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Article

Memory of Everyday Life

A Study of Edgar Reitz's *Heimat*

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Edgar Reitz's 1984 epic television series *Heimat* chronicles rural life in southwest Germany from the end of the First World War to the 1980s.[1] It shares many features with a predominantly left-wing historiography — the history of everyday life — driven by regionalist, ecological, and anti-American motives. However, due to its immense popularity and a shift in German public discourse, in America the series was seen as an indicator of a right-wing discourse on national identity: as being part of, and important for, a nationalist resurgence. In this essay, I examine these alterations, both the historiographical current that made its creation possible, and the historical process that was influential for its signification. The essay will not provide a global analysis of the television series in all its sixteen-hour complexity. Instead, through the lens of memory theory, I will undertake a close reading of some features of *Heimat* to offer explanations of its popularity, elaborate on its intellectual sympathies, and point to how it tackles epistemological difficulties integral to oral history research.

When *Heimat* was broadcast on West German television in the autumn of 1984, twenty-five million West Germans (almost half the population) watched at least one of the eleven episodes.[2] But between its

initiation in 1979 and its television premiere, instrumental changes took place in the Federal Republic. Helmut Kohl and the CDU — the Christian Democrats — won the 1982 election on a ticket of change — *Die Wende*. The neo-conservatives, holding office in Bonn, thought the task given to historical scholarship should not only be to demythologize and interpret a nation's past, but to provide 'the needs of a national polity for "positive" images and narratives that promote self-confidence and "elementary patriotism"'.[3] By and large, since the politics of *Aufarbeitung* were initiated in the 1960s, political nationalism in West Germany had been seen with the telos of Auschwitz.[4] Political parties kept reunification on their agenda, but more as a matter of default than as an active part of their policies.[5] However, at the same time, the idea of a continuous *Kulturnation* had famous proponents, such as Günter Grass, and popular support.[6] In the 1980s, such ideas gained momentum. One of the significant controversies tied to Kohl's urge to make West Germany a 'normal' country was the recategorization of the second world war victims and perpetrators during Reagan and Kohl's visit to the Bitburg cemetery, later to become known as the Bitburg scandal.

Owing to these developments in the West German public sphere, the *Die Wende* climate had become the master signifier. Thus, when J. Hoberman wrote that *Heimat* was 'one more example of the current reactionary cultural climate', or when Kenneth Barkin discerned an 'interpretation with a vengeance' carrying a 'disingenuous theme' thought to have 'been buried long ago', it should be read in light of this climate.[7] Furthermore, as James Markham has noted, *Heimat* has a tendency not to confront, but to cast ordinary Germans 'as decent […] even as victims'.[8] Such portrayals of Germans during the war prompted Timothy Garton Ash to ask 'what about the other side? What about Auschwitz?'[9] But rather than accordingly interpreting the series as yet another symptom of Bitburg, as being part of what some of Kohl's antagonists called *Das Ende*, or 'the end' of the postwar consensus, I will suggest that it is more accurate to read the American reception as foreshadowing the intellectual debate that signifies this end; that is, when Jürgen Habermas, in *Die Zeit* in 1986, accused some historians for being complicit to these political changes, the responses to which were later to be called the *Historikerstreit*.

The late 1970s and early 1980s saw fundamental changes in the theoretical field. The received idea is to locate the impetus for these qualitative transformations in Jean-Francois Lyotard's 1979 piece *La condition postmoderne*. In this, the grand narratives are claimed to have ended and 'History' has turned to histories. Reinhart Koselleck locates the starting point of this tendency somewhere between 1750 and 1800.[10] Shortly thereafter, G. W. F. Hegel mobilized the notion of History as a heuristic tool.[11] In its tripartite temporal structure, Hegel provided the ability to make the future and the past interdependent. When this temporal structure ended, as Lyotard implied, its most persistent trope — the future — lost its allure.[12] Or, in Andreas Huyssen's words, this was

a 'crisis of that structure of temporality that marked the age of modernity with its celebration of the new as utopian'.[13] At the juncture of the 70s and 80s, this was indicated, on a concrete level, by a growth of interest in historic museums and literature, sometimes called the memory boom.[14]

