

**Date: Fri, 2 Apr 2004 08:00:06 +0100**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

"The personal experiences of the public, the audience, or the reader of a book, or of somebody who looks upon a painting, together with the memories that he carries with himself, are set in motion by the work of art. In this way the encounter with the work becomes an observation of himself. You get a key to your inner workings, to the secrets of your own soul. That's where the message is actually hiding. The work itself gives no answer whatever, but the observer gives himself answers. The work gives him time and again the key to unlocking those secret rooms." [Edgar Reitz]

HEIMAT: Part 11. DAS FEST DER LEBENDEN UND DER TOTEN  
[1982]. [The Feast of the Living and the Dead].

I must confess to feeling daunted by the task ahead of me. I do not know how I am going to do justice to this most amazing and complex episode which finishes the film. Back in 1986 when "Heimat" was first shown on BBC 2 I felt rather cheated and disappointed by this episode, certainly by its ending. When I watched it straight through last week I felt a sense of disappointment again plus a certain amount of confusion. These feelings probably arose because I felt that characters whom I had come to know so well, whom Edgar Reitz had created and breathed life into, so that they were more real to me than many real people, had been wrenched away from me without me having had a chance, so to speak, of bidding them farewell. However, after watching again and making detailed notes in preparation for writing this introduction, my feelings have changed again. I feel I am now much closer to understanding Reitz's intentions and purposes in this episode and have a fuller and deeper appreciation of the underlying themes and resolutions of them, although there are still many aspects that puzzle me. I no longer feel disappointment with the ending. I shall try to explain!

I cannot find the numbers of the original German TV audience but more than 2 million people watched each episode on BBC 2, I believe. I have often wondered what the general reaction to this episode was, as we move well outside the normal confines of soap-opera and family saga. Age and death are everywhere in this episode and we can become afflicted with melancholy in the presence of all this dying. Lucie exclaims, "What a life this is with all this dying!" and Paul lying ill in bed confesses to Hermann that life is "no fun anymore". And yet we are shown an after-life, a next life, where the dead can watch the doings of the living, and the living go on with new hope and new aspirations and adventures. I have no idea what Reitz's religious beliefs in real life are or were, and I base all my comments on what we are shown in this episode of this film, "Heimat".

The episode is very cleverly constructed and uses flashbacks to emphasise the importance of memories in the lives of his characters and in the lives of all of us. They become the stories we tell ourselves. A good example of this, for instance, occurs when Anton goes back to his mother's house which he had boarded up to keep out Ernst and his men and any others like him. In the barn he finds, under a sheet, a dust covered TV which he had originally bought for his mother so that she should not feel bored living alone as she does. In flashback we are shown him arriving with the TV and Maria rejecting it as she never feels bored she says. Reitz is exploring through memory the nature of this mother/son relationship and Anton's feeling of rejection: "Mother, I never know how to please you." We can feel the hurt still there! Reitz also brilliantly arranges matters so that all 3 brothers are in their old house at the same time, unbeknown to each other, locked each in their own private memories which have helped to make them what they are.

If I may, and perhaps rather feebly as a method, I would like to run through the episode

paying special attention to the latter part of the episode from the arrival of the 3 brothers at the fun-fair. We shall see quite clearly the emphasis on death and dying. It certainly does not make comfortable viewing necessarily, but truthful and honest it is. Glasisch's opening commentary provides us with a few surprises, as others have commented [Marie-Goot is his mother], but he mentions Horst, the son of Lucie and Eduard, having died young after picking up a landmine. He perhaps proudly announces, "A big family, the Glasisches, the Simons, and the Wiegands" but continues, "A lot of them are dead now". We then move straight into the day of Maria's funeral. The whole scene is orchestrated brilliantly and beautifully acted. I wondered if Reitz was setting up a deliberate irony when he makes the priest, during the funeral procession, chant these words. "Thou hast shed thy light on the darkness of the world and of death. Give us the strength to follow that light" and all around them is the blackness of the impending storm, which eventually causes the coffin to be dumped in the road as they all take shelter from the thrashing rain. Drenching rain obscures everything. Hermann manages to stop his car just short of the coffin. Are we being invited to think that in the face of death we do not see clearly? At the actual burial two jets scream overhead leaving vapour trails and there follows a view of the Hunsruck in the beauty of its Autumn colours taken from the aircraft. Was it the new ousting the old, annihilating distance? Does it provide a contrast with the lumpy earth being shovelled in to the grave and to the body which can soar no more?

We then literally have the funeral feast. Glasisch has a high fever of 40.3 degrees C and collapses. Paul falls forward and collapses and is then revived by his nurse. Philipp[?] carries a plastic bag containing 120 gallstones removed from his wife. Age and death and illness are all around and yet we see newcomers too. The Vilsmeiers have adopted two little Vietnamese children. Glasisch is meant to be old and confused ["When you get old you get so stupid, so stupid"] but he is able to walk over to Paul's table and challenge him as to why he walked out of the village, and, once more, Paul has no answer.

There follows the scene in the graveyard, where Hermann walks among the gravestones, after a conversation with the grave-digger/attendant. He finds the graves of Pauline 1904-75; Robert killed on the Eastern Front 1945; Eduard 1897-1967; Lucie 1906-75; Alois and Martha Wiegand; Wilfried Wiegand, only 57 muses Hermann; Horst; Katharina and Mathias; Marie-Goot and Mathes-Pat, and his mother, Maria, of course. He has a vision of her coffin almost afloat in the rain. What is the significance? We did not know of at least 6 of these deaths before, as far as I am aware. Hermann then visits "Daddy", who is lying, close to death, in a flat attached to Anton's factory. There seems to be a genuine affection between the two men, but both are consumed by guilt about Maria's death. She was their anchor and both had rejected her in life! Both left their heimat and have not found another. They are self-pitying. [Hermann: "Now the two of us no longer have a home anywhere/Paul: We travelled around the world and didn't know it/Hermann: We didn't know how beautiful it was when she was still here." How universal such feelings are! They have a shared memory of when Hermann, as a 4 year old, asked Paul for a chocolate. Both men break down in tears.

Anton is not well either. The camera focuses on the sculpture of boots he wore on his epic walk back from Russia, but now he has a heart problem and all his old bounce and sparkle has gone. He is applying for a government subsidy. He does not know what to do now; this is symbolised by his endless walking in a circle around his courtyard. This idea of circularity is to return later.

Let us return, for a moment, to Maria's empty house. It is a repository of the individual and shared memories of the 3 brothers, Anton, Ernst and Hermann. Ernst is the first to arrive at the boarded-up house. He had quarrelled mightily with Anton at the funeral feast, after Anton had found Ernst's men in his mother's house. Ernst has his defenders in our little discussion group, but Reitz seems to present him with an ambivalence which makes it hard to decide about him. He certainly had sent Karl-Heinz to Schabbach in search of antiques. He acknowledges the man whilst in the funeral procession and

mouths at them not to go to the forge. He is obviously ashamed of what he is doing and does not want to be directly linked with them. His defence of himself and his threat of dismissal of his employee, however, did seem genuine. Reitz gives Ernst a touch of humanity when he stops to feed the rabbits, left forgotten and hungry. He finds his old construction set, and noticing a sampler, containing a poem about love, is reminded of the time he observed his mother and Otto, arm in plaster, embracing in the kitchen. We have a flashback in colour to this memory and another to the glider Otto had helped him to build. Anton has now arrived and sees that someone has fed the rabbits. His memories are aroused by a basket which causes him to remember a time when he had bought flowers for his mother in a basket and found no one at home. Hermann arrives, after walking through fun-fair bubbles. All three are in the house together, unknown to each other. Hermann looks closely at a flagon of coloured liquid which, I think, reminds him of the sloe gin his mother was making on an earlier visit. He finds a photo of himself and Klärchen in the tent. We see it again in flashback with details I did not remember. Anton finds the photo of Otto he took on the highway. Ernst reflects on his childhood with further examination of the construction set. We, in turn, remember incidents from the earlier episodes and are caught up in their memories. This is very skilfully done. When they finally bump into each other Anton is discovered trying to remove from the house a piece of furniture, a mirror; the very thing he was trying to prevent Ernst from doing! This is all resolved by Paul, who, typically without asking anyone, has affixed to the house a plaque donating the house, as a kind of museum, to the village presumably. Throughout this he cackles with self-satisfied, maniacal laughter.

There was one long flashback during the brothers' visit to the house, which I have overlooked. At first, I thought it was connected with Anton's gift of flowers but now I don't think so. We go to Maria's 70th birthday party in the village hall. Anton does arrive with flowers at the end but they are not in a basket and if it followed directly from the earlier incident it would mean he had not been invited. Not likely! I think the connecting idea was "flowers". We see all the colourful bouquets Maria has received, but the emphasis is on age, decrepitude and death, memories and regrets. Pauline never went to Lake Garda as she had wanted; Lucie, now like an old witch remembers her Eduard and her old profession. "And now I sit here and he's lying in the graveyard. Next to my Horst. And 3 graves away lie my mama and papa." Brandishing a knife, and demonstrating how and where the slits in her skirt were made, she becomes almost frightening. The elderly singer, who boasts of being 80 years old, rather pathetically, but to much applause, does a handstand against the wall to demonstrate his physical prowess.

When the three brothers arrive at the fun-fair, my memory took me back to the scene in "Hermännchen", when the three boys go to the funfair. There are many such "echoes" in this episode but I do not have time to analyze them. There are two prostitutes, Daggi and Marion, drinking at the stall. When I watched the episode last week they irritated me immensely and I wished they had been cut, but I now see how they fit into the thematic whole. They have their regrets and memories and talk of death. A man, troubled by a memory from the war, writhes on the ground. Music plays, trumpets blare, and a conga dance goes round and round and in and out endlessly. Merry-go-rounds twirl and circle. The dance and the roundabouts are all symbols of human life, as is the noise of the music and the shouting. A twentieth century English writer, Anthony Powell, has a sequence of novels entitled "A Dance to the Music of Time". That is how he sees life. It is a cacophony of noise, with us in the midst, meeting and re-meeting as our lives go on. This might help to make sense of this scene. We see Glasisch following the conga. A door has been shut. There is a battering on the doors and there is great hubbub and commotion. I did not quite understand why they were so desirous of entering the building. Glasisch seems to be having some kind of seizure. Paul and his nurse come into view. A giant shadow of Paul is cast on to the front wall of the building. Is Reitz having a kind of cinematic joke/reference here? It looked like the shadow of Dracula from the film, "Nosferatu"! He cries out, "Maria, I'm so cold." Do you remember these very words from the scene where he wishes to climb into her bed? He is Death or has been marked by Death. We have a shot of trumpet players revolving in the mist. Lotti and her

young family appear on the balcony and Paul struggles back as if he has seen something [youth/warmth/real love?] and collapses with the words, "I think I'm dying." I presume he does, though we don't actually witness him dying.

