

'Heimat' of memory, imagination and choice:

An appreciation of Edgar Reitz' Heimat films

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Acknowledgements and explanation

This is a thoroughly revised version of a text published on the same websites in 2009.

I am very grateful to webmasters Reinder Rustema (<http://www.heimat123.net/>) and Thomas Hönemann (<http://www.heimat123.de/>) for their dedicated support and provision of information to English-speaking followers of Edgar Reitz' Heimat films, and for opening their websites to our discussions and contributions. I am also greatly indebted to the participants in the English online discussions of the films, hosted by Reinder Rustema and led by Ivan Mansley, discussions from which I learned so much.

It will be obvious that I have no professional background in commenting on literature, music or film. I know little about the art of film, and have come late to enjoying its products. I am just a spectator. My observations have no other value than that. I would prefer others not to read much of my commentary unless they have already seen the films and formed their own understandings.

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Introduction

This text began as an extended online essay¹, continuing a conversation with other members of a general audience already familiar with the *Heimat Trilogy*. It records only my own personal reflections. It is a kind of guided commentary to the *Trilogy* from one individual lay spectator's point of view, but in discussion it contains many "spoilers" and is addressed preferably to those who are watching or have already watched the films. It is not meant to be a source of comprehensive factual information on the *Heimat Trilogy* and its Director, as such information is already available from the websites, the booklets accompanying the DVDs, and many other other publications of which a selection are referenced in my Bibliography. However in online form people might come across it who know little about the films, so here is a brief factual introduction for them. All the same, I would strongly encourage any readers to watch at least some of the films themselves and form their own impressions first, before engaging further with the commentary. I would hate my reflections to interfere with the process whereby, as Edgar Reitz often says, following Truffaut, "a film puts itself together in the head of the viewer. The film exists in as many individual variants as there are viewers..."²

Edgar Reitz' *Heimat Trilogy* is a cinematic masterwork of huge proportions, which has grown over the years since 1980, when production began, into a body of 30 feature-length parts, amounting to around 54 hours of film. The parts form three main cycles, *Heimat – eine Deutsche Chronik* (1984), *Die Zweite Heimat – Chronik einer Jugend* (1992), and *Heimat 3 – Chronik einer Zeitenwende* (2004). In the latest German DVD edition³ these are bookended by two further feature-length films, a "Prologue", *Geschichten aus den Hunsrückdörfern* (1981) and "Epilogue", *Heimat-Fragmente: die Frauen* (2006), of which only the latter is yet released with English subtitles. For simplicity in this book I have adopted the journalistic convention of calling the three cycles *Heimat 1*, *Heimat 2* and *Heimat 3*, though in the case of the first two these are not the correct titles.

The films of the *Trilogy* were created by film crews and casts made up of many gifted individuals, some now widely renowned, some otherwise little known, under the inspired leadership of the Director and *auteur* film-maker Edgar Reitz. Reitz, son of a clockmaker and

¹ Originally published on the websites <http://www.heimat123.net/> and <http://www.heimat123.de/>

² DIE ZEIT 16.12.2004 Nr.52 "Ich bewundere Treue, die auf nichts spekuliert"

³ *Die Heimat Trilogie/Gesamtedition* Kinowelt DVD edition 2010

dedicated craftsman, was born and brought up in the Hunsrück, a very rural region of Germany to the west of the Rhine. It was traditionally a relatively isolated area with its own dialect, culture and industries, though traversed and occupied by armies through the centuries, not least in the twentieth. As a student in the 1950s Reitz left the region to study in Munich and became immersed in the world of *avant-garde* arts – music, literature, theatre, and film, eventually helping to found and teach in an Institute of Film Design in Ulm. He was a founder member of the group of New German *auteur* Film-makers who signed the “Oberhausener Manifesto” in 1962, declaring the death of traditional commercial film making and the rise of a new language of film. He made a number of experimental short films, and in the later 1960s and 1970s set up his own film production company to make half a dozen remarkable feature films⁴. Only the first of these received international recognition, and the rest, with one further partial exception, were less well received at the time, even though in retrospect they arguably include several masterpieces⁵. The dramatic flop of the last one in 1978 left Reitz with his finances, his career and his personal life in ruins.

In many interviews and publications he tells how that winter, snowed in on a North Friesian island, he began to take stock of his life from his origins to the present moment, and found himself researching and writing down stories and memories of his Hunsrücker family from the time of his grandparents onwards. The resulting manuscript was the origin of the first *Heimat* cycle. With the encouragement of an influential friend and television editor he began to develop it into a script, in close collaboration with another experienced screenplay writer, Peter Steinbach. The two co-authors spent a year living in the Hunsrück researching and preparing their material. Re-familiarising himself with the Hunsrück in that way eventually led Reitz to make the poetic documentary *Geschichten aus den Hunsrückdörfern*. By the time this appeared in 1981, production of *Heimat 1* was already well under way.

The title ‘*Heimat*’ was adopted almost by accident. The notoriously untranslatable word imbues ideas of ‘home’ and ‘homeland’ with a sense of belonging in a place and close community which was once familiar and safe, but is now lost, only to be remembered and longed for, or projected as an unattainable utopia. In Germany the word had accrued ambivalent political and cultural meanings for both the left and the right. In recent years, in particular, it had been dangerously contaminated by association with Nazi “Blood and Soil” ideology, and later degraded in a different way by its symbolic use in facile, feel-good commercial films of the post-war years⁶. It was a risky choice for a title, but the film cycle itself has helped to rehabilitate the word.

In Germany, “*Heimat* was the film sensation of the year 1984”⁷. It was shown both in the cinema and as a television series, not only in Germany but, over the next few years, in many

⁴ Edgar Reitz – *Das Frühwerk*. Kinowelt/Arthaus DVD edition 2009

⁵ Angela Skrimshire: “Impressions of Edgar Reitz’ *Das Frühwerk*“ (2009)

⁶ Gundolf Hartlieb: *In diesem Ozean von Erinnerung. Edgar Reitz’ Filmroman Heimat - ein Fernseheseignis und seine Kontexte* (2006)

Rachel Palfreyman: *Edgar Reitz’s Heimat: Histories, Traditions, Fictions* (2000)

⁷ Reinhold Rauh: *Edgar Reitz: Film als Heimat* (1993), p.200

other countries too, including the UK. Its viewing figures were estimated in tens of millions, and in Germany its official TV audience rating stood at 26%⁸. It was lauded by the majority of critics, and much loved by the public, often for individual, very personal reasons⁹. As a social and political phenomenon it has since been extensively debated, especially in the context of the historiography of the Nazi period, and the history of German culture and film. The debate is helpfully reviewed in scholarly publications in both German and English, including the few quoted above¹⁰. *Heimat 1* was considered by many to be of historic importance in the way that, through its authentic, non-ideological depictions of “ordinary” lives through the Nazi period, it seemed to enable German people to revisit their own denied memories of that period, with greater openness and honesty than was acceptable before¹¹. Later, though, it attracted an understandable hostility from writers who felt that with such a focus it entirely failed to reflect the horrors of the Holocaust. Yet, as Rachel Palfreyman says: “if we are to learn anything from genocide then it is also important to consider perpetrators as well as victims. The attempt to understand why ordinary people allowed these crimes to take place is a ... task” as important as “the vital work of documenting the history of the Holocaust”¹².

It is a sensitive subject, but for my part I respect the similar arguments movingly put forward by Israel Shahak in an article where he writes: “One cannot repeat too often: The extermination of the Jews by the Nazis, with all its horrors and all the typical human behavior involved in those horrors, was not unique, and one can only begin to understand it when one sees that it was not unique ...”¹³ Shahak was a controversial figure, either misappropriated or reviled by ideologues on all sides, but he, as himself a survivor of the Holocaust, had every right to say this. Though to some extent misrepresenting the authors he criticised, the liberal understanding evinced in this citation from his article is very close in spirit to that which informs the *Heimat Trilogy*. So too are the moving words of Bernhard Schlink, author of *The Reader*, recorded in a BBC interview¹⁴, that it is “of crucial importance” that we do not oversimplify by believing “that those who committed monstrous crimes were just monsters. If they are monsters they are so far away from us they are not a threatening experience for us. But the experience that my generation made again and again was that someone whom we knew, liked, admired, even loved, who was kind and generous and helpful, as we later found out had been involved in something awful, had committed something awful. And this is the tension that we can find in people ... the tension that we have to acknowledge”. In particular this is the painful experience of the troubled student generation in *Heimat 2*.

⁸ Hartlieb, op.cit., p. 97

⁹ Even now, meeting other “fans” of the films, or participating with them in an online discussion, one is struck by the fascinating diversity of perceptions and understandings among them.

¹⁰ Rauh, Palfreyman, Hartlieb, opera cit.

¹¹ Palfreyman, op. cit., p.95-96, Rauh, op.cit. p. 182-83, Hartlieb op. cit. p.99

¹² Palfreyman, op. cit., p.103.

¹³ Israel Shahak: “The Life of Death: an Exchange”, *New York Review of Books*, vol.34, no.1 (1987). A response to an article by Timothy Garton Ash in the same Journal (vol.32, no.20, 1985) which had compared Reitz’ *Heimat* unfavourably with Claude Lanzmann’s film *Shoah*.

¹⁴ BBC interview with Bernhard Schlink on the World Book Club programme in January 2011:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0ocp7t1>

It is hard to summarise the subject matter of the *Trilogy* without making it sound like a soap opera. Indeed it has sometimes been mistaken for one. Yet it is distinguished from that genre by the authenticity of most of its characters, the way they and their stories develop without being manipulated to further an entertaining plot or to illustrate a stereotype, the subtlety and depth of screenplays and performances, and the artistry of the cinematography. Unlike a soap, it has achieved world-wide recognition as a masterpiece of international cinema. With this caveat, I will attempt a bare outline of the main story and a few of the principal characters. Readers may find it helpful to refer to the “family tree” of the Simons, reproduced in many publications, for example the booklets accompanying the DVD sets, and on several websites¹⁵. Once again I would urge people to see the films themselves, before reading too much about them.

The action of *Heimat 1* rarely moves far from the fictional Hunsrück village of ‘Schabbach’. It follows the family of the village blacksmith Matthias Simon, and Katharina his wife, from 1919 when their younger son Paul returns from the War, through to 1982 when Paul’s estranged wife, Maria, dies. Each film of the cycle is introduced by Glasisch, a marginalised war veteran who has remained a sharp but not infallible observer, leafing through a pile of ancient family photographs as he remembers the story. Many of the richly portrayed inhabitants of the village stay settled there, but some still dream of escape, and others, like Paul, eventually emigrate. In 1928, Paul’s sudden unexplained departure leaves Maria deserted with their two young sons, Anton and Ernst. Meanwhile his naïve elder brother Eduard, sent to Berlin for medical treatment, returns married to Lucie, the dauntless, manipulative madam of a brothel. Through the next decade Lucie hilariously propels herself and Eduard up the social scale of a Nazi-dominated world. The 1930s bring a degree of prosperity, but also portents of the price to be paid for it, as the region slides into fascism and war. Sinister developments impinge marginally on some lives, but still go largely unremarked, while people acquiesce in or energetically profit from the regime. A civil engineer, Otto, working on a new military high road, is billeted on the Simon family, and he and Maria have a moving but brief affair, curtailed by Paul’s abortive attempt to return. Through the war, Maria remains alone with Otto’s child, Hermann, and is bereaved by Otto’s death, while her older sons serve in the forces. Villagers suffer hardship, loss and social disintegration, but, though scornful of petty local authorities, most seek safety in denial or avoidance of crimes they half suspect. After the war Paul briefly returns, but the story is carried forward by all three of Maria’s sons, while the postwar economic ‘miracle’ transforms the Hunsrück, before abandoning its local industries to the mercies of multi-national corporations. Anton returns from captivity in Russia to found a company producing fine optical instruments, and becomes a respected pillar of the local community. Ernst, deprived of an exhilarating airforce career, is reduced to living in the Hunsrück as an enterprising but shady dealer. Hermann is marked for life by the premature destruction of his first love by a disapproving family. As the first member of his family to achieve higher education, he continues the tradition of those who leave the region for a new creative life elsewhere.

¹⁵ For instance: <http://www.heimat123.de/b/histb.jpg>

After the success of *Heimat 1*, Reitz had the support and financial resources to spend seven years on the writing and production of a second, even longer and equally powerful cycle, following a decade in the life of Hermann Simon after he angrily leaves the Hunsrück to become a student in Munich, vowing to devote his life to music and never to fall in love again. *Heimat 2* disappointed many “fans” of the first cycle by also failing to return to the Hunsrück, except in a few brief passages, but more than compensates by the depth and fascination of its portrayal of student life in Munich in the 1960s. This is the “second ‘Heimat’” of Hermann’s dreams, which sustains and deceives him in equal measure until he finally takes stock and looks beyond it. The thirteen films of the cycle are threaded together by the tortuous relationship of Hermann himself, and Clarissa, a sensitive, emotionally oppressed student of cello. Though deeply attracted to each other, both fear the intensity and danger of mutual commitment, and drift into unsatisfactory marriages with other people. The individual films, though, become almost self-contained, as they follow other members of an elite student group to which Hermann and Clarissa both belong. They include a number of intriguing characters, such as Juan, a multilingual musician and acrobat from Chile with an intuitive creativity that Hermann himself now seems to lack, or Helga the young poetess, infantilised and embittered by her petty bourgeois family, whose later career threatens to mirror that of Ulrike Meinhof. For several years the group has a base in a beautiful Jugendstil villa in Schwabing, the ‘Fuchsbau’. Its owner, Elisabeth Cerphal, middle-aged unmarried daughter of a wealthy publishing family with Nazi associations, “collects” talented young people around her. She too is accorded a film of her own, in which at the time of her father’s death she is confronted with her own part in the family’s guilty history, only once more to avoid facing up to it. The complexity and authenticity of a near dozen of these individual stories are beyond the reach of a simple summary.

Heimat 2 won a special prize in 1992 at the Venice Biennale, and was enthusiastically received by critics and reviewers and the educated audiences of the German cinemas and theatres where it was first shown. It went on to have a good reception in Britain and other European countries, and was wildly successful in Italy where cinemas were packed out and it won the prestigious Visconti prize in 1994. Unfortunately, unlike its predecessor, when shown on German public television it had to compete with the programs of a multiplicity of new commercial TV stations, and moreover it was not helped by being shown during the Easter holidays when audiences were small. The subject matter, too, had less popular appeal in Germany than the stories of ‘ordinary’ people in a rural village. As a television series it was far less well received in its own country than *Heimat 1* had been, and Reitz attracted severe criticism in the German media. The audience ratings were estimated to be ‘only’ 5% , a disaster in the eyes of a public TV company already suffering from rising commercial competition. As a result, it became very hard for Reitz to find funding and support for a further *Heimat* cycle¹⁶.

¹⁶ Ingo Fliess: “Interview mit Edgar Reitz zu *Heimat 3*“ (2004)
Thomas Koebner, Michelle Koch (Hg.): *Edgar Reitz Erzählt* (2008), pp.222-235

In 1994 he was already energetically gathering material for the next series, but met only negative reactions from the TV editors. Thoroughly discouraged, he stopped work as a film maker and took an academic teaching post. However, he did go on writing and preparing for another series, and in 1996 he began to collaborate with the well-known young East German writer Thomas Brussig as his co-author. All through the years from 1997 the authors were engaged in exhausting, dispiriting negotiations with editors and sponsors, “a constant battle with their backs to the wall”¹⁷, as the sponsors whittled down the number of episodes from an initial eleven to just six, until production finally began in 2002. Even then it proceeded under continuing supervision and constraint from the sponsors, who withheld funding for each episode until the previous one had been approved, and insisted on regulating the number and length of the episodes to fit the TV schedules of the day¹⁸. All this took its toll on the Director, and its nefarious influence is perceptible in the finished work.

Heimat 3 covers just over ten years between the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the Millennium. It takes up again the stories of the three Simon brothers, and witnesses life in Germany during those tumultuous years of hope and disillusion through their eyes, and the eyes of their family and friends. The cycle starts in Berlin on the night the Wall fell, when Hermann and Clarissa come together again by chance. In the strange ferment of the moment they resolve to escape from the stress of their lives as renowned musicians, and live together in a restored romantic ruin on the edge of the Hunsrück, above the Rhine, and within walking distance of Schabbach. For the rebuilding of the ruined “Günderode” house they employ East German tradesmen and craftsmen from Leipzig, including the brilliant tragi-comic figure of Gunnar. The cycle follows the interlinked rise and fall of fortunes among both East and West German characters, as they travel back and forth across the former East-West divide, as well as depicting a family of ‘Russian-German’ refugees who settle in the village. At the same time Hermann comes back into touch with his family in Schabbach, his brothers Anton and Ernst having now developed into two of Reitz’ most profoundly portrayed characters. He finds that shared memories and long-standing relationships, both acrimonious and supportive, among the Simons and older villagers form the nexus of a still living ‘Heimat’. But the romantic new ‘Heimat’ of his and Clarissa’s imaginations proves illusory, and the mood of exhilaration at the start of the cycle quickly degenerates for nearly all the characters, as relationships fail, businesses fall victim to globalised markets, and people succumb to grave illness, or, like Anton and Ernst, to death. Even the younger generation, Hermann’s daughter Lulu and Anton’s son Hartmut, the courageous Russian-German immigrant Galina, and a Bosnian boy Matko become caught up together in the toils of the collapsing Simon family businesses and the disarray and tragic accidents of their own lives. Yet at the last, Hermann and Clarissa appear to have reached some kind of precarious, intangible ground in their own relationship and their most immediate family. For them, and even also for Lulu, at a loss and weeping while her talented child plays music to her, the end still lies open.

¹⁷ Koebner & Koch, op.cit., p.234

¹⁸ Op.cit., pp.238-239

Heimat 3 was premiered in Venice in 2004 and shown in cinemas and on television around Europe in its full length, but for German television the six films were truncated into equal 90-minute episodes, losing two and a half hours of the existing material. This, together with other effects of the constraints under which the cycle had been produced, led to a number of critical reactions, though once more the films were better appreciated elsewhere in Europe, again especially in Italy. In Britain, BBC Four took the brave decision to broadcast the whole Trilogy in 2005¹⁹. It was clear however that the days were long over when film makers could hope for the support and freedom to create works of this length and originality for television.

Reitz still sought a way to continue the story of the younger generation in the person of Lulu. Lacking resources for a conventional sequel, he created the poetic montage that forms the "Epilogue", *Heimat-Fragmente: die Frauen*. For that, he used fascinating rediscovered outtakes (the "Fragments") from the earlier films, set in a digitally processed context which follows Lulu's growing maturity, as she relives and draws new life from the memories these images evoke. The film was premiered in Venice in 2006 and then shown in some theatres and cinemas in Germany, and released on DVD. However reaction was muted, even at first in Italy, though there have been some appreciative reviews. It is a visually beautiful film that grows on the viewer when watched repeatedly, and, in unsettling more conventional narrative or theoretical approaches to the *Trilogy*, leads us to new ways of seeing and valuing its images.

¹⁹ BBC Four Drama – Heimat (2005): <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfour/cinema/features/heimat.shtml>

How 'Heimat' is told – memory, image and sound

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

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

But at the same time there is structure – as land and sea, valley and hill, interact and define each other. And there is both direction and a dynamic variation in density of the information contained in the map – and also in intensity of vision as the focus changes. Ultimately the dynamic and density of the work come from the imagination of the author, his experience and thought. He gives us guides to this in his interviews and writings, but the evidence lives on the screen.

For me the image that contains the kernel of what the *Heimat Trilogy* is about and how it is structured comes in *Heimat 3* at Anton's funeral. It is that extraordinary unspoken counterpoint of continuing life and death, love and rage, when Lulu at the funeral bleakly carries her living child through the churchyard directly behind her cousin Hartmut (who caused the death of the child's father) bearing his own father's ashes to the grave. But each viewer will have his or her own defining image or images.

Such an image, at the micro level of the individual stories, is at the heart of Edgar Reitz' intuitive gift, the root of his authenticity. But conceptually he sets it in a wide historical

context, consciously interweaving and reflecting in each other the characters' individual lives and the socio-economic changes of eight decades. At that level the broad structure of the series is easy to follow.

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

'Heimat' in this sense is recognised and configured initially in memory, not in deliberation, often not even in words. It is built of images and sounds (which may include words), of smells and textures, of emotions that may not be fully conscious. From these, memory detects some kind of story in the lives and personalities of other people, but only as they have been perceived by the person who remembers. It is in this way too that the *Heimat* epic is told²⁰.

Living memory has many levels. The most distant are memories of stories being told, or of images and artefacts being shown, from times and places which the person who remembers could not have known. When told or shown to a small child they develop in imagination a vividness which cannot always be distinguished from memories of direct experience, and they can also be revisited in dream. At the same time they become coloured by a memory of the person who told them and the moment when they were told. So there is always this evanescent shifting of time and distance, of knowing and imagining, of telling and re-telling. These are the memories and stories from which the earliest parts of *Heimat 1* must have been made, and their status is confirmed by the role of Glasisch, introducing each part with seemingly ancient photographs of the characters, as he reviews the story so far.

As the century goes on, the stories arise from the direct youthful memories of a generation middle-aged when the films were made. Reitz has a favourite image for the act of remembering, saying that experiences "lie in our memory like a heap of fragments, and when we consciously remember, we take them and put them together again in our memory and make a second life with them"²¹. Sometimes too these fragments catch us unawares by reconstituting themselves, falling into a pattern that is shocking because we had forgotten it, or never looked at it in that way. Or we can dream of someone not seen for many years, and be painfully moved by a long forgotten turn of the head. Watching the first two *Heimat* cycles one recognises how processes like these must have underlain their creation.

²⁰ See Edgar Reitz' own writings, for example *Film und Zeit* Lectio doctoralis, Uni Perugia, 2006

²¹ VPRO Television Documentary 19.12.2004 *Over Heimat*.

Then there is the memory of quite recent adult experience that has been analysed and mulled over and consciously worked into a fictional story. *Heimat 3*, made after the end of a decade of dramatic events and very rapid changes of socio-economic circumstances, is in part a deliberate attempt to preserve memory of this kind, before it is lost. At the same time the story itself tells of the power of remembering and imagining, so that the moods and actions of some characters are driven by their own memories, in a web of imagination, partial recognition, and ill-fated attempts at re-creation of a much older past. And still, for these late twentieth century characters, within this retrospective longing lies the conviction that somehow by their own efforts they can or ought to be able to make a utopian future for themselves.

The remembered experiences, the stories and fragments of stories that they tell, make up one or another 'Heimat' of memory. In so far as the stories are still continuing and present, remembered past and actual present remain seamlessly interwoven in a 'Heimat' that is still concretely lived, that can be escaped from or even in a sense refound. So in the *Trilogy*, for a character like Anton, his remembered 'Heimat' is the refuge he flees to from the rigours of war, finding a place, a community and a way of life in the real world where he builds a solid career, and which he defends stubbornly against the forces of change. For many of the older characters in *Heimat 1*, their 'Heimat' in this sense is their whole world and the notion of leaving it is at most a vague, unrealistic fantasy.

But the experience of 'Heimat', whether lived in real life or only in memory, is instinct with a sense of longing, the 'Sehnsucht' of romanticism (and of most human life), for what is not immediately, if ever, obtainable. Those still living in their 'Heimat' can suffer 'Fernweh', longing for escape to another, distant world, while those who have already left, and even those who have stayed on through many changes, may feel 'Heimweh' for a lost, remembered life. The objectives of both longings exist only in the imagination, until a choice is made to pursue them. The chosen way of life, once entered, can prove illusory, as in *Heimat 3*, or, as in *Heimat 2*, can itself become a 'Heimat', with dwellings, experiences and stories, a nexus of relationships, in turn to be lost or escaped, remembered and longed for again. In this recurring pattern lies the dynamic of the *Heimat Trilogy*.

The successive experiences of 'Heimat' are recreated in the imagination of the author and realised in film through the lives and relationships of individual characters in precisely defined social contexts, observed with clarity, fascination and a kind of love, intuitively, and without judgment. Rarely is any one figure reducible to being just the bearer of some intellectual concept. "Bearers of ideas are fairytale figures", Reitz has written²². His characters' stories develop organically in ways entirely consistent with their personalities, and are very seldom manipulated to further a plot. They are recognisable, idiosyncratic human beings, who often move, hurt and irritate us, or (like the inimitable Lucie, in *Heimat 1*) surprise us into laughter, as do living people in real life. Yet entwined in their relationships lies all that is meant by 'Heimat'. It appears in many examples: the simplicity of Otto and Maria's last night together;

²² Edgar Reitz: *Drehort Heimat* (2004), p.25

the family's destruction of Hermännchen's love affair; the intricate dynamics of the Fuchsbau summer night's party; the final failed rapprochement of the two older Simon brothers; or the support Ernst and Hermann give each other after Anton's death.

In all this, so much of the story-telling lies beyond the script. The characters are for the most part played with great subtlety, often by little known or amateur actors, under the *auteur* film maker's personal direction. The power of the performances, the energy of movements, small gestures and glances, facial expressions, all substitute for words, projecting silent emotions and (most precious of all) silent humour. Sometimes the miracle occurs, by which a character is so richly developed by the author that an experienced actor recognises something at a deep level to which he can add a whole new dimension from within himself, so that the figure finally emerges with a life maybe beyond the imagination of either author or actor alone. In the *Trilogy*, perhaps, Maria, Lucie, Otto, Juan, Elisabeth Cerphal, Ernst and Gunnar are supreme examples, but there are countless others, including supporting characters like Otto's assistant, Pieritz, or the East German artist/craftsman Tobi. Naming examples is arbitrary, but the one of all Reitz' characters that first brought this home to me happened not to be in the *Trilogy* – he was the old crossing-gate keeper Mattiske (Herbert Weißbach) in Reitz' earlier film *Stunde Null* (1977).

