

**Date: Fri, 16 Apr 2004 14:41:46 +0100**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

## DIE ZWEITE HEIMAT: A NEW GENERATION

### PART 1: The First Songs, Hermann 1960

I would guess that, in some senses, my introductions to this film will be superfluous or even worse, as there must be many, many people out there who know far more about DZH than I do. I only saw it for the first time just over 6 months ago, having recorded all the episodes and then confining the tapes to my loft, with the intention of watching them one day, perhaps after I retired. In addition, to further add to my embarrassment, my expertise in the fields of music and the visual arts is virtually non-existent. I have been looking at the work of Alan Andres and Barry Fogden on the website and am mightily impressed. I wonder if they, or others, will be continuing and completing their encyclopaedic listing and identifying of the vast array of cultural references in DZH. I shall concentrate on matters such as characterisation, narrative, significances and symbols; in short, perhaps a plain man's guide/response to the film.

Well here we go! I am still suffering from Heimat withdrawal symptoms, as perhaps many of you are, but I had not realised, until now, how closely the beginning of First Songs grows out of Part 9 [Hermannchen] of "Heimat". Klärchen's letter has been intercepted and read by Maria. Anton has been sent for. The film opens with the camera panning around the kitchen concentrating on the unfinished business of slicing and preserving vegetables. The letter lies open upon the table. Hermann is shown in his room with the letter, having retreated there and locked the door. He screams, "Nein", as his mother and Anton beat upon the door, almost causing the picture of Hermann's father to fall to the floor. We had seen all this in "Heimat", hadn't we, but then we depart into new territory. He throws open the inner door and in a great burst of light he moves toward the outer window, and, in a strange orange light, Hermann makes his vow. There are religious overtones here. Strains of organ music are heard. The light from the window casts a kind of halo on Hermann's face, and, like a religious devotee, he vows to God that he will never love again, that he will leave the Hunsrück for ever, and that he will learn from the great composers of the past, for they were alone too. There is a slight problem in that our young, intellectual is a heretic, as he puts it later, but he knows God will hear him as "You are in me". This melodramatic, Romantic declaration sets the tone of the alienated artist, alone and defiant against the world, familiar in Romantic literature in both England and Germany. I think of the poets Coleridge and the young Wordsworth, Keats and Shelley. I also noticed that Hermann becomes aware of his reflection in the mirror of a wardrobe door, which has swung open; kneeling in his underpants he sees his image. I spotted this idea of reflection and image several times more, even in this first episode. Here is a man who watches himself, as it were. We return to the religious theme once more, when we see Hermann thundering out the toccata in the church. In "Heimat" Lotti had appeared through the door, hadn't she?

I was convinced by Hermann's intellectual powers by his performance in the viva examination. By his intellectual display he converts his Grade 5 in Religion into a Grade 1 without offending the Chaplain too much!! I was convinced by Hermann's musical abilities by the tour-de-force of his concerto for the school audience, which is received with tumultuous applause. Not only is Marie-Goot in the audience but also Schnusschen, whom we remember from the Rhineland fun-fair ["I showed him how to kiss"]. He rejects the Chaplain's request that he makes a retreat "to subdue his pride" but notes that, as the Chaplain moves off in the rain, "I saw that he was crying for me". Hermann has this great capacity to make others love him, as we see throughout the episode and the film. Our hero is now ready!

Do you notice how often it is raining in Reitz's films? It is September 2nd, 1960 when

Hermann leaves in the early morning gloom and takes the bus out. "Leaving home I sought my second home" and he does not look back. The camera does, on a wet, dismal scene, with a farmer driving his sheep across the road in the murky darkness. We do not see or witness any farewell with his mother. On the train to Munich he meets a Herr Edel, played by Alfred Edel, an enigmatic figure who later nicknames Hermann, "Jesus". He is full of rhetorical flourishes, acts as a kind of Greek Chorus, and voices, perhaps, some of Reitz's own views. He warns Hermann and the other students, "the first of you to free himself from ideology, the first of you to succeed in that, will make it." I was reminded of the German at the Ellis Island Immigration Centre who warned Paul Simon against "-isms"; a similar thought, isn't it?

Once in Munich, Hermann falls on his feet wherever he goes. Renate is immediately attracted to him, offers him a place to sleep, and makes direct sexual advances on him. Frau Moretti is entranced by him and offers him accommodation from the end of the month. There is a wonderfully comic, and yet moving scene, where she sings Franz Lehar's "Gypsy Love" with wild and dramatic flourishes and Hermann accompanies her. All the young female workers make cow-eyes at him. She seems to have almost fallen in love with him. "Lad, you're a genius." Josef, Clemens' landlord genuinely likes him and has a key specially cut so he can practise whenever he wants. Clemens' offers him a share of his room. The porter gives him a coveted key to one of the practice rooms because he is quiet and polite. He talks to Ansgar, Rob and Reinhardt, the student film makers and makes a best friend in Juan Ramon Fernandez Supercasseaux, the Chilean with 11 languages.