It is now that Reitz produces his most audacious stroke. We return to Glasisch, who tells the revellers to gain entrance by the back door, and we then see him dodging his own shadow, cast on the lighted wall of the building behind a kind of picket fence. He moves towards a lighted door. Mamangakis' thumping music is heard. The door is rather like a church door. It is surrounded by a yellow brickwork arch. As he approaches the steps, they suddenly turn an incandescent yellow. He climbs them and enters the after-life. It was late in the day when I realised all this. There is much Biblical imagery here. Are these steps the stairway to Heaven? Inside the hall Glasisch, who has now become a young man again, finds all the characters who have died in the course of the film. They are all young again, and, in the course of their conversations repeat lines and phrases we have heard before. They are lit from below by a light box which gives them a strange, ethereal quality. We see, for instance, Martina handing out potato cakes and the French horsewoman being handed into her bath. Maria appears on the stage carrying duvets, as she had appeared to Otto on his return to Schabbach. She is given the appearance of an angel, the duvets looking like an angel's wings. Maria names in turn those she recognises [I will leave out the complications of not seeing Grandad as he was blind]. The dead look through the window and see the living in the square. We have not lost the characters. They are now watching over us. I wonder if Edgar Reitz knows of a play by the American dramatist, Thornton Wilder, named "Our Town" where we have virtually the same idea [first performed January 1938].

Is Reitz saying this is Heaven? I noticed that Paul was not there! Perhaps he has gone to the other place or perhaps he is not dead? Glasisch is certainly dead, as his body is found by the fence and carried inside. Otto and Maria, symbols of true love, join the living unseen and watch over Hermann and Gisella embracing in the mine. He has found another totally unsuitable woman. She is Anton's daughter. What of Anton? He is drunk. The loud music of the fair and the noise of the conga coalesce into his irregular heartbeat. This becomes very dramatic. He collapses, cries out, and cannot hear. His daughter holds up a message hastily written in felt-tip pen: "Dad, don't worry its temporary deafness, caused by stress and lack of vitamins." I think he has also died but I may be completely wrong on this. The words on the paper, if genuine, seem unbearably flippant. Ernst, on the other hand, looks as if he has found happiness. His hideously convoluted proposal of marriage to Irene seems to have been accepted.

There follows a short scene of the empty road with a few bubbles blowing away and the noise of flies and the chirp of birds. The significance of this escaped me. We then have the final scene of the performance of Hermann's latest composition from within the mine. It is a kind of polyphonic chanting. We see ultra-modern cabling emerging from the ground running into a kind of portakabin. Hermann is standing in the doorway. The camera suddenly pulls back along the road and we have the final credits set to Hermann's music. The suddenness of the ending feels quite shocking. We have views of a ploughed field on a gloomy day. So we have a new venture by one of the young ones. Hermann's music incorporates the old Hunsruck dialect for after all "Yes, in Heaven, as you'd expect, they speak the Hunsruck dialect". The old heimat is still there. There was an old dog in the road scratching itself. The old telegraph poles were still there despite the modern cabling. The earth lies waiting.

Whose deaths have we seen during the episode? Maria, of course; Glasisch; Paul and Anton maybe. Who is left alive? Ernst, about to marry; Hermann; Anton perhaps and Martha. What has Reitz revealed to us in this episode? He has revealed or reminded us that human narrative to be complete must end in death. This is uncomfortable and shocks us but there is no other way. We all have our memories, Reitz says, and this makes us what we are. And there is an after life where we can be young again. Let us hope so!!

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Sun, 04 Apr 2004 08:24:44 -0400**  
**From: wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>**

Thanks very much, Ivan, for the summary and introduction to Episode 11. I chose to combine the two things, some comments on this episode and my feelings about the series.

The conclusion of this first series converges the themes and ideas and brings them into focus:

1. We just don't know where our fate will bring us but we humans need family to feel at home.
2. Leaving family and geographical bond in search of a better life makes us long for our roots sooner or later.
3. The "remote" village is not so remote after all, national events do effect the lives of the people.

And I would like to add a fourth observation: For me as a post WW2 German, it was comforting to see the German history of the last 100 years through the eyes of these families, what really mattered to them, and thus presumably to so many families (including mine) and then move on. Family life was terribly disrupted in the turmoil of this century that it was necessary to separate this from the front page news and cliches of so many other films. Germans should be allowed to be patriotic not because they follow propaganda particularly well but because they love their country.

I felt the same sense of loss and disappointment as Ivan when I watched this last episode for the first time. I don't think anybody can keep all the relationships and events in their heads in just one viewing. You want to know more, understand better, be part of that family a little longer. However, to give us a clear understanding of the entire family relationships is not the goal of the series. The goal is that we can identify and relate to some of the characters and events just as in our own families - we are selective in who we spend time with, who we like and who we rather ignore. That makes the series so compelling.

Having said all that, I really just plain enjoyed the story as told when this series was first broadcast on WGBH in Boston. It was about my own Heimat (I left the area in 1978 for Boston, Massachusetts) and so many things were so incredibly familiar. Of course, the language plays a major role in this film, that's why I was rather surprised when I found out that people from all over Germany enjoyed the series, let alone people abroad. Question is, are we all feeling the same thing? So what is the common bond of the viewers?

A few comments: In the English introduction by Glasisch, very well translated by the way, we see the painted family tree and can actually see the years of death for everybody in the story. No entry for either Paul or Anton so presumably, they stay alive. I think a "normal" ending would have been the two jets roaring over the cemetery while the credits are rolling. But this was different, in fact the two jets moved me to tears. These Phantoms from the German fighter-bomber wing JG35 in Pferdsfeld used to skim the Hunsrück hills all the time and fly mock attacks over my home town Koblenz. It reminded everybody that there was a cold war going on and they were training in very small air spaces to stop a Russian advance. Hermann refers to the extravagant Government Bunker built near Bonn, where the entire Administration would find shelter for weeks while the German people presumably figure out how to deal with nuclear fallout. As somebody observed during the fair: "those jets fly along the entire Hunsrück range in about three minutes". In this scene they instantly evoked the picture of two

angels with flaming swords descending and taking Maria along for the ride. She who had never left the village, was able to see the entire area in a matter of seconds. The story doesn't end here as expected but we get treated to the supernatural part, the "festival of the dead". I found it strangely serene and uplifting actually. When Maria eventually shows up at this assembly and is asked "where have you been", she smiles: "hey, it's Kirmes" (the annual parish celebration of the day the church was consecrated) as if to say "I had better things to do than join you yet for good". And, of course, the ultimate pun was that grandpa can't be seen because he was blind. Whether this was written into the script because the actor was no longer available or sick or dead (really dead), I don't remember. When Hermann returns to the cemetery the undertaker asks him if he still speaks "Platt" the German name for dialect ("Flat German vs. High German) and reminds him of the local nursery rhymes, which Hermann then uses for his composition at the end of the film and records them in the caves. I completely missed that connection at the first viewing.

I was wondering why Anton put his soldiers boots that meant so much to him, outside, in the weather, and probably bronzed. Is it to have space to walk around them when he needs to think and find answers? He needs to walk in order to come up with ideas. His government subsidy, by the way, was presumably granted, Lotti mentions that the people in Bonn had not yet made a decision but to start cooling the champagne. You do that to celebrate.

Why did everybody try to get into the guest haus and pub? Does it have something to do with the "afterlife" and the festival of the dead that is going on inside? It could just be that the owner locked up late in the night but this part is a bit strange anyway because what follows is Glasisch actually entering the house as he dies.

The scene with Anton loosing his hearing is dramatic but factual and I didn't think that the scribbled message of his daughter is flippant. I'd rather assume facts here rather than "message" because Reitz is still telling a story, although reality does seem distorted. The message is that the dead stay in people's memories in a village like Schabbach, they don't just fade away and disappear if you will.

Wolfgang

**Date: Sun, 4 Apr 2004 23:34:04 +0200**  
**From: "Gert Jan Jansen" <gertjan.jansengouda.demon.nl>**

Dear contributors to the discussion,

This is my last chance to participate in the discussion about Heimat 1. So I will join.

If you have read the introduction of Ivan Mansley -and you have seen the film before once or twice- it's not an absolute condition to see part 11 again. Thanks to his words most scenes appear automatically before your eyes. Still I searched for the old videotape and I played it again.

Some remarks:

1. I wondered if there were some signs in part 11 of a concept for the next chronicle of Edgar Reitz DZH. The answer is yes and no.

In the first place "Das Fest der Lebenden und der Toten" is the 'grand finale' of the

series, the end of nearly a century development in the world, contracted on a rather rural local level. For me it is the cinematically working out of the idea of TIME. In a grand finale you see all the players back on stage, also the figures who in earlier episodes went off through the side door. In the name of the public Maria greets them all, the living and the dead.

But it's not the end of the chronicle! It's followed by some scenes that still take place at the same (Saturday?) fair day: the finding of the dead Glasisch and the hearing-problems of Anton. And after that the film ends with the singing of Hermann's new local inspired music in the cave, recorded in a car at the well known end of the village. What does this mean? Perhaps Reitz wanted to express that the film had an open end, for the recorded symphonic poem does not represent a resumé of the foregoing 82 years. It's more the acceptance by Hermann of his roots, that he had execrated at the end of his schooltime.

With these last scenes Reitz closes the era of Maria and Glasisch and wants to say to himself: perhaps Hermann should be the principal figure in my next project.

