

HEIMAT: FROM RURAL PLACES TO URBAN SPACES

By

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To my parents

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Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
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This study examines the development of the German Heimatfilm from the 1950s until today and investigates how the traditional Heimatfilm differs from contemporary Heimat cinema. In discussing different Heimatfilm genres, such as the traditional post-war Heimatfilm, the Anti-Heimatfilm, the modern Heimatfilm, as well as the urban Heimatfilm, this research analyzes how the Heimatfilm's settings, characters, narratives and aesthetics changed over the past decades.

In an era of globalization, which is characterized by mobility and travelling characters such as migrants or guest workers, the idea of a spatially defined home is put into question. Therefore, the notion of Heimat cannot be seen as a spatial concept anymore, but rather as an internal sense of belonging and identity, which travels with people through spaces. Consequently, the notion of Heimat, which was usually associated with a rural setting in traditional Heimat cinema, can also be present in an urban locale, as epitomized by the urban Heimatfilm.

CHAPTER 1 OVERVIEW

Heimat is... This sentence can be completed in multiple ways, which makes a universal definition of Heimat virtually impossible. However, many scholars agree on several characteristics of the term Heimat. The most common translation of the German word is "home" or "homeland," which consequently limits the borders of Heimat to a place of belonging and familiarity. Family members, friends and acquaintances form a community in which we feel safe and secure. Often associated with memories, childhood experiences and innocence, Heimat also receives nostalgic connotations. It reflects our roots and traditions, and therefore shapes our identity and values in life. The Heimat locale is often displayed through idealized and clichéd descriptions of remote rural areas, hence ascribing Heimat a pristine and natural quality. Nonetheless, all of the above described features of Heimat raise an important question: What is Heimat? Is Heimat a place, a group of people, a memory, a feeling, or the combination of all? German journalist Peter Sandmeyer tries to answer the same question in a *Stern* article. The author defines Heimat as a "Grundbedürfnis," a basic need and an affinity for grounding in an era of globalization (Sandmeyer 1). For Sandmeyer, however, Heimat is "more than home, more than homestead, more than hometown, more than home country. Heimat is distinct, shapeless, blurred in color and shape, overflowing and impalpable like a dream" (1).

Even though an accurate definition of Heimat lies beyond words like dreams often do, and the question of Heimat often causes speechlessness due to its plethora of meanings, the term Heimat has always been a crucial part of German history and culture. *Heimatliteratur* as well as *Heimatfilme* tried to grasp the notion of Heimat

through words and images. This study traces the origins of the German Heimatfilm and its development until today. What themes and motives does the traditional Heimatfilm of the 1950s cover and what characters and locales does it display? How did these aspects of the Heimatfilm change over the years and how do contemporary Heimatfilme differ from the traditional ones? Unlike other scholarly works in the field, this study also discusses the contemporary German Heimatfilm of the Bavarian director Marcus H. Rosenmüller, followed by a broader discourse which reconsiders the spatiality of Heimat, relocating it from a rural setting to an urban locale. The discussion ascribes a mobile characteristic to the Heimat concept, suggesting that Heimat is not spatially limited, but rather an internal notion that travels with people through spaces. The mobility of Heimat therefore suggests the possibility of having a second home, or even multiple Heimaten, which are not necessarily tied to a rural setting, but can also exist in an urban space. German filmmaker Edgar Reitz, well-known for his 1984 *Heimat* epos, expresses this idea with the simple words: “Heimat is where I feel comfortable” (Buchheim).

Chapter two of this study examines the reasons for the emergence of the Heimatfilm genre and focuses on the traditional post-war Heimatfilm following 1945. After the war, Germans longed for their Heimat, which was destroyed during the Hitler regime. Therefore, the main challenge for 1950s cinema was the suppression of Nazi crimes through mythicization (Seeßlen, *Durch die Heimat* 136-137). With its idyllic depiction of a *heile Welt* (perfect world), preferably set in Bavaria and Austria, the traditional Heimatfilm brought the notion of Heimat to the people on screen. The subsequent *Heimatfilmwelle* (wave of Heimat films) “flooded” Germany and entertained

the audience with colorful and comforting images of pictorial Alpine sceneries and love-struck couples. However, the Heimatfilm's awareness of the trauma caused by World War II finds expression in the depiction of incomplete families and an ubiquitous sense of homelessness. Hans Deppe's protagonist Lüdersen exemplifies that notion of *Heimatlosigkeit* in *Grün ist die Heide* (1951, *The Heath is Green*), which accordingly links Heimat to the question of identity and belonging. With the emergence of the vacation film, a sub-category of the Heimatfilm, recreational activities were promoted in order to alleviate the collective notion of displacement. Wolfgang Schleif's *Die Mädels vom Immenhof* (1955, *The Immenhof Girls*) depicts an idyllic travel destination for the audience, and portrays the typical encounter of Heimat with the foreign. Heimat in the traditional Heimatfilm is thus opposed to modernity and the foreign, exemplified in Schleif's film by the tourist from the city who has to adjust to a rural lifestyle when on vacation at Immenhof. *Die Geierwally* (1956, *Geierwally*), another paradigm of the traditional Heimatfilm of the 1950s, demonstrates how Heimat can become an uncanny place for the female protagonist when disobeying the rules of the patriarch within the trope of Heimat.

Chapter three discusses how the traditional Heimatfilm of the 1950s changed during the past decades. After 1962, the year of the Oberhausen Manifesto, the so-called *Anti-Heimatfilm* occupied German screens. By depicting a counter-image of the traditional Heimat idyll, the Anti-Heimatfilm promotes the escape to the big city, as in Fleischmann's *Jagdszenen aus Niederbayern* (1969, *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria*). But even the blunt depiction of merciless provincials and the harsh realities of peasant life in the Anti-Heimatfilm could not prevent a revival of Heimat in contemporary cinema.

German filmmakers like Marcus H. Rosenmüller, Mathias Kiefersauer or Thomas Kronthaler popularize the Heimatfilm again by presenting the genre in a modern way. The modern Heimatfilme are coming-of-age stories, staging children or young adults as their protagonists. Instead of traditional folk music, scenes are accompanied by contemporary rock melodies, exemplified in Rosenmüller's *Wer früher stirbt, ist länger tot* (2006, *Grave Decisions*). Whereas the foreign and modern has been vehemently rejected in the traditional Heimatfilm, it is now part of the protagonist's everyday life. The female main character in Rosenmüller's *Beste Zeit* (2007, *Good Times*) even has the desire to leave her hometown behind and travel to America. Travelling characters that cross the borders of Heimat call the understanding of Heimat as a limited space into question.

The fourth chapter analyzes how the mobility of people affects the spatiality of Heimat. Mobile characters, such as migrants, tourists, and guest workers redefine the Heimat idea, suggesting that Heimat is not a spatial concept anymore, but rather an internal sense of belonging which is not restricted to a certain locale. Heimat, which was originally associated with a rural setting, can therefore also be present in urban spaces, as demonstrated in the *Stadt Heimatfilm*, epitomized by Edgar Reitz' *Die zweite Heimat - Chronik einer Jugend* (1993, *Heimat II: A Chronicle of a Generation*). After discussing the genres *Kino der Fremdheit* and *Kino der Métissage*, which both deal with the complexities of migration and integration, an analysis of Fatih Akin's *Soul Kitchen* (2009) displays how the sense of Heimat is presented in a city film about Hamburg. The discussion of two episodes of the anthology film *Paris, Je T'aime* (2006, *Paris, I love*

You) examines how the tourist figure as well as a Muslim immigrant experience the notion of Heimat in Paris when crossing international borders.

CHAPTER 2 RURAL HEIMAT

Introduction

Die Natur -

Jedem erscheint sie in einer eigenen Gestalt. Sie verbirgt sich in tausend Namen und Termen und ist immer dieselbe.

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Goethes Werke Band XIII*

In praising the beauty of nature in its valuable diversity, the German Heimatfilm genre stages the rural setting as its main protagonist. Pristine German landscapes and Austrian mountain sceneries represent the major sites of the Heimatfilm. These natural settings, however, can be experienced in various ways by the protagonists, or, as Goethe puts it, "to each [nature] appears in a unique form" (47). After introducing the reasons for the emergence of the Heimatfilm genre, as well as its characteristic features, this chapter examines three different paradigms of the 1950s Heimatfilm. In *Grün ist die Heide* (1951, *The Heath is Green*), the protagonist experiences nature as a place of comfort. Wolfgang Schleif's *Die Mädels vom Immenhof* (1955, *The Immenhof Girls*) stages nature as an alien realm for the city dweller, and for the female protagonist in *Die Geierwally* (1956, *Geierwally*), nature becomes a site of uncanniness.

Heimatfilm in Post-War Germany

When asking Germans which film genre they associate with their own country, many of them will most likely answer with the Heimatfilm genre. This genre plays a major role in German film culture, since it is "Germany's only indigenous and historically most enduring genre" (Elsaesser 141). In his book *Film/Genre*, film scholar Rick Altman argues that film genres are created by their audience and always feature a strong connection to the cultural era in which they were produced (26-27). With this in mind, it

appears that the German Heimatfilm mainly developed as a consequence to historical events. Even though Heimatfilme could be traced back to the beginnings of film production, they reached their peak in the 1950s (Steiner 253). This newly discovered genre of the Heimatfilm replaced the so called *Trümmerfilm* (rubble film), which thematized Germany's political defeat in World War II. Viewers were confronted with postwar images of destroyed cities and occupying armies, whereas the depoliticized Heimatfilm offered an alternative cinema to spectators, and thus helped creating a "postwar identity" (Hake 109) to overcome the "quintessential postwar syndrome of *Heimatlosigkeit*" (von Moltke, *No Place Like Home* 81).

The Heimatfilm became a crucial part of German culture and gave Germans back what they were longing for: Their old Heimat before it was destroyed by the war. Germans who have lost such an important part of identity, were now reclaiming their "right to Heimat" (von Moltke, *No Place Like Home* 7). For Johannes von Moltke, Heimat in the Heimatfilm has a particular function, as it "affords a colorful flight from a reality deemed lacking into an apparently unrelated fantasy world" (*No Place Like Home* 5). Thus, the Heimatfilm was an opportunity for Germans to escape their postwar trauma at least on screen. The term Heimat, which can be loosely translated with "homeland," has always been associated with a longing for home and comfort. This longing was omnipresent in postwar Germany, as many film titles show: *Sohn ohne Heimat* (1955, *Son Without Heimat*), *Und ewig ruft die Heimat* (1955, *Heimat calls Forever*), *Wer die Heimat liebt* (1957, *Holy Heritage*), *Heimatlos* (1958, *Without Heimat*), *Einmal noch die Heimat seh'n* (1958, *Seeing Heimat One More Time*) – to name just a few. These films allow spectators to immerse themselves in a romanticized idyll of

untouched landscapes and harmonious living conditions in a committed *Gemeinschaft* (local community) in which provinciality, morality, and tradition dominate the people's everyday life.

One does not necessarily have to watch the myriad Heimatfilme to be able to characterize their common features. Film titles such as *Schwarzwaldmädel* (1950, *Black Forest Girl*), *Grün ist die Heide* (1951, *The Heath is Green*), *Die schöne Tölzerin* (1952, *The Beautiful Girl From Bad Tölz*), *Das Wirtshaus im Spessart* (1958, *The Inn at Spessart*), *Gruß und Kuss vom Tegernsee* (1957, *Greetings and A Kiss from Lake Tegernsee*) immediately map out the geography of the Heimatfilm plots, which are mainly located in Austria, Bavaria or other parts of Germany. Even the different types of landscapes recur, such as mountains, lakes, forests, and heathlands. The sets of the Heimatfilm are consequently remote locales far away from modern urban settings. Furthermore, the Heimatfilm's characters are evidently mainly peasants (*Der fidele Bauer / The Merry Peasant*, 1951), landlords (*Die Wirtin vom Wörthersee / The Landlady from Lake Wörthersee*, 1952), hunters (*Der Jäger vom Roteck / The Hunter from Roteck*, 1956), fishermen (*Die Fischer vom Heiligensee / The Fishermen from Lake Heiligensee*, 1955), priests (*Der Pfarrer von St. Michael / The Priest From St. Michel*, 1957), doctors (*Die Landärztin vom Tegernsee / Lady Country Doctor*, 1958), and shepherds (*Der Schäfer vom Trutzberg / The Sheperd of Trutzberg*, 1959).

Although offering spectators an escape from reality, the German Heimatfilm was quite aware of the trauma caused by World War II and depicted "incomplete, dysfunctional, unconventional families" that had to deal with losses and a sense of *Heimatlosigkeit* (homelessness) and displacement (Hake 109). In *Rosen-Resli* (1954,

Rose Girl Resli) the young orphan girl Resi lives with a foster family after losing her parents. The Immenhof-trilogy (1955-1957) tells the story of the orphaned siblings Barbara (nicknamed Dick), Brigitte (nicknamed Dalli), and Angela who, after their flight from East Prussia, moved to Immenhof in Schleswig-Holstein to live with their grandmother Oma Jantzen. These and more examples demonstrate that, albeit harmony dominated the depicted Heimat idyll, victims of the war peopled these films. Additionally, harmony in the Heimatfilm was threatened by generational conflicts as well as “the stereotypical figure of the stranger” (Hake 110). The Heimatfilm genre thereby “provided a fictional framework for coming to terms with the loss of nation and for turning the Federal Republic into a new homeland” (Hake 110). Nonetheless, almost every Heimatfilm has a happy ending and unifies displaced families or creates new ones. Hans Deppe’s *Grün ist die Heide* exemplifies this ubiquitous notion of Heimatlosigkeit in postwar Germany.

