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JUSTIFYING THE MARGINS:
MARGINAL CULTURE, HYBRIDITY, AND THE POLISH CHALLENGE
IN FONTANE'S *EFFI BRIEST*

A Dissertation Presented

by

ZORANA GLUSCEVIC

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

February 2011

German and Scandinavian Studies

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Approved as to style and content by:

Sara Lennox, Chair

Barton Byg, Member

Rajagopalan Radhakrishnan, Member

Susan Cocalis, Department Head
German and Scandinavian Studies

DEDICATION

To My Parents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to my advisor Sara Lennox for her many years of expertise, understanding, and patience. She provided me with direction and guidance that helped me to stay focused on this work and beat procrastination during the challenging period of my life and became more than a *Doktormutter* to me.

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ABSTRACT

JUSTIFYING THE MARGINS: MARGINAL CULTURE, HYBRIDITY, AND THE POLISH CHALLENGE IN FONTANE'S *EFFI BRIEST*

FEBRUARY 2011

ZORANA GLUSCEVIC, B.A. UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

M.A., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Ph.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Professor Sara Lennox

This dissertation argues that the interpretive framework from which Fontane's *Effi Briest* is commonly approached limits discussion to metropolitan core culture and fails to address Fontane's path-breaking accomplishment. After outlining limitations of some prominent approaches to *Effi Briest* in chapter one, my next four chapters explore alternative reading strategies that instead situate the novel in the imperial context of the new German state inflected by transnational relations and problematize the tendency to see Germany as a space territorially and culturally homogenized and stable. Chapter two reads the novel through Foucault's notion of heterotopia to demonstrate Fontane's heterotopic strategies as a counter-model to the monolithic mapping of novelistic space. In chapters three and four I use Bakhtin's chronotopic strategies to show how Fontane "fuses together" fictional time and space into a productive force for depicting society in motion and change. I demonstrate how this "spatial turn" breaks with the traditional time-paradigm and opens up space for polyphony and dialogism. Chapter five discusses Fontane's *Wanderungen* contrapuntally to draw attention to Fontane's counter-strategies,

which break with the master narrative in favor of small-scale ones, to show their relevance for *Effi Briest*. The rest of my dissertation focuses on the novel's Eastern Pomeranian/Kessin-based chapters. Chapter six addresses the spatial arrangement of *Hinterpommern* from the viewpoint of the ruling elites. Chapter seven treats Kessin as a hybridized "third space" that both resists the dominant and represents an unstable and ambiguous alternative to paralyzing dichotomies of opposites. I also look into *Hinterpommern* as a contested space between Germans and Poles – and their competing claims over the Kasubians, inhabitants of the strategically important Baltic area. In chapter eight I show how the Polish margins impinge on Fontane's fictional representation of Prussia and are articulated in both the content and structure of *Effi Briest*. In chapter nine I discuss Fontane's representation of Polish/Slavic-hyphenated characters in terms of their different responses/resistance to anti-Slav/Polish prejudices and measures. In revealing the creative and transformative powers of margins this dissertation models alternative ways of approaching canonical writers and contributes to the transnationalization of German studies in particular and cultural studies in general.

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INTRODUCTION

Ohne Vermögen, ohne Familienanhang, ohne Schulung und Wissen, ohne robuste Gesundheit bin ich ins Leben getreten, mit nichts ausgerüstet als einem poetischen Talent und einer schlechtsitzenden Hose. (Auf dem Knie immer Beutel).

Theodor Fontane (Georg Friedlaender, 3.10.1893)

Eine tapfere Modernität zeichnete Theodor Fontane aus.

Thomas Mann, 1910

Given the fact that Theodor Fontane is today widely regarded as one of the most esteemed German novelists of the nineteenth century, or even the most important writer between Goethe and Thomas Mann (Chambers 1995: vii),¹ it is ironic that during his lifetime he was better known as a Prussian patriotic poet, journalist, historian and the author of local travelogues rather than a novelist. Theodor Fontane (1819-98) turned to the novel late in life, and his reputation and fame were slow in developing. Eventually he achieved posthumous acclaim as the first German novelist of social realism of European stature. Fontane's reputation began to grow steadily after World War II, and his popularity continues in post-*Wende* Germany. Fontane also seems to be one of the best researched and archived writers. In addition to a huge body of books and articles dealing with various aspects of Fontane's writing accumulated over time, a semiannual journal devoted solely to his work, *Fontane Blätter*, has appeared regularly since 1965.

Like other writers whose literary reputation extends significantly beyond their own lives, Theodor Fontane has been evaluated differently across time and space against the changing political, cultural and global contexts in which his fiction has been read for over a century. Imperial Germany was hardly a place for criticism and self-reflection and

¹ See for instance the introduction to *Effi Briest* (translated by Hugh Rorrison and Helen Chambers) by Helen Chambers.

can display few commentators with the lucid skepticism, critical irony and humor of the late Fontane. In an atmosphere pervaded by militarism, chauvinism and evangelical philistinism, Fontane's fictional narratives seemed too ambiguous and subversive for the dominant Wilhelmine taste, and with the exception of *Effi Briest* (1894/5),² they neither had much impact on his contemporaries nor lived up to the standards of contemporary critical demand for an inspiring heroic representation adequate to the times of new nation building.³ Moreover, Fontane was writing at a time of the emergence of a culture industry and mass market for fiction in which the German publishing industry was privileging profit over aesthetic concerns and when literature was to have a role of entertainment and escapism rather than contemplation. Were it not for a few but distinguished literary practitioners, such as a younger generation of naturalist critics, Fontane's fictional talent would have been virtually lost on contemporary German literary criticism.

Having said that, it should be remembered that Fontane's fictions attracted timely critical attention elsewhere in Europe, notably in Russia, where his three novels appeared in rapid succession already before the turn of the century, no doubt thanks to the fact that already by the 1830s literary commentary in Russia had emerged as an important genre of social analysis by the secularized intelligentsia. The Russian translation of

Unwiederbringlich appeared in 1891, almost simultaneously with its original German

² Unless otherwise stated references to Fontane's *Effi Briest* and page numbers given in parentheses are taken from *Theodor Fontane: Werke, Schriften und Briefe*, ed. Walter Keitel, section 1, vol. 4 *Sämtliche Romane, Erzählungen, Gedichte, Nachgelassenes*. Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1970, pp. 7-296. References and page numbers given in parentheses are taken therefrom. All English translations are from *Effi Briest* (translated by Hugh Rorrison and Helen Chambers) London: Angel Books, 1995, reissued by Penguin in 2001.

³ *Effi Briest* was an immediate success with both critics and reading audience and went into five editions in 1895/6 alone.

version, followed by *Effi Briest* in 1897/99, and *Frau Jenny Treibel* in 1899 (Schultze and Volkov 231-250; Glass 92-94). The importance of this early reception of Fontane's fictional narratives in Russia cannot be overestimated, given their comparatively poor reception in Germany (as well as the German-speaking world in general), and the fact that they remained virtually unknown in the English-speaking world until the 1914 publication of an abridged English rendering of *Effi Briest*.⁴

It was not only Fontane's contemporary compatriots who lacked critical distance and had trouble evaluating his importance for the continuing literary tradition in the German language. In the era of high modernism that followed in the wake of the Great War and the collapse of the old authority in Europe, Fontane's realism was dismissed as outdated and/or a symptom of his old age. To a younger generation of German writers such as his fellow Berliners Kurt Tucholsky and Alfred Döblin, looking back on Fontane's world from the traumatic experience of the Great War common both to themselves and to their readers, Fontane seemed an outdated author of a time gone by, of an age that to them came to an end with the war. Indeed, the world Fontane had known and depicted in his fiction was one of conformity, and compliance was the first duty of a citizen in the state dominated by semi-feudal elites; large landowners, army officers, high imperial officials, big industrials and financiers were all men from the ranks of noble and wealthy elites. Four years of war changed all that and everything else. Thus writing in 1919 on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Fontane's birth, Tucholsky felt justified

⁴ *Effi Briest*. Translated and abridged by William A. Cooper. In: *The German Classic of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, Masterpieces of German Literature*. Translated into English. Vol. 12, New York: The German Publication Society, 1914. Even now only roughly a third of his eighteen novels and novellas are in print in English, and only *Effi Briest* is well known, largely because of Rainer Fassbinder's 1974 film version.

in declaring: “Der alte Fontane ist nicht am 20. September 1898 gestorben. Er starb am 1. August 1914. Er wäre heute etwas völlig Unmögliches.” And he proclaimed: “Der Romanschreiber Fontane schwindet mit seiner Zeit.”

A physician and author, Alfred Döblin had even less understanding for the fellow author who dismissed the idea that realism meant depicting a dying member of the proletariat surrounded by his starving family,⁵ and whom Döblin consequently denounced as a “lightweight” conservative realist even as a recipient of the prize named after him.⁶ Thus in 1920 Döblin wrote,

Fontane schrieb aus dem Milieu des Hohenzollernschen Bürgers von 1880–90, eines fatalen Typus; die ganze Luft dieser Periode steht um ihn . . . Die Großstadt, die mächtige, anonyme, wuchs, er sah sie nicht . . . Er landete, wie zu erwarten war, bei der romanhaft angerührten Idylle (die 1914 sehr gestört wurde, November 1918 ein Ende nahm) (Linke Poot).

To be sure, there was at the same time Thomas Mann’s famous tribute to the “old” Fontane’s talent and his *Effi Briest* as one of the best written novels ever⁷ as well as Conrad Wandrey’s significant book-length study dedicated to Fontane’s fictions, in which the author hailed him as the most important German novelist after Keller, but such an opinion was rather an exception to the pervasive marginalization of Fontane’s fiction

⁵ Fontane. *Sämtliche Werke (Hanser Aufgabe), Aufsätze, Kritiken Erinnerungen*, vol.1, *Aufsätze und Aufzeichnungen*, Munich, 1969.

⁶ Döblin gained first critical acclaim for his historical novel *Die Drei Sprünge der Wang-Lun* (1915) hailed as a modern masterpiece, which earned him the Fontane Prize for literature,

⁷ Thomas Mann’s tribute to Fontane entitled “Der alte Fontane” *Adel des Geistes*, first appeared in *Die Zukunft*, Berlin, 19.1 (January 10, 1910). The second essay was published in 1954. Both essays were made available to a large critical public through the recent Stockholm edition of Mann’s collected works.

from the canon. A popular history of literature by F. Voigt and M. Koch from 1920, granted only half a page to Fontane, whom they disparaged as overrated (158).

In the highly charged political climate of the interwar years, Fontane was rejected by radical critics on either end of the ideological spectrum, who took his “noncommitment” and unobtrusive ironic detachment as a proof of his reactionary conformism. Whereas the Right considered him too unpatriotic, and un-German (given his French Huguenot descent of which he was proud), the Left thought of him as a trivial writer and a political reactionary, an “Adel-Liebhaber” and a writer who “alles verplaudert” as Alfred Döblin once put it.

In the aftermath of World War II, pervaded by a strong anti German atmosphere and influenced by the “Sonderweg” theory of German development, Fontane’s realism was unfavorably compared to French, English or Russian models. A new interest in political and ideological dimensions of literature prompted by the socio-political upheavals in the 60s brought about re-evaluation of Fontane’s *Romankunst*, so that his remarkably subtle and subdued style has increasingly been taken as a sign of his progressive and democratic stance in both German states.

The shift of Fontane’s literary reputation from that of a minor, provincial conservative Prussian writer and a political reactionary into a progressive metropolitan novelist and the greatest master of German realism of the late nineteenth century took place during the politicizing decades of the 1960s and 1970s and should be considered within the political context and conceptual framework of the Cold War. The origins of the shift in Fontane’s reception on either side of the Berlin Wall and especially in the GDR can be traced back to Georg Lukács’ influential 1951 article that appeared under the

title “Der alte Fontane.” The ascendancy of Marxism, both as a political agent and a discourse of knowledge – world socialism was at its peak in the mid-1960s, which was also the highest point of the Cold War as well as decolonization – seriously challenged the political and cultural hegemony of the West. During the revolutionary sixties and early seventies, left-wing political activity, progressive visions and revolutionary hope led to rising popular and scholarly interest in the Eastern Bloc, the division of Germany and its leftist traditions.

Consequently, the late nineteen-sixties and especially early seventies witnessed a massive upsurge of academic and popular interest in Fontane’s work on either side of the Berlin Wall. Television, radio, press, and, most notably, Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s film adaptation of *Effi Briest* (1972/74), which was most responsible for arousing popular interest in Fontane,⁸ played a significant role in the emergence of this belated “Fontane-Renaissance.” By this time, the publication of the two critical editions of Fontane’s complete works, diaries and correspondence became important sources of scholarly investigation. The seventies also saw a widening of the critical framework within which Fontane’s novels were studied, including Marxist, feminist, sociological and psychoanalytical approaches. In the eighties and nineties Fontane’s novels provided rewarding material for new critical and theoretical perspectives and fresh re-evaluations sparked by the growing influence of poststructuralist critical approaches to texts disseminated through newly developing German cultural studies. The new directions

⁸ Prior to Fassbinder's film version, *Effi Briest* had been adapted for film three times: under the title *Ein Schritt vom Wege*, (1939) directed by Gustaf Gründens, as *Rosen im Herbst* (1955/56) by Rudolf Jugert, and as *Effi Briest* (1969, GDR TV). Hermine Huntgeburth’s film version of *Effi Briest* from 2009 is the latest adaptation of the novel, testifying to continuation of popular and critical interest in Fontane’s novel.

Fontane scholarship was taking at this time were towards a close textual analysis aimed at problematizing Fontane's realism by exploring assumptions upon which Fontane's texts were based, and by looking at shifts, breaks, contradictions and inconsistencies as well as what his texts left unsaid.

The latest public and critical interest in Fontane was sparked by the events following the Fall of the Berlin Wall, which culminated in the unification of Germany in 1989/90. The German *Mittleuropa* debate as a part of the German-nation building project that had been going on in Germany since the end of World War II came full circle with the 1989-90 German reunification, no less significant as an act of nation-building than was Bismarck's *Reichsgründung* in 1871. Since no excursion through the world created by Bismarck can ignore Fontane, the most important literary name of Bismarck's *Gründerzeit* and a historian of Mark Brandenburg, Fontane's famous volumes *Wanderungen durch die Mark Brandenburg* (1862-82), a kind of local history in the form of patriotic travelogues in which he affirmed regional and national character of Prussia, have enjoyed renewed popularity with the events surrounding the reunification and served as a source of German-German commonality as well as a guide for time travelers from the West through the supposedly more authentically traditional cultural landscape of (Imperial) Germany.

However, Fontane is also a powerful subversive figure in the history of late-nineteenth century German culture and as such evoked at the other end of the political spectrum to a different end, most notably by eastern German born author Günter Grass, who in many respects can be considered one of Fontane's spiritual descendants. Grass has made Fontane the centerpiece of his novel *Ein weites Feld* (1995) in a gesture which

is intended as a tribute to Fontane and a rebuke to latest revisions of a certain German heritage by drawing parallels between the contemporary process of unification and the period of making Imperial Germany as depicted by Fontane. Fontane also plays a role in contemporary Polish literature. One of Poland's most renowned contemporary novelists Pawel Huelle, in his post-colonial novel *Castorp*, deals with Thomas Mann's protagonist from *Der Zauberberg*, Hans Castorp, building up his story around an episode of the novel taking place in Gdansk/Danzig and by reference to Fontane's *Effi Briest*.

Because of our own living experience of rapid acceleration of wide-ranging process of social change in the world haunted by crises, we will continue to produce original interpretations of Fontane's narratives and detect hitherto unnoticed allusions in his *Finessen* by listening with differently attuned ears to their resonances and dissonances. Therefore, I also think that the most important task of cultural scholarship is to constantly challenge given certainties of the status quo in the official truths and accepted wisdom of previous generations.

A look at the contemporary body of critical works on Fontane reveals that while the interest in Fontane continues unabated, much of the literary criticism produced comes from the traditionally more narrowly focused academic discipline of literary studies known as *Germanistik*, whose methodological presuppositions are grounded in older theoretical paradigms which consider fiction as a work of art largely divorced from the everyday world in which individual and social values are contemplated in a discourse largely emptied of political considerations. Thus even though Fontane wrote in the Imperial period (and was thus subject to all its unresolved contradictions) and is also one of the German language's canonical writers, scholars working closely with Fontane's

fiction, with few notable exceptions, generally tend to ignore the whole subject of capitalism as imperialism and fail to engage with some serious problems of interpretation and evaluation that have arisen in literary discussions of colonialist, modern anti-colonial and contemporary postcolonial writings and theoretical explorations of late nineteenth-century imperialism.

In light of this, the major impetus for this study comes from the need to redefine both the geographical boundaries and the disciplinary borders of the field of German literary studies in order to attune its critical approach to alternative and new theories that would effect fresh rereadings of Fontane's novels. Before I offer my reading of *Effi Briest*, I would like to outline what I consider the main limitations of mainstream Fontane scholarship's practice.

My first point concerns the need to understand the importance of the Western/metropolitan horizons of meaning in Fontane scholarship as well as the need to come to grips with the ethnocentric elitism that underpins such intellectual practice. It is therefore worthwhile to underline this extensive but compact view of "Europeaness" and its repercussions for the insiders' view for the rest of the world.

There is no one way to tell Europe's story and explain the meaning of Europe, since "Europe" means different things for different people in different contexts and times. Europe is an idea, an ideological construct as well as an ideal rather than a self-evident reality, and as such it has been constantly in the process of invention and reinvention. Europe is in fact part of a broader land mass, Eurasia, which in turn is inextricably connected to the rest of what over a century ago British geographer Halford Mackinder called the World Island: Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. In view of the fact

that geographical texts, especially non-European ones, continue to refer to the Eurasian continent and to Europe as a subcontinent, “Europe” is a geographical fiction. Not only was Europe a notion with vague territorial and ethnic boundaries and changing historical borders, but most of “Europe,” Prussia included, is only retrospectively “European” and has been invented and maintained in an image of distorted modernity in opposition to its many others (Hobsbawm; Wolff; Delany). Much of what is being called “Europe” is not only reconstructed but, as Larry Wolff has convincingly demonstrated, the East-West division is an invention of the European Enlightenment and its intellectuals and its corollary, colonial modernity (Wolff 1994). The invention of Eastern Europe as an inferior counterpart to Western Europe had a great deal to do with the emergence of the concept of civilization and the self-proclamation of a “civilized” Western Europe in the image of Enlightenment ideals. Consequently, Europe has persistently been viewed through the history of the rise of national states, which usually means the combined histories of a few major north-western European states. As a result “Europe” is conflated with the “West,” that is, the north-western part of Europe in a sort of “sordid modernist metonymy (using a word that is part of an entity to mean the entire entity itself); this is part of an exclusionary institutional language (as part of a discourse) with respect not only to other European countries, but with the rest of the colonized world without which ‘Europe’ could not even be contemplated” (Engel-Di Mauro 2006). That is, ever since the Enlightenment, the world has been mapped in the image of the West and presented in terms of a nested hierarchy in descending order from the (north) west as the apex and the centre of world, down to south east not only as a powerful cultural hegemony it exerted over its structured and imagined others through a set of discursive practices based on the

opposition between East and West, but also corresponding to the geopolitical reality of actual asymmetrical relations of power between cores and peripheries at multiple scales (B. Anderson; Bakic-Hayden; Berend; Golsworthy; Todorova; Wolff). In other words the West stands for universal qualities.

This metonymic practice is pervasive in mainstream Fontane scholarship, which seems to rely on a restricted notion of Europe by including only a handful of core Western European states and their national cultures, whose quite exceptional experience provides both the cultural-socio-political vocabulary and cultural-historiographical models for the study of Fontane's works. I will use the volume *Theodor Fontane and the European Context: Literature, Culture and Society in Prussia and Europe* (2001),⁹ as representative of much mainstream writing to point out what I consider to be larger disciplinary problems. In so doing, I want to draw attention to this extensive but compact view of "Europeanness" in mainstream Fontane scholarship and discuss the traditional culture-monolithic method of establishing Fontane's place in the venerable Western canon.

European culture(s) and ideologies have never been homogenous but existed only through conflicts and communications, through resistance to cultural and political hegemony, *characterized* by contradictions and ambivalence. Yet despite these unstable and contradictory metropolitan mixings Europe is persistently portrayed as something stable, homogenous and organic. It follows that a signifier such as "European context" misrepresents its real referent and is ambiguous and contested. Moreover it seems that the

⁹ The essays collected in the volume were first given as papers at the international symposium organized by the Center for Germanic studies of the University of London in March 1999 to commemorate the centenary of Fontane's death.

“European Context” of the volume’s title relies upon those familiar historical constructs and the traditional Eurocentric center-periphery cultural model of metropolitan modernity to establish Fontane’s place in the European canon. This means that the scholarly treatment of Fontane’s work as manifest from the introduction to the volume still predominately assumes the existence of a canon of national literatures underpinned by essentialist notions of autonomous cultural traditions and identities as well as relationships of influence among them, an aesthetic philosophy projected by European colonialist modernity and its corollary nationalist ideology. This is most obvious in the way the representation of Fontane's literary production in relation to the “Great Tradition” is underpinned by notions of national literatures and influence among them, that is, as a literary intertextuality, which is understood in hierarchical terms with the influenced text being placed in a subservient position to the dominant influencing text. Thus in the introduction Fontane is glossed over as the “most European and urbane of all nineteenth-century German novelists” whose novels “are sustained by his wide reading of European literature.” In conclusion, “Fontane internalized the European context of his writings and, especially with his novel *Effi Briest*, provided German literature with a European significance” (Görner 14). West-centric Europe thus exists as a sub-textual master narrative which sets the terms of literary representation and structures the field of choice and epistemological framework in which it is articulated.

The concept of national literature is based on the use of the Herderian notion of distinctness of language-based cultural identity and literary tradition, so that according to Herder each nation shared a culture, a language and literature. The comparative study of national literatures led to conclusions about the national character, which from the mid-

nineteenth century on began to be expressed in racially exclusive terms. The strength and value of a national literary tradition was determined by the degree to which that tradition remained monolithic and authentic, while, on the other hand, it was believed that powerful and original literary traditions and cultures not only shape their own masterpieces, but also help other cultures to evolve. Consequently, literature was also understood in a racialized terms as national literary tradition which expressed moral and intellectual essence of a nation.

It seems to me that such an introduction encourages contributions that both in their subjects of enquiry and the theoretical positions belong more properly within a framework that encompasses the normative horizons based on an assumption of a Europe as “West.” Thus it follows that “Europe” is an ideological term of reference for what is really Western Europe, as a political-economic as well as a cultural entity, and that the criteria for inclusion and exclusion in a collection under such a title are always difficult to justify and must remain open to challenges.

The process of canon formation that created a critical environment that favors all things Western has resulted in the desire to secure and appropriate Fontane as an example of German literature by highlighting his Western cultural credentials while at the same time effacing his East Central European background as irrelevant. Fontane scholarship has repeatedly focused on detecting signs of influence of the “Great Tradition” on Fontane’s writing by rereading Fontane’s texts through the values embedded in the canon as a proof that the Western/ metropolitan context is crucial for the central concerns and perspective of his literary practice. This circularity of Fontane scholarship as repeated investigations into Fontane’s “Europeanness” and the preoccupation with all things

Western is indicative of a more pervasive provincialism among the established European academic community.

As W. J. McCormack reminds us, “canon” and “tradition” are concepts with political implications and ideological connotations, especially as constructed from a monologic, modernist perspective; rather, he points out, “we should consider tradition historically as the (sometimes contradictory and violent) convergence of readings, not of texts” (*From Burke*, 12). In other words tradition should not be mistaken for its objects (the components of the canon), but instead recognized as “the social and cultural dynamics of the process of handing down, and the place of this in the modes of production of the period and the historical character of that period” (303). In this respect, the cultural process of tendentious canonization of Fontane’s literature has involved cultural censorship and appropriation: for redressing of Fontane’s place in the canon by promoting Western-centric notions of the essential “metropolitanism” in his writing tends to go together with placing constrictions on the way his works are read and consequently reinforcing a hegemonic understanding of literature, identity and culture. Conversely, aspects of Fontane’s literature which are least inflected by metropolitan influence are relegated to the provincial and backward, to be either neglected or ignored, because drawing attention to e.g. the Prussian margins from the metropolitan perspective means being drawn inevitably to the realm of the utterly provincial and local history and politics.

In this volume, the outcome is a criticism which, underpinned by the ideological assumptions of European high culture, naturalizes the principles of the master culture as universal forms of thought and projects its authorized representations as truths, thereby

sanctioning the power of the center to assert its historically resonant master narratives over the periphery. However, the very term “tradition” is a problematic and sometimes distorting one in literary critical history, since tradition is a much more heterogeneous and polyvalent term than the modernist monological view of narrowly confined literary history allows. Because the canon of “the Great Tradition” presumes monologic/hegemonic values and its aesthetic norms restrict the ways these texts are read by systematically prioritizing metropolitan experience at the expense of marginal ones, it produces a selective reading which suppresses the complexity and multivalency with which Fontane’s fiction constructs identity and culture by enlisting but also transcending and contradicting the narrow confines of canon, contemporary cultural models and national boundaries.

This is not to deny that intertextuality does not offer important insights into Fontane’s writing by demonstrating the ability of his texts to appropriate and transform these master narrative intertexts and make them relevant to their social and historical concerns. However, the intertextual model of influence that posits an unitary, cohesive, constituting and coercive model of culture and a singular European literary canon is a part of a stereotyping tradition which both suppresses the complexity of conditions within nations and relies on symbolic geographies mapped out by the superiority of West’s power to inscribe them with meaning.

If “tradition” is understood as a complex, contradictory and even “violent” process of understanding literary history, which involves textual production, interpretation and transmission, then the notion of cultural influence phrased in terms of the one-way diffusion of the Western tradition does not provide for an understanding of

the process of cultural mediation, assimilation and creative alterations in the heterogeneous context of Central-Eastern Europe built on cross-culturalism and resulting from centuries of migrations, assimilation and conflict. Rather than a single line of influence, there is always a body of fiction that is constituted through a network of dense intertextual relations.

Literary expression exemplified by Fontane's fiction can be better understood as a result of the interplay of historical, social and cultural factors specific of East-Central Europe and is also a result of the shifting nature of Germany and the movement of German culture outside of the traditional medieval lands of Germans and the formation of several multicultural metropolitan centers, such as for instance, Vienna, Prague and Berlin. It is also a literary tradition that occupies an in-between position, as located both in Berlin as a self-referential cultural center, which in reality is never as homogenous as commonly constructed and propagated but whose self-image varied widely over time under the influence of changing political, cultural, religious and economic conditions in history and includes German but also Polish/Slavic as well as the influence of the major Western centers, notably French and English literature, but also the various influences from Eastern Europe and of the wider non-European world infiltrating the metropolitan culture for centuries.

Finally, such a monolithic approach, as that exemplified in this volume, also suppresses Fontane's own complex and contradictory subjectivity, both oppositional/marginal and dominant/central, producing what W. E. B. Du Bois called a "double consciousness," as one familiar with both "margins" and "center" and ideally placed to deconstruct dominant and narrowly constructed national discourses. Despite his alleged

metropolitanism Fontane was neither a subject of the dominant ethnicity nor the dominant class; rather his unique sensibilities also derive from his marginal affiliations, his minority “Frenchness,” and his modest middle class background. Thus, even if Fontane’s ideological formation cannot be separated from the metropolitan “Great Tradition,” his writing also draws from a wide range of experiences and knowledge, including his own subalternity, and is sustained both by his awareness of changing, heterogeneous and multivalent identities, social contexts and cultural forms, and his mediation between metropolis and its geographical and social margins. Fontane’s literature may then be seen as an expression of this historically constituted polyphony, to borrow Bakhtin’s term, composed of both “Eastern” and “Western” currents and elements that no one can say who really originated or invented first.

I also take issue with the volume’s neglect to even use the term imperialism let alone to discuss the phenomenon even when dealing with an author who emerged as a novelist and wrote his acclaimed novels in the high imperial period (and was thus himself a subject to all of its unresolved contradictions). This volume tends to gloss Fontane as “the supreme novelistic chronicler of the new Germany, [who] plays a crucial part in moving German novel away from the introspection and provinciality often ascribed to it” (Preface 7) in a rather celebratory manner and without reflecting on how the very “movement” away from the provincialism of margins towards the center might enact Germany’s imperial movement. The failure to connect this trajectory of the development of the German novel to that of the German state developing its geopolitical position of power and to view both as part of the same overall project of imperialism, attests to the lack of attentiveness to interrelated longer-term and larger-scale phenomena on the part

of scholars in this volume. Obviously, it was the expansion of Prussia that “moved” Brandenburg-Prussia from the eastern margins of “Central Europe” into a more Western and “modern” position, and the newly Prussian dominated imperial Germany into a position of imperial center of domination. Prussia had already been an imperial state by virtue of annexing Polish territories and previously independent societies. After 1871 Germany set out to create new ones, through acquiring overseas colonies and in a process of projected eastward colonization. The new “German nation” was constructed in opposition to its ethnicized, racialized, gendered and classed subjects, who inhabit geographic and social margins such as ethnic, religious and increasingly racially defined minorities and mostly Polish immigrant/ migrant “domestic” and “seasonal workers.” In reevaluating Fontane’s place in literary and cultural history it is important to determine the impact on Fontane of both the politics of imperialism and new intellectual developments. By reformulating this statement it could also be argued that Fontane, the writer, was catalyzed by the “benefits” of Germany’s political expansion, which fuelled but also gave legitimacy to Fontane’s writing.

The practical effect of a theoretical approach like that in the volume is that Fontane scholarship (un)duly reproduces “selective readings” of Fontane’s texts, which continue to reproduce the textual inscription of an imperialist discursive practice – by promoting those aspects of “German” culture which reinscribe Western cultural/intellectual paradigms, and construct a Western-centric identity dependant on exclusion and marginalization.

My last remark concerns the effects of the continuation of global imbalances in the relations between metropolitans and non-metropolitans in intellectual life and the

implications of one's situatedness for the discipline one works within. Regarding this, the volume also demonstrates another symptomatic characteristic of mainstream scholarship – its inability or unwillingness to effectively intervene against the superior power of the material productions of advanced capitalism with the patterns of imperialist countries and hegemonic paradigms of their cultural productions that set the terms for comparison with marginal cultural production.

No doubt the theoretical approach exemplified in the volume has (something) to do with the institutional position of its contributors, all of whom, being a part of the First World academic system and its supporting institutions, form part of a discourse which fails to acknowledge that the very concept of culture is embedded in relations of economic imperialism and should be challenged on these grounds as a precondition to constructing alternative theoretical approaches to understanding the problematic relationship between cultural practices and imperialism. The institutional location of German-speaking studies in the Western academy, as a theory domesticated in Western institutions of high learning, and disseminated primarily by those who live, think and work under Western paradigms, necessarily posits them as a hegemonic Western authority over cultural production, which despite its claims to the contrary, precludes marginal and outside voices from being heard. For instance, if the contributors to the volume make up a representative cross-section of Fontane scholarship also in terms of geographical range, bearing in mind the volume's introductory commitment to "internationalism," then the conspicuous absence of Germanist/Fontane scholars from the erstwhile Eastern Europe, the site of Fontane's Prussia – to say nothing of the world's other peripheries – is just another illustration for the institutionalization of disproportion

of knowledge-production. It probably didn't even occur to the organizers that the guest list on their “international meeting” might strike some as ethnocentric!

This is the more controversial, since as I have previously mentioned, an early reception of Fontane’s novels in Russia cannot be overestimated, given their scant popularity in Imperial Germany by comparison with the best sellers of the time, and in view of the fact that he remained virtually unknown in the English-speaking world until 1914, when *Effi Briest* appeared in an abridged English rendering.¹⁰ As I noted before, not only have Fontane's novels long been familiar to Eastern Europeans (and especially in Russia where by the 1830s, literary commentary had emerged as an important genre of social analysis by the secularized intelligentsia), and since the 1950s through Lukács’ influence, no doubt, in the Eastern Bloc, but they have also been of interest to Asian readers and known to them in Japanese, Chinese and Korean translations (*Effi Briest* was first translated into Japanese in 1972).

The constitutive metropolitanism of Fontane scholarship as exemplified in the London symposium inevitably undermines the power of education as a force for change. Could not a symposium on Fontane draw the interest of new scholars from formerly marginalized quarters and colonized or silenced or otherwise disenfranchised groups whose reading of Fontane’s works could illuminate them anew? Such readings could open up these texts in ways which would invite the participation of many readers who had previously not found themselves in his texts at all. These readers would be more

¹⁰ When *Unwiederbringlich* was published as a book in Danish translation under the title “Grevinde Holke” in 1893 Fontane commented in a letter to Wilhelm Hertz on December 11, 1894, “das zweite Buch von mir (nach *Kriegsgefangen*), das ich in einem fremden Sprache von mir liegen sehe. Meine geliebten Engländer, für die ich meinerseits so viel gethan, lassen mich aber noch immer im Stich.” (*Werke* 4: 409).

likely attuned to Fontane's ironic strategies and his estrangement techniques, his omissions, displacements and exclusions. They would be more sensitive to the themes of loneliness, alienation and otherness. Perhaps by such dissemination of other voices, histories, experiences, and knowledge beyond the restricted audience of academic specialists and intellectual elites and ethnocentric privileged inclusions, Fontane would be accessible to more audiences. On the other hand, by preventing hitherto marginalized knowledges and other relegated cognitive traditions and cultural formations from challenging its insular territory, the enlightened minority culture canon known as "the Great Tradition," its practitioners run the serious risk of being further marginalized. These are questions that bring into focus current issues of inequality in the academic system of knowledge production and cannot be left out.

Finally, in the context of European integration, the symposium was not without its political aspects, and not only because it was financially supported by European institutions of power such as the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Embassy of Switzerland/Pro Helvetia. The gathering of literary scholars taking place in London, a major metropolis of European power and colonialism, against the background of the NATO and EU enlargement in East-Central Europe – the issue of NATO expansion and its overlap with the EU is crucial to understanding the geopolitics of EU enlargement)¹¹, the US/EU NATO bombing of Yugoslavia and shortly before the forty-ninth birthday of United Europe and the fiftieth birthday of the NATO alliance – make one think of political and even military uses of Fontane in the new process of creating a

¹¹ Military formations were used to spread American and Western European influence throughout Europe, Africa and the Middle East - NATO and its numerous partnership programs.

political community of identity in terms of identification with the unique European heritage in which the internal differences between the member states are downplayed in order to enhance the homogenized cultural identity of the Union against encroachments from culturally incompatible outsiders. Such politicized literary events staged against the background of the ongoing weight of colonialism and post-colonial forms of empire on major processes of globalization today, and specifically those binding emigration and immigration countries (such as e.g. Poland and Germany) stress even more urgently the need for understanding the responsibilities and consequences of one's own positionality and its implications in a discipline of literary criticism by acknowledging how place and space shape the way many of us approach our work and the role they play in interpretation and representation of cultures. In view of this, aside from culturally inscribing the actual boundaries between the West and the rest, the "inside" and "outside," Fontane scholars seem to either demonstrate disregard for the world outside the borders of their "European context," as Fortress Europe, or to share many of the assumptions of state and military elites.

This sort of willful public amnesia about the realities outside of a narrowly constructed "European context" and lack of genuine interest in an alternative viewpoint is largely a product of institutionalized metropolitanism and its modernist/colonialist discourse of identification to differentiate "us," the insiders, from all those categorized as "them" on the outside. Racial politics today may no longer be mediated through biological and naturalistic valorization, but by using the language of diversity through ethnocentric codes and rules, through symbolic cultural interpellations of the "common Western culture" shared by the small number of nations of the global West and North

united West (United Europe and the United States as nation-states writ large). The practitioners of such scholarship seem to live in a bubble, in a kind of mental ghetto, which cuts them off and prevents them from seeing another reality, the one perceived by the rest of the world. But if they aspire to participate in genuine global movements of cultural production, ideas and people, they can no longer follow the familiar one-way colonial path from center to periphery but rather should involve themselves in more complex and complicated flows and networks. It is therefore urgent to re-examine Western accounts of itself in order to expose deformations in critical thinking caused by the failure to compose a manifold and inclusive perspective on difference.

My goal is to unsettle the epistemological centrism of West European scholarship by exposing disparate attempts at categorizing and labeling of culture and cultural products as serving to reinforce or reinvent various metropolitan privilegings. I also wish to “deprovincialize” the discipline in both temporal and spatial terms by acknowledging dynamics of interaction within the shifting borders and margins of cultures. I start from an assumption that cultures are neither standardizable nor closed systems since they only exist through interactions. I will thus heavily rely on Bakhtin’s understanding of language and culture as inherently dialogically communicative. As an event which occurs when two or more consciousnesses respond to each other in a specific spatio-temporal context, dialogism is continually becoming and open-ended.

There has been a great deal of talk lately about the need to listen to different voices, to allow the Other to speak, to look for semantic richness and alternative ways of speaking and reading in the direction of dialogic and polyphonic texts. One cannot

understand social and cultural problems without understanding, in Bronislaw Malinowski's famous phrase, "the native's point of view." I understand this neither in terms of globalization, which spreads hegemonized global culture, nor in terms of its nemesis, segregating/differentiating multiculturalism, but rather as a pluralistic and interactive idea of transculturalism (seeing oneself in the other)¹² in order to re-direct attention to other aspects of Fontane's fiction in a movement of postcolonial displacement, re-representations and de-decentering.

I have taken Bakhtin's urge to dialogism and polyphony as a means to including otherness and difference not simply as contextualization of Polishness in Fontane's *Effi Briest*, but rather to demonstrate how these Bakhtinian principles can be a fruitful interactive and multileveled model for approaching Fontane's writing practices in representing transnational relations. Applying a Bakhtinian perspective enables "hearing" the other not as a one-way asymmetrical monologue, but as a two-or polyphonic challenging interactional processes. German-Slav/Polish relations in Fontane's text can be viewed from Bakhtin's perspective as a manifestation of dialogic, polyphonic and even carnivalesque practices and ever changing forms and dynamics of interaction which transcend national boundaries, states, languages and confessions of faith.

It is through his appropriation of the Bakhtinian hybridization, as a dialogical process of cultural negotiation, that Homi Bhabha attempts to undermine the binary opposition between the colonizer and colonized and to emphasize instead "the mutualities and negotiations across the colonial divide" (Moore-Gilbert 116). I am using dialogue less as a process of cultural negotiation, than in the Bakhtinian sense a site of

¹² The terms transculturalism in the sense of converging and merging of cultures was first coined in 1947 by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz.

“unavoidable semantic contestation” (*Speech Genres* 93-94). My own sense of polyphony derives on the one hand from Bakhtin and my affinity with his conceptions, and, on the other, from my own personal experience and background located in the Balkans at the borders and crossroads of cultures in a politically rebellious region with a history of anti-authoritarian tradition and resistance to imperial agglomeration, which is to say that my own preference for polyphony arises from a resistance to homogenizing approaches of imperial domination as they impose a monologic structure of closure such as the West’s claim legitimately to speak for all the Rest. I will thus want to oppose and challenge in ways that are both consonant and dissonant to prevailing approaches.

My approach has also been influenced by Fredric Jameson’s notion of the novel, which he calls “processing operation” as a process gathering up and transforming other genres, which can be ultimately traced back to Mikhail Bakhtin’s notion of the novel as a composite genre. Raymond Williams’ division of culture into dominant, residual and emergent discourse as developed by Jameson who flexibly incorporates residual traditions, the governing consensus of the moment, and emerging discourses.

I also propose to reread Effi Briest from today’s decentered postcolonial experience of culture as a productive hybridity of cultural influence and national determination and with an insistence on polyphonic critical discourse, but since I argue for an understanding of cultural practices as materially produced and inseparable from the material world they inhabit, my approach cannot be detached from questions of political economy, in and outside the metropole, in its specific historical juncture and form of capitalism. I will explore “materiality” not only as socio-economics, but also as the physical materiality of human bodies or the spatial materiality of local environments. My

analysis of *Effi Briest* will include the reading of the text against the grain or with Fontane's *Wanderungen* as a sub-text, which opens the imperial project to ethical scrutiny by reflecting on particular local practices, conditions and developments in Prussia-Brandenburg since the Middle Ages and by recounting the rise of modern German Prussia out of the violent encounters, interplay and interdependence between the German settler colonies and the declining Slavic communities.

This alternative reading experience of Fontane's texts does not imply marginalizing Fontane's stature within the European literary tradition, but rather an affirmation of the multivalence of his novelistic narrative, its capacity to generate in the course of time a series of topical rereadings and reinterpretations. Understanding Europe as a cultural crossroads is increasingly central to what it means to be a scholar of Cultural Studies today.

My dissertation is roughly divided into two related parts. In the first part I discuss some alternative approaches to *Effi Briest* while in the second I apply them to my reading of the novel. I start by giving an overview of the mainstream approach in general in chapter one, where I intend to give a brief review of several major approaches to *Effi Briest* in order to point out in more detail what I consider to be disciplinary problems. I will then proceed by building my own strategies for analyzing *Effi Briest* through the process of dismantling and reassembling, that is, by applying several more productive strategies for my analysis of the novel in succession. In chapter two, I apply Michel Foucault's notion of heterotopias to demonstrate Fontane's heterotopic strategies as his counter-model to the monolithic mapping of novelistic space. In chapter three I discuss *Effi Briest* through theoretical concepts Bakhtin advanced in *The Dialogic Imagination*,

notably his chronotopic strategies, to demonstrate how a “spatial turn” in Fontane’s treatment of novelistic time-space configuration represents a break with the traditional *Bildungsroman* – mode. In chapter four, I will discuss Fontane’s use of dialogism and polyphony by referring to Bakhtin’s work on Dostoyevsky to demonstrate Fontane’s shift towards the polyphonic novel. In chapter five, I will discuss Fontane’s *Wanderungen* against dominant contemporary historical discourse and fiction to draw attention to Fontane’s counter-strategies, which break with the master narrative and point to a broader disillusionment or lack of confidence in bourgeois narratives of progress and social and cultural ascent. These strategies also bear on his novelistic approach in general and *Effi Briest* in particular. The principle aim of my rereading of *Effi Briest* in the above chapters is to suggest alternative strategies of reading novels of empire that take account of events and processes resulting from transnational alliances, rivalries, movements and resistance. This in turn problematizes the tendency to see Germany as a space less territorially and culturally homogenized and stable but rather as fractured into dynamic environments consisting of fragments and “overlapping zones” of contradictory traditions rather than juxtapositions of monolithic entities.

The rest of my dissertation will focus on the Eastern Pomeranian/Kessin-based chapters, which I consider both strategically important and looming large in the novel in view of the transposition Fontane made from the original setting in Krotoschin in Posen/Poznan to Kessin in Pomerania to draw attention to the unique postcolonial perspectives from which a novel can be approached. Namely, in the early manuscript of *Effi Briest*, the so-called Betty-complex, after the name Betty von Ottensund, which Fontane originally gave his protagonist, instead in Pomeranian Kessin on the Baltic

shore, the novel was set in the town of Krotoschin (Krotoszyn) in the Polish heartland province of Poznan, renamed as Posen.

By switching perspectives, by focusing on the marginal and viewing the metropolitan as superimposed, I want to unsettle the tendency of giving primacy to the modern empires of the nineteenth century and to transgress the colonial paradigm in three major aspects: space arrangement, language and identity. In chapter six, I discuss spatial arrangement as perceived through the eyes of the ruling elites and imperial administration to draw attention to the colonial paradigm of viewing Polish/Kashub Hinterpommern and Posen. In chapter seven, I look into Fontane's Kessin as a hybridized "third space" that both resists the dominant and represents an unstable and ambiguous alternative to paralyzing dichotomies of the opposites, but whose hybridized diaspora is also utilized for the purpose of economic gain. Which brings me to the second part, in which I will look into Hinterpommern as a contested space between Germans and Poles – and their competing claims over the Kashubians, a small ethnic group related to Poles nationally undeclared and/or ambiguous and inhabitants of the strategically important Baltic area. Kashubian ethnicity became major bone of contention between Germans and Poles in the late nineteenth century. In chapter eight, I read the novel through post-colonial strategies to demonstrate that the historic formation of Prussian society cannot be understood without accounting for the Polish influence, that is, the late nineteenth-century socio-economic transformations of Prussian metropolitan society cannot be viewed in isolation from the developments in the Polish margins since they impinge on Fontane's fictional representation of Prussia and are articulated in both the context and structure of *Effi Briest*. In chapter nine, I discuss Fontane's representation of Polish/Slavic-hyphenated

characters in terms of their different responses to being Prussian-subjects against the background of the anti-Slav/Polish prejudices and measures. In so doing I want to demonstrate that the most concrete expression of the post-partition colonized condition are unstable, composite, and frequently conflicting hybrids who are traditionally perceived as incompatible and even antithetical and who represent both a puzzle and a challenge for the German self-image. I also want to show the ways in which Fontane also debunks the traditional Prussian stereotypes about Polish identity, society and economy.

CHAPTER I

UNDER WESTERN EYES: *EFFI BRIEST* AND THE LIMITS OF METROPOLITAN LITERARY AND CULTURAL THEORY

If Faust could have two souls within his breast, why should not a normal person unite conflicting intellectual trends within himself when he finds himself changing from one class to another in the middle of a world crisis ?

Georg Lukács, *History & Class Consciousness*, Preface to the New Edition, 1967

Effi Briest, now over hundred years old and never out of circulation since its publication in 1894/5, is Fontane's best-known novel launching him into fame late in life, and it has come to be considered as one of Germany's most important novels ever by both popular and critical consensus. *Effi Briest* is also Fontane's most interpreted novel, dealt with such thoroughness by literary critics and historians that some even doubt that there is anything new to be said about the novel. I beg to differ. As Hubertus Fischer, chairman of the Theodor Fontane Society, reminds us: "[E]ach generation rediscovers him [Fontane] for itself."¹³

While the scholarship on Fontane's *Effi Briest* is a relatively small field, it provides a window into the larger discipline. I argue that while the novel's multivalency has been acknowledged, as numerous interpretations it has elicited over time demonstrate, their interpretative framework has been almost invariably informed by the notion that Fontane focused mainly on metropolitan social life and its core culture and should be approached from within a nation state. Accordingly, *Effi Briest* has been most persistently interpreted within the tradition and development of the nineteenth century realist novel and has been approached from within the framework of *Bürgerlicher Realismus* (poetic realism), *Zeitroman* (novel representing a contemporary time period)

¹³ The Theodor Fontane Society was established on December 15, 1990, in Potsdam.

Gesellschaftsroman (novel representing a particular society), *Eheroman* (Müller-Seidel), *Ehebruchroman* (Grawe) or the novel of adultery, and *Berlinroman*.

However, it should be remembered that Prussia rose to power on the back of the three partitions of Poland in 1772, 1793, and 1795, and that the foundation of the German empire in 1871 was based on the continuation of the partitions. Consequently, given the size and significance of the Polish element (e.g. between 1815 and 1918 the mother-tongue of every tenth Prussian was Polish) as well as the presence of other Slavic-speaking minorities, one should ask whether Germany, and above all its core state Prussia, was really a nation-state. Interpretations that collapse the German Empire into a nation-state mystify both imperialism and nationalism and de-link theory from practice. Consequently, such models have been unable to situate Fontane's novel within a proper social-historical context of global economic system and imperialist social relations and neither offer a coherent analyses of the way Fontane creates a "fictional totality" within his narrative nor theorize adequate forms of resistance, political and practical solutions to the continuing problems confronting marginalized, internally colonized as well as millions of (neo)colonized peoples around the globe.

I argue that the lack of coherent focus on the marginal and neglect or near absence of comprehensive cross-cultural or transnational approaches to *Effi Briest* is indicative of a disciplinary theoretical, epistemological and cultural framework from which the novel is approached. In this chapter I will briefly discuss some of the potential shortcomings and methodological problems of most influential mainstream theoretical approaches. They include most importantly 1) stressing a division between center-periphery; 2) analyzing the novel from within the boundaries of an imagined national culture and state

boundaries, and 3) subordinating the marginal, peripheral or colonial to the metropolitan center, especially by those with no knowledge of, interest in or regard for non-metropolitan conditions. In what follows I will give a brief overview of several approaches to *Effi Briest* in Fontane scholarship in order to demonstrate what I find to be metropolitan scholarship's inability to situate ethnocentrism as a historical problematic and come to terms with the continuing importance of metropolitan horizons of meaning in their work by overlooking the non-metropolitan perspective and representation and by refusing to take marginal "authenticity" seriously.

For obvious reasons, cultural and literary scholarship devoted to studying literary works primarily as expressions of traditionally Western habits of thought, practices and concepts not only distorts the texts they analyze but also prevents a comprehensive understanding of various forms of control and subordination. Subalternizing and silencing propensities of colonialist representations are evident in elitist and conservative scholarship that falls back on standardized, received methodology and forms of representation in terms of sets of binary oppositions between West and East, progress and backwardness, modernity and traditionalism, high and popular culture, metropolis and margins, town and country etc. by stressing essentialized notions of nation/race/ethnicity and place, and suppressing the importance of both class and gender as analytic categories of cultural formation.

On the other hand, insofar as it can be broadly understood as an intellectual alliance that sees its task as one of challenging the limits of hegemonic modes of thinking, metropolitan left-inclined critique has generated some of the most productive literary and cultural criticisms. However, Western Marxism, traditionally male, has generally been

preoccupied with Western modernity and consequently shown little interest in subalternity, gender roles and political representation in the non-western context and often neglectful or even disrespectful of economically less advanced societies and cultures and their attempts at alternative practice and theorizing for the future. Such was largely perceived to be the condition not only of the non-western world but also of the predominately agrarian Eastern Europe in the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries, where the emerging self-conscious bourgeoisie was weak and where the peasantry still vastly outnumbered the working class, which was nonetheless in the privileged position by comparison to rural masses. Metropolitan Western-based Marxist and related scholarship, such as that represented by the “Critical Theory” initiated by the Frankfurt School, has remained consistently parochial, ethnocentric and elitist in its critical theorizing. Thus, even though the moral and political articulation of European imperialism changed radically in the second half of the twentieth century, and especially within Marxism and related theories, its cultural implications have still largely remained in place.

Lukács’ Turn and Fontane Reception

While the shift in the reception of Fontane’s literary reputation from a minor, provincial, conservative Prussian writer and a political reactionary into a progressive metropolitan novelist and the greatest master of German realism of the late nineteenth century took place during the politicizing decades of 1960s and 1970s, the origins of this shift, on either side of the Berlin Wall, can be traced back to Georg Lukács. It was in 1951 Berlin under the Soviet occupied zone that Lukács’ influential essay entitled “Der alte Fontane” appeared in *Sinn und Form*, the prestigious German-language literary and

cultural journal that was to achieve a legendary status across the Cold War German-German divide. The essay, grounded in the Marxist tradition of cultural analysis and combining textual interpretation with political criticism based on Fontane's letters available at the time,¹⁴ was to spark interest in Fontane's literature on the left of the political spectrum on both sides of the Cold War divide. Fontane was until then considered largely marginal and/or conservative by the Western cultural left-wing standards.

The reception of Georg Lukács' theorizing of realist narratives has been controversial and it often relied on an artificial dichotomy in Lukács' oeuvre. On the one hand, the early Lukács has been hailed as the author of a seminal aesthetic theory of the novel and an avant-garde Marxist philosopher credited as the founder of Western Marxism; on the other, the later Lukács has often been disparaged as a conservative, dogmatic defender of the nineteenth century realism and an intellectual compromised by Stalinism. To be sure, Lukács' argument that different classes have different forms of consciousness, but only proletariat's point of view coincides with objectivity and truth and his assertion that art cannot, nor it should be, separated from the class perspective seem incompatible with his staunch defense of bourgeois realism over modernism or naturalism, even if his preference is obviously aesthetic rather than political in nature. But to understand Lukács' oeuvre it is necessary to stress the continuity between Lukács' avant-garde and post-avant-garde paradigms. As Sara Nadal-Melsió observes: "[t]he role of realism in Lukács' oeuvre cannot be trivialized or rejected as 'doctrinaire' or

¹⁴ At the time Lukács did not have access to the Georg Friedländer correspondence, which, when published in 1954, revealed a more politically radical Fontane than previously assumed.

‘outmoded’ – two of the most common charges against Lukácsian literary criticism – without damaging an understanding of his political and philosophical contributions to Western Marxism” (62). When Lukács returned to the problem of totality in the novel in the thirties, he had gone through a complex destiny of failed revolution in Budapest, Nazism in Berlin and counter-revolution in Moscow. A life story of exiles like Lukács’ was not very unusual in the age of ideological struggles, especially not for the left-wing intellectual survivors who were politically involved in the controversies of the Third Internationale. Lukács’ life and work provide an example of the circuitous path many intellectuals had to take as a result of Nazi and Stalinist dictatorships. For Lukács under Stalinism – whose own ideas on culture did not quite square with Soviet cultural policy – literary criticism allowed him to pursue, in an oblique form, the problems that run through his earlier work.

It has been suggested that there are two Marxisms inherent in the classic tradition: a theory of the scientific Marxism of revolutionary practice and a philosophical critique of capitalist modernity, and that Georg Lukács stood at this point of departure in Marxism with his seminal *History and Class Consciousness* (1923) in which he highlights the centrality of the problem of class consciousness in revolutionary practice and reaffirmed Hegelian Marxist roots (by stressing Marx’s dialectical method rather than any particular ideology). In other words, according to Lukács revolutionary (transformative) practice depends on class-consciousness, which is incumbent upon the working class to develop to be able to enforce economic and social transformation. Lukács’ emancipatory discourse broke from the dominant party vision that prioritized “the development of

productive forces.” Instead, he places humans and human consciousness in the process of becoming at the centre of his focus.

Lukács’ interpretive paradigm of totality that is central to his theory of literary realism and also provides tools for his approach to Fontane’s fiction can be traced back to *History and Class Consciousness*, (1923) where he states that “reality can be seized and penetrated only as a totality, and only a subject which itself is a totality is capable of this penetration”(39). The major essay in *History and Class Consciousness*, called “Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat” shows how specific social and economic forms of capitalism destroy totality in consciousness. The concept of totality is a crucial problem for the working-class consciousness and organization. The achievement of such totality demands transcendence of individuality and only organized working class consciousness is able to penetrate reality. Totality also raises the central question for the study of literature; hence Lukács’ life-long preoccupation with the form and content of fictional totality.

Lukács’ realist theory was also shaped by his political concerns regarding critical potential of literature in an increasingly polarized atmosphere during the intense cultural and ideological debates that focused on the problem of how to judge European literary tradition, which by definition could not have been the product of a socialist society, and to ask what usable elements bourgeois tradition has to offer to the left-wing readers, if literature is to be used to effect social change. According to Lukács, art should be realistic because unlike many modernisms falling prey to formalism (formal fragmentation of modernist texts participates in the process of reification), which often reflects reactionary politics, realism is the only literary mode capable of representing the

totality of society and overcoming the effects of capitalist reification. For Lukács, living and working in post-revolutionary Central-Eastern Europe between the two wars, rising fascist populism in Italy, Germany, and elsewhere, was a bigger threat than Stalinism. Thus realism was not a matter of choice but of inevitability: a necessary tool to make sense of an increasingly commodified, reified and fragmented condition and to resist capitalist domination breeding radical nationalism and fascism.

Lukács devoted many pages to the critique of modernisms and sought in turn to develop a Marxist aesthetics and the realist literary canon for Marxist cultural politics. This project also involved a critical rereading of the nineteenth-century German realist tradition (undertaken mostly during his long sojourn in Moscow between 1935-40) from the Marxist perspective and aimed at reclaiming humanist democratic cultural tradition within Germany.

In the post-World War II anti-German atmosphere overshadowed by the horrors of World War II, the German novel has been viewed through the “Sonderweg”¹⁵ of German development – an ideological trope which validates literary and cultural traditions of those states to which Germany is compared. It contains implicit “normative assumptions” so that “sometimes explicitly and often implicitly, it was ‘western’ and most particularly English and French developments (that is British and French empires) that were taken as a yardstick against which German history (and literary tradition) was measured and found wanting” (Blackbourn and Eley 10). At the time, Fontane’s realism was rather unfavorably compared to French, English or Russian models (Pascal; Stern). Fontane’s

¹⁵ The German historian Heinrich Von Treitschke was the originator of the “Sonderweg” thesis about German history that was taken up by leftish historians such as Hans Ulrich Wehler in West Germany after the World War II.

reputation as a writer seems to have been clouded by this paradigm as late as 2002, as evident from the allegation that the Imperial Germany's "growing art industry praised the work of bourgeois, nationalistic writers such Theodor Fontane" (Cooke 84).

Lukács made bold both to defend the nineteenth century German bourgeois literary tradition during the heyday of the doctrine of social realism and to continue to write in German at a time when the judgment of the German cultural heritage was painted by the strong aversion to everything German or Prussian. Apart from his obvious respect for German culture, Lukács' constant preoccupation with the German socio-cultural change as articulated in his literary criticism seems to express his search and preference for an alternative, future oriented political agenda of building a socialist Europe as a "third force" independent of East and West as suggested by his support in 1956 for the Nagy government. To be sure, when in the same year his book *Deutsche Realisten des 19. Jahrhunderts* appeared, Lukács made a speech to the Petöfi circle in which he demanded genuine Marxism against Stalinist dogmatism, for which he was called the "unintended initiator of the Hungarian Revolution" (Eörsi). Neither Lukács' position as a minister of the brief Nagy government nor his literary theory gained him the approval of the new authorities and József Révai, the chief ideologist of the Party, who attacked Lukács' "critical/bourgeois realism."¹⁶

¹⁶ Even at his most Stalinist, Lukács continued to stress that realism should not sink into revolutionary romanticism, vacillating between a naturalism of means and an idealism of content. Socialist romanticism was just as dangerous as expressionism or formalism in Lukács' view. Socialist realism needs to stress contradiction in its inheritance of the nineteenth century's mimetic devices, mediating the contradictory complexity of the transitional period.

