

**Date: Fri, 30 Apr 2004 18:27:57 +0200**  
**From: Ivan Mansley <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

DIE ZWEITE HEIMAT: A New Generation

Part 2: A Stranger's Eyes, Juan 1960/61

I have been trying to think of an apt metaphor for this episode, which is so full of detail and has so many themes and narrative threads. It is like a vast plum pudding mixture, from which almost anything can be plucked, but sometimes, immersed in its ingredients, it is hard to discern the finished product. Reitz very helpfully provides the viewer, every now and then, with first person summaries from Hermann and Juan, which remind us of what has gone before and the position they have reached.

Let us look at the title for a moment. Juan, as a non-German in a strange land who has learned the language from a dictionary and reference book, obviously sees everything through the prism of a stranger's eyes. He is an outsider, looking in and despite his poise and multifarious talents he is insecure. In a scene towards the end of the episode, Josef shows Hermann a portrait of his mother who had died in the air raids of 1944. Her eyes are almost blank, enigmatic; Josef refers to how the artist has conveyed a sense of the times in her eyes. She is, of course, a stranger to Hermann and to us. Finally, we have the magnificent scene at Fraulein Cerphal's, where Clarissa, accompanied by Volker on the piano, sings "Zwei Fremde Augen", which has obvious relevance to the just developing relationship between Hermann and Clarissa. I found this moment absolutely entrancing. I do not have a copy of the words [they are not in my Bella Musica booklet] but the theme is the fleeting nature of time: "You can't stop time" and the importance of love: "You see a stranger. He could become your friend". Meaningful glances are exchanged. It sounds corny, but, in fact it is beautiful.

It seems to me that the focus of this episode, despite the title, is not Juan but Hermann and his relations with two women, in particular; Renate and Clarissa. The actress, Franziska Traub, plays Renate brilliantly, for she has to act a fairly shallow, almost ugly, character, who is out of her depth amongst all the gifted students, and who basically has very little to offer. During the scene in the jazz pub and later at Frau Cerphal's she drifts about, alone; twice, she interrupts Hermann's conversations with Clarissa and all she wants to know is when they are going home so she can have sex with him. She is a sad and lonely figure. If she ever thought she had captured Hermann she knows by the time they get back to her apartment that she has failed. She asks him, "Are you thinking of the lovely Clarissa?" He obviously is, but she is determined to have her man! "It needn't be love", she cries, and Hermann obliges. You feel he does this almost out of pity, and in order to prove to himself that he is not made out of stone. He leaves her naked and sweating on the bed. After he has been robbed, Hermann rejects her sympathies as being like his mother's. Much later Hermann turns down an invitation to stay with her and her parents at Christmas, as she stands clutching the arm of a new-found friend. People are constantly ignoring her and turning their back on her, and yet the actress manages to imbue her with a certain humanity and almost dignity.

Clarissa, on the other hand, is certainly beautiful and talented, and also, perhaps, even more of a complex character than Hermann himself. Hermann has admired her from afar, at the foot of the stone staircase in the Conservatoire. He has talked about her with Juan. He sees her name as deriving from Klara and Klarchen: "Names that haunt me". As Hermann and Juan wait at the door of the beer-hall and Clarissa passes, Juan remarks enigmatically: "Beware of beautiful women". Hermann knows that Juan has accompanied her to her mother's home in Wasserburg and wants to know whether they have slept together. He had described jealousy as "spiritual poverty" in conversation with Clarissa but we know he is jealous of Juan. In the marvellous scene where they leave Cleman's

beer cellar together, Hermann demands to know, "How was it with Juan?" This is by far my favourite scene from this episode. All the complexities of Hermann and Clarissa are revealed through beautifully simple dialogue eg. You hate men / I think they hate me / Und ich / I like you / But you're wary / Ich auch. They are discovering each other. We have two faces in close-up which eventually meet in a passionate kiss. ["You are like a hedge hog, all prickles / Our prickles are internal"]. They have self-knowledge! I did misinterpret the end of the scene, however. Hermann's summary reveals that he had run away. I had thought that Hermann was expecting to be invited in to Clarissa's apartment and that Clarissa had turned away to continue climbing the stairs but I was wrong.