Heimatlosigkeit in Deppe’s *Grün ist die Heide*

According to film critic Claudius Seidl, Hans Deppe’s *Grün ist die Heide*, a remake of Hans Behrendt’s 1932 film by the same title, embodies the “prototype of the Heimatfilm” (187). The film’s plot is set in the idyllic German plains and references the historical backdrop of World War II. The main character Lüder Lüdersen, an Eastern refugee, settles down with his daughter Helga in the Luneburg Heath. Helga soon adapts to her new environment, and feels attracted to the local game warden Rainer. But Lüdersen sticks to his old habits and poaches in the woods even though it is against the law in his new home. Lüdersen’s behavior disrupts the peace of the local community, but his compulsion to poach in the local woods has different reasons than just a passion for hunting. To Helga he mentions that the forest is the only place in his

new home, where he feels good: "Only in nature I feel comfortable. Then at least I forget about all the misery. It's not only the hunting instinct." According to von Moltke, Lüdersen's habit "functions as a manifest symptom of his underlying sense of homelessness and displacement" caused by the war (*No Place Like Home* 4). Lüdersen tries to heal these wounds by seeking comfort in the woods which will always stay "a *heile Welt* of flora and fauna" for him (von Moltke, *No Place Like Home* 80).

In *Grün ist die Heide*, the director displays this sense of displacement through his characters who are suffering from *Heimweh* (homesickness). The town's district judge mentions that he is in charge of all the expellees and describes the sense of homesickness as a disease: "I take care of the local expellees on a part-time basis, and I experience it every day. Homesickness can be a very serious illness." For Jean Améry, the notion of homesickness equals self-alienation (43). As a consequence, *Heimweh* has an immediate impact on the question of identity and self-image. Furthermore, the longing for a home of the displaced and alienated characters in Deppe's film affects their physical well-being significantly. According to his cousin, Lüdersen seems to be very depressed and distraught when suffering from *Heimweh*: "If he has his moods, his homesickness, then there is nothing to do with him. Then the man becomes melancholic. Then he runs around quite distressed." The protagonist's emotional state directly relates to the degree of his homesickness. But not only Lüdersen suffers from *Heimweh* in Deppe's film, there are multiple characters from other countries dealing with the same sense of displacement as well. Thus, the Heimatfilm can be described as a genre dealing with "conflicts over borders, territory, and identity" (King 131).

Even though Lüdersen suffers from *Heimweh*, he eventually realizes that he has found a new home when facing the question of leaving again. After the local police officer is found dead, Rainer suspects Lüdersen. Even though he proves his innocence, Lüdersen agrees to leave town with his daughter to flee to the anonymity of the city. Before he leaves, Lüdersen recognizes that he already found a *zweite Heimat* (new homeland) within the community and gives a farewell speech at the local *Schützenfest* (local folk festival). With his speech he represents all the other refugees in town and makes clear that he not only speaks for himself alone, but for “all the others who have found a second home here” (Fig. 2-1. A). He adds that people should not judge him, since nobody will understand what it means to be without Heimat, before they were forced to leave home. Through finding a second home in the Luneburg Heath, Lüdersen was able to find himself again: “When I was in the forest here, often I felt as if I were home again. The natural beauty comforted me and made me forget what I have lost. I was close to losing myself. But through the goodwill and understanding you have shown me, I have found myself again” (von Moltke, *No Place Like Home 4*).

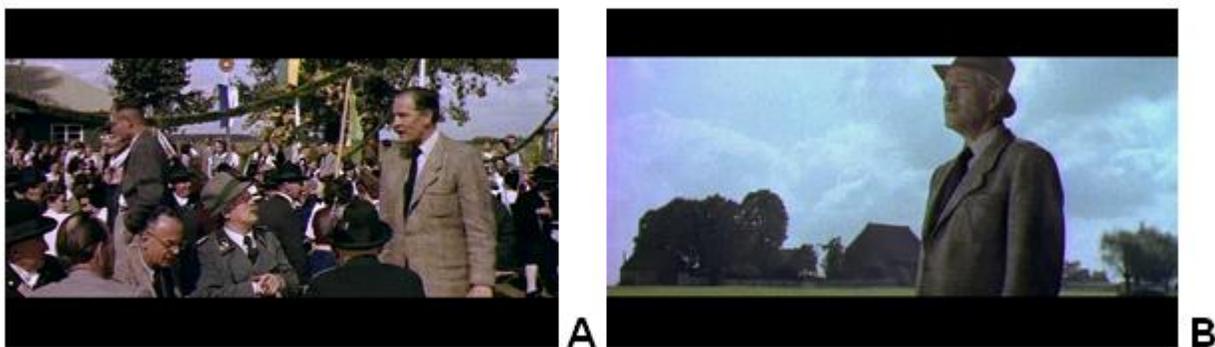


Figure 2-1. Lüdersen giving his speech (A). Lüdersen in harmony with nature. (B)

Lüdersen’s speech reveals that he was able to surmount homesickness through the experience of nature and the sympathy of his community which enabled him to find

a new home in the Luneburg Heath. According to Hegel, Heimat is the “state of having overcome alienation” (Blickle 27). In the end of the film, Lüdersen has found himself, and consequently his sense of Heimat again. Heimat therefore becomes a site for identification. For Lüdersen, the sense of Heimat is closely connected to the unity of man and nature. Through the beauty of nature, Lüdersen was able to regain his inner harmony as well as master the experience of his loss (Fig. 2-1. B). After his farewell speech, Lüdersen leaves the *Schützenfest* in order to see the heath one last time. Near the forest he sees a man killing deer and decides to confront him. But when Lüdersen approaches the man he gets shot and wounded. The police, who patrolled the woods during the folk festival, catch the man immediately. The hunter eventually turns out to be the murderer of the local police officer, thus attesting Lüdersen’s innocence in the end.

Lüdersen’s speech also suggests that one can find Heimat only through its absence and the resulting experience of homelessness. Deppe’s protagonist experienced what it means to feel *heimatlos* when he came as a refugee in the beginning of the film. But when he announces to leave the Luneburg Heath for the city, the villagers respond with rejection, thus emphasizing the discrepancy between city and country. They reject the city life and argue they would “die” there. For the villagers, the city dwellers are merely “ghosts” with “pale faces,” which underscores their understanding of the city as an unhealthy place of social anonymity. As he listens to their comments, Lüdersen recognizes that he is not ready to leave. The place that made him feel homeless in the beginning, has gradually become a new home for him and his daughter Helga. Instead of experiencing a “renewed displacement” by moving to the city, Lüdersen needs “(re)integration” (von Moltke, *No Place Like Home* 81). After the

police arrest the murderer, Lüdersen decides to stay in the village. For him, the Luneburg Heath changes “from a space of *Heimatlosigkeit* and restlessness into Heimat regained” (von Moltke, *No Place Like Home* 81).

In *Grün ist die Heide*, director Hans Deppe depicts the notion of Heimat as a mobile concept which can be “severed from its original ground” (von Moltke, *No Place Like Home* 89). The portrayal of a relocatable sense of home suggests a reconsideration of the spatial politics commonly associated with the term Heimat. Deppe’s protagonist exemplifies this mobility by demonstrating his shifting experience of Heimat. Although initially experiencing a sense of alienation and homelessness, Lüdersen finds a *zweite Heimat* after the war. Through the natural beauty of the Luneburg Heath and a new sense of *Gemeinschaft*, Lüdersen is able to overcome the dominating postwar syndrome of *Heimatlosigkeit*.

The Heimatfilm as Travel Narrative

In order to alleviate the collective notion of displacement, it became more and more important to focus on the individual’s physical and spiritual well-being. Questions of self and identity dominated the German nation of the 1950s, and consequently evoked the development of another cinematic genre, the travel or vacation film. These films, which basically represented “an extension of the tourist industry,” frequently overlapped with the Heimatfilm genre (Hake 110). For Sabine Hake, the vacation film functioned “as a promotional vehicle for new recreational activities and consumerist attitudes” (110). Films such as *Ferien vom Ich* (1952, *Vacation from the Self*) or *Ferien in Tirol* (1955, *Vacation in Tirol*) served as examples to show “their overworked audiences how to take a break from the pressures of economic growth and prosperity” (Hake 111). These pressures were ubiquitous in postwar Germany and forced people to

face significant economic issues while still struggling with questions of identity and belonging. The search for the self and a new Heimat were dominating German minds after the war, and were therefore expressed cinematically. Heimat's spatial politics were not merely interested in the worshipping of the pristine beauty of nature, but also in the act of travelling through spaces. Gertraud Steiner quotes a line of Luis Trenker's *Der verlorene Sohn* (1934, *The Lost Son*) which summarizes the film's main idea: "Those who never leave, never come home" (258). As a consequence, it is necessary to leave Heimat, in order to discover (or rediscover) it.

These travel narratives were not only a crucial instrument in defining German identity, but also a fundamental contribution to cross-cultural understanding: "these imaginary journeys to foreign locations helped to prepare German audiences for dealing with different cultures and nationalities, including the growing number of Italian, Spanish, and Greek *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers)" (Hake 111). During the time of the German *Wirtschaftswunder* (Economic Miracle), myriad immigrants from several European countries moved to Germany to help fuel the postwar boom. Through the depiction of foreign places and people on screen, the German audience became aware of the existent cultural differences and could prepare for the arrival of the migrating labor force.

One popular Heimatfilm which features characteristics of the travel film is *Die Mädels vom Immenhof* (1955, *The Immenhof Girls*), the film adaptation of Ursula Bruns' book *Dick und Dalli und die Ponies* (*The Snow Ponys*). The story is set in Schleswig-Holstein during the year 1954. The orphaned sisters Dick, Dalli and Angela live with their grandmother Oma Jantzen at Immenhof, a manor house the Jantzens have owned

for years. The sisters help their grandmother running the pony breeding business, but Oma Jantzen is struggling with finances and is about to lose all her possessions at an auction. She already leased the old forester's house to Jochen von Roth who tries to establish a riding school at his stud farm. Amid this crisis, the Jantzens are expecting a distant relative from the city, who is about to spend his holiday at Immenhof. Ethelbert, with his posh attire and arrogant attitude, is not quite what Dick, Dalli, and their friends expected. Constantly making a fool of himself, Ethelbert soon becomes the misfit of the group. Only Dick feels drawn to him and tries to integrate him nevertheless. Another romance is blossoming between Angela and Jochen, who supports Oma Jantzen in keeping Immenhof in the end.

The film's opening immediately introduces Immenhof as the perfect vacation destination and points out the necessity of a healthy way of life. The first image shows an idyllic view of a lake, followed by a long-shot of the Immenhof manor. These two shots are connected by a peaceful score and fading titles in order to suggest the closeness from Immenhof to the recreation area. The following shots show Angela passing by some ponies running around freely at the lakeside. Only clothed in a swim suit and a bathrobe, Angela is heading back to the main building, where Oma Jantzen is leaning out of the window. She takes a deep breath and calls for her other granddaughters to get out of bed. While the girls are getting ready, Oma Jantzen prepares breakfast on the patio. As Dalli refuses to do her usual workout before breakfast, Oma Jantzen points out the importance of a healthy body and mind and says: "Sport is a blessing." Oma Jantzen maintains a healthy lifestyle and demands the same

of her granddaughters. She therefore exemplifies a role model for the spectators, who should be encouraged to be mindful of their own physical well-being.

The Jantzens as well as Jochen von Roth expect vacationers in Schleswig-Holstein, who almost exclusively praise the resort for its beauty. As Dick and Dalli pick up their guest Ethelbert from the train station, they meet Jochen who is also waiting for his new guests to arrive. He is holding up a sign and calls for his guests with “Reiterparadies hier, bitte!” (“Please come here to riding paradise!”), thus announcing his Heimat as a paradise for travelers. Jochen’s guests are very excited as they see his horses and truly believe they are in paradise: “Lovely! Wonderful!” Among Jochen’s guests is one British woman who is surprised by the beauty of the German landscape: “Oh it’s lovely here. I never knew Germany was such a lovely country.” Ethelbert however is not able to adjust to his new environment immediately. What Mrs. Fowler just admired and lauded seems to be nothing special to Ethelbert. He feels rather bored by Dick and Dalli’s Heimat and comments: “Quite lonely here.” Being used to a hectic and modern city environment, Ethelbert does not feel comfortable in the countryside and struggles integrating with the community. Ethelbert thus exemplifies the stereotypical Heimatfilm figure of the stranger.

Heimat and *Fremde*

The notion of Heimat is generally associated with traditional ideas and thus opposed to the modern and foreign. Von Moltke quotes a dictionary entry from 1959 by Oskar Köhler which defines Heimat as follows: “a small world, which nonetheless encompasses a totality of life [*Lebensganzheit*], and where they [the people] perceive any other world as a more or less hostile ‘foreign territory’ [*Fremde*]” (*No Place Like Home* 10). In *Die Mädels vom Immenhof*, the tourist Ethelbert represents this foreign

territory and has difficulties to adjust and integrate into his new rural environment.

Before Ethelbert's arrival, the sisters Dick and Dalli cannot hide their excitement about meeting their distant relative from the big city. However, Dalli emphasizes the disparity between rural and urban life concerning the social and educational environment with a blunt remark: "I bet he took riding lessons at his weird boarding school. He will be glad to finally meet sane people."