2. Heimat has an undertitle: a German chronicle. That has hit me to reconstruct the film chronologically. Maria Simon died on the 18th of September 1982. That was on a Saturday. The funeral has probably been taken place on Thursday the 23rd., perhaps on Wednesday. All the guests of the funeral afterwards had lunch or dinner at Gaststätte "Zur Linde". Sepp Vilsmeier, the husband of Lotti takes a photograph in front of Zur Linde. At that time there is nothing to see of the fair that will take place at the square before.

Hermann's visit to the cemetery takes place on a Friday. When he walks back to the Simon-house, he meets a young woman who keeps clean the steps to her house. She asks if Hermann has plans to go the kirmesse. He says yes and asks back if she's cleaning the steps (really intellectual) and then she answers: I do this every Friday before  $\sum \sum \dots$  (kirmes ?)

That means it is Friday the 24th of September and some moments later we see the building up of the fair in front of Zur Linde.

In another scene we hear Hermann say to "daddy": On Sunday evening I'm flying to Boston; for conducting my new concert". This means that "the fair scenes and the "grand finale" are situated on Saturday the 25th of September 1982. The closing scene of the song concert must have taken place some weeks later; it is still autumn. One technical problem: Marlies Simon, the oldest daughter of Anton and since that Saturday the new love of Hermann, wears the same clothes as on that remarkable 25th.

3. Perhaps another little error. Glasisch introduces (in the middle of the film) the family tree of Simon/Wiegand/Schirmer, that is painted by Sepp Vilsmeier. (BTW he explains that Glasisch is a "Hausname", a housname that in rural areas often is more used than the legal name).

But as you look at the family tree you see by Glasisch himself "1900-1982", but he is not yet dead at that moment!!!!

Gert Jan Jansen.

**Date: Mon, 5 Apr 2004 09:31:56 +0200**  
**From: Th.Hoenemann t-online.de**

Dear Ivan and others,

Ivan, thank you again for your brilliant analysis of the last part of Heimat.

Well, how can I start? When watching this last episode once with some of my neighbours I put on black clothes, saying it was because we are going to participate in a funeral, and I said it with a smile, just as if I was joking... I indeed was not. This last part for me feels like losing good friends, and I guess many of you feel the same.

Ivan wrote: We, in turn, remember incidents from the earlier episodes and are caught up in their memories. This is very skilfully done.

Reitz is playing with or appealing to our memories in this episode, indeed. There are so many *deja vus*, so many links to things, actions and people we got close to by watching the film.

For me personally this is a very sentimental episode. Already the first few scenes (Maria in the coffin - by the way not the real actress but only a mask - Marita Breuer denied to die as Maria), and Glasisch, old, ill and very lonely, is going to cook a poor meal (potatoes, in Hunsrück dialect: "Krummbeere") get me very melancholic.

This last episode has a special filming background as it is improvised mostly. Reitz and his team did not work regarding the script consequently but did a lot of things without having planned them for years. In fact: this episode differs structurally from all others very obviously. For example the use of flashbacks: we never had this in such a dominant, sensegiving and consequent way. Of course, since the last episode 15 years have gone, and in this time lots of things happened (especially many people from the family died, e. g. Eduard, Marie-Goot, Pauline, Lucie, Eduard), as Glasisch already resumes at the beginning: "all dead, all dead ..." (to translate this adequately, with emotion, is not easy, you have to listen to it to get his melancholy). These flashbacks even represent scenes which already existed in the original plot, I guess.

In my eyes the quality and deepness of the different sequences of this episode differs very much. There are some things I really dislike about this episode, mostly scenes belonging to the Kirmes: the two prostitutes are like strangers to Schabbach and so to us watchers, what is their message? What do they want to learn or feel us? And those endless scenes with village people singing and doing their Merry-go-round. What quality difference this is to the other parts and sequences of the whole film. (What do you think?)

Let us consider that those two prostitutes originally were planned as leaders through the whole film, they were part of a frame of the film and all the historical sequences should have been told us as flashbacks - so far the original script which - in my eyes - was changed for good (thanks good!). These two figures seem not to fit in the whole milieu, scenery and rhythm at all - and I guess they would have brought us away from getting so familiar with the Simon family. Regarding this this last episode is - concerning her structure - a reminiscence towards the original plot.

Some words about the scene with the coffin standing on the road in the rain. (When I first saw it I was afraid Hermann would not see it early enough and crash his car into it - not to imagine what strange thoughts one can have ...) I already wrote about this referring to a former scene/episode: when writing the script Reitz and his co-actor P. Steinbach lived in a small wood-house in Woppenroth. They often went to the local bar, Gasthaus Molz (I spent my holidays there more than once and found good friends), and talked to the inhabitants. They both were very curious about village stories and anecdotes - and did get a lot of them. They worked these stories into their script, and the most important one of these stories is the one with the coffin left behind on the street because of a rainy



storm. This really had happened in Woppentoth a couple of years ago. And in fact. I think nobody's fantasy could long to invent such a scene.

The scene at the "Feast of the death" is another one which rises my sentimentality. Meeting again all those really lovely people causes memories. We have accompanied all those persons through their lives (within 15 hours until then). What strikes me most about this is that Maria mentions all names of her relatives, except her own father. Ivan: [I will leave out the complications of not seeing Grandad as he was blind]. That Mathias is not there could be caused by the fact that Willi Burger, the actor, already had died that time. In the credits you can see that cross behind his name.

Ivan: I noticed that Paul was not there! Perhaps he has gone to the other place or perhaps he is not dead? and: I think he [Anton] has also died but I may be completely wrong on this.

In fact: Both of them do not die in this episode. Referring to the gravestones that were used in Heimat 3 Paul will die one year after Maria did. And Anton will play a central role in Heimat 3 before dying in 1995.

Ivan wrote: We then have the final scene of the performance of Hermann's latest composition from within the mine. It is a kind of polyphonic chanting.

Well, indeed, this chior is a very strange combination from modern, atonal music (written by Nikos Mamangakis again) and Hunsrück dialect. The whole text consists of very typical dialect words, not making a real contextual sense - except the last sentence: "Die Goot un der Pat, im Himmel schwätze se Hunsrücker platt!" (Goot and Pat, in heaven they are talking Hunsrück dialect.) You remember: "Die Goot" is Marie-Goot, and "der Patt" her husband, Mäthes Pat. Goot and Pat - these are very convenient names for those second-degree relatives in Hunsrück dialect. So this last sentence reflects both: family and dialect - at last HEIMAT.

Originally the title of the film should have been "Geheischnis" - a further word in Hunsrück dialect wich means kind of trust, home, feeling warm and familiar. The producers convinced Reitz to change the title into Heimat because they where afraid a title which can't be understood or translated by most of the (even German) people would keep them away from watching. But from this we even learn wich understanding of the word Heimat we are expected to have or we are learning to have while watching the film.

One last thought: I really not informed about Reitz's religious attitude, but I am sceptical: the artificial use of the thought of life after death is no prove for any religious attitude.

Let me say some personal words at the end: I really enjoyed this discusion (and will enjoy the discussion of DZH, too). Even if I am dealing with Heimat for a long time, your comments and questions brought new light in some aspects I saw with different eyes ore not that deep going before. Special thanks again to Ivan, who did a really great job, and to Reinder for providing this service. I sure will print out the whole documentation of our discussion.

On April 21st I am going to start a Heimat-project in my school (you might remember that I am working as a grammar-school teacher). The idea was born when I watched a single episode of Heimat with my pre-graduate-class (22 pupils, 17 or 18 years old - I obviously talked so much about Heimat in my lessons that they got curious of it). They really were filled with enthusiasm after watching and asked to watch the whole film. So we worked on a concept. Since a couple of years we have a seniors academy: our pupils are teaching seniors from 55 years up in languages, using computers and different things else (for more deetails about this see my schools homepage: <http://www.nepomucenum-rietberg.de>, choose "EULE"). We decided to integrate the generations by inviting them to watch and discuss the film with us. I hope this will be a success. Your discussion-inputs will help me to prepare short introductions to each episode. So thanks again to all who participated.

All the best for you,  
excuse my poor English again,  
best regards

Thomas

Feel again invited to visit my Heimat-webpages:  
<http://home.t-online.de/home/th.hoenemann/heimat/index.htm>

**Date: Mon, 5 Apr 2004 14:15:31 +0200 (CEST)**  
**From: theresia\_martijn onetelnet.nl**

Dear all, a few comments:

Wolfgang wrote: we see the painted family tree and can actually see the years of death for everybody in the story. No entry for either Paul or Anton so presumably, they stay alive.'

I never got the impression that Paul died or is almost dead in this episode. He's just an old man who is confronted by the loss of one of the most important persons in his life. Maybe he feels guilty that he left Maria, now she's dead there's nothing to say nothing to change. I think this is why he gets such reactions. I also think that Paul can't bear to be confronted with death, it's too close to him personally and he doesn't want to face it. At the same time he gets the pleasant treatment from a nurse, which I think is very American. There's also a déjà vu, Paul was steaming in his mother's kitchen, now after all these years his nurse is bringing him a bowl to steam. We know that Anton is still alive as he also plays a part in Heimat III.

W: I think a "normal" ending would have been the two jets roaring over the cemetery while the credits are rolling.

The two jets are so brilliant, the speed, the energy, the whole Hunsruck in a flash. As fast as life they are before you realise it all stops. Together with the music the scene has so much strength.

W: When Hermann returns to the cemetery the undertaker asks him if he still speaks "Platt" the German name for dialect ("Flat German vs. High German") and reminds him of the local nursery rhymes, which Hermann then uses for his composition at the end of the film and records them in the caves. I completely missed that connection at the first viewing.

Is this really an undertaker? I never thought of the man that way, I thought he was just another cemetery visitor.

There's one more connection. In the first part we see Helmut's ghost in the kitchen, he says the same nursery rhymes. It completes the circle where Heimat began and now ends.

W: I was wondering why Anton put his soldiers boots that meant so much to him, outside, in the weather, and probably bronzed.

I always thought that they are bronzed and that he has put the boots outside as a sculpture (horrible!) so he can see them every single day.

Theresia

**Date: Mon, 5 Apr 2004 16:24:51 +0200**  
**From: JoelOYoung aol.com**

Everyone,

I have read a lot of messages and discussions from everyone as to the dates of death of the various characters in Heimat. There seems to be some confusion, and in some cases differences.