Juan, like Hermann, attracts women. One can tell that the Principal of the drama school is entranced by him. Clarissa takes him home to meet her mother, although he, more or less, invites himself. Clarissa is rather ashamed of her mother in a way. She describes her as a "simple woman" and we see a restless, rather stupid woman, in whose eyes we perceive a sadness and bewilderment. Her daughter is becoming a stranger to her [see Hermann's mother]. I wondered if there was anything sinister about her patron, Dr. Kirchmeier, whom we do not see in this episode, "who loves her more than his own daughter.!!" Juan later comments about a mystery man in the background. On the return journey from Wasserburg Juan and Clarissa kiss passionately [compare Hermann later] but they have agreed to "forget love". Earlier, on the journey down, there was a nice, little moment, when Clarissa is telling Juan about her mother, their arms lie along the window ledge but their hands do not quite touch. We know there is a gulf; that their relationship will not work.

Reitz interweaves the lives of Clarissa, Juan and Hermann and also shows us likenesses between them. All three have lost their fathers. We have seen what happened to Otto Wohleben in "Heimat"; Clarissa's father died in action and Juan lost his in an earthquake in a copper mine. All have problematic relations with their mothers. The idea of Juan and Hermann as doubles is a very interesting one. When Juan wonders if he is going mad Hermann replies, "Of course not. I don't belong either". He summarises that Juan's drama was to be too talented and that they were both in Munich to study music, although I noted that Juan claims to have other motives in coming to Germany but he does not tell us what they were. Clarissa has vowed never to marry ["Believe me I mean it"] as Hermann has vowed never to love again.

I would like to mention Herr Edel's death and the reaction to it. Herr Edel had been seen in the jazz cellar spouting views on music, free-loading other peoples' wine and confessing to be an alcoholic, even if a controlled one. Reitz is very good at directing these scenes of continual movement, of people drifting from group to group. It all seems so natural. Clemens joins Gisela [Is she Anton's daughter?]. Clarissa leaves her table with Volker and Jean-Marie and joins Hermann. She is concerned about him and her concern reveals great tenderness. It is as if they are already in love. She wants to mother him, just as Marianne had wanted to do earlier. Herr Edel is later found lying, frozen to death in the snow. All the students are shocked. Is this the first contact with death that most of them have had? Clarissa is very shocked, screams, and runs to a phone [practical girl!] and then, trembling, hugs her two lovers. It is a most moving moment and you feel the anguish and the momentary harmony of three souls, struggling to make sense of life and death and their own emotions.

My last paragraph concerns the loss / theft of Hermann's suitcase and its final recovery. It puzzled me when I first saw this episode and it puzzles me still. What exactly is supposed to have happened? When Hermann goes to Frau Moretti's to claim his room we see a man scuttling about in his underwear and she appears to be in a state of undress. His room has gone and his case has gone. Has Frau Moretti stolen the case for a lover? Evidently she recovers his belongings and sends a message via Gabi. It cannot have been burglars! His case and advance rent are returned, advice is offered, and Hermann is declared to be a genius. No explanation is offered. She must have repented her evil deed. "You comforted me, young man". Hermann's charm has won

the day again!

I loved the concert of Volker's "Wacht Auf" in its own right, not just as part of the film. Juan did not like it or understand the words but Ivan liked it. I noticed Reitz's fascination with the audience and its reactions [see cinema scenes in "Heimat"].

I hope my introduction helps viewers. I did find it difficult to write, to see the episode as a whole and not in little bits!

Ivan Mansley [Cottage in Lake District, April 29th 2004.]

**Date: Fri, 7 May 2004 17:43:40 -0500**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Ivan and all,

> It seems to me that the focus of this episode, despite the title, is  
> not Juan but Hermann and his relations with two women, in particular;  
> Renate and Clarissa. The actress, Franziska Traub, plays Renate  
> brilliantly, for she has to act a fairly shallow, almost ugly,  
> character, who is out of her depth amongst all the gifted students,  
> and who basically has very little to offer.