Ethelbert's social behavior and clothing style signify his urban origins and stand in stark contrast to the rural community. A short sequence of shots introduces the pastoral setting surrounding Immenhof, as well as Dick and Dalli as a part of the local community. On their way to the train station, the sisters sing a song while passing by beautiful landscapes with their pony coach. They wave at a shepherd driving his sheep and their friends who are working in the fields. These few shots demonstrate the close relationship of the villagers within the trope of Heimat. For Ethelbert however, it seems to be quite a challenge to accept the rules of this community. As a city dweller, Ethelbert is accustomed to a fully developed infrastructure which enables him to travel with modern means of transportation. Therefore, he is highly bemused when finding out that he is supposed to travel with a pony coach to get to Immenhof. When Ethelbert pays a carrier to carry his luggage from the station, Dalli calls him a "braggart," and mentions that there were so many things she would rather buy. This scene portrays the city as a place in which sufficient financial means are treated as a natural necessity and status symbol, whereas money in the displayed rural setting receives a higher value. Compared to the girls, who were singing and entertaining each other on the way to the station, Ethelbert brought a radio to listen to during the train ride. He points out that he

enjoys modern entertainment and goes to the movies or dancing on a regular basis, since cultural entertainment is important for an individual's education in his view: "Of course, nowadays that is supposed to be part of the education of the Central European intellectual." Ethelbert is not able to comprehend why the girls prefer riding their ponies during their spare time, which he deridingly calls "weird animals." With Ethelbert's arrival, two contrasting worlds collide. Both Dalli and Ethelbert find each other "weird," Dalli, however, is at the same time fascinated by her guest, who seems to be from another world. Whereas the girls are wearing simple shirts and shorts, Ethelbert seems to have the perfect attire for every occasion. He wears blazers with ties during his first lunch with the Jantzens and a custom-made red and white riding dress when riding the ponies, which Dalli simply comments with "Neat! Just like a movie star."

Not only Ethelbert's appearance evokes rejection, his rather arrogant attitude towards the villagers also prevents his social integration into the community. His formal and eloquent way of talking, which reflects his social background and education, causes laughter among the villagers. When Dick suggests to go swimming, Ethelbert points out the necessity of "acclimating" to his new environment first. Ethelbert's vocabulary and the reaction of his communication partners indicate an existing language barrier between him and the local community. However, Ethelbert insists on pursuing his lifestyle, especially regarding his nutrition and health. He routinely takes dietary supplements along with his meals, but Oma Jantzen explains that they treat illness in a traditional way, and takes away Ethelbert's pills which she simply calls "rubbish." The close circle of friends also approach Ethelbert with hostility, after he made a derogatory remark about Mans, the son of the local blacksmith. As Dick feels drawn to him

nevertheless, she defends Ethelbert vigorously in reprimanding her friends: "You are mean! Just because he is different from you." But when Ethelbert forces her to dance with him in a café a few days later, Dick feels humiliated and finally turns away from him as well. Now Ethelbert finally realizes that his attitude and boastful behavior is keeping him from becoming a part of the community.

The director solves the conflict between Ethelbert and the community in a way that links Heimat to humanism. When Ethelbert tries to approach Dick once again, she walks away from him in grief over the ponies Oma Jantzen had to sell. Ethelbert thinks the Jantzens should be glad to have sold those "creatures," but Oma Jantzen clearly points out the emotional value of their ponies. According to her, Ethelbert lacks the ability to understand that. While saying that, she points at her heart and leaves him behind. Not only Oma Jantzen tries to reach him with her speech, Jochen also challenges Ethelbert's conscience and encourages him to change and reach out for others. He points out the importance of giving and supporting each other within a community, and claims that only Ethelbert can change his situation: "It's up to you boy, and no one else." Ethelbert finally realizes his mistakes which is the first step to being accepted by the community according to Jochen: "When you start realizing that you are an idiot, you start being human." Jochen's comment as well as Oma Jantzen's remark suggests that being part of a community requires a sense of altruism and empathy.

The character Ethelbert, determined to become a part of the community, undergoes a remarkable change in the last part of the film which is expressed through the change of his appearance as well as his behavior. Ethelbert, this time dressed in a casual red shirt and shorts, meets Dick who is working at a river embankment in the

forest. When he offers his help, Dick sends him away by pointing out that this would not be the right work for him to do. When Ethelbert desperately jumps into the creek, he bedaubes his shirt with dirty water and shouts: "See, I just want to help you. I'm not afraid of dirt. I don't want to be alone anymore!" This scene represents a turning point for Ethelbert who has learned how to give and care about others in the community. He saves Mans when he is about to drown in the lake and helps Dick caring for an injured foal that he saved during a thunderstorm. Through his actions, Ethelbert demonstrates humanistic qualities and is accepted as a part of the collective. Although he is used to the anonymity of the city, he realizes the importance of a community at the end of the film.

Heimat, Gender, and the Uncanny

Besides idyllic depictions of the rural and questions of identity and the self, gender roles and the notion of the uncanny play a crucial role in Heimat scholarship. Peter Blicke describes Heimat as "the ideal woman (imagined by men)" (83). The perfect woman within the trope of Heimat is a "workhorse," responsible for housework and giving birth, whereas her emotional qualities were seen as a "potential source of weakness and disease" (Blicke 84). Consequently, Heimat becomes a "key site for the enforcement of outdated gender norms" and patriarchal conceptions (von Moltke, *No Place Like Home* 118).

These ideas are displayed to a significant extent in Franz Cap's *Die Geierwally* (1956, *Geierwally*), one of four different screen adaptations of Wilhelmine von Hillern's bestseller by the same title (1875). Set in the Austrian Alps, *Die Geierwally* depicts the typical Heimat locale. Wally, later nicknamed Geierwally after rescuing a little vulture, is forced by her father to marry farmer Vinzenz. Wally however is attracted to hunter Josef

and is determined to marry him. For disregarding her father's rules, Wally is exiled to a mountain farm, where she tames a young vulture. In Cap's film, Wally's father represents the stereotypical figure of the Heimatfilm's patriarch. He displays his derogatory attitude towards women in the opening scene of the film. As he enters the kitchen, Wally's father immediately asks his maid Luckard for food. When she answers she thought he would have eaten in town, he severely commands her to do what he says. After Luckard left the room, he murmurs that all these "Weibsleut" (derogative expression for women) have to "be in cahoots." Luckard is worried about Wally who seems depressed due to a conflict with her father. When Luckard confronts him afterwards, he threatens her and tells her to stay out of the education of his daughter.

Cap's film exemplifies a patriarchal hierarchy in which women, who oppose this system, are penalized for their misbehavior. Her father's patriarchal norms and Wally's firm and emancipated personality cause the main conflict in the film. Wally is introduced as a strong and independent woman, admired by men for her wildness. This is underscored when Wally passes by two men on top of a coach, looking down to them. She is determined to make her own decisions, and thus evokes a conflict with her father. He wants his daughter to marry farmer Vinzenz and seals the deal with his future son in law with a drink in the kitchen. Wally protests against this decision, and not only provokes the rage of her father, but also upsets Vinzenz, who insists on having the right to marry her: "Your father gave me permission, I won't give it back." Wally's father points out that he does not need his daughter's permission to find the right man for her. He does not take Wally's needs into account, and makes clear that he owns his daughter just like cattle according to the bible: "The child belongs to the father just like

cattle or a horse. That's written in the bible!" This scene illustrates the father's outdated gender norms which are closely linked to his Catholic beliefs. He is convinced of his right to treat women like a possession, and penalizes his daughter for her opposition. As a punishment, her father sends Wally to the *Alm*, a mountain farm on a glacier. When the maid tries to stand up for Wally, she gets attacked by Wally's father both verbally and physically. After this confrontation, Luckard has to leave the farm instantly. These conflicts demonstrate how women in the patriarchal construct of Heimat were penalized when disrespecting a man's hierarchical position. They were exiled from their home as an immediate consequence.

Cap's *Geierwally* also demonstrates how Heimat can become an uncanny place for women who refuse to follow the rules of the local community. According to Freud, the uncanny can be described as "unhomely," and thus ascribes the uncanny a spatial dimension, which can be found in the opposite of home (148). The film depicts uncanniness in two scenes. In the first scene, Wally is sent to the *Alm* as a punishment. As the camera captures the glacier panorama, the image of the snow-covered mountains is accompanied by a dramatic string melody to underscore the threat of this natural setting. When farm hand Lorenz warns her, Wally points out that she is not afraid of her new environment. For Lorenz it would be too "uncanny" ("grauslig") to stay at the *Alm* on his own. This uncanniness is depicted visually through the sudden appearance of heavy fog. Wally still acts unconcerned and Lorenz mentions that she must have the devil in her. Wally answers that it is not the devil, but love that gives her strength. Uncanniness is expressed in the natural environment within the exterior mise-en-scène. As a harsh wind blows, the fog gets even denser, and Wally starts worrying

about Lorenz after he left. When she calls for him, all she hears is her own echo reverberating from the cliff. The editing technique used in the following sequence demonstrates Wally's emerging panic on a visual and aural level. A medium-shot of her is cross-cut with shots of the rock cliff and thick clouds appearing on the blue sky. These images are accompanied by Wally's echoes, which are rising in tone and eventually end in a scream of ultimate despair. The scene's climax is depicted through the superimposition of Wally's face in a close-up shot and streaming clouds that seem to surround and gradually swallow her (Fig. 2-2. A-D). Whereas the Austrian Alps are captured as picturesque scenery in various Heimatfilme, they become a site of uncanniness for Wally in Cap's film.

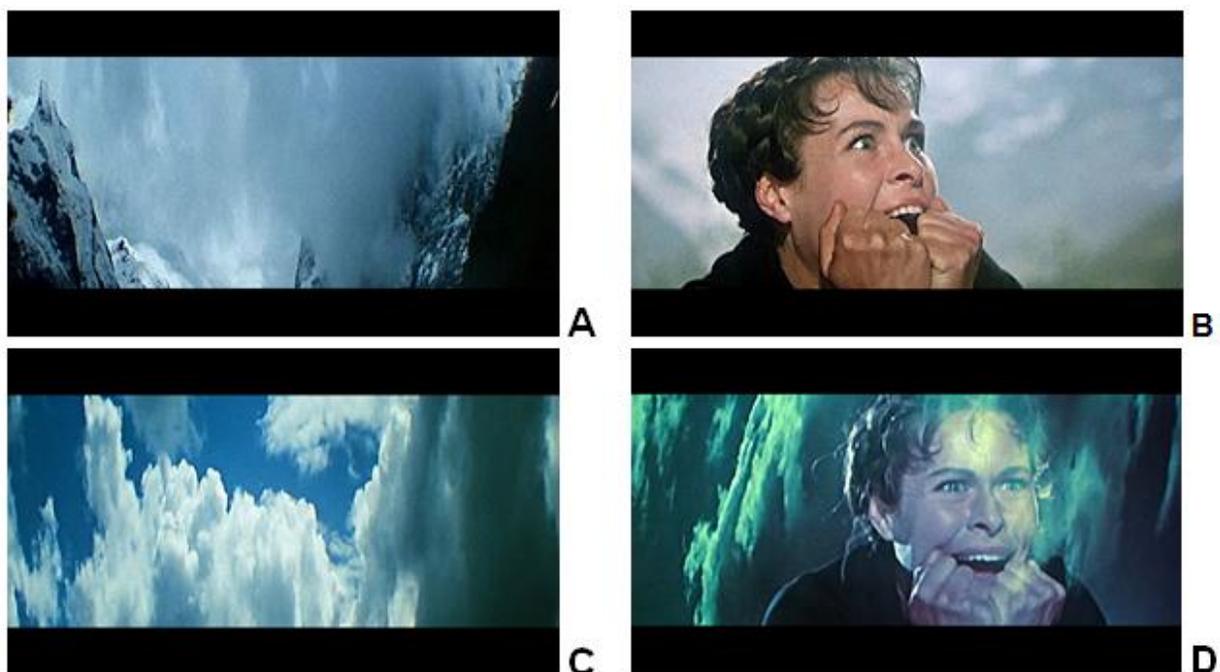


Figure 2-2. Wally at the Alm, experiencing nature as an uncanny place (A-D).

In a later scene, Wally has to face the same uncanny feeling within the trope of Heimat. Wally returns to town and inherits the farm after her father dies. She seems to be accepted in the community again, and is convinced to win Josef's heart at a local

Schützenfest. Josef invited her to dance with him, but this turns out to be a staged act of humiliation. Josef tries to penalize Wally, since she mistakenly offended Afra by stating she would be an easy girl. Wally insulted Afra out of jealousy, as she was not aware of the fact, that Afra is Josef's niece. Josef humiliates her in front of the townsfolk and leaves. The director employs the same editing technique as in the scene at the *Alm*. We see Wally in a close-up shot, her eyes widened by shock and embarrassment. She is surrounded by numerous people laughing at her. As they start to dance, Wally's pale face is superimposed with the dancing townsfolk around her. Her petrified look contrasts the joyous folk music which accompanies the scene.

Heimat in Cap's *Die Geierwally* is presented as a realm in which traditional gender roles as well as patriarchal norms are predominant values that have to be obeyed. Women in the film suffer under male dominance expressed through verbal and physical violence. Refusing to accept the rules of patriarchy, Wally learns that Heimat is a place that penalizes female emancipation. Her vigorous temper and independence, as well as her emotional mind are not accepted by her father who is determined to decide about his daughter's marriage partner. Heimat becomes an uncanny experience, and thus unhomely for Wally. The natural setting of Heimat, which seemed to be a place of retreat for Lüdersen, now turns into a threatening place for Cap's female protagonist. While representing home and security for the main character in *Grün ist die Heide*, the local community in *die Geierwally* becomes a site of humiliation for Wally. Although the representation of Heimat and its association with home and security in a natural setting is a different one in Cap's film, *Die Geierwally* closes with the characteristic happy ending when Wally and Josef reunite.

Conclusion

The rural setting constitutes a fundamental element of the traditional Heimatfilm of the 1950s. Alpine sceneries as well as pictorial landscapes such as vast grasslands, lakesides, lush forests, and heathlands become the focal point of the Heimatfilm plot. The characters perform their labor in nature, create bonds in nature, and even find love in nature. However, the rural setting of the traditional Heimatfilm can take on different meanings for its characters. For Lüdersen, nature becomes a site of comfort and identification, and the only place where he is able to overcome the notion of homelessness. For Ethelbert, on the other hand, nature represents an alien locale to which he has to adapt first. Through his confrontation with Dick at the river embankment, Ethelbert literally "jumps" into his new environment and absorbs nature metaphorically when bedaubing his clothes. For Wally, in turn, the natural realm becomes a site of uncanniness when she is sent to the *Alm* as a punishment for her actions. Nonetheless, all three films praise the natural setting and make it a prominent element of the cinematic representation. Detailed visual descriptions of colorful landscapes highlight the significance of the rural locale, and acknowledge nature as another main character of the traditional Heimatfilm genre.