Here it is worth clarifying a distinction that German holds, but English lacks: in German, one may differentiate between the lived history — *Geschichte* — and the intellectual inquiry making the lived experience intelligible — *Historie*.[15] In the case of the changes implemented by Kohl, Habermas argued that two were intertwined.[16] Generally speaking, the slippage between the two terms usually passes unnoticed, but it is helpful to keep this distinction in mind when looking at *Heimat*. For *Heimat* depended upon on the newly opened spaces in *Historie*, in which a description of histories could run alongside, underneath, and across that of History. Before disentangling the two, we need to look upon the concomitant developments in historiography.

The Making of the British Working Class, by the British historian E. P. Thompson, appeared in the early 1960s. This book could fairly lay claim to the inauguration of 'history from below'. Although a Marxist, Thompson turns his back on fundamental Marxist assumptions as 'the primacy of economic forces, the objectivity of scientific method, and the idea of progress' — in short, the idea of History. Instead, his aim was to bring forgotten experiences back to life.[17] When this method started influencing German historians, it was renamed *Alltagsgeschichte*, or 'history of everyday life'.[18] In its German take, one of the emphases became to reconstruct local identities from the 1930s and 1940s.[19] Its tentative aim was to grasp the perception of fascism of the people outside of the elites. This focus resulted in studies of normal days in the lives of people during the Third Reich.[20] According to Mary Nolan, writing about the *Historikerstreit*, these studies therefore came to challenge 'neat stereotypes about collaboration and resistance, bad Nazis and good anti-fascists' as 'there were seldom clear lines between supporters and resisters […] only victims could be definitely identified'.[21] The beginnings of such a historiography obviously did not take place in a vacuum. Rather, *Alltagsgeschichte* came of age in a historiographical climate dominated by macro-historical studies. And owing to Germany's Nazi past, *Alltagsgeschichte* would indeed have been unlikely in the Federal Republic, given the politics of *Aufarbeitung*, had not the genealogy of the Third Reich already been continuously explored — see, for example, the many studies for and against the *Sonderweg* thesis.[22]

After watching the American television series *Holocaust*, which was immensely popular when aired in West Germany in 1979, Reitz decided to reclaim German history from Hollywood.[23] He wanted to debunk the myth of the radical discontinuities of a *Stunde Null*, a 'year zero' after the war: a myth, he thought, that created West Germany's inability to mourn.[24] To acknowledge the continuities in German history, notwithstanding the political ruptures, was integral to the attempts made by Germany's intellectual left to come to terms with the country's past, a

recognition that the Germany of the Weimar Republic shared traits with the *Lebenswelt* of the present day.[25] Put differently, their life-worlds depended upon historical processes starting before and stretching beyond History's dialectic overcoming of the Nazi regime.[26]

Apart from its primary meanings of 'home' or 'homeland', the word 'Heimat' is rich with connotation in German. Around the 1890s, a 'Heimat' movement critical of urbanization and modernization grew popular in Germany. With it came a Heimat literature, and later on a Heimat film that similarly reacted against modernity — this time against what was perceived as esoteric modernist literature.[27] The Heimat literature depicted rural German communities grounded in an ahistorical, mythic time.[28] With the help of a longer historical context, Michael E. Geisler has defined the concept rather as a symbolic synonym to mother, or motherland — a trope he hears echoing in literature from Heine to Brecht. Thus, it is used as a contrast to Fatherland, or Deutschland, which signifies a more chauvinistic patriotism.[29] Reitz, himself, claims that 'one cannot translate the word "Heimat"'.[30] Yet, in the 1960s, it had strong pejorative connotations.[31] At the time when Reitz initiates his film project, the left wanted to redefine these associations. By stressing its positive elements, the peace movement, in which anti-American attitudes were essential, was a part of a greater political current turning against modernization by reappropriating the notion of Heimat. Other integral constituents were a newborn will to preserve the environment and to cherish regional traditions.[32] Miriam Hansen has claimed that 'unlike any other "new" German film, *Heimat* relates to [these] crucial changes in the West German public sphere'.[33]