Renate very obviously needs some help - maybe a girlfriend to whom she can go for advice on dealing with men. She is constantly disparaging herself and seems to ruin what few good moments there are between she and Hermann by her comments - "Oh I get so sweaty", etc. Hermann, in spite of his statements that he will never return to Shabbach, feels homesick. I think he turns to Renate because he is lonely and perhaps a little intimidated by the new artistic friends he has met - when he and Renate return to her apartment it is interesting that the camera pans away from them to the poster on her wall with the statement about one's "Heimat." Hermann's homesickness shows up again when he becomes ill and asks for his mother.

I am curious as to what some of men in this group think of Renate.

> I would like to mention Herr Edel's death and the reaction to it.  
> Herr Edel had been seen in the jazz cellar spouting views on music,  
> free-loading other peoples' wine and confessing to be an alcoholic,  
> even if a controlled one. Reitz is very good at directing these  
> scenes of continual movement, of people drifting from group to group.  
> It all seems so natural. Clemens joins Gisela [Is she Anton's  
> daughter?].

No, I think this is another Gisela.

> Clarissa leaves her table with Volker and Jean-Marie and  
> joins Hermann. She is concerned about him and her concern reveals  
> great tenderness. It is as if they are already in love. She wants to  
> mother him, just as Marianne had wanted to do earlier.

I like this scene - I think that here one first sees that Clarissa does indeed have feelings for Hermann.

> Herr Edel is later found lying, frozen to death in the snow. All the students are  
> shocked. Is this the first contact with death that most of them have  
> had? Clarissa is very shocked, screams, and runs to a phone  
> [practical girl!] and then, trembling, hugs her two lovers. It is a  
> most moving moment and you feel the anguish and the momentary harmony  
> of three souls, struggling to make sense of life and death and their  
> own emotions.

This scene reminds me of the Heimat episode when Eduard goes to Berlin and walks by the brothel to see a dead body being carried out - Lucie's friend (whose name escapes me right now) asks him if this is the first time he saw a dead person, and then tells him about the first time she saw someone dead. Apparently this is some marker in life for Reitz. Again it also shows the contract between the young artists and students who are just beginning their life story. Herr Edels' life is over, ending alone, drunk and frozen. A warning to all those at the beginning of life's journey?

When I thought about it, I have never seen a dead person except in a funeral home. Especially since the students knew this man, it must have been shocking to them.

> My last paragraph concerns the loss / theft of Hermann's suitcase and  
> its final recovery. It puzzled me when I first saw this episode and  
> it puzzles me still. What exactly is supposed to have happened? When  
> Hermann goes to Frau Moretti's to claim his room we see a man  
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> declared to be a genius. No explanation is offered. She must have  
> repented her evil deed. "You comforted me, young man". Hermann's  
> charm has won the day again!<<

Frau Moretti is quite a colorful character. I too found the theft of the trunk puzzling. I think that she had a spat with her lover who either left or she threw him out. The lover came back and thus Hermann was out of luck. I would tend to believe that perhaps the mysterious lover stole the trunk and probably found there was nothing much in it that he could sell. OR - Frau Moretti does say to Hermann that she was angry that he never came back to visit her - so perhaps out of spite she invited the lover back. I think Frau Moretti also had amorous designs on Hermann and was disappointed he did not visit her. She does seem genuinely surprised that the trunk is gone and I believe she would not really steal from "a poor student." Or am I being naive?

Susan

**Date: Wed, 12 May 2004 11:52:15 +0200 (CEST)**  
**From: theresia\_martijn onetelnet.nl**

Ivan thanks for writing such a good introduction once again! I imagine it is much harder to write an intro for DZH than for the first series. For myself it is much harder to write a reaction on DZH. Look at the length of the film and it's 'only' about ten years of time. Heimat is much shorter and we had over 60 years to discuss. DZH is more a psychological story which is more difficult to translate into words (especially when you have to write in a foreign language).

I would like to comment on three things.

First, you wrote:

> We have two faces in close-up [Hermann and Clarissa], which eventually  
> meet in a passionate kiss.

The first time I saw this scene it was in the cinema and I remember that you get a real close up of this passionate kiss. Between the lips of Hermann and Clarissa you see a thin line of slime hanging (sounds very off-putting now I write it down!). I couldn't see it when I watched it on tv, so it must be really thin. I suppose it's a detail which you can't direct but what has happened by accident. I think it's beautiful.

