

**Contemporary German Documentary Cinema**

**(1999 – 2007):**

**the Rural Represented, the Regional**

**Defamiliarised and Heimat Revived**

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I declare that this thesis is entirely my own work.

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## Abstract

The thesis identifies a development integral to contemporary German documentary cinema that has not yet been taken into academic consideration: namely a new will to depict the regional, the rural, or Heimat. I have organised the research under precisely these three thematic motifs: the rural (Chapter One), the regional (Chapter Two), and Heimat (Chapter Three). The importance of the rural and the regional has to date been largely overlooked by academics in the field of film studies. Yet in the context of Germany they are key cultural markers – both are fundamental to the deep-rooted German cultural concept of Heimat. Heimat, on the other hand, has attracted the recent attention of film scholars; their focus, however, has been mainly limited to historical analyses.

I have implemented a number of theoretical frameworks in order to model a much-needed understanding of this emerging German cinema. My examination of representations of the rural is rooted in a geographic approach to the medium of film, with an emphasis on the shaping (or lack thereof) of cinematic landscapes. My investigation of representations of the regional benefits from ethnographic concepts such as Other-ing and exoticism. My discussion of a revival of Heimat on screen is based on historical analyses of the genre of the Heimat film. These theoretical

frameworks are guided by close textual analysis of eight case study films spanning the period 1999 – 2007: *Die Blume der Hausfrau* (Dominik Wessely, 1999), *Out of Edeka* (Konstantin Faigle, 2001), *Schotter wie Heu* (Wiltrud Baier and Sigrun Baier, 2002), *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* (Andreas Dresen, 2003), *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* (Jochen Hick, 2003), *Die Blutritter* (Douglas Wolfsperger, 2004), *Durchfahrtsland* (Alexandra Sell, 2005), *Full Metal Village* (Sung-Hyung Cho, 2007). The thesis not only identifies and analyses this new development in German cinema but also contextualises it in an academic framework.

To my parents  
with love and thanks

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## Editorial Note

Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own. Although some case study films do provide English subtitles, I have chosen to use my own translations due to the lack of quality in some of these subtitled translations. If a German film title also carries an English / international title, this is placed in italics in square brackets in a footnote to avoid an interruption to the flow of reading. If the film does not carry an English title, a translation is provided in a footnote in square brackets and not italicised. Unless otherwise stated, all films mentioned are of German production origin.

German words are italicised. An exception to this is the term *Heimat*. As the term has no English equivalent, the word is increasingly entering the English language in its German form. I have taken the liberty of referring to the German genre of *Heimatfilm* as *Heimat film* to facilitate reading and avoid linguistic confusion.

Direct quotations from the case study films often carry strong dialects, which lead to deviations from the grammar of standard German – these linguistic inaccuracies have not been rectified but left in dialect for reasons of authenticity.

## Introduction

### 0.1. General Orientation: Contemporary German Cinema

The past decade has witnessed dynamic changes in German cinema. Signifiers are not hard to find. Abroad, German films are once again attracting attention. Renowned international awards such as the Academy Award and the European Film Award have recently had a number of German recipients.<sup>1</sup> German films are touring the festival circuit and the number of German film festivals has risen significantly in the past decade. In Germany, the *Filmförderungsanstalt* (FFA), the German Federal Film Board, has recorded a significant rise in audience numbers for domestic productions.<sup>2</sup> The emergence of a German publication, *Revolver*,<sup>3</sup> piloted by film students turned film-makers, has established a thriving domestic forum for critical film discussion and proves that the developments on the German cinema horizon are also fostering new debates off-screen.

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<sup>1</sup> The Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film was awarded to German productions in both 2002 and 2006: *Nirgendwo in Afrika* [*Nowhere in Africa*] (Caroline Link, 2001); *Das Leben der Anderen* [*The Lives of Others*] (Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, 2006).

The European Film Awards for Best European Film was awarded to German productions in 2003, 2004 and 2006: *Good Bye, Lenin!* (Wolfgang Becker, 2003); *Gegen die Wand* [*Head-On*] (Fatih Akin, 2004); *Das Leben der Anderen* [*The Lives of Others*] (Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> 'Kinoergebnisse – 5 Jahre auf einen Blick', *FFA Marktdaten* <http://www.ffa.de/> [accessed 6th March 2009].

<sup>3</sup> *Revolver* was first published in 1998.

First attempts to define these changes are varied. While the French *Cahiers du Cinéma* reports of a 'Nouvelle Vague Allemande' [New German Wave],<sup>4</sup> others speak of the 'Berliner Schule' [Berlin School].<sup>5</sup> The definitions may be debatable and the film-makers may be reluctant to be uniformly categorised; a cinematic change, however, is undeniable.

These cinematic developments come after a post-wall decade of German productions which primarily followed generic American comedy conventions. The productions offered a narrow vision of Germany: young professionals in predominantly urban environments. The focus, however, was not limited to the new capital, Berlin. On the contrary, the settings were for the most part West German cities, such as Hamburg (*Stadtgespräch*, 1995; *Männerpension*, 1996),<sup>6</sup> Munich (*Abgeschminkt*, 1993; *Irren ist männlich*, 1996; *Das Superweib*, 1996; *Rossini*, 1997)<sup>7</sup> and Cologne (*Der bewegte Mann*, 1994).<sup>8</sup>

Although successful with national audiences of the time, the films have been criticised for lacking engagement with any *real* identity developments of post-wall Germany. Eric Rentschler sees in them 'a lack of

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<sup>4</sup> See for example, Elisabeth Lequeret, 'Printemps allemand', *Cahiers du Cinéma*, 609 (2006), 45-53.

<sup>5</sup> The term was first used by film critic Rainer Gansera, 'Glücks-Pickpocket', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 3 November 2001, but has since turned into common use.

<sup>6</sup> [*Talk of the Town*] (Rainer Kaufmann, 1995); [*Jailbirds*] (Detlev Buck, 1996).

<sup>7</sup> [*Making Up!*] (Katja von Garnier, 1993); [*Father's Day*] (Sherry Horman, 1996); [*The Superwife*] (Sönke Wortmann, 1996); [*Rossini*] (Helmut Dietl, 1997).

<sup>8</sup> [*The Most Desired Man*] (Sönke Wortmann, 1994).

oppositional energies and critical voices, (...) a marked disinclination towards any serious political reflection or sustained historical retrospection'.<sup>9</sup>

It is precisely the hegemony of generic and cultural referents, such as narrative, stars, settings and identities, which contemporary cinematic trends in the past decade have arguably superseded with the construction of new stories, faces, places and characters for post-unification Germany, as well as retrospectively for pre-unification Germany. The films of the new millennium address Germany's complex past – from the Third Reich (*Der Untergang*, 2004)<sup>10</sup> to the German Democratic Republic (*Das Leben der Anderen*, 2006),<sup>11</sup> and the 1970s political upheaval – (*Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei*, 2004)<sup>12</sup> – as well as its future: second and third-generation German immigrants (*Gegen die Wand*, 2004),<sup>13</sup> the new Europe (*Lichter*, 2003),<sup>14</sup> social deterioration (*Knallhart*, 2006)<sup>15</sup> and provincial isolation (*Schultze gets the Blues*, 2003),<sup>16</sup> to name a few.

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<sup>9</sup> Eric Rentschler, 'From New German Cinema to Postwall Cinema of Consensus', in *Cinema and Nation*, ed. by Mette Hjort and Scott MacKenzie (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 260-277 (p.263).

<sup>10</sup>[*Downfall*] (Oliver Hirschbiegel, 2004).

<sup>11</sup>[*The Lives of Others*] (Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, 2006).

<sup>12</sup>[*The Edukators*] (Hans Weingartner, Germany / Austria, 2004).

<sup>13</sup> [*Head-On*] (Fatih Akin, 2004).

<sup>14</sup> [*Distant Lights*] (Hans-Christian Schmid, 2003).

<sup>15</sup> [*Tough Enough*] (Detlev Buck, 2006).

<sup>16</sup> [*Schultze Gets the Blues*] (Michael Schorr, 2003).

It is a cinema not only made in Germany but one that is very much about Germany. German film-makers are looking within – for the first time after unification film-makers are engaging critically with the subject matter Germany. Unification did not immediately act as a catalyst for new cinematic explorations into the new reality of one Germany. It was almost a decade after unification before film-makers reflected on the identity dynamics created by the merging of two Germanies. As Katja Hofmann notes in *Sight and Sound*: ‘Germans are rediscovering themselves.’<sup>17</sup> Film critic Georg Seeßlen describes the cinema as a ‘Bewegung zur sozialen Wirklichkeit’ [movement towards a social reality],<sup>18</sup> while academic Gabriele Mueller similarly talks of ‘the social as a narrative focus’.<sup>19</sup> Amidst all these noteworthy developments in German post-wall cinema, however, there is one sector which, despite evident activity, has been overlooked, namely contemporary documentary cinema. This thesis aims to rectify this omission.

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<sup>17</sup> Katja Hofmann, ‘Refound Selves’, *Sight & Sound*, 12 (2006), 28 (p.28).

<sup>18</sup> Georg Seeßlen, ‘Die Dritte Generation’, *epd Film: Was tut sich – im deutschen Film?* Sonderheft (2007), 16-19 (p.16).

<sup>19</sup> Gabriele Mueller, “‘Welcome to Reality’”. Constructions of German Identity in *Lichter* (Schmid, 2003) and *Halbe Treppe* (Dresen, 2002), *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film*, 4 (2006), 117 – 127 (p.117).

## 0.2. Research Objective

The thesis identifies a corpus of documentary films that show some remarkable similarities. The films in question span almost a decade: 1999 – 2007. This time frame corresponds to the break with post-wall generic productions (see my examples above in 0.1. General Orientation) and the current changes taking place on the German cinema horizon.

The research objective is to offer a preliminary understanding of these films as a development in contemporary German documentary cinema that has yet to be taken into academic consideration. The thesis provides the case study films with a solid academic framework for an analysis of the films. The documentaries under investigation show similarities on three thematic levels: their rural locations, their regional protagonists and their Heimat narratives. These three motifs provide the research portals for the thesis: the rural, the regional, and Heimat. The purpose of the thesis is to provide theoretical frameworks in which these films can be examined. Each chapter will engage in a discussion centred around these portals: the rural is considered in terms of an ecocritical framework, the regional is examined from an ethnographic perspective, and Heimat is investigated in terms of a Heimat film genre context. In addition,

the sub-divisions within the three chapters illustrate the stylistic approaches which the objects of the case studies share.

### **0.2.1. A German Framework**

The parameters of the thesis are set within a German framework. The three thematic research portals linking the corpus of films under discussion have powerful cultural implications in Germany: from the symbolic role of rural nature and the representative role of the region to the mystical role of Heimat. The roles of the rural and the regional are deeply embedded in understandings of national identities. Axel Goodbody points out: 'The significance of individual aspects of nature in a given country is (...) culturally defined in a lengthy process.'<sup>20</sup> These processes create spaces which are far from neutral but rather continuously charged with cultural implications which play a significant role in identity formation. Thomas Lekan and Thomas Zeller refer to a 'centuries-long interaction between communities and their natural surroundings' in Germany as 'spatial and symbolic glue':

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<sup>20</sup> Axel Goodbody, 'Anxieties, Visions and Realities: Environmentalism in Germany', in *The Culture of German Environmentalism – Anxieties, Visions, Realities*, ed. by Axel Goodbody (New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2002), pp.33-43 (p.42).

The cultural landscape ideal emphasized regional diversity and vernacular landscapes as the foundations of German culture (...). In the German environmental imagination, this cultural landscape, the result of centuries-long interaction between communities and their natural surroundings, was the spatial and symbolic glue that anchored each German to a particular locality despite the dislocations of political and social modernization. The landscape was the foundation of homeland, or *Heimat*, signifying a uniquely and often regionally defined German sense of place.<sup>21</sup>

Germany's late entry into nationhood may be one of the reasons why German national self-awareness has been, and still is, so profoundly interlinked with the provinces, regions, and *Länder* [German federal states] rather than with a centralised organ. The direct political associations with nationalism in Germany are another probable impetus for the German wish to identify with region over nation. The fascist abuse of the concept of *Heimat* by the Nationalist Socialist regime significantly changed the meaning of *Heimat* and the rural. The misuse provided both *Heimat* and the countryside with a national (and racial) framework which replaced the regional one, and cast a shadow on the understanding of *Heimat*. However, as Peter Blickle explains, for many Germans *Heimat* has survived different

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<sup>21</sup> Lekan and Zeller, 'Introduction: The Landscape of German Environmental History', in *Germany's Nature: Cultural Landscapes and Environmental History*, ed. by Thomas M. Lekan and Thomas Zeller (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005), pp.1-14 (p.3-4).

uses and abuses as a more 'innocent *völkisch* nationalism. [...] Such a nationalism – based in culture and language, predating the modern nations, and today no longer even called “nationalism” – is one of the foundations of the German idea of Heimat'.<sup>22</sup>

### **0.2.2. Contextualisation: The Rural in German Documentary**

Although academic research into the rural on screen is sparse, the rural on screen is far from new. The 1970s provides a fine example of the strong emphasis on the rural in documentary film in Germany. During this time the German countryside became the focus of documentary film-makers both in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Film-makers in the GDR increasingly turned their cameras towards the rural villages and towns to reveal working life in the provinces. In *Heuwetter* (1972) film-maker Gitta Nickel visits female workers in the Agricultural Production Cooperative Society in the small region of Hohenselchow; for his *Wittstock* series of films documentarian Volker Koepp visits workers in a textile factory in the small town of Wittstock over a period of two decades (from 1974); in the eighteen *Golzow* films Winfried Junge observes GDR school children in the small village of

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<sup>22</sup> Peter Blickle, *Heimat. A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2004), p.29.

Golzow over a period of four decades (from 1961). The portrayal of the working day life of socialist workers and agricultural socialist developments complied with GDR ethics and politics. Wilhelm Roth clearly comments on this political aspect of rurality on screen in the GDR: 'Die Hinwendung zum Land hat auch politische Gründe. [...] Das waren wichtige Projekte für die Entwicklung der DDR.'<sup>23</sup> [The change of direction towards the land also has political reasons. Those were important projects for the development of the GDR.]

At the same time, a similar shift in focus towards the countryside became evident in the documentary scene in the FRG. Fuelled by the critical political attitudes of post-1968 Germany, the portrayals of the rural on the other side of the wall were equally political. In *Die Liebe zum Land* (1973/1974) documentarian Klaus Wildenhahn reveals the economic difficulties faced by farmers in Schleswig Holstein; Edgar Reitz in *Geschichten aus den Hunsrückdörfern* (1980) shows the problems brought to the Hunsrück region by an American air-base. The countryside played a specific role: that of the victim. The FRG focus was very much on the destruction of the countryside through capitalistic forces, compared to the emphasis on the construction of a countryside

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<sup>23</sup> Wilhelm Roth, *Der Dokumentarfilm seit 1960* (München & Luzern: Verlag C.J. Bucher, 1982), p.112.

through socialist forces in the GDR. Rurality and film served as part of a political ideology or climate.

Although the relationship between rural and documentary film is not a new one, it has taken on an innovative dimension in the new millenium. The correlation has adopted a reflexive approach – incorporating histories of rural on screen from the German Heimat film genre (see Literary Review 0.3.3.), thereby revealing novel facets of this relationship.

### 0.3. Literary Review: Gaps in Film Studies

The fact that the corpus of films under discussion in this thesis has not yet received any attention in scholarly literature, nor been placed into any academic framework, is due only in part to the topical nature of the films under discussion. Although there has been increasing scholarly attention devoted to contemporary German cinema, such as in the recent collection of essays *German Cinema: Since Unification*,<sup>24</sup> for example, attention remains focused on investigations into developments in fictional film. The modest amount of recent literature on German non-fiction film, such as *Projecting History: German Nonfiction Cinema, 1967 – 2000* (2005)<sup>25</sup> and *Geschichte des dokumentarischen Films in Deutschland* (2005),<sup>26</sup> is generally limited to a historical approach. This thesis aims to add not only to the academic examination of German documentary film history but also to the ongoing scholarly investigation into contemporary German cinema.

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<sup>24</sup> David Clarke, ed., *German Cinema: Since Unification* (London & New York: Continuum, 2006).

<sup>25</sup> Nora M. Alter, *Projecting History: German Nonfiction Cinema, 1967 – 2000* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005).

<sup>26</sup> Peter Zimmermann, ed., *Geschichte des dokumentarischen Films in Deutschland* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2005).

### 0.3.1. Literary Review: The Rural

The representation of the rural on screen has been much overlooked in film studies research compared to the representation of the urban, which has dominated scholarly focus. This owes something to the fact that the city is the birthplace of cinema; cinema is a child of the industrial era and has been 'von Anfang an ein Medium der Metropolen' [from the very beginning a medium of the metropolises].<sup>27</sup>

It is only recently that the importance of a rural cinema study has been stressed and addressed. Although German cinema is not its specific focus, the recent collection of essays entitled *Representing the Rural: Space, Place and Identity in Films about the Land* (2006) highlights the crucial gap in studies of film:

There is very little written directly about the use of land or the rural in the cinema despite the fact that it so frequently forms a backdrop to both fiction and documentary work.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Karl Prümm, 'Ergebnisse, Tendenzen, Perspektiven – Zum Stand der regionalen Filmforschung', in *Spurensuche – Film und Kino in der Region*, ed. by Joachim Steffen, Jens Thiele and Bernd Poch (Oldenburg: Carl von Ossietzky Universität, 1993), pp.19-31 (p.19).

<sup>28</sup> Catherine Fowler and Gillian Helfield, 'Introduction', in *Representing the Rural: Space, Place, and Identity in Films about the Land*, ed. Catherine Fowler and Gillian Helfield (Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2006), pp.1-14 (p.2).

Another recent collection of essays entitled *Cinematic Countrysides* (2008)

sees as its objective a re-direction of focus:

The volume at hand is designed to function as something of an intervention in, and subversion of, this dominant spatial imagery (countrysides are somehow 'non-cinematic' in form and experience). (...) It is an effort to foreground a different imagery within the accounts of cinema and space.<sup>29</sup>

There is still a question mark over how a rural cinema might be best approached. Over a decade ago P. Adams Sitney in his article 'Landscape in the Cinema: the Rhythms of the World and the Camera' (1996) drew attention to this fundamental gap in film studies:

Landscape seems to have been granted no place among the topics of argument in the aesthetics of the cinema. (...) Although theoreticians describe cinematic landscapes in order to exemplify points, the topic itself is virtually an unconscious issue of film theory.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Robert Fish, 'What are these cinematic countrysides?', in *Cinematic Countrysides*, ed. by Robert Fish (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), pp.1-14 (p.3).

<sup>30</sup> P.Adams Sitney, 'Landscape in the Cinema: the Rhythms of the World and the Camera', in *Landscape, Natural Beauty and the Arts*, ed. by Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.103-126 (p.103).

In the absence of a uniform framework in the study of rural cinema, approaches still vary: the rural is seen as a platform of national identity,<sup>31</sup> or perceived as an extension of urban cinema study.<sup>32</sup> The rural also features as landscape study<sup>33</sup> or as cultural geography.<sup>34</sup>

All in all, although the rural is present on screen, it has yet to gain standing in academic discourse in film studies.

### **0.3.2. Literary Review: The Regional**

The regional has been an equally neglected area within film studies. In terms of historical and geopolitical approach, the context of national cinemas has long defined scholarly research in film studies. This national umbrella has led to a failure to take note of the region. Generally speaking, research into the regional has suffered from being viewed as secondary.

Historian Celia Applegate explains: 'The study of regions, provinces, and local places (...) became subordinate to the national history project.'<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Catherine Fowler and Gillian Helfield, eds, *Representing the Rural: Space, Place and Identity in Films about the Land* (Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2006).

<sup>32</sup> Robert Fish, ed., *Cinematic Countrysides* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008). Martin Lefebrve, ed., *Landscape and Film* (New York & London: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>33</sup> Günter Giesenfeld and Thomas Koebner, eds, *Blicke auf Landschaften* (Marburg: Schüren, 2005).

<sup>34</sup> Christopher Lukinbeal and Stefan Zimmermann, eds, *The Geography of Cinema – A Cinematic World* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2008).

<sup>35</sup> Celia Applegate, 'A Europe of Regions: Reflections on the Historiography of Sub-National Places in Modern Times', *The American Historical Review*, 104 (1999), 1157-1182 (p.1160).

The region is not only defined by its positioning vis-à-vis the national but is subject to many other frameworks. Geographer Anssi Paasi gives details of these in the context of regional identity:

Narratives of regional identity lean on miscellaneous elements: ideas on nature, landscape, the built environment, culture/ethnicity, dialects, economic success/recession, periphery/centre relations, marginalization, stereotypic images of a people/community, both of 'us' and 'them', actual/invented histories, utopias and diverging arguments on the identification of people.<sup>36</sup>

The issue of the German region gained much historical consideration in the 1990s. Historians such as Celia Applegate (*A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat*, 1999<sup>37</sup>), Alon Confino (*The Nation as Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871 – 1918*, 1997<sup>38</sup>) and Tom Scott (*Regional Identity and Economic Change: The Upper Rhine, 1450*

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<sup>36</sup> Anssi Paasi, 'Region and Place – Regional identity in question', *Progress in Human Geography*, 28 (2003), 475-485 (p.477).

<sup>37</sup> Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials – The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990).

<sup>38</sup> Alon Confino, *The Nation as Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871 – 1918* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

–1600, 1998<sup>39</sup>), to name a few, have created new understandings of the significance of region in German identity. Historian Nancy Reagin observes:

Some of the best recent research usefully both complicates and enriches our understanding of German identity by bringing in an awareness of other factors that helped shaped notions of Germanness: region, locality.<sup>40</sup>

Sociological and anthropological writings about the concept of the German region have seen similar growth in the 1990s and thereafter, with publications such as: *Region: Heimaten der individualisierten Gesellschaft* (1995);<sup>41</sup> *Regionale Identität im vereinten Deutschland: Chance und Gefahr* (1996);<sup>42</sup> *Region und Nation: Zu den Ursachen und Wirkungen regionaler und überregionaler Identität* (2004).<sup>43</sup>

There has been a recent renaissance of the region in other areas of study, as Paasi has observed:

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<sup>39</sup> Tom Scott, *Regional Identity and Economic Change –The Upper Rhine, 1450 –1600* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

<sup>40</sup> Nancy R. Reagin, 'Recent Work on German National Identity: Regional? Imperial? Gendered? Imaginary?', *Central European History* 37 (2004), 273-289 (p. 276).

<sup>41</sup> Heinz Schilling and Beatrice Ploch, eds, *Region: Heimaten der individualisierten Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt a.M.: Institut für Kulturanthropologie und Europäische Ethnologie, 1995).

<sup>42</sup> Bernd Mütter and Uwe Uffelman, eds, *Regionale Identität im vereinten Deutschland: Chance und Gefahr* (Weinheim: Deutscher Studienverlag, 1996).

<sup>43</sup> Kurt Mühler and Karl-Dieter Opp, *Region und Nation: Zu den Ursachen und Wirkungen regionaler und überregionaler Identität* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, 2004).

This old idea [regional identity] has gained new importance not only in geography but also in such fields as cultural/economic history, literature, anthropology, political science, sociology, psychology and musicology.<sup>44</sup>

Compared to many other disciplines, however, film studies still lacks a basis for examining the relationship between cinema and region. In a preliminary investigation into the difficulties involved in the study of regional and local film culture in Germany, Jens Thiele points to exactly this disparity:

Im Gegensatz etwa zu den Sozialwissenschaften gibt es in der Filmwissenschaft keine Richtung, keine Schule, keinen Schwerpunkt und schon gar keine wissenschaftliche Einrichtung, die sich hauptthematisch mit Grundproblemen regionaler und lokaler Forschung auseinandersetzt.

[In contrast to the social sciences, in film studies there is no direction, no school of thought, no main focus and least of all any scientific institution which deals with the basic problems of regional and local research as a principal theme.]<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Paasi, p.475.

<sup>45</sup> Jens Thiele, 'Der begrenzte und der weite Blick. Fragen an die regionale Filmforschung', in *Spurensuche. Film und Kino in der Region*, ed. by Joachim Steffen, Jens Thiele & Bernd Poch (Oldenburg: BIS-Verlag, 1993), pp.9-18 (p.11).

It is therefore of immediate importance that film scholars acknowledge the regional within film studies as well as the need to consider a regional perspective. In what ways such a regional perspective on the cinematic can be academically anchored is a research challenge which this thesis aims to engage with.

### **0.3.3. Literary Review: The Heimat Film**

The Heimat film is central to German cinema history. Thomas Elsaesser refers to it as 'Deutschlands einzige[s] eigenständige[s] und historisch beständigste[s] Genre' [Germany's only autonomous and historically most consistent genre].<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, the scholarly literature on the genre of the Heimat film has long been sporadic, not to say limited. The reason for this lack of scholarly material is the tabooing of Heimat as a word or idea after the Second World War. Hitler's political (ab)use of the term shed a dark cloud over the concept, which deterred scholars from approaching the topic in any detail. Hence, the 1950s, *the* Heimat film epoch, 'tends to function historiographically as a postscript to Nazi cinema or simply as a cinematic wasteland awaiting rebuilding by the pioneers of the Young German

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<sup>46</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, *Der Neue Deutsche Film. Von den Anfängen bis zu den Neunziger Jahren* (Munich: Wilhelm Heyne, 1994), p.195.

Cinema'.<sup>47</sup> Consequently, the Heimat film genre was long neglected by film scholars. An exception to this is Willi Höfig's work, *Der deutsche Heimatfilm 1947-1960*, published in 1973.<sup>48</sup> His investigation covers more than 300 Heimat films and is conducted with great precision. This attention to detail is based on statistical analysis and numerical calculations of production modes as well as on-screen motifs. While his findings provide a preliminary insight into the 1950s Heimat film, they do not, however, address any wider socio-cultural dimension. The 1980s saw Gerhard Bliersbach's *So grün war die Heide. Der deutsche Nachkriegsfilm in neuer Sicht* (1985)<sup>49</sup> and Manfred Barthel's *So war es wirklich. Der deutsche Nachkriegsfilm* (1986),<sup>50</sup> as well as the project publication entitled *Der deutsche Heimatfilm: Bildwelten und Weltbilder – Bilder, Texte, Analysen zu 70 Jahren deutscher Filmgeschichte* (1989),<sup>51</sup> which provided the Heimat film with historical contextualisation and cultural implications. Possibly due to new German identity dynamics following re-

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<sup>47</sup> Johannes von Moltke, *No Place Like Home – Locations of Heimat in German Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), p.21.

<sup>48</sup> Willi Höfig, *Der deutsche Heimatfilm 1947 – 1960* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1973).

<sup>49</sup> Gerhard Bliersbach, *So grün war die Heide. Der deutsche Nachkriegsfilm in neuer Sicht* (Weinheim & Basel: Beltz, 1985).

Revised edition: Gerhard Bliersbach, *So grün war die Heide...Die gar nicht so heile Welt im Nachkriegsfilm* (Weinheim & Basel: Beltz, 1989).

<sup>50</sup> Manfred Barthel, *So war es wirklich. Der deutsche Nachkriegsfilm* (Munich & Berlin: F.A.Herbig, 1986).

Revised edition: Manfred Barthel, *Als Opas Kino jung war. Der deutsche Nachkriegsfilm* (Frankfurt a.M. & Berlin: Ullstein, 1991).

<sup>51</sup> Wolfgang Kaschuba and others, eds, *Der deutsche Heimatfilm: Bildwelten und Weltbilder – Bilder, Texte, Analysen zu 70 Jahren deutscher Filmgeschichte* (Tübingen: Tübinger Vereinigung für Volkskunde e.V., 1989).

unification in 1989, the 1990s witnessed the beginning of an increasing interest in Heimat film amongst film scholars, notably from within Germany: Andrea Greis (*Der Bundesdeutsche Heimatfilm der fünfziger Jahre*, 1992<sup>52</sup>), Manuela Fiedler (*Heimat im deutschen Film: Ein Mythos zwischen Regression und Utopie*, 1995<sup>53</sup>), Jürgen Trimborn (*Der deutsche Heimatfilm der fünfziger Jahre – Motive, Symbole und Handlungsmuster*, 1998<sup>54</sup>), to name a few. These investigations used comparable approaches – segmenting the genre into polar understandings, e.g. city/countryside, tradition/modern, familiar/foreign. The past decade has witnessed renewed critical interest in the role of Heimat in German film history, most notably from Johannes von Moltke. Von Moltke's recent publication *No Place Like Home: Locations of Heimat in German Cinema* (2005)<sup>55</sup> develops the binary approach beyond such polar understandings. He suggests that the Heimat film actually reveals negotiations between the seemingly opposing binaries. His work is a significant milestone in the process of understanding the 1950s Heimat film. Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman<sup>56</sup> map out the cultural terrain of

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<sup>52</sup> Andrea Greis, *Der Bundesdeutsche Heimatfilm der fünfziger Jahre* (Frankfurt a.M.: Deutsches Filmmuseum, 1992).

<sup>53</sup> Manuela Fiedler, *Heimat im deutschen Film: Ein Mythos zwischen Regression und Utopie* (Coppengrave: Coppi-Verlag, 1995).

<sup>54</sup> Jürgen Trimborn, *Der deutsche Heimatfilm der fünfziger Jahre – Motive, Symbole und Handlungsmuster* (Cologne: Teiresias, 1998).

<sup>55</sup> von Moltke, p.21.

<sup>56</sup> Elizabeth Boa & Rachel Palfreyman, *Heimat: A German Dream. Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890–1990* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

the development of Heimat through the past century and pose crucial questions about the future of Heimat.

Although the Heimat film is seen to have reached its pinnacle in the 1950s, the Heimat genre is not confined to the post-war era. Both pre-war and post-war cinematic developments have been equal driving forces of the Heimat genre: the *Bergfilm* (1920s), the Anti-Heimat film (1970s), Edgar Reitz's Heimat films (1980s), for example. These Heimat film movements have also been the subject of recent growing academic interest.

Heimat on contemporary screens, however, has not been fully explored. Some attempts have been made to reinterpret the concept within other contemporary parameters: Alexandra Ludewig applies the term (Heimat) to Eastern European Cinema,<sup>57</sup> and Daniela Berghahn interprets the concept through the dynamics of immigration on screen.<sup>58</sup> Unlike Ludewig and Bergfelder, who both point to a cinematic *reinvention*, this thesis identifies a cinematic *revival*: a return to traditional Heimat settings and conventional Heimat narrative structures.

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<sup>57</sup> Alexandra Ludewig, 'A German Heimat in the Baltic Region? Contemporary German Film as a European Provocation', *Journal of European Studies*, 36 (2006), 157-179.

<sup>58</sup> Daniela Berghahn, 'No place like home? Or impossible homecomings in the films of Fatih Akin', *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film*, 4 (2007), 141-157.

## 0.4. Overview: Case Studies

The objective of the thesis is to identify and bring to academic attention a corpus of films that are bound by a striking unity in thematic arrangement and production mode.

I have limited my research case studies to eight films to allow for sufficient textual analysis. The films span the period 1999 – 2007, thereby coinciding with transitional developments in contemporary German cinema (see 1.0. General Orientation). An introduction to each case study film follows. Where pertinent to the context of this study, filmographic details of the respective film-makers have been incorporated.

### **0.4.1. *Die Blume der Hausfrau* (Dominik Wessely, 1999)**

*Die Blume der Hausfrau*<sup>59</sup> is Dominik Wessely's film directing debut.

Originally from Munich, Wessely decided to make a film about the region where he attended the prestigious film school, the *Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg*, from which he graduated in 1996. The film was produced by a fellow film school graduate, Michael Jungfleisch, who went on to produce

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<sup>59</sup> No English title available [The Flower of the Housewife].

*Schotter wie Heu* (Wiltrud Baier and Sigrun Köhler, 2002) – another case study film for this research.

In the German region most noted for cleanliness and orderliness, Swabia, Wessely follows five door-to-door vacuum-cleaner salesmen from the reputable company *Vorwerk* on their visits to the living rooms of Swabian housewives.<sup>60</sup> Over the period of one month Wessely observes the sales charm of four Italian-Swabians (Angelo Ditta, Massimo Santagatti, Maurizio Marino, Salvatore Trovato) and one German-Swabian (Steffen Widule) as they attempt to outdo each other in their selling results. The film's title metaphorically refers to a vacuum-cleaner's nozzle as a housewife's flower. The film was an audience success at the International Hof Film Days in 1998 and the Max Ophüls Film Festival in 1999.

Wessely went on to direct and co-direct a number of documentary films for television as well as for the cinema screen – using the rural and the regional as recurring themes in much of his work: *Broadway Bruchsal* – *Schauspielerträume in der Provinz* (television documentary series, 2001),<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> The documentary's focus on door-to-door salesmen strikes chords with the American documentary *Salseman* (Albert Maysles, David Maysles, Charlotte Zwerin, 1969).

<sup>61</sup> No English title available [Broadway Bruchsal – Actors' Dreams in the Province]. Bruchsal is a small city in Baden-Württemberg.

*Patient Landarzt* (television documentary, 2005),<sup>62</sup> *Gebenedeites Gebein* (documentary film, 2008).<sup>63</sup>

#### **0.4.2. *Out of Edeka* (Konstantin Faigle, 2001)**

*Out of Edeka* is Konstantin Faigle's first documentary film, made while he was studying for a postgraduate degree at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne. In the film Faigle returns to his childhood and teenage home, the Swabian village of Empfingen. There he revisits the village shop owned by his parents (Hans and Josefine Faigle), which is about to be closed down. In between the shop aisles and the daily village life of his parents, his sister (Ulrike Gaus) and his brother (Gerhart Faigle), Faigle's film starts to drift between different realities: childhood memories, family history and daydreams take over to offer a very personal portrayal of the Swabian province. Re-enactments with lavish costumes transport the viewer between memory and dream, and Faigle's Spanish girlfriend acts as the catalyst for many fantasy scenes. Towards the end of the film, Faigle travels with his camera to Georgia to reveal, to the surprise of the viewer, a further family protagonist: a young daughter.

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<sup>62</sup> No English title available [Country Doctor Patient].

<sup>63</sup> No English title available [Blessed Bones].

The autobiographical film received the Bavarian Documentary Film Prize, *Der junge Löwe*, in 2001. In 2005 Faigle released his second documentary film, *Die große Depression – made in Germany*,<sup>64</sup> which documented his sociological journey across Germany in search of the origins of the nation's depressive soul. Like *Out of Edeka*, the film has an autobiographical component: Faigle (as well as his father) become part of the on-screen narrative. It also sees Faigle continuing his cinematic concern with German belonging and identity.

#### **0.4.3. *Schotter wie Heu* (Wiltrud Baier & Sigrun Köhler, 2002)**

*Schotter wie Heu*<sup>65</sup> is the second film jointly directed by Wiltrud Baier and Sigrun Köhler. Baier, a trained pastry chef, and Köhler, a trained typescript editor, attended the *Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg*, where they co-directed their first film *How Time Flies* (2000). The film in its short version (11 minutes) and long version (88 minutes) was the recipient of numerous film prizes and was shown at many film festivals (notably the Cannes Film Festival in 2002). Since 2000 Baier and Köhler have been working jointly under the name of *Böller und Brot* [firework and bread]. *How Time Flies* already sets the tone for *Schotter wie Heu*: the focus is on a 100-year-old

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<sup>64</sup> No English title available [The Great Depression – made in Germany].

<sup>65</sup> No English title available. Discussion of title follows in main text.

lifelong farmer, Köhler's grandfather. In *Schotter wie Heu* the rural region of Hohenlohe in Southern Germany becomes the focus of the camera. Within Hohenlohe it is Fritz Vogt, an elderly bank director, who drives the narrative. Fritz Vogt is not only the director, but book-keeper, bank teller and bank clerk of the last bank in Germany to function without a computer, and also a part-time farmer. Over a period of six months Baier and Köhler explore the village beyond the smallest bank in Germany (the village shop, the church, two football fields, the gravel factory, the voluntary fire brigade, the pub) to reveal the ups and downs of provincial life. The film's title not only literally refers to the village's industrial income (*Schotter* = gravel) and the village's rural income (*Heu* = hay), but also metaphorically to the bank: *Schotter wie Heu* translates idiomatically as: lots of money. The film also carries the English alternative title: *The Good, the Bad and the Money*. Baier and Köhler took home the award for best documentary at the International Filmweekend in Würzburg in 2003.

Baier and Köhler's next film project, the documentary, *Der große Navigator* (2007),<sup>66</sup> remains true to the German provinces. Over the period of a year the two directors follow a Swabian missionary on his journey through the East German countryside. The short film project *Homemade*

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<sup>66</sup> No English title available [The Great Navigator].

(2007) takes the two film-makers to the rural habitat of another nation, Scotland. In a small town in Aberdeenshire the women collaborate with a local arts project and observe children over a period of three months attempting to replicate well-known consumer snacks and sweets by making them themselves in the kitchen of a local club.

#### **0.4.4. *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* (Andreas Dresen, 2003)**

Andreas Dresen grew up in the GDR – his films reveal his engagement with his home turf: they are for the most part set in eastern parts of Germany. Having worked for over a decade predominantly directing in theatre and television, Dresen's breakthrough came with his award-winning feature films about city life, *Nachtgestalten* (1999)<sup>67</sup> and *Halbe Treppe* (2001),<sup>68</sup> Set in Berlin and Frankfurt an der Oder (at the Polish border), both films focus on urban inhabitants and their built-up grey environments. Dresen has been praised for his cinematic realism: although fictional, both films share a semi-documentary nature as they draw upon techniques attributed to the documentary genre such as improvisation, interviews and non-professional actors.

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<sup>67</sup> [*Night Shapes*].

<sup>68</sup> [*Grill Point*].

For the documentary *Herr Wichmann von der CDU*<sup>69</sup> Dresen visits a rural setting but stays true to his geographical setting of choice: Germany's north-eastern region. In the weeks leading up to the German Parliament elections in September 2002, Dresen accompanies 25-year-old CDU candidate Henryk Wichmann on his election campaign through the provinces of the Uckermark, a region notorious for high unemployment and emigration rates. Whether visiting a home for senior citizens, a factory, a school or giving out pens and postcards from beneath his umbrella at the roadside, Wichmann's CDU enthusiasm and determination remain resolute in a region known to be one of the biggest strongholds of the oppositional SPD.<sup>70</sup> Filmed over the short period of fifteen filming days, the film follows a direct cinema approach, abstaining from voice-over and all non-diegetic soundtrack.

Dresen's work continues to put eastern regions of Germany on the cinema screen: *Willenbrock* (2005)<sup>71</sup> traces the down-spiral of a car salesman in Magdeburg; *Sommer vorm Balkon* (2006)<sup>72</sup> outlines the friendship of two

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<sup>69</sup> No English title available [Mr. Wichmann from the CDU].

CDU = Christlich Demokratische Union [Christian Democratic Union] is a political party.

<sup>70</sup> Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands [Social Democratic Party of Germany]

<sup>71</sup> No English title available. Willenbrock is the name of a person.

<sup>72</sup> [*Summer in Berlin*].

women in Berlin; *Wolke 9* (2008)<sup>73</sup> thematises the love and lust of an elderly couple in Berlin.

#### **0.4.5. *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* (Jochen Hick, 2003)**

Jochen Hick is acclaimed for films addressing issues of homosexuality.

Although he was brought up in Germany, his films, have been either set in Brazil (*Via Appia*, 1990) or the USA (*Menmaniacs – The Legacy of Leather*, 1995; *Sex/Life in L.A.*, 1998). *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* [*Talk Straight: The World of Rural Queers*] is his first film shot in Germany. Over a period of two years film-maker Hick travelled repeatedly into the adjoining regions of Southern Germany, Baden and Swabia, to ask the same question: 'Kennen Sie einen Schwulen?' [Do you know any gays?]. And over and over again he was confronted with the same answer: 'Ich kenn' keinen.' [I don't know any.]. Hick, however, has found many a homosexual living the life of the province. His film *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* is devoted to the portrayal of the life of five homosexuals: Claudio, Hartmut, Richard, Stefan and Uwe. The men, all of different ages, are torn between the love for their region with its rural lifestyle and the hostility and prejudices against homosexuals in that habitat. Claudio, whose brother is also gay, helps his

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<sup>73</sup> [*Cloud Nine*].

mother, Erica, in her battle for gay rights in the church; 57 year-old Hartmut has recently outed himself after becoming HIV positive; Richard is 78 years old and had never outed himself until being filmed by Hick; Stefan is openly homosexual and works as a local forester; Uwe lives with his mother, who still hopes that her son will bring home a girl one day. The film also travels with its protagonists out of the rural regions to Berlin, Thailand and Zurich. The film itself has travelled to screens internationally, particularly to the USA. Hick comments on this: 'Schwule Lebenswelten unterscheiden sich zwischen Land und Stadt viel mehr als zwischen Köln und beispielsweise Los Angeles.'<sup>74</sup> [Gay lifestyles differ much more between rural and urban than between Cologne and Los Angeles, for example.]. The film was awarded the Teddy Prize 2003, a prize granted to films with a gay context at the *Berlinale*, the Berlin International Film Festival.

Hick has continued to make films that tackle issues of homosexuality in a documentary format: *Rainbow's End* (2006); *East/West – Sex and Politics* (2008); *The Good American* (premiere at the *Berlinale* 2009).

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<sup>74</sup> 'Presseheft: *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros'*, p.6  
<[www.salzgeber.de/presse/pressehefte/heteros\\_ph.pdf](http://www.salzgeber.de/presse/pressehefte/heteros_ph.pdf)> [accessed 9 March 2009].

#### 0.4.6. *Die Blutritter* (Douglas Wolfsperger, 2004)

Douglas Wolfsperger began his career with fiction film productions of a comical and satirical nature: *Lebe kreuz und sterbe quer* (1985);<sup>75</sup> *Probefahrt ins Paradies* (1992);<sup>76</sup> *Meine Polnische Jungfrau / Heirate mir! – Die Braut und ihr Totengräber* (1999).<sup>77</sup> After making documentaries for the television screen, Wolfsperger marked his entry into the documentary cinema scene with *Bellaria! So lange wir leben* (2002),<sup>78</sup> a film about a Viennese art house cinema and its elderly audience. Acclaimed by audiences and critics, the film was awarded numerous film prizes such as the Bavarian Film Prize, the Ernst Lubitsch Prize and the Prix Europa. Like *Bellaria! So lange wir leben*, Wolfsperger's next documentary film, *Die Blutritter* [*Riders of the Sacred Blood*] (2004), is a film about traditions of the past surviving in modern day society. The film documents the event of the *Blutritt*, an equestrian procession in honour of a religious legend, in the small town of Weingarten in Upper Swabia held on the day after the feast of the Ascension. Three thousand men on horses ride annually from the monastery, through the

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<sup>75</sup> No English title available [Live crossways and die diagonally]. The idiomatic meaning is lost in translation. *Kreuz und quer* in German translates idiomatically as 'criss-cross'.

<sup>76</sup> [*Test Run to Paradise*].

<sup>77</sup> No English title available [My Polish Virgin / Marry me! – The Bride and her Gravedigger].

Note that the second title in the original carries a deliberate grammatical error often made by non-native speakers of German.

The film carries different variations of the above title depending on cinema/ tv/ dvd release.

<sup>78</sup> [*Bellaria! As Long as We Live*].

town and out into the countryside in homage of the Holy Relic. The *Blutritt* counts as the largest equestrian procession in the world. By interviewing and observing a cross-section of locals – a butcher, an undertaker, a nurse, a monk, a retiree, a beekeeper, the owner of a private museum – in their preparations for the big day, Wolfsperger provides a portrayal of people who believe and live by the region's traditions. The region is part of filmmaker Wolfsperger's personal history – it is where he attended boarding school.

Wolfsperger has continued his career in documentary film-making with *War'n Sie schon mal in mich verliebt?* (2005),<sup>79</sup> *Der lange Weg ans Licht* (2006),<sup>80</sup> *Der entsorgte Vater* (2008).<sup>81</sup>

#### **0.4.7. *Durchfahrtsland* (Alexandra Sell, 2005)**

*Durchfahrtsland* [*Remote Area*] (2005) is Alexandra Sell's first feature-length film. Sell, who has a background in Fine Arts and has worked as a photographer, made her first film, *Das Avon Projekt* (2000),<sup>82</sup> whilst studying at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne – where director Konstantin Faigle

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<sup>79</sup> [*Did you ever fall in love with me?*].

<sup>80</sup> No English title available [The long way into the light].

<sup>81</sup> No English title available. The title carries an ambiguous meaning: *Der entsorgte Vater* referring both to a father who has been disposed of as well as a father whose right to care has been removed.

<sup>82</sup> [*The Avon Project*].

coincidentally also made his first film. *Das Avon Projekt* follows three representatives of the Avon cosmetic firm through the English provinces. The depiction of English rurality prompted Sell to explore the rurality of her own home country. 'Da habe ich gemerkt, wie wenig ich über mein eigenes Land weiß...Besonders fremd war mir Deutschland zwischen den großen Städten.' [I noticed how little I knew about my own country ... Germany between the big cities was particularly foreign to me].<sup>83</sup> Although born in Hamburg, Sell chooses an area between Cologne and Bonn as the location for her film: the foothills in the Rhineland known in German as the *Vorgebirge*.<sup>84</sup> The film documents the lives of four foothill inhabitants: Mark Basinski, Hans Wilhelm Dümmer, Guiseppe Scolaro and Sophia Rey. Mark Basinski is the youngest member of a local bachelor club but is more interested in painting and shop window design than in the club; Hans Wilhelm Dümmer is a local church pastor responsible for two village communities divided by historic hostility; Guiseppe Scolaro struggles to find a new way of life after falling out with his brass band; Sophia Rey is a writer whose novels are set in the region but fail to find a regional readership. Over the period of a year – marked by the cycle of folkloric

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<sup>83</sup> 'Presseheft: *Durchfahrtsland*', p.3

<[http://www.realfictionfilme.de/filme/durchfahrtsland/assets/durchfahrtsland\\_presseheft.pdf](http://www.realfictionfilme.de/filme/durchfahrtsland/assets/durchfahrtsland_presseheft.pdf)> [accessed 9 March 2009].

<sup>84</sup> No English title available [The foothills].

festivities – Sell observes the four protagonists in their surroundings and offers the viewer an omniscient commentary on their developments. The film was awarded the *Special Prix Europa* in 2005. Sell has since turned her focus to script writing.

#### **0.4.8. *Full Metal Village* (Sung-Hyung Cho, 2007)**

Film-maker Sung-Hyung Cho was born and bred in South Korea and came to Germany to study. She has since made Germany her second home. *Full Metal Village* is Cho's first feature-length film. The film focuses on the small village of Wacken in the region of Schleswig-Holstein in Northern Germany. Every August Wacken welcomes, in the course of three days, over forty thousand Heavy Metal fans at the Wacken Open Air Festival. Cho's camera captures the culture clash, the encounter between inhabitants and fans, and at the same time portrays five village residents in particular: Farmer Trede, Farmer Plähn, Kathrin and her grandmother Irma, and Norbert. Farmer Trede takes pleasure in earning a few extra Euros by being in charge of the local festival volunteers but spends most of his time in his armchair in front of the television keeping track of his shares on the stock market; Farmer Plähn prefers the calm of his barn and the company of his animals; teenager Kathrin enthusiastically participates in the festival

whereas her grandmother takes a holiday to avoid the upcoming music scene; family man Norbert is unemployed and regrets having given up the chance of being one of the festival founders, who are now very well-off.

*Full Metal Village* received the Max Ophüls Prize 2007 – the first documentary ever to be awarded the prestigious main prize. The film was also the recipient of the regional Hesse Film Prize and the Film Prize Schleswig Holstein. Cho's next project has continued to explore the dynamics of cultural relationships: this time between Germany and South Korea. *Endstation der Sehnsüchte* (2009)<sup>85</sup> portrays Koreans returning to their home of origin after having lived and worked in Germany for over 30 years. The emigrants return with their German partners to enjoy retirement in a purpose-built 'German' community where the German way of life and Korean local conditions come together.

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<sup>85</sup> [*Home from Home*].