The sets are mostly natural locations, which the Director explains²³ have enriched the film with their own original characteristics and challenges, and they ground the films identifiably in a particular rural province, or in named cities. Each cycle of the *Trilogy* has its own significant house²⁴, to be entered and left, lived in, constrained by, lost or escaped, whose story is intrinsic to the nature of the 'Heimat' of that cycle. Also, many of the props for the period reconstructions, researched and procured with loving care by the production designer Franz Bauer²⁵, are used and old, with their own histories that then in a way become attributes of the characters and their homes.

The ability of the camera to reveal and explore surfaces, textures, the structure and mobility of faces, is itself a kind of "remembering" – mimicking the way touch and smell and a transient image trigger recall. The cinematography is outstanding. Even though one knows that the scenes have been expertly staged for the camera, one remains convinced by a magical illusion: that these spaces have been created by the camera alone, carved out of light, and defined by the movements and glances of the figures as the lens follows them. And yet at the same time, in the scene of a party, for instance, it can feel as though the camera has been wandering by chance, and that the movement of the scene is continuing elsewhere, unobserved. This seems to happen in all the films where the camera was held either by Reitz himself (the "Prologue"), by the great cameraman Gernot Roll (*Heimat 1* and parts 1-5 of *Heimat 2*), or by Christian Reitz (parts 9-13 of *Heimat 2* and parts 5-6 of *Heimat 3*) who had worked very closely with both masters. But a change of cameraman and consequently of style,

²³ In: Robert Busch: *Bis zum Augenblick der Wahrheit* (1987) (documentary about *Heimat 2*)

²⁴ Koebner & Koch: *Edgar Reitz Erzählt* (2008), pp. 211-217

²⁵ See: Christa Tornow: *Ein Denkmal für den Hunsrück* (1982) (documentary about *Heimat 1*), Robert Busch, op. cit., and many interviews and writings by Edgar Reitz.

can destroy that “magical” illusion, though even then a new style can have its own fascination, especially when (as in part 8 of *Heimat 2*) a new set sometimes looks to have been chosen to suit it.

In films where this “magic” works, it is almost as though the images “imagine” the story within themselves, there are nuances of narrative and performance that live only within the delicate lighting of the images. In the other films, it seems that the images are just vehicles for a story whose subtleties are spelled out in dialogue and performance, and that occasional “striking” images have been consciously devised to convey a concept or symbol. In those cases the power of the film no longer resides primarily in the images themselves, however much it is enriched by them.

Sound provides other subtle instruments for the telling of ‘Heimat’. In the 1960s, Reitz had made use of contemporary music for the soundtracks of his experimental short films, in a deliberate attempt to deconstruct the naturalism of film and affirm it as a truly abstract art. Ironically, in the documentary ‘Prologue’ to the *Trilogy* it is the natural sounds of rural industries and rural voices that contribute in their turn to this film’s appeal as at times almost an abstract work of interacting sound and image, almost a piece of “music”. In *Heimat 1*, natural rural sounds are as potent as the images in stimulating memories and creating the place of the Schabbach ‘Heimat’, and as they change through generations of machinery and vehicles and music they also create its time. In *Heimat 2*, the “secret metropolis” of Hermann’s dreams arises as a vast ceaseless “soundscape” of natural sounds, from constant movements, voices and diegetic music, echoing through the city of Munich and the resonant building of its Conservatoire. An unusual degree of naturalism and authenticity stems from the fact that the young actors of the music students are genuinely very talented musicians, performing in real time on screen. Yet once or twice there are scenes where performances and images merge in a dizzy abstract design. In the ‘Prologue’ and the first two *Heimat* cycles, all these sounds are interwoven with the film score of the Greek composer Mamangakis, who picks them up and enhances them, in a magical web of sound and silences. The net effect is of a vast musical composition, in which the voices in the dialogues also have parts, as do the movements and emotions of characters, and the polyphony of their intertwining stories. “Film and music are siblings”, as Edgar Reitz has written²⁶.

Some authors, for example Rachel Palfreyman in the course of her spirited defence of the first *Heimat* cycle against accusations of “revisionism” and of “ignoring the narrative of the Holocaust”²⁷, have written under the impression that Reitz’ objective was “a fictional appropriation of oral history with a critical perspective” and that his method involved a preparatory “use of oral history techniques”.²⁸ But even the documentary ‘Prologue’ is not primarily a work of oral history, it too is a work of art, born of the need to reawaken the author’s own familiarity with the region of his birth, the traditions, the ways of thinking and

²⁶ *Film und Zeit* Lectio doctoralis, Uni Perugia (2000)

²⁷ Palfreyman: Op, cit., pp. 89 ff.

²⁸ Op.cit., p.95, p.83

speaking among the people still living there, their hard past years, and what was still important to them. Without judging or analysing, he made a poetic collage of stories and memories that they chose to relate, and aspects of their daily lives, enveloped in the sounds and images of a countryside on the cusp of change, to record a sense of what he personally was finding again of his family's 'Heimat'.

Comparison with the first *Heimat* shows how the memories told in the documentary differ from the stories re-imagined in the fictional films, and how far both may be from professionally collected oral history. This emerges most clearly in relation to experiences of the war. The wartime memories that figure in the documentary tell mainly of dramatic local events and adventures, long in the public domain. There is no attempt to assess evidence, probe further, or elicit more private understandings, as there might be in the work of an historian. The fictional film, on the other hand subtly depicts things half-heard, half known, wilfully ignored, but still traceable in the undergrowth of memory. It is able to do this because Reitz' aim here is not to record history, but to tell stories. The stories are invented from his own memories, or those of his family, or those told to him, which his own intuition and experience lead him to consider authentic *as memory*. The *Heimat* stories are memories mediated through the imagination of a mature artist, and in spirit are perhaps closer to the reality of our own childhoods in the period than any consciously reconstructed historical account.

The “Prologue” – *Geschichten aus den Hunsrückdörfern*

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

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

Even the voices, whether or not one can understand the language, convey just in their sound so many nuances of feeling and personality, and the drama of events. A voice reading a young exile’s sad letter, the contrasting intonation of mother and daughter remembering their old family home, the teller of “Stückelscher” declaiming his tales, the cameo cutter handling antique examples of his art, old Opa Molz, sick and journeying through the land he loves, to be greeted by old friends for the last time – it is an inexhaustible wealth of people in sound. And because these are real voices and their dialogues unscripted, they are at home among the natural sounds in a subtly different way from the voices of actors in a feature film. (Sadly, on the new DVD (as compared with an old video recorded from a TV broadcast) some voices seem to have been enhanced, in a way which has tended to alter the balance slightly between voices and natural sound. This is most noticeable in the sequence of the gem cutter’s water mill and kitchen.)

Much of the music too comes from the land. The slate miners' bitter songs interweave with the darkness and materials of their hard working lives. A music teacher teaches her children and leads a village choir, while telling of her own musical ambitions cut short by the war. Rousing folk songs tell the tale of Schinderhannes, the robber captain of local folklore. A retired newspaper editor is an amateur musician, and the sentimental strains of his harmonium float with the mist over Hunsrück fields on screen. The inn explodes into football songs and laughter. The grandchildren of miners form a choir in the cavern of a mine, where one sings *Ave Maria* in her "bell-like voice". All of this is constantly echoed, supplemented and woven together by the composer Mamangakis into a mesmeric musical web shimmering among the images of the film.

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

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

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

We become aware of the love that the director and his team must have felt for these people, dedicated to their work and their land, richly endowed in immeasurable, immaterial ways, the endearing and fallible along with the awesomely skilled. We are tricked into an illusion of having known and loved them too. Fiction versus reality? We never knew them, but this is a documentary filmed in the real world. Their sadness and their laughter were alive

in 1980. Toward the end of the film comes a beautiful sequence of strong, living faces, one after the other slowly starting to smile. But the hardships and tragedies, the working lives they speak of, the harshness and joys of lived life, were not immediate at the moment of filming. They were mostly in the past. The land was already on the brink of huge change. The world celebrated in the film was not even then the “real” world, it is a world recalled and constructed from memories, not those of the director himself, but those of all the people who tell them to him, who tell and show him a ‘Heimat’ which is both his and theirs, but for those of us from different backgrounds, not ours.

Fiction and reality? What is the place of the *Hunsrückdörfer* documentary in the fictional *Heimat* “epic”, aside from its value for the director and his collaborators in preparing for the first *Heimat*? It stands at the start of the whole framework of the “epic” like the introduction the Director’s grandfather would make to his macabre and ghostly “Stückelscher”, sworn by “seven sacred oaths” to be true. In a lecture *Film und Zeit*²⁹, Edgar Reitz describes his grandfather’s story-telling principle, roughly translated as follows :

“The locations had to be real and might not be altered. The characters in his stories, too, laid claim to have really lived. My Grandfather’s stories mostly began like this: ‘Now you all know the great ancient oak tree that stands on the left, just beside the railway line, on the way into the village of X...’ (general murmur of agreement!) ...’then too you’ll know big Hans, the innkeeper in the village of Y, who died in such agony last year...?’ (another general murmur of agreement, as everyone had known big Hans.) ‘So now I want to tell you about how, early this morning as I was going to work, at 07.13 exactly, by the old oak tree, I ran into the dead man on the way...’. This kind of introduction could be varied a hundred times over ... ”

The audiences for Reitz’ grandfather’s stories surely had no problem in distinguishing fiction from reality. But we in Reitz’ own audience sometimes do, and in this respect perhaps the documentary does not help. It can be disorienting to find people interviewed in the documentary playing in small parts or as extras in the later films. Absorbed in the fictional film, I have caught myself thinking “There’s Albert Sulzbacher... was he really there when Paul found...?” That is of course silly, but it does reflect both the power of the fiction, its trueness to life, and also the extent to which the documentary rivals *Heimat* as a work of art, so that for a moment one fails to make the proper distinction. Nonetheless it is understandably galling to the director to feel his audience may treat his fictional creation as ‘mere’ documentary and ignore the consummate art and skill involved in creating the illusion that has so tricked us. But then, would Edgar Reitz’ grandfather have been at all dismayed if he found his listeners a little fearful of passing that old oak tree, on the way to work early the next dark morning?

Visiting the Hunsrück as a foreigner one sees, however superficial the visit and in spite of the language barrier, that though it is a living and swiftly changing region, the land itself, of both documentary and feature film, still remains, and so do the warmth and strength of the people. This does not come just from the tourist trail (which threatens one’s sense of the

²⁹ Koebner & Koch : *Edgar Reitz Erzählt* (2008), (pp.369-379)

fictional “geography” of *Heimat*), or the faintly embarrassing “graves” of fictional characters at the Nunkirche, or even the villages which, as in all living communities, are being modernised, infilled and changed. Yet wandering for a brief afternoon in the woods and fields one finds the land unchanged, not just in the rolling views seen from the roads, but under one’s feet. The stiff clay soil is still worked as agricultural land, even though by different means and by far fewer people. The woods are still harvested and hunted. Irregular corners of the great arable fields are still left rough and inhabited by butterflies and the last wild flowers, even in October, and by apple trees heavy with fruit.

For foreigners, *Hunsrückdörfer* has another significance. A foreigner hampered by the language barrier, and with no personal connection to anyone from the region, remains unable to appreciate the films as deeply as someone born and bred there. We lack the memories which inspire the first fictional *Heimat* cycle. Those of us who are old enough have some memories of our own which help. For instance the Simon smithy replicates internally, in nearly every detail, an ancient smithy beside my grandmother’s house in Somerset in the 1940s. The resemblance is uncannily close, and watching the first film of *Heimat* I can almost smell hot iron and singeing hooves. I am even troubled by small differences like the handle of the bellows. Otherwise however I remain a stranger. But the *Hunsrückdörfer* documentary partially substitutes for our lack of the memories. Only from the documentary can we come to the fictional films with a feeling for the land, the people and their ancient industries which goes beyond the scope of the screened narrative itself, and yet all the time enhances it. Of course this is still a very pale shadow of how it must be for those long familiar with the Hunsrück. Yet as Thomas Hönemann has written³⁰: “Anyone who has seen *Geschichten aus den Hunsrückdörfern* will be able to develop an even deeper appreciation of *Heimat*”, and from my own experience I know it is true.

³⁰ <http://www.heimat123.de/gadh.htm>

The First *Heimat*

1919-1982

1.0 Introduction

Heimat 1, like *Hunsrückdörfer*, has a powerful soundtrack which works like a piece of music in its own right, not only the composed music, with its themes or 'Leitmotiven' for various characters and their moods, but the music of all sounds. In *Heimat* the rhythm of the film's "music" relies less than the documentary on natural sounds other than voices. Nonetheless, those natural sounds are many, and often beautiful. They serve to link passages of the story, and to fix them in a specific, authentic place and time. For anyone from a rural background they are intensely evocative – the blacksmith's hammer, hens cackling, pitchforks shifting straw, cattle lowing, wheels and boots on gravelly roads, ancient vehicles, and birdsong. As the decades pass the sounds change in recognisable generations, with the vehicles, the dance music, the politics, the progress into war and into peace, until peace is shattered by the scream of military jets. But principally, in these films it is the rise and fall of human voices and the choreography of human movements that drive the "music", both creating and following the tension of the drama, in a web which is at once "music" and film³¹.

Yet unlike the documentary, through the fictional series this web evolves into a whole invented story, a created drama, extending far ahead in time. The time of the documentary is nearly all in the past, though presented and remembered in the present, within the time of the film itself. But even if introduced by Glasisch Karl and his photograph album, *within* each episode the time of the *Heimat* story, again unlike that of the stories told in the documentary, is not remembered time – the film time appears to march forward with the time of the story, though of course this too is an illusion. The film creates the time of the story, it is the time of an ongoing piece of music, as Reitz writes in his lecture *Film und Zeit*, not the time in which the actors were working, or the spectator now is living.

On the other hand, Glasisch's introduction of each film of *Heimat 1* with piles of photographs (often in fact stills from previous episodes) signifies that the stories are put

³¹ Edgar Reitz: *Film und Zeit* Lectio doctoralis, Uni Perugia (2000)

together from memories. The condition of the “photographs” themselves in the earlier episodes suggests that only for someone of his age could these still be “direct” personal memories at the time the films were made, though, belying this, the Glasisch of each introduction is contemporary with the film he is about to introduce, not the ancient figure of the last scenes of the cycle. Glasisch himself, illegitimate and looked down on by many of his community as an eccentric, set apart by his wartime experiences and an ugly skin condition incurred in the war, is an acute but not wholly trustworthy commentator. He is the Joker, who encourages others’ folly and probably wears his own Hitler moustache in private mockery, a truth-teller who is also capable, at least in his youth, of quite malicious behaviour. His introductions not only provide useful résumés in the course of the long cycle, they have an important distancing function, standing for the unreliability and subjectivity of the process through which the stories are being told³².

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

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

The delineation of characters in the early parts of the first *Heimat* cycle is outstandingly skilful and spare. People are introduced in a few brief exchanges of dialogue, in ways that leave them fixed in the memory for the rest of the cycle. For instance, Marie-Goot, Katharina’s sister, will develop into a significant character with many later scenes, but in the first few moments of her appearance the comic essence of her part is already clear: her talkativeness, her scorn for outsiders, eagerness for scurrilous gossip, need to interfere and put everyone to rights. Apollonia, the dark-haired girl of unknown origins, with whom Paul later falls in love,

³² See also Rachel Palfreyman: op.cit. pp.96-97

has only a few brief scenes in the first film, before disappearing from the story for good. Yet her personality established in those scenes, with her honesty, perceptiveness, suffering and strength, remains with us long after the cycle is ended, and not just because of her significance for the story.

An unusual degree of realism comes from the fact that many of the actors and extras are people of the region, where local amateur dramatic societies flourish. They are mostly country people, still in 1980 adept at handling animals and traditional agricultural and household implements. The prime example is Matthias the blacksmith, whose actor, Willi Burger, was a blacksmith in real life. No mere actor could work so convincingly as he does in the old forge, or with his oxen and muck-cart. His gestures and movements are familiar to me, and the rhythm of his ringing anvil precisely echoes the one that sounded in my own childhood. In other scenes too the authenticity of this rural working world is constantly apparent, and once or twice small part actors and extras, for instance the foresters felling trees in the first film, are recognisable plying their trades in the documentary. Like the musicians in *Heimat 2*, they provide an extra layer of fascination, along with the loving, painstaking reconstructions of period sets by Franz Bauer, which has been written about and shown in documentaries³³. The verisimilitude is so great that occasional lapses of continuity are more noticeable than their insignificance warrants, for example in Film 2 when the villagers walk from a wood full of flowering foxgloves into one already carpeted with bilberries, or the disconcerting disappearance and reappearance of quite deep snow in one afternoon in Film 3 – a small price to pay for scenes set in real, as opposed to artificial snow.

On the other hand, the village is not portrayed as a romantic idyll. Rural life in the inter-war period was anything but romantic. The association of evocative images of real hard-working life lived in the past, like that of Matthias at his forge, with the concept of a conservative “craftwork idyll”³⁴ is ahistorical. It lies in the mind of the modern observer, not of the generation that experienced it, nor I suspect of the story-teller. The fact that such images were misappropriated by earlier inauthentic ‘Heimat’ films does not invalidate their use as authentic reconstructions. Even in the 1940s, in my experience, a blacksmith’s work was still as mundane as that of a motor mechanic in the garage down the road.

In Schabbach, extremes of rural poverty do not figure in the memories and stories, even in the destabilised years of the early 1920s and mid 1940s, but people’s lives until mid-century are hard, though easing gradually with the advance of technology and relative prosperity. The community remains little educated, narrow and defended, often paranoid about those who do not belong, or are simply different, like the “socialist” basket maker. Apollonia, suspected of gipsy origins, is persecuted by vicious unfounded rumours until she leaves. Anti-Semitic sentiments are hinted at, but, except among stonethrowing yobs in Simmern, or in the context of official political pronouncements, such as Eduard’s presentation of Nazi policies on farming

³³ For example in: Christa Tornow: *Ein Denkmal für den Hunsrück* (1982) (documentary about *Heimat 1*), and in many interviews and writings by Edgar Reitz.

³⁴ Palfreyman, op. cit., p.143

and land ownership in Film 3, not very openly expressed in the village. That may be unrealistic, as anti-Semitic and other racist expressions were still readily in use among English people in the 1940s and 1950s, and nowadays racist remarks about immigrants are commonly heard.

In the pre-war Nazi period the basket maker's one-eyed boy, Hänschen, is intrigued by the new telephone line linking Schabbach to the outside world. Symbolically, following it away out of the village and through a dense thicket, he emerges in view of a concentration camp, the only time one is directly shown in the series. At the same time he meets a guard who implants the idea of his becoming a sharpshooter, a skill that eventually leads to his death in the war.

Katharina recognises more clearly than most the dubious basis of the region's growing prosperity, and she sees her communist nephew in the Ruhr arrested and deported for "re-education" in a concentration camp, never to return. During the war, she and Matthias are shocked by the behaviour of Wiegand's son Wilfried, a neurotic martinet returned from Berlin as a young SS officer, and now, due to childhood ill-health, left in command of the Home Front. In angrily reproving him, Kath puts herself in danger of reprisal, but few others in the village share her courage. Even her protest is more personal than political, and though other villagers too resent the overbearing behaviour of the Wiegands, father and son, that is nothing new. They always had resented and ridiculed the rich self-important farmer, long before he identified himself with Hitler and the Nazi party. In general, local culture and opinion is unquestioning, and prepared to defend the regime that seemed to have brought people prosperity and self-esteem in recent years.

As the war progresses, and villagers too suffer bombardment and bereavement, hideous truths about the Holocaust are still no more than half-heard and perhaps wilfully not understood. Should we call the silence of Schabbach complicity in guilt? Or should we recognise the strong reluctance to question sensitive issues openly, even today in Britain, among those conditioned in small rural communities to dread "making waves"? Moreover, living as many of us now do in open societies, we have no firsthand knowledge of the fear and danger of life in a police state. Yet in occupied Europe and in Germany itself there were many who risked and often lost their own lives for the sake of the persecuted. Maybe they alone, and their families, have the right to judge.

1.1 Films 1-4: *Memories of a recreated time. Light and colour.*

The first four films of *Heimat 1* are set in the interwar years, and the period is recreated mostly from what must have been indirect memories, stories told and retold. Gradually, the village of 'Schabbach' emerges from rural poverty and isolation, to become connected to the wider world through the 1930s by technology, politics, and the movement of armies. The increasing prosperity is seen by the old and wise as being mostly "on tick", and at times admitted by younger beneficiaries, with slight discomfort but not much shame, to be at the expense of Jewish property owners and bankers who have suffered persecution.

In the first film, Paul Simon returns from the First War to this closed community, at once secure and oppressive. For the next decade he is inwardly tormented by an unexpressed longing to escape it, evinced in his fascination with wireless technology, and his inability to choose between Apollonia, who is rejected by most of the community and leaves, and Maria, Wiegand's daughter, who recognises Paul's apartness, but for herself still has no ambition beyond life in the village. Too unsure of himself to travel away with Apollonia, he marries Maria and sinks back into the life of his farming family. His mute anguish, and his eventual desertion of Maria and their children, for reasons incomprehensible even to himself, establish the central theme of the *Trilogy* – the contrast of those who stay in the 'Heimat', and those who leave.

The next three films follow those he leaves behind. Maria remains in the family home, comforted by Paul's parents, working hard in the household and very protective of her children. The elder, Anton, is reserved, fascinated by technology, the younger, Ernst, is more outgoing, and already intrigued with aeroplanes and flight. Paul's father quietly works on alone in the old forge, and his mother Kath becomes the beloved grandmother and mainstay of the family.

Paul's brother Eduard, an amateur photographer, a naïve fantasist racked with TB, is now more or less cured and marries Lucie, the erstwhile madam of a Berlin brothel, where he was earlier introduced in a hilarious sequence. The unlikely couple, two of Reitz' greatest creations, become a constant source of delight and laughter throughout the first *Heimat* cycle. Propelled by Lucie, kind gangling Eduard joins the Nazi party and becomes Mayor of a larger district centred on a neighbouring village. On borrowed money they build a villa with "fifty-two windows", but to Lucie's frustration Edu remains happily on the first rung of the social ladder, as a complaisant official sharing the fun of young one-eyed Hänschen Betz' illicit

sharpshooting skills. Meanwhile Lucie curries favour with the local Gauleiter and makes eyes at the young SS officer Wilfried Wiegand. She is rewarded by the use of her villa to entertain a “secret” meeting of three of the most powerful and notorious leaders of the Reich, but Eduard has no interest in capitalising on this “success”.

Pauline, Paul’s sister, has married Robert Kröber, a clockmaker and jeweller in the county town of Simmern. Their business benefits from the growth of the region in the 1930s, especially later in the decade when the new military highroad is being built by the state engineering ‘Todt’ Organisation, whose members buy symbolic “death’s head” rings, and jewellery to send home. The local cinema shows Zara Leander films, which set Maria and Pauline dreaming of escape from their humdrum ‘Heimat’ lives to foreign lands. But already the engineer Otto Wohlleben has been billeted on the Simon household, and he and Maria fall into a moving, sensitively portrayed affair.

In the first film, the famous opening scenes of Paul’s return in 1919 sets up the theme that the whole cycle will develop. It is grounded in the almost silent figure of Paul. For a little while his face is full of recognition and relief at coming home. Both he and we are moved by his parents’ undemonstrative, almost wordless reception of him. There is so much love and pride in their faces, and in their practical actions. But once seated in the kitchen, as family and neighbours gather, he is inwardly alone. He is the one who returns changed, to a world which is unchanged, like the piper stolen by fairies in the old tales. He seems to become oppressed by the deliberate, repetitive speech patterns of country people, maybe of close families everywhere. He is indifferent to most of the trivial gossip. As the scene unfolds, people still talk about Paul, but less and less to him.

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

Paul’s attention is taken only by those outside the room – he smiles at the one-eyed ragamuffin watching through the window. He listens to evil gossip about the “gipsy” girl with whom he will one day fall in love, and who like himself is an outsider. Two people in the room share his sense of alienation: Glasich is one – as he extends his scabbed hand to Paul, Paul reaches up to release a trapped fly, and maybe they both understand why. The other is the bereaved mother of his dead friend Helmut. There is a direct line of sight between Paul and that sorrowing figure sitting by the corner of the fireplace. It creates a tense space between them, generating Paul’s vision of Helmut with his mocking comments on angels in white, dead soldiers ‘asleep’ on the battlefield and a heaven where they speak the Platt, finally closing the ‘trap’ on Paul. Again, as in the documentary, sounds and visual images work together. The

crash of Eduard's chair is echoed visually by the fall of Paul's head onto his arms at the end of the scene.

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

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

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

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

Later, in the fourth film, colour is used selectively to enhance Lucie's ex-colleague Martina's exotic and hilarious arrival in the midst of an almost monochrome world where exiled Saxons are building the Highway. Then, after they have born her small red motor triumphantly off the site and push-started it, there is a delicate image, for just a second, in soft green, ochre and

grey, where a plume of steam from a steam roller on the hillside is echoed by steam or smoke from a cabin lower down, reflected in turn in flood water on the road.