In the archive of old postings on the website I read a letter whose words I would like to quote. I did not make a note of the author's name and I hope he won't mind. Here are the words: "I think there is a lot to the doubling idea of Juan and Hermann, a very common dramatic device. Both begin as outsiders. One plays the game [by cheating on the entrance exam, incidentally] and becomes an insider, the other remains excluded." Again and again I watched the scene of Hermann's entrance examination and I feel most unsure that it was Reitz's intention to suggest that he cheated. At worst, in my opinion, he took advantage of a lucky chance and I am not even sure that he was watching the reflection for his answers. He seemed to be working them out correctly to me from his vast musical abilities. Even if he were helped somewhat, what was he supposed to do? Was he supposed to say, "Stop the exam and repeat it on another occasion with new questions." I am very interested to hear other peoples' opinions on this. It does not seem to me that Reitz wants to present Hermann as a cheat. Juan does not pass, however, because his music is considered to be no more than "folklore". I thought his percussive piece and performance were wonderful but the academicians did not.

Reitz certainly conveys, with remarkable accuracy, the heady days of early student life, its excitements where all things seem possible, the unbelievable and yet touching arrogance of the young, the searching for confidence and maturity. Reitz makes much use of 1st person narrative in this episode. For instance, Hermann says, "It fascinated me [Volker's avant-gard music] as the city fascinated me." Or again, "Munich all I ever dreamed of-friends who think just like me." Anyone who has ever left home for university will find all these scenes stirring old memories. As I have written before, and promise not to repeat, I left my home in rural Derbyshire in late September 1956, four years before Hermann, but only 18 years old, for the cathedral city of Durham, where I attended the university, reading English. Reitz certainly captures that heady mix of idealism, arrogance, immaturity, and intellectual striving so well. I might add that neither I, nor my friends, if I might speak for them, had the ability of Hermann and his student friends as depicted in the film. More's the pity!

To finish, I would just like to say something about the use of musical pieces and their filming. I watched Carol Angier's film last week, where Edgar Reitz talks about the language of music and its importance. I cannot now remember exactly what he said, but

it is easy to see that he is fascinated by the composition and performance of music. Look at Clarissa's cello lesson. The camera focuses in a loving way on the bow traversing the strings in close-up; one stroke forward and one back with the bow caressing the strings, echoing the description of masculine and feminine by the teacher. You see nothing but the strings and the bow. Very seductive! The high F note is paralleled by Salome Kammer's hauntingly beautiful and expressive face. In the concert the camera focuses on Volker's artistic and expressive fingers as they dance on the keyboard.

One last thing! Klärchen has sent her good-bye letter. Reitz likes doing the arrival of letters, delivered by postmen on different coloured bicycles, doesn't he? Now we begin the endless dance of attraction and distance between Hermann and Clarissa. He first sets eyes on her coming down the stairs and standing by the balustrade. As he passes they turn and look lingeringly at each other. Later, Hermann bumps into her. Apart from "Danke", as he returns a dropped item, no words have yet been spoken between them. They will be! Their relationship is to be a thread that runs through the whole film.

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Mon, 19 Apr 2004 17:25:19 +0200**  
**From: "Theresia en Martijn" <theresia\_martijn@onetelnet.nl>**

As I'll join in from now (DZH), first a general notion on Heimat and this mailing list. I like the slow pace of the filming, leaving time and space for the viewer's thoughts and for various interpretations. Harry Mulisch, a famous Dutch author, once said: A masterpiece is not enough, it needs talented readers. Well, I'm not sure whether any of us can approach Reitz' genius, but he inspires us to search our minds and put our notions down. I think it's a great idea to exchange these thoughts.

I'm Theresia's husband. She already wrote that I prefer DZH to Heimat. The main reason is that DZH's themes (music and film) appeal to me greatly. I teach autistic and (mentally) handicapped adolescents music and drama. In an interview Reitz once said his aim is to teach us to look in a new way. Those are probably not his exact words, I don't have the tape at hand. But I like the idea of his images healing our eyes. I get that when I walk out of a museum; Heimat has got the same quality: it lifts my spirits and slows me down.

I'm going to watch DZH for the second time now, with a notebook in hand this time. Good luck to you all. Enjoy the coming months!

