

Heimat and *Buddenbrooks* in the Age of Empire

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Turn-of-the-century Heimat literature, both that portraying Heimat as a perfect idyll and that conveying some skepticism about the concept of Heimat, was immensely popular, widely read, and part of the discourse within the German-reading community. In the first decade of the twentieth century, notable Heimatroman author, Clara Viebig, consistently ranked in the top three of German best-selling authors (Boa and Palfreyman 41). While popular, Heimat literature was not typically a genre explored by more “well-respected” authors. However, the attraction to Heimat was a pervasive part of the German identity and German everyday life; many writers found it nearly impossible to avoid including allusions to a Heimat concept in literature. Even if they never directly addressed the topic, German authors of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries entered into the debate on Heimat and, intentionally or not, altered the discourse on the subject for their audience. After the unification of German states in 1871, the representation of the Heimat concept in literature was an expression of the pairing of local/regional and national memory. This pairing created, for the first time, a regional Heimat concept that encompassed the nation, as well.

In the manner of most words, Heimat has undergone shifts in definition and usage over the centuries. As the *Wörterbuch* of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm tells us, by the fifteenth century, Heimat was close in meaning to *Vaterland* and was frequently used interchangeably in poetry and prose. At that time, both words were synonymous with the Latin *patria*, or nation. The meaning of both terms remained primarily static until the eighteenth century. For Heimat in the nineteenth century, Grimms’ dictionary provides a straightforward definition of “das land oder auch nur der landstrich, in dem man geboren ist oder bleibenden aufenthalt hat” (Grimm and Grimm). The other three possible

definitions are similarly direct and describe Heimat as a location, with only the final possible definition of Heimat as heaven for Christians demonstrating the metaphorical and lyrical potential for the word. The Grimms indicate that, by the middle of the nineteenth century, Heimat's definition grew increasingly specific to refer more clearly to the regional, moving away from the general *Vaterland*, which retained its association with *patria*. While the denotation of the word avoided lyrical interpretation, Heimat became a common theme in the poetry and prose of the Romantics of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. For them, the term Heimat conveyed a sense of rootedness and belonging, while also linking the Romantic artists to a pre- or anti-modern sense of social transparency (Applegate 2). Heimat allowed Romantics to idealize an imagined past and to place on a pedestal ever more obsolete traditions and mores. The concept also allowed for and encouraged pride in one's locality – fostering interest in nature, landmarks, historical figures, and the language that bound them all together. Despite the concept's connection with Romantic artists, the transition over the course of the nineteenth century saw Heimat imagery move away from the Romantic idea of nature as the sublime. The beautiful, sweeping landscapes reminiscent of a Casper David Friedrich painting were still present in Heimat art at the turn-of-the-century, but the landscapes now seemed to emphasize the mundane, rather than a spiritual connection. The concept of Heimat retained the pre-modern agrarian aspects of the Romantics but combined the townscape with the landscape; the common man and the common German could observe Heimat art at the end of the nineteenth century and find a part of themselves in the scene (Confino, *Württemberg* 178).

After the unification of the German states under Prussia in 1871, Germany experienced a period of unprecedented growth, rapid industrialization, and urbanization. A large portion of the population moved away from their family farms into the anonymity of the city, stoking a fear of the urban proletariat and the rise of social democracy (Boa and Palfreyman 39). In 1849, the population of Berlin was less than 500,000, but by 1914, Berlin had become Europe's most densely populated city with 1.8 million inhabitants (Schnurr). During this time, the Heimat movement gained steadily in popularity by pandering to the rural fears of urbanization and decline with the symbols of an agrarian, timeless Heimat concept. As Peter Blickle explains, even today, when German-speaking cultures have difficulties adjusting to changes in modern life, a greater importance is placed on Heimat as a national concept; it represents a longing to return to an idealized pre-modern state, during which, it is imagined, life would have been simpler (27).

The Heimat movement of the late nineteenth century lauded the symbols of agriculture, the farmer and his *Landbesitz*, the village, the domestic woman, and, above all else, nature and the *Landschaft*. This popular movement was both generated by the people, diverse in class and religion, and it had broad appeal; Celia Applegate writes that the Heimat movement claimed thousands of members in their various associations, had wide circulation of the many Heimat journals, and frequently hosted large public festivals and parades (60). Karlheinz Rossbacher describes in his *Heimatkunstabewegung und Heimatroman* (1975) how the scholars and authors whose work was printed in Heimat journals (e.g. *Die Heimat. Blätter für Literatur und Volkstum*, *Flugschriften der Heimat*,

*Gartenlaube*, *Die Gesellschaft*, *Der Kunstwart* etc.) had the specific goal of integrating the German peoples (“die deutschen Stämme”) and landscape into their literature (19).

A testament to the popularity of the movement is the establishment of Heimat museums. During the reign of the empire (1871-1918), 197 Heimat museums were opened throughout Germany, “from the metropolis Berlin to provincial small towns” (Confino, “Nation” 50–51). These museums showcased the non-fiction literature written about the specific regions and villages, as well as photographs of the villages and landscapes, handicrafts produced by local tradespeople, fiction literature written about the region, and, to emphasize the pre-modern nature of Heimat, traditional garb (*Tracht*). By encouraging an interest in the *local* geography, history, and customs (*Heimatkunde*), the various regions of Germany could express their uniqueness in an increasingly homogenous world. The Heimat movement grew out of regional pride and a desire to put on display that which made their region particular in Germany. The rural Heimat movement reacted against the centralization and industrialization of the modern by focusing on nature and ruins while the urban landscape focused on the new and mutable (Applegate 62). The museums, festivals, parades, and even the journals were a physical display to the outsider that the people of that region were proud of their Heimat. These public demonstrations bounded Heimat off from the outsider, from that which was radically different, and demonstrated that they did not belong and could not fit into that community (Boa and Palfreyman 27). However, it is more important that it was a display to the insider as well. The presentation of shared Heimat reinforced the community and reassured them of their shared beliefs and mores.

“Einheit aus Mannigfaltigkeit”, a term Rossbacher borrowed from the American *e pluribus unum*, is how the German nation went from being a series of independent nation states to being a united country with a national identity (Rossbacher 19). As Applegate asserts, there was a strong desire among the German people for uniqueness, for something that would make their region stand out among the many (62). This desire was not mutually exclusive from a concurrent rise in nationalism. In Alon Confino’s discussion of Württemberg after unification and Applegate’s research on the Pfalzers, both scholars explain how the promotion of Heimat can easily lead to an increase in nationalist sentiment. As already indicated, the empire had national influence over a great many aspects of life in the provinces of Germany, but there was little direct influence on the customs of the regions. There were few imposed national holidays or national monuments – the imperial administration left that to the local administration. The regional elites and leaders of the Heimat movement were thus able to “shape national identity in their own image” without imperial influence (Confino, *Württemberg* 31). In the case of Württemberg, this meant that the locals arranged for Sedan Day celebrations – a festival to celebrate a decisive battle in the Franco-Prussian war in 1870. The form of the Sedan Day celebration in many places closely mimicked other local festivals and invoked symbols and locations that would have been traditionally associated with the region and Heimat. While each festival varied to some degree, a typical celebration began with children at school. Locals paraded through the town square, often passing a church on the way out of town. The bulk of the festival would be held in a natural setting, in a field or near local ruins, where many other festivals had been held before. Childhood innocence, religion and the church, village domesticity, and the natural landscape are the

symbols of Heimat drawn on by a seemingly national holiday, “a holiday that represented the nation in a setting of localism, enjoying a popular and committed following” (*Württemberg* 39).