I have taken photos of each gravestones in the cemetery. They are now all located in one cemetery, which is on the hill in the churchyard at the Neuenkirch which is located just outside of Sargenroth (at least they were in the fall when I took the photos). Each stone has a small white sticker on it indicating that the stone is a prop and property of Reitz Productions but they are all real gravestones and are engraved and the lettering gold plated. To clear the air on dates perhaps Reinder could post them on his site and everyone could take a look at the dates? I also have a great shot of Maria Goot standing next to her gravestone.

Regards,  
Joel

**Date: Fri, 9 Apr 2004 22:12:56 +0200**  
**From: ReindeR Rustema <reinder@rustema.nl>**

At 16:24 +0200 5/04/04, JoelOYoung aol.com wrote:  
> To clear the air on dates perhaps Reinder could post them on his site

Done. <http://reinder.rustema.nl/heimat/picsnsndsdh.html> or  
<http://reinder.rustema.nl/heimat/pictures/graveyard/> to be more precise.

**Date: Fri, 9 Apr 2004 22:20:55 +0200**  
**From: "www.Heimat-Fanpage.de" <info\_heimat-fanpage.de>**

Hi everyone.

Pictures of the gravestones I took at the erfilm you can see in Heimat 1 you can find in the [www.Heimat-Fanpage.de](http://www.Heimat-Fanpage.de)

Hyperlink:  
<http://www.heimat-fanpage.de/temp/horst.jpg>  
<http://www.heimat-fanpage.de/temp/mathias.jpg>  
<http://www.heimat-fanpage.de/temp/wiegand.jpg>  
<http://www.heimat-fanpage.de/temp/lucie.jpg>

Pictures of the gravestones in Heimat 3 :  
<http://www.heimat-fanpage.de/h3/drehbuch/grabernst.jpg>  
<http://www.heimat-fanpage.de/h3/drehbuch/grabanton.jpg>

Best regards

Stefan Gies  
Heimat-Fanpage-Team

**Date: Sun, 11 Apr 2004 18:38:04 +0100**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

First of all I would like to mention a few points which I made note of but did not have space to include in my introduction to Part 11 of Heimat. I noted that Glasisch in his introductory commentary was quite emphatic that Mathes-Pat was not his father? Do we know who was? He was quite insistent so is he glorying, perhaps like a Shakespearean villain, that he was a bastard?

I completely accept that Anton does not die. Obviously my surmise was totally wrong. I cannot remember him in Part 3 of DZH but look forward to meeting him again there. If the words written by his daughter on the piece of paper and held before his eyes: "Dad, don't worry it's temporary deafness caused by stress and lack of vitamins", it certainly wouldn't have re-assured me in the grip of some kind of seizure or heart attack. On the subject of Anton's daughters I cannot remember which one wrote the words, but in my notes I have recorded that Hermann is embracing and kissing Gisela in the mine. One of our contributors, Gert was it, said that it was Marlies Simon. Have I got it wrong? The point is that once more Hermann is involved with a totally unsuitable female; in this case a very close relative ["My mother is your grandmother"].

Contributors were quite certain I was wrong about Paul dying in the episode. I am quite ready to accept that I was wrong again, BUT if you go to the pictures of the gravestones at <http://reinder.rustema.nl/heimat/pictures/graveyard> one can clearly see in Pictures 1 & 5 Graveyard in Sargenroth on the Familie Simon gravestone that Paul's dates are given as 1898-1981. That would mean he had died before the episode opened as it is set in 1982. Clearly there is some confusion. I would welcome the evidence being given as to when exactly he did die. Any comments with my comparison with Nosferatu? Perhaps Paul is the living dead!

One significant little moment is when Ernst, inside his mother's house and his old home, picks up a little plaque with what I took to be Hitler's head in relief and the words, "Until Victory is ours". I interpreted this as Reitz showing us that ordinary, decent Germans like the Simons felt patriotic and supported the war effort. Mind you Maria was a Wiegand. Perhaps Wilfried or his father left it with her or forced it on her. Anyway, Ernst taps it and decides it is worthless, as it is only made out of plaster. That's how I read it.

I noticed that in the life after death scene Maria greets her mother. We had never seen her actually in any of the episodes, had we?

I would just like to take up two contributions which really added to my understanding. Thomas, as always, made so many interesting points. [I have been looking at your web-site, Thomas, and doing my best to piece together the German words. Quite superb!!] You asked what was the message of the prostitutes. I had failed to make properly clear that I thought their role was to give another dimension to the idea of death, decay, mortality and change. One is diseased [psoriasis]; they talk of cremation, throwing one's ashes in the sea, taking your money in the shape of gold teeth to the grave; one says, "When I kick the bucket", another reflects on how farmers go to the brothel now, and so on. Like you, however, I don't think they really add anything and would have been better off on the cutting-room floor. You wondered about the "endless scenes with village people singing and doing their merry go round". I felt that Reitz was offering us a symbol of life. Humans go round and round in circles, history repeating itself maybe; we are born, become active and die, and this is repeated endlessly. I feel sure that this idea is being reflected, even if it is rather depressing in a way. We have the musicians twirling around as well in their merry-go-round chairs, playing in the mist. [Shakespeare:Twelfth Night: "Thus the whirligigs of time brings in his revenges".] Lastly Thomas, I thought Glasisch was cooking the potatoes for a poultice to cure his fever. Perhaps it was for a meal as well.

Gert Jan Jansen wrote very convincingly on Hermann's music at the end of the episode ["an acceptance of his roots that he had execrated at the end of his schooltime"]. Welcome Gert, I think you are a new contributor, which is always nice to see. I did not make enough of this. In the graveyard scene, where Hermann converses with the attendant, they talk about dialect words for cherries and whortleberries which Hermann remembers. I think there is a scene in the mine where Hermann, clicking his fingers, syncopates the words and then finally in the music he returns to and acknowledges his "Heimat" or "Geheischnis". Have I got that right?

Ivan Mansley.

P.S. Time is running out. I hope that some of you will send in your "overview" of "Heimat" before Friday. 4 days left. Don't make me be the first!!

**From: Susan Biedron [mailto:susan.jsbiedron.com]  
Sent: 11 April 2004 17:44**

Hello all,

The concluding episode is, as Ivan writes, very complex and it is hard to decide where to begin and what to comment on. There are also so many interesting contributions this time from different people. I will just list my observations on various parts. I really liked the opening scene where Glasisch explains the family tree. I rewound and played it twice. And still I apparently missed the Glasisch "1900-1982" comment from Gert Jan. I have become quite fond of Glasisch and of course don't want him to die!

There have been some comments about Maria not being totally convincing as an elderly lady. But isn't Glasisch wonderful as an old man? Kurt Wagmer's performance was superb - I especially like the scene where he dances with Lottie at Maria's party. Lotte is a good sport to put up with him. I was amazed to learn he was not a professional actor!

> Age and death are  
> everywhere in this episode and we can become afflicted with melancholy in  
> the presence of all this dying. Lucie exclaims, "What a life this is with  
> all this dying!" and Paul lying ill in bed confesses to Hermann that life is  
> "no fun anymore". And yet we are shown an after-life, a next life, where the  
> dead can watch the doings of the living, and the living go on with new hope  
> and new aspirations and adventures.

Does this mean the "old village life" is coming to an end - a new version is beginning? This episode could easily get one depressed. I too, was rather worried that Hermann was going to run his car right into the coffin. Does this mean he has to face that his mother is really dead? By the way, I am continually finding comparisons to Heimat characters and people in my family. I am sure others find this true also. I have a cousin who is always late. I learned just last week when visiting her sister, that she was late to my aunt's (her mother's) funeral. Then I watched the funeral guests comment on Hermann's punctuality. My first reaction to the jets flying overhead was as if they were in honor of Maria - or could be to indicate that now Maria's soul is free. It reminds us of Ernst's fly-over at the wedding and shows us the great progress made in a short time. The old slower life is gone, the faster life is here. Young people take the place of the old. Soon after Maria's funeral the town is having a fun fair or festival. Life goes on.

Maria's house represents the old ways. It not only looks like a museum inside, it becomes one in a way, when Paul puts a plaque on it, preserving it as a historical building. Of course Paul's intention is the preserve himself - even though he left the house and the village.

I think Ernst represents progress in a strange sort of way. Of course it is bad to demolish or change old historic houses - but at the time some people wanted new things. Just think of getting rid of all that wonderful heavy dark furniture. Yes, it is really despicable that Ernst had his scavengers going after furniture during the funeral and Anton has a right to be angry at that. Yet people, once they had some extra money to spend, wanted new modern things. Even Ernst, at the end, wants to hold onto some of the old memories - he feeds the rabbits, looks at his old construction set - even some of his childhood memories are pleasant. In the Fair scene he talks about settling down to what seems to be a local woman. Anton may represent what is the right thing to do - but even his wife Marta thinks he is a little harsh in boarding up the house.

- > The episode is very cleverly constructed and uses flashbacks to emphasize
- > the importance of memories in the lives of his characters and in the lives
- > of all of us.

We learn some things about Anton, too. Anton appears to be the perfect son - successful, respectable, produces grandchildren, etc. Yet the flashbacks indicate that even he feels he does not know how to please his mother. But - can Maria be pleased by anything in her last years? Even at her party, she states she invited everyone because she wanted to know who will walk behind her coffin. Rather a morbid thought at a birthday party.

I also wanted to comment on the "Volkslied" that is sung at Maria's party by the band: It went something like "Im Hunsruck steht ein Bauernhaus so hubsch und rein..." I have heard this same song many times but with the variation of a different location inserted in the lines.

I thought it was odd that Anton did not seem to know about his mother's 70th birthday party. He is very upset that she is not at home, where he expected her to be. Yet his wife Marta is at the party - so how could he not have known about it?

Reitz's scene with the 3 brothers together in the house is brilliant. You can see each reliving childhood memories - and they seem to be pleasant - as they find toys or other mementos in the house. Of course, Hermann's memory is the bed. What is it with Hermann and women?