## 0.5. Overview: Regional Film Funding / National Television

### Support

The films under study are very dependent on regional as well as national institutions for funding and support. The regional occupies a vital position in the national film production industry. Germany's film production is supported by a unique funding structure. It is a decentralised structure of funding organs of which the majority are regional film funds. In 1967 the first *Filmförderungsgesetz* [Film Funding Law] was passed and was followed by the establishment of the *Filmförderungsanstalt* (FFA) [The German Film Board] in 1968 which raises a film levy from film exhibitors and distributors. In 1979 the *Bundesländer* (federal states) followed this national example of film subsidy for the first time and established their own regional funding institutions, which, however, are not financed by film levies but by individual *Bundesländer* policies. In the 1980s regional film funds developed as they proved to be a means of boosting the regional economy and awareness of the region.

It was not until the 1990s, however, that the regional film funds reached the significant position in German film funding structures they hold today. They have additionally increased their presence by introducing

a film commission to every regional film fund. Regional film commissions were created as information services in order to promote the region as a film location and attract national as well as foreign investors. With their so-called 'Länder-Effekt' [local effect] many regional film funds guarantee that a certain percentage of funding is re-invested in the region in form of production costs. Regional film prizes offer additional promotion and exposure. Regional funding is undoubtedly linked to regional endorsement and is known as *Standortpolitik*, the politics of place.<sup>86</sup>

The relationship between the films under investigation and regional funding seems to be a symbiotic one. Since the niche subjects of the documentary attract a limited audience and the documentary format cannot compete with the audience figures of its fictional counterpart, the documentary cinema under investigation is reliant on public financing. The only party for whom it is economically viable to promote the regional on screen is the regional funder. The disadvantage, of course, is a potential cinematic compromise, in which film-makers seek to satisfy the economic requirements of the film fund by tailoring their films to suit marketing purposes. *German Films Quarterly*, published by the German Film Service + Marketing, ensures that this kind of 'economic compromise' is at least no

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<sup>86</sup> See Thomas Elsaesser, 'German Cinema in the 1990s', in *The BFI Companion to German Cinema*, ed. by Thomas Elsaesser (London: BFI Publishing, 1993), pp. 3-16.

longer an issue when funding is given by different film funds

simultaneously:

The heads of the 'Big Six'<sup>87</sup> have taken various moves to harmonize their guidelines and funding application forms as well as halting the spread of artificial road movies by coming to so-called 'bartering agreements' in which the demand for proof of an 'economic effect' in each region can be waived if there is reciprocity between the funds.<sup>88</sup>

All the same, the regional film funds have proven to be the financial means to successfully generate regional matter on screen. Seven of the eight documentary case studies received funding from regional film funds such as: Medien- und Filmgesellschaft (MFG) Baden-Württemberg<sup>89</sup> (*Schotter wie Heu, Die Blume der Hausfrau, Out of Edeka, Die Blutritter*), FilmFernsehFonds (FFF) Bayern (*Die Blutritter*), Filmboard Berlin-Brandenburg (*Herr Wichmann von der CDU*), Filmstiftung Nordrhein-Westfalen (NRW) & Nordmedia (*Durchfahrtsland*), Medienförderung Schleswig-Holstein, Kulturelle

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<sup>87</sup> Filmboard Berlin Brandenburg, FilmFernsehFonds Bayern, FilmFörderung Hamburg, Filmstiftung NRW, MFG Baden-Württemberg, and Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung.

<sup>88</sup> Anon, 'Regional film funding in Germany—the "Big Six"', *German Film Quarterly*, 1 (2002), 8–15 (p.9).

<sup>89</sup> In 2009 the MFG had an annual budget of 15 million euros. In 2010 this will be raised to 20 million. Baden-Württemberg's strong support of the film industry is reflected in the case study films. [www.mfg.de](http://www.mfg.de) [accessed 10th April 2010]

Filmförderung Schleswig-Holstein, Hessische Filmförderung (*Full Metal Village*).

In addition *Durchfahrtsland* and *Full Metal Village* received funding and support from a unique foundation within the web of film funding federalism: the *Kuratorium junger deutscher Film*.<sup>90</sup> This institution, established as a result of the 1960s German film movement to generate new talent in German Cinema, is the only one in its field to be funded jointly by all of Germany's *Bundesländer*.

On a national level it is German public television that accounts for support in seven of the eight case studies. The role of German television in cinema culture was established in 1974 with the 'Television Framework Agreement' between FFA and broadcasters ZDF and ARD. The agreements obliged broadcasting channels to co-fund films which were suitable for both cinema release and broadcasting. The agreements have since been extended to include private broadcasters.

The ZDF programme series *Das kleine Fernsehspiel*<sup>91</sup> must be given special consideration. This German public television series has been a weekly platform and showcase for young film-makers since 1963. The programme offers financial as well as editorial support to young talent.

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<sup>90</sup> Literal Translation: Board of Young German Film.

<sup>91</sup> Literal Translation: The Little Television Play.

Four of the documentary case studies were partially funded by *Das kleine Fernsehspiel: Schotter wie Heu, Die Blume der Hausfrau, Durchfahrtsland, Herr Wichmann von der CDU. Die Blutritter* received support from the channel 3sat, a ZDF-led culture channel in co-operation with Austrian ORF and Swiss SRG. *Full Metal Village, Herr Wichmann von der CDU* and *Out of Edeka* received support from regional offsprings of ARD public television. National television backing is crucial in reaching audiences once cinema release has ceased.

## 0.6. Overview: Documentary Aesthetics

The films under discussion are first and foremost united by their thematic focus. Aesthetically the films differ considerably, covering a diversity of cinematic techniques and styles. Far from detracting from the thematic unity of the films, the diverse aesthetic not only illustrates the versatility of the documentary form but also proves that the aesthetic choice in documentary is based on John Grierson well-known 'creative interpretation of actuality'. Interpretation is subject to aesthetic creativity which may differ from film to film; the 'actuality' in all cases, however, remains central to the films' intention. It is the 'actuality' of the rural, region and Heimat in contemporary Germany that these films intend to bring us closer to, albeit in different ways. Paul Ward comments:

The only unchanging thing about documentary is that it is a form that makes assertions of truth claims about the real world or real people in that world (including the real world of history); *how* it does this *is* something that is subject to change.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Paul Ward, *Documentary: The Margins of Reality* (London: Wallflower Press, 2005), p.8.

An initial overview of the varying documentary aesthetics in the case study films will allow for a more in-depth discussion of style in each of the chapters to follow.

Andreas Dresen in *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* omits all voice-over and music, and utilizes long lenses and remote microphones to maintain an observational and emotional distance to his subjects. Exterior open spaces allow Dresen to observe his protagonist whilst he and his camera often remain concealed to others. Instead, however, Dresen relies heavily on montage and image composition for commentary.

Konstantin Faigle in *Die Blume der Hausfrau* follows a similar observational mode. In his case, however, the practicalities of film-making often prohibit his fly-on-the wall approach. In contrast to *Herr Wichmann von der CDU*, the camera in *Die Blume der Hausfrau* moves predominantly within interior spaces in which the camera struggles to remain unintrusive. Unlike Dresen and unlike conventions of observational cinema, however, Faigle opts for the usage of a soundtrack. Faigle's choice of unconventional music adds a subtle level of commentary to the film's imagery.

Douglas Wolfsperger in *Die Blutritter* also excludes voice-over narration. Although Wolfsperger remains behind the camera, his presence is still conveyed on-screen. His subjects direct their speech towards the

camera thereby alluding to an off-screen interviewer (although his voice remains unheard). Wolfsperger's on-screen direction is also felt elsewhere in the film. Scenes often carry staged elements. Extensive lighting, premeditated lengthy camera pans and elaborate music insinuate a strong directional force off-screen.

Jochen Hick in *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* similarly remains off-screen but at the same time he is very much present. As in *Die Blutritter*, subjects directly address the camera (or Hick behind the camera). Even in instances when subjects are not addressing the camera, the camera remains close by, framing subjects tightly. The camera allows subjects little space and often literally towers over those it represents. Intrusive, the camera seeks to establish authority by exercising physical superiority over its subjects.

Alexandra Sell in *Durchfahrtsland* uses voice-over narration to establish the film's authority. Although Sell's voice-over is not authoritative in content (she moves between notions of rumour, legend and story), her voice continuously dominates the imagery. She comments, interprets and speculates, thereby leaving little room (and time) for the audience to do this on their own. The camera, on the other hand, remains unintrusive, often

observing subjects from afar. Sell invites her audience to 'listen' to a cinematic story.

Wiltrud Baier and Sigrun Köhler in *Schotter wie Heu*, on the other hand, choose to hand over narration to their subjects. Minimizing their presence to behind the camera, the film-makers give their subjects the time and space to talk freely (omitting any interviewing format), thereby allowing the film's narrative to be driven by the subjects and thus lending an air of authentic spontaneity. Although limited to an off-screen presence, Baier and Köhler allow their relationships with subjects assume a central role. The camera often becomes secondary as subjects by-pass the camera's gaze to address the film-makers on more personal matters.

Syung Cho in *Full Metal Village* creates a similar rapport with her subjects. As with *Schotter wie Heu*, conversation (rather than interview) dictates the rhythm of scenes. Cho occasionally moves on-screen to interact with her subjects although her voice is rarely heard. Cho never questions the accuracy of her subjects' claims but leaves judgement open to the audience. In a film about music, it is unsurprisingly the soundtrack that allows the images to develop an emotional dimension.

Konstantin Faigle in *Out of Edeka* already shares a personal relationship with his subjects before filming. Faigle explores the complexity

of the relationships he has had in the past with his subjects, thereby adopting an autobiographical approach which is steered by emotional and subjective memory. Faigle alludes to the reflexive nature of his film by staging re-enactments and parodying the role of documentary voice-over and music.

The chapters have been structured thematically, as it is the filmmakers' exploration of the rural and region which unites the case studies. The role of aesthetics will be considered when forming the overall arguments within each chapter and sub-chapter.

### **0.6.1. Aesthetics and Humour**

The use of humour is generally not associated with the documentary genre: 'Ernsthaftigkeit ist ein Signum des Genres.' [Seriousness is a mark of the genre].<sup>93</sup> Humour on screen stems from a high level of creative treatment by the film-maker. Hence, 'comedic expression can be seen to be in conflict with notions of documentary truth or objectivity'.<sup>94</sup> Although theoretical discussions on documentary and fiction film have developed beyond an aesthetic polarisation between documentary and fiction film, humour in

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<sup>93</sup> Peter Zimmermann, 'Spöttischer Blick contra Leidensmiene. Die Schwierigkeit des Dokumentarfilms mit Ironie und Satire', in *Strategie der Blicke – Zur Modellierung von Wirklichkeit in Dokumentarfilm und Reportage*, ed. by Dieter Ertel and Peter Zimmermann (Konstanz: Universitätsverlag Konstanz, 1996), pp. 51-63 (p.56).

<sup>94</sup> Ward, p.67.

documentary remains a fairly unexplored tool in academic terms. The increasing popularity of comedic effects in documentary is echoed in the case study films and must be considered as a result of the films' aesthetic aspirations.

Humour is a term open to many definitions. Its structures have served as a topic of debate over the centuries. The comments of the philosopher Immanuel Kant on humour provide a good starting point for a basic understanding of the structure of humour: 'Das Lachen ist ein Affekt aus der plötzlichen Verwandlung einer gespannten Erwartung in nichts.' [Laughter is the result of the sudden transformation of a tense expectation into nothing.].<sup>95</sup> Kant's theory can be broken down into two opposing elements: on the one hand *Erwartung* (expectation) and on the other hand the *Verwandlung* (metamorphosis) of the *Erwartung*. According to Kant, these two different dynamics are required to create humour. Following this line of thought Arthur Koestler has argued that humour is the result of context deviation. In his theory Koestler speaks of the 'logic of laughter' which is based on 'bisociation' with two frames (rather than association with one), i.e. two planes of thinking are required to create humour: 'Das Prinzip ist somit das Erfassen einer Situation oder Idee in zwei in sich

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<sup>95</sup> Immanuel Kant as discussed in Ursula Berlin, *Die Mittel der Komik in Doris Dörries Film 'Männer'* (Alfeld: Coppi-Verlag, 1996), p.22.

Kant's original citation can be found in his work *Kritik der ästhetischen Urteilskraft* (1790).

geschlossenen, aber gewöhnlich nicht miteinander zu vereinbaren Bezugssystemen.' [The common pattern (...) is the perceiving of a situation or an idea in two self-consistent but mutually incompatible frames of reference or associate contexts].<sup>96</sup> To exemplify, Koestler speaks of a situation or idea L which is 'bisociated' with the two 'matrices' M1 and M2. Both M1 and M2 are governed by different 'codes'. These 'codes' are formulated by the results of the human learning process which develop into nothing more than (unconscious) routine. Humour derives from the mental leap from matrix M1 to M2 – from one code of thought to another code of thought. Like Kant, Koestler refers to this leap as 'sudden', i.e. contrary to expectation. Hence, humour is the result of a sudden context ('matrix' or 'code') deviation. Aesthetics play a significant role in creating and conveying what Koestler refers to as mental leaps. Koestler's framework provides a useful tool for analysing scenes of humour in the case study films.

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<sup>96</sup> Arthur Koestler, *Der göttliche Funke. Der schöpferische Akt in Kunst und Wissenschaft* (Bern & München: Scherz Verlag, 1966), p.24.

## 0.7. Chapter Descriptions

The thesis is in three chapters, each exploring a different aspect of the relationship between human and habitat in the eight case study films. Every chapter is subdivided into four sections, each of which draws upon two of the case study films for analysis. This analytical structure means that all eight films are covered in each chapter.

Chapter One (The Rural Represented) highlights the importance of the role of the rural on screen and consequently adds to the much needed discussion on film and rurality (see 0.3. Literary Review). Through the separation into subdivisions – each subdivision examining the role of the rural from a different viewpoint – this chapter offers insight into multiple facets of the films’ unifying thematic of rural representation. The chapter opens by drawing upon the emerging study of ecocriticism and its potential as an additional framework for the chapter.

Section One (*Herr Wichmann von der CDU* and *Ich kenn’ keinen – Allein unter Heteros*) directs attention to the natural environment on screen: the land. The key to the analysis is the relationship between protagonist, camera and surroundings. The relationship is illuminated with reference to Fowler and Helfield’s notion of landscape on screen. Closer textual

assessment is given to scenes of driving through the land, scenes of homes within the land, and scenes of travel away from the land.

Section Two (*Die Blutritter* and *Full Metal Village*) underpins the cinematic rural as a geographical ideal. It closely analyses framing: from visual and aural framing to editorial framing. These formal aspects create an ideal gaze, thereby allowing land to be viewed as landscape. Closer attention is granted to the distinction between the terminologies of setting and landscape, as outlined by Martin Lefebvre, taking into consideration the idea of 'autonomous landscape' and the role of the films' narratives in forming this ideal.

Section Three (*Out of Edeka* and *Schotter wie Heu*) explores the cinematic portrayal of the village as part of the rural land. Particular emphasis is placed on the role of the film-makers within their representations of the villages – in what ways do the film-makers shape the cinematic experience of the rural habitat by entering the space as subjects of their own films? The section also contemplates the cinematic portrayal of the space bordering the village – a place that is regarded by villagers as 'outside of the village'.

Section Four (*Die Blume der Hausfrau* and *Durchfahrtsland*) looks at the filmic representation of a land in between, a land in transition, a land of

hybridity: German suburbia. Drawing upon Robert Beuka's ideas of American suburbia, this part of the chapter contemplates how the archetypal representation of suburbia is expressed in the films under investigation, with specific focus on the role of architecture and car culture. It further reflects on the point of contact between the rural and the urban, such as rural disintegration and urban landscaping.

Chapter Two (The Regional Defamiliarised) extends and enriches the understandings of Chapter One by considering the role of the region on screen. As the region on screen remains an uncharted territory in film studies (see 0.3. Literary Review), the chapter borrows a theoretical model: the research examines the ways in which the regional subject is explored as a matter of ethnographic Otherness by drawing upon early filmic conventions of ethnography. Assenka Oksiloff's research into early German cinema's first encounter with non-Western bodies, *Picturing the Primitive: Visual Culture, Ethnography, and Early German Cinema* (2001),<sup>97</sup> provides a theoretical basis for this chapter – with restrictions, of course. It is not my intention to apply a colonial approach to a contemporary context but rather to borrow aspects from the ethnographic research framework to provide fruitful insights into an understanding between the off-screen and on-screen

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<sup>97</sup> Assenka Oksiloff, *Picturing the Primitive: Visual Culture, Ethnography, and Early German Cinema* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

relationship between film-makers and subjects surrounding the dynamics of non-local film-makers and local subjects, self and Other, and domestic and exotic. This approach obviously requires a critical and cautious stance which will be reflected in the analysis in Chapter Two.

By adapting Assenka Oksiloff's concept of the 'primitive body' on screen to the regional body on screen, Section One (*Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* and *Schotter wie Heu*) explores and exposes the regional subjects' attitudes towards language, technology, society and politics. In particular, the relationship between camera and regional subject becomes central to this discussion. The Section considers in what ways both films promote a portrayal of the regional as 'primitive' as well as in what ways they challenge that precise portrayal.

Section Two (*Durchfahrtsland* and *Herr Wichmann von der CDU*) develops the traditional ethnographic divide between self and Other to consider further divides apparent within the portrayal of the Other. The section contemplates in what ways both film-makers display the Other as divided. Thematically tied in with regional antagonism and social oppositions, the films' formal aspects, however, create far greater visual and aural divides.

Section Three (*Die Blutritter* and *Out of Edeka*) expands the idea of Other-ing the regional against the background of exoticism. The research considers in which ways both film-makers exoticise the domestic sphere of the regional. It considers how the geographically familiar can become the geographically estranged, how the everyday familiar can become the everyday estranged. Furthermore, it takes an in-depth look at the exotic construction of religion (*Die Blutritter*) and family (*Out of Edeka*) as part of the regional on screen.

Section Four (*Die Blume der Hausfrau* and *Full Metal Village*) sees the two-fold relationship of self and Other in the relationship between the indigenous people and the non-indigenous people, i.e. between the regional and the non-regional. By adopting a terminology generally reserved for Western colonisation, this section is able to shed light on the dynamics between natives and settlers within a regional context. The research considers in what ways these two groups are represented on screen. What role do the protagonists take on? What role does the film-maker occupy?

The final chapter (*Heimat Revived*) draws attention to a recent re-emergence of *Heimat* on screen and offers a preliminary analysis of this renaissance of filmic *Heimat* motifs, thereby contributing significantly to a recent academic interest in the *Heimat* film (see 0.3. Literary Review). A

brief historical overview of the Heimat film and its endurance through different genres over time is outlined in the introduction to demonstrate the flexible, adaptable and lasting nature of this genre – its appearance on contemporary screens proves the genre’s filmic vigour.

An understanding of both the rural (Chapter One) and the regional (Chapter Two) is central to my analysis of the concept of Heimat on screen and is discussed in detail in this chapter.

Section One (*Ich kenn’ keinen – Allein unter Heteros* and *Full Metal Village*) is dedicated to an examination of setting – an integral component of the Heimat film. The analysis of the setting is based on the duality of the Heimat motifs of the rural and the urban. The research considers in what ways the *Ideallandschaften* [ideal landscapes] and the *Idealzustand* [ideal situation] created in the archetypal Heimat film reappear on contemporary screens within the dynamics of the thematic duality.

Section Two (*Schotter wie Heu* and *Die Blutritter*) continues the thematic two-fold investigation of Heimat on screen within the context of tradition and modernisation. On the one hand, the research explores the representations of tradition – from an idealised bygone time of innocence and nostalgia to a long-forgotten time of ostracism and regression. Drawing upon von Moltke’s concept of a negotiation and reconciliation between

tradition and modernisation prevalent in the 1950s Heimat film, which he terms 'nostalgic modernization',<sup>98</sup> the research contemplates the interplay of these two ostensibly contradictory Heimat dynamics on screen.

Section Three (*Herr Wichmann von der CDU* and *Out of Edeka*) examines the representations of dual sentiments integral to the Heimat concept: the longing to return to the Heimat (*Heimweh*) and the longing to depart from the Heimat (*Fernweh*). The research investigates in what ways illusionary longings and realistic findings – i.e. the physical return/departure – are played out on screen and identifies in what ways utopian idealism and everyday realism are (dis)integrated. Furthermore, the section examines the interdependent relationship between *Heimweh* and *Fernweh* within a global context (*Out of Edeka*) as well as an economic context (*Herr Wichman von der CDU*).

Section Four (*Die Blume der Hausfrau* and *Durchfahrtsland*) offers an analysis of the social dimension of Heimat by drawing upon Ferdinand Tönnies' concepts of *Gemeinschaft* [community] and *Gesellschaft* [society]. Textual analysis under the guidance of Tönnies' model demonstrates how the sentiment of Heimat is cinematically expressed. Although the social model lends itself as a research structure, the section proves that the Heimat

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<sup>98</sup> von Moltke, pp.114-134.

image on contemporary screens is far more complex than Tönnies' social model.

## Chapter One: The Rural Represented

### 1.0. The Rural Represented: Introductory Note

This chapter will examine the cinematic rural in contemporary German documentary cinema within the framework of four different understandings of the rural cinematic geography: the land, the landscape, the village, and the suburbs.

Critical evaluations of cultural perspectives on the environment have recently come together under the school of thought called ecocriticism – defined at its outset in the early 1990s by Cheryll Glotfeldy as ‘the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment’<sup>99</sup> and by Lawrence Buell as the ‘study of the relations between literature and environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist praxis’.<sup>100</sup> The past decade has seen a remarkable increase in scholarly engagement with the field of ecocriticism, which goes well beyond the borders of the USA, where the development had its academic origins in nature writing.

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<sup>99</sup> Cheryll Glotfeldy, ‘Introduction: Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis’, in *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, ed. by Cheryll Glotfeldy and Harold Fromm (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), pp. xv-xxxvii (p. xviii).

<sup>100</sup> Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts & London: Belknap Press, 1996), p.430.

This increased attention has allowed ecocriticism to develop into a discipline and to expand into interdisciplinary fields beyond that of literature, to include to a certain extent film studies.<sup>101</sup> Ecocriticism's place in film studies, however, must be viewed within separate parameters. Geography on screen cannot be investigated solely in its physicality; on the contrary, it needs to be considered in its own filmic topography as a 'cinematic landscape':

This landscape has its own geography, one that situates the spectator in a cinematic place where space and time are compressed (...). The pleasure of film lies partially in its ability to create its own cinematic geography (...). The cinematic landscape is not, consequently, a neutral place of entertainment or an objective documentation or mirror of the 'real'.<sup>102</sup>

Although the focus of this thesis is on documentary, the film genre most associated with the 'real', the geography represented in the films under study is very much a cinematic geography – a 'reel' rather than a 'real'

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<sup>101</sup> Examples include:

Jhan Hochman, 'The Lambs in the Silence of the Lambs', in *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism*, ed. by Laurence Coupe (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 299-301. *The Landscape of Hollywood Westerns: Ecocriticism in an American Film Genre*, ed. by Deborah A. Carmichael (Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 2006).

<sup>102</sup> Jeff Hopkins, 'A Mapping of Cinematic Places: Icons, Ideology, and the Power of (mis)representation', in *Place, Power, Situation and Spectacle. A Geography of Film*, ed. by Stuart C. Aitken and Leo E. Zonn (Maryland & London: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994), pp. 47-65 (p.49).

geography. It is a geography that has been composed by the film-maker through angles, editing and framing. Andrew Horton explains 'cinematic geography' as follows: 'In film, real landscapes can be filmed and thus incorporated into a narrative or documentary, or they can be created and presented as 'real' even though we understand they are actually imaginary.'<sup>103</sup> This artistic formation of the 'real' into a 'reel' geography contains meanings about a culture's relationship with the environment in which it exists. Although not labelled as ecocritical, the recent collections of essays *Representing the Rural* (2006),<sup>104</sup> *Landscape and Film* (2006)<sup>105</sup> and *Cinematic Countrysides* (2008)<sup>106</sup> offer original analyses of the relationship between film and natural environments, which will be referred to in the course of this chapter.

One of the challenges ecocriticism faces is to avoid a solely dualistic approach to nature and culture. Karla Armbruster and Kathleen R. Wallace call for a more interconnected approach, which understands nature and culture as 'interwoven rather than separate sides of a dualistic construct'.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Andrew Horton, 'Reel Landscapes: cinematic environments documented and created', in *Studying Cultural Landscape*, ed. by Iain Robertson and Penny Richards (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp.71-92 (p.73).

<sup>104</sup> Catherine Fowler and Gillian Helfield, eds, *Representing the Rural: Space, Place, and Identity in Films About the Land* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006).

<sup>105</sup> Martin Lefebvre, ed., *Landscape and Film* (London & New York: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>106</sup> Robert Fish, ed., *Cinematic Countrysides* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008).

<sup>107</sup> Karla Armbruster and Kathleen R. Wallace, 'Introduction: Why go beyond nature writing, and where to?', in *Beyond Nature Writing: Expanding the Boundaries of Ecocriticism*,

They question an investigation of exclusively natural environments, emphasising that 'environment also includes cultivated and built landscapes'.<sup>108</sup> Although this chapter focuses on the rural location, the analysis will not investigate the rural as a solitary space. In addition to natural environments, it will also take cultivated and built environments into consideration. The interplay (or lack of it) between rural and urban environments offers fruitful insights into the rural on screen.

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ed. by Karla Armbruster & Kathleen R. Wallace (Charlottesville & London: University of Virginia Press, 2001), pp. 1-25 (p.4).

<sup>108</sup> Armbruster and Wallace, p.4.

## 1.1. The Rural Represented: The Land

*Herr Wichmann von der CDU* (Andreas Dresen, 2003)

*Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* (Jochen Hick, 2003)

This study will use the term 'land' to refer to the raw natural environments of the rural: from soil and fields, hills and mountains, to grass and trees, wind and water. The protagonists in *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* and *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* experience their natural environments differently. In the former film the protagonist is 'denaturalized' while in the latter the protagonist is 'naturalized'. Henryk Wichmann, the film's main protagonist, is a twenty-five year old political candidate. Wichmann's political arguments are based on a repudiation of the German Green Party, the political embodiment of green environmentalism. He campaigns, however, under a slogan ironically reminiscent of nature's constructive energy: 'Ich will frischen Wind in die Politik bringen.' [I want to bring fresh wind into politics.]. The desired wind, however, is shown to be counter-productive. A long shot shows Wichmann's umbrella and leaflets being blown away by a strong gust of wind. Wichmann's positive wind metaphor in his campaign contrasts with his negative comments about the physical effects of the wind on his campaign stand: 'Es ist zu windig! Das ist ja

schlimm! Das Wetter ist nicht normal!' [It's too windy! It's really bad! The weather's not normal!]. The deviation between Wichmann's positive metaphorical usage of the wind and his negative comments about nature's strong wind creates humour in the scenes. Dresen augments this comical situation with techniques of montage. The film cuts from a scene in which Wichmann is looking for his blown-away campaign leaflets straight to a close-up of him stating: 'Ich will frischen Wind in die Politik bringen!' [I want to bring fresh wind into politics!]. The direct consecutiveness of the two scenes underlines Arthur Koestler's humour theory of context deviation: the audience makes a mental leap from Wichmann's metaphorical slogan to its literal meaning. Wichmann's experience of the land is thwarted by forces beyond his control. He is portrayed as out of sync with his natural environment, i.e. 'denaturalized'.

In *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros*, on the other hand, the protagonists are portrayed as in harmony with the land. The film ends by depicting the relationship of one of the film's protagonists with the land. Hartmut, one of the film's five protagonists, is seen in an extreme profile close-up smoking and gazing onto the horizon out at sea.<sup>109</sup> The film cuts to a shot of moving sea water. This final depiction of the land not only shows

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<sup>109</sup> See Appendix I, E8.

that Hartmut is at one with his environment but that he has become one with himself – with his sexual identity. Hartmut's voice-over gives voice to his contentment: 'So sehr wie einfach mein Outing war, ärgere ich mich, dass ich es nicht früher gemacht habe.' [As simple as my outing was, I'm annoyed I didn't do it before.]. The sentimental soundtrack of a Chopin piano étude predicts a happy and harmonious ending for Hartmut. A sequence of stills depicting him from the past up to the present follows the scene at the beach. The sequence concludes with a still of Hartmut lying on a white sandy beach, his body partially covered by the clear blue water of the sea. This final still underlines Hartmut's physical as well as mental ease with his environment, i.e. 'naturalized'.

The documentaries *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* and *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* are set at opposite ends of Germany. *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* is set in the north-eastern region of the Uckermark whereas *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* is mainly set in the south-western regions of Baden and Swabia. Despite their geographical discrepancy, the documentaries offer a similar image of the rural of the regions. In both films the rural setting is not confined to one geographical place but expands over fields, villages and small towns. Instead of concentrating on one village community, the films focus on individuals from varied communities of the

one region (*Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros*) and on one individual through his encounters with varied communities of another region (*Herr Wichmann von der CDU*). This approach conveys little sense of one local community but rather a vast remote space of non-urban land and region, isolated from Germany's urban hotspots.

The vastness and remoteness of the environment are reflected and echoed in the films' choice of protagonists and their isolated status in their regional societies: Herr Wichmann is a candidate for the German conservatives, the CDU, in the regional stronghold of Germany's other major political party, the social democratic SPD (*Herr Wichmann von der CDU*); the four homosexual men Uwe, Richard, Hartmut, Stefan, and Erika, the mother of two homosexual sons, all live in a homophobic region (*Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros*). The notion of vast and remote space is most pre-eminent in the driving sequences featured in both films. Driving is an effective method of physically combating the rural regional vastness in the pursuit of sexual (*Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros*) or political (*Herr Wichmann von der CDU*) interests: Uwe needs to drive to visit a gay bar (*Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros*), Erika needs to drive to organise her pro-gay activities (*Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros*), Wichmann needs to drive to visit potential voters (*Herr Wichmann von der CDU*). The mobility of

the protagonists adds to the films' portrayed image of the land as a vast space.

One of the first sequences of both films is a driving sequence with a protagonist as the driver. Both sequences open with a shot through the front window of a moving car: a road winding through the hilly country steeped in mist (*Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros*) and a road stretching across the flat country with a large tractor blocking the way (*Herr Wichmann von der CDU*). Although in different ways, both sequences continue to convey spatial perpetuity of land. In *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* the voice-over of the driver speaks off-camera: 'Ich hab' 150 Kilometer nach Stuttgart.' [I have 150 kilometres to drive to Stuttgart.]. The film cuts to an almost identical view from within the same moving car and the voice continues: '150 Kilometer nach München zum Fahren, Freiburg sind's ein bißchen mehr mit 300 Kilometer.' [150 kilometres to drive to Munich, Freiburg is a little bit more at 300 kilometres.]. In *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* the camera then shifts its focus from the road to the driver, Wichmann, who remains silent throughout the sequence. A continuous horizon of fields and a steady line of alley trees are seen to pass the car through the driver's window. The camera pans back to the front of the window and rests on the image of a straight alley with trees and fields on either side.

Film-maker Jochen Hick (*Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros*) chooses to accelerate the images of rural country filmed from within the car by abrupt editing, fast-paced music and high-speed viewing. Film-maker Andreas Dresen (*Herr Wichmann von der CDU*), on the other hand, chooses to decelerate his images of the land by panning slowly rather than editing, eliminating music or voice-over and choosing a monotonous alley as a focal point. Each film-maker chooses a different technique to create a similar viewing result: both scenes establish an image of a monotonous immense countryside.

In their recent investigation into rural land in cinema, Fowler and Helfield attempt 'to extricate "the land" from "the landscape"'.<sup>110</sup> Land as opposed to landscape 'capture(s) scenes of the land from the perspective of those who dwell on it, rather than those who stand back to admire'.<sup>111</sup> This approach requires a modification in the film-maker's framing of his or her subject matters. The film-maker steps away from the elevated position of an onlooker to share a more intimate relationship with his or her theme. Fowler and Helfield illustrate this repositioning by means of the medium of eighteenth-century painting: the space between artist and subject is

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<sup>110</sup> Catherine Fowler and Gillian Helfield, 'Introduction to Part 1', in *Representing the Rural: Space, Place, and Identity in Films About the Land*, ed. by Catherine Fowler and Gillian Helfield (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006), pp.17-18 (p.17).

<sup>111</sup> Fowler and Helfield, 'Introduction to Part 1', p.17.

condensed, the perspective is shifted from elevated to eye-level; the artist consequently becomes part of the landscape.<sup>112</sup>

The films' framing from within the moving cars is a fine example of a cinematic realisation of this. Instead of viewing the land from *outside*, the camera chooses to be *within* a confined space with the protagonist, the rural inhabitant. Rather than taking on a typical landscape perspective, which Fowler and Helfield refer to as a 'magisterial gaze' ('the view offered from an elevated position atop a mountain or hillside provides a lofty, colonizing gaze upon the land and its inhabitants'<sup>113</sup>), the camera/film-maker shares the subject's eye-level, thus sharing *his* experience of the land.

Fowler and Helfield's inside/outside landscape dichotomy ('The artist, by extension the viewer, is positioned within the landscape'<sup>114</sup>) is, however, further complicated. The film-maker is inside the landscape, within the inhabitant's space, the car, but he is also separated from the actual land by the car. The camera creates a permanent intimate space with the rural inhabitant but a transitory distant space from his rural surroundings, with the car (windows, speed, noise) acting as a barrier.

Although the shared experience of the land does not create a colonising

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<sup>112</sup> Catherine Fowler and Gillian Helfield, 'Introduction', in *Representing the Rural: Space, Place, and Identity in Films About the Land*, ed. by Catherine Fowler and Gillian Helfield (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006), pp. 1-14 (p.9).

<sup>113</sup> Fowler and Helfield, 'Introduction', p.9.

<sup>114</sup> Fowler and Helfield, p.9.

gaze upon the inhabitants, it establishes, however, a new kind of colonising gaze upon the land. Whereas a 'magisterial gaze' may convey a colonisation by the film-maker, Dresen's and Hick's 'shared experience gaze' offers a colonisation by the rural inhabitant himself. The mobility of his car and the consequent sweeping images of the land captured by the camera (and the inhabitant) convey dominance over the land, similar to the 'magisterial gaze'. The land is not experienced as a place but rather as a space which can be visually conquered by looking out the window of a moving car, by the rural inhabitant as well as the viewer. Although fulfilling Fowler and Helfield's notion of 'providing a means of engaging and identifying with on-screen subjects',<sup>115</sup> the film-makers' proximity to the rural subject matter results in a *shared* 'magisterial gaze' on the land.

Besides Stefan driving, Hick includes sequences of protagonists Uwe and Hartmut driving their vehicles, each sequence filmed from the passenger seat. In the sequence with Uwe, Hick intercuts the images of the fleeting land with still images of various village iconography – the location and identity of the village(s) are not specified – and accompanies these with a steady repetition of comical music and animal noises. The editing pattern combined with the audio rhythm produces a repetitive audio-visual

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<sup>115</sup> Fowler and Helfield, p.9.

arrangement which diminishes the land to little more than a repetitious passing space of sameness. The driving sequence corresponds visually to Uwe's voice-over ('Da habe ich gedacht, ich bin im Umkreis von 100 Kilometern der Einzige!') [And I felt I was the only one in a radius of 100 kilometres!].) and his feeling of social isolation in a region of sameness. The driving sequence with Hartmut also relates to his own concerns about his reclusive role as a homosexual in the vastness of the country. Driving through a village and passing a tractor with people gathered around it, backs turned, he talks about the danger of being an outsider as a homosexual. The camera peers through the front window onto the village road and the tractor, slowly panning on to Hartmut whilst the car approaches the tractor. Again, the location of the camera inside the car offers a 'shared experience' between the viewer/film-maker and Hartmut. Hartmut's role as a potential outsider due to his sexuality is visually conveyed: Hartmut as well as the camera are set off from the tractor incident; Hartmut as well as the viewer are only onlookers, effectively outsiders.

The protagonists' moving cars are in themselves another form of rural colonisation. The car and the road, heavily relied upon by the rural inhabitants, act as physical constructs of colonisation. In *Herr Wichmann von*

*der CDU* the rural colonisation is one brought about by physical human constructs. In one sequence the view of the land is through a windscreen onto a roundabout. Grey lampposts loom in the sky, road and direction signs circle the traffic island. The car's front window is soiled and broken; at one point nearly half of the image consists of the car's black dashboard. Very little of the outside surroundings is visible since the camera, like Wichmann himself, is focused on the road. The next sequence is of the land itself shot from the car's side window. The countryside is gloomy: dark trees, brown fields, a single cow, occasional electricity masts, grey overcast skies. The image is dominated by the continuous sound of the car. Not only is the viewer's vision colonising the land but it is doing so from the car on the road, a physical mode of rural colonisation. In a different driving sequence, Wichmann is driving home at night. The surroundings are barely visible because of the darkness – what is visible, however, are the gleaming white lights of approaching cars and the red lights of cars in front. A petrol station ahead begins to dominate the environment as its neon blue lights grow with the lessening distance, a pictogram of human colonisation of the rural.

Dresen shifts his perspective to the side of the road. His camera remains motionless and focused for a substantial amount of time. These

sequences resume the tensions between land and human colonisation already established in the film's driving sequences. The marks of human colonisation are unmistakable: a countryside image of a horizon of woods and fields, washed by sunlight, and accompanied by faint animal noises is marked by a single lamppost with a campaigning poster attached.<sup>116</sup> The sequence is further humanly disrupted by the sound of an approaching motor and an unexpected car driving past in front of the camera lens. A close-up of a frog cuts to a wider angle of the frog sitting on a block of tarmac with blades of grass peeping through. A village scene is obscured by a near lamppost.<sup>117</sup> Black bins, telephone masts, lampposts, fences and signs line the road as far as the eye can see to a horizon of tall trees. Not only the car and the road but also its iconography (signs, lamps, lights, posters) are markers of human authority. The images construct tension points between human civilisation, rural colonisation and the land.

In *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* three protagonists actually travel outside the rural land. The film accompanies them on their journeys: Richard on one of his frequent visits to Zürich, Uwe on his annual trip to Berlin and Hartmut on his regular trip to Thailand. All three trips are motivated by the desire to explore homosexuality. The city becomes the

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<sup>116</sup> See Appendix I, D4.

<sup>117</sup> See Appendix I, D7.

place of sexual exploration, liberation and fulfilment. Berlin, Zürich and Thailand become places of abundance. Berlin is the place where Uwe can find what he desires: military clothes, sex toys, gay bars and teddy bears (for his mother). Zurich is the place where Richard can reminisce about his youthful days in a thriving homosexual community. Thailand is the place Hartmut can enjoy male attention and companionship – for a price.

The urban environment, however, frequently becomes a space of physical deterioration or human frailty. Hartmut visits a massage parlour where he reveals his AIDS-ridden body. His nakedness reveals his physical deterioration, which the interiors of the parlour echo: the parlour's shower and massage area are small, drab and poorly maintained. Richard visits a festive hall in Zurich of which he has fond memories. The room is completely empty, painted grey, sheets of plastic cover parts of the wall and the windows are partially closed. Richard and his friends stand in the centre of the room sharing memories. The viewer is denied visual access to the memories and so the room's interiors reiterate the frailty of time and age. Uwe's night-time adventures are marked by a bar not yet open, a shut-down pub, a dark door to a club with neon lights and finally a phone call to his mother from a pay-phone. The film omits any depiction of Uwe with his homosexual encounters in the city. Uwe's environments of sexual liberation

are lonesome places, echoing Uwe's own loneliness. Although the city represents liberation for all three men, its liberation is limited and takes its toll: illness (Hartmut), old age loneliness (Richard) and social solitude (Uwe).

Hartmut's travels to Thailand, however, also reveal scenes of the land, a different kind of land: a land of beaches. The sequence begins with a scene at the beach: a medium shot of Hartmut and his young Thai lover shows the men sitting at a beach bar.<sup>118</sup> The conversation is held in English and remains on a simplistic level due to both men's lack of English. The topic of conversation is Hartmut's place of origin, which leads them to talk about animals in Germany. Their deficiency in English and their ingenuous choice of topic portrays the men in an innocent light. The sexual undertones underlying previous hotel and massage parlour scenes are no longer apparent. The following scenes strengthen this perception: the Thai lover is seen playing with a stick on the waterfront, Hartmut's female friend is seen posing beside a mound of colourful swimming rings. The shots indicate playful innocence. The non-diegetic sound of laughter and the music of a ukulele add to the carefree atmosphere.

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<sup>118</sup> See Appendix I, E4.

The role of the photo-camera is central to the beach scenes – the film offers numerous shots of the act of shooting snapshots: a female friend takes a picture of Hartmut posing with his Thai friends; the German friends pose for Hartmut’s camera in their sun-loungers; the female friend poses with a mound of swimming rings for Hartmut, who takes a picture with two additional cameras hanging from his wrists and eventually the five German friends pose for the film’s camera.<sup>119</sup> The photo-camera’s governing presence allows for all parties to be artist as well as subject. This allows for an unproblematic interaction between Hartmut, his lover and his German friends. The interplay between photographer and subject brings to mind Fowler and Helfield’s notion of ‘shared experience’. The artistic experience of the beach is literally shared by sharing the use of the camera between individuals. The film camera joins the ‘shared experience’ by providing the final shot to the scene: the five German friends posing in front of the sea. The friends’ motionlessness in posing suggests they are standing for a photographic still rather than a film in motion: the film’s camera takes on the characteristics of the photo-camera. The film’s protagonists are not only sharing the experience with each other but moreover with the film-maker. It is of interest that neither Hartmut’s Thai lover nor his Thai female friend is

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<sup>119</sup> See Appendix I, E7.

seen in the role of photographer: their part is solely that of the object of the photographic gaze. It is the tourist, the outsider, who is in control of the way the land is represented through the photo-camera lens. This, of course, applies also to film-maker Hick, equally an outsider to Thailand but who controls the film's camera lens. Despite a 'shared experience', the land is subject to visual 'colonisation' by non-inhabitants.

In *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* the protagonist never travels outside his region. However, he talks about Berlin, the place where he studies law and where he hopes to be a political representative for his region. Berlin embodies Wichmann's potential victory. It is his place of political exploration, liberation and fulfilment. The film ends, however, with his defeat and the knowledge that Wichmann will not find political victory in Berlin in the near future.

The houses of the rural countryside, in particular their interiors, convey a sense of human community and security which the land as such fails to do. Both film-makers are permitted entry into the homes and inner circles of the protagonists. Stefan and Uwe (*Ich kenn' keinen– Allein unter Heteros*) both live with their mothers with whom they share close relationships. Both men are interviewed in living-rooms, often in the presence of their mothers. Both rooms are the result of female decorative

collecting: flowers and teddy bears (collected by Uwe's mother), floral prints, plants and figurative mementos (assembled by Stefan's mother). The iconographic imagery of female domesticity is continued with the protagonists Richard and Erika, who are presented in the presence of a table elaborately set for coffee and cake. Richard has invited his homosexual friend; Erika and her husband have invited their son and his partner. Erika's home is marked by cosiness: ornamental plates and paintings on the wall and a Christmas tree in the corner, whereas Richard's home is of immaculate design: an elegant ornate combination of antiques and pastel colours.<sup>120</sup> Hartmut, who lives alone, has a home similar in style to Richard's, who also lives alone: a home of order, precision and aesthetic elegance. The film captures Hartmut smoking in a suit on his exquisite sofa and adjusting the pendulum weights on his grandfather clock. Although Hartmut's home is marked by the absence of visitors, photographs in the background of friends and family are witness to social stability. All homes in *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* create an ambience of private sanctuary and family social well-being. Whereas the land as such is marked by bleak vastness and the protagonists' need of mobility, their interior

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<sup>120</sup> See Appendix I, E1.

homes situated within the land are inviting, whether cosy or elegant, and offer a place of comfort and rest.

It is noteworthy that the protagonist Richard (*Ich kenn' keinen– Allein unter Heteros*) is only represented in spaces which bear no sign of the land: his flat, a café, a museum, the streets, a hotel room. One scene shows Richard admiring the ornate male figurine on the front of a majestic winter sledge in a museum. The means of transport once intended for the land in snow remains locked behind closed museum doors. One cannot help drawing a symbolic parallel between Richard and the sledge: Richard, the only protagonist of the film, who, after decades, has still not come out with his sexuality, remains figuratively behind closed doors.

In *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* Wichmann is only portrayed once in his home: he is seen sitting on the sofa with his pregnant girlfriend watching television.<sup>121</sup> Although the television is off-screen, voices identify the programme as a political debate. Wichmann is listening with interest (he leans forward, turns the volume up, gives his girlfriend an irritated look when she disturbs his viewing) whilst his girlfriend at the end of the scene is lying exhausted against the arm of the sofa. The couple remain almost wordless throughout the sequence. The scene is confined to one place in the

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<sup>121</sup> See Appenidx I, D6.

living-room, which reveals limited imagery of the home. However, the mise-en-scene does reveal something about Wichmann. The living-room is divided vertically into two spaces: firstly, by the protagonists' bodies and secondly, by the colourings of the surroundings. Wichmann's space is dominated by an off-white bleak wall and the nearly matching off-white standard shirt he is wearing. His girlfriend's space is marked by the colour red: a red cloth decorating the wall, and her red top. She tries to enter his space by caressing his head which he rejects immediately, signalling his intense concentration on the television programme. The home sequence illustrates Wichmann's role as a politician beyond the public eye. It also shows, however, that Wichmann has an affectionate counterpart who creates a warm atmosphere.

*In Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros and Herr Wichmann von der CDU* the rural land is portrayed as a vast geographical territory in which individuals whose sexual/political preferences differ from the rural consensus are forced to take on isolated roles within the rural surroundings. Cars are a necessary part of the lifestyle of these individuals. The frequent driving sequences in both films allow a 'shared experience' with the driver. Whereas the artist traditionally 'colonised' the land with his 'magisterial' perspective, film-makers Dresen and Hick offer a new variation on rural

colonisation. It is the rural inhabitant himself who 'colonises' the land with his car, visually as well as physically. Urban places outside the region offer (potential) liberation and fulfilment for the outsider, but at a price. The real haven for these individuals is in their homes within the regional land and the security and warmth these interior spaces convey.

## 1.2. The Rural Represented: The Landscape

*Die Blutritter* (Douglas Wolfesperger, 2002)

*Full Metal Village* (Sung Hyung Cho, 2006)

As with *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* and *Herr Wichmann von der CDU*, rural locations are central in the films *Die Blutritter* and *Full Metal Village*. Film-makers Douglas Wolfsperger and Sung Hyung Cho, however, offer a different approach to the representation of rural environments.

As with *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* and *Herr Wichmann von der CDU*, the documentaries *Die Blutritter* and *Full Metal Village* are set at opposite ends of Germany. *Die Blutritter* is set in the region of Swabia in Southern Germany whereas *Full Metal Village* is set in the region of Holstein in Northern Germany. Although the land in each film is of a different topographical nature (flat land in Northern Germany, hills in Southern Germany), the cinematic treatment of the surroundings is similar in both documentaries.

The land in both cases is represented through a single place rather than a vast territory. *Die Blutritter* centres on the small town of Weingarten and *Full Metal Village* focuses on the small village of Wacken. The protagonists of the films are from the locality and often even know each other. Film-maker Cho, for example, portrays sixteen-year-old Kathrin, as well as her grandmother, Irma. The narrative corresponds to the tight geographical focus by offering one focal point which is attached to the place

in question. *Die Blutritter* centres on Weingarten's annual religious equestrian procession *Blutritt*, whereas *Full Metal Village* concentrates on Wacken's annual heavy metal music festival *Wacken Open Air*. In both films the festivals offer a place and motive for the protagonists to come together, emphasising the strong sense of local community.

The land itself is established as a geographical ideal in both films. *Die Blutritter* introduces Weingarten with a panoramic pan, following a black insert with white letters proclaiming: '...Weingarten heute' [Weingarten today]. The black insert gradually fades into the image of a majestic tree and a small white chapel to its right.<sup>122</sup> The tree is in full bloom and its branches and green leaves curve over the little chapel. Rolling green hills dominate the background, and long grass the foreground. Warm red colours saturate the image. The camera slowly pans to the right over the hills, the horizon, the setting sun and rests on a green field where a man in costume is drumming. Light rays reflected in the camera's lens add to the warm glow of the imagery.