In retrospect, Lukács' re-readings of German realism represent an early revision of its generally negative critical reception and consequent neglect, for which Erich Auerbach's epoch-making book *Mimesis: Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur* (1946, 1953) set the tone for subsequent critics. Where Auerbach dismissed German nineteenth-century realism as irredeemably inferior to its European, especially French, counterparts, Lukács instead embraced it, albeit not uncritically. Where in Auerbach's view the anachronism, parochialism, regional scope and introspectiveness of German realism did not warrant serious critical consideration, Lukács set out to reclaim its progressive heritage as represented by Raabe's and Fontane's "critical realism." Where Auerbach considered Fontane to be a novelist of little distinction, and assigned him a rank far below Jeremias Gotthelf, Adalbert Stifter and Gottfried Keller, Lukács, on the other hand, counted Fontane among great realist novelists whom he merited for their ability to depict society as changing.

What made Auerbach rank Fontane's fictions so low was the double bind of his presumed marginality, as an ageing author writing about geographical locations such as Berlin and the provinces east of the Elbe, in Auerbach's opinion culturally and literarily less significant than either Keller's Switzerland or Stifter's Austria (480). Lukács, however, shared Mann's view that the "old" Fontane was the real Fontane, and contended that it was precisely in his old age that Fontane became fully aware of the world-historical forces that were rapidly changing German society after the foundation of the Empire in 1871, to which he responded critically. Furthermore, by judging *Effi Briest* alongside Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1857) and Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1878)

Lukács, in effect, was granting Fontane's less known novel an equal status with established European texts.

Lukács also pointed out Fontane's blind spots, his lack of penetration into the basic contradictions that he exposed without suggesting any solutions for them, and took him to task for according virtually no attention to the swelling ranks of industrial working class as an effect of a rapidly industrializing Germany. Nevertheless, according to Lukács, as a bourgeois intellectual, Fontane played a positive role: even though the active presentation of the working class is absent from his fiction Fontane showed respect for the individual members of the working class. Lukács' praise is reserved for Fontane's portrayal of a humble servant Roswitha as a being whose superior humanity nothing could undermine or disfigure.

However, the genealogy of the left-wing humanist critical approach that consistently analyzes the formation of metropolitan culture in *Effi Briest* from an internal perspective (that is, from within the boundaries of metropolitan Germany) can also be traced back to Lukács paradigm. Lukács placed the concept of totality at the heart of Marx's system and in his approach to literature insisted on an all-embracing totality in depiction of life, which presupposes a comprehensive dialectic treatment of life in all its dimensions and interactions. While a life story like Lukács' that cuts across national borders certainly helped make him an international thinker he was, transnational engagement was not something he dealt with in his approach to *Effi Briest*. Rather, his analysis of the novel never goes beyond the limits of the metropolitan Prussian society. For Lukács the novel is a paradigmatic genre of modernity i.e. a privileged form of an individualist metropolitan capitalist society and an appropriate mode for the expression of a relatively

coherent bourgeois identity. The crux of the matter for Lukács' "essential forces" driving society at any given time is the force of dialectics within metropolitan social life towards or under the new order embodied by the nation state which constituted the reality of capital's most comprehensive political command structure, and as such represented a necessary stage in the social development.

For Lukács there is an intimate connection between history and consciousness – a quasi Hegelian unity – which is brought together in a historical subjectivity, in class. In *history and Class Consciousness*, Lukács argued that totality was the crucial form of the revolutionary class subjects and that class was the subject and object of knowledge. Socialism would abolish alienation – that Lukács identified with objectification. Yet after reading Marx's economic and philosophical manuscripts in 1930, Lukács realizes that "objectification is indeed a phenomenon that cannot be eliminated from human life in society . . . [because] every externalization of an object in practice . . . is an objectivization" (*Class Consciousness*, introduction to 1967 edition, xxiv). Objectivity and subjectivity are in constant mutual interaction.

If subjectivities cannot be understood in isolation from systemically organized totalities, as Lukács asserted, then, a comprehensive approach to "totality" in Fontane's narrative has to take into account the ways in which metropolitan Germany was a constitutive focus and center of dependence for important social, cultural, economic and political processes at geographically, socially and ethnically different peripheries. This is especially important since the novel is set in the Polish province against the background of anti-Polish measures taken by the Imperial Government in the 1870s and 1880s, which

are conditions of oppression between the German state and the Polish provinces in which the former objectively exploits and/or hinders the self-affirmation of the latter.

Whereas, according to Lukács, critical realism should reflect the dynamic contradictions of social life he, nevertheless, neglected to look into how the contradictory relationship between German nation-state and capitalist expansion is dramatized in Fontane's novel in terms of displacement and geographic migration of population in and across the state borders. While Imperial economy was highly dependent on the Polish labor, the Poles were at the same time dehumanized, subjected to discrimination and persecution. Furthermore, the potentially revolutionary labor migration, symbolized by the advancing "Slavic flood," the threat of the Polish migrant workers joining the growing and increasingly socialist working class, and the counter measures taken by the Imperial Government against Socialists and Poles in the 1870, and Poles and Jews in the 1880s, characterized the era in which Fontane's *Effi Briest* is produced.

However Lukács fails to see the need for theorizing an alternative subjectivity to that of European modernity, the one inspired and shaped by anti-colonial resistance and non-western modes of knowledge and practice that constitute parallel or counter modernities rather than subsuming them under a centralized ontology of concrete and determinate social formations and without conflating them with the notions of a teleological reasoning of progress and humanism of the kind of modernization theory. For instance, "organic work" (*praca organiczna*) envisioned and implemented by the Polish intellectuals was an alternative to Imperial knowledge and practice. It was intended as an all-encompassing self-emancipatory praxis that would mobilize all segments of Polish society for the purpose of building more just society through

improving socioeconomic condition of the collective as prerequisite for liberation from imperialist oppression

The humanist tradition both as an idea and practice, which provides the framework for Lukács' formulation of totality has since the outset of anti-colonial struggle been critiqued as deeply Eurocentric and exclusionary. Just as administration of the colonies functioned according to a logic of progress and rationality was based on assimilation of natives, so too within the European nation-state groups seen as "the Other" were pressured to assimilate. Lukács' paradigm does not contain within it a critique questioning the impact of imperialism on the lives of those "Others," deemed to be in need of the "civilizing mission" (through education and bureaucratic system) by the "superior" German culture. Socialists, Catholics and Polish minorities were all considered "different" and "other" to the norm set by the *Kulturkampf* and legitimized by the German Imperial nation state. Besides all these "others" had allegiances beyond the German nation state and were subjected to discrimination or overt state persecution. Most *Kulturkämpfer*, notably public intellectual and political figures as influential as Rudolf Virchow and Max Weber, detested socialists as much as they despised Catholics and Poles, and some of them downgraded women and Eastern Jews.

Lukács' totalistic perspective, which focuses on structural change, but not on what is being actually changed, passes over seemingly insignificant social and cultural phenomena of modern life. While these details may be not directly accessible to conventional expectations for the realistic novel, they are nonetheless detectable in other registers. Lukács' focus on the dominant socio-political and economic development and forces in Fontane's fiction often overlooks a wealth of (in)significant details and leaves

the marginal and subaltern out of his consideration. In other words, Fontane's allusive political register and disarticulated aspects of reality, his unsettling omissions, displacements, ambiguities and exclusions seem to elude Lukács, whose primary focus is on explicit mimetic representational strategies at the expense of other formal and rhetorical modes. He even blocks out whatever might question, weaken or complicate the impression of created totality. There are, to be sure, also elements in Fontane's realism that are "negative" rather than positive dialectics that preclude totalization. Lukács considers this a weak discourse because such an elusive, skeptical and disillusional mode is not politically efficacious.

As later critics, such as e.g. Martin Swales and Christian Grawe, have shown, by paying attention to closer textual and discourse analyses, to bring political criticism to Fontane's writing is not so much a matter of isolating socially significant aspects of the novel, nor of attempting to read the fiction as a "reflection" of reality but rather of appreciating the hidden social content in Fontane's texts. In other words, Fontane's strength lies in his ingenious use of details. As he himself points out in 1893: "Der Zauber steckt immer im Detail" (Briefe 221).

Nevertheless, Lukács' principal concern with social-historic totality, in form and content, and his concept of new historicized and revolutionary humanism that envisions "man as a product of himself and his own activity in history" (*Historical Novel* 28-29), not only laid grounds for a revolutionary literary criticism but also continue to provide powerful tools for the politically engaged critics interested in the relationship between politics and aesthetics.

Since Lukács was a literary critic and philosopher whose judgments carried great authority – not only in the socialist East or communist circuits in the West – his 1951/56 appreciative critique of Fontane’s fiction played a pivotal role in establishing “the old Fontane’s” Cold War reputation as a progressive critical social realist with wider political and cultural relevance.¹⁷ Establishing Fontane’s presence in the European literary tradition was, in turn, a crucial step towards redressing the rather unfavorable treatment of the nineteenth century German realist tradition within the larger European cultural scene. In other words, Lukács’ appreciative socio-historical comment on Fontane’s realism is of great importance for the paradigm shift of German realism by bringing it out of its alleged traditional provincialism into the European context. Following Lukács’ lead (first in the East and later on in the West too), literary theorists on either side of the Berlin Wall (among whom most notably Hans-Heinrich Reuter in the GDR and Walter Müller-Seidel in the FRG) have used Marxist insights in their literary approach to support their preoccupation with Fontane as a political critic. In both Germanies there eventually emerged a critical reappraisal of the nineteenth century German realist tradition long dismissively dubbed as “poetic realism” and generally thought of as second hand by comparison to the “Great Tradition.”

During the Cold War, informed interest in many aspects of the GDR’s cultural life was generally biased and strictly limited in the West. However, during the revolutionary 1960s and 1970s, left-wing political activity, progressive visions, and revolutionary hope

¹⁷ In Eastern Europe, *Effi Briest* was translated into Serbo-Croatian in 1953 (1967), Czech in 1954 (first translation in 1933), Hungarian in 1954 (1955, 1964, 1981, 1984), Russian in 1960 (third version), Slovak in 1961 (1968), Bulgarian in 1963 (1982), Romanian in 1965, Latvian in 1970, Lithuanian in 1971, Polish in 1974, Slovene in 1974, etc.

led to rising popular and scholarly interest in the Eastern Bloc, the division of Germany and its leftist traditions. The ascendancy of Marxism, both as a political agency and a discourse of knowledge – world socialism was at its peak in the mid-1960s, which was also the highest point of the Cold War as well as decolonization – seriously challenged so-called “Western values,” as well as the political and economic hegemony of the West.

The ‘68 movement and the academic development that followed in West Germany were crucially inspired by Marxist social and cultural criticism of Western society. The movement would not have been possible without the dissemination of Marxist ideas by the anti-fascist intellectuals and Marxist scholars who returned to Germany from exile and gathered around the Frankfurt School, which reopened in 1950. Probably the major inspiration for the critical theory of Frankfurt School was Lukács’ notion of Marxism as the critical force in transformative social change in his *History and Class Consciousness*.¹⁸

If the sixties was characterized as a decade of political and cultural turmoil and social and political movements for justice and change, the seventies was the decade that witnessed the first fruits of those upheavals also in German-Polish relations. By the 1970s the international political climate of détente between the two superpowers ushered in a change in East-West relations, which also reflected on German-German relations. As the socialist SPD replaced the conservative CDU as the senior partner in the ruling coalition, the FRG policy towards the GDR and Communist Eastern Europe underwent significant changes. The new SPD Chancellor Willi Brandt (1969-74) gradually introduced what

¹⁸ Notably, its influence on the fellow Budapest-born Karl Mannheim’s (1893-47) sociology of culture, who was recognized as an antecedent of the *Frankfurt School*.

came to be known as *Ostpolitik*, a policy of détente with the GDR and the East Bloc countries, which earned him the Nobel Prize in 1971. The policy never involved formal recognition of the GDR by the FRG, but it favored closer ties with the GDR and improved diplomatic and economic relations with the states of Eastern Europe, notably with Poland.¹⁹ The resulting Basic Treaty of 1972 with Erich Honecker recognized common national identity under the slogan “Two German states within one German nation.”

The ice with Eastern Europe began to thaw in December 1970, when Chancellor Willy Brandt made a historic visit to Poland, went to the Warsaw Ghetto memorial to pay homage to Nazi victims, and signed a treaty just shy of formal recognition of the frontier, which described “the present boundary line” as the “legal western border of Poland” despite the opposition of the German conservative right, who opposed the treaties with Poland and the Soviet Union recognizing the Oder-Neisse line as a factual border of Poland and who were especially appalled by his humble gesture of apology and respect to the victims of the German atrocities in Warsaw/Warszawa. However, the subject of the post war expulsions of Germans from Poland, and anti-Polish prejudice, which as a result of Willy Brandt’s policy towards Eastern Europe was back burnered, has since the

¹⁹ The so-called German Doctrine of the Continuation of the German Reich was asserted by the German Constitutional Court and formulated on several occasions since the German surrender on 8th May 1945. For instance in the judgment of the German Constitutional Court of 31st July 1973 it is laid down that “The German Reich continues to exist, maintains its legal identity but, lacking organization and in particular lacking any institutions, is not capable of action.” This ruling, maintained by Germany’s highest court, is anchored in the German constitution. According to that doctrine the German State is forbidden to undertake any activity which anticipates the end of the German Reich in case that Reich one day re-establishes its capacity to act.

Reunification shifted to the center of German media attention with the (re)turn to the subject of German victimization.

The seventies also saw the building of intra-German networks as well as the founding of “German Polish Societies” with the aim of exerting influence in the spirit of the Social Democrat Party's “New Eastern Policy” (*Ostpolitik*). The first Congress of Polish and West German Germanists took place in Warsaw in 1975. The interest in Fontane’s representation of Polishness (*Polenbild*) in German scholarship also started in the seventies period of *détente*, when the first translation of *Effi Briest* into Polish language appeared in 1974. According to the Polish Germanist Hubert Orłowski, however, the genealogy of a critical approach of German Fontane scholarship that has consistently cast Fontane’s Polish representations in an overtly positive light was politically motivated and can be traced back to scholars such as Dietrich Sommer, Walter Müller-Seidel, Siegfried Sudhof and Klaus Zernack, who set the positive tone. This is why, according to Orłowski, Fontane scholarship never rose above self-referentiality: generations of subsequent scholars have not only taken their cue from the same secondary sources to illustrate their point but also from the same primary sources by rehearsing the same tropes and quotes in Fontane’s texts, thus repeating what is already known and what had become uncontroversial (25-40). However, a scholarship that separates Fontane’s prejudice from its base in history and culture fails to realize that every act of expressive writing is inseparable from material practices and thus constitutive of his work. It also effaces dialogism in Fontane’s works.

Academic developments that followed the political/cultural turmoil of the late sixties in West Germany produced a growing interest in the relationship between

literature and its cultural and sociopolitical context and stimulated such an inquiry in Fontane's fiction. Walter Müller-Seidel is a case in point. As he writes in the introduction, his delayed book-length study on Fontane published in 1975 resulted chiefly from the student challenge-induced social and academic crisis of the sixties, which made him rethink the traditional conceptual and analytical framework of Germanistik.²⁰

Fontane's "renaissance" in the early 1970s was an outcome of the same historical conjuncture that gave rise to the socio-political changes in the FRG. While the increased focus on Fontane's life and work in West Germany of the sixties and seventies is to an extent derived from the continuing fascination with the Prussian cultural heritage as part of the specter of the *fin-de-siècle* as an age of accelerated transformation and cultural ferment, it was even more an expression of the politically radicalized public discourse and the academic developments that followed the political/cultural turmoil of the late sixties that produced a heightened social-critical conscience and growing interest in the relationship between literature and its cultural and sociopolitical context. At the time, many authors and commentators critically reflected on continuities in German history and invoked the dilemmas facing Germany from the founding of the modern nation state in 1871 through the Third Reich to the post-1945 Adenauer years of reconstruction of post-war West Germany.

Coming from a tradition particularly sensitive to the contemporary restructuring of capitalist society, Marxist and related critiques in West Germany were drawing parallels between the economic boom of the so-called *Wirtschaftswunder* of their own time and the rapid expansion of Fontane's own *Gründerzeit*, as well as the affinities between their

²⁰ Walter Müller also took part the first conference of Polish and West German Germanists which took place in 1975 in Warsaw.

respective societies in the face of the crisis of the system of values (Koc). Critics who have viewed the contemporary social novel as the vehicle of Fontane's social criticism, and who have undertaken to demonstrate the novel's inherent criticism of society, were concerned with rather parochial issues: they have scrutinized the state of certain institutions within metropolitan society (by focusing on single issues such as marriage, family, the church, the military, the aristocracy or the duel) as oppressive and by noting indications of the beginning of their breakdown, but they have generally neglected to account for transnational imperial relations that might have had their effects on changes in metropolitan German culture and society.

As a result of both radicalized thought and practice, the *textimmanent* approach to literary texts that dominated the field of Western *Germanistik* and mainly emphasized timeless values and apolitical (Western) aspects of fiction as well as their formal literary qualities, gradually ceded ground to critical contextual and political readings which appropriated the language of sociology, psychology, Marxism and feminism to develop modes of cultural studies that analyzed the production, interpretation, and reception of fictional narratives within socio-historical conditions that had contested political and ideological effects and uses.

Some Mainstream Western Feminist Perspectives

The rejection of realism from the 1970s on in favor of modernism, and, especially the effects of post-structuralist and post modern theorizing, has also eroded Lukács' authority, whose theory of totality became increasingly seen as old-fashioned, rigid and dogmatic as well as, from the minority and feminist perspective, reinscribing a repressive master narrative and patriarchal approach to the novel. However, I believe that the

feminists have been too quick to dismiss Marxism in general and Lukács in particular, and in so doing they have overlooked Lukács' new humanism that sees humans as actors in society and hence failed to see that his position on women is more complex and comprehensive than acknowledged. While classical Marxism did recognize patriarchy and female oppression it based its analysis on a division of public and private by privileging the former, to which it afforded extensive and in-depth analysis over the latter. That said, however, it should be remembered that Clara Zetkin and August Bebel wrote important penetrating critiques of gender inequalities.

Fontane's fiction has received a rather extensive treatment from feminist criticism and deservedly so, since as a male writer who sympathizes with the plight of women, Fontane has always been considered as women's writer. While a presentation of feminist approaches is beyond the topic of my dissertation, I will outline some limitations of the concerns with the representation and politics of women's lives in the mainstream Western feminist approach to *Effi Briest*.

New feminist approaches to gender and subjectivity are related to the growth of capitalism and proliferation of the division of labor when the studies of identities have been expanded to include the kind of work people do and sex they engage in. Impacted by the development of capitalism, feminism sprung from two broad sources: on the one hand, from the dissatisfaction of privileged women, who during a time of a booming economy sought equal opportunities, and on the other, from the awakening of an anti-capitalist, anti-racist and anti-imperialist conscience. The former continues the liberal bourgeois feminist tradition, which explains the oppression of women in terms of "patriarchy." The latter feminism is based on a Marxist understanding of women's

oppression not as the effect of a singular patriarchy but instead maintains that material conditions of all sorts play a vital role in the social production of gender (and gender hierarchy) and points to the different ways in which women collaborate and participate in these productions. The Socialist-feminist tradition, which considers oppression as rooted in class society, sees the struggle against oppression as an integral part of the wider class struggle. Thus from the beginning feminists have been divided in their attitudes towards capitalism and their understanding of the material conditions of oppression. These two theories are incompatible and they lead to very different political practice — and very different results: while liberal bourgeois feminists were accommodating to the existing order the Marxist/material feminists were pushing beyond that goal, seeking to abolish all restrictions that make one human being dependent on another.

As an articulation of modernity, western bourgeois feminism has from its inception had an ambivalent relationship to empire, progress and the civilizing mission. It has often been ethnocentric and complicit with regimes, power structures and knowledge. In their struggle to expand the realm of social and political power for women, western feminists have often relied upon frontiers and zones of difference established through economic and cultural imperialism between the West and its others. Critics who view Fontane's protagonist Effi Briest as "appallingly victimized" (Krause 122), or as a "vivid example of female victims of society" (Wansink 5) limit the scope for action which forces them into depoliticized realm populated by "eternal victims." They often approach victimization in isolation from economic, class-based or ethnic/racial differences and inequalities as well as by overlooking Effi Briest's conformity with the dominant ethos and her own engagement in the imperialist enterprise for her personal gains.

Unproblematic acceptance of the title character's victim status confirms a dubious ethnocentric worldview by exposing an obviously privileged meaning of oppression.

While *Effi Briest* raises critical questions about the status and education of women as well as the role of marriage and family in Imperial German society, such an unproblematic attribution of victimhood delinks woman's oppression from class and obfuscates the novel's complex engagement with imperialist practices, by failing to demonstrate how respectable feminine roles and the gender division were adopted by middle and upper-class women themselves, who in so doing both carved out and limited their space. Effi Briest was allowed to express her individuality and her power within the space of her family estate – her fenced-off freedom was symbolized through the nature of the enclosed garden in Hohen-Cremmen. However, while Effi is willing to marry for the wrong reason, out of ambition to get on in society, she is unable to realize that marriage ultimately means to be legally and mentally subjected to a husband. Furthermore, in an unequal marriage she will have to forfeit both power and freedom of choice. The novel dramatizes Effi Briest's solitary existence both in marriage, and especially after her divorce as her futile search for self-realization and meaningful content of life after her failure to fulfill the mythical female role as a married woman and mother at the time when occupational opportunities were becoming available for women to function outside of traditional domestic roles. Notably, the original Effi, Elisabeth Ardenne, following her public divorce, was able to find self-affirmation in pursuing a socially useful activity by devoting herself to caring for the poor and sick. While gender based oppression cuts across class to the extent that all women are impacted by sexism, the experience of that oppression varies qualitatively and quantitatively by class (work they do or religion they

practice, as Roswitha's and Effi's cases testify), or ethnicity or race (as testified by the Slavic/Polish servant classes, migrant laborers, or the Chinaman).

Most western feminist critics who treat gender oppression in *Effi Briest* usually write from a centrist perspective, from the political center of spectrum, which means that they express the needs and concerns of middle and upper middle class white, "First World" women and generally ignore the importance of material conditions, i.e. the link between gender oppression and capitalism, just as they tend to ignore the whole subject of capitalism itself. Instead they focus on the conflict in which Fontane uses gender constraints to open an avenue for the discussion of feminine identity and at the same time critique the patriarchal society that denies that identity. For instance, in her discussion of *Effi Briest* Sara Shostak follows a well-established feminist tradition of second wave feminism of analyzing the relationship between the private and public spheres of daily life through to point out political nature of the family, long considered as an apolitical entity and relegated to the private sphere, by tracing political contingencies to the ideological framework that asserted the strict (Christian) dichotomy between male and female and culture and nature, which she traces to influential Hegelian thought, though there is no consensus of the origin of this public/private division.

While the mantra of "the personal is political" signifies the first attempt to break down the gendered division between the private sphere attributed to women and the public sphere of men, for liberal bourgeois feminists the goal was to achieve equal rights for men and women by accommodating to the existing order. In her analysis of private/public in *Effi Briest* Shostak relies on culturalist conceptualization of society and social relations such as marriage by eschewing any focus on material historical moments

as complex of social relations which include and influence gender hierarchy and by neglecting to situate her analysis in a wider socio-historic context and examine socio-material basis upon which the modern world was predicated, e. g, by making connections between the production of gender and other hierarchies and capital and class relations.

The division of private from the nascent public sphere of bourgeois society is only a part of a more general process of social development an outcome of the acute rationalization of society brought about under the conditions of the modernization of the European nation-state, which by the end of the nineteenth century culminated in the racially justified exploitation of “inferiors” which served to rationalize, systemize and render coherent bourgeois social practices and institutions accepted by important segments of German/Prussian population of both genders who were willing to justify such practices under a pretext of bringing civilization to savages, barbarians and primitive peoples of the world, Eastern Europeans included. In other words, subordinate or colonized ethnic and class groups were affected in ways similar to gendered groups, on the grounds of innate inferiority, and likewise excluded from public life/discourse. In the cultural and political framework of Central-Eastern Europe, since the Enlightenment, and especially within the later nineteenth-century imperialist system, the subordinated female as nature-bound gender group was aligned with non-historical and nature-bound ethnic groups (*Naturvölker*). For instance, categories used to describe Slavic condition and to characterize the so-called “Slavic soul and character” (synonymous with their ethnic/national spirit) are by and large the same ones applied to women and as such familiar to feminist critics: irrational principles, excessive emotions, unbridled sexuality, closeness to nature as opposed to notions of civilization, progress and rationality typically

associated with (Protestant) males. This equation between subordinated females as nature-bound gender group with the subordinated eastern European ethnic groups and cultures is presented clearly enough in *Effi Briest*.

In *Effi Briest* the social drama of private life is symbolically and actually acted out in relation to imperialism, since the plots of Effi's married life/adultery and hegemony are aligned in Polish *Hinterpommern*, the novel invites an analysis of heartlands as well as the hinterlands. However, the fetishization of metropolitan family and marriage relations occludes material facts and forces of imperialism's history and precludes an understanding of the novel's depiction of "epistemic violence" perpetrated in the periphery on imperial subjects. Thus on another level, the novel's implication in colonialism points to the complicity of metropolitan female subjectivity with colonial ideology and the contradictory implications of identity politics in the context of global economy. For while distinguished women in the contested colonized context of East Pomerania might have occupied a subordinate position in Prussian society their ideological commitment to their class, ethnicity and culture was not much different from their male counterparts.

While Shostak observes the role of the family as a socializing institution that structures behavior in such a way so that guilt and responsibility are internalized and privatized, she is inattentive to the specific conditions under which different discourses were produced and the purposes they were intended to serve i.e. the role hierarchal notions of ethnic/racial, metropolis/periphery and the cultural, class and religious differences thereof played in socialization. For instance, Effi has anti-Slav prejudices even before she comes into contact with Slavic people in Eastern Pomerania. Innstetten

further socializes Effi into her forthcoming role of the “first lady” of the district by disparaging the local population as unreliable and inferior, both the townsfolk (middle classes of North and West European background) with more liberal and international outlook and the “close-minded” rural Slavic inhabitants of the inland, and assures Effi that she will have little to do with the latter.

In Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (1990), Judith Butler argued that the self and its gender are realized only as performances. Her antiessentialist critique maintains that the very category of gender is a “regulatory fiction” that serves to enforce compulsory heterosexuality (everyone is either male or female). The appearance of “naturalness” that goes along with heterosexual gender identity is for Butler nothing more than the effect of a repeated imitative performance. Butler’s argument that gender roles are always a performance is particularly compelling because it so effectively describes other such socially constructed norms and categories — ethnicity, sexuality, race, nationalism, or social norms of behavior e.g. the practice of dueling as a way of settling of elite male differences etc. The underlying ideas and their constructedness become visible and obvious especially during periods of conflict and change such as in the period surrounding and following the unification of Germany.

Following Butler, we can think about these categories as multiple, discontinuous, and contingent on circumstances, and historical moments rather than possessing “ontological integrity.” In fact, Butler underscores the inherently political nature of all identity by construing the performance of subjectivity as a constant negotiation of borders — a “constitutive antagonism” between what is “inside” and “outside” recognized socio-symbolic structures. Butler’s notions of performativity and plurality are well illustrated in

Fontane's first novel *Vor dem Sturm* (1878) where he shows that his characters' identities are not inborn but that they are constructed and re-constructed through speech-acts, performance and societal pressures. In other words, Fontane treats the formation of German and Polish national identities as constructed at a particular moment of Prussian history, i.e. against the background of the Napoleonic Wars and as an effect of the French occupation. Thus contrary to the dominant discourse, which conceived of a German nation in essentialized terms as an intact organic community predetermined by blood, language, culture or geography, Fontane represented cultural/national identity formation as a matter of individual choice and in response to pressures and changing circumstances.

I would argue that gender roles are social relations and neither natural nor inevitably circumscribable as male dominance and female subservience is clearly demonstrable in *Effi Briest*. In Imperial Germany (as elsewhere in imperial Europe), the family was advertised as the cornerstone of social and political unity of the new Reich, in which women were supposedly given a special role in the new capitalist order, as upholders of morality and virtue and the transmitters of tradition and nurturers of families. These, of course, were myths that Fontane's *Effi Briest* debunks. By making cross reference to other characters in the novel to provide parallels to Effi Briest's experience and condition as well as to illuminate the theme of marriage, family and gender relations Fontane problematizes the naturalness of the gender division, which both casts women as weaker than men and questions their ubiquitous maternal instinct.

It is noteworthy that in *Effi Briest* heterosexual gender relations are flawed in all social classes and age groups and are symptomatic of a wider process of social development, which also includes tabuisation, fragmentation and autonomization of body

and its sexual and reproductive functions (e.g. family is drastically reduced to one child and celibacy encouraged to consolidate property during the period of economic insecurity and depression). For example, the novel abounds in single (and redundant) men and especially women either unwed or widowed such as e.g. Roswitha, Marietta Trippelli, Johanna, Hulda, Sidonie von Grassenab, Frau Zwicker and Frau Padden. Marriage is negatively coded through incompatibility e.g. the von Briests, the Innstettens, the Crampas, the Cruses, and half a dozen of other marriages mentioned in the text. Some women may be the dominant ones in a couple, i.e. Luise Briest or Frau Niemeyer, or they can become masculinized (i.e. Sidonie von Grassenab), and/or removed from the domesticity that German women found at home (i.e. Marietta Trippelli). As Jeffrey Schneider has shown Geert von Innstetten's existential crisis is an outcome of the growing realization that patriarchal values could ensure neither happiness nor a stable society. Innstetten's nervousness and other signs of hysteria and neurasthenia (Kuhnau 40-43) expose the fragility of expectations and assumptions about roles, identities, and capabilities of men.

Effi's closest relationships, apart from her parents, are with those "others" to the society proper ranging from her childhood friends, older men like Gieshübler, Niemeyer, Rummschüttel, and above all, her maid Roswitha, with whom she has a close relationship despite their differences in religion and social class, but rather come from her individual affinity, circumstances and her independent agency which transgresses family, marriage, class or boundaries of the proper society. *Effi Briest* exposes the underside of the institution of marriage (as a contract) in general and the late nineteenth-century upper-class Prussian marriage in particular and the (mis)use of the body and its sexual,

reproductive and other functions. It demonstrates the need for bondings beyond marriage and family, especially the need for bonding between women, e.g. as between Effi and Roswitha, who apart from the dog Rollo becomes Effi's best friend and remains her constant companion to the very end, despite her changed fortunes. Finally the dog Rollo plays an important role in Effi's life and in the novel itself; he represents an obvious surrogate for the lack of affectional bondings in Effi's surrounding. Effi's sexual relationship with Crampas is an expression of her craving for affection. Furthermore, Effi Briest is willing to challenge the socially prescribed norms and strictures, but she also wants social status. Obviously an awareness of resistance to such social strictures and gendered roles is widely recognized in the novel, even as it is displaced into the domestic and familial. Although the gender roles in *Effi Briest* are clearly subverted the characters lack the agency to escape the normative societal roles mostly because their assigned social roles (East Elbian landed gentry during the economic crisis) go with social privilege and economic security. However women's demands for equal rights found little resonance in *Effi Briest*.

Hence, just as it is valid to analyze the subordination of women in a society ruled by men, it is also necessary to identify how the social construction of gender is made more complex by the intervention of class, race, religion, ideology, ethnicity, nationality and local community. In her seminal *Materialist Feminism and the Politics of Discourse* (1993) Rosemary Hennessy argues for materialist feminism as a positive alternative both to Marxism and feminism. While Marxism was inadequate in accounting for the sexual division of labor because of its class bias and focus on production, feminism was also problematic due to its essentialist and idealist concept of woman (Hennessy, 1993: xii).

Hennessey argues for a global feminist outlook: “despite the postmodern rejection of totalities and theoretical analyses of social systems, materialist feminists need to hold on to the critique of the totalities which affect women’s lives: patriarchy and capitalism. Women’s lives are everywhere affected by world capitalism and patriarchy and it would be politically self-defeating to replace that critique with localized, fragmented political strategies and a perception of social reality as characterized by logic of contingency.”

Furthermore, Rosemary Hennessey and Chrys Ingraham, as editors of the collection *Introduction to Materialist Feminism: A Reader in Class, Difference and Women's Lives* (1997), recognize the irreplaceable importance of historical materialism for feminist theory and politics. In their introduction, entitled “Reclaiming Anticapitalist Feminism,” they critique the dominant feminist concern with culture, identity and difference considered in isolation from any systemic understanding of the social forces that affect women’s lives, and critique an academic feminism that has marginalized and undermined the knowledges produced by the engagement of feminists with Marxism and their contributions to feminist scholarship and to the political mobilization of women. Even more importantly, this introduction is a celebration of Marxist Feminism whose premises and insights have been consistently “misread, distorted, or buried under the weight of a flourishing postmodern cultural politics” (5). They point out that whether called Marxist feminism, socialist feminism or materialist feminism (these are names that signal theoretical differences and emphases) – these perspectives together indicate the recognition of historical materialism as the source of emancipatory knowledge required for the success of the feminist project. The authors draw a clear line between a cultural materialism that characterizes the work of post-Marxist feminists who, having rejected

historical materialism, analyze cultural, ideological and political practices in isolation from their material base in capitalism, and materialist feminism (i.e. Marxist or socialist feminism) which is firmly grounded in historical materialism and links the success of feminist struggles to the success of anticapitalist struggles; “unlike cultural feminists, materialist, socialist and marxist feminists do not see culture as the whole of social life but rather as only one arena of social production and therefore as only one area of feminist struggle” (7). Marxist feminism, on the other hand, does make the connection between the oppression of women and capitalism and this is why the purpose of their book, according to the authors, is “to reinsert into materialist feminism — especially in those overdeveloped sectors where this collection will be most widely read — those (untimely) marxist feminist knowledges that the drift to cultural politics in postmodern feminism has suppressed. It is our hope that in so doing this project will contribute to the emergence of feminisms’ third wave and its revival as a critical force for transformative social change” (9).

While in one sense all women living in the late nineteenth century Germany are victims of patriarchal societies and are subaltern according to today’s standards, some women are more victimized than others. Thus in view of the above, if we wish to understand women’s oppression—past and present—and to engage effectively in the struggle against it, if our task is to elaborate an approach to *Effi Briest* that goes beyond the point of reproducing a restricted ethnocentric outlook then the analysis has to detach itself from this particular focus on and affinity for Fontane’s protagonist Effi Briest. In other words, the focus of most feminist and other studies on Effi Briest as a more or less a “victim of society” is often made at the expense of, in Spivak’s words “subaltern

characters,” that is, the historically muted subjects of the non-elite. Spivak’s point is also about the capacity, or rather, incapacity, of the powerful to listen to and to hear the subaltern.

An attempt at a different approach to female subalternity would be to switch the perspective by focusing on the traumatic life-story of Fontane’s apparently minor but rewarding character Roswitha as a representative of the multiply colonized woman (in terms of patriarchy, sexuality, gender, class, religion, etc.) in order to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the novel’s depiction of “epistemic violence” exercised upon the subjects of empire. A consideration of oppression, cares and aspirations of the lower orders would shed new light on *Effi Briest* by revealing more dimensions of Prussian society and in turn move feminist criticism in new directions.²¹

Fontane’s portrayal of his character Roswitha, a loyal Catholic servant is revealing in the light of the novel’s background of religious conflict. During the *Kulturkampf* when Catholics were denigrated as a “backward” threat to “modern” liberal Protestant nationalism, women, and especially Catholic women, played a major role in challenging received elitist ideas about cultural norms of reason, morality and social ordering. Usually, German Protestant liberals were as much anti-feminist, and anti-Catholic as supporters of racist ideology and eugenics. For instance, the hugely influential physician/politician/anthropologist Rudolf Virchow, referred to as “the Pope of German medicine” and praised for helping lay the foundations of preventive medicine and public health, was also an avowed anti-feminist, who claimed that natural differences between men and

²¹ To my knowledge there are only two articles dealing with Roswitha: by Theo Buck and Teresa Martins de Oliveira.

women were self-evident and therefore women belonged in the domain of the private while men belonged in public. Virchow was also at the forefront of the *Kulturkampf* (in fact, the very term was coined by him), who similarly supplied “racial-scientific” evidence to support the claim that there were racial differences between “Germans” and non-Germans, especially Jews. Poles, who were seen as inferior to Germans, also stood accused of threatening to engulf the Prussian east in a “Slavic flood” and figured among Bismarck’s “enemies of the Reich,” who, together with socialists and Catholics, represented radical elements threatening with revolution. For obvious reasons the initially envisioned Kashubian/ Polish nanny in Fontane’s earlier draft was replaced by Roswitha, as one of “die Katoliken, unsere Brüder, die wir auch wenn wir sie bekämpfen, achten müssen” (111). This substitution may be understood as Fontane’s compliance or compromise with the monological restriction of heteroglossia, one meant to strengthen the nation by eliminating foreign elements. Nevertheless, Fontane’s characterization of the Catholic nanny Roswitha, a subaltern but strong, resistant, open-minded, and outspoken character, whose humanity is superior to all other characters in the novel, would support the suggestion that with her character Fontane intended to critically comment on the *Kulturkampf* and its advocates as well as on the course of German imperial culture.

Hence, just as it is valid to analyze subordination of women in a society ruled by men, so also it is necessary to ground the discussion in a longer and broader history of multiply located oppressions and resistance based on difference and negation by including the experience of men and women of minority ethnic groups or non-German cultures in order to transcend the consternation of certain feminist vision.

Liberal Humanism

Just as commentaries preoccupied with identifying factual equivalences do not engage with the fictiveness of Fontane's realism by accounting for the mediating function of language so do the critics who seek to establish the existence of universal and metaphysical categories remain dissociated from the historically productive ideology which Fontane's fiction implies, undermines or augments. *Effi Briest* is viewed as a chronicle of society in transition by joining domestic issues and social critique of a particular condition with an abstract moral testament. Thus Allan Bance asserts: "[T]he wisdom of old age which speaks in *Effi Briest* and produces a statement about social transition as such, a statement that cannot be made with the same validity about any *historical* period... The contemporary novel is timeless: it can grasp the world as both synchronic and diachronic totality" (76). On the one hand, the approach to *Effi Briest* as a contemporary social novel, which overwhelmingly construes the novel as an insular moral critique of metropolitan society exclusive of imperial relations, fails to properly acknowledge the periphery's historic role in shaping the internal dynamics of metropolitan society. On the other, the conception of the contemporary novel as timeless reflects the contradictory nature of such an approach: of acknowledging that the novel is a product of history, hence, the contemporary social novel without abandoning the essentialist idea of the novel as timeless while seeking to grasp the eternal and universal elements of the human condition.

As Robert Young points out in his discussion of "Colonialism and Humanism," the problem with humanism is its ahistoricism; or its aim of putting humanity beyond history, at the level of the essential (1990: 158-165). In *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous*

Identities, Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein contend that the history of modern racism is not a history of “progress” but rather a history of continual transformation within and among the social structures of each given epoch, such as the particular forms of the nation-state, the social division of labor, and the developments of class struggle in contemporary capitalism.

According to Balibar, racism and universalism are intricately linked. When the Enlightenment project of racial categorization based on genetic or biological variations finally began to lose ground, a new structure of racial differentiation emerged, “a racism whose dominant theme is not biological heredity but the insurmountability of cultural differences.” Nevertheless, this cultural racism is also grounded in the universalism of the European Enlightenment, working to order humanity through the category of “culture” – in a hierarchical order of supremacy and subjugation, with the signifiers of Western whiteness always in the position of predominance. Thus the humanist project, founded upon an ahistorical essence of man that is universally applicable, poses fundamental problems as a response to racism (1989).

Bance’s example, even as an exceptional and no more tenable one, points to the persistent trend in literary criticism towards ethical and metaphysical notions of universal forces such as human nature, one that represses the impact of history and displaces the conflictual political relationship with metaphysical and moral context. Even if morality is understood to be a searching activity rather than mere adherence to a code, it assumes universalism. Since all ethics is predicated upon the violence of exclusion and othering, therefore any reading should acknowledge the historical meanings of notions and conceptions such as “human nature” as contextual, relational and open to change

according to cultural, economic and political differences. This is because nothing is permanent, everything is in flux - despite the periods of apparent stability within which the standard approaches defining identity were formulated. Moreover, since identity apparently cannot be epistemologically secured or stabilized in the face of historical modernity and accelerated cultural change, the question arises as to whether it should be treated in terms of an intrinsic property it possesses but instead always in the context of specific socio-historic dynamics. While it is necessary to question how the universalist idea of humanity is shaped by Eurocentric development of humanist legacy, "it is also crucial to discuss ways in which humanism can be reclaimed from its reactionary variant and re-radicalised for truly inclusive, creative and autonomous ends within progressive collective action" (Lentin).

German literary studies have reconfigured the disciplinary field by addressing the specificities of German culture and by discovering complexity and differences hitherto submerged by totalizing axioms. However few literary studies address Fontane's fiction by taking a cross-cultural approach that examines Fontane's *Effi Briest* in the context of a Central European network of interconnected, overlapping and conflictual multiplicity and diversity of identities and communities or by grounding discussion in a longer and broader history of multiply located oppressions and resistances based on difference and negation by including the experience of men and women of minority ethnic groups or non-German cultures in their discussion.

Critics who point to Fontane's allusive fictional strategies of estrangement or allegories do not question whether the figurative casting of affinities between the metropolitan and colonial condition might act to familiarize imperial practices by looking

at how metropolitan class and gender oppressions and break-downs might be articulated together with colonialism and imperialism and how the tropes of domination inflect each other. The nexus of domestic and colonial oppression is brought together through the reference to *Plantage*, which as a trope is associated with overseas plantation colonialism. Germany was involved with e.g. in Samoa by hiring cheap Chinese labor as well as the subordinated position of the Polish agrarian labor of East Elbian Prussia which also played its role in the perception of the Slavic Europe as colonized area. At a time when Western Europe or some of its parts became the center of a world system the “combined and uneven” economic dictates that required international division of labor in order to gain access to cheap labor and resources also produced the “plantage” economy in Eastern Europe as a part of the whole organized colonial system derived from the core. The introduction of the “second serfdom” was determined by the same forces that brought about slavery in the New World with all it implies politically and socially. The heritage of servitude in East Central and Eastern Europe has influenced popular and elite attitudes about Eastern Europe down to the present.

It might be argued that the metropolitan cultural tradition, even if it derives from the avowedly progressive political premises of an either humanist liberal, Marxist or feminist stamp, and produced by scholars who despite their claim to adherence to a common human nature remain limited in their assumptions of culture and values, a consequence of their ethnocentric universal assumptions. Most importantly, they persistently focus their attention on various metropolitan aspects of oppressions in the context of *Effi Briest*, by neglecting to fully capture the complexity of the asymmetric power relations of capitalist modernity in all its ramifications in an integrated gender, class and colonial critique. By

showing themselves persistently inattentive to the subjectivity of the subordinate and/or (internally) colonized, but nonetheless resistant political subjects, Western left-liberal scholarship has also unwittingly reproduced interpretations of *Effi Briest*, based on the cognitive aesthetics grounded in the metropolitan tradition, which tends to marginalize the non-metropolitan experience as unauthentic or irrelevant or frequently deploys the strategy of otherness, which Edward Said called “Orientalism,” reinforcing traditional Western preconceptions about the European East and its societies.

CHAPTER II

DECOLONIZATION OF IMAGINATION: THINKING ABOUT SPACE THROUGH HETEROTOPIA

We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein.

Michel Foucault, “Des Espaces Autres,” 1967.

Historians are to nationalists what poppy-growers in Pakistan are to heroin addicts: we supply the essential raw material for the market.

Eric Hobsbawm, *Anthropology Today*, 1992.

In 1979 Richard Löwenthal, Jewish German journalist, publicist, and influential post-war FRG scholar noted “a very special lack of chronological continuity, geographic unity and spiritual form and coherence” of Germany (*Gesellschaftswandel* 240 - 242). In 1981, James Sheehan, an American specialist in German history, similarly insisted on the need to acknowledge the fragmentation, discontinuity, divisiveness and regional diversity of German historical experience and criticized post-World War II German historians for their tendency to view Germany’s history through a Prussian lens and to conflate the German Empire with Prussia. Thus he observed: “It is remarkable that France, Europe’s most centralized nation, has been dissolved by its historians into regions, while Germany, Europe’s most fragmented polity, is treated as if it were a cohesive entity.” If Germany did not exist as a coherent entity either in terms of language, politics, or physical boundaries in the eighteenth century, Sheehan points out, the notion of a single German culture is not sensible. It is an abstraction, whether it is supposed to apply to the whole of the German-speaking territories or to those later incorporated into the Bismarckian state. Furthermore, while one can speak of German state-builders and their supporters, a narrative which omits opponents and those indifferent to German nationalism, not to

mention the millions with ties to German social, cultural, economic and political life who were excluded from the Bismarckian state, does violence to the facts. (21).

Such observations serve as an apt reminder of the impact German/ Prussian nineteenth century historiography has made on prevalent attitudes and common misconceptions of Germany as a whole with Prussian Germans as crucial factors in giving the area that was once Imperial Germany its meaning and coherence. Sheehan's verdict, however, has to be revised in view of a burgeoning new interest in the area's cultural history and a growing number of new historic approaches which stress diversity and heterogeneity and a common heritage of Germans and Poles in Prussia by connecting intertwined and overlapping territories and societies thereby increasingly undermining a unified and /or Germano/Prusso-centric view of German history (Aust/Fischer; Engel; Blackbourn; Retalleck; Piskorski; Friedrich; Bartlett and Schönwälder).

Nevertheless, mainstream Fontane scholarship has barely taken notice of these innovative approaches and still continues to sustain a largely monolithic vision of Prussia/ Germany, which overlooks the fact that Germans and Poles share a common heritage in Prussia. These older largely Germano-centric historiographic traditions still seem to exert a strong influence on Fontane scholarship and they have in turn impacted the framework within which the content, context and time/space in Fontane's *Effi Briest* is critically approached and analyzed in terms of identifying Prussia with Germany and hardly even mentioning Prussia's close relations with Eastern Europe and especially Poland. Since Fontane scholarship creates not only the knowledge about Fontane's texts but also about the very reality his texts deal with, our practice as literary and cultural critics needs to resist such pitfalls of homogenized constructions of Prussia/Germany.

The dynamics, complexities and multifariousness of the historic realities of East Central Europe (where Prussia also belongs) defy any easy categorization and the paradigms so far applied have failed to do credit to differences as regional diversity and to properly represent the spatial continuity, openness and fluidity of these transitional frontiers between East and West, where boundaries fluctuated widely according to time, political conjuncture and national and religious loyalties, challenging efforts to stabilize identities. A proper historic cross-cultural reading of *Effi Briest* requires a methodological shift: different tools, different strategies, different knowledge and most of all different sense of time and space.

In contradiction to a totalizing, homogenizing developmental discourse that habitually pits a dynamic, creative Western civilization against a static, fast-frozen image of European East, I argue that spaces are heterogeneous, contradictory and unstable, subject to contingency between economic power and cultural power, both of which thoroughly imbricated in a system of time and space. My contention is that Fontane's *Effi Briest* requires attention to the representation of a regionally diverse, culturally contradictory and vocally polyphonic Prussia. This heterogeneity, however, cannot be reduced to a center-periphery dichotomy, as it is commonly done, because it occludes the ways in which German nation building was intertwined with and dependent on Poland (and a number of other minorities) within and without the boundaries of the nascent German imperial-nation state and how metropolitan Germany became the constitutive focus and center of political, economical, cultural domination over places outside of the German core. Etienne Balibar's decentered notion of borderland Europe differs from the

conventional center-periphery paradigm in that there is no “center,” there are only “peripheries”:

I suggested in the past that (particularly in Mitteleuropa but more generally in all Europe), without even considering the question of “minorities,” we are dealing with “triple points” or mobile “overlapping zones” of contradictory civilizations rather than with juxtapositions of monolithic entities. In all its points, Europe is multiple; it is always home to tensions between numerous religious, cultural, linguistic, and political affiliations, numerous readings of history, numerous modes of relations with the rest of the world, whether it is Americanism or Orientalism, the possessive individualism of “Nordic” legal systems or the “tribalism” of Mediterranean familial traditions (Balibar 5)

In order to challenge the familiar one-way modernizing trajectory from the center to periphery and bearing in mind Balibar’s suggestion, in this chapter I propose to explore Fontane’s *Effi Briest* through the lens of Foucault’s concept of heterotopia as one possible model of approaching the novelistic space which, by emphasizing instability, multiplicity and contradictions, simultaneously juxtaposed and dispersed, can be productive in dismantling previously homogenizing methods of analyses and ideological effects of such traditional interpretational impositions that lie at the very heart of European universalism and progress.

Michel Foucault’s text, entitled “Des Espaces Autres,” first published by the French journal *Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité* in October, 1984, was the basis of a lecture on heterotopia he had given in March 1967 to architecture students and it was later released into the public for an exhibition in Berlin shortly before Foucault’s death. Foucault starts his lecture by observing the defining difference between the nineteenth century’s obsession with history and the twentieth century as above all “the epoch of space” which he described as the epoch of simultaneity juxtaposed, “the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed in a network that connects points and

intersects with its own skein” (22). Foucault’s contestation of the traditional notion of linear time and his observation that “certain conflicts animating present-day polemics that oppose the pious descendents of time and the determined inhabitants of space” is at the core of my reading of Fontane’s *Effi Briest*.

Foucault’s notion of heterotopia, I suggest, is a good starting point that can help us begin also to account for the entangled and changing relations of power and ethnic hierarchy, identity construction and reconstruction, and the workings of Eurocentric epistemologies. The conflation of space with nation as a recurrent point of reference in most analyses of *Effi Briest* has often effaced this heterotopic character by equating Prussia with Germany and “Germanness” and by contrasting German urban and modernizing activities with the static provincialism of the eastern periphery mapped in the image of the agrarian and backward Polishness. In what follows I will draw on Foucault’s notion of heterotopias as referring to varied spatial and temporal disruptions that imaginatively interrogate and undermine certain formulations of time and space by demonstrating that spaces are no less mental constructs than nations. The idea of heterotopia understands space(s) over a period of time and also opens up spaces like nations to multiplex uses, which help to uncouple the supposedly natural growth of space and *Volk* and also disrupt binary oppositions, which pit a modernizing center against a backward periphery.

On July 27, 1890 Fontane announced his intended novel to the Stuttgart publisher, Adolf Kröner, owner and editor of *Die Gartenlaube*, the publication which serialized many of Fontane's novels but which under Kröner’s tenure became an increasingly conservative influence in shaping reading habits of the public:

Zugleich frage ich an, ob ich Ihnen im Winter oder um nächsten Ostern einen neuen Roman schicken darf? Es spielt im ersten Drittel auf einem havelländischen

adligen Gut, im zweiten Drittel in einem kleinen pommerschen Badeort in der Nähe von Varzin und im letzten Drittel in Berlin. Titel: Effi Briest. Es handelt sich, ganz im Gegensatz zu „Quit“ und „Unterm Birnbaum“ nur um Liebe, also stofflich eine Art Ideal. Ob auch sonst? (*Werke* 4: 55)²²

As usual when writing to famous, respected or important persons such as publishers, Fontane's tone is characteristically modest and deceptive. While Fontane's proposal was not exactly exciting it complied with the mass market tried-and-tested formulae as well as the requirements demanded of writers by conservative editors such as Kröner, who would tolerate neither political nor religious topics, neither divorces nor suicides. Normally the writer had to meet expectations of depicting a protagonist that represents what society holds to be proper. The guarantee of success is part of the function of entertainment.

Surely there must be more to this claim that the novel is only about an everyday love story than initially meets the eye. For one, it is an obvious contradiction to Fontane's preference for social themes over love stories, as he explained in another letter to Friedrich Stephany on July 2, 1894, when:

Liebesgeschichten, in ihrer schauderösen Ähnlichkeit, haben was Langweiliges –, aber der Gesellschaftszustand, das Sittenbildliche, *das* versteckt und gefährlich Politische, das diese Dinge haben . . . *das* ist es, was mich so sehr daran interessiert. Und dabei, bei naiven Leuten, immer noch die Vorstellung: so was kommt bei uns nicht vor! (*Werke* 4: 370).

Fontane achieves this goal of engaging with and questioning the practices of Imperial Germany of his time through his productive fictional strategies. By setting his intended novel in three different locations: the Old March of Brandenburg, Hinterpommern (East Pomerania of the New March)²³ and the imperial capital, Berlin,

²² In 1894 *Effi Briest* was serialized in the *Deutsche Rundschau*.

²³ The North German Confederation was established in 1867, a confederation dominated by Prussia. The Prussian provinces of Posen, West Prussia and East Prussia were not part

Fontane announced his intention to tell his story from the different perspectives these multiple locations (the local, the peripheral, and the central, respectively) entail. In other words, Fontane intended to give a cross section of contemporary Prussia, the largest and most powerful part of the new German Empire. By spreading his story over diverse geographic and national/ethnic landscapes and superimposed places, and by constantly questioning relations between these different locations, Fontane was engaging a strategy of composite map-making: rather than a unified textual space, he created a composite, heterogeneous spaces resistant to any homogenization. In so doing Fontane provided a counter-model to the monolithic mapping of Prussia. Fontane's fictional strategies in *Effi Briest* thus come to resemble what Michel Foucault calls *heterotopia(s)* – which can help understand relations between power, knowledge and space as Fontane envisioned them in the novel.

In 1967 Michel Foucault introduced the idea of heterotopias as lived and socially produced spaces thus: “We do not live inside a void . . . we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites, which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another” (“Other Spaces” 22). Among all sites Foucault is interested in particular ones “that have a curious property of being in relation with all other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or invert” (“Other Spaces” 24). These two unique sites are utopias and heterotopias. While utopia is fundamentally unreal, heterotopia, by contrast, is a real space but simultaneously mythic and real (“Other Spaces” 24). Poland can be taken for such an example. At least since the Enlightenment Prussian discourse

of the German Federation, West Prussia and Posen having a Polish population majority.

had claimed that Polish culture was never able to separate reality from myth. Seen through the Prussian lens, Poland was different, extreme, and backward and it did not even exist. However the case of Germany is also interesting in view of its contradictions; the processes of rapid modernization and homogenization competed with regional loyalties to separate principalities across an extremely heterogeneous and confusing geographic, ethnic and linguistic space with no clear boundaries in the east.

The lifestyle of a long-time journalist afforded Fontane the opportunity to witness the range of different communities within Prussia and the German Empire. Fontane's novels are considered as a valuable source of historic information about late nineteenth century Prussia because they exemplify a supposedly realistic or "truthful" representation of Prussia's reality at the time, even though Fontane himself had mocked his readers who enthusiastically praised the photographic and historic accuracy of his detailed descriptions. In one letter Fontane commented that all the details in *Schach von Wuthenow*, "everything down to the last straw," was his own invention. Elsewhere he listed with irony all the inaccurate details contained in his novels set in Berlin, but he also added that, nevertheless, they were essentially realistic (qtd. in Lukács, *German Realists* 302; Doebling ix-x).

Against this background, I suggest that the three broad locations, in which Fontane's *Effi Briest* unfolds, namely, Hohen-Cremmen in Havelland, Kessin in *Hinterpommern* and Berlin, might also be taken for such imaginary and yet real places. Furthermore, they are socially constructed spaces, which do not stand alone but are simultaneously coexistent and inextricably linked, even though they can be incompatible.

“Heterotopias” provide a useful tool for considering the relationships within and between these spaces in *Effi Briest*. Thus for instance in Foucauldian terms Havelland/Hohen-Cremmen, Berlin and *Hinterpommern* (Eastern Pomerania)/Kessin in *Effi Briest* not only suspect, invert and mirror each other and bring together different incompatible sites, but they also bring together different times as well as sites. On the one hand, Berlin had undergone dramatic changes especially in the last fifty years of Fontane’s life, which he observed and reflected upon in his late novels. On the other, as a historically minded author, Fontane was aware that the capital of the new German empire, increasingly becoming one of the premier centers of power in the world, originally sprung from a little medieval Slavic village. By the late nineteenth century there remained few visible remnants of this “prehistory” but its ghostly presence was still felt. As a historian of Mark Brandenburg, Fontane wrote about this Slavic “historical a priori” in Foucault’s sense by invoking a long history of struggle, colonization, cooperation, intermingling and overlapping between Germans and Wends/Slavs. Everywhere in Prussia there were visible remnants of the Slavic past both in form of ruins as well as proverbs and names of many Prussian toponyms and family names which together indicate not only the superimposition of the German over the submerged Slavic layers, but also patterns of a complex demographic mix, resistance and cultural hybridization. Finally, fictional Kessin is situated in the real province of *Hinterpommern* of the Baltic region, a transitional but also highly contested site since the Middle Ages where Teutonic Knights and Slavs, Germans and Poles, Prussia and Poland encountered and contested each other.