CHAPTER 3 MODERN HEIMAT

Introduction

Die Heimat ist ja nie schöner, als wenn man in der Fremde von ihr spricht.

—Horst Wolfram Geißler, *Die Frau, die man liebt*

Whereas die Fremde has been depicted as a threatening foreign territory in the traditional Heimatfilm, it is portrayed as a space of security and wish-fulfillment in the subsequent Heimatfilm genres. With the emergence of the critical Heimatfilm, the province is transformed into a place of bigotry and violence, as featured in Peter Fleischmann's *Jagdszenen aus Niederbayern* (1969, *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria*). For Fleischmann's protagonist, ostracized by the village community, the city thus provides the possibility of a safe escape. The contemporary Heimatfilm in turn, exemplified by the films of Marcus H. Rosenmüller, illustrates the province as a rural idyll, but represents the foreign territory as a space of wish-fulfillment and self-realization, as demonstrated in his works *Wer früher stirbt, ist länger tot* (2006, *Grave Decisions*) and *Beste Zeit* (2007, *Good Times*).

Dismantling of the Rural Idyll: The Notion of Anti-Heimat

As a time of continuous change, the 1960s marked a cultural and historical turning point. The *Heimatfilmwelle* of the 1950s eventually abated when the *Oberhausener Manifest* transformed German film culture significantly. In 1962, young German filmmakers signed a manifesto, which rejected *Papas Kino*, epitomized by the traditional Heimatfilm (von Moltke, *No Place Like Home* 203). The manifesto demanded a new German feature film which should not only aim to please the consumer society, but meet certain artistic expectations as well. The young filmmakers, such as Edgar Reitz or

Alexander Kluge, assured that they are "collectively prepared to take economic risks," in order to enforce their claim (Knight 30). They stated that New German Cinema (*Neuer Deutscher Film*) should meet precise "intellectual, formal, and economic aspects" and reflect the innovative, experimental cinematic language of the young directors (Knight 30). These directors endeavored to employ film not only as entertainment medium, but to encourage their audience to think and reflect critically.

The Heimatfilm genre of the 1950s, with its trivial and predictable plots, could not satisfy the demands of the young German filmmakers. Idyllic, unrealistic scenarios were the main reason to attract audiences after the war, since recurring motifs and predictable happy endings evoked a sense of stability and security. Through the Heimatfilme, Germans were able to find their desired idyll on screen and thus had an opportunity to experience a *heile Welt* through the medium film. This suppression of reality signifies a psychological escapism into an imaginary world. In this respect, Willi Höfig mentions in his standard work *Der deutsche Heimatfilm 1947 – 1960* the Heimatfilm's similarities with fairy tales. Höfig states that both the fairy tale as well as the *Trivialfilm* – a film primarily aiming to entertain the audience and thus, according to Höfig, also including the German Heimatfilm – depict their own universe, a "Universum im kleinen" (250). This universe ignores the traumatic post-war realities, but instead depicts an idyllic world set in a remote province. In order to meet the requirements of the young filmmakers, the Heimatfilm genre had to be modified significantly, and a new notion of Anti-Heimat emerged.

The Heimat idyll including the depiction of a *heile Welt* is "destroyed" in this genre of the Anti-Heimatfilm or "critical Heimatfilm" (Donner). Represented by directors such

as Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Peter Fleischmann, and Volker Schlöndorff, this newly established genre displayed the social structures in postwar Germany from a different perspective. The province was depicted as “social battlefield,” the protagonists were “more complex, suffering characters in a world full of relentless persistency” (Seeßlen, *Alpenwestern*). This new notion of Anti-Heimat revealed the inner view of the film’s characters in an authentic and unadorned way. Instead of untouched landscapes and loving couples, the critical Heimatfilme depicted rural life and peasantry with all its harsh realities. Hence, the local in the Anti-Heimatfilm became “a site of profound social ruptures, of unreconciled hierarchies and stark class divisions, of prejudice and backwardness” (von Moltke, *No Place Like Home* 206). Protagonists were mainly victims of the war and outsiders in any form in order to demonstrate that the clichéd Heimat idyll of the 1950s portrayed a false and distorted image of the past (Donner). Donner thus argues that the Anti-Heimatfilm with its authentic depiction of social structures gives the concept of Heimat a “real and political meaning” (Donner). The Heimat idyll, as Hans Deppe and his contemporaries of the 1950s depicted it, did not exist anymore.

As the “main work” of the genre, Peter Fleischmann’s *Jagdszenen aus Niederbayern* (1969, *Hunting Scenes from Bavaria*) exemplifies this notion of Anti-Heimat both on a narrative and aesthetic level (Buchheim). The film is set in the small village Unholzing in Lower Bavaria, which turns out to be the exact opposite of the idyllic province introduced by the traditional Heimatfilm. When mechanic Abram returns from a short stay in the city to his hometown, he is suspected of being homosexual and gradually becomes the outsider of the conservative local community. The villagers avoid

Abram, who they think has spent his time in prison when he left Unholzing for the city. Accused of touching a mentally handicapped boy, Abram decides to leave Unholzing again. The situation escalates when maid Hannelore claims to expect Abram's child. Out of panic, Abram attacks her with a knife and escapes to the forest. Each member of the local community takes part in the ensuing manhunt.

Although Fleischmann's *Jagdszenen* displays the typical setting of the traditional Heimatfilm - most scenes are set at the farm, the local tavern, or the church - the depicted community and their rural lifestyle both reflect Anti-Heimat remarkably forthright. The village Unholzing is depicted as a place of hostility and malevolent atmosphere. Abram, the homosexual ex-convict, is not the only outsider in Fleischmann's film. The locals gossip about widow Maria, who "could have respected a certain period of mourning" after her husband's death, before publicly displaying her love for farm hand Volker with the wooden leg. Maria's mentally handicapped son Ernstl, as well as a group of Turkish guest workers are taunted by the villagers for their disability to communicate in proper German. Maid Hannelore, constantly surrounded by men, is known as the town's "easy girl." When her affection for Abram is not returned, she decides to give in to Volker, who promises to reimburse her at a later point. Men in Fleischmann's film are portrayed as violent and lecherous in their behavior towards women. A scene in the pig pen dramatically stages this violence when Hannelore, drunken and defenseless, tries to escape a group of farm hands groping and mocking her. Fleischmann's characters do not represent the typical Heimat community which is characterized by a sense of togetherness and security. Rather, Unholzing is marked by parochial, distrustful villagers who enjoy infidelity, gossiping, and ostracizing outsiders.

Fleischmann's film portrays a fight of "the weak against the weakest," thus emphasizing the notion of Anti-Heimat through its characters (Buchheim).

The same hostility seems to be predominant within family constellations. Whereas values like reliability, trustfulness, and love defined a strong family bond in the traditional Heimatfilm, the opposite is the case in Fleischmann's film. When Abram returns from the city, his mother does not say a word to her son when he arrives at the bus station. Abram's mother Barbara, tired of justifying herself against the continuous gossip about her son, sends Abram away with the words: "You don't have any right! One has no right when one is against nature! I hope they'll beat you until you leave voluntarily." Barbara joins the hostile attitude directed against Abram, since it is "important what people say, I want to live with them." For Abram's mother, staying part of the local community is more important than the relationship to her own son. She assures that she made every effort to raise Abram as a decent man, but that even locking him up and beating him did not prevent him from becoming a pervert. In the Anti-Heimatfilm, the domestic realm becomes a site of violence where fragile family bonds are prevalent.

In addition to Fleischmann's narrative depiction of social structures within the local community, the director communicates the notion of Anti-Heimat on a visual level as well. The film's mise-en-scène captures the harsh realities of farm life through an authentic play, as well as through Alain Derobe's documentary camera. Mainly shot with amateur actors, most of them the actual inhabitants of the Bavarian village Unholzing, the film represents rural lifestyle in a convincing and genuine way (Johnson). With its black and white footage, Fleischmann's film forms a stark contrast to the

traditional Heimatfilm with its colorful illustration of the rural setting. The camera relentlessly captures the notion of Anti-Heimat without distorting or euphemizing the daily routine of peasant life. One sequence explicitly shows the slaughtering of a pig, a picture that surely would not have been part of a 1950s Heimatfilm. Numerous close-ups document the process of slaughtering, skinning, and gutting the pig, portraying the killing of animals as part of the villager's everyday life. The staged violence seems to be a banality for the children, as they integrate parts of the dead pig into their play (Fig. 3-1. A-B). Through the blunt depiction of killing, drinking and sex as element of the community's daily routine, Fleischmann's *Jagdszenen* becomes a counter image of the 1950s Heimatfilm.

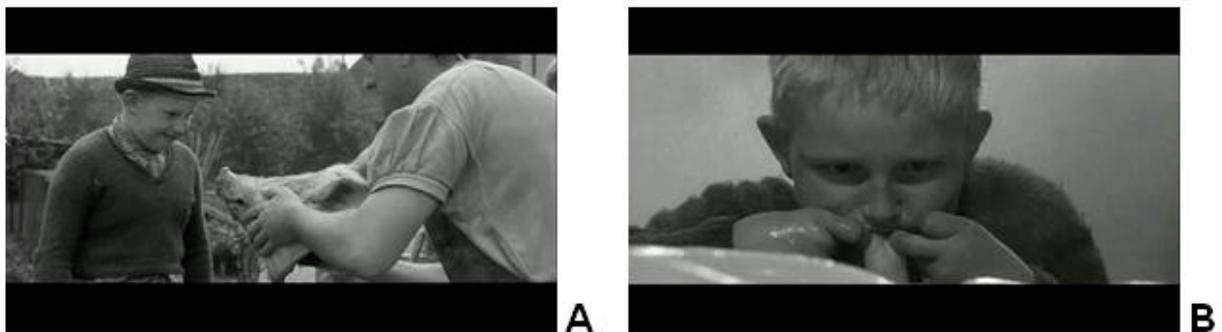


Figure 3-1. The children include the slaughtered pig in their play (A-B).

One similarity of Fleischmann's *Jagdszenen* and the traditional Heimatfilm is the still noticeable antagonism between city and country. When Maria states: "Who is bringing all those scandals to our village? We are just fighting back," she implies that Abram, who has just returned from the city, has a bad influence on the village society. Abram's mother points out that, although his homosexuality might be "modern" in the city, lifestyle is different in the village. Barbara's remark underscores the conservative values of the village society which demand conformity in order to be accepted as a

member of the community. As Abram refuses to adjust, he gets arrested in the end, while Unholzing celebrates at a local festival the restoration of the ostensible idyll. Fleischmann's film suggests that the urban setting, albeit associated with negative connotations in the traditional Heimatfilm, might indeed offer better living conditions for Abram than the hostile community of Unholzing. Thus, the critical Heimatfilm turns "the values of staying and leaving upside down," suggesting that the flight to the city allows outsiders to remain true to their values and principles (von Moltke, *No Place Like Home* 206). Whereas the traditional Heimatfilm presented Heimat as a place of shelter, the depiction of the city as a "safe haven" links the village to a notion of uncanniness in the critical Heimatfilm (von Moltke, *No Place Like Home* 206). According to Daniel Alexander Schacht, Heimat in the Anti-Heimatfilm is no longer a place of security; the restricted village world rather becomes an uncanny place for the protagonist (215). Just as in Fleischmann's film, the city represents a desired destination for characters in contemporary Heimat cinema. The following section examines two contemporary works of the Bavarian Heimatfilm director Marcus H. Rosenmüller, who redefined the traditional Heimat concept and presented it in a modern way.

The Renaissance of Heimat in Contemporary German Cinema: The Modern Heimatfilm of Marcus H. Rosenmüller

Although Heimat was considered critically during the late 1960s, the concept of Heimat still continued to be present on the German screen thereafter. Even the forerunner of the Heimatfilm, the *Bergfilm* (mountain film), celebrated a comeback in the first decade of the twenty-first century with Philipp Stölzl's *Nordwand* (2008, *North Face*) or Joseph Vilsmaier's *Nanga Parbat* (2010). The Bavarian director Marcus H. Rosenmüller is one of the leading contemporary Heimatfilm directors, since his films

recall the original idea of Heimat and present it in a modern way. The setting of the modern Heimatfilm continues the conventions of its forerunner: Remote villages far from the big city, surrounded by mountains, lakes, and vast corn fields or grasslands. However, Rosenmüller gradually transcends the gap between Heimat and the foreign; his characters even display a high affinity for mobility and travel. The main characters in Rosenmüller's films are also part of a local community; but instead of portraying the life of peasants struggling with the challenges of everyday life, the plots of the modern Heimatfilm often focus on the issues the peasant's children have to face. By depicting the conflicts young adults are experiencing, Rosenmüller's modern Heimatfilm often overlaps with the coming-of-age drama. Therefore, this rediscovered genre has become a crucial part of popular German cinema, since it addresses the target group of the feature film industry.

Statistics show that German films have been on the upswing during the last years (Figure 3-2.). According to SPIO (*Head Organization of the German Film Industry*), the number of visitors of German films has risen from 13.1 million up to 34.1 million between 1994 and 2006, which means a growth of more than 100% (spio.de). Surveys show that German films gained popularity within the past few years, especially among young audiences with a high affinity for audio-visual media. The reason for that are qualities like "authenticity, content and good dialogs" (ffa.de). Besides comedies, such as *Der Schuh des Manitu* (2001, *Manitou's Shoe*), and historical films, such as *Das Leben der Anderen* (2006, *The Lives of Others*), the modern Heimatfilm constitutes another popular genre for German audiences.

