

**Date: Fri, 12 Dec 2003 09:00:18 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

"And so each venture/Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate/With shabby equipment always deteriorating." [ T.S.Eliot: Four Quartets]

#### HEIMAT Part 4. REICHSHOHENSTRASSE [The Highway]

My Introduction:-

I should like to begin this time on a very personal note. Reitz once said: "Anyway you can only really understand a film when you bring your own life experiences to it." Well, I can certainly do that now!! I know what I am about to say is only external and not what he really meant. Nevertheless, I was born on February 22nd 1938 [birthday presents, please!!] so I am now in the story. One minuscule step for mankind, one huge step for yours truly!! It does make a difference, believe me. Without boasting, my parents looked very like Otto Wohlleben and Maria Simon, nee Weigand. When I closed my eyes and opened them I could see them, my mother in a hair net and identical hair style [Maria] and my father in his Army greatcoat [Otto], perhaps putting me to bed or helping me to fly my kite in the fields. Forgive me!

This episode may be a bit fragmented and "bitty" but Reitz held me entranced. I think also that in this episode he conveys inner character better than previous episodes and the general psychology deepens. The central character this time is Maria, and her growth into full womanhood is done with great strength and delicacy. Her growing relationship with Herr Wohlleben convinced me with its authenticity and depth. She has become a fiercely protective mother to Anton and Ernst [see the quarrel with her brother, Wielfried]. "I am making sure they'll become something." She shares her children's triumphs and interests. Anton's photograph fascinates her, especially as pride of place is taken by Herr Wohlleben, and she shows all the excitement of a child when rushing for Ernst's glider. The love scene in the dance-hall held me spell-bound. It was magic. And the feeding of Herr Wohlleben with his meal of fried eggs is magic also. [ Cynical comment: Couldn't he use his left arm?] The operative word here is tenderness and Reitz conveys this in bucketfuls. This moves to real tears unlike the sentimental tears shed by the ladies in the cinema audience at the beginning.

The opening scene in the cinema and then back at Pauline's house is wonderfully managed. The words of Zarah Leander's song, of course, speak directly to Maria's situation. [I must confess that I have never heard of Zarah Leander but web site investigations reveal that "she was one of the great stars of the German film and she aroused enthusiasm with her cool kind of acting and especially with her fascinating and deep voice" ref: Thomas Staedele. There is a reference to a bullfighter so was the unnamed film, La Habanera (1937)?]. I loved the scene back at Pauline's house. Pauline and Maria are like two giggly schoolgirls, trying out twiddly hair styles like the film star, drinking, confessing their innermost feelings, opening out to each other and to us, the viewers. Maria says at one point: "I wish I had the courage to start again from scratch. Somewhere far away in the world... Sometimes I think I've never really lived at all yet." Isn't that what her husband, Paul, felt but couldn't articulate? Isn't that what we all feel sometimes? That is why the film is universal and speaks to us all, because Reitz's characters are you and I.

Did anyone else feel there was a parallel between the opening of this episode and its ending? In the opening scene we have two ladies giggling and sharing secrets, Maria and Pauline. At the end we have two ladies giggling and sharing secrets, Martina and Lucie. In the first Maria's longings are made apparent. She tells of many men, working on

the highway, coming to the Hunsruck and mentions Herr Wohleben, her new lodger, the engineer on the project. We can see her interest in new men, even if they are Saxons! I gathered from this episode that Germans see Saxons as rather stupid and slow, even if they like potato cakes! In the last episode Lucie's longings for Berlin and her old way of life are re-awakened by Martina's comments. She wants to be straight-laced but notice the wistfulness in her remark to Martina, after she warns her old friend not to lure men to the villa with a promise of potato cakes and further delights: "There's none of that sort of thing in the Hunsruck..It's not even thought of." [ Hidden thought: "I wish it were."]

There were nuances in this final scene which I think I missed. When Eduard says: "Those were marvellous times in Berlin with you, "who is he addressing? Lucie? Martina? "I thought I could bring a bit of that into my home - for ever." Those last two words convey a great deal of sadness. Nothing, of course, is for ever. And yet we all want it to be at times. Eduard, like a prophet, wants everything to remain as it is. He has an all inclusive vision. "Time ought to stand still"; a universal human wish! And it is not a selfish vision: "It ought to remain for ever, for everyone" and he explicitly includes Bleistein, the Jewish banker. Lucie, meanwhile, wishes to invite all the girls down from Berlin even though she knows how narrow the life is in the Hunsruck in relation to such things. Her old life has been re-awakened. There is an elegiac air at the end plus a strong hint of foreboding! Things will change and we know for the worse. Time cannot stand still, much as we may want it to.