According to Foucault all cultures are heterotopias and he illustrates this through six principles to explain the concept’s application in reality. 1) The first principle involves

two main categories of heterotopias: the heterotopia of crisis and deviation, respectively. The first refers to sacred and forbidden places, including the site of the bride's "deflowering" on the honeymoon trip. The second refers to places where people are confined when they do not conform to social norms, including rest homes, psychiatric hospitals, and prisons; 2) heterotopias can change function within a single society; 3) they may take the form of contradictory sites or combine several spaces which actually can never be together, such as the representation of a "sacred garden" as a microcosm of the world or theatrical performance bringing onto the stage, one after the other, a whole series of places that are alien or unfamiliar to one another; 4) they are linked with a break in traditional time, identifying spaces that represent either a quasi-eternity, like museums and libraries, or are temporal, like fairgrounds; 5) heterotopias are not freely accessible, they are entered either by compulsory means or their entry is based on ritual or purification; 6) the final principle concerns singular spaces within some given social spaces whose functions are different or even the opposite of others. To Foucault some seventeenth-century puritan societies in America are the most extreme example of other spaces, a realized utopia, a very strict planned settlement that combines strict Christianity and ordered communal life.

In what follows I will explore the relevance of Foucault's principles for the reality Fontane constructed in *Effi Briest*. Foucault's first principle involves two main categories of heterotopias: the heterotopia of crisis and deviation. According to Foucault the heterotopia of crisis refers to sacred and forbidden places, reserved for individuals in crisis including the site like a hotel room where the bride's "deflowering" on the honeymoon trip takes place out of sight, as happens to be also the case of the eponymous

protagonist of *Effi Briest*. Furthermore, the crisis intensifies as she moves away from the *heimlich*/familiar parental home in the *Heimat* to the unfamiliar/ *unheimlich* and alien Kessin. It is a brutally drastic change of situation for the protagonist who suddenly finds herself isolated and frustrated by a sense of confinement and enforced passivity and fearful of her new surroundings. This leaves someone like Effi feeling confined yet vulnerable, not fully part of the real world yet subject to its demands and intrusions. Effi's feelings of being imprisoned: "Es brach wieder über sie herein, und sie fühlte, daß sie wie eine Gefangene sei und nicht mehr heraus könne" (169)²⁴ invoke what Foucault's "crisis heterotopia," that is, privileged, sacred or forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis: adolescents, menstruating women, pregnant women, etc. ("Other Spaces" 24). Similarly, the parental house also serves as a crisis heterotopia (functioning something like a present-day hospice) to which terminally ill Effi is admitted and confined at the end of her life.

Furthermore, Fontane makes the subtle intertextual link between Effi's married life in Kessin circumscribed by conventions reminiscent of life imagined to be the condition of Oriental women, caged behind the bars of a harem. A Kessin gingerbread-baker Michelsen who objected to the stationing of Hussars in Kessin on moral grounds, pointed out that should they be coming anyone with a daughter would have to put bars on their windows (167). Effi's punishment for adultery at the hands of her husband and parents in the late nineteenth-century Prussia/Germany is likened to the Muslim culture and

²⁴ It was all descending on her again, and she felt like a prisoner, as if she would never escape.

especially the cruel practice of drowning adulterous women in Constantinople under Ottoman Empire.

Foucault also suggests that in the modern world crisis heterotopias are being replaced by “heterotopias of deviation,” as places for individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to required norms, such as prisons, resting homes, psychiatric hospitals (25). There are plenty of such heterotopias in the novel in relation to Effi’s secretive and illicit affair ranging from Effi’s and Crampas’ secluded meeting place in the dunes, which is also a discrete site of the fatal duel, the dilapidated house between the churchyard and the corner of the woods where she and Crampas exchange letters, through Effi’s private space harboring incriminating love letters (in the locked drawer of her writing desk), to her secluded humble apartment in Berlin, and to the walled in garden of the family estate in Hohen-Cremmen.

The prime heterotopia of deviation in the novel is Effi’s humble Berlin apartment tucked away from view on the fourth floor of a building on Königgrätzer Street overlooking the railway tracks, to which she is exiled as a castaway adulteress and divorcee (as one with a social disease viewed as polluting, needing to be excluded from public life and polite society) which serves the same purpose as institutions for people excluded from mainstream society. In this deviant heterotopia, which Effi shares with her maid Roswitha, other social norms are breached and cultural and class barriers lifted as the lady and the servant share a “Wiener Schnitzel” together which Roswitha brings from a restaurant bearing the subversive name “Habsburger Hof,” thus another “deviant place.” Still more barriers go down as Effi plays Chopin (rather than Wagner, as she used to do to please Innstetten) perhaps in anticipation of her own early death. The parallels

between Effi, the outcast of the Prussian high society, and the exiled Polish revolutionary composer who died young of tuberculosis, also come to mind.

The second principle is that heterotopias can change function within a single society. Nineteenth-century Prussia is an apt example because of the swift and violent social and economic changes and dislocations of territories, languages, lifestyles through the French occupation, wars, and subsequent unification. The pace of these changes and “modernization” had increased drastically since the second half of the century, further impacting the institutional, political and societal changes of Prussian society. For instance, following the third Partition of Poland in 1795, Prussia consisted of vast Slavic territories and was in effect a state consisting of two nations, Germans and Poles. However, after the creation of the German-nation state, Poles became not only second-class citizens but were also represented as backward others to the Prussian Protestant ideal of modernity and resented as enemies of the Empire. After the 1871 proclamation of German nation-state, Poles, of whom three million (or every tenth citizen) lived in Prussia by 1890, refused to be Germans and especially from 1880s and 1890s onwards, Polish issues became central for imperial politics due to denial of the Polish state and identity and Poles’ persecution.

Following unification into the imperial nation state, the processes of new German Protestant national identity making led to the contradictory imagining and (re)invention of tradition and (both recent and distant) history through education, monuments, museums, exhibitions, celebrations, commemorations, images and other artifacts. Feelings of belonging to the new nation state exclusively for the German nation were forged by promoting German-Protestant ideals in opposition to non-Protestants and non-

Germans. New German national consciousness was forged largely from above and had to compete with local and regional identities and therefore had been forced upon many indifferent or resistant citizens by means of invented common Germanic mythology through cultural symbols, official rituals, celebration of new holidays, such as annual Sedan Day festivities commemorating the defeat of France, to celebrate the ties that bound them together as Germans, and bestowing honors on the veterans of the recent wars of unification. Not only were entirely new symbols, like flags, anthems and coats of arms, created but also historic continuity and national identity had to be invented, e.g. by creating an ancient past beyond effective historical continuity either through fiction, forgery and/or distortion. These ponderous distortions as constructs or “invented tradition,” which make up a lot of historical narrative as well as in historical fiction that glorified German valor and heroism but seldom made these claims upon the facts were target of Fontane’s criticism.

Of course identities change over time and acquire new meaning as circumstances change. People’s allegiance to flag, uniform, political parties and other state symbols and institutions had changed more than once in Fontane’s lifetime and these facts found expression in his fiction. Thus *Effi Briest* abundantly demonstrates confused, contested and denied identities. For instance, Effi’s middle-class friends are confused at hearing the name of the Briests’ distinguished guest, Baron von Innstetten, since it does not sound familiar to them and they even burst out laughing at what they find a funny-sounding name. Effi is piqued by the lack of respect they show to persons with old names, titles and positions. They apologize by explaining: “So heißt hier kein Mensch. Freilich, die adeligen Namen haben oft so was Komisches” To which Effi replies: “Ja meine Liebe,

das haben sie. Dafür sind sie es eben Adelige. Die dürfen sich das gönnen, und je weiter zurück, ich meine der Zeit nach, desto mehr dürfen sie sich gönnen (11-12).²⁵ Effi's friends have also never heard the name Kessin so they ask: "Was ist Kessin? Ich kenne hier kein Kessin" (13).²⁶

Hybrid-hyphenated characters bear the traces of competing discourses of national identity (Polish, Prussian, German, Kashubian, Spanish, Swabian etc.) Polish and German identities are contested and even on the course of collision: Innstetten refuses to acknowledge Kashubs and refers to them dismissively as "so-called." He treats Polish identity with suspicion and disregard. Poles, Socialists and Catholics are considered suspects and enemies of the state by ultra-conservative Junkers.

In fact *Effi Briest* also demonstrates that contrary to what German national mobilizers were wishing, Germans were slow in realizing that they shared the same culture, identity or even language. With the political unification of 1871, little such national unity had been achieved in common identity since localism and regionalism remained powerful forces, as can be demonstrated from the fact that Cantor Jahnke's allegiance lies not so much with the new German nation, but is rather restricted to the heritage of the independent north German "Hansa" cities on the Baltic shore, established by the Teutonic order in the Middle Ages and ruled by the self-assured, traditionally anti-aristocratic merchant classes, he also admires purely Germanic Scandinavia and the

²⁵ "Nobody around here is called anything like that. These old aristocratic names can be so funny." Yes, indeed my dear but that's aristocracy. They don't have to care, and the further back they go the less they have to care."

²⁶ "What is Kessin? I don't know any Kessin near here."

regional cultural tradition and dialect of the rural Mecklenburg.²⁷ Cantor Jahnke for instance is a fan of Mecklenburg writer Fritz Reuter, who depicted rural life in the “Platt” German dialect of his native Mecklenburg (and even named his twins Hertha and Bertha, characteristically Teutonic names, to honor his favorite writer’s twin characters Mining and Lining, from his major novel, *Ut min Stromtid*, 1862-4).²⁸ Fontane’s characters from the socially inferior segments of the educated bourgeoisie: teachers, and clergy like the Pastor Niemeyer and Cantor Jahnke, are inclined towards *völkisch* ideology.

Further east in Hinterpommern, ultra conservative Junkers demonstrate Prussian rather than German patriotism and chauvinism. For instance, in chapter fourteen the ultra conservative old Junker Güldenklees toast at the occasion of christening of Annie, the Innstettens’ daughter, demonstrates ultraconservative nationalism which does not extend to the whole of the unified Germany, but only includes Prussia: “solange wir noch Männer haben wie Baron Innstetten, den ich stolz bin, meinen Freund nennen zu dürfen, so lange geht es noch, so lange hält unser altes Preußen noch. Ja meine Freunde, Pommern und Brandenburg, damit zwingen wir’s und zertreten dem Drachen der Revolution das giftige Haupt . . . (116-17)”²⁹ As far as can be judged from the novel, the

²⁷ While Meklenburg became definitely German in character, the dynasty of Meklenburg, founded by the Wendish/Obodrit duke Niklot, continued to rule over the country, down to the end of World War I.

²⁸ Jahnke’s literary taste should not have come altogether as a surprise to Fontane who often comments on the imbalance between literary achievement, and especially the new literary trend of rural themes and regional writing among the ranks of the middle classes. While Fontane initially criticized the novel’s provincialism, he also characteristically took back his former opinion and ranked it among the highest literary achievements in 1889.

²⁹ “As long as we still have men like Baron Innstetten, whom I am proud to call my friend, then things will go on, and this old Prussia of ours will survive. Yes my friends,

main links of solidarity continued to be two: regional and religious. People continued to identify themselves with their village, their city or their province much more than they did with the nation-state.

The splendid metropolitan culture, ponderous public buildings, institutions of education and luxurious resorts and rapidly developing infrastructure were never intended for the benefit of the indigenous subject population or common people. One has to think of the lack of infrastructure in Eastern Pomerania and remember that the horse-pulled coach was the main transportation for many while Kashubians continued to live obscurely and in isolation from both the Kessiner burgers and the Junkers in the countryside. The celebration of victorious battles over vanquished neighbors and veneration of history was offensive to many minorities within the new German state who were excluded from the nation.

The third principle is that within any single heterotopia several spaces may be juxtaposed in a real single place – sites that are in themselves incompatible. A garden is the prime example of a contradictory site given by Foucault, particularly some Oriental gardens that he sees as having many superimposed meanings. The seemingly secure *Heimat* symbolized by the garden of the parental estate at Hohen-Cremmen can be seen as such a contradictory heterotopia with a specter of different meanings and uses. Initially, Effi Briest is referred to as a child of nature (*Naturkind*). She is shown to be a healthy, happy, innocent and open-air being, upstanding and thriving in her own environment, like the flowers in her garden. Thus some commentators refer to Hohen-

Pomerania and Brandenburg together we'll see it through and stamp on the venomous head of the dragon revolution.”

Cremmen garden as the “garden of Eden” (Schuster; Mandelartz), from which Effi is barred after the divorce. The garden in Hohen-Cremmen is a combination of a garden and park, a place of (re)creation of plant life, Effi’s playground, a place of innocence, a place of Effi’s secure and restricted freedom and happiness, a safe-haven, but also a confinement, a hospice, and, a place of final rest, a cemetery (as a place which is literally used to house Effi’s dead body).

Heimat represents a similarly contradictory heterotopia. Effi is suddenly sent away from home to marry and depend on an utter stranger. When she ultimately returns home from a long exile, after rounding up her experience, it is a return to the apparent seclusion of her childhood and the safe-haven of the basic and apparently unquestionable womb-like innocence. But she only returns home in disgrace after being rejected by the larger world and with a broken spirit and body. Furthermore, she is only allowed to return to die at home. Thus the illusory character of home of which the *Heimat* is the quintessential embodiment lies in the fact that life cannot return into the pseudo-innocence of childhood. Berlin too is an obviously contradictory heterotopia in the novel since one can talk of at least three distinct Berlins, Berlin as a spectacle seen through Effi’s eyes in the pre-marriage period, (here also Walter Benjamin comes to mind), the Berlin of court and high-society insiders Effi experiences during her married life, and the Berlin of the outcast and disillusioned Effi exiled to anonymous and lonely life in the humble and nondescript outskirts of Berlin following her divorce.

Finally theatrical performance can bring onto the stage, one after the other, a whole series of places (and times) that are alien or unfamiliar to one another. Amateur theater is a prominent feature in *Effi Briest* staged once as a tragedy and once as a comedy. Kleist’s

Das Kästchen von Heilbronn is staged in Hohen-Cremmen on the occasion of Effi's engagement, which brings both different places and times together, in addition to the fact that Kleist wrote the play with the Viennese audience in mind. A popular contemporary comedy *Ein Schritt vom Wege* (1871) by Ernst Wichert in which Effi appeared in the role of heroine was directed by Crampas and staged in Kessin.

The fourth principle is related to time. Heterotopias are linked with a break in traditional time, identifying spaces that represent either a quasi-eternity, like museums, or are temporal, like fairgrounds and exhibitions; either as "slices in time," "accumulation of time," or "transitory." Museums have been created with the aim to connect the past with the present and to project the future. This is easy enough to point out in Imperial Germany, where national commitment after 1871 found its expression in the popularization of museums of national history and tradition. The museum is also an example of the use of history to manipulate people as it educates them in the basic ideological commitments of a specific society. Hence its power to command allegiance to the uniqueness of "national" history. Museums and art galleries feature prominently during Effi Briest's honey moon as she writes in her cards, which invariably start with the report of a visit to an art gallery from the Pinakhotek in Munich to art galleries in Italian cities.

Innstetten's house in Kessin and his collecting habits can be understood in Theodor Adorno's characterization: when art objects are collected and placed in a museum, they are withdrawn from the world, torn from their context of origin, and recontextualized in such a way as to participate in strategies of hegemonic power (1990: 173-85). Effi is scared of signs and articles of death, such as killed and stuffed animals, or the Chinaman

which come to new life in the person of Innstetten as their new collector as he doubles not only as curator but also as interior decorator and metteur-en-scène. The fact that he refuses either to remove such paraphernalia from the house or move out to escape the ghost at Effi's pleading would suggest his intention to use them as scare tactics.

As an example of temporary time one can think of exhibitions which celebrated achievements in commerce and art of particular nations, and especially World Expositions (Weltausstellung). Ironically, the Viennese Exhibition from May 1, to October 31, 1873, was the first in the German-speaking countries highlighting their economic power and political influence opened with pomp and in opulence by Kaiser Franz Joseph, in the presence of royal dignitaries coincided with the Stock-market crash, only nine days after the opening, not only ended the *Gründerzeit* period but also initiated the World Economic Crisis, the Great Depression. It demonstrated clearly for all to see the discrepancy between the ostentatious parading of the privileged classes and social reality - the indebtedness and social misery of the lower classes.

Otherwise, *Effi Briest* is distinct in its representation of subjective time. Time can be "seen" represented by Fontane as "dragging" for Effi in Kessin and can be identified as a "quasi-eternity." Her six-week visit home after having a baby is represented as transitory and appears brief. Fontane only gives a brief summary of Effi's married life in Berlin and in fact five-or six years of Effi's married life in Berlin are accounted for in a sentence either because they are experienced as a "slice of time" or "transitory" time by Effi or because Fontane finds them too uninteresting to be worth depicting.

The fifth principle deals with "heterotopias of ritual or purification" as spaces that are isolated and penetrable yet not freely accessible like a public place. As Foucault

writes: “Either the entry is compulsory, as in the case of entering a barracks or a prison, or else the individual has to submit to rites and purifications. To get in one must have a certain permission and make certain gestures (26).” And he gives examples of heterotopias dedicated to a kind of consecration/ purification, Scandinavian sauna or a Muslim hammam. An approximate equivalent of a heterotopia of purification in the novel is Effi’s stay in Bad Elm. This is also how exclusive aristocratic society and especially its higher military ranks operate both towards outsiders but also towards their insiders. To be a member of this highly hierarchical social structure, one must adopt the codes of ethics of the Prussian hegemonic landowning military class, including the duel prevalent as “the ethics of honor” among high military circles and their ultimate arbiter of disagreement. Non-Germanic descent by definition excludes anyone from the membership in the trusted circle of the Prussian Officer Corps. In order to gain access to the society proper or the Court Effi must learn the rules of acceptable behavior or court etiquette. After she had been ostracized by society Effi must again make a lot of “certain gestures” in order to obtain permission for a visit from her daughter, whom she has not seen in three years and who is at that point aged ten. She also has to suffer the consequences for her actions to the point of becoming seriously ill and broken-hearted, at which point she, or, rather, Dr. Rummschüttel on her behalf, must perform “certain gestures” so that she can be readmitted to the fold by her parents and permitted to return home to die.

Finally, heterotopias also “have the function in relation to all the places that remain” (“Other Spaces” 27). This function unfolds between two extreme poles:

Either their role is to create a space of illusion that exposes every real space . . . as still more illusory . . . Or else, on the contrary, their role is to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill-constructed, and jumbled. The latter type would be the heterotopias, not

illusions, but of compensation, and I wonder if certain colonies have not functioned somewhere in this manner. (“Other Spaces” 27)

Effi Briest’s relation to her *Heimat* is a case in point for just such a consciousness of one place in relation to all other places. For Fontane’s protagonist the village of Hohen-Cremmen in Havelland, the seat of the Briest family, represents the only place with the possibility of secure human relationships and harmony with nature. Effi is also attracted to everything distant, exotic and unfamiliar. But despite the usual tension between the longing for distant places and homesickness, Effi’s feelings towards the *Heimat* remain strong throughout her short life much like Cantor Jahnke prefers above all else the North German Hansa cities on the Baltic coast, purely Germanic Scandinavia and the rural, regional cultural tradition of Mecklenburg.

Foucault’s illustration of two extreme poles in relation of heterotopias to all the remaining space is suggestive of the East-Elbian Prussian Junker’s self-image. Here Foucault meant Puritan moral agency in creating their settlements in North America, by referring mockingly or with a keen sense of irony (and perhaps with Max Weber’s ideal type in mind) to them as the settlements in which “human perfection was effectively achieved” (“Other Spaces” 27). Foucault’s paradigm of the Puritans of America or the “Wild West” may be easily transposed to the European “Wild East” and the mystique and exclusiveness of Prussian German societies sustained by the same moral agency to carry a civilizing mission in the east of Europe. Drawing from the Teutonic Order’s crusading ideology, the proclaimed “Germanization of space” of Fontane’s own time, the notion of colonization of the “Wild East” was the constitutive aspect of the Prussian German self-image as people with a highly religious, methodical and disciplined conduct of everyday life and thus with a self-imposed mission as a duty to colonize the East and civilize others

in their own image. The classical image of German pioneers as settlers on the European eastern frontiers, crusading Indian-like Slavs and Balts, reverberates in the early Puritan American mythological role as a bulwark of civilization in their relentless push of the frontiers of the “Wild West.” The Polish/Eastern European wilderness and messiness is constructed as an antithesis to German-Prussian cultivation/civilization. Both instances cast a skeptical light on the “high and holy mission” that spurred the western modernizing project of the “civilized” nations to control or take the land from “barbarians.”

In *Effi Briest* the eastern regions of Prussia may also be seen to function as a heterotopia of consolation and contestation providing conditions in which the Prussian aristocratic-military caste can live up to their image of themselves, while the rest of an increasingly industrializing and urbanizing Germany does not provide such opportunities. In face of the drastic socio-economic changes in Germany brought by capitalist modernity, they stick together and hold to their pre-industrial ways and feudal values, which they project back to their origin from the Teutonic Knights. However, contestation is provided by other critical voices, both within and without, notably, by the Poles’ manifest refusal to play the assigned role of the presumably doomed “savage Indians” of the far Western narrative, which has generated both suppression of and identification with the Polish national narrative in which the history of the Teutonic Order has a negative tradition among their neighbors who deplored the arrogance and aggression that threatened their security and peace. There are also the ascending middle-classes with their anti-aristocratic code of conduct, such as the international mix of inhabitants of the Baltic towns like Kessin, who condemn Innstetten’s dueling act as murderous and refuse to host military barracks in their midst.

Historically, Prussia was located much more within an east-central European context – much closer to Poland and Russia than to Western Europe. It constituted Western Europe’s eastern frontier and was ambiguously positioned between a “civilized” West and a “barbaric” East, or what since the Enlightenment was called “savage Europe.” Like Transylvanian *Siebenburgen* in the easternmost corners of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Baltic *Hansa* fortified cities were founded by the Teutonic Order (after they had been expelled from Transylvania) and Germanic immigrants, and remained the islands of “German” culture in the sea of alien peoples. These rugged marches and their frontier societies were the result of centuries of continuous warfare, during which borderlines were never firmly established and attracted bolder free-spirits who made their living as warriors, whose lives were guarded by frontier institutions and rough codes of behavior, military cult and chivalry, guarding honor that had little in common with the life in the core societies. These ambiguous locations and their inhabitants served and saw themselves as guardians of the gates of Christendom, but were exposed to the possibility of being “polluted” or “pollinated” by the other and of being in Europe and yet not quite part of it. Thus in many respects the gate-keeping mentality of the East Elbian Junker has affinities with the mind-cast of similar militarized borderland societies, such as the Polish *szlachta*, the Hungarian *Szecklers*, the Russian Cossaks, or the Serbo-Croat Frontiersman in the Military Frontier on the border between the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires whose social psychology and military culture had been shaped by hundreds of years of frontier life. Thus the traditional self-image of East-Elbian Prussia in particular as a warrior nation is often recalled and stressed.

Finally, according to Foucault, the ship is the heterotopia par excellence: “In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates” (“Other Spaces” 27). In the Baltic chapters of *Effi Briest* the ship represents an important heterotopia. In accordance with Foucault’s idea of heterotopia, the ship is represented as a counter-site that challenges place and interrupts everyday life. In the Kessin part of the novel, the entry of the outside world of trade into the small community creates a contact zone between very different worlds: the local agrarian community of peasants and Junkers on the one hand and the international consuls and Kessin business class with their overseas trading connections on the other. There is also an old paddle-steamer named “Phoenix,” which carries tourists up and down the river during the summer season. The otherwise slow rhythm of daily life in Kessin becomes livelier with the arrival of tourists. It is not a coincidence that the “Phoenix” also takes Effi out of Kessin and towards a new, happier and upgraded life in the capital world of court and high administration society, with a promise of a new beginning, a rebirth. So hopes Effi: “Nun mit Gott, ein neues Leben! Es soll anderes werden” (203)³⁰ and she makes a promise to Innstetten: “Nun bricht eine andere Zeit an, und ich fürchte mich nicht mehr und will auch besser sein als früher und dir mehr zu Willen leben” (203).³¹ Finally the space of the mirror functions typically in a fantastic text as heterotopia. *Effi Briest* also contains a fantastic subtext related to the supernatural haunting of the Chinese

³⁰ “Now God willing a new life! Things are going to be different.”

³¹ “It’s a new time, a new beginning, and I’m not afraid any more and I am going to be better than I have been and behave to your liking.”

ghost. Effi's aspirations, frustrations and anxieties are literally and figuratively mirrored through fantasies of haunting, splitting and doubling.

After this cultural geography survey it becomes obvious that Fontane's conceptualization of late nineteenth century Prussia/Imperial Germany is inherently plural. Its complexity becomes more pronounced as the narrative moves from the familiar terrain of the *Heimat* to what is considered periphery, where it demonstrates a shift from local and national, to the transnational, international and even supernatural. Fontane's heterotopic strategies provide a counter model to the essentialist perception of Germany as an organic national community as he continually questions relations between local specificities across Prussia. Thus Fontane's paradigm problematizes prevalent homogenizing and hegemonizing narratives by providing a counter model to the monolithic mapping of space in the false and reified image of homogeneity by demonstrating a complex mosaic of productive spaces. This also debunks the binary opposition between the parochialism of the Western periphery and the cosmopolitanism of the center, which the West seeks to pass off as universality.

There is no doubt that cultural studies have been indebted to the Foucauldian reconceptualization of the politics of location, the location of the standpoint of cultural studies itself as a critique of the relationship between the center and periphery. Foucault also comes close to the post-colonial perspective in characterizing heterotopias as places that contest the hegemony of dominant social and political structures. However, while Foucault's paradigmatic model of heterotopia offers an approach from which Western humanism and universalism can at least be problematized, it falls short in the face of more complex modes of dynamic environments of changes and exchanges such as those

created/represented in certain fictional narratives. Whereas the concept of heterotopia does allow for a teleological representation of a historical process, (heterotopias seem to be always in the process of making), they nevertheless appear static even when they represent spaces of transition, because they see different histories overlaid each other but always from the same vantage point. The heterotopic approach to fiction can be further criticized for its tendency of abstracting the lived experience of space, detaching difference from the existence of inequality, class and ethnic stratification, cultural differences and economic exploitation. Consequently it fails to address resistance adequately.

These problems can be approached more productively with Bakhtin's concept of chronotope which does not detach form from content, or time from space and experience, but places human affairs and interaction in a representation of actually existing social time-space. As postulated by Mikhail Bakhtin "[c]hronotopes are mutually inclusive, they co-exist, they may be interwoven with, replace or oppose one another, contradict one another or find themselves in ever more complex interrelationships" (*Dialogic Imagination* 252). Thus the concept of the literary (narrative) chronotopes is an alternative, productive and connecting concept, which can be seen in dialogue with, as a counterpoint and complement to heterotopias. Finally, while heterotopias represent a particular constellation of relations articulated together at a particular social space, the concept of chronotope articulates the interconnectedness of temporal and spatial aspects of a fictional narrative by accounting for the perception of the experience of complexity and dynamics of transformational processes as expressed in fictional form as e.g. effective compression and expansion of time and space of the world in motion. The

chronotope foregrounds strategies of instability such as dialogue and therefore ambiguity and limits of coherence and unity by focusing on intersections, cross roads, meeting points and contact zones. It captures dynamic changes, exchanges and mutual influence within and among heterotopias, by stressing various forms of interaction, mobility, migration, intermingling within and among those heterotopic spaces and places which are productive of polyphony and hybridized entities within the context of their time and place in the text. Most importantly, Bakhtin's dialogic approach to discourse analysis is a more adequate tool in depicting resistance. The object of the following two chapters is to show the relevance of Michael Bakhtin's theory of literary discourse on *Effi Briest*.

CHAPTER III

THINKING ABOUT EFFI BRIEST THROUGH BAKHTIN'S CHRONOTOPE

Der moderne Roman wurde für Deutschland erfunden, verwirklicht, auch gleich vollendet von einem Preußen, Mitglied der französischen Kolonie, Theodor Fontane. Als erster hier hat er wahrgemacht, daß ein Roman das gültige, bleibende Dokument einer Gesellschaft, eines Zeitalters sein kann; daß er soziale Kenntnis gestalten und vermitteln, Leben und Gegenwart bewahren kann noch in einer sehr veränderten Zukunft . . . Er war, in Skepsis wie in Festigkeit, der wahre Romancier, zu seinen Tagen der einzige seines Ranges.

Heinrich Mann, "Theodor Fontane, gestorben vor 50 Jahren."

For the mind (Geist) is indeed not capable of producing or grasping the totality of real, but it may be possible to penetrate the detail, to explode in miniature the mass of merely existing reality.

Theodor Adorno, "The Actuality of Philosophy"

The nineteenth century German novel is generally considered inferior to other periods and genres in German-language literature. In the view of many commentators Germany not only fails to achieve any distinction in the novel in the latter half of the nineteenth century, but the genre of the social novel flourishing at the time elsewhere is almost non-existent in German literature until the twentieth century. Theodor Fontane is considered to be the best of the few exceptions to these generalizations. As Martin Swales puts it, "Theodor Fontane ist der einzige deutsche Romanschriftsteller des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts, der mit den großen europäischen Realisten in einem Atem zu nennen ist" (*Epochenbuch* 149). The following argument by G. Wallis Field is typical in this respect: "The German novel continued to focus on the protagonist's inner development, until Fontane, at the end of the century, moved into the mainstream of European fiction, portraying society and social problems" (94). While this perception is

not new, approaching it through Bakhtin's concept of the literary (narrative) *chronotope* gives us fresh purchase on it.

A lot has already been written about the ways in which Fontane's realism confirms or undermines the Great Realist Tradition. Most commentators find Fontane's realist mode to be in a different key or at variance with the canonized tradition. Thus, while they agree that as a turn of the century novel *Effi Briest* stood at the threshold of modernity and literary modernism, they disagree about the nature of this threshold represented in the novel. Falling, as it were, between the cracks of classical realism and modernism, Fontane's fiction proved awkward for literary historians and literary critics. I suggest that it is the importance of this "threshold" that begs to be explored by Bakhtin's approach to literature as developed in his concept of "chronotope," the term he uses for the specific sense of space and time which characterizes every genre according to its specific ideology.

Fontane's extraordinary sensitivity to time and space in his fictional world and depiction of minutely observed apparently insignificant details of people and places invoke the importance Bakhtin attached to small, "prosaic" facts of life instead of big dramatic events. Yet Fontane scholarship has played little attention to the role spatio-temporal relation plays in his novels by drawing on Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope even in social and political readings of the novel when commentators were establishing relationships between both lived and represented reality.

I contest the notion that Fontane's late novels, including *Effi Briest* continue in the mainstream German tradition of *Bildungsroman* as suggested by e.g. Helen Chambers (*Changing* 111-131) or that they can be adequately approached by any of the canonical

narratological theories which assume a connected sequence of events underpinned by the notion of linearity of language developing in time and derived from Goethe's organic concept of art. Rather, I argue that Fontane breaks with the *Bildungsroman* narrative tradition, and in so doing brings a new quality into the German novel.

Fontane's fiction is original in that it defies classification because it moves with grace back and forth between established cultural norms and forms and the democratizing pulse of modernity, relying, on the one hand, on many artistic devices and forms of the past, but also contributing to innovative modern techniques. In so doing, it offers an apt illustration of the model of coexistence, of the simultaneous presence of what Raymond Williams terms "dominant, residual and emergent or anticipatory" discourses (*Marxism* 121-127), which in turn contain within themselves the idea of multiple and overlaying temporalities or indeterminacies of time and space and can be traced back to Bakhtin's conceptualization of the *chronotope*. This is clearly demonstrated by Fontane's choice of protagonists. Effi and Innstetten are an obviously mismatched couple belonging to different generations and sharing different values and affinities: new/emerging and residual/old, respectively. It is through Bakhtin's chronotopical approach that valuable insights can be gained into the ways Fontane's fictional world is constructed. In what follows I will apply the Bakhtinian notion of a chronotope to demonstrate how in *Effi Briest* Fontane "fused together" fictional time and space, thereby creating a productive force whose effect in depicting society in motion and change will be greater than each of the sum of its component forces. This approach can also bring about an exciting intervention into discussion about the paradigm shift in the German novel.

Mikhail Bakhtin, philosopher, sociologist and literary theorist, initiated new ways of

thinking and speaking about literature by attempting to reconcile the formalist concerns of close reading with the socio-historical approach to literature by insisting on a social and political reading through the inseparability of fictional time and space. Bakhtin borrowed the term *chronotope* from Einstein's theory of relativity, by adapting the concept of "the inseparability of space and time" (time as the fourth dimension of space) to refer to the "carefully thought-out" fusion of spatial and temporal parameters in order to facilitate exploration of the ways in which these space-time intersections appear in artistic texts (DI 84-85).³²

Bakhtin defines the chronotope generally as "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" (DI 84), that is, the chronotope is the means of expressing the meaning of the narrative in the novel and organizing the pivot of the novel: "The chronotope is where the knots of narrative are tied and untied. . . [T]ime becomes, in effect, palpable and visible so that the reader can 'see' the time through space and vice versa; it refers to the manner in which "[T]ime, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history" (DI 84). "All the novel's abstract elements – philosophical and social generalizations, ideas, analyses of cause and effect – gravitate towards the chronotope and through it take on flesh and blood, permitting the imaging power of art to do its work. Such is the representational significance of the chronotope" (DI 250).

³² Unless otherwise stated references to Bakhtin's *Dialogic Imagination* referred to as DI, and page numbers given in parentheses are taken from Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*.

Thus the chronotope, functioning as the primary means for materializing time in space, emerges as a center for concretizing representation, as a force giving body to the entire novel. As Tzvetan Todorov explains in his book on Bakhtin, the chronotope is the set of distinctive features in the treatment of time and space in the literary genre (*Bakhtin* 83). As defined by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, chronotope is “a unit of analysis for studying texts according to the ratio and nature of temporal and spatial categories . . . An optic for reading texts as x-rays of the forces at work in the culture system from which they spring” (DI 425-26). But, as Bakhtin points out, chronotopes do not exist in isolation, but must be understood in dynamic relationship to one another (DI 214). He goes on to explain the complex ways in which they are interconnected: “Chronotopes are mutually inclusive, they co-exist, they may be interwoven with, replace or oppose one another, contradict one another or find themselves in ever more complex interrelationships. The relationships themselves that exist *among* chronotopes cannot enter into any of the relationships contained *within* chronotopes. The general characteristic of these interactions is that they are *dialogical*” (DI 252). In other words, every chronotope is a link in a chain that refers, consciously or unconsciously, to other chronotopes and hence shares in the phenomenon of intertextuality. In a similar vein, Fontane’s detail-oriented fiction tend neither towards a documentary truth – as a reflection on physical reality; it is not the world presented as description of isolated observed factual details i.e. in the realm of the concrete, the particular, the reified (delineated in Lukács’ critique of reification in *History and Class Consciousness* later reworked in his literary theory based on narration/description dichotomy). Nor does it focus on minute detail at the expense of temporal movement, creating a static text marked

by dissolution, fragmentation, and ennui. Rather, it weaves these discrete elements into dynamic significant structures, which give a place and a meaning to every detail. By focusing on human conflicts central to Effi Briest, the novel's seemingly insignificant details are charged with dynamic tension and integrated into the novel as a whole.

The concept of the chronotope according to Bakhtin serves to characterize the distinctive ways in which literary genres combine the treatment of time and space and characterize genres. While chronotopes may vary significantly, they have no single defining characteristic; rather they are composed of a cluster of features or chronotopes, which are variously shared in different instances. Thus, for instance, the difference between the *Bildungsroman* or *Entwicklungsroman* and social novel is not in the fact that they have different or incompatible chronotopes altogether, but rather that their chronotopes have become differently configured. In this construct, novels often conjoin features from different genres, even where one genre remains dominant. At the same time, the principle genres constitute a tradition which has acknowledged masterpieces — models of the genre in question which serve as a paradigm. Among the most notable examples are Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, (1794–1795) and its sequel, *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre oder Die Entsagenden* (1821), the two novels that have had a profound and pervasive influence on the subsequent German, European and world novelistic tradition. They provided the model for the classical *Bildungsroman*, a genre in which the story of inner development was influenced by Goethe's concept of nature and followed his dictum that “[T]he story of man is his character” (*Lehrjahre* 1980: 458) as

well as for the romantic *Bildungsroman*.³³ Bakhtin credited Goethe as the founder of the “novel of emergence” and considered him a supreme exemplar of chronotopicity because of his profound sense of history and interconnectedness of time and space in events (*Speech 42*).

The *Bildungsroman* in turn profoundly influenced the development of the novel in general. Since temporality and questions of time play an essential role in the *Bildungsroman* the temporal framework has been used in most critical studies as an appropriate approach to engage with all novelistic genres regardless of the different socio-historic conditions in which the novel was constituted and it also influenced the ways novels have been traditionally valued.

The *Bildungsroman* aesthetics can be traced back to Goethe’s organicistic poetics theory of art. The search for knowledge through systematic ordering and mapping of natural world and people was part of the Enlightenment’s belief in rationality and science. Goethe’s disappointment in mechanistic explanation of nature led him to develop his own organicistic concept of nature in which humans were an integral part of the same organicism that produced the growth of the flowers and of all that was growing and was vital on the earth. Goethe’s studies of morphology in nature and his explanation of the vital dynamics of organic life including human, grounded on integration of science and art, influenced his notion of narration based on a biological term of development. According to Goethe development can only be adequately represented through perception

³³ Goethe made the distinction between classical and romantic *Bildungsroman* as follows: “Das Klassische nenne ich das Gesunde, und das Romantische das Kranke” (Eckermann, *Gespräche*, March 21 and April 1, 1830).

and not in linguistic terms hence his idea of the arts as a medium of morphology.

Goethe's aesthetic ideal was classical beauty as epitomized by the Greek antiquity.

The influence of Goethe's organicistic view of art, its attribution of natural/organic laws to culture consequently lead to the problematic relationship between morphology, the study of forms and the theory of evolution with its racialized byproduct of nature-culture tension along with other false dichotomies that guide explanations of human behavior (Richards 526). At the root of the growth/development process in human nature is a quest story, the search for meaningful existence and attaining perfection within the context of a defined social order. This traditional quest is also based on an ethnocentric universalism, common origin and conceit: it presumed to discover Universal Truth, to proclaim Universal Laws, and to describe a Universal Man, all of which imply European norms, values and core culture. This European superiority makes the improvement of the barbaric, primitive, backward or immature people a moral obligation.

The revival of organicistic ideas in Germany was closely related to the reinterpretation of Goethe's morphology in the wake of the publication of Darwin's theory of evolution through natural selection in *Origin of Species* (1859), especially following German unification (Darwin's *Descent of Man* was published in 1871). This model of unilineal European development resulted in Social Evolutionism and increasingly its twin — Social Darwinism, the idea that class, gender, and racial inequalities are rooted in biology, thus the nation began to be expressed in racially exclusive terms.

The concept of *Bildung* became increasingly linked to the idea of national culture and identity, which were manifested in national language, literature, tradition, history,

mythology, politics etc. The idea that the study of forms can help define the context and environment that shape the values and behavior of individuals and nations is also responsible for the ways German fiction has been unfavorably judged against the Great Realist Tradition in general and is also why *Effi Briest* was found wanting in comparison with such paradigmatic novels as Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*.

The morphological approach to literature that investigates formal and poetic properties of texts gave important impulses to German-speaking post-war close readings (*Werkimmanente* Interpretation) represented by e.g. Günther Müller and Eberhard Lämmert, which focus overwhelmingly on the narrative uses of time regardless of space. Drawing upon Günther Müller's distinction between *Erzählzeit* (narrated time) and *Erzählzeit* (narrating time) narratologists were able to describe in great detail the varied ways the structures of narrative discourse rearrange, compress, expand or reflect the "real" experience of time. The basic concept of this approach is based on understanding of time as intrinsically linear. The notion that the chronological order is naturally built into narrative can be traced back to the enormous influence of Goethe's ideas on morphological poetics and ideas of aesthetic evaluation on *Bildungsroman*. Narrative theorists who follow this developmental model emphasize the need for narrative coherency and consistency and they suggest that the narrative should respect the internal and external logic of the story line by avoiding discontinuities, contradictions, ambivalence and illogicalities. They generally focus on the perceptible, objectifiable forms, while the hidden, the marginal, the imperfect, the deviant, the invisible is left out of analysis.

The approach to a literary work that follows traditional narrative ordering presumes that describing a text's structure or tracing it according to literary typologies generally suffices to explain its significance. The impact of such an approach is that it encourages us to accept a perspective without questioning it. The fact that it imposes on the reader/critique only a particular point of view or a single logic raises questions about the ethical imposture of such approach. To illustrate this I will use the example of Brian Tucker's application of the traditional linear time paradigm to prove that *Effi Briest* is about boredom. In Tucker's reading *Effi Briest* is easily accessible and safely categorized, as he asserts: "[B]oredom is the point of departure for many nineteenth-century adultery novels. In Germany, the classic example is Theodor Fontane's *Effi Briest*, in which the boredom inflicted by an older, distant husband drives the heroine into an extramarital affair" (185).

While Tucker correctly observes that in *Effi Briest* the time during which the story is being told may be very different from the time which is being spoken about (represented) in that story, he comes to a very reductive conclusion that boredom is the main point of *Effi Briest*; at least such is the outcome of his measurement of the novel's fictional (in terms of the relation between the narrative and narrated time he sets out to prove: the novel's narrative time is, indeed, adjusted to narrated time in order to depict Effi's distorted perception of time caused by her boredom.

But did Fontane mean his narrative to be labeled according to this typology? Did he not express his preference for social themes over love stories by referring to *Effi Briest* in a letter to Friedrich Stephany of July 2, 1894, quoted in chapter two of this text?

Furthermore, Effi Briest's retrospective assessment of her time in Kessin upon her departure problematizes if not contradicts Tucker's standard reading of boredom:

Effi gedachte des Tages, wo sie, vor jetzt gerade Fünfvierteljahre, im offenen Wagen am Ufer eben dieses Breitlings hin entlangefahren war. Eine kurze Spanne Zeit, und das Leben oft so still und eisam. Und doch, was war alles seitdem geschehen! (191)³⁴

It seems to me that to make such unproblematic statements about boredom and adultery is to monopolize the meaning. To claim to know the motive for the adultery of Fontane's protagonist means to take possession of her or to step into her shoes. Such a one-sided approach does not enable us to understand how *Effi Briest* might represent a complex and multi-layered nature of interconnectedness of temporality and spatiality and its various effects on Effi's experience. This is because the traditional time paradigm based on a fundamental division between narrative and narrated time assumes continuity and linearity of time and approaches the narrative as an account of a linear sequence of events, or a story that evolves from event to event in chronological order of beginning, middle and end in time. It follows from this that an uneventful narrative is about boredom because to use Tucker's words it "denotes a particular relation to time, a perception of time passing more slowly than it should."

Yet reflecting on the problem of space in the case of *Effi Briest* at the same time would have been very important. An analysis of Effi Briest's experience of boredom also needs to discuss relationships between temporality, spatiality, narrativity, and experience by taking into account discontinuity in time and the deep break in her life and ensuing

³⁴ "Effi's thoughts went back to the day, fifteen months before, when she had driven along the shore of this self-same Breitling in an open carriage. A short span of time, and often such a quiet and lonely life. And yet the things that had happened since then!"

crisis caused by her sudden marriage and removal away from the familiar and friendly to an unknown and hostile terrain. It might be argued that Effi's experience and perception of time as distorted and dragging in Kessin, is evidence for her experience of a complex mix of wide ranging feelings including boredom but also inner ambiguity, alienation, anxiety, separation, insecurity, fear, loneliness, to mention but some.

In order to understand Effi Briest's experience in Kessin, Martin Heidegger's notion of the category of event he analyzed in his seminal *Zeit und Sein* is also instructive, especially his emphasis on genuine historic events causing changes in mentality and in the understanding of the world, and not mere happenstance. Against this background, it is not the continuity and sequence of events that is decisive for the story of Effi Briest, but the experience of a break and discontinuity created by the event. The marriage is a disquieting event for Effi while Crampas' response to her sense of immediacy and urgency evoked by crisis can be seen is an important mental event that impacts her life. The dated character of Tucker's approach to the novel's narrative through narrative and narrated time as antithetic categories is further demonstrated through the language patterns deeply embedded in the narrative of "Western civilization." By describing these aesthetic antinomies in terms of binary pairs such as stasis vs. progression, inaction vs. action, even life vs. living as primary vehicle for distinguishing the difference between narrated and narrative time represented in the novel, Tucker resorts to well-established categories rooted in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries based on stark dichotomy between a supposedly dynamic, creative West and static and timeless East. Thus he writes that Fontane "intentionally designed the novel to focus on monotonous intervals in locations such as Kessin and Krotoschin (in the earlier fragments) as "periods

in which boredom sets in,” without ever reflecting on these locations he so unproblematically qualifies as breeding ground for boredom thereby resorting to rhetorical commonplaces recurring in Western paradigm.

The approach to narrative which draws a division between time and space translates into an existential opposition between narrative and life or form and content which, when applied to *Effi Briest*, amounts to using these Eastern spaces as tropes for boredom and metaphors for ennui and in broader sense serves to institutionalize ideological assumptions in Western scholarship about what is traditionally designated as “beyond the pale” of civilization by repeatedly harking back to tropes from previous representations and by reducing complex issues to a readily transmittable formulae and generalizations. One of the consequences of being marked out as a sign in someone’s discourse is marginalization and silence. It follows that Tucker’s time framework easily translates into a familiar notion of “timelessness” which carries associations of backwardness and deviancy from Western teleology.

Further limitation of narratological approach is absence of analysis of cultural and socio historical context, i. e. taking into account the specific socio-historical context in which the novel is produced to explain e.g. Fontane’s choice of a Polish/Kashubian environment as the setting for the unfolding of marriage and the extramarital triangle story in which the third person is half-Polish against the background of the Polish/Kashub – German conflict.

Formally, from the structural point of view, *Effi Briest* could be forced to fit Tzvetan Todorov’s definition of general and conventional narrative structures – his three-stage structural model of narratology. Accordingly, narratives always embody a process of

situation – transformation – situation by which Todorov means that most narratives start with a situation which is relatively stable or in a state of equilibrium – then something happens that transforms this situation, which he calls causal transformation – the story then deals with the way in which this transformed situation is brought under control again, or stabilized, so that some sort of equilibrium situation is again restored.³⁵ The story of Effi Briest follows this pattern: she marries and moves from a secure and happy life into an alien-like world of anxiety and terror, which probes her weakness and reveals her frailty. It is also significant that she must cross a geographical/cultural border to encounter her rite of passage. She reemerges from this experience by reaffirming her culture's values and by living by them but her affirmation rings disturbingly hollow. While Effi's final return home may be understood as a restoration of some sort of equilibrium, it is disputable how this final situation may or may not resemble the initial situation. However, even if the narrative is a tragic one that ends in death, some kind of normality or lack of disturbance will have been re-established, since death, especially as depicted in *Effi Briest*, is a form of equilibrium, of peace and of lack of tension.

However, Fontane's ironic version of this paradigm has a twist to it: just as Effi Briest assumes her proper societal role and settles into a conventional lifestyle, just when in Todorov's words equilibrium is reinstated, another unexpected event occurs – the discovery of secret love letters which disrupts the equilibrium again – and exemplifies another twisting effect of a story that dramatizes the outcome of an artistic process aptly described by Friedrich Dürrenmatt: "Eine Geschichte ist dann zu Ende gemacht, wenn sie

³⁵ Todorov in fact envisions five stages: 1. A state of equilibrium at the outset. 2. A disruption of the equilibrium by some action. 3. A recognition that there has been a disruption. 4. An attempt to repair the disruption. 5. A reinstatement of the equilibrium.

ihre schlimmstmögliche Wendung genommen hat (82).³⁶ The discovery of the letters throws into disorder the settled order of the lives of all chief characters and by unsettling and breaking the narrative trajectory itself forces the reader to reread the previous chapters for clues such as ambiguities, breaks, gaps, and displacements etc. It also reveals inadequacy of narratological theorizing when applied to *Effi Briest*.

Georg Lukács claimed that the great realist novelist always depicts society as change by using Fontane as one of his chief examples. Thus he noted that the old Fontane stood at the threshold of a new era, acutely observing the shifts from old to new society, as the rigidly hierarchical social system in Germany was breaking down, overcome by the turbulent arrival of capitalism, along with all its irreconcilable contradictions and differences. Another way to approach *Effi Briest* would be to use Lukács' conception of time in the novel based on a Bergsonian concept of *durée*, the duration and expansion of time which the novel covers integrating its action into an historical social context. However, when perceptions and the experience of break or fracture find expression in fictional narrative, of which *Effi Briest* is a fine example, critical attention should be paid to the spatial dispersal because the narrative highlights multiple spaces with a diversity of life in their coexistence and simultaneity that has previously been easily ignored. However, for Lukács the process of becoming is more important than what is actually changing; thus his focus on the time dimension rather than the space in which this process unfolds. Conversely, what Bakhtin is interested in are transitory practices, styles, identities, modalities of thought and expression that arise as attempts to resolve specific

³⁶ "A story has been thought out to its conclusion when it has taken its worst turn." Dürrenmatt, 21 Punkte zu den *Physikern*.

historical contradictions and crisis (Dostoyevski's novels dramatize the social crisis caused by the sudden arrival of transnational capitalism).

One of the fundamental flaws of all these theoretical approaches that focus on traditional narrative ordering in time is inability to adequately analyze the experience of transformation reflected in literature both at the level of structure and content, or in Morson's and Emerson's words "[o]verlooking the contingent factors that need not have happened" (*Bakhtin* 3) by reflecting on discontinuities, breaks and ruptures as locations of unexpectedness, surprisingness, or irony as the writer's most powerful tools, which open up possibilities for the reader's independent thinking and resistance to cultural and political hegemony. As Bakhtin observes "most contemporary reading fusses about in the narrow space of small time . . . There is no understanding of evaluative nonpredetermination, unexpectedness, as it were 'surprisingness,' absolute innovation, miracle" (*Speech* 167). This is what we should bear in mind if we want to account for the supernatural, the haunting of the Chinese ghost in *Effi Briest* to which Fontane accorded a pivotal role in the novel's plot as he revealed in a letter to Paul Schlenker of Nov 11, 1895 (*Briefe* 502).

The uncertainty, allusiveness and incoherence of Fontane's narrative about the Chinese ghost subtext and the uncanny emotions the text elicits lend themselves to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical concept of das *Unheimliche* and Todorov's related concept of *fantastic* in literature. Freud defines the "unheimlich" as aesthetic experience, "that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar" (*Uncanny* 220). Scholars have commented on how Fontane's description of the unheimlich/uncanny atmosphere in Kessin and the oddities of the Landrathaus reflect his

evocations of his childhood experience of Swinemünde, the town and the house he had lived in as a boy, which he recollected in his autobiographical text *Meine Kinderjahre* (e.g. Radcliffe 12) written at the same time as *Effi Briest*. Fontane's case is an exemplary illustration in support of Freud's contention about the effects of uncanny in literature evoked by an author who takes an equivocal position between reality and unreality and considers the uncanny as a kind of negative aesthetics concerned not with beauty but with frightening or of anxiety. It has been noted that Fontane systematically destabilizes various aesthetic ideals of the Enlightenment such as those of beauty, harmony and ratio (e.g. Doebling xi) but also of traditional narrative chain of causality.

Todorov's association of the fantastic with a psychological "hesitancy" between supernatural and a natural understanding of the plot is especially relevant for understanding of the role of the ghost's supernatural properties in the context and organizing structure of the novel. Todorov defines the fantastic as a literary genre in which "the hesitation is thematized by the text itself." Todorov's qualification of the fantastic as that "hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event" (*Fantastic* 25) is relevant for the incorporation of the ghost in a realist novel. According to Todorov the reader must be integrated into the world of characters which s/he experiences as a plausible, realistic world, but also has doubts - hesitation between different possible explanations of strange events, a realistic, rationally explicable explanation (which might be implausible but nevertheless conforms to the rules of nature) and a supernatural, inexplicable explanation. This hesitant delay in the act of resolving into one of these related explanations: the

marvelous and the uncanny, is the defining aspect of the fantastic as a genre because it generates the possibility of two or more meanings or readings of the text.

For Todorov, a narrative is fantastic only as long as the reader is unable to settle the hesitation between the realistic and the supernatural explanation; once this hesitation is settled, a narrative becomes either uncanny (meaning that unusual events can be explained by realistic reasons (the supernatural explained) or else marvelous (meaning that the narrative recounts impossible events that can only be explained by the action of the supernatural (the supernatural accepted) for example, a character believes s/he saw a ghost, and it actually does turn out to be a ghost.

Todorov believes that fantastic literature, as a genre, has been superseded by psychoanalysis, that is, that with the psychoanalytic discovery of the unconscious, there is no hesitation. Fontane scholarship proves his point: most critical approaches have rationalized the Chinese ghost in psychoanalytical terms as Effi's unconscious or repressed sexuality or an articulation of her fears and anxiety in an outlandish and inhospitable atmosphere. But even with the narrow definition Todorov uses, it seems to me that the ghost can also fall into the marvelous-fantastic-uncanny spectrum in exactly Todorov's sense because events with the ghost remain a strange, inexplicable phenomena left unresolved in the multi-voiced expression. As an intruder with ability to destabilize certainties and disrupt coherence of the dominant, the ghost cannot be simply dealt with rationality: whatever available scientific knowledge exists about such phenomena is insufficient. In fact, the trope of the ghost in the Pomeranian part of the novel is so elaborately contrived together with other tropes of "dark places" such as the forest and underground water, "the schloon" that one cannot but label Fontane's style at this

junction as the Gothic. If *Effi Briest* is viewed as belonging to the genre of the fantastic or possessing element of fantastic, or the Gothic then it crosses both genres as well as “high” and popular culture and ventures into “magic realism” and postmodernism.

Drawn to a reading positioned in the post-colonial and anti-imperialist sensibilities of more recent times, critics have concluded that a novel written at the height of imperialism cannot be reduced to psychological states and literary devices. As a result of this slow paradigm shift the ghost has been increasingly addressed in the context of German imperial projects by taking cues from the ghost’s alterity, that is, by taking his racial/ethnic origin to reveal Germany’s imperial designs in the Far East. According to Todorov, the original purpose of the fantastic in literature was to express taboo material in a way that was concealed by representations (or suggestions) of the supernatural, and yet now that material is not so taboo, and psychoanalysis exists to enable people to confront it directly. In other words those critics who have considered taboos other than sex, such as political taboos, political ideas proscribed from public discourse, interpret the Chinese ghost in terms of contemporary political realities especially in relation to the imperial projects of the new German state (Utz; Ryan; Kopp). But the question arises as to where Germany’s heart of darkness was, that is, what kind of offensive reality of the imperial/colonial state would demand that certain facts and ideas about German relations with other communities and nations be taboo – so hushed up that there are not even ways to coherently represent these ideas that appear both supernatural and colonial?

Furthermore, how are we to theorize and valorize fragmentation, discontinuity, contradictoriness and illogicality represented by the intertextuality of the ghost subtext? The narrative incoherence of the ghost-subtext goes against the grain of the traditional

narrative ordering and expectation that the narrative (or “story”) should make sense of the events as they really happened. Irony comes to mind if we want to account for the fact that a character qualified to hold dear high moral principles turns out to be an unreliable narrator. Did Fontane reject the notion that the traditional narrative ordering of events is necessarily “truer to life” or more meaningful than any other?

Mikhail Bakhtin may come to mind first because of his emphasis on and celebration of texts flaunting a diversity of fully valid and autonomous voices with relativistic and centrifugal consequences as well as counter-centrifugal tendencies such as the active merging of perspectives within a single consciousnesses. Bakhtin’s concept of dialogism not only accounts for the multi-voiced expressions of characters and narrators, or the relationship between author and character, but also connects together author, characters and reader. Bakhtin emphasizes the active involvement of the reader with the text. As he writes “thought knows only conditional points; thought erodes all previous points ” in the process of “active dialogic understanding” (*Speech* 162) which means that every reading rewrites the text in a creative way. Thus we can understand the ghost as Fontane’s most powerful tool whose multifaceted meaning can be read at many different levels e.g. cultural, structural, conscious, subconscious, political, imperial etc. and thus creates communication and understanding between reader, character and author.

While interpretative frameworks that focus on the traditional narrative ordering of events raise important questions about novels they fall short in analyzing more complex narratives such as *Effi Briest*. Every narrative is organized both in time and space, and it is the breaks and discontinuities of time that create narrative multi-layeredness, which in turn are potential locations of independent thought and political and cultural resistance.

Thus failing to reflect on space reduces the novel to a particular explanation instead of allowing a widening of possibilities of approaching the novel in its multilayeredness. Bakhtin's argument that time-space is inseparable, and his consideration of the shifting locations of time-space provides a key to understanding the philosophical geography of the novel especially of a complex and multi-layered novel depicting dramatic changes such as *Effi Briest*. The relationship of time and space is therefore fundamentally relevant for the reading of *Effi Briest*.