The Heimat concept was expanded beyond the meaning proscribed by the Grimms in the 1830s, “das land oder auch nur der landstrich, in dem man geboren ist oder bleibenden aufenthalt hat”. Heimat could no longer be defined simply as a place – it was a set of traditions, a style of dress, a way of interacting with nature, and a connection to likeminded individuals. Heimat defined how an individual identified themselves in relation to a group and also how they defined the group. By celebrating the nation with established traditions associated with Heimat, Germans brought the Heimat into the nation, but also the nation into the Heimat. An “imagined community”<sup>1</sup> is created in the idea of a national Heimat, which can alternate between being a local, regional, or national specific phenomenon (Confino, *Württemberg* 98). The German people find commonalities in their celebration of Heimat traditions, commonalities in their understanding of how to protect their Heimat, and despite their other apparent differences, they consider themselves to be part of the same community. Confino defines these commonalities among differences as “common denominators of variousness”; it is this phenomenon which allows a German from Munich and a German from Hamburg to look at each other and feel a common national identity, despite their myriad regional differences (*Württemberg* 9). As the nineteenth century progressed, it became

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<sup>1</sup> A term coined by Benedict Anderson in his 1983 book of the same name. As the term implies, Anderson asserts that communities are imagined institutions constructed by those who believe themselves to be a part of them. There are many avenues through which one would consider themselves to be a part of an imagined community, some examples include through a shared language, a shared region, a shared history, a perception of common background or knowledge (i.e. By reading the same newspapers). Anderson argues that European nation states were imagined communities formed around a national printing language. Anderson, Benedict. 2006. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. New York: Verso.



increasingly clear that nationalism and “Germanness” could be subsumed under an already developed regional pride and identity; the concept of Heimat became both infinitely vast to encompass the German nation and people, and remained restrictive and exclusive to express regional variation (Applegate 13). The mixing of Heimat traditions, long employed for local celebrations and considered to be sacrosanct in their immutability, with the symbols of the post-unification nation allowed the Germans to move unification back in history. Germany became a nation that had always been – as old as the medieval ruins where they celebrated the national holidays (Confino, *Württemberg* 49). The imagery of churches, farmers, and the village, once merely connected to Heimat, then tied to the nation, could be used to call upon citizens to buy war bonds, for men to serve in the army, or for women to stay home and preserve the Heimat.

The interplay of local and national sentiment wrapped up with community traditions are the relevant components of Alon Confino’s concept of “local-national memory”. Confino utilizes the concept of collective memory in order to explore how “opposing memories construct a national memory” and how multiple layers of memory can coexist in tension, but “without breaking” (*Württemberg* 8). The opposing memories here are the collective memories specific to the regions of Germany – they seem to be at odds with each other while still managing to blend together. Local-national memory is a specific form of collective memory which allows for the convergence of these two seemingly different forces. This particular form of memory coalesces where these opposing memories, which often contradict one another, reconcile “through a process of remembrance and forgetfulness” forming the concept of Heimat that encompasses the local, regional, and national (*Württemberg* 9). Alteration of the local-national memory

becomes possible by variously remembering or commemorating past events, as well as through selectively forgetting. While it may seem trivial at first, the ability to forget certain elements, traditions, or customs of the past is what allows us to reshape our present and prepare for our future. Even the smallest of communities enters into the discourse with the local-national memory and contributes to the debate on what must be remembered and what is best to be forgotten.

How a community decides to remember its past shapes both the social structure and customs of that community. In order to illustrate the potential implications of remembering and forgetting certain aspects of the past, I will take Germany and the United States as models of national communities and provide an example of how the countries commemorate controversial events in their history. After the Second World War and particularly after the 1960s, the West German response to the atrocities committed by the Nazi regime was one of guilt and atonement. Both large and small memorials to the victims of the Holocaust are erected in every city, ranging in scale from the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin to the small, brass “Stolpersteine” in the sidewalks marking the homes of those murdered. To this day, children are taught in schools about the German national guilt for the crimes of the Third Reich. The task of teaching children both facts about and empathetic reaction to a distant past becomes more difficult when the children become further removed from the events (Staas). However, the feelings of guilt for the Holocaust are undeniably a part of the German national memory. On the other hand, the United States can be seen as an example of a nation seeking to forget their past and erase feelings of guilt for wrongs committed against oppressed and subjugated people. In 2015, a student in Texas drew

attention to the use of the term “workers” to refer to the slaves that were taken on forced passage from Africa to the American colonies and textbooks consistently highlight causes of the Civil War aside from slavery (Rockmore). While this might seem like an extreme example, it is not uncommon for school curricula to focus on the events of the Civil War and the freeing of the American slaves, but ignore the genocide perpetrated by white Americans against black Americans, both during and after slavery. The history of racist laws and disenfranchisement of black voters are taught in schools, but primary and secondary school education is sanitized to remove the tales of violent lynch mobs. Each country has dealt with the education of the public about the past in a different way in order to commemorate particular aspects of the past and remove others from the collective memory. The main questions for the purpose of this research are how do we choose what to commemorate and what to give less attention? What process do we use in order to remember or forget the events of the past? How do we learn to take part in this process? How does this process affect our understanding of our communities and form a collective memory within those communities? And finally, what can we find in literature that reflects this process?

### **The Heimatroman**

At the turn-of-the-century, the Heimatroman, or Heimat novel, was a central medium for artists seeking to take part in the process of selective commemoration. Karlheinz Rossbacher’s *Heimatkunstabewegung und Heimatroman* (1975) remains one of the most detailed monographs on the Heimatroman, or Heimat novel. His chapter on the characteristics and analysis of the Heimatroman begins by listing the fifteen novels, chosen from at least three times that number, which he will use to define and analyze the

genre. From these texts he has drawn out a converging characteristics that are based heavily on “Szenerie, Großstrukturen, Personenkonstellationen und Kleinstrukturen” (138). Here, I will summarize some of the main properties of the Heimatroman and discuss them using one of Rossbacher’s chosen texts, Clara Viebig’s *Das Kreuz im Venn* (1908). Later, I will demonstrate how *Buddenbrooks* (1901), by Thomas Mann, though not traditionally considered a Heimatroman, fits into and manipulates the expectations of this genre.

When Clara Viebig’s novel was published in 1908 it enjoyed a reasonable amount of popularity, with between 30,000 and 50,000 copies being sold before 1933 and a new edition being published in 1938, despite her marriage to a Jewish publisher (Rossbacher 236). Some of the early, and frequently anti-Semitic, *Heimatkunstprogrammatiker* disavowed Viebig as a writer of Heimat novels; however, those scholars who studied *Heimatkunst* and Heimat novels, including Rossbacher, have found much of her work to be characteristic of the genre (Krauss-Theim 36–37). Viebig’s novel is an exemplar of how the Heimatroman of the turn-of-the-century could both fit into and go beyond the expected paradigms for the genre. *Das Kreuz im Venn* strives to be both a Heimatroman and a snapshot of society in this small community. The setting is split between three levels: the small city (unnamed, but recognizable as Monschau in North Rhine-Westphalia) in the valley, the village, Heckenbroich, up the mountain, and, higher up, the Hohe Venn, a plateau that is mostly moorland. On each level, Viebig introduces characters from the bourgeoisie, the government, the farming class, the working class, and even prisoners. The divergent plot lines merge into two main channels by the end of the text. In one, the Bürgermeister Leykuhlen deals with the potential fallout of drought

and disease for having placed religion above technological progress – he uses the Heckenbroich community funds to build a larger church instead of a water supply line for the village. When, on the same day, two cases of typhoid turn out to not be caused by contaminated well water and a drought miraculously ends, Leykuhlen is turned into a local hero and is chosen to be a representative in the Reichstag. In the other main plot line, the cousin of a local factory owner, Josef Schmölder, believes that he will finally be able to be happy if he can live alone on the Hohe Venn at a hunting lodge and leave the concerns and frivolity of city life behind him. He brings a young, pious girl, Bäreb Huesgen, with him as his maid – otherwise, he gets very little human companionship. During this section of the novel, Viebig focuses solely on Schmölder and the events at the lodge. Schmölder gets little news of the outside world and the narration reflects that by breaking its earlier pattern of following multiple characters in a chapter and, in this case, only reporting from Schmölder's perspective. Viebig isolates the audience as she presents Schmölder's slow descent into madness. In the winter, he has a near death experience after being lost in the snow and fog. However, it is only through an encounter with an escaped prisoner that he recognizes his decay in mental acuity and reasoning – he chooses to leave the Hohe Venn for the Riviera. Around these two main lines float scenes of religious piety, neighborly affection, the agrarian idyll, gambling, marriage, illicit relationships, and bureaucratic relations. Viebig's novel creates a robust world in the Eifel.