This, to my mind is the best episode so far. Serious work and serious purpose!! I hope there will be much to discuss.

Ivan Mansley.

P.S I will not draw a conclusion to the discussion until the New Year. I will be returning to my Heimat, the Yorkshire Dales [between Harrogate and Skipton] from the 20th to the 27th December. Have a happy Xmas wherever you are. By the way, Zarah Leander apparently starred in a film called " Heimat" in 1938. I am sure Reitz and German viewers knew that!!

**Date: Fri, 12 Dec 2003 11:52:20 +0100**

**From: "Foerderer, Walter (MED)" <walter.foerderer med.ge.com>**

Hi there,  
Here is my contribution to the Heimat discussion group.

It serves more the stomach than the brain ;-)

Martina is not serving an ordinary potatoe cake to the workers but the famous saxonian QUARKKEULCHEN which is in fact a very popular and delicious dessert in Eastern Germany and Poland. It's best enjoyed in these cold Winter days.

Here it is:

The original Saxonian Quarkkeulchen recipe !!!

That's what you need:

Ss = soup-spoon (sorry for that abbreviation but somehow it fits into the context...)

3 ss raisins (non sulphurized)  
500g potatoes

a pinch of salt  
200g low fat quark  
30g wheat flour  
3 ss dark cane-sugar  
3 fresh egg yolks  
3 ss butter  
3 ss sugar  
half a tea spoon of cinnamon

How to prepare:

Soak the raisins in some water for 10 min.  
Skin the potatoes and wash them.  
Boil the potatoes in salted water for 20 min.  
Drain the boiled potatoes and let them stand for 5 min.  
Mash the potatoes while they are still hot.

Beat together the quark, flour, cane-sugar and egg yolks using a whisk, then mix in the potatoes to obtain a smooth dough.  
If the dough is too soft and it sticks add some more flour.  
Form small balls from the dough and squash them flat.  
Heat the butter in a frying pan and fry the cakes from both sides until golden brown.  
Drain the cakes on kitchen paper towel.  
Serve immediately with a mixture of sugar and cinnamon.

Quarkkeulchen go very well with fried apple rings or stewed apples.

Enjoy!

Walter Foerderer

**Date: Fri, 12 Dec 2003 06:25:40 -0500**  
**From: wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>**

Quark is unknown in the US - and difficult to substitute. It's somewhere between cottage cheese and yoghurt.  
Wolfgang

**Date: Fri, 12 Dec 2003 12:44:57 +0100**  
**From: "Foerderer, Walter (MED)" <walter.foerderer med.ge.com>**

By checking my english dictionary Quark is also known as curd cheese, a kind of sour skim milk.  
Walter

**Date: Fri, 12 Dec 2003 11:50:59 -0600**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Ivan,

Thanks for the great introduction. Pauline reminds me of my mother, whose name was also Pauline. Her hairstyles, both as a young village girl and as a married woman are like

the old photos of my mother. I think Pauline represents the child who has success in life - everything goes good for her, to contrast with Maria or Eduard who have some problems. Pauline marries a successful business man, has a happy marriage and two children - everything is right with her life.

I love the opening scene with Pauline and Maria, giggling like two schoolgirls. Maria never really had a chance to enjoy life on her own, - she went right from her father's house to being a hardworking Hausfrau. Here at least she gets a chance to have some fun here and then states in later scenes that she wants her sons to have fun too. Really quite a modern thought for the 1930's! It is interesting that Pauline has not yet had the nerve to wear her glamorous dress or coat in Zimmern. How the women of the town would talk! Think of how life has changed today - no one would hesitate to show off a new dress.

Eduard indeed had his time in Berlin to have fun - he wishes his life could stay that way, unlike his new responsibilities that Lucie expects of him. This is the first time that I noticed Glassish's comment that "Lucie thinks only of her villa."

Walter, thank you for the QUARKKEULCHEN recipe! You can get Quark in the US, often at a German or Polish deli. OK, at least in the bigger northern cities. Myer's Delicatessen in Chicago and Kuhn's in the suburbs has it. I would not be surprised if one can order it online! My former German teacher used to substitute sour cream, but Quark is thicker and more solid.