- > Anton is not well either. The camera focuses on the sculpture of boots he
- > wore on his epic walk back from Russia, but now he has a heart problem and
- > all his old bounce and sparkle has gone. He is applying for a government
- > subsidy. He does not know what to do now; this is symbolized by his endless
- > walking in a circle around his courtyard. This idea of circularity is to
- > return later.

Wolfgang commented on the sculpture of the boots. I think the boots remind Anton of when he was young and vigorous and developed his ideas on his march home. I think Anton tries to hold onto that part of life when he had everything ahead of him. Now he is getting older and has problems.

- > ... Paul, who, typically without asking anyone, has affixed to the house a
- > plaque donating the house, as a kind of museum, to the village presumably.
- > Throughout this he cackles with self-satisfied, maniacal laughter.

I thought it was very funny when the unnamed man standing by the car tells Paul that soon he will have another plaque with his name on it. I am sure this is not what Paul has in mind.

I find the next part confusing:

> Hermann and Gisella embracing in the mine. He has found another totally  
> unsuitable woman. She is Anton's daughter.

I would love to have seen a scene where Anton finds them together! Why does Hermann continually pick unsuitable women? Fortunately Anton is drunk. This is the only time in the whole series that we see Anton cutting loose and acting improperly. All his life Anton has worked hard, done what is expected of him - but even good behavior does not stop death, change, problems - so he decides to get drunk. Perhaps he is just overwhelmed by all that has gone on.

As to the addition of the prostitutes in the story - I am not sure what to think. Perhaps the prostitutes are added because they are so out of character with Anton's usual respectable self. It shows he is apparently having some kind of personal crisis.

> The loud music of the fair and the noise of the conga coalesce into his  
> irregular heartbeat. This becomes very dramatic. He collapses, cries out,  
> and cannot hear. His daughter holds up a message hastily written in felt-tip  
> pen: "Dad, don't worry its temporary deafness, caused by stress and lack of  
> vitamins." I think he has also died but I may be completely wrong on this.  
> The words on the paper, if genuine, seem unbearably flippant.

There must be some meaning to this scene, but I am unable to figure it out.

> What has Reitz revealed to us in this episode? He  
> has revealed or reminded us that human narrative to be complete must end in  
> death. This is uncomfortable and shocks us but there is no other way. We all  
> have our memories, Reitz says, and this makes us what we are. And there is  
> an after life where we can be young again. Let us hope so!

Ivan, I like your conclusion. I also like the conclusion to Heimat.

Susan

**Date: Sun, 11 Apr 2004 21:18:30 +0200**  
**From: Raymond Scholz <rscholz zonix.de>**

Did you ever notice that sounds in the background when Glasisch reflects the past episodes using the old photographs?

Glasisch role as the chronicler of Heimat has been discussed before I think. His viewpoint is the one from the outside, neutral but always present and knowing.

The background noise sounds to me like coming from a party going on Glasisch has (yet again) not been invited to. I see him sitting in a private place digging through old photographs...

Don't be disappointed, I told you that this seems rather unimportant to me :-)

Cheers, Ray

Date: Sun, 11 Apr 2004 22:36:46 +0200  
From: "Theresia en Martijn" <theresia\_martijn@onetelnet.nl>

Dear all,

I like to comment on many things others have written before I write a few things which were important to me in this final part.

Thomas wrote:

> There are some things I really dislike about this episode, mostly scenes belonging  
> to the Kirmes: the two prostitutes are like strangers to Schabbach and so to us  
> watchers, what is their message? What do they want to learn or feel us? And those  
> endless scenes with village people singing and doing their Merry-go-round. What  
> quality difference this is to the other parts and sequences of the whole film. (What do  
> you think?)

Well what I think? I totally agree with you!

> Thomas: All the best for you, excuse my poor English again.

Oh stop it! We foreigners make mistakes but I'm sure nobody cares about that in this discussion! What would happen if we were all forced to write in German! So remember your English is far better than our German! Anyway your email was very touchy.

Ivan wrote:

> I noted that Glasisch in his introductory commentary was quite emphatic that  
> Mathes-Pat was not his father? Do we know who was?

No we don't know who is father is.

> BUT if you go to the pictures of the gravestones at one can clearly see in Pictures  
> 1 & 5 Graveyard in Sargenroth on the Familie Simon gravestone that Paul's dates are  
> given as 1898-1981. That would mean he had died before the episode opened as it  
> is set in 1982. Clearly there is some confusion. I would welcome the evidence being  
> given as to when exactly he did die. Any comments with my comparison with  
> Nosferatu?

I remember in the beginning of the discussion I wrote about the fact that many dates were changed. I also had some correspondence with Joel about the subject. For instance at the gravestone you can see that Pauline died in 1984 but in Heimat I she was already dead before Maria (in 1975), on the gravestone Maria died in 1980 but in the film in 1982. And there are many more dates changed. What I think is that they needed to change them for the script of Heimat III because I really can't believe that Reitz makes such mistakes! And yes the shadow reminds me of Nosferatu, I have had the same thought about this scene.

Ivan:

> I noticed that in the life after death scene Maria greets her mother. We had never seen  
> her actually in any of the episodes, had we?

Oh yes we have! In the first episodes we can see her in many scenes. At the Baldenau for instance.

Ivan:

> I think there is a scene in the mine where Hermann, clicking his fingers, syncopates the



> words and then finally in the music he returns to and acknowledges his "Heimat" or  
> "Geheischnis". Have I got that right?

Yes you are absolutely right, the same words as in episode 1 where Helmut's ghost speaks to them in the kitchen of the Simon family.

Ivan:

> Lucie, now like an old witch remembers her Eduard and her old profession.

It's her coming out! Imagine that she had told the Simon's such stories when she had just arrived in the family.

Susan wrote:

> I was amazed to learn he [Glasisch] was not a professional actor!

I didn't know that either! And it is hard to believe that his man was an amateur actor, what a talent! In the book 'Heimat eine Chronik in Bildern' there's a photo with the Heimat crew. If you see how Kurt Wagner looks in real you get another shock! He looks so different.

Susan:

> can Maria be pleased by anything in her last years?

My opinion on Maria changes so much from the beginning of Heimat, the early years, to the end. First she's adorable, sweet, caring, but later on she becomes such a bore. Is it because she's so disappointed in life? Was she hurt too much? When she's dead and back with Otto she's good young Maria again.

Now my own thoughts; this last episode is really an end. The end of a life, the end of a film. And I very much like that. It's shocking that Maria is dead but at the same time it's the normal end of a life. We can't say she lived her life to the full but maybe in her own way she did. When I watch this part I always feel like I've lost someone myself, I felt the same when my grandparents died. This feeling of losing, many memories, being together with your family, is exactly like the way Reitz portrays it.

One of my favourite scenes in this part is the sample with the saying. 'Einmal im Jahr blüht die Monat Mai, nur einmal im Leben blüht die Liebe' (Thomas I hope my German is alright because I write this down from memory).

When Glasisch dies and enters heaven (just to keep it simple let's call it heaven) I always shiver. You hear a voice saying 'Von dem Dunkel in die Klarheit' (from darkness into the light) you see everybody back again which gives us, viewers, the chance to say goodbye to all the ones we know so well by now. And then Maria arrives, beautiful and sweet again and back she is with Otto. I can only wish that Reitz view is the right one. Imagine that you can see everyone back again, all the ones you've known and loved! But at the same time this seems impossible because where would it end? As everyone knows different people! You can see that already in this film. The french woman who only stayed overnight in Schabbach is there too in heaven. It's nice to see her back for a moment but what's her real connection to Maria?

I once heard that the script of Heimat was much longer but because they ran out of money they needed to cut out many parts. Could it be that the flash back scenes in this final part were actually meant for other episodes? From part 9 they really run through time and sometimes it feels to me that things are missing. Am I the only one?

Theresia

**Date: Sun, 11 Apr 2004 23:45:51 +0200**  
**From: Thomas Hönemann <Th.Hoenemann t-online.de>**

Dear Heimat-fiends,

Here some replies to your multiple contributions:

Ivan:

> I completely accept that Anton does not die. Obviously my surmise was totally  
> wrong. I cannot remember him in Part 3 of DZH but look forward to meeting  
> him again there.

I am quite sure that the only (main) Heimat-characters that appear in DZH are Marie-Goot and Pauline as guests of Hermanns and Schnüssschens wedding-party at the Fuchsbau. So Anton in my memory will not appear in the third part of DZH. I can't find his name in the cast of DZH, either.

Ivan:

> Contributors were quite certain I was wrong about Paul dying in the episode.  
> I am quite ready to accept that I was wrong again, BUT if you go to the  
> pictures of the gravestones at  
> <http://reinder.rustema.nl/heimat/pictures/graveyard> one can clearly see in  
> Pictures 1 & 5 Graveyard in Sargenroth on the Familie Simon gravestone that  
> Paul's dates are given as 1898-1981. That would mean he had died before the  
> episode opened as it is set in 1982. Clearly there is some confusion. I  
> would welcome the evidence being given as to when exactly he did die. Any  
> comments with my comparison with Nosferatu? Perhaps Paul is the living  
> dead!!

Well, there is a kind of mystery concerning this gravestones that were used in Heimat 3: some dates changed, especially Maria's year of death which certainly was 1982 in Heimat, but is now 1980, so even in this new version Maria died one year before Paul whose heimat-3-year of death is 1981.

Ivan:

> I noticed that in the life after death scene Maria greets her mother. We had  
> never seen her actually in any of the episodes, had we?

We certainly did, for example at the Baldenau-radio-scene she is included in the group, even in the films first scene she is cleaning up the Wiegands living-room with Maria or later when Paul is constructing the radio at the Wiegands and all the villages women come there. We meet her more often in the following episodes, e. g. at the Christmas-evening, the Ferntrauung and other family meetings at their house. But generally you are right: this woman does not play an important role at all - quite different from her husband. Relating on the Heimat-Gravestones Marias mother died in 1948.

Ivan:

> Thomas, as always, made so many interesting points. [I have  
> been looking at your web-site, Thomas, and doing my best to piece together  
> the German words. Quite superb!!]

Thank you very much. If I could find some time anywhen I promise to work on the English versions of some of the sites.

Ivan:

> Lastly Thomas, I thought Glasisch was cooking the potatoes for a poultice to  
> cure his fever.