While situated in these historical processes, Reitz set out to explore, in his opinion, the seeming impossibility that ninety percent of the German population collaborated with Hitler in a morally conscious way.[34] One of his methods was to interview people in his birth province, where *Heimat* is set.[35] Thus, he shared the aim, and to some extent the method, with oral history fieldwork at this time: a desire to write about people possessing reserves of memory, but lacking historical capital.[36] Even before finding the empirical data to prove his point, Reitz had his mind set: 'the moral question does not play that role in the lives of people which we think it does'. Instead, he thinks 'there is a certain anarchic element in the nature of man and of society, a principle of living-in-spite-of-everything under all conceivable circumstances.'[37]

Heimat depicts, in dialect, village life for three interrelated families, in fictional Schabbach, in the real province of Hunsück. It starts in 1919 when Paul Simon comes home from the first world war and ends when his wife Maria dies in 1982. Paul walks out on his wife and two children ten years after returning from the trenches. He comes back to visit the village during the postwar era, this time as a wealthy American factory owner. The village's increasing interconnectedness with the outside world (and, hence, History) due to technological progress runs like a thread throughout the series. In addition, similarities are to be discerned

between the depiction of the allure of Nazism and of the Americans for the villagers in the way both end the provincial isolation; the former providing infrastructural novelties such as the highway and the telephone, the latter offering commodities, as chewing gum, cigarettes, and chocolate. Some people in the families stay clinging to tradition, primarily Maria, but also her son Anton and Karl Glasisch, the narrator. Others are swept away by History, as Paul, his son Ernst and Hermann, Maria's son outside of marriage with Otto, a part Jewish engineer. On some occasions people are presented as being left without a choice in the face of the stream of History, such as those who become Nazis. However, when someone joins the Nazi party voluntarily, they are shown no sympathy. For example, when Paul leaves, the questioning of his motives never ceases. As a viewer, you are rarely invited to witness the theatres of History, its battlefields, its migrations, its concentration camps, as the series mostly stays on its provincial site.

At the start of each episode, the village fool/drunk Glasisch recounts the story thus far with the help of his photo album. These openings illustrate yet complicate the role Maurice Halbwachs ascribed to the 'collective frameworks'; in other words, 'the instruments used by the collective memory to reconstruct an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thoughts of society'.[38] In the first episode, 'The Call of Far Off Places (1919–1928)', a statue is erected in the middle of the village, in honour of the dead soldiers in the First World War. Despite the pouring rain, the inhabitants gather for the ceremony. Songs by a choir are followed by a speech urging Germany, preferably through a Messiah-like figure, to restore its honour after the humiliation of the Treaty of Versailles. Glasisch and a few other inhabitants point out, mockingly, how the neighbouring towns also erect statues at this time and that the company making the statues thus must be earning good money. In the subsequent episode, all the facts are accurate when Glasisch describes the event with the aid of the photographs. However, in hindsight the inhabitants are claimed to have been amazed by the statue. Comments such as those concerning the unoriginal move to erect it or that it was a 'mass produced' item are no longer mentioned.

At face value, the employment of a retroactive narrative expresses an awareness that the memory of the past is dependent upon and permeated by the present day narrative. But although Halbwachs asserted that the 'collective frameworks' determines the image of the past, these cannot bend the past however it likes as the photos have to be taken into account. In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes regards a photograph as being an emanation of its referent. He describes its essence as 'this-was-now'.[39] In the photographs of Maria, the temporal duality Barthes prescribes can be discerned: Glasisch repeatedly starts his recollection with photos of Maria from the first episode, displaying *what-has-been* and thus exposing the work of time. Although she lives on in the series, the person she was, surrounded by her family, at the moment of the photograph has

vanished, for the viewer knows that Paul will leave, knows *what will be*.[40] When the photos repeat what has happened in the film, they act as an authentication of a fictional series.