Even after seeing this episode several times, I am still mystified about the Todt rings with the death heads. Why were they popular?

Susan

**Date: Wed, 31 Dec 2003 16:31:41 +0100**  
**From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder.rustema.nl>**

hi everyone,

When I was catching up with watching parts three, four and five around Christmas at my parents place, I noticed that they had problems keeping track of who is who in Schabbach. I noticed the same thing when I was watching Heimat with a friend.

There is an official drawing with family trees published in colour in the Heimat book and on Thomas' website at <http://home.t-online.de/home/th.hoenemann/heimat/heim1inh.htm>

Thomas' scan is a bit small, difficult to read, but I have a greyscale scan (taken from my tv-guide) you can print from <http://reinder.rustema.nl/heimat/heimattree.jpeg> and keep together with your Heimat-videos.

best wishes for 2004,

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ReindeR

**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan@jsbiedron.com>**  
**Date: Wed, 31 Dec 2003 10:29:40 -0600**

ReindeR,

When looking at your greyscale map, I see a third child of the Wiegand family - looks like Gustav. Although I have watched Heimat at least 4 times, I do not remember Gustav Wiegand at all! Or was he killed in WWI?

Thanks for the Heimat fix. I needed that!  
Susan

**From: Th.Hoenemann@t-online.de (Thomas Hönemann)**  
**Date: Wed, 31 Dec 2003 18:06:53 +0100**

Dear friends,

I just posted a bigger, coloured version under the following URL: <http://home.t-online.de/home/th.hoenemann/heimat/stammbaumgr.jpg> (732 kb).

The best wishes to you all for the coming year 2004. Stay (ore get) healthy and have much fun on Heimat furtheron.  
Thomas

**Date: Mon, 5 Jan 2004 18:34:36 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman@dsl.pipex.com>**

I think Christmas and the New Year must have overwhelmed everyone as there has been only Susan's posting of 12/12/03 on Part 4, The Highway which has discussed the film itself. A great shame, as I regard this episode, in many ways, as the best so far and would have been very interested in others' views.

Susan asked this question at the end of her post: "Even after seeing this episode several times, I am still mystified about the Todt rings with the death heads. Why were they popular?" I have been pondering over this question also. I think that they were popular as signifying death to Germany's enemies and were therefore popular with nationalists and, in particular, National Socialists and SS members, but I may be quite wrong about this.

As I remember it the subject of the death's-head rings arose 3 times in the episode and all were linked together through the dialogue. Whilst Maria and Pauline have been to the cinema Robert has been buying jewellery for the shop. The price and profit margin are discussed and Maria takes the tray of death's-head rings and stares at them, partly repulsed. The camera focuses on the ruby red eyes of some of them, which shine in a most sinister fashion. Maria: "They're frightening. Those red eyes seem to stare at you. Who buys stuff like that?" Reitz, thus highlights thro' a small symbolic detail, the evils of the Nazi philosophy. Maria is told that death's head rings are a best-selling item and that highway workers buy a great deal of this jewellery to give to their wives and salve their guilty consciences about being unfaithful. Note the linking, perhaps, of more than one kind of immorality. Maria is looking very troubled by all this [an honest, decent response?]. One person who has bought this kind of stuff we soon find is Otto Wohlleben. Maria notices such a ring on his finger when Otto is helping young Ernst to make a model aeroplane. Maria: "You've one of those rings too. Lots of people are wearing them. I didn't think I'd see you with one." And perhaps we, the viewers, share her opinion. Here are two people of integrity and decency. Otto replies: "They're alike but they mean something different to every wearer." And offers no further explanation. Does Maria think of infidelity here? [Otto's?]. The link has been made earlier.

Otto's words have left their mark. When Maria and Otto are seated at a table on the balcony of the dance-hall she remarks on Otto's ring again and mentions "Tod", the Death Organisation. I had to re-check the video for this. We have the following dialogue:

Otto: "No, it's Todt with a hard T at the front.. a soft D and a hard T at the end."

Maria: "Well now I know."

We need a German speaker for this [Thomas?]. Are there 2 different German words sounding alike and meaning different things? Or is he simply avoiding the issue of why he is wearing such a ring by being pedantic? Or is there some kind of joke/pun involved here. Then Maria expresses her surprise that a good man like Otto should be wearing such a ring: "Everybody's wearing these rings now. You too." She remembers the earlier exchange with Pauline and Robert and so do we. Then we have:

Otto: "The rings are private." [What is he hiding?]