This visual representation of the land corresponds to what Fowler and Helfield refer to as the 'magisterial gaze': the camera is in an elevated position on top of a hill. The 180-degree pan emphasises the viewer's

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<sup>122</sup> See Appendix I, F2.

elevated position over the countryside. The land stretches as far as the eye can see and as such is subordinate to the human gaze. The pan movement imitates the movement of the human gaze, resulting in what P. Adams Sitney describes as 'the ineluctable *potentiality* of offscreen space: the sense of the landscape extending in all directions beyond the edges of the screen'.<sup>123</sup> According to Fowler and Helfield, the pan and deep-focus correspond to 'a precinematic mode of perception similar to the *vedute* of the eighteenth-century Italian paintings', which aims 'to produce an "ideal" panoramic view of rural space'.<sup>124</sup> The ideal view is determined by framing. Framing presupposes a certain way of seeing the land, as Martin Lefebvre states: 'The form of landscape is thus first of all the form of a view, of a particular gaze that requires a frame.'<sup>125</sup> Scholarly consensus on the etymological root of the word landscape offers a first indication of the importance of framing land in creating landscape imagery. The term itself entered the English language in the seventeenth century. Its origins from the Middle Dutch *landschap*, Flemish *lantskip* and German *landschaft* all incorporate a similar suffix ('schap,' 'skip,' 'schaft') with the meaning of

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<sup>123</sup> P. Adams Sitney, 'Landscape in the Cinema: the Rhythms of the World and the Camera', in *Landscape, Natural Beauty and the Arts*, ed. by Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.103-126 (p.107).

<sup>124</sup> Fowler and Helfield, 'Introduction', p.8.

<sup>125</sup> Martin Lefebvre, 'Introduction', in *Landscape and Film*, ed. by Martin Lefebvre (London & New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. xi-xxxi (p.xv).

giving shape.<sup>126</sup> The framing by the artist/film-maker shapes the land into an ideal view. The shaping can be the effect of a 'magisterial gaze,' a panoramic pan or a deep focus, as in the above example. Essentially, it is human intervention which creates landscape, as Lefebvre observes: 'Cultural geographers insist that landscapes do not exist independently of human investment towards space. (...) It is our (real and imaginary) interaction with nature and the environment that produces landscape.'<sup>127</sup>

*Full Metal Village* offers the northern equivalent to the southern topography depicted in *Die Blutritter*. A sequence of three diverse landscape shots portrays an ideal view of the land from three perspectives. This ideal view works primarily with colour, form and composition to convey ideal harmony, balance and symmetry. The first shot is one of geographical symmetry: the image is vertically divided between land and sky, between the colours green and blue.<sup>128</sup> The green grass itself is again divided vertically into two: a row of short green grass and a row of tall darker grass. The framing creates symmetry in the length and colour of the grass. Due to a low camera position, the horizon remains out of sight. Although the image lacks the deep focus of land, it offers the spatial depth of sky. The second image follows a different image composition but there is a similar

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<sup>126</sup> Lefebvre, 'Introduction', p.xv.

<sup>127</sup> Lefebvre, p.xiii.

<sup>128</sup> See Appendix I, H1.

emphasis on lines of colour and form. The shot depicts, from fore to back: a row of fields, a horizon of dense green trees and a clear blue sky. Each field has a different shade of brown: from dark brown in the foreground to golden brown in the background – the fields gradually becoming lighter. The monochromatic shades of the trees on one hand and the sky on the other add to the symmetry already established by the steady pattern of colours of the crops in the fields. Form adds a further layer of equilibrium to the landscape. The wave-like divisions of the fields are echoed in the line dividing the horizon of trees from the sky. The shadow of a wind turbine in motion is projected on the fields. The steadiness of the turbine's movement echoes the regular uniformity of colour and form of this landscape image. The third shot bears witness to animate life within the landscape. A crowd of horses graze on a green field which they share with a wooden telephone mast. A sloping hill of green trees and golden fields dominates the background below a clear blue sky. The view, however, does not permit horses or turbine any kind of spatial dominance: the green field occupies one third of the image; the horses and the mast only a minimal part of that. The land itself remains the focus of the image. The horses as well as the turbine remain part of the landscape rather than dominating it. The land is

represented as a pictorial product of colour, form and composition rather than a setting for a scene.

Lefebvre defines landscape as exactly that: a transition of setting to landscape ('setting concerns narrative representation, and landscape aesthetic representation').<sup>129</sup> He sees the transition as the result of a termination of landscape as setting in favour of 'its emergence as a completely distinct aesthetic object'. Applying this to the medium of cinema, Lefebvre characterises the landscape by its dependence as a visual spectacle and its independence from the narrative: 'Landscape in the cinema (...) requires that space acquire some autonomy from narrative.'<sup>130</sup>

Both films, *Full Metal Village* and *Die Blutritter*, offer moments of 'autonomous landscapes'. The landscapes are aesthetic contemplations of space which are not narratively driven but are nevertheless firmly integrated in the narrative. Both films resort to narrative constructs of dream in order to attach the landscape spectacle to the narrative. In *Full Metal Village* the farmer is having an afternoon nap on his sofa when the film cuts to an extreme close-up of slowly moving white clouds. Although the skyscape is not driven by narrative, the farmer's sleep offers a symbolic narrative bridge to the visual spectacle of clouds. In *Die Blutritter*,

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<sup>129</sup> Martin Lefebvre, 'Between setting and landscape in the cinema', in *Landscape and Film*, ed. by Martin Lefebvre (London & New York: Routledge, 2006), pp.19-59 (p.52).

<sup>130</sup> Lefebvre, p.52.

interviews regarding the (im)possibility of a female ceremonial horserider at the *Blutritt* event are followed by a scene depicting an anonymous female riding in costume through the landscape. The landscape scene is attached to the narrative as an (im)possibility, a dream or fantasy spectacle.

There are additional similarities in the above visual landscape spectacles in both films. In *Full Metal Village* the skyscape is followed by a deep-focus view of a field of gently moving golden crops and a blue sky. The camera remains motionless for ten seconds. This relatively long duration transfixes the viewer's gaze and allows for an exploration of visual space. The gentle movement of the golden crops in the wind is mesmerising: the landscape becomes a visual spectacle. Sitney notes that it is precisely these subtle movements of the land that are unique to cinematic landscapes: 'It is in the depiction of gentler meteorological phenomena that cinema has developed a unique capability: the movement of clouds, changes in the intensity of light, the indication of breezes in the vibrations and swaying of flora, and the gradations of rain.'<sup>131</sup> In *Die Blutritter* various shots of the female rider in the landscape end with a deep-focus shot of her riding off into the horizon. Again, the camera remains steady for almost ten seconds. The lengthy shot of the land encourages the viewer to explore

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<sup>131</sup> Sitney, p.113.

beyond the rider and appreciate the land as an aesthetic object: lush green fields and a dramatic sky in gradual shades of violet. As Lefebvre acknowledges, duration is a key characteristic in filmic landscapes as opposed to pictorial landscapes.<sup>132</sup> However, another key characteristic which Lefebvre fails to acknowledge is the aural space. Landscape, a shaping of the land, is determined by audio framing as well as visual framing. In *Full Metal Village* as well as *Die Blutritter* an aural space of music becomes part of the landscape spectacle. In both scenes examined above, music plays an essential role in creating a space of spectacle.

In *Full Metal Village* the music is introduced whilst the farmer is sleeping and continues throughout the skyscape and landscape imagery; its diegetic source is only revealed with a cut to dancing villagers. The music is the song *Tennessee Waltz*, a popular country hit from the early 1950s. The soft soothing rhythm of the waltz corresponds to the sleeping farmer and the gentle movements of the clouds and the crops, encouraging the viewer to abandon the narrative for a short period and become immersed in the spectacle of the sky and the land. The mellow and peaceful melody puts the viewer's senses at ease and allows the gaze to be guided into the landscape, thereby also shaping the land in terms of audio space. Music, similar to

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<sup>132</sup> Lefebvre, p.52.

landscape, invites the viewer to succumb to a 'spectacular mode'<sup>133</sup>. While Lefebvre defines the 'spectacular mode' in visual terms as 'the effect of isolating the object of the gaze, of momentarily freeing it from its narrative function'<sup>134</sup> – a prerequisite for the shaping of land into landscape on screen, shaping film space aurally is integral to the spectacular mode. Music is a key component in shaping the land into landscape in *Full Metal Village*. The film establishes strong associations between music and the environment. The country song is visually coupled with virginal landscape and the elderly village community, whereas heavy metal music is visually linked to the urban invasion of the rural and a young international community. Hence, *country* music is literally displayed as music of the countryside, and heavy *metal* music is literally showcased as music of the industrial urban.

In *Die Blutritter* the music is composed by Haindling, a Bavarian pop band whose aim is to create Bavarian world music. The landscape scene is underlined by a strong rhythm and strains of melodic longing. While the rhythm matches the horse's galloping, the harmonious melody moves with the dramatic landscape. It is the music which plays an important part in creating a spectacle space: the viewer's approach to the visuals is driven by the flow of music rather than a narrative.

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<sup>133</sup> Lefebvre, p.29.

<sup>134</sup> Lefebvre, p.29.

In both *Full Metal Village* and *Die Blutritter* there is an abundance of cinematic landscapes. Their aesthetics convey a land of virginal innocence, seemingly unspoilt by human interface. As opposed to *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* and *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros*, for example, the road and the car hardly feature in the villagers' habitats of Wacken and Weingarten: tractors, mopeds and wheelbarrows (*Full Metal Village*) and horses and bicycles (*Die Blutritter*) are the preferred means of transport. In *Die Blutritter* the villagers participate in the religious event by moving across the landscape on horses. At first, the horses take over the cathedral square and the streets of the town: rural animals literally taking over urban spaces. Then the medieval procession integrates itself into the landscape scenery.<sup>135</sup> The camera captures men on the way to the religious event: a man in costume rides on horseback through vast fields of bright yellow crops,<sup>136</sup> another costumed man cycles along a vast horizon of dramatic light and clouds and snow-topped Alps.<sup>137</sup> In both shots, the costumed men are peripheral to the aesthetics of the land. The landscape in *Die Blutritter* is compatible with the religious event it portrays. The cathedral of Weingarten, the religious centre of the procession, is portrayed as a haven of nature. A low-angle shot of the cathedral from a busy street in the town

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<sup>135</sup> See Appendix I, F3.

<sup>136</sup> See Appendix I, F6.

<sup>137</sup> See Appendix I, F8.

cuts to a high-angle shot of a monk walking through a stoned-walled garden: plants have covered the walls in green and a pond is surrounded by green bushes in bloom.<sup>138</sup> The monk's soft voice and the sounds of birds and water aurally frame the space as a peaceful 'garden-scape'. A later view from the cathedral onto the town emphasises the dominance conveyed by the previous low-angle shot of the cathedral. A panoramic pan of the town and the landscape from the top of the cathedral is truly a 'magisterial gaze'. The sound of bells coming from the cathedral underlines the dominance of the beholder's position over the land. The day of the religious procession begins with a deep focus shot of the horizon and the sunrise colouring the sky red and yellow. The sound of a rooster crowing, the pealing of bells and trumpet music support the visual spectacle of anticipated awakening. After the event, the film offers a panoramic view of fields of yellow crops and a pale blue sky and eventually captures a horserider in the midst of it, on his way home. Soft animal noises and a gentle piano melody accompany the visual landscape. The camera pans to the left over the fields to rest on an image of a rural farmhouse with a tree and a green bush to the right and yellow fields and a blue sky to the far left. The man descends from his horse in front of the house and the image fades gradually into a black insert. The

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<sup>138</sup> See Appendix I, F4.

landscape imagery bears witness to the same unspoilt innocence towards the end of the film as it did at its opening: the panoramic view, the ideal framing, the gradual fading. The event has not stood in the way of conveying Weingarten as a space of landscape.

Whereas the event in Weingarten leaves the landscape intact, visitors at the music event in Wacken ravage the landscape turning it into a wasteland. The film's opening scene is a panoramic pan of a field littered with waste. People with white plastic bags are scattered amongst the waste. Silence rather than music frames the land's damage. By opening with an alarming image of the land as wasteland, the film offers a stark contrast to the film's subsequent aesthetic landscape sceneries. The landscapes offer a view of the land's virginal purity before human maltreatment. The film closes with a wider panoramic pan over the littered fields.<sup>139</sup> The transformation from landscape to setting is explicit. Drawing upon Lefebvre's distinction between setting and landscape, it can be argued that *with* the event the land is a setting and *without* the event it is an 'autonomous landscape'.<sup>140</sup> A panoramic shot of the land with rows of tents establishes the land as the backdrop or the setting for an event. Tents, people and waste rather than the scenery itself directs the viewer's attention

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<sup>139</sup> See Appendix I, H8.

<sup>140</sup> Lefebvre, p.28.

across the cinematic space, an attention which is subject to investigative rather than mesmerised gazing. Lefebvre defines setting in similar terms – the viewer is offering an interpretation or seeking an interpretation of the filmic space:

To speak of a setting is already to offer an interpretation and to assert a property of the filmic space presented in the frame. (...) It implies reference of some way of *using* a film – be it simply trying to make sense of narrative.<sup>141</sup>

The shots of the fields littered with waste represent the aftermath of the event. Since the event is the focal narrative drive of the film, the image is underpinned with a sense of eventhood or narrativity. An interpretation of the wasteland is propelled by the film's stark contrast between virginal and polluted land in the film – the transformation of farming land into human wasteland invites and calls for interpretation and environmental contemplation.

By opening and closing with shots of the wasteland (the setting), the film as a whole portrays a threefold transformation (setting-landscape-setting) thus implying a cyclicalness in the annual festival and its transformation of the environment.

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<sup>141</sup> Lefebvre, p. 22.

The threat to the purity of the landscape is further embodied by an invasion of visitors: immense trucks invade the village, portable toilets are placed along the fields, stage scaffolding and iron gates are mounted on grassland, the road is expanded, cars overrun the countryside. The threat to the land is symbolically envisioned in nature itself: scenes of blue skies and sunshine make way for scenes of dark clouds, rain and violent wind; at the same time natural sounds give way to heavy metal music. The 'metal' music underlines the 'metal' invasion of the countryside.

The approaching invasion of the virginal land is captured with fast-paced images of the non-rural: the urban space. The camera is placed within a moving car and urban spaces flash past the camera lens at high speed. The viewer does not have time to explore the spaces due to tight editing. The viewer no longer gazes but only glimpses. The urban space is a compilation of abstract metal angular constructions (a bridge's frame, train tracks, fences, factories) and the road (a bridge, signposts, concrete, cars, the motorway). The urban space is mirrored in the transformed land and village. A shot of the bridge's metal angular framings is echoed in a shot of a metal stage frame at the festival.<sup>142</sup> Both images are of metal constructions extending into the grey skies, symbolically conveying the growing threat to

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<sup>142</sup> See Appendix I, H4.

the rural land. A shot of metal fences alongside the motorway is paralleled in a shot of mobile metal fences erected alongside the village road. The rural space has been absorbed by urban space.

Whilst the village is being occupied, some village inhabitants decide to leave for a holiday, among them the elderly Irma, as well as the parish pastor. Before doing so, however, Irma's voice is heard saying a prayer over the image of a landscape at dusk: cows grazing leisurely in the fields and clouds moving slowly across the moon. Her soft voice and the faint sounds of chirping add to the tranquillity of the scenery. Uniting Irma's religious prayer with the calmness of the scenery gives the landscape a sense of spirituality. The scene cuts to a shot of Irma's bedroom where she is seen kneeling and praying at the side of her bed.<sup>143</sup> The shot is reminiscent of seventeenth-century Dutch painting: the camera inhabits a space of great intimacy enveloped in the dim but dramatic lighting of a single lamp falling onto austere furniture. The shot's resemblance to a well-known genre of painting points to the film-maker's conscious or unconscious 'shaping' of space, which Anne Hollander refers to as 'cultural continuity': 'A pictorial tradition becoming internalized and naturalized.'<sup>144</sup> She believes that the framing of the world is one that is imparted from one medium of visual

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<sup>143</sup> See Appendix I, H6.

<sup>144</sup> Anne L. Hollander, *Moving Pictures* (New York: Knopf, 1989), p.443.

culture to another – a cycle which the artist/film-maker is unwittingly part of: ‘A correspondence between a modern film-frame and an old painting might be called an indirect quote, an unconscious allusion.’<sup>145</sup> Hollander’s understanding of visual ‘shaping’ can be equally applied to landscapes: the land is ‘scaped’ just as the room is ‘shaped’ by the artistic beholder. The sequence continues with Irma packing her suitcase in the morning to escape the festival’s arrival.

Irma’s granddaughter, Kathrin, on the other hand, looks forward to the upcoming heavy metal festival. Like her grandmother, Kathrin is also portrayed in her bedroom. The sequence commences with a close-up of her computer screen which depicts an animated sequence of sheep mating wildly until one of the sheep dissolves into a cloud of smoke; the procedure is then repeated with another sheep. The establishing shot shows Kathrin sitting at her computer playing the animated sheep game below wooden slanted ceilings covered in Wacken festival posters and newspaper clippings. Kathrin’s voice is heard off-screen expressing her desire to leave the village of Wacken: ‘Mal weiter nach unten in den Süden von Deutschland (...) Einen Urlaub machen in Bayern.’ [Off to the south of Germany (...) Have a holiday in Bavaria.]. Despite being a rural resident,

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<sup>145</sup> Hollander, p.443.

Kathrin is never portrayed within her natural environment apart from at the festival. The animated sheep symbolically point towards Kathrin's artificial relationship with her natural habitat. She and her friend are seen spending their spare time exercising in a shed-like space. Bare wooden boards stand as walls and are sparsely decorated with magazine cuttings the girls have collected. The wooden planks in Kathrin's bedroom and in her workout shed convey a sense of restriction and confinement. When talking about the festival Kathrin repeatedly uses the word 'gemütlich'<sup>146</sup> to describe the event – a term very much associated with homeliness. The film comments on Kathrin's unusual contextualisation of the term by cutting from the festival newspaper clippings on Kathrin's bedroom wall to an exterior shot of her home.<sup>147</sup> The cut between shots is timed to coincide with one of Kathrin's remarks about the festival: 'Es ist eine gemütliche Atmosphäre.' [It's a cosy atmosphere.]. The image of the house is the epitome of the meaning of *gemütlich*: a large green lawn sprawling out in front of the house; well-kept flower beds; washing hanging tidily on the line; well-manicured bushes. The picture-perfect image of homeliness corresponds to the audio, although Kathrin is describing the festival and not

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<sup>146</sup> *Gemütlich* is used in German to describe a place of cosiness. The term also incorporates sentiments of belonging and home. Due to its untranslatable connotations, the word has been adopted into English.

<sup>147</sup> See Appendix I, H3.

her house. Kathrin herself, standing at one of the windows, remains barely visible. She sees the *gemütlich* elsewhere, in the most unlikely place: the heavy metal festival. Fellow Wacken resident and festival enthusiast, Norbert, is depicted in a very similar way: he is never portrayed within his natural environment apart from at the festival. Instead he is seen spending his spare time with the mechanics of his motorbike in his own shed. The shed is filled with tools and artificial dim lighting. Norbert's motorbike is his prize possession and connects him to the world outside the rural. In the same way, Kathrin relies on her clippings from magazines for girls which advise her on how to stay slim. It is her gateway to the world outside the rural: the camera accompanies Kathrin to a model agency.

In *Die Blutritter* and *Full Metal Village* the rural land has become the object of an idealising gaze: visual framing (camera movement and angle), aural framing (music) as well as editing (duration) play an important part in transforming land into landscape. Lefebvre argues for an 'autonomous landscape' in which the narrative is subordinate to the land as an aesthetic spectacle for short periods of time during the narrative-driven film. Both films offer landscapes of weak or little narrative presence. These sceneries, however, are not detached from the main narrative but integrated via narrative bridges. Anne Hollander's idea of 'cultural continuity' suggests

that the idealising gaze is a matter of the unconscious: over centuries visual culture has set an ideal pattern. Hence, landscape is the result of unconscious framing. The idealising of the land results in representations of virginal unspoilt land. Whereas the landscape in *Die Blutritter* remains unharmed by the focal event, the landscape in *Full Metal Village* is left harshly scarred by its central event. The event takes over with signifiers of urban space to disrupt the landscape's aesthetic autonomy: the landscape can no longer be viewed as landscape but as a setting for the event. It is the intrusion of the urban that transforms landscape back into land.

### 1.3. The Rural Represented: The Land and the Village

*Out of Edeka* (Konstantin Faigle, 2001)

*Schotter wie Heu* (Wiltrud Baier & Sigrun Köhler, 2002)

Whereas in the previous filmic examples (*Ich kenn'' keinen – Allein unter Heteros*, *Herr Wichmann von der CDU*, *Die Blutritter*, *Full Metal Village*) the rural land played a main role, in *Out of Edeka* and *Schotter wie Heu* it is the rural habitat, the village, and its relationship with its rural surroundings that take centre stage.

*Out of Edeka* and *Schotter wie Heu* are both films about Southern Germany, both set in the federal state of Baden-Württemberg. The locations of both films are single village communities: *Out of Edeka* portrays the village of Empfingen in the region of Swabia; *Schotter wie Heu* depicts the village of Gammesfeld in the region of Franconia. The narratives of the films are spun around the villages' central hubs: the village bank (*Schotter wie Heu*) and the village shop (*Out of Edeka*). This narrative concentration is mirrored in the films' focus on location: particularly the interior spaces of the bank / the shop become the prime setting for both films. Although interior spaces dominate both films, the rural land is clearly present.

*Schotter wie Heu* opens with a long-shot of fields of golden crops swaying gently in the wind under a cloudless blue sky against a horizon of

green trees.<sup>148</sup> Amidst the green, a church steeple and houses are visible. Against the idyllic landscape, the sound of voices is heard: a man and a woman greeting each other. The voices direct the spectator's view towards the sign of habitation: the village on the horizon. Similarly, in *Out of Edeka* the first landscape image is of the village.<sup>149</sup> A high-angle shot captures an array of red-roofed houses under the red rays of the rising sun. The camera, accompanied by Middle Eastern music, zooms into a horizon of forest and hills. Whereas *Schotter wie Heu* aurally shifts the focus from landscape to village, *Out of Edeka* visually moves from the village scenery to the surrounding landscape. This slight difference in emphasis subtly marks the film-makers' respective relationships with the village: film-maker Konstantin Faigle (*Out of Edeka*) was born and bred in Empfingen and left the village as a teenager to escape rural restrictions. Like the image, Faigle's viewpoint is from within the village: *Out of Edeka* is an intimate portrayal of his family's village shop. The exotic music implies his estrangement from the village as a returning adult film-maker. Wiltrud Baier and Sigrun Köhler (*Schotter wie Heu*), on the other hand, are strangers to the village of Gammesfeld. The village lies on the horizon, barely visible in the distance, situated far from the beholder, surrounded by idyllic countryside.

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<sup>148</sup> See Appendix I, C1.

<sup>149</sup> See Appendix I, B1.

The village of Gammesfeld is depicted as an integral part of the cinematic landscape: a church steeple is surrounded by fields of green and a setting sun; a clouded sky and rows of green farming land stretch out against a village horizon. These landscapes convey the static condition of the land and the village. This pictorial stasis is reflected in a painting of the village hanging on the walls of the bank. Fritz Vogt, the film's main protagonist, proudly introduces the painting, which he hopes to receive as a retirement present. The camera offers a full close-up of the image of Gammesfeld in the winter: tall dark trees and fields covered with snow dominate the image whilst the village lies almost hidden in the background. The painting has been given a prime position in the bank, looking down on the bank's board meetings. The subordination of the village to the landscape, similar to Baier and Köhler's cinematic landscapes, is evident in the painting. This dominance of rural nature is established in the previous scene when a local resident, an amateur film-maker, reveals some of his work on his television screen. The images show lengthy close-ups of colourful flowers filmed in his garden. Although the images are set in motion, stasis of the imagery is aurally created by the sound of a ticking clock within the diegetic space. It is not only the outsiders, Baier and Köhler, who have a romanticised view of Gammesfeld. Village residents

such as Vogt and the amateur film-maker share an equally idealised perspective of the village's place within the natural habitat.

The film's idealised perspective on the land and village is accentuated by the cinematic method Baier and Köhler employ to establish the village as a place: the map. Tom Conley notes on the role of the map in the medium of film:

It [the map] has affinities with a *mise-en-abyme*, but while it may duplicate or mirror the surrounding film within itself, the map can reveal why and how it is made and how its ideology is operating.<sup>150</sup>

The nature of the map in *Schotter wie Heu* dictates how the viewer is to read the surrounding film. The map is actually a still aerial shot of a village model which functions as a Gammesfeld 'map'.<sup>151</sup> The 'map' model is childlike in its features with vibrant colours, large areas of nature and a lack of geographical detail (e.g. street names). Instead of using a map which would provide reliable geographical information, Baier and Köhler opt to use a 'map' that is questionable in its nature. The 'map' cannot be viewed as a credible referent to the 'real' geography of Gammesfeld. This innocent and simple depiction of the village echoes the romanticised view of Gammesfeld

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<sup>150</sup> Tom Conley, ed., 'Introduction', in *Cartographic Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2007), pp. 1-22 (p.20).

<sup>151</sup> See Appendix I, C3.

discussed above. The map lifts Gammesfeld into a deliberate fantastic realm, thereby emphasising 'reel' geography rather than 'real geography' – an unusual ideology for the genre of non-fiction.

The map is lococentric in that it exists within its own borders, providing no information about what the borders separate it from. At the same time, it conveys an idea of Gammesfeld as a village community. It is, therefore, not only a 'map of knowledge' but also conveys what Lawrence Buell describes as 'place-sense'.<sup>152</sup> Place, by his definition, is essentially 'space humanized rather than the material world taken on its own terms'.<sup>153</sup> The idea of community is an essential part of a romanticised rural outlook, as Keith Halfacree comments: 'The "sense of community" so central to the rural idyll is the product of an accepted order within the village.'<sup>154</sup>

The 'map' intercuts the narrative on numerous occasions to indicate the whereabouts of the upcoming sequence: a red circle slowly fades in to encircle the relevant geographical area of the village followed by a white heading that appears beside the circle indicating the name of the location in question (e.g. bank, Edeka shop, Dorfkrug pub etc.). The subtle circling and

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<sup>152</sup> Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge, Mass. & London: Belknap Press, 1995), p.298.

<sup>153</sup> Buell, p.253.

<sup>154</sup> Keith Halfacree, 'Landscapes of Rurality. Rural Others/Other Rurals', in *Studying Cultural Landscapes*, ed. by Iain Robertson and Penny Richards (London: Arnold, 2003), pp. 141-169 (p.149).

titling provide the 'map' with an interactive function – indicating movement of the narrative. Alexander Böhnke notes on 'dynamic maps' in film narrative:

Während eine Karte zu Beginn eines Films die Bewegung der gesamten Narration auf den Punkt hin, wo die Handlung einsetzt, bezeichnet, ist eine dynamische Karte innerhalb des Films fast immer an die Bewegung von Figuren gebunden. (...) Eine dynamische Karte ist die Figur für die Bewegung der Narration, die zwei Orte verbindet.

[While a map at the beginning of a film marks the movement of the whole narrative to the point where the action begins, a dynamic map within the film is almost always tied to the movement of figures. (...) A dynamic map is the figure for the movement of the narrative, which connects two places.] <sup>155</sup>

The Gammesfeld 'map' functions as a bridging shot to move the narrative swiftly from one geographical place to the next. However, in *Schotter wie Heu* the dynamic indicators on the 'map' are not bound to any protagonist but to the film-makers. The documentarians in the film adopt active roles – the narrative movement is coupled with their roles as visiting film-makers.

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<sup>155</sup> Alexander Böhnke, 'Karten und andere Adressen des Films', in *Blicke auf Landschaften*, ed. by Günter Giesenfeld and Thomas Koebner (Marburg: Schüren, 2005), pp. 46-67 (p. 59).

Instead of the protagonist, Baier and Köhler become the subjects of the dynamics of the map.

Film-maker Faigle also includes pictorial reproductions of landscapes to depict the relationship between the village and its rural inhabitants in *Out of Edeka*. In the opening of the film, the camera rests on an extreme close-up of a clock. The clock's face, covered in the blue and white Bavarian flag, is only half visible. The focus is on the clock's stand: a painting of a horse and carriage decorated with the Bavarian flag and men in traditional costume. The clock's stand suddenly opens to reveal a three-man musical band dressed in *Lederhosen* and playing in front of Alpine landscape scenery. Trumpet music and flashing lights emerge from the stand. The clock's owner is soon established as the village shopkeeper. A later depiction of the village Empfingen on a postcard in the village shop reflects this idealised rural view. The shot shows the shopkeeper's hands placing a stack of postcards onto a shelf. The camera rests on the cards in close-up thus offering a clear picture of the card illustration. The cards are divided into four photographic colour images of the village Empfingen, two featuring the village in its rural surroundings and two presenting village houses. The images' colours are bold – blue skies dominate the postcard in colour. The images are connected by a long bright red square with white

script proclaiming: 'Gruss aus Empfingen' [Greetings from Empfingen]. The shopkeeper's voice is heard saying: 'Das ist aber eine schöne Stadt. Da ist sogar unser Haus mit drauf.' [That's a really nice town. On that picture you can even see our house.]. The scene then cuts to a close-up of the shopkeeper's head looking up towards the shelf where the village postcards stand. The shopkeeper's admiration of the village postcard resembles the bank director's high regard for the village painting in his bank and the amateur film-maker's approval of his home-made film of garden flowers in *Schotter wie Heu*.

In the next scene, however, Faigle shows the village from a different angle. The scene begins with a low-angle shot of the clouded sky – a contrast to the bright cloudless skies depicted on the village postcard. The camera tilts down to reveal the yellow village sign with two men standing in front of it.<sup>156</sup> The men, who are not film protagonists, are standing directly, and seemingly superfluously, at the roadside staring silently and intently at the camera while Faigle's voiceover offers a historical overview of the village. The two men make the sign of the cross when Faigle mentions the village's religious importance but otherwise remain motionless. The men offer an idiosyncratic, almost freak-like view of the

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<sup>156</sup> See Appendix I, B4.

village and its inhabitants. The scene continues with an idyllic image of the village church against a blue sky and green forest. Faigle, however, deconstructs this image with the voiceover narration: '1529 fiel das Dorf in Besitz des berüchtigten Fünf Zentner Fürsten, Christof von Nellenburg-Thengen, von dem wahrscheinlich auch das halbe Dorf abstammt.' [In 1529 the village fell into the hands of the notorious petty prince Christof von Nellenburg-Thengen, from whom probably half the village descends.]. The human peculiarity witnessed in the previous shot is emphasised and given credence by the historical narration. Whereas the shopkeeper's image of the village is reflected in pictorial objects such as his Bavarian alarm clock and the postcard, Faigle's position as narrator, on the other hand, lends his view of the village greater credibility.

*Out of Edeka's* depiction of cinematic land is by and large connected to scenes of re-enactments. The land becomes the stage for Faigle's imaginary world. Film-maker Faigle, for example, steps into a Spanish Flamenco costume to dance and sing in fields of golden crops, accompanied by a man playing a guitar.<sup>157</sup> The scene follows a sequence about a Spanish woman looking for a product in the village shop – when leaving the shop, she kisses the camera lens. The film then cuts to a close-up of Faigle in the

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<sup>157</sup> See Appendix I, B2.

fields. The scene resembles that of a dreamscape. At first, the camera remains steady and switches from facial close-ups of the film-maker to landscape and skyscape shots which include a bewildered-looking Faigle, who seems out of place. The sky as well as the fields express infinite space: the crops and the sky generally meet at the horizon. Whilst Faigle sings, the film rapidly fades from a sky pan to an upward tilt of the crops back to a sky pan creating an in-sync reverie 'nature-scape'. The camera becomes increasingly intermittent as it follows Faigle down the fields at a fast pace. The final shot of the scene is a close-up of Faigle's hat resting on the fields, before the camera tilts upwards and the music slowly fades. The camera halts on a horizon of green trees with a traditional church steeple in its midst, thus establishing the fields in the geographical framework of Swabia and not Spain. Faigle decontextualises the Swabian countryside and borrows the rural environment to simulate a Spanish dreamscape.<sup>158</sup>

In a further example, Faigle simulates the countryside as a historical landscape.<sup>159</sup> Again, it is Faigle himself who takes the leading role in the re-enactment. Dressed as a soldier with a moustache and a walking stick, he walks down a path in the countryside towards the village in the background. The soldier is intended to be his grandfather returning from

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<sup>158</sup> The choice of a Spanish context may stem from Faigle's personal situation. His girlfriend at the time of production was Spanish.

<sup>159</sup> See Appendix I, B3.

war to a village that has left him little. The scene is in black and white and offers grainy images of Faigle and his surroundings. Dark clouds and the sound of wind encourage a sinister view of the rural area. Both reenactments transform the rural Swabian landscape into landscapes imagined or remembered. The land becomes a psychological space. Fowler and Helfield point to this human aspect of the rural land: 'Landscape is not limited to purely physical terrain: another key element of the rural landscape is its emotive, nostalgic power as an idealized space and community – the land imagined or remembered as a dream.'<sup>160</sup>

In *Schotter wie Heu* as well as *Out of Edeka* the camera also travels outside the village. Immediately outside Gammesfeld there is a gravel pit which the film-makers visit to observe a detonation. The detonation is filmed with the village in the background.<sup>161</sup> The image is horizontally divided into two parts: the pit with its mounds of gravel and the village with its surrounding green fields. The strong horizontal divide between the two is additionally marked in the colour contrast: grey versus green. The compositional tension between the gravel pit and the village comes to a social surface in an interview with Vogt – he begs the film-makers not to film the gravel pit as part of the village portrayal.

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<sup>160</sup> Fowler and Helfield, 'Introduction', p. 7.

<sup>161</sup> See Appendix I, C6.

In *Out of Edeka*, similar commercial constructions loom at the edge of the village: the new supermarkets. The new discount supermarkets are portrayed as an immediate threat to the village shop. A high-angle shot of the village shop, empty apart from the waiting shopkeeper, precedes the busy images of the new supermarkets. A shot of dark clouds accompanied by threatening didgeridoo sounds foreshadows the threat of *Penny Markt* and *Edeka Aktiv Markt*. The two supermarkets are portrayed literally in the darkest light: dark clouds hover over *Penny Markt* and puddles of water are scattered on the parking lot outside the *Edeka Aktiv Markt*. The supermarkets are purpose-built: angular constructions with concrete parking lots. Their outer-village geographical location is apparent in the shot of *Penny Markt* – fields of crops commence at the edge of the concrete parking space. Once inside *Edeka Aktiv Markt* the film continues to portray the supermarket from a threatening angle. The camera is placed in a trolley, tilted slightly upwards, facing the trolley's metal grille.<sup>162</sup> The grille takes up the entire frame conveying a notion of confinement. In addition, the unusually low positioning of the camera creates a sense of vulnerability. The trolley is wheeled down long aisles, angular lighting tubes glaring down from the ceilings through the grille. There is no sign of human

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<sup>162</sup> See Appendix I, B6.

presence in the supermarket. Faigle portrays the supermarket as a constructed place of threatening artificiality. When the village shop finally closes down, the shopkeeper is forced to seek out the outer-village commerce centres. At the new supermarket, he is confused by the progressive digital scales when weighing his tomatoes. Suddenly, a trivial plaster on his cheek seems to be concealing more than a minor cut, indicating a more general vulnerability.

*Out of Edeka* not only takes the viewer to the outskirts of the village but also beyond the borders of Germany to a small town in Georgia. It is there, far from the village, that Faigle turns away from the rural playful re-enactments to offer a sincere image of nature. The camera half-circles a tree, a so-called *Wunschbaum* [wish-tree], full of ribbons hanging from its branches. Gentle choral folk music underlines Faigle's voice-over in which he explains the tree's significance as a wish-tree for parents for their children – he himself has attached a ribbon for his Georgian daughter. The scene presents nature as a source of hope rather than as a stage for escapist re-enactments.

Both films conclude with images of the village and the land. In *Schotter wie Heu* the camera slowly circles the snow-covered village from an

aerial viewpoint.<sup>163</sup> The village is surrounded by fields and forests; further rural habitat remains out of sight. Despite being more accurate, the aerial shot strongly resembles the simplistic model 'map' of the village. Both 'maps' are even accompanied by similar brass-band folk music. Instead of discrediting the romanticised view of Gammesfeld, the aerial shot places the 'map' within an authentic geographical context: the idyllic village becomes part of a credible geography. *Out of Edeka* ends with a crane shot of the village at night. Moving out from the illuminated street near the shop to a long shot of the village, the camera then tilts upwards into the dark blue sky. The Middle Eastern music from the first village shot emerges. Faigle's view of rural Empfingen still remains mystified in the dark.

*Out of Edeka* and *Schotter wie Heu* both thematise the rural as village.

The village is an integral part of the rural land, as Fowler and Helfield point out: 'This complex way of seeing the landscape includes recognizing the landmarks, if you will, of both its terrain and social formation.'<sup>164</sup> Film-makers Baier and Köhler integrate the village Gammesfeld into the picturesque scenery of *Schotter wie Heu* whereas Faigle offers a more unsettling view of the village Empfingen in *Out of Edeka*. In both films the film-makers take on participant roles: as the subject of a recurring dynamic

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<sup>163</sup> See Appendix I, C7.

<sup>164</sup> Fowler and Helfield, p. 7.

village 'map' (*Schotter wie Heu*) and as the prime subject of rural re-enactments (*Out of Edeka*). The colourful simplistic village 'map' corresponds to the idyllic landscape imagery of the film; the rural re-enactments function as a psychological vent for Faigle in his attempt to process his personal relationship with the village. Both films also travel outside the village to expanding developments portrayed in a threatening light: the gravel pit and the new supermarkets. It is only outside the village, abroad in Georgia, that Faigle manages to approach nature free from his village past. The cinematic portrayals of the villages overall are a reflection of each film-maker's relationship with the village. The ex-villager, Faigle, paints a personalised and troubled image of Empfingen whereas the visiting film-makers, Baier and Köhler, capture a more romanticised picture.

#### 1.4. The Rural Represented: The Land in Between

*Die Blume der Hausfrau* (Dominik Wessely, 1999)

### *Durchfahrtsland* (Alexandra Sell, 2005)

Whilst the portrayal of the rural land differs significantly from *Herr Wichmann von der CDU*, *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* (1.1.) to *Die Blutritter* and *Full Metal Village* (1.2.) and *Out of Edeka* to *Schotter wie Heu* (1.3.), rural locations feature strongly in all six films, providing a unifying common denominator. In *Die Blume der Hausfrau* and *Durchfahrtsland* the film locations are of a different rural nature. *Die Blume der Hausfrau* is set in unspecified outskirts of Stuttgart in Southern Germany whereas *Durchfahrtsland* is set in villages at the foothills near the cities of Cologne and Bonn in the west of Germany. The locations of the films are in urban proximity (Stuttgart / Cologne and Bonn) but, at the same time, they are politically independent communities.

The land is a hybrid of urban and rural; positioning itself in between. This fusion has strong similarities with concepts of suburbia. The word suburbia incorporates the simultaneous detachment as well as attachment to the urban in its suffix 'sub' which implies a subordinate but appended location to the city. Robert Beuka defines suburbia as 'tied to both the urban

and rural spheres yet not fully identifiable with either'.<sup>165</sup> This clash between rural and urban is exemplified in *Durchfahrtsland*. Deep-focus shots of the horizon from the high vantage point offered by the foothills regularly interrupt the narrative flow and offer landscape imagery of a different kind: soaring industrial chimneys interrupt a horizon of green hills; an enormous mast looms over fields of blooming yellow sunflowers and a horizon of green forest is disrupted by industrial buildings;<sup>166</sup> fields of agriculture and rows of masts divide the foreground of village houses against a horizon of urban skyline;<sup>167</sup> an aeroplane ascends into the open skies from the Cologne-Bonn airport in the vague distance. The suburban viewer is 'colonising' the land with his gaze but is, at the same time, being physically colonised by the urban: smog hovers over the ground, constructions tower high, and even the sky is drawn into the urban sphere by aeroplanes.

Whereas the landscape in *Durchfahrtsland* represents the visual clash between the spheres of urban and rural space, *Die Blume der Hausfrau* conveys a different kind of hybrid landscape. Beuka continues his definition of suburbia: 'The early suburbs composed a new kind of landscape.'<sup>168</sup> *Die Blume der Hausfrau* represents this new kind of landscape: a land consisting

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<sup>165</sup> Robert A. Beuka, *SuburbiaNation: Reading Suburban Landscape in Twentieth-Century American Fiction and Film* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.24.

<sup>166</sup> See Appendix I, G5.

<sup>167</sup> See Appendix I, G6.

<sup>168</sup> Beuka, p.24.

solely of residential housing. The film's scenery is homogenous due to the similarities in housing architecture. The houses are newly built concrete multiple-storey apartment blocks. The uniform architectural landscape typifies suburbia as 'an environment that emphasized the prospect of perfectibility through its precise, meticulous plotting and architecture'.<sup>169</sup>

This standardisation of the environment is conveyed with shots of salesmen in nearly identical surroundings (in front of apartment buildings that share identical glass doors and door bells) performing identical tasks (ringing the doorbell or talking to a potential customer). These shots suggest environmental dominance: the choice of a long shot to represent salesman Massimo standing at the end of a semi-open corridor waiting for a door to open, makes him barely visible in the image – instead the image is governed by the standardised architecture: the long angular semi-open corridor and a view over the building's other exterior identical corridor structures.<sup>170</sup> The next sequence shows salesman Angelo walking up a corridor stairwell: the camera follows his footsteps and finally rests on a low-angle long shot of him standing in front of a door waiting for the doorbell to be answered. The bare walls to the left and the stairwell's railings to the right dominate the space and appear to tower over his body. The next scene portrays Massimo

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<sup>169</sup> Beuka, p.5.

<sup>170</sup> See Appendix I, A3.

walking away from the camera down a long interior corridor until he becomes barely detectable.<sup>171</sup> Small framed pictures line part of the corridor's wall – their miniature size, however, does not impede the dominance of the walls, ceiling and floor in the shot. All three scenes convey architecture's supremacy over the human being. By employing long shots, film-maker Wessely detracts from the human being in the image. This is an effect noted by Sitney: 'The long shot is long, or distant, in regard to the center of human activity. (...) More frequently it serves to diminish the human scale.'<sup>172</sup> The film does not offer any panoramic shot of the suburban land as an entity, thus creating a feeling of alienation and confinement: the city is out of sight, as is the rural countryside. Film-maker Wessely's image of the German suburbs corresponds to Beuka's description of the downside of American suburbia as 'the vision of a homogenized, soulless, plastic landscape of tepid conformity, an alienating "noplacem"'.<sup>173</sup> The anonymity and lack of traditional and social ties of suburbia also conform to Marc Augé's definition of 'non-places' as spaces which 'cannot be defined as relational, historical, or concerned with identity'.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> See Appendix I, A8.

<sup>172</sup> Sitney, p.108.

<sup>173</sup> Beuka, p.4.

<sup>174</sup> Marc Augé, *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London & New York: Verso, 1995), pp.77-78.

Suburbia in *Die Blume der Hausfrau* is literally a 'noplacé'. The homogenous area remains anonymous as the film never refers to or distinguishes the suburban area(s) by name(s). The salesmen divide the suburb into geographical sales areas by simply pointing to the streets from within a moving car.<sup>175</sup> Whereas the suburbs in *Die Blume der Hausfrau* are the product of pre-planned architectural landscaping, the suburbs in *Durchfahrtsland* are generally villages on the brink of spreading urban development. Film-maker Sell refers to the suburban area in *Durchfahrtsland* by village names (Vochems, Hemmerich, Walberberg, Rösberg), visually emphasising this with shots of village signposts. Rivalry between the geographically connected villages bears witness to the individuality still attached to rural village identity. Despite village rurality, the film illustrates that the landscape of the foothills has become an arena for the same pre-planned landscaping seen in *Die Blume der Hausfrau*. The film not only conveys a visual clash between urban and rural but also a clash between rural and suburban. Sell's image compositions visually suggest these tensions: diagonal rows of houses of identical architecture (and sometimes also colour) stand behind a foreground of farming land and fields.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> See Appendix I, A7.

<sup>176</sup> See Appendix I, G3.

The suburban in *Durchfahrtsland* is a land not only in between but also in transition. A shot of the construction of a hypermarket visually symbolises a village's rural disintegration: a grey concrete parking space dominates the foreground while green fields are visible near the horizon; two yellow dredgers are digging in between the two spaces in the midst of brown soil.<sup>177</sup> The rural land's gradual urban landscaping is indicated in the land's transformation from foreground to background. A bright yellow sign within the concrete space proclaiming an international supermarket chain visually manifests the approaching suburban lifestyle. At the same time, Sell's voiceover describes the village's loss of identity:

In diesem Sommer bekam das Vorgebirge eine neue Autobahnausfahrt und zwei neue Supermärkte, das Dorf Sechtem bekam die achte Siedlung und verlor sein Wahrzeichen. Das letzte alteingesessene Gasthaus brannte bis auf die Grundmauern nieder. Und viele sagten, nun sei es endgültig vorbei mit dem alten Sechtem.

[This summer the foothills got a new motorway exit and two new supermarkets, the village of Sechtem got its eighth housing estate and lost its landmark. The last old-established inn was burnt down to

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<sup>177</sup> See Appendix I, G4.

its foundations. And many said, now the old Sechtem has gone for good.]

The hybrid nature of the suburban space is illustrated by two people cycling through the frame on the concrete surface intended for car traffic. Whereas *Die Blume der Hausfrau* conveys a lack of identity of place in suburbia and *Durchfahrtsland* expresses the loss of rural identity, both films highlight the unstable and transitory nature of identity of the land in between.

The idea of community identity lies at the core of the concept of the new landscape of suburbia, which Beuka refers to as 'a utopian dream of community figured through landscape and architectural design'.<sup>178</sup> This living ideal generated by a landscaped ideal land, as Beuka points out, harbours levels of imperfectibilities. The suburban community in *Die Blume der Hausfrau* and *Durchfahrtsland* is layered by a lack or loss of traditional community identity.

The portrayal of the suburban community in *Die Blume der Hausfrau* is constituted by a divide of private and public space. The suburban residents live behind closed doors and only occasionally invite the salesmen into the private sphere of their living-rooms.<sup>179</sup> Steffen embodies suburban success: he is shown demonstrating and selling in the living-rooms. Angelo,

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<sup>178</sup> Beuka, p. 6.

<sup>179</sup> See Appendix I, A2.

on the other hand, has not been admitted into the living-rooms: he is shown knocking unsuccessfully on the front doors. Each living-room scene introduces a new face, a new suburban resident. The film thereby shows the suburbs to be a place of anonymity: the residents are little more than customers and names on the salesmen's worksheets. The lack of community outside the living-room walls is reflected in the impoverished sense of community within the living-room walls: solitary elderly ladies dominate the salesmen's clientèle. The interior spaces are generally small and moderately furnished – both salesmen and camera occasionally struggle within the small spaces. The heart of modern suburbia, the residential home, is portrayed as a lonely and confined space.

The lack of rural and urban images in the film conveys the protagonists' existential dependence on the suburban community. The film does not specify whether the salesmen themselves are residents of a suburban land – the film does not portray the men outside their professional roles. This purely professional portrayal of the men creates a distance between the salesmen and the suburban residents, which sets limits to any sense of a shared suburban community identity (between the two). This is emphasised by a further spatial divide. Whereas suburban residents are rarely represented in public spaces, the salesmen are. The

public space of the café / pub functions as the geographical hub for the five salesmen.<sup>180</sup> This is where the men meet for their breakfast, lunch and a chat. The café /pub is generally quiet, re-emphasising the suburbs' preference for private spaces such as the living-room. The café / pub, the public space, is set against the living-room, the private space, reiterating the divide between salesmen and suburban community.

The suburban community in *Durchfahrtsland* is divided by deep-rooted village rivalry. Although the rural land is being transformed into a new landscape, many residents adhere to the customs of rural communities. A village community's traditional May festivities feature strongly in the film. The portrayal of the rural procession, however, is layered with the dominance of the non-rural space: two women in traditional costume walk through the green fields with industrial constructions in the immediate background; a tractor pulls a cart full of traditionally costumed men and women waving a flag with a local crest into a horizon of towering industrial chimneys and masts.<sup>181</sup> Mark and Giuseppe, two of the film's protagonists, belong to local traditional clubs which feature in these festivities, the bachelor club and the brass band club. After portraying the men's attempts to fit into the conventional communities, the film ends with the protagonists

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<sup>180</sup> See Appendix I, A4.