The distinctiveness and originality of Bakhtin's concept as opposed to most other uses of time and space in literary analysis lies in the fact that it privileges neither category, but treats them as closely interdependent. According to Bakhtin the novel expresses a certain relation to reality, possesses certain principles of selection, and relies on certain forms of perception and conceptualization. However, this is not so much a question of grammar, authors' artistic affinity or the logic of formal temporal and spatial devices they employ, but rather the relation of these attributes, and the way they are organized to the cultural and historical conditions in which they arise. In other words, the character of a novel, according to Bakhtin, does not so much derive from its formal characteristics as from its external orientation, towards both the audience that it addresses and the tradition and context to which it belongs and from within which it speaks. It also presupposes a certain audience, certain types of reaction, and certain ideological values.

Bakhtin's specific sense of space and time (chronotope) casts a new light on the ways Fontane's fiction reconceptualizes and/ or breaks with the traditional narrative mode, the one that characterizes the novel of development (*Bildungsroman* or *Entwicklungsroman*). In the *Bildungsroman* the story line follows the evolutionary line in

life of a person's long, gradual and arduous development that unfolds in time understood as linear or chronologic. Obviously in such a narrative temporality is of crucial importance; therefore the focus is on time dimension. Bakhtin describes the difference between Goethe's traditional narrative and Dostoyevsky's in terms of their different concepts of/ and engagement with time/space and narrative perspective. Thus he writes:

The fundamental category of Dostoyevsky's artistic visualizing was not evolution, but *coexistence* and *interaction*. He saw and conceived his world primarily in terms of space, not time. Hence his deep affinity to dramatic form. Dostoevsky strives to organize all available meaningful material of reality, in one time frame, in the form of a dramatic juxtaposition, and he strives to develop it extensively. An artist such as Goethe, for example, gravitates organically toward an evolving sequence. He strives to perceive all existing contradictions as various stages of some unified development; . . . In contrast to Goethe, Dostoevsky attempted to perceive the very stages themselves in their simultaneity, to juxtapose and counterpose them dramatically, and not stretch them out into an evolving sequence. For him, to get one's bearing of the world meant to conceive all its contents as simultaneous, and to guess at their interrelationship in the cross-section of a single moment" (PD 28).

Effi Briest does not follow an intensive inner and harmonious developmental unfolding process of its eponymous protagonist, but rather the stress is on her incomplete development by highlighting sudden changes, breaks and discontinuities in her life, in effect breaking with the traditional story-line. Fontane starts his narrative directly with the break in his protagonist's biography – with the abrupt and unexpected end of her childhood. Effi Briest is a *femme enfant* at the threshold of womanhood, who at the age of seventeen is suddenly, unexpectedly and prematurely given in marriage to Baron Geert von Innstetten, a former suitor of her mother's and more than twice her age. Fontane's protagonist thus takes a leap from girlhood into adulthood at the outset of the story and without any experience.

Furthermore, unlike Goethe's protagonist Wilhelm Meister, Fontane's young female

protagonist does not even hesitate before she consents to be delivered into marriage and social responsibilities without any social, sexual or practical preparation for the role thrust upon her, but in accordance with arranged-marriage conventions of her class and spurred on by her ambitious mother and her problematic romantic visions of life, and naively confident of her own success. Indeed, her failed *Bildung* or lack of proper upbringing and experience ultimately excommunicates her from high society. Moreover, and ironically, plunging into marriage is obviously a fatal mistake, since a person who is initially shown to be full of the will to live ultimately withers away and only returns home to die at an age when she finally reaches maturity.

As a consequence of discontinuity and deep breaks in the life of Fontane's protagonist, the narrative time in *Effi Briest* is represented as multiple rather than as sequence, that is, its novelistic time "thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible"; which results in extensive unfolding in space, or in Bakhtin's words space "becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history" (84). By stressing the breaking points in life experience and discontinuous development of the novel, Fontane unfolds the story extensively in space that encompasses a range of different locations/communities in Imperial Prussia, which is encapsulated by the *Heimat*, Kessin and different settings of Berlin. Unlike Goethe whose aim is to show the process of maturity (development), Dostoevsky as well as Fontane portray their protagonist in exceptional situations, and crises thereby focusing on a special idea (threshold), such as, in Fontane's case, separation from home, marriage, adultery, duel and banishment from society.

According to Bakhtin, "Dostoevsky always represents a person on the threshold of a

final decision, at a moment of crisis, at an unfinalizable — and unredeterminizable — turning point for his soul” (PD 61). Fontane too represents his protagonists on the threshold of decisions and at periods of crisis: for instance, since the novel is taking place against the background of the *Kulturkampf* and subsequent anti-Polish measures, Fontane’s Polish-hyphenated characters find themselves in a state of a permanent crisis. On the other hand, Effi Briest is confronted with the sudden marriage proposal (an instance in which Effi Briest finds herself at the threshold at the very opening of the novel), following her marriage and move to Kessin, she finds herself at the threshold of yet another crisis – caused by the trauma of separation, incompatible marriage and unfulfilling relationships, loneliness, fears and adultery), as well as the discovery of letters, Effi’s life in Berlin following divorce, meeting with her daughter and her reunion with Roswitha, return home are fine examples of crisis moments and thus described, dramatized and enacted in far more detail than the settled life in Berlin during her marriage. Innstetten’s moment of crisis is one of the most commented scenes in the novel. It is Innstetten’s conversation with his colleague upon the discovery of the incriminating letters in which he expounds on his decision to challenge Crampas to a duel and divorce Effi that is habitually quoted as revealing rigid codes of behavior of the Prussian upper class.

Because the traditional narration is devoted to all-around self-development, a single viewpoint is adopted and told by a first person narrator or omniscient author. Moreover, all characters have to act consistently, according to their inner goals, speaking a language that convincingly expresses their motives and character traits and events are described in terms of beginning, a development, and a conclusion, thereby “making sense” of the

events. Unlike the system-building mentality of the *Bildungsroman* which seeks to forge a unitary personality by self-reflexion and appropriate action striving to achieve harmony, completeness, closure and truth, generally told monologically, Fontane's mode reveals that the attempt to build and maintain whole selves in accordance with principles of a *Bildungs*-world view is undermined by the loss of holistic experiences of time and place, of rootedness in history and living communities. Instead, the world experience has become increasingly mobile, spatially oriented, multi-layered and characterized by discord, anxiety, complexity, contradictions, confusion under the pressure of an increasingly fragmented, subjectivized and psychologized as well as rationalized modern existence in which social vision and/or truth is relativized and totality and closure is increasingly unavailable for representation. The all-encompassing master narrative of progress and hopeful and radiant future is no longer valid. Thus *Effi Briest* enacts the country-to-city movement, characteristic for the later nineteenth century European novel of disillusionment. At the end of the novel Fontane's heroine is brought back to the starting point when the story comes to rest in her childhood home; her childhood garden literally becomes her resting place. By returning home Fontane's protagonist rounds off a cycle of experience, but her journey seems to be in vain, because she has only completed a circle. Fontane offers no final solution to the contradictory views and ideologies and contradictions that come into conflict in the novel. The effect is pluralism that does not accept an unquestioned truth.

What Julia Kristeva writes of Bakhtin's reading of Dostoyevsky that "[T]here is no third person to bring unity to the confrontation between the two; they do not culminate in a stable 'I' which would be the 'I' of the monologic author" (*Russian* 111), is also true of

Fontane's narrative. These characteristics make *Effi Briest* approximate Bakhtin's polyphonic novelistic principles of incompleteness (unfinalizability) and openness, expressing complexities, contradictions and anxieties, the realities not only of life but also of literature.

Bakhtin also theorized a model by which one literary genre is influenced by the contents and structure of other genres by noting the importance of Dostoyevsky's career as a journalist in creating/perfecting the polyphonic genre. Both journalism and writing for periodicals are important issues of concern for the novelistic writing because they pose a significant threat to its constitutive temporal experience. A crucial Bakhtinian event of genre influence in novelistic writing is also relevant for Fontane's novelistic writing. Furthermore in Prussia the sudden rise of the political power of journalistic discourse after unification was triggered by the *Kulturkampf* including the virulent anti-Polish discourse and anti-socialist campaign.

Thus further insight into Fontane's fictional narratives can be gained by taking into account Fontane's journalism and literary criticism. Fontane's journalistic experience was crucial for several reasons: on the one hand, it turned him into a fine distanced empirical observer with an interest in cultural geography and it shaped his sense of contemporaneous, contextual and dialogical approach to fiction. On the other, Fontane's narrative style is sometimes said to have been marred by journalistic expressions and colloquialisms (Sagarra, *Introduction*)

Fontane became a professional journalist in 1849 and for many years struggled to support his family by his writing alone and his economic situation depended on his writings. His status as a writer, first in the reactionary *Kreuzzeitung* (1860-70) and as

theater critic with the *Vossische Zeitung* (1870-89), increasingly depended both on his employer and his public, whose requirements he was expected to meet. Thus, when he tried to contradict the narrow and one-sided discourse of his time or demystify entrenched notions about the unassailable nature of existing social institutions, standards of conduct or tackle taboo topics, his subversion was subtle and oblique rather than open. As Russell Berman noted: “Attempting to respond to a profound restructuring of society, Fontane developed a form of critical practice which broke radically with the established structures of discourse “(39). There was also a political rationale to deal allusively and obliquely in what, after all, was a country of increasing paranoia, intolerance and censorship.

Bakhtin also seems to feel that the indirectness of double-voiced discourse may be more effective than monologic or direct speech. Perhaps because Fontane, like Dostoyevsky, was subject to censorship and had to write indirectly, he uses what Bakhtin terms double-voiced discourse, which expresses authorial intentions but indirectly, conditionally, and in a refracted way and often exudes irony. Thus, it is difficult to determine to what degree Fontane’s characters speak in their own voice or the author’s. A specific type of double-voicing form, according to Bakhtin, is the one in which the protagonist’s perspective on himself is infiltrated by “someone else’s words about him” (209). Double-voicedness also occurs because according to Bakhtin, the language of communication is never free from the intentions of the other people socially involved in an event.

Fontane’s subjective critical style in the theater reviews he wrote during his twenty-year tenure as a theater critic for the *Vossische Zeitung* (1870 and 1890), which

overlapped with his novelistic production — as he himself asserted at the end of his life, the year 1870 had made him into a writer — was characterized by an obvious interest in the social environment and problems of the moment in arguing with different voices of the day and was thus counter-discursive to the conventions of literary tradition of his time, which distanced art from both knowledge and politics. The newspaper article as a genre brings divergent and contradictory voices into the novelistic genre and helps us to understand the novel as being about discourse and dialogue rather than a monologic description of character and psychology.

Fontane's subjective approach to writing and to art work within its socio-political context was felt to be so much counter discursive to the established norms of the academic-aesthetic model, that his contemporary, and a fellow author, reviewer and journalist, Karl Gutzkow (1811-78) considered Fontane's style to be inferior to the high standards of the *Vossische Zeitung*, the paper of the wealthy liberal bourgeois in Berlin, and an audience convinced in their cultural superiority, but rather fit for the "scandal sheets" of tabloid journalism. However, Fontane saw otherwise. His main aim was "die Menchen *so* sprechen zu lassen, wie sie *wirklich* sprechen" (a letter to his daughter Martha 24 August, 1882). Fontane is responsible for the entry of differentiated everyday languages into literary texts.

The most significant implication of Raymond Williams' rethinking of culture/literature as social practice ("Culture is ordinary"), which includes non-textual traditions, is to question not only products but also processes of signification, including the signification of values. According to Williams every literary tradition is more various and complex than the "selective" constructions put on it (*Marxism and Literature* 70;

Long Revolution 67). Fontane's fiction, which assimilates a variety of literary models, is an appropriate example to illustrate Williams' point because in a cultural climate of a strict division between high and low cultural forms, particularly typical of German intellectual life, Fontane's innovative use of everyday language was not taken altogether seriously in his own time.

In retrospect and because of the radical shifts in historical perspective and new methods of reading by the end of the twentieth century it is now possible to do justice to Fontane's style and to see how in his hands these strategies became extraordinarily productive in fiction. By unabashedly and ingeniously incorporating folklore, proverbs, sayings, gossip, colloquialisms, different professional and vernacular registers, Fontane enlarged the creative possibilities of both literary criticism and fictional narrative, whereby, at the same time dissolving the binaries between genre/non generic forms and high and low culture/ literature. Thus he also anticipated the modernist style of using ordinary conversational language and mixed genres.

In discussing journalism as a counter discourse to dominant ideas, and a kind of writing which takes itself as the object of its own critical examination, because journalism is a direct response to the experience of a cultural or historical actuality, David Spurr wrote that journalists who call into question the underlying assumptions that govern their work, "must treat them as an *event*; he or she must find them in an immediate context of the moment"(189). Spurr's notion of journalistic writing as counter-discursive can be extended to include both the Bakhtinian dialogic notion of discourse and the Foucauldian notion of discourse as practice, both of which treat dialogic encounters between divergent ideas as a performative act, as an *event*. As Bakhtin wrote of

Dostoyevsky's novel in 1963: "[T]he idea . . . is inter — individual and inter-subjective — the realm of its existence is not individual consciousness but dialogue — communion between consciousnesses." In fact, Bakhtin says that the idea is a "live event, played out at the point of dialogic meeting." In this sense "the idea is similar to the word, it wants to be heard, understood and answered" (PD 88). This idea is particularly important because for Bakhtin genres are more than outward conventions; they are "form-shaping ideologies" with inherent knowledges and ways of thinking. Adopting or adapting a new genre requires a writer to change not simply forms, but also attitudes, assumptions, and worldview.

Bakhtin's idea of a dialogue as a live event closely resembles the Foucauldian notion of discursive event. According to Foucault discourses are made up of diverse and heterogeneous statements, which though linguistic in form, are themselves the product of an interaction between language and the world. Discourses are heterogeneous and uneven. Furthermore, concepts are not static but always changing, in a state of transformation and producing schizophrenic identity: "My aim," Foucault wrote, "is to show what the difference consisted of, how it was possible for men, within the same discursive practice, to speak of different objects, to have contrary opinions, to make contradictory choices" (1969/72: 200). This observation brings to mind Fontane's own conflicting identity as he had expressed in a letter to his father of October 19, 1856: that after every positive statement, the opposite automatically appears in his mind (evoking Dostoevsky's famous axiom "nothing is true" as well as representing a good example of what Bakhtin calls "contrapuntal inner dialogue."

Fredric Jameson sees this paradoxical reversal and transformation as an essentially dialectical process — a sign of sophisticated thinking. In his creative world Fontane gives free play to relativism and contradictions in human life, which produce contradictory identities within individuals themselves. In other words they are expressions of dialectical thought, which seeks both to be consciousness and self-consciousness at the same time. Everywhere in his work the reader is met with similar preoccupations that give cogency to contradictions and ambiguity, which never provide clear-cut answers or relies on a one-sided point of view.

Fontane's discursive practices are amply reaffirmed in his approach to fictional writing, which by being at the same time journalistic and dialogic is a direct response to the experience of a specific cultural and historic reality. The material of Fontane's best novels is taken from times and places he himself knew. Nearly all Fontane's novels are based on real-life accounts of events involving the Prussian nobility that he learnt about oftentimes in a humble-middle-class second-hand way. What attracted him to these actual stories was their representativeness, their embodiment of the essence of the contemporary condition, whereby the scandal in the anecdotal material gave him the opportunity to comment on the important issues beneath the surface.

Fontane's novel, *Schach von Wuthenow* which he started in 1878 and published in 1883, offers an example of Fontane's process of writing within a historic context, which resists ideological closure by exposing its logic to view. The novel, set in early nineteenth century Prussia, focuses on a small aristocratic circle that in its personal relationships and fate, reflects the situation of Prussia on the eve of its collapse before Napoleon, of which Fontane learnt from his parents. The events depicted in the novel take place only thirteen

years before his birth and are closely related to his own time. The immediate source of the novel was an anecdote told to Fontane by a friend. When he heard it, he inquired carefully whether the incident occurred before or after the Prussian collapse at Jena (1806), so that he could relate it unambiguously to a social situation in the precise historical moment, in this case a “the great event.” Fontane dated the novel exactly in the years 1804-6 and felt the anecdote to be so apt that he only slightly altered the names of those involved. *Schach von Wuthenow* also demonstrates a further development of Fontane’s critique of Prussia, first voiced in *Vor dem Sturm*, by including into the discourse the counter-voices of the Pan-Slavs such as the attorney Turgany or the Polish patriot Count Bninski, (the latter of whom expresses scathing criticism of the Prussian greed and predatory mentality) Fontane maintained openness to the disclosure of truth that would otherwise remain closed off by the boundaries of discourse. In his fiction Fontane will continue to use Polish counter-voices to comment on contemporary politics and express criticism of the Prussian mentality.

A similar approach can also be observed in *Effi Briest*, a novel set in the contemporary Prussia of the 1880s in which the basis for the story is the duel-scandal of Berlin society, the breakup of the Ardenne marriage, the details of which Fontane had heard at a dinner party in 1888 or 1889. Fontane must have been aware that he wrote about the harsh treatment of women for adultery in an age when such transgression was becoming an increasingly acceptable part of contemporary life yet he plays the subject matter up deliberately in *Effi Briest*. He had already explored the topic in *L’ Adultera*, a novel about the unpunished adultery of a mother and wife who takes control of her own life conceived in 1878 and published in 1882 after a considerable difficulty in finding a

publisher for what was considered a potentially offensive subject matter. In *Effi Briest* the offending woman is ostracized from society, stripped of property and meets an untimely death. Also in contrast to Effi Briest in real life, and to Fontane's protagonist from *L'Adultera*, Melanie van der Straaten, the title character from *Effi Briest* fails to find a sphere in which even her humane feelings can develop a beneficent activity and she slowly wastes away after divorce.

Bakhtin's approach to the novel and specifically his analysis of the relation between space and time established by and through narrative can help to establish a link between fiction and history, both lived and represented. As Bakhtin maintained "[o]ut of the actual chronotopes of our world (which serve as the source of representation) emerge the reflected and *created* chronotopes of the world represented in the text" (*Dialogic Imagination* 253).

In other words, Bakhtin suggests that the chronotope could be used as a medium for appreciating the interrelationships between "real historical time and space" and "actual historical persons" and the expression of these into literary forms (84). The literary artistic chronotope thus represents the difference between the factually represented event, such as e.g. a newspaper article Fontane read or piece of conversation accounts he was told at the party about the Ardenne case, and literary narratives in which these events surrounding it are fictionally represented: by Fontane's *Effi Briest* (1894/5) and Friedrich Spielhagen's *Zum Zeitvertreib* (1897), which articulate the historic space-time Ardenne events or chronotope.³⁷

³⁷ Fontane heard of the Ardenne duel-scandal at a party. It involved Elisabeth Ardenne von Plotho the model for his character Effi who married an officer Armand von Ardenne at the age of seventeen fell in love with Emil Hartwich, a district judge, whom she

The important feature of *Effi Briest* is its sensitivity to its historic moment, through its depiction of experiences of the post-unification moment of tumultuous social, cultural and political transformation through a cross-section of simultaneous coexistence either side-by-side or against the other, or superimposed spatio-temporalities of Prussia. In Germany the period following unification was perceived as one of rapid and tumultuous transformation of society, which caused the world to fracture into wide-ranging and uneven process of change characterized by contradictions and contestations of established norms. Relativized certainties cause societies to undergo “dialogization” i.e. ideas tend to be expressed dialogically out of awareness of competing views of the same things. Bakhtin stressed the polyphonic novel and devised a terminology for its multiple points of view and indeterminate endings.

At such periods of rapid transformation, as Bakhtin showed on the example of Dostoyevsky, the narrative model is so organized that in the time-space relationship spatial order becomes more prominent than the temporal one because the sense of social crisis creates a sense of accelerated time that compresses the process of actual change dramatized in space. Thus Bakhtin’s model of chronotope provides an adequate conceptual framework for reading *Effi Briest* as a novel which gives expression to the experience of transitional epoch marked by diversity, dynamism, and contradictions. It is a historically specific period of society in rapid change which moves in a zone of transition when places and world, tradition and change, a pre-modern culture and the onset of modernity, agriculture and industrialization, familiarity and strangeness, city and

planned to marry, but the offended husband challenged his rival in a duel and killed him. The couple divorced and the children were taken away from the mother.

countryside, Catholics and Protestants, Germans and Poles are confronted in opposition but also compelled to negotiate.

As Bakhtin explains within any narrative several chronotopes may be at work: they may be interwoven with, replace or oppose one another, contradict one another or find themselves in ever more complex interrelationships (252), and at the same time they react to actual socio-cultural chronotopes that are understood as differing views of time and space that are in dialogue with each other (253). Several main chronotopes operate in *Effi Briest* in the way Bakhtin describes them: *Gründerzeit*, promoters' boom, economic depression and *Kulturkampf*. For instance, economic changes, industrialization and urbanization brought about unwelcome consequences such as migration, uprootedness and disorientating effect produced anxiety, insecurity and xenophobia. Effi Briest joins the general flight from the countryside to the city in an upward movement but her married life and the life of her parents is also marked by economic depression. Frau von Briest reminds Effi that she and her husband will have to make ends meet even though Innstetten has been promoted to Berlin, because the older Briest might lose his estate if the economic tariffs are not raised to restrict the import of cheaper agricultural produce and thus protect Eastern Elbian landowners. As Frau von Briest explains to Effi: "Denn ihr werdet euch einschränken müssen. Innstettens Stellung ist sehr ehrenvoll, aber sie wirft nicht allzuviel ab. Und Briest klagt auch. Die Preise gehen herunter, und er erzählt mir jeden Tag, wenn nicht Schutzzölle kämen, so müß' er mit einem Bettelsack von Hohen-Cremmen abziehen" (193).³⁸ Paradoxically, however, as Effi's social status

³⁸ "You will have to make ends meet," the mother said. "Innstetten's position is very honorable, but it does not bring much. Briest also complains. Prices are going down, and

improves in the capital her life becomes less secure. *Effi Briest* takes place against the background of the promoters' boom and economic depression, while the *Kulturkampf* and anti-Polish measures place every Polish character in a state of crisis.

Fontane's narrative is also chronotopic in the sense that, as Bakhtin writes: "there can be no question of reflecting on an epoch outside the passage of time, outside any contact with past or future, outside time's fullness" (146). In other words, if we recognize that no period of time can be appraised in isolation and that events are interlinked in an inseparable flow of cause and effect relationship occurring in time, then Fontane's story about Effi Briest is but a chapter in an ongoing narrative, made up of his other contemporary novels. Since time in *Effi Briest* is not experienced as a succession of events but as duration it can be treated as space.

Effi Briest is not a traditional novel that follows a somewhat linear and predictable storyline in the "traditional way." Whereas the novel's main story line is arranged close to chronological order, this order is significantly interrupted in the way which demonstrates Fontane's interest in varied aspects of temporality. Novelistic "time" in *Effi Briest* is characterized not as unified but above all by multiplicity, which is expressed through discontinuities, breaks, circularity and uneven rhythms in which the pacing of the plot proceeds by jumps and stops which precludes reading the novel as one of the linear types of expository narration of a conventional nineteenth century literature. The ingeniously woven plot structure demands particular patience and attentiveness from the reader. The subtlety, for instance, with which Fontane depicts Effi's and Crampas'

he tells me every day that it is high time for protective tariffs, otherwise he would have to leave Hohen-Cremmen with a beggar's knapsack."

intimate affair, or other gaps and ambiguities created by the enunciative instability of textual pronouncements, the incongruent and contradictory fragments of the Chinese subtext, which break with continuity, all of these force the reader to go back over the entire narrative looking for clues to their meaning and frustrate the linear process.

Furthermore, Fontane's representation of absence and silence in *Effi Briest* also suspends linearity. While Fontane devoted a great deal of attention to portraying his protagonists in precisely such "moments of crisis" or of being at the "threshold" in their lives, he skipped over (briefly sketching or summing up) long passages of e.g. Effi's married life lived according to conventions and uneventful "for the soul." Skipping, anticipating, hinting at or reducing the kind of detail expected of the socio-psychological novel of everyday life in Fontane's writing represent innovative/experimental modern features of narratology.

One of the experimental modern features of the novel is the foregrounding of conversation, arguments and moments of spiritual and erotic crisis. As a result, the novel invokes a puzzle with elements in different places, but they are not coming together exactly in sequence and some pieces are even missing and have to be surmised.

According to Bakhtin fictional space and time are historically situated and determined by a given culture and ideology. Bakhtin's approach to the novel through inseparability of time and space as well as form and content is an adequate way of dealing with transformational processes and transitional locations as exemplified in Fontane's *Effi Briest*. When applied to *Effi Briest* it demonstrates how during periods of transformation breaks and discontinuities produce multiple spaces of coexistence and synchronicity, which in turn are experienced as contradictions in time/space dimension and heterogeneity. It also helps us realize that the fictional space is not just a background

against which a narrative unfolds in time but that all three are inseparably interconnected and mutually interdependent. The change as experienced by Fontane's young protagonist requires careful analysis of disruptions and dislocations caused by disquieting events. For instance Effi Briest's experience of change that can be understood as shifting between familiarity and unfamiliarity is poignantly symbolized by the ghost/haunting.

The engagement with theoretical concepts Bakhtin advanced in *The Dialogic Imagination* helps us to detect a "spatial turn" in Fontane's treatment of time-space configuration in *Effi Briest* by providing us with a rich source of tools for exploring the novel's spatiality. In so doing we can appreciate how Fontane's representation of shifting locations of time and space has contributed to the ensuing paradigm shift towards the polyphonic novel. Finally, Bakhtin's concept of chronotopes provides a more adequate framework to approach the relationship between Imperial Germany and Polish-inflected Eastern Pomerania as Fontane's "spatio-temporal constructions" in *Effi Briest*.

CHAPTER IV

TOWARDS THE POLYPHONIC NOVEL

[T]he novelist does not set out to take the place of his master, the epic poet, but to set him free from restricting coercions of his single-minded, monological vision.

Paul de Man “Dialogue and Dialogism,” 1985.

Die kl. Kritik über *Quitt* ist ganz gut. . . Das einzige Anzügliche in der Kritik ist der Hohn – und Schreckens – Ausruf: Dostojewski und Fontane! Ich schrieb an Brahm, es klänge etwa wie: Egmont und Jetter! Natürlich lache ich darüber, ich göne den Berühmtheiten ihre dickere Berühmtheit und freue mich der Gesundheit und Natürlichkeit meiner Anschauungen. Das habe ich vor der ganzen Blase voraus und bedeutet mir die Hauptsache.

Fontane to his daughter Mete, February 17, 1891.

Denn Niemeyer ist doch eigentlich eine Null, weil er alles in Zweifel läßt. Und dann, Briest, so leid es mir tut...deine beständigen Zweideutigkeiten...

Luise von Briest to her husband in *Effi Briest*

Even though in modernity the novel remains the principle vehicle of realism (realist representation), it is often considered as an end genre (notably, both Auerbach and later Lukács were exponents of such view) rather than merely representing another instance of it. Conversely, Bakhtin saw the novel not as an end, but rather as a new genre still in the process of becoming, not yet been formed. As a theorist of the genre of the novel, Bakhtin contrasted it with poetry (as in music, polyphonic compositions differ from monophonic ones). While Lukács considered the novel to be a form of bourgeois epic, in which the “problematic individual” must emerge as a self in a society forced apart by capitalism, Bakhtin viewed the novel as separate from an epic past. He argued that unlike the old and stable genres such as the epic, rooted in the “monological” where all elements of the narrative conformed to an architectonic, unifying logic, the novel is “dialogic”

because it accommodates different and competing systems of thought and does not presume to possess a monopoly on the truth and discourse. According to Bakhtin the novel exhibits an “indeterminacy” and “semantic open-endedness” and, unlike the epic, it is polyglot, polyphonic and flexible – it has the potential to continually grow and shape itself beyond the present by virtue of remaining in living contact with unfinished, still evolving contemporary reality (DI 11). It is through the communicative function of the novel, through the interchange of discourse that reality is produced and recognized. In other words, in dialogic prose, such as the novel, the world appropriately appears as an unfinalizable, open, creative space. Because the novel subjects other genres to the critical test of contact with what it claims to know as the real, in many respects it has anticipated, and continues to anticipate, the future development of literature as a whole.

I contend that Fontane’s narrative fiction including *Effi Briest* belongs to a specific paradigm of development of non-dominant literatures, which, by virtue of their socio-historical circumstances at the time of social novel canon-formation, as occupying a peripheral position in relation to the centrality of the metropolitan Western core cultures, differs from the Great Tradition of the European Realist novel. In this chapter, I will use Bakhtin’s approach to the novel, which represents a break with traditional ways of reading literature in general and Dostoyevsky in particular, to demonstrate other aspects of Fontane’s contribution to the paradigm shift, that is, the transformation from monological to dialogical and polyphonic novelistic mode of writing in the field of literature that highlights cross-cultural encounters.

According to Bakhtin, all literary works belong to one genre or another or they combine the features of different genres, so that for him every new form of writing is an

extension of the possibilities of a known genre or a creative synthesis of the two or more already existing genres (DI 259-422). Bakhtin's concept was based on the idea that in the novel, as in every work of fiction, the meaning, the ideas are encoded by all other genres, which present different forms and ways of expressing these meanings. But because the novel has the capacity to assimilate other forms of language and incorporate material from other genres, and reformulate, mutate or parody them, Bakhtin saw the novel as a consciously composed hybrid of languages, a composite and the most complicated genre. This process of gathering up and transforming other genres into the novel as a composite genre is similarly described by Fredric Jameson as a "processing operation" through which fictional writers dialogically recycle pre-existing literary traditions:

Processing operation variously called narrative mimesis and realistic representation has as its historic function the systemic undermining and demystification, the secular "decoding" of those preexisting inherited traditional or sacred narrative paradigms which are its initial givens (*Political* 152).

Bakhtin's broader, more flexible, kinetic, open and self-reflexive concept of genre allows us to see *Effi Briest* as a narrative which embraces different writing possibilities in realist form, whereby a seemingly already exhausted genre of the novel of adultery with its domestic theme is transformed into a unique and intricate narrative that dynamically combines different discourses into a complex hybrid. Or to put this in terms of both form and content, *Effi Briest* as fictional prose demonstrates the break-down of the older realist tradition because, on the one hand, the traditional domestic plot and story arranged in near chronological order exhibiting an ostensible stylistic "harmony" rooted in the nineteenth century German realist tradition, is intertwined with diverse genres such as poetry, drama as well as elements of naturalism or imperial Gothic; on the other, the novel's preoccupation with textuality and dialogue and its complex, allusive and self

referential style is unmistakably associated with emerging (post)modernism.

A commonplace of literary criticism, that theoreticians do not make good close readers and conversely textual critics are seldom long on theory, is also true of Fontane scholarship. In their approach to *Effi Briest* scholars have either focused their critical attention on the novel's formal aspects by scrutinizing the literary conventions Fontane employed or challenged in his fictional narrative while largely ignoring the complex, material relations which constitute its historicity, or, conversely, those who stress the novel's content in its socio-political context have tended to subordinate formal aspects of Fontane's realist representation and his innovative strategies in style and structure.

Thus, for instance, critics who view Fontane's fictional narratives as occupying a transitional position between nineteenth century realism and the modernism of the *fin-de-siècle*, do so mostly from an ethical position by observing that they embody the beginning of the disintegration of consciousness, along with breakdown of faith in both nineteenth-century literary realism and its humanist underpinnings. There is no attempt to connect this disintegration of totality in consciousness with the specific social and economic forms of capitalism as imperialism. They focus on the aesthetic, linguistic and stylistic intricacies of Fontane's fiction without placing them into their proper material socio-political context, thus evoking a dematerialized, depoliticized and ahistorical concept of culture. However, viewing formal aspects of literature as separable from socio/historical/ideological contingencies preserves literature in its elevated and reified form and obscures the fact that in general terms of the debate on the production of theoretical knowledge in the context of Europe, ideological, national and socio-political differences between Western and Eastern Europe that have existed

at least since the fifteenth or sixteenth century, have produced different cultural trends and sensibilities and ultimately separate canons of literature and its interpretation. As recent literary studies in the context of post-unification Germany have shown there are strong signals that cultural divisions between the two former German states have increased rather than diminished (Bullivant; Jankowsky and Love).

The emerging modernism in Fontane's fiction, therefore, has usually been ascribed to the turn inward and away from the social materials associated with classical realism, that is, as his increased subjectivization and introspective psychologization. Thus, for those critics who map the novel's psychological and moral aspects, that is, in an approach that prevails in humanist liberal, feminist and psychoanalytic criticism that stresses the private and hermetic over the public and social, *Effi Briest* is primarily a psychological novel (e.g. White 59). For those who relate the psychology of Fontane's characters to the spirit of their time, *Effi Briest* is taken as an illustration for breakdowns in communication and the inefficacy of language as an adequate medium of communication.

In the essay "Discourse in the Novel" Bakhtin argues against the pure stylistic analysis of the novel, explaining that the context of the novel is important, even primary, in the understanding of its meaning. As he wrote, "Form and content in discourse are one, once we understand that verbal discourse is a social phenomenon – social throughout its entire range and in each and every one of its factors, from the sound image to the furthest reaches of abstract meaning" (DI 259). For Bakhtin, dialogue is a natural condition of speech and it is precisely as verbal process that the dialogic force is most accurately sensed. Moreover, according to Bakhtin "the word in language is half someone else's,"

and he explains: “every word is directed toward an answer and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates”(DI 280). Bakhtin considers the literary or artistic work as a form of utterance — a complex utterance based on the conventions of generic form. When applied to the novel, individual speech utterances are always in dialogue with each other. As Bakhtin writes,

Utterances are not indifferent to one another, and are not self-sufficient; they are aware of and mutually reflect one another . . . Every utterance must be regarded as primarily a response to preceding utterances . . . Each utterance refutes, affirms, supplements, and relies upon the others, presupposes them to be known, and somehow takes them into account . . . Therefore, each kind of utterance is filled with various kinds of responsive reactions to other utterances of the given sphere of speech communication. Every utterance necessarily elicits a response in one form or another . . . in the subsequent speech or behavior of the listener . . . Utterances are not indifferent to one another, and are not self sufficient; they are aware of and mutually reflect one another. (*Speech* 91)

Other voices and other texts can be heard in each discourse implicitly or explicitly. This dialogic imperative, determined by the pre-existence of the language world relative to any of its current inhabitants, insures that there can be no actual monologue. As Bakhtin put it: “The word is born in a dialogue as a living rejoinder within it; the word is shaped in dialogic interaction with an alien word that is already in the object. A word forms a concept of its own object in a dialogic way . . . Only the mythical Adam, who approached a virginal and as yet verbally unqualified world with the first word, could really have escaped from start to finish this dialogic inter-orientation with the alien word that occurs in the object” (DI 279). In fact, it is Marx who wrote that “language is practical consciousness” and posited language as the matter that burdens “spirit” from the very start, for consciousness is always and from the very first a social product. Bakhtin's social view of language, which places equal importance on the speaker as well as listener, is relevant for Fontane’s novel with its many (story)-tellers and their listeners.

Bakhtin's first detailed references to the dialogic potential of the word and polyphonic writing appeared in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. According to Bakhtin the novelistic form exemplified by Dostoyevsky is polyphonic because it contains a polyphony of voices presenting different consciousnesses or points of view. The novel develops into a sort of unmerged dialogue of voices presenting their own perspective on the world. This is a whole, albeit one that includes all various voices, which intersect and interact, mutually illuminating each other and their viewpoints, potentials, biases and limitations. No individual perspective is adequate to the whole in itself, for only the concrete totality of perspectives can present the whole. In other words Dostoyevsky's novelistic language is heteroglossic and dialogic in the sense that it is incapable of rendering a single meaning.³⁹

It should be recalled that in his early essay on the novel, *The Theory of the Novel*, Lukács similarly envisions the novel as a perpetual reinvention not of the epic but of itself. Unlike other genres the novel appears as "a form in the process of becoming" as departure, as a narrative, which thematizes its own reflexivity:

Thus, the novel, in contrast to other genres whose existence resides within the finished form, appears as something in process of becoming . . . As form, the novel establishes a fluctuating yet firm balance between becoming and being; as the idea of becoming, it becomes a state. Thus the novel, by transforming itself into a normative being of becoming, surmounts itself. "The voyage is completed: the way begins." (72-73)

Lukács' early work represents a dialectics of pessimism and utopia, a philosophical pessimism in which there is no objective truth but only a subjective one. While it rejects optimism it does not exclude utopia, albeit a negative one which does not promise a

³⁹ Heteroglossia is a broader concept than polyphony, a description of speech styles in a language, especially characteristic of the novel but apparent in languages generally.

possibility of reconciliation of contradictions, or an end of suffering. It offers self-constitution without optimism, which is basically tragic because it brings about the self-destruction of the one who strives for authenticity. According to Lukács it is not the hero of the novel but the author who is the true hero, because he gives form to life. In the midst of meaningless chaos he is the one who strives for the possibility of order by means of aesthetic possibilities still open to him.

Like Bakhtin, Lukács too championed “proto-modernist” Dostoyevsky, whose social commentary could be seen as foreshadowing that representative twentieth-century condition — social crisis. At the end of *The Theory of the Novel*, Lukács looks for signs for a new beginning by referring to Dostoyevsky: “It will then be the task of historico-philosophical interpretation to decide whether we are really about to leave the age of absolute sinfulness or whether the new has no other herald but our hopes: those hopes which are signs of a world to come, still so weak that it can easily be crushed by the sterile power of the merely existent.”

Lukács later upheld the idea that works of art can provide unity, coherence, and meaning, which have been lost in most of modern life; European realism was able to create totality, that is, the all-round determining domination of the whole over the parts, that other human institutions failed to do. The category of totality was the essence of the dialectical method, which considered the process of becoming more important than what is actually changing. However, in viewing the world as structured totality Lukács’ dialectics offers a unified paradigm by which to approach a work of fiction, but at the same time imposes constraints on practitioners because structures impose their form on human beings, restricting their creative ability to transcend form.

Bakhtin did not accept these constraints of a dialectic, or structured view of reality. As a critical theorist Bakhtin was consistently mistrustful of “theoreticism” (i. e. the belief that everything can be explained through wide-ranging systems, such as Marxism or formalism), and attached importance to small, “prosaic” facts of life, favored heterologic or centrifugal forces rather than unitary, monologic and authoritarian language, thus inherently contesting homogenizing and totalitarian ideologies. The novel, for Bakhtin, uncovers the formative principle of discourse, its relationality, dialogism, neither presenting some final absolute language of truth in terms of Kantian transcendence nor merging of voices into a final authoritative voice such as that which constitutes Hegelian conceptualism. In other words Bakhtin stands at the threshold between modernism and postmodernism. Unlike modernists of his own time, but much like contemporary postmodernists, Bakhtin, rather than lamenting fragmentation, paradoxes, contradictions, provisionality, performance, instability, liminality, unpredictability or incoherence, celebrates them. He rejects rigid genre distinctions, mistrusts centrism of various kinds, closure, hierarchy of values, or undermines from within any absolutes, but rather emphasizes polyphony, hybridity, parody, bricolage, irony, and subversive playfulness.

Long before postcolonial theorists placed the writers from the margins at the center of what is now considered the “canon of world literature,” Mikhail Bakhtin, long-time internally exiled to Soviet Kazakhstan, had made claims about the distinctive and innovative qualities of novelistic discourse and appreciated in the novel giving voice to the fringes of society and mainstream culture, including the inherent multiculturalism and populist tenor of genuine creativity (DI 11-12). Bakhtin believed that novelistic discourse

thrived in the bilingual or trilingual periphery of Western (i.e. Hellenic and Helleno-Roman) culture and continued to thrive in the zones called peripheral where secular and religious cultures confront one another, and where economic asymmetries become more pronounced and strained at the marginal reaches of societies where different cultures interact and breed new forms (DI 61-63). In the Bakhtinian sense border areas — zones, countries, and cities — are not marginal to the constitution of a public sphere but rather are at the center.⁴⁰ They are certainly at the center of those at the peripheries.

Polyphonic narrative became the key articulation of modernity characterized by an increased fragmentation of individual consciousness in the West so much so that it became assumed that polyphonic novelistic discourse was created in large cosmopolitan centers of Western core cultures, while the eastern part of Europe was discarded as belated, underdeveloped and rural, so that Eastern European ethnic, regional, religious identities were assumed to have been so entrenched in their locality and tradition, their languages insufficient, that they could not have facilitated the creation of modernity either in civic society, political nations of citizenships or in culture and literature. This particularly anachronistic argument about Eastern Europe, however, overlooks the a priori situation and condition of diversity, the fact that what also existed in the area

⁴⁰ Marina Warner's dynamic principle of creation that she calls metamorphosis evokes Bakhtin in that she also asserts that art flourishes at crossroads and on borders. In *Fantastic Metamorphoses, Other Worlds: Ways of Telling the Self* she argues that "metamorphic writing" flourishes "in transitional places and at the confluence of traditions and civilizations," (18) in periods of cross-cultural fertilization and migration. The self-told in such metamorphic writing is typically fluid, hybrid and unfinalized. For Warner, this idea of metamorphic identity is preferable to that which superseded it in Western culture: the Judeo-Christian, and Freudian, concept of a unified, integral self (203). According to Warner, it is a more productive model for the relation between colonized and colonizing nations, because it emphasizes the attraction, fascination and pleasure felt on both sides in confronting otherness (20).

before the development and imposition of nation states, were not exclusive parochial and inward-turned worlds, but continuous and constantly interpenetrating, ethnically, linguistically and religiously fluid cultural identities. As a result of conditions of the area, e.g. the Polish Commonwealth, Habsburg Empire, Ottoman Empire or Russian Empire as well as Prussia (especially after the Polish partitions) were all polyethnic in nature where substantial segments of populations had “mixed” or composite identities, were in possession of several languages or speaking the official language but sharing different cultural, religious and political traditions. Nor was nation building in Central-Eastern Europe an outgrowth of inherently monological-one-dimensional, non-inclusive identities; rather there existed social and cultural affinities, customs in common resulting from inter-ethnic mutual aid and solidarity that were severed through the Euro-colonial intervention. The rich mutuality of the area’s past was dissipated within newly re-imagined national histories of exclusivist and self-contained political identities imposed (first on the German political space) from above by two major political forces: by the penetration by various stages of capital, euphemistically termed as modernization, and national ideology.

Bakhtin’s model challenges the reigning notions of literary value by calling into question discourses that augment the metropolitan West as an uncontested agent of cultural modernity against non-Western peripheries characterized as pre-modern or anti-modern or at best its passive recipients by positing the shifting, multiply positioned character of resonant, nonsynchronous ideas, thus insisting on the periphery’s creative transformative powers. As Bakhtin himself wrote in response to a questionnaire from a leading intellectual journal during the early seventies: “The most intense and productive

life of culture takes place on the boundaries of its individual areas and not in places where these areas have become enclosed in their own specificity” (qtd. in Mcleeme).

I contend that Fontane’s fiction also flourished on crossroads and boundaries and that it should be situated at a cultural flux on the borders of individual areas of Central/Eastern Europe, rather than in places which have become enclosed in their own specificity. I also argue that Fontane’s narrative fiction belongs to a specific paradigmatics of culture and literature that could appear only under certain conditions, namely — that a certain tradition of lifestyle and culture should precede them. I see Fontane’s novelistic development as the development of non-dominant literatures: such ones that by virtue of their socio-historical circumstances at the time of the social novel canon-formation, as occupying a peripheral position in relation to the centrality of the metropolitan Western core cultures and values, could not influence the formation of the literary canon within the ethno-centric discourse of the “Great Tradition” of European realism, which was associated with nation-cum-empire building state and national cultural identity, all of which were synonymous with the modernity of the urban experience. At the time Germany did not exist; instead, what was called Germany consisted of a collection of small statelets with no single national, cultural or political center. Historically, Prussia belonged to the outer eastern “Frontiers of Europe,” one of the “peripheral” countries of Europe in its traditional socio-political configuration in terms of: the lack of nation-state, the lack of industrialization and the absence of modern urbanized society. Until the second half of the nineteenth century Berlin was considered a provincial town lacking sophistication and cosmopolitanism at the edge or even beyond the pale of what was considered cultural Western Europe.

The key here is marginalization of these cultures by the powerful West (primarily British and French) European cultural establishment, and their self-conscious, and perhaps belated, paths toward cultural self-identification. Writers occupying a marginal position relative to the mainstream have often responded to this marginalization in similar ways: they were torn between cultural uniqueness and cultural inferiority. Sometimes these similarities arise from cases of direct influence of one literature on another (e.g. especially the enormous influence of German romanticism and Herderian ideas on East Central Europe that promoted a revival of cultural tradition). In other cases, the similarities arise from a common sense of cultural marginality in the wake of the spread of the Enlightenment and of a need to develop viable cultural identities in the face of that marginality, either through the development of independent nationalist identities or through engaging in dialogue with the metropolitan culture. The expansionistic cultures of Russia, Prussia and earlier Poland were themselves structured in large part by an internalized sense of belatedness and marginality but also with the notion of a mission to carry out civilizational activities within their own “barbarous” zone. Serfdom is another common trait these countries shared. Another common self perception was that of one’s own historic discontinuity and belatedness in relation to the West and viewing the past from the perspective of collective traumatization, on the one hand, and on the other the feeling of one’s spiritual and moral superiority over Western Europe. These social and political circumstances informed parallels in public discussions throughout the nineteenth century between the so-called Westernizers who were Eurocentric intellectuals and drew upon Western models as a path in national and cultural renewal in an attempt to “modernize-Westernize” their peoples and pull them into the cultural mainstream and

those others with more nationalist conceptions of independent cultural identities that would be appropriate to the special historical experience and Central Eastern European agrarian socio-economic circumstances.

This condition of being simultaneously an agent and a subject of a “doubling of consciousness” with the sense of looking at oneself through the eyes of others, which sometimes borders on the schizophrenic, seem to resonate with double-voicedness and dialogue. This dialogic nature of discussion between the vision of either pursuing cultural identities congruent with essentialist visions of the ethnic “Geist” or by countering such essentialism through exploration of the historical contingency of ethnic cultural identities has informed the dialogic nature of language and consequently the polyphonic nature of their literatures. Consequently, a commonly perceived difference of such “marginal” literatures from the dominant Western models is in the fact that their authors do not belong to any movement or tradition but rather that their uniqueness is owing to their cultural originality, their *avant la lettre* “postmodernist” characteristics such as unfinalizability, dialogism, plurality and polyphony of “fragments” of various literary genres, styles and discourses.

Searches for Fontane’s place in world literature usually entail detecting signs of the influence of the “Great European Tradition” on Fontane’s writing. The assumption is that the literary ideals and models Fontane followed were in the West. Thus Fontane’s texts have been compared with and reread through the values embedded in Western norms. Yet, the West was not always the uncontested avant-garde either in literature, or in social welfare reforms, and evidently not by the time Fontane was writing his best late novels. For instance, Imperial Germany was at least twenty years ahead of Britain in the area of

social welfare. The welfare reforms Bismarck introduced to curb the growing SPD, helped to improve the life of many ordinary Germans. Furthermore, when compared to Berlin in terms of the modern stage, Victorian London appears much more conservative. As Peter Paret observes, unlike the Londoners, the Berliners could see modern plays when the Lord Chamberlain, the official censor of theatrical performances, kept them from the London stage.⁴¹ Fontane's novels were first translated into Russian and Scandinavian. Consequently, scant or no attention is paid to the ways in which Central/Eastern European social and historical circumstances might also have informed his writing by exploring affinities in form and context between his texts and the texts of other writers from the region to see how cultures, political values and the whole way of life that result from the particular commonality of historical experience was represented in literature. So it seems that Fontane became a "Westerner" almost by default.

Both Lukács and Bakhtin contended that Dostoevsky's novels of ideas seemed to prefigure a new cultural configuration and stand out as alternatives to the Franco-British model that comes to dominate the European imagination. Bakhtin praised Dostoyevsky for appreciating the truly dialogic nature of language — and of the novel form in particular and even credits Dostoevsky for "creating" the polyphonic novel. As he wrote

Neither the hero, nor the idea, nor the very polyphonic principle for structuring a whole can be fitted into the generic and plot-compositional forms of a biographical novel, a socio-psychological novel, a novel of everyday life or a family novel, that is, into the forms dominant in the literature of Dostoevsky's time and developed by such of his contemporaries as Turgenev, Goncharov and

⁴¹ Modern naturalist plays also enjoyed Fontane's approval and support in the 1870s and 1880s. For instance, Fontane defended Henrik Ibsen, and Gerhart Hauptmann. Ibsen's play *Hedda Gabler* was premiered in Berlin in 1891. Ibsen's *Ghosts* was almost sneaked into London theater by being premiered on a semi-private stage in 1891 (Egan).

Leo Tolstoy. In comparison with those writers Dostoevsky's work clearly belongs to a completely different generic type, one quite foreign to them (101).

Fontane was interested in the plight of the young women or adolescent girls in Wilhelmine society who, brought up largely in ignorance, especially about sexuality, had to make their way in the grown-up world, and he exposed the double-standard that characterized gender relations in the Bismarckian era and restrictions preventing women from controlling their property in marriage or from securing other legal rights, or controlling their lives in general, which is why Fontane's *Effi Briest* has been traditionally compared to Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. The true nature of marriage in class society, especially the marriage arrangement, as practiced in the upper classes, between an experienced and usually older man and a formerly chaste virgin and a lifetime of sterile conventions of married life, was a constant theme Fontane shared not only with Tolstoy but also with Dostoyevsky who too showed in his novels e.g. *The Idiot*, that upper class women would have been ostracized if they had been known to have engaged in sex outside of marriage. This would allow comparison between e.g. Fontane's eponymous character Cécile and Dostoyevsky's Nastasya Filipovna, both of whom transgress social norms by coming from a poor background but being supported by a rich and important man.

However, I suggest that Fontane's writing shows an increasing shift towards the polyphonic novel and the turn to spatiality. If we assume with Bakhtin that genuine polyphony allows for "multiple systems of measurements" then we should also be able to compare different and perhaps apparently incompatible writers in order to detect complex affiliations between Dostoyevsky (1821-1881) and Fontane and to attempt to gain important insights into the "uniqueness" of Fontane's fictional style by drawing parallels

between Fyodor Dostoyevsky's and Fontane's literary mode. Moreover, the search for clues about Fontane's place in literature should also include literary intersections with other writers who sprang from a Central and Eastern European background such as for instance, Leopold von Sacher-Masoch (1836-95),⁴² Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846-1916), Boleslaw Prus (1847-1912),⁴³ or Teodor Josef Konrad Korzeniowski, (1857-1924).

Thus thinking with Bakhtin about these peripheries as dynamic and productive environments offering possibilities of thinking differently, it is possible to see that from such "marginal peripheries" interesting *avant la lettre* "postmodernist prospectives" can and do open. It is in these peripheral cultural sites where *fin-de-siècle* aestheticism coexisted with a futurist avant-garde impulse and a plethora of lore and all sorts of eastern forms of oral tradition and where perhaps more modernities, either local or imported, were imagined and expressed than in the western centers.

⁴² The question of women's emancipation was especially important at the University of Lwów (Lemberg) now Lviv in Ukraine where Masoch was a professor. With Masoch Fontane shares performativity of multiples genders in the former, and identities, in the latter. There is also a mutual interest in the local folklore and culture, e.g. Galicia and Brandenburg respectively.

⁴³ Fontane's *Die Poggenpuhls* (1896) deals with an impoverished Prussian aristocratic family, which is the topic of Boleslaw Prus's novel *Doll* (*Lalka*, 1889). *Lalka* is considered by many, including Cezslaw Milosz, as the greatest nineteenth century Polish realist novel. Set in post-insurrection Warsaw, the novel depicts a comprehensive cross-section of contemporary Polish society in transition. Prus was a keen observer of city life whose composite portrayal and minute description of everyday life of contemporary Warsaw in *The Doll*, is comparable to Fontane's description of Berlin in his novels. In other words, what Prus was for Warsaw (Warszawa), Fontane became famous for doing in his novels for Berlin. Fontane's style was impressionistic and his voice diffused much like Conrad's. They both preferred to express indirectness by using silence, void, and evasion, and their disdain of vulgar middle-class materialism found expression in their fiction.

Effi Briest's sensitivity to the historical moment, its narrative structure highlighting polyphony and its interest in representing language as dialogical, heteroglossic, multivoiced, intertextual, and intonated with the usages of the ordinary and the everyday invites Bakhtin's approach to the novel in general and to Dostoyevsky's novel in particular. In what follows, I will first trace out the conceptual framework developed by Mikhail Bakhtin, his famous concept of critical polyphonic discourse, which is closely connected to his work on Fyodor Dostoyevsky whom Bakhtin initially considered the "creator of the polyphonic novel."

The origins and dynamics of the notion of the dialogue and polyphony are closely related to the body of Bakhtin's work on Dostoyevsky, his *Problemy Poetiki Dostoevskogo* (*Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*, first published in 1929 but stretching into the 1960s).⁴⁴ The main difference from the traditional novel is that the polyphonic novel subverts the notion of an omniscient narrator and characters subordinated to the main moralistic or ideological purpose of the novel. The ideal human agent for Bakhtin is the novelist who, by means of his linguistic mastery, is able to realize his own identity by displaying the linguistic identity of others, by giving voice to the social voices in language. In other words, the greatest novelists, according to Bakhtin, are those able to manipulate others as the self.

Bakhtin begins his study by reviewing in great detail the previous critical responses to Dostoyevsky's work. He finds out that Dostoyevsky's novels are seen either as a reflection of the social reality of the time, or as deeply psychological works that reflect

⁴⁴ *Problemy tvorchestva Dostoeskogo*. Leningrad: Priboi, 1929; *Problemy Poetiki Dostoevskogo*. Moscow: Sov. pisatel, 1963.

the contradictions in Dostoyevsky's own personality. Traditional criticism approached Dostoyevsky's realism through "poetic" modes of interpretation, which revolved around the idea of unity of style and narrative voice. This approach, however, was insufficient to describe the polyphonic novel because it failed to acknowledge the dynamics of different social forces that make up the heterogeneous style of the novel. One assumption that critics made was that one or other of the characters conveyed the moral philosophy of the novel, by assuming that the author's philosophy and moralistic view were revealed through a character of his fiction. Contradictory characters and ideas in the novel, none of whom seemed to prevail morally, and different styles of speech, none of which was predominant, were traditionally explained in terms of what Bakhtin called "poetical principles of writing," which assumes that the literary text is organized around a main narrator and one point of view. While Bakhtin acknowledged that there was something in all of these explanations, nevertheless, he believed that the main principle behind Dostoyevsky's work was his style and formal structure rather than ideology and psychology. In other words, instead of "characters" Dostoyevski presented "personalities"; he discovered "a new integral view on the person" (PD 58) and realized that "personality is not subordinate to (that is, it resists) objectified cognition and reveals itself only freely and dialogically" (PD 298). To present a character is to present a stasis, while a personality is open-ended. This is because people cannot be defined nor fully understood.

Bakhtin then explains how Dostoevsky creates the polyphonic novel by presenting speaking subjects known by their voices rather than characters defined by any other features; that is, the idea of the novel, its truth, is shared within multiple and various

characters rather than a single hero by positing the author alongside the characters as one of these speaking voices, so that the author's voice, instead of controlling the discourse from above, descends into the polyphony of clashing ideologies and voices with no more authority than the voices of characters with their different views. According to Bakhtin, the characters have the same status as the author: "The character's word about himself and his world is just as fully weighted as the author's word usually is" (PD 7).

It is a well-known fact that nineteenth-century German literature has long and persistently been associated with or labeled "poetic realism." "Poetic realism" has also been ascribed to Fontane's mode of realism e.g. by critics such as Fritz Martini (1976), Klaus Detlef Müller (1981), Gabrielle Wittig-Davis (1983), and Metin Toprak (2000) among others. The term denotes the attempt to depict everyday life truthfully while "transfiguring" it poetically, but it usually serves as a label commonly associated with a pre- or proto-modernist narrative, routinely connoting a kind of realistic writing practice considered to be marginal and second-rate by comparison to the mainstream realism written in the metropolitan Western, primarily French and British tradition.

By general consensus with Auerbach and others who have followed his lead, nineteenth century German space differed/deviated from the established trends of metropolitan Europe as epitomized by the France and Great Britain as much more provincial, old fashioned, less contemporary, inwardly oriented and even belated. Such perceptions of German social and political belatedness and cultural inferiority have colored the approach and critical evaluation of Fontane's realist fiction, which prompted Martin Swales to remark, by referring to critics (such as Pascal and Stern) who consider, "der Fontanesche Realismus etwas Kleinkariertes: als sei in der Metropole Berlin die Luft

der deutschen Kleinstaaterei immer noch zu spüren” (1989: 71), by alluding to the persistent image of *Kleinstaaterei* in reading signs of German culture and identity on which such textual comparisons according to him relied. What such critics consider to be a sign of weakness of Fontane’s realism or even of his character, Swales calls Fontane’s “Halbheiten” (1989: 76) to describe his preference for double-voicedness, variety, ambiguities, contradictions, tolerance and pluralism as the key to his imagination. In other words, ambiguity Fontane’s fiction was pervaded with and aspired to – that is, the impossibility of arriving at a single simple version of the truth about any human action or experience – is what in the broadest sense good fiction should be all about.

I understand Swales’ challenge to the theoretical and evaluative priority of the “Great Tradition” in terms of critical theory initiated by Mikhail M. Bakhtin and Volosinov, who point out that language does not reflect reality in any direct way, rather language speaks about reality, engages in an evaluative discourse about it. The fundamental principle here, that the discourse of realism is not reflexive but evaluative, has opened up the possibility to develop a new theory of realism which displaces the terms of the realist debate by shifting the focus away from the vexed questions of veracity and empirical reality to textuality and the discursive function of realism.