One of the main characteristics of the Heimatroman is the use of the village as the social model and main setting. Avoiding the metropolis was a key characteristic of the Heimatroman. "Das Sozialmodell Dorf ist anders als das Sozialmodell Stadt, es

beherbergt auch andere Menschen. Das ist der Anspruch des Heimatromans“ (Rossbacher 139). Although a positive portrayal of the metropolis is not typically found in the Heimatroman, the city does often feature typically as a foil to the village. In Clara Viebig's novel *Das Weiberdorf*, Berlin, according to Rossbacher, was “[die] Stadt der Salons, des Verfalls, der Verjudung, der Arbeiterbewegung, des versteinerten Elends, des Asphalts,“ whereas Viebig depicts the village as a place providing protection and security while avoiding the claustrophobic atmosphere of the city; „[diese] geradezu klassischen Elemente einer Stadt-Dorf-Kontrastierung sind getreulich nachgeredetes Heimatkunst-Programm“ (Rossbacher 144). The city also need not be as large and metropolitan as Berlin; in Viebig's *Das Kreuz im Venn*, the city of Monschau is practically a village in comparison to Berlin. It has only two narrow main streets, but the size of the city does not prevent the residents from dressing in their finest clothes, drinking, carousing, and gambling in the popular *Lokal*, driving the newest automobiles, and operating smoking and steaming factories. For the soldiers stationed there from Pomerania and Cologne, the city is too small and rural; for the residents of the village, Heckenbroich, it is a den of sin and an instigator of unnecessary change. In addition to Monschau, the city of Echternach features in the text as an overwhelming array of noises, smells, and people during Bäreb Huesgen's pilgrimage there. The market festival taking place during Pentecost weekend could be taking place in any German city or town. The narration from Bäreb's perspective describes it thusly: “Schaubude, Würfelbude, Schießbude, Schaukel, Karussell, Glücksrad, Pfefferkuchenstand, Menagerie, Wahrsagerin. Ei, was gibt's da alles zu sehen, zu kaufen, zu naschen, zu belachen!“ (134). She is enthralled but quickly overwhelmed; a few pages later, she is described as having a “Sehnsucht...nach der Stille

der Heimat” (141). Following this, Bäreb makes the acquaintance of a young man who comes from an area of Germany close to her village, Heckenbroich. She trusts him because he is familiar, despite never having met him before. While there is no direct description of a sexual relationship between the two teenagers, the dangers of the city to a young, pious girl are made apparent in the frequent implication that such an event occurred in Echternach. As a foil to these events, while Bäreb is later the maid of Josef Schmölder at the hunting lodge, the narration presents several thoughts from Schmölder’s perspective that indicate that he has sexual desire for her and the intention to act on that desire; however, while in the safety of her Heimat, Bäreb remains unmolested. Within this text, the dichotomy between city and village represents a struggle between the modern and the traditional, both in technology and morality.

In *Das Kreuz im Venn*, Viebig creates a world with a large cast of characters. Rossbacher writes that she offers one of the widest spectrums of social types in a Heimatroman with the intention of drawing the genre of the “Gesellschaftsroman” toward Heimat art (184). Before discussing the main protagonists of the text, it is necessary to look to the supporting characters of the Heimatroman. In the village of Heckenbroich, one particular aspect seems to unite all the inhabitants – the “Hecken” themselves. The residents are factory workers, migrant laborers who commute back and forth from Aachen, or farmers – some with small farms and a cow, some with many acres and a large herd of cattle. While they have different professions, there is the implication that they own their homes, and with each home comes the responsibility of caring for the immense hedges. The narration from Leykuhlen’s perspective describes his hedges as “mehrhundertjährig”, “die schönste im Dorf“, and as “der Stolz der Vorfahren“ (29). He

says he would never remove them, despite the way they keep the sun from reaching the house. The supporters and propagators of Heimat art frequently equated home and land ownership with possession of a Heimat. Julius Langbehn, a contributor to the journals *Heimat: Blätter für Literatur und Volkstum* and *Der Kunstwart* and a known antisemite, wrote, „Eine wahre Heimath hat der Mensch erst, wenn er Grundbesitz und insbesondere Landbesitz hat“ (Rossbacher 146). For Viebig’s Heckenbroich villagers, land ownership is necessary for the possession of Heimat, but a necessary aspect of land ownership in the village is the maintenance of the hedges – for the villagers, home is where the “Hecke” is.

According to Rossbacher, one of the most prominent features of the Heimatroman is the hero: „der heroisierte Bauer [steht] im Mittelpunkt“ (14). If the peasant figure is not the protagonist of the Heimatroman, then he (or she) is typically a character who has escaped the life of the city to lead a simpler life in a village or a *Heimkehrer*, having returned home finally after a long stay away. If a character is not local to the region in question they must work twice as hard or develop a particular relationship with nature in order to fit into the local Heimat concept (Rossbacher 188). Viebig’s “heroisierter Bauer” is the Bürgermeister Leykuhlen. He has unfailing faith in the community of Heckenbroich to guide their own destiny and to remain strong together through faith. When agents of the imperial government come into the village and forbid the use of the local wells, for fear of contamination, he continues to defend the decision to build a church instead of a water supply system. When there is a drought and two men become sick with typhoid, the townspeople briefly turn on Leykuhlen and throw rocks and excrement at his home; despite this treatment, he remains loyal to the town and the citizens he serves. He reaps the rewards of his loyalty after the cases of typhoid are found



to come from a different source and the drought finally breaks – the village celebrates him everywhere he goes and decides to vote him into office as a representative in the Reichstag. Viebig’s depiction of Leykuhlen, while mainly positive, is laced with irony. She demonstrates a keen awareness that Leykuhlen’s behavior is highly prized by his community, but she uses the sudden shift in public opinion about him to depict a highly fickle community that clearly is not always the safe haven it would claim to be. Leykuhlen’s situation shows how quickly one can become an outsider in a small community like Heckenbroich.

While Leykuhlen avoids being ostracized from his community, the other main protagonist of the novel, Josef Schmölder, is not able to avoid a similar fate. In his case, however, he is not in danger of being ousted from a community, but rather, he fails to find his idealized concept of Heimat and is thrown back to civilization by nature itself. Schmölder is not the only character who is viewed as an outsider to the pastoral concept of Heimat. Leykuhlen accuses the Landrat Mühlenbrink, from East Prussia, of only being able to love the area “mit dem Verstand”, but Leykuhlen loves it “mit der Seele” (99). However, Schmölder is the only clear outsider who attempts to turn an idealized version of the Venn moorland into their Heimat. Rossbacher contends, as stated earlier, that an outsider would have to work twice as hard to become a part of a new Heimat concept (188). Schmölder works hard to explore the area of the Venn near the hunting lodge, but he continues to believe that he knows better than the local residents, that he understands the Venn because he is so emotionally connected to the land. It is not until the snows fall and trap Schmölder and Bäreb in the lodge for days on end that he finally begins to admit that this is not what he thought it would be. When he gazes out at the unending whiteness

of the snowy moorland, it is narrated, “Er fühlte eine heimliche Angst. Vor was? Er hätte sie nicht erklären können. Aber die Angst war da, er fühlte sie genau, sie war keine Täuschung“ (284). After a near death experience in the snowy landscape and an encounter with an escaped prisoner from a nearby prison work camp, he is finally convinced that the Hohe Venn is not the idyllic perfect Heimat concept that he had imagined. The Venn does not give him the solace from the frivolity of modern life that he seeks because he does not seek to understand the true nature of the forbidding landscape, but rather he attempts to force nature to fit his expectations – a truly foolish endeavor.