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

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

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

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

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

The next four films (Films 5-8) cover the build-up to war in 1938-39, the war years, and the immediate post-war time of disorientation and occupation. Though warmth and humour still persist, the underlying mood of these films is dark. In the fifth, the darkness falls heavily on the Simon family, when Paul, long given up for dead, announces his intention to return, in a letter that old Matthias is becoming almost too blind to read. Maria decides that Otto must leave, nonetheless she and her children are desolated. Ernst runs away from home, and Maria herself, meeting Otto once more in Trier, is demented with grief. Otto loses his job because he is half Jewish. In the end Paul gets no further than the docks at Hamburg, where he has to remain on the ship because, absurdly, there is no time before it returns to prove his Aryan descent. Then war is declared, but only a few, like Katharina, recognise that it presages a grim day of reckoning.

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

In the sixth and seventh films some of the memories informing the tale are those of all our rural childhoods in the 1940s: military uniforms and vehicles on the roads, propaganda, paranoia about parachuting enemy pilots, the ominous roar of incoming bombers heading for industrial areas, search lights, ak-ak fire, a stick of bombs jettisoned at random over fields and villages as a plane flees home. All the young men are absent, their distant loss mourned usually by older people, we hardly knew them. In the countryside, national shortages and hardships are mitigated by resources of the land, while the land reverts to the seeming peacefulness of older means of work and transport, in response to a dearth of petrol. But in England our government was not fascist, and we were never invaded.

In Film 6, Maria's older sons are both in the forces, and enthusiastically training, Anton to be a camera technician in a propaganda unit on the Eastern Front, Ernst to be a fighter pilot. But she has a new son, little Hermännchen, her child from Otto. Otto himself, careless now of his own life, has enlisted as a bomb disposal expert, assisted once more by the faithful Pieritz, their exchanges marked by sharp, unsentimental humour in the face of danger. Otto chances to be defusing an unexploded bomb on the airfield where Ernst is training, and from Ernst he learns that Maria is still alone, and that he has a three-year old child.

In the microcosm of a German village the origins and influence of a Nazi culture and regime are ever more apparent. Wilfried, insecure authoritarian neurotic that he is, revels in his command of the Home Front, but when he shoots a defenceless, wounded English pilot, claiming the man was escaping, and takes kudos for it, the children will remember their suspicions of his cowardly deed. It remains safe, but only just, for Kath the grandmother, whom everyone loves and respects, to speak her mind. Otherwise the mood is that of the rather threatening song sung by Maria and her son's pregnant fiancée, Martha, in the post van: "...whoever asks no questions and sets off undaunted, for him there's no questions asked until his job is done. Jawohl, meine Herren, that's how we like it... from today the world belongs to us..." (until Martha thinks of her Anton far away in ice cold Russia and weeps.) Lucie, still intently social climbing and unaware of any irony, enthuses over the "divine" performance of a pseudo gipsy tune, crying "What a culture!" At Lucie's party sinister truths about Jews and chimneys are only half uttered and half heard, like the muttered horror stories we half-heard in childhood, withheld from us to shelter us. Only Eduard mourns the loss of Hans Betz, and feels responsible for having encouraged the lad's sharpshooting skills.

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

Back in the Hunsrück on the way to defuse a bomb at a railway station, Otto returns: "Look Pieritz, there's Schabbach, like in peacetime". He and Maria find each other again and talk with honesty and love about why she sent him away, and how they both have suffered, in scenes of extraordinary tenderness and visual beauty, set not in peacetime but against the constant drone of bombers. The subtlety of dialogue, performances and cinematography in these scenes is unsurpassed anywhere in the *Trilogy*. Then next day comes the tense, sparsely written scene, ending in the shock of Otto's death. Had his skill and attentiveness been affected by the emotion of the last day and night? The irony of his dying, just when he had found life worth living again, is unbearable. Death, like the mysterious old linesman who distracts him by tramping stubbornly along the line above his head, is "always on duty". Not long after, bombardment around Schabbach precedes the American invasion.

All through these wartime episodes there is still so much humour and warmth, Maria welcoming Martha, and their ensuing friendship, Kath's provocative comments when the Wiegands take over the proxy wedding between Martha and Anton, staged at the Front for a propaganda newsreel, Ernst overflying the village to throw red carnations, Otto and Pieritz teasing and joking. We love these people and care deeply about their fate. And there are always Lucie and Eduard – the vagrant feather in Lucie's hat³⁵, Lucie's new religiosity which in no way constrains her ambition, her panic when the situation crumbles under invasion. Her hard-won social standing in the Nazi world now places her in danger of losing all she possesses except what she stands up in. So as she tries to wear all her clothes at once, her son arrives chewing gum, and a new light dawns in her head. She turns to welcome two grinning black GIs.

The sinister wartime themes are all the more threatening because played among everyday relationships. In shocking contrast they invade the ordinary lives of everyone, the gentle and upright, the venal and foolish, the simple and the manipulative, all alike. This is what the people themselves, and probably their children, might have known. They are not even the same as the wartime stories remembered and recounted in the documentary, which treat more of adventures and events. The stories in these films are not historical records, they are reconstructed from the bits and pieces of everyday private memory.

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

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

³⁵ remembered with delight by Eva Marie Schneider:
<http://www.heimat-fanpage.de/cms.htm>, 'Interview' section.

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

Paul himself, that great uncomprehending alien, retains almost nothing of his sensitive introverted earlier self apart from avoidance of his own and others' feelings. Consequently the conscious echoes of his original 1919 return remain rather unconvincing contrivances. Very briefly, in the attic with the remains of his old wireless, listening to his mother, a glimmer of himself returns. Also his inability to tell Maria why he had left, the admission that he truly doesn't know, is painful and rings true. Otherwise the character seems sadly to be a casualty of what must have been a difficult casting problem. In a world of memories, he brings few and generates none.

In the scenes with Paul, especially, the dialogue becomes as flat and banal as his voice. There are too many brash, over-insistent people – Paul himself, Lucie, the new Lotti. Even Lucie starts to lose her comic skill, and is in danger of becoming a caricature of herself. The images have lost much of their depth, the spaces have become cramped within the frame, overpopulated, the fluidity of movement and interaction lost, figures staged together in spaces that they do not themselves define. Some of the subtlety of light and shadow has disappeared, focus and movement no longer create distances. Close-ups are planted in the middle of the screen, too close, obscuring the space. It is a disturbing contrast with the masterly scenes in the previous film. Yet beyond these sequences are others, where the complexity of light and focus returns, for characters like Maria, Kath, Eduard and Ernst who never lose the subtlety of their performances.

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

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

1.3 Films 9-11: *The brothers – memories of a living generation*

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

Instead it might be good to look at the place of this episode in the first cycle, and in the whole *Heimat* Trilogy. It is pivotal in several ways. In the Hunsrück the “new age” that Kath despaired of ever seeing seems at last to have arrived. Some in the village, though perhaps not the traditional farmers, are prospering, including once again the objectionable Wiegands, and Anton with his flourishing and honourable business. Maria’s youngest son goes to the High School and will be the first member of the family to enter university, carrying forward the stories of leaving and return.

The story now focusses on Marias’ three adult or near adult children. The memories are no longer recorded just in Glasisch’s faded monochrome images, but living and colourful in the minds of a generation still only middle-aged in the year the film was made. So for the first time in the cycle, the greater part of the film is shot in unexpectedly lovely colour, rich and soft, not nearly so harsh as the colour of many modern films. Near the end, as Hermann starts to play his anguished cry on the organ, there is one of Gernot Roll’s unforgettable, momentary images, of the village street, blue with rain in the early morning light, leading to the church, as a light mist drifts in. In this story, black and white film is reserved for the most inward, private, sensitive memories of the love affair. The black and white images are as luminous and ethereal as any in the earlier episodes of the series, and the contrast with the colour of the more public memories is moving and works well. The music too is changing, and Hermann’s beautiful Klärchen Lied, which recurs in the second *Heimat*, is heard for the first time. There is coherent dramatic shape to the story. Tension builds towards the end, when a buzzing fly or a barking dog in the background ratchets up the suspense in a still moment before the family storm breaks.

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

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

Yet we in the audience have come to know Maria and Anton as mature, complex people. We sympathise with Maria's loss and loneliness, and know how precious her youngest son is to her, and why. We know too that in her time she was open and relaxed and young, and that were Otto still alive neither of them would have reacted to the situation with such possessive anxiety. Similarly with Anton, we can trace his rigidity and over-developed sense of responsibility to what we have already seen of his childhood and wartime experience. It is natural that he should be jealous of Ernst's ready charm and uncaring disregard for traditional values, and of Hermann's youth, and of their relationships with Klärchen. The intuitive portrayal of a family over time has made the story of Film 9 even richer than corresponding stories in the second *Heimat*.

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

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

good brotherly relationship between Ernst and Hermann, which becomes another moving theme of *Heimat 3*.

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

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

Colour returns to the film when Anton drives back to the Hunsrück in the early morning light. He pays a civil but bemused visit to Ernst's business premises and goes home with new resolve. In front of his whole workforce Anton rejects the takeover bid and vows that the quality of his business and the prosperity it brings to Schabbach will continue as long as he lives (which in *Heimat 3* it does).

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

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At first the final Film (11) seemed confusing and disappointing, when viewing the series in weekly TV instalments. There were so many characters to cope with, some smaller parts forgotten, some new. The whole Kirmes (village festival) section appeared to dissipate the momentum of the series, and the idea of re-encountering the dead seemed sentimental and alienating. But having grown far more familiar with the characters and the story, and

watching with enhanced image reproduction on DVD, I can now recognise this episode as a powerful and wholly fitting way of bringing the series to an end³⁶.

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

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

At the funeral meal, the two old men, Glasisch and Paul, think of Maria, and are overcome by their memories. Perhaps too they think of Apollonia and their ancient rivalry. Glasisch thumbs through his photograph album, saying "All dead, all dead", like Opa Molz in the documentary. Who buried Wiegand's motorbike in the dung heap? He knows but will not tell, as his eye falls on an image of Paul. Paul too, challenged by Glasisch to say why he walked away, can only shake his head. Memories buried and lost for good.

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

Eventually the brothers converge on the Simon house. Anton, unwell and convinced Ernst intends to raid the house, has crazily boarded up the door. Ernst feeds the rabbits, climbs in round the back and wanders about, no longer with an eye just for the value of things, but treasuring the memories they raise. In flashback he remembers peering round the kitchen

³⁶ see also similar and moving reactions by Ivan Mansley and other contributors to *Online Discussion of Heimat* (pdf) pp.37 ff.

door and seeing Maria and Otto embracing, with Otto's arm in plaster, and then the model glider flying in his grandfather's field. This is the only flashback that is filmed fully in colour, fitting, because it is a warm, happy memory, not tinged with regret like some of others.

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

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

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

The villagers intent on a brief night of revelry and escape are Hunsrückers of the contemporary 1980s world. All through this episode there have been a few faces familiar from the documentary, and Hermann at the fair meets two of the slate miners called Hans. Two tarts, comic even if rather overplayed, are clearly shown as incomers, not caricatured locals offensive to a Hunsrück audience. But they echo words spoken in the documentary by respectable local employees at the airbase, when they lament the old days in Lautzenhausen when the Yankees were loaded with dollars, and note that nowadays it is just the farmers who frequent the brothel. This is no longer the world of memory.

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

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

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

This is not quite the end of the film, but it feels like an affirmation that the memories of these characters' lives will live on in the work of their creator, and in the hearts of his audience. The love they have felt for each other in the fictional story, and in any remembered lives they may partially reflect, gives them back their life. It will stay with the author and with us, the love among and for these imagined people. That may also be a sentimental idea, but so be it. After Hermann's new composition has celebrated his Hunsrück roots from the depths of the Herrenberg slate mine, the credits roll against a wide landscape. In the sky, two short vapour trails, maybe from jet fighters, dwindle towards the horizon.

The Second Heimat

1960-1970

2.0 Introduction

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

Heimat 2 traces the transition of its young characters out of the self absorbed, anxious, but exhilarating life of their first student years, into a harder maturity. They become disillusioned about their own prospects, depressed and made angry, and politicised. In Germany the turmoil of the '60s had a special character, in the extent to which the legacy of Nazism and militarism still infected some institutions and authorities, not just in their image but in their behaviour. The film cycle suggests how that infection may have bred an opposition in its own likeness. It shows characters through whose lives an unwarranted violence of police reaction to the Schwabinger riots of 1962 ultimately feeds into the harsh arrogance and authoritarianism of the far Left in 1968 and beyond.

At the micro-level too, normal family conflict has been exacerbated by the century's history. So many of the parents have lived stern lives under a controlling regime, through war and economic disintegration. They have often condoned or collaborated with shameful deeds. So many young people have grown into a world where the old society has crumbled. They do not need to repeat the tainted patterns that dominated their parents' lives. The rigidity and possessiveness, the emotional dishonesty, inflicted on Hermännchen is reflected in the experience of most of his student contemporaries, in some cases to a monstrous degree. The damage done is traceable in their fear of commitment, avoidance of their true feelings, the "mixture of passion and fear", and for a few, in tormenting sado-masochistic relationships,

political violence, and perhaps suicide. This makes *Heimat 2*, for all its humour and beauty, a much darker series than the first *Heimat*, in which the darkness was less explicit.

The students think of themselves as “Kennedy’s children”, and the day of President Kennedy’s death is deeply imprinted on their memories. The Vietnam War, by contrast, does not figure much in the story – the vocal political activists are concerned initially with a national issue, the 1965 Emergency Laws, and later with the more theoretical ideological clichés of “the Revolution”, including “democratization” and “collective decision making”, even when applied to the work of an *auteur* film maker. Other young artists are preoccupied with political aspects of their art, the struggle to pursue it and make a living in a bourgeois commercial environment. There is resonance in the advice of a local eccentric, Herr Edel, to students newly arriving in 1960: “The first of you to free himself from ideology ... will succeed.”

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

The life these elite students create for themselves, playing music or making films together, working, partying, and exchanging ideas in the shared refuge of the ‘Fuchsbau’ villa, with their often fraught personal relationships, makes up the new ‘Heimat’ that they have imagined and longed for. For a while they share a vision of a future life of glittering artistic success. But as the years pass, the group disintegrates, and the “young geniuses” are pitchforked into a workaday world where they must make a living, and cope with family responsibilities that have been too quickly or casually assumed. They struggle to reconcile the demands of their art with the demands of commerce, and of personal relationships. Marriages break up, careers are abandoned and reconstructed. There is a mood of disillusionment, a sense of being at a loss.

Already by mid-decade the new ‘Heimat’ of imagination and choice has been re-invaded by the old ‘Heimat’ of memory: Hermann has drifted into marriage with Schnüßchen, a lass from the Hunsrück like himself, comforting, not challenging like his academic peers, not elusive and tormenting like Clarissa. A couple of years later, Clarissa too seeks protection from the turmoil of her life in a staid marriage with the pianist Volker, and motherhood, which, for a woman at that time, threatens to end her artistic career. The “second ‘Heimat’” of the Fuchsbau years is itself already no more than a longed for memory, submerged in ‘Fernweh’

for a yet further 'Heimat' of imagination and escape. Some of the women arrive at constructive ways out, but for Hermann escape, more often than not, means little more than flight.

All along, this generation has perceived and endlessly talked of a conflict between "Art and Life", and more deeply, between artificial and authentic experience of each. There is a recurring image of the choice between the "clockwork" and the "real" nightingale in the fairytale, images of caged birds, of artificial musical boxes. This extends, in particular, to considering the art of film, the 'reality' perceived by the inhuman 'eye' of the camera, the 'life' of the subject of a story created in film. Whose life, whose story, whose 'reality'? Is art "more beautiful than reality", and should it be? Laughter arises from the debates, but also in the end tragedy. These powerful, self-reflective images within the films themselves put into perspective any attempt to treat this work of art as social history. *Heimat 2*, like the other *Heimat* cycles, is neither soap nor documentary.

Each of the first five films is, like *Heimat 1*, a constant stream of beautiful images. Take for example the scenes of Hermann's visit to a drama school for lessons in speaking Hochdeutsch. Pause on any frame at random, and find a finely constructed still, exquisitely lit, a portrait of a person, or a space, or people in a space, their shadows and reflections. But these are not just stills. Sounds echo, movement and light flow through them, and so does the story. A young actress, Olga, smiles and makes a face through a window, Hermann swiftly grins back, and struggles on with his elocution lesson. The stiff, disabled teacher gets his whole class moving fluidly round him, intent and absurd, mouthing their tongue twisters. The interlude is brief, and barely advances the story, and yet it is perfect, like a small poem.

The significance of the artist-cameraman is made very evident in *Heimat 2*. The hydra-headed authorship of a film is a mystery: how do highly individual, intuitive artists collaborate so successfully to fashion the skills of a whole team of creative talents into a single work? And at what cost? In Gernot Roll, Reitz found a colleague with whom he shared an unsurpassable intuitive understanding of their joint work. He has written about this, and about the similarities and differences in their approaches which for a long while fruitfully complemented each other, in moving passages of which unfortunately I believe there is still no English translation³⁷. Sadly, less than halfway through the filming of *Heimat 2* their collaboration came to an end³⁸. The loss perhaps to both, and certainly to the work at that time was severe. The change of style with a new cameraman is disturbing even to a lay viewer like myself. I am not competent to appreciate the technical aspects of the changes, so in later sections about Films 6-8 I can only record the impact on someone with no specialist knowledge. The change to yet a third cameraman, Edgar Reitz' son Christian, for Film 10 and the rest of the cycle, restores much of the delight and subtlety of the cinematography, at least in the eye of a lay observer.

³⁷ Edgar Reitz: *Drehort Heimat* (2004), pp.54, 90-97, 145-6

³⁸ Op.cit., pp.141-149

As in the first *Heimat*, another outstanding colleague for the Director was the production designer, Franz Bauer, working on the sets and props. The characters inhabit a confusing variety of apartments. There are so many rooms, some narrow, some cluttered with fascinating objects, some filled with the personality of their owner, some empty. Later from the documentaries³⁹ one learns that all these apartments are genuine real-life habitations, painstakingly selected to suit characters and action, and in turn modifying both. The windows often look onto real streets, lovingly filled with 1960s vehicles and street furniture, but appearing natural and lifelike. It perhaps helps that the urban costumes and hairstyles of the early 60s seem paradoxically less old fashioned to us than those of the seventies and eighties. So one is not that aware of these being authentic period reconstructions, unless one knew the city at that time, or has a particular interest in how the effect was achieved. It just feels right, nothing jars.

The film music is famous and fascinating, but I am not competent to describe it adequately. Ulrich Schönherr⁴⁰ for instance, placing the music of *Heimat 2* in the context of post-war avant-garde music, argues that Reitz' young musicians, unlike their film-maker friends, for long remained preoccupied with an aesthetic rather than political confrontation with older traditions. In spite of their militant rhetoric, he sees them as still working within the "political naïvety" and "latent conformism" of 1950s serialism, "a music that eliminated any historical and personal narrative and suspended the subject from working through its own trauma, guilt and responsibility". Far from making his music an instrument of revolution, in politics or in New Music, Hermann finds belatedly that he has dedicated it and himself to revitalising commercial advertising. Yet historically the New Music of the 1960s was already entering "a new phase of critical self-reflection and openness", and Schönherr writes perceptively of "the feminist oratorio *Hexenpassion* that becomes the artistic climax of the last episode..." in 1970, a work that "establishes a musical memory for the suffering of women ..." and "points to the future".

An article by Mehrnoosh Sobhani⁴¹ affords a brief, interesting analysis of the role of music in *Heimat 2*, illustrating Sobhani's two main themes, Reitz' life-long concern with music as a "model" for film making, in that "film and music are so similar because they both work with time, and because they can both penetrate and manipulate time", and the parallels between Reitz' innovative film making and the work of John Cage. There is also an informative, succinct outline in Alan Andres' article *The Music of Heimat*⁴², reviewing a 4 CD set⁴³ of music from *Heimat* of which three whole disks were devoted to *Heimat 2*. Andres made other intriguing contributions to the subject on the English fan website⁴⁴.

³⁹ Robert Busch: *Bis zum Augenblick der Wahrheit* (1987) (documentary about *Heimat 2*)

⁴⁰ Ulrich Schönherr: in *New German Critique* vol. 37(2 110) Summer 2010, pp107-124

⁴¹ "Avant-garde music and the aesthetics of film. On Edgar Reitz's 'Die Zweite Heimat'" in Goetsch and Scheunemann: *Text und Ton im Film* (1997/2001)

⁴² <http://www.heimat123.net/music.html>, originally in *Film Score Monthly* No. 51, November 1994

⁴³ No longer available as new, but see links from <http://reinder.rustema.nl/heimat/videoacd1-7-2004.html>

⁴⁴ E.g. <http://www.heimat123.net/references.html>

The soundtrack is a constant feast of music, of hugely varied origins. As such it recalls and represents the multitudinous variety of people and locations, emotions and plots that form these films. Moreover, and again famously, the actors who are seen studying and giving performances are in real life also professional or very good amateur musicians themselves and perform live on the screen. Performing together, they watch and listen to each other, as mere actors might not have done, and there are subtle moments like Volker's wry smile at Clarissa as they play Chopin's Polonaise Brillante. This creates a world of music and of young serious musicians that to a lay viewer feels convincing and true to life, at least in the sixties. This is the new 'Heimat' that Hermann set out to seek. As his friend Juan keeps telling him it is at heart a world of "Sehnsucht", longing, and also, for both of them, a longed for world. It is no coincidence that many of the lyrics of the songs are full of longing⁴⁵.

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

⁴⁵ www.heimat123.de/h2art.htm - page on "Lyrikzitate in *Die Zweite Heimat*"

2.1 Films 1 – 2: *The “secret metropolis”; its memorable inhabitants; ‘Sehnsucht’ for a new ‘Heimat’; “the mixture of passion and fear”; a troubled generation*

After the first few scenes in the Hunsrück, shot in the colour of everyday, which serve to establish the new actor of Hermann as an incarnation of the teenage Hermännchen of *Heimat 1*, we plunge with him into an alien world. Still wounded and embittered by the loss of Klärchen, he solemnly vows never to love again, and embarks on the search for a new ‘Heimat’, a fantasy world of music in which man can be free.

In the great city, images in daylight are once again shot in subtle black and white, while at night they glow with rich colour among the shadows (the “secret metropolis” of Hermann’s dreams, “with its thousand colours in the nights”). Watching the films for the first time one is, like Hermann himself, bewildered by the proliferation of people and places. Characters appear and disappear. There are tentative meetings, wandering eyes, movements towards and away, people absorbed in their practice or their project, people watching them, people ignoring them. People get to know each other, learn from each other, or misunderstand and make mistakes. There are many reflections, in mirrors, windows, marble walls, the polished case of a piano. Many moods, elation, anticipation, fascination, anxiety, loneliness, shift endlessly through the first two films of the cycle. Many journeys, short and long, on foot, by bicycle, in cars, buses, trams, trains. This constant movement and change, constant newness, constant mirroring, is the antithesis of life in Schabbach.

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

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

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

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

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

Then there is the coal merchant, Kohlen Josef, rough of accent and appearance, a man of few words, but kind and sensitive to his young lodger. Towards the end of each of the first two films he spends with him a still, healing moment. The scene where he shows Hermann the radiant painting of his mother is one of the most touching in the whole cycle. Moved almost to tears, Josef thinks of his mother, lost when their house was bombed, recognising

how the artist focussed on the moment of the painting. It is still so acute to him now that he takes refuge in describing the exact feeling of the weather that day, before the Föhn. Something of his emotional generosity starts to melt even Hermann's defences. As Hermann invites him to the future performance of his new piece, saying that the cello will be played by "a very beautiful woman", we suddenly hear the warm voice of his father Otto: "Eine sehr schöne Frau".

In contrast, Renate, the first young woman Hermann encounters in Munich, has a far larger role, reappearing in most of the later films as a fellow traveller with the elite student group, but accorded no film of her own. She too is a resilient, eccentric tragi-comic figure, a provincial law student with unrealistic ambitions to become an actress. She is for long in awkward, anxious pursuit of sex and love through various transient relationships, her lack of self-confidence and social graces being compensated by warm-heartedness, courage, an adventurous exhibitionist talent and the ability to laugh at herself. She eventually finds a compatible partner with whom she sets up a night club, a successful vehicle for her bizarre talents as stripper and cabaret artiste. In a sensitive paragraph, Jonathan Rosenbaum, film critic of the *Chicago Reader*, has written of this "beautifully realized character" as "a characteristic example of Reitz's strength as a multilayered storyteller", concluding that "she never figures in the film as a static element – as a running gag or simply as a familiar presence — but evolves at every moment, teaching us things about the other characters when she interacts with them and teaching us things about ourselves when she confounds our expectations about who she is and what she's like"⁴⁶.

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The first two films of *Heimat 2* are formed from the memories of Hermann and Juan. Each tells part of his story in a series of voiceover passages. Hermann and Juan seem to be complementary figures, almost two aspects of the same person, though the portrayal of Juan in particular has an unforgettable individuality.