An example in line with Halbwachs's argument, on the other hand, is Katharina Simon — the mother of Paul, grandmother of Anton and Ernst — whose actions are not only distorted, but ignored, by the photos. She decides, in the second episode, 'The Centre of the World (1929–1933)', to pay her brother Hans, in Bochum, a visit on his birthday. Hans's birthday is on 20 April. Hence, he shares a birthday with Hitler, for whom the inhabitants of Schabbach are planning a celebration by, among other things, baking 'Hitler rolls' that, incidentally, Eduard thinks, taste just like the 'Kaiser rolls' they used to bake. During a festive dinner in Bochum, it is revealed to Katharina that Hans's son Fritz is a communist, but that he, since the dawn of the Third Reich, avoids openly criticizing the regime. One morning during Katharina's stay, the police arrest Fritz. He is taken to the local concentration camp for re-education, to 'exorcise the Marxist spirit'. Because of this, Katharina grows increasingly hostile to the new regime. When back in Schabbach, she responds to the ubiquitous happy jargon that 'not everyone is prospering'.

Apart from a reference saying that people are afraid of her because of her boldness, Katharina's journey to her brother's in Bochum does not make it into the photo album, the canon of memories.[41] The fate of her imprisoned nephew is forgotten in the collective memory of *Heimat*. This absence of the journey in later recollections provides not only an insight into the selective nature of collective remembrance, but also into Reitz's deductive approach to his subject matter: he did not believe in the majority's morally conscious collaboration with Hitler. If photographs equate historical documents in their indexical quality, their absence coincides with the previous lack of proofs for local resistance movements. Accordingly, Reitz demonstrates that the non-appearance of Katharina's journey in the album does not exclude the possibility of its existence. It does not, as Hoberman claims, prove the sequence to be merely a token one, for the logic of memory works differently than that of critical history: 'Memory, insofar as its affective', Pierre Nora writes, echoing Halbwachs, and as Reitz seems to mean, 'only accommodates those facts that suit it'.[42]

The above extract can also be reversed in Reitz's favour, and then seen as providing an argument for the raison d'être of *Alltagsgeschichte*. Since the viewer has seen 'what really happened', it becomes throughout the film obvious how much is forgotten, consciously left out, suppressed; how complex sympathies and involvements are, even those of the 'little people'; and how some experiences can only be recaptured by oral history research. Katharina, who did not leave written traces and who therefore would have been lost in the anonymity of the past, can here be construed as a site of resistance. Obviously, this parallel concerns form and not content, as *Heimat* is a work of fiction and thus investigates the

possibilities of history, not its realities. Katharina's resistance inside of Schabbach is noticed in the retrospective photos. Yet it is not repeated after the war episodes. Not only an archetypal character for the history of the everyday in her micro-resistance, Katharina can be placed in opposition to Hermann's venomous attack on his mother as one of the mass, in the episode 'Little Hermann (1955–1956)' — the mass that lacked ideals and thus cried for a leader. He continues: 'They will soon see once again what that brings them.' As the viewer knows that a new leader never emerges, such accusations appear empty, full only of an elitist distaste for the petite bourgeoisie. These kinds of allegations intensify in the *Second Heimat* amongst Hermann and his friends in the early 1960s Munich avant-garde scene.[43]