You are right.

Susan:

- > My first reaction to the jets flying overhead was as if they
- > were in honor of Maria - or could be to indicate that now Maria's soul is
- > free. It reminds us of Ernst's fly-over at the wedding and shows us the
- > great progress made in a short time.

Thank you for pointing on this scene again. Fact is, that in that time the whole Hunsrück was used as a training-camp for American jets that were based on Hahn-Airbase (today well known as a civil airport with very cheap flight offers). So the sounds of the American tornados were quite usual in that area. Reitz picked this impression up and used it maybe indeed as a symbol of modern, fast running times. The Hahn Airbase is more concretely located near a small village Lautzenhausen. This village became a area of pleasure with lots of bars and prostitutes. Even the two prostitutes from the last episode had their place at Lautzenhausen.

It is quite strange to drive though that village today. The whole business broke down when the Americans left the base, but you can see some old signs which seem not to fit in this area at all...

Ray:

- > Did you ever notice that sounds in the background when Glasisch
- > reflects the past episodes using the old photographs?

Yes, I did notice it. In my opinion this noise sounds like a bar-scenery: people talking very diffusely. I am quite sure that Reitz adopted this noise from the coffee after Maria's funeral, when Glasisch is even looking through the old photo-album.

Theresia (who already answered some of the questioned I answered again above ... I did not recognize early enough, sorry)

- > One of my favourite scenes in this part is the
- > sample with the saying. 'Einmal im Jahr blüht die
- > Monat Mai, nur einmal im Leben blüht die Liebe'
- > (Thomas I hope my German is alright because I
- > write this down from memory).

Completely correct. This quotation is very good fitting for Maria. She had one real love in life: Otto, but not Paul.

Theresia:

- > When Glasisch dies and enters heaven (just to
- > keep it simple let's call it heaven) I always
- > shiver. You hear a voice saying 'Von dem Dunkel
- > in die Klarheit' (from darkness into the light)
- > you see everybody back again which gives us,
- > viewers, the chance to say goodbye to all the
- > ones we know so well by now. And then Maria
- > arrives, beautiful and sweet again and back she
- > is with Otto.

I really agree with your feeling towards this scene. Seeing all that people back again really touches me very much, like meeting again lost old friends. A really nice thought - "... im Himmel schwätze se Hunsrücker Platt!" (in heaven they are talking Hunsrück dialect) - lovely done!

Theresia:

> I once heard that the script of Heimat was much  
> longer but because they ran out of money they  
> needed to cut out many parts. Could it be that  
> the flash back scenes in this final part where  
> actually meant for other episodes? From part 9  
> they really run through time and sometimes it  
> feels to me that things are missing. Am I the  
> only one?

I am not really sure about this. In fact the script differs very much from the real film in its structure, but not in the contents itself. Originally the concept was to have a frame level in the actual time, focussing Maria's funeral, and all the past should have been presented in flashbacks (so the last part gives a good idea on how the script originally was). But before realising the script Reitz changed this concept, maybe because he saw that a chronological structure was easier to be followed concerning that voluminous material. But to say it again: I am quite sure that no historical essentials from the script had been left out, but only the originally planned frame (Rahmenhandlung).

Thats it for tonight. Have a nice second easter day.  
All the best to you, and on Theresias special demand I won't apologise for my poor English today ;-)

I am very proud to be able to participate in such a friendly and intelligent group. Hope we all will meet some day.

Thomas  
<http://heimat.hoenemann.de/>

P. S.: On my website I quoted from the Heimat-fanpage Newsletter from 31st of March, that there would be a DVD release of all three parts at the end of this year wich could be bought singlely or as a "Trilogie-collection". After having corresponded with Reinder about that I really doubt if this information can be correct. I guess it is not. Reinder will find out and inform all of us soon.

**From: "Maarten Landzaat" <gijs xs4all.nl>**  
**Date: Mon, 12 Apr 2004 14:30:59 +0200**

Everybody,

Thanks for all your insightful comments!

With some of you, I shared the feeling of disappointment, not with the Edgar Reitz' effort, but with the fact that so many people died, leaving me with only memories from previous episodes. The cold "kirmes", with its whores, beer, drunk "dancing", depressing music, only contributed to this feeling. The prostitutes do indeed create a sense of distance to the story, which clearly has its function in this episode. I agree with others they were quite irritating, so I'm happy they were not part of every episode!

Title

The title refers to many things again (or at least I like to think so):

- Maria's burial
- Maria's seventieth birthday party, where everything seems to be revolving around death, sickness and disappointment

- the simultaneous sound of birds (=good) and flies (=bad)
- the kirmes with the living outside and the dead upstairs in the pub
- the insights that some people get after these deaths: (e.g. the scene with Paul and Hermann talking about Maria)
- the feast of the predators: people die, other people want their belongings (even Anton takes a mirror!)
- the fact that the 3 brothers came together. Anton takes the mirror and looks caught, Ernst and Hermann smile. They are not so different after all.
- The finale: the music links (maybe even reconciles?) death (Pat/Goot-quote, use of platt) with the living (the modern music, modern recording techniques)

#### Maria-Glasisch

Only now I realized that Maria and Glasisch play the most important pivotal roles in the series. They're both born in the same year (1900) and die in the same year. Maria's inside the story, Glasisch is always an outsider, an observer. Maria is clean and good, Glasisch is dirty and (regarded) unadapted to the customs. Maria's female, Glasisch is male. They both stay in Schabbach for their entire lives. Of all deaths, Maria's and Glasisch's deaths are given the most attention. I think they both represent the entire century up until 1982.

#### Coffin in the rain

Apart from being a historical fact, was this about Maria being left again? Just like all the other occasions (Paul, Otto, all her three sons).

#### Cemetery

I noticed the WWI-statue moved here.

#### Circularity

Lots of it, like Ivan already mentioned.

- the dancing in circles
- the merry-go-rounds (e.g. with the band playing "sentimental journey")
- bubbles (with and without smoke)
- Anton walking in circles
- Anton's story on "left-to-right" growth and the reversing of this process.

#### Animals

- the song about the pig being slaughtered and made to a nice sausage.
  - the man impersonating a dying donkey on the kirmes.
  - the forgotten rabbits
- Clearly these animals did not have a good time!

#### Shadows

The shadows to me are a mystery. There were at least three instances:

- the plaque on the Simon house
- Paul during the kirmes
- during Glasisch's death

Can anybody distill any meaning from this?? Maybe the shadows just mean "death"?

#### Up/down

The feast of the dead was upstairs, whereas the musical performance was down in the mine.

#### Blind grandfather

Grandfather wasn't there "because" he was blind. They also looked down (literally) on the living. So maybe that's the only supposed role of the dead: to look on/watch over the living.

Sorry if these are only shattered observations. Maybe I will muster enough confidence

to answer Ivan's request to write something on the entire Heimat chronicle, but as usual, I let others go first!

Maarten

**Date: Mon, 12 Apr 2004 22:19:55 +0200**  
**From: "Gert Jan Jansen" <gjjansengouda hetnet.nl>**

Some reactions lead to new reactions:

1. Ivan wrote:

> Gert was it, said that it was Marlies Simon. Have I got it wrong?

No, you are absolutely right. In the cave Hermann didn't kiss Anton's eldest daughter Marlies, but his youngest daughter Gisela.

2. Susan wrote:

> I rewound and played it twice And still I apparently  
> missed the Glasisch "1900-1982" comment from Gert Jan.

I played it also again to be sure there are no problems with my eyes. Is it possible that we have different copies/ versions? I heard and saw it again: Glasisch gives (at the start of part 11) an explanation to the familytree. Above his own name you see the years 1900 (born ) and 1982 (death). Perhaps the family tree is to see on the website of Thomas Hoenemann, or Stefan Gies.

(Besides: the name and photo of Maria you can find two times in the family tree; one time as part of the Wiegand-tree; one time in the Simon-tree. In the first case there is only one year: 1900; in the second also Maria can read to be dead at that moment : 1900- 1982)

I must confess it is rather strange to reconstruct in detail the history of a family that did never exist, but it's difficult to stop. The dates, the places, the seasons, we expect everything to be correct and clear.

I have a little problem with the first scene of part 11; the funeral day. We see the entrance of Lotti, Sepp Vilsmeier and their two Vietnamese children. They are welcomed by a woman that belongs to the family.

Vilsmeier says: << My name is Josef Vilsmeier>>;

The woman answers: << It's good we make acquaintance>>

Vilsmeier: << But it's a sad occasion>>

My problem is: Sepp was already a guest at the 70th anniversary of Maria, as we see later in the flashback.

Another question of this species is the return of Hermann at the end of Die Zweite Heimat. It's 1970 and before entering Schabbach he meets Glasisch, who says: I presume you're coming back for your mother's 70th anniversary?.

But: looking back the flashback: Hermann wasn't there in 1970!

3. Ivan wrote:

- > I noticed that in the life after death scene Maria greets her mother.
- > We had never seen her actually in any of the episodes, had we?

We have seen Maria's mother for several little moments in part 1 (Fernweh). It's the first scene of Paul's coming home in 1919. Maria is cleaning up the windows inside the mayorhouse of her father and sees Paul walking down the street. Her mother is in the same room, sees Paul too and curious joins the window. Maria says: <<Wasn't that Paul Simon?.>> and her mother answers <<No it is Garfunkel >> (Sorry this is a joke) Later in part 1 Paul is preparing his first radio in the kitchen of the Wiegand family. I think the family sings a German folksong and Martha Wiegand, the mother of Maria tries to impress Paul by showing him the roll of linen Maria spinned "for eternity".

When it is 1923 and Wiegand shows his first car in Schabbach misses Martha Wiegand is proudly sitting in the car.

You see Martha Wiegand another time in the famous scene at the Baldenau-ruine. She gets out of the car and goes with a basket and bread to the family sitting in the grass. In that scene she is saying some words to her son Wilfried, to Marie-Goot and to her husband

4. Ivan wrote:

- > In the graveyard scene, where Hermann converses with the
- > attendant, they talk about dialect words for cherries and whortleberries
- > which Hermann remembers. I think there is a scene in the mine where Hermann,
- > clicking his fingers, syncopates the words.