As well as being played by an intriguing actor, Juan's character is a masterly creation,. The young Chilean is potentially the most gifted "artist" of the group, in the clarity, humour and profundity of his perception. There must have been an extraordinary meeting of author and actor here. At some level he is an ageless, mythical figure. He often seems very young and vulnerable, anxious and hurt, but in the moment we first see him, playing the *quena*, his face as he blows is the face of an old man. Hermann and most of the first year students are strangers in Munich, but Juan is "the stranger". To Hermann, Juan often feels "like a being from another planet, invulnerable, alien". He has the shamanic ability to intuit, share and mirror the feelings and situations of his companions. He voices their fears (to Hermann: "Beware of beautiful women!"; to Clarissa: "We'll forget love"). Juan is the one person in the group who is acutely aware of the others and of their pain, watching them screw up their lives under layers of hurt and damage in their past and emotional dishonesty in the present. As he

⁴⁶ "Interrogating the 60s" From the *Chicago Reader* May 6, 1994, <http://www.jonathanrosenbaum.com/?s=die+Zweite+Heimat>

says, before taking his leave, he loves them. He sees them as they are, and loves them for it, and they value him as a friend. Hermann remembers: "he had the broadest vision and he believed in love, yet he was alone." Juan is often sad, and his sadness, even his suicide attempt, is cathartic for the others. He can be very funny, and his humour is cathartic too. He is ambivalent, maybe sexually, certainly in many other ways: a talented musician, a gymnast, an entertainer, a confidant, a mask. Always, "blindly", the acrobat's smile. He is needy, but he gives more of himself than most of the rest. In Film 10 he moves on, as all their lives are moving on and apart.

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

Juan is already aware that studying music was not all he sought when he came to Germany. He has remained here even after being rejected by the Conservatoire. He sees that all the young faces in the concert hall are bewitched by the Chinese Emperor's clockwork nightingale. Already the ambiguity of the concepts "art" and "artifice" gives a subtle dimension to the story of the Emperor's nightingales, prefiguring recurring conflicts in these students' later lives.

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

During the visit of his old school teacher and a pretty schoolgirl, as truly and illicitly in love as Hermann and Klärchen had been, the recurrence of a childhood illness leaves Hermann in delirium calling for his mother and his home. He sees himself now as no more than a third rate provincial musician. The great dream has altogether faded. But later, as he gets better,

Clarissa tentatively returns to him. In the scene of their kiss on her stairway, Hermann starts to ask her to play in his piece for cello but she stops him with the truth: "If we pretend this is about music, we are both lying". They are both "hedgehogs full of prickles", and their prickles go inwards. And after the kiss, Hermann runs away.

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

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Another theme pervading the memories of the first episodes, and later affecting most of the leading characters, is the streak of cruelty in nearly all their childhoods in this troubled generation.

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

A fascination with death and dying figures at times in the students' conversations. Hermann plays with the idea, in a young person's way. It sounds as though "death" for him is a metaphor for his frustration and hurt, his sexual memories and loneliness, and his insecurity. But the disturbed medical student Ansgar's bitterness is much deeper and more intractable, and when he says: "We're always in danger of death" he means it. In the next episodes it will be evident how damaging his family life has been. Now, sharing a temporary job with Hermann in a film store, sorting out dangerous decayed cellulose nitrate reels from the Nazi era, his face appears in close-up, half in warm light, half deathly cold.

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

2.2 Films 3 – 4: A 'Heimat' lost, recreated and destroyed again; and the Fuchsbau, a house of dangerous memories

In Films 3 and 4 the story of Evelyne and Ansgar gives a new twist to the theme of loss and regeneration of a 'Heimat', while the student friends flourish in the haven of the Fuchsbau, and the film flourishes with them in the brilliance of its cinematography and performances. But by the end of Film 4 the glittering second 'Heimat' is traumatised and has begun the slow slide into a darker place, not so different from the first.

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

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

In a strange way, Evelyne wants to realise a new 'Heimat' in replicating with Ansgar the happy passionate affair which she imagines and hopes her father had with her mother. Her true mother had looked exactly like herself: "The more I look for my mother, the more I find myself. And the more I find myself I find Ansgar... ..I was conceived in love... when I say 'I love' it's like remembering". Not surprisingly, Ansgar rejects the idea. It is all the more distasteful to him in that he, the only child of elderly parents, sees his own parents as

monsters – pious, hypocritical, self-sacrificing, guilt inducing, devouring. As they appear later in the film, they are indeed a grim couple. He burns his creative work, so that they shall not appropriate it when he dies. In truth, the relationship of Evelyne and Ansgar is no replica, but alive and warm in its own right. Yet tragically, Ansgar's parents return to hound him with their sick "love", his demons cannot be assuaged, and he is already back on drugs the day of his last accident. Evelyne is no more able to protect him from the death he has sought all along, than she could protect her own father from an early death.

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

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The other lead character of Films 3 and 4 is the Fuchsbau villa itself. The beautiful house, from basement to attic, is the setting for scene after scene. Hermann in voiceover remembers how it became the refuge and stage for this elite group of students. Inside and out, empty or crowded, in every light and every season, in all moods from gaiety to tragedy, it enfolds their lives, and moulds the action of the films. It is not just the physical house and its contents, however fascinating and exquisitely filmed, that has such power, it is also its dubious history, and that of its owner and her household.

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

is an unbearable image of Frau Ries after the Fuchsbau is sold, polishing a floor in the Cerphal publishing house, on hands and knees like a charwoman⁴⁷.

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

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

The students use the house to work, practice, perform, and party. Activity in any one place is often carried on in a context of sounds and interruptions from elsewhere. The scene in the library where Evelyne learns her mother’s story from Frau Ries, for instance, is intercut with clips from the young film makers’ short about the ruins of Munich, being “premiered” in the room next door. The music from the film is in the background throughout. With dramatic effect, the story of the bombing in which her mother died coincides with the moment in which the unseen film describes the fire-bombing of the Opera House and strafing of the city, to the sound of Gluck’s ‘Furies’.

After the film show there is a summer night party and the audience breaks into shifting groups, all through the house and garden. Everywhere there are small conversations, or someone singing or making music. Invisible threads of attraction, jealousy and pride draw people into and out of the groups, and the camera turns with them or follows them. Juan looses an outburst of genuine anger against an intruding Hermann. For once the mask slips and Juan’s smile disappears. “Jealousy!” he shouts after his retreating rival. Which it is, for

⁴⁷ Edgar Reitz: *Die Heimat-Trilogie*, 2004, p.317

both of them. In the darkened library among patterns of shadow, Evelyne and Ansgar meet, with distant voices in the background and somewhere a guitar. At the piano, Hermann and the young poetess Helga are joined by Evelyne, and a group gathers to listen. First Olga, then Clarissa watch through the rainy windows of their jealousy. Later, in the garden again, the patterns continue to evolve, as someone plays Chopin, and Evelyne finds a wine glass on Ansgar's upturned foot. The whole evening is a rich texture of movement and colours, of voices and musical instruments and light, and of complex emotions, sparking round the groups like the "word-cats" in Helga's game. It is as though the action were happening everywhere in the house and garden, fluidly, with no boundaries, and the particular focus of camera and screen is almost incidental. Perhaps this is something peculiar to *Heimat*, and maybe to the work of Reitz and Gernot Roll.

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

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

Clarissa gives an impression of overwhelming fragility. She is at once stressed out and elated by the demands of her music, the competition, the concert, and its success. And we now see how she has all along been crushed by the adults who profess to love her – her mother's controlling drive, and the emotionally blackmailing involvement of Dr. Kirschmayer. It is no wonder that she runs away and creates obstacles to a relationship she really wants. There is no ground for her to trust it, and Hermann in his current state is incapable of "waiting" and giving her space.

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The succession of beautiful images continue through these two films. Some of the most memorable include the scenes of Evelyne and Ansgar walking through the streets to her aunt's dairy shop, and then in an old graveyard. As they move along, and vehicles and passers-by appear and disappear, there is a sense in which the silvery spaces of the streets and the parks open out around and beyond them, leading out of the frame of the screen towards an unseen but imagined world. In the graveyard there are remarkable moving portraits: Evelyne and

Ansgar sharing the milk; an old woman and her goose; Ansgar in sunlight looking down at Evelyne; the textures of skin, clothes, hair, feathers, the tenderness of their faces. Even in the most dreadful scenes, like the encounter of Evelyne with Ansgar's mother after his death, the black and white images are startlingly beautiful. Like the images of Otto's unexploded bomb, they have no right to be so, and yet there they are. The colour too in the night scenes becomes even richer – Frau Moretti's room, the Fasching party scene, and the preparations for it. And when Evelyne grieves, bent over Ansgar's pullover in the library, her bright hair falls with the brushstrokes of an Expressionist painting.

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

2.3 Film 5: "Playing with freedom", by-ways

Film 5 tells of a stormy summer week of playing and testing out of "freedoms", whose outcomes are both enriching and destructive. Near the start, it depicts the Schwabinger riots of 1962, represented as the game of free-wheeling student life and protest on the streets, met with violence and injustice by ex-Nazi elements in the police force. By the end of that no one was playing games any more. This and further episodes of the later films will suggest that it crystallised the politicisation of the young with both creative and destructive effect, further polarising inter-generational conflict until the debacle of 1968.

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

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

infants, far into the distance ...You know, Dorli, we are like gunpowder. You simply need to hold a match to it. If a guy just goes past..."

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

Dorli's attic is another location built by light and sound and movement into a magical, unforgettable scene. Once more it is hard to write anything that could do it justice. The figures move in a dance, both constructing the space and constrained by it. Watching again, it is clear that though it is an ensemble piece, the leader is Marianne. The scene is structured round her silent initiatives, her hands on Hermann's shirt and body, the glances that pass between them. The younger girls are turned on as much by this as by their own participation, but they cannot compete. Dorli takes refuge in cream cakes, and Helga in ecstatically reciting Nietzsche, until emotion and anxiety overcome her and end the game. Hermann later remembers that "for a little while I had the idea that everything might be possible. ... Was it the start of something completely new? Freedom! Then I got frightened."

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

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

not last. For Marianne as well the moment is transient. He finds her crying, because it is so good, and because she herself must send him away.

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

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

This whole fifth film has again been full of intriguing images, constantly unfolding, constantly interacting with the action and the sound. A few fleeting examples: Near the start, when Hermann plays the piano after Tommy's lesson during a storm, rain lashing the window pane pours flickering shadows over the semiquavers on a sheet of music as he plays, and over himself. In Dorli's attic, light touches Helga's hair as she sits holding her wine glass, on the point of responding when Hermann calls her. Later, very briefly there is a momentary image of Marianne, standing under an outside light against a white wall, while Helga is swallowed into her family house. When Hermann goes to Marianne's door, the wind moves her lampshade in a cascade of white shells. Finally, the credits roll against a background of the Fuchsbau verandah in early autumn, furnished with soft brown garden chairs. It seems to be the last image for *Heimat* from Gernot Roll's camera.

2.4 Films 6 - 7: *Change of cameraman; laughter and pain, song of the wolves*

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

My amateur reaction ⁴⁸ to the change of cameraman is based only on watching the DVDs on inexpensive home equipment, or rare cinema showings of the old original film stock, now the latter sadly seems to have begun to darken and lose some of its subtlety. But naïvely I would say that the overwhelming change under the new cameraman is in the quality of light. In all the previous films, the light and the focus created very subtle distinctions of tone and texture, and thereby of depth, in individual objects and figures, and in the whole of a scene. There was an intense physicality, a tactile quality. Colours glowed out of shadow, a space was moulded out of them. The images were luminous and resonant, in a way that no one aspect of technical skill could achieve. For me, that is what is lost after the fifth film.

Watching Film 6, I no longer want to keep revisiting a breathtaking image or sequence. On the Tartan DVD, figures in the foreground tend to be lit with a flat, rather dull light, while the background is often comparatively featureless and unnaturally bright. It may be relevant that all the action of this episode takes place on one dreary November day. But the mistiness in streets and gardens is bland and too clearly blown from off-screen, and does not substitute for the mysteriousness of real shadows. The shifts between black/white and colour film are less intuitive than before. On occasion they just seem gimmicky, though at times the shift works and is suitably comic, as when the eternal philosophy student, Alex, watches Renate and Juan through the bevelled glass panes of a door, or visits the location where the young film makers are working. On DVD the colour throughout this film seems mostly either muted or rather banal. There is much play with coloured filters on the fictional film-makers' location – but this only emphasises the unreality of the 'natural' colour elsewhere. When at the end the students gather once more in the Fuchsbau, the light everywhere is monotonously bright and the whole atmosphere of the house seems to have evaporated. Perhaps it is an intended effect,

⁴⁸ NB: if readers disagree with my reactions in this section, I would be very grateful to receive their comments, as it would be good to know if mine are just subjective, or dependent on inadequate equipment.

given the story line. In the cinema however, colour appeared much richer in those scenes, and the effect less disturbing, while the concomitant heaviness and relative subtlety of the tones may have been due simply to the age of the film stock.

It is possible that a dearth of magical images may in fact enhance the story. The drab tones work well in the scene where Clarissa visits a sordid abortion clinic. She is miserable herself, dreading the painful humiliating procedure, and in the early stages of pregnancy she is exceptionally sensitive to pervading unpleasant smells. Both images and words combine to convey that feeling. Again, Alex's overriding memory of his visit to the film location is that he " ...was so wet and hungry that the scene turned into a dream", which may account for the unreality of the colour. Moreover, there are still the beautiful iconic images of bare branches and rocks, in the tradition of Caspar Friedrich, that introduce the episode and recur at intervals. Together with the music, setting Nietzsche's words (sung off-screen), their recurrence binds the varying moods of the film to the romantic bleakness at its heart.

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

The new style seems less suited to black and white film. Where distance is already built into the scene, as on the snow mountains, there is no problem, but elsewhere the absence of depth and texture can be oppressive. For instance a conversation between Volker and Jean-Marie is overpowered by the great cliff of Jean-Marie's father's house, with its insistent brightly lit detail. Nonetheless the beautiful "Wölfelied" scene that ends the film triumphantly survives, acquiring depth from a few features of the foreground figures, picked out by faint shafts of light from the window above and behind them, as is the arch of the recess overhead.

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The romantic bleakness underlying the sixth film is itself sent up in heartwarming comedy which tumbles through the story of Alex. The humour of this film is perhaps less subtle than in some of the earlier films, where trying to write about it would be hopelessly heavy handed.

But Alex, the improvident “victim of individualism”, is a wonderful character, almost comparable to Eduard. Also, like Edu, he is lovable – as Olga tells him “... you are touching because you’re not envious. You have a kind of generosity”. He has some splendid lines, for example, when dripping wet and hungry, but trying to console himself with the *Tractatus*: “What Wittgenstein forgot was to consider the conditions for observing any facts...” His story is a perfect foil for the growing anguish of Clarissa’s, on this dismal day which ends in shock with the death of President Kennedy.

Brilliant too is the comic routine for the two “fifty-fifty fathers” of Clarissa’s pregnancy. Its formal, farcical elements heighten rather than mask the pain of her situation, and emphasise a poignant contrast between the responses of the two men. Renate bounces back as well, still in pursuit of love and desperate to become an actress, and at heart still depressingly realistic about her chances. Another rich vein of laughter is provided by the young film makers and their location. Poor Rob the cameraman tries in vain to hold the ring between Director, Stefan, and Scriptwriter, Reinhard (“two directors in charge, that’s hell”), but at the end he manoeuvres a rather touching, sheepish reconciliation over a pot of goulash. Finally there is Schnüßchen from the Hunsrück, still as young, funny and bubbly as she appears in some of the precious “Fragments” in the ‘Epilogue’.

There are “Fragments” from this stage of the stories of both Helga and Olga too, and sadly some of the laughter in the “Fragments” is missing from Film 6 itself, where Helga becomes increasingly neurotic, a textbook “hysteric” and very trying, and also genuinely vulnerable. Olga, now less depressed, is sharply intuitive about her friends, and comes out with some interesting home truths about the disintegrating clique of arrogant young male “geniuses”. In Film 7, the legacy of Oma Aufschrey bears fruit in Helga’s vicious tormenting of Stefan, the student film-maker. Their sado-masochistic relationship is a mirror image of that of Ansgar and Olga in the past, but this time it is the woman who has the power.

Hermann comes out of Film 6 quite badly, the nights in Dülmen seem long gone. He is strangely insensitive to Clarissa’s distress. He remains piqued by her abandonment of his new cello piece, and misses the chance to hold and comfort her (though she might not have let him). He seems unable to see and feel for her as herself, rather than the tricky, insubstantial anima figure of his own fantasy. When Kennedy’s bereft “children” gather for comfort in the Fuchsbau for the first time for over a year, it is Schnüßchen who is lying in Hermann’s lap.

In Film 7 he remembers that out of his hurt and anger he wanted his concert, with the figure of the “absent cello”, to be a “gesture of... pride” aimed at Clarissa, but now she does not even attend it. He has no idea that she is sick. It is not clear why none of his other friends come to his celebratory party. Are they deterred by Schnüßchen’s naïvety and possessiveness? Are they embarrassed by the crude “absent cello” symbolism which looks so vengeful towards Clarissa? Or by not wholeheartedly admiring the music? According to the elite musician Jean-Marie it is the work of a sorcerer’s apprentice, “derivative but talented.” Some are preoccupied with their own relationships, which the ties that bound the group in the past may have become too weak to counter. But whatever the reasons it is a turning point in the

disintegration of the group, that began when the senior students graduated, and will be more or less complete after the wedding next summer.

It propels Hermann into the arms of Schnüßchen. Not only Clarissa but the whole new world he had set out to conquer is rejecting him. He has had enough of “intellectual” women and creative people, and he finds refuge in an unchallenging, physically good relationship with this cheerful girl who shares his childhood memories and food and language, who loves him and comforts him, and idolises even what she cannot understand in his work.

Remembering the traumatic abortion and its outcome, Clarissa laments “I didn’t want a woman’s life. I wanted to do things myself, not merely be done to”. Then follow many days at the mercy of illness, medical procedures, the threat of legal action, the sentimentality of a hospital Christmas. She is aware of her dependence on the two men originally responsible for her condition, Jean-Marie who paid for the illegal abortion but is now desperate to extricate himself from the consequences, and Volker who loves her deeply and whose love she finds oppressive.

The friendship of Jean-Marie and Volker belies the gulf between their social origins. They are both gifted musicians, and share a fastidious, sophisticated appreciation of their art. Among the most distinguished of the former students, they with Clarissa form according to Alex “the Holy Trinity” or, less kindly, “Jules et Jim”. Jean-Marie is a lonely intellectual, cynical, quite possibly gay, and once more from a troubled, though this time wealthy, family background. Volker is his only close friend. Jean-Marie is fascinated by Clarissa and even attracted by her blatant use of them both to provoke Hermann, but he has little sympathy for her predicament. He is nonetheless rather touchingly concerned that the situation should not damage his relationship with Volker.

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

In hospital Clarissa seeks to recover her sense of herself but then comes the moment where she happily greets her mother and is met with the demented accusation: “You murderess!” Fleeing the mother, the hospital, the city where all her friends are away, she turns up doubly reflected in the window glass and in a wall mirror at the Fuchsbau. She and Hermann huddle together in the cold, his hand bleeding from tearing wood from the fence, both trying to get the stove alight. They start to talk from their hearts, and then, in fear and love, repel each other with the words they least want to say. When she crawls into the bed they hold each other, weeping. They are crippled with fear, she of losing her freedom, he of losing her and, in that hurt, himself. In the cold early morning they play and sing the tender “Wölfelied”.

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

2.5 *Film 8: A wedding where nothing is as it seems, and the second 'Heimat' is invaded by the first, followed by exile.*

The first part of Film 8 traces Hermann's almost absent minded drift into matrimony. It follows Schnüßchen, homely, lively, energetic, as she revisits her beloved family in Schnepfenbach, tries to console Juan with her own warm energy and some inappropriately practical suggestions, and hunts for a flat. She is unable to understand why Hermann has cut himself off from the Hunsrück and tries to persuade him to go back for a visit. The beautiful Jugendstil apartment, where she takes him to babysit for her colleague, is a revelation. A new location, presumably chosen and designed for the current style of camera work, shows that it too can produce a lovely scene of light and movement. On the DVD, the simplicity of the space and the Japanese furnishings, the huge window with delicately coloured stained glass, the high ceiling, all in white, allow subtle lighting to work in a new and quite different way. But in the cinema once more the tones of this scene were much heavier, and curiously this time the darkening effect seemed not at all enriching, only damaging, working against the delicacy of tone and subtlety of light. Taking all three films, 6 through 8, such comparisons leave one disturbed by the fragility of the art, its vulnerability to the condition of medium and equipment, and its dependence on the audience's subjective perceptions.

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The couple's 'Japanese' night is heartwarming and funny, they are so comfortable with each other. Hermann plays along with Schnüßchen's sense of fun, feels alive and empowered, and lets go of his inner conflicts. But when he sleeps it is Clarissa he dreams of, while at the same time, travelling through the night to study in Paris, Clarissa is dreaming of him, and in the film their dreams become entwined.

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

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

For this is not a rich bourgeois wedding, but that of two young Hunsrück villagers. A few of their relatives come, and there is an uncomfortable social gulf between the Hunsrückers and Herman's circle of Munich friends, an awkward encounter of the old 'Heimat' with the new. Schnüßchen, entirely unselfconscious and without social pretensions, welcomes her father with delight when he (alone of her huge family) arrives cheerful and late, and she is very happy too to meet Marie-Goot, Pauline and her grand-daughter Jacquelinchen from Schabbach. But Hermann squirms with embarrassment at what his relations say and do, and is not helped by the obvious condescension of Jean-Marie and Volker and the rest. Pauline loudly presents the couple with two rings from the shop in Simmern and insists they wear them. Marie-Goot notices the funny way Hermann's friends look at him sometimes, and as Kath would have done in the past, warns him about it and reprimands him for never coming home: "Someone has to say it to you... It's not easy for us either". With the arrival of Schnüßchen's father, the Hunsrück contingent gains confidence, and Hermann in shock perceives that his new 'Heimat' is now under occupation from the old. Only his mother is absent. Her presence there is almost unimaginable. By the end of the evening all the Hunsrückers, including Hermann and Clemens, are gathered in the kitchen, helping with the washing up and singing an uncomfortable song about "Klärchen from the Sahärchen". Later they come crowding into the new flat with the bride and groom, heaving furniture, and needing help to find their lodging.

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

The party breaks up into small groups and couples, installing themselves in separate corners of the location. Unlike the party in Film 3, this one does not give the impression of flowing through space and time regardless of where the camera is focussed. Relationships

start to crumble. Early on, Renate, overconfident, loses the lawyer Dr Bretschneider to a triumphant Frau Moretti, and Juan loses his companion, Anniki, to Rob, the young cameraman. Stefan finds Helga with a gorgeous trumpeter with a romantic Russian name, and starts a drunken fight. Even Schnüßchen's "perfect couple" of friends depart in the throes of a fierce marital row.

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

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

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

Now, he becomes a kind of lightning conductor for the energies sparking around him. His suicide attempt releases a storm among the others. Helga screams and clings to her new man. Stefan and Reinhard fall into the violent fight that has been pending between them for

months if not years. Clarissa rushes to help Juan. She calls to him desperately, almost as though it were Hermann, whose virtual self destruction too she has failed to prevent. Volker tells her he loves her, she replies: "Volker, please never use that word again..."

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

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

2.6 Film 9: *The eternal daughter: guilty memories destroy the house, a guardian deity cannot protect it.*

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

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

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

She is herself a victim as well as a perpetrator of the evil that was done. She lived at a time when “ordinary” jealousy or betrayal of others could lead not only to their emotional hurt but to their death in Dachau. Her life reflects something of the mechanism of collaboration. Infantilised by her dominating father, she is now seeking to identify with a young generation to whom her complicity and denial are anathema. Movingly the students who know her personally do not reject her out of hand, they respect her as another human being, in spite of their suspicions about her past. To them the issues seem unequivocal, but she is already at an age to know the complexity and confusion of cowardice, and sometimes the futility of courage. Those of us who did not live as adults at that time, and are not German, and who are courageous only in words, have no right to judge.

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

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

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

Leafing through old photographs, she remembers how her father had not allowed her to acknowledge the tragedies that happened: “Child, you don’t need to worry” – about deaths and cancer, or the fate of the Jewish friend of her childhood and youth. But the “foolish” forbidden thoughts are still there: “Won’t you help me, Vati, ...say something!” she pleads to the great empty chair. On the way home she tries to cheer herself with shopping, then sits on her bedroom floor eating chocolate: “I’m missing 20 years, I’ve mislaid them somehow.”

In the soft coloured light of her father's room that evening he makes her tear up a "sham" contract that records the true ownership of the house, she must remember the house belongs to her alone, and there is nothing for her to worry about. Yet again, she clutches at the reassurance, and complies. His only stipulation is that she should complete her studies, she must earn what she possesses. This she does try to resist, but ignoring her protest he starts to write his will. The camera lingers on his old face as he smiles at his mother's portrait, and on his wasted hands, the right one paralysed, the left struggling to write. This is not artificial ageing, the actor of this part must himself have been very old, and it is a powerful performance.