As the various takes on new beginnings appear merely to be nominal changes from the horizon of an isolated village, *Heimat* establishes an historical continuum. It describes a (prolonged) 'moment of history [*Geshichte*] torn away from the movement of history [*Historie*]'.[44] Based only on the above mentioned scenes and characters, two cases can be singled out. After Fritz's arrest, in the 'Centre of the World' episode, his wife is told by a policeman that there is no need to worry: 'We have had the least bloody revolution of all time.' The policeman who has known Fritz all his life explains that 'he just went along with them [the communists], like many others'. Read as an analogy, it becomes a tacit criticism of a Year Zero after the end of the war, and of the explanation provided for the attraction of Nazism. A similar attitude is expressed by Katharina in 1947, in the episode 'The American (1945–1947)', when she historicizes the concept of new eras: 'Another new age. There was one after the great war and then after the inflation, and then 1933 … And then 1945, they called that Year Zero … Every time we expect it to be better. There is no end to these new ages. Six times in my life, there's been a new age for me.' After having defined her perception of History, she dies, surrounded by family and friends.

Yet, it is not hers, but the embryo of Maria's solitary death that the series carries. As it proceeds, she becomes both increasingly alienated in the village — parents and lovers dying and children moving — and central to the plot. The yellowed photograph of Maria as a young mother, shown over and over by Glasich, also makes the viewer aware of her aging. It implies that she will ultimately die in the series and that the photographs will then act as evidence that she has lived; a transition of their meaning from showing, in Barthes's terms, what-has-been to what-is-no-longer.[45] Since Maria is the last to personify tradition, her death testifies to the disappearance of an authentic memory. When a quarter Jewish, *Hochdeutsch*-speaking Hermann finally returns, it is for Maria's funeral. In other words, it is not until history has besieged memory that he reconciles with the past and composes a symphony based on the region's idiomatic expressions: he creates what Nora has called a *lieu de mémoire*, or 'site of memory'. If one is inclined to biographical readings, this is Reitz himself creating the series.[46] This generational distance and

lack of deep personal connection would make it a work of what Marianne Hirsch has defined as 'postmemory'.[47] And in this light, if we go on with the biographical interpretation, it could arguably be seen as a qualification of the previously prevalent belief that the entire preceding generation belonged to one uniform 'mass' with inherent authoritarian tendencies.

Concluding Reflections

I have tried to show how the creation of *Heimat* depended both on newly opened spaces in historiography as well as on a political arena receptive to the critique of modernity. I have implied that the cultural moment was ripe for 'an affective investment in a specific set of *lieux de mémoire*', that is, the creation of a site of memory for a country that lost much of the cultural memory that would have been inherited through the built environment due to WWII bombardment, and since the fiction of a Year Zero, disowned collective memory as a sign of a no-longer-desirable historical continuum.[48] But I have at the same time tried to disentangle *Heimat* from the '*Die Wende* climate' and its concomitant historiography by highlighting how the historical moment in which the project was conceived did not coincide with the one in which it was received.

Although the series spans over sixty years, it is, as we have seen, its description of and coming to terms with the Nazi period that is chiefly at stake in its reception. Rather than creating a positive imagery of the past century, I have suggested that *Heimat*'s depiction of Katarina reveals its intellectual affiliation to, and application of the photo album exposes the epistemological challenges of, *Alltagsgeschichte*.[49] But why does Reitz's aim to write about people possessing reserves of memory but lacking historical capital tally with *Alltagsgeschichte*'s emphases to reconstruct local identities from the 1930s and 1940s? With Katharina, it seems to share not only the aim to diversify the involvement of the 'multitude', but also to challenge what Nolan has called the 'neat stereotypes about collaboration and resistance'. She personifies the resister, unconnected with any formal political struggle — such as the exiled SDP, or as a part of an organization such as the White Rose.[50] Its American reception correctly noted that a consequence of the emphasis on the quotidian and the provincial is that it implies a sense of normality during the Third Reich. But, unfortunately, this was confused to be the purpose of the series. Notably, *Alltagsgeschichte* has also been perceived as intending to re-evaluate the totalitarian nature of the regime.[51] In one of the articles forming part of the *Historikerstreit*, the German historian Jürgen Kocka wrote that in its 'partialization' of the understanding of history they [the historians of *Alltagsgeschichte*] 'create identity in small spaces by blocking off connections'.[52] To Garton Ash, it is precisely with the application of such a trick that *Heimat* escapes the yoke of German perpetration. That such a reaction is misguided is visible if one turns to the specific

epistemological challenges of oral history research and to the historiography against which it reacted.