Maria: "You said they mean something for everyone. [She remembers his words earlier. A sign of her growing love for him]. "What does it mean for you?" [Are you being unfaithful to another woman? Does it signify something about your character? Implied-I love you and want to marry you. Wonderful!!]

I noticed then that he changes the subject and does not answer. Thus, these rings symbolise much about the wider social and political scene but also tell us much about the lives and hearts of the characters. Just as Reitz' film Heimat does also! I probably haven't answered your question, Susan, but I have enjoyed writing this little piece of analysis. Please contribute anyone out there, especially German speakers.

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Tue, 6 Jan 2004 11:23:02 +0100**

**From: "Foerderer, Walter (MED)" <walter.foerderer@med.ge.com>**

"Tod" (death) and Todt sound similar in German. In HEIMAT the discussion about the death rings is about "Organisation Todt". I found an abstract in German and I tried to translate a part of it.

"Organisation Todt" (OT) belonged to the biggest mass organizations in the Third Reich. It differed from all others especially because most of the members were foreigners (Auslaender). In 1943 only 50000 out of 1 million men in duty for OT were Germans. The foreigners were recruited by force from civilians or prisoners of war.

During World War II the OT carried out a huge construction program which was described at the end of the war by the British Secret Service as "the most impressive since the roman times".

The OT was not the result of a definitive legislative or executive decision.

There was neither an order nor a law about its raising. Since Fritz Todt was in charge as General Inspector for the German Streets and Traffic in 1933, OT developed from the smallest beginnings to the most important organisation essential to the war effort next to Wehrmacht and SS.

The structure changed from year to year. It became adapted to the needs of the orders.

The name "Organisation Todt" was shaped by Adolf Hitler at the Reichsparteitag 1938 as he acknowledged OT for the participation on the construction of the Westwall. OT then became especially important during the battle against France (Frankreichfeldzug).

After Todt's death, when Speer came in charge, OT became part of the Reichs Ministry for Weapons and Ammunition.

OT had its biggest construction orders in the occupied areas: roads, plants, bridges, barracks, telecommunications network, minings and of course defense constructions. From 1943 OT workers had to take care as well for consequences of air raids, e.g. deactivating bombs etc..

Walter Foerderer

**Date: Tue, 6 Jan 2004 11:29:41 +0100**  
**From: "Foerderer, Walter (MED)" <walter.foerderer@med.ge.com>**

For a brief introduction in English see also:

<http://motlc.wiesenthal.com/pages/t057/t05789.html>

**Date: Thu, 8 Jan 2004 17:14:48 -0000**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

Because of the hiatus with the server matters have become a little confusing. I think there were 8 contributors in all including myself with a total of 20 posts. General critical discussion was a bit thin with only 3 contributors and 8 posts including myself. The other 12 posts with 5 contributors were on factual matters such as the Heimat Museum [?], the family tree, death's-head rings, and Saxon potato cakes. Nothing wrong with a good potato cake but can I have Martina to serve it to me?!!

If you have any feedback at any time about the introductions you can send to the list or e-mail me privately. Is there anything I'm not doing that you want done? Is there too much detail? Not enough? Comments would be most welcome. Introduction to Part 5 tomorrow so must up and away!!

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Sun, 11 Apr 2004 21:07:57 +0200**  
**From: Raymond Scholz <rscholz zonix.de>**

On Jan 06 2004, "Maarten Landzaat" <gijs@xs4all.nl> wrote:

> In the last scene, the time stand-still was also in the acting,  
> wasn't it? There were some awkwardly silent few seconds, which  
> gave the viewer time to think about what the future would bring.  
> I will watch the scene again.

Sorry for the late reply on that last scene of part 4 where we see Lucie, Martina and

Eduard. I totally agree with your interpretation - we see a set that would fit on a theater stage. Martina and Lucie in the front on the sofa and Eduard coming from his desk behind into the foreground. Note that the few seconds of silence are disturbed by the ticking clock we see all the time. So yet another reference to changing times...

Heimat has a lot of those theater like scenes, I didn't like when I watched Heimat first because they don't seem to fit into the cinematic quality of the rest film. They felt a bit overemphazized to me. But after watching Heimat again during my personal marathon (I'm not finished yet...) I'm starting to like them. They slow down the tempo of the film and give the viewer some extra time (that's what you wrote, Maarten).

Cheers, Ray