The left hand, the hand "near the heart" says Fräulein Cerphal, figures more than once in this film. The music of the film is dominated by Volker's performance of Ravel's concerto for the left hand. Volker emerges as not only an impressive musician, but a warm, attractive man, with more maturity and emotional depth than Hermann. Even Clarissa is susceptible to this and they become closer, though her dream of the F-holes of Hermann's "absent 'cello" hovers in her consciousness, and she is shaken to meet Schnüßchen with Hermann's child ("And mine", Schnüßchen reminds her). Her mother is embarrassingly sycophantic to Volker, now that the former "sex fiend" has become a well-known concert pianist. Clarissa has returned from America to the arms of her mother and the pathetic and dreadful Dr. Kirschmayer. For the sake of her music she still feels unable to walk away from the emotional trap they hold her in, which parallels the stranglehold in which Fräulein Cerphal is bound by her father.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.7 Film 10: *The house is a memory, but older memories claim victims; "Your story is my story now"; the lens a "glass eye"? The Ammersee*

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

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

Clarissa is heavily pregnant and due after all to marry Volker: "...we are like ships on the high seas that have to sail under someone's flag". How has she arrived here, from fear of losing her "freedom"? She and Hermann meet at the demolition site, painfully aware, but not directly speaking, of what they have both relinquished. Perforce, her music is "resting". "Can it be?" asks Hermann, and she replies only: "I am a woman". Hermann's little Lulu watches, and the conversation is filmed from her eye level. Later comes the very moving scene where Clarissa's waters break and she turns for help to her mother: the child will be a stranger, she does not love Volker, she is trapped in a world without choice. Mother Lichtblau only half understands, but is unexpectedly gentle, remembering perhaps her own past experience.

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

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

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

Trixi is beautifully written and played, funny, sad and very photogenic. There are lovely portraits of her in this section, and of Reinhard himself too, in the fine white light of his rooms high in a block of flats. Her fantasies and behaviour are teenaged, but her empathy is that of a woman, and it is touching how they share their sadness. Earlier, there were other subtle images at the site of the Fuchsbau, of Reinhard wandering round bewildered, the old neighbour dappled under the trees, Rob's mobile face sad and concerned by his friend's illness, or charmed by Hermann's child. In the "U-boot" there is a sad-eyed close-up of Alex, listening to the Beatles' "Yesterday", and a dismal 'Nighthawks' scene, where Alex and Reinhard drunkenly smash their beer glasses, and a girl with a plastered leg hobbles away through the broken glass, past Renate and Bernd, both too exhausted to react at the end of the night.

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However it is in the second half of the film, in Venice, and especially on DVD, that the cinematography surpasses itself⁴⁹. The camera slides along the canals, the water and the buildings, in the rich tones and delicate detail of breath-taking unpeopled images. The gleaming reflections in moving water, the scum on its surface when stagnant, flickering light under bridges and up walls, the many textures of stone, the many meanings of the shadows. At one point there is a brief glimpse along a narrow street with sharp formal diagonal shadows thrown by the light, as in an old print. The sounds are simple: footsteps, distant voices, children playing, the water, the distant sound of canal traffic, an Angelus bell, music

⁴⁹I am indebted to Robert Cran for an interesting discussion of this section

(Messaien) for cello and piano interpreting the shadows. Only at night, the moonlight and a half-moon look contrived, perhaps ironically as sometimes in the first *Heimat*,

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

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

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

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

Reinhard challenges her love for the father who betrayed her mother, but he also has ambivalent feelings for his own Nazi father. Once more it is the inheritance of this post war generation, what Edgar Reitz has called "the tragedy of loving someone whom at the same time one judges on moral grounds"⁵⁰. Reinhard admits this to Esther, torn as she is when

⁵⁰ Hartlieb, op.cit. p.75, footnote

Gattinger and Fräulein Cerphal appear at her flat, and she clings to him with relief, for comfort. Again, as in so many of the couple relationships in *Heimat 2*, comes the juxtaposition of need and fear of closeness, fear of inevitable loss. They both know that they are using each other. For Reinhard there is always this split between his love for Esther as a woman and his fascination with her as a character for his script. She is aware and afraid of that, but in the dark-room he tells her: “Your story is my story now”.

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

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The encounter of Reinhard with Esther and the story he makes out of her story, raise many questions. Whose story is it? Who is a figure in whose story? How far is the story a flight from the real person? Does it falsify, or can it, if it is just a story? Esther feels it is her story, that her story is her own life, and that he is both falsifying it and appropriating it. Reinhard believes that her story as he has written it now belongs to him, that she is a figure in his story, and that ultimately his story is “more beautiful than reality”, as he tells the printer back in Munich, in one of the “Fragments”. But as her lover he has become part of her story. And one thing that is missing for us is the ending he has written for the “beautiful” story.

Several times in this episode there have been discussions about the nature of art and film. At the site of the Fuchsbau Reinhard and Rob fail to film the greedy speculation, the laying waste, the spirits of the place driven out, the emptiness of the space. “All this damn glass eye can do is goggle. Without hope and without compassion. Nothing is stupider than a camera!”. In the cutting room Dagmar tells them that they can forget all their memories of their “jewel-like” days in South America as those are nowhere in the pictures. But with Esther’s story, Reinhard comes to grips himself with the reality of hope and compassion. Is his screenplay truly “more beautiful than reality”, or is his own eye too another “glass eye”? Does art need to be “more beautiful than reality” to preserve and convey the reality of hope and compassion? Or is that reality distorted and betrayed by the beauty, as much as it is by the “glass eye”? In the “Fragments”, the printer shows Reinhard and Olga the racks of film scripts all newly printed to compete for funding. The room is full of birdcages, and he says proudly “those are Chinese nightingales”.

Reinhard seems to have put Venice behind him, in spite of the scratches on his face, but then he gets Trixi’s tongue-lashing. She is just a fantasy-ridden teenager with a crush on him, but he has confided in her, made unrealistic promises to her, and broken them. Guilty of

hurting her, maybe now he can no longer avoid confronting the ambiguity and extent of his love and his guilt towards Esther.

Perhaps it is at this point that he writes the postcard which Esther receives after his death. It is loving, painful and conflicted, and perhaps self deceiving, but not suicidal. Maybe the conversation at the printer's forces him to look at what he has refused to contemplate, namely that he might fail to get funding for "*Esther*". Maybe, reflecting on the screenplay in a boat on the Ammersee, he concludes that it is inadequate, both as art and as a way of loving, and that his love for Esther demands a deeper and more stifling commitment than he could bear. Is any of this enough to explain his disappearance, the empty boat?

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

His death remains an enigma. He could have deliberately swum till overcome by exhaustion. Maybe he had an unsuspected heart condition. It is after all only a story. As it is, in the story, his death and the mystery surrounding it has a heavy impact on his Munich friends, especially Rob, and it lays an undeserved burden of guilt on both Esther and Trixi, which will compound their grief, for which there can be no closure.

2.8 Films 11 – 12: Silences; 'Heimweh' for the lost 'Second Heimat', 'Fernweh' for the future; the many loud words of 1968

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

Film 11, the “time of silence”, picks up threads from the preceding film. One “silence” is the disappearance of Reinhard, which generates myths and rumours but remains unexplained. In memory of him, Rob, now “become the author”, creates “a kind of cinematic *perpetuum mobile*” whose themes are “the secrets that lie on the floors of lakes, utopias, dreams, the last ideas of the drowned.” But he has to use words to explain this.

Rob is a cameraman, because unlike Reinhard, the screenwriter, he has no faith in words. In the beautiful sequence where Rob and his father go hunting on the wooded shore of the Ammersee, Rob in quiet voiceover reflects that in his family “nothing much was said, we always knew exactly what the other person was thinking”. The silent understanding between himself and his father (played by the actor’s own father, a forester in real life) resembles that between Paul and Matthias in the opening scenes of the first *Heimat*. Rob is the kind of person Paul might well have become, had he been born in a later generation.

When Rob and Hermann eventually both get good jobs in a film company, Isarfilm, they are new to the sense of power and achievement and become rather arrogant. Rob is impatient with envious Herr Zielke, the established film maker for the company, whom he is displacing in their employer’s estimation. Rob believes that “seeing is perceiving the truth”, but Zielke maintains that the camera can falsify truth. Rob witheringly dismisses this but Zielke is haunted by hideous images. He was captain of the propaganda company on the eastern front where, by coincidence, the young Anton was his assistant, when they shot terrible footage to record the “achievements” of the Nazi troops.

The two young men continue to rile Herr Zielke, by their arrogance as much as by their skills with the new technology. Zielke's revenge is another "silence", concealing an electrical fault which ruins the public presentation of the two young creators' work and leaves Rob terrified and temporarily blinded. In the final scene the young man, hitherto totally reliant on the accuracy and honesty of his vision, gropes his way to the bank of the lake and tries to lift the bandages for the first time. For a moment he is blinded all over again by the light, and then gradually perceives the boat from which Reinhard died, with someone in it. Watching with him, at first unbelieving, we realise that the person is Esther in her red coat, taking silent leave of Reinhard's "grave".

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

In Dachau, now a tidy tourist attraction, she finally gets the truth, as far as it goes, from Gattinger: her mother was never in Dachau, but in Ravensbrück and then, through family influence, transferred to a work camp in Moringen where she would have survived had the camp not been closed in 1944. After that he does not know what happened. He is able to admit his part, but seems still impervious to its enormity. Alone with her camera Esther sees that: "All traces of her are lost..." Back in a restaurant in the town, Gattinger offers her soup, gently putting the spoon in her hand, and she weeps. His face shows love and pity, if not remorse. Had he looked like that at her mother in the past? And if he had not betrayed her mother, what would have happened to them all? It is unimaginable, what memories he must have amputated to be able to live with himself. No wonder he cannot bear to risk full comprehension now. This moment of unspoken insight, raising such questions, lifts the whole passage from near "documentary" drama into another realm.

In the old house at the core of the Cerphal publishing works, Esther finds Fräulein Cerphal asleep clutching a wine glass, while two graduate students research her dissertation for her. She has had to resume her studies, at least nominally, in order to access the rest of her inheritance. Fräulein Cerphal is all warmth and disingenuous welcome, but Esther removes her aunt's dark glasses and demands: "...why is there no trace of my family? ..." Cerphal replies shortly that there is a glass case upstairs for the Goldbaum mementos. Running upstairs, Esther shouts: "Yet another memorial! You've got a pigeon-hole to fit everything, or else it's at the bottom of a deep lake!" Loss of her family and loss of Reinhard are merged in grief. Cerphal stays sitting on the stairs, her head backlit by the window, until she droops sideways helplessly against the banister and the image dissolves in a blaze of sunlight.

Gattinger makes one more crass, rather desperate attempt at restitution, still unable to grasp why Esther rejects it. She appears briefly at Isarfilm during the disastrous public

opening of Rob's installation (Rob's mother's warning was not misplaced), and finally rows in across the lake as the credits roll. This is a heart-breaking place to leave the story of a character we had got so close to in the previous film, a story that, as in life, could have no resolution.

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

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The disintegration of the marriages is drawn in an interwoven tapestry. Both couples suffer the stresses of making a living and advancing in a career, and of relationships between people who are not very well suited. In addition, for the three musicians there is a specific challenge in trying to combine homelife and childcare with professional life. On parallel paths both Hermann and Clarissa are troubled by their memories and longings for the lost "Second Heimat" at the Fuchsbau and also still by the original "Fernweh" for a far away future time of achievement and freedom with like-minded friends.

Hermann, reduced to borrowing from the patient Clemens and playing in his band, is suddenly offered the prospect of a well paid job at Isarfilm, the freedom of a new electronic studio and the support of its technician. But even then there is still something missing. He returns to find his flat invaded by Helga and her friends, haranguing Schnüßchen and smoking pot. Schnüßchen is distraught, but the encounter with Helga brings back to Hermann a homesickness for the Fuchsbau, and memories of Dülmen. There is a "Fragment" from this scene where he says wistfully "I often think of Dülmen". When Schnüßchen throws his alien friends out and asks again about the new job, he no longer wants to talk about it.

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

Volker, as a rival composer, is made to feel redundant to this setup and returns home hurt and envious. He and Clarissa too are drifting ever further apart. Seeking Hermann, he finds Schnüßchen deserted in the silent flat. The ensuing encounter is very delicately written, as an

erotic tension between them is first set up and then broken by Schnüßchen, and Volker has to leave.

A scene where Clarissa sings a sad lullaby to her child, in a delightful, still untrained voice, is beautifully lit and costumed. Clarissa has perforce given up the 'cello, and in memory romanticises life in the Fuchsbau before Schnüßchen came. Schnüßchen, who had little time for the Fuchsbau friends, now knows that "in his heart" Hermann left her long ago, and is convinced that it is because of her lack of education. Touchingly, as their children play, the two women admit they have never liked each other, and why, and confide their unhappiness. Returning home with a squalling child, Clarissa finds her mother cleaning the house and reproaching her for the dust on the 'cello. She promptly returns the instrument to Dr Kirschmayer's house. Perhaps fortunately, he is not there. It looks like an hysterical gesture marking the end of her career and of any kind of artistic life, but in fact it is the first step to freeing herself from both her mother and the unsavoury doctor.

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

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

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

Sadly, her good heart and naïvety leave her vulnerable to the disorganised characters whom she invites in and tries to help. Hermann finds their new comfortable middle-class flat filled with strangers, who do not respect his piano or himself, sleep in his bed, and threaten his privacy. In their attempts to discuss the situation the couple talk past each other, without understanding. After the debacle with Trixi, Schnüßchen faces up to the reality of the new tasks she is setting herself, and of her helplessness: "Hermann, the city is so cruel, I don't want to live here any more." Hermann's depression has not lifted with the start of his sabbatical leave. On the contrary, he finds he is unable to compose as he had hoped. He fails to respond to Schnüßchen's distress, and instead provokes the furious, ridiculous row which leads to them both throwing their wedding rings out of the window and Hermann slamming out.

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

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

Even Stefan, who belongs to an older generation and ends up playing the invidious role of the reactionary, starts out from a basis of fashionable theory. But when his film set is taken over by the crew, led by Helga, early in her Baader-Meinhof phase, demanding "democratisation" and collective decision making, he is torn. He has sympathy with the ideal that everyone in the team should have a voice, and also is anxious not to lose politically correct credentials for the film in the eyes of the critics, so he permits the discussion to continue. On the other hand, since the film is supported by public money, the argument is that it must be directed by and for "the people", not by an "auteur" film maker. At that point Stefan resists. The endless discussions and attempts to rewrite the screenplay and collectively control the filming mean that production is effectively halted, at huge cost. Stefan, abandoning ideals and reasserting his authority, ends up "selling out" to the commercial sector by negotiating re-financing of the film by an American film company. As a result he

loses the friendship of Rob and others of his team. Stefan is a character whom his creator admits he found hard to love, but he is made bearer of the role forced on Edgar Reitz in the filming of *Cardillac*.

Helga now speaks mostly the language of revolutionary socialism. She lectures Stefan about the content of his film: “...(Its themes) are social and historical facts... you can't describe those with feelings”. But it is not long before her own feelings re-emerge as sharply as ever. She is jealous that Hermann is with Kathrin, and riled by the casual irresponsibility of the commune, whose members have failed to provide care for her son. Collective film-directing may be a great revolutionary ideal, but collective childcare is proving a dead loss. Then right-wing terrorists fire-bomb the nursery where her child goes, and in shock, Helga's certainties are challenged. When a reporter tries to elicit her views on violence, she can only reply, with unaccustomed honesty, “that's difficult”, and “there's always another side to it”.

Schnüßchen enthusiastically joins a student sit-in at the university. Her simple attempt to describe how her family, who were all “workers”, experienced the rise of Fascism in the village at home, only shows up the mindless militancy of her fellow students. They jeer her because she speaks naïvely without the trendy jargon. The mature student leader Dirk (who once arrived with Alex at the Fuchsbau expounding a philosophy of revolution, but afraid to jump the locked gate) kindly explains why. Poor Schnüßchen feels crushed, and leaves with his recommendations for a reading list. Meanwhile Rob supports the “revolutionaries” but with a very different understanding from theirs, and being a man of few words, he expresses himself quite briefly. Unlike Helga, he has learnt, since his temporary loss of sight, that Reinhard was right, and that “to approach the truth, the cameraman must get his feelings into the picture. Reality is not truth.”

Kathrin is a person of contradictions too – she can be as aggressive and hostile as Helga, and yet write eloquently if simplistically for *Stern* about the “fascism of feelings” and the family interactions that engender it. At the same time she can be warm, open and gentle, but so indiscriminate that Hermann leaves her, fleeing the nightmare of a druggy communal love-in. Hermann's flirting with the heady world of revolution has ended in disillusion. Back in Munich, he finds that Schnüßchen, distressed and deserted, has left home. Once again he takes refuge in flight, this time in a trip up the Zugspitze in a cable car with a delighted, wondering Lulu. Kathrin's article in *Stern* belongs to another world. But the flight has to end.

2.9 Film 13. *Taking leave of ten years of life; return to the beginning?*

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

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

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

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

Afterwards, Zielke and Gross take him to a bar for a drink. Zielke speaks of his wartime role as one of Goebbels's directors, of a shady deal struck with Handschuh to their mutual

advantage at the end of the war, and the power the Consul has had over him ever since. His dizzying financial proposition for a new company leaves Hermann feeling unreal and mistrustful. He sees Jean-Marie and Volker in the crowd leaving the bar and runs out after them.

Of the next scene, where Jean-Marie and Volker appear to watch a young dancer perform militaristic fascist movements to their music, Edgar Reitz has written: "In the last part [of *Heimat 2*] it is never quite clear whether a scene depicts Hermann's fears and wishes, his memory, or a real story"⁵¹. He explains that to mark this the scene was set unrealistically in a glass-roofed court of the Palace of Justice, and in a light that could be either indoors or out. Presumably there are many ways to see it – perhaps as a dream inspired by a real conversation, or maybe reflecting Hermann's envy of his successful fellow musicians. Maybe his two friends have become linked in Hermann's dream with the corrupt dealings of Handschuh and Zielke, though in fact Volker's part is only to acquiesce, under protest. Is Hermann simply projecting his anxiety about allowing his own talent to be used for commercial purposes? His words at the end suggest that it is anyway a nightmare that he wants to wake out of, and in the following scene he is wandering round his apartment in his dressing gown.

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

Next day comes an unexpected and moving offer from Consul Handschuh and his wife. The couple are portrayed with all the sensitivity with which Reitz draws even relatively minor figures. Handschuh is an interesting character – his Nazi past does not sound so evil as Zielke's, the deal he had with Zielke was to protect him after the war in return for illegal appropriation of cameras and equipment, with which to set up the business. A creative businessman himself, Handschuh idealises artistically creative people whom he wishes he could emulate, he understands them, and recognises the value of their work at Isarfilm. Now, gravely ill and childless, he, together with his poor wife, is offering to make Hermann their substitute son, and the heir of the business. Numbed by his depression, Hermann talks on and on about the future of the studio, without believing what he is saying. There is a striking black and white image in which his face is seen through a window, with the Ammersee where Reinhard died reflected in its panes. If he is willing to stay and devote himself to working on the Consul's he will inherit the whole firm. "But I am a musician, Herr Consul".

In shock at receiving two huge financial offers in the course of twenty four hours for the sake of his youth and idealism, Hermann needs advice. Renate's bar has closed down, but a light comes on in Clarissa's apartment. Her mother tells him she is on a successful European tour with a new production, the *Hexenpassion*. Tomorrow she is in Heidelberg. Next day Hermann takes his free railcard, a gift from the Consul, and sets out with the idea of travelling

⁵¹ *Drehort Heimat*, 2004, p. 160

in whatever direction he may feel like, without any goal to arrive at, “to keep moving, far and wide, without rest and endlessly”, where no one should find him and he might finally stay silent. Another flight. When he reaches the station there happens to be an announcement that an express for Heidelberg is about to depart. The image as he chases down the platform after it recalls Kieslowski's *Blind Chance*.

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

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

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

Everywhere there are posters for the *Hexenpassion*, but he is too late (did Mutter Lichtblau deliberately mislead him?) The performance was yesterday, the singers have left town, and today the theatre is showing *The Beggar Student* instead. So Hermann begs an hotel room, which he imagines was the one where Clarissa had slept the night before. In front of the Hotel zum Ritter (the Knight or Cavalier) a man leads a riderless horse. Is *Parzifal* the myth of this chapter?

Next morning on the railway station there is a “Wanted” poster for the Baader-Meinhof gang. One of those pictured is Helga. She seems to have finally abandoned the difficulty and complexity of her own understanding, and to be now trapped in the icy simplicities of

extremism. In so far as the character is supposed to have been partly inspired by the life of Ulrike Meinhof, this seems likely to be a “real” development of her story.

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

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

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

The story of Helga’s invasion of Stefan’s flat, and his subsequent near fatal encounter with the police, which is intercut with the story of Hermann’s night in Cologne, looks like a conscious *homage* to political thrillers of the period. Ironically, one of the big posters in Stefan’s flat is for *The Conformist*, though that is set in an earlier time. Stefan’s clothes and hairstyle, the heavy spectacle frames, the spiral staircase to his Munich apartment, the shadows of the police on its walls, and Helga’s clothes, especially her disguise with wig and heavy glasses, all seem almost stereotyped. Maybe the scene is simply as Hermann would have imagined it, on reading the press reports. The one illuminating moment is when Stefan says: “My God, Helga, how can you live like this?” and she replies: “At last I’m needed”.

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

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

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

The beautiful scene in the Hotel Acacia is again dreamlike, and full of silences. Its gentle humour brings it to earth but it is an open question whether this, too, is not a dream or a fantasy, Hermann’s, or Clarissa’s, or both. The scene is strangely lit, very beautifully, but in the style of another film, reflecting the light in the last “chorale” of the *Hexenpassion*. For me this has a distancing, unreal effect.

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

Clarissa’s note and the intrusion of the chambermaids in the morning brings it all into the light of a normal day. Hermann has to wait. In one of the “Fragments” Martha, waiting endlessly for the return of Anton, asks the child Hermann: “Do you know what that is,

Hermann? To wait?" and the little boy, who has watched her crying, says "Yes". But as a young man he has announced that "Waiting makes you stupid", and now he fails to wait. Smashing the mirror, he only multiplies his own image. His leaving Amsterdam has something of the wretched, unconscious self-selection that causes us to desert the scene we most want to be part of, because we are not yet ready or adult enough for it. Like Parzifal, he has failed to ask the right question.

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

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

Heimat 3

1989-1999

3.0 Introduction

Heimat 3 is a six-part epic journey through the turbulent decade in Germany following the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. It contains some of Reitz' most strongly and sensitively realised characters, richly performed in complex stories full of humour, grief and power. It revisits the fictional 'Schabbach' and the heights bordering the Rhine, but also traverses the old border between West and East during and after the period of reunification, with scenes in big cities on both sides. Multi-faceted characters are drawn from both former parts of the country, and then from still further afield. As the cycle proceeds there are more and more of the delicate nuances of image and performance so typical of Reitz' work.

The role of memory in creating *Heimat 3* is very different from its role in either of the two earlier series. It is very recent memory, generated entirely within the month and ten years up to the Millennium, memory structured by intellect, and imbued with the mood of today. The experience that it records is adult experience. It was subjected at the same time, or soon after, to analysis in a language of politics and social history, as well as simple recognition in the language of immediate personal response. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 change has been so rapid and radical that the memory even of recent experience is getting lost. Now, at the time of making the film, it is rescued and interpreted retrospectively from within a state of mind to which the experiences themselves have given rise. For most of the period it is a long way from the sepia-toned memory of family tradition, or intuitively recreated memory of the intense feelings and perceptions of being young, long ago. The film locations return again at times to the village of 'Schabbach', but the society within which this cycle is set is no longer just that of a rural village. Instead, it is German society of the decade as reflected in the consciousness of socially mobile protagonists. The lives of minor characters in the village are not portrayed in the same depth as in *Heimat 1*.

At the same time, the "third 'Heimat' " resembles the second, in that it is a 'Heimat' of choice, located in an imagined future. But otherwise it differs, in that the choice is now a flight from the present legacy of the second 'Heimat', and the imagination is inspired by an

idealised memory of the first. Its reality rests on the survival of older members of the generation who have remained in the nexus of the first 'Heimat' and changed with it, but as a 'Heimat' of choice it remains a fantasy that dissolves around those who have chosen to "return" to it.

The leading actor Henry Arnold says⁵², "It is characteristic of *Die Zweite Heimat* and *Heimat 3*, and probably *Heimat 1*, that Reitz is telling the story of a decline or dismantling [*Abbau*]"'. So the action goes from the euphoria of the fall of the Wall and of the reunion of Hermann and Clarissa, to a high point for the characters, on the Zugspitze. Then, even as Germany rejoices in winning the World Cup, a deterioration gradually sets in, so that relationships start to crumble, dreams go sour, brutal economic and social realities start to intrude, change becomes a source not of joy but of anxiety, and individual lives are challenged by financial failure, sickness and death. At the Millennium there is a frantic need to recover hope and faith in yet more change, but the series ends in a mood of disillusion, realism grounded in the family, and maybe tentative hope. Alan Andres⁵³ describes this succinctly as "the human journey most of us make from idealism to realism, and often, to resignation, with family being a regenerating constant".

In parallel with this world view, goes a sense of despondency at a personal level, so that Hermann "the idealist" is a bearer of the concept "that applies to all intellectuals these days, they are at a loss in a special way... they cannot turn back and make their way again, despite all their experience, knowledge and ideals... Hermann increasingly lacks language, ... his character becomes steadily less outspoken, more a rather pale character, ... finally he is almost like anyone else"⁵⁴. This is the mood within which the memories of the past decade are rescued from oblivion and interpreted.