However, while Swales argues for an acknowledgement of a different German realist tradition not in terms of its inferior deviancy from the established norm, but of its parallel co-existence as an equally legitimate European tradition, he nevertheless still remains confined within the disciplinary constraints of an ethnocentric canon, which privileges certain aspects and a certain culture rather than displacing hierarchy altogether, and the standardized tradition of evaluating cultural production. He thereby forecloses on

the possibilities he offers (namely that the canon is a process, always becoming, always changing and never stable) by upholding rather than going beyond debilitating binaries and value hierarchies, because his essentially apologetic posture leaves canonical criteria firmly in place.

Consequently, Swales' comparative framework seems to confirm a commonplace assumption that literary theory and the literary norm are a metropolitan enterprise, where the metropolitan is always articulated in terms of some form of establishment (and masculine too), and that its non-metropolitan (feminized) forms therefore require sponsorship and integration into the metropolitan culture. While the cultural horizons of such a conceived metropolitan Europe are narrowly and parochially defined they also tend to be universal by continuing to exert the hegemony of Western/ metropolitan cultural ideals and norms. The late-nineteenth century metropolitan centers were not only large cities as part of the urban/rural mapping of national space, but as capital cities of home nations they were at the same time the center of a nation and empire, whose political superiority over their imperial subjects was expressed in their external symbols.

I would rather agree with Bakhtin that canon has no place in the study of the history of the novel, since the novel is inherently anticanonical, inconclusive, self-reflexive and constantly reinventing itself and pushing the limits of its constraints. Bakhtin's open hermeneutics allow for a heterogeneous approach to *Effi Briest* as a complex and multilayered narrative and for an interpretation of Fontane's dialogic art which goes far beyond "half seriousness of pleasant, partly optimistic, partly resigned conversation" as Erich Auerbach characterized it (*Mimesis* 519)." Rather than simply recounting parlor debates of the rich and noble, it explores the lives of real people, the conflicts of cultures

and classes where it employs the heteroglossia (literally multiple tongues) of these conflicts that Mikhail Bakhtin described. Fontane's novelistic mode truly demonstrates Bakhtinian dialogism in the novel as a composite of different discourses attributed to different voices and "languages," which participate in discourse and are especially evident at times of socio-historic changes. In fact, by following Bakhtin's approach what has traditionally been dismissed as the poetics of pre-modernist narrative mode may surprisingly reveal itself as *avant la lettre* post modernism.

Another recurrent theme in *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics* is that "the epoch itself made the polyphonic novel possible." For Bakhtin, the novel thrives precisely during periods of dramatic change when certainties are being undermined and the old ideologies and hierarchies are called into question. This, Bakhtin thinks, is true in the sense that "the multi-leveledness and contradictoriness of social reality was present as an objective fact of the epoch" (PD 27).

Historically the Russian novelistic mode of expression was in the form of the confessional monologue of the self-reflexive, upper-class protagonist, often an anti-heroical and superfluous man, an ambivalent and irresolute character who habitually engages in chances of fate such as gambling and dueling.⁴⁵ The German novel was similarly inward oriented and self-reflexive. While these characteristics are often taken to be the reason why German-language fiction failed to make an impact in Western Europe, Flaubert had already in 1850 begun to complain that French realists lacked a comprehension of the inner life, of the soul of things. It was this comprehension of the

⁴⁵ Mikhail Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time*, (1838), Ivan Tugenev's *The Diary of a Superfluous Man* (1850), and Ivan Goncarov's *Oblamov* (1859) became classic literary expressions of a peculiarly modern unhappy self-consciousness.

inner life that enabled both Dostoyevsky and Fontane to extend the horizon of the realist tradition, which they had inherited. Fontane, for instance, perceived clearly that the inner truth of a novel must come from life itself.

Dostoyevsky lived and wrote during the time of dramatic changes in Russia. The onset of capitalism and the reforms of the tsars, especially the abolition of serfdom in 1861 and the beginning of industrialization dramatically changed the social landscape of Russia. Many historians regard the emancipation of over twenty million serfs as the key moment in which Russia moved from a feudal society to a capitalist one. One of the major effects of these reforms was a greatly destabilized class system by weakening the upper classes and benefiting the professional middle classes. As Bakhtin suggested, monologism consolidated by the rationalism of the Enlightenment was undergoing a crisis in capitalist modernity, which he saw marked by the healthy but unsettling process of opening up of various fields of life. Thus he wrote:

At some earlier time those worlds, whose planes – social, cultural, and ideological – which collide on Dostoevsky’s work were each self-sufficient, organically sealed and stable; each made sense internally as an isolated unit. There was no real-life, material plane of essential contact or interpenetration with one another. Capitalism destroyed the isolation of the worlds, broke down the seclusion and inner ideological self-sufficiency of these social spheres. (PD 19)

Bakhtin stressed the particular propitiousness of Russian conditions by tracing polyphony to Dostoyevsky’s experience of the socio-economic conditions of crisis and uncertainties caused by the dynamics of capitalist modernization. Thus he regarded the aporias of the modern cities on the periphery of the Western core societies and saw capitalist modernity, the shift in cultural gravity from the land to the city, as the most potent feature in the social environment of Dostoyevsky’s polyphonic novels.

The polyphonic novel could indeed have been realized only in the capitalist era. The most favorable soil for it was moreover precisely in Russia, where capitalism set in almost catastrophically, and where it came upon an untouched multitude of diverse worlds and social groups which had not been weakened in their individual isolation, as in the West, by the gradual encroachment of capitalism . . . in this way objective preconditions were created for the multi-levelledness of multi-voicedness of the polyphonic novel. (PD 19-20)

Historically, Prussia (like Russia and Poland), especially the Eastern Elbian regions, where Berlin is also situated, was a rural country of landlords, serfs and small peasants, and marked by traditional way of life of estates, small towns, villages, relatively less metropolitanized as compared to the West until the second half of the nineteenth century, when the rapid expansion of industrialized capitalism increased the tempo of work, travel, communication and mandated dramatic changes, discontinuities and socio-economic dislocation and refractions. All that contributed to a new sense – one of the hallmarks of modernity – that life was changing at an accelerated and unpredictable pace, fostering uncertainties and anxieties. If we are to concur with Bakhtin's genesis of polyphonic dialogism as a result of capitalist modernity, then his paradigm of Dostoyevsky's Russia can be transposed to Fontane's Prussia, fostering a deep sense of unease and new possibilities.

The following description of Dostoyevsky by Bakhtin could apply to Fontane too:

The epoch itself made the polyphonic novel possible. *Subjectively* Dostoevsky participated in the contradictory multi-levelledness of his own time: he changed camps, moved from one to another, and in this respect the planes existing in objective social life were for him stages along the part in his own life, stages of his own spiritual evolution. This personal experience was profound, but Dostoevsky did not give it direct monologic expression in his work. This experience only helped him to understand more deeply the extensive and well-developed contradictions which existed among people – among people, not among ideas in a single consciousness. Thus the objective contradictions of the epoch did determine Dostoevsky's creative work – although not at the level of some personal surmounting of contradictions in the history of his own spirit, but

rather at the level of an objective visualization of contradictions as forces coexisting simultaneously (PD 27).

Fontane was Dostoyevsky's contemporary, who also witnessed in his lifetime Prussia undergoing a similarly profound process of transformation in the face of rapid industrialization, the dying estate, country-to-city migrations which was structurally comparable to the Russian case.

The rapid industrialization and commodification Germany was going through was bringing the breakdown of the landowning aristocratic Prussia along with it. Since it was no longer economically viable to simply maintain an estate in the countryside one needed to develop it, turn it to more productive use. Prussian (like Russian, Austro-Hungarian or Polish) narratives deal with aristocratic families who fall on hard times and are forced to sell off their properties. The traditional structures of authority founded on ossified values and traditions of the aristocracy were being challenged by bourgeois and working-class claims to economic, cultural, and political ascendancy. These transformations spurred Fontane's interest in the Junker class, which parallels similar preoccupation with the landowning superfluous class in Russia, Poland, or Austria-Hungary.

Hence, *Effi Briest's* sensitivity to its historic moment, or in Bakhtin's terms, for the chronotope of change in Prussia during the relatively short period of a couple of decades following the unification. The so-called *Gründerzeit* with its intense financial speculation of the "promoters" in which universal ambition — everyone was aiming high — was the signature of the time, ended in the stock market crash of 1873 that ushered in a six-year world depression (until 1879) and uncertain times of widespread unemployment with thousands losing their livelihoods, mass emigration, migration, radical nationalism and xenophobia. This turbulent transition made itself felt by everyone in Prussia/Germany,

one way or the other. On the one hand, many Germans were marked by a deep break, discontinuity and insecurity, on the other, such circumstances triggered the onset of powerful business concentration in the world divided into imperial spheres of interests of several great powers competing with one another. Fontane's depiction of the lassitude which resulted from the loss of a sense of inseparateness of history and place, or of an experience of rootedness in time and living communities, also gives an insight into eastern reaches of Europe heralding a new type of men from the East.

Bakhtin considered that characters' thoughts are both internally and externally dialogic. In other words voices are not only conflicting but also dialogic, internally riven by contradictions, polemics and struggle, making them double-voiced, while external dialogism means that a character's thought "lives a tense life on the borders of someone else's thought, someone else's consciousness" (DI 55). Fontane himself is a prime instance for what Bakhtin calls "internally polemical discourse" or "internal contradictions" or that the authentic consciousness can be revealed only by presenting the interaction of at least two voices – as Fontane expresses in a letter to his father of October 19, 1856, that "after every positive utterance the opposite automatically appears in his mind."

In other words, the Bakhtinian fundamental concept of the "self" as dialogic is also true of Fontane, who also celebrates the diversity and complexity (contradictoriness and ambiguity) of human character, such as that epitomized in Fontane's hybrid identity and in many of his characters, demonstrates that there is no bounded coherence to the subject – the I is dialectic and the passing over into the opposite statement is dialogic. This is certainly contrary to the essentialist and transhistorical notions of nation, identity, race

mobilized by the dominant social discourse on national identity in the war against the others in the early years of the Second Empire.

According to Bakhtin internal dialogism had enormous power to shape style (DI 279). The dual or polyphonic nature of the narrative consciousness together with dramatization of a network of voices and narratives Fontane shares with Dostoyevsky's (and Conrad's) writing can be explained in terms of the Bakhtinian notion of novelistic hybridization and dialogism as realism sprung out at the intersection of the different tongues and multicultural background these authors come from. A similar dialogical principle Fontane achieves with some of his most memorable characters, such as Dubslav von Stechlin considered one of his arguably most likable characters. Stechlin remarks in the opening chapter of the eponymous novel: "Unanfechtbare Wahrheiten gibt es überhaupt nicht, und wenn es welche gibt, so sind sie langweilig." He thus begins a dialogue with himself by internalizing various alien discourses in a process of self-enrichment and, only on the basis of this, with others.

Duality on both the structural and narrative plane is a consistent pattern in Fontane's fiction. The dual voice, characteristic of Fontane's narrative structure, with its ample reliance on irony, promotes dialogic context, whereby confrontation and contradiction combine productively, undermining resolution and closure as well as a single reading. This dialectical nature of the narrative consciousness is often reflected in Fontane's celebration of Janus-face ambiguity and ambivalence either as a doubled self embodied in two different persons – antithetical pairs like Pastor Seidentopf and attorney Turgany, Dubslav and his half-sister Domina, Innstetten and Crampas, Thora and Cora, or doubling like the twins, Hertha and Bertha, or embodied in one, by using linguistically

antithetical names to express these hybrid-dialectical identities such as Dubslav von Stechlin, the compound of Slav and German, Alonso Gieshübler (Spanish and German), or Niels Wischowitz, Crampas and Golchowski (half Polish), or the duality reflected in the cheek-bones of Frau von Padden. Frau Briest also disapproves of her husbands “beständigen Zweideutigkeiten” (*Effi Briest* 295).

Finally, Effi Briest herself is a complex character, a multi-faceted personality. In the introductory description, the narrator passes this judgement about Effi: “In allem was sie tat, paarte sich Übermut und Grazie, während ihre lachenden braunen Augen eine große, natürliche Klugheit und viel Lebenslust und Herzengüte verrieten“ (8).⁴⁶ Later on she is described as at once naturally robust and graceful, vigorous and weak: “Denn so weich und nachgiebig sie ist, sie hat auch was Rabiates und lässt es auf alles ankommen.“ On the one hand Effi is a child of nature, on the other, she adheres to all the values of her class and is a declared social climber. Frau von Briest sums up her daughter as “überhaupt ein ganz eigenes Gemisch” to point out complexities and contradictions that mix and shape Effi's multi-faceted personality.

Bakhtin’s notion of the novel as polyphonic or heteroglossic generic form comes closest to reflecting the state of language in society and opens up the textual field to plurality of voices.⁴⁷ In order to understand the meaning in which Bakhtin referred to novel as the polyphonic (or dialogic) it is necessary to understand the related concept of

⁴⁶ “Grace and careless abandon were combined in everything she did, while her laughing brown eyes revealed much good sense, a great zest for life and kindness of heart.”

⁴⁷ Mikhail Bakhtin’s notions of polyphony or heteroglossia inspired the polyphonic ethnographic writing developed by Michel Leiris, which was in turn a precursor to the ethnographic practice represented by James Clifford now known as “postcolonial.”

heteroglossia, which Bakhtin used to stress the multi-layered nature of language. In other words, heteroglossia refers to the way in which meaning is produced by discourse through the use of a social diversity of speech types.

This is also what Fontane intended to achieve in his narratives when he wrote that he wanted “die Menschen *so* sprechen zu lassen, wie sie *wirklich* sprechen“ (a letter to his daughter Martha of August 24, 1882, *Werke* 3: 206). Varieties of speech genres found in *Effi Briest* include the speech of characters such as, imperial administrators, reserve and military officers, parsons, cantors, village teachers, lawyers, physicians, landowners, young women, servants, an opera singer, an apothecary etc, who engage in the enactment of scenes from plays, life narratives, story-telling, gossip, polite conversation, courtship, proverbs, songs, professional, sermon-like and political discourse.

Not only are there social dialects, professional jargons, or passing fashions, etc., but also socio-ideological contradictions of both the contemporary moment as well as carried forward from various periods and levels in the past. Language is not a neutral medium that can be simply appropriated by a speaker, but something that comes to us populated with the intentions of others. Every word tastes of the contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life. For instance *Effi Briest* focuses on the recurrent themes of duel, honor, betrayal and guilt and psychological torment or charade between the representatives of law and order (Innstetten) and other protagonists that belongs to the common literary tradition of Central and Eastern Europe and is explored by Dostoyevsky, notably, in *Crime and Punishment* (1866/1886) and Conrad's, *Under Western Eyes* (1911). Innstetten, a zealous upholder of tradition, enforcer of state laws and dueling

honor, and stabilizer of identity immediately comes to mind both as a tormenting educator of his inferiors and his young wife as well as a judge and executioner of law.

It is no wonder that many certainties became upset, taboos broken and boundaries transgressed in this process of change in Germany's and Russia's "turn of the century condition." It is thus interesting to compare apparently different characters such as Fontane's protagonist Effi Briest and Dostoyevsky's character from *Crime and Punishment*, Raskolnikov, who nevertheless have in common complex characters with multifaceted personalities but who are in denial about their moral and human complexity. Raskolnikov is described by Philip Rahv as a criminal in search of his motive (20). In his confession to Sonia he reveals: I wanted *to have the daring . . .* and I killed her. I only wanted to have the daring Sonia! That was the whole cause of it" (352). Raskolnikov's rationale for committing crime and Effi's motives for committing adultery are similarly linked to the idea of their *daring*, their willingness to transgress the boundaries. In both cases the punishment that society metes out to them for their crimes is an anti-climax. Also, both novels deal with murder, differently motivated, and executed, to be sure, but nevertheless the novels explore the moral and ethical motivation for taking another person's life.

Crampas' behavior is similarly described by Innstetten as motivated by an overbearing daring that threatens individual existence. According to Innstetten Crampas is unreliable since he is different, namely, half-Polish and "Eine Spielernatur. Er spielt nicht am Spieltisch, aber er hassardiert im Leben in einem fort und man muß ihm auf die Fingersehen (EB 147).⁴⁸ Crampas, however, sees through the game Innstetten plays of

⁴⁸ He's a gambler. Not at the gaming table, but he gambles his way through life.

using ghost stories as putting up an act because such idiosyncrasies assert his power over others and can advance his military career (131). Both Crampas and Effi are characterized with reference to the same adage “Hochmut kommt vor dem Fall” (155)⁴⁹ to describe their overbearing daring, the thrill of danger, enticement to break the existing social norms, that tendency to promote one’s own demise and destruction which threatens their very existence.

However, the prime example of feeling possessed (or being possessed) by an idea is demonstrated in the scene where Innstetten explains why he must challenge Crampas in a duel: “Man ist nicht bloß ein einzelner Mensch, man gehört einem Ganzen an, und auf das Ganze haben wir beständig Rücksicht zu nehmen, wir sind durchaus abhängig von ihm” (EB 235).⁵⁰ As Bakhtin writes: “Every experience, every thought of a character is internally dialogic, adorned with polemic, filled with struggle, or is on the contrary open to inspiration from outside itself – but it is not in any case concentrated simply on its own object; it is accompanied by a continual sideways glance at another person” (PD 32). Innstetten’s self-righteousness comes from an ideal of following strict codes, thus he seeks council/conformation for his actions from his likeminded colleague Wüllersdorf, who agrees with him: “Ich finde es furchtbar, daß Sie recht haben, aber Sie *haben* recht . .

⁴⁹ “Pride comes before the fall.”

⁵⁰ “We’re not just individuals, we’re part of a larger whole and we must constantly have regard for that larger whole, we’re dependent on it, beyond a doubt.”

. [U]nser Ehrenkultus ist ein Götzendienst, aber wir müssen uns ihm unterwerfen, solange der Götze gilt“ (EB 237).⁵¹

Fontane throws critical light on Innstetten’s restraining, calculating rationalism and moral principles and their limitations as a means to understanding and dealing with existence in a changing world. While, on the one hand, Innstetten places high value on rationality at the expense of his inner being and his spirituality, on the other, he falls short before universal humanity, based on love, compassion and forgiveness and has little qualms about undertaking an ethical or non-ethical deed with respect to the Biblical command: “Thou shalt not kill your fellow being in thought or dead.” Even though he feels neither hatred, nor desire for revenge, the usual pretexts for a duel, but executes another human being and discards Effi with cold-blooded efficiency out of a self-imposed obligation to his caste/tribe and out of his extreme dependence of the opinion of others.

Effi Briest presents many examples of multiple autonomous voices: from Junkers through middle-class professionals to servants. While the aristocrats display their dynastic status, middle-class hold on to self-respect for their own class, profession or values as illustrated by the apothecary Gieshübler, Cantor Jahnke, Pastor Niemeyer and the father and daughter Tripell/Trippelli. The sophisticated, ambitious and cosmopolitan singer Marietta Trippelli, who herself comes from an enlightened middle-class pastor’s family, breaches social norms, both in her private and professional life, without impunity (e.g. at their first meeting she addresses Effi informally: “Du bist die Baronin Innstetten, ich bin die Trippelli” 90). Her father, Pastor Trippel, is attacked by his bigoted

⁵¹ “I find it terrible that you’re right, but you are right . . . this cult of honour of ours is a form of idolatry, but as long as we have idols we have to worship them.”

parishioners when he demonstrates real humanity by insisting that Captain Thompsen's Chinese servant deserves to be buried in the Christian cemetery just like anybody else.

Effi is also fond of fairy-tales which have lived obscurely in the folk, transmitted through generations of illiterate people held in subjection and in loyal allegiance to their masters (Roswitha for one), but the ideals to which they give expression still are those of that quasi anarchic life from the pagan ages, despite their fairly complete revision by Christianity in all that relates to the religious cult. Roswitha is a testimony that the preservation of folklore of the archaic type has been the work of the submerged classes and peoples. Significant for storytelling is both the story itself and an allegory of the age-old, everlasting popular struggle against subjugation.

Bakhtin was interested in literary structure such as the dialogic mode and the uses of language in prose writings, particularly in subversive novel within historic traditions. He emphasized the complexities of the novelistic genre and compared the novel with a musical score where different instruments united by some general purpose play their own individual parts. The term that describes the dialogic nature of the novel is polyphony, a concept derived from music, or dialogism as such. Yet his field of inquiry extends well beyond formalist concerns both in scope and form as he researched not only literary language, but also other socio-ideological forms of expression, such as the carnivalesque one, on a wide range of literature from antiquity onwards. In his seminal *Rabelais and his World*, Bakhtin writes, "Carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions" (10). As a musical metaphor polyphony refers to the co-presence of individual but interconnected voices. Bakhtin considered the roots of

polyphony to be in a carnival tradition, which is similarly framed by dialogism through which the expressive, random, individual viewpoint is expressed. An exemplary illustration for this is Robert Schumann's Carnival Piano piece (Op. 9. 1834/35), an interesting polyphonic crossover between different genres, a fusion of the literary idea with its musical illustration from Romantic Germany. It is a work for solo piano (but also arranged by Ravel for orchestra) consisting of short pieces, each given a title, representing masked revelers at Carnival. Schumann opened up a carnivalesque dialogic space for different voices by giving musical expression to himself, his friends, other musicians, characters appearing in his critical writings, characters from improvised Italian comedy (*commedia dell' arte*) as well as the march of Davidsbünder-truth seekers against the clamor of falsehood embodied by Philistines.

Bakhtin's celebration of the "joyously ambivalent carnivalesque" mode in Rabelais' writing referring to the life conditions and the constraints under an authoritarian state can also be demonstrated to serve similar purposes in Fontane's narrative. Thus in the Hohen-Cremmen part of *Effi Briest*, the Prussian educated middle classes are expected to be respectful of and subservient to their hereditary superiors and patrons and in agreement with the well-ordered authoritarian principles according to which life was conducted even as late as the end of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, they do not display the distressful servility of denigrating themselves to them.

In *Effi Briest* the petty bourgeoisie is shown to be oscillating between conformism and "anarchistic" leftism. As Marx pointed out, petty-bourgeois ideology theoretically sums up the everyday notions of the petty bourgeoisie. In other words it does not rise above class prejudices. Unlike Roswitha, Pastor Niemeyer's wife shows open resentment

towards the nobility's ways. Though such views seem to be undermined by being ascribed to her lack of breeding and education, bespeaking her working-class background as a former housekeeper, her apparently ill-disposed attitude towards Effi's rushed betrothal turns out to a shrewd judgment: "Ja, ja, so geht es. Natürlich. Wenn's die Mutter nicht sein konnte, muß es die Tochter sein . . . Alte Familien halten immer zusammen, und wo was ist, kommt was dazu"(20).⁵² Given Niemeyer's vocation, one would expect from a man in his position as an ideologue of the existing social order to do little more than just feel embarrassed by his wife's ill-mannered behavior and sharp tongue. Yet, he makes no attempt to suppress them. Niemeyer is described by Frau Briest, who prefers monologic discourse, as a poor educator because he questions everything ("Denn Niemeyer ist doch eigentlich eine Null, weil er alles in Zweifel läßt" (295).⁵³ Thus, unsurprisingly, it is the Niemeyers' upward striving daughter who disobeys conventional class norms. Her fascination with dashing officers in a society pervaded by military and aristocratic models is disapproved of by society proper even though Effi's is encouraged to do so. In the eyes of nobility Hulda's behavior is inappropriate because she is seen to be aping the manners of aristocracy (her manners are more lady-like and seemingly less proper) than those of her twin friends, which is why Effi considers her conceited ("eingebildet") and vain. While Effi is fascinated by "blondness" and believes that men prefer pretty blonds like Hulda, her parents know that in reality in a society that upholds strict class/caste distinctions few ambitious young officers would breach the

⁵² "Yes, well, that's the way of it, of course. If it couldn't be the mother it will have to be the daughter. We've seen it all before. Old families stick together, and to those that have shall be given."

⁵³ "For Niemeyer is really useless, because he leaves everything open to doubt."

strict code and jeopardize their military career by entering into a romantic marriage alliance with a girl below their social standing. The military-landowning circles to which Effi and the officers belong wish to see particular patterns of reproduction, regardless of the desires of those involved.

Others are shown to resort to subversion in the carnivalesque mood as manifested in the amateur theatricals on the occasion of Effi's marriage. While in normal circumstances society is ruled and controlled by established hierarchies, amateur theatricals may offer a venue for the subordinates' discontent, contestation and momentary release from the strictures of the established order. It also involves transgression of social norms, subversion of established hierarchies: so that the village pastor's daughter turns into a princess. Pastor Niemeyer's subversive enactment of the "Holunderbaumszene" from Kleist's *Käthchen von Heibronn* – well-known for its title heroine who voluntarily endures every ill treatment and every disgrace which the loved one heaps upon her – on the eve of Effi's wedding in which Hulda appears in the role of Käthchen is in carnivalesque mood and has the effect of parody. Niemeyer's choice for rendering the scene in Kleist's play, in which female subordination is underlined by the phrase "mein hoher Herr," is an obvious comment on the pending marriage between unequal partners⁵⁴ which does not fail to produce its intended effect on Briest, who protests "Hoher Herr und immer wieder Hoher Herr" and indignantly complains to his wife: "Ich will nicht, das eine Briest oder doch wenigstens eine Polterabendfigur, in der jeder das Widerspiel unserer Effi erkennen muß – ich will nicht, das eine Briest mittelbar oder unmittelbar in

⁵⁴ It is also a comment on contemporary German family law, which ensured that a wife is always dependent on her husband by taking the marriage vow: "And he shall be thy Lord."

einem fort von, 'Hoher Herr' spricht. Da müßte denn doch Innstetten wenigstens ein verkappter Hohenzoller sein, es gibt ja dergleichen. Das ist er aber nicht, und so kann ich nur wiederholen, es verschiebt die Situation." (26).⁵⁵

Von Briest resents Jahnke's and Pastor Niemeyer's deference to Innstetten in respect of his ancient nobility (*Uradel*) stemming from the Holy Roman Empire, and as such recognized as being of equal birth to the ruling families. Since the *Uradel* provided an invaluable pool of potential marriage partners and candidates for lesser or newly established thrones in Europe, Innstetten's match with the local newer nobility could be considered below his standing. At the same time Briest considers that the state and society owes him for his historic name. Briest's strong sense of family pride, boasting of a lineage deserving of national history, makes up for his inferior social status, and makes him morally superior to the ancient but undistinguished nobility. Thus Briest complains: "Wir sind doch nun mal eine historische Familie . . . und die Innstettens sind es *nicht*; die Innstettens sind bloß alt, meinetwegen Uradel, aber was heist Uradel" (26). Even as Baroness Innstetten, Effi insists on being taken seriously on her own ancestral merits as in the scene of her introduction of herself to the Kessin apothecary Gieshübler shows.

Dialogism also highlights the notion that all representations of the real are constructs, and it especially encourages skepticism regarding common hegemonies and one-dimensional myths. In the words of Fontane's protagonist from *L'Adultera*, Ebenezer Rubehn, this is one of the "Durchschnittsheldengeschichte," or family myths: "Es ist das

⁵⁵ I don't want a Briest, or at least a character in a Wedding Eve sketch in whom everybody is bound to see a reflection of our Effi – I don't want a Briest constantly going on, directly or indirectly, about her lord and master. Innstetten would have to be a Hohenzollern in disguise, at the very least, and there are such things. But he's not one of them, so I can only repeat, it's a distortion of the situation."

Traurigste in der Welt, immer wieder eine Durchschnittsheldengeschichte von zweifelhaftem Wert und noch zweifelhafterer Wahrheit hören zu müssen” (*Werke* 3: 153). In a letter to his friend James Morris of January 31, 1896, Fontane similarly expressed his critical views of military heroism: “Abgesehen von dem Entsetzlichen jedes Krieges, stehe ich außerdem noch allem Heldentum sehr kritisch gegenüber” (*Werke* 4: 529).

The amateur theatricals in *Kessin with Effi* in the leading role offers Effi temporary escape from the stultifying atmosphere of her marriage and the strictures of society as well as opportunity to express her corporeal and sensual aspects and creative potential (she shares with Crampas similar enthusiasm for the body culture). Indeed, the conflation and mixing of diverse elements and distinct realms — what Bakhtin calls “misalliances,” a transgressive promiscuity — is also at the heart of carnival. In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin writes: “Carnival brings together, unifies, weds, and combines the sacred with the profane, the lofty with the low, the great with the insignificant” (123). In this respect Effi’s mismatched marriage with Innstetten could also be qualified as carnivalesque. The irony is in the fact that whereas the Brieists disapprove of Hulda's brazen behavior and aspirations of marrying an officer above her class, they, at the same time, arrange their daughter’s obvious marriage misalliance. What Brieists cannot see is that the miss-match and inequality between the future husband and wife implies much more than just social status, and that they are sacrificing the private happiness of their daughter by placing so much emphasis on the historical ties, status and obligations that bind them.

Another apt example for the carnivalesque mood, which invokes body and bodily functions, is Fontane's depiction of Sidonie Grassenab preaching restraint, while stuffing herself with roast beef: "Das Fleisch ist schwach, gewiß; aber . . . In diesem Augenblicke kam ein englisches Roastbeef, vom dem Sidonie ziemlich ausgiebig nahm . . ." (153).⁵⁶ The effect produced is a grotesque mix of high and low, religious crusading zeal and gluttony. Finally Fontane's celebration of "imperfect" body and mind is obvious from his characterization of Gieshübler, a Kessiner apothecary, a somewhat bizarre looking eccentric with a hunchback as well as with Crampas' shortened hand (which does not repel Effi) as well as Frau Kruse's mysterious metal condition.

The significance of *Effi Briest*'s dialogism is profound. Just as Bakhtin sees language as a field of ideological struggle in which different voices participate, so too Fontane's dialogues are always used to suggest that everyone's point of view is fictional or/and ideological, and the language of his narrative asserts the dialogic nature of his fiction. Looking at Fontane's text dialogically, it can be said that ideology provides a large part of the vocabulary of people's social language and fair amount of its syntax.

Bakhtin situates ideological struggles in which different voices participate in language, in heteroglossia. The central idea of this dialogue of voices, representing social classes, gender positions, the oppressed and the oppressor is shaped as they come into contact, collide with one another and thus transform themselves. Some among them are dominant and totalitarian discourses, called monoglossias, which tend to suppress other

⁵⁶ "Active intervention my dear Pastor, discipline. The flesh is weak of course, but . . . At that moment English roast beef appeared and Sydonie took a generous helping. . . "

voices, thus sacrificing the multifacetedness of truth. While language may be saturated with ideology, it never represents the one, monolithic viewpoint.

Fontane's working class character, the simple servant Roswitha, challenges not only the dominant Evangelical Protestant ideology but also exposes the reification and hypocritical morality of both the Prussian middle classes and nobility on many different issues. Her famous letter is notable in its display of superior humanity and conviction of character, which even Innstetten acknowledges and praises. Otherwise, Roswitha challenges linguistic conventions of the frigidly dry and polite discourses by exposing their meaningless artificiality.

Moreover, Bakhtin's observation that both reification and monologism override the multiplicity of human experience and difference by the imposition of views maintained by different types of authoritarian forces is also reflected in Fontane's fictional approach. Thus, for instance, when spoken with conviction (Innstetten) or when taken up in a spirit of political opportunity (Golchowski and Crampas on Bismarck and Innstetten, respectively), the unreflexiveness of monoglossia does not offer an insight into the irony of the contradictory discourse; when put in the mouth of Fontane's fictional characters in dialogue or quoted polyphonically, the ironies are resonant and speak from and to urgent yet lasting wants.

In "Discourse in the Novel," Bakhtin proposes that "the most fundamental organizing idea in the novel" is that of "testing" a character's discourse as he or she develops through dialogic interaction (DI 388). An excellent example for the connection between reification and the dialogue as monologism is made apparent in the conversation between Innstetten and his friend and his colleague Wüllersdorf before the duel and

divorce in chapter twenty-seven. By letting one voice prevail other points of view are silenced and thereby the multifacedness of truth is destroyed. Within this frame of reference, Effi Briest is a victim of society, but so are Innstetten and her parents in sacrificing her, since Fontane shows that all members of society being exposed to the reification of monologism suffer their unavoidably negative effects. As a result one is nudged to question any monologic truth and this reinforces distrust towards any authoritative formulation. While monoglossia in the novel, according to Bakhtin, prevents literature from doing justice to the multiplicity of human existence and to otherness, dialogue is a true remedy against reification/ monoglossia and the only practice which precludes an objectifying finalization of the other. A similar idea is reflected in Fontane's discursive practice that gives cogency to contradiction and ambiguity, supported by a narrative viewpoint which does not provide clear-cut answers and single definitions, for which he has been accused of having no political backbone.

Bakhtin observed that novelistic hybridization “is not only (in fact not so much) the mixing of linguistic forms . . . as it is the collision between differing points of view on the world that are embedded in these forms” (DI 360-61) As important as Fontane’s famous dialogue is also his intricate style of the thousand *Finessen*, of which he himself speaks to describe the subtlety of his technique. Fontane’s intricate devices and subtly conceived style which further ensure plural vision are masterfully exemplified in *Effi Briest*, a text compiled of heteroglossic forms, encompassing dialogues, internal monologue, letters, second-hand commentary, literary references, political diatribes and speeches, folk and ghost-story telling, anecdotes, proverbs, songs, poems, newspaper news, gossip, songs, irony, omissions, allusions, hints, generalizations, motifs, metaphors, pseudo-scientific

truths, medical jargon, stereotypes, appeals to common sense, a dream and an open postscript addressed to the reader.

Fontane's writing anticipated many concerns of modernist, deconstructionalist, and postmodernist writing, most notably that of the viewpoint. In *Effi Briest* at the heart of the novel is the novel's eponymous protagonist whose character and conduct contributes to ambiguity of the story, which arises from the conflict of contradiction. The conscience of his protagonists is often represented in free indirect speech or through direct interaction with others. For Bakhtin this fusion between author's and protagonists' discourse through free indirect speech and what he called doubly oriented speech is constitutive of a novel as for instance in the already mentioned description of Hulda (in chapter one). Is it Effi or the narrator who utters the opinion about Hulda (i.e. that she is not much endowed, apart from her admirable "blond beauty," albeit marred by her protruding and stupid eyes). Is it seen in the context of the aspirations of the rising middle class? Or could it be understood that she aspires to rising up in society in which she would enjoy – by no merit on her own part, and with neither a title, nor wealth nor connections — the prestige of belonging to what would soon be called the "Aryan master race?" The narrator seldom speaks in a clearly distinct voice of his own, from above (as an omniscient narrator) but rather rapidly shifts perspective on the level of his characters and shows us now what Effi is thinking/uttering, now what her parents are uttering about her, now what Cantor Jahnke is thinking of Frau Briest's Belling Family or what his wife is thinking of the upper classes to which they belong, or what Innstetten is thinking of others and others of him, or what he thinks of Crampas. This fluid, flexible handling of point of view allows a

variety of subject positions to be articulated in the text without any obvious determination in favor of anyone of them.

Bakhtin's concept of unfinalizability, the idea that in dialogic prose the world appears as an unfinalizable, open, creative space is also demonstrable in *Effi Briest*. What makes *Effi Briest* dialogic or polyphonic in both the ideological as well as in a purely formal or compositional sense (for instance the use of direct speech) is that the narrator almost never delivers a final judgment on the conversation of its protagonists. The issues that are raised in the novel are neither resolved nor contained within its boundaries; it is thus open-ended. Thus the conversation between Effi's parents at the end of the novel is not a closing but rather an open, ongoing statement. *Effi Briest* literally ends in a dialogue between Effi's parents, but even though the novel itself formally ends at that point, the dialogue (with the audience) still continues. The dialogic nature of narrative consciousness and polyphony disrupts the unified narrative (monoglossia) and cultural hegemony disclosing social constructions of meaning and the ambivalences within these constructions.

Furthermore, within Fontane's heterotopic fictional paradigm his dialogic techniques become productive fictional strategies to engage imperialist practices by questioning the relationships between local specificities, heterogeneity and difference across a range of geographic, linguistic and cultural environments within the German Empire, thus exposing the fictitiousness of a homogenous collectivity by explicitly undermining imperialism's monologic grandiloquence, by encouraging the reader to examine the construction of "proper German" values. It is this possibility of transformative dialogue and polyphony that enables them to disrupt the exclusionary

binary logic upon which discourses of colonialism, nationalism and patriarchy depend. Both polyphony and heterotopia debunk humanism and universalism as parochial, and they offer a position from which texts can be read in the light of what they exclude and repress.

Whereas in *Effi Briest* Fontane struggles to bring into coherent relation his nostalgia for an old benevolent (Prussian) patronizing, and his critical awareness of the new German imperialism and an apprehension of the violence implicit in it, in his last novel *Der Stechlin* he knowingly situated himself at the impasse of an atomized modernity through his character Dubslav.

Bakhtin's dialogism and the concept of intertextuality were further developed by Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva and other postmodernists, who have used the terms mainly to refer to modernist and postmodern fiction to suggest that literary texts are permeated by a variety of social and cultural signs in relation to which they take their meaning in dialogue.

As French/Bulgarian post-structuralist and feminist Julia Kristeva notes, "Bakhtin situates the text within history and society, which are seen as texts read by the writer and into which he inserts himself by rewriting them . . . any text is a construction as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (*Desire* 65, 66). Roland Barthes has placed the reader, rather than writer at the center of the text. According to him the author is no longer the "father" of the work but simply another voice in polyphony. The polyphonic text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is

one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as hitherto said, the author (148).

However, Bakhtin's own theory goes beyond poststructuralism, since it considers the author as an important source of meaning and that he was grounded in the historical background of his work. It is thus better suited to approach Fontane's fiction, which is not and does not see itself as a purely self-reflexive work of art, detached from the time and place of its production.

Mikhail Bakhtin's notions of transformative dialogism and generic polyphony open up the possibility for a different approach to novelistic narrative by focusing both on the way that hierarchies, which seemed to hold identity in place, are brought into question and as a different way of theorizing identity and agency. Especially the novel, according to Bakhtin, was the genre that revealed, like no other, the heteroglossia lurking beneath any imperial dream of order: the internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects, characteristic group behavior, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various circles and of passing fashions, languages that serve the specific sociopolitical purposes of the day, even of the hour (we see in *Effi's* married life how each day has its own slogan, its own vocabulary, its own emphases).

Insofar as a polyphonic model counters limiting and hierarchical assumptions on which most cultural models of influence and growth depend as well as it unsettles the notion of monolithic, static and collective identities (shared by both colonial and/or nativist discourse), *Effi Briest* may be considered to approximate Bakhtin's notion of a genuine novel in its textual employment of dialogue and heteroglossia (polyphony) to

create a multiplicity of voices which override the single voice of monolithic discourse moving them away from the language of a traditional national fiction towards a complex interplaying of competing languages.

In “Response to a Question from the *Novy Mir* Editorial Staff,” Bakhtin explains how the dialogic interrelations that shape individual utterances also shape whole cultures (Emerson, “Keeping the Self Intact” 109-14; *Speech*). From a cultural and intercultural perspective, these interrelations are a viewing of each culture from the standpoint of another,

In the realm of culture, outsidership is most powerful factor in understanding. It is only in the eyes of another culture that foreign culture reveals itself fully and profoundly (but not maximally fully, because there will be cultures that see and understand more). A meaning only reveals its depths once it has encountered and come into contact with another, foreign meaning: they engage in a kind of dialogue, which surmounts the closeness and one-sidedness of these particular meanings, these cultures, We raise new questions for a foreign culture, ones that it did not raise itself; we seek answers to our own questions in it; and the foreign culture responds to us by revealing to us its new aspects and new semantic depths. (*Speech 7*)

Bakhtin is talking about an international process of “bringing different languages into contact with one another” where dialogue implies entering into interaction and exchange on equal or democratic terms. As a political strategy of negotiation, Bakhtin’s transformative dialogism is envisioned in a situation in which dialogue is generated by a degree of openness to plurality and egalitarian tolerance, or under a socio/political system in which parties concerned share equally in the horizon of expectation. However, Imperial Germany was far from this ideal model of “democracy.” For instance, during the 1870s and 1880s, the time of the unfolding of the story in *Effi Briest*, any expression of Polishness was sanctioned and even the language was banned from the public realm. To have acknowledged the existence of an equal Polish language and culture, would have

qualified the Polish speakers to an equal status within the German empire. Thus any dialogic exchange between Germans and Slavs in *Effi Briest* has to take into account the asymmetric relations. As Annie Coombes points out “[A]ny dialogue said to occur between colonizer and colonized is already circumscribed by the all too tangible violence of imperialism” (6). Nevertheless, Fontane does achieve genuine polyphony in precisely Bakhtinina sense by shifting the chronotope, by transposing the novelistic time-space from Posen to Pomerania. This is because dialogism also functions as a principle of radical otherness, or in a Bakhtinian sense as a principle of “vnenakhodimost” vne=outside, nakhodi= to find oneself (to find oneself on the outside), which Todorov translated as “exotopy.” To be on the outside is an ideal transcultural position because to understand our own culture only from the standpoint of another means that there is no closure or dialectic synthesis. The function of dialogism is to think through the pluralism of ideas and heterogeneity of voices. Paul de Man’s related suggestion that “[e]xotopy has less to do with class structures than with “relationships between distinct cultural and ideological units. It would apply to conflicts between nations and religions rather than classes” (105) is a useful reformulation of the Bakhtinian idea for considering Fontane’s representation of German-Polish unresolved conflict unleashed during the *Kulturkampf* and in the 1880s in Imperial Germany. I am going to discuss how the need for this spatial/temporal move comes about in my subsequent chapters. But before I come to that I want to discuss Fontane’s engagement with Prussia as I read it from his *Wanderungen*.

CHAPTER V

OVERLAPPING TERRITORIES AND INTERTWINED HISTORIES OR WHOSE HISTORY AND TERRITORY IS IT ANYWAY?

**Hier dient der Wende seinen Götzenbildern
Hier baut er seiner Städte festes Tor,
Und drüber blinkt der Tempel Dach hervor:
Julin, Vineta, Rhetra, Brennabor
Carl Seidel**

The German-American historian Konrad H. Jarausch has argued that there is a lack of interdisciplinarity even within humanities by taking the relationship between German studies and history as a case in point. Thus he observes that “Germanists . . . consider historians only useful for providing a temporal framework, while historians tend to think literary critics merely helpful in sketching the intellectual atmosphere of the period. Individual exceptions notwithstanding, neither side takes the other’s methods or paradigms seriously” (195). I take this opinion as a point of departure for my further analysis of Fontane’s work. As a man of letters Fontane is known most widely in two guises: as a German nineteenth-century novelist and as a historian of Mark Brandenburg. This would indicate that Fontane’s writings both encourage and even require an inter/or cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural approach to understand and interpret Fontane’s narrative texts in the larger social-historical context in which they are embedded.

In this chapter my aim is to make a case for Fontane’s contrapuntal reading and writing of Prussian history. I will primarily draw on Foucault’s original “archeological” methodology and apply the “contrapuntal reading” later developed by Said, as a way of looking at “different experience contrapuntally as making up a set of what [he] calls intertwined and overlapping histories. . . [or] a network of interdependent histories

(*Culture* 18-19) or reading with “awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts” (*Culture* 51), to discuss Fontane’s *Wanderungen durch die Mark Brandenburg* (1862-82) by focusing on the part “Die Wenden in der Mark.” By looking at the text contrapuntally, that is, by taking into account “intertwined histories” and perspectives of Germans and Slavs and by approaching Prussia as an overlapping territory it is possible to take a better insight into Fontane’s approach to Prussia. This examination of *Wanderungen* is also intended to demonstrate how Fontane’s polyphonic writing informs *Effi Briest* both in form and content. I will draw attention to how formal aspects of entire project of *Wanderungen* in general and the contents of the part on the Wends in particular are relevant for *Effi Briest*.

It may seem paradoxical to approach Fontane contrapuntally by thinking of him as both “belated” and an “avant la lettre” (post) modernist, to get fully at his contrapuntal writing,⁵⁷ especially when one thinks of Fontane’s reputation as one of those good conservative Germans who contributed to the consolidation of national narratives and identities through their construction of history. However, the justification for calling the appearance of Fontane’s fiction a belated event is not to ascribe it to his proverbial ripe old age, but more so a reflection on Homi Bhabha’s reading of Fanon’s belatedness. As Bhabha writes:

⁵⁷ I take the term “contrapuntal” in both Benita Parry’s meaning of opposition as she uses it in reference to Joseph Conrad to describe the fissure of what she calls “Conrad’s struggle to escape ideology” (Parry 1983: 7) and in Edward Said’s notion of contrapuntal writing to suggest aesthetic harmonization, displacement of social conflict and by taking different perspectives whereby promoting polyphony.

It is Fanon's temporality of emergence – his sense of the *belatedness of the Black Man* – that does not simply make the question of 'ontology' inappropriate for Black identity, but somehow impossible for the very understanding of humanity in the world of modernity: "*You came too late, much too late, there will always be a world – a white world between you and us.*" It is the opposition to the ontology of that white world – to its assumed, hierarchical forms of rationality and universality – that Fanon turns in a *performance* that is iterative and interrogative – a repetition that is *initiatory*, instating a differential history that will not return to the power of the Same. Between *you and us* Fanon opens up an enunciative space that does not simply contradict the metaphysical Ideals of Progress or Racism or Rationality; he distantiates them by "repeating" these ideas, makes them uncanny by displacing them in a number of culturally contradictory and discursively estranged locations (Bhabha 1991: 195-219).

Likening Fontane to Frantz Fanon might seem inappropriate: what might these two authors greatly removed from one another in time, space, culture, race and political outlook have in common? What I suggest is that Fontane's writing is "contrapuntal" in that its discourse is oppositional to official discourse and yet at the same time it tries to avoid direct conflict and attempts to be aesthetically balancing and harmonizing. It demonstrates skepticism about the legitimacy of the self-representation of the victorious jingoism that excludes the vanquished and the marginalized, the complicity of German historical discourse with the political hegemony of Germany/Prussia over Poland. In revealing the Prussian German historic discourse to be repressively monologic, Fontane too speaks about the signifying time-lag of cultural difference that has been constituted in modernity within which cultural supremacy and racial typology have been made universal and normative.

When I propose that Fontane, like Fanon, is a prophet of decolonization and postcoloniality, I am not suggesting that Fontane's subdued polyphony and dialogism are to be reread as a code for anti-imperialism comparable to Fanon's radical politics and passionately involved anticolonialism: Fontane was neither an active adversary of the

imperial system, nor did he envision an alternative project in ethnic, class and property relations. In that sense, he was never a radical. Nor did he openly or passionately support any radical confrontation and independence of Poland in the way that e.g. Wilhelm Liebknecht did but rather shunned confrontation and violence. In fact, Fontane's ambivalent discourse lingered between admiration and rejection of Poland's national cause. Rather, what I want to point out is a common aesthetic *code* that Fontane shares with Fanon, one based on a dialogue among different individual conceptions. In other words, Fontane's polyphonic interpretation of history, which inserts different perspectives simultaneously, allows us to see how his text interacts with itself as well as with historical or biographical contexts.

What is at issue here is that by exposing the constructedness and relativity of identity and culture, Fontane undermines the accepted claim to German superiority over the Slavs as "belatedly" entering human history. Just as Bakhtinian polyphonic writing applies to Fanon's discursive context where every utterance of the colonizer about the colonized is counterbalanced by the colonized's answer in the sense that "[t]he natives' challenge to the colonial world is not a rational confrontation of points of view. It is not a treatise on the universal, but the untidy affirmation of an original idea propounded as an absolute" (*Wretched* 42), it also can be said of Fontane's distrust of the monologism of Prussian/German historical discourse by deploying dialogic sensitivity and unfinalizability in the Bakhtinian sense as a mode of confronting German official discourse. A fine example for this argument is dramatized in Fontane's first historical fiction *Vor dem Sturm* through the confrontational polemic between two minor characters Pastor Seidentopf and the county attorney Turgany. To Seidentopf's claims to German

cultural superiority and exclusively German origins of Brandenburg, despite the quite obvious Slavic archeological remnants of the Slavic settlements and toponimes, Turgany (a Pan-Slav enthusiast) counter-claims that the early Germans who had occupied the area were barbarians who learned civilized ways from the local Slavs (Wends). The dispute that goes on throughout the narrative ends with Seidentopf's death, on which occasion Turgany's last words are: "Nun kann ich diesen Landesteil unangefochten für wendisch erklären; aber ich tät' es nicht" (706).⁵⁸ Similarly, in the duel scene in *Effi Briest*, the duel/dialogue between Innstetten and Crampas ends with last words uttered by dying Crampas, but he dies and we don't know what it was he wanted to say to Innstetten and the scene ends unresolved. In *Wanderungen*, Fontane ends the story of the Wendish prince Mistiwoi, who was double-crossed and offended by the German nobility by his open-ended oath that the day of reckoning with his offenders will come (25-26). In other words Fontane shares with Fanon and Bakhtin the same rejection of the universal monologic imposition in terms of monologic/dialogic difference as a relation that exists between, on the one hand, monologic and dominant discourse and on the other, between dialogue/polyphony and marginalized, and regularly overheard voices, which demonstrates their similar awareness that any interaction of cultures produces immediate changes to each, and lasting exchange of language and culture that only takes place gradually.

Conversely, the monologic discourse imposes unity or resolution in terms of stabilizing the time lag of cultural difference that has been constituted in modernity within which cultural supremacy and racial typology have been made universal and

⁵⁸ "Now that I am uncontested, I can proclaim this part of land for Wendish, but I won't."

normative. In a broader sense this falls under the problematics of the “master-slave” relation in terms of what Hans Jauss refers to as “the problem of alterity”. . . between producer and recipient, between the past of the text and the present of the recipient, between different cultures” (Jauss 56). Translated in relation for instance, between the German and the Slav, where the latter was perceived by the former as the inferior other who entered history “belatedly” and only through the contact with and intervention of the former, the Slavs/Poles because they were represented as different/inferior, required the “civilizing mission” of being ruled, supervised and ordered.

On the other hand, a polyphony like contrapuntal reading considers different perspectives simultaneously by allowing marginalized voices to be expressed in terms of synchronicity of the space-time complex, which undermines possibility to impose unity by reconciliation of contradictions in favor of the colonizer. It is also a position from which Fontane problematized German historicism by casting a skeptical light on “historical facts” its practitioners and users have excluded or repressed, and thereby passed an indirect judgment on Prussian metropolitan society. For instance, the story of Mistiwoi is told dialogically, i.e. Fontane allows the Wendish side to be heard by letting Mistiwoi speak in his own voice thus the reader has both sides in the conflict.

Long before the advocates of postmodernism declared that master narratives lost their power to convince, Fontane had criticized ponderous distortions of German history in historical novels by authors dedicated to constructing master narratives in publications several volumes long. In a 1875 review of Gustav Freytag’s monumental novel-cycle in six volumes, *Die Ahnen* (1872-1880), that traces the history of a German family from the fourth century A. D. to Freytag’s own time, based on his five-volume German cultural

history *Bilder aus der deutschen Vergangenheit* (1859- 1862), a portrayal of Germany's entire history, Fontane objected to Freytag's "invention of tradition" on the grounds that: "[ein] Roman . . . soll uns unter Vermeidung alles Übertriebene und Häßlichen eine Geschichte erzählen an die wir *glauben*." ⁵⁹ And he defined the modern realistic novel as the portrait of the age to which we belong or at least a reflection of a life at whose borders we still stand or our parent told us ("Bild der Zeit . . . der wir selber angehören, mindestens die Widerspiegelung eines Lebens, an dessen Grenze wir selbst noch standen oder von dem uns unsere Eltern noch erzählten)."

Fontane applied these views in his first programmatic historic novel *Vor dem Sturm* (1878) where he demystifies a national myth of common origin and the Prussian destiny to unite Germany. In fact he shows that the sense of a national identity among (in this case) the Prussian aristocracy did not exist until well into the nineteenth century. Instead, what existed were competing interests, since alliances and loyalties changed according to opportunity and personal choice primarily to protect the ruling caste's dominance, the family possessions and title.

The novel portrays Prussian society during the turbulent and fast changing circumstances caused by the French occupation on the eve of the Battle of Jena 1806. It demonstrates how in those specific circumstances loyalties to place and community grew confused and the collective sense of self-identity began to break down into multiplicity of ideologies and identities by focusing on a small community of aristocrats in Brandenburg, not far from Berlin. At the center of this community are two related

⁵⁹ The novel should tell a convincing (realistic) story while at the same time avoiding all exaggerations and ugliness.

families, the Vitzewitz and the Ladalinski, both with Slavic/Wendish or Polish sounding-names bespeaking their similar ethnic background but who are differently inclined to adopt either German-Prussian, or Polish (or even French) identity according to personal choice or circumstance, demonstrating how identities can be challenged and redefined. While Count Ladalinski adopts Prussian identity, his daughter opts for the ardent Polish patriot Count Brninski with a strong Polish identity. Political class in Prussia, as Fontane demonstrates on the example of aristocrats, had no national loyalty and their identity was fluid as late as the first decades of the 1800s. By revealing the constructed, performed and thus relative nature of identity/humanity, Fontane also deconstructs the two-time schemes in which the official historicity of the humankind was thought in the nineteenth century Germany and Europe in general, i.e. as pre-given and rooted in race, ethnicity or common tribal origin and space.

Fontane's approach to historic novel anticipates Hayden White's relativist stance about the fictionalization of narrative history. White argues that historical studies are best understood not as accurate and objective representations of the past but as creative texts structured by narrative and rhetorical devices that shape historical interpretation: a historian takes events that have happened and makes a story out of them and calls the writing of history a poetic act. Fontane's narration offers a good example of this cross-fertilization between non-fictional and fictional as they have eventually enabled a convergence between historian's and novelist's attempts to provide a framework to interpret reality. It is the distinction between the "poetic act" and ponderous distortions of historical fact, which make up a lot of historical narrative that Fontane had in mind when targeting historical fiction that glorified German valor and heroism but rarely made these

claims upon facts as epitomized by novels of Felix Dahn (1834-1912),⁶⁰ Julius Wolff and Gustav Freytag (Craig, 1999: 147).

Next I want to discuss another important aspect of Fontane's writing, his rejection of meta or master narratives in favor of small-scale ones by using *Wanderungen* as a fine example for my argument. Fontane's declared purpose of writing *Wanderungen* was to affirm and animate locality (*Belebung des Ortlichen* qtd in Craig 1999: 49).

Wanderungen represents a heterogeneous text in form and context because it mixes and combines traditionally separated genres such as literature (prose and poetry), old chronicles, parish records, travelogue, newspaper article, anecdote, and everyday conversation, dialogue, interview, etc. that cannot be seen as any of these taken separately, but rather they create a productive force whose effect will be greater than each of the sum of its components. In fact its form resembles what in modern parlance is termed a *bricolage* or a hybrid text composed of stories, dialogues, anecdotes, reflections, small practices and events, local people, local history, economy, flora, fauna, agriculture, technology, art, social and physical geography.

In *Wanderungen* Fontane also fuses together the space-time dimension in the Bakhtinian sense by simultaneously jumping back and forth in time and space so that he gives up linear time while at the same time, by moving away from center to periphery, he is making no claims to universality, truth, reason, or stability. The spatial dimension in Fontane's *Wanderungen* is especially prominent in the fact that Fontane literally paces the landscape in order to parse its juxtaposed contents ranging in scope, from local cucumbers to local nobility and historic figures and sights thereby crossing the normative

⁶⁰ It was Fontane who motivated Dahn to write patriotic ballads.

boundaries between low and high, lofty and modest, significant and insignificant, thus calling into question the division between genres as well as between high and low culture. In so doing Fontane significantly anticipates the post-modern widening of the field of history to include subjectivity, and a bottom-up perspective as well as viewing the past as text and historiography as construction.

When read against the background of escalated animosities in the encounters between Germans and Slavs, Fontane's discourse appears to be counter-discursive to the contemporary discourse, as he seems to suggest that Prussian German and Polish/Slav identities are produced by personal choice and circumstances rather than being biologically determined. In *Wanderungen* Fontane writes about blending (*Verschmelzung*) between German and Slavic population due to the circumstances in the central areas of Brandenburg into an ethnic mixture resulting in an ethnically hybrid territory – *Mischungsbottich* (35). Thus *Wanderungen* can be taken as Fontane's writing back to dominant historical narratives about the so-called medieval colonization of Prussia as represented by Johan Gustav Droysen, who evoked an "opposition of blood" between Germans on the one hand and Slavs and Prussians on the other. Droysen was also the first historian to make a comparison between medieval Europe and nineteenth century America to explain that Slavs and Prussians so thoroughly differed from Germans that the mixing of their blood was as rare as it was "among the American redskins and (white) settlers as a result the Slavs died off or were expelled or forcibly resettled on reservations" (57). On a related note, Heinrich Ernst claimed that it was not possible to speak of the Germanization of the Slavs of the territory east of the Elbe in the medieval period because Slavs were either expelled or exterminated and he concluded

that the country was inhabited by completely different people, namely Germans (27). In so doing, Fontane distances himself from and illuminates the role scholarly and popular narratives of history play in nation building myths and geopolitical alliances.

