inspires a search for change and the fulfilment of dreams, in characters already at a loss in their lives. In the same way, Herr Böckle chances to reveal his nefarious designs to the brother of a man whose business is shortly to fall prey to them. But both Böckle and Hermann are travelling East with a similar aim – to exploit business opportunities in the old GDR. And Hermann, when he re-encounters Böckle at the Simon christening, happens to fail to warn anyone, because he leaves embarrassed by his brother's behaviour.

On the other hand, events in *Heimat* are nearly all scripted events in a purely fictional story, chance cannot enter into them, except in so far as characters may at times have seemed to take on lives of their own, beyond the film maker's conscious control. In *Drehort Heimat*,

Reitz went on to reflect that: “Our feelings are conditioned to thinking about Fate, the association of guilt and atonement, of action and nonaction, of heroism and cowardice, and similar moral opposites.” He recognises that the “emotionless” approach to the story of a life in terms of chance and everyday interconnectedness, which he himself favours, lacks appeal to an audience’s feelings: “People expect something to happen, something catastrophic or monstrous if one does this or that, which bears no relation to it, either psychologically or physically.” It is not surprising, therefore, that in spite of many clear statements of Reitz’ method, some people see the disasters that befall the characters of *Heimat 3* as a ‘nemesis’ on their ‘hubris’, a retribution for living ‘selfish’ lives, or ‘having it too good’.

In contrast, interviews with Reitz about *Heimat 3* show 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. ‘Hubris’ for him seems to have no moral connotation, the context [for example, the interview in *Die Zeit* 16.12.04] makes clear it refers to the psychological delusion of an ‘Ideal-Self’ built on a romantic ideal of eternal love and glittering success in a career. Life knocks people off the pedestal of the ‘Ideal-Self’ (as he says), not however because it is “selfish” or lacking in social responsibility, but because it is an ideal, and hence unrealistic. This is not invoking nemesis or retribution, it is a non-judgemental observation about a causal connection – it is not something people “deserve”, it is simply what happens. It has happened to his own generation of ‘68, and he is “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.” [Die Zeit 16.12.04]

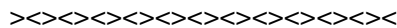
The story-teller’s method he uses is the one he once described, the ‘magic’ that sees the detail of interconnected, everyday chance events. He wrote in *Drehort Heimat* that neither high moral ideas nor any scientific method, but only “magic” can detect the patterns of this interconnectedness, and he claimed that film is in this sense a magic medium, though it had so far developed no form for such a representation. That was back in 1981, but over 20 years later in, for instance, the intertwining stories of cousins Lulu and Hartmut, or the death of Ernst, which is a classic example of the type of causal chain in question, Reitz himself was still producing work in a “magic medium” which reproduces exactly those patterns.

Reitz often uses this concept of ‘magic’, which is susceptible to different interpretations. In the immediate context of the pages quoted above, he invokes the notion of a system of ineluctable interconnections underlying phenomena. Most superstitions are built on this concept, magic rituals “guaranteed” to deflect or ensure certain outcomes, although it has also informed profound philosophical concepts like the Buddhist notion of *pratityasamutpada*, in the essence of which there is nothing mystical or superstitious. Reitz points out that, when one looks back from a death along the causal chain of unexceptional events that has led up to it, the links of the chain are now as inescapably determined and determining as such “magic” events are seen to be.

The concept of ‘magic’ for Reitz also has implications that range from Brustellin’s mother’s ability to find lost objects through 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 *Heimat 1* or Juan in *Heimat 2*. As a deeply intuitive author himself, he describes how images in the cutting room “belong” to each other and force one to order them in one way and no other, while music and images, movements and dialogue work together in inexplicable ways that one can only describe as “magic”.

‘Magic’ in this sense runs through all the *Heimat* films, from the miraculous interplay of image and sound in the *Hunsrückdörfern*, to the sense of “rightness” and recognition that recurs in the brief clips forming the *Fragmente*. At one level, it has something to do with a creative director and author’s ability to allow his work to respond to a subconscious interaction with his experience and with his medium and cast, without forcing it to conform to any preconception or principle. It is the ability to allow Paul to disappear without explanation, other than one we can construct in our own imagination from the preceding two hours of image and dialogue and movement. It is Otto’s smile, in the dance hall. It is the life that returns to the faces of the “dead” when Maria comes into the hall and speaks to them by name. It is in the faces of Evelyne and Ansgar, sharing the milk. It is the tension that sparks through the summer night party at the Fuchsbau. It is Fräulein Cerphal’s gait as she hurries to do her father’s bidding. It is Ernst’s face when he sits in the cockpit of a jet fighter, and again when he hears the wild geese fly. It is Hartmut wiping the clay off his shoe, and Mara taking his hand as she leads him to her car. Examples would be endless. It seems that it is experienced in one way or another by everyone who loves the films. We all know what we mean by “Reitzian”, we can point to scene after scene that displays it, and share the recognition, and share also the disappointment in the few places where it has been overtaken by conscious contrivance. We in the audience lack the expertise to analyse something so subtle, we simply enjoy the wealth bestowed on us by a masterpiece in film.



## Sources

As explained in my Preliminary Note these “reflections” were initially stimulated by participating in the English online discussions of *Heimat 3*, and I have freely incorporated material from my own contributions to these discussions and from my own essays and articles contributed to Reinder Rustema and Thomas Hönemann’s websites. Where I have referred to other people’s contributions to these sites and discussions they are of course referenced properly in the text.

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