## THE TIME OF THE FIRST SONGS

Hermann vows he will never love again. Does he here curse his future relationship with Clarissa? Could that be the reason why (in DZH) it never solidifies/works? Hermann is a troubled mind, as is Clarissa, but they don't seem to find comfort in each others company. They rather disturb one another, but at the same time stir and trigger each other's creativity. It seems they're two souls destined to be together (in chance meetings their worlds literally collide), but their (artistic) identity is stronger than their need for plain happiness.

I would like to discuss the images Edgar Reitz uses. For example the cauliflower carried around by the man Hermann meets on the train to München. Why a cauliflower? Hermann's first meeting with Clarissa: the concierge awards him a piano room key, because of his peaceful presence. Is this symbolic at all? And for that matter, why does he pass Clarissa on the stairs? Does he have to pass Clarissa (in life) to reach higher

regions (musically)? When Hermann sees Clarissa he gazes with big wondrous eyes. He gazes at this beautiful image of a figure with a cello case. Reitz is a perfectionist with a keen eye for detail, but I wonder to what extent he ponders over the images he chooses to show us, and in this case, chooses to show Hermann. Hermann just experiences the scene, he doesn't think. So why should we think? Maybe we should just experience this beauty instead of trying to find meaning. But does Reitz calculate the probable effect of the images and events he chooses? Apart from the autobiographical bits, I wouldn't be surprised if he chooses a lot of his images instinctively. I suppose this would also account for the various possible interpretations. As I said earlier, watching Heimat really relaxes and unwinds me. It doesn't strike me as the work of a freak. So if he is a freak, he's a master at erasing his tracks.

In the same hall we see concert pamphlets falling down the stairs. Volker shouts: Die Musik ist tot, jetzt lebe die Musik! The king is dead, long live the (new) king. The clock in the concert room seems to say the time has come for a new, more experimental kind of music. I mentioned the Dutch author Harry Mulisch. One of the main characters in his book *The Discovery Of Heaven* is a beautiful cellist called Ada. One of the other characters calls her *musicienne du silence*. I like that phrase. Seeing Clarissa playing silence in the scene made me think of this. I haven't consulted my watch, but it feels like this minute is real time. Hermann enthusiastically applauds. You can see his admiration for Volker.

The first part (*The Time Of The First Songs*) is full of promise, oozing spontaneous creative musical energy: the singing Frau Moretti with Hermann behind the piano, the scene in the school canteen (students improvising with spoons on tables and radiators), the auditions (i.e. Juan's xylophone bit), the messing around with rulers and erasers on the grand piano, the minute of silence... Hermann perfectly fits into his new scene. He's born again at a place where music is born again. *Die Zweite Heimat*, or the second coming.

I look forward to react to the thoughts you all got from watching this part!  
Regards, Martijn Sikkens

**Date: Tue, 20 Apr 2004 21:31:14 +0200**  
**From: "Theresia en Martijn" <theresia\_martijn\_onetelnet.nl>**

Hi Ivan,  
this is Martijn writing to you.

As on our tape we miss the first 20 minutes of *The Time Of The First Songs* part, Theresia pointed out this part of your introduction to me. I read this bit, so I could get the full picture. For instance, the fact that Hermann vows he will never love again, I got from your mail. The rest of your mail I read later. I am sorry; I'm happy to comment on it now.

You call your introduction superfluous, well, the above goes to show it isn't. But more than that your way of putting things is a pleasure! Very vivid. Your observations on Herr Edel were very interesting, casting him in a new light. I found him a bit of a bore actually and switched off (the train window offered a great view didn't it?) probably just before he started making sense. Next time 'round I'll pay attention and reconsider. To what extent do you think Reitz uses Herr Edel and other characters as a sounding board for his thoughts and views? If so, who are his favorite characters in this respect? I like the mirror bits. In the last part (in the Amsterdam hotel room) he smashes his reflection in the mirror, breaking the mirror glass, doesn't he? This in itself is kind of a mirror as well isn't it? If so, is there any middle scene that centers (mirrors) those 2 scenes? I guess I'm the freak, not Reitz. Sorry.

Perhaps I can help out a little on the subject of Hermann's assumed cheating. The second time 'round I missed this bit (was jotting down some notes), but I well remember it from the first time I saw it. I remember being under the impression he cheated, but that he was helped by fate (I took it he did not have 'absolute hearing' as I believe you call it) I can't cast a new light on it I'm afraid, but my impression (when I watched it last year) was, and still is, a fresh one. The notion of the 'doubling idea of Juan and Hermann' (whoever it was who wrote it) is most interesting indeed. For one thing, they're equally charismatic (although perhaps that's more in the casting than the acting) and look like they're brothers.