Heimat literature works most effectively when it allows time to affect the static Heimat that can otherwise be tedious; the passage of time undoes the illusion of permanence, allows for change, and brings action to the plot (Boa and Palfreyman 25). This focus on the passage of time is also highlighted by Rossbacher, „Man darf im Heimatroman im Durchschnitt mit langen bis sehr langen Spannen von erzählter Zeit rechnen“ (149). He indicates that a commonly used expression in a Heimatroman will be something similar to “Jahre vergingen”. In Viebig’s Heimatroman, the time span is shorter than in many, but the narration describes the events of the area from the middle of spring in one year to the beginning of spring in the next. Instead of “Jahre”, it was months that would pass in great leaps of time. Viebig could also have time inch by achingly slow, as she does in the scenes where Schmölder is living in isolation at the hunting lodge. In *Das Kreuz im Venn*, the passage of a full year effectively demonstrates how much in a location can change over the course of a year, but still somehow manage to stay the same.

The church tower is a fundamental symbol of Heimat in the German village. Alon Confino describes how the church tower was chosen as an icon of German Heimat that could be applied to any Heimat related materials without implying a specific location, but would still evoke a “pleasant emotion” in the viewer (*Württemberg* 163–164). As a symbol that appeared in the center of every German village, the church tower became one of many “common denominators of variousness” that would lead to a stereotypization of Germanness and a feeling of unity among diverse provinces. A village could be bound off geographically by the church tower as well, in that the village is located in the space „in dem die Glocken des Dorfkirchturms (des ‚campanile‘) zu hören sind“ (Rossbacher 140). In *Das Kreuz im Venn*, the church is demonstrated as being central to the town life. Leykuhlen is the most outspoken advocate for the choice to build a church instead of a water supply pipe, but he is not alone in his religious fervor. Jilles, the previous caretaker of the hunting lodge that Josef Schmölder takes over, is an example of the importance of the church and religion in the village. He says to Heinrich Schmölder, Josef’s wealthy cousin, “Bis Heckenbroich is et so wiet, un jut drei Stund hammer no’r Kirch“ (72). Jilles wants to move his family back to town so they can be closer to the school and church, but while living at the lodge they are still willing to go three hours one way to attend church services. After the new church is built, the description from Leykuhlen’s perspective echoes the imagery described by Confino. Leykuhlen is out walking, praying for rain, when he sees the church tower in the distance, he thinks,

Sieh, da war ja der Turm von Heckenbroich! Und sieh, da war sie auf einmal voll da, sie, die Kirche, die man noch nicht sehen können vorm letzten Aufstieg! Zwischen hohen Tannen ragte sie, schöner noch, und viel höher als diese. Vom

Dorf war noch nichts zu entdecken, das lag versunken hinter den Hecken, aber hier, im Ausschnitt der Tannen, die wie lebende Pfeiler das schöne Bild einrahmten, stand die Kirche von Heckenbroich, klar und deutlich auf dem Goldgrund der ewigen Sonne und grüßte weit übers Hochland hin. (225).

This scene reflects the typical Heimat iconography of the natural landscape mixing with the symbols of human development. The church is so magnificent, in part, because it is taller than these ancient trees; once the church has been built, the trees and the sunshine seem to become a backdrop for the beauty of the church to be displayed upon. Although, Viebig creates subtly, and with irony, a literal hole in this Heimat image – the only part of the church tower that is incomplete is the clock face. This leaves behind a hole in the tower that clearly bothers Leykuhlen. Small gestures such as this demonstrate that, even in a Heimatroman, the image of Heimat is still depicted as imperfect.

While each individual Heimatroman can find a myriad of ways to reflect on the concept of Heimat, when taken as a genre the characteristics begin to boil down to their basics. Clara Viebig's Heimatroman, *Das Kreuz im Venn*, is not an uncritical portrayal of a local Heimat concept, but rather a nuanced understanding of how Heimat can grow and change. In the following, I will demonstrate how the novel *Buddenbrooks* also uses the properties of a Heimatroman to explore the possible variations on the genre and the Heimat concept itself.

### ***Buddenbrooks* as Cautionary Heimatroman**

Thomas Mann did not intend his family epic to mimic the style of contemporary Heimat artists. The reading public originally mistook the novel for a Heimatroman. However, according to Todd Kontje, Mann believed that his novel drew on broader

European literary traditions and should be considered world literature (*Weltliteratur*) – at the same time, Mann found that the novel retained “das Nationale, ja Regionale” (509). It is noteworthy that Mann viewed *Buddenbrooks* as expressing the national as well as the regional. The events of the novel rarely transpire more than a few hours outside of Lübeck, giving *Buddenbrooks* a particularly regional scope. Social customs, governing bodies, religious landmarks, and local dialects all come to the fore in Mann’s portrayal of Lübeck and the Buddenbrook family. Mann finds the dialects to be of great importance to depicting the landscape of the city; he writes:

Ja, wenn ich meinte, die Landschaft einer Stadt, das sei ihre Architektur, so scheint mir nun fast, die Sprache sei es, die sie spricht, ihre Sprache als Stimmung, Stimmklang, Tonfall, Dialekt, als Heimatlaut, Musik der Heimat, und wer sie hörbar mache, der beschwöre auch den Geist der Landschaft, mit der sie so innig verbunden, deren akustische Erscheinungsform sie ist... Der Stil eines Schriftstellers ist letzten Endes und bei genauem Hinhorchen die Sublimierung des Dialekts seiner Väter. (Lindtke 10)

Despite his focus on the regional and local in *Buddenbrooks*, Mann does not appear to have written the novel with the intention that it be a work of Heimat art. Much of the novel can be interpreted as warning against the “cult” of Heimat and the characters often seek to escape from the confines of Lübeck (Schonfield 98). However, an author’s intention and how the work is able to be perceived are not always congruent.

While it may be easier to find examples of the Heimat concept as an expression of local-national memory in works traditionally considered to be Heimat art or a Heimatroman, Mann’s novel is ideal for examination in the scope of this research. A

chosen text must clearly be a part of the literary discourse during the time from 1871-1914. *Buddenbrooks*, being published in 1901, falls into the middle of the chosen time frame, was popular at the time of publication, and is still considered to be a part of the literary canon from this era. The extended *erzählte Zeit* of the novel also allows for the plot to begin at a time before German unification and conclude following it. This allows for narration of the reactions to unification, minimal as they may be in this text, and an analysis of the familial development in opposition to the development of the nation. Finally, while *Buddenbrooks* does not immediately stand out as a Heimatroman, Mann draws thematically on the stereotypes of the contemporary Heimat concept in order to create a scene of urban Heimat. By creating parallels between the proto-Heimatroman and *Buddenbrooks*, Mann distinguishes the concept of Heimat in the text, turning it into a central theme.