<sup>181</sup> See Appendix I, G1.

resigning from their clubs: Mark has started commuting to the city to study design and Giuseppe has signed up for military service abroad. Both protagonists have chosen to pursue a lifestyle far from the rural community, indicating an incipient disintegration of long-established rural community structures. In protagonists Sophia and priest Dümmer similar signs of a breakdown of the rural community are evident. Sophia is a successful village outsider whose books sell best at the big industrial hypermarket, and Dümmer is the first parish priest to be shared between the two rival villages. Although rural community structures are still in place, the gradual landscape transformation not only invades the rural space but also shows visible effects on the way of life.

The way of life in the suburbia of *Die Blume der Hausfrau* is hugely shaped by car culture. One of the opening sequences of the film shows two salesmen in a car driving through a residential area.<sup>182</sup> The shot is not from within the car as in *Ich kenn' keinen– Allein unter Heteros* and *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* (see 1.1.) but from outside the moving car. The camera accompanies the car from the front: first with a frame of the windscreen and the bonnet, then with a wider frame of the entire car, then back to the tighter frame. This frontal angle allows a view of the two men as they keep

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<sup>182</sup> See Appendix I, A7.

turning their heads from right to left to look at the area as they drive through it. The area, however, remains barely visible to the viewer as almost the whole frame is occupied by the car. This tight framing of the men created by the frontal car window frame conveys a sense of confinement and visually suggests the car's dominance. The individual's dependence on the car is best exemplified in the sequences which follow the salesman's pub meetings. The camera follows the men to a large parking space from where they all depart in their individual cars. The film's final shot is of the five cars driving from the car park.<sup>183</sup> The film establishes the car not only as a way of suburban living but moreover as a means of livelihood in suburbia. The car, however, also emphasises the individual rather than the community: each has his own car and moves in his own world independent of the world he drives through.

In *Durchfahrtsland* the film's title already implicitly refers to the land as a place where cars prevail. The verb *durchfahren*, which translates as passing / driving through, is added onto the noun *land* to create a compound noun for the land in between: a land which is only worth passing through. The land's lack of appeal is further established in the opening credits of the film with a quotation from nineteenth-century writer

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<sup>183</sup> See Appendix I, A5.

Johanna Schopenhauer: 'Der Weg zu Lande von Bonn nach Köln – unerachtet der schönen Chaussee auf welcher man ihn in weniger als vier Stunden zurücklegt – ist unbeschreiblich öde und langweilig.' [The land route from Bonn to Cologne – despite the fine road which allows one to do the journey in less than four hours – is indescribably bleak and boring.]. The quotation suggests that the land has long been a place of in between: a place between two cities that even in the nineteenth century merely functioned as a land to pass through.

An alternative to the land route between Bonn and Cologne, and one used more in Schopenhauer's time, is the water route provided by the River Rhine. In *Durchfahrtsland* the Rhine does make a brief appearance but not as a rural feature. It too is depicted as a throughway, carrying cruise ships and transport barges to other destinations. The film shows Guisepe and his brass band on a Rhine river cruise. The portrayal of the river has little resemblance to rurality: the group waits at the jetty against a background of towering industrial chimneys and a transport barge with a cargo of coal passes by.<sup>184</sup> Once on the cruise ship, images of container barges rather than picturesque scenery are seen through the windows. The final boat scene symbolises the river as a throughway: the brass band is silhouetted behind

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<sup>184</sup> See Appendix I, G2.

the soiled boat windows and against the background of a red marker buoy. The glass dirtied by the river traffic and the channel marker bear witness to the river's industrial usage as a thoroughfare.

Writer Schopenhauer considers the land too boring for words, whereas film-maker Sell resorts to an invented word – *Durchfahrtsland* – to verbally describe the area. The film's title is presented in white letters within a black insert and underlined with the sound of cars driving past. The film then cuts to a shot which visually conveys Sell's invented description of the land. A landscape image of snow-covered fields and a village on the horizon is disrupted by a large road running close to the camera across the frame – the aural source of the car noises. Coloured flags hanging from strings attached to wooden masts line the roadside and extend its presence. The camera remains motionless whilst the cars rush through the frame. The land as little more than a thoroughway for traffic is maintained in the film as a recurring visual motif in landscape imagery.

The protagonist Sophia and her car become part of this leitmotif. The film shows her driving her car across stretches of land: rather than rushing through the frame, the camera follows the movements of her car. Her car is small and shown driving along small roads, parked at the roadside or in front of her house. Sophia and her little green car are one. Rather than

passing through, Sophia and her car are here to stay. Sophia represents the new landscape of suburbia: she is a village outsider but does not think of leaving; she would rather build a new house on rural farming land with a view of the urban horizon.

The land as a projection space for dreams is extensively depicted in *Durchfahrtsland*. Whereas Sophia is seen taking measurements with her feet for her ideal imaginary house on the rural fields, protagonist Giuseppe yearns for a land far removed from suburban space. Giuseppe is seen visiting the small village of Nebelschütz in eastern Germany with his brass band. Giuseppe compares the land's rural aesthetics to his native home of Sicily and describes his vision: 'Wenn ich hier eine Arbeit hätte und alles, und meine Vereine, dann, keine Frage, würde ich herziehen.' [If I had work here and everything, and my clubs, then, no question, I would move here.].

In Dümmer's case the ideal land is equally far removed from the suburban foothills. Dümmer's ideal land is the rural Spanish coastline where he once lived. Paintings on Dümmer's living-room wall bear witness to the Mediterranean rural land. The film offers two close-ups of paintings depicting the Spanish land: a small peninsula amidst blue skies and water; a small pink village chapel. The land depicted is free of urban intrusion and human interface. By representing the land with the aid of decorative

paintings, the film enhances the aspirational quality Dümmer attaches to Spanish rurality. It is a pilgrimage to the Spanish rural coast that Dümmer organises for his two parish villages which turns out to be a success in bridging village rivalry.

Young protagonist Mark is equally emotionally attached to a painting depicting rural space – his own creation on canvas. The film cuts from a shot of the village and its dominating church steeple at night to Mark's painting: a small village with a prominent church steeple in the moonlight. Sell's editing establishes an implicit connection between the painting and Mark's village. Although Mark is attached to his work, he is dissatisfied with it. Sell's visual association between Mark's painting and his own village can be extended to Mark's feelings towards both his painting and his village: attached but dissatisfied.

Both *Die Blume der Hausfrau* and *Durchfahrtsland* represent land which is neither rural nor urban. *Durchfahrtsland* visually portrays the fusion between the advancing urban and disintegrating rural. In *Die Blume der Hausfrau* this land in between is represented as a pre-planned apartment block suburbia. The development of suburban architecture and lifestyle is also evident in *Durchfahrtsland*. The lack or loss of place and community identity through suburbia features strongly in both films: Sell offers a

picture of rural identity degeneration; Wessely an image of suburban identity deficiency. Whereas protagonists in *Durchfahrtsland* seek new communities in the urban or suburban sphere, the main protagonists in *Die Blume der Hausfrau* maintain a close community of salesmen outside the private spheres of suburbia in the public sphere of a quiet café / pub.

The land in between is featured as a land of car culture. In *Die Blume der Hausfrau* the salesmen drive through suburbia in their cars, in *Durchfahrtsland*, as the name already implies, motorways and roads criss-cross the land making it a land of passing traffic. Whereas the salesmen in *Die Blume der Hausfrau* are dependent on suburbia for a living, the desire for a return to rurality is expressed in *Durchfahrtsland* through protagonists' holidays and paintings.

## 1.5. The Rural Represented: Concluding Note

Chapter One has demonstrated that the rural is more than a cinematic backdrop – the land is an essential part of my critical investigation of screen-scape . Although thematically the land is a uniting element of the documentary cinema movement in question, stylistically the films follow different routes. The chapter has thus brought forward a scope of cinematic perspectives on the rural, which, however, should be seen as belonging to a larger filmic effort to explore the rural space of twenty-first century Germany.

*Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* and *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* represent the land as a vast peripheral territory – the remote land reflecting the isolated outsider status of the protagonists as well as hinting at a lack of rural community. Instead of gazing upon the land from above or from outside, both film-makers choose to be *within* a space with the protagonists. The camera accompanies the rural inhabitant whilst he 'colonises' the outspread land, visually as well as physically.

*Die Blutritter* and *Full Metal Village* both transform land into landscape. This aesthetic transformation of the land is, according to Lefebvre, the result of an autonomy of the land from the narrative: the

landscape as a self-directed aesthetic spectacle of nature. Hollander on the other hand sees the transformation of land into cinematic landscape as a visual by-product of 'cultural continuity'.

*Out of Edeka* and *Schotter wie Heu* explore the social habitat of the land: the village, often an integral part of landscape representation. In *Schotter wie Heu* the village of Gammesfeld becomes the object of a romanticised view – the use of a childlike village 'map' and the establishment of pictorial stasis of nature and landscape underline the film's idealised perspective of the village. The village of Empfingen in *Out of Edeka* becomes the object of a daydream – the Swabian land takes on different historical and national characters depending on the film-maker's psychological agenda.

Both *Die Blume der Hausfrau* and *Durchfahrtsland* offer a new kind of land, one that is neither urban nor rural: suburbia. Represented as either the edge of urbanity (*Die Blume der Hausfrau*) or the edge of rurality (*Durchfahrtsland*), both films' depiction of suburbia highlight the escalating dominance of urbanity and its concomitant drawbacks while disregarding any positive aspects: the suburban community in *Die Blume der Hausfrau* lacks community identity, the suburban community in *Durchfahrtsland* is faced with a disintegration of identity.

The films illustrate a range of 'reel' geographies which share many similarities with 'real' geographies. They reveal more than environmental representation: these different cinematic perceptions offer insight into the ways in which rural residents cohabit with their environment. The representation of nature acts as a mirror of society, and landscapes can be seen as products of the dominant culture, with its values, meanings and symbols.<sup>185</sup>

The representation of the rural also provides insight into the environmental issues societies are faced with. Deborah Carmichael notes on this: 'The portrayal of nature and our cultural relationships to the environment in film signal (...) changes in ecological thinking.'<sup>186</sup> Ecocriticism aims to raise awareness of these underlying ecological concerns and reveal the 'ethical and aesthetic dilemmas posed by the environmental crisis'.<sup>187</sup> Although the aim of this chapter was to unveil the importance of the rural land within the documentary development researched in this thesis and explore the cinematic representations of the rural, the analysis has simultaneously shed light on ecocritical notions of awareness: the

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<sup>185</sup> Iain Robertson and Penny Richards, 'Introduction', in *Studying Cultural Landscapes*, ed. by Iain Robertson and Penny Richards (London: Arnold, 2003), pp.1-18 (p.2).

<sup>186</sup> Deborah A. Carmichael, p.12

<sup>187</sup> Cheryll Glotfelty, *What is Ecocriticism?*, ASLE The Association of the Study of Literature and Environment  
[http://www.asle.umn.edu/conf/other\\_conf/wla/1994/glotfelty.html](http://www.asle.umn.edu/conf/other_conf/wla/1994/glotfelty.html) [accessed 6th March 2009].

'colonisation' of land by car culture (*Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* and *Herr Wichmann von der CDU*), the urban expansion and invasion of the village (*Full Metal Village*), the disintegration of village rurality (*Durchfahrtsland*) and the standardisation of environment (*Die Blume der Hausfrau*). Although the film-makers may differ in their aesthetic choices – from the ideal shaping of land to the un-shaping of land – the creative treatment of the land in both approaches raises concerns about the state of the land in Germany. The film-makers highlight the fragility and vulnerability of contemporary rurality.

## Chapter Two: The Regional Defamiliarised

### 2.0. The Regional Defamiliarised: Introductory Note

Although an established word, the region still struggles for a consensus of definition. Historian Joachim Kuropka points to the complexity of the terminology:

Daß es sich nicht nur um geographische Merkmale handeln kann, wenn im modernen Sinne von einer „Region“ gesprochen wird. Das heißt natürlich nicht, daß man nicht mit geographisch-wissenschaftlichen Methoden Regionen abgrenzen könnte.

[It cannot only be a question of geographical characteristics when a 'region' is spoken of in the modern sense. This does not mean, of course, that regions cannot be differentiated by geographical-scientific methods.]<sup>188</sup>

It is this twofold understanding of the region as a place bound to tangible features on the one hand (e.g. topographies, demographics, linguistics) and/or intangible features on the other hand (e.g. identities, sentiments, values) which makes it difficult to reach a consensus of definition. In

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<sup>188</sup> Joachim Kuropka, 'Thesen zur regionalen Identität', in *Region und Regionalismus*, ed. by Volker Schulz (Cloppenburg: Runge, 1994), pp.11-34 (p.13).

addition, the term is one that crosses many disciplines with the effect that a consensus in meaning has become almost impossible. To complicate the matter, the meaning of region must also be considered an interpretation, as historian Tom Scott explains: 'They [regions] exist (...) both as a reality and an idea, sustained by the accumulated weight of history and tradition (...) rather than neutral-topographical entities.'<sup>189</sup> The region remains a fluid construct of reality that is subject to individual readings. Governments may apply boundaries to administrative regions, but these may differ considerably from other understandings of border lines of the same regions. 'The region,' as Scott explains, 'may express an identity which transcends the boundaries of individual states just as much as it gives voice to loyalties which lie at a more local level.'<sup>190</sup> In film production terms, for example, German regional film funding follows the governmental boundaries of the *Bundesländer*, the German federal states (see Introduction). In her research into language and region, Joan Beal emphasises the subjective understanding of the region, which can result in different regions from those politically determined: 'The sense of "region" must be fluid, covering

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<sup>189</sup> Tom Scott, *Regional Identity and Economic Change: the Upper-Rhine, 1450-1600* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p.2.

<sup>190</sup> Scott, p. 1.

whatever geographical areas are considered distinct from each other by the people living in them.'<sup>191</sup>

Whereas Chapter One explored the representation of topographical elements, Chapter Two will concentrate on the illustration of the social dimensions which constitute a region.

Das Aufwachsen am gleichen Geburts-, Schul- und Wohnort, die Kommunikation in demselben Dialekt, gemeinsames Handeln in weltlichen und kirchlichen Vereinen, das Geborgensein in der Kirchengemeinde oder in derselben Religionsgemeinschaften, das Verfolgen gemeinsamer Interessen im wirtschaftlichen Bereich, all das kann über den verwandtschaftlichen Umkreis hinaus Gemeinschaftsbewußtsein und Bildungsgefühle, Solidarität und Heimatgefühl entstehen lassen, alles Komponenten einer regionalen Identität.<sup>192</sup>

[Growing up in the same place where one is born, goes to school and lives, communicating in the same dialect, taking part together in secular and church clubs, being accepted in the church congregation or in the same religious communities, pursuing common interests in the economic field, all this can create beyond the radius of relatives a

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<sup>191</sup> Joan Beal, *Language and Region* (London & New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 4.

<sup>192</sup> Karl Filser, 'Dimensionen regionaler Identität', in *Regionale Identität im vereinten Deutschland. Chance und Gefahr*, ed. by Bernd Mütter and Uwe Uffelman (Weinheim: Deutscher Studien Verlag, 1996), pp. 253-256 (p.254).

feeling of community and cultural feeling, solidarity and sense of belonging, all components of a regional identity.]

All case study films take a similar approach to exploring the German region. Whereas production is linked to regional institutions, the cinematic perceptions are not of regional origin: with few exceptions the film-makers are not from the region they choose to portray. The filmic view of the regional is therefore not a view from within but a view from outside.

This outside and inside dichotomy has been a dominant feature in ethnographic film-making, arising from the use of film for anthropological research/science purposes. Although its use was solely meant to serve observation and recording purposes, in actual fact the camera provided ethnographic film-makers with a much more powerful tool. Particularly in early cinema which sought to capture the inhabitants and cultures of uncharted geographical territories, this power resulted in visual Othering. 'It [the moving image] lent indexical credibility to anthropology, arming it with visual evidence not only of the existence of "others" but also of their actually existing otherness.'<sup>193</sup> The ethnographic subject fell victim to a definition that was based on its relation and opposition to the familiar

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<sup>193</sup> Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, 'The Imperial Imaginary', *The Anthropology of Media: A Reader*, ed. by Kelly Askew and Richard R. Wilk (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 117-147 (p.106).

Western world. The other-ing of the subject through the ethnographic gaze often resulted in a cinematic spectacle.

The ethnographic characteristics of the films under discussion have been briefly noted in a few journalistic reviews. *Filmdienst* has noted that *Durchfahrtsland* is dominated by an ethnographic demeanour: 'Als Langzeitstudie angelegt, nähert sich der Film mit...einer eher ethnografisch als sachlich motivierte Beobachtungshaltung den Ritualen dieser dörflichen Parallelwelt.' [Designed as a long-term study, the film with its ethnographic rather than objective mode of observation approaches the rituals of this rural parallel world.].<sup>194</sup> The national newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* identifies an ethnographic gaze in *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros*: 'Hick...richtet seinen ethnografischen Blick, der schonungslos ist, aber immer auch liebevoll, diesmal auf das Alltagsleben von Schwulen unterschiedlichen Alters abseits der großen Städte.' [This time Hick directs his ethnographic gaze, which is relentless but always kind, at the daily life of gays of different ages outside the big cities.].<sup>195</sup> The city information guide magazine *Szene Hamburg* notes that *Full Metal Village* is in actual fact an ethnographic study: '*Full Metal Village* ist eine ethnografische Studie. Die

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<sup>194</sup> Alexandra Wach, 'Durchfahrtsland', *film-dienst*, 19 (2005).

This article can be viewed at <http://www.filmportal.de> [accessed 6th March 2009].

<sup>195</sup> 'Presseheft: *Ich kenn' Keinen – Allein unter Heteros*', [www.galeria-alaska.de/content/2\\_portfolio/alb/presse\\_alb.doc](http://www.galeria-alaska.de/content/2_portfolio/alb/presse_alb.doc) [accessed 14th February 2003].

wiederum ist so unterhaltsam wie ein Spielfilm. [*Full Metal Village* is an ethnographic study. But one that is as entertaining as a feature film.].<sup>196</sup>

‘Participant-Observation is one of the most basic ethnographic research methods’,<sup>197</sup> and involves the ethnographer observing as well as participating with his subject matters. The dichotomy is also relevant to the documentary film-makers under discussion, who have engaged in varying degrees of observing and participating. Some of the film-makers opt to observe solely from behind the camera, reducing their presence to a minimum (*Die Blume der Hausfrau*, *Herr Wichmann von der CDU*), others have defined roles of interviewer and interviewee (*Full Metal Village*, *Ich kenn’ keinen – Allein unter Heteros*) or narrator and narrated (*Durchfahrtsland*), and others again prefer to participate to the extent that they themselves become the focus of some on-screen attention (*Out of Edeka*, *Schotter wie Heu*).

Although these films are contemporary in nature and offer a novel understanding of the German region, their representations of the regional subject show similarities with *earlier* ethnographic film-making conventions. Early German ethnography was very much a part of colonial film-making.

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<sup>196</sup> ‘Presseheft: *Full Metal Village*’,

[http://www.flyingmoon.com/de/filme\\_details.php?film\\_id=13](http://www.flyingmoon.com/de/filme_details.php?film_id=13) [accessed 6th March 2009].

<sup>197</sup> Wayne Fife, *Doing Fieldwork: Ethnographic Methods for Research in Developing Countries and Beyond* (New York & Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.71.

The ethnographic discourse was one of racial and ethnic understandings and was anchored in physical anthropology. The films were strongly attached to systems of knowledge of the time such as anthropometry, craniology and race theory – all areas that have long seen their scientific demise. Hybrid genres, such as the *documentaire romance*, merged the ethnographic gaze with the fantastic narrative, but nevertheless these films cannot be seen outside of a colonial discourse.

As with the contemporary documentaries under discussion, the ethnographic dialogue over a century ago was engaged in filmic Other-ing. Whereas the divide between self and Other was once determined by national borders, this chapter will shed light on a new cinematic interpretation of the region that re-invents this traditional concept within national boundaries. Despite there being a shift in subject, from non-Western to non-regional, the cinematic devices employed show startling similarities. Assenka Oksiloff's research into early German cinema's first encounter with non-Western bodies, *Picturing the Primitive: Visual Culture, Ethnography, and Early German Cinema*<sup>198</sup> offers a useful understanding of this early cinematic movement which will provide a basis for this chapter. The analyses of the case study films will draw upon early filmic

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<sup>198</sup> Assenka Oksiloff, *Picturing the Primitive: Visual Culture, Ethnography, and Early German Cinema* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

conventions of ethnography to examine the ways in which the regional inhabitant is explored as an embodiment of ethnographic Otherness. As noted in the Introduction, this framework must be used with restrictions in mind. Oksiloff's analysis of early German cinema is based on an ethnographic framework, which this thesis utilizes. I am fully aware, however, of the colonial context of early German films, and therefore do not apply Oksiloff's theoretical approach unreservedly to my case studies.

## 2.1. The Regional Defamiliarised: The Primitive Other

*Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* (Jochen Hick, 2003)

*Schotter wie Heu* (Wiltrud Baier & Sigrun Köhler, 2002)

Both *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* and *Schotter wie Heu* are films about regional hinterlands. The subject matter of the films already exploits the clichéd perception of the back-country: both films represent individuals who are (un)intentionally unaware. *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* reveals ignorance about homosexuality in society; *Schotter wie Heu* portrays a technologically uninformed bank. It is only through the awareness of the film-makers and the viewers that this unawareness becomes apparent.

Assenka Oksiloff points to a similar perception surrounding the subject of the ethnographic gaze: 'The primitive body is placed in opposition to the civilized one, a point of reference in the duality of self and Other.'<sup>199</sup>

Although Oksiloff's 'primitive body' refers to the non-Western body, this framework can be borrowed for the regional body of the German hinterland. Like film-makers of early films about the colonies, film-makers Baier and Köhler (*Schotter wie Heu*) and Hick (*Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros*) travel into the regions as outsiders to capture their subjects on

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<sup>199</sup> Oksiloff, p.2.

camera. Hick travels the adjoining regions of Baden and Swabia, whereas Baier and Köhler take up temporary residence in a village in Franconia. Regional subject matters become the 'primitive body' which the film-makers/viewers colonise with their gaze. The camera work of the film-makers' functions as the 'civilized one' to which the 'primitive body' is opposed. However, as Celia Applegate points out in her findings about German regional identity: 'It [the persistence of Pfälzer identity, or for that matter, Bavarian, Saxon, Berliner, or Pomeranian identity] bespeaks quaintness rather than conflict, nostalgic backwardness rather than modernity.'<sup>200</sup>

Language becomes the first divide between film-maker/viewer and regional subjects. Strong dialects form the primary division between the film-maker and his audience on the one hand, and the region on the other. In addition, the language spoken in the film provides an immediate indication of place; as social linguist Werner Kallmeyer states: 'Sprache ist [erst] ein Herkunftindikator.' [Speech is firstly an indicator of origin].<sup>201</sup>

The foremost indicator of any regional identity is a common dialect.

'Language,' as geographer Lyndhurst Collins explains,' is generally viewed

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<sup>200</sup> Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1990), p.3.

<sup>201</sup> Werner Kallmeyer quoted in Heiko Hausendorf, *Zugehörigkeit durch Sprache* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2000), p.36.

as the supreme expressive component of identity.<sup>202</sup> *Schotter wie Heu* resorts to German subtitles to overcome the language barrier created between on-screen Germans and an off-screen German audience. The interest in German dialect on screen is part of a wider development in German cinema.<sup>203</sup> In the run-up to the 2007 Berlinale, the president of the German Film Academy, Günter Rohrbach, encouraged film-makers not to shy away from German dialects on screen: 'Es wäre schade, wenn wir die Vielfalt der Dialekte verlieren würden.' [It would be a pity if we were to lose the variety of dialects.].<sup>204</sup>

In *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* film-maker Hick's role is limited to the off-screen. His standard German as interviewer and narrator contrasts with the on-screen regional dialects, extending Oksiloff's divide between 'primitive body' and 'civilized body,' to an audio level. Hick's standard German functions as the 'civilized voice' in contrast to the regional dialect which adopts the role of a 'primitive voice'. In *Schotter wie Heu* the

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<sup>202</sup> Lyndhurst Collins, 'The Dynamics of Regional Identity in a Frontier Region: The Case of Alsace', *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 13 (1998), 29-55 (p.34).

<sup>203</sup> A prime example is the film *Wer früher stirbt, ist länger tot* (Marcus H. Rosenmüller. 2006. [Grave Decisions]), a fiction film shot in Bavarian dialect, which received a number of awards at the German Film Prize 2007, including one for Best Direction and for Best Feature Film Runner-Up.

<sup>204</sup> Günter Rohrbach quoted in Deutsche Presse Agentur (dpa), 'Filmakademie: Mehr Sächsisch bitte', *Focus Online* (31 March, 2007) [http://www.focus.de/kultur/kino\\_tv/filmakademie\\_aid\\_52261.html](http://www.focus.de/kultur/kino_tv/filmakademie_aid_52261.html). [accessed 6 March 2009].

role of film-makers Baier and Köhler is likewise limited to behind the camera. The voices of Baier and Köhler remain largely inaudible. The film avoids direct interviewing but allows the subjects time and space to narrate. By supplying subtitles instead of voice-over narration, the film provides the subjects with an implicit independent voice and gives the regional dialect its own means to become a 'civilized voice'.

Both in *Schotter wie Heu* and in *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* protagonists display a 'primitiveness' in their communication and interaction with the camera. Hick introduces his protagonists in a sequence of successive separate shots. His voice-over accompanies the images with a short introduction for each protagonist. The subjects remain completely silent and extremely still. The protagonists submit their bodies to the camera's gaze, thus placing themselves on display like objects of attraction.<sup>205</sup> The one-by-one introduction of the protagonists by the ever-so-serious voice-over resembles that of a television show. The introduction ('Schwarzwälder Uwe ist 38, mag Militärklamotten und hat noch nie ein Mädchen mit nach Hause gebracht.' [Black Forest Uwe is 38, likes military clothes and has never brought a girl home.]) is cut to the format of a blind date programme. The light-hearted music and the character's strong artificial poses in front of the camera add to the effect. Hick's voice-of-authority uses the

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<sup>205</sup> See Appendix I, E6.

documentary schema of seriousness to make fun of it and follows the dictum described by Peter Zimmermann: 'Das Komischste am Dokumentarfilm ist der Bierernst.'<sup>206</sup> Paul Ward defines cinematic parody as precisely that: 'Films that make their main aim to satirise the textures and conventions of certain types of documentaries and documentary practices.'<sup>207</sup> In this sequence Hick satirises the voice-of-God narrator commonly used in expository films. Arthur Koestler's theory of context deviation can also be applied to this scene. The viewer jumps from a soundtrack and a voice-over that signals blind date television into a film format that calls out for seriousness.

This static submissive behaviour of the protagonists' bodies is comparable to the positioning of objects of the ethnographic gaze. The ethnographic gaze of the anthropometric tradition of early ethnographic research films caused the film's subjects to submit to the camera's investigative manner.<sup>208</sup> The dominance of the camera and the authority of Hick's voice over his subjects are both patent.

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<sup>206</sup> Peter Zimmermann 'Spöttischer Blick contra Leidensmiene. Die Schwierigkeit des Dokumentarfilms mit Ironie und Satire', in *Strategie der Blicke – Zur Modellierung von Wirklichkeit in Dokumentarfilm und Reportage*, ed. by Dieter Ertel and Peter Zimmermann (Konstanz: Universitätsverlag Konstanz, 1996), pp. 51-63 (p.60).

<sup>207</sup> Ward, p.67.

<sup>208</sup> Oksiloff, p.78.

In *Schotter wie Heu* the camera exposes the protagonists' naïve unawareness of the power of the camera. After Vogt's appearance on national television, his village bank becomes the victim of a robbery. His willingness to participate in the documentary is consequently surprising. During filming, Vogt welcomes a further camera, that from the regional television station. The television team are engrossed with Vogt. In the bank Vogt turns his attention to a small manual letter weight while the television crew spread out their equipment.<sup>209</sup> He holds up the weight ('Die ist mindestens 60 Jahre alt! Oder älter.' [This is at least 60 years old! Maybe more.]) and admires it. Behind Vogt the television lights shine brightly on him while the crew members get to grips with their equipment. The shot embodies Vogt's dialectic relationship with the camera: Vogt has become a media attraction by rejecting modernity. The television camera is out to capture Vogt, the 'primitive,' in all his technological innocence. Like the subjects observed by ethnographic film-makers in early cinema, Vogt is not media conscious. The encounter between 'primitive man' and 'advanced technology' formed the basis for much of early German ethnographic film-making.<sup>210</sup> This fascination that transforms the innocent into an object of attraction was shared by many early ethnographic film-makers. Like Vogt

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<sup>209</sup> See Appendix I, C8.

<sup>210</sup> Oksiloff, p.45.

in the bank, the native of the colonies provided a way of life which modernity had not yet reached. As Oksiloff explains: 'The screened body of the native figured as a lost unity and provided a vanishing point for a fantasy of coherence and wholeness.'<sup>211</sup>

It is during these television recordings – with both cameras directed at him – that Vogt's naiveté towards the media is confirmed. Out of earshot from the television crew, Vogt turns towards the documentary camera to let the film-makers know exactly what he thinks about the other cameraman. Vogt's confidence in Baier and Köhler seems to allow him to ignore the presence of the documentary camera. In another scene Vogt cycles down the path to his cows as directed by the television crew. After cycling down the path, Vogt turns to the television camera to ask: 'Kann es weiter gehen?' [Shall I go on?]. The camera crew start laughing at his inexperience of the camera. The use of humour and slapstick was not uncommon in early ethnographic film – Oksiloff mentions the effect of slapstick in her investigation into early German ethnography film. Early films achieved comic effects by exposing behind-the-scenes footage or, as Oksiloff puts it, in 'the eagerness to "bare all"'.<sup>212</sup> The first bank scene in *Schotter wie Heu* bears witness to the film-makers candid approach which at the same time

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<sup>211</sup> Oksiloff, p.6.

<sup>212</sup> Oksiloff, p.83.

calls for a round of laughter on-screen as well as off-screen.<sup>213</sup> The shot shows Vogt and an elderly customer chatting over the bank counter: the medium shot captures Vogt from the front and the elderly lady from behind. The conversation evolves around the film crew: Emma, the elderly customer, expresses her wish to hide from the documentary camera: 'Ich bin doch gestern wieder heim! (...) Da haben sie doch fotografiert.' [I went home again yesterday! (...) They were photographing again.]. Emma's unawareness of the camera behind her allows Vogt to glance into the camera and say: 'Und heute fotografieren sie auch wieder.' [And today they're photographing again.]. Emma quickly responds by announcing her immediate departure: 'Dann geh ich vorher.' [Then I'll go before.]. At the same time, another female voice is heard, that of one of the film-makers from behind the camera: 'Wir sind schon da!' [We're already here!]. The elderly woman spins around to identify the source of the voice, thereby looking unwittingly straight into the camera. Emma and Vogt burst out laughing. Once again, it is the protagonist's lack of knowledge which provides the source of the comical. Despite Vogt proving in this scene that he is media conscious, he simultaneously points to his technological

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<sup>213</sup> See Appendix I, C5.

innocence once again by referring to the camera's filming as 'fotografieren' [photographing].

The protagonists' naïve unawareness of the media is not only to be found in the older generation of Vogt and Emma. The film shows footage of a young Gammesfeld fireman as a guest on a television show. The shot shows Markus, the fireman, sitting in profile in his living-room to the right of the frame whereas the television screen is seen to the left. The screen cuts from the television presenter, well-known Jürgen von der Lippe, to a medium shot of Markus sitting in the television studio. The programme is set to an interview format.

Von der Lippe: Was ist jetzt mit den Frauen? [What about women?]

Markus: Ja, und die hätte ich gerne! [Yes, I would like them!]

Roars of audience laughter.

Von der Lippe: Als Feuerwehr? [As fire brigade?]

Markus: Als Feuerwehrfrauen. Erstens brauche ich...wie sagt man?

Nachwuchs. Da habe ich auch Schwierigkeiten. [As firewomen. First I need .. what do you say? New blood.<sup>214</sup> I've got problems there too.]

Further rounds of audience laughter.

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<sup>214</sup> Laughter is generated by the double entendre of *Nachwuchs*, which means both 'new blood' and 'offspring'.

Markus' answers can be understood on two levels – although Markus is clearly referring to the village fire brigade, the audience pick up on the ambiguity of the answers which suggests he could also be talking about his personal love life. Markus remains serious on the television screen making the viewer wonder if he has realised the ambiguity of his answers. The television programme implicitly ridicules his 'primitive' statements by cutting to a shot of the audience clapping and laughing at Markus. Like Vogt, Markus is oblivious to the power of the camera.

The films portray Franconia (*Schotter wie Heu*) as well as Baden and Swabia (*Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros*) as places of tradition and customs. Like ethnographic film-making which took up 'the focus upon "living culture", which includes the recording of everyday life, practices, and rites',<sup>215</sup> both films portray 'living culture' of religious importance. *Schotter wie Heu* offers an insight into a traditional wedding from wedding-eve party to wedding day. *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* accompanies protagonists to church meetings and mass. The wedding and its pre-celebrations are depicted by scenes of ritual: a truck emptying the traditional debris at the wedding-eve party; the groom's mother explaining the ideal moon phase for marriage; children collecting money from the

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<sup>215</sup> Oksiloff, p.61.

wedding guests at the church door. Whereas *Schotter wie Heu* focuses on the regional and esoteric rituals of the religious event, *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* concentrates on the role of religion and church: pro-gay Catholic meetings, anti-gay religious demonstrations, church mass and church choir. Personal religious belongings bear witness to the protagonists' religious roots: Hartmut has a crucifix picture beside his bed, Erica has a crucifix hanging in her living-room, Stefan is seen wearing an altar-boy robe in a childhood picture. Hick emphasizes the Catholicism of the region by including shots of public religious iconography: a roadside chapel, a roadside crucifix. Both films illustrate a religious dimension to the region.

Regional festivities are central to both films. In *Schotter wie Heu* it is the traditional regional festival of Muswiese in the Franconian town of Musdorf ('Das ist das Fest bei uns in der Gegend.' [That's the local festival in our area.]). The central status of the fair to the region is accentuated by the film-makers' editing. The film cuts to different Gammesfeld villagers discussing the upcoming Muswiese. The topic is not prompted by the film-makers but is an integral part of conversations. The pooling of these conversations in subsequent scenes conveys the regional importance of the fair. Similarly, at the Muswiese the film moves from one villager to another, thus again illustrating the significant status the festival carries as a regional

hub. In line with the film's subject matter, regional pro-gay parades become the regional hub for the protagonists of *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros*. The film follows Stefan to the Christopher Street Day Parade in Ravensburg and Erica and Richard to the Christopher Street Day Parade in Stuttgart. All three become part of the festivities: Stefan drives one of the parade trucks; Erica carries a banner and Richard is pulled into the parade by parade participants. Whereas the regional festival in *Schotter wie Heu* is steeped in tradition, the regional celebrations in *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heters* are novel events that have recently come to the region as part of a global phenomenon. Both films, however, portray the events as extraordinary. The CSD parades offer eccentric costumes and make-up: Japanese geishas, Native Americans, sailors, cleaners, Brazilian dancers, nuns etc. The colourful costumes of the CSD parades, however, seem less peculiar to the viewer than the individuals the documentary camera captures. The object of attraction of Hick's camera is a different group of CSD participants: the parade opposition. A passer-by starts shouting angrily at the camera: 'Die sind nicht homosexuell, die sind wahnsinnig! (...) Das ist jetzt bloß dreckig!' [They're not homosexual, they're crazy! (...) It's nothing but filth!]. Another passer-by starts crying in front of the camera when talking about the religious repentance of homosexuals. A

religious anti-demonstration group of women with banners gets caught up in incoherent arguments. The banners' edges keep dropping into the close-ups of the women's faces, literally as well as metaphorically narrowing their view. The emotional instability and specious arguments of these CSD objectors remove any credibility but are part of a portrayal of 'primitive voices'.

The film-makers underline the narrow outlook found in the regions they portray. During filming in Gammesfeld in 2001, Baier and Köhler record the villagers' reaction to 9/11. The shop-assistant and the customer express uncertainty about the day of the events.

Shop-assistant: Das war am Dienstag, gell?

[It was Tuesday, wasn't it?]

Customer: Wann war es? Vorgestern, nachmittags?

[When was it? The day before yesterday, in the afternoon?]

The customer then swiftly moves on to a conversation about bread. The event has clearly not made any impact on the villagers. The shop-owner even states this directly into the camera: 'Das ganze Geschehen ist ja so weit weg, da betrifft es einen nicht so direkt.' [The whole thing is just so far away, it doesn't affect us so directly.]. The following scene underlines this limited point of view. A low-angle shot captures a table in the village pub

where five villagers sit in silence with their beers. The silence allows the diegetic pub music to be heard: Udo Jürgen's *Ich war noch niemals in New York* [I've never been to New York]. The song's well-known lyrics seemingly reflect the shop-owner's preceding insular comment. The way the villagers are positioned towards the camera echoes this. They are all sitting literally inwards, their backs to the camera, facing only each other. A bowler hat, typical of the region of Bavaria, hangs from one of the chairs, offering a metaphorical indicator of the region's dominance in this circle of individuals.

In *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* the protagonists are more willing to travel outside the region: Hartmut to Thailand, Uwe to Berlin and Richard to Zurich. These journeys are solely motivated by sexual desires while the region remains the place of friends and family (Uwe: 'Ist man auch wieder froh nach Hause zu kommen (...) man hat ja auch hier Bekannte und Freundeskreis.' [One's always happy to come home again (...) one's family and friends are here.]). A scene with Hartmut at the local pub offers indicators of a dominant sense of regional belonging. The scene opens with a high-angle over-the-shoulder shot of Hartmut's bowl of food. The bowl contains *Maultaschen* – a dish typical of the region of Swabia. Whilst Hartmut is in conversation with the pub owner about his trips to

Thailand, the film momentarily cuts to a close-up of a calendar hanging on the pub's wall. Apart from revealing the date, the page offers a phrase: 'Das verborgene allen Reisens ist es, Heimweh zu haben.' [Hidden in all journeys is homesickness.]. The film connects Hartmut's voice-over with the close-up of the phrase, thus indirectly commenting on Hartmut's attachment to the region. Hartmut himself expresses his regional belonging earlier on in the film: 'Ich wollte in der Gesellschaft – im Liederkranz, im Albverein – als normaler Bürger angesehen werden.' [I wanted to be seen in society – in the local choir, in the mountaineer club – as a normal citizen.]. Hartmut's definition of society as based on regional social structures bears witness to his strongly regional outlook.

It is the homophobic and homo-ignorant individuals of the region that share a more insular view. Hick interviews a wide range of individuals about their understanding of homosexuals, with a similar response: 'Ich kenn' keinen.' [I don't know any.]. In a scene at a church meeting about homosexuals, Hick asks the priest whether he has ever encountered any gay individuals. The question is repeated in similar words three times, and three times the answer remains the same. Hick's long questions to the priest seem sophisticated in contrast to the priest's repetitive brief answers. Hick edits the questions and answers to create a seemingly consecutive interview

to enhance the potency of the priest's answer. Hick employs the same cinematic tool in a further scene to the same effect. At the beach in Thailand Hartmut's two friends are questioned about their previous experiences of homosexuality. Hick strategically edits the similar responses into one seemingly consecutive answer. The answers of the two respondents collate into one repetitive reply:

Da habe ich auch keine Schwulen oder Lesben kennengelernt.

[I didn't get to know any gays or lesbians there either.]

Ich kenn' in dem Ort keinen Schwulen.

[I don't know any gays in the place.]

Ich kenn' überhaupt keinen Schwulen.

[I don't know any gays at all.]

Kenn' ich keinen.

[Don't know any.]

Noch nie einen kennengelernt.

[Never met one.]

The rhythmic monotonous dialogue not only emphasises homo-ignorance but additionally exposes a simplicity of language and speech. Once again, as a result of editing the subject is depicted as the 'primitive'.

Although both films illustrate the insularity of a region in some form, they also portray a co-existence between the narrow-minded and those they

are prejudiced against. In *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* homo-ignorants are seen co-existing with homosexuals: Hartmut's homo-ignorant friends accompany him on holiday to Thailand; Stefan remains the forester in his homophobic village. In *Schotter wie Heu* villagers welcome non-villagers: the film-makers. The camera is approached on numerous occasions by villagers wanting to make personal contact with the film-makers. The presence of the two young female film-makers in the village, even if they are there for professional reasons, attracts male attention especially. They are invited for coffee, to the regional festival and even on a date whilst the camera is running. Although the two film-makers participate in these dialogues, they never physically enter the frame of the shot. The comment of a villager passing by the camera on his bicycle highlights the personal closeness the villagers sense towards the two female non-villagers: 'Ich glaube, ihr gehört langsam zu Gammesfeld, ihr zwei.' [I think you two are beginning to belong to Gammesfeld.].

*Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* as well as *Schotter wie Heu* portray the region as a place of the 'primitive' and the insular. The films at times resemble the cinematic relationship between early ethnographic film-makers and their colonial subject matters. The ultimate image of 'primitiveness' is displayed in *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros*. The film

offers extreme close-ups of two homo-ignorant females peeling bananas to cut to extreme close-ups of their mouths eating the bananas. The film continues with a close-up of the women chewing. Apart from the sexual connotation, the visual deconstruction of their body and the emphasis on the primal act of consumption results in an image of zoomorphism. The de-anthropomorphisation of the human body is also found in early German colonial cinema. Portraying the native in terms that suggest he was little more than a being of the animal world, was widespread in the Weimar adventure films.<sup>216</sup>

However, Hick also inverts the image of the 'primitive' insular region in the final scene of the film. Protagonist Uwe displays a magazine article about homosexual animals to the camera. He seems excited about the revelations the article presents: 'Das liegt einfach in der Natur. Das ist ein Bericht, den würde ich jedem mal empfehlen zu lesen und danach hat bestimmt mancher darüber eine andere Einstellung.' [It's just part of nature. That's a report I would recommend everyone to read and afterwards some would have a different attitude.]. Hick gives Uwe's recommendation special importance by making it the final statement of the film. By placing the human condition into a wider evolutionary context, Uwe exposes his

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<sup>216</sup> Oksiloff, p.80.

sophisticated knowledge rather than his 'primitiveness'. Hick ends by overturning the film's initial and at times mocking portrayal of the regional 'primitive'. But at the same time it is the *real* 'primitive', the uncivilised animal world, that holds the real conclusion to Hick's film, particularly when one considers the film's opening scene. The film opens with a medium shot of an elderly man sitting in a pub explaining his views on homosexuality: 'Der Herr Gott (...) schuf einen Mann und schuf eine Frau. Und so stelle ich mir das vor. Und diese anderen Dinge (...) sind nicht natürlich.' [The Lord God (...) created man and woman. And that's how I see it. These other things (...) are not natural.]. The elderly man's opinion is overruled by the film's concluding statement made by Uwe about homosexuality: Das liegt einfach in der Natur. [It's just part of nature.]. Uwe's promotion of the scientific article and his confidence that its influence will change attitudes allows the film to end on a hopeful note.

Film-makers Baier and Gudrun conclude *Schotter wie Heu* by similarly suggesting that the regional 'primitive' is perhaps more outward-looking than expected. The film ends with the first Euros being delivered to the bank. The camera observes Vogt carrying two cases of Euros into the small bank. Vogt exclaims when walking over the threshold: 'Ein historischer Moment! [A historical moment!].' The insular bank is prepared

to embrace part of a larger European development. At the same time, however, this historical moment means a potential loss of a 'primitive' region. To survive, the local bank must adhere to global developments, which will in time dominate aspects of local life.

## 2.2. The Regional Defamiliarised: The Divided Other

*Durchfahrtsland* (Alexandra Sell, 2005)

*Herr Wichmann von der CDU* (Andreas Dresen, 2003)

Like *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* and *Schotter wie Heu*, the films *Durchfahrtsland* and *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* underline the traditional ethnographic 'duality of self and Other'.<sup>217</sup> An initial divide between self and Other is already apparent from the titles. *Durchfahrtsland* displays the subtitle: 'Das Unbekannte vor der eigenen Haustür' [The unknown on our own doorstep]. A divide between self ('eigenen Haustür' [own doorstep]) and Other ('das Unbekannte' [the unknown]) is already established. *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* was produced as part of the BR (Bayerische Rundfunk) and WDR (Westdeutsche Rundfunk) television series entitled 'Denk' ich an Deutschland' [If I think of Germany]'. This is the opening line of a well-known poem by the German poet Heinrich Heine:

Denk ich an Deutschland in der Nacht,  
dann bin ich um den Schlaf gebracht,  
ich kann nicht mehr die Augen schließen,  
und meine heißen Tränen fließen.

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<sup>217</sup> Oksiloff, p.80.

[If I think of Germany in the night,  
then I wake from sleep  
and cannot close my eyes again  
as my hot tears flow.]<sup>218</sup>

Heine's sorrow stems from being in exile from home. Dresen, when asked to make a film for the series, similarly associates the well-known lines with far-off forgotten places.<sup>219</sup>

Andreas Dresen (*Herr Wichmann von der CDU*) as well as Alexandra Sell (*Durchfahrtsland*) stress the self / Other divide in the cinematic modes they employ to illustrate the region. In *Durchfahrtsland* the voice-over takes on a unique role: Sell's voice-over is in indirect speech with frequent use of the subjunctive, thus conveying a sense of storytelling. This technique is enhanced by an occasional male voice-over narrator who reads out passages from one of the protagonist's provincial crime novels. The voice-over aurally frames the foothills in a fantastic realm by employing temporal ('damals' [then]) and spatial ('dort oben' [up there]) codes familiar from mythical storytelling (e.g. 'once upon a time in a faraway land'). The film ends with photographic stills which evoke a similar sense of another time

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<sup>218</sup> Barker Fairley, ed., *Heinrich Heine. Selected Poems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p.209.

<sup>219</sup> The film's website: <http://www.herrwichmann.de/wichmann2.html> [accessed 6 March 2009].

and another place. Like a storyteller, Sell is an omniscient narrator, revealing protagonists' feelings and thoughts. The cinematic divide between film-maker and subject emphasises the dichotomy of self and Other. Dresen uses a different cinematic mode to achieve a similar divide. *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* turns to the tradition of direct cinema. Dresen reduces his presence and that of the filming to the minimum. The camera remains at a steady distance using a long focal lens and wide angle shots whilst sound is transmitted and recorded through a small microphone attached to the protagonist's clothes. Dresen and Sell are not caught up in the world they portray but create a separation which forms a discourse of self and Other. Both Dresen's and Sell's cinematic approach to the Other is reminiscent of early ethnographic methods which established an unattached authority from behind the camera.<sup>220</sup>

The Other in *Durchfahrtsland* are residents of the villages of the foothills of the Rhineland region; in *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* the inhabitants of the villages of the region of the Uckermark. The protagonists of both films are presented with strong regional indicators. Herr Wichmann, the sole protagonist of *Herr Wichmann von der CDU*, is a man whose aim is to represent his region politically, or as he says: 'Ich will mich

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<sup>220</sup> Oksiloff, p.64.

für die Region einsetzen.' [I want to do something for the region.]. He visits regional institutions such as schools, clubs and old people's homes in order to promote his ambition for the region. *Durchfahrtsland* sets its focus on four individuals: Hans Wilhelm Dümmer, Sophia Rey, Mark Basinski and Guiseppe Scolaro, whose very names signify Otherness. The surnames Rey<sup>221</sup>, Basinski<sup>222</sup> and Scolaro<sup>223</sup> are all of non-German origin while the seemingly German surname Dümmer [more dumb] indicates a certain strangeness. Like Dresen, Sell has chosen individuals who support the region. Sophia Rey writes regional crime novels in dialect; Mark Basinski paints regional landscapes; Dümmer leads the regional religious community and Guiseppe plays in the regional brass band.