Second, you wrote:

>Clemens joins Gisela [Is she Anton's daughter?].

I think this is hardly possible. As Hermann was so much older as Gisela in 1982. I don't know her date of birth but in the sixties she must have been a child.

Three, you wrote:

> My last paragraph concerns the loss / theft of Hermann's suitcase and its  
> final recovery. It puzzled me when I first saw this episode and it puzzles me still.

This seems to puzzle everyone! I already wrote about it in my last email. Question is does Reitz like it that such facts (very important to us they seem) are not clear and that we, viewers, will never find out what has happened. Or is it clear to Reitz what has happened and do we miss something here?

Theresia

**Date: Thu, 13 May 2004 22:42:16 +0100**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

I am afraid we have only had 2 and a little bit responses to DZH Part 2. I believe that has been the smallest response so far in terms of quantity since we started the project. This has been a surprise to me as I thought the traffic would increase with more people having access to tapes and it recently being re-shown in Europe. Anyway hats off to the ladies!! Susan and Theresia made valuable contributions, and Theresia discussed the Frau Moretti episode in a post about DZH in general.

As regards the theft of Hermann's luggage perhaps Reitz is indicating that cities are strange places where the unexpected happens and where often it is difficult to ascribe personal responsibility. Anyway Hermann gets his luggage and money back and Frau Moretti has restored her sense of integrity. She seems like a woman led by her passions.

I have a slight feeling that Susan feels I am being sexist in my response to Renate. She wrote: "I am curious as to what some of men in this group think of Renate". No one replied! I remember Hermann thinking she was ugly! Anyway I say something nice about her in my Introduction tomorrow. I agree Susan that I was totally wrong about Gisela. Dates should have told me that! Theresia mentions it also. Mea culpa! By the way, Susan, thank you very much for your good wishes for my little week's break/holiday. You wrote:" Ivan, I always wanted to visit the Lake district. Many years ago when I was in college I had a English literature course - perhaps Wordsworth - romantic poets? I could be wrong on that, but whoever the author was, he wrote about the Lake district." It certainly would have been Wordsworth.

["I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze."]

You are quite right. We visited Wordsworth's birthplace in a town called Cockermouth and his final home in Grasmere, Rydal Mount.

Theresa you are quite right when you wrote: "I imagine it is much harder to write an intro for DZH than for the first series." It certainly is and I am worried I am not doing the film justice. Theresa, you wrote about Clarissa and Hermann's kiss, "The first time I saw this scene it was in the cinema and I remember that you get a real close up of this passionate kiss. Between the lips of Hermann and Clarissa you see a thin line of slime hanging (sounds very off-putting now I write it down!). I couldn't see it when I watched it on tv so it must be really thin. I suppose it's a detail which you can't direct but what has happened by accident. I think it's beautiful." Do you think substituting "mucus" for "slime" would make it less off-putting? However, reality is always more beautiful than escapism, isn't it?

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Fri, 14 May 2004 04:59:49 -0700 (PDT)**  
**From: Julian Pye <julian\_pye@yahoo.com>**

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

> I am afraid we have only had 2 and a little bit responses to DZH Part 2. I  
> believe that has been the smallest response so far in terms of quantity  
> since we started the project. This has been a surprise to me as I thought  
> the traffic would increase with more people having access to tapes and it  
> recently being re-shown in Europe. Anyway hats off to the ladies!! Susan and  
> Theresa made valuable contributions, and Theresa discussed the Frau  
> Moretti episode in a post about DZH in general.

I have been lurking for some time and have been reading the summaries for Heimat 1 and 2 with great interest. Unfortunately I have my videotapes of the series stored at my parents place while I have been living in LA for the past four years. I am now living in the UK and trying to get my tapes and a VCR so I can participate. Please don't give up until then, even if it takes another two weeks :-). Until then I want to make some comments just based on my memory of seeing the series many years ago so I may be totally wrong and change my mind when I see the series again.

I find it is very interesting to see how people on this list see characters in the series different, just as we had this discussion with Ivan's and Susan's views on Renate. When Heimat 1 was discussed 6 weeks ago I remember thinking that the treatment of Klaerchen by many on this list was quite harsh: I always saw Klaerchen as a city girl (which I remember is where she came from), as someone out of place in the farming villages of the Hunsrueck and her connection with Herman gave her a different perspective on life and made her his muse and ultimately gave him the will to leave it all behind, too.