Thomas Mann's novel is thinly veiled, fictionalized autobiography. The city, Lübeck, is the primary setting and Mann's own *Heimatstadt*. Most of the characters and events, particularly those surrounding Antonie "Tony" Buddenbrook, can be traced back to his family members that inspired the work. The text orbits consistently around the Buddenbrook family. Beginning in the 1830s, the patriarch of the family is the elder Johann Buddenbrook. With the money of his company, a grain wholesaler, he purchases a home and lives there with his wife, Antoinette, and their son, the younger Johann Buddenbrook, and his young wife and three children. The beginning of the text begins to set up the expectations and traditions within which the family must operate and the assumption that the Buddenbrooks will place *Familie und Firma* above all other concerns and desires. As time passes, we are introduced to Tony Buddenbrook, the younger

Johann's daughter, as a young woman of marriageable age. From this point on, much of the novel follows Tony through her failed relationships, and the disastrous consequences those have for her life in her family and wider community. Thomas Buddenbrook, oldest son of the younger Johann Buddenbrook, also plays an important role as the proprietor of the family company. After his father's death, he begins to engage in increasingly risky business deals and his business, home, and personal life fall ever deeper into disrepair. During the time from 1835 to 1877, much happens in the lives of the Buddenbrooks, but despite every effort to the contrary, it all leads to the death or institutionalization of nearly every member of the family, the dissolution of the company, and the loss of everything they once considered essential to their identity as Buddenbrooks.

At first glance, *Buddenbrooks* has characteristics which distinguish it quite strongly from the standard Heimatroman. The most distinct difference is found in the hero(es) of the novel. The protagonists of Mann's novel are far from being farmers or peasants and their time spent outside of the city is always temporary. The characters often express a desire for a simpler life, like that in a Heimatroman's village, but that desire is quickly conquered by duty to *Familie und Firma*. Additionally, the importance in the novel of Lübeck, which is and was quite a large Hanseatic city, further distinguishes Mann's work from the typical Heimat literature of the time. However, as Lübeck is Mann's *Heimatstadt*, it makes sense that his novel would be set in this trade city. The key connections to *Familie und Firma* are found within Lübeck, while the visits to Travemünde highlight how different the rural village setting is from the metropolis. Mann also describes the city in a manner that avoids giving too great an amount of detail. It may seem to the reader that they have a feeling for what the city of Lübeck would be

like if they were to visit, but Mann's novel will not guide you through the city naming clubs, shops, or streets as you go. Mann surprisingly, perhaps, infrequently describes the specifics, „wie vage im Grunde seine historisch-topographischen Angaben bleiben“ (Lindtke 10). In contrast to the typical Heimatroman, Mann's description of the local color is a light sketch (Schonfield 98). The metropolitan setting and temperament of the characters in *Buddenbrooks* do much to differentiate it from the typical Heimatroman of the late nineteenth and twentieth century; however, despite Mann's claims to the contrary, the content of *Buddenbrooks* shares many distinctive characteristics with the genre.

The sea village, Travemünde, is located on the Baltic Sea approximately 20 km northwest of Lübeck. In *Buddenbrooks*, it provides the contrast to Lübeck that would be seen in a typical Heimatroman. In literature, and Heimat literature particularly, the metropolis distinguishes itself from the village as the site of decline and ruin. The decline of the Buddenbrooks – the subtitle of *Buddenbrooks* is “Verfall einer Familie” – is intrinsically linked to the city and their ever increasing desire for wealth and good-standing. However, Mann's novel draws the city/village dichotomy into question as he brings elements of the village into the city and avoids using stereotypes of the metropolis when characterizing Lübeck.

Being known to everyone and being aware of the matters of concern to your neighbors is an established trope of the village. Heimat is often portrayed in this way as well. Anthony Giddens has shown that “[where] in modern societies... a faceless trust has become crucial to every interaction with anonymous, abstract systems, in Heimat conceptualizations an impersonal trust in systems and symbols is irrelevant because



everything in this locality is known (*bekannt* and *gekannt*)” (cited in Blickle 32). Neighbors will trust one another because they *know* one another, not because they must. The metropolis has traditionally been placed at the opposite end of the spectrum, being the symbol for anonymity and the unknown. However, Mann’s Lübeck shares more with the Heimat village than the anonymous city. The danger of the unknown in a typical city fades into the background as Mann describes scenes of idyllic childhood play:

Es war kein Schade, daß Tony auf ihren Gängen durch die Stadt alle Welt kannte und mit aller Welt plauderte; der Konsul zumal war hiermit einverstanden, weil es keinen Hochmut, sondern Gemeinsinn und Nächstenliebe verriet. Sie kletterte, gemeinsam mit Thomas, in den Speichern an der Trave zwischen den Mengen von Hafer und Weizen umher, die auf den Böden ausgebreitet waren, sie schwatzte mit den Arbeitern und den Schreibern, die dort in den kleinen dunklen Kontoren zu ebener Erde saßen, ja, sie half sogar draußen beim Aufwinden der Säcke... (48; sec. 2, ch. 2)

The irony that is often present in Mann’s narration is briefly obscured by the genuinely neighborly behavior demonstrated by the children as they explore their *Heimatstadt*. However, Tony’s good deeds are quickly forgotten as the narrator depicts her as a little “Königin” of the city, treating others in whatever manner she pleases, depending on her mood. Though even this action, betrays a level of comfort with her surroundings that one might not believe possible in a metropolis. Mann demonstrates that Lübeck can be as close in neighborly knowledge and trust as the village of the Heimatroman<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> The use of the *Gruss aus* postcard also thinned the distinction between city and village in Heimat imagery by depicting large cities on the postcards in a similar manner to the smallest of towns. Alon Confino reports that the city of Stuttgart, with over 250,000 inhabitants, would be indistinguishable from a town with 2% of that population. “The *Gruss aus* Heimat image represented an idealized community regardless of the real

As the majority of Germany and Europe tended to belong to a church of the Christian tradition during the nineteenth century, it is entirely unsurprising that *Buddenbrooks* contains scenes having to do with the church and church bells. However, Mann places great emphasis on the church bells in the first chapter of the novel. His description of the bells tolling four o'clock immediately follows his detailed descriptions of each member of the household, implicitly tying the church to the Buddenbrooks dynasty.

Das Glockenspiel von St. Marien setzte mit einem Chorale ein: pang! ping, ping – pung! ziemlich taktlos, so daß man nicht recht zu erkennen vermochte, was es eigentlich sein sollte, aber doch voll Feierlichkeit, und während dann die kleine und die große Glocke fröhlich und würdevoll erzählten, daß es vier Uhr sei, schallte auch drunten die Glocke der Windfangtür gellend über die große Diele, worauf es in der Tat Tom und Christian waren, die ankamen, zusammen mit den ersten Gästen, mit Jean Jacques Hoffstede, dem Dichter, und Doktor Grabow, dem Hausarzt. (10; sec. 1, ch. 1)

The simultaneous ringing of the church bells and the bells of the vestibule door further emphasizes the link between the church, the family, and the home. If Heimat in a village is tied to the imagery of the church and church bells, then the home of the Buddenbrooks in the Mengstraße is their own protected, secure Heimat.

The importance of the family home in *Buddenbrooks* suggests additional parallels with the typical Heimatroman. The novel opens to the celebration of the recently purchased home – as leaders of the *Heimathbewegung* typically found land ownership to

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size of the locality because it avoided displaying the social consequences of modernity in imperial Germany” (Confino, *Württemberg* 181–182).

be a prerequisite to having a Heimat, this would be the moment when the Buddenbrooks possessed a “true” Heimat. The detailed description of the home and the rarity, especially at the beginning of the novel, of scenes that take place outside of the home underscore the deep connection with the Buddenbrooks Heimat. Often, land ownership implies a more natural connection with actual earth, rather than the purchase of a townhome; however, the narration reveals early that the Buddenbrooks own a section of garden near the city gates – a garden which becomes a contentious issue for the elder and younger Johann Buddenbrooks. While the father, from an earlier generation, prefers the garden to be well maintained, the grass to be trimmed, and the hedges to be shaped like cones or cubes, the son believes that altering the garden in this way would ruin its appeal for him. He evokes the *Naturschutz* ideals of Heimat artists as he says, “Ach Vater, wenn ich dort im hohen Gras unter dem wuchernden Gebüsch liege, ist es mir eher, als gehörte ich der Natur und als hätte ich nicht das mindeste Recht über sie...” (23; sec. 1, ch. 5). Within the boundaries of their city, the Buddenbrooks are able to have a variation of the Heimat proscribed by Heimat artists – they own land, both for a home and for the enjoyment of unadulterated nature.