'unbelievable and yet touching arrogance of the young' - nicely put. 'Reitz certainly captures that heady mix of idealism, arrogance, immaturity, and intellectual striving so well.' I agree.

Another quote from your introduction:

'Look at Clarissa's cello lesson. The camera focuses in a loving way on the bow traversing the strings in close-up; one stroke forward and one back with the bow caressing the strings, echoing the description of masculine and feminine by the teacher. You see nothing but the strings and the bow. Very seductive! The high F note is paralleled by Salome Kammer's hauntingly beautiful and expressive face. In the concert the camera focuses on Volker's artistic and expressive fingers as they dance on the keyboard.'

This sounds very poetic!

As you promised not to repeat you left your home in rural Derbyshire in late September 1956, four years before Hermann, I promise to not bring Harry Mulisch to this scene again. (Just one more time). In his novel *The Discovery Of Heaven* there are many descriptions of the cello and Ada playing it. This in a style, so seductive, it made me consider buying a cello. (Turned out they're quite expensive! - perhaps later). The *Heimat* bits with Clarissa didn't exactly change my intention to buy a cello.

A *Heimat 3* introduction isn't useless luxury! Just keep 'em coming!

Regards, Martijn Sikkens

**Date: Tue, 20 Apr 2004 22:25:58 +0200**  
**From: Raymond Scholz <rscholz zonix.de>**

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

> In addition, to further add to my embarrassment, my expertise in  
> the fields of music and the visual arts is virtually non-existent.

Getting started with it while watching and enjoying DZH - that's what it did to me. DZH probably made me a Munich addict too. And I can recommend climbing up the stairs of Der Alte Peter like Hermann did. But by no means I'd call myself an expert in any kind of these arts (except in climbing on steeples...)

With the starting of DZH I must confess, that I'm "more the DZH guy" like ReindeR beautifully expressed himself (and agree on what he said about *Heimat* too). Shivering whenever I see the Munich panorama that reminds me of the title sequence...

> I have been looking at the work of Alan Andres and Barry Fogden on  
> the web-site and am mightily impressed. I wonder if they, or others,

- > will be continuing and completing their encyclopaedic listing and
- > identifying of the vast array of cultural references in DZH.

When I visited ReindeR's page for the first time after watching the first episode of DZH, I got virtually stunned by this impressive work. Like, I mean the impressive work of Alan and Barry (are you still with us?) and the impressive work of Reitz putting all those pieces together. I'd really like to see this project to be continued. Hopes that we see some kind of this on the DVD have vanished, haven't they?

- > I also noticed that Hermann becomes aware of his reflection in the
- > mirror of a wardrobe door, which has swung open; kneeling in his
- > underpants he sees his image. I spotted this idea of reflection and
- > image several times more, even in this first episode. Here is a man
- > who watches himself, as it were.

Just to add a few reflections... The most notable reflection occurs at the moment when Hermann thinks of Renate as a woman "with all the senses of a woman". He faces his reflection in a mirror just as he finished this thought. Probably Hermann was shocked about thinking of breaking his vow on his first day in Munich...

Yet another reflection when Hermann tries to abandon his Hunsrück Bauerndialekt. Maybe these reflections could express more than a man watching himself? Reflections from his past, his memories?

- > We return to the religious theme once more, when we see Hermann
- > thundering out the toccata in the church. In "Heimat" Lotti had
- > appeared through the door, hadn't she?

Besides Hermann wearing the same shirt in this scene, the casting of Henry Arnold as Hermann even brought back the same mischievous, slightly mocking smile as of Jörg Richter. Though I'm sorry about thinking of this unique smile at a dramatic scene where Hermann is crying while playing the organ...

- > Do you notice how often it is raining in Reitz's films? It is September 2nd,
- > 1960 when Hermann leaves in the early morning gloom and takes the bus out.
- > "Leaving home I sought my second home" and he does not look back. The camera
- > does, on a wet, dismal scene, with a farmer driving his sheep across the
- > road in the murky darkness.

Interestingly, Hermann voice as the narrator's voice isn't coloured by the Hunsrück dialect - putting emphasis on fact that he is leaving home and his roots from that moment on?

- > We do not see or witness any farewell with his mother. On the train
- > to Munich he meets a Herr Edel, played by Alfred Edel, an enigmatic
- > figure who later nicknames Hermann, "Jesus". He is full of
- > rhetorical flourishes, acts as a kind of Greek Chorus, and voices,
- > perhaps, some of Reitz's own views. He warns Hermann and the other
- > students, "the first of you to free himself from ideology, the first
- > of you to succeed in that, will make it." I was reminded of the
- > German at the Ellis Island Immigration Centre who warned Paul Simon
- > against "-isms"; a similar thought, isn't it?