Anyway, now Hermann has arrived in Munich and in episode 2 meets Renate. I have to say that Renate is of course portrayed in a very unattractive light, physically, intellectually, with low self-esteem and esp. her Swabian accent is almost as uncomfortable to most German ears as a Saxian accent (I grew up in Munich and most people from there cringe at these accents). She has low self-esteem and Hermann exploits her, almost

once more to show himself the separation of emotions and physical love. It's just sex and an opportunity, no attraction whatsoever.

What's interesting about Renate is her journey. The entire series is about character growth during the 60s, for example some people who are too self-obsessed that they don't really change that much (Hermann), some who radicalize themselves (Helga) and some who grow intellectually (Schnuesschen).

Renate also grows, gains self-esteem and finds her right place. Episode 2 just sets the starting point for her journey, which is that of a lost girl out of place in the demands of a patriarchic society of the German 60s. The free spirit of the 60s allows her to progress in the end, although I remember that there was not much seen of her between the scene with Juan ('Do you think I am pretty?') and when she reappears as the owner of the bar and in the end as a mermaid on Hermann's trainride.

Anyway, to give my 2 cents to Susan's question, concluding I think her portrayal in episode 2 is negative, but is intended to be that negative to show the starting point of her journey.

Anyway, these are just fragments that I remember. I hope to catch up soon.

Julian

**Date: Fri, 14 May 2004 14:43:16 -0500**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Ivan, Theresia, Julian and all,

First of all to Ivan's comment:

> I have a slight feeling that Susan feels I am being sexist in my response  
> to Renate.

No, I don't think that at all! You were actually very fair with your comments about the character she plays. Like many of Reitz's characters, there are many facets to her. And of course, we somewhat view her through the eyes of Hermann.

> "I am curious as to what some of men in this group think of Renate". No one replied!

Julian, you wrote

> What's interesting about Renate is her journey. The entire  
> series is about character growth during the 60s, . . .

I never thought about the characters that way - that is a good observation. Thank you for pointing that out.

> I have to say that Renate is of course portrayed in a very  
> unattractive light, physically, intellectually, with low  
> self-esteem and esp. her Swabian accent is almost as  
> uncomfortable to most German ears as a Saxonian accent (I  
> grew up in Munich and most people from there cringe at  
> these accents).

I did not pick up about her Swabian accent, knowing German as a second language and mostly Hoch Deutsch at that! There are a number of characters I cannot understand very well, but Renate is not one of them. I suppose that her regional dialect/accents is also part of her character. Something like myself, living most of my life in Chicago I find that some

accents from other regions of the US are extremely irritating - South Carolina and Southern Indiana come to mind. Yet I just find German regional differences only interesting or hard to understand. I wonder if Germans visiting the US find regional accents annoying or merely interesting.

My version of Heimat and DZH have English subtitles in white letters. I sometimes find it frustrating when I cannot understand the characters and the subtitles appear against a light background.

Ivan - I can't believe I remembered the author correctly! These are beautiful lines that immediately paint a picture in one's mind. It makes me want to be outside, hiking in some meadow. I guess to stick to the subject of DZH I should say that Reitz creates his own poetic images with film.

> I had a English literature course - perhaps Wordsworth - romantic  
> poets? I could be wrong on that, but whoever the author was, he wrote about  
> the Lake district." It certainly would have been Wordsworth. ["I wandered  
> lonely as a cloud/That floats on high o'er vales and hills,/When all at once  
> I saw a crowd,/A host, of golden daffodils;/Beside the lake, beneath the  
> trees,/Fluttering and dancing in the breeze."]  
> You are quite right. We  
> visited Wordsworth's birthplace in a town called Cockermouth and his final  
> home in Grasmere, Rydal Mount.<<

Finally, I agree with Theresia that DZH is harder to comment upon than Heimat. It was much easier to make observations about Heimat. Hopefully the future observations of others in this discussion will make it easier to put thoughts into words.

> DZH is more a psychological story  
> which is more difficult to translate into words (especially when you  
> have to write in a foreign language).<<

Susan