Mann also brings the tropes of Heimat into the urban environment and the home in the inclusion of the *Landschaftszimmer*, an opulent room in their townhome. Just the name of the room creates an oxymoron, as they strive to contain a pastoral landscape within an urban living room. Throughout the novel, this room is witness to parties, marriage proposals, and arguments. The emotional attachment to the room is demonstrated when, late in the novel, after her mother’s death, Tony Buddenbrook specifically names the room as a reason for not selling the house. It is both essential for

the function of the home and central to the Buddenbrooks' pride in the home. Their pride in the room and the name of the room stem from the opulent decoration and the elaborate mural painted on the wall, which is described as follows:

Man saß im ‚Landschaftszimmer‘, im ersten Stockwerk des weitläufigen alten Hauses in der Mengstraße, das die Firma Johann Buddenbrook vor einiger Zeit käuflich erworben hatte und das die Familie noch nicht lange bewohnte. Die starken und elastischen Tapeten, die von den Mauern durch einen leeren Raum getrennt waren, zeigten umfangreiche Landschaften, zartfarbig wie der dünne Teppich, der den Fußboden bedeckte, Idylle im Geschmack des 18. Jahrhunderts, mit fröhlichen Winzern, emsigen Ackersleuten, nett bebänderten Schäferinnen, die reinliche Lämmer am Rande spiegelnden Wassers im Schoße hielten oder sich mit zärtlichen Schäfern küßten... Ein gelblicher Sonnenuntergang herrschte meistens auf diesen Bildern, mit dem der gelbe Überzug der weiß lackierten Möbel und die gelbseidenen Gardinen vor den beiden Fenstern übereinstimmten. (7; sec. 1, ch. 1)

The room's introduction reveals the firm bond between the home and the family business as it makes the point that the home was purchased by the company of Johann Buddenbrook, not the family individually. The home was built in the late seventeenth century and the mural harkens back to an eighteenth century style that connects the Buddenbrooks to an earlier legacy, in the way that Heimat art draws on an early idealized past. It is the images of the mural that bring Heimat into the townhome. The peasants, farmers, and young shepherdesses enjoying the idyllic landscape remind the Buddenbrooks of the village life they abjure for the city, power, and money. The painted

representation of Heimat creates another level of criticism, as well, by drawing attention to the constructed nature of the Heimat concept. Even in the typical Heimatroman, as in the mural, the Heimat setting is constructed through careful use of scenery and characters; in *Buddenbrooks*, the use of Heimat tropes and images in an urban environment constructs a new setting for the Heimat concept.

The passage of time is perhaps the most obvious narrative feature of *Buddenbrooks*. Following the family over the course of decades allows Mann to show both the ravages of time and the subtle nuances of change that would otherwise go unnoticed. Time in the novel can pass in great leaps or inch by in agonizing slowness. However, in Mann's novel, time fulfills a different purpose. The long passage of time, accompanied by the inevitable change of the city and its citizens, serves to highlight the Buddenbrooks' desire to remain the same. They strive to keep their lives and values held static in an idealized past that never existed. From this condition, the plot of the novel becomes driven by disruptions to their closed system (Rossbacher 157). The world could change around them, but the Buddenbrooks would attempt to keep themselves as anchored to the past as possible. This idealized past is narrated early in the novel as Jean Jacques Hoffstede comes into the billiards room with Pastor Wunderlich, "zwei unbefangene und muntere alte Herren aus sorgloserer Zeit" (30; sec. 1, ch. 8). At this moment, the indirect speech narrated for the younger Johann Buddenbrook reveals his envy for those carefree times of old. His insistence on maintaining the traditions of *Familie und Firma* as they had always been will prove to be the undoing of his family. Johann's children fall into the same cycles as they try and fail to follow his example.

Thomas Mann did not set out to write a Heimatroman. The bourgeois protagonists and the urban setting mark the text as falling outside the typical confines of the genre. However, in the increasingly modernized and urbanized environment of the nineteenth century, it is only reasonable that those Germans who were raised in a city would connect their concept of Heimat to the urban milieu. Mann's novel constructs a world in which the tropes of the Heimatroman are reflected in an urban setting in order to draw attention to Heimat as a central theme and to criticize the potentially destructive nature of an inflexible Heimat concept.

### **Heimat in *Buddenbrooks***

Heimat is a manifestation of the personal manner in which we experience and interpret the world around us. The word affords meaning to the locations of security and memory in our lives. It is also an identity that is shared with family, the community, clubs and organizations, entire regions, and, from a local-national memory perspective, the nation at large. The community in *Buddenbrooks*, whose memories mingle, interweave, and reemerge altered, is the family. Collective memory in the novel is most frequently represented through family memory. Their family memory, and thus in large part their understanding of Heimat, is built out of the individual memories that they experienced directly, to which the reader often bears witness, and the events of the past they did not directly experience "but around which one's memory is oriented" (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy 19). By tying the concept of Heimat to the family, the *Buddenbrooks* endow it with a defined social structure and milieu. Just as with any community, there are insiders and outsiders. When a character maintains the favor of the family, particularly the favor of the family patriarch, he or she remains a member of the

insider group. They are invited without prejudice into the intimate family spaces and their achievements are held up as examples of family glory. The outsiders of the Buddenbrook family are often treated with scorn. Those who are treated the worst are those who were once insiders but are now relegated to the outside. Many in the Buddenbrooks family find a sense of identity in their connection to the family as a Heimat concept. The establishment of this small exclusive community results in the rejection of other forces of change upon their collective memory structure. This strong definition of personal identity as a part of an immutable group leads to the decline of the individual and a corresponding decline of the group.

The character most associated with the deep and abiding connection between duty to family and Heimat is Antonie “Tony” Buddenbrook. Beginning in her school days, Mann demonstrates how unquestioningly Tony accepts what her family has planned for her future. She discusses marriage with her friends and says, „Ich werde natürlich einen Kaufmann heiraten... Er muß recht viel Geld haben, damit wir uns vornehm einrichten können; das bin ich meiner Familie und der Firma schuldig“ (67; sec. 2, ch. 7). Tony becomes like many women in Heimat literature – without being consulted, she becomes part of a “Heimat that included them, that made use of them” (Blickle 101). Like her brothers, she is expected to bring the family and the company wealth and prestige, and as a woman, this is the only way through which she can achieve these goals. As Mann describes it, “[ihr] ausgeprägter Familiensinn entfremdete sie nahezu den Begriffen des freien Willens und der Selbstbestimmung“ (153; sec. 4, ch. 6). Her feelings of responsibility toward the family and the family tree are displayed most tellingly in a moment of envy. Her brother, Thomas Buddenbrook, marries Tony’s wealthy school

friend, Gerda; after their marriage, Gerda appears from the shadows and the indirect speech of the narrator conveys Tony's reaction, „Es war Gerda, die Mutter zukünftiger Buddenbrooks“ (229; sec. 5, ch. 9). Tony, the woman who had spent her entire life knowing that she must fulfill her responsibilities to *Familie und Firma*, who had sacrificed so much to ensure that the family name and company interests remained safe, could never continue the family line. While both of her marriages ended in divorce, Tony remains aware that as a Grünlich or Permaneder she would not ever be the mother of future Buddenbrooks. As Tony is Mann's most extreme example of family loyalty, she is also his most tragic. Tony lives in disgrace as a divorcée as she watches her family line die out and the company fail. The security the Buddenbrooks find in their Heimat concept, which amounts to cultivating and maintaining a family memory, is constantly questioned by Mann.