Rather than accusing a historical account with a local perspective of being exculpatory, it is more fruitful to see how it lays bare the logic of memory, which, incidentally, is different than that of history. For, as Nora writes, 'memory attaches itself to sites', where 'history attaches itself to events'.[53] There is a discrepancy between the exclusive nature of memory and the inclusive universality of history, or, as Nora puts it, 'Memory is blind to all but the group it binds', where 'History belongs to everyone and no one'. This discrepancy is indeed accentuated if *Heimat*'s American reception is juxtaposed with its German popularity: the intense desire for a depoliticized, de-historicized quest for a lost home made the audience bypass *Heimat*'s bracketing of important events, random alternations between black and white and colour, as well as its thwarting of traditional patterns of identification.[54] The loss of these subversive aspects of *Heimat* indicates that it did not bring about a nostalgic climate. Rather, its American reception testifies to the fact that it was perceived in a public sphere that could already be characterized thus. And though Reitz indeed articulated lived experiences previously foreclosed from the symbolic order of History — highlighted by the fact that he received some ten thousand letters praising the series for 'retrieving memories' and 'unlocking them' — it does not indicate that his intention was to confirm the *Die Wende* climate, nor that this is the only way to read the series.[55]

The inhabitants of Schabbach might have lacked historical capital, but they possessed what Barthes considered to be the other great invention of the nineteenth century, namely photography.[56] With the use of a photo album in the initial retroactive narrative of each episode, Reitz lays bare the epistemological difficulties which memory studies has confronted. He exposes how memories accommodate what he called a 'living-in-spite-of-everything'. And this arbitrary nature of memories shows how the role of memory studies is complementary, not antagonist, to the macro-historical studies in the shadow of which *Alltagsgeschichte* was first formed.[57] Seen in this way, the positive outcome of Reitz's deductive approach is to widen the horizon of expectation for agency in accounts of the Third Reich, overshadowing the problematic absence of some key theatres of History. Furthermore, around the time when *Heimat* was made, the possibility to complement the historiography of the German twentieth century with substantial witness accounts was running out. This is signified in the series by Maria. She is a symbol, not only of an unmediated memory from the entire century, but of living a life surrounded by the presence of inherited traditions. She functions as its last vestige. And in the series, as she becomes both increasingly alienated in the village — parents and lovers dying and children moving — she becomes central to the plot. Thus, when she dies in 1982, so too, to some extent, does the ability to embark on similar projects. But in her death resides a paradox: the vast resources of memories these studies try

to recapture die with her, but their disappearance may be necessary for the creation of such a contested site of memory.

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Notes

1 *Heimat* premiered as a film, first in Munich, then at the film festivals of London and Venice, in 1984. In this essay, I will focus not on the film, but on the television version (*Heimat: A Chronicle of Germany* [1984]. Dir. Edgar Reitz. Tartan Video, 2004.)

2 Anton Kaes, *From Hitler to 'Heimat': The Return of History as Film* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 163.

3 Nancy Wood, *Vectors of Memory: Legacies of Trauma in Postwar Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 1999), p. 48.

4 Wood, pp. 41–42. In other words, the coming to terms with the past.

5 Andreas Huyssen writes that when the Green Party asked the other parties to abolish reunification from the political agenda it was a way to call the other parties' bluff (*Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 68). James M. Markham agreed, writing for the *New York Times* in 1987 that 'the Kohl Government and the Christian Democratic Party are effectively abandoning "reunification" as a serious goal' ('Uneasy West Germans: Yearnings Despite Plenty', *New York Times*, 2 August 1987.

6 Huyssen, p. 68. Markham writes that ever since the creation of the Federal Republic in 1949, an undercurrent of provisionality had existed beneath the current political constellation.