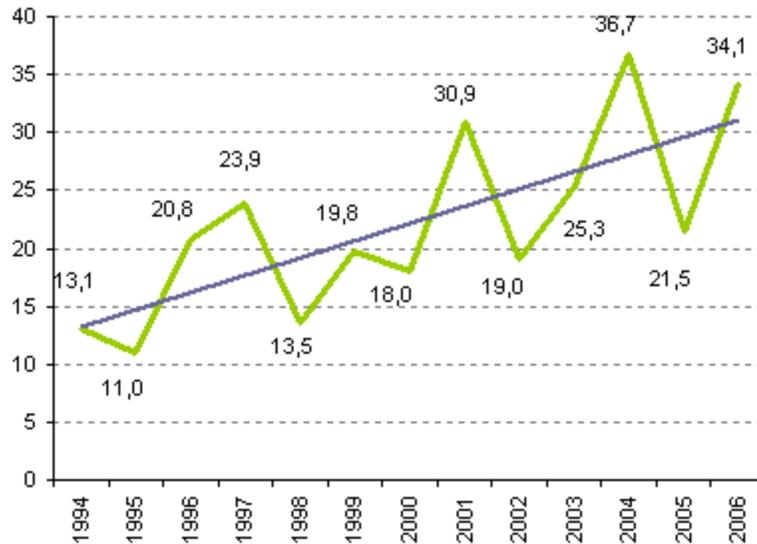


Figure 3-2. The German film: number of moviegoers from 1994-2006 in million.

Rosenmüller's *Wer früher stirbt ist länger tot* (2006, *Grave Decisions*) attracted 1.8 million moviegoers, not only in Bavaria, but in the whole republic (Buchheim). The director's success of bringing back nostalgic images of the Austro-German landscapes on screen shows that the Heimatfilm is far from being a dying genre. Rosenmüller's productions demonstrate that the concept of Heimat is still omnipresent in German minds and film culture.

The Sound of Heimat in *Wer früher stirbt, ist länger tot*

Rosenmüller's debut feature *Wer früher stirbt, ist länger tot* exemplifies the modern Heimatfilm in various ways. The film tells a Bavarian *Lausbubengeschichte* (rascal story) about 11-year-old Sebastian, who lives with his widowed father Lorenz and his brother Franz in Germringen. Sebastian gets in trouble almost every day, most of the time unintentionally. When he finds out that his mother died at his birthday, Sebastian feels responsible for her death. His feelings of guilt dominate his life and even his dreams, since Sebastian is convinced to be punished with purgatory for all of his sins. To avoid this divine punishment, he starts to look for an easy way to become

immortal. As his plan of making amends through finding a new wife for his father turns out to be difficult to realize, Sebastian decides to learn how to play the guitar and become an immortal rock star.

Whereas typical German folk music accompanied the plot of the traditional Heimatfilm, Rosenmüller's film is characterized by modern rock melodies. This change of music entails a change of focus regarding the locus of Heimat. In *Grün ist die Heide*, music functions both as commentary on the plot, as well as a contribution to the "idyllization of the landscapes and spaces of Heimat" by praising its beauty (von Moltke, *No Place Like Home* 90). The opening sequence of *Grün ist die Heide* starts with a slow pan over the branches of a tree before the titles roll. A song introduces the setting and the camera reveals three singers as source of the music. While singing their song, they stroll through the countryside and praise the Luneburg Heath as a "beautiful land." Whereas Deppe places the locus of Heimat in nature, and thus an exterior space, Rosenmüller locates Heimat within his characters. He does not characterize the setting of his film through music, but rather uses music in order to express a character's emotion or to create emotional links between characters. For the protagonist, music creates an emotional link between him and his mother. Sebastian's feelings of guilt for his mother's death prevent his feelings of Heimat, of feeling "homely" at home. Hence, Rosenmüller's Heimat is associated with an interior space. Sebastian thinks he has to become immortal in order to solve his inner conflict. But in the end, it is music which helps him regaining his Heimat.

Music plays a crucial role in Rosenmüller's *Wer früher stirbt, ist länger tot* and expresses, in combination with modern camera techniques, the film's main idea of

immortality. The film's opening shows a radio station on top of a mountain which is gradually approached by the camera through a helicopter shot. The ensuing cut to the interior of the radio station is followed by successive close-up shots of photographs showing rock legends such as Kurt Cobain and Elvis Presley. The scene is accompanied by a catchy rock melody playing on the radio which underscores the setting in this opening sequence. After the radio host Alfred announced to play the same rock song again, the camera leaves the radio station through the window to introduce the surrounding area with another helicopter shot. The unfastened camera creates new dimensions of space by being able to cross the cinematic frames. Within a few seconds, the spectator is able to "travel" from the interior of the radio station to the outside of the building, thus becoming an equal part of the camera eye. In addition, Rosenmüller employs the time lapse technique in order to increase the camera's pace, which conveys a feeling of floating and weightlessness to the spectator. This camera technique combined with the soundtrack already establishes the basic emotion Rosenmüller's film expresses: that rock music liberates and enables immortality.

Rosenmüller employs this first rock song in order to introduce the main characters and the conflict of his film. The radio host, who chooses to play the song twice, since it is such a "wonderful song," celebrates his role of being a DJ. We see lots of colorful costumes hanging on a clothes rail, and each seems to be standing for a certain musical genre. Next, we see a truck driver listening to the same song on the radio. He turns up the volume and moves along with the music. The driver is crosscut with Sebastian riding his bike at the farmyard and listening to the same song on his portable radio. As the music rises, both scenes intersect in an accident in which Sebastian is

thrown off his bike. At this point, Rosenmüller confronts the spectator with death for the first time, the main topic of his film. Even though the spectator believes that Sebastian is dead when lying in the street, after a few seconds, the boy stands up with the simple comment “Lucky me.” When Sebastian tries to move the truck to pull his bike out, he accidentally kills his brother’s rabbits. Franz then confronts him with the fact that Sebastian is also responsible for his mother’s death.

Music in *Wer früher stirbt, ist länger tot* helps Sebastian in coming to terms with his mother’s death and thus in finding Heimat within himself. Therefore, Rosenmüller not only includes music on an aural level, but also as a main element of the narrative. At a field trip to the radio station, Sebastian and his classmates learn about music from Alfred who is shocked that the children do not know rock legend Jimi Hendrix. After Alfred tells them that Jimi Hendrix is dead and yet immortal through his music, Sebastian decides to make music as well. When he finds his mother’s old guitar, the instrument is presented as holy and valuable. Through lighting, Rosenmüller casts this key scene as a very important moment for Sebastian. As the boy slowly opens the guitar case, a light shines out of it and lightens up his face (Fig. 3-3. A-B).



Figure 3-3. Sebastian opens the guitar case (A), and his face lightens up. (B)

When Sebastian plays along a record of the fictional rock star John Ferdinand Woodstock, he immerses into a short reverie, imagining how it would be to play on stage with a rock band. Rosenmüller uses a similar camera technique as in the film's opening sequence. The camera slowly circles around the room in the tavern, with Sebastian always in focus in the middle of the frame, making it appear as if the room is moving around Sebastian, who is suddenly surrounded by a rock band which is playing the song along with him (Figure 3-4. A-D).

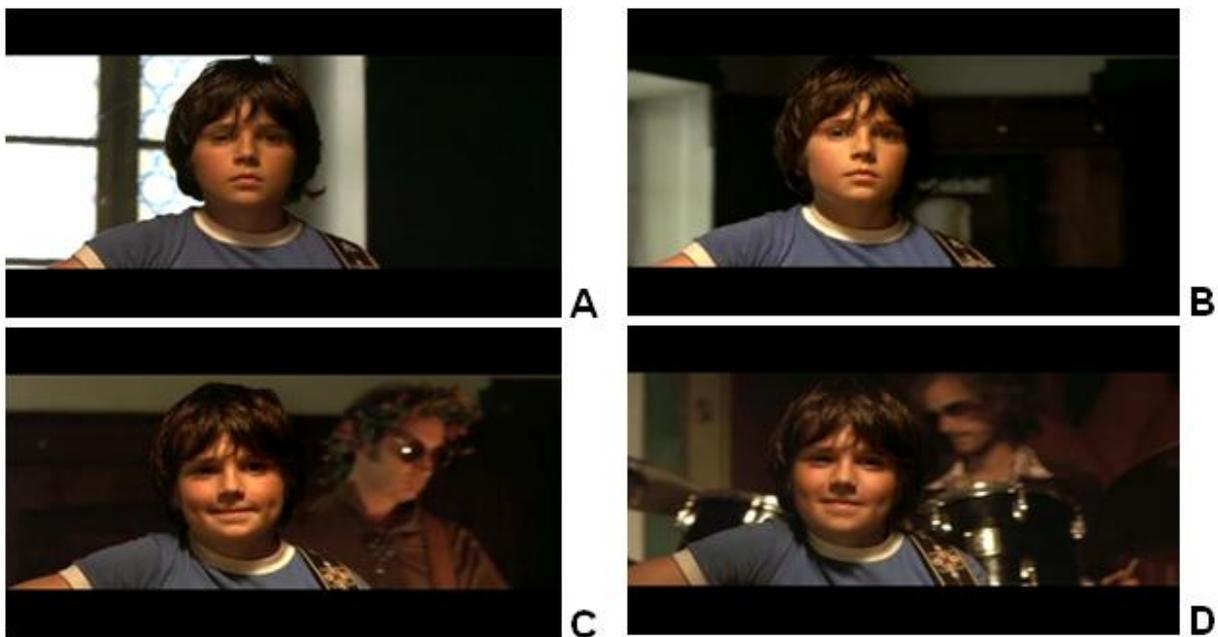


Figure 3-4. Sebastian playing along the record while the room is slowly rotating around him (A-B) until he is suddenly surrounded by a rock band (C-D).

Playing guitar means being close to his mother to Sebastian. He practices everyday and even commits a crime by stealing a new guitar after the old one breaks. Sebastian's commitment to music helps him in coming to terms with his strong feelings of guilt. In the end, we see Sebastian playing a song on his guitar at the radio station, commented by Alfred with the words: "Let's make you immortal". Through music, Sebastian is finally able to get over his mother's death and realizes that it is not him

who became immortal, but the memory of his mother. Hence, Sebastian finally finds Heimat within himself.

Rosenmüller and Uncanniness

The notion of the uncanny is also present in Rosenmüller's modern Heimatfilm *Wer früher stirbt, ist länger tot*. Compared to Cap's *Die Geierwally*, where uncanniness and the protagonist's fears are mainly expressed through camera work and editing techniques (as discussed in chapter two), Rosenmüller includes the notion of the uncanny on a narrative level. As in Cap's *Die Geierwally*, the notion of the uncanny is associated with "feeling unhomey at home" and thus mainly expresses the fear of *Heimatlosigkeit*. Whereas Wally felt *heimatlos* on top of the mountain and at the local folk festival among the villagers, Sebastian feels the same way at home. As long as he is haunted by guilt, he suffers nightmares and the fear of being punished with purgatory. But as soon as he finds a way of coming to terms with his feelings of guilt for his mother's death, which has been the source of his *Heimatlosigkeit*, his fears disappear. When Sebastian plays a song at the radio station in the last scene, Alfred tells him that he is finally about to become immortal. Even though this was Sebastian's motivation in the beginning of the film, he is now convinced that "there is no need anymore."

Instead of depicting the protagonist's fears through close-ups, Sebastian's fears are visually narrated through his recurring nightmares and imaginations. After Sebastian found out about the actual circumstances of his mother's death, he suffers from insomnia. Meanwhile, his father's friends rehearse a play about a trial of a witch downstairs in the tavern. Through the air shaft, their voices carry to Sebastian's room, and the trial of the witch in the play becomes part of his dream. We see him running through heavy rain to the local cemetery where he kneels down at his mother's grave,

apologizing for causing her death. Suddenly, a hand is reaching out of the grave, and Sebastian starts from his sleep. But the nightmare is not over yet and he finds himself at a trial, being judged for all of his sins with purgatory.

Besides Sebastian's nightmares, the uncanny is also presented through his fantasies and reveries during the day. At a birthday party, Sebastian tells a local folk tale about the burning of witches at the Danninger Lake. His story is visualized as a dream sequence, which shows a burning witch that puts a spell on her murderers who end up dying in the swamp. At the next full moon, the children go to the swamp to find out, if the folk tale is true. They actually see Lorenz and Sebastian's teacher Veronika in the lake who they mistakenly consider as the undead bog people of the folk tale. Sebastian's vivid imagination takes the uncanny to another level and makes it part of his own reality. After his father's friends jokingly tell him that he needs to find a vampire to make him immortal, Sebastian is convinced to see one on the train in a later scene. Rosenmüller depicts the uncanny not only as a subliminal feeling, but as part of his protagonist's daily reality. Uncanniness is omnipresent in Sebastian's life as well as in his dreams, and stems from his anxieties and vivid fantasies. Nonetheless, Rosenmüller embeds the notion of the uncanny in an ironic and humorous way in his film.

City and Country: A Convergence

Whereas the modern urban setting was depicted as the foreign other in the traditional Heimatfilm, Rosenmüller's film overcomes the gulf between the city and the country. In *Wer früher stirbt, ist länger tot* the city constitutes a place of wish-fulfillment for the protagonist Sebastian. After his mother's guitar broke during a fight with his father, Sebastian decides to replace the instrument with a new guitar from the music store in the city. In a later scene, we see Sebastian entering the cabin of a train, which

creates a link between the urban and the rural setting. Through modern means of transportation, Sebastian is able to travel back and forth between his Heimat Germringen and the city of Munich. It is noticeable how easy it seems for the young boy to cross the borders, since Sebastian is only used to ride his bike or drive through the village on a tractor. It appears as if travelling between city and country is a familiar matter for the protagonist. He has no difficulties in orientating himself at Munich's central station or in the city itself, and knows where to go without a city map. Even though both spaces are linked through the travel sequence, the next scene emphasizes the differences between the country and the city when Sebastian arrives at the music store. When Sebastian learns that he is not able to afford a new guitar, he tries to apply the rules of a rural community by asking for the possibility to put the instrument on tab. If a customer is not able to pay right away, this would be a common procedure in a rural setting, since the local community is usually familiar with all of its members. But in the city, Sebastian learns, it is not possible. Therefore, he decides that stealing the guitar is his only option. By traveling to the city in order to get a new guitar, the urban setting becomes a place of wish-fulfillment for Sebastian. Since the guitar is also becoming the main factor in regaining Heimat for him, the antagonism between city and country is almost abrogated.