The maintenance of family memory is facilitated by the nineteenth century custom of communal living spaces for extended family. For the majority of the text, the Buddenbrooks family shares a home on Mengstraße. This house becomes a *lieu de memoire* and the focal point of their Heimat concept, with the nucleus in the living room, the *Landschaftszimmer*. The home contained several generations of history and, as a personal extension of the business, the Buddenbrooks' reverence of the company is manifested in their pride in the house. The bourgeois families of the nineteenth century were known to create mementos and rituals that “occurred within the bounded space of the home, usually in the living room” (Tebbe 200). The bourgeois *home* in the nineteenth century was much more likely to be the scene of major life events than in the modern age, becoming a “repository for memory, a node of preservation in a world in flux” (201).



Throughout the novel, the reader learns details about births, deaths, proposals, marriages, and holiday celebrations that all occur in the home in the Mengstraße. Despite the connection with the house and her unfortunate first marriage, Tony Buddenbrook still finds the idea of selling it objectionable. She exclaims, “Das Haus! Mutters Haus! Unser Elternhaus! In dem wir so glücklich gewesen sind! Wir sollen es verkaufen...!” (442; sec. 9, ch. 2). When it is finally sold to their corporate and social rivals, the Hagenströms, she breaks down in tears on the street in front of strangers and acquaintances (462; sec. 9, ch. 4). The home preserved an idyllic version of the past, molded by the family memory (Tebbe 196). Their familial Heimat concept is preserved in that house, and when the house is sold, doubt is cast upon the sacrifices made to maintain and uphold that Heimat. The family, and especially Tony, begins to mistrust the adoration of *Familie und Firma* that has always been a part of their lives.

The house on Mengstraße acts as a physical structure to support the social structure of family memory and Heimat, but, within the home, the Buddenbrooks’ family chronicles are the locus of their family memory. Located in the paternal desk, the pages edged with gold and filled with histories of the momentous events of past Buddenbrooks, the chronicles held the most weight and importance for the younger Johann Buddenbrook and his daughter, Tony. Both are described as reading the papers with a type of reverence, carefully noting differences in handwriting and style as they travel through the family history. These pages are filled with birth and death announcements, descriptions of illnesses that have been survived, and marriages and engagements from so long ago that many are no longer a part of the “living” family memory. Rather, they exist only in this book, a comforting connection to the past which ensures that the authors would be

remembered. As a source of collective self-awareness of the family, the style of the chronicles supported familial veneration and a deep self-importance as part of their family identity (Boa and Palfreyman 19). “[Jeder] der Schreibenden hatte von seinem Vorgänger eine ohne Übertreibung feierliche Vortragsweise übernommen, einen instinktiv und ungewollt angedeuteten Chronikenstil, aus dem der diskrete und darum desto würdevollere Respekt einer Familie vor sich selbst, vor Überlieferung und Historie sprach“ (119; sec. 3, ch. 13). Memoirs and personal records are written purposefully to shape the memory of others (Burke 189); by adopting this style, the Buddenbrooks have created a false sense of objectivity in the presentation of their history. Tony concerns herself deeply with how the family history will remember her; she asks herself, “Was würde hier hinter ihrem Name, den sie von ihrer Großmutter Antoinette empfangen hatte, in Zukunft noch zu berichten sein?“ (120; sec. 3, ch. 13). Her conception of Heimat is wrapped up with the family memory. Everything that drives Tony’s personal identity is guided by her connection to Heimat and the formation of family memory. She is Antonie (named for Antoinette) Buddenbrook, obedient and proper daughter of Konsul Buddenbrook, who lives in a house in the Mengstraße and owns the flourishing business, Firma Johann Buddenbrook, in the great free city of Lübeck. The weight of this family history persuades her to marry a man she loathes and then to remarry after a first ended marriage so that her memory in the chronicles would be untarnished. The importance placed on family memory and honor leads the Buddenbrooks to make hasty decisions that have the appearance of being correct and proper, but upon reflection, are harming the family at large.

Heimat naturally builds boundaries around itself, creating groups of insiders and outsiders. Within the Buddenbrook family, Heimat is so carefully defined that important members of the family can become outsiders by ignoring the prevailing mores and crossing the established boundaries. When Gotthold Buddenbrook, son of the elder Johann, half-brother to the younger Johann, married an unacceptable woman and established a shop, referred to only as a “Laden”, he committed the greatest sin that a Buddenbrook can commit – he did not put *Familie und Firma* above his own desires. The elder Johann Buddenbrook finds the very mention of Gotthold to be abhorrent, and the younger places the blame for Gotthold’s ostracization squarely upon Gotthold’s own shoulders. The younger Johann exclaims to his mother, “Es ist seine Schuld, dies traurige Verhältnis! ...Warum mußte er diese Demoiselle Stüwing heiraten und den ... Laden... Es ist eine Schwäche, Vaters Widerwille gegen den Laden; aber Gotthold hätte diese kleine Eitelkeit respektieren müssen“ (14; sec. 1, ch. 3). By believing that Gotthold’s guilt is entirely in his own hands, the younger Johann allows himself to believe that proper and obedient behavior will keep him from the same fate. By placing the central tenets of the shared Heimat - family honor and company reputation - above all else, the younger Johann sacrifices a great deal, specifically, as already described, his daughter’s happiness and well-being. However, for much of the text, he believes that avoiding exclusion is worth whatever price is demanded of him.

Travemünde, the seaside village resort, represents one of the few opportunities the family has to break away from the rigid social structures and traditions and to develop a sense of self separate from *Familie und Firma*. The idyllic seaside village, with its red roofed houses, provides the possibility of a second Heimat – a bucolic Heimat scene

which one typically finds in Heimat art. Tony travels to Travemünde while being courted by Bendix Grünlich, a businessman whom she does not trust. Her trip is described partially as a relaxing seaside vacation, partially as a way to escape Grünlich's attentions. While there, she develops a relationship with Morten, the son of the owners of the inn where she is staying. From the beginning of her momentous trip, Tony is confronted with a new version of Heimat. When she is offered honey for her bread, it is a "reines Naturprodukt"; Morten says to her "Dem Scheibenhonig können Sie vertrauen, Fräulein Buddenbrook... Da weiß man doch, was man verschluckt..." (92; sec. 3, ch. 5). The appeal to Tony becomes quickly clear as the reader discovers from the narrator that her worries about life in the city, Grünlich's proposal, and the pressures from family and friends to accept him are fading away and she's looking forward to waking up "jeden Morgen ganz sorglos" in her new surroundings (93; sec. 3, ch. 6). At this point in the novel, Travemünde is still a temptation away from the rigid Heimat concept of *Familie und Firma*. The separation allows Tony to exercise some personal agency. She is at ease in her friendship with Morten and allows herself to believe that a relationship with him could be possible. Unfortunately for Tony, her choice in a romantic partner is unacceptable to her family and the wider community. Even Morten sees the social barriers to their relationship. When Tony wants to introduce Morten to her city friends, he declines, preferring to sit "auf den Steinen". Morten's self-imposed topographical segregation demonstrates the inferred social division between the locals and the high-society visitors to Travemünde (Boa and Palfreyman 51). The stones become a symbol of exclusion and boredom for Tony and Morten; they make jokes about having to sit there, all the while being very conscious of their social function. Morten, a student with

Marxist political leanings, represents an escape for Tony from the social structure to which she is accustomed. In the end, Morten's father contacts Tony's father, Johann, about the relationship and he arrives to retrieve his daughter and remind her of her responsibilities to *Familie und Firma*. Despite the temptation of a loving relationship with Morten, Tony cannot bring herself to sit "auf den Steinen" and become an outsider to their family Heimat concept.