Yes indeed, the words come back in the symphonic poem, but did you realize that the words of the attendant were a copy of the words said by 'the dead soldier /the angel of death ' (terms of Ivan in his introduction to part 1), a ghost in the Simon-kitchen, only seen by Paul. The ghost is Helmut Legrand, the best friend of Paul, who did not return - like Paul and Glasisch- from the battlefields of WW1; the man that was seriously in love with the mysterious Apollonia. Helmut speaks a "welcome home" to Paul by saying: <<Oben, unne, vonne, hinne, due, drunne, drausse.....in heaven we speak the dialect of the Hunsrück>>.

Isn't it remarkable that Reitz used the same words to feel at home for Paul (at the start of Heimat 1 in 1919) and for Hermann (at the end in 1982). At the beginning Paul is his favourite protagonist, but when Paul is americanised he changes to Hermann.

5.

The funeral-scene ends with the two jetfighters flying above the Hunsrück. The music you hear (an organ) has -in my opinion- quite a similarity with the organmusic, that is played by Hermann in Simmern, when he decides to quit and never come back to the Hunsrück. If it's right, what does it mean?

6.

To end something else. In the Rhein Zeitung I've read the new dates of the Heimat tours of the Tourist Board in Simmern: Saturday 8th May, 26th June and 25th of

September. The bustour starts at 9 in Simmern (Castle) or at 9.15 in Kirchberg (Market Place). The tour goes to the places well known from Heimat 1, but also to the G nderode-house in Oberwesel (Heimat3). It's guided by someone who participated in Heimat 1, f.e. Eva Maria Schneider (Marie Goot).

Reservation and info Tourist Information Simmern, telephon 0049 6761 837106, fax 0049 6761 837120; e-mail tourist-info@gvsim.de

Perhaps we meet.

Gert Jan Jansen.

**Date: Wed, 14 Apr 2004 09:01:46 +0200**  
**From: Jack.Woollven telekurs.com**

Hello everyone

Ivan mentioned the viewing figures: "I cannot find the numbers of the original German TV audience..."

There is some information on this in Michael Kaiser's dissertation on the Heimat series (pages 354 - 355). (Document is in German, can be found under the link:)  
[http://elib.ub.uni-osnabrueck.de/publications/diss/html/E-Diss162\\_HTML.html](http://elib.ub.uni-osnabrueck.de/publications/diss/html/E-Diss162_HTML.html)

He says that Heimat won an average viewing audience of 26%, i.e. 9 million viewers, and this figure was fairly consistent during the showing of the series in 1984. Just for interest, the figures he gives for DZH are an average audience of 6,3%, i.e. 1,72 million viewers, for the first showing in 1993. Unlike Heimat, the percentage dropped during the series, starting at 13,5% and finishing at 5,1%.

Best wishes  
Jack Woollven

**Date: Wed, 14 Apr 2004 17:07:50 +0200**  
**From: "Theresia en Martijn" <theresia\_martijn\_onetelnet.nl>**

Dear all,

First of all I would like to thank my mother (Banty) who recorded all the Heimat episodes in 1987 (I was only 16 then) when they were broadcasted on Dutch tv. We always kept the videos (as Reinder knows) and I watched it many many times. Sometimes I watched the entire film sometimes only a single part. I cherish many good memories whilst watching Heimat. Starting back in the mid 80s when I saw the first scenes on German tv together with my parents. Sometimes when I had a flu and lied on the sofa I watched it. Sometimes I used Heimat as a try out when I had a new boy-friend. If he didn't like Heimat I knew gaps in our taste could be too big to survive the relationship. So no suprise that my husband likes Heimat too (although I think he prefers DZH as I'm more the Heimat type). When we lived in England and his mother visited us we talked about Heimat and she wanted to watch it too. I remember that it was cold and that we were sitting in front of the fire and that we created our own Heimat in that old English house. I've written before that Heimat has been very good for my German. I did my exams in German and Heimat really helped! (There're German words in the film which I like, for instance Eduard who wasn't 'transportf hig'.) So after 17 years of Heimat (more than half my life!) Heimat is not only a film to me but it means so much more. I never saw



Heimat in the cinema and that's still one of my wishes.

What Reitz has given us is a film in which real people act, normal day life, like our lives with our own emotions and that's why it moves us. These people are like us, they've their good and bad sides, they're beautiful and ugly, rich and poor and some are more intelligent than others. We can imagine that these people are family or friends to us. We think we know them very well because we get the impression that we know them already their whole life. After watching the entire film it feels like I have lived an entire life. The film also proves to me how short life is and how time flies.

One of the reasons why Heimat means so much to me is because you see a whole century in front of your eyes. We were all born in that century but when Heimat starts in 1919 the world was completely different. Our grandparents and for some of us our parents were living at that time. And we can see how they lived, in what kind of world. I often think of my grandparents when I watch Heimat and their youth comes closer to me. It's unbelievable how their lives have changed within 50 years of time. And still the world changes quickly, ten years ago this discussion would have been impossible because something like internet didn't exist the way it does now. Ten years ago we wouldn't have got the chance to know each other, the world gets smaller and smaller.

I like the time until the war the most, also in Heimat. There's a kind of melancholy in the air with intrigues me. It's also very nostalgic and I think that's what I like most. After episode 8 the world in Heimat gets too familiar to me, I know that world myself and the nostalgic feeling becomes less.

Heimat also has a very important society element. I was born a long time after the second world war but both my parents were born during the war. This war is still so important in Holland, much more than WWI in which we didn't take part. To Dutch people all the Germans were the bad guys (and girls) and just ask the Dutch man in the street what he thinks of Germany and the Germans... you won't hear many positive things. So the general impression of Germany and its population is still a very negative one in my country. What Heimat shows us is that the Germans suffered as much as 'we' did, like 'us' they had nothing to eat, their soldiers died just the way 'ours' did. On both sides the effects were exactly the same, the same horror was also going on in Germany and we always seem to forget that. Heimat shows that Germany had people like Katherina and that this country didn't exist only out of Wilfrieds. I think that's an important lesson we can learn from the film.

My favourite characters are (of course) Katherina her wisdom and kindness makes her a true heroine, Glasisch because he's wise in his own way. And Lucie for being such a whore, such a strong woman and because she can be so irritating.

It's hard to choose a favourite scene because there're so many. One scene I like very much is in part 8, when Lucie is busy re-arranging the poem Horst should perform to Paul, she's thinking aloud and at the same time she smokes a ciggie (she didn't smoke before, remember that Maria told the shopkeeper that she didn't, when they were talking about the 'Rauchzimmer' in Lucie's villa?) and strikes her hands through Horst's hair. There're no words for that kind of intimacy.

Scenes I didn't like or like less are easier to remember. I don't like the long cinema scenes (I've to confess I always forward them), I don't like the start of episode 7 and although the last part of Heimat is one of my favourite episodes there're parts I like less but I'm not the only one I've discovered through all your discussion.

It's unbelievable that after more than 20 years this production is still not out of date. Of course the scenes in 1982 are oldfashioned now (look at the clothes!) but because it plays in 1982 it looks the way it should. What I mean is that it's amazing that through the whole film, so when it plays in the 20s, 30s, 40s and so on, you don't see a 80's sphere

at all. The stylists did a very good job with the props, clothes, make up and hair. When you look at other series or films you'll know that it could be totally different. A good example (Ivan will know) is the Forsyte Saga made in the sixties, look at the thick eyeliner on the eyelids and the beehive hairdos. Because you don't see such anachronisms in Heimat it's a very good historical film. And I think it's also the reason why it feels so much like real life to us. Let's see if I'll think the same in another twenty years.

Well it has been great fun to do this. I didn't have the time and chance to watch every single part during the discussion but I know the whole film by heart so I always knew where you were talking about. I would like to thank you all, Ivan for his superb job, Reinder for making this all possible, Thomas and Joel for all the behind the scene facts and facts about Germany, Susan who was always there, the only other woman who takes part. And all the others who I don't mention here.

As you will have understood DZH is not really my thing, I think it's good but it doesn't touch me the way Heimat does. And the sixties are just not my era. I never watched it as often as Heimat so I don't know it as well. Now don't worry, this is no goodbye, I'll read all your emails and I will take part in the discussion again but I don't think I'll have as much to say as with this masterpiece. WHICH IS THE BEST THING I'VE EVER SEEN!

Theresia

**Date: Wed, 14 Apr 2004 10:34:56 -0500**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Theresia,

Yes, this gravestone is very confusing - obviously a big mistake! Apparently whoever carved the stone was only thinking of Wilfried!

> The gravestone I've attached is really confusing! As we know Maria was  
> born in 1900. According to this gravestone her father was born in 1890 and  
> her mother in 1898 so only two years before her daughter was born. How did  
> they manage?  
>  
> Theresia

Gert Jan,

Regarding Glasisch's death, I probably missed it. After, all I appeared to be brain dead when I wrote that I hoped Glasisch did not die. What was I thinking? I had not finished watching the last part when I wrote my answer. Your other comments:

> My problem is: Sepp was already a guest at the 70th anniversary of Maria,  
> as we see later in the flashback.

Yes, I agree with you - Sepp was indeed at Maria's party and I had the same reaction.

> Another question of this species is the return of Hermann at the end of  
> Die Zweite Heimat. It's 1970 and before entering Schabbach he meets Glasisch,  
> who says: I presume you're coming back for your mother's 70th anniversary?.  
>  
> But: looking back the flashback: Hermann wasn't there in 1970!

Yes, this is also strange. But I suppose we are not supposed to consider the

overlapping events from DZH. After all, there is no mention of Hermann's wife Schnüsschen or his daughter in the later episodes of Heimat. It does bother me that Hermann comments to "Daddy" Paul that he is sad his girlfriends have both left him. No mention of his ex-wife or more importantly his daughter. Of course, I supposed that at that time, Reitz had not yet created Hermann's future family.

I also agree with your statement that Reitz changes his allegiance from Paul to Hermann. Paul has not only left his Heimat, he has completely metamorphosed into a foreigner! Reitz portrays Paul as very unlikable after he returns, with the exception that we do feel some sympathy for him when he finally admits that his Heimat is not the same without Maria. Although Hermann leaves, deep down he is still attached to Schabbach.