Language also creates a link between the urban and the rural setting in Rosenmüller's film. Sebastian lives in a community, which employs the Bavarian dialect as the basis for communication. When Sebastian arrives at the music store in the city, however, the sales man is talking to him with a Bavarian dialect as well. This creates a communicative convergence between the city and the country dwellers, reducing the

discrepancy between the urban and the rural setting. The representatives of both locales are able to approach each other and communicate without difficulties. When the police drive Sebastian back to Germringen, the policeman talks to Sebastian's father with a Bavarian dialect as well. Furthermore, by crossing the borders between the two locales city and country again, Rosenmüller emphasizes the connection between the two as well as the protagonist's affinity for mobility. Compared to the traditional Heimatfilm, which mainly depicted the city dwellers coming to the countryside, Rosenmüller's protagonist travels from the country to the city. Leaving their Heimat behind seems to be no obstacle for the villager anymore. Rosenmüller's *Wer früher stirbt, ist länger tot* displays an affinity for mobility, traveling and the foreign as part of the modern Heimat concept. The protagonist travels to the big city to fulfill his wish of a new guitar. In Rosenmüller's film *Beste Zeit* (2007, *Good Times*), this affinity for traveling is even more intensified and expressed as a longing for the foreign. Whereas Sebastian only traveled to the next city, the main character in *Beste Zeit* decides to leave Germany to go to a foreign country.

Leaving Heimat Behind in Rosenmüller's *Beste Zeit*

Beste Zeit, also set in a small Bavarian village, tells the story of farmer's daughter Kati, who gets the opportunity to leave her hometown Tandern to take part in a student exchange program with America for one year. Even though this is what she longed for, she realizes that her Bavarian Heimat might be the place where she actually wants to be. Therefore she has to decide, whether she prefers to stay with her friends and family, or if she is finally ready to live her dream of freedom and independence by traveling to another country.

In *Beste Zeit*, the notion of Heimat is ubiquitous and, just as in the traditional Heimatfilm, located in a rural setting. In the opening scene, the two main characters Kati and her best girlfriend Jo meet in the early morning to watch the sun rising on top of a hill. This scene emphasizes the beauty of nature and how it is perceived by the girls. Throughout the film, nature plays an important role and becomes a secret retreat for Kati and Jo. Nonetheless, Kati does not see her home as paradise, like Dick and Dalli see Immenhof for example. Kati feels caged and limited at their little farm in Tandern and is convinced that she is only able to experience freedom abroad. Many times, we see her sneaking out of her window and climbing down the balcony at night to go out. Her rejection of Tandern suggests that Heimat for her means limitation and dependence. Kati's feeling of being trapped is contrasted to the myriad long-shots of the vast fields of Tandern. But the possibility of finding freedom in nature is prevented by the omnipresent conflict between Kati and her father.

Kati's father is presented as the typical patriarch of the Heimatfilm. Yet, his way of parenting seems more comprehensible for the spectator – as opposed to the patriarch in *Die Geierwally* – since his actions seem reasonable and mainly result from his fear of letting his daughter leave. Rosenmüller depicts him as head of the family, being responsible for all important matters at the farm as well as in the house. Just as the father of Wally, Kati's father does not like her boyfriend and tells her how to behave in several situations. When the family is working in the fields, he complains about Kati's work ethic. In a later scene, he suspects Kati of having smoked cigarettes. Kati reacts like a typical teenager at her age and gives her father a defiant response. He, in turn, rebukes Kati by telling her: "As long as you're eating the food in my fridge, you won't

smoke!” Kati claims to be glad to leave soon, and that she even thinks about continuing her academic future in America. As her father won’t believe her, she gets angry and throws the pitchfork on the ground. When her father asks her to pick it up again, Kati demonstrates her feeling of being a prisoner in her own home by answering: “Yes General, Sir!” Unlike the main character in *Die Geierwally*, Kati is not sent away by her father, she rather decides to leave on her own. Nonetheless, one can sense that both Kati and her father are afraid of her leaving home, but at this point, none of them is able to communicate their feelings.

Fusion of Heimat with the Foreign

In *Beste Zeit*, Rosenmüller depicts the foreign as an omnipresent element of Heimat. The Bavarian village Tandern is situated at a flight lane and the director uses various shots of planes gliding through the sky. While watching those planes, Kati realizes how easy it could be to leave her Heimat Tandern behind by just taking the next plane to America. By interrupting the plot with long-shots of planes, the director constantly reminds Kati and the spectator of the connection and proximity between the two locales Heimat and *Fremde*, thus foregrounding the element of traveling again. After Kati receives the acceptance letter from the American exchange organization, her ambivalent reaction reveals her doubts and fears concerning the decision of going abroad. Her best friend Jo is excited when she hears about the news, but Kati is afraid to miss everything when she leaves Germany for one whole year. The next scene pinpoints Kati’s inner conflict and the juxtaposition of Heimat and the foreign (Figure 3-5. A-D). Kati tries to find some time to think in nature, and rereads the letter while sitting in the meadow under a tree. This tree embodies Kati’s secret retreat and is therefore an important part of her Heimat. The camera slowly approaches Kati who longingly

watches the vast fields surrounding her, holding the letter and information brochures of the exchange organization in her hands in a medium-shot. Rosenmüller cuts to an extreme close-up of Kati's eyes, first watching the horizon before slowly turning up to the sky where the paths of two planes intersect and leave a cross behind. This image echoes an earlier scene, where Kati and Jo promise, that their paths will always cross. The shot of the planes is followed by a series of different shots of Kati, lying in the grass or leaning against the tree while reading through the different brochures. The branches of the tree and the blue sky are covered when Kati lifts up her hands holding a brochure and the frame is fully occupied by pictures of Manhattan's Skyline and the Statue of Liberty. This scene links images of Tander's nature with images of America, therefore combining the two locales on a visual level.

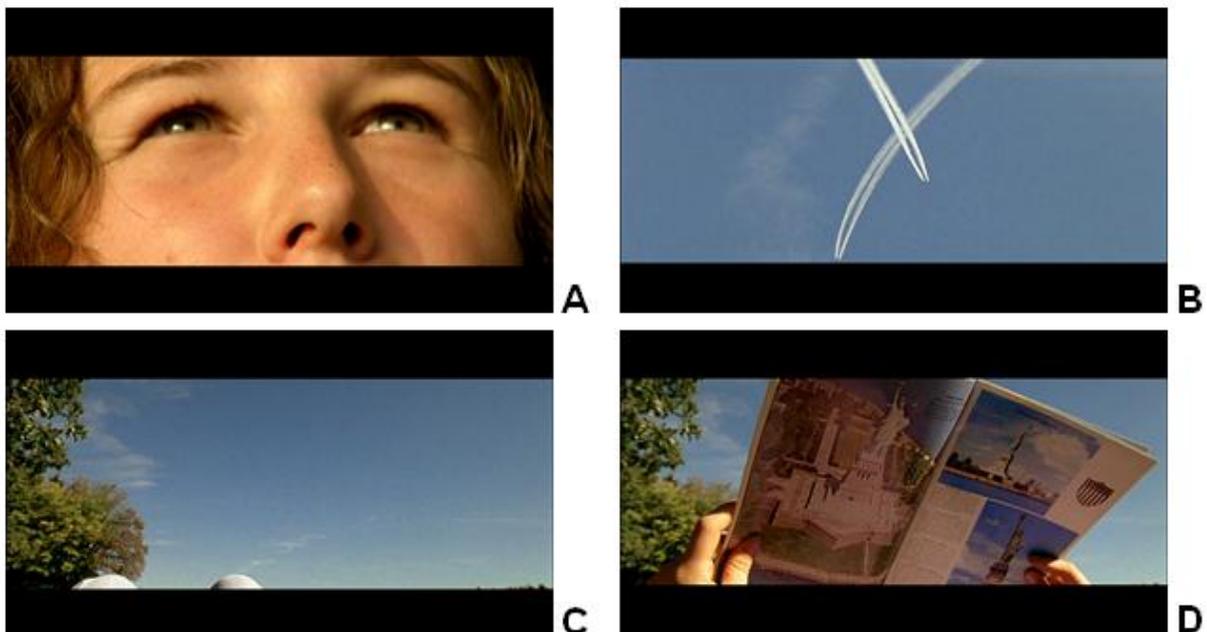


Figure 3-5. Kati is looking up and sees two planes crossing (A-B). The next frame shows her natural surroundings (C), followed by the brochure with pictures of America filling the frame (D).

Besides connecting Heimat and the foreign visually, Rosenmüller also links Tander and America through his use of language. Kati's mother decides to take an

English language class to be able to communicate with her daughter when she leaves. Shortly before the above discussed scene, Kati is chatting with her mother in the driveway of their house. Their conversation consists of both English sentences and Bavarian dialect. Especially the sentence “Do you have me?” stands out in this scene, since Kati’s mother, who possesses only little English skills, translates the Bavarian equivalent “Hast du mich?” (meaning “Do you understand me?”) literally into English. This also adds a humorous dimension to the scene. Kati participates in this bilingual conversation by answering “Yes I have you.” This commingling of languages connects Kati’s Bavarian culture with the foreign American culture on a linguistic level.

The modern Heimatfilm of Marcus H. Rosenmüller does not only differ from the traditional Heimatfilm in terms of aesthetics – due to technological progress and thus greater visual possibilities – but mainly through a visible shift of the locus and the idea of Heimat itself. Rosenmüller’s protagonists developed an affinity for traveling and are not afraid to cross borders to experience the foreign. Instead of depicting the foreign as a threat, Rosenmüller ascribes an element of attraction to the foreign space. Even though Kati is not able to leave Tandern in the end of the film, Rosenmüller addresses the topic of travelling again in the sequel *Beste Gegend* (2008, *Best Place*). Through depicting the idea of travel and the attraction to the foreign, the modern Heimatfilm suggests a mobility of the locus of Heimat and thus conveys the possibility that Heimat itself is able to cross borders or can even be present in an urban setting.

Conclusion

After Oberhausen, which marked a turning point in German film history and culture, the Heimatfilm as well as the understanding of the Heimat concept underwent a significant change. The Anti-Heimatfilm, with its critical depiction of the village society,

deconstructs the cliched rural idyll as it was introduced by the traditional post-war Heimatfilm. Instead, the province becomes a realm in which fascist politics dominate peasant life. As opposed to the Heimatfilm of the 1950s, the social dynamics of the village community in the critical Heimatfilm are mainly characterized by the physical crudeness of its peasant characters. Heimat, which used to be a site of security, is presented as a place of social bigotry and violence in the Anti-Heimatfilm. The flight to the city therefore becomes an appealing possibility for the outsider, who is not accepted by the local village community. Contemporary filmmaker Marcus H. Rosenmüller reconciles the country dwellers with the province, but simultaneously portrays an affinity for the foreign locale. For Rosenmüller's characters, crossing the borders between the rural and the urban locale is presented as a matter of daily routine, even the opportunity to leave Germany for a foreign country offers a chance for self-realization beyond the familiar borders. In depicting traveling characters, Rosenmüller suggests that the notion of Heimat has a mobile dimension, and is not necessarily a limited space. This conception is further investigated in the last chapter of this study, which examines the notion of home from the perspective of mobile characters, such as the tourist or the migrant. This raises the question, whether Heimat represents an exclusively German concept, or if the concept of Heimat could be reconsidered as a global idea.

CHAPTER 4 URBAN HEIMAT

Introduction

Heimat ist kein geographischer Begriff. Man trägt sie in sich selbst.

—Andrej Sinjawskij

Having a Heimat, means having a home, which in most cases equals the place where one is born and grows up. This raises the question, if immigrants, travelers, or guest workers, people who are forced to or willingly change places, are able to find a new home beyond their birthplace. How does the mobility of people affect the spatiality of Heimat? This chapter examines the spatial aspects of the term Heimat, suggesting that Heimat cannot be localized within certain geographic borders, but rather represents an inner sense of belonging and identity. Therefore, Heimat can be created or recreated in multiple places, even beyond the rural locale and outside the German borders. Fatih Akin's *Soul Kitchen* (2009) replaces the provincial setting of the traditional Heimatfilm with the urban spaces of Hamburg, where his protagonists come together around food and soul music. In including city spaces, Akin remodels the Heimat concept significantly and underscores its mobile characteristic. This chapter furthermore suggests, that the Heimat idea is not necessarily restricted to German cinema, but that the notion of Heimat can be experienced individually, even in a global context. In discussing two episodes of the anthology film *Paris, Je T'aime* (2006, *Paris, I love You*), this chapter explores how Heimat is experienced by both an American tourist visiting the French capital, as well as a Muslim immigrant with Paris as permanent place of residence.

in: Hamer, Mark. "Heimat: Gedanken in Bildern – Ein Projekt und Ausstellung von Mark Hamer."

Heimat in The City?