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Much has been said about the nefarious influence on *Heimat 3* of the TV editors and the financial backers, who are reputed to have curtailed the original 11-part design of the series and maybe instigated the introduction of the "Hollywood-style" catastrophe in Film 6. Everything one has since read or seen about the film emphasises the dire effect of the conditions under which Reitz was forced to work. The trouble began far back, with the late evening scheduling of *Heimat 2*, and the changed media and audience culture which meant that, in simplistic commercial terms, *Heimat 2* was not rated a great "success". It can only be imagined what we have lost because Reitz was not able to get funding to start work on a another series straightaway while still enthused with the spirit that induced him to make *Heimat 2* out of "love of life". The years of struggle and the unwelcome degree of compromise required before he could get the filming under way clearly took a toll.

⁵² In: Arnon Grunberg: VPRO Television Documentary 19.12.2004 *Over Heimat*.

⁵³ personal communication

⁵⁴ Edgar Reitz, in: Maarten van Bracht: VPRO-gids article 24.12.2004 „Gezocht: Heimat“.

The loss of “magic” and what seemed at first viewing like a loss of the author’s love for characters such as Hermann and Clarissa, at least in the early episodes of *Heimat 3*, may reflect this weariness. One of the most disconcerting aspects of the series, especially the first half, is that Hermann and Clarissa have both become quite different people from their incarnations in *Heimat 2*, as the actors of their parts explain in the VPRO documentary. That may also reflect the sense that Edgar Reitz describes in many of his interviews that the experience, knowledge and ideals of intellectuals of his own generation are no longer valid or valued in the world today. As we have seen, he deliberately presents Hermann and to some extent Clarissa as bearers of this uncomfortable consciousness, and attributes Hermann’s “passiveness” to it. All this may contribute to the flatness and disappointment one feels when first meeting them again at the start of *Heimat 3*, though it has to be said that Hermann was already the “intellectual, eternally failing to arrive”⁵⁵ even in *Heimat 2*. But he seemed somehow more complex and understandable then, and full of energy, and funny, and young. In the VPRO documentary quoted earlier, Henry Arnold says of his character in *Heimat 3*: “It’s not just that he’s a bit older than I am, but his view of the world, what he formerly expected from himself, his life, and also his music and his art, is so changed that I had to invent him as a new man.”

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

Heimat 3 lacks the enjoyment there was in *Heimat 2* of watching Clarissa’s work as a student of cello. Her musicianship and the fun, anxiety and seriousness of her approach felt then very real. But there is no counterpart to that in what is represented of her life as a singer, only a focus on the stress of combining professional and home life. Hermann’s having gravitated to a more conventional form of music making may be realistic, considering the constraints of the market on concert programming, but he too is less convincing as the great “maestro” than he was as the young experimental composer. Nonetheless, though they may not be “world class”, they still come across as serious musicians, performing and not miming their parts in the scenes of their public appearances, and this enriches *Heimat 3* just as it enriched *Heimat 2*. In *Heimat 3* there is much less film music contributed by Mamangakis, and the constant delight of his score is sorely missed. However as time goes by, Riessler’s intriguing music for bass clarinet becomes very effective at giving ground and voice to the

⁵⁵ „Das Hermännchen als Intellektueller und ewig Nicht-Ankommender“- Edgar Reitz in: Thomas E Schmidt: DIE ZEIT 16.12.2004 Nr.52 “Ich bewundere Treue, die auf nichts spekuliert“.

tensions that arise in the story, though by the end of the fourth film it is starting to annoy. But that whole film is also intriguingly haunted by two contrasting interpretations of Schumann's *Dichterliebe*, a straight romantic version, and an ironic, if (to my ears) rather fatuous "crossover" one.

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The greater part of the cycle is shot in bright colour, and there are splendid images in the first film, including a great panorama from the Zugspitze. Black and white film is used for historical reconstructions of Berlin and Leipzig in 1989, and for Hermann's return to Schabbach, which maybe he was still seeing through the eyes of memory. The black and white images have silvery light, but again, in the first half of the cycle, lack the texture and depth of the work of Gernot Roll or Christian Reitz, and the lighting and the positioning of the characters on the screen seem more conventional. There is not the same flowing of movement through the scenes, nor the spaces carved out of light and shadow. This also applies in some degree to the colour images in the first four films. In Films 3 and 4 particularly there are many beautiful scenes, maybe with only two or three characters, with clear living light from windows, or elsewhere, often from a luminous background, pervading a whole space, but not creating it in the way of the two first *Heimat* series. Depth is created more by planes of placement of characters and scenery, and rather less by focus and light. The landscape images are also often beautiful, but perhaps more static than in the first *Heimat*. The sense of space comes only from the movement of the camera, it is not suggested in the image. This changes in the last two episodes, with Christian Reitz' cinematography. Once again, scenes have light and texture and depth, and the flexibility and sweep of his camera crane allows the landscape and vehicle shots to flow⁵⁶.

There are a number of very beautiful close-ups in the second film, striking images both in black and white and in colour, especially of Ernst, and also of the East Germans Tobi and Gunnar. In that episode there are, as well, many black and white sequences. Reitz has explained that "they only appear when the scenes take off into the sphere of universal validity or contemporary history. These are for example scenes dealing with the fall of the Wall, historical flashbacks or people in borderline situations, moments detached from the plot"⁵⁷. However there seem to be other subtleties at work too.

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

⁵⁶ Edgar Reitz in: Ingo Fliess: „Interview mit Edgar Reitz zu Heimat3“, 28.06.2004

⁵⁷ In: Ingo Fliess, op.cit.

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

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

Meanwhile, it is worth reflecting that because these great films are the work of an individual artist and his team, they cannot be homogeneous, like a commercial product. The opus of a master in any medium is bound to be uneven, because it is constantly developing new ideas and methods, and encountering unprecedented resources or constraints. Unevenness in no way invalidates the work, its inspiration will spiral through troughs and peaks because it develops like a living thing. The early films of the third series may have met with some initial disappointment, but this does not mean that *Heimat 3* as a whole is “unsuccessful”. It grows in stature and in the power to fascinate, each time one watches it again.

3.1 *Film 1: Turning point: to a new-built dream? Or family and place refound?*

It is probably not possible for an English audience to appreciate what the memories of 1989 recreated in this episode mean for Germans, both in the West and in the East. So it may well be that we underestimate the true impact of what is being portrayed. We tend to focus on the rather perfunctory re-encounter of Hermann and Clarissa, and our distress that they meet again in this way with barely a hint of their multi-layered enigmatic relationship in the past. Yet we know from his interview with Maarten van Bracht⁵⁸ that Edgar Reitz shot about an hour of film that was never used, which covered a whole day in Berlin celebrating the fall of the Wall, and gave more depth and credence to the reunion of Hermann and Clarissa, so that “the two would not have arrived in the Hunsrück before the end of part 1.” The missing section would have depicted an extra day during which they rehearsed and performed together for a concert by musicians from both East and West, attended by Willy Brandt, which might have let them seem less oblivious of what was happening in the world around them, and also made their eventual decision to rebuild a house together more plausible. Dwelling longer on the events of that day might also have enhanced understanding of the import of the fall of the Wall for the whole following decade, which Reitz emphasises so much in his interviews about *Heimat 3*, but which the shortening of the films has tended almost to trivialise. It could have given a quite different balance to the series, the significance of the “Wende” might have become more accessible to non-German audiences, and we might even have felt less of a sense of loss and disbelief in the new incarnations of the leading characters.

After that, it might have been less disconcerting to start a new film for the scenes of speedy house building, full of the energy of the recent upheavals, with perhaps more space to develop the skilfully interwoven individual stories. As it is, it was not till after having watched the whole cycle that one came to understand and appreciate Brussig’s new East German characters in depth, as much more than figures in a kind of docu-drama. Having been followed through the subsequent episodes the tradesmen and craftsmen, Gunnar, Udo, Tobi and Tillmann, have now become friends to the audience, as it were, and are no longer intrusive “strangers”. They are still observed more simply and more from outside than the subtler “Reitzian” characters of *Heimat 1* and *Heimat 2*, but even if it does at times seem that (to be a bit pretentious) Dickens has collaborated with George Eliot or Flaubert – it finally feels “so much the better for that!”

⁵⁸ VPRO-gids article 24.12.2004 „Gezocht: Heimat“.

Nonetheless even in Film 1 as it now is, there are moments of true magic – there was a deep sense of relief in the short scene when Hermann visits Ernst. Ernst has everything, the ambiguous, sensitive, stubborn, way-out personality that Reitz delights in, and there is a quietness in this scene, a welcome contrast to the technicolour clamour of most of this film. There are also grateful moments like the tenderness of the Hunsrück innkeeper Rudi and his wife Lenchen, which look back to moments in the first *Heimat* with Kath the grandmother, or with Maria and Otto. Here perhaps is the secret, unmapped side of Schabbach that Reitz believes has survived into the modern world⁵⁹. Some of the new minor characters are subtly drawn and played too, like Tillmann and his girlfriend Moni. Then there are the children. Reitz must be one of the best directors of small children in film. Gunnar's daughter creeps onto his lap as he plays the piano, and it is Udo's son who slips between Hermann and Clarissa as they embrace, the child they have never made enough room for in their lives, whom now they will never have together. They are so gentle to him.

The culmination on the Zugspitze, with its sad and funny aftermath, is a delicious mix of Reitz and Brussig, which again is easier to appreciate after watching the whole series, and learning more about the significance of the scene in Germany. In retrospect, Gunnar's antics in this scene, imitating Honecker and running his little green bag up the flagpole, are all of a piece with everything that is both exasperating and endearing about him. He stubbornly remains himself throughout all the changes of the decade, and equally stubbornly represents his half of the country, with heart warming, clear-sighted humour. At the same time, in personal life, he does everything wrong, antagonises everyone he cares about most, and yet at heart he is loving and lovable, and impossible. It is touching too in both this and the next film how his friends, Hermann and Clarissa as well as his compatriots Udo and Jana, unsentimentally try to support him and shield him from the situations he gets himself into. It seems they feel for him much as we do too, in the audience. Also, even the relationship of Gunnar's estranged wife, Petra, with Hermann's concert manager, Reinhold, has subtle moments in the all too few and brief scenes where they appear together, in the first two films. Their faces show more than the truncated script allows them to develop.

The 'Heimat' that Hermann and Clarissa seek, and the 'Heimat' that they find, are already contrasted in this first episode. The pair seek an escape from their exhausting professional lives which perhaps now offer them less that is stimulating and new, their creativity has maybe reached a plateau. They are both tired of constantly travelling, they want to "unpack for ever." "What is this great freedom we've been seeking?", asks Clarissa, "It's all a mistake ... Things have to change." For Clarissa, it will be a new imaginary 'Heimat', a romantic ruin with a spectacular view, a place to be quiet and alone with someone she remembers as the love of her life nearly twenty years ago, but even then never managed to be quiet and alone with for more than a few brief hours. For Hermann the idea starts in that way too, but somewhat hilariously turns out (by "blind chance" again) to be a return to the physical 'Heimat' of his own youth. The romanticism of their dream is emphasised in so much of what they say and do, and in the lyrics of the songs Clarissa sings by the ruined house, or later in the car, already

⁵⁹Ingo Fliess, op.cit.

driving away again alone, next day. Very unusually for *Heimat*, her singing of Schumann in the car has a piano accompaniment, a lack of realism which jars, or maybe is an intentional comment on the lack of realism in her situation. There is also unspoken humour in the image of a huge romantic moon, ornamented by delicate bare branches, lighting the couple's wandering round their "haunted" ruin.

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

3.2 Film 2: *East and West, euphoria and dejection as fortunes rise and fall.*

Like the previous episode, Film 2 on first viewing still seemed to contain elements of docu-drama, and the scenes in the East were hard for an English viewer to appreciate, but when watched again, a much clearer and richer impression emerges. The narrative has more space, and there are many small delicate moments of glances and dialogue, between Ernst and the hippy East German craftsman Tobi, for instance, or Udo and his wife Jana. There is accompanying music, much of it on guitar, and some lovely images, often with just one or two characters, maybe Gunnar by the television, or Ernst and Tobi awaking to the looming presence of Lenin. More broadly, there seem to be two major themes: one is of movement back and forth over the former border between the West and the East; the other is of ups and downs in the fortunes of individual characters.

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

For the Westerners, there are shadows on the horizon. Hermann and Clarissa, hoping to regain their initial "faith" in the dream house, are still torn between their professional lives and their romantic ideal. Already at their house-warming party it is clear that the dream is starting to fade. The house itself looks unavoidably over-restored, with the grounds and mysterious woodland suburbanised, and, for the party, invaded by opulent motors. Maybe this only reflects Reitz' expressed intention to avoid suggesting a return to some idyllic romantic 'Heimat', by placing the house above the Rhine, "the river that ... connects the peoples – with all the shadow sides of the modern world: noise, traffic, destruction of nature..."⁶⁰. Clarissa's bright manner and obsession with the house is uncomfortable as well. It is hard to imagine the Clarissa of *Heimat 2* making such a success of being a charming hostess to Anton and his family and seeking to be accepted by them.

⁶⁰ In: Ingo Fliess, op.cit.

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

Then there is the plight of Gunnar, uncontrollably distressed because Petra and the children have arrived unexpectedly with Reinhold. The scenes of his family conflict are beautifully scripted and performed, and it is heart-rending when he is moved to tears by his small daughter. Petra and Reinhold should not both have come, their behaviour is unforgivably insensitive, but it is also difficult for Petra. She would know that Gunnar has no boundaries and that if she showed him any warmth he would totally overreact and misinterpret it. By the time the whole situation blows apart amid angry words and frightened children, and Gunnar roars off for the last time in his yellow VW, Hermann and Clarissa have slipped away together into the neighbouring vineyard and only return when the house is still and at peace. Next morning Hermann learns that he has been commissioned to write a "Unification Symphony".

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

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

Tobi is in many senses a borderline figure, rejecting the material values of both the Simons in the West and Gunnar in the East. Though "hippy" and laid back, he is nonetheless a highly skilled craftsman, astute and grounded – more so than the much older Ernst. His life under the regime of the GDR has matured and toughened him in a way that Ernst may never have known in the West. There is a short, very powerful scene where he confronts an officer who assaulted him as a conscript years before in the GDR. In spite of the bitterness from that time, he is gentle, and the scenes with his partner and their daughter, Anna, with Down's syndrome, are touching. Ernst typically lets him down, but he half knew that would happen. It becomes

sad that we see so little more of him in the later episodes. In a full 11-part *Heimat 3* he might well have merited an episode of his own. His brief reappearance with Anna at the Millennium party in Film 6 is a delight.

In Film 2 black and white film may help to enhance the distancing effect of the comedy in some places. There is plenty of comedy in this episode, the prime example being the progress of Lenin (the statue), to which conscious homage has been paid more recently in *Goodbye Lenin!* Lenin affords the one real belly laugh in the whole third cycle, that I can remember, but there is still a sinister undertone – the end of the episode leaves one wondering if he really is safely earthed in that paddock in Schabbach. There are other comic passages: the situation of the redundant GDR army and its equipment, and (mostly in colour) Gunnar's adventures as his luck appears to turn. Whether or not pure fantasy on Gunnar's part, as Alan Andres⁶¹ intriguingly suggests, the sequences of the double wave, the pneumatic secretary, the Elton John piano and so on, are intentionally comic, but less subtle than the tragicomedy of Gunnar's predicament in Film 6.

Alan Andres' idea, that Gunnar's adventures in Film 2 could be largely fantasy, resonated with several of us in the English online discussion group, but was disturbing to others. It is true that in the interview with Ingo Fliess⁶², Edgar Reitz says:

“Gunnar's life history has turns that are not at all typical for me. The story of his becoming a Wall-pecking millionaire springs from the most original Brussig imagination. All along it's been a joy for me to transpose this story of Thomas' into film, although it did not stem from the world of my ideas.”

So there is no suggestion there that he was treating it as a fantasy. Nonetheless, the same sequences could be understood in different ways without falsifying either interpretation, and that double wave by the four “Warner Bros.” executives does suggest something beyond simple realism. In the 1993 Arena documentary⁶³, Edgar Reitz says: “Just as music is composed with many voices, film can tell a story along many lines and paths, with many narrative threads. I'm very interested in telling stories on many simultaneous levels”.

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

In *Drehort Heimat*⁶⁴, in one of his production diary entries for *Heimat 3*, Reitz writes:

“Storytelling always has a melancholy undertone, as it portrays the transience of all happiness and all sufferings. ...The true depth of narrative opens itself up only to those [viewers] who are patient. ...Only when stories in this respect 'lie' and overstep the

⁶¹ In: *Online Discussion of Heimat 3* (pdf) pp.57-58

⁶² In: Ingo Fliess, op.cit.

⁶³ Carole Angier: BBC2 Arena: *Edgar Reitz Return to Heimat* (1993)

⁶⁴ *Drehort Heimat*, (2004) p.291

bounds of reality does light-heartedness arise, which makes [both] his readiness to be patient and the hidden melancholy of all life endurable to the viewer."

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

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

3.3 Film 3: *Power and rivalry in a changing world; brothers divided, cousins bound*

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

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

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

Galina herself is a fascinating character, sensitively played by a beautiful actress. As ever, one wishes there were more space for her part in the whole series. She is innocent and

vulnerable, but also strong and willing to adapt and make a life for herself. Her husband's peasant family test her love and loyalty to destruction, and in becoming involved with Hartmut she is not a victim, but a woman who, even in a time of anguish and indecision, knows who she is and what she is doing. "I wolf too", she tells Hartmut. Their "wolf" conversation recalls the "Wölfelied" of *Heimat 2*, though it only serves to emphasise the contrast between that slow scene and its lovely music, and the brief almost perfunctory treatment of the exchange in Hartmut's speeding Porsche. But the seduction scene that follows is given more space. Beautifully lit and performed, it shows Hartmut as the weak, irresponsible, needy partner, and Galina as the one who is both simple and strong. There is another moment in Film 4, showing Galina's wisdom in refusing to take part in Hartmut's wild plan to defy his family (and hers) in Schabbach, telling him "My new life is beginning here in this town [Wiesbaden]". We see her face when he leaves and she turns sadly and alone to her child, knowing herself emotionally older than the man she loves. In the final film, and in a delightful "Fragment", she has found herself another man, a master chef with whom she is excitedly planning to open a high-class restaurant in St. Petersburg. "You're only young once, isn't that true?" she tells Lulu. She is a courageous and lovable survivor.

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Film 3 expands on the power of the Simon family, the rivalries between Ernst and Anton and between Anton and his son Hartmut, and the rising threat to the Simon firm from wider changes in society and the world of business. Anton and Ernst are pillars of whatever reality remains of Hermann's still living Schabbach 'Heimat'.

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

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

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

The story of Anton's family, with their vulgar, glossy houses and lifestyles, fast cars, the dreadful christening party, and the family dynamics – autocratic father, playboy son, and so forth, seemed at first something of a soap opera, contrasting sadly with the much funnier and exquisitely portrayed social climbing of Lucie and Eduard in *Heimat 1*. But once again, first impressions soon dissolve on rewatching the episode. In the dialogues, Anton is true to his earlier incarnation in *Heimat 1*, it is just that old age has made him more rigid and defended, and even less sensitive to the needs of others. Like old Cerphal in *Heimat 2*, after years of emasculating his children by imposing his own power and judgement over theirs, he now despises and envies their relatively irresponsible lives. He tells Hartmut: "You're a child of the fat years ... that's why I don't trust you". He is right that his experience has taught him so much more than Hartmut has the discrimination to understand, but then his own behaviour has invited rejection of his wisdom. Like Herr Edel, he is left to pronounce wise sayings unrespected: "He who weds the Zeitgeist will be widowed early". It is no accident that striding ahead of his chauffeured car to the encounter with Ernst, he recreates the image of uncomprehending, insensitive American Paul. Materially, he has been far more successful in life than the "children" of the 1960s, or than his own children can hope to be, but emotionally his family life is no less disastrous than theirs. His way of love is to bestow the fruit of his own mastery on those he loves, but it is a bitter fruit.

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

Herr Böckle, asset-stripping Schinderhannes of the late twentieth century, is a mysterious figure. His part is beautifully scripted and played, but his encounter with Hermann on a train

to Leipzig is surreal. I know that Edgar Reitz is reported to have said⁶⁵ that the conversation is based verbatim on a real encounter he himself once had. But in the context of Hermann's train journey it emerges like one of the dream or fantasy passages on similar journeys in *Heimat 2*. It is shot in black and white, and starts with Hermann gazing at his own reflection, and then perceiving the reflection of the man opposite him – who speaks like a projection of his own guilt at travelling to exploit the property market in the East. The conversation ends on another note that is near to the bone, when Böckle says: "You're a musician? ...I'm full of unfulfilled dreams, too". When, by "blind chance" again, Böckle turns up at the Simon christening, and disgust at Anton's announcement happens to send Hermann away before he can warn Hartmut, one has to take the train encounter as having been "real". But it is also a conscious symbol of the predatory profiteering that characterised the epoch after Reunification, in both West and East. The ambiguity is rather fascinating. The figure himself might perhaps be a *homage* to some other film, possibly *Glengarry Glen Ross*.

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Hermann and Clarissa have with difficulty organized themselves a year's sabbatical for Hermann to compose his "Unification Symphony", and Clarissa to prepare new work and look after the goat. They tell themselves that they are enjoying it, but they are not at ease. Hermann laments that: "We are in the most beautiful spot on earth, but we can't find our peace." He can no longer compose, he has run out of inspiration. But when Lulu arrives she is refreshing and convincing, and immediately involving, and Hermann and Clarissa in their efforts to communicate with her become more complex and alive themselves. By now one is getting over the "loss" of the original Clarissa, and starting to appreciate the charm of her new incarnation.

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

Lutz' death at the hands of Hartmut is an accident that is not so unlikely as it might seem, given the small size of the community in which both families live. In its causes, it is yet

⁶⁵ at the London Goethe Institute in 2005

another example of Reitz' fascination with the interconnectedness of things, and the "small banal links"⁶⁶ in the chains of causality, that repays much further thought. The car accident itself is a link in another chain which intertwines Lulu's story inextricably with those of others in her Schabbach family, and determines the course of the rest of her life.

⁶⁶ *Drehtort Heimat* (2004), p.63

3.4 *Film 4: Collapse of the ideal 'Heimat', but "a brother is still a brother".*

Film 4 raises the work to another plane. Dramatically and emotionally it is the centrepiece of the whole third cycle. It is the most coherent, integrated film of the series. Its powerful sequences have more space and depth than is accorded to the earlier episodes, and they all interweave around the central themes: the decline and dismantling of a society, a way of life, a complex family, and also of an ageing intellectual's sense of his place in the world. As the title ("Everyone's doing well") suggests, the overriding challenge for all the characters is a confrontation with denial.

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

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

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

The first step is the collapse of the artificial situation, perilously constructed on the edge of two real lives that do not have space or energy for it. During their parting row, Hermann tries to remind Clarissa of "all the things here we have seen through together". Although the

previous films have shown only glimpses of their life at the house, there is a lost story in the gap of around two years between the third and fourth episodes, which may well have been particularly stressful. We learn later that Lulu, always stropic, and now distraught with grief and anger, stayed with them during her pregnancy, and that they cared for her at least until her baby was born.

By the start of Film 4, Clarissa has returned full-time to her career as a musician, being too young and creative to retire, but Hermann is still absorbed with his own lack of inspiration and inability to write. There could not be a greater contrast than the one that symbolises their relationship throughout this film: the contrast between his straight rendering of "Im wunderschönen Monat Mai", and Clarissa's "crossover" send up of "Ich grolle nicht", both from *Dichterliebe*. He has not noticed, or has avoided noticing, what is happening to Clarissa, he is continuing fondly to play a passive role as house-husband, and the realisation is a shock. It is compounded by Clarissa's own anxiety and defensiveness about what she is doing, and the silly, tense brittleness of her behaviour. Everything goes wrong from then onwards, the idyll has turned literally into a vicious trap. Lying in agony, caught in a marten trap like the one that symbolised Paul's entrapment in *Heimat 1*, Hermann reads Clarissa's honest and painful letter: "Sometimes I think we made a mistake ..." As if to prove her right, the shock and distress of her seeming desertion and of his injury, unblock Hermann's creative energy so that he finishes the "Unification Symphony" and writes his "Günderode Songs" – for Clarissa. The earthquake in his life is paralleled by a real tremor that shakes the house and bizarrely sets all the lights flashing on and off. This may seem a superfluous piece of symbolism, but it has a resonance later in the film.

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

On the football pitch Schabbach FC wins a trophy, and the players chair their huge patron shoulder high in celebration. Once again Anton triumphs, in a world he feels he has created. Afterwards he stands alone on the autumnal field, savouring his glory and maybe contemplating his own mortality in the midst of it. Hermann limps out to join him. The bitter memories of Anton's destruction of his first love affair have faded. Hermann's own world has collapsed, and he seems to be seeking some ground in what survives of the old Schabbach: Rudi and Lenchen, and his own family. He is depressed and at a loss, he sees Anton standing as a bastion of the world that is about to disappear. Out of brotherly concern, and perhaps also the wish to re-establish order in his family, Anton prompts Hermann to talk about Clarissa. Hermann wordlessly acknowledges the sympathy but does not pursue it, and

departs with the chauffeur in Anton's car. On the way home, it seems, he leaves his walking stick in the car. Anton stays gazing across the field, "a man alone, comfortable in his world, but his world is vanishing, ... looking out over the village and the hills of the Hunsrück. He is taking his leave," as Ivan Mansley movingly writes⁶⁷.