A grand narrative of Prussia and Imperial Germany is the story of Prussia's inexorable destiny to unite all Germans because of its most superior form of government and its people's alleged advanced spirituality, culture and moral values. The beginning of modern historiography in Germany coincides with the early nineteenth century establishment of Great Power hegemony and political subordination of the weaker people. However, at least since the Enlightenment peoples had been ranked according to their perceived ability to overcome a "natural" state and enter history as "developed." Essential to a sociological theory of the evolution of modern political culture is a vision of the structures underlying shifts of collective identity and their norms, such as the state, economy, culture, social institutions. German Romantics had glorified the medieval absolutism embodied by the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, the period when the German nation was imagined by poets and historians as united and powerful. As ethical and historical category the idea of development gained in intellectual authority with G.W. Hegel, who closely linked development with the state-centered model in modern times to the pursuit of economic interests and world supremacy. Hegel saw Europe as a spiritual synthesis of Christianity and Germanic culture (*Geist*) whose highest embodiment was in the state, notably the Prussian state.

The absence of history is the theme in Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, which he delivered in Berlin between 1822 and 1831. Hegel considered Africa, the "New" World of the Americas and huge sections of the Eurasian population, who

lack historical consciousness and cultural maturity, outside of world history. The Hegelian discourse of difference as negation denies history as well as place, by constituting not only the past as absence, but also by designating that absence as a negative presence. Unlike the “German,” which as a term Hegel used in a broader sense to denote “European” (European peoples, insofar as they belong to the world of thought are to be called “German”), peoples without historic consciousness exist only in a negative sense; they are absent from Hegel’s conception of history.

Hegel uses the image of “shallow rivers” that have not yet had time to “dig their own bed” as a metaphor for the New World’s “physical immaturity.” This cultural immaturity is a consequence of the physical and intellectual weakness of the natives who were unable to resist the attack of the superior conquerors.⁶¹ Similar tropological ruses were applied to the geography of Eastern Europe – its open, broad stretches offering no natural barriers, other than large stagnant marshes and slow-running rivers have been attributed to the (self)perception of Eastern Europe as a site of perpetual migrations of populations, invasions, wars, starvations, diseases, untold suffering and harsh exploitation of peasantry etc. – to validate the objective physical conditions which obstructed their populations from entering the evolutionary narrative of the Western history and to justify the notion of their inferiority.

For Hegel, peoples broadly defined as Eastern Europeans at best played a role as gate-keepers against non-Christian Asia and as such were merely intermediaries between

⁶¹ Hegel’s influential assertions about far away peoples were based on suspicious misconceptions. He obviously lacked a scientific knowledge of microbiology when he made his claims about the superiority of the Western world over Americans. Hegel could not conceive that something else other than “Western Geist” and superior technology aided the West in conquering Americans.

European (Germanic) and Asiatic *Geist*, hence he excluded them from his historical consideration. Such an ambiguous position of Eastern European/Slavic peoples allows for their construction as more or less objects of history, the Hegelian Slave (Slav), depending on the current political configuration, but he suggests that for their own good, they should be either overcome by or assimilated into the progress of Germanic history.

Hegel also dismisses the Oriental world from his historical consideration on similar grounds of their lack of subjectivity, but he also admits that his decision to exclude China or India was made largely on ignorance and that the justification was provided mainly after the fact. The idea of an inherent Oriental space characterized by despotic, stagnant and arbitrary societies dominating Asian and Eurasian worlds quite inferior to the dynamic Western counterpart has its origins in the Enlightenment, but it gained further intellectual authority with Hegel.

Hegel's views gained historiographic currency in the work of Leopold von Ranke, who adopted them. Ranke believed in the natural and superior bond between Latin and Germanic nations as European essence. Following the publication of his influential *Geschichte der romanischen und germanischen Völker* in 1824, German historians adopted the view that from the coronation of Charlemagne by Pope Leo III as Western emperor in 800 AD onwards, Europe had been divided into two unequal halves: the (superior) Latin-Germanic West and the (inferior) non-Western world, or what he called *Außenwelt*, east of the Saale (Solava) and Elbe (Laba) line, a mostly Slavic-Byzantine-Islamic Orient. Soon language and race became closely linked in the construction of the Aryan myth, which postulated an anthropological unity of the Germanic "race" as an

original race in Europe. The Slavs were thus excluded from both the community of European culture and race.

Moreover, since the demise of Ranke's claim to "objectivity," every historiographical assessment reflects the ideological dispositions and personal limitations of historians or literary or cultural critics. By the time that Prince Bismarck became prime minister of Prussia (1862), and once the native of Pomerania and the Prussian arch-Junker came to power, Polonophobia and eastward expansion became the main issues in Prussian/German politics. Bismarck always considered the Poles as an anarchic and revolutionary people, whose national aspirations were a threat to Prussia. Therefore he denied Polish nationality, except as a privilege of the Polish aristocracy and high clergy, while he regarded Polish peasants as unconscious masses to be gradually absorbed by the superior German civilization, even by employing harsh methods in the campaign against the Polish patriots. Bismarck envisioned the destiny of Poles in the starkest of terms as expressed in a letter to his sister Malwine of March 26, 1861: "Haut doch die Polen, dass sie am Leben verzagen. Ich habe alles Mitgefhl fr ihre Lage, aber wir knnen, wenn wir bestehn wollen, nichts andres thun, als sie ausrotten; der Wolf kann nicht dafr, dass er von Gott geschaffen ist, wie er ist, und man schiet ihn doch dafr todt, wenn man kann" (Werke Vol. XIV/1: 568).⁶²

The most popular and virulent historian of Bismarckian time was Heinrich von Treitschke (1834-98), a member of the Reichstag from 1871-1884 and an intellectual leader of its pro-Bismarckian faction, whose influence was considerable especially during

⁶² "Flay the Poles until they despair of life! I have all sympathy for their situation, but if we wish to endure, we can do nothing else but extirpate them. It is not the wolf's fault that God created him as he is, but nevertheless we kill him whenever we can."

his years as professor of history at the University of Berlin (1874-96). Treitschke used his position of lecturer to propagate ideas which were openly nationalistic, imperialistic and racist. Treitschke was a Saxon born who despite his Czech descent had a strong pro-Prussian outlook and was repelled by being associated with, in his opinion, culturally and economically backward and racially inferior Slavs. Already in his well-known eulogy to the Teutonic Knights in 1862, in the same year that Fontane's first volumes of *Wanderungen durch die Mark Brandenburg* appeared, also the year in which Bismarck became prime minister of Prussia, Treitschke justified the right of civilized nations such as Germans to take the land from and impose their will on the barbarians, the Balts, the Slavs and other peoples of Eastern Europe (Piskorski 2004).

Yet it was only after the unification that history, deliberately distorted by German historians, was actually played out by projecting it into the future. The mythological image of the medieval eastern German colonization was justified as Germany's right to the lands it had conquered and colonized in the East when the Government took the sharp anti-Polish turn in 1886 and attempted to Germanize Polish territories by settling Germans on farms carved out of the estates purchased by the Polish landowners.

It is beyond doubt that Fontane openly contests the version of truth presented in the accepted Prussian/German academic historiography as a true interpretation of the past. In this sense Fontane's *Wanderungen* appears as response to Droysen's influential account of Prussian history in 1855, to Felix Dahn's publication of a history "Die Könige der Germanen" in 1861, later to be followed by historical novels in which he glorified the Germanic kings and the exploits of the barbaric peoples' migration.

But how exactly did Fontane, an outsider to the academic discourse of his time, who confessed to his unease in the presence of scholars because of his self-consciousness that he lacked formal education, presume to counter the prevalent discourse? Owing to his irregular family situation Fontane received a rather haphazard education supervised by his father, was trained to be a dispensing chemist at vocational school, entered journalism as a failed pharmacist and finally became a self-taught writer. Literary critics and historians such as Georg Lukács and Hans-Heinrich Reuter observed that these very disadvantages, in fact, gave him a number of advantages over many of his contemporaries. According to Lukács Fontane's greater and richer life experience, his observation from below made him the perceptive critic he was. Fontane's greatest gifts, in Reuter's opinion, were his powers of acute observation, his critical capacity, and his sense of history and it was these, gradually developed and mutually self-supporting, that comprised his originality and determined the character of his finest work. As Gordon Craig put it: "Whoever examines the details will find that Fontane quoted more accurately and judged more objectively than [the influential professor of history at the University of Berlin] Heinrich von Treitschke" (1985: xvii).

Fontane's method of reflection is based explicitly on his perception, and on his balanced judgment that obeys the inner rule of his own thinking rather than the dictates of the prescribed discourse of the German imperial higher educational system, intended for the sons of the elites and, according to today's standards, notoriously uncritical, close-minded on many subjects, elitist, self-laudatory and self-serving. Thomas Mann's comment on Lukács after having read his *Die Seele und die Formen* (1910), that we have

a particular right to “knowledge, which we ourselves helped to create merely by our own existence” (qtd. in Arpad Kadarkay 500) also holds true of Fontane.

Fontane raised many questions about the discipline of history, notably, the relationship between texts and power, long before they became the focus of later historians and scholars of the cultural history of the subaltern. Fontane questioned the limits imposed on historical and cultural understanding by dominant modes of narrative and challenged the method of collecting historical facts on the basis of their relevance by arguing that historical archives, usually collections of documents, are by no means reliable sources of historical evidence because they support the kind of history one chooses to tell based on one’s perspective and interpretation; that is, one’s moral and aesthetic values determine one’s historical writing, which cannot be an accurate and objective representation of the past.

In order to understand what enabled Fontane, who was not a trained scholar but rather an amateur historian, to presume to criticize authority on the subject of history, and to achieve a more penetrating insight by presenting his alternative thought-provoking interpretation to dominant historical narratives by his celebrated and venerable academic contemporaries, it is useful to turn to Hans-Georg Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics which is not just a theoretical approach, but is grounded in the principles of common sense and thus it is necessarily resistant to science’s exclusive claims to authority. As Gadamer argues, an untrained and uncensored “hermeneutical consciousness” is capable of grasping what is worth knowing in the first place, and thereby raising vital questions that generate significant knowledge such as for instance by “common sense” a faculty which Gadamer credits with the production of knowledge (Gadamer 3-17). Fontane’s

method of knowledge producing that resists official historical social science anticipates Gadamer's "philosophical hermeneutics" which similarly refuses to acknowledge science's exclusive claims to authority. Fontane's interest in human agency and lived realities as sources of knowledge production is just the sort of phenomenological material Gadamer has in mind when he talks about fusing and combining the private and public, domestic and international, subjectivity and authenticity without aiming at a homogenous narrative.

Fontane's strength lies in the use of his intuition and the "conceptions of the world" derived from popular common sense, as a fluid, complex and contradictory mix of ideas from various sources. They are first and foremost empirical notions consisting partially of relative truths and partially illusions and errors and are the quintessence of popular wisdom, expressing class or subaltern instinct, or popular fears and hopes some of which reflect the ideas of socially dominant groups and classes in the Gramscian sense of cultural hegemony. Crucially, however, its fragmentary and contradictory nature means that popular common sense has an inherently heteroglot nature in the sense that it is open to multiple interpretations and functions as a matrix of forces potentially supportive of very different kinds of social visions and political projects but practically impossible to reconcile. In that sense it resists monologic resolution.

Common sense is most often evoked in relation to Fontane's brand of perceptive reflection (Stern 1989: viii; Görner 2001:11). One encounters concepts of common sense everywhere in Fontane's texts uttered by many characters from all walks of life usually through proverbs which are summaries of common sense lessons learned after the fact. In his essay on Gustav Freytag Fontane states that a proverb can sum up the essence of a

good play or a novel: “Der gedanchliche Inhalt jedes guten Dramas läßt sich fast ausnahmelos auf ein simples Sprichwort zurückführen” (*Werke, Aufsätze* 3: 303-4). *Effi Briest* can be summed up by the proverb “Übermut kommt vor dem Fall,” which as a refrain is repeated throughout the novel, and significantly, by the female characters who are also in a somewhat subordinate position through ethnicity or class. Another leitmotif in the novel is Old Briest’s “ein weites Feld.”

Another insight into Fontane’s knowledge and his historical discourse can be gained by drawing on Michael Foucault’s formulation of the power-knowledge relationship and his theory of discourse as power and the genealogical excavation of an ideological formation and a lexicon of knowledge, truth, power, meaning and interpretation that he developed in *The Archeology of Knowledge* (1972) where he focuses on fundamental terms like discourse, enunciative modalities, concepts, strategies, statements, the archive, etc. in order to gain an insight into the networks within which knowledge circulates, e.g. he sees statements as important indicators of the rules and conditions in a larger field of discourse, institution, discipline, or “discursive formation.” The conditions under which statements exist reveal how claims of truth are constructed and valued within the positivity of a discipline: which statements are acknowledged as being significant or insignificant provides important insight into the mechanics and dynamics of a discipline or epoch.

In order to reveal the nexus between knowledge and power, Foucault subjects his “archeological field” to an analytical process that interprets history in terms of discontinuities as well as received narratives, and by looking at ruptures, breaks, thresholds, mutations, and transformations — including marginal or forgotten as well

received discourses. Thus for Foucault: “[a]ll manifest discourse is secretly based on and ‘already-said’; and (that) this ‘already-said’ is not merely a phrase that has already been spoken, or a text that has already been written, but a ‘never-said’, an incorporeal discourse, a voice as silent as a breath, a writing that is merely a hollow of its own mark. The manifest discourse, therefore, is really no more than the repressive presence of what it does not say; and this ‘not-said’ is a hollow that undermines from within all that is said”(Archeology 27-28) and consequently subverts grand narratives of history that both depend upon and sustain a narrow selection from “official” records of what happened. Fontane expressed similar idea in reference to *Wanderungen* in a letter to Heinrich von Mueller of 1863 where he wrote: “Even in the sand of the Mark the springs of life have flowed and still flow everywhere, and every square foot of ground has its story, and is telling it too – only one has to be willing to listen to these often quiet voices” (qtd. in Craig 1999: 49).

While Fontane was not unique in his choice of “irregular” sources, such as his liking for the anecdotal in history (e.g. Ranke used an unusual variety of sources including memoirs, diaries, personal and formal missives, government documents, diplomatic dispatches and first-hand accounts of eye-witnesses) he is irreverently skeptical in his approach towards the objectivity of historical insight and information of most “official” sources. Fontane’s approach is noteworthy for unearthing alternative or silenced sources of information and using them in a self-reflexive way to propose a balanced or alternative information.

Fontane’s writing can also be viewed through Fredric Jameson's revised formulation of Althusser’s tenet that history is an absent cause: “in which history is *not* a text, not a

narrative, master or otherwise, but that, as an absent cause, it is inaccessible to us except in textual form, and that our approach to it and to the Real itself necessarily passes through its prior textualization, its narrativization in the political unconscious” (Jameson, *Political* 35). As “an absent cause,” history retains the tension that every act of textualization or narrativization involves and, that tension, is an offshoot of a politically conscious/unconscious struggle to accommodate social contradictions and service specific interests. In a way Fontane’s deconstructive strategies also anticipate New Historicism: writing history so-to-speak from below, questioning the official version, using alternative sources such as eye-witness’ accounts, local newspapers, letters, concentration on different localities.

While Fontane’s interest in the history of Brandenburg-Prussia is often referred to, his counter discourse on the early history of Brandenburg and its earlier settled inhabitants, the so-called Wends (the name Germans used for the Polabian and Baltic Slavs) who dominated Brandenburg until the eleventh century, is barely taken notice of by mainstream Fontane scholarship when approaching his fictional narratives. Those scholars who do are divided in their opinion concerning Fontane’s attitudes regarding the Slavs in general and Poles in particular. While earlier scholarship represented by scholars such as e.g. Joachim Remak (1964: 20) and Müller-Seidel (1979: 437), had a more positive assessment of the picture Fontane painted of the ancient Slavs/Poles, recent scholars like Kristin Kopp (100-146) and Benjamin Breggin (213-122) are more inclined to see Fontane’s Slav representations in a more problematic light. On the other hand in her monumental history of Berlin titled *Faust’s Metropolis*, Alexandra Richie recently

singled out Fontane as a notable exception to nineteenth century Germany's refusal to "acknowledge Berlin's debt to the much maligned people" the Slavs (7).

The first chapter of the third volume of Fontane's *Wanderungen*, entitled "Die Wenden in der Mark," briefly chronicles the process of subjugation of the Western Slavs/Wends from their forced inception into Western Christendom by Germanic or Germanized secular and ecumenical leaders and through the various phases of capitalism that have emerged since the inception of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, and draws attention to their opposition, potential and shortcomings of their revolutionary tendencies in the past and at the present moment.

One of the merits of Fontane's historical approach in *Wanderungen* is his treatment of Brandenburg in the early context of a settler land, without neglecting to deal with its earlier inhabitants as historical subjects, in sharp contradistinction to the dominant contemporary historical discourse promoted by the state and its institutions, which attempted to deny any claim to Slav's/Poles' prior historical and cultural existence in Brandenburg-Prussia. Far from accepting the black-and-white picture as promoted by official historiography, Fontane attempts to reconstruct the early history of Slav-German relations in Brandenburg by including "alternative voices" and by drawing on a variety of sources of information, documents, anecdotes and cross-cultural references as documentary evidence about historical events.

The history of the Mark's early inhabitants, the ancient Wends/Slavs, raises for Fontane the question of the knowledge/power nexus. On the one hand, Fontane notes how incessant repetitions of handed down observations about the Wends are constructed into mutually reinforcing stereotypes about cultural and racial characteristics of the

Wends. On the other hand, since the Wends did not leave behind written evidence, the produced historical knowledge of the early Brandenburg history is one-sided and blatantly biased. What is missing, according to Fontane's critique of the Germano-centric history of Prussia, is a dialectical comprehension of relations between Germans and Wends – that precisely constitute the problematic of one-sidedness, falsity and distortion Fontane discerns in German historical narrative. Furthermore, the German side was not only unable but also unwilling to be objective. Fontane exposes the role of representation and self-representation in knowledge production by questioning the validity of such entirely one-sided truthfulness of the “facts” handed down from early German sources in which the original Slavs/Wendish inhabitants are described in negative terms:

Die Wenden haben uns leider kein einziges Schriftstück hinterlassen, das uns dazu dienen könnte, die Schilderungen, die uns ihre bitteren Feinde, die Deutschen, von ihnen enworfen haben, nötigenfalls zu korrigieren. Wir hören eben nur *eine* Partei sprechen, dennoch sind auch diese Schilderungen ihrer Gegner nicht dazu angetan, uns mit Abneigung gegen den Charakter der Wenden zu erfüllen. Wir begegnen mehr liebenswürdigen als häßlichen Zügen, und wo wir diese häßlichen Züge treffen, ist es gemeinhin unschwer zu erkennen, woraus sie hervorgingen. Meist waren es Repressalien, Regungen der Menschennatur überhaupt, nicht einer spezifisch *bösen* Menschennatur. (24-5)

Fontane also exposes the “facts” recorded by German contemporary chroniclers (Widukind, Thitmer and Adam von Bremen) as self-serving by pointing to internal contradictions and inconsistencies of their reasoning in their early descriptions of Slavs: who were respected even by their enemies for their virtues since all the chroniclers concur as to the bravery and traditional hospitality as distinguishing Slavic traits (“Je freigebiger der Wende war, für desto vornehmer wurde er gehalten, und für desto vornehmer hielt er sich selbst” (25), but they also (paradoxically) proclaim them as bad and disloyal (“falsch” and “untreu”). And he arrives at a very different conclusion, namely

Sie [Die Wenden] waren tapfer und gastfrei, aber sie waren falsch und untreu, so berichten die alten Chronisten weiter. Die alten Chronisten sind indessen ehrlich genug, hinzuzusetzen: “untreu *gegen ihre Feinde*.” Dieser Zusatz legt einem sofort die Frage nahe: wie waren aber nun diese Feinde? Waren sie, ganz von aller ehrlichen Feindschaft, von offenem Kampfe abgesehen, waren diese Feinde ihrerseits von einer Treue, einem Worthalten, einer Zuverlässigkeit, die den Wenden, ein Sporn hätte sein können, Treue mit Treue zu vergelten? (25)

Fontane exposes what he considers German perfidy to scathing criticism as recorded by the chronicles themselves. Thus he writes:

Die Erzählungen der Chronisten machen uns die Antwort auf die Frage leicht; In rühmlicher Unbefangenheit erzählen sie uns die endlosen Perfidien der Deutschen. Dies erklärt sich daraus, daß sie, von Parteigeist erfüllt und blind im Dienst einer großen Idee, die eigenen Perfidien vorweg als gerechtfertigt ansahen. Dagegen war wendischer Verrat einfach Verrat und stand da, ohne allen Glorienschein, in nackter, alltäglicher Häßlichkeit. Der Wende war ein ‘Hund,’ ehrlos, rechtlos, und wenn er sich unerwartet aufrichtete und seinen Gegner biß, so war er untreu. Ein Hund darf nicht beißen, es geschehe ihm was da wolle. Die Geschichte von Mistiwoi haben wir gehört, sie zeigt die schwindelnde Höhe deutschen Undanks und deutscher Überhebung” (25-26).

Unlike Treitschke, who celebrated German cruelties against the Slavs, their “primal enemies,” Fontane condemns them as acts of violence which begot resistance and started a perpetual vicious circle through which the obviously civilized but resistant and rebellious Slavs were conquered and colonized: “Die deutsche Grausamkeit schuf wendische Aufständen folgten erneute Niederlagen, die, von immer neuen Grausamkeiten des Sieger begleitet, das alte Wechselspiel wiederholten”, and their territories were gradually brought under German control while all traces of the previous material culture of the natives were obliterated “sei es aus Rache oder sei es zu eigener Sicherheit” (17).

To illustrate this Fontane evokes a story about Mistiwoi, an Obodrit tenth-century Christian prince, (the grandfather of Saint Gottschalk, prince of the Obodrit confederacy 1043-66), as an early instance of German anti-Slavism, thus tracing the roots of anti-Slav

racism back to medieval German discourse. The Christian Wendish/Obodrit prince Mistiwoi was promised the hand of a German princess, niece of the Saxon Duke Bernhardt. Later, as the Duke hesitates to make good on his promise, another German nobleman intervenes by making a half-loud comment: “Mitnichten; eines deutschen Herzogs Blutsverwandte gehört nicht an die Seite eines *wendischen Hundes*” (18). On hearing the slander, mortally insulted Mistiwoi renounces Christianity for the old religion of his forefathers and promises to revenge himself: “Der Tag kommt, wo die Hunde beißen” (18). The story describes a practice installing and perpetuating the demoralizing relation into which Germans and Slavs were locked.

Theories about the decisive beneficial creative influence of the German settlers’ superior culture on the backward and underdeveloped Slav natives and the positive effect on the farming of new territories that were promoted in the later 1800s served to justify “eternal rights to settled lands” and in support of the existing state of occupation over the partitioned Poland. Even the greatest scholars, Fontane’s contemporaries, took part in the legitimization of the Borussian myth of “empty” lands and the Slavic “barbarian natives” doomed to extinction.

In reminding his readers that most toponyms in Prussia are Slavic or Germanicised Slavic and Baltic names, Fontane’s genealogical excavation of suppressed subalternity demonstrates that in Brandenburg as well as in much of the territory between the Elbe/Laba and Oder/Odra the original population spoke Slavic: “Die Wendischen Namen unserer Ortschaften beweisen dies zur Genüge. Manche Gegenden haben nur Wendische Namen” (21). According to Foucault, discourse always involves a form of violence in the way it imposes its linguistic order on the world. Thus, one of the

important tasks for colonizing powers, to which Germans were no exception, was to change the local habitat by removing any previous organization of the geographical space of the colonized territory, which involves its mapping and renaming, since the conscious aim of the settlers was to transform the territories into images of what they left behind. The assumption of title to the land by reference to prior rulers of inhabitants itself contradicts the notions of “empty lands”; it also enforces present legality by assuming a prior one. The German terminology, which reflected the Slavic world which they had destroyed in the process of colonization, also implies a greater respect for the early Slavic authority than at present. Thus Fontane points out to numerous family, place names, lakes, rivers, streams and hills in Brandenburg alone.⁶³

Contrary to conventional wisdom, authorized by the official historiography that renders the Slavs barbarians who were only able to develop at all from the twelfth century thanks to achievements and diffusion of the German culture, Fontane contended that the early Slavs were organized in a sophisticated network of social, political and cultural communities which included not only villages but also prosperous and cosmopolitan towns:

Die Wenden aber hatten nicht nur Häuser, sie wohnten auch in Städten and Dörfern, die sich zu vielen Hunderten durch das Land zogen . . . Einzelne galten für bedeutend genug, um mit den Schilderungen ihres Glanzes und ihres Untergangs die Welt zu fühlen, und wie geneigt wir seien mögen, der poetischen Darstellung an diesem Weltruhme das beste Teil zuzuschreiben, so kann doch das Geschilderte nicht ganz Fiktion gewesen sein, sondern muß in irgend etwas Vorhandenem seine reale Anlehnung gehabt haben (22).

⁶³ 6th century Slavic settlement in today’s Saxony, Brandenburg, Saxony-Anhalt, and Mecklenburg-West Pomerania up to the Elbe River. Evidence of these “Wends” (as they are known in German) presence are the hundreds of German place names ending with “itz,” “ick,” “ow,” and “au” — Germanizations of the Slavic suffixes “ice” and “ovo.” German Placenames Etymology:
http://www.search.com/reference/German_placename_etymology

In maintaining the importance of the commercial cities on the Baltic, characterized by their cosmopolitan culture and international trade, among which Jumne, presumably on the mouth of the Swine, and Vineta or Julin were the most famous ones, Fontane quotes Bishop Adam of Bremen who wrote in *Hamburger Kirchengeschichte* (1075) that Vineta was the largest and most beautiful of all towns in Europe:

Hinter den Luitizen die auch Wilzen heißen, trifft man auf die Oder, den reichsten Strom des Slawnland. Wo sie an ihrer Mündung ins Skythenmeer fließt, bietet die sehr berühmte Stadt Jumme für Barbaren und Griechen in weitem Umkreis einen viel besuchten Treffpunkt. Weil man sich zum Preise dieser Stadt allerlei Ungewöhnliches und kaum Glaubhaftes erzählt, halte ich es für wünschenswert, einige bemerkenswerte Nachrichten einzuschalten. Es ist wirklich die größte von allen Städten, die Europa birgt . . . Die Stadt ist angefüllt mit Waren aller Völker des Nordens nicht Begehrenswertes oder Seltenes fehlt. . .

Thus the legend about famous and marvelous Slavic town of Vineta can be traced back to Adam von Bremen who was not given to glossing over Wends in his accounts of them. Nineteenth-century German historiography claimed that there were no towns in Poland prior to the thirteenth-century German colonization and dismissed that the town of Vineta ever existed. The semi-legendary city of Vineta, (the Atlantis of the North) which ended by sinking into the sea, is mentioned before the year 500 as the most important trading city in Europe with links with Russia, Greece (Eastern Roman Empire), Phoenicia and the Mediterranean.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ The legend of Vineta may have been related to the later trading city of Wolin in northwestern Poland. In the account of the Arabic writer Ibrahim ibn Ya'qub, envoy of the Calph of Cordoba, reported around 970 about a great Weletian town (no name is mentioned) with the large port by the ocean "with twelve gates," which probably refers to Wollin or Vineta in Pomerania, the greatest of all cities in Europe, farthest northwest in the country of Misiko (Poland) in the marshes by the ocean". And he added that its armed force is superior to "all peoples of the north" (Slupecki 1-2) The semi-legendary city of Vineta, (the Atlantis of the North) which ended by sinking into the sea, is mentioned

Fontane also brings to attention a syncretic multiculturalism of the pre-Christian Slavic urban life on the Baltic which appears as an avant-la-lettre polyphonic culture as described by Adam von Bremen:

In ihr [Jumne] wohnen Slawen und andere Nationen, Griechen und Barbaren. Und auch den dort ankommenden Sachsen ist, unter gleichem Rechte mit den Übrigen, zusammen zu wohnen verstattet, freilich nur, solange sie ihr Christentum nicht öffentlich kundgeben. Übrigens wird, was *Sitte* und *Gastlichkeit* anlangt, kein Volk zu finden sein, das sich ehrenwerter und dienstfertiger bewiese (22).

Fontane also observes how much Adam von Bremen was impressed by the riches and cultural-technological sophistication of Jumne. Thus he wrote: “Jene Stadt besitzt auch alle möglichen Annehmlichkeiten und Seltenheiten. Dort findet sich der Vulkanstopf, den die Eingeborenen das “griechische Feuer” nennen. (22).⁶⁵

before the year 500 as the most important trading city in Europe with links with Russia, Greece (Eastern Roman Empire), Phoenicia and the Mediterranean.

⁶⁵ The “Greek fire” was a secret weapon, which was a closely guarded state and military secret (the knowledge of the whole system was highly specialized and compartmentalized to ensure that no enemy could gain knowledge of it in its entirety). Even if Bremen’s description was not reliable as to what kind of the “Greek fire” was in question, the fact that the people of medieval Vineta (Jumne/Wollin) were in possession of any such formidable weapon, which made such an impression on the Arabs and Western Crusaders, would indicate not only a high level of civilization but also that there existed not only lively cultural and trade but also friendly relations between the Baltic peoples and the mighty Byzantine Empire. The “secret fire” was discovered immediately before and used in the triumphant defense of Constantinople (the “Queen of Cities”) against the double Arab siege of Constantinople in 678 and 718, which were turning points of world-wide historical significance, ascribed to divine intervention on behalf of the defense of Christians against the Muslims. Interestingly, “Greek Fire” that was the empire's secret weapon that may have saved them from the two Arab sieges (Greek fire was hurled from siphons mounted on Greek ships at Arab ships which burst into flames on contact causing panic to the invasion fleet). Word soon spread of this miracle weapon, and there was a fervent search for its secret formula, but the formula remained Byzantine’s most closely guarded secret; those attempting to find out were told that angels had conveyed the formula directly from God to Emperor Constantine III. The Byzantine Empire, convinced of its invincibility because it possessed an ultimate weapon that would never be defeated, grew proud and complacent and serves as a prime example for the adage: Hochmut kommt vor dem Fall.

Fontane too seemed to have been so impressed by the “Greek fire” that “miraculously” saved Constantinople, that he also evokes its capacity for miracle performing in *Vor dem Sturm* where it rescues the noble Witzevitz family. In chapter two Fontane recounts how during the Hussite wars (1420 and 1434) the Hussites beleaguered the area pillaging all the villages around the Witzewitz ancestral seat. The ancestor of the contemporary von Witzewitz, von Rhodus, saved the day by hurling the “Greek Fire” at the Hussite camp setting it on fire, causing panic and dread in their midst so that they fled in terror leaving the estate intact. Rhodus learnt about the Greek fire while campaigning in the Balkans on the side of the Greeks/Balkan Christians against the Ottoman Turks in 1432.

By acknowledging the existence of western Slavic culture on the Baltic many decades before German colonization in the twelfth century, based on the recorded evidence in German sources, Fontane challenged the views of official historiography influenced by Enlightened scholars and Hegelian ideas of the Western superiority over East, which although lacking in solid basis in their sources was prepared to measure objectivity only by its own criteria, rejecting others’ knowledge.

Thus in *Wanderungen* Fontane the historian demonstrates how the perpetuation of German anti-Slav stereotypes had been constructed into a discourse of the German superiority over the inferior Slavs. The point of Fontane's critique of the constitutive object of historical and pseudo-scientific discourse, is that Slavs/Wends are not in any way different or “Other,” only that this is how German discourse presents them according to its own binaristic logic. However, while Fontane counters the official claim of “lack of

history” of the early Slavs in Central and Eastern Europe, nevertheless he concludes: “Sehr wahrscheinlich war die Superiorität der Deutschen, die man schließlich wird zugeben müssen, *weniger* groß, als deutscherseits vielfach behauptet worden sei” (20).

While this may reveal Fontane’s mind-set as Eurocentric, embedded in a Western discourse of progress of civilization, any account of his opinions should be analyzed and placed in context of intellectual discourse of his time. By comparing Fontane with other historians, German as well as Polish and Russian, it is possible to gain a balanced picture of Fontane’s strengths and defects. Many Polish and Russian educated “Westernizers” who were profoundly influenced by the West, were convinced that the West created a superior type of civilization which they considered a norm and a measure of all things and advanced the theory that the Slavic civilization owed its origins to the impact of the West. Thus, notably, Timofey Nikolayevich Granovsky (1813-1855), the founder of medieval studies in Russia, rejected the possibility of existence of an indigenous early Slavic urban culture and dismissed Vineta as a myth.

The theory of the origin of Slavs, of their alleged *Uhrheimat* in the marshes along the Pripiet river of Polesie is worth mentioning because despite heavy criticism it is still repeated in a number of current Western textbooks. It can be ultimately traced back to the Roman sources which refer to old Slavic custom of building fortified places mostly in heavily wooded country or marshy areas where the population could take refuge in case of invasion and to subsequent German stereotypes of Slavs as treacherous people who lurk in forests and marches. This territorialized image of the Slavic stigma belongs to repeatedly used topoi in German and Western colonial texts, which suggest that such a ghostly and obscure place can only produce backwardness, stagnation and the moral

pollution of its dwellers. However when it gained currency in the imperial German academic circles, it was first advanced by the Polish botanist Josef Rostafinski 1850-1925, and later supported by the Czech archeologist Lubor Niederle (1865-1944) (Curta 8) and was readily accepted by those scholars in Western Europe who considered the Slavs as an inferior race. By confining the original residence of Slavs to the dreary narrow basin of the lazy Pripet river, the poor conditions of the swampy lands of which would contribute to the stagnation of any people living on them rather than stimulate their cultural development, they could prove their putative racial inferiority. It was used to prove the belatedness of the Slavic peoples by denying them the capacity to produce a culture at an early stage of their existence.

Fontane considered that the Wends lacked the state-building ability, which the Germans presumably possessed. Thus he wrote: “aber in einem waren sie ihnen allerdings unebenbürtig, in jener gestaltenden, große Ziele von Generation zu Generation unerschütterlich im Auge behaltenden Kraft, die zu allen Zeiten der Grundzug der germanischen Race gewesen und noch jetzt die Bürgschaft ihres Lebens ist. *Die Wenden von damals waren wie die Polen von heut* (26). While Fontane does not elaborate on the kind of state-building ability, he nevertheless connects it with the role Christianity played in it.

In the *Wanderungen* under the title “Die Wenden und die Kolonisation der Mark durch die Zisterzienser” Fontane describes the introduction of the new Germanic Church system in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, whereby kings and noblemen claimed not only the ownership of sanctuaries established by them, but also the right to

appoint all the clergy in ecclesiastical institutions endowed by them.⁶⁶ There was a bitter hostility towards Latin Christianity and the brutal missionary methods employed by the German Church on the part of Slavs who adhered to their own gods, so that paganism lingered in Eastern Europe after Slavs' official conversion in Lithuania, Kievan Rus, Bohemia and on the island of Rügen. The main thrust of German expansion was mainly into the Slavic territories.

Thereafter, as Fontane notes, the "Wends" found themselves under growing pressures from Germans and within several centuries were pushed back to the east and south or assimilated while the area changed from predominately Slav speakers to German speakers. The colonization of the East produced a clash between those Slavs who were converted by Germans and those who resisted Christianization. While this was fiercely condemned as genocide by Pan-Slav nationals, there has been a tendency among German researchers to minimize the loss inflicted on the Slavs at the time.

My point here is to problematically associate the material base for a fair degree of cultural homogenization among the future capitalist countries with the advent of Western Christianity and the lack of that kind of homogenization in its cultural logic in the rest of Europe, where the coming of Western Christianity entailed tremendous cultural loss and fragmentation which put the indigenous populations at a disadvantage. Perry Anderson argues that the roots of the divergent development in Western Europe lie in the specificity of feudalism as a form, which issuing from the break up of the Western Roman Empire by the Germanic tribes, gave way to capitalism (435-549). If we link Western

⁶⁶ Fontane does not mention that although this was a breach with the old Roman laws in both Eastern and Western empires, the Germanic ecclesiastical system was applied to the lands of the Slavs from the moment of their subjugation during the reign of Otto I.

proselytizing with the cultural logic of proto-capitalism it follows that the resistance of the Eastern European/Slavic people to German Christianization was fierce because the spreading of Christianity meant submission not only to the holy Roman Emperor, as the head of Western Christendom, but also to the nobles, often resulting in traumatic displacement complete with a loss of liberty, land, language and culture, something America, Africa and Asia will come to experience only more recently. While Fontane does not account for these material aspects he seems to agree with Slavic scholars such as Kollar and Chodakovski⁶⁷ that the process of forceful assimilation of the numerous pre-Christian Wends/ Western Slavs in the Christian/imperial structures, which went together with violent germanization resulted in eradication of Slavic pre-Christian cultural

⁶⁷ In the opinion of Adam Czarnocki, alias Zorian Dolega Chodakovski, the pioneers of folk studies in Poland Christianization under Frankish and papal auspices with its Latin liturgy had generally had a negative impact on the cultures and societies of the Slavic peoples in Central Europe who had their pagan saviors, who were mostly nature deities, representing the eternal cycles of life and death. According to Chodakovski, the (mostly enforced) adoption of Christianity not only destroyed egalitarian way of life of Slavic peoples since the subjugation to an alien and distant cultural paradigm, meant introduction of hierarchy and slavery and ultimately resulted in the tremendous loss of culture of pre-Christian times and character which this culture supported because the language of the pre-Christian Slavs formed an integral part of their pagan rituals and celebrations, as their polytheism infused everyday language with its metaphors and proverbs. Indeed, they were part of a long collective memory which evoked a whole archaic rural culture, dominated by ancient superstitions and customs, signs and portents for human life read in the skies and the countryside, in the flowering of the fields and the behavior of birds and animals; herbal remedies and folk-medicine, faith in a complex web of belief which fell into disuse after Christianization and which is now forgotten beyond recall. Chodakowski agree with Fontane on the role the literate Christian hand of Medieval Catholic clerics played in one-sided distortion of history: “Everybody knows in whose hands was the chisel to shape the history of the North. We can easily see how their calling guided their hands and distorted their picture of the fatherland. And we need not wonder if they either omit pre-Christian era altogether or heap abuse upon it and if they depict (only) the coarse, savagery, and obtuseness of our forefathers . . . Above all, it is hard to give a new turn to speech which is tuned to the worship of many gods” (qtd. in Brock 1-22).

character and heritage. Thus he writes: “Aber es ist charakteristisch, daß eben, das einzige, was aus der alten Wendenwelt noch zu uns spricht, ein *Begrabenes* ist. Alles geistig Lebendige ist hinüber. . . Das Wendische ist weggewischt, untergegangen in dem Stärkern, in dem germanischen Leben und Gemüt” (36).⁶⁸

In my reading of *Wanderungen* the multicultural Slavic urban culture appears polyphonic by comparison with the authoritarian, monologic, and hierarchical monastic state — *Ordensstaat* formed by the semi-religious Teutonic Order ruled by extremely rigid and violent customs of an intolerant Crusading ideology of conquest of territory of the pagan Balts and Slavs. Instead of negotiation in dialogue and living in peace side-by-side it sought to superimpose: to impose sharp difference between noble and serf, German-speaker and non-German speaker, Christian and non-Christian, to expel or forcibly convert or to depopulate by attrition all those perceived to be different. This German exclusiveness and intolerance towards those perceived as “others” invoking the relation between the Teutonic Order and the Hanseatic cities persisted; as Fontane remarked “Die alten Bürgerfamilien freilich beharrten in ihrer Abgeschlossenheit und betrachteten den Wendenkietz um kein Haarbreit besser als ein jüdisches Getto” (*Wanderungen* 35).

These differences between German and Slav could be detected in Fontane’s depiction of his contemporary character Frau von Padden whose amiable traits Fontane traces back to her ancient Wendish background that apparently distinguishes her from

⁶⁸ Jan Kollar (1793-1852), the Slovak poet, archeologist, linguist and Pan-Slav ideologist, bluntly referred to Germany as a “Slavic cemetery.” Charlemagne’s troops also so thoroughly massacred the Avars that they vanished from history of which reminder survived to this day in a Russian saying “They perished like Avars,” handed down from *The Russian Primary Chronicle* (56).

other Junkers in Pomerania, for she is as kind, tolerant, hospitable and friendly as other junkers are bigoted, unkind, intolerant and unfriendly. I will deal with the character of Frau von Padden in more detail in Chapter nine.

In addition to outlining a long history of animosity and struggles between Germans and Wends, Fontane also notes their peaceful cohabitation by also emphasizing relations of friendship and cooperation between them, thereby countering the conventional wisdom, which gives prominence to the historic enmity and strife of “Teuton and Slav.” Thus he notes “die kleinen Leute taten sich zusammen, unbekümmert um die Frage: wendisch oder deutsch” (35), which differs greatly from the nineteenth century national criteria used to define Germanness and Slavness and to project national ideology and a pre-existent identity back to the Middle Ages. Thus Fontane reminds his readers that ethnic mingling is hardly a modern phenomenon, and spread wider than modern nationalists and racists want to admit in their blindness.

Fontane thus refutes the claims of an exclusive German ethnic and cultural ancestry of Prussia by rejecting the myth of racial purity in no uncertain terms thereby challenging notions of identity rooted in race, ethnicity, national coherence and exclusion of difference. With an insight uncharacteristic of his time, Fontane notes that as a result of migrations, conquest, assimilation and cohabitation the population in Brandenburg, as a contact zone, is an ethnic mixture in varying degrees of assimilation (*Verschmelzung*). And he maintained that even Brandenburg, considered as the core land of Germanic settlement and the Prussian cradle, is rather predominately heterogeneous or hybrid – a *Mischungsbottich*, while only few areas are culturally and ethnically monoethnic. In his historical approach to early Prussia, Fontane shows affinities with his contemporary,

French historian Ernst Renan who observed in 1882, that a sense of nation which develops as an migratory and settlement history of diverse groups in a particular region is forgotten while the heroic deeds and deaths of a single dominant group of settlers becomes glorified as representing the only “people” who have always lived there. Modern nation, a relatively new creation, is a mélange of different races, “Indeed,” he writes, “historical inquiry brings to light deeds of violence which took place at the origin of all political formations . . . Unity is always effected by means of brutality” (Nation 11).

Fontane’s counter discursive strategies in *Wanderungen* involve a deconstruction of the one-sided historiographic discourse on the medieval history of Prussia, by exposing its self-serving distortions underlying the systematic production of knowledge about Poland and by extension about Slavic history and peoples, in general, dismantled from the cross-cultural standpoint. His discourse frustrates the official unilinear teleological narrative which legitimized its own preservation and continuation (from early tribal Germanic origins and further self-aggrandizement at the expense of Slavic fragmentation and as an attempt to construct German identity as unified, fixed, stable, enduring and exclusive.

Fontane’s approach to Prussia demonstrates that the history of Prussian Germans is closely intertwined with the history of Slavic peoples. However the historiography framed primarily as a story of the Germans and their impact on Prussia tends to explain it in terms of its distorted logic, and to minimize or erase altogether the social, economic, legal, and cultural realities indigenous to the region. Because of the supremacy and general acknowledgement of German historiography in the West, in the metropolitan historiography the Germans of the medieval period have retained the status as either the

crucial factor or the only single factor, which made the region where they settled a part of civilized Europe.

Fontane demonstrates discrepancies and inconsistencies in German one-sided historical accounts based on misrepresentations of the Slavic people. Finally the insistence on distinction between history and literature is not easy to maintain, since as Fontane shows the writing of history is just as concerned with perception as it is with facts, which are often not verifiable. These perceptions were very much marked by their authors' inclination and agendas. This traditional monologic discourse has only recently been challenged by the cross-cultural scholarship in the light of which Fontane's accomplishments can be properly appreciated.

CHAPTER VI

IMAGINATION OF DOMINATION: SPACE AND NATIVE MARGINALIZATION

It is not possible for the colonized society and the colonizing society to agree to pay tribute, at the same time and in the same place, to a single value . . . The truth objectively expressed is constantly vitiated by the lie of the colonial situation.

Frantz Fanon, “Medicine and Colonialism”

In the commonsense language of today the notion of “development” designates not only the geographical area but also a “type of society” or a level of development. Though the exceptional development and achievement of Western Europe was restricted to the small core in Europe surrounded by a semi-periphery lagging behind, in the west and south of Europe, the eastern part of Europe characterized as the Slavic world has come to be seen as an ultimately underprivileged other. Given the West’s prevalent view of Eastern Europe as belated, semi-barbaric/oriental, rural and marginal, it is persistently excluded or treated as deviant in the Western discussions of the city in literature.

Urban paradigms have been considerably inspired by the German cultural and sociological models of urban modernity developed by Simmel, Benjamin and others, but we would have to go back to Max Weber’s ideal types to trace the genealogy of the urban modernity. Weber contended that an urban (civil) society was a distinctive aspect of the Occident (including “Mitteleuropa”), which he traces through the rise of the Western urban communities to the Middle Ages in his essay “The City.” Lacking the city of the European Medieval type, according to Weber, the cities in Eastern Europe, and the rest of the world have remained of an “ancient” or “Asiatic” type and have never reached the same degree of autonomy and displayed a lack of civil society and the dominance of a centralized state apparatus. Weberian historicized dichotomy between ideal “Occidental”

and “Oriental” types differentiates Western European city in terms of the uniqueness of the West, defined by modernity, while the non-western world defined by absence of modernity is homogenized as the “other,” so that the type portrayed as from another time (ancient) and the type portrayed from another space (non-Western, oriental) are lumped together in a spirit of rationalistic indifference and arrogance towards an otherwise rich variety of traditions and cultural heterogeneity. Weber thus advanced a theory which expressed the late nineteenth century Germany’s Mitteleuropa expansion and arrogance towards the peoples and cultures lying to the east of the areas of onetime Germanic settlement and colonization, whose historical process of change it conveniently denies. This, in Enrique Dussel’s words, “provincial, regional view” (470) of the uniqueness and centrality of the West and the constitution of all other cultures as periphery, so central to Weber’s thought, has continued to exert great influence on many subsequent writers.

The absence of East-Central Europe from the political map of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, at the period of emergence of modern social science and historiography, has had great bearing on the perception of both the past and present of central and eastern parts of Europe. Consequently, the larger picture of Central Eastern Europe is impoverished and distorted by looking at it constantly through the German and Western prism. These cultures are interpreted through the paradigm of Western development, i.e. what the West had and they lacked. Thus the seeming lack of developed indigenous urban centers and cultural institutions in the early modern period of the Western type was taken as evidence that most people of Eastern Europe lacked the kind of “rational culture” associated with more advanced and “civilized” societies and their grand narratives, which necessarily resulted in an inferiorization. The thrust of such

arguments in Prussia was directed against Poland for political ends. It legitimized Poland's partition in terms of barbaric natives and backwardness of their social economical structure.

The rigid framework of such clichés is still cramping the readings of *Effi Briest*. What emerges upon reviewing works on *Effi Briest* is not so much occasional blind spots and silence but rather a systematic marginalization of subordinate ethnic groups and non-German cultures. *Effi Briest* is routinely approached from within the metropolitan society and even when attempts are made to move beyond the confines of the nation-state and core culture the division between the center and periphery and an overwhelming focus on the metropole or "Germany," metropolitan culture and society they still assume a unitary nation or nation-state which is implicitly represented as a unified, homogenized and coherent agency in relation to external world.

As a result, non-German heritage in the formation of Central European culture is consistently and persistently overlooked or downplayed. Most readings of *Effi Briest* deal overwhelmingly with aspects of dominant culture while neglecting to deal properly with the periphery and thereby underestimating its transformative potential. One necessary consequence of analytical strategies that focus on the metropolis is that it runs the risk of imposing a single metropolitan label on a much more complex and intertwined context. Thus, for instance, *Effi Briest* is routinely included, along with Fontane's ten other novels, under the rubric "Berlin novels," because, as Henry Garland puts it in the preface to his *The Berlin Novels of Theodor Fontane* (1980), "[I]n all of these novels Berlin is the focal point and the pivot, and its centripetal pull is constantly evident"(ii). In this respect, the terminology assigned to Fontane's novels, namely the general acceptance of the label

“Berlin Novel” is particularly instructive, since it has defined the context and scope, that is, the coverage, range of reference and the field of vision in Fontane scholarship and also impacted the ways in which *Effi Briest* has been traditionally read until present.

My polemic here is not to deny the centrality of Berlin in Fontane’s novels, nor to ignore the all too obvious power dynamics from the center of the newly created empire. Indeed, nowhere was this more pronounced than in Berlin, the Europe’s most expanding metropolis (i.e. in 1830 Berlin had a population of less than 200,000; by the end of the century it had reached nearly two million). Rather, my aim in what follows is to go beyond Berlin’s centripetal pull, which, as a focal point of all analyses, has been responsible for so many metropolitan/ hegemonic readings of *Effi Briest*. Or, to put it another way, my argument is less that hegemonic paradigms and institutions exercise influence over the margins, than that we need to pay attention to the ways in which asymmetric encounters shaped metropolitan culture including its literature by tracing how those margins approach, subvert, resist and contest those hegemonies. Moreover, to every pull from the center there is resistance and opposition from the margins. To look beneath the surface of hegemony exerted from the capital of Bismarckian Germany is to detect tensions, contradictions, conflicts, and crisis. The fact that all of these are represented in Fontane’s novel also presupposes some kind of dialogue between different languages and points of view. These contending tendencies and their centripetal pull might appear less powerful and important from the canonical point of view, but theirs is the reality of actual articulation in Fontane’s novel. Because it is precisely at these borders where the plurality of conceptions, cultures and views are articulated and are likely to be more important on

many different levels (for example cultural hybridity and contradiction, conflicts, interaction and affiliation etc.).

Clearly readings which do not validate the local and particular will continue to rectify the widespread ignorance of the non-metropolitan situations, promote stereotyping simplifications, erase the voice of the native and neutralize or elide challenges produced by the “centrifugal forces” countered from the imperial margins. Giving the consideration to local, marginalized (colonized) topographies and histories are crucial counter-hegemonic strategies, which recognize the role of the native as a historical subject. Understanding the relationship between center-periphery from the cross-referential point of view provides a conceptual model for rethinking the boundaries, which separate metropole and colony from the high tradition of German literature.

Which brings me again to the related issue that concerns the persistent resistance in Fontane scholarship to addressing Fontane’s novels in relation to the historically specific contingencies of imperialism. The approach to *Effi Briest* as a contemporary social novel, which overwhelmingly construes the novel as an insular moral critique of metropolitan society exclusive of imperial relations, fails to properly acknowledge the periphery’s historic role in shaping the internal dynamics of metropolitan society and culture. For instance religious and ethnic tensions in the ethnic borderlands within and without the imperial boundaries greatly influenced the nationality conflict between Germans and Poles in Prussia thereby affording an understanding of how the systematic suppression of Catholicism and Polishness inflect each other. Since Catholic organizational loyalties extend beyond the national state, during the *Kulturkampf* of the Bismarckian era Catholic German citizens of the eastern provinces of the Reich were natural allies to the

Polish Catholics. As Helmut Walser Smith remarked, “Bis tief in die Geschichte des Kaiserreiches unterstützen viele deutschsprachige Katholiken sowohl im Ermland als auch in den Mischzonen Westpreußens bei Wahlen polnische Kandidaten und über die ethnischen Grenzen hinweg teilten sie die sakralen Räume mit ihren Glaubensbrüdern” (2004: 154). Hence frequent complaints of the Catholic connection, that is, the Germans in eastern provinces were being thrown onto the defensive as a result of German-Catholic support of the Polish national aspirations and their separatist demands in the ethnically mixed areas of eastern provinces.

Whereas older interpretive tradition separates metropolis from margins by assuming that all the important action is taking place at the center and therefore a canonical novelist of the nineteenth century focused mainly on the metropolitan social life and should be approached from within, much attention has recently been directed to the ways in which the encounter with the margins shaped metropolitan culture. In so doing, such studies have opened the ways for rereading canonical texts in new and challenging ways, thereby exposing the disciplinary shortcomings of traditional literary studies and deconstructing hegemonic constructions of the periphery as solidified by the master narratives of the metropolitan center.

The advent of “colonial discourse theory” and postcolonial literary studies, which is usually dated to the publication of Edward Said’s seminal and massively influential *Orientalism* (1978), has changed the way in which metropolitan texts are read, even if they have no ostensible reference to empire, race, colonialism or anti-colonialism. As a consequence of Said’s pioneering work, it is now widely recognized that metropolitan culture has long been permeated by an imperial consciousness. Paradoxically, however,

literary critiques that continue to treat German cultural practices as detached from the wider context and contingencies of colonialism and imperialism can in a way depend on the standpoint Said expressed in *Orientalism*, where he is curiously evaluative about German Orientalism: while acknowledging the important contribution of German scholarship for the field of Orientalism, Said also maintains that “at no time in German scholarship during the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century could a close partnership have developed between Orientalists and a protracted, sustained *national* interest in the Orient. Moreover, the German Orient was almost exclusively a scholarly” (*Orientalism* 19).

Said does not deal with the European intercontinental or “adjacent” imperial system and internally colonized populations within European empires and justifies his decision to omit German Orientalists from his analysis by claiming that German scholars came to the field later than the British and French, and merely elaborated on the work originally done by their European rivals. This claim has been contested by many contemporary Oriental scholars most notably by Bernard Lewis who pointed out that “at no time before or after the imperial age did their [British and French] contribution, in range, depth, or standard, match the achievement of the great centers of Oriental studies in Germany and neighboring countries” (108). Germans were prominent Orientalists, yet Germany had no significant involvement in the slave trade, nor did it become an imperial power in any of the Oriental countries of North Africa or the Middle East. But this does not mean that German knowledge did not generate power in the way that it did elsewhere, just because at the time under Said’s consideration trade rather than colonial possession characterized German relations with many parts of the world. In fact, as Susanne Zantop convincingly

demonstrates, Germans were anything but “passive” observers during these long years of colonial abstinence; not only were they involved in complicated links with the emergence of capitalism and European control of international trade, but they also generated a huge literature on colonialism which was fraught with fantasies about imperial conquest, serving in favor of arguments that colonialism and racism are terms appropriate to an analysis of German history. As Larry Wolff among others observed “as in the case of Orientalism, so also with Eastern Europe, intellectual discovery and mastery could not be entirely separated from the possibility of real conquest” (1994: 8).

While Germany’s brief colonial career began in the 1880s, nevertheless, its most persistent imperial and colonial projects since the Middle Ages have been conducted in the east of Europe, which Todd Konje dubbed “The Nearest East,” to point out that it was not abstraction but that it was a German particular and material Orient. Germanic state-sponsored crusades against Slav and Balt lands predate by some three centuries the European movement against Islam and can be traced far back to the German associations with the “Holy Roman Empire” of the so-called “German Nation,” and the privileged position German secular and spiritual leaders enjoyed within it, which gave “Germans” an initial colonial/ imperial advantageous status over other rising Western European peoples, including England and France. Prussia is the most successful colonial enterprise Western Christian Europe undertook in Eastern Europe. Thus the notion of Germans as a *Kulturnation* with the civilizing mission has also served as a vehicle of German expansion into and colonization of what is broadly defined as Eastern Europe.

While the history of research on the medieval historiography of central-eastern Europe is traditionally too remote from Anglo-American post-colonial scholarly interests,

the “colonization of the east” is an exemplary model of the discursive utilization of the concept of the past, and as such essential to an understanding of the genesis of colonialist thinking. In the Imperial German context, for instance, the medieval colonization was increasingly instrumentalized to legitimize Poland’s partitions in terms of barbarism of its population (Piskorski; Friedrich; Bartlett Robert; Bartlett Roger; Schönwälder; Davies).

The myth of the European east as the “land of origin” of Germans, however, does not represent a repetition of the classical colonial case of European expeditions into the Americas, Africa and Asia, since the ideology of return to the “land of origin,” a view of the land belonging to the Germans, from which they were driven out by the Slavs in some ways represents a departure from traditional colonial discourse. According to this myth Germans were “cultivators” in their homesteads and settlements, like their ancestors, (described by Tacitus) so the German spiritual renewal demands German settlement on the Eastern plains, where a collective existence in nature and on the “soil” would contribute to German national wholesomeness. Thus German’s desire to return to the lands alleged once to have belonged to their ancestors, who were forced from them by the powerful westward floods of the Slavs. The broadly defined Slavic Europe was constructed similarly to other coveted areas of the world in terms of “empty” or “no-man’s-land” and portrayed as unproductive, wasted, infertile, awaiting fecundation by the German modernizing activity and “civilizing mission” similar to that which European powers proclaimed during their surge into “found lands.”

German cultural science arose from perceiving close connections between late nineteenth century political ideologies in Germany (certain versions of radical imperialism), German historiography, distinctively German Orientalism and racialized

anthropological theories such as Virchow's *Schulstatistik* and Ratzel's *Lebensraum*, Lagarde's antimodernism decrying the threat of industrialization on *Deutschum*, and Weber's modernization theory and his allegations of the danger of the advancing "Slavic flood." Despite their contradictory discourses they all reflect the need to consolidate the territorial gains Germany amassed with the unification by protecting itself from "pollution" from Eastern frontiers and beyond and concur in one, the right of civilized nations such as Germans to take the land from and impose their will on the inferior peoples such as Eastern Europeans, Poles/ Slavs and Jews.