Although commonly conceived as a place within geographic borders, Heimat includes a mobile characteristic which needs to be considered in the definition of the term. Many scholars have associated Heimat with a rural setting and thus emphasized the particular spatial dimension of the concept of homeland. Hermann Bausinger for example claims that even though "it may not be possible to delimit Heimat with any precision, it can be located in space" (von Moltke, *No Place Like Home* 10). However, this claim does not fully reflect the development of the term Heimat. In her article "New Places, New Identities: The (Ever)Changing Concept of Heimat," Uta Larkey states that the traditional Heimat concept, which generally included a "spatial aspect closely connected to a particular region or even neighborhood," was modified during the past few years (24). According to Larkey, the traditional concept of Heimat shifted in the second half of the twentieth century to what she calls "postmodern Heimat," which includes "identity, reflection and self-reflection, the loss of *Heimat*, and even multiple *Heimaten*" (24). Eduard Beutner, the editor of *Ferne Heimat, nahe Fremde: Bei Dichtern und Nachdenkern*, also mentions a tendency of having more than one home, to have several "Heimaten" (16). In defining the word Heimat, Beutner mentions the term "Nicht-Ort" (non-place), and states that people indeed need an "Ortsfestigkeit" (a permanent positioning), but one which always changes (Beutner 7-8). Consequently, Heimat can be identified as a mobile concept, one that is in fact rather rooted within a person than in that person's environment. Therefore, Heimat is not necessarily restricted within the boundaries of an enclosed locale, but rather expresses an internal sense of belonging which can travel with people through spaces.

The possibility to experience Heimat in an urban setting is dependent on the sensual and physical interaction of the individual with its surrounding. In his book *Stadt als Heimat – Schriftstellerinnen und Schriftsteller äussern sich zu Stadtgestalt, Geborgenheit und Entfremdung*, which is addressed to city planners, inhabitants as well as visitors of a city, Swiss author Hans Boesch explains how the city as a living space can become Heimat. He mentions that rootlessness and alienation can indeed be the logical consequences of changing surroundings (Boesch 16). However, it is important to always maintain a “sinnlich erfahrbare Umwelt,” that is to say an environment in which inhabitants are able to experience their surrounding with all their senses (Boesch 25). For Boesch, this is especially important for children, since “in childhood, one develops a stabilizing element, an anchor point, a landmark, and a buoy in the chaos, which we can return to, if only in our thoughts” (25). The author claims, that it is simply not true that the possibilities of a sensual environment could not be preserved or recreated in a new surrounding (Boesch 25). Boesch concludes that experiencing Heimat in an urban setting is possible, as long as the city is “menschlich” (human) and “sinnlich erlebbar” (to be experienced with the senses) (29). By “menschlich,” the author means the need for interpersonal relationships as well as vivid, sensual contacts (Boesch 29). With “sinnlich erlebbar,” he means a sensual environment in which people are able to perform and contribute to their community, and thus identify with it (Boesch 29). Apart from the exterior circumstances, Boesch also mentions an interior dimension when emphasizing that “inner freedom should be promoted and declared a valuable goal” (30).

Not only does the individual need to sensually experience the urban locale, but also contribute physically to their environment. According to Swiss writer Erika Burkart, the identification process with one's surrounding can only take place if it is acquired physically: "One has to be able to act, work, and discover" (Boesch 46). As a consequence, people are able to create another Heimat beyond their place of birth "through the investment of physical labour and a concomitant spiritual attachment" (Boa 6). Heimat therefore becomes a "personally lived space," determined through individual experiences which shape the memories connected to that place (Stavenhagen 45). Hence, the sensual experience of one's surrounding, self-reflection, identification, as well as physical investment and self-realization play a crucial role in the creation or recreation of Heimat in an urban setting.

Heimat and Modernity: The *Stadtheimatfilm*

Even though the terms Heimat and city seem to be mutually exclusive in respect of their conception of modernity, there is a link between the two locales. As opposed to Heimat, the city represents an urban space usually associated with modernity, velocity, and technology which, in contrast to the quiet rural life, produces "quickly changing impressions on individuals" (Mennel 25). Alon Confino points out that scholars used to label Heimat as an antimodern concept, and that this perceived contradiction between modernity and Heimat was "a result of the putative dichotomy between modern and antimodern" (121). This dichotomy ignores the fact that "Heimatlers," while on the one hand mourning the past, on the other hand strived for a "modus vivendi between the preservation of national roots and the continuation of modernity and the prosperity it promised" (Confino 121). Confino therefore suggests an existent link between Heimat and modernity, which implies a connection between Heimat and the city.

City and Heimat converge in the genre of the "urban Heimatfilm," epitomized by Reitz's saga *Die zweite Heimat - Chronik einer Jugend* (1993, *Heimat II: A Chronicle of a Generation*), which redefines the Heimat concept as an idealistic idea. In *Home Again: Revisiting the New German Cinema in Edgar Reitz's Die Zweite Heimat* (1993), scholar Johannes von Moltke discusses a subgenre identified by a group of authors as the "urban *Heimatfilm*," or the "'Stadttheimatfilm'" (121). Edgar Reitz, whose "obsession with Heimat [has] already become a sort of trademark of the director," relocates the sequel to his 1984 series *Heimat - Eine Deutsche Chronik* (*Heimat - A German Chronicle*) from the fictional village Schabbach to the Bavarian metropolis Munich (von Moltke, *Home Again* 119). *Die zweite Heimat - Chronik einer Jugend* starts with the departure of Hermann Simon, who is leaving the province, his Heimat Schabbach, behind in order to study music at the Munich conservatory. Even though both series are concerned with the generic and cultural dimensions of Heimat, it seems that *Die Zweite Heimat* ascribes a reversed meaning to that term and rather becomes the counterpart to *Heimat*, than its sequel (von Moltke, *Home Again* 119-120). Just like Hermann, who first has to acquaint himself with his new urban environment, the audience of the series has to get used to the new setting the director chose for his sequel (von Moltke, *Home Again* 120). Although Hermann's plan to attend university means leaving behind his place of birth and childhood, he seems to be determined to make himself a new home in Munich, a second home. Hermann describes his departure as a second birth: "I was born a second time. Not by my mother this time, but out of my own head. I set out to look for my 'second home' ['zweite Heimat']" (von Moltke, *Home Again* 120). However, Hermann's intention of recreating Heimat in the new urban setting negates the

stereotypical terms such as community, birthplace, and familiarity, with which Heimat is commonly associated (von Moltke, *Home Again* 121). In fact, Hermann is convinced to find all the aspects of Heimat in art: "Music shall be my only love and my *Heimat*" (von Moltke, *Home Again* 120).

Hermann's redefinition of Heimat demonstrates that the dimensions of that term apparently go beyond its spatial boundaries, suggesting that Heimat originates within oneself, through one's ideals, or as Hermann would put it, "out of one's head." Hence, Heimat is not tied to a certain locale anymore, but rather to a place which establishes and forms identities, and which allows for choosing "one's 'authentic' self" (von Moltke, *Home Again* 121). This includes the possibility of devoting oneself to one's passions, fulfilling one's dreams and experiencing love, in Hermann's case, a love for music. These qualifications are not limited to a certain territory, but can be fulfilled in multiple places. This also implies that one is not limited to only one Heimat, or a second Heimat, but rather multiple Heimaten, or one which is extensible. In the TV documentary *Adeus und Goodbye* (2001, directed by Peter Patzak), which traces the reasons for the emigration of Germans, former journalist and writer Manfred von Conta talks about his "ever-expanding Heimat" in an interview: "First, I went to school in Berlin, and that was my *Heimat*. Then I was evacuated to East Prussia... after that evacuation to Upper Franconia. Then my *Heimat* was Berlin and East Prussia, and Upper Franconia. Then I lived in Munich and Vienna... My *Heimat* became even bigger" (Larkey 32). The notion of Heimat can be experienced in multiple places, even when crossing national or international borders, like guest workers, immigrants, or travelers do.

The Cinema of Inbetween

Experiencing the foreign and the notion of alienation as results of a life between two cultures are the key issues of the so-called "Kino der Fremdheit" (cinema of foreignness), which emerged in Germany between the 1970s and 1980s (Seeßlen, *Fremdheit und Entfremdung*). According to Seeßlen, this new genre developed out of an "impulse of fright at the coldness of the own society" (*Fremdheit und Entfremdung*). Facing a language barrier, social rejection, and thus social as well as cultural marginalization consequently led to estrangement and alienation in the new living space. By labeling it as "cinema of social accusation," Seeßlen emphasizes the misery guest workers and other immigrants had to face when coming to Germany (*Fremdheit und Entfremdung*). Hence, this cinema became an "attorney" of the depicted minority which did not have a political voice at that time (Seeßlen, *Fremdheit und Entfremdung*). Helma Sanders-Brahms' film *Shirins Hochzeit* (1975, *Shirin's Wedding*) exemplifies this cinema of foreignness. Shirin (Ayten Erten) leaves her small Turkish hometown behind in order to be reunited with Mahmud (Aras Ören), a man to whom she was promised as a young girl and who is now guest worker in Germany. After arriving in Cologne, Shirin has to face the difficulties of immigrating and settling down as a foreigner. Her situation gets hopeless and prostitution seems to be the only way for her to survive. Other films, which exemplify the cinema of foreignness, such as *Katzelmacher* (1969), *Angst essen Seele auf* (1974, *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*), *In der Fremde* (1974, *Alien*), or *Aus der Ferne sehe ich dieses Land* (1977, *I See This Land From Afar*) also deal with the complexities of migration and integration.

Seeßlen points out, that this "Kino der Fremdheit," which takes up a didactic-humanistic position in cinema, was followed by another genre called "Kino der

Métissage" ("cinema of inbetween") which was mainly represented by the third generation of migrants (*Das Kino der doppelten Kulturen* 4). The French term *métissage* means "hybrid form," and therefore reflects the commingling of two different cultures. The cinema of *métissage* does not represent the alienation of the first generation anymore, or the question of integration or returning to the home country, but rather deals with the banalities of living inbetween two cultures:

In the 1980s, therefore, the cinema of emigration, the cinema of foreignness, has to separate itself from the cinema of *métissage*, a cinema which reflects on the irreversibility of cultural commingling and the life between (at least) two cultures. The cinema of *métissage* is able to secretly diminish the subject of foreignness, but instead focuses on the everyday life between two cultures (Seeßlen, *Das Kino der doppelten Kulturen* 4).

Since the Turkish make up the largest group of the migrants in Germany, Turkish-German filmmakers are the "engine" of the cinema of *métissage* (Seeßlen, *Zwischen den Kulturen*). Directors such as Fatih Akin (*Kurz und Schmerzlos*), Thomas Arslan (*Dealer*), Yüksel Yavuz (*Aprilkinder*), and Kutluğ Ataman (*Lola und Bilidikid*) share a "fearless aesthetic in their representation of images and self-images" (Seeßlen, *Zwischen den Kulturen*). Thus, the cinema of *métissage* creates a "new realism" within German cinema by offering an authentic perspective of living in-between cultures, while at the same time creating a critical outlook on Germany for the German audience (Seeßlen, *Zwischen den Kulturen*).

Soul Kitchen: A Turkish-German Heimatfilm

In Fatih Akin's comedy *Soul Kitchen* (2009), the Greek-German chef Zinos (Adam Bousdoukos, also co-writer of the screenplay) runs a decrepit restaurant named soul kitchen in a run-down warehouse in the Wilhelmsburg suburb of Hamburg. Zinos seems to be dogged by bad luck: stricken by back pain, Zinos is not able to work in the kitchen

anymore. He hires the vigorous gourmet chef Shayn (Birol Ünel), who frightens away Zino's regular working-class clientele with his fancy menu. The tax inspector and the health department want to close him down, while Zino's ambitious girlfriend Nadine (Pheline Roggan) accepts a job offer from China. Overwhelmed by the situation, Zinos decides to follow Nadine to Shanghai and puts his brother Illias (Moritz Bleibtreu) in charge of the restaurant. However, as a convicted criminal on day-release, Illias soon gambles away his brother's beloved restaurant in a poker game. After learning about the new man on Nadine's side, Zinos returns and finds out that he has also lost his soul kitchen.

Greek Zinos has found a home in the city of Hamburg, which is portrayed in the film as modern, fast-paced, and popular living space. Akin's main character Zinos also reflects the director's personal connection to the city. In his film, Akin wanted to put the focus on his birthplace Hamburg, also to communicate his own belonging: "In recent years, there was indeed a kind of correspondence between me and the press about my films and on the issue, where I actually belong. This dialogue is continued through 'Soul Kitchen'" (Borcholte 2). Akin states, that he partly made Soul Kitchen for Hamburg, since he had the feeling to still owe a film to the city in which he was born (Behrens). In his film, he continuously includes shots of the city, its infrastructure, and nightlife. Zinos is moving through the city by car and train, and we repeatedly see images of the city's streets, bridges, as well as the Hamburg subway and train. Akin also portrays a young and lively club scene in order to give an authentic personal image of Hamburg. In an interview with Spiegel Online, Akin emphasizes that he deliberately chose places in Hamburg which were about to be closed down, and which he therefore wanted to

capture in his film: "There is one scene in *Soul Kitchen* which is set in the Mojo-Club, this legendary place on the Reeperbahn, shortly before it was closed down for good. Wow, the parties we had there! Those were key experiences in my life, I've even met Prince there" (Borcholte 2). By depicting the "beautiful city" of Hamburg as "the place to be," Akin also sees himself as "ambassador" of the city (Behrens). Not only did his portrayal of Hamburg reach his German audience, even his Italian and Canadian audience, which saw Akin's *Soul Kitchen* on international film festivals, responded positively according to the director: "Everybody kind of wants to move to Hamburg now. That is just terrific" (Behrens). Akin himself labels *Soul Kitchen* as Heimatfilm, thus making a connection between the city and Heimat: "I am not a country bumpkin, but more of a big city guy, but city can be Heimat, too" (Behrens).

Akin's protagonists experience the notion of Heimat in the city of Hamburg primarily through their restaurant soul kitchen, which becomes a site of home and memory for them. Akin explains why he decides to let his protagonists experience Heimat in Hamburg instead of letting them leave first, as he did in previous films: "Since Hamburg is my Heimat, and I wanted to close a circle, this time, the protagonists do not find their true identity at the end of the world. In this film, the heroes defend their Heimat." (Behrens). Zinos, whose friend Neumann is interested in buying the restaurant soul kitchen, stresses his emotional connection to his place: "I don't know, if I want to sell. That is my place, you know what I mean? I've built it with my own hands. I've laid the pipes, installed the toilettes, collected tables and chairs from the bulk garbage. I feel attached to that place." Zinos thus reflects that one is able to experience the notion of Heimat through physical labour and commitment. He built the soul kitchen with his own

hands and ran the place for several years. These memories capture Zinos' emotional attachment to the restaurant, which he experiences as a part of his Heimat Hamburg.