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Roughly in the middle of this "central" fourth episode Hermann encounters the old Russian-German by the Rhine, obsessed by the number four, the foursquare number of standstill and power (Anton again?). Hermann wanders down to the river at Oberwesel, in one of Reltz' "moments detached from the plot". It has a dreamlike logic, and may be Hermann's dream. The film becomes black and white, and winter seems to have already arrived. Trees are nearly bare and the river banks are inundated. The images are beautiful, against the gleaming silver light of the flood. The old man, through his slightly crazed apocalyptic millennialism, touches on central themes of *Heimat 3*. He loves "the wide river that flows on and on and takes all our filth with it". Will everything change with the Millennium, and the Rhine flow in the other direction? "It's all the same to the river", replies Hermann. The old man speaks of the earthquake: "The earth is mightily beautiful, but it is not secure", and Hermann sings the lines of Schubert back to him. "That's how they announce themselves", says the old man mysteriously, and walks away. After a few yards he grasps the handrail and starts to limp like Hermann, seeming to mirror the despair from which Hermann, having now abandoned his walking stick, will one day emerge. It is a suspended point, between the earthquake in the small hours a few nights before (was it first meant to have been at 4 am this same day, when the old man woke to find he was 94?), and the death of Anton at 4 am the next morning. Of who or what have "announced themselves" we too can only dream.

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

⁶⁷ *Online Discussion of Heimat 3* (pdf), p.146

However much Hartmut hated his father, he was also very close to him, and defined his own life in opposition to him. So also did Ernst. When Hartmut comes to tell him Anton is dead, both of them in a strange inverted way replay the tragic meeting between the brothers in the previous episode. Ernst is shocked, but cannot stop himself saying that Anton was “Someone with clods of clay on his feet and in his head” – yet at that moment it is Ernst himself who is wearing heavy boots. “You’re the boss now” he reminds Hartmut, and he must get on with it, life is short.

Then wild geese pass overhead, like a pack of hounds in the sky. Their flight has a sudden effect on Ernst – the old countryman may think of the nearness of his own death, and his stubborn rejection of Anton, perhaps he even hears a threat of revenge, and reaches at the wire with which he fences himself in. “But for now we’re doing well, aren’t we, Hartmut”, he announces as he recovers himself. Hartmut, who with the loss of his father has lost access to his own sustaining anger, wipes the clay off his shoe and climbs into the Porsche.

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

Hermann too is very shaken by Anton’s death, coming as it does on top of his own loss and confusion. He leaves as soon as is decent, past the silent grieving figure of the chauffeur outside the door, and starts driving in no particular direction. He happens upon Ernst at a filling station, and the two remaining brothers, always closer in spirit to each other than to Anton, return to Ernst’s house to commiserate in moving passages of the main film, supplemented by a couple of the “Fragments”.

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

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

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Hermann's attempt in Cologne to tell Lulu about Anton's death is a classic parent-child disaster. There is a strong sense of her hurt and bitterness and the constraints on her natural warmth and positive energy, and of how her history might have produced this. The pain of both Hermann and herself in their scene together at the flat is horribly recognisable. In spite of his part in caring for her through her pregnancy and the birth of her son Lukas, Lulu remains bitter towards her father, conflating her long standing resentment of him with the attempt by Anton and Hartmut to "compensate" with money for the death of Lutz. Hermann tries sadly to defend himself, but she is past reason. She watches him go, silent now, but too late. There is nothing he can offer here, he himself is helpless and without consolation.

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

From his hotel window he sees Cologne cathedral, mysteriously blue, as it was on his wandering flight at the end of *Heimat 2*. "Im Rhein, im heiligen Strome..." – is Clarissa's performance of *Dichterliebe* already in his mind before he hears on his answer phone that she has "a very great need to see him again" in Berlin? Once again, as in *Heimat 2*, he is journeying wildly across the country to catch up with her and arriving late for her concert, clutching the "Günderode Songs". Once again their meeting is wrecked by the chance intrusion of someone else (Gunnar), by the jealous flouncing out of her singing partner, and by Hermann's own suspicions. Is David really her lover? It is hard to believe, he is portrayed throughout as such a wally. Finally she is left on her own, sobbing. Next day Hermann drives home alone, his head full of the ironic, alien "crossover" performance of "Ich hab' im Traum geweinet...", to find he has forgotten a concert engagement, for the first time in his career.

The famous scene of Anton's funeral starts with a surreal yellow bush with legs – a wreath from "Food and non-Food". Mozart from Hermann's concert accompanies the first moments, as the family inspect the "perfect" family photograph. After that there is only natural sound for these scenes – a single dog barking, a rook, cars on the road, crunching footsteps and quiet voices. For a long while bathos rules, as people stand in desolate groups, making self-conscious small talk and waiting for the delayed urn, which is even now being raced along the highways in an undignified fashion. Everyone is oppressed by the massive absence of all that

would have made this a fitting ceremony for Anton. One need only think of the lavish christening ceremony at Ravensburg to imagine what he might have expected. Instead, the family exchange tips on stocks and shares, or proudly inspect a clever gadget for lowering the urn. No one there is old enough to remember Eduard's contraption for unveiling the Schabbach war memorial.

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

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

From the unaccompanied sonority of his language, the film cuts perhaps too quickly to Hermann's car, while the bass clarinet starts up again, suddenly tiresome and repetitive. At home, Hermann finds Clarissa. She has dreadful news, he holds her silently, and as the credits roll they look out at the river from a home which has lost all its romance. But such a cliffhanger is alien to *Heimat* – has this scene strayed in from the start of a lost or later episode?

3.5 Film 5: Death of the last older brother ends an era; greed destroys the family and claims an innocent victim; illness and a fragile homecoming

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

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

Nonetheless the film, just as it is, is a joy to watch, not least because with Christian Reitz as cameraman it has recovered the subtle lighting that carves spaces out of the shadows, moulding faces and figures, creating depth and texture, tactile details of fabrics and hair. This is noticeable in indoor scenes, in particular the evening sunlight in Tante Hilde's cottage and Matko's attic. In group scenes, like the debate among the "heirs", the way characters move in a space is more fluid again. There are also remarkable close-ups, even subtler than those in the earlier films of this cycle – images especially of Ernst, Matko, Clarissa (very painfully sick), and the young hospital nurse. Lulu's face too has become more mobile and softer, maybe reflecting her changed state of mind. Ernst's face while he watches Matko releasing his pigeon is radiant and gentle, a side of him often lost under his stubborn, suspicious exterior.

Landscape scenes, and (with Christian Reitz' camera crane⁶⁸) the passage of vehicles, are starting to acquire a new freedom – especially the final image behind the credits, which shows the view from the G nderode House with a breadth and spaciousness not seen before. The film music too, except in tense moments, is mostly gentle guitar music that merges with natural sounds like the wind.

All the scenes of Clarissa's sickness in hospital and convalescent home are shot in luminous black and white, until the last day when colour returns now she is well enough to be taken home. It seems to denote that this dark period is an abyss that will be left behind, relegated deep in memory, once she is home and beginning to live normally again. It forms an agonising substratum to the whole of the otherwise fragmented film, and links it back to the previous film, albeit with a time lag due again no doubt to the constraints on length and number of parts. There seem to have been about twenty months between Clarissa's diagnosis at the end of the fourth film, and her operation near the start of the fifth.

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

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

⁶⁸ See: *Fliess op.cit.*

renew her career. But of this, Edgar Reitz has said⁶⁹ that it changes the couple's perceptions of their relationship and re-introduces mystery into it, so that "love can arise again". That seems a long way from the disturbing notion that she might have been somehow "brought low" by her illness in retribution for her illusions. Looking through some of Reitz' interviews, I do not see there much moralising, just a recognition that the ideal self-image of his own generation could not last, simply because it was unrealistic. Merely observing the causal connection in a chain of attitudes and events does not amount to labelling it as retribution. This point will be revisited in the context of patterns of causality in Reitz' stories, in [a later chapter](#).

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

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The first part of the film chronicles the development of Ernst's attempt to "redeem his life" by, in a way, taking the place of Simon Optik in the life and economy of Schabbach through turning his huge private art collection into an underground museum. Could there be a belated feeling of reparation towards Anton as well here? His work is undermined by his typically stubborn undiplomatic failure to connect with the outside world for which he purports to be doing it. In fact the museum project, like the compulsive collecting that dominated his life before, is an expression of his own inner creative drive, in which need for recognition and for a kind of immortality outweighs the altruism.

His instinct to seek for a son is awakened by his growing affection for Matko. In this young lad he sees himself at a similar age, and finds someone who can uncritically share his enthusiasm, for flying at least, if not for art collecting. The gift of the glider appears symbolic of trying to be to Matko another "father" like Otto. Ernst and Matko are kindred spirits. Matko, having no father, and a mother he has not seen for five years, is even more alone than Ernst was after Otto's death, though perhaps no more so than Ernst has now become. In their conspiratorial relationship there is also something of Eduard's friendship with Korbmakers

⁶⁹ VPRO Television Documentary 19.12.2004 *Over Heimat*

Hänschen. Matko has need of both a mother and a father. Ernst in his rough and ready way provides for him emotionally, if not materially, as a father, but he cannot be the mother that the lad so much needs too. Ultimately his concern for the boy has its limits.

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

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

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

significant a stopping point as the end of Anton's, and would have been a natural close to an episode.

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We learn later something of the guilt felt in the village about Ernst's death. The village of Schabbach plays a greater role in this film than hitherto in the third cycle. It is interesting, because there were only minor references to reaction in the village to the wide social upheavals of Reunification in the earlier episodes. Now Bürgermeister Toni Bast has made clear that it was not the 'Eco' protestors who swung the balance of the local committee against Ernst's plans, but general resentment in the village against Ernst's unsociability, his arrogance, flying overhead and looking down on people, his parading of support by the regional Prime Minister and other authorities and experts from outside the immediate community. The Simon family too, maybe for decades objects of some envy, have become very unpopular as their firm, so crucial to the village economy, slides into bankruptcy. There are a number of scenes set in the Gasthaus Molz, and the villagers there provide a kind of Greek chorus for the misfortunes of the Simons⁷⁰. Always good sense and balanced insight are purveyed by the innkeeper Rudi, to whom both Ernst and Hermann have turned for support. Rudi, like old Wilhelm, remembers the days of Matthias and Maria, and preserves something of the wisdom of Katharina's generation. He has seen how village opinion has vacillated with the times over half a century or more, and confronts people now with their current, remorseful change of attitude to the museum. The fortunes of all the Simons, and of Matko, are still intimately interwoven with the fortunes of the village.

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

The plight of Hartmut and Mara receives no sympathy from the siblings, Hartmut's mismanagement is after all responsible for the failure of their company. They have lost their patriarch, and remain bitterly divided. Meanwhile Lulu is fiercely determined to preserve Ernst's collection intact, for the sake of her own career, and presumably also for the sake of his memory. Two events erupt into the gathering. First Böckle and his team arrive to start taking over and closing down the bankrupt company. Two expensive black cars sweep into the village, in an echo of the time when Anton had to fight off a hostile takeover forty years earlier. Like Lotti before her, Frau Weirich valiantly tries to hold the fort, but there is no Anton to lead the defence. Hartmut can manage no more than a foolish physical assault on

⁷⁰ Amanda Jeffries in: *Online Discussion of Heimat 3* (pdf), p.239

Böckle as he tries to assert ownership of Mara's horses, which are not assets of the firm. Hartmut seems to imply that there has been something between Böckle and Mara, but it would be very out of character for her to be fooled by that weird man, his methods trade on weaknesses that Hartmut possesses but she does not. Hartmut sees her as hand in glove with Anton in disinheriting and humiliating him, his father still haunts him after years in the grave.

The other event is the reappearance of Meise, telling Hermann in a tediously roundabout way that Matko may be a rival heir. Anton's family close ranks in horror, only Hermann foresees and fears the effect of their greed on poor Matko. There is a different quality to Matko's tragedy: unlike Ernst and Hartmut, he has done nothing to bring his distress upon himself. He is resilient and trusting and so young, rebuffing attention for an abscess, harbouring a crush on the carnival Wine Queen, making a fool of himself to attract her attention, an endearing, not very streetwise teenager. With the help of a local woman "Tante Hilde", who had once known his mother, he has made a life for himself in a strange country, his use of a foreign language made harder by a speech impediment. The scenes with his tame pigeon seem to be a conscious *homage* to *Kes*, and similarly avoid sentimentality. To the village, and to the Simon siblings, Matko is the stranger, the intruder, and he becomes the prey of the greedy rest of the world. He is also tragically a victim of the death of Ernst, the one person who would have provided a refuge for him, and who failed as Otto had failed. Sorrow for Ernst, incomprehension of his loss, must have numbed his mind. The sad dignified way he throws carnations over the Lorelei rock totally transforms Meise's grubby gesture in supplying them. Briefly Matko finds another kindred spirit in Hartmut, as abandoned now as himself, who, in a crazy state not so far from Ernst's, nearly kills them both on a wild last ride in his vintage Horch. For a moment they console each other with the cry "Tomorrow doesn't matter!". Finally, Hermann's well-meant befriending is undermined by his passiveness and inability to replace the staunchness of his brothers. He fails to shield the boy from threatening conversations, and simply assumes that when he runs away he will turn up again back at Hermann's house.

The last part of the film follows the unbearable hunting down of this poor child by Meise, by the administrator handling the inheritance dispute, and by the police, not to mention the school children and teenage bullies. Appallingly, the village collaborates with the persecution. He hears it said that if he were the true heir the whole village would hate him. Terrified, distraught by the death of the pigeon at the hands of local 'yobs', he flees from one unsafe refuge to the next. Matko's grief for Ernst (largely unspoken, as once he started running, who else was there for him to confide in?) seems most likely the fundamental reason for his death, all the other factors contribute, but the loss of Ernst would have undermined his ability to face them. Nonetheless, as Amanda Jeffries⁷¹ whose perceptive piece about Matko echoes through these pages, has written: "His tenderness towards the bird is tenderness towards the deeply wounded part of himself. When the bird is killed, it is the moment where Matko's hope for his own life also dies." The arrival of his "unrecognisable" mother is the last straw. For years he must have nursed a memory of her, which is invalidated, now she has aged and been scarred

⁷¹ *Online Discussion of Heimat 3* (pdf), p.222

facially by some violent event in the Bosnian war. It remains an open question as to whether she really is his mother. From being his refuge, Schabbach has become a living hell that he cannot escape, except by following Ernst. His death is hideously unnecessary, and Schabbach and the Simon family should have been deeply ashamed of themselves, but once again the film ends before that can be shown.

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

3.6 Film 6: *In Munich, eclipse and tragi-comedy; the refound 'Heimat' is just a story; the Millennium party is not what it seems. Realism?*

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

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

The eclipse is a tour de force. Reitz has explained that the eclipse in Bavaria in 1999 gave him an explanation for bringing a number of characters together in Munich on the same day, as he has "never otherwise taken chance meetings on the street to be a good dramatic device". So, much later, he "laboriously staged the solar eclipse of 2003 for the film with countless extras on the streets of Munich"⁷². The unworldly, eerie light, the dark sun, the uncanny tension of the crowd are authentic, according to those who have had the experience, and it is enhanced by beautiful, equally strange film music. Then the sun starts to reappear as a flashing diamond, before everyday life resumes.

Gunnar's return to the scene is surprisingly welcome, and it is easy to empathise with his predicaments, in the family and in prison. The faithfulness of his elder daughter, Nadine, is very moving, and so is the way the younger, Jennifer, gradually warms to him. In one nice moment, Clarissa and Hermann's concert performance of "Hermann's" (Rihm's) "Günderode

⁷² Edgar Reitz in: Fliess, op.cit.

Songs”, a performance gifted to each other as an expression of their mutual love, cuts straight to Gunnar playing “The Entertainer” as a gift to Nadine, in memory of their shared love of his playing it when she was a small child.

Alone with Nadine, he is able to give an honest account of events leading to his pending prison sentence, and confesses to “being a complete failure”. Nadine, who has kept her early love and trust of him, seems to be the only person he can confide in: “No one knows what I feel, except Nadine, Nadine senses it.” Yet when she tries to find out whether he has a girl friend or partner he twice evades the question. Maybe he is still together with the “timid lodger” of Film 2 in Berlin, but it later becomes clear that he has not confided in her either. He is an extraordinarily lonely person, who now has a “magical time” with his new-found children. The “magic” is enhanced by the rich lighting of the set, and the delicacy of the dialogue. But when Petra returns, he overdoes everything and creates an emotional confrontation.

The children are disturbed by the tension between their parents, it must have reminded them of times when they sat with hands over their ears during family rows ten years before. Initially, when Petra and Reinhold leave for the concert, taking Gunnar with them, the two girls sink to the floor and sit side by side against the door, much as they had crouched on the stairs in Leipzig when Gunnar first left for the West. Now, after the concert, as Gunnar aggravates Petra, the children both become confused and embarrassed that he has overstepped the boundary and is upsetting their mother. It is a painful experience for them, and makes Nadine’s loyalty to Gunnar and her gesture at the Millennium all the more poignant.

In this film, the persisting cultural contrast between East and West is deliberately emphasised, with Gunnar’s use of words that the girls do not understand, and their failure to recognise his impersonation of Honecker. In a VPRO documentary⁷³, Reitz comments on the effect this has on Gunnar: “One can sympathise when something that was important, even if it was negatively important, is suddenly no longer understood.” In prison, Gunnar launches into a nostalgic spiel about drink and driving in the old GDR. In the same documentary, the interviewer asks whether the East Germans wanted to go back to having two Germanies. Reitz gives an interesting reply:

“It’s quite ambivalent. If you really took people at their word they wouldn’t want to go back ... or to be shut in again. But there was perhaps a feeling of a greater closeness among people, people were not so alone as they are today, they were closer together in their work and their homes, and talked to each other more, and there were many more friendships. Outside it was a totalitarian state that watched people, but ... there was still a private world to withdraw to, this cosy atmosphere in the private world is lost.”

And he goes on to regret the loss of memory, our tendency to live only in the present and to lose our consciousness of history.

⁷³ VPRO Television Documentary 19.12.2004 *Over Heimat*

Gunnar does not fit the image of a successful “millionaire” contractor with “Warner Bros”. What has life been like for him in Berlin since 1990? He keeps saying “money is no object”, which becomes a kind of refrain in this episode. But seemingly he has nothing he can do with it, other than throw an extravagant Millennium party for all his friends, which he will not be able to attend. It is not clear how much of what Gunnar says is calculated simply to impress. On being admitted to prison he jauntily presents himself as someone so rich and famous that not only did he pay for all the damage to the butcher’s shop he crashed into, but the butcher then put up a poster of him in the shop. The long walk down sporadically lit corridors as he rattles on to a silent warder is both funny and disturbing. In the first corridor they approach us, but as they turn a corner yet another corridor appears and they head away. The lighting is beautiful, the walk symbolises all the forlornness of prison life. He enters the cell still talking, then his face falls as he finds the one-sided conversation ended and himself locked in. When confronted by a threatening cell-mate, the jauntiness immediately disappears, and he becomes anxious and compliant. But then and for months afterwards he continues to fantasise that he will be released in time for New Year.

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

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Before leaving Munich, Hermann and Clarissa clear out Hermann’s old flat. Hermann is unexpectedly nostalgic, and in philosophical mood: “The old stories are packed away in boxes and will follow us Our life together began as an experiment and it still is... ..when you sing the songs I wrote for your voice, then I feel safe.” Clarissa is more matter of fact: “Since my illness I know we are never safe”.

Thereupon her mother turns up in an hysterical state and demands to be rescued from the comfortable care home in Wasserburg, where she had herself originally insisted on returning. Clarissa, exchanging desperate glances with Hermann, gives in and promises to take the old woman with them to the G nderode House, after going back with her to Wasserburg to arrange the move.

In the VPRO television documentary Salome Kammer says of this scene:

“Clarissa has to take responsibility... This conflict with the mother is a very difficult thing - it can disrupt the life of a fragile relationship. Her mother is very strong and dominant... Clarissa can’t refuse... the story ends with the conflict still unresolved, but I am glad at least that Clarissa has taken her to live with them in Oberwesel.”

It is difficult to be “glad” about that. Frau Lichtblau is presented throughout *Heimat 2* as being almost pathologically manipulative and emotionally dishonest, she has persistently dominated Clarissa’s life from childhood onwards, while claiming and probably genuinely believing herself to be a devoted and selfless mother. In her defence it can be said that her earlier life was hard, she cared devotedly for her daughter in childhood and more recently for her grandson, and now she is frightened of dying far from her daughter. In the first film of *Heimat 3* she was depicted as a one-dimensional character, but here the actress playing the part skilfully shows each glimmer of glee at the success of her dramatic manoeuvre to blackmail Clarissa into this situation. It is hilarious, but horrible.

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

Apparently it really was a hot sultry day when the scene under the twin trees was shot. Hermann is already a little disoriented, the church tower of Schabbach advances and recedes, even before he sleeps. His empty black suit hangs eerily over his head. In his first dream, he finds himself outside the Simon house as it was just after Maria’s funeral, when Anton had roughly boarded up the door. Rudi’s image trembles in the water butt, like the reflected faces in train windows that have signalled earlier dream sequences. Rudi’s line about the young of today hearing with their eyes and seeing with their ears recalls a conversation between Hartmut and Matko that Hermann could not have overheard. But Hartmut is a good example of exactly what Rudi seems to mean.

The red artic-transports bearing away Ernst’s art collection reflect Hermann’s near accident a few hours before he slept. However, the question arises whether these scenes in his dream were originally intended as an alternative to the melodramatic collapse of the slate mine. Sequestration by the Inland Revenue, after maybe some official enquiry into the provenance of Ernst’s collection, sounds a far more satisfying scenario, though with less “Hollywood style” appeal for the TV ratings. In an earlier version of the plot, Rudi did not die, and his presence and comments would not then have needed to be “ghostly”. (Incidentally the “cuckoo” he speaks of is slang for a bailiff’s seal). The dream of exporting the collection reflects a recurring theme in Reitz’ interviews, that globalisation results in the movement of wealth and productivity away from European nations to the Far East⁷⁴. If not a dream, could it have been a realistic and politically significant reason for the Simon museum enterprise to fail, instead of the watery Götterdämmerung, complete with collapsing bridge?

⁷⁴ Ivan Mansley in Online Discussion of *Heimat 3* (pdf), p.247

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

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

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

But in the restaurant with Delveau, for once there is a chance to see a gentle and unsure side of Lulu. Delveau tries to comfort her, his French dropped "Hs" perhaps an affectation or game, since when she was in danger in the mineshaft he had no problem with pronouncing "Lulu, hörst du mich?". He quotes from "Der Zeitgeist" and says he loves 'ölderlin because "he saw a new beginning in everything and was enthused by it", but Lulu replies that she has lost too much – it was "more than just any job... it had to do with my family... No Hölderlin can help me now". When he asks her to marry him she is very gentle in return, but cannot answer. So Edgar Reitz says in his interviews⁷⁵ that "romanticism", "this idea of being always at the beginning, and seeing life as a journey", has become useless, and now, like poor Lulu, people are "at a loss".

⁷⁵ E.g. in Thomas E Schmidt: DIE ZEIT 16.12.2004

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

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

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

To start with, just a quibble: this is supposed to be midwinter, but, apart from the big chestnut (was it deliberately stripped?), most of the trees and bushes near the house are still heavy in leaf under artificial snow, and the view along the Rhine was clearly shot in the autumn. This is particularly sad when one thinks of snow scenes in *Heimat 2*, which are either genuine (the English Garden), or lovingly and convincingly created by Franz Bauer (the “W lfelied” scene). Once again, if there had been fewer constraints on time and funding, perhaps it would have been possible to shoot these scenes later in the year.

The party is in Hermann’s house, but he and Clarissa are not “giving” it. Gunnar, who is, cannot be there. Clarissa again momentarily assumes her bright social manner, so alien to the character she presented in *Heimat 2*. But in the midst of all that there is her delight at seeing her new grandchildren and tenderly singing to them, and welcoming her daughter-in-law for the first time. I wish again there had been place in the series to develop her relationship with her son, so that this scene and the one of the wedding video in hospital could have had more space and depth. Near the end, her singing of “Maybe this time”, to welcome the new millennium, might be thought sentimental, but the bitter-sweet lyric suits the mood.

Hartmut and Mara have an awkward meeting with Galina and Christian, her “new German husband”. Clarissa appears to ignore Galina while welcoming Mara, tactfully leaving Hartmut free to talk to Galina. Mara continues to watch them through the window. Galina as ever is very direct and simple in such a situation, though she has to give a clumsy summary of

Hartmut's life story since they last met, just so the viewer can learn what has happened to him. Their feeling for each other is still alive in their faces and movements. Absurdly, Hartmut and Christian find they are business acquaintances, and amuse Udo's sons by their wine-tasting antics. At one point later when we see Galina and Christian talk but cannot hear their words, it would be easy to imagine Galina is telling her husband about her past affair with Hartmut. Christian's face grows solemn as he looks back across the room. The camera does not follow their gaze, we do not know if they are indeed looking at Hartmut. But Hartmut is now attentive only to Mara. Galina and Mara are so different, yet each in her way is a woman of both beauty and strength. Hartmut does not deserve either of them.