To offer just one case of many that could prove that Orientalism and colonialism in the East of Europe are very much connected: one of the most influential German Orientalist scholars, Paul de Lagarde (1827-91), was also among the first German scholars who championed pan-Germanism for *Mittleuropa*, as expressed in his highly influential *Deutsche Schriften* (1886). It should not come as surprise that Lagarde, who spent most of his life amassing knowledge of the Orient, should advocate national expansion in the east at expense of "inferior" peoples and as a solution to German national problems. Lagarde's and Ratzel's *völkish* ideas had large and diverse influence on, among others, Nietzsche, Treitschke and Hans Grimm, the last of whom was the author of *Volk ohne Raum* (1926), the major novel of German colonialism, with an enormous impact on the German reading public. Grimm's fictional narrative explored the imperial situation and recollected imperial experience in Africa, after Germany was deprived of its overseas colonies. When in 1890 Chancellor Caprivi signed Heligoland-Zanzibar Treaty by ceding some contested territory in East Africa to the British in exchange for Helgoland, (an island off the German North Sea coast occupied by the

British navy since the Napoleonic wars) some radical nationalists got so infuriated about the loss of land in Africa that they formed a Pan-German League to propagate colonial expansion. As novel that appeared, not at the flood-tide of colonial expansion overseas before 1914, but eight years after the end of WW1, *Volk ohne Raum* could be read as an advocacy of the *Lebensraum* in eastern Europe and as such it is a transposition of the model of colonial domination Imperial Germany had pursued in Africa (notoriously in Namibia) or that other great powers had pursued in Africa and Asia. Germany could not compete with other major European powers, without threatening their vital interests. Germany, however, could expand as a territorial empire in the eastward direction at the expense of its eastern neighbors. In other words, it was used by the Nazis in the drive to establish a German Empire in Europe rather than for regaining a foothold in Africa. The appearance of a huge body of imperial texts following the collapse of the German Empire, and the establishment of *Ostforschung*, served to reinforce the imperial drive in the East of Europe, and was instrumental in ethnic cleansing and genocide (as envisioned in the *Generalplan Ost*) not only in Czechoslovakia and Poland, but also in the USSR and in the Balkans.

Said's analytical approach has been criticized also by the Third World Marxist scholars (notably Samir Amin, Alijazz Ahmad, E. San Juan Jr. and Tripta Wahi, among others) for his inability in San Juan's words to "situate culture, and its diverse expressive forms, within the complex dynamic of the altering historical modes of production and reproduction in specific social formations" (2009). Samir Amin (1989) also commented on Said's provincialism and its inability to explain the historical causality of Eurocentric prejudice. Alijazz Ahmad (1992) also called in question Said's

orientalist paradigm for its marked obsession with European knowledge and Western high culture and insufficient attention to Third World resistance by pointing out that the notions of inferiority and superiority were not part of “constituting” the East, but rather were the components of an ideology of subjugating and subordinating others a result of capitalist logic and predatory nature of colonial and imperial relations and as such they cut across regions, continents, nations and races and are contradictory as well. These contradictions also have specific histories, operate in ideologies, and are grounded in material bases and effects.

Marxist scholars, such as Aijaz Ahmad, Arif Dirlik, E. San Juan, Jr., Benita Parry, Neils Lazarus, Michael Sprinkler, Tim Brennan, Helen C. Scott, Crystal Bartolovich and many others, have criticized the cultural turn postcolonial studies has taken with its preference for cultural explanations of and psycho-linguistic approaches to colonialism over economic and political issues demonstrating ambiguity of historical references rather than grounding enquiry in historical context and its concrete social determinations. They have argued that the rejection of the historical materialist approach and capitalist totality has lead to mechanical reification of ideas and terminology, fragmentation of knowledge divorced from the experiences they refer to which has ultimately resulted in the failure to grasp the contemporary world order and to engage adequately with new forms of imperialism. The dominant globalization discourse continues to draw heavily on the legacy of imperial expansion rather than on the legacy of those who have resisted, which is why it is increasingly dubbed by its opponents “globalony.” Scholars who in promoting globalization set up to promote identity policy (by promoting and proliferating new identities and by calling for recognition of differences as an alternative to direct

political action against the neoliberal model) have defused social movements and kinds of praxis capable of directing globally articulated solidarity and revolutionary action.

More recently David Harvey, Neil Smith and Edward Soja, among others, have applied materialist and geographic analysis to further elaborate on imperialism as a complex mixture and multilayered and differential temporal order created by the dynamics of industrial capitalism and implementation of a transcontinental program of reterritorialization that articulates race and labor, space and peoples, according to the needs of capital and to the benefit of European core culture to draw attention to imperialism's self-presentation as a rational and progressive project. The struggles involved in the development and delineation of control over physical spaces and the restrictions and facilitation of specific flows (e.g. facilitating investment flows and restricting immigrant entry) emerge through what Neil Smith has described as the "production of scale," whereby the scale of societal processes are restructured and reorganized as the effect of political struggles and power relations and, as part of the economic and political expansion. These processes underpin the cultural construction of place boundaries between center and margins.

Others have criticized an oversimplification proliferated in certain forms of theorizings since the publication of *Orientalism*. While Said used the term "West" to denote specifically Western Europe, most poststructuralist theories developed in the wake of *Orientalism* have created a monolithic, homogenized and abstract representation of Europe based on binary opposition between East and West. As the Polish historian Jan M. Piskorski, has observed: "Third-World scholars located in the US academy (such as G. Prakash to whom he responds) tend to conflate all Europe with the Western colonizers

and “overlook the fact that this image of Europe is quite distorted. Their Europe includes only Western Europe – and, as Ireland is usually left out, not even the whole of that. Above all, their dichotomous and sharp distinction between East and West leaves no place for what some call ‘The Black Europe’ of the east – encompassing countries situated to the east and south of Germany and Austria” (7).

Piskorski has drawn attention to this ambivalently designated European location, variously called “Third Europe,” or even “Black Europe,” a border area between Germany and Russia. Although culturally, geographically and politically varied territory, the “Third Europe” is predominately Slavic and thus generally seen as a huge monolith, a borderland of transitions from Europe into Asia – the site of a hybrid Eurasia thus outlandish and unlike the rest of Europe, compacted into a threatening unity ungovernable and lagging behind the West in economic, cultural and political terms often denied history and logic of organization. As a cultural sign it was created and experienced as a colonized territory and thus served as repository of negative meanings which helped define Europeanness and in particular Germanness as its contrasting image.

Historically, not only is not all Europe is the West, but given the racisms that have proliferated in metropolitan Europe and the US at the turn of the century, starting with the racializing of the Irish, not even all Western Europe was in the West. Perspectives of a homogenous Europe on the part of non-Europeans have to do with the fact that thinking of oneself as a “European” was a label once synonymous with that of being a white colonizer of nonwhite people’s territories. This was a legacy of the Enlightenment in the wake of which Western Europe’s superiority arrogantly asserted itself over all other civilizations. In the nineteenth century as the rest of the world was better explored the

sense of belonging to Europe grew stronger giving rise to the notions of bringing the superior civilization to the rest of the world. Towards the end of the nineteenth century Europe believed that it had been given a mandate to bring civilization to the savages, barbarians and primitive peoples. It entertained the myth of the white man's superiority as Kiplingesque "white man's burden," the best of whom was the tall blond Aryan. Yet while it is customary to assume that this racism – at first primarily Anglo-Saxon, but later Germanic – is designed to be against colonized people outside of Europe, as it is central to racial theory, much of the work on race since the nineteenth century, as Robert J. C. Young points out, was devoted to analyses of European ethnicity: i.e. the treatment of Irish and Polish ethnicity in Britain and Germany. In Imperial Germany the most (in)famous examples are *Kulturkampf* and subsequent counter-measures against the "Slavic flood," pseudo-scientific theories of race, and the massive *Schulstatistik*, to study hair, eyes and skin color of German school children, undertaken in 1873 by Rudolf Virchow et al.

Young and Piskorski point out that there is a different sense of Europeanness that of a subaltern European identity, rooted in the feelings of being oppressed. Like the Irish "White Negro" West of Europe, the space east of Europe is not only considered outside of the dominant Western tradition in terms of being a "Third rate-Europe" a sort of a limbo or in-between- space that serves as a transitional zone between Europe and Asia but also a racially suspect Europe with its distinct shades of darkness (e.g. comparison of Slavic peoples to the native Americans). In other words the European/German history of anti-Slavism or Slavic racism (like the anti-Jewish history) demonstrates that the history

of racism in the Europe is far more complex and not necessarily reducible to the issues of skin-color or distant colonial domination.

An attempt at colonial discourse analysis in the Central-Eastern European context would demonstrate an Orientalist discourse to be considerably more complex and layered when viewed from within Europe, producing a rather discontented, ambivalent and fundamentally fractured set of power relations because the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized in Europe has been made more refracted by the fact that some of the colonized countries were colonizers themselves.

Although the West/non-West binarism monolithic paradigms invoke has been fairly well discredited in favor of fragmented sets of power relations – at least in theory, the prejudices stemming from an old tradition of East-West central paradigm still continues to covertly or overtly govern Western perspectives of the European East. Thus Eastern Europe all too often carries connotations of backwardness, cultural inferiority, belatedness and marginality – however, non-European races were considered irredeemably inferior as well.

Nevertheless, Said's work opened up the space for political criticism and contributed to a serious study of imperialism/colonialism and interrogation of dominant discourse by enabling minority scholars to state their own political positioning rather than adopt values of dominant and hegemonic discourse of criticism, which they in the first place intend to criticize. It is within the context of this latest explosion of interest in postcoloniality and only recently – and even then reluctantly – that German cultural studies has begun to engage with postcolonialism. Recent years have also witnessed increasing calls for the extension of postcolonial theory and analysis to rethink other fields of oppositional

inquiry among other internal colonization in the context of the history of intra-European imperialism, and in particular Austro-Hungarian and German Empires, as well as German discursive practices and cultural hegemony in the region and relations between Germans and German speakers and non-German speakers and cultures and their legacies within colonial and post-colonial theory.

German literary critics such as Katie Trumperer, Todd Kontje, Kristin Kopp, and Nina Berman, among others, have argued that in order to fully understand legacies of German and European colonial past, changing meanings of colonialism, and current representations of various Eastern European peoples via the mapping political and imaginative boundaries and borderlines, the definition of the colonial terrain would have to include the internal colonialism and Eastern Europe rather than just overseas colonies. As these German scholars have shown, the imperial process has had lasting impact also on European cultures and societies affected by it. Thus Katie Trumperer urges a transnational approach to German language literatures within new theoretical paradigms of literature, which would acknowledge imperial relations. As Trumperer points out

The writings and history of “German literature” in particular, must be situated within an ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous “Central Europe” that “Germans” have occupied historically as imperialists, colonists, and bureaucratic officials, and in which “German” itself therefore functioned specifically as an imperial language (like Russian in the Russian empire, or English in the British empire) with all that implies politically” (105).

The importance of these aspects notwithstanding, Central and Eastern Europe have not received due attention in mainstream postcolonial scholarship. The lack of post-colonial interest in Continental European imperialism, and the predicament of the “internally colonized” has been ascribed to the fact that by comparison to the experience of the non-European peoples, the Eastern European kind of “alterity” and “subalternity”

is neither considered dramatic nor racialized enough to be an interesting topic for postcolonial cultural scholarship. Although eastern Europe is perceived as “other” to Europe “proper,” its otherness is ambiguous, simultaneously constructed as in and out of Europe and neither exotic enough to arouse curiosity nor sufficiently familiar to facilitate understanding. As Ella Shohat has argued the rapid popularity of “post-colonial” has displaced other fields of oppositional inquiry many of whom have extensive histories of their own such as “internally colonized” comprised of those marginalized and chronically fragmented on the basis of not just race but also ethnicity, gender, class, citizenship, and language use. Given these various forms of internal colonialisms, the term post-colonialism remains problematic.

While German literary studies have reconfigured the disciplinary field by addressing specificities of German culture and discovering complexity and differences hitherto submerged by totalizing axioms, few literary studies address Fontane’s fiction by taking a genuine cross-cultural approach that examines Fontane’s *Effi Briest* in the context of the Central European network of interconnected, overlapping and conflictual multiplicity and diversity of identities and communities. Attempts to move beyond the confines of nationalism or the nation-state often inadvertently leaves in place the “us” of the nation or nation-state (as the “metropole” or “Germany”), which implicitly acts with a singular, coherent agency in relation to “them.”

The lack of more comprehensive study of *Effi Briest* in its imperial context through transcultural approach that goes beyond the paralyzing dichotomies of center/periphery and the standard focus on the metropolitan nation-state core culture reinscribes normative distortions and prejudices about Central and Eastern European societies prevalent at the

time of the novel's writing. This sort of willful ignorance or public amnesia about other people's cultures and histories encourages the hegemony of the specter of Western epistemology. At this moment of social and ideological crisis as vested national interests of the West manifest ever more explicitly and globally it is necessary to disseminate multiple and overlapping histories and understand "Europe," in Paul Lauter's words, as part of "a world system, in which the exchange of commodities, the flow of capital, and the iterations of cultures know no borders" (qtd. in Fishkin 21).

Hinterpommern

Fontane's engagement with space as borderlands and places of contact zones described in Mary Louise Pratt's words as "social spaces where disparate culture meet, clash, and grapple with each other" (4) is an important aspect of his fictional narratives. In *Effi Briest* Eastern Pomerania, *Hinterpommern*, is such an important transcultural liminal space.⁶⁹ In this chapter I wish to investigate the text's engagement with – what current theorists are now beginning to redress – the complexities, potential and dangers of the margins. Even though Poland is not represented directly in the text, since it did not exist on the map, its ghostly presence nevertheless looms large and is conveyed through an indigenous Prussia represented as an alien, unhomely and threatening background to many of the narrative's central events, thus posing as an apparently unintelligible obstacle for the Prussian/German hegemony. In the subsequent chapters I wish to foreground the periphery as epitomized primarily by Eastern Pomerania in order to draw attention to omitted, abandoned and undervalued aspects of the text in order to

⁶⁹ While the term "transculturation" gained wild currency in association with Pratt, rather than Fernando Ortiz (1881-1969) who originally coined the term to mean converging cultures.

demonstrate Fontane's representation of the Polish challenge and the periphery's significant political, intellectual and cultural transformative potential.

In the sixth chapter of *Effi Briest* Fontane depicts an encounter with the oppressed, the Poles and Kashubians as experienced by the members of the nation that exercises authority over them. As depicted through spatial arrangement, *Hinterpommern* in *Effi Briest*, seems to comply with the criteria of literary representation of colonized space defined by Frantz Fanon and other earlier radical critics of colonialism such as Sartre, and the now largely forgotten Polish scholar, jurist and activist, Raphael Lemkin, who have argued that the tactics of domination in a colonial environment are dialogically mediated by the relations of power between colonized and colonizer by the needs of colonialism. When the goal is accessing the resources or land of the colonized, the existence of prior inhabitants is an obstacle for the colonizer and their presence will be tolerated only so long as they do not interfere – or if they serve as a source of labor. Where their labor is needed in a more permanent way the colonized eventually becomes a subject to attempts by the colonizer to integrate them into the hierarchical relations of the dominant.

Concerning specific geographies rearranged by capitalism and usurped by the empire Eastern Pomerania offers an example for what Franz Fanon famously expressed in *The Wretched of the Earth*. Thus he wrote:

The zone where the natives live is not complementary to the zone inhabited by the settlers. The two zones are opposed but not in the service of a higher unity. Obedient to the rule of Aristotelian logic they both obey the principle of reciprocal exclusivity. No conciliation is possible, for of the two terms one is superfluous. The town belonging to the colonized, or at least the native town . . . is a place of ill fame, peopled by men of ill repute . . . The colonized man is an envious man. And this the settler knows very-well; when their glances meet he ascertains bitterly, always on the defensive, "They want to take our place." (39)

Similar constellation is depicted in *Effi Briest*: Pomeranian geography is represented through a typical colonial allocation of space: town/country dichotomy as ethnic/national segregation and cultural apartheid between the German (or German speaking settlers) town vs. the indigenous Slavic countryside. In other words, it is a constellation in which a number of different life styles, practices, ethnicities, religions and cultures are sharply juxtaposed and structurally linked to asymmetric economies and power relations with the colonizing center dictating the level of modernity and dependant on exploitation of the (semi)colonial world.

The importance of spatial arrangement for the postcolonial reading of *Effi Briest* is already demonstrated at the novel's exposition. The opening interaction between Effi Briest and other protagonists reveals commonly held views about the east, as backward, alien, exotic that is, in line with imperial discourse at the time. The evidence of the low esteem in which the province of *Hinterpommern* and its population was held by the Old March Germans is shown by Effi's dislike for Wends and by her reluctance to quit playing with her friends and make herself more presentable in honor of the district's Landrat (governor): "Ich mag noch nicht hineingehen, und alles bloß, um einem Landrat guten Tag zu sagen, noch dazu einem Landrat aus Hinterpommern" (16).⁷⁰

Throughout his novel Fontane seems to be at pains to point out the different relationship that existed between the metropolis to the March Brandenburg as the *Heimat*, on the one hand, and with the New March of Eastern Pomerania as a subject land, on the other. Pomerania neither simply represents an extension of the Prussian countryside, nor

⁷⁰ "I don't want to go in yet, just to say good afternoon to a Landrat, and a Landrat from Eastern Pomerania at that."

is it invested with similar connotations as the Havilland *Heimat*. Rather, its alienness, unfriendliness and outlandishness stem from its provincial subordination as a result of the Prussian occupation of the partitioned Polish state, where German communities, unlike in Old Mark's Havelland, are a weakly rooted and artificially sustained minority. In fact the Slavic inflected Pomeranian topography appears as a kind of inverted geography of the Germanic Brandenburg: Pomerania appears as wild, uncultivated, alien and unstable, as Havelland at the heart of the Old Mark seems tamed, cultivated, familiar, and stable.

The medieval colonization of Brandenburg referred to as the Empire's "sand box" was led by the Saxon Albert the Bear from the House of Ascanians, the forerunners of the Hohenzollerns, who extended their family power by recruiting and rewarding vassals to be followed by conscious development through encouragement of settlements (Bartlett, Robert). Brandenburg was settled by the systematic and extensive colonization from all parts of Germany as well as the Low Countries. By contrast to eastern Prussia, or Pomerania where the colonizing process went hand in hand with the building of fortified cities, as new gains were always consolidated by the building of fortifications, in Brandenburg, the vassals/knights – the *Junkers* were settled in open villages and lived as neighbors to the farmers in the settlements. It is this image of Brandenburg as embodying the collective experience of a comparatively unified and homogenized communities that I think the novel attempts to convey with the description of the Briest ancestral seat, situated in the center of the village and merging harmoniously with its surroundings. The chronotope of *Heimat* represented by Hohen-Cremmen is characterized by spatial wholeness and harmonious unity achieved through history – thus the dominance of vertical time over space. Permanence is epitomized by the dominance of the Briest's

family estate over the Hohen-Cremmen landscape, in which generations of Briefts lived stretching back to the Great Elector, coupled with stories told to evoke history, whereby the local history is tied to the wider national history, both of which are supposed to be characterized as an unbroken chain of tradition.

If the picturesque, harmonious and sun-bathed village of Hohen-Cremmen in Havelland, at the heart of March Brandenburg appears as obviously enjoying its earned peace and tranquility after having rendered its services to Prussia-Germany, to paraphrase Chinua Achebe,⁷¹ then the Baltic sea-port and resort Kessin, situated in the marshy morasses of *Hinterpommern* of the New March, is dark and far from idyllic, fragmented, in flux, and lacking any harmony.

In chapter six, in which Effi's first encounter with Eastern Pomerania is depicted, the reader is placed at the point where Kessin, an outpost of Occidental/German culture, encounters its "other," the Slavic East, by projecting an image of Eastern Pomerania as distant and alien, but also vaguely familiar. Since, predominately Slavic Pomerania was adjacent to Brandenburg, unlike e.g. German East Prussia, which was situated farther east at the outer edges of the Empire, bordering on Russia, it follows that its imagined distance, and "alienness" lies in its perceived ethnic, cultural and religious otherness,

⁷¹ I refer to Achebe's "Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*" a published (and amended) version of the second Chancellor's Lecture given by Chinua Achebe, then teaching at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in February 1975. While a great deal of recent criticism has centered on Conrad's racism towards non-European peoples and his Eurocentrism, notably in his famous essay, "Image of Africa" Chiuna Achebe has expresses his indignation at Conrad's racism by arguing that his representations of Africa and Africans in *Heart of Darkness* reinforce Western assumptions about Africa, similar elitist attitudes shaped Conrad's opinion that the Slavic world as alien to Europe and that Poles are not of Slavic origin but of Iranian Sarmatians.

rather than in its geographic remoteness. Categorizing something as different involves placing it far away in time and space.

Just as the opening scene of *Effi Briest* is symbolic of “real” Prussia, the sixth chapter acts as a key to understanding the construction of Pomerania as its inversion. Unlike the mid-day approach to summer sun-bathed Hohen-Cremmen, the reader is introduced to *Hinterpommern* under the darkness of nightfall of late autumn. The road into the comparison between Brandenburg and Pomerania comes through the opening narrative device: the journey into the East is also a journey of discovery. In terms of the time-space complex, the narrative turns from the time-dominated unified realm into a refracted spatial terrain. The most interesting and revealing paragraphs of the chapter describe Effi’s arrival in Kessin as a passage from the familiar, orderly, modern and civilized Brandenburg, into an alien, backward, exotic, and literally dark Slavic backdrop. This juxtaposition is epitomized by the travel discourse. After a pleasant journey by rail from Brandenburg, the train arrives on time at Klein-Tantow station, still in the German domain, whereupon Effi literally steps out of the train into an alien world. The pace slows down as the journey continues by coach, in Innstetten’s words: “Pferd und Wagen, das sind tempi passati, mit diesem Luxus ist es in Berlin vorbei,” (205)⁷² which takes them through Kashubia, in the Pomeranian hinterland.

As Effi and Innstetten ride in the open carriage from the railway station along a country road, the first landmark they come by on the way to Kessin is an inn. Thus among Effi's first impressions of Pomerania Effi gains is the local inn as a first hallmark

⁷² “A horse and carriage, tempi passati, that kind of a luxury is a thing of the past in Berlin.”

of native life. And it seems predictably so, because the inn serves as a common trope of the debasement of the native Slav (and eastern Jewish) life in contemporary German literature of the time. This particular introduction invokes a well-known clichés of German imperial discourse of the time about Poland: alcoholism and debauchery of the population led to anarchy and were the reasons for civilizing mission and partition of Poland.

Consider the disgust with which Heinrich Mann described the native Slavic peasant life and the village inn, a traditional gathering place of dirty, drunk and foul-mouthed peasants, the so-called Morlaks in the Dalmatian hinterland in the first part *Diana* of his trilogy *Die Göttinnen, Die Drei Romane von Herzogin Assy* (1903) and Robert Musil's similarly notorious representation of the Slavic peasants in the Austro-Hungarian Slavic province of Moravia in his *Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß* (1906). In Musil's text the location of a little Moravian town, where the action takes place, is given in the opening sentence of the book in a description of a small station on a railroad leading eastwards to Russia. Consider especially their scathing critique of the messiness of the border town inns. All these works describe the atmosphere in these Slavic places in a similar way as remote, alien, inhospitable and outlandish. In all of them German culture is an island in the middle of the Slavic sea of debasement which seem to sink lower and lower as one proceeds eastward.

One of the notorious tropes is the Polish village inn where the gentry's agents drain off the peasantry's meager earnings, while the estates usurp the brewing rights (Hagen v). But as Heine wrote, the inns were almost invariably in Jewish hands whose appalling condition Heine described as follows:

Bis auf wenige Ausnahmen sind alle Wirtshäuser Polens in den Händen der Juden, und ihre vielen Branntweimbrennereien werden dem Lande sehr schädlich, in dem die Bauern dadurch zur Völlerei angereizt werden. Aber ich habe ja schon oben gezeigt, wie das Branntweintrinken zur Seligmachung der Bauern gehört. – Jeder Edelmann hat einen Juden im Dorfe in der Stadt, den er Faktor nennt und der alle seine Kommissionen, Ein- und Verkäufe, Erkundigungen usw. ausführt. Das Äußere des polnischen Juden ist schrecklich. Mich überläuft ein Schauer, wenn ich daran denke, wie ich hinter Meseritz zuerst ein polnisches Dorf sah, meistens von Juden bewohnt. (*Über Polen* 565).

Thereupon we are introduced to Golchowski, a “half-Pole,” the local Kashubian leader and the innkeeper, as he stands in front of his inn clad in traditional Polish clothes: a fur coat and cap, saluting the couple respectfully by removing his cap. Effi curiously observes him, fascinated by his exotic handsomeness, and he reminds her of a *starost* (leader of a Slavic community or elder), although she admits she has never seen one, she draws attention to what she assumes to be his exotic “Eastern” aspects, which Innstetten further confirms.

In 1823 Heine summed up the life of Polish peasants on Sunday as:

In diesem Kostüm sieht man den polnischen Bauer des Sonntags nach der Stadt wandern, um dort ein dreifaches Geschäft zu verrichten: erstens, sich rasieren zu lassen; zweitens, die Messe zu hören, und drittens, sich vollzusaufen . . . Aber die Polen haben es doch im Trinken übermenschlich weit gebracht (*Über Polen* 561)

The fascination Golchowski holds over Effi’s imagination, perhaps also because she represents the noble savage herself, is a peculiar mixture of feelings, involving both dread and obsessive fascination, which constructs the sense of the exotic. The term *starost*, is usually understood in terms of its tribal meaning rather than to refer to a royal officer in the Polish Commonwealth, while his handsome body clad in fur is taken to mean that Golchowski represents the living embodiment of a tribal chieftain, which is a step projecting him along a path to his reincarnation as noble savage, rather than by invoking a Polish royal officer dressed in traditional fur trimmed-coat (which obfuscates the irony

of the subtext that would allow us to see Golchowski's position as comparable to Innstetten's). Thus even after Innstetten comments pejoratively that Golchowski is only "ein halber Pole" (44) and supplies Effi with a long list that incriminates him as a bad character, she still maintains her initial aesthetic observations about Golchowski: "Er sah aber gut aus" (44).⁷³

Local Slavs, as represented by the Prussian narrator in the person of a district imperial administrator, apart from their looks, are in every other respect inferior to Germans: above all they lack the culture and morality of Germans and their high standards of honesty,

Ja, gut aussehen tut er. Gut aussehen tun die meisten hier. Ein hübscher Schlag Menschen. Aber das ist auch das Beste, was man von ihnen sagen kann. Eure märkische Leute sehen unscheinbarer aus und verdrießlicher, und in ihrer Haltung sind sie weniger respektvoll, eigentlich gar nicht, aber ihr Ja ist Ja und Nein ist Nein, und man kann sich auf sie verlassen. Hier ist alles unsicher. (44)⁷⁴

By putting the comments deliberately into the mouth of an imperial administrator, the relation of the viewer/ruler and viewed/ruled is clearly established. Innstetten's imperial rhetoric of domination, negation, and devaluation underpinning his patronizing tone on both the Kessin burghers in his ironic expression "unser gutes Kessin" and the Kashubian countryside dwellers, is indicative of the powerful ideological constituents of the Prussian establishment's abrogation of the people and places held in subjugation and low esteem.

⁷³ "But he looked handsome."

⁷⁴ "Yes he is handsome all right. Most people here are handsome. They're of good-looking stock. But that's the best you can say of them. Your people in the Mark are an unprepossessing and morose lot, and their manner is less respectful, in fact it's not in the slightest respectful, but when they say yes they mean yes and when they say no they mean no, and you can rely on them. Here nothing is clear-cut."

The ride in a carriage through the hinterland of Pomerania gives an opportunity for the depiction of spatial arrangement through the panoramic view. There is an evident purpose in offering the subject's attitude towards the observed objects, through the privileged point of view of the imperial official administrator of the district, whose commanding view also affirms the imperial vantage point:

Was du hier landeinwärts findest, das sind sogenannte Kaschuben, von denen du vielleicht gehörst hast, slawische Leute, die hier schon tausend Jahre sitzen und wahrscheinlich noch viel länger. Alles aber, was hier an der Küste hin in den kleinen See- und Handelsstädten wohnt, das sind von weither Eingewanderte, die sich um das kaschubische Hinterland wenig kümmern, weil sie wenig davon haben und auf etwas ganz anderes angewiesen sind. Worauf sie angewiesen sind, das sind die Gegenden, mit denen sie Handel treiben, und da sie das mit aller Welt tun und mit aller Welt in Verbindung stehen, so findest du zwischen ihnen auch Menschen aus aller Welt Ecken und Enden. Auch in unserem guten Kessin, trotzdem es eigentlich nur ein Nest ist. (45)⁷⁵

The privileged high grounds of an open carriage enable Innstetten to convey his version of the scenery by commenting on the spatial arrangement with a strategic, aesthetic and economic evaluation of the land in what confirms neatly to what Mary Louise Pratt calls “the monarch of all I survey” strategy. Namely, all three parts Pratt identifies: the landscape is first aestheticized, then it is invested with density of meaning, and finally it is described as subordinated to the power of the speaker, are present in Innstetten's survey (Pratt 201-226). The native Kashubians, as an extension of nature, are imagined as handsome tillers of the countryside of Pomerania. In the countryside, which

⁷⁵ “If you go inland, what you find are so-called Kashubians, whom you may have heard of, a Slav people who have been here for a thousand years and maybe much longer. But all the people who live in the little shipping and trading towns along the coast are immigrants from far away, who care little about the Kashubian hinterland because there's nothing there for them, their concerns are elsewhere. What concerns them is where their trade is, and since they trade with the whole world and are in communication with the whole world, you find people among them from all corners of the globe. Which goes for Kessin too, backwater though it is.”

represents most of Prussia's wealth east of the Elbe, it is the peasantry, the backbone of eastern Prussia who generates that wealth. The prosperous commercial seaports and resorts with their small communities of burghers command strategically important positions, whose fortresses have traditionally safeguarded Hanseatic cities in their past aggressive trade practices, and now also attract tourists as popular sea resorts. Finally, Innstetten concludes by passing his aesthetic judgment: "Ist es nicht schön" (45)?

The Enlightenment project of panoptical knowledge often uses rhetoric based on the sweeping mastery of space. This device is typically used in the German version of narratives of travel and exploration – the *Bildungsroman*, in which the adventurous spirit of the protagonist seeks to invest the breath-taking panoramic views with the fascination with unfamiliar places. Innstetten's panoramic vision, rather than a harmonious whole, conveys an image of a strikingly heterogeneous and asymmetric space. It is a deeply divided space exemplifying the fundamental contradiction between, on the one hand, the indigenous Slavs of the hinterland, rooted in the land and fixed within their rural environment and, on the other, the bustling activity and international trade and progress brought by the German "civilizing mission" of the German-speaking commercial towns planted along the seaside. Fontane's description of *Hinterpommern* communicates rigid divisions and social asymmetry between urban and rural communities divided along national lines and living in close proximity for centuries without mixing or fusing their identities. The reader receives a clear message that while nature is the realm of the Slavic countryside, the domain of German culture is the town.

In *Effi Briest* surveillance is a matter of discovering and establishing mastery by virtue of Innstetten's role as imperial dispenser of order and law. However, Innstetten's

epistemological act of appropriation through Fontane's use of the rhetorical convention based on panoramic surveillance is underwritten by subtle irony to demonstrate apparent failure, even if it claims visual mastery. Innstetten's imperialist rhetoric is ridden by uncertainty and troubled by apprehension of the competing social forms and cognitive alternatives, which contest and undermine the authorized version.

Rather than making Effi feel at ease Innstetten deliberately undermines her feeling of ease by highlighting the threatening aspects of the exotic, thus delivering a serious blow to Effi's adventurous spirit and her sense of freedom and well-being. Effi, who is initially portrayed as the uncontested leader of her playmates always ready for adventures and exploration in her native village of Hohen-Cremmen, had already romantically envisioned her future life in Pomerania, imagining a poetic adventure to a new and exotic world, half way to Siberia, (where "Siberia" may mean the province of Posen) where she expects to encounter all sorts of exotic people. However, her natural impulse for exploring a whole new world in Pomerania is undermined from the very beginning. Her initiation into the colonial world is one where her sheltered senses are becoming subject to strain. Effi is captivated by a thrilling and repulsive scene.

Effi war wie benommen. „Ja du hast recht, Geert, wie schön; aber es hat zugleich so was Unheimliches. In Italien habe ich nie solchen Eindruck gehabt, auch nicht als wie von Mestre nach Venedig hinüberfahren. Da war auch Wasser und Sumpf und Mondschein, und ich dachte, die Brücke würde brechen; aber es war nicht so gespenstig“ (45).⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Effi was spellbound. "Yes you're right, Geert. It's beautiful. But it's sort of uncanny too. In Italy I never had this impression, not even when we were crossing from Mestre to Venice. There was water and swamp and moonlight there too, and I thought the bridge was going to collapse but it wasn't so spooky."

Already at this early stage the landscape of *Hinterpommern* acquired an uncanny charm in Effi's imagination, outlandish and unlike familiar Europe. Even Catholic Venice with warm morasses lurking beneath its Oriental splendor (associated with Byzantines and Ottomans, and with its geographical proximity to the barbarian Balkans), failed to produce such an eerie impression on her. The nocturnal reflection of the moonshine in water also anticipates the alluring dangers of the illicit.

The Slavic realm of natural elements: the primordial forest, marshy unreclaimed land and above all the *schloon*, stand in direct contrast to the rational Prussian realm symbolized by the cultivated land embodied by Hohen-Cremmen landscape. If the cultivated Brandenburg village is associated with the security of solid ground and clarity of the summer's day, *Hinterpommern* stands for the wildness, insecurity and peril of the night and embodies the East as a formidable and uncanny place where unpredictable events may occur and lurking temptation and danger is awaiting outsiders.

Given the contemporary notions of national pride, it is not surprising to find Innstetten praising Effi's "compatriots" from the Mark as superior to the Pomeranian natives. Innstetten also evokes the *völkish* concept of analyzing the population in terms of the landscape they inhabit by holding up the genuineness of the natural environment of Brandenburg to praise and credit by engendering its population with such qualities as sincerity, integrity and honesty.

By contrast to the cultivated landscape of Brandenburg, in the image of the Germanic character and achievements, the wilderness and rather wretched, marshy land morasses of *Hinterpommern* is a reflection of permanent cultural retardation and moral inferiority of natives. Coming at the flood-tide of anti-Polish policy, such an image of

native Pomerania would be automatically associated with the denigrated “Polacken,” who practiced a disorderly “polnische Wirtschaft” and lived in a muddle. In *Effi Briest* the Pomeranian Slav seems to be identified with the unchanged and ever self-present earth, water and above all their muddy mixture, embodied by the “schloon,” a shifting bog, serving as a metaphor for silence, denseness, treachery and the historical immobility of the people themselves and the moral necessity of their cultural transformation.

Thus the opening scenes of nature could slide alarmingly from the exotic into the uncanny and threatening. But the alarming otherness also has to do with the instability of its inhabitants, who oscillate between the picturesque “noble” and a more formidable savage, between the Germanizable and recalcitrant, the crude outdoor health of the country dwellers (Kashubians), and the mentally deranged, physical decadence and/or atavism of the town dwellers (i.e. Frau Kruse, Gieshübler and Frau von Padden). Pomerania, represented as a fragmented and destabilizing world invested with negative values threatening to German’s ideals of peace, order and harmony, serves to increase German anxieties about the dangers of the East.

Kessin as an expression of westernized civilization, even though a dubious one, is under constant threat from more primitive forces outside. By contrast to Brandenburg, the atmosphere of Eastern Pomerania is pervaded with anxiety, hostility, superstition, supernatural and natural phenomena, and irrational influences to further suggest that the natural forces and human relations there are out of joint. There are hints of forces that cannot be brought under full control by reason (the marsh, the ghost, the ocean). This is

why it is both desirable and disgusting, beautiful and eerie as Innstetten puts it: “Es ist sehr schön und sehr schauerlich” (46).⁷⁷

But how reliable a narrator is Innstetten? After all the local population are seen as dishonest and untruthful through the eyes of the imperial administrator, the pillar of the establishment, while the countering view is missing. Is not such a one-sided view exposed by Fontane as biased and distorted in his historic excursion through Brandenburg in *Wanderungen*? Innstetten informs Effi that the so-called Kashubians have lived in Pomerania for over thousand years, while her ancient family she is so proud of has lived in Hohen-Cremmen only since the seventeenth century. At this point *Effi Briest* invites a more careful rereading of the manifest text as much for what it does not say explicitly, as for its narrative claims, in the light of the *Wanderungen*, which can serve to confirm and radicalize the above reading of the text, so that another legitimate reading of Hohen-Cremmen becomes more available.

While the depiction of the old aristocratic order of Hohen-Cremmen in the heart of Brandenburg appears to be an expression of Fontane’s undivided affection for the tradition of Mark Brandenburg, the cradle of Prussia, his awareness of its historical fragility and its ethical dubiousness is expressed in a subtle and subdued manner. The pastoral idealization of the Prussian heartland that is integral to Fontane’s narrative simultaneously asserts and subverts his own authority. On the one hand, the description of Hohen-Cremmen evokes the traditional, archaic image of the Prussian community as in an ahistorical mythic time and permanence associated with rootedness in nature and connoting political innocence because it is rural. By tracing the origin of the local Junker

⁷⁷ “It’s very beautiful and very eerie.”

family from the “Great Elector” Friedrich Wilhelm, the local history is tied to the wider national history, both of which are represented as an unbroken chain of tradition. On the other, however, Fontane’s geographical strategy of containment also works to accentuate its historic ambiguity. In highlighting the connection between nature and the Prussian history of colonization, of laying a sole claim to territory rightfully inhabited by others and as later legitimized through the Great Man, Fontane’s text produces a statement with semantic ambiguity: the time coordinates of this history signify contingency: for all its ancient existence in Brandenburg, the Briest Junker family traces its origin there only from the seventeenth century, and is predated by the European colonial settlements in what is euphemistically called the “New World” of the Americas.⁷⁸ Conversely, Kashubians and other natives in Prussia like the Sorbs but also Jews could claim a much more ancient bond to the country than the Briefts in Hohen-Cremmen or even the Hohenzollern dynasty which goes back only as far as the early fifteenth century.

During his term as a district governor in Pomerania, Innstetten is concerned with upholding German imperial authority, which set the ruling authority apart from ordinary people; he is prohibitive and aloof and maintains a clear social hierarchy between the ruling class and the ruled, by openly favoring the gentry over the burghers, and burghers over the local Slavic rural population. Thus in his role of a public person he exercises a dividing rather than coercive influence. Innstetten often makes rounds to visit the local Junkers both for political reasons and out of his preference and caste solidarity. In her

⁷⁸ I mean the “discovery” of America in the fifteenth century as the beginning of the West dominated world history. The British colonists arrived in America and established the Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts in 1620, the same year Friedrich Wilhelm, subsequently the Great Elector, was born.

role as a wife of a Pomeranian Landrat, and the “first lady” of Kessin, Effi is far more restricted in her social intercourse than in her native Hohen-Cremmen. Though he is often entertained by others, Innstetten never returns invitations, which explains the strange arrangement of his house, which features neither a dining nor a reception room.

In *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Fanon points to the psychological effects of colonialism. Fontane’s colonial discourse similarly reveals tensions, uneasiness, instability, and even paranoia, and mental disorders, in a variety of ways. There is, for instance Frau Kruse’s mysterious mental illness and her black hen which does not lay eggs, and may symbolize colonial relations in *Hinterpommern* as unhealthy and unproductive. Furthermore, not only Effi, but Innstetten too shows signs of increasing paranoia. To administer a district with natives whose language is forbidden, and culture disregarded while maintaining at all costs, morale, and high standards, is indeed a strenuous enterprise, which has its price. Its moral inconsistency is no less disturbing and enervating for being, for the most part, only dimly perceived or uneasily felt. What this well-known code of double morality means is that Innstetten in his capacity of an “honest broker” (following Bismarck) in the dispensing of cool and even-handed justice, keeps on good terms with those whom he deems unreliable and unworthy of his respect like Golchowski.

Holding a public office also means social status, respect and power. However, as a representative of an intruding imperial administration and a public figure, Innstetten must feel imperiled by the resentment of the society and territory over which he rules. Indeed, his exercise of power is tinged with insecurity, which is suppressed for the sake of the imperial authority, but his nervousness, however, gives him away. Innstetten is said to be

a Wagner enthusiast: “Was ihn zu diesem hinübergeführt hatte, war ungewiß; einige sagten, seine Nerven, denn so nüchtern er schien, eigentlich war er nervös; andere schoben es auf Wagners Stellung zur Judenfrage. Wahrscheinlich hatten beiden recht” (103).⁷⁹ The risk of personal disintegration is real for Innstetten and he guards himself against it by the absorption in the long hours of work. Even after his marriage and the birth of his child, Innstetten devotes most of his time to service, at the expense of his vulnerable new family. In Berlin he is said to have devoted his time equally between his work and his family.

In what seems to be a mocking reproduction of the familiar colonialist rhetoric by both affirming and negating the natives in Pomerania, Fontane is simultaneously implicated and detached from the received version, so that the text’s “knowing” position is beset with the ambivalence and anxiety of seeing, interpreting and representing otherness. Innstetten’s proclamation of Kashubians and Poles to be irredeemably defective and his deprecatory assessment of the citizens of Kessin can be read as suppressing the challenges of alternative traditions and erasing signs of colonial recalcitrance and resistance. The representation of Pomeranian landscape and its inhabitants through the imperial official is a fine example of Fontane’s double-voiced (or speaking in double-forked tongue) utterance understood differently by the master and the subject.

⁷⁹ Why he had been drawn to this composer was uncertain: some said it was his nerves, for down to earth as he might seem, he was actually of nervous disposition, others put it down to Wagner’s stand on the Jewish question. Probably both were right.

Poznan/Posen

Schrim
Ist Schlim
Rogasen
Zum Rasen
Aber weh' dir nach Samter
Verdammt⁸⁰

In what follows I want to show how an image of Poland as the stasis of time-space, which was consolidated during the Enlightenment and reinforced in the late nineteenth century German historiography and in the Western colonial discourse has been driven to extremes through representation of the Polish cities in Poznan, on the frontier of German Empire through signs of emptiness and negation.

Regions are often conventional constructs, within spatialized structures of power such as imperialism, made to fit scholars' or imperial officers' needs in mapping geographies for imperial projects. An arrogant and condescending view that there was nothing of any interest or worth in the indigenous Polish cultures encountered in the process of the Prussian expansion, comes clearly inform the above scornful lines quoted from *Effi Briest* disseminated by the Prussian civil servants, who served their tour of duty in the towns the Polish province of Poznan/Posen.

Unlike rural Pomerania dominated by the network of Bismarck's uncompromising anachronistic Junkers, Poznan was the cradle of Polish statehood and cultural and

⁸⁰ Schrimm is grimm/ Rogasen you go mad in/ but being sent to Samter/ is even damnder. Schrimm (Srem), Rogasen (Rogozno) and Samter (Szamotoly) are regional cities in the overwhelmingly Polish-speaking Prussian province of Posen/ Poznan named after the city of Poznan, under Prussia since the second partition of Poland (1793). In 1807 the province became part of the Great Duchy of Warschau (Warszawa), but was ceded to Prussia in the Vienna Congress in 1815.

national identity and the center of Polish national activity with its network of small towns and new social institutions. However, while Effi Briest can expect to find in Kessin “Eine ganze neue Welt, sag’ ich, velleicht einen Neger oder einen Türken, oder vielleicht sogar einen Chinesen”(43), these Poznan Polish towns, positioned between East and West, are completely drained of all color and life, they are even devoid of exotic allure such eastern sites are usually associated with.

It is this kind of negative argument and imagery produced in Prussia, which renders Eastern European symbolic geography as immutable, epistemologically empty and negative whereby denying eastern European identities access to urban environments, and by analogy, to the European sphere of modernity. The thrust of such arguments in Prussia was directed against Poland in general and Posen in particular for political ends. They legitimized Poland’s partition in terms of barbaric natives and backwardness of their social and economic structure. A view of German superiority over their Polish neighbors found many adherents who felt compelled to defend Germanness against “Slav barbarism.”

However, this is not a simple fact that these Polish towns are so drab to attract or tempt visitor. Rather this is about a symbolic landscape represented in terms of negation, degradation and denial to the point where Poznan (Poland) appears as an abyss of nothingness and ennui. In other words, it is about exploiting the myth of the negative space to the point where Poland becomes a metaphor or metonym for the dark place of the World. The negation and absence of the local culture is social and political, as the denial of any claim to a people’s historical and cultural existence in order to open the space for colonial expansion whereby German culture should give life and form to the

land that lacks it by planting the seeds of German civilization in the Slavic soil. It mobilizes a powerful general image of Eastern Europe as the embodiment of a vast primordial Eurasian emptiness.

This textual requisition and colonization of Poland is based on the set of narratives not only about Poland /Eastern Europe but more importantly about Imperial Germany. It is obviously inspired by popular anti-Polish sentiment, which denied Poland history and culture. The tendency towards reification of Eastern part of Europe derives from the parochial linear teleological narratives of the evolution of world history of which Hegelian/Weberian have been most influential paradigms that represent relationship between Germanic Europe and the world beyond by using the historic development of western modernization as a paradigm against which other histories are compared. In effect other histories and cultures are considered in terms of what the West had and they lacked, that is, through absence — by relying on strategies of exclusion, which allow that which can be thought to seem coherent in its own terms, while repressing that which lies beyond the boundaries of their knowledge as the unthinkable. It overrides a wealth of historical and geographical differences as well as linguistic, ethnic, cultural and class diversity of the area.

Constructed “experience” like this does not simply mirror the world, but rather, in its discursive location, it contributes to the “discovery” of truth through its construction. As such, “experience” has been regarded as part of a methodologically produced knowledge, rational and certain in its outcome; thus, defined in advance by the logic of truth, “experience” comes out of this discursive mechanism as a *sign* through a practice of categorizing which easily identifies the pre-given sign with reality. Thus the depiction of

the turn of the twentieth century Poland is highly reminiscent of earlier depictions of eastern Europe left by eighteenth-century enlightened travelers. Whether depicting eighteenth-century Bohemia, Poland Russia, or Hungary, Walachia, Bulgaria or Serbia, the travelers concur that these otherwise little known regions were all desolate places, engulfed with poverty, crime and misery and quite at odds with the civilized West.

What is ironic about this dehumanizing image of representing Slavs as having no history or possibility of improving themselves, is not so much that this “experience” still has currency, but the fact that it could (and continues to) generate “knowledge” about the “unknowable subject.” One would normally assume that if you do not have the means to analyze a subject you would not have much to say about it. However, precisely this supposed non-analyzability of eastern Europe has created an extensive body of “knowledge” about it. This is a typical German version of internalized Western Orientalism, which was German Orientalism. In other words these topoi have been constructed from a big epistemic lie from an intense and persistent imagination.

Prussian experience of these provincial Polish Poznan/Posen towns and by implication all geo-cultural space of Eastern Europe is indicative of a typical exercise in a characteristic mode of modernist representation, which, as Lukács observed, involves the disintegration of a subject as a coherent, rational entity and its reduction to a sequence of unrelated experiential fragments (1977: 26). The identity of the imperial enforcers in these hostile Polish towns becomes a subject to the processes of disintegration, and through dialogue with themselves the integrity of their rigid monologic personality breaks up and no longer coincides with their “ideal” selves their culturally shaped egos. In time-space dimension the deeper one penetrates into the Polish territory and away

from the Germanic space, the more intense one's experience of disorientation and disintegration of one's own consciousness. It follows that in revealing their own narrative objectivity as impossible the above lines about Poland undercut their own claim to truth, plausibility or moral high grounds, thereby undermining their own imperial grandiloquence.

Thus, while Fontane does provide a powerful critique of German behavior vis-à-vis Polish culture, following Lukács it can be said that in such places Fontane works toward the reification of the consciousness of the imperial subject through its internalization of colonialist discourse, and as a result the text's anti-imperial critique is simply imbricated with imperial hegemony. The Prussian officials seemingly dominate both the physical and intellectual worlds with which they engaged. There is no heteroglossia in Bakhtinian sense as the presence of more than one language or means of representation within one given text or situation. Rather, the imperial administrators represent a monologic authority, and almost everything on the Polish frontier exists or does not exist on their terms. What is missing here is what Said describes as the "strategic location" of the "author's position," in regard to the Oriental material described (*Orientalism* 20).

As a result, most commentators have represented Imperial Germany in *Effi Briest* from an approach of German and Slavic/Polish relation as if absence rather than avoidance defined Eastern Europe: as if Poland were indeed "waste land," empty, uninhabited, silent, dumb except for spaces reclaimed from its wilderness by German cultivators. However, we can only understand the attitudes expressed in the derogative couplets from above if we read them "with a simultaneous awareness both of the

metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts” (*Culture and Imperialism*).

The historic Polish province of Posen/Poznan, which includes Warsaw, had been the center of the Polish state and nation, and by far the most insubordinate Polish province. Tensions and the wide-spread hostility between Germans and Poles were notorious. It was annexed by Prussia in the second partition of Poland in 1793. As a result of the violently suppressed national insurrection of 1794, which was led by the legendary leader Tadeusz Kosciuszko, who mobilized all classes of the Polish population, Poland was partitioned for the third time. During the Napoleonic Wars in 1806, the Polish legions participated in Napoleon’s campaign, with a view to their independence, against Prussia (at Jena with which Fontane dealt in his novel *Vor dem Sturm*) and Russia. The independent Duchy of Warsaw was created in 1807. With Napoleon's defeat, the Duchy of Warsaw passed back to Prussia at the Vienna Congress in 1815 and German settlers arrived, while the confiscated land was sold to Prussian Junkers. However the revolutionary spirit was kept alive and between 1794 and 1864, each generation of Poles was engaged in secret activities and organized new uprisings. The repressive anti-Polish measures, inaugurated by the Prussian government after the Uprising of 1830-1 and remained in force until 1918, were especially ruthless in Poznan. Therefore Bismarck’s anti-Polish politics were especially notorious in the Posen Province (once a Grand Duchy of Posen) where they took a much more virulent nationalistic character than elsewhere in Germany and included a number of specifically anti-Polish laws that resulted in the Polish and German communities living in a virtual apartheid (Kitchen 130).

The only brief respite from these practices were four years of Caprivi's office. When Count Leo von Caprivi, who was of Slovenian background (his original name was Kopriva, a name native of Koprivnik, Kocevski Rog) succeeded Otto von Bismarck as Chancellor in 1890, ushered "new course" of relaxation of anti-Polish measures practiced during Bismarck's time, for which he became subjected to attacks by radical German nationalists and east-Prussian Junkers. When Caprivi reduced the protective duties on imports of grain, the East Elbian landed magnates demanded and obtained his dismissal in 1894. After a brief period of relaxation under Caprivi, the anti-Polish measures increased again.

It so happens that the only parliamentary representative (Oberpräsident) from Posen/Poznan, Hugo von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, who was a Posen native, was appointed during Coprivi's tenure. Because Wilamowitz-Moellendorff sought to promote conciliatory policy between Germans and Poles during his tenure in Posen (1891-1899), he too was a target of hostilities by radical nationalist Junkers and radical, ultranationalist, and xenophobic organization Deutscher Ostmarkenverein, established in 1894. As Martin Sprungala wrote,

In der Zeit von 1815 und 1919 standen 16 Oberpräsidenten an der Spitze der Provinz Posen, aber nur ein einziger, nämlich Hugo v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, stammte aus ihr. Dies hatte in Preußen System, denn man beließ Staatsbeamte nicht all zu lange an einem Einsatzort, damit sie sich nicht zu sehr eingewöhnten und es damit zu Abhängigkeiten und Freundschaftsdiensten bis hin zur Korruption kam. Der Nachteil dieser Verwaltungspolitik war, daß sich die Staatsdiener nur selten mit wenig attraktiven Regionen identifizierten und ihnen daher nicht sehr wohl gesonnen waren. Die Provinz Posen galt unter den höheren Beamten als „Preußisch Sibirien“ und sie verfaßten auf die Kreisstädte derbe Reime wie “Kommst Du nach Samter – Verdammter, in Schrimm, da geht's Dir schlimm, Rogasen ist zum Rasen, in Wreschen, werden sie Dich verdreschen.”⁸¹

⁸¹ From the site "Ostdeutsche Biographie - Persönlichkeiten des historischen deutschen Ostens" posted by "Kulturstiftung der deutschen Vertriebenen" <http://www.ostdeutsche->

The fact that the Imperial administration deliberately appointed non-native officers to Posen and shifted them from town to town in order to prevent them from staying long enough in one place and getting familiar with the area and making friends with the local population, had an effect of deepening rather than easing the conflict between Germans and Poles. Consequently, imperial officers could hardly identify with these “alien regions” toward which they were unfavorably disposed and even hostile. Posen/Poznan was the most unfavorable and counted as “Prussian Siberia” among high ranking officers who were in the business of keeping and spreading the high standards of honesty and “civilization” among the backward natives with the support of the military and police rendering their land as vacant. Thus, when Effi Briest, imagines Kessin in Hinterpommern to be located halfway to Siberia, Fontane might have had in mind halfway to Posen, in the sense of the “Prussian Siberia.”

Heinrich Heine visited Posen in 1823 and his recorded impressions concur with the above assessment:

Von den Bewohnern der preußisch-polnischen Städte will ich Ihnen nicht viel schreiben; es ist ein Mischvolk von preußischen Beamten, ausgewanderten Deutschen Wasserpolen, Polen, Juden, Militär usw. Die preußischen deutschen Beamten fühlen sich von den polnischen Edelleuten nicht eben zuvorkommend behandelt. Viele deutsche Deamten warden oft, ohne ihren Willen, nach Polen versetzt, suchen aber so bald als möglich wider herauszukommen; andere sind von häuslichen Verhältnissen in Polen festgehalten. Unter ihnen finden sich auch solceh, die sich darin gefallen, daß sie von Deutschland isoliert sind. (“Über Polen” 579)

As Heine observed, what made these Prussian imperial officers feel most uncomfortable in their day-to-day life and routine pursuits was perhaps the isolation from the Polish local high society who considered them intruders. They, in turn, could not

avoid thinking of themselves as minority in a culturally alien milieu. Being a minority surrounded by explicitly or latently inimical population affected not only their mindset, but also their temperaments, emotional reactions, manners of public behavior. An overemphasis on their loneliness and boredom as an institutional group among the local population ran through both their official and private writings. The logic of this dramatization can be seen from the imposed limitation on Effi's contacts and communication. According to the Bakhtinian conception of heteroglossia, monologism is ultimately harmful, since any language that strictly guards itself from contact with outside voices is doomed to atrophy and grow weak. Nevertheless, no character leaves the frontier without showing the imprint of contact.

Thus the imaginary claim, that the Polish towns are lacking subjectivity does not simply reflect the prevalence of unrelieved boredom on the part of Prussian civil servants who spent their career in various Prussian Polish provincial towns. Rather these loyal servants to the state who had come to Posen to assure loyalty and obedience and punish disobedience to the Berlin government, were met with fierce resistance and felt uncomfortable, uncertain, fearful and even paranoid, as the missing couplet shows: "in Wreschen, werden sie Dich verdreschen" (In Wreschen they will beat you up). Obviously in the state of crisis human perceptions do not stay in a stable relation to its environment. Thus the verses express the Prussian elite's fear of an unknown and autonomous space created in response to inimical, alien, coercive and hierarchial imperial system as a space of Polish territorial organization, of increasing political and economic autonomy and democratization that views German presence as occupation. Prussia's mission to restore order in Poland represented a myth in the late nineteenth century.

This was the period during which Bismarck tried to destroy Polish identity by every means: by imprisoning Polish leaders, by Germanizing education, and even the Arch-Bishopric of Poznan-Gniezno, by buying the estates of Polish landowners and settling German peasants in Polish areas, by trying to reduce the numbers of Polish (and Jewish) lower classes. As these derogatory couplets show, Prussian attitudes towards Poznan were saturated with contempt and disrespect that the local populations return at every opportunity. All this produced despondency among the rank and file, a sentiment that affected their increasing Polanophobia. As a result excessively obnoxious conditions prevailed throughout the province. Unsurprisingly, the Prussian anti-Polish policy had contrary effects to the ones aimed at, it stimulated growing national consciousness among its Polish population, particularly vigorously among the growing middle class, thus helping to lay the foundation for the establishment of an independent Polish state after World War I.

The repressive reality of Poznan was not the kind of material a writer of Fontane's sensibilities could use in his fiction especially in view of Fontane's expressed belief that sooner rather than later Polish people of Poznan will regain their independence from Germany. Unlike in Posen where communication with Polish population is precluded by avoidance and animosities, in *Effi Briest* Innstetten informs Effi that she will communicate with the inhabitants of Kessin even though not with the local population of the surrounding area. Obviously the circumstances of Posen would preclude both the dialogue and the genuine polyphony. Thus the shift of fictional chronotope from Krotochin in Posen to Kessin in Eastern Pomerania, in which the latter represents a sort of connective tissue between Germans and Poles, and a third hybridized space in which

polyphonic fiction can thrive through mutuality of dialogues, which seek to subvert the ideological abuse of the monologic, authoritative colonial vision with its imposed norms of reified consciousness. Kessin also opens up a space for the possibilities for a dialogue between the dominant (German) and subaltern (Polish) narrative. The relationship between polyphony and marginalized voices is expressed in terms of synchronicity of the space-time context in which the discursive dimension opens up for synchronic interaction allowing for authenticity and unfinalizability, which undermines the possibility of imposing unity by the reconciliation of contradictions in favor of the colonizer. It is also a position from which Western humanism and universalism can be problematized by casting a skeptical light on what they have excluded or repressed. It is this synchronicity inhabited by the subjects of polyphony that represents a textual allegory of perpetual possibilities with which Bakhtin credited the novel. As Bakhtin observes: The truth about a man in the mouth of others, not directed to him dialogically and therefore a *secondhand* truth, becomes a *lie* degrading and deadening him (PD 59).