In *Durchfahrtsland* and *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* the dichotomy between self and Other is extended to illustrate the region as a place of internal social animosities. In *Durchfahrtsland* all four protagonists are depicted as being caught up in regional antagonisms. It is solely Sell's voice-over that informs us about the village and club animosities: the falling-out between Guiseppe and his brass band; the divide in Dümmer's congregation; the social hostility towards Sophia; the misunderstandings between Mark and his bachelor club. The initial dispute between Guiseppe

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<sup>221</sup> The name Rey is of Spanish origin.

<sup>222</sup> The name Basinski is of Slavonic origin.

<sup>223</sup> The name Scolaro is of Italian origin.

and his brass band is narrated by Sell: 'Vielleicht war er auch nicht bei der Sache, als er einem der kleinen Mädchen mit militärischer Härte befahl, ihren Teller leer zu essen. Und sie mit vollen Backen in Tränen ausbrach.'

[Maybe he wasn't showing the right spirit when he harshly ordered a little girl to eat up what was on her plate. And she started crying with her mouth full.]. The scene of the incident remains absent from the film. Instead, the narration is laid over shots of the location where the incident took place: the brass band holiday village of Nebelschütz – a shot of the street sign and a shot of the farm residence. The weather echoes the breakdown in the relationship in both shots: sunshine gives way to grey overcast skies heightened in the next shot with torrential rain – an apparent metaphor for the girl's tears. The next scene shows Guiseppe packing and driving off. All signs of dispute between Guiseppe and his fellow band members are omitted from the film – the viewer must rely on Sell's words, which govern the way in which the viewer interprets the region. Sell's voice-over, for example, reports a deep-rooted hostility between two villages and their priest Dümmer's commitment to both communities: 'Weil sich beide Dörfer ständig benachteiligt fühlten, entsannen sie ein Rotationssystem, dass so kompliziert war, das man eigentlich einen Einführungskurs gebraucht hätte. Die beiden Gemeinden beobachteten ihren Pfarrer ganz genau.' [Both

villages felt short-changed. They devised a schedule for their priest. It was so complicated he would have needed a training course. The congregation watched their priest closely.]. The voice-over is accompanied by a shot of priest Dümmer in church handing out coloured Easter eggs to the congregation. Individual church members enter the frame from the left to approach the priest then exit to the left again. The simple act of distributing eggs acquires a further level of meaning: the congregation's orderly move towards the priest echoes the villagers' schedule for Dümmer; Dümmer's uncertainty as to whom to offer an egg to reflects the complexity of the schedule; the congregation members' concentrated move towards the priest reminds us of their watchful eye on him. Dümmer remains standing patiently with a display of eggs to the right of the frame. Sell's voice-over offers a new set of parameters for viewing this shot: the visuals are governed by the implied authority of the voice-over narration, which informs the viewer of the social animosities in the region. Like a rumour, the social animosities in the region are never seen but only heard. Jennifer Barker notes on ethnographic film-making: 'The ethnographer takes on the responsibility for the credibility of the ethnographic text.'<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Jennifer M. Barker, 'Bodily Irruptions: The Corporeal Assault on Ethnographic Narration', *Cinema Journal* 34, 3 (1995), 57-76 (p.60).

Dresen, on the other hand, reveals social oppositions within the region through the absence of non-diegetic as well as diegetic voices. The political competition in the region is articulated early on in the film through single shots of posters scattered along the rural roads and lanes. This 'poster-scape' symbolically reflects the regional political rivalry. Dresen uses it to contextualise the SPD's superiority in the region. In the foreground of a long shot of a busy street an SPD and a CDU poster decorate a lamppost.<sup>225</sup> The SPD poster hangs above Wichman's smaller CDU poster and a view of the length of the street reveals further lampposts with countless SPD posters. Another shot indicates a CDU defeat – the shot immediately precedes the scene of the final regional election results.<sup>226</sup> The camera pans on to two large posters of the opponents CDU and SPD. The CDU poster is weather-beaten and badly torn. Political animosities are indicated in a similar way. Dresen includes a shot of a vandalised poster and a shot of a man holding up a T-shirt proclaiming: 'Asoziale an die Macht' [Power to anti-socials]. Dresen's images of regional political campaigns develop into a metaphorical commentary on the political rivalry and hostility in the region.

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<sup>225</sup> See Appendix I, D3.

<sup>226</sup> See Appenidx I, D8.

*Herr Wichmann von der CDU* exposes open antagonisms on camera.

As the camera's presence is often hidden to everyone in the frame except for the main protagonist, the film catches on camera some uninhibited comments expressing extreme enmity towards non-regionals. The immigration of non-nationals to the region constitutes one side of this hostility. A father claims: 'Mich ärgert, dass so viele Ausländer hier sind.' [It upsets me that there are so many foreigners here.]. An elderly woman leans towards Wichmann to confide her intolerance: 'Vor allen Dingen die Ausländer raus.' [The main thing is to get rid of the foreigners.].<sup>227</sup> Her body language strongly suggests that she is unaware of the presence of the camera: she moves her body towards Wichmann to safeguard her opinion; her gaze wanders into the distance instead of looking at the camera. Meanwhile, a further conversation takes place in the space between the camera and Wichmann: a partial profile of a woman enters the frame from the right, then a partial profile of a man enters the frame from the left. These two people are clearly in conversation with each other, but although they are physically closer to the camera, their voices remain audible but incomprehensible. The space between the scarcely audible conversation and the camera is interrupted by physical movement: passers-by walking

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<sup>227</sup> See Appendix I, D2.

through the frame. The camera resembles the early ethnographer, who remained at a safe distance.<sup>228</sup> This safe distance allows the camera to keep its presence to a minimum. The camera's guarded positioning allows individuals to speak more freely, thereby capturing intimate opinions such as unscrupulous antipathy towards regional non-natives. The film, however, omits any representations of regional non-natives (unlike *Durchfahrtsland*), thus denying the comments any form of support or contradiction. The non-natives remain an invisible presence.

Dresen portrays the region as a place not only of political extremism but also of political ignorance. The CDU's political events are attended by very few visitors and Wichmann's political stand often merges into entertainment and shopping venues. A long shot of Wichmann at the local fair represents how his political enthusiasm is lost among other forms of entertainment. The political stand is barely visible amongst the regional amusement activities. Wichmann approaches a woman to the right of the frame; three women dancing an aerobics routine govern the left of the frame. The middle of the frame is dominated by onlookers, turned to the left of the frame, with their backs to Wichmann. Two women in traditional costume enter from the right and join the onlookers. Wichmann's voice tries

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<sup>228</sup> Oksiloff, p.63.

to compete against the aerobics music although he clearly fails to attract the attention the dancers receive. The early ethnographic film gaze utilised the novelty of recording movement to capture performances such as dance. The semi-exposed bodies of the aerobics dancers and their step routines echo images of tribal dance. The image serves a similar purpose to dance images produced by early ethnographic film-makers. According to Oksiloff:

Dance was one of the most popular subjects for all of the filmmaker ethnographers of this era. (...) Dance was understood as language through gesture, but it also was used to expose the physical, irrational nature of that language. Images of pulsating, near-naked bodies served to confirm the notion that physical needs and desires took precedence over thought in this primitive world of inverse values.<sup>229</sup>

This image, in which the regional audience grants superiority to the physical (dance) over thought (politics), extends the notion of self and Other. The regional Others do not respond to Wichmann's political enthusiasm. Wichmann has become the Other amongst the regional Others. A further scene at the fair underlines this. A clown on stilts waving towards the camera is accompanied by Wichmann's voice: 'Darf ich ihnen das mitgeben? Ich bin der Bundestagskandidat hier im Wahlkreis.' [Can I give

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<sup>229</sup> Oksiloff, p.63.

you this? I'm the local parliamentary candidate.]. The camera tilts down and pans to the left into a crowd of people, in the middle of which Wichmann is seen talking to a woman. The play between audio and visual in this shot comments on the role Wichmann plays in his region. Wichmann, like the clown, is forced to take on the role of the Other.

In *Durchfahrtsland* the animosities experienced by the protagonists similarly extend the dichotomy of self and Other. The four protagonists take on roles as outsiders within their regional communities. Dümmer must act as mediator between two villages; Sophia must face rejection for her regional literary work; Mark does not succeed in the local bachelor club; Guiseppe fails to be reconciled with the regional brass band. The film explores the ruptures between the protagonists and the region. The protagonists, who are Othered by the regional communities, all have longings for the exotic Other in their lives. Dümmer, a German, longs for Spain, which was once part of his life; Guiseppe, an Italian, longs for a German lifestyle. Mark dreams of studying in Milan and admires contemporary Polish art; Sophia romanticises the foreigner as the hero in her works of fiction.

Instead of interviewing the protagonists in *Durchfahrtsland*, the camera patiently observes them in their surroundings. During the auction

of the May Queen at the bachelor club, the camera captures Mark in close-up observing the auction customs. In a further scene at the May tree awards, the camera again concentrates on Mark's face observing the tree award traditions. Framed observing the Others in regional acts of festivities, Mark reveals his own notions of self and Other. Unacquainted with the bachelor club's proceedings, he chooses not to participate but to observe the regional Other with anxiety and curiosity. This double experience of the gaze – the viewer observing the observer – is also found in representations of Dümmer. At the May Fair the camera focuses in from a crowd of dancing couples to Dümmer interlocked with a costumed musician at the edge of the stage swaying to the music. He touches his forehead, reluctantly moving his lips to the song's lyrics whilst observing the crowd, unaware that he is being observed by the camera. His emotional detachment from the regional is emphasised in the following shots by a physical detachment: scenes of the regional fête cut to a shot of Dümmer walking down the street away from the camera. The subsequent shot of a joyous crowd at the fête cuts to Dümmer opening his front door.

This twofold gaze adopts a different constellation in *Herr Wichmann von der CDU*. It is not the protagonist who observes the regional Others but the regional Others who observe the protagonist. Whilst singing the

national anthem, Wichmann becomes not only the object of the viewer's gaze but also that of a regional gaze. The camera pans across three men who are struggling with the words of the national anthem: the first man waves his hand in rhythm, the second man looks sheepishly around, the third man holds his hand to his neck in embarrassment. The camera rests on a shot of Wichmann singing and two of the men standing to the left behind him. Both men direct their gaze onto Wichmann who sings the anthem with passion. Whilst the one man observes and smirks, the other looks at Wichmann with scepticism. A further shot includes another man to Wichmann's left, who is also having problems with the anthem lyrics and looks nervously every so often into the camera, thus making the film-maker also an object of a gaze. The regional divide between self and Other is extended to include the camera/film-maker. Unlike *Durchfahrtsland*, in which the viewer observes the observer, in *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* the viewer observes being observed.

*Durchfahrtsland* ends with an affirmative look at the divided regional Other. Dümmer's organised pilgrimage between the two hostile villages turns out to be a journey of truce; Guiseppe finally leaves the brass band club and soon finds another club to join, the shooting club; Mark embarks on his career as a designer/florist; Sophia finds a readership. The film's

solutions to the divides are often the result of the intervention of the non-regional. Dümmer takes his congregation on a pilgrimage to Spain; Guiseppe turns his hopes to military service abroad (but eventually fails to be accepted); Mark begins an education in the city (which he absconds from); Sophia decides to write about a hero who is a newcomer rather than a local. In *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* Dresen concludes by underlining the struggle rather than the harmony within the divided Other. After Wichmann's reaction to the political results ('Na, das ist nicht so toll.' [Well, that's not so great.]), the film cuts to a black insert with white writing:

Rot-Grün konnte mit knapper Mehrheit weiterregieren. Im Wahlkreis Uckermark-Oberbarnim gewann Markus Meckel mit 49% vor Henryk Wichmann, der das Ergebnis der CDU von 20% auf 21% verbessern konnte.

[Red-Green won with a small majority. In Uckermark-Oberbarnim, Meckel won with more than 49% over Wichmann, who improved the CDU's results from 20% to 21%.]

The statistical facts state the bleak truth: Wichmann has not been able to make any impact on the divided Other. Dresen conveys the continuous struggle in the last scene of the film, which follows the black insert. A man is seen taking down posters of Wichmann's campaign. The poster's slogan

(‘Zeit für einen Neuen’ [Time for a new man]), once hung to encourage political change, now takes on another meaning: the cycle of political struggle with and against the Others – against regional candidates and with regional electorates.

The region in *Durchfahrtsland* as well as *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* can be seen through the ethnographic dichotomy of self and Other. Sell and Dresen construct worlds of Otherness. One of Germany’s leading film criticism journals, *epd film*, notes: ‘Es ist fast ein ethnographischer Blick, den Sell auf die Spezies des Vorgebirges wirft.’<sup>230</sup> [It is almost with an ethnographic eye that Sell views the species of the foothills.]. These portrayals of regions reveal further layers of division, which are created by the portrayal of social animosities of the region. The antagonisms divide regional subjects – but most importantly they divide the regional from the protagonists, who struggle on one level or another to merge with their regional surroundings.

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<sup>230</sup> Rudolf Worschech, ‘In der Nähe so fern, Deutsche Filme auf der Berlinale’, *epd film* 4 (2005).

The article can be viewed at <http://www.realfictionfilme.de> [accessed 6th March 2009 ].

### 2.3. The Regional Defamiliarised: The Exotic Other

*Die Blutritter* (Douglas Wolfsperger, 2004)

*Out of Edeka* (Konstantin Faigle, 2001)

Film-makers Douglas Wolfsperger (*Die Blutritter*) and Andreas Faigle (*Out of Edeka*) share a personal connection with the regions they chose to portray: Swabia. Wolfsperger attended boarding school in the town of Weingarten; Faigle grew up in the village of Empfingen. Although formerly residents of the region, long-lasting absences from the places of their youth mark the relationship between film-makers and region and offer a personal basis for the exploration of a regional Other.

Wolfsperger's film focuses on the events of the religious *Blutritt* procession; Faigle's film is a personal exploration of his parent's *Edeka* shop. In both films the Other is tied to explorations of the past: the religious *Blutritt* is a medieval tradition; the shop has been family-run for generations. Whereas the procession is thriving and has become the largest equestrian procession in the world, the shop is on the brink of closure. The films, however, are equally films about cultures of Otherness, cultures that still exist outside of the present.

The regional Other in *Die Blutritter* as well as in *Out of Edeka* is developed beyond the duality of self and Other. Otherness is constructed as exotic. The regional Other adopts markers of the far-off and the foreign. As Longley explains: 'The exotic is always an attribute given to someone else or somewhere else (...) exoticism (...) is a way of seeing.'<sup>231</sup>

*Out of Edeka* captures the notion of exoticism already within its title, which is undoubtedly a reference to the film *Out of Africa* (Sydney Pollack, 1985) and as such echoes a vision of a geographically distant place. Faigle continues to emphasise the notion of the geographical foreign by quoting the actual distance between his village of Empfingen and the Mongolian city of Ulambatur. Accompanied by the voice-over, ('Mein Heimatdorf Empfingen, 3500 Seelen.' [My home village Empfingen, 3500 souls.]) the camera tilts from a low-angle shot of the clouds in the sky down on to the village's yellow sign and a long shot of two men standing beside it facing the camera. The voice-over continues: '8235 Kilometer von Ulambatur, der Hauptstadt der Mongolei.' [8235 kilometres from Ulambatur, the capital of Mongolia.]. The distance from Swabia to Mongolia is irrelevant to the film's content, but by linking the village to such a faraway place, Faigle is creating associations with the far-off. In conjunction with the wide-angle shot of the

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<sup>231</sup> Kateryna Olijnyk Longley, 'Fabricating Otherness: Demidenko and Exoticism', in "New" Exoticisms. *Changing Patterns in the Construction of Otherness*, ed. by Isabel Santaolalla (Amsterdam & Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000), pp.21-40 (p.23).

men seemingly waiting at the village entrance for arrivals (see 1.3. for scene description), it also evokes an image of a sparse and isolated population.

*Die Blutritter* similarly places the region within a geographically exotic context. The camera pans slowly over an idyllic landscape to come to rest on a long shot of a man crowned with a Native American feather headdress. The man is standing behind a drum, which he beats in monotonous rhythm, while gazing out of the frame onto the horizon. The film cuts to a low-angle shot from below the drum to expose the costumed man in a medium shot raising his hands and speaking in an unidentifiable language. Only after this scene does the film cut to introduce the film's title, thus establishing the exotic parameters with which the region should be viewed from the outset.

The Native American has a recurring role in the film. He is in actual fact a costumed regional inhabitant, Alois Weber. Alois' passion for Native American culture inspired his creation of a private Native American museum. In full costume, he reappears, sitting in a decorated wooden canoe, holding a rifle and wearing a fur head-dress with horns.<sup>232</sup> Dense fog and a cactus move past the camera creating an artificial impression of the canoe's movement. The man gently rocks in the boat to support the seeming

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<sup>232</sup> See Appendix I, F7.

movement. The film pans over the rifle and the Native American, who looks into the distance whilst the music takes a dramatic turn. The next shot is a long shot which deconstructs the artificiality of the scene: planks on the grass support the canoe, a flowerpot holds the cactus and a woman with secateurs peers over the tall hedge into the garden space. The following shot provides the link between the Native American and the region of Swabia. The man is seen walking towards the camera in a room surrounded by Native American artefacts: a buffalo head hanging on the wall to the left; a costumed male mannequin standing to the right. The camera follows the man's footsteps, panning to the left to reveal four additional costumed mannequins, on one of which he places his head-dress. In the subsequent interview Alois Weber, the costumed man, explains the roots of his interest: the filmic adaptations of *Lederstrumpf* (*The Leatherstocking Tales*) and *Winnetou*. Both tales are the literary works of authors who were not Native Americans but who used Native Americans as their subject matter and played a role in constructing notions of the Western view of the exotic Other. Oksiloff points out the connecting relationship between scientific ethnography and the popular narrative forms of representation of 'the tradition of Karl May [author of *Winnetou*] and the sustained fascination with vast plains on which cowboys, Indians, and all types of "exotic"

peoples roam' over a century ago.<sup>233</sup> She notes that 'often, these types of narrative accounts would accompany the scientific ones (...) for lay audiences'.<sup>234</sup> Fictional narratives merged with early ethnographic research, thereby contributing to the construction of an exotic non-Western Other. Shohat and Stam note the close relationship between spectacle and science: 'Operating on a continuum with zoology, anthropology, botany, entomology, biology and medicine, the camera, like the microscope, anatomized the "other."' <sup>235</sup>

After the interview, the film pans over figurines of Native Americans carved and clothed by Weber. This physical construction of the Other metaphorically also points to a mental construction of the exotic. Weber's museum is a dedication to a geographically removed and vanishing culture. His obsessive collecting echoes that of early anthropologists who harboured material cultures of Otherness in the nineteenth-century age of the museum. The early anthropological need to classify and collect was driven by the desire to conquer the exotic by statically materialising it. Kateryna Olijnyk Longley defines the exotic as precisely that: 'The desire to enter forbidden

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<sup>233</sup> Oksiloff, p.39.

<sup>234</sup> Oksiloff, p.40.

<sup>235</sup> Shohat and Stam, p. 106.

territory, whether in the imagination or physically, to partake of otherness and to stake a claim.<sup>236</sup>

Weber's home-made museum resembles that of another protagonist: Franziska Schüle. Schüle's private collection resembles Weber's in so far as both are commitments to 'preserve' the Other. The elderly woman is interviewed in her living-room, which is full of stuffed animals. While Schüle explains the North Sea origins of some of the animals, the film cuts to close-ups of the dead creatures. The choice of low-angle close-ups to represent the dead animals conveys a sense of strangeness. In addition, the abnormal expression on the faces of some of the exhibits lends the sequence a freak-show quality. Schüle's collection is reminiscent of the beginnings of anthropological collecting: the private curio cabinet. 'In the collection of curiosities, the viewer is confronted with an eclectic mix of exotic or terror-inducing objects.'<sup>237</sup> With unconventional points of view, Wolfsperger turns the artefacts into curiosities of exoticism.

In a similar way, Wolfsperger captures an exhibit of a further collection, that of the protagonist Jürgen Hohl, who restores old church textiles. The camera moves upwards along a mannequin dressed in a nun's uniform. A close-up of the mannequin's hands holding a pair of scissors

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<sup>236</sup> Longley, p.23.

<sup>237</sup> Oksiloff, p.102.

follows, then a close-up of her face. The face rests diagonal to the frame with an odd expression: the eyes and the mouth are both wide open. These unusual features are emphasised in the next extreme close-up shot of the eyes. The close-ups of the inanimate objects of dead animals and a life-like mannequin seem to aspire to capture attributes of the living although these objects are clearly lifeless. The camera's attention to facial detail creates exhibits of artificial life – exhibits of curiosities. Weber and Schüle collect exotic Otherness to exhibit in their own private spaces in Swabia. Their behaviour recalls Isabel Santaolalla's definition of the exotic as 'one in which an agency appropriates a "colonised," domesticated version of an Other to meet its own needs'.<sup>238</sup>

*Die Blutritter* also bears witness to the problematic notions of this exotic relationship. In an interview with a Swabian man and his black wife, Wolfesperger captures the 'colonisation' and domestication of a *living* Other.<sup>239</sup> The Swabian man explains his reasons for marrying his wife as follows:

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<sup>238</sup> Isabel Santaolalla, 'Introduction: What is "New" in "New" Exoticisms"?' in *"New" Exoticisms. Changing Patterns in the Construction of Otherness*, ed. by Isabel Santaolalla (Amsterdam & Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000), pp. 9-20 (p.10).

<sup>239</sup> See Appendix I, F5.

Deutsche Frauen habe ich auch schon gut kennen gelernt, und die Ansprüche von deutschen Frauen sind (...) ein bisschen zu hoch.(...) ...und deswegen war die Wahl, eine schwarze Frau zu heiraten.

[There have been German women that I've got to know quite well, but German women's expectations are too high. (...) ...and that's why I chose to marry a black woman.]

He gestures with his hand towards his wife, thereby objectifying her as little more than a consumer choice. His perception is based on male and racial superiority. Longley points to this power imbalance between the viewer and the viewed: 'Exoticism (...) is a way of seeing which sustains the myth of cultural centrality, and therefore the superiority, of the viewer.'<sup>240</sup> The white man's superiority in this scene is unmistakable. In addition to his verbal presence – the woman remains silent and acquiescent – the dominance of the white man is physically conveyed: the woman is seated on a bench between her husband and a further white man. The camera tilts down her body to rest at knee level: both men's bodies are physically pushed up against hers. The slow tilt down her body emphasises her sexual role. This is confirmed in the final shot at knee level: the woman has one hand placed on each man's thigh. The camera movement encourages the

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<sup>240</sup> Longley, p.23.

perception of a regional 'colonisation' of the Other as sexual exoticism. The cinematic objectification of the black woman becomes so apparent that this in itself points to the problematic issues surrounding the beholder of the exotic.

*Die Blutritter* not only offers representations of the exotic in the region but also of the region as exotic. The film portrays one form of regional exoticism: the religious region. The legend surrounding the religious relic of Weingarten is narrated through a series of interview statements from locals. The use of multiple narrators to convey the legend underlines the uncertain nature of the oral myth. The interviews discuss the relic's origins: a Roman was said to have taken the dried blood of Christ to his home in Italy. The relic's voyage offers a new understanding of regional exoticism: the region that once embraced the exotic by adopting a religious myth from far away has now in turn become the exotic for the beholder of the film.

Wolfsperger draws subtle connections between the exotic exhibits of the Native American museum and the dominating regional faith, predominantly through editing techniques. For example, the film cuts from a shot of Weber talking about the absent role of women in the religious procession to a different shot of Weber talking about the limited role of

women in the Native American culture. By placing the two shots consecutively, Wolfsperger allows the viewer to make associations between the two statements: the one about Native American culture and the other about regional religious traditions. Another scene uses similar indicators to build a bridge between the two shots: the film cuts from a Native American figurine with a plaque entitled 'priest killer' to the Weingarten monastery and the voice-over of a monk. This technique also works as a sound bridge: the film cuts from a medium shot of the costumed Weber singing in Lakota language and playing the drums to a low-angle shot of the monastery and its bells pealing. The sound of the drums and the bells aurally merge into one.

Wolfsperger encourages an exotic perception of Swabian religious cultures. Regional belief is represented as alien. Near the end of the film, the priest comments on the alienation he has observed between church and society: 'Die Menschen können mit der Kirche nicht mehr viel anfangen. (...) Es wird zunehmend etwas Fremdes, und Fremdes gibt man dann auch sehr leicht auf.' [People can't relate to the church anymore. (...) They increasingly perceive the church as something alien, and all things alien are easily abandoned.] Wolfsperger's film recreates this alienation by portraying religion as exotic.

In *Out of Edeka* Faigle also uses exoticism to defamiliarise the German region, as a scene in the local village shop demonstrates. The camera slowly pans over the shop's interior from an elevated position. The shop is shrouded in darkness and only the gradual turning-on of the neon ceiling lights offers individual spots of light onto the disarray of shelves and items. The shot is accompanied by Middle Eastern music. The aural contextualises the visual with the far-away – the cluttered shop becomes reminiscent of a Middle Eastern bazaar. The film cuts to exterior shots of the shop – the exotic music now merging with the sound of church bells. The Middle Eastern music eventually dominates the aural and ends with a crane shot over the village zooming in to the horizon at sunrise – a visual signifier to the Middle East, as *Morgenland* [literally: morning land] translates as the Orient. The geographically far-off becomes a motif in the representation of the shop. In a further scene, a knee-level tracking shot of the depth of the shop's aisles is accompanied by a Middle Eastern flute melody. The film cuts to an upward camera movement along a display of publications, the first magazine entitled: *Heimatklänge* [literally: sounds of home]. The title adds an ironic undertone to the exotic soundtrack. The scene ends with another ironic juxtaposition between the exotic and the home-grown: plastic canisters stacked on the shop floor and entitled *Gurkenaufguß* [gherkin

pickling vinegar]. The containers of ingredients for home-made cooking are outsized. Although culinary miles apart, the unusual proportions relate to the unusual music.

Faigle exoticises the upper floor of the shop, the textile room, in the same way as he defamiliarises the lower floor. The room is encased in darkness until the neon ceiling lights are turned on one by one and a long row of disorderly piles of textiles becomes visible. In unison with the lights, Far Eastern music emerges. The camera tracks along the piles of textiles to fade into another tracking shot of heaped clothes. The camera's uneven movements and multiple merging tracking shots convey a sense of disorientation. The scene ends with a high-angle shot of the upper floor which revolves around its own axis reinforcing the loss of spatial orientation.<sup>241</sup> The revolving shot is superimposed with shots of unusual clothing items; the music merges with sounds of laughter. Faigle transforms the upper floor of the shop into an exotic souk.

Faigle's family, the essence of familiarity, is equally defamiliarised. The family – mother, father and sister – take part in a re-enactment of guerrilla warfare. The film cuts from Faigle closing his eyes whilst undergoing an acupuncture treatment – in itself a form of exoticism – to a

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<sup>241</sup> See Appendix I, B5.

scene of guerrilla warfare re-enactment in the shop. Dressed in military camouflage, his sister forces a man, his head covered by a paper bag, at gunpoint into the shop – the camera pointed at her back. The man has been taken hostage for shopping at the new discount supermarket. The camera moves into the shop to reveal the father dressed in matching attire and sunglasses, sitting behind the cash desk with rounds of ammunition hanging around his body.<sup>242</sup> The mother in identical attire sits in front of the desk pointing a gun towards the hostage. The sound of pan pipes and guitar strings identify the exotic re-enactment as South American. The family's strong regional dialects – which require German subtitles in this scene – are the sole indicators of local regional identity. In this scene Arthur Koestler's theory of context deviation as responsible for humour is created by the 'bisociation' of South American guerrilla warfare and a local Swabian supermarket. The merge of South American generic music and the mise-en-scène of unconventional warfare mark the scene as exotic. The Swabian speech is placed within the exotically constructed context thereby drawing connections between the unfamiliar of the foreign and the unfamiliar of the native.

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<sup>242</sup> See Appendix I, B7.

Faigle does not exclude himself from the construction of a regional exotic. He re-invents himself as Spanish: dressed as a Spanish flamenco dancer singing in the fields or being bathed and depilated by a Spanish woman in the barn. Again, it is once again the music that provides the prime indicator of a Spanish re-contextualisation. In one scene Faigle even lip-synchronises the Spanish lyrics of the song.

Faigle's early fascination for the exotic is made evident in a photographic still depicting himself and his brother as children in cowboy and Indian outfits. The Western allure of childhood days is re-enacted in a sepia scene depicting Faigle and his brother dressed in cowboy attire sitting around a burned-out fire. Stills of Faigle in costume follow: dressed up for his First Communion; costumed as a chicken-headed superhero; crowned with an Easter wreath and wearing rabbit's teeth. Faigle shows himself and the regional masquerading as exotic. Whereas Wolfsperger never enters the frame in his film, Faigle steps into the frame to enter into a construction of the regional exotic, thereby swaying between the borders of self and Other. His voice-over, which identifies him as the film-maker, presents identification of self; on the other hand, the exotic re-enactments of himself with the natives present his persona as Other. Regional exoticism is no

longer only a matter of in front of the camera (self versus Other) but also a matter of behind the camera (self and Other).

Whereas the regional in *Out of Edeka* is transformed into the exotic, the film avoids depicting the non-regional as exotic. It is the scenes surrounding members of foreign descent which evoke genuine emotions in the regional protagonists: Faigle's brother, who suffers from shyness, opens up for the first time when talking about his Polish wife; tears come to Faigle's father's eyes when thinking about his grandchild in Georgia. The film reverses the role of the known and unknown: the unfamiliar, the non-regional, becomes the familiar while the familiar, the regional, becomes the unfamiliar.

Both *Out of Edeka* and *Die Blutritter* construct the German regional as exotic. Whereas the exotic signature of Wolfsperger's film lies in the filmmaker's craft in editing and camera work, the exotic marker of Faigle's film lies in the elaborate re-invention of regional people and surroundings in front of the camera. The geographically close becomes the geographically distant: the films create 'domestic exoticism'.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> François de la Bretèque, 'Images of "Provence": Ethnotypes and Stereotypes of the South in French Cinema,' in *Popular European Cinema*, ed. by Richard Dyer and Ginette Vincendeau (London: Routledge, 1992), pp.58-71 (p.58).

## 2.4. The Regional Defamiliarised: The (Non)-Indigenous Other

*Die Blume der Hausfrau* (Dominik Wessely, 1999)

*Full Metal Village* (Sung-Hyung Cho, 2007)

In *Die Blume der Hausfrau* as well as *Full Metal Village* the binary of self and Other is to be found in the dichotomy of regional and non-regional communities, between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. The term indigenous is commonly used in an anthropological context to describe peoples who are native to a place, and particularly to describe peoples 'when there are other populations in the same region that can reasonably be described as settlers or aliens.'<sup>244</sup> In the latter case the term identifies and gives a voice to an Other which has undergone colonisation. Hence, the term is a by-product of Western thought and white settlement. In this section the term will be applied to a geographical area that has not been subjected to traditional colonisation and will be used to shed light on a contemporary context of migrants and locals. It must be noted that this is not a discussion about a re-evaluation or an extension of the definition but

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<sup>244</sup> Andre Beteille, 'The Idea of Indigenous People,' *Current Anthropology* 39, 2 (1998), 187-192 (p.188).

rather a borrowing of the term in order to engage in a contemporary discourse of natives and settlers.<sup>245</sup>

Both films document and explore the contact between the non-indigenous and the indigenous of a region: *Die Blume der Hausfrau* follows a group of non-indigenous salesmen on their sales rounds to the living-rooms of Swabia; *Full Metal Village* records the invasion of small village community by non-indigenous music festival fans in Northern Germany.

Moreover, both film-makers are non-indigenous. Wessely is native to Munich and Cho is native to South Korea. Whereas Wessely remains completely indiscernible visually as well as aurally, Cho is seen interacting with subjects on screen. Cho is instantly aurally and visibly identifiable as non-indigenous due to her Asian ethnicity and accented German. In an interview Cho describes her non-indigenous background as an advantage for film-making:

Durch meine augenscheinliche Fremdheit sind die Leute ganz anders, viel offener mit mir umgegangen und haben mir zum Beispiel auch Dinge erzählt und erklärt, die sie bei Deutschen vorausgesetzt hätten.

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<sup>245</sup> For a detailed discussion of the term *indigenous* see Andre Beteille.

[Because of my obvious foreignness the people were completely different, more open with me and they told me things they would have assumed that a German knew.]<sup>246</sup>

This is best observed in a scene with the local farmer Plähn who strikes up a conversation with the film-maker which results in him becoming a protagonist of the film. Plähn is depicted in a long shot beside his fenced-in cows. He takes no notice of the camera and walks out of the frame towards Cho who is off-screen. Eager to help the outsiders, he instigates a conversation:

Plähn: Wollt ihr noch irgendetwas wissen?

[Is there anything else you want to know?]

Cho (off-screen): Wir möchten ihre Kühe aufnehmen.

[We want to get a shot of your cows.]

Plähn: Sagt ihr Kühe? [Did you say cows?]

Cho: Ja, Kühe. [Yes, cows.]

Plähn: Kälber. [Calves.]

Cho: Kälber. [Calves.]

Plähn: Kälber. [Calves.]

The next shot portrays Plähn and Cho in medium shot – Plähn explaining the differences between types of cattle to Cho. She acknowledges and nods

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<sup>246</sup> Peter Badenhop, 'Interview Sung Hyung-Cho: Kaffee und Kuchen zu scheußlicher Musik', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 19. April 2007, p.38.

and he invites more questions: 'Fragen?' [Questions?]. The scene is undoubtedly not staged, as Cho's amused expression betrays. Plähn's lesson in cattle at times seems to border on a language lesson. Cho's non-indigenous background provides her with the opportunity to ask or be offered information as Plähn presumes that what is known to the indigenous is not known to those from outside.

Early ethnographic footage often included a shot of the ethnographer posing with the natives. The ethnic or racial contrast formed a visual on-screen divide between researcher and bodily artefact, between subject and object and ultimately between self and Other. In *Full Metal Village* these roles are to an extent reversed. Like the ethnographer, Cho is non-indigenous to the area – ethnicity is the key on-screen indicator. However, this ethnic divide is inverted: the white man has become the bodily artefact under filmic investigation. Cho, not only non-indigenous to the region but also to Germany, forms another divide: between herself and the domestic viewers. Cho challenges the ethnic roles of traditional ethnography, thereby questioning fundamental ethnographic constructions of self and Other.

Before Cho even enters the frame, the film offers apparent markers to the non-indigenous background of its film-maker. The top left corner of the film's promotional poster is inscribed with Korean writing – only below in

smaller lettering in brackets is the German translation given. The order and appearance of the film's opening credits extend this discourse. The film's subtitle (*Ein Heimatfilm*) is separated from the film's title (*Full Metal Village*) by several minutes. Instead of combining the title with the director's name, Cho decides to place the director's name (Sung-Hyung Cho) under the subtitle (*Ein Heimatfilm*). The two headings share identical lettering and space but the temporal pause between the two indicates a divide: Heimat film, the German film genre and Cho, a non-German film-maker. The oppositional elements at play make the viewer aware of the parameters of self and Other from the outset which shape the film throughout.

In *Full Metal Village* the indigenous is represented through protagonists whereas the non-indigenous is experienced as an anonymous crowd, as Cho herself explains in an interview: 'Die Dorfbewohner sind diejenigen, die wahrnehmen. Subjekte der Wahrnehmung. Die Metal Fans sind Objekte der Wahrnehmung.' [It's the villagers who perceive. Subjects of perception. The metal fans are the objects of perception.].<sup>247</sup>

Representing the metal fans through rapid glimpses rather than lengthy portrayals, as arbitrary individuals rather than protagonists underlines their position as alien Others. Otherness is conveyed through

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<sup>247</sup> 'Interview with Sung-Hyung Cho', *Full Metal Village* DVD bonus material.

filmic snapshots of human eccentricity: a man whose face is full of large piercings; a man singing from within a rubbish bin; a man travelling with a shopping trolley. Inanimate peculiarities add to the images of strangeness: a sequence begins with a shot of a mud-covered troll toy and teddy bear hanging as lost items from a line; it then cuts to a camera tilt upwards along a replica of a grave with a skeleton hand on the grave and a toy guerrilla on the cross; and ends with a shot of chairs, umbrellas and various road signs on a caravan roof.

In *Die Blume der Hausfrau* the cinematic roles of indigenous and non-indigenous are reversed. The non-indigenous are represented by the film's five protagonists. From the outset Wessely pinpoints the protagonists as non-indigenous. The first scene establishes their uniformity as a group.<sup>248</sup> In a long shot the film introduces the five men lined up in dark coats standing with their backs towards the camera and facing a row of urinals. The second part of the scene establishes their non-indigenous status. The protagonists' names appear – their Italian origins stand out, emphasised by the generic music of the Spaghetti Western.<sup>249</sup> The borrowing of an element from the Italo-Western genre attaches a whole spectrum of Western genre clichés to the image. The Swabians' long coats become reminiscent of cowboy coats

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<sup>248</sup> See Appendix I, A1.

<sup>249</sup> The scene is reminiscent of the iconic shot of cowboys standing with their backs to the camera in *Once Upon a Time in the West* (Sergio Leone, 1968).

and the Swabians' sales jobs reminiscent of heroic acts. Here, Arthur Koestler's theory of context deviation is fuelled by sound and image: the audience is suddenly required to jump from one code of thought to another code of thought. This 'bisociation' results in a humorous understanding of the Italo-Swabian salesmen.

One of the men, Steffen, is not of Italian origin. The film later reveals, however, that he is also non-indigenous to the region – he left the GDR after the fall of the wall. The men are united by their roles as salesmen as well as by their roles as non-regionals. The indigenous, on the other hand, is represented by arbitrary individuals. Like the metal fans, they are seen as somewhat strange: a salesmen pitches next to a woman's terrarium that contains a giant iguana; another woman introduces her tortoise that only eats the regional dish of *Spätzle*; an elderly woman abruptly lets down her rolling shutters to block out the salesman who is standing outside. In *Die Blume der Hausfrau* the indigenous becomes the Other. The 'natives' rather than the 'settlers' are portrayed as eccentric. Again, the roles of traditional ethnography are tested: the white 'natives' become alien artefacts. Eccentric strangeness, in both films, becomes the key marker of Otherness. Bill

Nichols remarks on ethnographic film-making: 'Rather than seeking to make strangeness known, we seek to *know* strangeness.'<sup>250</sup>

The 'settlers' in *Die Blume der Hausfrau* are seen marking out their territory. The scene depicts two of the salesmen driving slowly along a road pointing left and right: 'Nein, das ist vom Salva. Hier ist der Salva, da ist der Widule. Da vorne bin ich.' [No, that's Salva's. Salva works this side and Widule works that side. I work there.]. Although the discussion is linked to area sales divisions, the initial question ('Wem seins ist das?' [Whose turf is that?]) that sparks off the discussion metaphorically implies notions of possession over indigenous territory.

Unlike the 'settlers' in *Die Blume der Hausfrau*, the 'settlers' in *Full Metal Village* have not yet arrived. The film documents the process of temporary settlement. The metal festival settlement is portrayed as an enormous onrush of the masses. Before the crowds arrive, the film captures the structuring of natural habitat to accommodate them: shots of portable toilets, builders and metal constructions on green fields. Other images witness the re-structuring of the indigenous community: shots of metal fences and provisional road signs along the quiet village roads and village houses. On the other hand, the imminence of the invasion is indicated by

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<sup>250</sup> Bill Nichols, 'The Ethnographer's Tale', in *Visualizing Theory: Selected Essays from VAR 1990 – 1994*, ed. by Lucien Taylor (New York: Routledge, 1994) pp.60-83 (p. 68).

the departure of selected indigenous inhabitants: Grandmother Schaak is seen packing her suitcase, followed by a scene depicting the local pastor packing his. The actual arrival of the 'settlers' is depicted as an onrush of transportation: cars, trains, local buses and taxis. The camera visualises the sudden onrush by allowing the countryside to fly past the lens whilst the camera remains on a fast moving vehicle. Heavy metal music underlines the images leaving no doubt as to who the 'settlers' are.

The onrush is of an international nature: a man with a Spanish-themed t-shirt exits a bus shouting in Spanish; a man in the shop sends greetings in English to his mother in Mexico; a group of black Africans wanders the village road speaking Swahili. These images redefine the traditional understanding of the creation of indigenous peoples as the by-product of white settlements. In Wacken the tables have turned: the ethnically diverse non-indigenous are settling into a white region. Visually the non-indigenous 'settlers' are distinguishable from the white indigenous: black clothing provides visual cohesion. Their united black attire underlines their anonymous filmic representation as a collective Other.

As in *Full Metal Village*, the non-indigenous in *Die Blume der Hausfrau* are distinguishable by visual markers: dark hair and dark skin are obvious indications of Mediterranean origins. Dark coats offer a unifying collective

attire. The salesmen, however, lack any aural features that would identify them as being non-indigenous to Swabia. On the contrary, their language functions as an indicator of Swabian belonging: the men speak in Swabian dialect. The men's adoption of indigenous culture indicates a process of integration. One of the men's customers highlights a similar verbal assimilation. The man, whose surname Chazilikizctisidis identifies him as being of Greek origin, talks in a somewhat broken Swabian dialect and even insists the salesman call him in the shortened, more German-sounding version of his name: Schatzi – *Schatzi* being a German term of endearment. Although a Greek, he has not only 'germanified' his name but also adopted the extreme Swabian cleanliness: he relates how he had previously used twelve litres of water to wash his carpet and kneels down on the carpet to inspect it with a magnifying glass.

Despite the images of integration, divides are equally apparent. Although Steffen and the Italians are united by profession and friendship, a divide between the German and the Italians is perceptible. In the pub, the film cuts to a medium shot of Steffen who is busy telling a joke about a blind hare and a blind frog. The joke's punch line, however, turns out to be a play on national Italian clichés and somewhat offensive to his colleagues. The camera pans to the left to capture the reaction of his Italian colleagues.

Whereas Steffen and his German friend burst out laughing, the Italians glance down and smile awkwardly. A further pub scene depicts a similar situation. The youngest salesman claims about the customers that 'die Besten sind die Ausländer' [the best are the foreigners], a statement which is received with criticism by Steffen. One of the other Italians intercepts by putting on a sarcastic voice: 'Da steht er, der Deutsche, der echte Arier.' [There he stands, the German, the real Aryan.]. The conversation continues by mockingly imitating Germans and foreigners. The men all laugh but the comments and jokes suggest a collective awareness of a divide between Germans and foreigners, particularly between Italians and Germans in the non-indigenous regional group.

In *Full Metal Village* a different kind of 'settler' integration is portrayed. The camera catches moments of home-grown regional culture being offered to the alien 'settlers': an elderly couple sit patiently at the busy road-side selling their home-made jams; a man duplicates the famous yellow village sign to sell as souvenirs. The exposure of regional culture to the 'settlers' is best witnessed during a performance of the local fire-brigade band.<sup>251</sup> The film cuts from on-stage to the audience which consists of heavy metal fans and elderly villagers. The 'settlers' are seen moving frantically to

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<sup>251</sup> See Appendix I, H7.

the music as if it were a metal concert: crowd- surfing and head-banging. At the same time other 'settlers' adopt more traditional folkloric movements: partner dancing and line dancing. Some elderly indigenous are seen holding on to metal barriers, swaying their heads gently to the music. When the metal crowd call out for more ('Wacken, Wacken, Feuerwehr!' [Wacken, Wacken, fire brigade!]), a close-up of farmer Trede reveals his lips moving along to the crowd's request. The film cuts to a medium shot of three elderly inhabitants, including farmer Trede, at the edge of the crowd smiling at the alien crowd around them – their traditional local band has found approval with the unconventional 'settlers' and they have become part of the festival crowd. The scene indicates that the indigenous and the non-indigenous have more in common than anticipated, as Cho's comments on the film suggest: 'Wenn man die Fremden kennenlernt, und diese Andersheit als solche akzeptiert, dann merkt man immer mehr Parallelen und Gemeinsamkeiten.' [When you meet strangers and simply accept their being different for what it is, then you notice more and more parallels and similarities.]<sup>252</sup>

Other indigenous community members embrace the culture of the 'settlers' with enthusiasm. Teenager Karin Schaak has her bedroom wall

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<sup>252</sup> 'Interview with Sung-Hyung Cho', *Full Metal Village* DVD bonus material.

plastered with festival souvenirs and young father Norbert has his garage plastered with festival photos. The integration of 'natives' and 'settlers' is not limited to the younger generation. The film captures the elderly similarly welcoming the incoming alien culture: a man hangs a Wacken festival flag from his mast below his window, another elderly man has descended from his bicycle to engage with the festival passers-by by imitating their behaviour of outstretched arms.

Although the two cultures are seen interacting, Cho also casts her ethnographic gaze on disparities. The 'natives' as well as the 'settlers' are observed performing dance acts within their groups. As previously noted in this chapter (see 2.2.), the exhibition of dance was a fundamental part of the initial filmic ethnographic discourse. The camera captures a circle of elderly village women dancing to the song of *Tennessee Waltz*, a popular American country song from the 1950s. The women hold hands to form encircle the camera in their midst. The camera pans slowly to the left then to the right whilst the women gently circle round the camera. At the metal festival the camera equally pans slowly across a group of people moving to music. The camera moves along the front row of a concert crowd of young male metal fans head-banging and throwing their arms up into the air to the sound of a heavy metal band. The scenes are witness not only to different music

preferences and dance rituals but also indicate a generational gap between the two. Whereas traditional ethnographic films contrasted 'a coupling of the first and last links of the evolutionary chain, thus providing a visual expression of one of the founding narratives of modern ethnography itself',<sup>253</sup> *Full Metal Village* contrasts the first and last links of a human life-span: the young and the old.

Both *Die Blume der Hausfrau* and *Full Metal Village* challenge the conventional ethnographic roles of indigenous and non-indigenous, natives and settlers, migrants and locals. Both Cho and Wesseley play with notions of ethnicity and eccentricity to establish newfound Otherness in the non-indigenous (*Full Metal Village*) and the indigenous (*Die Blume der Hausfrau*). The relationship between regional and non-regional individuals is outlined by assimilation and integration as well as disparities and divides.

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<sup>253</sup> Oksiloff, p.57.

## 2.5. The Regional Defamiliarised: Concluding Note

Chapter Two has examined the social dimensions of the region on screen. Since the region includes both tangible and intangible features, understandings of what constitutes a region vary considerably. The cinematic view of the regional in the documentaries under discussion explores the dynamics of inside/outside, giving the regional the role of the Other.

This dichotomy of self (film-maker) and Other (regional) echoes notions of traditional ethnographic film-making. Bearing in mind the parameters imposed by the colonial context, this chapter has compared the historical depiction of the non-Western Other with the contemporary depiction of the regional Other. The analysis of the regional on contemporary documentary screens looks back to early German ethnographic cinema which shows striking stylistic similarities.

In *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* as well as *Schotter wie Heu* Otherness is conveyed through the dichotomy of 'primitive' and civilised – an approach already witnessed in early German ethnographic cinema. An initial divide between the 'primitive' and the civilised is established in the film's choice of language: German dialect versus Standard German – the

film-makers' German versus the subject matters' German. The contrast between 'primitive' and civilised is also a matter of awareness versus unawareness: in *Schotter wie Heu* the divide is epitomised in the representation of technological innocence surrounding the role of the camera; in *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* the divide is embodied in the portrayal of homo-ignorance.

*Durchfahrtsland* and *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* extend the dichotomy of self and Other. The films depict animosities within the Other thereby creating new understandings of self and Other: the Other itself suffers from divides. A new constellation of self and Other manifests itself *within* the boundaries of the region. Image composition in particular reveals the partition between protagonists and other regional inhabitants.

*Out of Edeka* and *Die Blutritter* explore the notions of self and Other within the parameters of exoticism – exoticism being an integral part of the attraction of early German ethnographic cinema. Although the German region is far more likely to be a site of familiarity, both film-makers approach the region as foreign and outlandish. In *Out of Edeka* even the essence of familiarity – the family – turns exotic; in *Die Blutritter* superiority over the Other forms the basis for much of the film's scenes of exoticism. Much of the exploration in both films is achieved through scenes of re-

enactments of foreign cultures in regional locations: notably Native American (*Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros*) and Spanish (*Out of Edeka*).

*Die Blume der Hausfrau* and *Full Metal Village* open up the theme of self and Other by exploring the interplay between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. Both films challenge the traditional ethnographic understandings by questioning the role of ethnicity. In *Full Metal Village* Korean Cho takes on the role of the traditionally white ethnographer, her German subjects the role of the traditionally ethnic-minority indigenous. In *Die Blume der Hausfrau* a similar reversal can be observed: the non-indigenous salesmen form an outside community typical of indigenous people while the regional indigenous remain separate eccentric individuals.

