

Report from the HEIMAT 3 Premiers in Munich (18./19.9.2004) and Simmern/Hunsrück (25./26.9.2004)

PRELIMINARY NOTE

Writing these lines demands a precise declaration of intent: to antedate too much of the contents would be as wrong as not to satisfy your needs for information and curiosity by using nebulous words and descriptions. Basically I am no film-critic, and I cannot justify my feeling of having seen a very good and extraordinary film by proving it by any scientific categories, words or analysis. So I am going to create this text as a summary of thoughts which came while watching the film for two times. Feel sincerely invited to disagree, complete or concretise my words.

TWO PREMIERS - TWO DIFFERENT WORLDS



For someone like me, who is not native to the milieu of filmmakers and -critics, the invitation to the German premier of HEIMAT 3 in the Munich Prinzregententheater means the attendance to another world. A really breathtaking experience. And the short breaks between the films did not suffice to do all the things that could have been done. For me, Reinder and Raymond there was not even enough time for eating and drinking - besides to my great pleasure and honor to meet them personally for the first time. Next to nearly all of the important actors of HEIMAT 3 to my big delight even Marita Breuer, Karin Rasenack and Jörg Hube, those impressing and eternal characters of HEIMAT, have been there, and, I have to concede

it, the common photo with Mrs. Breuer and Mr. Hube had to take place, most primitive fannish behaviour somehow or other. But the most exciting experience: myself being recognized by strangers, "you are the one with the green webpage ..." - unbelievable, and then being interviewed about all this together with Reinder and Ray, by Professor Lothar Spree and by Sabine Mahr from the SWR radio. Coming to Simmern one week later Marga Molz acclaimed me with the words "Ich wusste, dass Sie kommen, ich habe Sie doch gestern noch im Radio gehört." (I knew you were coming, I recognized your voice on the radio yesterday.) I felt homelike immediately, amongst friends. Half of the cinema audience took part in HEIMAT 3, as actors or in the background, all of them full of enthusiastic and inspiring urge to talk about their experiences. It is remarkable: anywhere where filmteams did their job they left scorched earth. And Edgar Reitz achieved to create two monumental films in the Hunsrück, and nobody is angry with him. In opposite: People are full of confidence and conviction committed to their Hunsrück, their HEIMAT and their genius Edgar Reitz, who appears on Saturday evening for the premier party as unboastful and naturally as he had never been away, and had never been the famous, established, intellectual director from Munich.

ABOUT SLOWNESS AND PRECISION

The fact that I experienced the first three films in Munich like joining a roller coaster trip I first ascribed to my own affection and inadequate expectations. But thinking about it made clear: especially these first three films were influenced by the forces of the investors, the public TV-broadcasters, very deeply. Surely: the customs of watching TV changed during the last twenty years, but: that the reunion of those two, who struggled for each other for 13 films and 26 hours without success, just took five minutes of film with the Berlin wall falling at the same time, disapproved all my hopes and expectations of tying up to Reitz's deliberate rhythm of filming I became fond of. The impression of an oversized contentual denseness reactualised with the second watching, but anyway: Edgar Reitz was able (and allowed?) to realise his very own style and rhythm of narrating not until the fourth film, but then in a

very impressive and convincing way. And the fact, that this fourth film had to be shortened for the german TV-broadcasting from 132 to 92 minutes (!) really makes me cared.

We can discover how precise Edgar Reitz worked again even this time on lots of little details, for example at the audio-track, I never (consciously) found such sophisticated spears of sound before. So who will care for the fact, that the team had sometimes to fight against the seasons because of the chronological order of filming, or Hermann going to pay at a filling station with the petrol pump showing 0,00 €, or an advertisement of a directory assistance (11833) appearing at a station wich was not established in the concrete year? - Not to forget: the (again) lovingly and authentic equipment, wich could not have been realised without the help of the people in Hunsrück. On Sunday morning (26th of Sept.) I sat on Matkos moped, and its owners, Werner and Ingrid Litzenberger, even owner of the Anzenfelder Mühle (where Ernst lives in the film), appeared in the credits of the film in the category "Gute Seelen" (good spritis).



ESTABLISHED AND NEW THINGS

The quotings from and parallels to HEIMAT, that appear in HEIMAT 3, are a really great pleasure for me. Here some examples, I will be thankful for further references (some of the follwoing aspekts, all marked with *, were found by Theresia Sikkens-van der Meij who indeed is a very competent HEIMAT-lover, thank you very much, Theresia!).