Never thought of this before - but you're right. At least Herr Edel didn't try to sell his cauliflowers to Hermann like the immigrant tried to sell his boots... Both characters are some weird experience in a new world. Everybody has met people like this in foreign places I guess. And you think to yourself: If I meet people like this on the first day at a new home, what will the other people be like...? Usually everything turns out to be less worse than you imagined.

> In the archive of old postings on the web-site I read a letter whose words I would like to quote. I did not make a note of the author's name and I hope he won't mind. Here are the words: "I think there is a lot to the doubling idea of Juan and Hermann, a very common dramatic device. Both begin as outsiders. One plays the game [by cheating on the entrance exam, incidentally] and becomes an insider, the other remains excluded." Again and again I watched the scene of Hermann's entrance examination and I feel most unsure that it was Reitz's intention to suggest that he cheated. At worst, in my opinion, he took advantage of a lucky chance and I am not even sure that he was watching the reflection for his answers. He seemed to be working them out correctly to me from his vast musical abilities. Even if he were helped somewhat, what was he supposed to do? Was he supposed to say, " Stop the exam and repeat it on another occasion with new questions." I am very interested to hear other peoples' opinions on this. It does not seem to me that Reitz wants to present Hermann as a cheat.

Hermann denies having an absolute pitch and I don't think his does it in a false modesty. If all the great composers didn't have one (and Louis Armstrong couldn't even read notes...), why should our little genius willingly fail the examination? I believe he certainly is cheating but he does it with a clear conscience.

> Juan does not pass, however, because his music is considered to be no more than "folklore". I thought his percussive piece and performance were wonderful but the academicians did not.

I wonder whether the perception of that music at conservatories changed since then? I hope so.

> Reitz certainly conveys, with remarkable accuracy, the heady days of early student life, its excitements where all things seem possible, the unbelievable and yet touching arrogance of the young, the searching for confidence and maturity.

I really liked how Reitz demonstrating the self-assuredness of the young film makers "just shooting a film" and the musicians on their modern music rehearsals. Hermann watches them somewhat awestruck - not knowing that he'll soon become a part of them. Magic.

> To finish, I would just like to say something about the use of musical pieces and their filming. I watched Carol Angier's film last week, where Edgar Reitz talks about the language of music and its importance. I cannot now remember exactly what he said, but it is easy to see that he is fascinated by the composition and performance of music. Look at Clarissa's cello lesson. The camera focuses in a loving way on the bow traversing the strings in close-up; one stroke forward and one back with the bow caressing the strings, echoing the description of masculine and feminine by the teacher. You see nothing but the strings and the bow. Very seductive! The high F note is paralleled by Salome Kammer's hauntingly beautiful and expressive face. In the concert the camera focuses on Volker's artistic and expressive fingers as they dance on the keyboard.

Time to worship Gernot Roll, isn't it? Concert broadcasts often look grim to me. Musicians do look grim even if they enjoy what they're doing... But we are presented with true passion and beauty. Ivan, you were better in finding the right words to express what I meant. Dust arising from cello strings... what a great shot! Shooting in small rooms like Renate's chamber must have been challenging too.

Some random observations:

Renate pulling the airbed, Hermann was supposed to sleep on, towards her bed made me smile.

Hermann first calls himself Hermann. \_W.\_ Simon when introducing himself to Juan. Perhaps Hermann felt shabby of his real name compared to Juan's...

Klärchen left an imprint (did I chose the right wording here?) on Hermann's bed.

Cheers, Ray

**Date: Wed, 21 Apr 2004 12:39:30 -0500**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Yes, I also started out viewing this while still having Heimat withdrawal.

But one is quickly drawn into Hermann's story. We see Hermann go off on his journey to the big city. He gets stuck next to a bore on the train, Herr Edel. Hermann keeps looking out the window and Herr Edel keeps talking. Actually Hermann is quite good natured about it. I often wondered what role Reitz meant for Herr Edel and Ivan's "Greek Chorus" is a good answer. Edel is part of the big city, but a contrast to Hermann and all the new people Hermann meets - people of Hermann's own generation who are all starting out and full of hope for the future. Herr Edel seems to be someone who talks to anyone on the street because he is lonely and makes ends meet by eating cauliflower. I never paid attention to his cauliflower before - but perhaps someone else has a better idea about it.