Instead of revealing the Other *in* the rural, these films portray the rural *as* Other. Portraying the German rural region as Other reverses systems of familiarity: German region becomes the object of an ethnographic gaze. The film-makers challenge audience's expectations and presumptions by defamiliarizing a seemingly familiar German territory – the domestic region – thereby introducing new perspectives into contemporary concepts of the regional and rural in Germany.

## Chapter Three: Heimat Revived

### 3.0. Heimat Revived: Introductory Note

Heimat is a concept particular to the German language which expresses a strong sense of home and belonging. Heimat has become so intrinsically part of German culture that there is no consensus on its translation, which ranges from 'home', 'homeland', 'nation', 'region', 'roots', 'birthplace', to 'country'. Any translation attempts remain unsatisfactory as the word is bound to a wide spectrum of implications and meanings which have been shaped by the word's developments within German-speaking countries, as Johannes von Moltke explains:

One of the defining characteristics of the word may be its adaptability to different contexts. On the other hand, such flexibility poses serious problems for any attempt to pin down its meaning.<sup>254</sup>

The term dates back to the fifteenth century.<sup>255</sup> However, it was not until the nineteenth century that it evolved in meaning to become more than a geographical denotation: 'Der Begriff wird entmaterialisiert, er wird

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<sup>254</sup> Johannes von Moltke, *No Place Like Home. Locations of Heimat in German Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), p.8.

<sup>255</sup> For an etymological analysis see Andrea Bastian, *Der Heimat-Begriff: Eine begriffsgeschichtliche Untersuchung in verschiedenen Funktionsbereichen der deutschen Sprache* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1995), pp.21-23.

verschwommener und immer mehr zum Gefühlswert.' [The term was dematerialised, it became more and more indefinite taking on an emotional value.].<sup>256</sup> It took on new meanings in cultural and political life, as part of a political discourse for the national as well as part of a literary and conservational ambition for the local. The concept of Heimat became a 'mediator' for many a cause affected by nineteenth-century modernisation. The word has since evolved into a complex concept embracing different aspects of belonging and identity in German society.

The term is thus subject to many interpretations. Scholarly writings on Heimat are varied and focus predominantly on specific fields of expertise, which results in a complex web of readings for a single word. This inconsistency in meaning has allowed the word to fall prey particularly to political abuse, most notably during the Third Reich. Heimat evolved into a word 'dangerously unstable in meaning'.<sup>257</sup> One phenomenon that recurs in the diversity of conceptions of Heimat is the use of the word to attempt to provide and convey a perception of the individual and collective self. Whether national, regional or local, historical or utopian, it is the construction of a self-image which lies at the centre of the Heimat idea. It is

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<sup>256</sup> *Der deutsche Heimatfilm. Bildwelten und Weltbilder. Bilder, Texte, Analysen zu 70 Jahren deutscher Filmgeschichte*, ed. by Wolfgang Kaschuba (Tübingen: Tübinger Vereinigung für Volkskunde e.V., 1990), p.15.

<sup>257</sup> Blickle, p.xi.

a self-image often distorted by wish-fulfilment and mythical understanding.

At the heart of Heimat lies an orderly structure which reflects the human psyche's need for the affirmation of self through boundaries . David Morley comments:

There is a long history of the production of imaginary geographies, in which the members of a society locate themselves at the center of the universe (...).The question of boundary maintenance, between outside and inside, between the world of the familiar (Heimat) and of the strange (Fremde) is crucial.<sup>258</sup>

It is not the aim of this chapter to deal with the extensive scope of the term but rather to focus on one particular aspect of Heimat which has become manifest in the twentieth century: Heimat on screen. The Heimat film is integral to German cinema history – Pflaum and Prinzler consider it to be 'das deutscheste Genre überhaupt' [the most German of all genres].<sup>259</sup> It is a genre unique to German-speaking cinemas, rarely travelling beyond the borders of Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The Heimat film is very much a product of German culture as it is founded on pre-existing images,

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<sup>258</sup> Morley, David, 'Bounded Realms: Household, Family, Community and Nation', in *Home, Exile Homeland: Film, Media and the Politics of Place*, ed. Hamid Naficy (New York & London: Routledge, 1999), pp, 151-168 (p.161).

<sup>259</sup> Hans Günther Pflaum and Hans Helmut Prinzler, *Film in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Der neue deutsche Film. Herkunft / Gegenwärtige Situation. Ein Handbuch* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1979), p.24.

motives and narratives within German culture. 'Genres do not consist only of films, they consist also, and equally, of specific systems of expectation and hypothesis which spectators bring with them to the cinema.'<sup>260</sup> These expectations were shaped by cultural systems already in place before the birth of cinema. Although Heimat literature acted as a narrative template for many Heimat films, it would be a simplification to argue that Heimat film is an extension of the Heimat literature genre. The Heimat film genre also draws upon an abundance of other preceding cultural strands such as *Volksmusik* [folk music], Romantic painting, folk theatre [*Volksstück*], and comedic *Bauerntheater* [peasant theatre]. The cinematic genrification of Heimat was a process that evolved from films initially labelled as *Dorffilm* [village film], *Volksfilm* [folk film] and *Bergfilm* [mountain film] from the 1910s until the 1930s.<sup>261</sup> The genre developed during the Nazi regime but saw its peak in post-war Germany. The generic Heimat film was a predominantly West German product, although recent scholarly material has shown that it was not confined to West Germany.<sup>262</sup> At the same time the GDR produced films of 'local place and rural space'<sup>263</sup> within a socialist framework, which nevertheless showed 'the same ideological potential of

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<sup>260</sup> Steve Neale, *Genre and Hollywood* (London: Routledge, 2000), p.31.

<sup>261</sup> For a historical account of the terminology of Heimat film see von Moltke, pp.26-35.

<sup>262</sup> For a discussion of Heimat film in the GDR see von Moltke, pp.170-200.

<sup>263</sup> von Moltke, p.174.

Heimat'<sup>264</sup> as West German Heimat films, albeit with a different ideology. Genre is a process, as Rick Altman argues.<sup>265</sup> The Heimat film of the 1950s may have dominated West German domestic productions but it was not a stable construct. The 1960s and 1970s witnessed a renaissance of the Heimat film with a new critical form, later known as the *New Heimatfilm* or *Anti-Heimatfilm*, and less critical forms known as the erotic *Lederhosenfilm* [leather trousers film] and the scenery-driven *Touristenfilm* [tourist film]. The 1980s were marked by a further revival of the Heimat film with the first part of Edgar Reitz's *Heimat* trilogy. Scholars have also examined the revival of the Heimat film in the arena of television: in countless re-runs of the classic 1950s Heimat film (Pay TV *Premiere* has its own Heimat channel) and its reincarnation in 1980s and 1990s television series such as the widely popular *Schwarzwaldlinik*.

This chapter will take the discourse of Heimat and film one step further. It will argue that Heimat in film is experiencing a new lease of life on contemporary cinema screens. In the past the Heimat film has merged with other film categories such as the erotic film (*Lederhosenfilm*), the drama (*Anti-Heimatfilm*), the saga (Edgar Reitz's *Heimat*). 'Genre mixing,' as Altman points out, 'constitutes a fundamental stage in the standard

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<sup>264</sup> von Moltke, p.174.

<sup>265</sup> Rick Altman, *Film / Genre* (London: BFI, 1999), pp. 49-62.

genrefication process.<sup>266</sup> The cinema under investigation in this research merges documentary and Heimat – a merge which combines two film categories: one that aspires to capture reality with one that aspires to create fiction. This chapter, however, will not be a discussion about genre or genrefication per se but an investigation of cinematic Heimat motifs that have reappeared in new forms on contemporary cinema screens between 1999 and 2007.

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<sup>266</sup> Rick Altman, p.142.

### 3.1. Heimat Revived: The Rural and the Urban

*Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* (Jochen Hick, 2003)

*Full Metal Village* (Sung-Hyung Cho, 2007)

In her analysis of the term Heimat Andrea Bastian distinguishes two major interpretative factors: the spatial (*Territorium*) and the social (*Gemeinschaft*).<sup>267</sup> This divide resembles distinctions made in analyses of the regional:

In one dimension, the region may be determined by natural features (geographical feature, uniformity of geology, topography, or ecology); in another, it may reflect the pattern of human settlement (marked by common language, ethnicity, or culture).<sup>268</sup>

Where Heimat is perceived to be is determined by both the spatial (*Territorium*) and the social (*Gemeinschaft*). A survey published in *Spiegel* revealed that statistically for 31 percent of Germans Heimat was the place of residence, for 27 percent the place of birth, for 25 percent the family, for six percent friends and for eleven percent the countryside.<sup>269</sup> A more recent *Spiegel* survey of young Germans between 20 and 35 revealed that Heimat

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<sup>267</sup> Bastian, p.25.

<sup>268</sup> Scott, p.1.

<sup>269</sup> Emnid Survey, 'Distanz zum Land', *Spiegel Spezial: Sehnsucht nach Heimat* 5 (1999), p.11.

for 44 percent is the place where they grew up, for 20 percent the place where they live, for 18 percent the place where their love is, and for 17 percent the place where their best friends are.<sup>270</sup> The results of these surveys underline the multi-layered understanding of the term.<sup>271</sup>

An initial qualification of a Heimat image is its location, as Kaschuba explains: 'Heimat im traditionellen Sinne lässt sich geographisch also lokalisieren: Heimat ist das Dorf, die Region, aus der ein Mensch stammt.' [Heimat in the traditional sense can be localised geographically: Heimat is the village, the region where a person comes from].<sup>272</sup> The setting of the Heimat film is an integral part of its genre. On screen Heimat can generally be located in the countryside, as Höfig's statistics conclude: 'Das beherrschende heimische Milieu ist das Landschafts- und Dorfmilieu.' [The dominant home milieu is the countryside and village milieu].<sup>273</sup> In the Heimat film of the 1950s spatial features play a leading role: 'Nearly all of the Heimatfilme of the period display a marked priority of "scenery" and location in relation to narrative progression.'<sup>274</sup> The spatial environment functions as more than a backdrop or setting, as Manuela Fiedler points out:

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<sup>270</sup> TNS Survey, 'Sie lernen jemanden kennen, googeln Sie ihn?', *Der Spiegel*, 25 (2009), p.62.

<sup>271</sup> It of interest how few respondents perceived Heimat as nation.

<sup>272</sup> Kaschuba, p.29

<sup>273</sup> Willi Höfig, *Der deutsche Heimatfilm, 1947-1960* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1973), p.266.

<sup>274</sup> Tim Bergfelder, *International Adventures. German Popular Cinema and European Co-Productions in the 1960s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), p.40.

‘Es entstehen Ideallandschaften.’ [Ideal landscapes evolve.].<sup>275</sup> Although identifiable by regional markers (mountains, heath, sea), film landscape functions as a placeholder for a type of geographical area rather than as a representation of specific locations. The geographical location in the classic Heimat film was transformed into an ideal landscape by apt editing and framing.

Es wird in der Mehrzahl der Heimatfilme der fünfziger Jahre fast nie eine konkrete existierende Stadt oder eine genau so existierende ländliche Region zum Schauplatz der Heimatfilme gemacht, das Setting des Heimatfilms ist fast ausnahmslos aus der geographischen Realität herausgehoben und ins Idealtypische, Idyllisch-Harmonische überzeichnet worden.

[In the majority of the Heimat films of the 1950s there was almost never a concrete existing city or an equally existing rural region used as location. The setting of the film is almost without exception removed from geographical reality and recast in the ideal-typical, idyllic-harmonious.]<sup>276</sup>

Although the location in *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* is portrayed as far from idyllic (see 1.1.), one of the protagonists, Stefan the forester, is seen

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<sup>275</sup> Manuela Fiedler, *Heimat im deutschen Film: Ein Mythos zwischen Regression und Utopie* (Coppengrave: Coppi-Verlag, 1995), p.12.

<sup>276</sup> Manuela Fiedler, p.12

living and working in and with nature. The forester is a profession typical for the Heimat film:

Der Förster ist im Heimatfilm (...) Vertreter eines bestimmten, heimatfilmischen Ordnungsprinzips. (...) Der Beruf des Dorfbewohners ist ausnahmslos dem Wohle der Natur und dem Wohle des ländlichen Lebensbereiches und der Dorfgemeinschaft verpflichtet.

[In the Heimatfilm the forester (...) is the representative of a certain Heimatfilm principle of classification. (...) The calling of the village inhabitant is without exception to be committed to the good of nature and the good of the rural sphere of life and the village community].<sup>277</sup>

Stefan proves to be in tune with his natural surroundings, as he himself states: 'Das Wetter (...) höre ich meistens schon.' [I usually hear the weather before it comes.].

The film accompanies Stefan on his way to work in the forest.<sup>278</sup> The scene opens with a gravel road lurching through mist and tall trees filmed from within a moving vehicle. A shot of the road jump cuts to a nearly identical shot of the same road, thus distorting the viewer's geographical orientation. The next shot reveals Stefan walking into the forest's morning

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<sup>277</sup> Jürgen Trimborn, *Der deutsche Heimatfilm der fünfziger Jahre: Motive, Symbole und Handlungsmuster* (Cologne: Teiresias Verlag, 1998), p.120.

<sup>278</sup> See Appendix I, E2.

mist and the red rays of the rising sun – the camera following him closely – while he is heard off-screen marvelling about the atmosphere of the woods: ‘Die Bäume, hin und wieder kommt mal ein Reh vorbeigehüpft, und zum Teil könnte ich mich auch einfach ins Gebusch legen und eine Runde schlafen.’ [The trees, a deer jumps by from time to time, and sometimes I just feel like lying down in the bushes and having a nap.]. The scene is enfolded in mist bathed in sunlight and exudes a serenity similar to that of dream sequences. Stefan himself emphasises this notion by referring to his naps in the wood. The forest is experienced as a place of natural beauty, innocence and tranquillity. This idealisation of place through nature allows an element of fantasy to enter the genre of documentary: ‘Heimat ist im Heimatfilm (...) stets nur eine idyllisierte, harmonisierte, von der Wirklichkeit bewußt abgehobene Phantasievorstellung.’ [In Heimat films, Heimat is (...) always only an idyllised, harmonised fantasy image deliberately far removed from reality.]<sup>279</sup>

The next scene brings the location back to reality. Still in the woods, the camera pans with Stefan’s movements: Stefan closing the car boot door, then adjusting the equipment strap over his shoulder, all with a cigarette hanging from his lips. Whereas the previous scene omitted all signs of

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<sup>279</sup> Trimborn, p.61.

civilisation, this shot reinforces them: the car, the forestry equipment, the cigarette. The disparity between the two scenes is aurally marked by the abrupt halt of gentle music when the car boot door is closed with a thud.

The scene cuts between close-ups of Stefan being interviewed to shots of Stefan at work marking logs. The images, however, are dominated by Stefan's voice-over. Classical string music accompanies Stefan while he talks about the difficulties of his coming-out to his forestry colleagues. His accounts reveal a darker side of the forest as a place of homosexual discrimination. The viewer is also aurally reminded that this is far from an ideal place when the music ends abruptly with the banging noises created by the hammer with which Stefan marks the tree logs – the mark acting as a symbol of civic control over nature.

The sequence ends with Stefan's descent from the woods. The camera is no longer in Stefan's car but facing it, thereby capturing a long shot of the car and its surroundings.<sup>280</sup> The tall trees loom darkly over the moving vehicle. The car's front lights are switched on, although only one of the lights is working. The scene stands in stark contrast to the sequence opening shot. Bright morning light and white mist give way to darkness and dried leaves on the ground. The camera's interior positioning has been exchanged

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<sup>280</sup> See Appendix I, E3.

for an exterior one. The sequence first constructs then deconstructs an ideal landscape thereby pointing to the essence of Heimat, as defined by Höfig: 'Ohne Gegenüberstellung mit der Fremde ist die Welt der Heimat nicht zu erkennen.' [Unless there is a contrast with the unfamiliar, the world of Heimat cannot be recognised.].<sup>281</sup>

Heimat as a place of double character also becomes evident in the portrayal of Stefan's home village. Stefan is seen walking with his dog through the small village of Michelwinnaden. The village is represented as one of animals rather than humans: the camera captures a duck, dogs, a group of goats. Although the camera represents the village as idyllic, Stefan tells a different story: 'Wir hatten im Landesdurchschnitt die höchsten Rep Wähler überhaupt, in dem kleinen Kuhdorf, wo ich wohne. (...) Ich wohne zwar in Michelwinadden aber leben tue ich da wo meine Freunde sind.' [In the national average we had the highest number of extreme right voters, in the small one-horse town where I live. (...) technically I'm resident in Michelwinadden but where my friends are is where I actually live.]. Image and sound (i.e. voice-over) offer different accounts of the same place: Heimat becomes a visual spectacle of nature with an aural aftertaste of social intolerance.

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<sup>281</sup> Höfig, p.388.

The film-maker, Jochen Hick, does not shy away from revealing this double character. Again, Stefan is seen at work in the woods. Images of picturesque green mountains accompanied by soothing classical music precede the scene.<sup>282</sup> The music continues while the camera observes Stefan enthusiastically explaining the copulation of insects inside a tree. Hick interrupts to express his interest in the *Rammelkammer* [copulation chamber]: 'Was ist genau so eine Rammelkammer?' 'Und alle haben eine Rammelkammer immer?' [What exactly is a copulation chamber? And do they all always have one?]. It soon becomes clear to the audience (not to Stefan) that Hick is taking advantage of his role as documentarian and abusing his subject's trust: his questions are actually mocking his protagonist. The scene cuts to Stefan's mother admitting her ignorance about gay sex – the continuation of the gentle classical music providing a sound bridge. Hick de-contextualises the word *rammeln*, which is generally reserved for animals, to apply it to a human context which carries more vulgar connotations. This effectively strips Stefan's enthusiasm for the reproduction of insects bare of all innocence.

In *Full Metal Village* it is the village that is represented as the setting for *Ideallandschaften*. The village is visually introduced in a series of tracking

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<sup>282</sup> See Appendix I, E5.

shots: a field of horses, a large farm, the church, rows of red-brick houses, the shops, the pub, a deserted factory building, and green fields of grazing cows. The tracking shots follow the slow pace dictated by the melancholic music. The shots are empty of human beings: machines are laid to rest, shops are closed and streets are empty. Wacken becomes a place where time stands still.

The introductory tracking sequence is sandwiched between scenes of animal feeding: farmer Plähn feeding his cows; grandmother Schaak feeding her dogs and chickens. The relationship between man and beast is a symbiotic one in Wacken, particularly between farmer Plähn and his animals. Plähn enjoys a cigarette break in the cow barn. The shot captures the farmer sitting on a small stool leaning against the wooden barn doors smoking his cigarette.<sup>283</sup> A black cat enters left of the frame and perches up on the milk canister next to Plähn. While the cat greedily sips the fresh milk, Plähn leisurely looks on as the cat helps itself to the fruits of his hard work: 'Da vorne auf der Diele habe ich den Katzen was gegeben, aber die wissen auch, dass es hier was gibt.' [I've given the cats something in the hall at the front there but they also know there's something here too.]. Plähn chuckles and points to the cat, obviously at ease with its mischievous behaviour.

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<sup>283</sup> See Appendix I, H2.

Other sequences capture Plähn in the presence of animals: riding his moped with a trailer with two canisters of milk and his dog; in the barn with his dog and a new-born calf, guiding his cows with a tractor on the road.

In Wacken nature is a source of nutrition: farmer Uwe Trede shows off the height of his corn crops; a wagon bears a sign selling potatoes; an elderly couple sit at the village roadside selling home-made jams; grandmother Schaak digs out potatoes in her garden. The camera provides a close-up of Schaak's hands digging in the black soil for the potatoes. This stark imagery of white hands and black soil recalls notions of the *Blut-und-Boden-Ideologie* [blood and soil ideology], a concept of human connection to the land strongly popularised by Richard Darré<sup>284</sup> in a racist framework in Nazi Germany. The ideology was based on the perceived connection between German descent and the birthright to German land. The term Heimat was shaped by the Third Reich to correspond to this ideology: 'Heimat and nation became largely synonymous in Nazi usage. Both were defined racially and spatially, or, to use Nazi terminology, through blood and soil.'<sup>285</sup> The bond created between the concept of Heimat and the blood and soil ideology did not cease after the war. Jürgen Trimborn points to parallels between the blood and soil ideology and the 1950s Heimat film.

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<sup>284</sup> Richard Walther Darré was Hitler's Minister of Food and Agriculture from 1933 to 1942.

<sup>285</sup> von Moltke, p.54.

One of these analogies lies within the role of the farmer and the rural communities:

Eine gewisse Übereinstimmung und Parallele zwischen den Weltbildern (...) lässt sich auch in der nahezu unreflektierten Glorifizierung und Heroisierung des deutschen Bauerntums und der traditionell lebenden Land- und Dorfbewohnern feststellen.

[A certain agreement and parallels between the world views (...) can be detected in the almost uncritical glorification and heroisation of German farmers and the traditionally-living country and village dwellers.]<sup>286</sup>

A worrying reference to the Third Reich is established in the Schaak family when the granddaughter talks about her passion for Nazi culture: 'Ich will mir wünschen eine Stunde im Zweiten Weltkrieg zu sein. (...) So richtig dabei zu sein, so irgendwie in der Hitlerjugend. (...) Das wäre schon toll irgendwie.' [I'd like to be in the Second World War for one hour (...) Really there, like in the Hitler Youth. (...) That'd be great.]. Villager Norbert Venohr offers his view on employment and immigration which evidences problematic ideas of German superiority: 'Ich finde das scheiße, dass sie auch so viele Gastarbeiter haben, die Polen und die Weissrussen und weiß

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<sup>286</sup> Trimborn, p.141.

der Geier was hier alles rumkreist. (...) Da sollen sie mal anfangen aufzuräumen.' [I think it's really crap that there are so many immigrant workers, Poles and White Russians and heaven knows who else is around. (...) They should start getting rid of them all.]. Norbert delivers this xenophobic statement to film-maker Cho, whose Asian ethnicity must be evident to him. Either his intolerance is selective or it is ingrained to the point of insensitivity.

The concept of village soil, however, is turned on its head towards the end of the film. The camera observes two festival participants playfully mud-wrestling in the rain-drenched soil. Mud covers them from head to toe – only white teeth glimmer through smiling faces. The concept of soil and descent has been turned upside down: the soil has covered their bodies thereby masking any signs of ethnicity. Moreover, the village soil has been given a new role: the soil no longer provides a source of farming but a playground for entertainment.

The approach of the festival fans is marked by a turn in nature and the weather – the Heimat of *Ideallandschaften* has been disturbed: a low-angle shot of dark clouds blowing over the sky to conceal the sun; a long shot of expanses of green fields with grey clouds hovering above and cows abruptly running rapidly from one side of the frame to the other is followed

by a low-angle shot of flowers and trees being beaten by the wind and rain and finally a cut to the music festival stages in the rain.<sup>287</sup> Heavy metal music accompanies the shots of natural turmoil directly pointing to the symbolic perpetrators of the change in nature.

The heavy metal fans are visitors from elsewhere. The motif of the city-dweller visiting the countryside is typical of the Heimat film genre. The post-war Heimat film wave came at a time of increase in tourism, and was an essential means of promoting the countryside to urban viewers. Heimat on screen captured a place where the visiting urban met the residential rural:

Einige der häufigsten bildlich-symbolischen Chiffren sind die Gegensatzpaare Auto versus Pferdewagen, städtisch-moderne Revuemusik versus ländlich-traditionelle Blasmusik und städtische Kleidung versus ländliche Trachtenkleidung.

[Some of the most frequent visual-symbolic codes are the opposite pairs of car versus horse-drawn carriage, urban show music versus traditional rural brass band music and city clothes versus rural traditional costumes.]<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> See Appendix I, H5.

<sup>288</sup> Trimborn, p.53.

These visual contrasts are to be found in *Full Metal Village*: heavy metal fans invade the countryside in cars with loud metal music and in extraordinary dress; the villagers are seen driving tractors, mopeds and bicycles, enjoying brass band music in ordinary dress. Trimborn sees the contrast of the two as antagonistic: 'Mit diesen antithetischen Motiven soll die Unvereinbarkeit der beiden Lebensbereiche Stadt und Land dargestellt und verdeutlicht werden.'<sup>289</sup> [These antithetical motives serve to underline the incompatibility of both city and rural life.]. Von Moltke has recently suggested that certain films went beyond the mere antagonism perceived in these thematic dualisms: 'These films achieve closure by accomplishing a harmonization between such ostensibly opposed terms as rural and urban.'<sup>290</sup>

*Full Metal Village* offers images and sounds of cultural opposition but at the same time provides scenes of harmonised reconcilability. The reconcilability is most poignant in scenes where not only rural and urban come together, but also young and old: an elderly village volunteer directing the cars of the young visitors into the fields; an elderly villager greeting the young metal fans on the village street with the typical heavy metal horn-of-the-devil hand gesture. The height of reconcilability between

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<sup>289</sup> Trimborn, p.53.

<sup>290</sup> von Moltke, p.128.

urban and rural takes place at the festival during the performance of the local fire brigade band. The sequence commences with a local in traditional costume opening a barrel of beer with a wooden hammer – metal fans gather round to watch. He raises the first full glass in the air to shout a toast and the metal fans start clapping and cheering. The sequence continues to depict the metal fans welcoming the locals' performance: joyfully they move to the traditional music of the fire brigade band (for a textual analysis of the scene see 2.4.). The feast is a mandatory element of the 1950s Heimat film. 'Erst im obligatorischen Fest am Ende der Filmhandlung erreicht der Heimatfilm seine eigentliche Bestimmung, seinen Idealszustand.' [The Heimat film only reaches its real purpose, its ideal state, with the obligatory festival at the end of the film's story.].<sup>291</sup> This *Idealzustand* is generally produced by the resolution of conflict: 'Einerseits eine euphorische, familiäre Stimmung zu beschwören, in der die im Zuge des Filmgeschehens aufgehäuften Konflikte untergehen, andererseits die heimatliche Welt in festlichem Glanz und damit optimal darzubieten.' [On the one hand, creating a euphoric family-like atmosphere, which drowns out all conflicts gathered in the course of the film, on the other, presenting the world of

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<sup>291</sup> Trimborn, p.130.

home at its best in festive colours.].<sup>292</sup> In *Full Metal Village* city-dwellers and villagers resolve their culture clash and find themselves as one: as an audience. Reconcilability is based on compromise, as Tim Bergfelder explains:

The 'idyll' of the 1950s Heimatfilm principal locations is nearly always deconstructed through human intervention in the course of the films' plot, only to be reconstituted at the end, not in its pure and untouched form but as another compromise construction.<sup>293</sup>

Heavy metal fans head-bang to village music – a reconciliation of the two cultures.

Despite this moment of harmony, the film does not end on an ideal note. The last sequence depicts the aftermath of the festival: villagers coming together to gather the waste left behind by the urban visitors, now scattered over their fields. The *Idealzustand*, the union between rural and urban, is only of temporary duration. In accordance with the generic narrative of a Heimat film, the urban visitors have by and large left the

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<sup>292</sup> Höfig, p.298.

<sup>293</sup> Bergfelder, p.43.

Heimat milieu at the end of the film leaving the order of the Heimat unchanged.<sup>294</sup>

In *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* the contrary is the case: villagers take on the role of visitors in the urban sphere. The camera accompanies Uwe to the nightlife and shops of Germany's capital, Richard into hotels and onto public transport of Switzerland's largest city, and Hartmut to the gentle hustle and bustle of a resort town in the Far East. Non-rural and foreign environments are an integral part of Heimat, as Höfig observes:

Das Bild der Heimat und damit das der positiv bewerteten Seite der Heimatfilm-Welt wird aus dem Gegensatz zur Fremde entwickelt. Fremde, das kann heißen: die exotische Welt (...); das kann heißen: die Stadt.

[The image of the Heimat and with it the positive evaluation of the world of the Heimat film develops from the contrast with the foreign. Foreign can mean: the world of the exotic (...); it can mean the city.]<sup>295</sup>

Only in the foreign context do the men find sexual liberation: Uwe enjoys sex shops and gay clubs in Berlin, Richard enjoys an active elderly gay

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<sup>294</sup> Trimborn, p.72.

<sup>295</sup> Höfig, p.386.

community in Zurich, Hartmut enjoys the physical well-being provided by young men in Thailand. The journeys outside of the rural habitats are, however, not marked by a negative counter-image. In *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* city-dwellers prove to be friendly and forthcoming. A dark undercurrent, however, appears in the form of Hartmut's illness. Hartmut's deteriorated body becomes the focus of much of the camera work on his journey to Thailand: the attention paid to his body exposes Hartmut as old, ill and weak. The visual connection between Thailand and Hartmut's illness, however, is turned on its head by Hartmut himself: 'Bei mir im Ort vermutet jeder, dass ich mir in Thailand den Virus geholt habe. Ich selber vermute eher, dass ich ihn mir im Schwarzwald geholt habe.' [Everyone at home thinks I picked up the virus in Thailand. I myself think I picked it up in the Black Forest.]. All of a sudden it is the rural and not the urban that carries the dark undercurrent. Despite his sexual promiscuity and illness, Hartmut has the support of his friends from home who pack their bags and accompany him to Thailand for a holiday. Although differing in issues of sexuality, they display a togetherness which is captured in a shot that shows them lined up at the beach posing for the camera with their arms around each other.<sup>296</sup> (see also scene description 1.1.)

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<sup>296</sup> See Appendix I, E7.

The men's family structures – non-existent, broken or unbalanced – bear witness to the underlying problems in the rural communities. Both Uwe and Stefan live with their mothers whereas Richard and Hartmut live alone. The broken family was a widespread Heimat film motif and a reflection of unstable family fortunes after the war. The constellation of father and daughter played a central role, the role of the mother figure being generally omitted in Heimat films of the 1950s. This family constellation does not correspond to the post-war conditions of absent or fallen fathers. This process allowed the viewer to identify as well as repress memories of war conditions.<sup>297</sup> In *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* this family constellation is reversed with sole attention given to the relationship between mother and son, thereby omitting the father figure. Even when a father figure exists, the film chooses to disregard him. In Stefan's family the father figure is mentioned but never seen. In Claudio's family, mother Erika becomes one of the film's protagonists whereas his father remains mainly silent in the background. At the support group for parents of homosexual children, of which Erika is a member, only mothers have a say in front of the camera, although in an establishing shot of the group fathers can also be identified.

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<sup>297</sup> For more detail see Trimborn, pp 80-87.

While visiting the bright lights of Thailand, Hartmut this time discovers a new kind of relationship with a man: 'Ich habe sexuell überhaupt kein Interesse mehr. Ich mag den Jungen einfach, ja, wie ein Sohn. Und ich glaube er mag mich auch.' [I've got no sexual interest any more. I just like the boy, like a son. And I think he likes me.]. In Zurich Richard offers insight into his non-sexual relationship with a man: 'Man lernt sich kennen, man lernt sich lieben, man trennt sich wieder aber bleibt gute Freunde.' [You get to know each other, you learn to love one another, you go your separate ways but stay good friends.]. In both cases the urban evolves from a place of sexual fulfilment to a place of male friendship – a bond between two males that remains absent in their family relationships. At the end of the film the protagonists return to their rural habitat – the urban representing, as it did in the 1950s, a place far from Heimat.

### 3.2. Heimat Revived: Modernisation and Tradition

*Schotter wie Heu* (Wiltrud Baier & Sigrun Köhler, 2002)

*Die Blutritter* (Douglas Wolfsperger, 2004)

The Heimat film is fraught with thematic dualities – alongside the twofold premise of nature and civilisation (see 3.1.), modernisation and tradition play a leading role in constructing Heimat on screen.

Die meisten Probleme und Konflikte des Heimatfilms lassen sich auf die Formel reduzieren: Bedrohung und Verteidigung des Traditionsraums. Das Böse besteht also meistens in einem Verstoß gegen tradiertes Brauchtum und bestehende Ordnung (...) Dies Grundschema wird inhaltlich in verschiedenen, ihrerseits aber ebenso stereotypen Handlungsabläufen präsentiert: (...).  
Gegensatz Stadt – Land, oder Natur – Technik.

[Most Heimatfilm problems and conflicts can be reduced to the formula: threat and defence of the traditional space. Evil mainly consists of a breach of handed-down traditions and existing order (...). This basic scheme is presented with respect to content in different stereotyped plots: (...) the opposites city – country, or nature – technology.]<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> Eckhard Bailer, 'Kritischer Rückblick auf die Geschichte deutscher Heimatkunst', *Der deutsche Heimatfilm* (Nürnberg: VHS Seminar Meisengeige, publication date not available), 1-11 (p.4).

In both *Die Blutritter* and *Schotter wie Heu* tradition lies at the core of the narrative. *Die Blutritter* is a tale about a medieval religious procession; *Schotter wie Heu* is a portrayal of a one-man village bank boasting a history of three generations. Both films are about places where traditions and customs are alive despite changes brought about by progress. Alongside the narratives, the films are steeped in formal aspects, aural and visual, that confirm the leading role played by tradition.

On the one hand, this is displayed in the choice of soundtrack: both film-makers worked with the music group Haindling, who are known for their Bavarian-influenced compositions. The regional roots of the soundtracks point to traditions of long-established folklore. In addition, the folkloric music imitates the nature of tradition itself. In both films the music is cyclical in melody, thus underpinning the cyclical nature that regulates customary tradition. The recurring musical leitmotif is governed by a fast rhythm and a cheerful tune – Heimat on screen becomes a place of traditional (aural) delight.

On the other hand, tradition is to be found in the choice of visual presentation. Both *Die Blutritter* and *Schotter wie Heu* make use of material from a prior time: footage within the film shows Weingarten (the village in

*Die Blutritter*) and Gammesfeld (the village in *Schotter wie Heu*) at an earlier day and age. *Die Blutritter* opens with black-and-white footage of the medieval procession in the year 1924. The sequence is mirrored in the latter part of the film in the portrayal of the contemporary procession. Resemblances between the two filmic representations are unmistakable: a church leader on his horse accepting the religious relic in front of the basilica; the musicians marching on the streets; the horse procession strutting through the countryside<sup>299</sup> – the religious customs have changed little over the past eighty years: horse, attire and locations have remained the same. The stasis of time brought about by tradition is further noted in the close-up of a painting depicting the procession. The date of the painting is not revealed but it resembles Joseph Bayer's lithograph of the same procession of 1865. The camera moves across the painting from left to right over the basilica on the horizon, from the crowds of pilgrims to the pious horse-riders in the foreground. The shot is followed by an interview with a local shopkeeper who confirms the strength of the tradition by stating: 'Ich lebe seit meiner Geburt hier in Weingarten, bin ein überzeugter Weingärtler und stehe hinter unseren Traditionen hier.' [I've lived here in Weingarten

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<sup>299</sup> See Appendix I, F1 and F3.

since I was born, I'm happy to belong to Weingarten and to uphold our traditions.]

In *Schotter wie Heu* Super 8 footage provides a visual aid to understanding tradition and also documents the village architecture and gardens.<sup>300</sup> The footage is provided by a villager – the date it was taken remains unknown. Super 8 itself, however, already establishes a sense of time passed regardless of its actual age. The voice-over of the amateur filmmaker additionally establishes the historical dimension of the shot: 'Das ist jetzt die Raiffeisenbank wie sie halt früher war.' [That's the Raiffeisen Bank the way it was before.]. The film-makers, Baier and Köhler, match the Super 8 footage with their own shots of the village: the film jumps from a grainy exterior shot of the bank to a present-day exterior shot of the same bank. Not much has changed apart from the camera angle and perhaps the size of the flowers hanging from the windows. The juxtaposition of the two shots creates a sense of temporal stasis. This effect is heightened by the appearance of a man and his wheelbarrow in the contemporary shot: an elderly man pushes his wheelbarrow from left to right across the frame, additionally indicating the slow pace of life in Gammesfeld.<sup>301</sup> Like the

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<sup>300</sup> See Appendix I, C4.

<sup>301</sup> See Appendix I, C2.

religious procession in *Die Blutritter*, the bank – a symbol of family and village tradition – has remained unchanged over time.

Nostalgia is a close ally of tradition. While nostalgia is a present longing for the past, tradition is a maintenance of the past in the present. Inside the bank, Fritz Vogt, the bank director, is the personification of nostalgia. He prefers his typewriter to computers, his dial telephone to a touch-tone telephone, his manual letter scale to a digital letter scale and the German Mark to the Euro – Vogt recalculates every Euro amount back to the German Mark for the convenience of his customers. Vogt's bank is a haven of nostalgia that seems to border on the incredible at times. Moreover, the geographical location of the bank is transferred into the realm of the fantastic. The village is represented by aerial shots of a three-dimensional model of the village, which the film uses to introduce and locate forthcoming sequences. The model is deliberately rendered in a simplistic childlike style with bright colourings and toy-like features. The model shifts the location of Gammesfeld into a childlike realm – a realm of innocence and simplicity. Peter Blickle defines the idea of Heimat as exactly that: 'Imaginary spaces of innocence projected onto real geographical sites.'<sup>302</sup> This longing for the past is in essence a longing for an imaginary

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<sup>302</sup> Blickle, p.130.

past, or as Manuela Fiedler puts it: 'Er [der Mythos Heimat] existiert nur in der sentimentalen Erinnerung.' [The myth of Heimat only exists in sentimental memory.].<sup>303</sup> It is not an objective recollection but an adult perspective of what childhood might have been like. The village model captures this notion: the model is *child-like* but not *child-made*.

The model symbolises the concept of Heimat as the product of subjectification of spatial visualisation. Rose Derkau argues that Heimat, although anchored in spatial relations, is foremost an idea of the mind. The experience of the place is subjective, hence, Derkau argues, the place of Heimat is only to be found on maps of the mind: mental maps.<sup>304</sup> A mental map must be measured with different parameters, as Karl Schlögel explains:

Sie bestehen aus einem anderen Material, aus Bildern, Erinnerungen, Gerüchen...Sie haben sich so sehr eingepägt, daß ihnen nicht einmal die Zeit (...) etwas anhaben kann.

[They are made of different material, of images, memories, smells ... They are so imprinted that not even time can affect them.]<sup>305</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> Fiedler, p.74.

<sup>304</sup> Rose Derkau, 'Mental Maps oder Wie objektive Wirklichkeit und subjektive Darstellung zu einem Gefühl von Heimat werden', in *Region: Heimaten der individualisierten Gesellschaft*, ed. by Heinz Schilling and Beatrice Ploch (Frankfurt a.M.: Institut für Kulturanthropologie und Europäische Ethnologie, 1995), pp.207-224 (p.207).

<sup>305</sup> Karl Schlögel, *Im Raume lesen wir die Zeit: Über Zivilisationsgeschichte und Geopolitik* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2003), p.1.

The model of the Gammesfeld village reflects this subjective longing for a place that promotes a timeless *heile Welt* [ideal world] of nostalgia.

In *Schotter wie Heu* the village bank offers a slice of idealised bygone time; in *Die Blutritter* a medieval relic elicits traditions of the past. In *Die Blutritter* the belief in a *heile Welt* is established through the faith in the local legend surrounding the procession: a blood relic stored in the Weingarten Basilica. It is not a biblical belief but one based on traditions, as the local priest elucidates: 'Das ist eine Überlieferung. (...) Unsere christliche Kultur lebt von vielen außerbiblische Überlieferungen. Das sind natürlich Dinge, die man als Christ nicht unbedingt glauben muss.' [It's a tradition. Our Christian culture lives from many non-biblical traditions. These are things which as a Christian you don't have to believe in.]. The Weingarten community, however, does believe in its traditions, as an elderly man explains: 'Bei irgendwelchen Gefahren, bei Unwetter, nimmt man das Heilige Blut Öl und sprüht es aus dem Fenster hinaus, wenn man nicht mehr hinaus kann. Und somit ist man immer verschont geblieben vor allem.' [When there are any dangers or storms, you take the oil of the holy blood and spray it out the window if you can't get out any more. Then you are protected from everything.] This united faith in the power of the relic is conveyed in a sequence which blends protagonists' statements of belief into

one succession. The film's choice of protagonists echoes the firm grounding in traditional principles – all are from traditional professions: a baker, a butcher / horse-breeder, a beekeeper, a textile-restorer, a carpenter, a nurse, a monk, a vet. The statements of two interviewees are close to identical: both are convinced that the holy relic is the source of his / her recovery. The film cuts back and forth between the elderly woman and the elderly man who, independently from each other, narrate the tales of their personal physical healing:

Man: Ich lag acht Tage zwischen Leben und Tod. Und da habe ich immer wieder gebetet.

[I lay for a week between life and death. And I prayed again and again.]

Woman: Es hat mir damals auch geholfen im Krankenhaus (...)  
Und tatsächlich ich bin in fünf Tagen entlassen worden.

[It helped me when I was in hospital (...) After five days I was discharged.]

In the film both protagonists fail to mention the success of modern medical intervention. The dismissal of modern practices in favour of the power of the relic is to be found at the end of the sequence: 'In der Region Weingarten und Schussental vertrauen wir aufs heilige Blut und da sagen viele, wir brauchen keine Hagel Versicherung.' [In the Weingarten and

Schussental region we trust in the Holy Blood and many say we don't need any hailstorm insurance.].

In contrast to *Die Blutritter*, issues of modernisation surface in *Schotter wie Heu*. In line with conventional 1950s Heimat film narratives, modernisation is seen first and foremost as a threat to the traditional village. The potential construction of a combuster on the outskirts of the village, to which contaminated soil was to be brought to be regenerated, causes a village insurgence. The contaminated soil is a metaphorical as well as a real hazard to the pure soil of the Heimat (see also 1.3.). The planned installation of the combuster is seen as a peril, particularly by Vogt: 'Schreckliches Szenario! Und das 200 Meter vom Dorfrand entfernt!' [A terrible scenario! And just 200 metres from the village!]. A young villager's solution to the problem sums up the traditional Heimat dialectics between city and village: 'Da hätte sich so eine Anlage für Stuttgart rentiert. (...) Weil in Stuttgart findet man immer was Kontaminiertes.' [Such a thing would have been worth it in Stuttgart. Because in Stuttgart you always find something contaminated.]. The gravel pit located on the outskirts of the village is similarly rejected because of its industrial nature: 'Das gehört nicht zum Dorf! Das ist Industrie.' [That doesn't belong in the village! That's industry.].

Whereas modernisation is generally associated with the future, tradition is commonly linked to the past. This struggle between the past and the future – the old and the new, restoration and abolition, regress and progress – absorbed *the* Heimat film period of post-war Germany off as well as on screen. While earlier film scholars have concentrated on a black-and-white divide (Heimat = tradition and Fremde = modernisation) in the Heimat film genre, recent scholars have shed new light on the matter. Von Moltke points to what he terms a ‘nostalgic modernization’ prevalent in some Heimat films:

The function of the Heimatfilm is not so much to negate the effects of modernity, as critics have suggested, but rather to model compromise solutions: negotiating the encroaching demands of modernity within the spaces of Heimat, these films allow viewers to imagine postwar reconstruction as a process that embraces both the traditionalism of Heimat and the advances of modernization.<sup>306</sup>

Bergfelder likewise sees the reconciliation of strong antagonisms in some Heimat films:

The Heimatfilm constructed and celebrated a world in which the technological and social progress of modernity could without major

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<sup>306</sup> von Moltke, p.120.

problems be negotiated and harmonised with a rural and pre-industrial Arcadia.<sup>307</sup>

In *Schotter wie Heu*, although it is not a cinematic product of the post-war period, modern forces are equally visible: the Euro, the tech-savvy farmer, the car. These forces must be viewed as modern in comparison to Fritz Vogt: Vogt recalculates Euro amounts back into the German Mark, he remains a bank director and part-time farmer without the aid of computers, and he rides to work on his bicycle. Vogt views modernity as an existential threat to local traditionalism: 'Wenn wir auf die moderne Technik aufsteigen als so eine kleine Bank, dann sind wir weg. Das können wir uns nicht leisten.' [If we take on modern technology as such a small bank, then we're finished. We just can't afford to do it.]. Technology is destined for the bin: Vogt is seen struggling to open a CD case (even asking for the help of the film-makers), sent to him by the Federal State Bank, to only close it and throw it away without viewing it. On the other hand, Vogt is shown embracing the modern currency as he exclaims: 'Es geht nahtlos in Euro weiter!' [Things will continue smoothly in Euro!]. Although he recalculates Euro back into the German mark, he is proud to introduce the Euro into his

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<sup>307</sup> Bergfelder, p.42.

bank. The relationship between Euro (modernisation) and local bank (tradition) turns out to be one of harmony due to Vogt's mediation.

The portrayal of farmer Dürr shows a similar compromise: Dürr is seen showing off his high-tech computer facilities in his pigpen ('Nichts Nostalgie!' [No nostalgia here!]). Dürr's technical ambitions are motivated equally by agricultural utilisation and by his dedication to a traditional Heimat value – the welfare of animals, as he explains: 'Für ein modernes Schwein (...) ist es doch modern und artgerecht, das wir ihm bieten. Und wir bieten ja nur das Beste, dass es unseren Tieren gut geht, damit sie wachsen und Geld bringen.' [For a modern pig it's all up-to-date and proper what we give. And we only give the best so that our animals thrive and grow and bring money in.]. The sequence is followed by a medium shot of a village construction worker standing in front of a demolished structure which, he explains, was once a pigpen. The reason for its demolition is identified as the discontinuation of the family-run agricultural business. In this light Dürr becomes an example of helping agriculture to survive with the help of modern progress.

The modern feature of the car, on the other hand, must be viewed with special consideration. Both films feature the use of non-motorised modes of transportation (horses, wheelbarrows, bicycles). In *Schotter wie*

*Heu*, however, the car is portrayed alongside these older-style vehicles. The 1950s Heimat film did not limit its transportation modes to pre-industrial means, as Boa and Palfreyman explain: 'The motor car was a too potent symbol, a too alluring object of desire to be displaced by the horse and cart.'<sup>308</sup> The car figured dominantly in the 1950s Heimat film, reflecting the ever-increasing private ownership of cars in that decade. Kaschuba notes: 'Der scheinbar rückwärtsgewandte, antimoderne Heimatfilm der 50er Jahre bereitet diesen Automobilboom vor: die Landschaft, die Natur als schönere- und befahrbare Kulisse.' [The seemingly backward-looking anti-modern Heimat film of the 1950s is a preparation for this car boom: the landscape, nature as a beautiful setting which can be experienced and driven through.].<sup>309</sup> In *Schotter wie Heu* the car acts as a symbol of pride. In a low-angle shot over the bakery counter, the young female baker's assistant, Andrea, is questioned about her dream: a new Audi A3. The film cuts to a medium-shot of the shop owners, who smugly proclaim: 'Wir haben (...) noch einen nigelnagelneuen Audi A6 und das ist mein momentanes Traumauto.' [We have a brand new Audi A6 and that's my dream car of the moment.]. The film next cuts to an exterior shot of a garage with a vehicle slowly reversing out of it. The camera pans to the right following the

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<sup>308</sup> Boa and Palfreyman, p.95.

<sup>309</sup> Kaschuba, p.90.

movement of the car to finally reveal the driver: Fritz Vogt. Vogt gets out of his car to proudly exclaim: 'Schwarz, japanisch und bezahlt!' [Black, Japanese and paid for!]. A close-up of an Audi A3 miniature model car follows; the camera tilts up to reveal a close-up of Andrea smiling: 'Mein Auto!' [My car!]. The car is worshipped as an indicator of status and self-satisfaction – even if it has not have been made in the Heimat. Mobility as a means to leave the region, on the other hand, is portrayed as undesirable: Andrea gives up a holiday to save for her car; Christiane Dürr treats herself and her daughters to an Alpine holiday but admits on her return: 'Die wollten nach Hause, die Mädchen. Heimweh haben sie gehabt.' [They wanted to go home, the girls. They were homesick.]. The villagers' rejection of mobility and travel is further expressed after the car sequence. In a medium shot, Vogt at the bank counter expresses his concern straight into the camera: 'Einundsechzig Autobahnen haben wir jetzt in Deutschland. (...) Und da braucht man natürlich so gigantische Schotterwerke, wenn das so weitergeht. Ich frage mich bloß, wie lange das Land das aushält.' [We've got sixty-one motorways now in Germany. (...) And then you need such gigantic quarries if it doesn't stop. I just wonder how long the countryside can hold out.].