Having inherited her father's fear of losing paternal respect and reverence for *Familie und Firma*, Tony Buddenbrook allows herself to enter into an unhappy, loveless marriage to Bendix Grünlich, who lies about himself and his finances. When the extent of his debts is revealed and Grünlich turns to his father-in-law for aid, Johann Buddenbrook is forced to reexamine the choices he made for his daughter. He calls into question his own judgment and the overarching authority of *Familie und Firma*. His anxiety and emotional instability is reflected in his physical appearance; he is described as looking pale and aged, his eyes and cheeks sunken (158; sec. 4, ch. 7). Although they are confronted with evidence of the consequences of blind obedience and adherence to duty, the mores of the Buddenbrooks remain the same. Johann may be rethinking his actions, but Tony's adoration for the company is clear when she discovers the company would be in danger if Grünlich's debts were paid. She exclaims, "'Gut! Genug! Nie!' Sie sah beinahe heroisch aus. Das Wort ‚Firma‘ hatte eingeschlagen. Höchst wahrscheinlich wirkte es entscheidender als selbst ihre Abneigung gegen Herrn Grünlich" (165; sec. 4, ch. 7). Johann's doubts never have an opportunity to create an altered family memory, as he dies soon after these events and the devotion he once felt so confidently to family, tradition, and sameness lives on in his children.

In *Buddenbrooks*, change in slow within the family and comes mainly at the hands of modernization and the Prussian push towards a German Empire. The movement towards a unified nation was in line with the model of Heimat contemporary to the nineteenth century. As Celia Applegate expresses it, “Heimat was both the beloved local places and the beloved nation; it was a comfortably flexible and inclusive homeland, embracing all localities alike” (11). The Buddenbrook Heimat did not embrace the “beloved nation”; it was neither flexible nor inclusive. When Lübeck becomes a part of the Empire, Mann devotes only two pages to the event. It was as if, like in Confino’s Württemberg, they “accepted the nation-state as a *fait accompli*: without enthusiasm, but recognizing that cooperation with Bismarck was the only way to safeguard [in this case, Lübeck’s] peculiarity” (*Württemberg* 22). The lack of interest shown by the Buddenbrooks is exemplified in Mann’s framing of the events around Hanno, Thomas Buddenbrook’s only son and the presumptive heir of the Buddenbrook family line: “Große Dinge geschahen, während Hanno spielte” (331; sec. 7, ch. 8). Hanno, as the Buddenbrook responsible for continuing the family name, is significantly more important, even as a child, than the wars being waged around them. Apart from Tony’s brief encounter with an anti-imperial perspective from Morten, the doubt and skepticism about unification felt by many at the time is not present in the novel (Lindtke 26). The German Empire was founded despite the lack of concern shown in the Buddenbrook household. Still trying to live an outdated life of *Vornehmheit* and decadence, the Buddenbrooks found themselves unable to keep up with the forces of change. In this way, Mann’s novel is a testament to both the futility of avoiding change and the necessity of adaptation in a new world order.

The structure of the novel shows that it is impossible to avoid the march of time; however, the decline of the family, as they fight back against change, conveys the futility of their struggle. Each new generation of Buddenbrooks finds it increasingly difficult to please the generation that came before it, to measure up to the standards expected from decades of sanitized family chronicles and financial obligation. Disappointment in one's children goes hand in hand with higher standards and expectations placed upon them. Even people outside of the family notice the inevitable change; after taking control of the business, Thomas Buddenbrook is described as “[ein] bißchen prätentiös... ein bißchen... anders: anders auch als seine Vorfahren“ (222; sec. 5, ch. 8). They purchase a new home, while the newspapers they read come from Berlin, and the school that once educated students in the style of the Enlightenment now functions with a military-like efficiency. The narrator rarely makes judgments about the quality of these changes. Whether change is positive or negative, the novel makes it clear that change is unavoidable and necessary.

The family Heimat concept – obedience to the importance of a strong family and a thriving company – becomes faded for the Buddenbrooks as marriages fall apart, they sell their home in Mengstraße, and the company begins to fail. The connection to Lübeck, once a keystone in the family identity, is severed as Travemünde becomes the second Heimat of Thomas's son, Hanno. For Hanno, *Familie und Firma* never held the appeal or the importance that it did for Tony or even Thomas. Hanno's experiences with the family reputation are dismal and he reports to his friend Kai that the pastor said that he, Hanno, “aus einer verrotteten Familie [stammte]” (565; sec. 11, ch. 2). It comes as no surprise that his mother says of him, “Er hat Heimweh nach der See“ (484; sec. 10, ch. 3). The use of *Heimweh* indicates that Hanno is seen to be deeply psychologically affected by his

time in Travemünde – *Heimweh* being long considered *die Schweizer Krankheit*. However, in order to have *Heimweh*, Hanno must count Travemünde as a Heimat. The strict family rules of conduct expect the Heimat of the Buddenbrooks – the definition of personal identity connected to group identity – to be found within the family. Hanno, heir of the Buddenbrooks, transitions away from a family Heimat concept to a Heimat concept defined in his relationship with Travemünde. What was once a place representing temptation away from Heimat, is now the Heimat that is longed for and missed. Often, the village in a Heimatroman is a location of escape from the disappointments of a bourgeois life (Rossbacher 139). This transition signals the true “Verfall” of the Buddenbrooks family.

The ruin and decline foretold by the subtitle, “Verfall einer Familie”, is exactly what the Buddenbrooks family have worked so hard to avoid; however, throughout the novel, they move toward it as inexorably as though it were their goal. They are easily led away from progress, and they unflinchingly avoid situations that would push the boundaries of their comfortable conception of Heimat and family structure. Approaching the end of the novel, Thomas chastises his sister for having the audacity to encourage his son, Hanno, in his musical pursuits, saying, “Ich bitte dich, was setzest du ihm in den Kopf...” (385; sec. 8, ch. 6). Hanno is still expected to be a serious businessman. The world around them has changed, their business is failing, their family no longer has an untarnished reputation, but the Buddenbrooks stay the course. Thomas’s adherence to the values of his grandparents demonstrates a lack of understanding of the modern world and the changes taking place around the family. Although it is often to their detriment, the characters focus exclusively on the people and events immediately related to *Familie und*



*Firma*. In this way, Mann is able to celebrate the community of the family for its loyalty and condemn the institution of family for its lack of foresight (Schonfield 110). While the reader observes several decades pass in the course of the novel, they also observe the attempts of the family to suspend time and maintain the values of the an earlier age, an age in which their *Familie und Firma* were thriving; however, the decline of the Buddenbrooks reveals that time changes all things – families, cities, and nations – and one must change with them in order to survive. The understanding of Heimat, and by extension, of their family memory, had to grow and be revised as new generations arrive – a task in which they failed.

### **Conclusion**

In Mann's novel, the Buddenbrooks' Heimat concept is forged through family memory. Feelings commonly associated with a positive understanding of Heimat – comfort, safety, and familial happiness – and a negative understanding – exclusion and stagnation – are linked inextricably to their feelings of duty to *Familie und Firma*. Throughout the novel, the Buddenbrooks refuse to widen their scope and, instead, strictly maintain their local/family memory. In order to thrive in modern society, like Confino's local-national memory, the Buddenbrooks' conception of Heimat must allow for revision, both in what is remembered and what is forgotten, in order to be able to be incorporated into the Heimat concept of the larger community. Heimat is a shared memory, but it must be a memory that is capable of forgetting – a skill the Buddenbrooks were never taught.

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