Susan

**Date: Wed, 14 Apr 2004 11:49:40 -0500**  
**From: "Susan Biedron" <susan jsbiedron.com>**

Theresia, I really enjoyed reading your summary of Heimat. I feel the same way - although DZH is a masterpiece, Heimat is definitely my favorite for some of the same reasons. It has been wonderful these past months to discuss Heimat. Previous discussion in this group has been primarily on DZH.

Heimat shows a time of great historical change and progress. I am a long-time fan of history, especially of Germany and northern Europe. Both of my grandfathers and the parents of both grandmothers were born in Germany and since I have become rather obsessed (just ask my family) with my ancestors, I have enjoyed seeing history from the German perspective.

At the beginning of Heimat, Schabbach is a simple country village. The inhabitants are living their lives pretty much the same way their ancestors did for the past century (1800-1900). It is also a story, as several members in the list have pointed out, of leaving home and coming back again. Some of the characters are effected by leaving more than others.

The first change is brought about by the First World War. Young men like Paul go off to war and then return home changed - whether by battlefield experiences or seeing faraway places. After returning, Paul is obviously not completely "at home." He seeks to learn new things in the village - building radios - but it is not enough. He finally decides to follow local conventions and settles down with Maria. We can see he is never completely happy. Paul takes a rather drastic step and leaves by himself for America, abandoning his young family. Although the largest waves of German emigration peaked in the 19th century, Paul represents the many, many Germans who went to the "New World". Another son of the village, Glasisch, was also changed by the war. He stays and narrates the story. Glasisch is always there, the one villager who does not change much.

After this major leave-taking, others in the Simon family also leave and return. Some are changed more than others. Some, like Maria, always stay in their Heimat.

What fascinates me about Heimat is that it seems to realistically portray a time period that I have only read about in books or seen in in old German films. After the bad times of war, it is a story of hope. Some of the characters rebuild their lives and are successful (Anton). Others suffer and loose loved ones (Maria, Pauline, Lucie).

Hermann, the new protagonist who takes Paul's place, is another symbol of change. He is the child of a wartime love affair and becomes almost a free spirit. His mother Maria

spoils him, gives him the best, but he still leaves her like Paul. Yet Hermann seems to be much more attached to his Heimat than he realizes and eventually returns. Can we assume at the end that Hermann acknowledges his Schabbach roots and values? Does he think it wasn't so bad after all to grow up there?

I like most of the characters, so it is hard to choose. I would have to pick Katharina and Glasisch. Katharina, though a simple village woman, has strong values and always sticks to what she believes. You can see how she loved her family. Who would not want to have a grandmother like Kath? I think that Glasisch has a lot of courage. Life has dealt him some tough blows - he suffers from a skin disease from a gas attack (?) in WWI, so none of the girls want anything to do with him. Yet he works and goes on with his daily life - he actually is a survivor.

I have several favorite scenes. Two are actually snippets - first, the view of road leading to the village by which the characters leave and return - with the music playing - is always stirring. The scene where Otto Wohlleben looks through his telescope and sees Maria bringing lunch to her father working in the fields. The other is in "Die Liebe der Soldaten" - the Simon household at night in 1944, the lovers snatch some last time together, air raids and danger in the outside world, the Simons are sleeping in their beds, the family cat asleep on the stairs. A family just like anywhere in the world.

Which character do I like the least? It would be easy to say Wilfried, but I would choose Klärchen. I find her seduction of Hermann and Hermann's heartbreak very painful to watch. I am sure Reitz intended it that way. Even though she is a refugee without family, she should not have taken advantage of the Simons who took her in. If she truly loved Hermann, she would have left for his own good.

Paul does one good thing at the end by setting up a foundation to preserve his father's forge and the family house. Perhaps his motives are selfish but it does the job. I have visited the villages of 2 of my ancestors in Germany, and as an American I am always amazed in Germany (and other places in Europe) that some buildings stay the same for centuries - the village tavern, the church, the ancestor's house. Schabbach has old buildings and Anton's new factory. Some Heimat characters stay the same, some change. Just like true life.

Thank you everyone for the wonderful discussion,  
Susan

**Date: Wed, 14 Apr 2004 17:35:39 -0400**  
**From: wolfgang <wolf floitgraf.com>**

Hello all,

When I was thinking about a summary of Heimat, I found myself looking back through the book that accompanied the first series to find out how Edgar Reitz himself explained what he did and why. He wrote the introduction ("Sichtbares und Unsichtbares") and I was wondering if this has ever been translated or posted on one of the web sites that you know of. I can probably do it after I return from London (I hope to meet with Ivan next week).

I sincerely hope that the Heimat DVD will contain the pictures and the text from this book as it is done as a kind of family album with all the pictures (that Glasisch shows during the film) and a few fantastic double page color photos of the Hunsrück area throughout the seasons. The fact that Edgar Reitz Productions was looking for help in digitizing pictures makes me very hopeful.

Just one point that I think was mentioned before but Reitz confirms this in the

introduction: He himself left the "farmers" land of his ancestors, as he thought, for good and found his way back to make the movie.

He also writes (and I am translating this pretty liberally): "The film shows the invisible by taking a manic approach to show the visible, by screaming for the visible and triggering pilgrimages to the locations of the visible motifs. But there are no visible stories, they only exist at the seams between the pictures, not only in the movies but in life itself. ... Because our themes are often invisible and inaudible stories that can't be grasped with our senses, we must be committed to use the strongest of pictures. Only the most impressive and multi-layered picture creations have the power to capture our senses so that they can be controlled in their quest to devour everything and we become liberated to ask our memory and reassemble the stories that we are told in a new way."

... and he quotes from "Sans Soleil" by Chris Marker: "I will be asking myself all my life how remembering really works, it is not the opposite of forgetting but rather the other way around. You don't remember, you rewrite your memory".

Wolfgang

**Date: Wed, 14 Apr 2004 23:59:52 +0100**  
**From: "Ivan Mansley" <ivanman dsl.pipex.com>**

HEIMAT: THE FILM

Gentlemen, we have been put to shame! The ladies have beaten us to it! If I had known how knowledgeable Theresia and Susan were on the subject of "Heimat" before I started writing my introductions, I think I would have been too frightened ever to begin. Thank you both for your fascinating overviews. I also have another problem at this stage of proceedings. My memory is not what it once was and I find it difficult to summon-up and retain an overall view of the complete film. It is not any fault of Edgar Reitz's film but a problem I bring to the contemplation of it.

I have no doubt in my mind that "Heimat" is a masterpiece. It creates a rich, concentrated world; it has the texture of a great novel; it creates a lived-in world, familiar to say readers of Charles Dickens or George Eliot or Tolstoy. In a way we do not want the film to end. We know the characters so well that we feel cheated when they are gone. Why couldn't we say good-bye to them? Some contributors to our discussion wrote to me and expressed amazement that someone who was not German and could not speak German could have such insights into the film. Whether I had any insights is not for me to say, but what I was responding to, was the universality of Reitz's characters. We have all lost loved ones, responded to political events outside our control, fallen in love, rebelled against restrictive conventions, felt melancholic and nostalgic and so on and so on. Reitz makes us share in the lives of his characters.

The strength of the film lies, however, not just in its universality but also in its honesty and integrity. This is a film made by a serious person with serious intent. We do not get, as we do now in the UK, in nearly all dramas on TV, great dollops of gratuitous sex and violence, with the aim of increased audience numbers. There is no attempt here to keep the audience in a state of perpetual hysteria. The film is quite content to move leisurely, according to the rhythms of everyday life, when that is what is demanded. We see the traditions of the people and of the Hunsrück, this rural corner of Germany, exposed to all the cross-currents of history.

Like Theresia I liked the episodes before the outbreak of WW2, where the pace of change was slower and the strength of rural communities was stronger, than in more recent times, even though dissatisfied rebels such as Paul were thrown up. I have tried

closing my eyes and seeing what images from the film rise up into my brain even then. I can see the bilberry picking, Ernst throwing the red carnations from his aircraft as he overflies Schabbach, Otto's giant wrench as he turns the bomb's fuse, Hermann and his friends swooping down to the Rhine on their bikes with a flag flying [?], Katharina taking the boiled Easter eggs from the pan, and many more. My favourite scenes include, like Susan's, the scene in the Simon household in 1944 where they are all asleep, and also the scene between Otto and Maria where her face is lit by the stove and the Allied bombers constantly drone in the background. I remember vividly the scene of Otto's death, the seduction of Hermann, the arrival of Paul's letter announcing his impending arrival, Otto with his arm in plaster being fed by Maria, etcetera, etcetera. What a cornucopia of riches!!

Do I have any favourite characters? I loved Eduard's endearing quirkiness, Hans' mischievous twinkle, the anonymity of Herr Pollack and...

My wife is calling me to come to bed now, so good-bye for now.

Ivan Mansley.

**Date: Thu, 15 Apr 2004 22:01:08 +0200**  
**From: "Theresia en Martijn" <theresia\_martijn\_onetelnet.nl>**

My mother has asked me to translate the following for you. Talking English is no problem for her but writing is much harder, hence this translation from Dutch.

Theresia

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Dear all,

I would like to let you know how much I've enjoyed the discussion and all the extra information on Heimat. I agree with many things.

Looking back to the past is a beautiful thing, especially when you look back on your youth. When you remember things you thought you had forgotten and that came back, in a pleasant way, because of Heimat.

The most impressive scene for me is still the moment when Ernst throws the red carnations over Schabbach out of his plane. [It's the first scene my mother ever saw from Heimat. She watched it on her own, late at night on tv. When she saw this scene she thought this was something really special and from then we watched the whole series.] Another scene which is special to me is when Katherina visits her family by train, one can see from the trainwagon the Bayer logo which shines bright. I remember that about 40 years ago you could see the letters Bayer (horizontal and vertical in a round circle) from a far distance when driving on the German Autobahn.

When I read the discussion the most special thing to me, as a mother, is to see that our daughter became such a conscious young woman, partly because of Heimat. And that she remembers the past and her grandparents with so much love and such respect.

It was such a pleasure to read all your messages and to reread them. Reinder, thanks for sending all these messages through to me.

Until DZH. Best wishes for you all.

Banty