Modern advances are embraced but with limits: especially not at the cost of the land (in this case meaning rural countryside), the geographical location of Heimat. Once more there is compromise between modernisation and tradition: automobiles are required, travel rejected. Ostensibly contradictory, Heimat, a trademark of stability and continuity, remains compatible with modern means of transport but not travel. Von Moltke's analysis of the 'nostalgic modernization' of 1950s films can be directly applied to the contemporary screen: 'It [the Heimat topos] provided a ground for wistful backward glances *and* a headlong rush towards the future without monopolizing either one of these impulses.'<sup>310</sup>

'Nostalgic modernization' does not feature in *Die Blutritter* as modernisation in itself does not feature in the film. Instead the traditional conquers all, even the city-dweller. Otfried is a native Berliner who has found his 'zweite Heimat' [second home] in Weingarten. The film first captures him on a walk in the woods – Heimat metaphorically embracing him in its surroundings. The camera tilts up from a stream flowing between the green trees of the forest onto a path above. Otfried walks down the path towards the camera – dressed in green, he is almost camouflaged into the environment. The sequence continues with a black- and -white still of a

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<sup>310</sup> von Moltke, p.133.

younger Otfried lying outdoors with a woman while Otfried's voice-over is heard introducing himself. The sequence returns to the forest scenery and a medium shot of Otfried narrating whilst leaning on a tree trunk. Otfried confesses to initial difficulties in living in a small village but states that these were overcome by the discovery of the love for his wife. Otfried has developed an emotional attachment to his new surroundings. His deep affection for Weingarten is expressed later on in the film in his reaction to the local *Blutritt* tradition. Again, Otfried is depicted in nature. In a medium shot, he is portrayed sitting on a balcony decorated with flowers: flowers hanging from above; flowers sprouting in front -- the stems of red flowers framing his body. Small ornaments in the form of a little bird and two garden gnomes – a cliché of Germanness – adorn the flower beds. Whilst describing the most spiritual rituals of the procession, he starts to cry. The camera moves into a close-up detailing his sincere emotional bond to the traditions of the place that he has adopted as Heimat. Jürgen Trimborn divides the portrayal of city-dwellers in 1950s Heimat films into two categories: receptive and non-receptive city-dwellers.<sup>311</sup> Otfried qualifies as a receptive city-dweller. Trimborn, however, also sees limits as an integral part of the portrayal of the receptive urban inhabitant:

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<sup>311</sup> Trimborn, pp.72-75.

Wie positiv die Städter im Heimatfilmen in Ausnahmefällen auch dargestellt sein mögen, eins vermögen sie nicht, nämlich die bedingungslose Selbstlosigkeit als oberstes Ideal anzuerkennen und zu leben, wie ihnen dies von den Landbewohnern vorgemacht wird.

[As positive as city-dwellers might be portrayed in exceptional cases in Heimat films, one thing they cannot do is to acknowledge unconditional selflessness as the highest ideal and to live it as the rural inhabitants do.]<sup>312</sup>

The portrayal of Ottfried, however, seems to disagree with Trimborn's argument. Ottfried experiences an emotional outbreak which has been caused by his thoughts and prayers for others - a sign of altruism: 'Und mit dem Hintergedanken im Kopf, den Segen für die Felder und die Höfe, die Stadt.' [And with the thoughts in your head, the blessing of the fields and the farms, the city.]. The traditions of Weingarten have not only withstood the influences of urban modernisation but have also made the urban man part of its rural mysticism.

Some Heimat traditions revived in *Schotter wie Heu* and *Die Blutritter* do not evoke nostalgic sentiment in a contemporary audience. The Heimat film world is a patriarchal one – the woman's role is limited and set.

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<sup>312</sup> Trimborn, p.75.

Jürgen Trimborn notes: 'Im überwiegenden Teil der bundesdeutschen Heimatfilme der fünfziger Jahre ist eine Glorifizierung der Frau in der traditionellen Rolle als aufopfernde Hausfrau und Mutter zu beobachten.' [In the majority of national German Heimat films in the 1950s the glorification of woman in the traditional role of self-sacrificing housewife and mother is evident].<sup>313</sup> Both contemporary films reflect a similar composition of traditional elements: women are excluded from certain roles. In *Schotter wie Heu* women are prevented from becoming board members of the bank (Villager: 'Da ist keine Frau, und da kommt auch keine Frau mehr rein.' [There's no woman here and there'll be no woman here.]). In *Die Blutritter* women are prohibited from riding in the procession (Villager: 'Das ist ja eine ausgesprochene Männerprozession.' [It's an exclusively male procession.]). In *Die Blutritter* the absurdity of some of the reasons given by male riders only underlines the deep-seatedness of the gender divide: 'Wenn sie [die Frauen] dann Figur kriegen, da sie einfach breiter werden und die Vorderseite und die Hinterseite eben ausartet. (...) Das ist schon eine Streitfrage: Ist das schön oder nicht schön?' [When they (women) start to get a figure, when they get wider and the front and back start to get out of hand (...) that's then a matter of dispute: does that look

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<sup>313</sup> Trimborn, p.92.

good or not?]; ‘Stellen Sie sich vor, es wären doppelt so viele Reiter. Man wusste gar nicht wohin damit.’ [Just imagine there were twice as many riders. One wouldn’t know where to put them.].

In *Schotter wie Heu* the gender divide is attached to a tradition that is on the brink of extinction (the village bank). On the surface Heimat promotes a *heile Welt*, on the inside exclusion is evident. Manuela Fiedler notes: ‘Sie [Heimat] ist der Ort der Utopie ebenso wie der Ort der Ausgrenzung.’ [Heimat is the place of utopia but also the place of ostracism.]<sup>314</sup> On Heimat and social exclusion, Peter Blickle similarly notes: ‘The defensive structure of a self and of a Heimat fulfil the same purpose: they provide a sense of ontological security at the expense of those who are not given access because they might threaten the small world.’<sup>315</sup>

In *Schotter wie Heu* additional cracks become apparent in the seemingly wholesome Heimat image. The flaws are not visible but are indicated by the villagers in conversation – underlining that there is a

darker side to Heimat: never seen openly but implied furtively. Vogt himself describes one of these cracks: ‘Nicht das Sie meinen, dass wir in einer heilen Welt leben. Bei uns gehen Ehen zu Bruch, dass es nur so pfeift.’

[Don’t think we live in an ideal world. We have marriages breaking up here

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<sup>314</sup> Fiedler, p.11.

<sup>315</sup> Blickle, p.78.

all over the place.]. The village community – a prime Heimat value – is in itself broken: hostility among family and neighbours ('Da könnte man ein Horrormoman drüber schreiben (...) was da unter der Decke läuft.' [One could write a horror story about what goes on behind closed doors.]), deserted and lonely youth ('In Gammesfeld ist für die Jugend eigentlich fast nichts da.' [There's almost nothing for youth in Gammesfeld.]), suicides ('Es fällt auf, dass überdurchschnittlich viele Selbstmorde im Blick auf die Einwohnerzahl hier geschehen sind.' [It's noticeable that there is an above-average number of suicides in relation to the number of inhabitants.]).

In *Die Blutritter* the victims of Heimat ostracism speak out directly. It is only towards the end of the film that the shadows of Heimat appear. Jürgen Hohl, a church textile restorer, discloses his homosexuality for the first time in front of the camera towards the end of the film. He recounts his sexual coming out: 'Mir ist innerlich der Boden unter den Füßen weg, weil ich plötzlich gemerkt habe, man beginnt auszustoßen.' [I felt as if the rug had been pulled from under my feet because I suddenly noticed I was being expelled.] Scenes that follow, however, represent Jürgen as part of the community that expelled him: a devout member of the traditional procession and local church. A later sequence shows Jürgen with his new partner. The camera pans from one close-up of a face covered by a theatrical

mask to another face covered by a similar mask. The lighting lends the scene a dream-like atmosphere. The men take off the masks in the establishing shot that follows which shows them both seated in armchairs positioned diagonally facing each other. The image is framed by a decorated wooden door that leans open and fills the left part of the image. The masks and door can be read symbolically: the film-maker has opened the door into a private and deeper side of the Heimat picture; Jürgen is willing to break out of his masked life and present himself with a male partner – a partner not from Weingarten but from elsewhere. The representation of Heimat is far from a black-and-white picture; it is a place where tradition remains alive but at a cost, whether this is the cost of tradition compromising or the cost of tradition ostracising.

### 3.3. Heimat Revived: *Heimweh* and *Fernweh*

*Herr Wichmann von der CDU* (Andreas Dresen, 2003)

*Out of Edeka* (Konstantin Faigle, 2001)

The notions of departure and return are intrinsically linked to the concept of Heimat. The Heimat image is most often generated by the sentiment of *Heimweh* [homesickness]. Heimat develops from a longing – the longing for a place left behind and a time elapsed. Martin Hecht explains:

Heimat entsteht erst im Blick zurück, im Augenblick des Innewerdens des Verlusts eines Ortes. Ohne diesen erlebten Verlust gibt es keine Heimat.

[Heimat originates in looking back, at the moment of awareness of the loss of a place. Without this experience of loss, there can be no Heimat.]<sup>316</sup>

Hence, the return to the location of Heimat is a search for what has been lost, described by one Heimat publication in its title as 'Suchbild und Suchbewegung'.<sup>317</sup>

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<sup>316</sup> Martin Hecht, *Das Verschwinden der Heimat. Zur Gefühlslage der Nation* (Leipzig, Reclam, 2000), p.17.

<sup>317</sup> Fabienne Liptay, Susanne Marschall and Andreas Solbach, eds, *Heimat. Suchbild und Suchbewegung* (Remscheid: Gardez!, 2005).

The generic 1950s Heimat film featured a distinct emphasis on displacement, one caused mainly by war refugees. However, this mobility was not characterised by a return to Heimat but more by *Heimweh* and the longing for that return, as Moltke points out: 'To indulge in nostalgia was only one of the functions of the *Vertriebene* [displaced persons] in the *Heimatfilm*.'<sup>318</sup> Both the narratives of *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* and *Out of Edeka* are driven by the return to Heimat, in both cases to the place of birth/of childhood. In *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* Henryk Wichmann returns from Berlin, where he studies law, to his home region of the Uckermark, where he embarks on a political campaign. In *Out of Edeka* filmmaker Faigle returns from the big city to his home village of Empfingen in the region of Swabia, where he embarks on a journey of self-discovery through his family relationships. On the return to the Heimat, *Heimweh* expectations must be reconciled with the discovery of the prosaicness of reality, or in Ernst Bloch's words: 'Dass die Vergoldung des Heimwehs bei der Rückkehr verschwindet.' [That the gilding of the *Heimweh* disappears with the return.]<sup>319</sup> The relationship between illusionary longings and realistic findings is central to perceptions of Heimat in both films.

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These terms, not easily translatable into English, express notions of yearning.

<sup>318</sup> von Moltke, p.139.

<sup>319</sup> Ernst Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1959), p.433.

*Herr Wichmann von der CDU* opens by establishing the relationship between Henryk Wichmann and his longing for Heimat. The film begins with a medium shot of Wichmann standing against a background of green countryside: bushes, leaves, trees, water.<sup>320</sup> Wichmann launches into a motivational speech directed at someone to the left behind the camera: 'Ich bin 25 Jahre alt, einer von hier, und möchte mich in Berlin für meine Heimat stark machen.' [I am 25 years old, come from here and want to represent my Heimat in Berlin.]. As Wichmann physically moves towards this point of engagement, the camera slowly pans left with his movements. The speech ends with Wichmann embracing his girlfriend: 'Ich möchte, dass unsere Kinder einmal hier eine Zukunft haben.' [I want our children to have a future here.]. The scene is one of Heimat motifs: pastoral nature, regional belonging, family values. The scene fades into a black-out which carries the film's title in white lettering: 'Herr Wichmann von der CDU.' The sequence continues but only to reveal the artificial construct of the previous scene: a camera team filming and Wichmann rehearsing his lines and movements. The construction of the Heimat image is faced with external intrusion: noisy passers-by. The intrusion has its affect on the Heimat setting. The camera captures Wichmann in medium-shot standing on a small walkway bridge in

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<sup>320</sup> See Appendix I, D1.

the middle of green countryside. The sound of approaching passers-by irritates him and he mimics the sound of their steps: 'Schlurf, schlurf, schlurf!' [Shuffle, shuffle, shuffle.]. Once the passers-by reach the bridge Wichmann mutters: 'Füsse heben!' [Lift your feet!]. The cameraman comments: 'Das sind deine potentielle Wähler!' [Those are your potential voters.]. And Wichmann replies: 'Die bestimmt nicht.' [Not them for sure.]. The passers-by descend into the background while Wichmann again imitates their clatter: 'Krup, krup, krup!' This aural imbalance and disparity is reflected in the visual framing: the team's camera lens and microphone infringe the frame, as do the sound engineer's body and the cameraman's hand. A long metal pole speckled with rust runs vertically through the frame from the bridge's railing. The initial Heimat image is obliterated and the initial Heimat motifs are inverted: metal constructs and technical equipment instead of pastoral green countryside, regional irritation instead of regional belonging, a production team instead of a family unit. This sequence foreshadows both the film's and Wichmann's dialectics: Heimat idealism versus Heimat realities.

The first scene in *Out of Edeka* foreshadows similar Heimat dialectics. Faigle's voice-over offers an indicator to the illusionary quality of his film's subject matter:

Ich träume oft von unserem Laden, dann steigt mir dieser Geruch in die Nase, ein Geruch, den ich nie vergessen werde. (...) Nun wird er bald schließen, der Laden meiner Kindheit, der Ort, den ich immer noch als Heimat bezeichne.

[I often dream about our shop, then I smell this smell which I'll never forget. (...) Now it's going to close, the shop of my childhood, the place which I always think of as Heimat.]

The camera slowly moves along the shop shelves through darkness guided by a torch's light which shines onto the items for sale. The movements of the torchlight and roaming camera establish Heimat as a search – a search into a place and time which remains unidentifiable in the darkness. The non-diegetic sound of wind whistling strengthens the surrealism of the sequence. The dream-like sequence ends with the noises of a busy shop: a black insert displaying the film's title in white lettering appears accompanied by the sound of murmuring customer voices and the harsh noise of the cash till. The nostalgic dream-like scene is ended by a return to the everyday.

The correlation between Heimat nostalgia and Heimat reality is epitomised in the depiction of Faigle's parents. Faigle places his parents at the centre of collective German Heimat nostalgia: the couple are seen

listening to *Heimatmusik* [Heimat music] and watching a Heimat film. Hans and Josefine are depicted dancing in the shop to traditional *Volksmusik* [folk music]. The music prompts association with the Heimat film genre - a genre laden with spectacles of dances and *Volksmusik*. The *Volksmusik* song in *Out of Edeka* acts as a nostalgic bridge to the past: it was music that brought the couple together over thirty years ago, and it is music that unites the couple in old age. The lyrics of the song echo Heimat's illusionary quality as a longing rather than a reality: 'Unter den Kastanien spielt die Musik. Dort zu sitzen, zu lauschen, zu träumen, das ist mein größtes Glück.' [The music plays under the chestnut trees. To sit there, to listen, to dream, that is my greatest joy.]. The sequence is followed by another scene in which the couple is placed within Heimat nostalgia. Faigle's parents are seen sitting relaxing in pyjamas and blankets in their armchairs watching TV. A close-up of the TV screen identifies the programme as one of a generic Heimat film nature: a group of men and women in regional dress – two carrying bouquets of flowers – gathered in a traditional interior setting and involved in a comical scene of confusion.<sup>321</sup> These images of Heimat family bliss are counterbalanced by scenes of harsh realities. The camera symbolically indicates a tragedy that lingers in the past: a shot of a drawer

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<sup>321</sup> Confusion and misunderstanding being a typical 1950s Heimat film motif.

of empty schnapps bottles and a mouse caught dead in a mouse trap. The film then cuts to confront Faigle's father, then his mother, about an alcoholic and violent past. When confronting his mother about his father's behaviour, she gets up from her chair to escape the glare of the camera lens: 'Ich sag' dazu nichts. Dann hab' ich die ganze Zeit Streit. Dann störst du unseren Frieden. Und ich will keinen Streit mehr.' [I'm not going to say anything. There'll just be arguments the whole time. You're ruining our peace. And I don't want any more arguments.]. Despite indicating realities that challenge the construction of Heimat bliss, Faigle concludes with an image of family romanticism steeped in a Heimat landscape. Hans is pushing his wife in a wheelchair along the fields.<sup>322</sup> The camera captures the couple moving from left to right along the horizon – blades of grass in the foreground, vast forest hills in the background and a red-tinted sky reigning over the entire image.

The return to Heimat in *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* is not motivated by nostalgia. The film denies insight into Wichmann's personal past. It must be noted, however, that the DVD offers interviews with both his parents (who do not feature in the film) as extended material. Wichmann's visit to an old folks' home – the gateway to the past – offers insight into dementia rather than nostalgia. The only hint of nostalgia is one of political

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<sup>322</sup> See Appendix I, B8.

parameters: *Ostalgie*, a term referring to nostalgia for life in the former East Germany.<sup>323</sup> Wichmann admits in an emotional moment in a plenary discussion: 'Wir wollen das, was wir in der DDR auch hatten.' [We want what we had in the GDR.]. Wichmann's return to his home is driven far more by a political idealism for his Heimat's future. Whereas Faigle turns to search for Heimat in the past, Wichmann is sure of finding it in the future. Hence, Heimat becomes a place of utopia as well as a place of nostalgia.

On the return to Heimat, the protagonists in both films are confronted by threats to the Heimat brought about by economic circumstances. In *Out of Edeka* the autobiographical journey is instigated by the closure of the family-run village shop. The threat comes from the modern: the global discounter supermarket. The modern lifestyle is the perpetrator of the demise of local family traditions (see also 3.2.). The film stages a dream-like battle against the global enemy: dressed as armed guerrillas, the family take customers of the discounter supermarket hostage (see 2.3. for scene description).<sup>324</sup> In the next scene the camera enters the rival discounter supermarket within the confined space of a shopping trolley. The family cat is seen sitting in front of the lens in the cart with

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<sup>323</sup> It is a portmanteau of the German words *Ost* [east] and *Nostalgie* [nostalgia].

<sup>324</sup> See also Appendix I, B7.

explosives tied around its body. The threat to the family legacy is a typical Heimat film plotline, as Höfig notes:

Die Analyse (...) hat ergeben, das das bäuerliche Anwesen als „Erbe“ einen positiven HF-Wert darstellt und die gesamte heimische Welt in Gefahr gerät, wenn dieser Wert bedroht wird. Der Rettung eines bedrohten Anwesens ist deshalb immer der (...) Erfolg beschieden.

[Analysis has shown that rural property as inheritance presents a positive Heimat film value and the whole world of the home is in danger when this value comes under threat. Saving a threatened property is therefore always allowed success.]<sup>325</sup>

*Out of Edeka*, however, ends with the closure of the shop rather than its rescue. The negative effects on family and Heimat are, however, palpable. The collapse of the family legacy causes health consequences. Towards the end of the film, mother Faigle is faced with a physical ailment: Josefine has injured her leg and is restricted in movement. Father Faigle on the other hand suffers from an emotional ailment: his lawyer recalls a breakdown in his office. Even film-maker Faigle is seen visiting an acupuncture practice to reduce stress-related illness.

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<sup>325</sup> Höfig, p.422.

In *Herr Wichmann von der CDU Heimat* also faces economic threat: the lack of employment and consequent migration. While Dresen dispenses with all voice-over, it is the camera work that comments on the consequences of the economic circumstances on Heimat. By using long shots to capture Wichmann campaigning, Dresen simultaneously depicts his surroundings: urbanised spaces empty of people. A shot of Wichmann campaigning in front of a shopping arcade is dominated by a vacant pavement. A shot of Wichmann campaigning at the roadside is again dictated by an empty pavement.<sup>326</sup> A shot of Wichmann campaigning on stage is overshadowed by rows of unfilled beer-benches assembled on an open pavement.

Whereas in *Out of Edeka* the return witnesses the disintegration of family tradition, in *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* the return is greeted by the disintegration of a rural community. Wichmann is prepared to compromise on Heimat's natural landscape to create employment opportunities and avoid the demise of his home. He is heard repeating the same catchphrase over and over again to his potential voters: 'Die Grünen kommen und sagen, da ist ein Frosch, da ist ein Trockenrasen, ein Feuchtbiotop.' [The Greens come and say, that's a frog, that's grassland, that's wetland.].

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<sup>326</sup> See Appendix I, D5.

Wichmann is offering Heimat's most valued commodity for sale: nature. Nevertheless, like *Out of Edeka*, the film does not end with the recouping of Heimat. The return of Wichmann to the Uckermark concludes with the defeat of his utopian idealism. The film ends with election results: a close-up of Wichmann shaking his head, frowning and muttering in disbelief while he watches the screens deliver the results.

In keeping with Heimat's twofold character, the notion of *Heimweh* is linked to *Fernweh* – the longing for the *Fremde*. The urge of *Heimkehr* is the result of an initial *Fernweh*: a decision to depart must precede the decision to return. It can only be presumed that Wichmann's decision to leave the region was motivated by his educational ambitions – the film gives information about Wichmann's studies in Berlin but fails to offer insight into his initial departure from the region. In *Out of Edeka*, on the other hand, the theme of *Fernweh* is explored to a greater extent. On his return to the village of Empfingen Faigle attempts to revisit his youthful days, thereby exploring sentiments of *Fernweh*: the camera focuses on an interior door while Faigle's voice-over contextualises the image: 'Zwischen meinem heutigem Zimmer und meinem Jugendzimmer liegen 468 Kilometer, 94 Meter und zehn Lebensjahre.' [Between my room today and the room of my youth lie 468 kilometres, 94 metres and ten years of life.]. The door is

covered with a poster depicting a Spanish matador and a bull in battle. The names of two famous Spanish bullfighters additionally decorate the poster. It is striking that Faigle's name stands alongside that of the Spanish fighters – a clear identifier of a custom-made souvenir. Whether or not Faigle actually visited Spain is irrelevant, however. More important is that it offers an indicator of Faigle's early *Fernweh*. As a youth Faigle pictured himself on a Spanish battlefield rather than in a Swabian shop floor. The sequence that follows emphasises Faigle's longing to be part of the non-familiar: in a re-enacted scene Faigle is able to translate a Spanish customer's shopping requests. Spain recurs as a leitmotif throughout the film: one re-enactment shows Faigle actually dressed as a matador (see Chapter Two), and another re-enactment shows him being depilated by a Spanish woman. Faigle's *Fernweh* is equally expressed in his choice of girlfriends over the years, as father Faigle explains: 'Zuerst eine aus München, dann eine Französin, die dritte, weiß ich nicht woher, und jetzt hat er wieder eine Spanierin. Der ist international, der Kerl.' [First one from Munich, then a French girl, don't know where the third one came from and now he has a Spanish girl. The fellow's international.]. Faigle describes his *Fernweh* as: 'Eine Flucht vor dem Laden.' [An escape from the shop]. His urge to forsake the shop is an ostensible simultaneous abandonment of Heimat values such as family,

home and tradition. Faigle is seen re-enacting his teenage days of escape by racing the village streets and countryside on his moped with a chicken mask accompanied by rock music. The film suddenly cuts to a different landscape: Faigle sitting smoking on top of a hill overlooking a town. Like Faigle in the past, the camera ventures away from the village to Georgia, where Faigle reveals that he has a young daughter living. The disclosure is unexpected as Faigle has not mentioned her up until this late point in the film. As there is no subsequent mention of the girl's mother, the images of Georgia fail to explore the broken relationship between Faigle and the mother. Instead the images of Georgia remain uncomplicated and purely innocent: the child Miriami combing her hair in front of a mirror, Miriami walking down the street, Miriami running in a red hat. The camera circles a tree which Faigle identifies in the voice-over as a 'wish-tree' (see also 1.3. for scene description). Folkloric Georgian songs underline the camera movement. Although far off from his *real* Heimat, Faigle portrays Georgia in Heimat film terms: the innocence of childhood, the supremacy of nature and folklore, the absence of a mother figure. The film reconciles the two ostensibly conflicting notions of *Heimat* and *Fremde*. In Empfingen Faigle offers a further picture of this reconciliation. Faigle's brother, Gerhard, is portrayed as a solitary hard-working man who has only just found

happiness in life with his girlfriend and two children. Family bliss is conveyed through a single shot of two children playing in the garden with their mother. Gerhard's family bliss originated in the *Fremde* – his girlfriend is from Poland; they met through letter correspondence. Gerhard has embraced someone else's *Fernweh* to optimise his Heimat. In *Out of Edeka* Faigle re-invents ideas of Heimat and family into a global framework.

Towards the end of the film the elderly Faigle couple, who admit to having travelled abroad only once in their lifetime, are seen travelling outside the familiar region – a journey, however, that is not motivated by *Fernweh* but necessity. To avoid embarrassment the couple decide to travel outside of the village community to do their food shopping and to sell their remaining shop goods. Hans and Josefine are seen selling remaining shop goods at a car boot sale on the parking lot of a large discounter supermarket. The camera moves past stalls and goods, buyers, cars and large trucks – a motorway bridge is visible in the background. Middle Eastern flutes and drums accompany the hand-held camera movements. A shot of a female seller in a headscarf underlines further the foreignness of the place for the Faigles. The supermarket car park is worlds apart from the cosy village shop. Heimat, as Faigle once knew it, no longer exists.

In *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* displacement is equally motivated by necessity rather than by sentiment. Like the Faigles, the young people of the Uckermark region are forced to leave their Heimat due to economic circumstances. They see the solution to their economic problems in the *Fremde*. In other words, their longing to move away is an 'economic *Fernweh*'. Economically, the Heimat has only unemployment to offer. *Fremde* is no longer defined by the divide between rural and urban (see 3.1.), but by an economic segregation caused by the end of the political divide between East Germany and West Germany. Wichmann makes this clear in one of his rallies: 'In Bayern wird das Geld erwirtschaftet, und in Brandenburg hat Regine Hildebrandt<sup>327</sup> ABM Projekte davon bezahlt, die nichts gebracht haben.' [The money is earned in Bavaria, and in Brandenburg Regine Hildebrandt spends it on job creation projects that amount to nothing.]

Although a community of economic emigrants, however, the Uckermark region does not generally welcome economic immigrants: 'Hauptsache die Ausländer raus!', 'Mich ärgert, dass so viele Ausländer hier sind!' [Main thing is to get rid of the foreigners! It makes me angry that there are so many foreigners here!] The immigrants, also motivated by

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<sup>327</sup> Former minister of the government of the federal state of Brandenburg.

'economic *Fernweh*', are seen by the local inhabitants as an intrusion into their Heimat. They fail to see that their own 'economic *Fernweh*' will make of them intruders into someone else's Heimat.

Wichmann intends to save his Heimat from 'economic *Fernweh*' and its consequences by overruling Heimat conventions: change instead of consistency, economy instead of ecology, construction instead of preservation. Although Wichmann's campaign slogans proclaim change ('Frischer Wind bringt Bewegung in die Politik'; 'Zeit für einen Neuen' [A fresh wind will get politics moving; Time for someone new]), it is a change that actually aims at preservation. By replacing 'economic *Fernweh*' with 'economic *Heimweh*', the future of the Heimat is safeguarded.

### 3.4. Heimat Revived: *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*

*Die Blume der Hausfrau* (Dominik Wessely, 1999)

*Durchfahrtsland* (Alexandra Sell, 2005)

3.1. examined the spatial dimension (*Territorium*) of Heimat, 3.4. will consider the social dimension (*Gemeinschaft*) in more detail on the basis of the films *Die Blume der Hausfrau* and *Durchfahrtsland*. The term *Gemeinschaft* has been shaped significantly by sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies. According to Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft* equals social bonds that are based on natural conditions which he explains as follows: 'Die allgemeine Wurzel dieser Verhältnisse ist der Zusammenhang des vegetativen Lebens durch die Geburt.' [The general root of these relationships is the connection of the vegetative life through birth].<sup>328</sup> The core of *Gemeinschaft* lies within the relations that are acquired by birth: the family. *Gemeinschaft*, however, is not limited to family relations, which gradually expand to include relations through neighbours, friends and marriage. *Gesellschaft* on the other hand is not based on family bonds: 'Die Theorie der Gesellschaft konstruiert einen Kreis von Menschen, welche (...) auf friedliche Art nebeneinander leben und wohnen, aber nicht wesentlich verbunden (...) sind.' [The theory of

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<sup>328</sup> Ferdinand Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1963), p.8.

*Gesellschaft* constructs a circle of people who live and reside near one another but are not essentially connected.].<sup>329</sup> Andrea Bastian draws upon the term *Gemeinschaft* to define the social dimension of Heimat. Her understanding of Heimat relations resembles Tönnies' insight into *Gemeinschaft* – early socialisation being the key initiator:

Mit zunehmendem Alter erweitern sich die Heimat-Beziehungen über die Mutter und die Familie hinaus und das Individuum tritt in vielfältige Beziehungen zu seiner Umwelt. (...) Neben Familie, Verwandtschaft, Freunde und Nachbarn treten im Laufe des Sozialisationsprozesses Institutionen wie Kindergarten, Schule, Arbeitsplatz, Vereine, Verbände, Gewerkschaften, Parteien. Aus all diesen Beziehungen, die dem Individuum potentiell zur Verfügung stehen, kann sich, bedingt durch das Bewusstsein von Zusammengehörigkeit, Heimatgefühl entwickeln.

[With increasing age the Heimat relationships expand beyond mother and family and the individual enters into diverse relationships with his surroundings (...) Besides family, relatives, friends and neighbours institutions such as kindergarten, school, work place, clubs, societies, unions, parties are added in the course of the socialisation process. From all these relationships that are

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<sup>329</sup> Tönnies, p.40.

potentially at the disposal of an individual, conditioned through the awareness of belonging, a feeling of Heimat can develop.]<sup>330</sup>

Bastian, however, notes that *Gesellschaft* as well as *Gemeinschaft* can lead to sentiments of Heimat (*Heimatgefühl*).<sup>331</sup> Her use of the term *Gemeinschaft* embraces both Tönnies' definitions of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. This Section, however, will distinguish between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* when looking at Heimat on screen. Whereas *Gemeinschaft* is generally associated with pre-industrial societies, *Gesellschaft* is linked to industrial societies. The term Heimat itself is often cast between the pre-industrial and the industrial – its nineteenth-century conceptual development evolved alongside the decline of *Gemeinschaft* and the advance of *Gesellschaft*. A century later the 1950s Heimat film proved a forum for negotiating the pre-industrial and the industrial. Hence, *Gemeinschaft* as well as *Gesellschaft* must be taken into consideration when examining the social dimension of Heimat.

*Durchfahrtsland* portrays four protagonists represented through their experiences with local social structures of *Gemeinschaft*: Pastor Dümmer and his religious congregation; Guiseppe Scolaro and his brass band; Mark Basinski and the *Jungesellenverein* [bachelor club] and Sophia Rey and the

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<sup>330</sup> Bastian, p.42.

<sup>331</sup> Bastian, p.26.

village community. Other forms of *Gemeinschaft* are indicated throughout the film: a 'Schumi' club,<sup>332</sup> a *Schützenverein* [shooting club], a *Karnevalverein* [carnival club]. The cohesiveness of the *Gemeinschaft*, provided by what Andrea Bastian refers to as 'gemeinschaftsstiftende bzw. gemeinschaftserhaltende Aspekte wie z.B. Traditionen, Bräuche, Rituale' [aspects which promote or maintain *Gemeinschaft* such as traditions, customs, rituals.],<sup>333</sup> is witnessed in the film's many scenes of seasonal *Gemeinschaft* celebrations: the Easter procession, the May Queen auction, the May tree allocation, the May Queen coronation, the St. Martin's lantern parade, the Carnival meeting. With traditional modes of transport (foot, tractor, horse) and traditional costumes, the *Gemeinschaft* is seen moving through the landscape or village symbolically reviving times gone by. Sell's voice-over assures her viewers that these celebrations are profoundly historical: 'Früher gab es Regionen im christlichen Abendland, da began das Kirchenjahr zu Ostern. Im Vorgebirge schien es immer noch so zu sein.' [Before, there were regions in the Christian West where the church year began at Easter. This still seems to be the case in the foothills.]. They were also close to folkloric and mythical happenings ('Mancher unten am Rhein sagte, dass es die Frauen wären, die im Vorgebirge den Ton angeben. Dass

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<sup>332</sup> A fan club of the German racing-driver Michael Schumacher, whose public nickname is *Schumi*.

<sup>333</sup> Bastian, p.25.

die Männer nicht allzu viel zu sagen hätten und dass es am Trinkwasser dort oben liegen müsse.' [Some down at the Rhine said that it was the women who called the tune in the foothills. That the men didn't have much of a say and that it must be because of the drinking water up there.]). The Heimat film has often been discussed in mythical terms.<sup>334</sup> Sell's frequent use of the subjunctive in her sentence constructions adds a mythical quality to her images. Her voice-over delivers word-of-mouth rather than verified facts ('Ganz genau wußte niemand, warum das Vorgebirge Vorgebirge hieß.' [No-one really knew for sure why the foothills were called the foothills.]). Sell's voice is occasionally interrupted by a male voice-over reading passages from a crime novel set in the *Vorgebirge*, thereby setting the imagery within an additional fictional context. Sell's voice-over techniques permit the generally fact-driven documentary to take on a fictional character, allowing the myth of Heimat to enter the genre of documentary.

Nevertheless, Sell's choice of framing is far from mythical. On the contrary, she reminds her viewer of the nearby industrial structures of *Gesellschaft*. The shot of the May procession of musicians moving through the green fields is governed by tall factory chimneys rising into the sky in

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<sup>334</sup> Georg Seeßlen, 'Der Heimatfilm. Zur Mythologie eines Genres', in *Sprung im Spiegel. Filmisches Wahrnehmen zwischen Fiktion und Wirklichkeit*, ed. by Christa Blümlinger (Vienna, Sonderzahl, 1990), pp.342-362.

the background. The children's Easter march is introduced by a shot of branches of yellow flowers and a horizon of industry.<sup>335</sup> Whereas the 1950s Heimat film avoided disruptions to the pre-industrial village-scapes, *Durchfahrtsland* encourages framing that sets people of *Gemeinschaft* in opposition to symbols of *Gesellschaft* – a reminder perhaps that the Heimat *Gemeinschaft* is a fragile construct in this present day.

Neither framing nor narrative allows for an idyllic understanding of *Gemeinschaft*. Rather than portraying *Gemeinschaft* from its midst, Sell chooses protagonists who struggle to find their place in the *Gemeinschaft* of Heimat: Dümmer is new to the region and finds himself caught between the hostility of two villages; Guisepppe is torn between his Italian heritage, his commitment to the German army and the local brass band; Mark would rather paint than devote his time to the *Junggesellenverein*; Sophia has become an outcast in her own village. All four protagonists are to an extent outsiders from a Heimat *Gemeinschaft*. Whereas local social formations of *Gemeinschaft* generally aim to provide a harbour for sentiments of Heimat, in *Durchfahrtsland* they are portrayed as sources of conflict for the protagonists.

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<sup>335</sup> See Appendix I, G8.

These troubled undercurrents of *Gemeinschaft* are foreshadowed in the first sequences of the film: melancholic music, grey snow-washed village scenery and a citation from Sophia's novel. The excerpt tells about a young woman, Camilla, who is lured into the foothills by a doctor in his luxurious car to be brutally murdered in his lavish holiday home. The audio is linked to the imagery by symbolically connecting the fictitious to the factual: the passage describing Camilla approaching her murderer ('Sie tippelte wie selbstverständlich auf den Doktor zu.' [She tip-toed trustingly towards the doctor.]) is linked to the congregation approaching pastor Dümmer for communion; the description of the doctor gasping for air ('Er drang nach Luft.' [He fought for air.]) is tied to a close-up of Sophia breathing deeply amongst her cigarette smoke; the account of Camilla's last moment of silent horror ('Camilla machte die Augen auf und wollte vor Schreck laut schreien. Doch sie kam nicht mehr dazu.' [Camilla opened her eyes and wanted to scream in terror. But she was no longer able to.]) is accompanied by an image of Sophia's porcelain doll holding her hand delicately in front of her mouth. The bridge between audio and image ascertains Heimat as *unheimlich* rather than *heimlich*.

Towards the end of the film there is a second reading from one of Sophia's novels. This time Sophia's words tell about a man fleeing from the

East and settling down in the foothills: 'Er musste zur Arbeit. Er fühlte sich wohl dort. (...) Er hatte sich den Vorgebirgsdialekt seiner Kollegen angewöhnt.' [He had to go to work. He felt good there. (...) He had got used to his colleagues' foothill dialect.]. The camera momentarily rests on a diagonal view of a television screen: a colourful and joyful carnival parade flickers on the screen. The *Gemeinschaft* of *unheimlich* has been transformed into a *Gemeinschaft* of *heimlich*.

The literary passage is echoed in the protagonists Dümmer and Guiseppa who both come to the region from elsewhere. Dümmer's origins remain unknown whereas Guiseppa is of Sicilian origin and moreover resides in a village beyond the region, the foothills. Their non-regional background, however, does not deter them from participating in the local *Gemeinschaft* institutions. Dümmer's position as head of the religious congregation obliges him to take on a formal role in the religious *Gemeinschaft*. Although the film depicts scenes of his success in uniting two hostile communities, Sell creates a rift between him and the village congregation in Dümmer's final appearance in the film: 'Eigentlich hatte Pfarrer Dümmer seine Annahme an allen Karnivalsitzungen (...) abgesagt (...). Letztendlich kam er doch, denn seine Absage wurde viel diskutiert.' [Father Dümmer had cancelled his participation at all carnival meetings. In

the end he did come because his refusal was much discussed.]. The camera cuts between close-ups of elderly ladies dressed in carnival costume gazing sternly off-screen upwards towards the stage on which Dümmer is being presented. By choosing to illustrate the audience separately from Dümmer, Sell creates a visual partition thereby reinforcing the divide already indicated in the voice-over. Dümmer's role in the foothills is a purely occupational one – he is never seen interacting with the *Gemeinschaft* on a personal level, which indicates a relationship more *Gesellschaft* in nature. Dümmer does not evidence any Heimat sentiment.

Guiseppe, on the other hand, is seen seeking emotional bonds of Heimat through his music band. The band is a distinct sign of *Gemeinschaft* – Benno Kleber, a prominent member of the group, acts in a fatherly way towards Guiseppe and even refers to the members as 'Brüder' [brothers]. Guiseppe abandons his Italian roots to embrace the foothills traditions, as his mother explains: 'Da hat er das Italienische abgelehnt.(...) Guiseppe hat Nebelschütz<sup>336</sup> und Benno<sup>337</sup> immer vorgezogen. (...) Der Verein stand an erster Stelle – immer noch!' [He has rejected the Italian. (...) Guiseppe has always preferred Nebelschütz and Benno. (...) The club always came first for him – and still does.]. Guiseppe replaces the *Gemeinschaft* of early

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<sup>336</sup> Village in East Saxony, where the *Tambourcorps* [pipe and drum band] holiday on an annual basis.

<sup>337</sup> Prominent member of the *Tambourcorps* [pipe and drum band].

socialisation (his family) with a new one: the brass band. Guiseppe's crisis with the musical *Gemeinschaft* commences when his commitments to the army get in the way. The crisis evolves and breaks down relations in the group. After failed attempts to make peace with the brass band, Guiseppe puts in a request to be stationed abroad. Film-maker Sell recounts the rising hostility towards Guiseppe: 'Manche im Tambourcorps sagten, Guiseppe's plötzliches Fernweh wäre eine reine Trotzreaktion. Da ginge einmal wieder sein italienisches Temperament mit ihm durch.' [Some members of the pipe and drum band said Guiseppe's sudden longing to go away somewhere else was no more than an act of defiance. His Italian temperament once more got the better of him.]. Although Guiseppe rejects his Italian heritage, the band now see him as exactly that: an Italian – thereby labelling him as an outsider to the *Gemeinschaft*. The film ends with Guiseppe's definite withdrawal from the brass band. The film's final still shows him once again in traditional custom – this time as a member of the *Schützenverein* [shooting club]. For Guiseppe *Gemeinschaft* is replaceable.

Mark and Sophie, on the other hand, are from the foothills but like Dümmer and Guiseppe struggle for integration into the village's community. Mark's relationship to the *Junggesellenverein* [bachelor club] is a troubled one. Mark's uneasiness in the *Verein* is displayed through his body

language when with the *Verein* members – the camera catches him off-guard yawning, biting his nails or peering at the others. Despite being from the region, Mark takes on the role of an outsider, as Sell makes clear: ‘Mark Basinski hatte seine ganze Kindheit überlebt ohne einem einzigen Verein beizutreten. Das machte ihn zu einem eher ungewöhnlichen Walberberger.’ [Mark Basinski went through his whole childhood without joining a single club. That made him an unusual Walberberger.]. His exceptionalism is expressed through his passion for art: rather than assisting his *Verein* colleagues to build the festive tent, he is seen helping the girls paint the stage design in the tent. In the privacy of his own home, Mark introduces his artistic achievements to the viewer.<sup>338</sup> The camera focuses on a close-up of a painting in blue shades, with an unmistakable similarity to Van Gogh’s masterpieces. Mark’s hand points to the few houses amongst the blue land-and skyline: ‘Also hier unten fehlt noch das Dorf.’ [Down here the village is still missing.]. This statement seems to sum up Mark’s feelings towards his neighbour environment: Mark has left the village until the end – its lack of priority reflects the village’s lack of precedence in Mark’s own life. His desire to leave the village to study fashion in the big city, however, is thwarted by obstacles. Instead, at the end of the film Mark decides to

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<sup>338</sup> See Appendix I, G7.

become a florist, which will allow him to enjoy Heimat sentiment without compromising his personal artistic ambitions.

Whilst Mark escapes into the world of art, Sophia escapes from the village in her writing. Although Sophia's relationship to the foothills is problematic, her novels explore exactly that geographic milieu. With novels titled such as 'Kiffer, Klunker und Kaffeetanten' [Potheads, Bling and Biddies] and 'Wahnsinn, Wirrwarr, Wasserleichen' [Madness, Chaos, Water Corpses].<sup>339</sup> Sophia portrays her *Heimat* as a place of crime. The novels are not a success with her village neighbours. Sophia's relationship towards her village *Gemeinschaft*, however, changes towards the end of the film. The reason for this is her new book, according to Sell's voice-over: 'Der Mörder kam aus dem Vorgebirge und der Held war ein unschuldig verdächtiger Zugereister. Das hat es nie gegeben in einem Buch von Sophia. *Der Maskenmann* wurde Sophia Rey's größter Erfolg.' [The murderer came from the foothills and the hero was an innocent suspect from outside. That has never been in any of Sophia's books. *The Masked Man* became Sophia Rey's biggest success.]. This characterisation of hero and villain contradicts the conventional Heimat film plotline where the *villain* is always associated with the outside. This reversal of Heimat roles has ironically allowed

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<sup>339</sup> The alliteration of the titles is obviously lost in translation.

Sophia to embrace Heimat sentiment: 'Sophia ließ sich für ihr Auto einen Aufkleber mit der Aufschrift *Sophia Rey, Schriftstellerin aus Sechtem* anfertigen.' [Sophia had a car sticker made with the inscription *Sophia Rey, Author from Sechtem.*]. Even though Sophia has now found a readership amongst her fellow villagers, the film still does not represent her in the village outside of her own private home. Instead Sell's voice is heard over an image of the local supermarket – a symbol of commerce. Sophia's success is essentially based on commerce – her fellow villagers must pay to enjoy Sell's product. This relationship resembles one of *Gesellschaft* rather than *Gemeinschaft*. Sophia's new-found Heimat sentiment is due to her success in transforming her failed village *Gemeinschaft* relationship into a successful village *Gesellschaft* relationship.

The interplay between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* in creating Heimat sentiment is equally explored in *Die Blume der Hausfrau*. The relationship between the film's five door-to-door vacuum cleaner salesmen is founded on their daily work commitments. The men are seen discussing sales targets, tactics and turfs. Christmas is represented by a work party – a celebration of annual success and awards. The men are a community of competitive work relations and most certainly a *Gesellschaft* formation. The film, however, also sets a dominant focus on scenes of work intermission:

the coffee and lunch breaks. The camera observes while the men meet to chat, joke and gossip. These scenes all set in a café and a pub are more reminiscent of the togetherness and familiarity of a local *Stammtisch* [regulars' table] than of a work encounter. Candles, decorative curtains, floral table decorations and plants both in the café and the pub create an atmosphere of homely warmth.<sup>340</sup> The last scene even shows the men kicking a football outside the pub. By repeatedly incorporating these leisure scenes, film-maker Wessely allows another layer of this male community to come to the surface: the *Gesellschaft* structure includes elements of *Gemeinschaft* which evoke sentiments of Heimat.

Despite this indication of personal life, the film omits the depiction of the men's homes, thereby representing them solely in their occupational roles as salesmen. The depiction of work has a limited function in the conventional Heimat film, as Trimborn states: 'Die Personen im Heimatfilm sind in den überwiegenden Fällen nicht mit alltäglicher Arbeit belastet.' [The people in Heimat film are for the most part not burdened with daily work.].<sup>341</sup> If represented in Heimat film, work generally serves the welfare of the community. The product sold by the salesmen is one that incongruously does serve Heimat values. The vacuum cleaner not only

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<sup>340</sup> See Appendix I, A4.

<sup>341</sup> Trimborn, p.119.

upholds the wellbeing of *the* Heimat venue, the home, but moreover upholds regional traditions, the *Kehrwoche* [regional cleaning week]. The target customer is female, as a senior salesman implies during a training session at Christmas time: ‘Dass die Frauen (...) im Stress sind mit Gutsle backen. Aber das darf euch nicht stören. Im Gegenteil ihr solltet vielleicht versuchen, dass ihr von den einen oder anderen Backgutsle geschenkt kriegt.’ [That the women are stressed making biscuits. But that shouldn’t bother you. On the contrary, you should maybe try to get them to give you a present of some of their biscuits.]. His description reveals his prototype customer: the housewife, who is also the prototype of the female persona in Heimat film.<sup>342</sup> In *Die Blume der Hausfrau* the housewife takes on the role of consumer (of vacuum cleaners). This consumerism, however, is linked to home-keeping – the Heimat structures of patriarchalism are still in place: ‘Die im Sinne des Heimatfilms “gute” Frau ist weder karrierebewußt noch ehrgeizig.’ [The ‘good’ woman in the sense of Heimat film is neither career-conscious nor ambitious.]<sup>343</sup> The film allows for one exception: a customer of Greek origin. This scene adds an ironic twist to the notion of patriarchal Heimat. Customer Chatzichristidis shows much enthusiasm for cleaning – he tells salesman Stefan how he previously cleaned his carpet: ‘Zwölf

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<sup>342</sup> See Trimborn, Chapter: ‘Das traditionelle Frauenbild im Heimatfilm’, pp.92-95.

<sup>343</sup> Trimborn, p.92.

Eimer, Seifenwasser, warm, habe ich hineingeschüttet. Zwölf Eimer! Ich habe es geschrubbt und dann abgesaugt.' [I poured in twelve buckets, soapy water, warm. Twelve buckets! I scrubbed it and then vacuumed it off.]. The phone rings mid-scene to reveal Frau Chatzichristidis on the line – a local Swabian woman, as Herr Chatzichristidis explains. The phone is passed to Stefan, who tries to arrange a time to revisit once Frau Chatzichristidis has come home from work but this proves to be difficult as she works late. The roles of the Chatzichristidis seem to be reversed: whilst she goes out and works, he stays in and cleans. Herr Chatzichristidis is the only househusband presented in the film. This is all the more extraordinary as he is from Greece – a society that is perceived as typically patriarchal.

The idyllic Heimat image of the welcoming baking housewife described by the senior salesman fails to deliver for all salesmen. The film shows the men more often than not standing in vain in front of a closed door.<sup>344</sup> The world behind the closed door is only open to a few: Stefan who is salesman of the year, for example, is never portrayed outside the home but always within it. Persuasion and charm are the keys to the housewives' homes and successful selling is the key to personal accomplishment. The film cuts between Stefan successfully demonstrating sales equipment and

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<sup>344</sup> See Appendix I, A6.