Hermann immediately charms the women he meets and the viewer is happy to see Frau Moretti's joy that Hermann is a musician. You just know she is going to offer him a place to stay. It's too good to be true. Hermann is somewhat overwhelmed by Munich, (the high prices in the restaurants - he had nothing to eat on his first day) but we can see he is a survivor, he takes advantages of all opportunities offered. Renate's coming on to him is so obvious and it is amusing when Hermann turns away when she steps over him to shut the curtains.

Hermann is also very realistic. He was considered a genius back in Shabbach, but here he knows he is only a little fish in the big pond. He is awed by the talent of other students.

I too have no musical education, other than I like to listen to most kinds of music. My inclination is to fast forward through the music lessons, but I don't because I think Reitz wants us to know what the students experience. Hermann talks about genius and then he meets someone that I think is a genius - Juan. Juan's music on the marimba (?) is fantastic - that I could have listened to more. Juan seems to be a true artist, he is just as talented as Hermann, but he is not accepted by the school.

Then Hermann sees Clarissa. Interesting that both Hermann and Clarissa's music teachers tell them they should find someone to love. After that they literally bump into each other.

Hermann has some unbelievable luck. He is accepted by the conservatory and makes friends wherever he goes. He even meets an old chum on the bus. But even this has a twist to show that life in the big city is very different. Clemens charges Hermann to stay in his room. Nothing is free.



I wasn't sure if Hermann cheated or not on the music exam. But I know the feeling as I definitely did cheat in high school on a music exam. I wanted to be in the school chorus and at freshmen entrance exams we were supposed to write the notes on paper as they were played on the piano. I copied from a girl next to me because she made no attempt to cover her paper. Of course, 2 years later when we had to audition and sing solo for the main chorus, they realized I could not sing and I was thrown out.

I have not finished watching this very long first part, but there is so much going on, I wanted to write before I forget!

Susan

**Date: Wed, 21 Apr 2004 21:28:42 +0100**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

The full title of this post is actually "Dr.Bretschneider and the Lavatory" or "Herr Edel's Cauliflower."

Before I begin, and I hope you are sitting comfortably, let me say how much I have enjoyed and learnt from all the contributions posted so far, after a slow beginning, and what pleasure I gain when you all point out things I had not seen at all.

When Hermann arrives in Munich his first port of call is Dr.Bretschneider's apartment. Dr.B was a fellow student in Innsbruck with Hermann's teacher and is now a successful lawyer. As Renate, a second year law student, admits him, Dr.Bretschneider emerges from the lavatory with a newspaper in his hand. We may assume he has been reading it whilst occupied in the toilet [Leopold Bloom in James Joyce's "Ulysses" is fond of doing this, as are many men, I believe! I cannot speak for the opposite sex!]. What are we to make of this? Why did Reitz choose this little piece of detail? What is its significance?

As film analysts we are in a conundrum. Here are some arguments:-

1. Realism - many people read newspapers in the lavatory and the detail simply adds to the naturalism of the scene.

2. Character - Herr Bretschneider is a rather dishevelled, bear of a man, who is obviously used to getting his own way and is somewhat disorganised. This detail adds to that impression.

He is a great reader of newspapers and this emphasises the fact. There was also some business near the letterbox, which I did not entirely follow, where his fingers got caught. Was there another newspaper in the door?

Herr B could be seen as anally retentive with a desire to possess and a selfish non-concern with the problems of others. He certainly stoops to examining Hermann's belongings, while Hermann is at Frau Moretti's, and plays his music with his secretary. He is not very apologetic either, I noted, when discovered.

3. Circumstance - Hermann arrives unexpectedly and disturbs Herr B's domestic routine.

The latter seems most plausible! Any other ideas?

Now to Herr Edel and the cauliflower!

Susan was quite puzzled. She wrote: "Herr Edel seems to be someone who talks to anyone on the street because he is lonely and makes ends meet by eating cauliflower. I never paid attention to his cauliflower before - but perhaps someone else has a better idea about it." Raymond wrote: "At least Herr Edel didn't try to sell his cauliflowers to Hermann like the immigrant tried to sell his boots... Both characters are some weird experience in a new world. Everybody has met people like this in foreign places I guess. And you think to yourself: If I meet people like this on the first day at a new home, what will the other people be like...? Usually everything turns out to be less worse than you imagined." Martijn wrote: "Your observations on Herr Edel were very interesting, casting him in a new light. I found him a bit of a bore actually and switched off (the train window offered a great view didn't it?) probably just before he started making sense. Next time 'round I'll pay attention and reconsider".

As film analysts what can we say about Herr Edel's cauliflower?