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

The absence of Gunnar pervades the whole evening. In the Fliess interview, Edgar Reitz says: "When in the sixth episode New Year is celebrated, when everyone comes together once more, and Gunnar is missing because he is in jail, then that really hurts. We miss him, as parents might miss one of their children." It does really hurt, and his friends are upset and confused by it. The "timid lodger", who once washed Gunnar's football shirt in Berlin, wanders around like a ghost, knowing no one, and unable to find out what has happened to him. Although Hermann knows that she is seeking Gunnar, strangely neither he nor anyone else makes any attempt to talk to her and make her welcome. She haunts the images of the party, glimpsed again and again in the background, a personification of Gunnar's own loneliness and absence. What happens to her when she leaves her present on a table and slips away alone? How and where will she go, in that midnight of other people's jubilation? She may be or have been Gunnar's girlfriend, but he has not confided even in her. Like Ernst, without meaning to, Gunnar lets everyone down, however close to him a person may be. None of those at the party, not even Tillmann who is organising it for him, have any idea where he is. Someone so exuberantly alive and over-the-top absent from his own party – it is like another Schabbach funeral, all over again.

All the time, behind the convivial party lies the silent prison cell, where Gunnar sits tearful and alone with his daughter's musical greetings card. Nadine's tentative visit to the prison to hand in the card is one of the most moving scenes in the whole of *Heimat 3*. She is so young, and courageous, and the gesture so simple and loving. Yet who else but Gunnar, through sheer exuberance and over-optimism would get himself in the position of missing his own party? As with Falstaff - you don't know whether to laugh or cry. Then finally, Tobi and Anna appear, and at first viewing this was a moment of delight, like the brief reappearance of Juan in the final film of *Heimat 2*.

The Millennium party is skilfully orchestrated. As in the summer evening party in the Fuchsbau in Film 3 of *Heimat 2* the camera tends to follow the glances and movements of the characters, knitting groups of people and points of the location together. There are some

lovely unspoken moments, like the disapproval shared by Mother Lichtblau and Udo, or the glance of understanding between Hermann and Mara, as she sits in her errant husband's arms. But it lacks the sense given at the Fuchsbau, of movement just flowing all around, off screen as well as on, while the camera wanders through it. There is something searching, even frantic, about these party-goers, the characters are not interconnected in a net of their sparking emotions like the Fuchsbau friends, they are not held in the same space, they are older and have less to share among themselves. The energy and excitement are contrived, like Tillmann's lighting displays. No wonder Hermann takes refuge by the piano, teaching Lukas to play Mozart. The Millennium is not what it seems.

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

The following scene on the bank of the Main in Frankfurt is comparable with the best and most open and authentic parts of *Heimat 2*. The artificiality of the winter in the images no longer matters. It is moving to see Lulu with friends of her own age and experience – even sad experience. Some of the hardness of her bitter, defensive shell seems to have given way, and her friends can endorse and value her decision not to marry Delveau when she does not love him. Together in their sadness, these young people, insecure, afraid, and "at a loss" in the material world, have a very deep sense of love and friendship, so that when Lulu later stands weeping at the window it is truly an "open" end. This is where the *Heimat Trilogy* formally ends, in disillusion, realism, love, and not entirely devoid of hope.

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

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

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

The outtakes on colour film, however, were already no doubt suffering from the same severe deterioration of the film stock that afflicted Reitz’ earlier work, until its recent meticulous restoration. They may also have been further modified, perhaps to make them easier to distinguish from new material forming the context. Whole images have darkened, and parts of them have flooded with intensified colour, often blue, green or yellow, sometimes vivid red or white light, so the balance of light and colour and depth is seriously distorted. It

is disturbing, and very disappointing, once one has grown to recognise the beauty of so much of the original work.

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

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

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But this is not the only way to enjoy the film, there is more to it. One object of the film was somehow to continue the story of Lulu. Since sadly there were no resources to film a continuation of her life story in the “real” world of the Trilogy, this epilogue is a way of allowing her a kind of resolution of her situation through contemplation, reliving and understanding of her memories. They are memories both of her own early life and of what she has heard or imagined of the lives of her forebears and their contemporaries. At the same time, she reflects, and the film itself is a reflection, on the nature of memory and the art of film.

It was saddening to hear after the film first appeared that some viewers were wishing they could make themselves a version of the *Fragmente* from which Lulu’s part had been excised. That was probably not a serious intention, but as a crude scissors and paste job on the film as

we have it, it would have been vandalism! On the other hand, Daniel Kothenschulte, in one very intelligent review of the film⁷⁶, made a reference to another film, Jonas Mekas' *As I Was Moving...*, in which "unsimulated and raw as the moment created them, the snippets run past one after the other like a patchwork rug many hours long. The form of these *Heimat-Fragmente* could have been just like that: no form." I have not seen the Mekas film, but this is a tantalising thought. All the same, Lulu's journey through the images gives them a form which must have a special resonance for their author, and which projects illuminating interpretations back into the original films.

At times it is difficult not to feel impatient with poor Lulu when, after a delicate, funny, beautiful "fragment", she tramps over the screen with her spade and assortment of drills. She so rarely smiles. It would be nice if she could sometimes share the joke of those self-conscious lapses into a looking-glass world. At the first two or three times of viewing, her words were hard for an English viewer to absorb, due to the language barrier. Even now in places they seem to verge on truism and cliché. But written down and translated, and reflected on in conjunction with the "fragments" themselves, they give rise to a pattern that might start to do justice to the complexity and depth of this elusive film. Nonetheless my interpretation may only impose on the film a structure of my own imagining, that it was never meant to convey. Spelling out my own reflections on this flow of images, this laughter and pain, these ambivalent, questioning feelings, becomes as clumsy and intrusive as trying to analyse someone else's dream or poem, and maybe as pointless. Other people will surely have quite different ways of understanding the film. The richness of the *Heimat* films lies exactly in that multiplicity. I hope only to encourage other people to value the film as a whole work of art, as more than the sum of its parts.

At the dawn of the new millennium Lulu starts from a fixed, deeply depressed place: she cannot escape from the past. She has lost any sense of a future. This appears graphically in her face, more diffusely in her words. Nonetheless, she will go and start work at the metaphorical building site, "where life begins". Starting her "work", she "sees", imagines, builds stories about, her forebears when they were young, and the many aspects of their lives. For Lulu, in the flux of these still present images, the fixity of her situation starts to dissolve. She finds a new energy. The vitality of remembered figures, of their suffering, dreams, loves and desires, and of her own too in childhood, revives her capacity to live creatively in the present. Riding the flow of these fragments, she perceives the interchangeable nature of working with shifting memories, creating illusory images in film, and simply living fully in the flux of time. At the end, in the G nderode House, surrounded by photographs and stills from the films, she announces "I am free, I am alive!", and stands up and strides away. The pictures fade and crumble, into the Hunsr ck landscape.

Sadly, this final "resolution" is not so convincing on film as it feels on paper. That may be partly because it happens only in Lulu's words, and is not related to her "real" life, which for us comes to an end with *Heimat 3*. She has had no opportunity to create any free-standing

⁷⁶ Frankfurter Rundschau: FR online 04.09.06

composition outside herself, from the inner images that she has been working with. Also, she does not look "free". She moves with determination, but at the last she looks back at the pictures, and her face is still sombre and unsure. If only there had been resources for all of this to have had context in a film that also followed her life in the "real" external world, during that healing journey. But as it is, at each point the structure of her odyssey is subtly filled out and enriched by the "fragments", so we should be content with all that wealth.

Lulu's journey liberates the Trilogy both from those for whom it is a "text" to be assessed primarily in an historical, socio-political context, and from those of us who want to cling too simply to its documentary "reality". It leads us to understand that what has seemed to be a linear, objective narrative is composed of subjective images relating to various intersecting times and moods. They do not depend on one context for their life. They can be differently interpreted in different contexts. The same character can be played by different actors, and his or her meaning for the author can change from one film to another, without invalidating the work. The same scene can be a "real" event, a memory, a fantasy, or a dream. It can illuminate the depths of a character or an intellectual thesis about the nature of film or society. How the author intends it in the course of the narrative, how Lulu perceives it, how any one of us in the audience interprets it, they all differ, and each is itself multiple. *Heimat-Fragmente* makes clear that the Trilogy is above all a living work of art, originating in the personal lives and craftsmanship of its creator and of all his colleagues, cast and crew. The work has its own form, which is evanescent and shape-changing, and life-giving.

'Chance' and 'magic' in the telling of *Heimat*

The telling of 'Heimat' is illuminated by Edgar Reitz' own reflections in the book *Drehort Heimat*⁷⁷ on how "small banal events seen as a series represent a chain of causality that leads to the death" of a person. His thoughts, recorded in the production diary of the first *Heimat*, were prompted by the death in a car crash of a close friend and colleague, Alf Brustellin, led up to by "a chain of banal links, entirely consistent with his own character". Ironically, Brustellin had been intrigued by the possibility of such a causal chain as material for film, in place of lofty notions of Fate and atonement. At the time of his death he was scripting a story by the Polish writer Wladislaw Lem (author of *Solaris*), the English translation of which is entitled *The Chain of Chance*. Similar concepts famously inform the work of Kieslowski. In the last film of *Heimat 2* Reitz seems to pay direct homage to Kieslowski's *Blind Chance* in the scene where Hermann wanders into the station on a journey to nowhere in particular, when there happens to be a train departing for Heidelberg which he runs to catch. Chance and dream also pervade much of Hermann's subsequent odyssey in search of Clarissa.

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

Hermann's arrival back on the edge of the Hunsrück at the start of *Heimat 3* is an outcome of what seems like a contrived chain of events, rather than 'chance' – and yet – the Hunsrück and its dialect would have had meaning for Clarissa when she found the house, the fall of the Wall draws a crowd of hotel guests together by the TV, and inspires a search for change and the fulfilment of dreams, in characters already at a loss in their lives. In the same way, Herr

⁷⁷ *Drehort Heimat* (2004), pp.61-69

Böckle chances to reveal his nefarious designs to the brother of a man whose business is shortly to fall prey to them. But both Böckle and Hermann are travelling East with a similar aim – to exploit business opportunities in the old GDR. And Hermann, when he re-encounters Böckle at the Simon christening, happens to fail to warn anyone, because he leaves embarrassed by his brother's behaviour.

On the other hand, events in *Heimat* are nearly all scripted events in a purely fictional story, chance cannot enter into them, except in so far as characters may at times have seemed to take on lives of their own, beyond the film maker's conscious control. In *Dreht Heim*, Reitz went on to reflect that: "Our feelings are conditioned to thinking about Fate, the association of guilt and atonement, of action and nonaction, of heroism and cowardice, and similar moral opposites." He recognises that the "emotionless" approach to the story of a life in terms of chance and everyday interconnectedness, which he himself favours, lacks appeal to an audience's feelings: "People expect something to happen, something catastrophic or monstrous if one does this or that, which bears no relation to it, either psychologically or physically." It is not surprising, therefore, that in spite of many clear statements of Reitz' method, some people see the disasters that befall the characters of *Heimat 3* as a 'nemesis' on their 'hubris', a retribution for living 'selfish' lives, or 'having it too good'.

In contrast, interviews with Reitz about *Heimat 3* show that his own view of the modern world and of his characters, though often despondent, is not moralistic or eager to invoke nemesis on others. 'Hubris' for him seems to have no moral connotation, the context⁷⁸ makes clear it refers to the psychological delusion of an 'Ideal-Self' built on a romantic ideal of eternal love and glittering success in a career. Life knocks people off the pedestal of the 'Ideal-Self' (as he says), not however because it is "selfish" or lacking in social responsibility, but because it is an ideal, and hence unrealistic. This is not invoking nemesis or retribution, it is a non-judgemental observation about a causal connection – it is not something people "deserve", it is simply what happens. It has happened to his own generation of '68, and he is "looking for a story-teller's answer to our idea of a life-image, to the question: What is left of all that I have wanted in my life? It is still legitimate to want to save something from one's dreams."⁷⁹

The story-teller's method he uses is the one he once described, the 'magic' that sees the detail of interconnected, everyday chance events. He wrote in *Dreht Heim*⁸⁰ that neither high moral ideas nor any scientific method, but only "magic" can detect the patterns of this interconnectedness, and he claimed that film is in this sense a magic medium, though it had so far developed no form for such a representation. That was back in 1981, but over 20 years later in, for instance, the intertwining stories of cousins Lulu and Hartmut, or the death of Ernst, which is a classic example of the type of causal chain in question, Reitz himself was still producing work in a "magic medium" which reproduces exactly those patterns.

⁷⁸ for example, the interview in *Die Zeit* 16.12.04

⁷⁹ *Die Zeit*, op.cit.

⁸⁰ *Dreht Heim* (2004), pp.66-68

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

The concept of 'magic' for Reitz also has implications that range from Brustellin's mother's ability to find lost objects through concentration or meditation, to what I understand as a profound intuitive relationship and response to people and their lives, represented by, for instance, characters like the grandmother Kath in *Heimat 1* or Juan in *Heimat 2*. As a deeply intuitive author himself, he describes how images in the cutting room "belong" to each other and force one to order them in one way and no other, while music and images, movements and dialogue work together in inexplicable ways that one can only describe as "magic".

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

Imagined lives: The telling of life-long stories

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

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

Maria

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

Maria is a triumph of the director's imagination and the actress's skill. She grows all through the first series and yet she remains believably the same person throughout, there is almost nothing that jars. The changes wrought by age and circumstances, joyful, distressing, even tragic, are entirely consistent with her personality, as are the paths she takes. Less

unquestioning and satisfied with traditional rural life than Katharina, and lacking Kath's heritage of ancient intuitive instincts (she is after all by birth a Wiegand), she too suffers some of the frustrations of a 'Weggeher'. She dreams at times of travel and a new life. But all her emotional energies go outwards to other people, to the family and to Otto. She is bound by the strength of her love for them all, by recognition of their needs, and her need of them. Her conflicts and grief are generated not in an inner life, but in her relationships. She intuits the inner creative drives that propel Paul and her sons, but she does not share them.

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

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

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

But from then on, bereavement and grief, the absence of her older sons, the war and its disorienting aftermath, are ageing her. She becomes harder and more tensely defended, suspicious of Klärchen when she arrives, unable to bear the presence of poor Pieritz, Otto's assistant. When her privacy and self-possession are intruded on by American Paul, she is honest with him and not unsympathetic, but firmly sets her boundaries. He cannot give a straight answer to the question that torments her: why did he leave her? "No", she says,

“Don’t try to explain...”, and hears the truth: “I don’t know”. Finally Katharina dies, and Maria is beyond tears. We do not see her weep.

After the war, we begin to see her see her more through the eyes of her children. First Hermännchen as a small boy watches his mother withdraw into that altered adult world. Later as an adolescent he is oppressed by her possessiveness and devotion. She clings to him, the last of her sons at home, and all she has left from Otto. Had Otto lived, they might together have been relaxed and open towards the boy’s relationship with Klärchen. They are shown to be so, perhaps as reconciling figures in Hermann’s own mind, when he is with the equally “unsuitable” Gisela in the final episode. Even as it is, Maria nearly softens towards Klärchen’s letter, but she has turned to Anton to help defend her child from the woman who has seemed to betray her trust, and he is only too ready to do so. Yet she is clearly conflicted when she sees the effect of their heavy-handedness on Hermann.

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

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

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

We have other glimpses of Maria in old age. We see her loneliness, her household work like bottling fruit, her sense of duty, and her frustration at being unable to escape from Schabbach. She and Pauline still plan the journeys they never took when they were young, and now never will. Nonetheless she sells the cow, the one practical impediment to travelling,

and feels pain and guilt when the poor beast is roughly removed. Again in the “Epilogue” there is the splendid “fragment” in which Maria at last travels off on her own, to the consternation of Anton and Martha whom she does not tell. No doubt she realises they would try to stop or accompany her. She goes to France to find Apollonia, maybe still seeking closure to her ancient questions about Paul. Apollonia has died, but her daughter comes back with Maria for a visit. Returning to be reproved by her children, Maria finally asserts her independence: “Now just stop that, Martha, I can do and leave undone what I want. I’m an adult, after all.”

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

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

Anton and Ernst

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

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

Anton's life is more single track and predictable than Ernst's or Hermann's. As a child, skill with a camera becomes his main channel for communication with other children, and a talent fostered lovingly by his mother, maybe in memory of Paul. Eduard too is something of a role model in this respect. Anton is devoted to Otto, yet he stays close to his mother when Otto leaves, sharing but unable to alleviate her distress. The child actor of Anton is quite convincing as a childhood version of the mature man, but the actor of Anton the young soldier is a very different person. However, his experiences still make sense in the history of the character: a helpless witness of barbaric executions, he takes refuge in the intricacies of the camera. In later years, it is only in technology that he like Paul will have the confidence to venture and succeed. His way will be one of craftsmanship, probity, responsibility and control. On the stubborn walk home across the width of Europe he obsesses over his plan for Simon Optik. His temporary dissociation from his family on return is not so different from the young Paul's, except that the world has changed, and he will be in a position to realise his ambitions, not in a foreign land, but in Schabbach. Anton will never voluntarily travel away again. His flight is into his 'Heimat', not out of it.

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

The relation of Anton and Mara is another intriguing complication, both moving and disturbing – widowed Anton's emotional need, his envy (once again) of his own son to whom he had given everything that didn't matter and nothing that did, who disappointed him by not being able to break the emotional chains he had himself imposed. Only Mara is free enough from the history of his dominance to love him in a dignified and adult way, as simply who he is, without hatred or ambivalence at the same time. Anton needs success for his children, for his workforce and for his footballers, and reconciliation of couples within his family - not only for their sakes, but as affirmation of his own mastery and his own world view. This dominance is also genuinely his way of love, witness his sensitivity to Hermann's situation, on the football field the day before he died.

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

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

have started collecting just for something to do, it did not really suit him, but now it has become an addiction.

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

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

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

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

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

Finally comes the angry risk-taking that leads to his crash, his death the outcome of a causal chain "entirely consistent with his own character" as Edgar Reitz once wrote of another man's accident⁸¹. Though an accident, it is also a way out of what he would see as the worst fate of all, "the slow disappearing without trace". But after that, almost complete silence.

⁸¹ Edgar Reitz: *Drehort Heimat* (2004), p.64

There is no footage of his funeral, and very little mourning, apart from the anguished clip of Hermann weeping in Clarissa's lap, and poor Matko's ceremony with the carnations.

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

§

In Robert Busch's documentary about *Heimat 2*, Edgar Reitz speaks about the process of casting:

"It's always such a remarkable thing, one writes, and thinks that one has the characters clearly before one's eyes. While writing, I live with the characters as though they exist. But as soon as I look for an actor for the casting, I realise that is all an illusion... ..In the moment before you get to know an actor who inspires you in some way, the imagination starts to transform the character into the actor. In the process I meet the character for the second time, quite differently from how I do when I am writing, in a way that is unmistakably individual and personal."⁸²

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

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

Paul

Paul is an intriguing and mysterious character, especially as played by the young actor in the first part of *Heimat 1*. We understand that maybe in the War he has had experiences that set him apart from his family and village, and his best friend has died. In the overall structure of the Trilogy he is a bearer of the concept of the one who goes away, who is "homesick" for unknown distant places. He has absences, as when for example a fly walks over his face in a clip in the *Fragmente*. Like his mother he is intuitively in touch with another dimension of

⁸² Robert Busch: DREHORT HEIMAT Bonus-disc : Bis zum Augenblick der Wahrheit 1987

reality, seeming to see a vision of his dead friend Helmut, but he lacks Katharina's strong down to earth ability to trust her own intuition. Attractive to women, and probably hungry for relationship, he is torn between Apollonia and Maria, and takes refuge in his fascination with wireless technology. Maybe shocked by discovering the dead woman, and perhaps sensing the unspoken reaction of the village (as betrayed by the ancient Glasisch in another clip in the 'Epilogue'), unsettled by the incident of the pine-marten and the trap he sets for it, he walks away – from what? From the demands of home and family and work on the land, the intensity of his inner hunger and maybe murderous anger, his feeling trapped – who knows? The strength of the characterisation is that one knows no more about this fictional figure than about any other person in real life, and no more than maybe he knows about himself, and yet one is entirely convinced by its authenticity.

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

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

Hermann and Clarissa

Hermann himself is another enigmatic character whose earliest hopes are largely unfulfilled, in spite of his eventual material success. Again the role is played by different

actors – but except in the case of the unconvincing 40-year-old Hermann towards the end of *Heimat 1* this is not necessarily a problem, since Hermann of *Heimat 2* is in many ways a credible reincarnation of his teenage self. But some of the light and warmth has gone out of the person, perhaps not because it is another actor, but through the pain inflicted on the younger Hermann in the previous series. In documentaries, the actor himself has a funnier and more positive personality than his character. On film, Hermann has consciously rejected and lost access to an open, vulnerable part of his creative self, which was so badly hurt. For a long while he is in flight from falling in love, and when he almost accidentally slides into marriage, it is too soon and to the wrong person. There is something shallow about this Herman: he looks down on Clemens, he would choose the clockwork nightingale “with no soul”. Always in *Heimat 2* there is the hope that the open-hearted creative Hermann of the time with Klärchen will re-emerge, but except in small glimpses, as in his night with Marianne, it does not. With him has disappeared the only one of the Hermanns who could convincingly have become a “world class musician”. Meanwhile a more complex, funnier, sadder, less secure, more self-centred, and ultimately rather passive person stumbles through to adulthood. Throughout *Heimat 2* he is functioning and maturing, becoming an effective musician, “successful” in the conventional sense, at the level of the “sorcerer’s apprentice”. At the same time there is the complementary figure of Juan. Is it possible that Juan represents the Sorcerer, the Shaman, without access to whom within himself Hermann can never attain his full stature? Whereas Juan, with no Apprentice, no recognised practical achievement, remains in some eyes a failure?

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

“It didn’t help having played him in *Heimat 2*, because he has become a quite different man... What he has rather lost is his forward drive to want to go further with his music and composing. I accepted it because it was the storyline, but it was strange to me – ... I had to find another way of thinking myself into it, a different tempo, a different way of moving”⁸³

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

All through the second and third series Hermann is the person to whom things happen, rather than the one who makes them happen. On the other hand many of the stories in the films are told as his memories. In a sense, though not literally, he is the invisible “I” of the narrative, and too many of what might have been his more interesting characteristics seem to have been given to other figures. He is seen as a “riddle”. “That’s because he is an artist, that

⁸³ VPRO Television Documentary 19.12.2004 “Over Heimat”.

always makes one a bit of a riddle, he is always having to look for his artistic inspiration... he is always in development, always in search of himself.”⁸⁴

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

“The Clarissa in *Die Zweite Heimat* always gave me a problem because she was always hiding in a cocoon and not coming out, always in flight... By the end of the filming I was really unhappy with this character... she was so closed in, and she doesn't know where she wants to go or what she wants. She couldn't trust herself to let her feelings flow, that really tormented me.”

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

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

Nearly twenty years later, at the start of *Heimat 3*, the “magic” has gone, Hermann and Clarissa as their actors explain, have radically changed, they seem at first little more than bearers of the concepts of the intellectual at a loss in a changing world, and of the musician struggling to reconcile the demands of the art and of a stable relationship. Since the actors remain the same, the loss of continuity seems due to other causes, maybe the circumstances enforcing the long gap between the two productions, maybe also a change in the meaning of these two characters to the author. Hermann is still rather passive, with a wry wit, but the energy and enthusiasm for experimentation are lost. Clarissa has acquired an outgoing social manner and organising ability, and shows great charm and empathy and no little humour. The fear of deep feelings has gone, but inwardly she is still vulnerable, and they are both under stress in their working lives. Rather unconvincingly, Hermann is the great “maestro”, Clarissa “almost like a diva”, they give performances, but music no longer occupies their minds and

⁸⁴ Edgar Reitz, in the same Dutch TV documentary.

their life at home. They were far more believable as dedicated musicians when they were students.

The attempt to make a life together in the G nderode House is a flight into travelling in each others' dreams, and their own. Its predictable failure leads both of them once again into further forms of flight, an old, familiar sense of inadequacy and despair has returned to haunt their new 'Heimat'. But by the end of the series they have lived through experiences which bring them to a very different kind of 'Heimat'.

Even before Clarissa's illness, both she and Hermann have responded valiantly and together to the needs of Arnold and Lulu. In his distress after Clarissa seems to have left him, Hermann becomes briefly absorbed in his music once more, completing successful compositions. At the same time he rediscovers what remains of the living 'Heimat' of his brothers and Rudi, only to lose it again over the next few years, with their deaths. Then in the horror of Clarissa's illness Hermann effectively relinquishes his career to care for her. Worn down by her illness, and shaken by the death of Ernst, and his own failure to protect Matko, he and Clarissa settle again at the house, both of them changed and seeming indissolubly together.

In the final episode they have started performing again, but are still based firmly in Oberwesel. The space of their small house is no longer sacrosanct. But in the final analysis they find that "Family – seems to be the strongest thing, after all", and Clarissa tenderly makes Hermann the promise which is not in her hands to keep, that she will "Stay well". They have for the moment arrived at something approaching the grounded everyday inner 'Heimat' that Hermann's step-grandmother would have known.

Was this 'Heimat' the "Ithaka" of Cavafy's poem⁸⁵ which in its entirety encapsulates a great arc of their lives? The last lines run:

Ithaka gave you the marvellous journey.
Without her you would not have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now.

And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you.
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
you will have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.

⁸⁵ C.P. Cavafy, *Collected Poems*. Trans. Edmund Keeley & Philip Sherrard, ed. George Savidis (1992), p.36

Sources

The impetus to write about the Trilogy came from participating in the English online discussions of Heimat 3, and I have freely incorporated material from my own contributions to those discussions and from my own essays and articles contributed to Reinder Rustema and Thomas Hönemann's websites (see below). Where I have referred to other people's contributions to these sites and discussions they are referenced properly in the footnotes.

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