7 See J. Hoberman, 'Once in a Reich Time', *Village Voice*, 16 April 1985, repr. in *New German Critique*, 36 (Autumn 1985), pp. 9–11 (p. 11); Kenneth Barkin, 'Review of *Heimat: Eine deutsche Chronik*', *American Historical Review*, 96.4 (1991), pp. 1124–26 (pp. 1124–25). Contrary to the tone of these reviews, the British and French press predominantly hailed the series (see Kaes, p. 183), perhaps because these reviews were written earlier, before some of the significant changes had been put in place.

8 James Markham, 'West German TV Specials Spark Debate on Reconciliation with Nazi Era', *New York Times*, 24 April 1985. This is also evident in the film *Das Boot* [1982].

9 Timothy Garton Ash, 'The Life of Death', *New York Review of Books* 32.20, 19 December 1985, pp. 26–39.

10 Reinhardt Koselleck, 'Historia Magistra Vitae: The Dissolution of the Topos into the Perspective of a Modernized Historical Process', in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans by Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), pp. 26–42.

11 See, for example, G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. by J. Sibree (Mineola: Dover, 2004), p. 11.

12 Wood, p. 1.

13 Huyssen, p. 6.

14 If we only take the example of Germany, which is the focus of this essay, Michael Stürmer writes that the 1980s saw a significant rise in the interest of history ('History in a Land without History', in *Forever in the Shadow of Hitler?: The Dispute About the Germans' Understanding of History, Original Documents of the Historikerstreit, the Controversy Concerning the Singularity of the Holocaust*, trans. by James Knowlton and Truett Cates, ed. by Ernst Piper (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1993), pp. 16–17 (p. 16). In the same volume, Jörgen Kocka discerns on the same note a dialectic pattern: as history became more popular, sociology lost in currency ('Hitler Should Not Be Repressed by Stalin or Pol Pot: On the Attempts of German Historians to Relativize the Enormity of the Nazi Crimes', pp. 85–92 (p. 85).

15 I owe this insight to Pierre Nora, who writes that French equally lacks the distinction. By and large, I will follow his line of argument of what its absence makes interlocutors blind of (see 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire', *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989), pp. 7–24.

16 Jürgen Habermas, 'A Kind of Settlement of Damages (Apologetic Tendencies)', *New German Critique* 44, (Spring/Summer 1988), pp. 25–39 (pp. 29–36), orig. pub. in *Die Zeit*, 11 July 1986.

[17] Georg Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), p. 88.

[18] Mary Nolan, 'The Historikerstreit and Social History', *New German Critique* 44, (Spring/Summer 1988), pp. 51–80 (p. 57).

[19] Nolan, p. 51. Two major studies on society under fascism belonging to this historiography in their 'methodology, conception and scope' are the 'Essen oral history project on the Ruhr and the Institut für Zeitgeschichte's Bavarian project' (Nolan, p. 56).

[20] Nolan, p. 52. Besides the two examples given above, there were multiple grassroots movements and school projects researching life in the Third Reich.

[21] Nolan, p. 59, p. 60.

[22] Iggers, p. 72–74.

[23] Thomas Elsaesser, 'Memory, Home and Hollywood', *New German Critique* 36 (Autumn 1985), pp. 11–13 (p. 12).

[24] Don Ranvaud, '*Heimat*', *Sight and Sound* 54.2 (Spring 1985), pp. 124–26 (p. 124). This inability was perhaps most famously documented by Günter Grass in *The Tin Drum* (1959) in which one chapter concerns 'The Onion Cellar', where people peel onions in order to be able to cry while sharing memories from the war.

[25] Michael E. Geisler, '*Heimat* and the German Left: The Anamnesis of a Trauma', *New German Critique*, 36 (Autumn 1985), pp. 25–66 (p. 27).