1. Realism - We simply accept that he shops for vegetables outside the city because they are cheaper, as he says. Mind you, we see him in what looks like quite an expensive restaurant later, chatting up a lady with a dog. He calls out to Hermann who has looked at the menu and found it colossally expensive.
2. Character - Herr E is an urban eccentric. He could have had a bag of carrots but there is also something eccentric about a cauliflower with its efflorescent floret, is there not? He desires to make an impression.
3. Circumstance - I can't think of anything!! Creative talent meets oddity?

I hope you enjoy this little jeu d'esprit.

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Sat, 24 Apr 2004 10:54:31 +0100**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

I shall be away on a short holiday in the English Lake district from today, April 24th, until Saturday, May 1st so the intro to Part 2 of DZH will be delayed until Sunday, May 2nd. I hope there will be some more discussion on Part 1 before that.

Ivan Mansley.

**From: "Theresia en Martijn" <theresia\_martijn@onetelnet.nl>**  
**Date: Mon, 26 Apr 2004 20:57:58 +0200**

Dear all,

DZH was shown on the Film Festival in Rotterdam in 1993 on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday. I went there together with my mother on the Friday. At the cinema was Daniel Smith's mother (Juan in DZH). Apparently this actor lived (lives?) in the Netherlands and his mother came to Rotterdam to watch her own son on the silverscreen. There was also a lot of press, I remember the radio interviewed us and many journalists from newspapers were there as well. DZH was really something special for the festival and the expectations were high. But at first the people stayed home, maybe they were scared of something that takes 26 hours. The cinema was empty. A few days later I

read in the newspaper that DZH had become a success after all and people gave the film a high rate.

I remember I was excited when I saw the beginning of the film. The first minutes reminded me so much of the first film \*. Then it all changed, the village became a city and the peasants became artists. I do like the atmosphere of the movie but the people don't touch me as much as the characters in Heimat I. I was born in the beginning of the seventies, it could be that the 60s are just too close to my date of birth. I just don't like that era, I don't like the music, don't like the Hippie stuff, the drugscene, don't like the feeling of protest against everything. And then... you've got a problem because DZH is nothing else than 60s. Of course I think the film is a brilliant reflection of this era, the styling is perfectly done once again. But what I try to say is that, although I can appreciate this movie for what it is, it almost never touches me emotionally. Besides there are too many long scenes in this film which sometimes leaves me bored and impatient. I think if this film would have been half of the original length it would have been such a different film and for me so much more interesting to watch. But I suppose many of you will totally disagree with me.

\* Martijn already wrote that we miss the first twenty minutes of the film (this problem will be solved by Reinder by the way), so I only saw this scene once in my life. I can hardly wait to see the scene back. I want to know if the impact is still the same for me.

Our own video version starts when Hermann leaves the house in Schabbach. On the street he meets a man. Am I right and is this the same man as in the last episode of Heimat I, the man who Hermann meets at the cemetery? If I remember correctly his name is Wilhelm.

Ivan has asked our opinion about the fact whether or not Hermann is cheating when doing the entrance exam. I do think he's cheating, you see his eyes staring at the reflection on the piano and you see him considering what to answer. Will he be honest and say that he doesn't know the answer or will he cheat? I'm sure Maria will have taught him to be honest in every situation in life so at this moment Hermann is confronted with something very difficult. If he doesn't cheat they may not accept him, if he does they may catch him. He believes no one can see the reflection of the fingers, no one will find out that he cheats so he decides to do it. Though, in the end I think this scene is not about cheating but about luck. We will never know what would have happened if Hermann hadn't answered this question correctly, maybe his professional music career would have stopped here. I think what Reitz shows is that sometimes you need a little bit of luck in life to get where or what you want.

I've got a question as well. Frau Moretti seems a very pleasant and open woman and she seems to like Hermann a lot. She says she's got a room for him and he leaves his suitcase and some money. Later on it seems that the room never came vacant and we find out that Hermann's luggage has been stolen. Everytime I watch the film I wonder if Moretti is cheating. Can we trust her or not? Is Reitz playing with the common prejudice about gypsies? I don't think we get a clear answer to what has happened exactly. A few episodes later we see Moretti is performing one of Hermann's pieces so apparently they stayed in touch with each other.

Theresia

**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**  
**Date: Mon, 26 Apr 2004 15:30:20 -0500**

I watched the end of Part 1 a few days ago. I have enjoyed the various observations from others that point out things that I missed, such as Hermann wearing the same shirt

as in Heimat and Herr Bretschneider reading in the bathroom. I guess Herr Edel is to be thought of as an eccentric - I did not remember from previous viewings that he is sighted in an expensive restaurant in a later episode. Eccentrics in Shabbach, eccentrics in Munich.