Ditta unsuccessfully ringing doorbells. Stefan is seen in an elderly lady's cosy living-room. The scene is steeped in Heimat motifs: the faint sound of church bells and a close-up of an ornamental angel lend the scene an air of religious serenity; a traditional broom points to regional obligations such as the *Kehrwoche* [cleaning week] and a pet tortoise provides an allusion to the significance of nature. This scene, however, proves to be the exception: the housewife of Swabia no longer lives in Heimat scenery. Financial troubles ('Das Geld fehlt.' [There's no money.]), divorce ('Aufgrund Scheidung, finanzielles Problem.' [Financial problems because of divorce.]) and absent fathers ('Er ist Kraftfahrer.' [He's a lorry driver.]) have disrupted the notions of a Heimat idyll. The homes are small flats in high-rises far from nature. The camera observes the salesmen walking along corridors lined with doors and up and down hallways of stairs – a visual indicator of a society of individualism rather than community. The film portrays Santagatti more than once working the line of door buzzers. Distant voices speak to Santagatti over the speaker phone. Wessely's depiction of Swabia lacks all sense of *Gemeinschaft*. Although traditions may be upheld (*Kehrwoche* [cleaning week]), they are not communal: the film includes a close-up of a *Kehrwoche* reminder pinned up in a lonely corridor. It is thus surprising that it is precisely the representatives of *Gesellschaft*, the five

salesmen, who are the ones to create *Gemeinschaft*. Not the home, but the café and the pub become the places where Heimat sentiment flourishes.

### 3.5. Heimat Revived: Concluding Note

Chapter Three has revealed new perspectives on the relationship between Heimat and film. Although Heimat, a German concept of belonging and identity interlinked with a sense of place, has long been part of German film history, academic attention in films studies has only really developed in recent decades.

This chapter has identified and examined a new hybrid on the German cinema screen: Heimat and documentary. It has highlighted four different Heimat motifs, each of which consists of polarities and their negotiations, which are integral to the concept of Heimat: rural and urban, modernisation and tradition, *Heimweh* and *Fernweh*, *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. The analysis has shown that these motifs are as relevant to contemporary film-making as to the 1950s Heimat film but in re-invented form.

*Full Metal Village* and *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* offer insights into Heimat film's dualistic understanding of setting: the rural and the urban. Although Heimat is grounded in ideal landscapes of rurality, the role of the urban should not be dismissed but taken into consideration as part of Heimat's double character. In *Full Metal Village* the notion of rural

and urban is played out in the context of a culture clash between villagers and visitors. Despite these significant differences Cho's portrayal of Heimat also includes scenes of cultural reconciliation. In *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* the duality of rural and urban is contextualised in the desires of the protagonists and their visits to the urban. Although the rural presents sexual suppression and family break-up compared to the urban of sexual liberation and close friendships, the rural with its tight-knit social structures such as *Stammtisch*, church and *Verein* remains the preferred choice of home for the protagonists.

*Die Blutritter* and *Schotter wie Heu* thematise Heimat as the locus of tensions between modernisation and tradition. Tradition, at the core of both films, is expressed through narrative, music and film footage. In *Schotter wie Heu* the construction of Heimat is founded in the customs of nostalgia. Whereas modernisation is initially viewed as an existential threat to local traditionalism, the film also offers scenes of 'nostalgic modernisation': the role of the automobile being a potent symbol of this. In *Die Blutritter* the construction of Heimat is established in the rituals of religious myth. Instead of negotiation, *Die Blutritter* shows the drawbacks for women caused by uncompromising traditions in a patriarchal society.

*Herr Wichmann von der CDU* and *Out of Edeka* explore sentiments of *Heimweh* and *Fernweh*. Although the concept of *Heimweh* is based on feelings of longing rather than the actual Heimat return, both films centre their narratives on the return to Heimat and the discovery of the prosaicness behind this idealised yearning. In *Out of Edeka* re-enactments of dreamlike nostalgia are counterbalanced with interviews revealing the harsh realities of family relations. In *Herr Wichmann von der CDU* campaign speeches of political utopia are counterbalanced with long shots of Wichmann in a desolate environment. Wichmann attempts to replace ideas of *Fernweh* and economic growth with sentiments of *Heimweh*. Film-maker and protagonist Faigle, on the other hand, re-invents ideas of *Heimweh* and family by fusing them with sentiments of *Fernweh* – the camera travels to Georgia where it captures scenes of childhood innocence.

*Die Blume der Hausfrau* and *Durchfahrtsland* look at the interplay of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* in present-day Heimat. *Durchfahrtsland* introduces regional and religious community structures into which the film's main protagonists struggle to integrate. The film's framing draws in the nearby industrial *Gesellschaft*. *Die Blume der Hausfrau* reveals *Gesellschaft* relations of work colleagues with sentiments of Heimat. Home has come to represent *Gesellschaft*, whereas work has come to represent *Gemeinschaft*.

All eight films under study revive Heimat motifs typical of the Heimat film , at times re-inventing the Heimat themes in a different pattern. However, the quintessential portrayal of Heimat's *heile Welt* remains. It is a *heile Welt* only to some, an *unheile Welt* to others. Again, Heimat proves its double character.

## 4.0. Conclusion and Further Research

The thesis has provided a preliminary insight into a cinematic development prevalent in contemporary German documentary cinema. The research has identified and introduced a corpus of films which are representative of this development. Using close textual analysis, it has isolated and demonstrated the characteristics that unite these films. The thesis has explored the films through the relationship between human and habitat on screen: Chapter One explored the representation of the rural on screen, Chapter Two examined the representation of the regional on screen and Chapter Three drew upon both previous chapters to engage in a discussion about the portrayal of Heimat on screen.

Representations of the interplay between human and habitat under discussion in this research are the result of a representation of 'reel' as well as 'real' environments.<sup>345</sup> More generally speaking, these documentaries often represent habitat as an emulation of representations of environments. These 'reel' environments have been formed and shaped by generations of other film-makers. Film-makers emulate representations of countrysides in

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<sup>345</sup> The terms are used in inverted commas to avoid misconceptions concerning cinema's ability to produce anything other than cinematic landscapes (See Chapter One Introduction).

previous visual media: for example, landscape painting, ethnographic filmmaking, and Heimat film cinema. The emulation is either a subconscious way of seeing or a deliberate route of cinematic exploration, in which filmmaker as well as audience can participate on common grounds. Because of this common cultural heritage, the case study films do not transcend national boundaries easily. A notable exception is *Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros*, which was also released in the USA. The homosexual context provided an additional 'common global language' in this case. In the films under study, the reproduction of 'reel' environments and the representation of 'real' environments are not clearly delineated. They are merged, blurring the lines between 'reel fiction' and 'real non-fiction' and thereby highlighting the delicate state of objectivity in documentary representation.

At the same time, the film-makers in question challenge exactly the 'reel' environments they choose to engage with: roles are occasionally reversed or overstated to contest the 'reel' representations. The creation of 'reel' idyllic landscapes is challenged by the unshaping of other landscapes; the usage of 'reel' ethnographic conventions transforms the distinctively domestic into the foreign and the seemingly familiar into the unfamiliar; the

revival of bygone 'reel' Heimat motifs in contemporary surroundings reorders the model Heimat world.

On the one hand, the documentaries reflect what cinema screens represented over half a century ago: idyllic rural settings, nostalgic narratives, sentiments of *Heimweh* and *Gemeinschaft*. The twenty-first century screen, however, has added *Gesellschaft*, *Fernweh*, modernisation and the urban to an understanding of Heimat. Hence, Heimat in contemporary documentary cinema is an intricate balance of 'reel' replications and 'real' representations.

This reflexive mode of documentary relies on the viewer recognizing the allusions to the Heimat film genre. Only then can the results be humorous. Arthur Koestler's theory of humour can be applied to understand the dynamics at play: the epitome of fictional genre film, the Heimat film, is revived in a most unexpected format, the documentary. The 'context deviation' allows for the 'real' to be viewed at times in a parodic or satirical context. This humorous undertone is an effective mechanism to deal with a burdened subject such as Heimat but at the same time referring to its relevance.

To allow for sufficient textual analysis, I have limited the number of case study films to eight, but the development in question exceeds the eight

films under discussion. It is worth mentioning some of the other films that could be placed and tested in this academic framework.

Film-makers Wiltrud Baier and Sigrun Köhler (*Schotter wie Heu*) have continued to bring the German region to the screen. For their next production, they travel to the opposite end of Germany. *Der große Navigator – Gott ist auch nur ein Mensch* (Wiltrud Baier and Sigrun Köhler, 2007)<sup>346</sup> follows a Swabian missionary to the German federal state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, where he intends to spread the word of God among the people, after having gained twenty-two years of missionary experience in Papua New Guinea. The rural provinces of north-eastern Germany and the concept of religion are represented as a spectacle of exoticism, as similarly seen in *Die Blutritter*. Unlike *Die Blutritter*, however, it is a lack of religion rather than a profusion of religion that allows for an exotic portrayal of the rural region.

Film-maker Andreas Geiger's film *Heavy Metal auf dem Lande* (Andreas Geiger, 2006)<sup>347</sup> strikes thematic cords with *Full Metal Village*. The film explores a rural curiosity in the Swabian village of Donzdorf: the seat of one of the most successful independent heavy-metal record labels. Whereas *Full Metal Village*, however, portrays a culture clash between the

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<sup>346</sup> No English title available. [The Great Navigator – God is also only a human being].

<sup>347</sup> [*Heavy Metal in the Country*].

rural indigenous and urban non-indigenous, *Heavy Metal auf dem Lande* explores a culture of heavy metal within the indigenous rural community.

Like Andrea Sell in *Durchfahrtsland*, film-makers Paul Rainer-Wicke and Götz Penner explore a rural community of a no-man's land. *Überleben in Nauheim* (Paul Rainer-Wicke and Götz Penner, 2005)<sup>348</sup> witnesses through the portrayal of six inhabitants the lack of community and belonging prevalent in the small residential town of Nauheim in Hesse – a place wedged between the rural and the urban.

*Die Siedler – Am Arsch der Welt* (Claus Strigel, 2004)<sup>349</sup> portrays a Swiss community which resettles in an abandoned village in a north-eastern region of Germany but not without local conflict. The film carries the tagline: *Ein dokumentarischer Western im Deutschen Osten* [A Documentary Western in Eastern Germany]. Echoes of the Western genre are also dominant in *Die Blume der Hausfrau*, as is the on-screen relationship between 'settlers' and 'natives' as an extended dialogue of Heimat.

*Milch und Honig aus Rotfront* (Hans-Erich Viet, 2001)<sup>350</sup> examines a German community outside of the borders of Germany. The film travels to Kyrgyzstan to the village of Rotfront, where over half the inhabitants are

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<sup>348</sup> No English title available. [Surviving in Nauheim]. Nauheim is a small town in the Rhine Main region.

<sup>349</sup> No English title available. [The Settlers – In the Back of Beyond].

<sup>350</sup> [Milk and Honey from Rotfront].

descendants of East Frisian immigrants. This Mennonite community has kept the regional culture of their ancestors alive over hundreds of years and even speak a Frisian dialect. The film explores and questions ideas of Heimat and *Fremde* (See Chapter Three) as well as Other-ing and regional identity (see Chapter Two).

*Der Himmel küsst die Berge* (Pascale Schmidt, 1995)<sup>351</sup> is a documentary about the famous German folk music stars: Maria and her daughter Margot Hellwig. The film is a solitary forerunner to the overall cinematic development in question. In the deepest Bavarian province the film reveals the family's guest house which welcomes bus loads of tourists to whom it hopes to sell kitsch merchandise, or in other words a bit of living Heimat. The film also accompanies the duo on their tour on which they promote musical Alpine Heimat sentiments across Germany. The film is an exploration of the industry behind *Heimweh*, the longing for Heimat.

As indicated in the brief synopses, the films share common grounds with the case study films. How these dialogues shape into the academic framework devised by the thesis research is a worthwhile subject for on-going study and continued observation of contemporary German documentary cinema.

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<sup>351</sup> No English title available. [The skies kiss the mountains].

The thesis has laid a solid groundwork, which can encourage further research to test the academic framework from other angles. I have intentionally set the research national boundaries due to the particular role the rural, the regional and Heimat play within the parameters of German culture. The research, however, does open up questions for further transnational research with other German-speaking countries, such as Austria and Switzerland, both of which boast a strong history of Heimat.<sup>352</sup> The Heimat film is also integral to Austrian and Swiss national film history. Is a similar documentary cinema development evident in these countries? Although this question requires extensive further research, some documentaries suggest a recent increased filmic interest in narratives of the rural, regional and Heimat in both countries: *Unterwegs nach...Heimat* (Barbara Gräftner, Austria, 2004),<sup>353</sup> *Heimat lebenslänglich* (Christine Bänninger and Jens-Peter Rövekamp, Switzerland, 2005),<sup>354</sup> *Heimatklänge* (Stefan Schwietert, Germany/Switzerland, 2007),<sup>355</sup> *Einst süße Heimat* (Gerald Igor Hauzenberger, Austria, 2007),<sup>356</sup> *Bergauf, Bergab* (Hans

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<sup>352</sup> For example, the condition of *Heimweh* was first recorded in Switzerland in 1688 by Johannes Hofer, and was initially coined the 'Swiss illness'.

<sup>353</sup> No English title available. [On the way to...Heimat].

<sup>354</sup> No English title available. [Heimat for life].

<sup>355</sup> [*Echoes of Home*].

<sup>356</sup> [*Beyond the Forest*].

Haldimann, Switzerland, 2008).<sup>357</sup> How these films correspond to or conflict with the academic framework provided for German documentaries by this research awaits investigation.

My intention has been to identify and contextualise a corpus of documentary films that share similar characteristics with reference to the on-screen relationship of human and habitat. Since I began the research, this particular on-screen relationship has also seen an emergence in the fictional genre, most notably in films by Marcus H. Rosenmüller. *Wer früher stirbt, ist länger tot* (Marcus H. Rosenmüller, 2006),<sup>358</sup> Rosenmüller's cinema debut is a film about a young boy in rural Upper Bavaria who tries to come to terms with his mother's death. The film features strong Bavarian dialects (the DVD offers the option of standard-German subtitles and the special edition even comes with a Bavarian phrase dictionary) but has proven to be a national film success. It is of interest that prior to the film Rosenmüller directed three episodes of a documentary television series entitled *Irgendwo in Bayern* (2003-2004)<sup>359</sup> for the *Bayrischer Rundfunk* [Bavarian Broadcasting], which explored people and places of the Bavarian region. *Wer früher stirbt, ist länger tot* has been termed a Heimat film in the popular press; subsequent productions also adhere to the genre. Rosenmüller's latest work is a trilogy

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<sup>357</sup> No English title available. [Uphill, Downhill].

<sup>358</sup> [*Grave Decisions*].

<sup>359</sup> No English title available. [Somewhere in Bavaria].

of contemporary Heimat films – *Beste Zeit* (2007),<sup>360</sup> *Beste Gegend* (2008)<sup>361</sup> and *Beste Chance* (2009).<sup>362</sup> Besides Rosenmüller, other non-documentary film-makers have also recently tried representing rural settings, regional protagonists and the Heimat film genre in their productions: *Fleisch ist mein Gemüse* (Christian Görnitz, 2007),<sup>363</sup> *Hierankl* (Hans Steinbichler, 2003),<sup>364</sup> *Schultze Gets the Blues* (Michael Schorr, 2003), *Bungalow* (Ulrich Köhler, 2003), *Heimatfilm!* (Daniel Krauss, 2002), *Storno* (Elke Weber-Moore, 2002),<sup>365</sup> to name a few. This recent cinematic interest has yet to be fully explored. Whether and how these fictional films relate to the development in documentary cinema is a subject worthy of further investigation by film scholars.

Indicators of a Heimat revival or reinvention can also be observed in other forms of media and visual art. In visual arts, for example, Anne-Marie von Sarosdy has created a collection of ironic Heimat kitsch with her clichéd images exhibited under the title *Heimatliebe* (Galerie Reygers Munich, 2008),<sup>366</sup> and Peter Bialobrzkeski published his collection of photographic

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<sup>360</sup> [*Good Times*].

<sup>361</sup> No English title available. [The Best Area].

<sup>362</sup> No English title available. [The Best Chance].

<sup>363</sup> No English title available. [Meat is my Vegetable].

<sup>364</sup> No English title available. Hierankl is the name of a farm in Bavaria.

<sup>365</sup> No English title available. [Cancellation].

<sup>366</sup> No English title available. [Heimat Love].

Her work can also be viewed online: <http://www.sarosdy.de/exhibition.html>. [accessed 6 March 2009].

work entitled *Heimat*, which documents Germany's pristine natural habitats in sublime aesthetics.<sup>367</sup> In television, on the other hand, the reality television show *Die Alm – Promischweiß und Edelweiß* (ProSieben, 2004)<sup>368</sup> observed celebrities struggling with living conditions in a clichéd Heimat landscape: an alpine cabin on a mountain pasture. Another television series entitled *Schwarzwaldhaus 1902* (ARD/SWR, 2002)<sup>369</sup> placed a Berlin family in rural living conditions experienced by a farmer's family in the year 1902 in the Black Forest. The title *Schwarzwaldhaus* creates associations with the famous Heimat film *Schwarzwaldmüdel*<sup>370</sup> (Hans Deppe, 1950) as well as with the popular Heimat television series *Schwarzwaldklinik*<sup>371</sup> (ZDF, 1985-1989). The recent renaissance of Heimat themes such as the regional and the rural in media other than film provides much scope for extensive interdisciplinary research.

Research into sociological dimensions of Heimat in the new millennium is already underway. Martin Hecht, Bernhard Schlink, Christoph Türcke, Klaus Hofmeister, for example, all reconsider Heimat in a contemporary society, thus emphasizing that the term has become all the more important in a time of globalisation. This thesis has provided film

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<sup>367</sup> Peter Bialobrzeski, *Heimat* (Ostfildertn: Hatje Cantz, 2006).

<sup>368</sup> No English title available. [The alm – celebrity sweat and edelweiss].

<sup>369</sup> No English title available. [Black Forest House 1902].

<sup>370</sup> [*The Black Forest Girl*].

<sup>371</sup> [*The Black Forest Clinic*].

studies with the essential framework and tools with which to further monitor and evaluate this socio-cultural development.

By placing this particular corpus of films into an academic framework, the research has not only identified and given academic voice to a cinematic development but at the same time has expanded on concepts in film studies with regard to the rural, the regional and Heimat on screen.

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## Appendix I



A1.



A2.



A3.



A4.

*Die Blume der Hausfrau* (Dominik Wessely, 1999)



A5.



A6.



A7.



A8.

*Die Blume der Hausfrau* (Dominik Wessely, 1999)



B1.



B2.



B3.



B4.

*Out of Edeka* (Konstantin Faigle, 2001)



B5.



B6.



B7.



B8.

*Out of Edeka* (Konstantin Faigle, 2001)



C1.



C2.



C3.



C4.



C5.



C6.



C7.



C8.



D1.



D2.



D3.



D4.

*Herr Wichmann von der CDU (Andreas Dresen, 2003)*



D5.



D6.



D7.



D8.

*Herr Wichmann von der CDU (Andreas Dresen, 2003)*



E1.



E2.

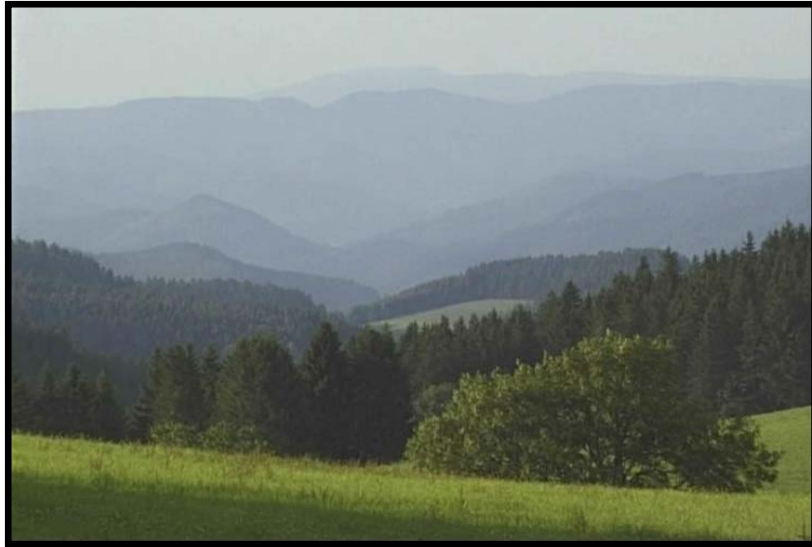


E3.



E4.

*Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* (Jochen Hick, 2003)



E5.



E6.



E7.



E8.

*Ich kenn' keinen – Allein unter Heteros* (Jochen Hick, 2003)



F1.



F2.



F3.



F4.



F5.



F6.



F7.



F8.

*Die Blutritter* (Douglas Wolfsperger, 2004)



G1.



G2.



G3.



G4.



G5.



G6.



G7.



G8.



H1.



H2.



H3.



H4.

*Full Metal Village* (Sung-Hyung Cho, 2007)



H5.



H6.



H7.



H8.

*Full Metal Village* (Sung-Hyung Cho, 2007)

## Appendix II

*Die Blume der  
Hausfrau*

1999

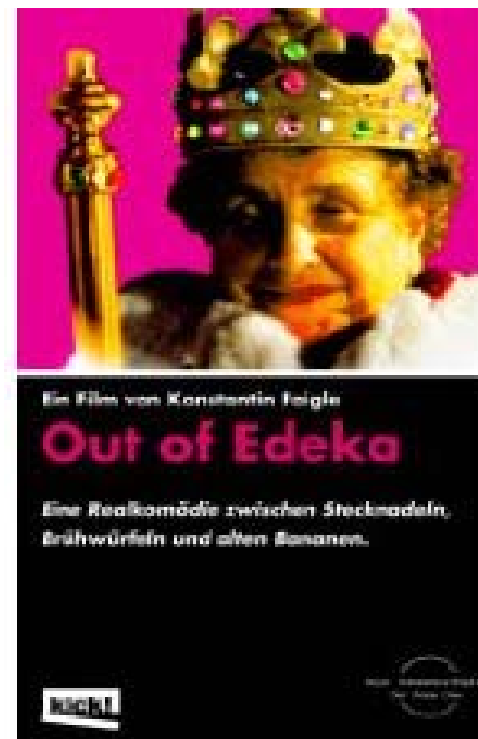
Dominik  
Wessely



*Out of Edeka*

2001

Konstantin  
Faigle



*Schotter wie  
Heu*

2002

Wiltrud Baier  
Sigrun K hler



*Herr Wichmann  
von der CDU*

2003

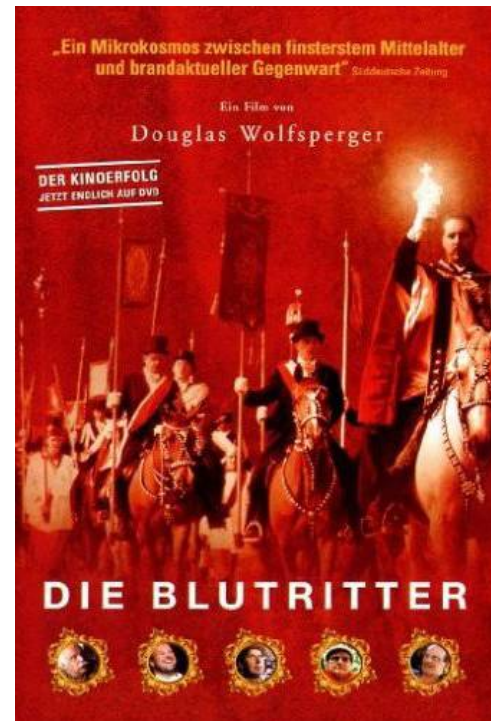
Andreas  
Dresen



*Ich kenn' keinen  
– Allein unter  
Heteros*

2003

Jochen Hick



*Die Blutritter*

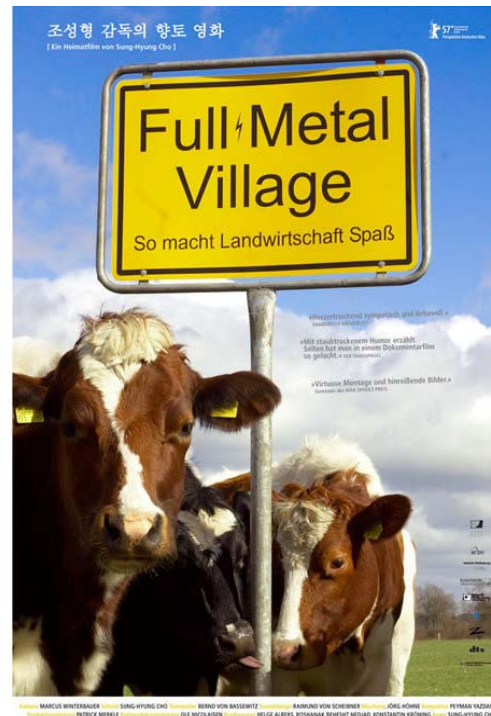
2004

Douglas  
Wolfsperger

*Durchfahrtsland*

2005

Alexandra Sell



*Full Metal  
Village*

2005

Sung-Hyung  
Cho

## Appendix III

Bruns, Christina, 'Defamiliarising the Familiar: Regional and Rural Identities in Contemporary German Documentary Cinema', in *Cinemas, Identities and Beyond*, ed. by Ruby Cheung with D.H. Fleming (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 200-211

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## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### DEFAMILIARISING THE FAMILIAR: REGIONAL AND RURAL IDENTITIES IN CONTEMPORARY GERMAN DOCUMENTARY CINEMA

CHRISTINA BRUNS

Recent dynamic changes in German cinema have been drawing an increasing amount of national as well as international attention. Signifiers are not hard to find. Renowned international awards such as the Academy Award and the European Film Award have recently seen a number of German recipients. Abroad, German films are touring the festival circuit and the number of German film festivals has risen in the past decade. In Germany, the *Filmförderungsanstalt* (FFA), the German Federal Film Board, has recorded a significant rise in audience numbers for domestic productions.<sup>1</sup> The German film magazine *Revolver*, a publication created in 1998 by film students (now film-makers), provides an important forum for discussion of recent developments in German cinema. First attempts to define these changes are varied. While the French *Cahiers du Cinéma* writes of a “Nouvelle Vague Allemande,” others speak of the “Berlin School” or the “Munich School,” and others define it historically as the “*new* New German Cinema.” The definitions may be debatable and the film-makers may be reluctant to be uniformly categorised; a cinematic change, however, is undeniable.

These cinematic developments have broken with the generic, popular cinema of the 1990s. Post-wall popular cinema in Germany is characterised primarily by comedies which offer a narrow vision of German identity: Young urban professionals in predominantly West German cities. Although successful with national audiences of the time, the films have been criticised for lacking connection with any *real* identity of post-wall Germany. Eric Rentschler suggests the “films focus on identity crises which are in fact pseudo-crises” (Rentschler 2000, 263). He sees in them “a lack of oppositional energies and critical voices, ... a marked disinclination towards any serious political reflection or sustained historical retrospection” (ibid.).

It is precisely the generic, cultural hegemony of narrative, stars, settings, and identities that contemporary cinematic trends have arguably superseded with the construction of new identities for post-unification Germany as well as retrospectively for pre-unification Germany. The films of the new millennium address Germany’s complex past—from the Third Reich (*Der Untergang/Downfall* [Oliver Hirschbiegel, Germany, 2004]) to the German Democratic Republic (*Das Leben der Anderen/The Lives of Others* [Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, Germany, 2006]); and the 1970s political upheaval—(*Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei/The Edukators* [Hans Weingartner, Austria/Germany, 2004]); as well as its future—third/second generation German immigrants (*Gegen die Wand/Head-On* [Fatih Akin, Germany, 2004]), the new Europe (*Lichter/Distant Lights* [Hans-Christian Schmid, Germany, 2003]), social deterioration (*Knallhart/Tough Enough* [Detlev Buck, Germany, 2006]), and provincial isolation (*Schultze gets the Blues* [Michael Schorr, Germany, 2003]). It is a cinema not only made in Germany but one that is very much about Germany. As Katja Hofmann notes: “Germans are rediscovering themselves” (Hofmann 2006, 28). It is about German film-makers offering an authentic self reflection. Georg Seeßlen describes the cinema as a “Bewegung zur sozialen Wirklichkeit” (Seeßlen 2007, 16) [movement towards a social reality], while Gabrielle Mueller similarly talks of “the social as a narrative focus” (Mueller 2006, 117).

An important facet emerging from these developments is the exploration of regional and rural identities in German documentary cinema. This article offers a primary understanding of these developments. It identifies a corpus of films that are bound by remarkable similarities in representing regional and rural identities in Germany today. These films are all the more important as they have not yet been the subject of academic consideration.

Although the regional is not new to the cinema screen, it has often been overlooked or overshadowed by other research frameworks in film studies. In terms of a historical and geopolitical approach, the context of national cinemas has been the predominant framework. This national approach has often failed to take note of the region and its importance within the larger national framework. On a regional level, it is the urban rather than the rural that has been the focus of academic attention. The recent publication *Representing the Rural* stresses the importance of a rural cinema study: "There is very little written directly about the use of land or the rural in the cinema despite the fact that it so frequently forms a backdrop to both fiction and documentary work" (Fowler and Helfield 2006, 2). Although German cinema is not referred to as such, the need for further research into the cinema of the rural is clearly emphasised.

In the 1990s German regionalism became the subject of much socio-historical research. Celia Applegate (1990), Alon Confino (1997) and Tom Scott (1997), to name only a few, have created new understandings of the regional identity within German identity. The new literature on German identity demonstrates Germany's inclination for the regional as one that is intrinsic to national identity. This recent historical and sociological interest has made it even more urgent for the discipline of film studies to be able to place and reconsider the German regions in a cinematic context.

One of the first films to thematise the representation of German regional identities in the framework of this new documentary cinema is *Die Blume der Hausfrau/The Flower of the Housewife* (Dominik Wessely, Germany, 1999). A number of other films have followed in bringing German regional and rural identities onto national screens, to name some key examples:

*Out of Edeka* (Konstantin Faigle, Germany, 2001); *Schotter wie Heu/Gravel like Hay*<sup>ii</sup> (Wiltrud Baier and Sigrun Köhler, Germany, 2002); *Herr Wichmann von der CDU/Mr. Wichmann from the CDU*<sup>iii</sup> (Andreas Dresen, Germany, 2003); *Ich kenn' keinen-Allein unter Heteros/Talk Straight: The World of Rural Queers* (Jochen Hick, Germany, 2003); *Die Blutritter/Riders of the Sacred Blood* (Douglas Wolfsperger, Germany, 2004); *Durchfahrtsland/Remote Area* (Alexandra Sell, Germany, 2005); *Heavy Metal auf dem Lande/Heavy Metal in the Countryside*<sup>iv</sup> (Andreas Geiger, Germany, 2006); *Full Metal Village* (Sung Hyung Cho, Germany, 2007).

Almost without exception, these film-makers have been funded or partially funded by regional film funding institutions. The regional occupies an increasingly important position in the national film production industry in Germany. Germany's film production is supported by a unique funding structure. It is a decentralised structure of funding institutions, the majority of which are regional film funds. In 1979 the *Bundesländer*, the German federal states, for the first time followed the national example of film subsidy and established their own regional funding institutions. In the 1980s the regional film funds developed as they proved to be means to boosting regional economy and regional awareness. However, it was not until the 1990s that the regional film funds reached the significant position in German film funding structures they hold today. They have been further strengthened by the introduction of a film commission to every regional film fund. Regional film prizes offer additional promotion and exposure. Regional funding is undoubtedly linked to regional endorsement and is known as *Standort-politik*, the politics of place (Elsaesser 1993, 3-16).

Whereas production is linked to regional institutions, the cinematic perceptions are not of regional origin: With few exceptions, the film-makers are not from the region they choose to portray. The filmic view is therefore not a view from within but a view from outside. Although these films are contemporary in nature and offer a novel understanding of the German rural regions, they show similarities with ethnographic film-making conventions. The outside and inside dichotomy has been a special concern in ethnographic film-making: "Participant-Observation is one of the most basic ethnographic research methods" (Fife 2005, 71), which involves the ethnographer observing as well as participating in his subject matters. The dichotomy is also relevant to the documentary film-makers under discussion, who have dealt with it in varying degrees of observing and participating. Some film-makers opt to observe solely from behind the camera and reduce their presence to a minimum (*Herr Wichmann von der CDU*); others have defined roles for interviewer and interviewee (*Ich kenn' keinen-Allein unter Heteros*) or narrator and narrated (*Durchfahrtsland*), and others again prefer to participate to the extent that they themselves become the focus of attention (*Schotter wie Heu*). Like ethnographic films, the films under discussion in this article are constructed on notions of self and Other. New cinematic interpretations of the German rural regions that re-create and re-invent ethnographic notions of self and Other are presented here.

*Full Metal Village* is the creation of Sung-Hyung Cho, a South Korean film-maker who has made Germany her home of choice for close to twenty years. Funded amongst others by regional institutions, the

film went on to win two regional film awards in 2006 and received the prestigious Max Ophüls Prize in 2007. The film portrays an international Heavy Metal festival in the small North German village of Wacken. Film-maker Cho is seen participating with subjects on screen. She is instantly aurally and visibly identifiable as non-indigenous due to her Asian ethnicity and accented German. In early ethnographic footage a shot of the ethnographer posing with the natives was generally included. The ethnic or racial contrast forms an on-screen, visual divide between researcher and bodily artefact, between subject and object, and ultimately between self and Other. In *Full Metal Village* these roles are to an extent reversed. Like the ethnographer, Cho is non-indigenous to the area—ethnicity is the key, on-screen indicator. However, this ethnic divide is inverted: The white man has become the bodily artefact under filmic investigation. Cho challenges the ethnic roles of traditional ethnography, thereby questioning fundamental, ethnographic constructions of self and Other. At the same time, the film goes beyond portraying a conventional, transnational exchange (German–South Korean) to engage in a far more complex relationship: Wacken meets South Korea, regional meets immigrant, local meets global.

Otherness also becomes a thematic concern in Dominik Wessely's film (*Die Blume der Hausfrau*). The film, a huge audience success at the International Hofer Film Days (1998) and the Filmfestival Max Ophüls (1999), focuses on Swabian suburbia. Wessely places the Swabians' reputation for cleanliness at the centre of his documentary. He portrays five door-to-door vacuum-cleaner salesmen in a region most noted for cleanliness in the regional week most renowned for cleaning (*Kehrwoche*: Annual Swabian cleaning week). Wessely pinpoints his protagonists' ethnic origin from the start: The protagonists' Italian origin is emphasised by the generic music of the Spaghetti Western, which forms a musical leitmotif and brings a whole spectrum of genre clichés to the film's images. The music transforms the salesmen in their long dark coats into cowboys. The final shot of the salesmen driving off into the sunset in their company cars accompanied by the musical leitmotif reinforces the stylised image of provincial cowboys.<sup>v</sup> Although the soundtrack marks out foreignness, the salesmen, however, lack any aural features that would identify them as being non-regional. On the contrary, their language functions as an indicator of Swabian belonging: The men speak in Swabian dialect. One of the men's customers highlights a similar verbal assimilation. A client, whose surname Chazilikizctisidis, identifies him as being of Greek origin, talks in a somewhat broken Swabian dialect and even insists that the salesman call him by the shortened, more German-sounding version of his name Schatzi—*Schatzi* being a German term of endearment. Although being a Greek, he has not only "germanified" his name but also adopted the extreme sense of Swabian cleanliness: He relates how he had previously used twelve litres of water to wash his carpet and kneels down on the carpet to inspect it with a magnifying glass.

Dialects form the primary division between the film-maker and the subject matter, between the region and the audience, between self and Other. In addition, it forms the primary indicator of a regional identity. The foremost indicator of any regional identity is a common dialect, as Lyndhurst Collins explains: "Language is generally viewed as the supreme expressive component of identity" (Collins 1998, 34). A few of the documentaries (*Schotter wie Heu*, *Out of Edeka*) resort to German subtitles to overcome the language barrier created between on-screen Germans and an off-screen German audience. The interest in German dialect on-screen is part of a wider development in recent German cinema.<sup>vi</sup>

These contemporary German film-makers place the German rural region under an ethnographic lens, thereby representing the rural region as a terrain of Otherness. Otherness is by and large marked as the unfamiliar and exotic and, as Kateryna Olijnyk Longley explains, "the exotic is always an attribute given to someone else or somewhere else ... exoticism ... is a way of seeing" (Longley 2000, 23). The film *Out of Edeka* (*Edeka*: Cooperation of independent retailers) captures the notion of the unfamiliar already within its title. The film, an autobiographical journey into the lives surrounding a small Swabian family-run village shop, was partially funded by regional television and film organisations and was awarded the 2001 Bavarian Prize for Documentary Film. The title exudes foreignness on two levels. Firstly, Faigle chooses an English title for a German production. Secondly, the English title is undoubtedly a reference to the film *Out of Africa* (Sydney Pollack, USA, 1985) and echoes a vision of a geographically distant and unfamiliar place, thus creating an air of exoticism in a German rural region. The theme is supported throughout the film by exotic music ranging from Middle Eastern to Indian, Spanish-Flamenco and Gypsy instrumental compositions. The film features colourful re-enactments of worlds far away, played by the villagers and the film-maker himself: A queen, guerrilla warfare, cowboys, a Flamenco dancer.

Faigle emphasises the notion of the geographical foreignness by quoting the actual distance between his village of Empfingen and the Mongolian city of Ulan Bator: "Mein Heimatdorf Empfingen, 3500 Seelen. 8235 Kilometer von Ulan Bator, der Hauptstadt der Mongolei" [My home village Empfingen, 3500 souls,

8235 kilometres from Ulan Bator, the capital of Mongolia]. The camera tilts from a low-angle shot of the clouds in the sky down onto the village's yellow sign and a long shot of two men standing beside it facing the camera. The distance from Swabia to Mongolia is irrelevant to the film's content, but by linking the village with such a faraway place, Faigle creates associations with the far-off. In conjunction with the wide-angle shot of the men seemingly waiting at the village entrance for arrivals, it also evokes an image of a sparse and isolated population—a population living outside the borders of the familiar. The film is no longer a story about the familiar local but about the unfamiliar local.

Like *Out of Edeka*, *Die Blutritter* similarly places the region within a geographically exotic context. *Die Blutritter*, also the recipient of regional funding, portrays the people surrounding the medieval equestrian procession of the town of Weingarten. A man dressed as a Native American has a recurring role in the film. Alois Weber, the costumed man, runs a Native American museum in the middle of the German countryside. He explains that his interest is rooted in the filmic adaptations of *Lederstrumpf* (The Leatherstocking Tales) and *Winnetou*. Both tales are fictional works on Native Americans by non-Native American writers, thus echoing notions of the Western view of the exotic Other. The film pans over figurines of Native Americans carved and clothed by Weber. This physical construction of the Other metaphorically points to a mental construction of the exotic. Weber's museum is a dedication to a geographically removed and vanishing culture. His obsessive collecting echoes that of early anthropologists who harboured materials from the cultures of Others. The early anthropological need to classify and collect was driven by the desire to conquer the exotic by statically materialising it. Longley defines the exotic as precisely that: "The desire to enter forbidden territory, whether in the imagination or physically, to partake of otherness and to stake a claim" (Longley 2000, 23).

*Die Blutritter* also bears witness to the problematic notions of this exotic relationship. In an interview with a Swabian man and his black wife, Wolfesperger captures the colonisation and domestication of a *living* Other. The Swabian man explains his reasons for marrying his wife as follows: "Deutsche Frauen habe ich auch schon gut kennen gelernt, und die Ansprüche von deutschen Frauen sind ... ein bisschen zu hoch ... und deswegen war die Wahl, eine schwarze Frau zu heiraten" [There have been German women that I've gotten to know quite well, but German women's expectations are too high ... and that's why I chose to marry a black woman]. He gestures with his hand towards his wife, thereby objectifying her as little more than a consumer choice. His perception is based on male and racial superiority. Longley points to this power imbalance between the viewer and the viewed: "Exoticism ... is a way of seeing which sustains the myth of cultural centrality, and therefore the superiority, of the viewer" (Longley 2000, 23). The white man's superiority in this scene is unmistakable. In addition to his verbal presence—the woman remains silent and acquiescent—the dominance of the white man is physically conveyed: The woman is seated on a bench between her husband and another white man. The camera tilts down her body to rest at knee level: Both men's bodies are physically pushed up against hers. The slow tilt down her body emphasises her sexual role. This is confirmed in the final shot at knee level: The woman has one hand placed on each man's thigh. The camera movement encourages the perception of a regional "colonisation" of the Other as sexual exoticism. The cinematic objectification of the woman becomes so apparent that this in itself points to the problematic issues surrounding the beholder of the exotic gaze.

In *Schotter wie Heu* the exotic is linked to notions of "primitiveness." The film is a portrayal of Fritz Vogt, the bank director of the smallest bank and the last bank in Germany to run without a computer. The film exposes the protagonist's naïve unawareness of the power of the camera. Prior to filming, Vogt's appearance on national television results in his village bank becoming the victim of a robbery. During filming of the documentary, Vogt welcomes a further camera, one from the regional television station. It is during these television recordings—with both cameras directed at him—that Vogt's naïveté towards the media is confirmed. Out of earshot from the television crew, Vogt turns towards the documentary camera to let the film-makers know exactly what he thinks about the other cameraman. Vogt's confidence in film-makers Baier and Köhler allows him to seemingly ignore the presence of the documentary camera. In another scene Vogt cycles down the path to his cows as directed by the television crew. After cycling down the path, Vogt turns to the television camera to ask: "Kann es weiter gehen?" [Shall I go on?] The camera crew start laughing at his inexperience towards the camera. The encounter between "primitive man" and "advanced technology" formed the basis for much of early ethnographic film-making (Oksiloff 2001).

The media are engrossed with Vogt's "primitiveness." In the bank Vogt turns his attention to a small, manual letter weight while the television crew spread out their equipment. He holds up the weight ("Die ist mindestens 60 Jahre alt! Oder älter" [It's at least 60 years old! Maybe more!]), and admires it. Behind Vogt the television lights shine brightly on him while the crew gets a grip on their equipment. The shot embodies

Vogt's dialectic relationship with the camera: Vogt has become a media attraction by rejecting modernisation. The television camera is out to capture Vogt in all his technological innocence. This fascination that transforms the innocent into an object of attraction resembles the appeal many early ethnographic film-makers shared, as Assenka Oksiloff explains: "...the screened body of the native figured as a lost unity and provided a vanishing point for a fantasy of coherence and wholeness" (Oksiloff 2001, 6).

In the first instance then, it may seem surprising that many of the films explicitly promote themselves as Heimatfilms (*Schotter wie Heu*, *Durchfahrtsland*, *Full Metal Village*). Heimatfilm implies Heimat—a unique but widespread word in the German language that expresses a strong sense of home and belonging. Heimat is so intrinsically being a part of the German language that there is no consensus on its translation. Translation attempts, however, remain unsatisfactory as the word is bound to a wide spectrum of connotations, implications and meanings, which have been shaped by the word's developments within German-speaking countries. Despite the word's many interpretations, it is the location of Heimat in cinematic representation that remains persistent. The Heimatfilm is integral to German cinema history, as Thomas Elsaesser comments: "Deutschlands einzigem eigenständigen und historisch beständigstem Genre" (Elsaesser 1994, 195) [Germany's only independent and most historically consistent genre]. It is the rural region that has featured strongly as a location for Heimat.

The contemporary film-makers under discussion revisit the traditional Heimatfilm location. Familiar to German cinema viewers as a place bearing notions of belonging and home, the traditional Heimatfilm setting has become exactly the opposite: A place of unfamiliar Otherness. Thus *Die Blume der Hausfrau* is defined by its own film-maker as a "schrägen Heimatfilm" (Wessely, quoted in Hesler and Richter, n.d.) (*schräg* literally means slanting and is commonly used to describe the off-beat). *Spiegel* magazine describes the film *Full Metal Village* as a "Heimatfilm der etwas anderen Art" (Buß 2007) (another kind of Heimatfilm). ZDF television sees *Die Blume der Hausfrau* as a Heimatfilm of "skurril" (*skurril* meaning bizarre, whimsical) nature. Although Heimat is a familiar place, the Heimat location on contemporary screens is far from familiar.

Whilst the films on the one hand defamiliarise, they also emphasise the values so much associated with the familiar, generic Heimatfilm, such as nature, tradition, family and community. *Full Metal Village* focuses on a small village community; *Die Blume der Hausfrau* and *Die Blutritter* are portrayals of regional traditions; *Schotter wie Heu* and *Out of Edeka* are explorations into village family businesses. However, the films expand from the familiar notions of Heimat to construct new understandings of a traditional concept. Faigle (*Out of Edeka*) reveals contemporary images of family and Heimat that are to be found not within the village community but outside it: A brother who has finally found love and a family with his Polish wife; a father who is seen on the phone talking to his Georgian granddaughter; a girlfriend who is Spanish. Faigle's Heimat has grown literally "out of Edeka." Wessely's (*Die Blume der Hausfrau*) Heimat community is not a village community but the communal solidarity among vacuum-cleaner salesmen. Wessely restricts his portrayals of the salesmen to their professional role, omitting any reference or access to their private lives. The support of the salesmen for one another takes the place of the traditional role of family and home.

The nature of Heimat, whether in familiar or unfamiliar guise, is double-faceted, as Manuela Fiedler points out: "Sie ist der Ort der Utopie ebenso wie der Ort der Ausgrenzung und des Vergessens" [It is the place of utopia as well as the place of ostracism and oblivion] (Fiedler 1995, 11). The Heimat image gradually reveals cracks: An alcoholic and violent father (*Out of Edeka*); isolated youth and suicides (*Schotter wie Heu*); gender discrimination (*Die Blutritter*); lonesome suburbia (*Die Blume der Hausfrau*); the abuse of nature (*Full Metal Village*). Even the new Heimat structures are not impervious to cracks. In *Out of Edeka* the core of the family—the shop—shuts down as it can no longer compete with the global discounters. Global expansion allows Faigle to expand the traditional notion of Heimat and family "out of Edeka" but equally threatens the traditional core of Heimat and family: The shop. In *Die Blume der Hausfrau* the solidarity between salesmen is vulnerable to ethnic divides: East German salesmen make jokes about their Italian colleagues. Again, global expansion allows Wessely to develop the traditional notions of Heimat and region into a multi-ethnic regional community but not without drawbacks.

Although German cinema has been drawing an increasing amount of attention, an important element of its cinematic revival deserves closer examination. Contemporary documentary cinema has become a strong forum for German rural and regional identities. The non-urban region as location is typical of the traditional Heimat image; however, it is in the heart of this Heimatfilm backdrop that young documentary film-makers reveal new understandings of identity, belonging and Heimat. Not only do the film-makers exoticise the familiar Heimat setting but they moreover represent new structures of Heimat communities unfamiliar to

the viewer. By defamiliarising a seemingly familiar, German territory, film-makers challenge audience's expectations and presumptions, thereby introducing a new array of fabrics to be woven into contemporary concepts of regional and rural identities in Germany. This focus on German rural regions and the constructions of new interpretations of German identities by means of defamiliarisation unite these documentaries into a cohesive group, which must be taken into consideration in any discussion about German cinema today.

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## Notes

<sup>i</sup> see FFA. Markdaten. *Kinoergebnisse—5 Jahre auf einen Blick*, <http://www.ffa.de/>.

<sup>ii</sup> No English title available. Literal translation. The title in German is an idiom meaning lots of money.

<sup>iii</sup> No English title available. Literal translation.

<sup>iv</sup> No English title available. Literal translation.

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<sup>v</sup> Parallels between the Heimatfilm genre and the Western genre have been the topic of academic consideration. For textual comparisons, see Jirsa (1979).

<sup>vi</sup> In the run-up to the 2007 Berlinale, the president of the German Film Academy, Günter Rohrbach, encouraged filmmakers not to shy away from German dialects on-screen. It is of interest that a fiction film shot in Bavarian dialect, *Wer früher stirbt, ist länger tot/Grave Decisions* (Marcus H. Rosenmüller, Germany, 2006), received a number of awards at the German Film Prize 2007.