In a later scene, the restaurant becomes the site of the protagonist's reunification with his brother. Illias, on day-release on the weekends, visits his brother in the restaurant to ask for a job. One can sense the situation of the brother's relationship when Zinos immediately suspects that Illias has broken out of prison. Instead, Illias wants to pretend to have a job to be able to get released on the weekdays as well. He makes Zinos sign a forged contract and asks him for some money. After spending some time together, Illias realizes how important the relationship to his brother actually is and helps him transform the soul kitchen into Hamburg's hotspot for food and dancing. After most guests have left the restaurant, Illias plays a pop song with a traditional Balkan melody, and joins his brother on the dance floor. Both embrace each other and share a cigarette. The camera slowly circles around them, capturing the closeness of the two brothers in that sequence. The soundtrack as well as the cinematography express the blending of the two cultures the brothers grew up with. Therefore, the soul kitchen helps Zinos and Illias to reconnect and becomes a reason for family bonding.

The soul kitchen becomes a crucial part of the brothers' life, a part for which they even commit a crime, thus risking the freedom of convict Illias. When Zinos is about to leave Germany for China, we see him packing a photograph of the soul kitchen, which once again demonstrates his emotional attachment to his restaurant in Hamburg. When Zinos finds out about Nadine's new partner, he returns to Hamburg where he is confronted with the sale of soul kitchen. Illias, whom he has put in charge of the soul kitchen before his departure, lost the place through gambling. In order to get the

restaurant back, the brothers decide to break into the notary's office to steal the already signed contract. For Zinos and his brother, the soul kitchen represents not merely a place for soul food and soul music, it also reflects a bit of their own soul and thus represents a piece of Heimat. In Fatih Akın's film, two Greek brothers try to defend their new German Heimat. However, the sense of Heimat is not necessarily tied to Germany and Germanness, but may, as a mobile concept, go beyond the borders of Germany. In the anthology film *Paris, Je T'aime* (2006, *Paris, I love You*), the two characters Carol, a lonely American tourist in her fifties, and Zarka, a young Muslim girl, experience the notion of a new Heimat in the French capital.

Paris, Je T'aime: Heimat Abroad

Directed by 22 different filmmakers, *Paris, Je T'aime* is a collective vision of life in the city of love. This portrait of Paris is as diverse as the contributing directors who each gave a different view on the French capital by depicting unusual and random encounters in the streets of Paris. The film consists of 18 short episodes, each of which is dedicated to one of the capital's arrondissements (neighborhoods). The film's final episode *14e Arrondissement*, written and directed by Alexander Payne, tells the story about the American tourist Carol (Margo Martindale) who is on her first trip to Europe. The middle-age postwoman from Denver describes the highlights of her six-day tour to Paris to her French class. She reads out her story with a rough American accent, which accompanies the picture as a voice-over. In the beginning of her travel report, one can sense Carol's longing for Paris when she mentions that it has always been her dream to see the French capital. Carol points out, that she especially "loved the museums and streets of Paris," two characteristic sites of the modern urban setting. She emphasizes that she intends to have a "genuine foreign adventure," and thus tries to adapt to the

Parisian way of life and speak French at every opportunity. As an "independent woman," Carol is determined to experience Paris on her own, and decides not to be part of a guided city tour. She wants to discover the French capital by foot, and can therefore be compared to a flaneur, the "key figure in nineteenth-century Paris. . . . who wandered the city aimlessly and sought 'refuge in the crowd'" (Mennel 27). For Carol, her stay in Paris becomes a moment of self-reflection: "However, during those days, I had many thoughts about my life." Even after that short period of time, Carol already ponders about the possibility to become a part of Paris and move to the city. On a stroll through an alley, she imagines "delivering mail every day on a street like this and meeting the people who live here." Through her self-reflection and openness to the foreign, Carol establishes the basis for the creation of Heimat.

Even though Carol's reason for choosing Paris as travel destination is to find love, she does not find love on a social level, but rather through experiencing the notion of Heimat. Throughout her trip, Carol does not participate in any kind of social interaction, instead she spends her days walking alone through the city streets or eating alone in a restaurant. When she talks about general opinions she heard about Paris, she reveals her longing for love: "They say it is where artists find inspiration. They say it is where people go to find something new in their lives. They say it is where you can find love." When she adds that she naturally does not expect that to happen to a woman at her age, one can guess that she hopes it would happen. In a later scene, Carol enjoys the view over Paris from an observation deck and admits her longing for a partner with whom to share her experiences. However, Carol eventually falls in love when sitting on a bench in the city park. Yet, the feeling of love she experiences cannot

be compared to a feeling she had experienced with a partner before, but rather a feeling of love for the city:

Sitting there, alone in a foreign country, far from my job and everyone I know, a feeling came over me. It was like remembering something I'd never known before or had always been waiting for, but I didn't know what. Maybe it was something I'd forgotten or something I've been missing all my life. All I can say is that I felt, at the same time, joy and sadness. But not too much sadness, because I felt alive. Yes, alive. That was the moment I fell in love with Paris. And I felt Paris fall in love with me.

Carol experiences Heimat in Paris, even though she is not quite able to determine the feeling she has. Peter Blicke ascribes an "underlying binary structure" to the concept of Heimat which is therefore expressed through "antinormal binary pairings" (85). In Carol's case, these pairings are "Heimat - foreign" and "joy - sadness." Even though she is not in her familiar surroundings, Carol senses something that she has been missing. For Carol, this longing was an unconscious longing which she has not been aware of. According to Vilém Flusser, "Heimat lies beyond waking consciousness," which therefore precisely reflects Carol's description (17). Carol's experience in Paris suggests that Heimat is not only location-independent, but also temporally unrestricted. The journey, marked through spatial and temporal impermanence, displays a contradiction to the idea of Heimat. The tourist figure therefore represents the opposite of a person searching for permanent residency, and thus a home. Nonetheless, this paradox demonstrates that the Heimat experience is not necessarily restricted to a certain period of time.

Finding a Second Home in Paris

The film's third episode, directed by Indian-British filmmaker Gurinder Chadha, tells the story of Muslim Zarka, for whom the French metropolis became Heimat. The episode opens with a long-shot of the city center. As the camera slowly zooms out, the

title *Quais de Seine* fades in, accompanied by a rhythmic pop melody. The next cut introduces the banks of the Seine as the setting, while at the same time pointing out the main theme of this episode. We see the back of a young blonde girl wearing tight low-rise jeans and walking by a group of three young men sitting by the river. The men start taunting her as she passes them, revealing their condescending attitude toward women. Next, we see an attractive Thai woman walking by, and one of the men provocatively asks her for a Thai massage. The men continue to flirt with two African-American women, except for Francois (Cyril Descours), who notices the young Muslim girl Zarka (Leïla Bekhti) secretly watching them. When Zarka stumbles on a stone and falls on the sidewalk, Francois helps her adjusting her hijab to cover her hair. When he accidentally covers Zarka's face with the fabric, both start laughing. By adding a racial dimension to the film, the director emphasizes the fact that Paris is a city of multicultural encounters, which can be characterized by rejection and hostility.

For the Muslim Zarka that means facing the challenge of finding a new Heimat in a city where her faith and beliefs might not be accepted by everyone. Francois' friends exemplify that hostility when they ask their friend if he had a crush on "that brown girl." They cannot comprehend why Francois helped Zarka and warn him: "Fool, you touch her and Osama will personally bomb your ass." Since her faith is a crucial part of her identity, and thus her Heimat, Zarka tries to maintain that part of her lifestyle. When Francois asks her, why she would cover up her pretty face, Zarka explains that she chooses to do so, since her hijab reflects her beliefs and expresses who she is: "When I wear this I feel part of a faith, an identity." Attending mosque represents another habit that Zarka wants to maintain in her life in Paris. Zarka's religion, as well as the lifestyle

connected to her faith define her identity and therefore are a piece of her Heimat. In practicing her religion in her new surrounding, Zarka is able to recreate that piece of her Heimat in the city of Paris.

In order to fully adapt to her new surroundings and find a second home in Paris, Zarka is determined to become a journalist and promote cultural exchange as ambassador of her country. In their dialog at the Seine, Zarka already taught Francois about her faith, who is now determined to see the Muslim girl again. On his way to the mosque, the image of Francois walking through the streets of Paris is accompanied by typical Indian sounds, which reflects the commingling of the two different cultures. After reaching the mosque, Francois meets Zarka and her grandfather on the street. Zarka's grandfather invites him to join them on their way home, and another dialog develops. He appreciates the fact that Francois is a history student, as "knowing your history is very important." When Zarka's grandfather points out the importance of the history of a country, he implies the fact that history shaped his identity and understanding of the world, and therefore represents a part of his Heimat. He then mentions that his granddaughter is striving to be a journalist for *Le Monde*, a French daily paper. The French term "le monde" ("the world") in this case reflects Zarka's wish for intercultural exchange and understanding. The intersection of two cultures is a fundamental part in (re)creating Heimat. Only through the foreign, "the self becomes visible and can be upraised to the level of reflexivity" (Gebhard 17). "Heimat is being opened for the foreign through the intersection of cultures," which is a requirement for creating a second home in the foreign place (Gebhard 17). For Gebhard, the pristine meaning of Heimat gets

lost when moving through a foreign space. However, this process is necessary in order to recreate Heimat on another level:

Through the spatial and temporal movements, the foreign and the native commingle. Heimat is deprived of its instinctiveness, but only then . . . becomes visible, and can be acquired through reflection, action, and communication. Thus, Heimat can newly emerge on another level (18).

For the Muslim girl Zarka, this new Heimat is Paris. The Paris she experiences might be a different one, but this is what she is eager to communicate as a journalist. Her grandfather summarizes it as follows: "She wants to write about France, but her France. God willing."

Conclusion

The traditional concept of Heimat being an exclusively rural locale shifted in the past decades. Whereas the 1950s Heimatfilm was solely set in the province, perceiving the foreign territory of the city as a threat, contemporary cinema also displays the urban spaces of metropolises as a site for the Heimat experience. This shift consequently reevaluates the idea of Heimat, which rather epitomizes an internal sense of belonging than a spatially enclosed sphere. The notion of Heimat therefore receives a mobile component, which allows individuals to create a second home, or even multiple homes in other locales beyond their place of birth. This concept of Heimat especially applies to mobile characters such as the migrant or guest worker, as represented in the Cinema of Métissage. Even a momentarily traveling character like the tourist is able to experience the notion of home in a foreign place, which also redefines the temporal aspects of Heimat. Although usually associated with the memories of childhood experiences, Heimat represents a temporally independent concept which can come into play even within a limited period of time. The twentieth-century notion of Heimat, which emerged

in the immediate German post-war condition of homelessness, profoundly changed in the past decades so that it cannot be located in a particular space or time anymore, but can rather be understood as an individual sense of identity within a global context.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

The cinematic representation of Heimat reflects the transformation of the term. The 1950s, which marked the peak of the German Heimatfilm genre, represented the Heimat locale as shelter for the homeless, who lost their home during World War II. In depicting a *heile Welt* set in a peaceful, rural community, the traditional Heimatfilm of the 1950s presented a counter image to the preceding *Trümmerfilm* genre, which depicted the aftermath caused by the ravages of World War II. Nature in traditional Heimat cinema played a crucial role and determined the spatiality of Heimat within the borders of the German province. Considered as an antimodern concept, Heimat used to imply an underlying antagonism between the country and the foreign territory, mainly epitomized by the modern urban realm.

With the Oberhausen Manifesto in 1962, which boldly declared the old cinema dead, German film production aimed to compete in the export market dominated by the U.S. Determined to use the medium film to educate rather than entertain, the young filmmakers promoted the emergence of the critical Heimatfilm. In depicting a notion of Anti-Heimat both on a narrative and aesthetic level, the critical Heimatfilm set a new tone in the representation of the Heimat idea. The romanticized rural idyll of the traditional Heimatfilm was replaced by a more critical depiction of the German province, mainly expressed through patriarchal hierarchies and social inequalities. Through the Anti-Heimatfilm, the term Heimat lost its connotations of being the safe haven and a secure shelter, thus presenting the flight to the big city as a reasonable possibility.

This possibility, in turn, is reflected in modern Heimat cinema, which reconciles the Heimat locale with the urban space. The modern Heimatfilm does not depict the foreign

territory as a threat anymore, but rather displays the city as a place of wish-fulfillment and self-realization. The characters of the modern Heimatfilm, which are mainly young adults, voluntarily cross borders in order to explore the foreign space beyond their familiar Heimat. Instead of rejecting the unknown realm of the city or a foreign country, the modern Heimatfilm characters display an affinity for travelling as well as a sense of curiosity for the foreign.

In an era of globalization, traveling characters reevaluate the traditional concept of home, which was spatially and temporally defined in the traditional Heimatfilm as the pre-war rural locale. In contemporary films, however, multi-nationality as well as mobility dominate the cinematic narrations. Mobile characters, such as the tourist, guest worker, and immigrant transform the traditional concept of Heimat significantly and demonstrate the possibility of finding a second home beyond Heimat. The individual's mobility is thus reflected in the depiction of a mobile Heimat, which can be determined as an inner notion of home independent of spatial boundaries. Hence, Heimat can also be experienced in an urban setting, as exemplified by the genre of the urban Heimatfilm.

The ever-changing notion of Heimat was, is, and will most likely always be part of German and international film culture, since the medium film itself embodies Heimat in several ways. An individual's basic need for grounding, security, and identity can be fulfilled by the cinema, which both represents a medium of identification for the spectator, as well as the possibility of retreating to a place of peace and security.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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