Herr Bretschneider did have a lot of nerve to go through Hermann's belongings and then played his music on the piano. Perhaps since Hermann's music teacher was his friend, he thought he had some right - perhaps to see if Hermann really has some talent.

Was anyone surprised when Hermann turns angrily on Clemens? I had not watched DZH for about 5 years and had forgotten this scene. Hermann seems to direct all his anger with Schabbach towards his old friend, when Clemens is unable to describe or identify the female visitor. And it turns out that Klärchen really did not leave her name with Clemens.

Hermann seems to have outgrown his friendship with Clemens - but then he is befriended by the rather rustic character who runs the coal yard. However, this rustic character appreciates art and music. Is Reitz stating that ordinary people can appreciate art also? A good contrast to the preceding scene with Clemens when Hermann belittles Clemens's talent.

Susan

**Date: Thu, 20 May 2004 21:49:53 +0200**  
**From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder@rustema.nl>**

At 14:41 +0100 16/04/04, Ivan Mansley wrote:

> It does not seem to me that Reitz wants to present Hermann as a cheat.  
> Juan does not pass, however, because his music is considered to be no more  
> than "folklore". I thought his percussive piece and performance were wonderful  
> but the academicians did not.

A small and very late idea on the cheating by Hermann. A little far fetched perhaps, but it might be an important lesson to Hermann. He learns that honesty in the city doesn't bring you as far. Initially his 50 marks and luggage is stolen because of his honesty. But then he learns that a good story can get you places, he even gets his luggage and money back.

At the same time, our nice Juan with his really honest and authentic story does not get the appreciation from the academicians, big city folks. Frau Cerphal appreciates his background though! And Hermann himself seems to be also charmed by the mystery called Juan. Hermann allows himself another little cheating when he says his name is Hermann W. Simon... It is obvious that these young ambitious adolescents are busy with reinventing themselves, making up the story about themselves. This is the life they decide to live, not a life that is told to them, something that would happen to them when they would not have left their homes. Sometimes they succeed with their story, like Juan with Cerphal, and sometimes they don't, for example when Hermann's story is in competition with Frau Moretti's story of her artist husband.

Another moment when their attempt fails is when they dress up and go the house of the rich people to give a performance. Unfortunately they are not cultured and their performance fails, in spite of all their efforts.

The older year students have impressive presentations, mysterious and attractive. Especially when many of them are gathered together in the Fuchsbau. As a contrast we see Renate walking around in this company of people, a bit lost and she wants to go

home, together with Hermann. Hermann brings her into contact with an actress, so she can learn to act better, because she once said she wished to. This is the time and place to let your dreams come true by just inventing them on the spot and by living them they become reality because people want to hear such a story.

Perhaps?

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ReindeR

**Date: Thu, 20 May 2004 22:03:51 +0200**  
**From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder@rustema.nl>**

At 21:28 +0100 21/04/04, Ivan Mansley wrote:  
> As film analysts what can we say about Herr Edel's cauliflower?

Cauliflower as symbol for the country side?

Even Big City Herr Edel is carrying around the country side with him, one can not survive without it, ignore it.

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ReindeR

**Date: Fri, 28 May 2004 23:23:55 +0200**  
**From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder@rustema.nl>**

I am catching up on old e-mail.

At 15:30 -0500 26/04/04, Susan Biedron wrote:  
> I had not  
> watched DZH for about 5 years and had forgotten this scene. Hermann seems to  
> direct all his anger with Schabbach towards his old friend, when Clemens is  
> unable to describe or identify the female visitor. And it turns out that  
> Klärchen really did not leave her name with Clemens.

I had not watched DZH for about 10 years and had remembered the scene with Hermann reading Klärchen's letter completely different. I was surprised to hear the voice of Hermann reading the letter in a voice-over. In my memory it was the voice of Klärchen, just like in the very first scene of the Zweite Heimat. Not only that, but I also remember flashes of Klärchen sitting on Hermann's bed waiting for Hermann. It turns out that these pictures were described in the letter, but they were not in the film at all! As always, not showing something is more powerful than showing it...

**Date: Mon, 31 May 2004 13:37:43 -0500**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

ReindeR,

I also have a number of memories of DZH (and Heimat) that turn out to be not actual scenes. Like the letter they are implied and when I think back on it, I imagine it as one of the scenes on film. I know of no other film than DZH & Heimat that have had this effect

on me.

I also liked your comment on the califlower - it shows that the city cannot live without the countryside!

Susan