[26] To nuance this, it was an aim that was, by no means, only shared by a postwar left; the fact that 'every part [of life] expresses something of the whole of life', as Hans-Georg Gadamer writes apropos Dilthey, was an integral notion for German historicism from Herder to Gadamer (see *Truth and Method*, trans. by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (London: Sheed and Ward, 1989), p. 241).

[27] These films continued to be made after the war. In the decade and a half succeeding the 'Year Zero', some three hundred *Heimat* films were made, out of which thirty were in fact remakes of Third Reich films (Hoberman, p. 10). Reitz also plays with this tradition as one episode features the Carl Forelich 1938 film *Heimat* staring Swedish actress Zarah Leander, who both Maria and her sister Pauline adore. A lot of Third Reich films that were considered entertainment also continued to be shown in both DDR and FGR. (See Kate Trumpener, 'Drowning out the Newsreel' [review of Nazis and the Cinema, by Susan Tegel, Cineman and the Swastika: The International Expansion of Third Reich Cinema, edited by Roel Vande Winkel and David Welch, Prague in Danger: The Years of German Occupation 1939-45, by Peter Demetz]', *London Review of Books*, 12 March 2009, pp. 23–24 (p. 24)). Other films, judged to be propaganda by the Allies, were banned, and in certain cases remain banned.

[28] Kaes, p. 165.

[29] Geisler, p. 25.

[30] Franz A. Birgel, 'You Can Go Home Again: An Interview with Edgar Reitz', *Film Quarterly*, 39.4 (Summer 1986) pp. 2–10 (p. 4).

[31] Kaes, p. 166.

[32] Geisler, pp. 48–50.

[33] Miriam Hansen, 'Dossier on Heimat', *New German Critique*, 36 (Autumn 1985), pp. 3–7 (pp. 3–4).

[34] Birgel, p. 7.

[35] Carole Angier, 'Edgar Reitz', *Sight and Sound*, 60.1 (Winter 1990–1991) pp 33–40 (p. 38).

[36] Nora, p. 7.

[37] Birgel, p. 7.

[38] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. by Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 40.

[39] Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. by Richard Hower (London: Vintage, 2000) p. 80, p. 86.

[40] Thus, this resembles Barthes perception of the photograph as a coming to terms with death.

[41] A possible 'realist' reason for this is that she does not take any photos. Yet numerous other occasions are represented in the album without there having been a visible photographer when they 'happened'. Still, her trip is not even mentioned.

[42] Hoberman, p. 9; Nora, p. 8.

[43] To some extent, they express a previously widely held belief that Nazism was alluring mostly to shopkeepers, clerks, tradesmen, etc., since it prevented these groups from becoming proletarianized (see Christopher Clark, 'Vases, Tea Sets, Cigars, His Own

Watercolours [review of The High Society in the Third Reich by Fabrice d'Almeida]', *London Review of Books*, 9 April 2009, pp. 31–32.

44 Nora, p. 12.

45 Barthes, p. 96.

46 Birgel, p. 3.

47 Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 22.

48 Wood, p. 21.

49 Kaes (p. 172) identifies Heimat's similarities to this historiography as well. Incidentally, the two share the same point of departure: both the film and the historiography reacted against the American television show *Holocaust*.

50 Nolan, p. 59.

51 Nolan, p. 74.

52 Kocka, p. 89.

53 Nora, p. 22.

54 Nora, p. 9; Geisler, pp. 52–53.

55 Regarding the letters, see Angier, p. 34. The symbolic order of History is, however, not to be confused with what Reitz defined as his aim, namely to 'reclaim' German history from Hollywood. Or, rather, what he reclaims is a German *experience*, not History; he could do this since there existed layers of memory in Germany that had not been articulated to a large degree, something which W. G. Sebald also remarked upon in his *A Natural History of Destruction*. I was inspired in this application of Lacan's ideal types on collective memories by Charity Scribner, *Requiem for Communism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), p. 91.

56 Barthes, p. 93.

57 Iggers, pp. 103–17.

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