- "Freundlich, freundlich ..." (friendly, friendly) Clarissa instructs Gunnar, Udo and the bank assistants when taking a photo of them (H3, film 1), just like Eduard did years ago (H1, nearly all episodes), and also Mr. Schwarz does when taking the photo for Antons company anniversary (H3, film 3).
- Anton introduces the hunsrück food to Gunnar and Udo (H3, film 1), just like he did years ago when the busisnessman who intended to absorb his company visited him (H1, film 10).*
- Ernst still being true to his Motto: "... immer nur ne kurze Bodeberührung, dann gleich wieder durchgestartet ..." (just a short touchdown to earth, but then going upward immediately) (H1, film 11 / H3, films 2 und 5),
- exactly as his father Anton once was Hartmut is convinced: "... jetzt wird die Welt neu verteilt ..." (now the world is shared newly, wich means it would be a good time to get into buisness) (H1, film 8), but Anton is not true to this motto anymore (H3, film 3),
- even this time Ernst introduces a woman causing trouble, once Klärchen who Hermann felt in love with (H1, film 9), now Galina turning Hartmuts head (H3, Film 3).
- Galina running through the village searching for the doctor (H3, film 3), just like once Maria did when Lotti laid in bed with high fever (H1, film 2).*
- like in the first two films of HEIMAT even now a trap for a marten plays an indeed incising role (H3, film 4),
- Anton, the "Fußgänger" (pedestrian), walking in front of his car (H3, film 4), just like Paul did when coming back to Schabbach (H1, film 7)*,
- if Antons heart aches he gets a foot-massage, once by his lovely wife Martha (who (fictively) died in 1987 and so does not reappear in Heimat 3, unfortunately) (H1, film 10), now by his favorite (and only) daughter-in-law, Mara (H3, film 4).*
- even Antons gold plated boots reappear, pedantist (as Ernst calls him) remains pedantist ... (H3, Film 4)
- red cloves falling from the sky, not only at the "Ferntrauung" (marriage by proxy) of Anton and Martha once in Schabbach, when Ernst threw them out of the cockpit of his military plane (H1, film 5), but also from the Loreley-rock when Matko bids farewell to his paternal friend Ernst (what a seensitive parallel! - H3, film 5).
- Hermann dreams of the coffin having been abandoned on the street in the tempest (H1, film 11 / H3, film 6), and even all those who had died in H3 reappear in this scene.

[For more quotations and analogies look [here](#).]

Moreover we meet again with a couple of good old acquaintance:

- Henry Arnold and Salome Kammer (Edgar Reitz' wife) playing an old couple of artists, Hermann and Clarissa, nobody would have had any doubt about this casting,
- Ernst and Anton, the older brothers, are played by the approved actors from H1, Michael Kausch, who creates the for me most impressing scene of the whole film (H3, film 4), and Matthias Kniesbeck as the aged "Hunsrück-Tycoon",
- Manfred Kuhn, who played Anton Jakob in H1, now plays Schabbachs mayor Toni, and Ingrid Isermann, "Frau Gauleiter" in H1, plays his wife,
- The band "Evergreens" who also made music on Marias 70th birthday, are now dulcifying the christening of Antons grandson Mathias Paul Anton with bitter-sweet irony (in H1 there was no Saxophon-player in this band),
- Rudolf Wessely, once as a strange emigrant on Ellis Island (H1, film 2), now (H3, film 4) appears as a as well strange prophet of the apocalypse,
- and Willem is, like ever before and even in real life, the neighbour at the now abandoned Simon house.

But even new faces achieve to persuade us and to win our confidence. I want to emphasise just a few characters who are played especially convincing from my point of view: First of all the fifteen year old schoolboy Patrick Mayer from Hunsrück playing Matko, a role of such importance that a personal musical motive was created for it. Peter Schneider and Julia Prochnow (born in Simmern) who are playing the embodiment of "das kleine Glück" (the decent fortune) so convincingly, Constanze Wetzel very exact and harmonius as Mara Simon, Christian Leonhard (who joined the Woppenroth soccerteam to get practice in the Hunsrück dialect) as her husband Hartmut and Larissa Iwlewa from Kasachstan as his beloved Galina. And, to admit, my biggest worry in the time before ever having seen the film, Uwe Steimle playing Gunnar Brehme as intensive and believably, that all preliminary fixings he underlay from his former work is not going to influence our perception at all.

REALITY AND FICTION

More then ever before in H3 Edgar Reitz refers to real characters. Karl August Dahl for example, who was a leader of the Hunsrück peace movement in the eighties, also called "Raketen-August", is playing himself without any pathos, and everyone who belives that Rudi and Lenchen Molz are fictive characters, is wrong. Rudi Molz (who unfortunately died in 2002) really was the innkeeper in Woppenroth, really was, like Hermann says, the "soul of the village" (H3, Film 1), and was deeply involved in the creation of H1. For Rudi Molz, who was his friend, Edgar Reitz raised a monument with HEIMAT 3. H3 is, besides all fiction, even a documentary film in some respects. Even the "Pro-Winkino" Simmern (lokal cinema) ist shown, with a big HEIMAT transparent above the entrance (H3, film 6), and I recognized Wolfgang und Jürgen who (amongst others) founded this cinema appearing as guests of the new-years party in film 6.

CONCLUSION

Whenever Edgar Reitz was asked these days, if there would be a HEIMAT 4, he negated this with reference to the very exhausting negotiations with the financiers. After all those ignorance and loss of respekt, after all those indignity this big artist had to accept the last years his decision is more then comprehensible. But anyhow: The end of HEIMAT 3 could not be more open. For example the little beneficiary of Antons Millions named Mathias Paul Anton (by the the Names of his great-great-grandpa, great-grandpa and grandpa), or Lukas Simon, a piano talent, or his mother (Hermanns daughter) Lulu Simone Simon, still searching for her way, Edgar Reitz leaves us alone with so many open questions and is keeping, despite of all denials, lots of strands open.

"Everything we ever believed in ...", Hermann is starting to talk in a key-scene of the film (see H3, film 4), and

Ernst cutting him of "... did make us sad."

But anyhow: HEIMAT 3 is going deep to the heart without depreating our Illusions, without spreading melancholy or resignation. The film creates, in spite of all bitter and deflating reality, in spite of all taken up fears and risks of civilisation, a deep love of live.

© Thomas Hönemann, Oct. 16th 2004

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