CHAPTER VII

JUSTIFYING THE MARGINS: KESSIN AND KASHUBIAN QUESTION

Languages of heteroglossia, like mirrors that face each other, each reflecting in its own way a piece, a tiny corner of the world, force us to guess at and grasp for a world behind their mutually reflecting aspects that is broader, more multi-leveled, containing more and varied horizons than would be available to a single language or a single mirror.

Mikhail Bakhtin

German diplomats and imperial servants were not the only ones who traveled, observed, defined the world and recorded their observations. Eastern Europeans themselves were travelers who left their accounts of Prussia, in which they show how Prussians can fall short of their own standards. In the 1840s, the would-be Serbian diplomat and travel writer Ljubomir Nenadovic (1826-1895), recorded that he found filth and disorder of a village life while on a walking tour through the Prussian countryside in the vicinity of Stettin:

I am describing all this to you in minute detail so that you should understand how Germans live outside the towns. We are constantly hearing and reading them ridiculing and deriding the domestic life of foreign nations, and especially the Slavs, but they don't take into account their own poor. From this village to Stettin is less than two miles, and you can travel to Berlin by rail, through Stettin, in a morning. Everywhere that they travel through foreign lands, Germans censure the inhabitants and commiserate with their lovely, fertile lands for not being settled by better people. When they travel through Serbia or any other foreign country and find nothing but soup, they raise their complaints to the skies, and trumpet to the whole world, through the papers, that such a country is worth nothing, and is even barbaric; and yet they are scarcely a one who asks himself what people, what misery and what poverty exists within that very nation that gave him birth (qtd. in Bracewell)

Valuable glimpses of Pomerania can be gained from an autobiography by Franz Rehbein (1867-1909), an Eastern Pomeranian native, former agricultural laborer and subsequent socialist, editor of *Vorwärts*, the central organ of the SPD, in which he

recorded his evocations of a childhood in a remote village in Pomerania falling at the time period Fontane's novel unfolds in Kessin. Rehbein illuminates social relations that existed between the privileges and the lifestyle of the elites – landowner Junkers who seem worlds apart from the rest of society and especially the underclass of day laborers and their underprivileged lifestyle, bringing into focus the significance of both social and institutional barriers that existed between the “estates” in Pomerania by likening Pomerania to Kamerun (Cameroon), the German colony (mis)ruled by its longtime Governor Jesco von Puttkamer, Bismarck's relative through marriage:

Hinterpommern! Puttkamerun!! – – Schon bei dem bloßen Gedanken an diese etwas verrufene Ecke unseres lieben deutschen Vaterlandes wird's einem so merkwürdig »östlich« zumute. Es ist, als wenn heute noch ein Hauch des Mittelalters über die pommerschen Flachfelder weht.

Ein Adelssitz am andern, Rittergut an Rittergut; Stammschlösser und Tagelöhnerkaten, Herrenmenschen und Heloten. Von Zeit zu Zeit ein mehr oder minder in der Kultur zurückgebliebenes Bauerndorf, und in respektvoller Entfernung voneinander die kleinen industriearmen Landstädtchen mit ihren Ackerbürgern, Kleinhandwerkern und – Honoratioren.

Und nun erst Bismarck! War er nicht unser Speziallandsmann? Gewiß, ihm gehörte ja das pommersche Gut Varzin. Nur wenige Meilen von uns lag's entfernt mit seinen ausgedehnten Waldungen. Also hatten wir alle Ursache stolz zu sein.

Übrigens gab es ja auch in der näheren Umgebung unseres Ortes eine ganze Anzahl adeliger Gutsherrn, die an den letzten Feldzügen teilgenommen hatten, als Herr Leutnant, Herr Hauptmann, Herr Rittmeister, Herr Major oder auch als Herr Oberst. Häufig kamen diese Herren nach unserem Städtchen, jeder Zoll ein Edelmann. Im Sommer hoch zu Roß oder per Wagen, im Winter in eleganten Schlitten, in prächtige Pelze gehüllt, oft genug »viere lang« mit zwei Vorreitern, Kutscher und Diener in reicher Livree.

Honoratioren und Geschäftsleute standen dann nicht selten in ihren Haustüren und machten Bücklinge und Kratzfüße, und mancher zünftige Spießbürger rechnete es sich zur hohen Ehre an, wenn er das Glück hatte, derartig vornehme Herrschaften grüßen zu dürfen und gar – wieder begrüßt zu werden. Die Herrschaften schienen diese ehrerbietigen Grüße der Einwohner als etwas ganz Selbstverständliches zu betrachten, denn meistens erwiderten sie jene Devotionen nur mit einem leichten, flüchtigen Kopfnicken; selten lüfteten sie die eigene herrschaftliche Kopfbedeckung. Wir Kinder aber freuten uns über die feurigen, schnaubenden

Pferde, die dampfend und schäumend vor dem adeligen Gefährt prunkten. Ich versäumte zudem nicht, noch regelmäßig nach der Brust der Herren zu spähen, ob dort auch ein farbiges Ordensband im Knopfloch prangte. Erblickte ich es, so rangierte dessen Besitzer für mich ohne weiteres in der Reihe der tapfersten aller tapferen pommerschen Krieger. Er galt mir als eine Art höheres Wesen. In meinen Augen war er dann nicht nur ein geborener Führer und Offizier der gewöhnlichen Soldaten, sondern auch rechtmäßiger Herr und Gebieter in anderen Dingen, der ein natürliches Anrecht darauf hatte, daß ihm jedermann mit Achtung und Zuvorkommenheit begegnete. So erzählten es uns auch die Lehrer in der Schule, und sie ermahnten uns oft, nur immer recht höflich und ehrerbietig gegen jene Herren zu sein, denn diese seien nach Gottes Willen die Obersten des Volkes. Und da mußte es doch stimmen.⁸²

⁸² Eastern Pomerania! Puttkameron!! – – Just thinking about this rather infamous corner of our beloved German fatherland makes one so curiously “eastern.” It is as though a whiff of the Middle Ages were blowing across the flat Pomeranian field... Incidentally, a considerable number of noble estate owners who had participated in the recent campaigns, as Herr Lieutenant, Herr Captain, Herr Cavalry Captain, or Herr Colonel, could also be found in the vicinity of our town. These gentlemen frequently came to our little town, noblemen from head to toe. In the summer, they appeared on horseback or came by carriage; in the winter, they wore splendid fur coats and came in elegant sleighs, quite often four-horsed, with two outriders, a coachman, and a servant in rich livery. When this happened, it was not uncommon for local dignitaries and businessmen to stand in their doorways, bowing and scraping, and many a proper philistine considered it a high honor to be fortunate enough to greet such distinguished ladies and lords and even – to be greeted in return. The lords and ladies seemed to regard these deferential greetings by the town dwellers as something entirely natural, for most of the time they returned them with only a light, casual nod of the head; they seldom raised their own hats in greeting. As children, however, we delighted in the fiery, snorting horses that steamed and foamed as they paraded in front of the noble carriage. I also never neglected to take a routine peek at the gentlemen’s chest to see whether it displayed some colorful medal ribbon. If I saw one, then I regarded its owner as easily ranking among the bravest of all brave Pomeranian warriors. I considered him a kind of higher being. Consequently, in my eyes he was not merely a born leader and officer of common soldiers, but also a legitimate master and lord in other things, someone who was naturally entitled to other people treating him with respect and courtesy. This was also what the teachers in school told us, admonishing us often to be extremely polite and deferential toward those sirs, for they were, according to God’s will, the leaders of the people. And so it had to be true. Source: Franz Rehbein, *Das Leben eines Landarbeiters* [The Life of a Farm Worker] ed., Urs J. Diederichs and Holger Rüdell. Hamburg: Christians, 1987, pp. 5; 12-15. Translation: Erwin Fink. Rehbein’s autobiography was originally edited and published by Paul Göhre, a Protestant minister and social reformer, shortly after his death in 1911.

When interpreted alongside the standard colonial narrative, expressed by Innstetten and other elites, Nenadovic's and Rehbein's accounts invite the reader to a contrapuntal rereading of the novel and especially of the Pomeranian-based context. The voices of a rural Pomeranian laborer and a Balkan /Serbian traveler provide that absent perspective that I referred to in previous chapter, and that Lukács found wanting in Fontane's text, that missing outside, the other face of the mirror, that speaks critically (even if with a certain mixture of awe) and with resentment about Prussia. As a comment on Pomerania from outside and below, they offer a mirror image of the novel's perspective from inside and above, as expressed by the Prussian nobility. Their mirror makes visible what is apparent to others but a mystery to the elite subjects, showing what their images really look like. The dialectic of the gaze that each side casts on the other is informed by that larger picture of which Fontane wrote in his *Wanderungen*.

Kessin

In the first part of this chapter I am going to look at Fontane's representation of Kessin as a hybrid "third space" that resists the dominant and represents an unstable and ambiguous alternative to paralyzing dichotomies of the opposites. Following Bhabha who seeks to find the "location of culture" in the marginal, "haunting," "unhomely" spaces between dominant social formations, we can see in Fontane's Kessin in particular and Hintepommern more generally representations of such a location. However, as a third space Kessin and its hybridized diaspora is also utilized for the purpose of economic gain which brings me to my second part in which I will look into Hinterpommern as a contested space between Germans and Poles – and their competing claims over the

strategically important but nationally undeclared or ambiguous minorities such as Kashubians, inhabitants of the strategically important Baltic area.

It is conventionally assumed that internationalism and cosmopolitanism are experienced in the capital centers such as Berlin and not in some Baltic backdrop like Kessin, which in most analyses of *Effi Briest* is associated with provincialism, remoteness, backwardness, alienness, or exoticism. However, as Anthony D. King has demonstrated it is precisely in the distinctive historical and unequal conditions of ex-colonized cities that the notion of the “international” was constructed. King has argued that during the time of empire colonial city was far more internationalized than the metropolitan city (*Urbanism* 78). Stuart Hall has similarly observed that contemporary post-colonial and post-imperialist critiques have emerged in the former centers of empires evident today in ex-colonial cities or countries.

In chapter six, where Innstetten introduces Effi to her new surroundings he also gives her a lecture about the foreignness of her future place of residence. After having introduced the Kashubians, as the indigenous population of the Kessin hinterland, whom Effi finds exotic, Innstetten introduces the town of Kessin to Effi by defining it as a diasporic town: “Die ganze Stadt besteht aus solchen Fremden, aus Menschen, deren Eltern oder Großeltern noch ganz woanderes saßen (46).”⁸³ Effi finds this situation extremely peculiar (Höchst merkwürdig).

But as world historian William H. McNeill points out, in world history poliethnicity was the rule rather than exception (*Polyethnicity* 4). He also sees monoethnicity not only

⁸³ “The whole town consists of foreigners like that, people whose parents or grandparents lived somewhere else altogether.”

as exception but also “barbarous.” A case of point for McNeill’s assertion is Fontane’s invocation of Vineta in *Wanderungen*. In fact, the medieval Baltic region and its network of polyethnic coastal towns engaged in a lively long-distance trade, its ethnical-racial-linguistic-cultural-religious diversity gave rise to Fontane’s fictional Kessin as a counter model to the monoculturalism and homogeneity of Hohen-Cremmen or exclusiveness of Pomeranian nobility, going back to the racial-ethnic-linguistic-cultural exclusiveness of *Hansa Teutonoricum*, that is, the interconnected relation that existed between the Teutonic Order and the merchant Hansa cities who controlled the trade in and through the Baltic sea through their aggressive practices and maintained a distinct ethnic identity which connected it with Germany. In *Wanderungen* Fontane writes about how Slavs and Jews are shunned by the Hansa families (35).

The dominant narrative of the literal rootedness of Germans in the physical space of the German nation excludes as Others all non-Germans, such as Poles, Kashubians, Sorbs or Jews. From the Pomeranian Junkers’ perspective, the commercial seaport and resort Kessin is a different kind of “Other,” the site of modernity, rootlessness, hybridity, adventure, liberalism and foreigners with their international connections. In other words, trade played a key role in the process of what the enemies of the market often refer to as “mongrelization,” which according to McNeill is a factor in civilized life that assured ethnic mingling: the exchange of goods across cultural boundaries through some sort of organized trade. Furthermore, the presence of resident aliens, often in the form of merchant or mechanic subcommunities, is as old as recorded history. The example of Huguenot community in Brandenburg comes to mind as an appropriate case in point for McNeill’s assertion that aliens played significant role as bearers of social skills.

In this respect, McNeill's notions of "polyethnicity" and "mongrelization" and King's arguments that during the time of empire colonial city was far more internationalized than the metropolitan centers, are relevant for Fontane's representation of the Baltic Kessin. Similarly, in his reading of *Effi Briest*, Marshall Brown points out that apparently remote Kessin is not only accessible by rail from Berlin, but that it "is far more planetary than seen at first glance." He also remarks on the multi-layeredness of Pomerania as sailor's territory, as Swedish skandinavisches Vorland superimposed on Slavic Pomorce etc. (249-258). This suggests that relations between the global and local (Kessin) have always been complex and multidimensional.

As Bhabha argues the "liminal" space is a "hybrid" site that witnesses the production — rather than just the reflection — of cultural meaning:

Terms of cultural engagement, whether antagonistic or affiliative, are produced performatively. The representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of pre-given ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition. The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation. (1990:45)

Because *Effi Briest* is liminally set in the eastern reaches of Prussia, hybridity, borders, thresholds, in-betweenness play an important role in the novel. Bhabha's middle-ground theory, expressed through the notion of hybridity as an in-between space is especially helpful for understanding Fontane's decision to relocate the unfolding of the narrative of *Effi Briest* from the social relations of everyday life of the bleak Krotoschin which epitomizes fundamentally antagonistic colonial confrontation between Germans and Poles to the multinational and hybridized Kessin, as the "third space" of diasporic/ displaced population positioned "in-between" German and Polish culture and thus challenging the limits of existing boundaries between Germans and Poles.

In *Effi Briest* Kessin is such a colonial space inscribed with the dominant culture but also contested by a multiplicity of other cultures and identities. It is a terrain contested and negotiated among international, often hybrid business-classes, reactionary landowners, Kashubian peasants, Polish nationalists and imperial administration. Liminality, according to Bhabha, pertains not only to the space between cultures, but also between historical periods, between differing politics, world views, aesthetics, between theory and practice. In Kessin we observe a negotiation taking place between localism and world-scale transformations. In the process of being challenged by the international, the periphery is becoming a piece of “glocal” Europe, or world, which is, in turn, itself challenging to the center and the local. The slippage is evident: while the power of the dominant German culture inscribes other cultures and identities with “otherness” thereby devaluing them, it can neither encompass nor fathom them. Fontane’s Kessin actually fits the paradigm case of what is now called the “postmodern” predicament of multiple inscriptions and creolization cross-connected with outside network of other centers, rather to any individual (e.g. German) nation, which undermines the notion of a nation-state homogenization and relativizes the center-periphery dichotomy.

What is also compelling about Bhabha’s argument in relation to *Effi Briest* is Fontane’s demonstration that this complex process of collective social transformation is taking place also in the Polish/Kashubian society. As dramatized through his Polish inflected characters such as Golchowski we can perceive that the Polish elites abandoned the idea of achieving national emancipation through violent struggle and confrontation and like Czechs (Zeman; Agnew) adopted a new national approach of gradual

socio/economic improvement and reinvention of national identity without giving up Polishness and hope of national determination. I will discuss this shift in chapter nine.

However we also need to situate the discussion of diaspora and hybridity into their lived/material experience of time and space. Marxist legacy rests on analyses of workings and contradictions of capitalism. One of the fundamental postulates of Marxist theory is that capitalism is a world system that has developed unevenly. The global economic order that arose towards the end of the century enabled by new technologies of communication along with the arrival of mechanized mass production compressed time and space, sharply juxtaposing a variety of cultures linked to unequal economies and polities, with the colonizing center dictating the measure of modernity. I take *Effi Briest* to be a fine example that illustrates this effect in the part of the novel set in Pomerania. As in many other societies that have been shaped by colonial and later imperial (finance-capitalism) domination, Pomerania too demonstrates this mixture of forms understood as a hallmark of modernity and its cultural logic: the co-existence of a modern sector, usually foreign dominated or managed by the merchant-capitalists sharply juxtaposed with a traditional sector characterized by pre-capitalist modes of production and ruled by feudal/ tributary ruling classes.

Thus while Kessin as an important liminal location transcending cultural limits and national boundaries, it is also a third space clearly related to capital accumulation. In *The Wealth of Nations* Adam Smith used the phrase “principal architects” in decrying the mercantile system, which he argued benefited those who designed it at the expense of the vast majority.

It cannot be very difficult to determine who have been the contrivers of this whole mercantile system; not the consumers, we may believe, whose interest has been

entirely neglected; but the producers, whose interest has been so carefully attended to; and among this latter class our merchants and manufacturers have been by far the principal architects.
(Book IV, ch. VII, pt. III, pp. 180-181)

Smith's account of economics at the beginning of the industrial revolution has its relevance for the Germany of the late nineteenth century e.g. Kessiner are identified as people who operate beyond the state boundaries and thus with multiple loyalties and affiliations where aristocracy was still able to place a variety of restrictions on the rising bourgeoisie. Prussia had been essentially an aristocratic society, dominated by landholding families. During the Second Industrial revolution Prussian industrialization came to be dominated by wealthy investors, and capitalism became the dominant economic system. This led to a major social transformation. As capitalism became dominant economically, capitalists became dominant politically so that the tax structures and import-export policies were gradually changed to favor investors over landowners. During the time of the Great Depression (1873-1896) there was a growing disillusionment with materialistic greed and claims that the fruits of honest German toil were filched from hard-working Germans by finance swindlers and speculators. Especially badly hit was German agriculture, with falling prices for the wheat of the large estates of Eastern Elbian Prussia (e.g. old Briest is complaining that he is going to lose his estate if the tariffs on agriculture produce are not raised) and started a great internal migration of population in search of livelihood from the countryside to towns, from the underdeveloped eastern provinces towards the industrialized west providing cheap labor needed to fuel industrial revolution that amassed the fortunes of corporate and banking interests still surviving today.

The landed nobility, its social position rooted in the land and the army, was obviously late in accommodating itself to the new circumstances of its declining economic fortunes. However, it is not the subaltern Slav peasant who poses a threat to landowning economic interests and social prestige, but rather the vigorously rising urban: industrial and commercial, and internationally connected middle classes. For the pre-industrial elites were primarily intent on preserving their accumulated territorial possessions rather than accumulating distant territories. Since they traditionally despised commerce and shunned anyone with a business mentality all those engaged especially in international business were seen with suspicion as anti-patriotic because they threatened their old privileges and value systems as well as their lifestyle, by what they saw as robbing the country of her wealth while working for international interests and enriching themselves.

Unlike aristocratic landowners, traders or (proto)capitalists are not tied to a place, or to the maintenance of a place since capital is disloyal and mobile – it flows to where the most growth can be found. The Kessiner think on a global scale and their business is international. This detachment from place leads to a different kind of geopolitics under capitalism, as compared to aristocracy. Thus it is possible for Kessiner citizens to imagine and wish for their governor's imperial venture in Africa. As rumor among the Kessin burghers and entrepreneurs has it, Innstetten, was entrusted with heading an Imperial delegation sent on a mission to Morocco bearing proverbial gifts among which is a modern ice-making machine.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ See for example Ludwig Pietsch, Marokko. Briefe von der Deutschen Gesandtschaftsreise nach Fezim Frühjahr 1877. Leipzig 1878. Kaiser Wilhelm's rush

The prosperous Kessin community consists of diverse and cosmopolitan middle-class traders and professionals, represented by non-German (but mostly Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian) names (except for Jews, perhaps because they had been traditionally prohibited from settling in Hanseatic cities and only recently emancipated). While they show disregard for their neighbors, the local Kashubians, they are in turn considered parvenus hardly worthy of being called a society proper by local landowners and imperial officers. Effi is disappointed at finding out that there are no old/good families in the town. The only character in the Kessin middle-class milieu highly respected and well-liked by everybody for his kindness, cultivated and sensible nature, is the somewhat bizarre-looking, eccentric and physically handicapped apothecary Alphonso Gieshübler, a half-Spanish hybrid who has no political interests or international business connections and is not seen as a threat to the elite's interests. Nevertheless, Gieshübler's salon and the Club ("Ressource"), which he presides over with his middle-class flair, are the focal point of Kessin burghers and despised and even accused of harboring "destructive tendencies" against the established order by the ultra conservative local landowners like Guldenklee (156). The novel undercuts its apparent rejection of the world of commerce; material gain is rarely the ostensible goal of the novel's main characters with the possible exception of Effi Briest who not only aspires to get on in society and prosper materially but also contemplates a rich banker for her future son-in-law.

The rise of German bourgeoisie emphasis on basic class conflict is evident in the eastern reaches of Imperial Germany. Fontane's Kessin/ Pomerania in *Effi Briest* offer an

intervention in Moroccan Affairs in 1905 later provoked three crises and converted the Anglo-French alliance into a military pact.

exemplary locus not only of the hybrid life experiences but also of the graphic triangulations of opposites, (or rather two competing and occasionally contrasting nationalisms) a cognitive mapping of processes of ruptures and contradictions that epitomizes the genuinely dialectical vicissitudes of history apprehended by Marxism in its survey of historically specific milieus and concrete conjunctures of disunity.

According to Wallerstein the development of the modern industrial economies (the core territory) is inextricably linked to underdevelopment of the periphery. In other words, contrary to modernization theories (Weber) who argue that underdeveloped nations have not yet developed, Wallerstein argues that the core actively underdevelops periphery for its own benefit through a strict division of labor between the core and periphery. The process of the development of the core German provinces continued to underdevelop the semiperiphery which provides raw material and cheap labor (both Polish and German).

This is what has been stigmatized as Balkanization, well captured in Emanuel Wallerstein's observation about "ethnicization of the exploited classes" which allows capitalism to expand as the most efficient system of exploitation of labor through continuing and intensifying cultural/ethnic hierarchies. Since according to Wallerstein capitalism ethnicizes peoples by intensifying cultural/ethnic differences and hierarchies to promote labor segmentation, not only hybridity in Bhabha's positive sense but also other differential phenomena result (Wallerstein 1991: 71- 86). Fontane's *Effi Briest* is a case in point that demonstrates how capital ethnicizes peoples to promote labor segmentation resulting in hybridity and other differential phenomena e.g. only certain North West European ethnicities are encouraged to settle in Kessin, while Slavs

(Kashubians or Poles), eastern Jews, and non-Europeans like Chinese, are not only shunned as “aliens” or seen fit to be only domestics, but that their presence is otherwise a cause for fear.

Consequently, in the rigid framework of the eastern Prussian society, vertical social mobility was almost non-existent. East of the Elbe, as Fontane’s text shows and Rehbein’s autobiography confirms, there is little communication between the landed nobility and the burgers and still less with local rural predominately Slav communities. Whereas the Prussian landowning gentry continued to occupy their traditional position in the state and country bureaucracy and army, and thus were able to preserve their status in the new ruling bureaucratic and political elite of Pomerania, German or Germanized burghers controlled the trade in the Baltic cities, and there was no embourgeoisement of the local Slavs. The vast majority of the indigenous population, even long after being emancipated from feudal obligations (in 1807, under the impact of the Napoleonic wars), remained alien from the urban environment, lacking skills and knowledge (denied to them by Prussian anti-minority policies) to merge into the rank and file of the middle class. The gulf was filled and further fuelled by non-indigenous settlers. Driven from the native cities and lacking German medieval type of cities (Hansa cities and Crusaders), to use Weberian terminology, the natives were deprived, because Imperial Germany in *Hinterpommern* maintains a relationship between the city and rural environment from which the urban consumers benefited. This is why Slavs (Kashubians or Poles, eastern Jews, and non-Europeans like Chinese, are not only shunned as “aliens” or seen fit to be only domestics, innkeepers and factors, but their presence is also a cause for fear (Effi dislikes the Wends and considers the Chinaman sinister). Thus only certain North West

European ethnicities are encouraged to settle in Kessin, certainly because of their perceived ethnic, linguistic and cultural similarity to Germans but more importantly because of their aggressive business practices. This is clearly communicated in the text by the fact that the most respected citizen in Kessin is a pirate who sailed the China Sea (was probably engaged in slave-nature trafficking of Chinese coolies overseas which started in 1840s), while Innstetten's immediate neighbors are a barber-surgeon from Lisabon and a Scotsman who brings his own country into discredit. This reference to dubiousness of Kessin burghers is not an idle comment because it alerts the reader to the subaltern Polish minority and their long-standing plight to regain the access to the Baltic in Pomerania, which is shown to be both historically justifiable and an urgent economic necessity, while at the same time it questions the right for imperial implementation of its order and selective progress over the subject peoples. In Imperial Germany with state controlled capitalism, while many changes took place in daily life in the core provinces in consequence of technological and commercial innovation, the large-scale of modernization: industrialization and transport development closely linked to state planning and banking, largely bypassed eastern peripheries, especially those whose populations were designated as enemies of the empire. Thus even though proletariat in the industrial centers stood to benefit from Bismarck's welfare reforms of 1883 and 1884, in the rural areas no such improvement was felt. In fact the anti-Polish measures especially since 1886 were intended to worsen Polish condition.

The colonial situation of *Hinterpommern* opens up the possibilities for Bakhtin's notion of the dialogic as the rupture of the monologic in the text as a carnivalesque dispersal of the hegemonic order of a dominant culture, where the subversive potential of

polyphony and dialogue reveals itself in a motley hybridity of Kessin bourgeois society, Gieshübler's Club and its subversive activities (in the opinion of conservative Junkers), the intrusion of half-Polish characters (Crampas, Frau Padden and Golchowski), subordinate ethnic and religious groups, such as the isolated Kashubians lurking in the background, and the uncanny subversiveness of the mysterious Chinese ghost, the supernatural, the otherworldly, the strange, the bizarre.

There are also signs of resistance against the imperial presence by the locals, who not only play the master's game in terms of what Bhabha elaborated as *sly civility*, but their latent hostility also takes active forms of sabotage, such as arson, we find out that during his office in Kessin, Innstetten is often called to investigate arson as political acts of the local patriots.⁸⁵ Thus even though Innstetten as a governor of *Hinterpomern* is in position of authority, and despite his feelings of superiority, he feels imperiled since maintenance of authority depends on inherent animosity and constant vigilance for signs of resistance among the local people.

Fontane expressed his imperial anxieties and his profound lack of confidence in the state privately e.g. in a letter written in the summer of 1893, which he attributed to the unsound foundations on which Bismarck had built and Wilhelm II had ruled the Reich. A more indirect and ironic treatment of the same theme in *Effi Briest* is illustrated by Innstetten's growing lack of confidence in people and the sense of isolation. Innstetten is

⁸⁵ Günter Grass' *Blech Trommel* picks up where Fontane's *Effi Briest* leaves. Oskar's grandparents lived in Bismarck's Germany in the Baltic littoral. Joseph Koljaiczek (Wranka) / Joe Colchic: Oskar Matzerath (Bronski)'s maternal grandfather, who hid from the police under Anna Bronski's four skirts, was wanted for arson. In Fontane's *Effi Briest*, Fontane's character Golchowski remarks on Bismarck's acquisition of a paper mill.

so suspicious of not just the local Slavs but the whole area becomes an object of his mistrust and dislike: even the most likable person in Kessin the apothecary Gieshübler, whom Innstetten initially characterizes as “unsere beste Numer hier, Schöngest und Original und vor allem Seele von Mensch” (49)⁸⁶ is later viewed with suspicion and resentment. When Innstetten comes back for the duel with Crampas, Innstetten’s colleague and second Wüllersdorf expresses his surprise that none of the Kessin citizens came to greet their supposedly popular ex-governor, not even Gieshübler. Innstetten bitterly replies: “Da verkennen Sie die Leute hier an der Küste; halb sind es Philister and halb Pfiffici, nicht sehr nach meinem Geschmack; aber eine Tugend haben sie, sie sind alle sehr manierlich. Und nun gar mein alter Gieshübler. Natürlich weiß jeder, um was sich’s handelt; aber eben deshalb hütet man sich, den Neugierigen zu spielen” (240).⁸⁷ The middle-classes of Kessin are equally mistrustful of the ruling oligarchy and do not hold in high regard the aristocratic way of life and militarism. The fact that the town voted against the relocation of the elite units of Hussars to Kessin, despite the social prestige their presence in the town would have involved, demonstrates also self-assertion of the bourgeoisie code of conduct which, from the point of view of the delusional aristocracy, as Effi’s cousin Dagobert expresses it “ein Fall, der übrigens einzig in der Weltgeschichte dasteht” (193).⁸⁸

⁸⁶ “He’s a character, the best we have here, an aesthete and something of an original, but above all he’s all heart.”

⁸⁷ “You don’t know them up here on the coast; half of them are philistines, the other half are slippery customers, not much to my taste; but they do have one virtue, they have manners. And for dear old Gieshübler. Of course they all know what’s going on, and for that very reason they’re taking care not to appear curious.”

⁸⁸ “a unique phenomena in the history of the world.”

The outcome of the duel and Crampas' death will have no doubt contributed to further alienation between the ruling elites and the rest of society. This unfortunate outcome of the duel taking place against Prussian Government's anti-Polish measures will certainly outrage the Polish people but Innstetten and the establishment will not fare better in the eyes of the Kessiners.

The Kashubian Question:
From Bismarck's Trusted Pomeranian Grenadiers to Polish Nationals

In the early manuscript of *Effi Briest*, the so-called Betty-complex, after the name Betty von Ottensund, which Fontane originally gave his protagonist, instead in Pomeranian Kessin, the novel was set in the town of Krotoschin (Krotoszyn) in the Polish heartland province of Poznan, renamed as Posen. While this transposition has received scholarly attention, e.g. both Christine Hehle and James N. Bade treat the topographical transposition as an important element of the structure and content of the novel its contemporary political resonances have not been addressed. For instance, in her article "Von Krotoschin nach Kessin. Zu Landschaft und Mythos der Ostsee in Theodor Fontanes Roman *Effi Briest*," Christine Hehle draws attention to the changes of setting Fontane made, and explains the geographic transposition from Krotoschin in the Province of Poznan to Kessin on the Baltic coast in the Hinterpommern as a move from an antagonistic, remote and outlandish to a more familiar, closer and affiliative setting which appeals to Fontane's creative sensibilities by offering artistically more rewarding source of material for the unfolding of his story. But as the title suggests Hehle highlights Fontane's life-long interest in the motives the area invokes for him and less in

contemporary politics. Thus she writes that the geographic transposition to Hinterpommern enables Fontane “nicht nur eine Landschaft zu schildern, die ihm von Kindheit an vertraut war . . . sondern vor allem auch, Motivkomplexe einzuführen, die ihn zeitlebens faszinieren und die den Roman *Effi Briest* mit jenem berühmten Gewebe von Subtexten und – mit einem Begriff von Renate Böschenstein – ‘horizontalen’ und ‘vertikalen’ Geschichten unterlegen, das sicherlich einen großen Teil seiner literarischen Qualität ausmacht (75).

James N. Bade similarly remarks on the significance of the move from Krotoschin, situated well inland in the Polish territory to Kessin on the Baltic coast. Bade, who is primarily interested in the narrative function of landscapes explains this change of location by similarly invoking Fontane’s familiarity with the topology and fascination with the mythology of the Baltic coast. And he writes: “Changing the locale from Posen to the Baltic Sea coast . . . helped him [Fontane] a great deal, as Kessin now took on the landscape of his childhood reminiscences. Fontane’s memories, good or bad, of Schwinemünde, started to flow into the novel and gave it a new life” (118). Such explanations are true insofar as they acknowledge cultural and historical circumstances that inform the parallels they make and explore. However they use the Hinterpommern/Kessin as a static background or a throwback to Fontane’s childhood memories and his familiarity with topology and mythology. Such approaches are also insufficient because they exclude socio-historic interpretation based on analysis of questions of class, ethnicity, capitalism, division of labor, geopolitics, and imperialism, thus they show a tin ear for the realities of the actual contemporary events pertinent to the socio-political context *Effi Briest* is situated in and refers to. I intend to address Fontane’s political

concerns and his awareness of the historic moment to which his novel responds and to analyze instead social relations indissolubly tied to Fontane's contemporaneity which are themselves constantly been reconstructed and changing.

Having said previously that the Pomeranian setting is crucial for understanding the novel, my purpose in this chapter is to explore alternative reasons for Fontane's choice to transpose his fictional Kessin in the Kashubian region of Eastern Pomerania. What I suggest and intend to demonstrate is that Fontane's location resonates with contemporary urgency. The precise geographical delineation, the location of Kessin⁸⁹ in the Kashubian region is related to the historical moment in which the Kashubians impinged on the metropolitan consciousness a great deal in connection with the "Kashubian Question," which figured as an important issue in Polish-German relations at the time and remained largely unresolved until 1945, and beyond. The mass exodus of ethnic Germans from the former German eastern territories, ceded to Czechoslovakia and Poland by Germany in the aftermath of World War Two of which the large majority were from Posen/Poznan and Pomerania, territorial issues and fears are no marginal social phenomenon. They have remained an ongoing source of tensions between Germany and Poland.

Effi Briest is generally understood to be Fontane's reflection on the *Gründerzeit* period, which he considered to be largely influenced by Bismarck's politics. Since the novel is set in the eastern Polish margins and dramatized against official anti-Polish

⁸⁹ Fontane's fictional Kessin is moved east. Historic Kessin was an old Obodrit burg near Rostock captured by the Saxon Duke and future German king Lothar von Supplinburg in 1121, when the Obodtit prince Swentipol was conquered. Obodtits ruled Macklenburg from their settlement in the sixth century until 1167, when their kingprince Niklot was killed. Their kingdom was undermined in the wars that ensued after the crusade against Slavs in 1147. The Kessini were an off-shot of the ancient Slavic peoples Veletians, the Obodtits' neighbors in Mecklenburg.

campaign this understanding should also address Fontane's critical comment on the crisis created by Bismarck's anti-Polish measures and its effect on Polish mobilizing movement. I want to show how textual displacement, suppression, omission and estrangement are Fontane's strategies for expressing the contradictions of the discourse of nationalism and imperialism less problematically and they are for that reason more complex than it is apparent. Namely within German imperial-nation state Poles, Kasubians, Jews, Sorbs and other minorities were viewed as racially inferior "alien bodies" in the German *Volkskörper* by German nationalists and racists who proposed two solutions to the minority problem: persecution or absorption. While Poles were to be persecuted, Kashubians, like other smaller minorities were to be absorbed and thus were encouraged to assimilate into the mainstream Germanness despite being regarded as culturally and increasingly racially inferior. This contradiction between the emergence of racism and homogenization is one of the paradoxes of the time. Seen from a perspective of Foucauldian bio-power, this can be explained by the state's need to seek inclusion in order to be able to discipline and control society more efficiently.

By confining his action to a small area of the German-speaking Baltic town with the Kashub hinterland, Fontane could or, rather, would not avoid, giving his location and action their contemporary political national dimensions. Even though the Kashubs, the Pomeranian internally colonized indigenous population is mostly silent their presence in the novel is nevertheless palpably felt, in the very act of their silencing. By dramatizing human relations in the Kashubian midst, the text reveals the knowledge of their vexing existence and their increasing oppositional presence, a presence that may be overlooked within the paradigm of the discipline of Germanistik, but which was not ignored by

imperial practices and became the source of ideological struggle between Germans and Poles.

The displacement of action from Krotoschin (Krotoszyn) in Poznan/ Posen, the heart of the Polish-speaking territory to the fictional Kessin in the Bismarck's *Heimat* of Pomeranian region of *Hinterpommern*, might well have been the result of Fontane's political unease with some aspects of the subject matter with which he was dealing. In choosing *Hinterpommern*, and more precisely, by placing his action in a little multi-ethnic, but nonetheless, German-speaking Baltic port-town, Fontane could avoid the less palatable and more graphic description of the colonial violence conducted by the German state in the Polish territories and especially in Poznan triggered by increasingly ruthless germanization policies ranging from various discriminatory measures especially rigorously implemented against the Poznan Poles such as restriction on the use of the Polish language, through denying that Polish nation even exists to expropriation of Polish land and its colonization.

By focusing on *Hinterpommern*, Fontane could substitute the much more powerful, familiar and therefore distinctly visible Poles, with the motley and hybridized conglomeration of newcomers in Kessin. Consequently, without having to populate *Hinterpommern* with Poles, the main contestants over the province, he could avoid dealing with the Pomeranian context as a highly contested territory and potentially volatile battleground between Prussia and Poles, or Germans and Slavs in general and the contemporary metropolitan's culture's linguistic and governmental imperium vs. resistant local linguistic, political and social practices.

With the representation of the population of the *Hinterpommern* through Kessiner immigrant burghers and isolated and obscure Kashubians, a small indigenous ethnic group there, the reader gains an odd impression that they are the only residents. While Kashubians are the indigenous Slavic residents of the area, they are at the same time the characters who for the lack of detailed description, remain disembodied and unreal, and serve only as a backdrop. Interestingly enough, this small indigenous population, does impinge on the novel, and becomes the embodiment of its radical, cultural, political instability, symbolized by the schloon. Thus as the homeland of a mixed but segregated population, the *Hinterpommern* context in *Effi Briest*, offers a case-study of the late nineteenth century nation building and the clashing of opposing national projects between Germans and Poles and of the manner in which the contemporary German conscious and unconscious anxieties and hostilities towards the eastern Others are articulated.

The significance of otherwise marginalized, obscure and more-or-less poverty-stricken Kashubians in the politics and therefore in Fontane's narrative, lies in their important strategic location on the Baltic. Until the expulsion of the German population following World War Two, Kashubians formed a Slavic-speaking wedge in West Prussia, dividing the two German-speaking territories in the Baltic: East Pomerania, a part of West Prussia and of Gdansk (Danzig), and East Prussia. Kashubians occupied the territory westward from Danzig/Gdansk along the coast as far as the pre-1939 Polish-German border, which would provide the Polish state with a corridor to the Baltic Sea with Gdansk, Poland's historic port. While German historians denied Polish cultural influence and even existence of a Polish population, their Polish counterparts insisted that Western Pomerania or "Ziemia Pomorska" including Kashubia and Danzig was originally

Polish-Slavic province Pomerania/ Pomorje. Claims to Kashubia on strategic and historic grounds, were put forward by Poles, both before and at the time of achieved renewed statehood in 1918.

Kashubians (Kashubs), were a small indigenous ethnic group of Slavic origin, descendents of ancient Pomeranians, who survived as a distinct group on the Baltic coast in the marshy region of the lower Vistula, northwest of Danzig, at the mouth of the Vistula, but who though their language and ethnic background were closely related to the Poles. With regards to their numbers and political and cultural background (consisting mostly of peasants, laborers and fishermen), Kashubs were in relation to Prussian Germans similarly placed as Masurians, Szlantzoks, Gorale or Lusatian Serbs.⁹⁰ They adhered to their Slav heritage and Catholic religion in an environment of aggressive German political and cultural ascendancy, but they were also alienated from the Polish *szlachta* because of their cruel oppression of peasantry: Kashubian as well as Polish. In fact the triangulation between the town, the landlords and the rural population in Fontane's depiction of *Hinterpommern* is an illustration of the consequences of second serfdom or "export-led serfdom" in Eastern European grain producing countries which isolated the privileged gentry and town's people from the vast rural masses kept in poverty and subordination. While serfdom was abolished in Prussia during the French

⁹⁰ The Thirty Years' War (1618 to 1648), started over the Bohemian crown and engulfed the whole Germany and most of Europe in the wake of the triumph of Protestantism in Europe and the movements towards unification, centralization and formation of national states. After the defeat in the decisive battle of the White Mountain on November 8th 1620, devastated and depopulated Kingdom of Bohemia passed into Habsburg possession again as were Moravia and Silesia, whereas Lusatia, with its Sorbian population, ceded to the Elector of Saxony by the peace terms, and was finally separated from the Crown of St. Wenceslas.

occupation in 1807 (in Habsburg Empire in 1848 and in Russia in 1861), large ownership over land remained and so did the unequal social relations since landowners maintained a great deal of manorial privileges over free peasants.

Though Poles were their historic mentors and patrons, after 1850 the Kashub intelligentsia, like the educated classes of other small Slavic peoples looked rather to Russia than to the still gentry dominated Polish nation for cultural inspiration and support in the struggle for national and social emancipation. It was only in the decades preceding World War I, that Kashubs started to increasingly favor the Poles, as a result of Prussia/German harsh anti-Slav politics and practices in the 1870s and 1880s and as an achievement of the Polish “organic work” of building mass national movement. Historians generally agree that the *Kulturkampf* was a crucial moment and the turning point when the Polish influence prevailed and Kasubians began to identify with Polish nation (Belzyt; Brock; Walser-Smith). For instance the Kashubs of Pomerania had not participated in the general Polish national movement until the *Kulturkampf*. However, the state attack on their Catholic Church and clergy caused many of them to overcome their traditional anti-Polish sentiments and enlist in the common cause, first Catholic and increasingly Polish-national. Helmut Walser Smith quotes an old proverb “Was katolisch ist ist kaschubisch, was protestantisch ist, ist deutsch” to point out deep segregation between the Germans and Kashubs. Drawing on the official documents from 1896 he writes “Die Dörfer auf dem Lande waren nicht gemischt und Deutsche (und Juden) wurden mit kleinen und größeren Städten associert. Deshalb verschärften die religiösen Differenzen die Spannungen bereits von ihren deutschen Nachbarn trennten, wurden zudem verstärkt durch soziale und wirtschaftliche Unterschiede (Walser-Smith: 1995).

Most of the small peoples in Central and Eastern Europe were for centuries “invisible,” referred to as “linguistic ethnicities, obscured and subjugated by other strong states and foreign dynasties, and had a status of internally colonized peoples, whose indigenous languages and cultural traditions were excluded from public life, and banned from educational institutions under foreign rule while they were forced to live under the oppressor master narratives. What the bishop of Avila so succinctly expressed in the context of to Spanish conquistada Queen Isabella in 1492, “Language is the perfect instrument of empire” is true for Eastern Europe.

Theorists like Benedict Anderson have shown how the rise of modern nation-state in Europe and the U.S. coincided with and depended upon the emergence of vernacular cultures and the standardization of national languages, supported primarily by print technology and its dominant cultural forms: the book and the newspaper. Since control over language is one of the main features of imperial oppression, Herder’s ideas that tradition was not only a matter of the privileged and dominant elites gave the sense of worth and dignity to those silenced and subjugated minority groups to emancipate themselves and reconstruct their language and distinct tradition. Cultural decolonization anticipated and paved the way for political decolonization, which accompanied it.

In the period of Romantic “national awakening,” especially following Herder’s idealization of the Slavic peoples, small Slavic peoples began to claim their distinct cultural heritage and national identity. It was then that Czechoslovak and Polish poets influenced by Herder’s tradition, “discovered” their nationality and emphasized cultural value of indigenous language, origin and the importance to abide by the people and national character. However, even when the West was also offering cultural recognition

to the East Central European world, or at least to some of their more “progressive” or “sophisticated” cultural products, the area was held as a separate space variously denoted as belated, improving, exotic, alien and potentially hostile but never an equal. For example, during the Slavonic Cultural Renaissance in the early nineteenth century, when the single great achievements of i.e. Czechs, Slovak, Serbian, Slovenian, etc culture had been made known to Western Europe and in particular in Germany, there was still no general recognition of a Slavness on equal terms. Although scholars like Kollar, Kopitar or Karadjic were recognized in German academic and intellectual circles, their achievements were not seen as an expression of the *Geist* of an equal Czech, Slovenian, Serbian, etc. national culture and identity. While Germanness represented a definite language and culture, both for Germans and German speakers as well as for Western Europe, a general notion of “Slavness” was a hazy, generic term representing some primitive tribes or at best diverse ethnic groups submerged under Prussia, Habsburg or Ottoman empires.

During the national “movement” of the nineteenth century, there was in all small Slav subjugated peoples, a sense of their common bondage, and, in many ways, a feeling of shared heritage and the need to recover their cultural legacy. Through the discovery and celebration of emancipatory potential of one's own cultural heritage they produced an oppositional aesthetic, the one that even appropriates indigenous ancient royal families, to the project of cultural democracy. Thus the myth of the origin of the Czechs and Poles disseminated that the Premyslides and Piastas, the ruling families of Bohemia and Poland through most of the Middle Ages, respectively allegedly proclaimed their pride from their peasant descent! In the Polish political literature of the nineteenth century, the word

narod, i.e. the present-day meaning of “nation” began to be identified with *lud*, i.e. peasantry, the people, instead of the old identification of the nation with the ruling class *szlachta*, which prevailed until the end of the eighteenth century.

In Central and Eastern Europe, especially in border regions ethnic, linguistic and religious identities were often mixed, multifaceted, fluid, contingent, fragmented and overlapping because historic factors created local and regional loyalties and aspirations that sometimes conflicted with these liminal identities. In the late nineteenth century Berlin and Vienna were discovering and promoting these small ethnic minorities, whose claims could potentially destabilize and weaken more nationally defined peoples seen as the strongest independent state-builders obstructing German influence in the east. Similar process of forced germanization was attempted in Poznan, Pomerania, Galicia, Moravia, Silesia, Carinthia, Dalmatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁹¹ Within the limits of historic Hungary of the Habsburg Empire, the Magyar minority while opposed to German influence succeeded in becoming a majority by politically and culturally absorbing Slavs, Jews, Germans and other ethnic groups.

In the late nineteenth century, Kashubian ethnicity became a major bone of contention between Germans and Poles. While the Poles stressed the essentially Polish character of the Kashubians, and considered the Kashubian language as a Polish dialect,

⁹¹ After Bosnia and Herzegovina was placed under Austro-Hungarian administration in 1878 attempts were made at germanization of land where immigration of foreigners from Austria-Hungary and Germany was actively promoted. The German immigrants received in addition to free land, seeds for the next harvest, a sum of money and loans without any taxes. The German colonies of Windhorst, Franz-Joseph Feld, Rudolfsthal and others were founded in the best agricultural regions. As a result, the native population chose to emigrate mostly to Serbia and after 1905 also to United States. (Milojkovic-Djuric, 1994: 96-172)

the German side contested Polish arguments by stressing the difference between Poles and Kashubians by highlighting distinctiveness and Germanized features of Kasubian ethnicity, very much along the lines of a similar debate that was going on in Austria at the time between Germans and Slovenes over the ethnicity of the “Wends.” However, even the most ardent apologists on the German side could not deny that Kashubians, as indeed, Wends were not Slavs.

When language became legislated into a statistical measure of nationality in the second half of the nineteenth century Berlin pressured the Kashubian peasant population to become “proper Germans.” The Slavic-speaking Catholic Kashubians (like Protestant Serbs/Sorbs, Masovians and Masurians) were recognized as adopted tribes. The concept of *eingeschprachige Kulturdeutsche* was devised by separating language from nationality to denote a “non-German-speaking German” for minorities such as Kashubs, Mazurs, Szlonzoks and Serbs to be constructed as communities of the German culture and thus for their unambiguous incorporation into Germandom through the shared German culture.

As germanization policies intensified Poles also responded in cultural sphere whereby history and literary discourse assumed a crucial role in the policies of the “Polish Organic Work” in fostering national identity through a large output of popular literature, which was dealing with the German-Slav conflicts throughout history and German aggression and Slav defense. One of the most notable examples was Henryk Sienkiewicz’s enormously influential historical novel “Teutonic Knights” (*Krzyzacy* 1897-1900), which in a way was writing back to Freytag’s *Soll und Haben* and its notorious representation of Poles, insofar as the Germans the self-proclaimed civilizers –

Kulturträger in eastern Europe were turned into barbarian invaders and exploiters. The newly established Polish *Landesgeschichte* and the interest in Pomeranian history of the Kashubian-born (and half German) historian Wojciech Ketrzynski (born as Adalbert von Winkler (1838-1918) similarly played an influential role in the Polish nation-building process in the ethnically mixed areas (Friedrich 2004: 351-2).

The Polish cultural nationalists made use of the new science whose pejorative judgments were typically used against them, and which structured the relationship between dominant and subordinate groups by underwriting racial and imperial sentiments. Thus, ironically, it was the German discourse of racialized difference, since any appeal to ethnic distinctiveness cut both ways, which was based on norms of negation and exclusion and hitherto used in domination over them, which became the powerful weapon in furthering the Polish cause. The argument of the new science of ethnology that prevailed was an important criterion for counting the Kashubs as Polish nationality.⁹²

On January 22, 1917, United States President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed the right of self-determination for national sovereignty and in his address he called for erecting a “united, independent and self-contained” Polish state. Poles’ right of sovereign country was recognized also by Russia, and it is both by the Petrograd Council of Workmen's Delegates (March 27, 1917) and by the Temporary Government (March 30, 1917). Germans however put their efforts so that the possible reconstruction of Poland would not be at the cost of Prussia.

⁹² Linguist and ethnographer Friedrich Lorentz wrote extensively about Kashubian language, culture and history (Pomeranian Language). Bronislaw Malinowski wrote the introduction to the English edition of *Kashubian Civilization*, London 1934.

In the unpublished fragments of the so-called Betty-complex Fontane uses the term “Polish” and “Kashub” interchangeably when he talks of a beautiful Kasubian/Polish nanny, which also points out the fact that the Slavic people were commonly employed both as farm workers and as domestic servants. In the published version of *Effi Briest* the Polish/Kashubian nanny is replaced by the German Catholic one, and Fontane includes a subplot to explain the not so common presence of the Swabian German Catholic Roswitha in the predominately Protestant East-Elbian setting. At the same time the full-signifier “Poles” disappears from fictional Pomerania completely to be replaced by “half-Poles,” of some uncertain Wendish origins so that they are hyphenated and hybridized or half-neutralized.

As natives of *Hinterpommern*, the Kashubs, are not given their own full voice in Fontane’s narrative. We learn about their indigenous condition from the German characters in the novel. Viewed through the Prussian protagonists’ eyes especially mediated through imperial bureaucrats like Innstetten, both rural Hinterpommern and Polish province Poznan are defined by means of their innate and contradictory otherness: they are alien but always present, disloyal but necessary, dull but also picturesque, populated by good looking but mentally deranged, threatening and despicable subterfuge and harmless objects of ethnography.

While Slavs in Pomerania are represented as indisputably physically superior and sexually desirable they are characterized as unreliable and disreputable. The aesthetization of “race,” based on the presumed “whiteness” and blondness of Kashubs at a time of racial determinism and racial discourse surrounding a supposedly irredeemable black, Jewish and Polish inferiority, makes them “racially” assimilable for Germanization

as they are perceived as not yet nationally conscious. Furthermore, these rural Slavs, without distinct national consciousness and physically superior have always provided Prussian armies with foot soldiers and from a military point of view, they continued to provide better “soldiers material” than the young men from the industrial centers. As Heine observed of Polish peasants “Der Bauer ist von guten Körperbau, starkstämmig, soldatischen Ansehens und hat gewöhnlich blondes Haar” (Über Polen 560) corresponds the description of Slavs in *Effi Briest*.

Bismarck's low opinion of the Pomeranian Slavs is well known, however he himself was in no doubt as to the value of peasantry for this purpose, who still had more value to him than the Balkan Slavs. During the revolts of the Balkan Christians against the misrule of the Ottoman administration in Bosnia and Bulgaria (1875-78) which threatened to extend the war between Austria and Russia, Bismarck refrained from involving Germany directly in the Ottoman and Balkan affairs, e.g. to help the Bulgarians, because he considered the Balkans “unworthy of bones of a single Pomeranian grenadier,” by which he meant local Pomeranian Slavs, of whom he had no high opinion but this did not prevent the newly born (and recently victorious) Germany from engaging in the redesign of South Europe.⁹³ While Kashubian culture was

⁹³ “Ich würde zu irgendeiner aktiven Beteiligung Deutschlands an diesen Dingen nicht raten, so lange ich in dem Ganzen für Deutschland kein Interesse sehen, welches auch nur-entschuldigen Sie die Derbheit des Ausdruckes--die gesunden Knochen eines einzigen pommerschen Musketiers wert wäre.” Quoted in Ludwig, Emil, “Bismarck: Geschichte Eines Kämpfers,” Paul Zsolnay Verlag (1932) p. 438, Bismarck also repeated his emphatic warning against any German military involvement in Balkan disputes: “Der ganze Balkan ist nicht die gesunden Knochen eines einzigen pommerschen Grenadiers wert.” (The entire Balkans are not worth the healthy bones of a single Pomeranian Grenadier.) According to Taylor, “The more familiar grenadier took the musketeer’s place in a speech of 1888.” [A. J. P. Taylor, “Bismarck: the Man and the Statesman.” Alfred A Knopf, New York, 1969, p. 167.

downgraded to ethnicity and folklore, the best and strongest was “harvested” for empire and made into famously notorious Bismarck’s Grenadiers. Bismarck’s Prussian formidable army consisted mostly of Slavs and half-Slavs from Pomerania, and even after the unification Prussian officers enjoyed the reputation as savages and not educated men so-called Polacken or Hinterpommern (Pomeranian Hicks) among other parts of Germany.

Thus in the context of the burning Kashub question, at the time of the rapid expansion of “colonial sciences” in German institutions of learning, such as geography, ethnology and linguistics, especially between 1871 and 1880, as preparation for colonial service, Fontane’s imperial exponent, Innstetten seems to possess neither knowledge of the native mind, nor appreciation of the natives as people. He refers to them pejoratively as “sogennante Kashuben” by underscoring that they are “ganz andere Menschen . . . , ihrer Abstammung nach und ihren Beziehungen nach” (45). Innstetten shares disrespect informed by the official misconceptions and popular stereotypes of arrogant attitudes of the Germans towards the Slavs. Innstetten’s discourse about the Kasubians is informed by uncertainties, ambiguities, gaps and silence, which might derive from his awareness of the mobilizing forces in Poland who sought alternative conceptual and practical routes of building other societal projects.

Furthermore, the indigenous Kashubian people seem to be squeezed out to the utter margins both in terms of real space and representation, as well as shunned both by the townspeople of Kessin and the aristocratic overlords. Kashubs constitute an enclave which does not communicate or mix with the dominating population of Germans and

German-speakers and apparently has no connection to the outside world except with the Poles. Most importantly as a result of the *Kulturkampf* and anti-Polish measures in the 1870s and 1880s the Polish national movement broadened the social base and extended geographically and ethnically to include Kashubians, e.g. the unfriendly atmosphere in Hinterpommern Kashubia in *Effi Briest* and the population disloyal to the Reich attests to the growing identification of the Kashubs with the political aims of the Poles. This was the result of the gradual “Organic work” which also involved the transformation of the Kashubians, from an indigenous ethnic group living an insular and traditional life in the Vistula delta, into the Polish nation-building process and their incorporation into the Polish nation. As the official document submitted by the Governor of West Prussia in 1896 clearly stated it was not only that the Imperial administration was pessimistic about winning back the loyalty of the Kashubians for the German state, who by this time felt themselves a part of the Polish nation, but more so with preventing the German Catholics from “polonizing” (Walser-Smith, 1995: 185-190).

By the late nineteenth-century Slav-counter nationalism became so powerful that it threatened the survival of the Habsburg Empire. Incapable of initiating reforms to recognize these minorities as equal the Empire began an open ethnic struggle against the different Slav minorities within their sphere of power. The way officials of powers-that-be figured how to stem it was by manipulating minorities against one another and against their neighbors. Thus Benjamin von Kallay,⁹⁴ during his long tenure (1882-1903) as the Joint Minister of Finances and Governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who was expected

⁹⁴ Baron Benjamin von Kallay was a consul in Serbia from 1868 to 1875, as well as historian and writer of the well-received “Geschichte der Serben.”

to procure plans for long-lasting rule of Austria-Hungary over the protectorate, attempted to create or impose (given the resistance) a new Bosnian national identity and new language first called *Landssprache* and renamed *Bosnische Sprache* to undermine the influence of Serbs and Croats both from within the protectorate (over 50 per cent of the population) and from the neighboring Serbia and Croatia (Milojkovic-Djuric, 1994: 96-172).

In Austria the “Badeni Crisis” triggered by the 1897 proposed language reform issued by the then Prime Minister, Polish Count Kasimir Badeni, (whose government took over in 1895) governor of Galicia by which Czech and German would have had equal status in Bohemia, exploded the German resentment against the Slavs and was massively and violently supported by all sections of German society, by fostering national sympathies among the Germans not only in Cisleithan half of the Empire but across the border. The most infamous example of intervention from Wilhelmine Germany in the Badeni crisis on behalf of Austrian Germans was an open letter from Theodor Mommsen, the renowned Berlin liberal historian. Mommsen, who strongly opposed anti-Semitism, did not shrink from calling in 1897 the Czechs and South Slavs who sought national and linguistic equality in Austria Hungary, “apostles of barbarism, who wish to bury the work of half of a millennium of German culture in the abyss of savagery.” The virulence in Mommsen’s anti-Slavism and racist insults of Czechs was worth a Pan-German leader Schönerer, as he wrote: “The brain of the Czechs does not understand reason, but it understands blows.” It was a struggle of life and death because the failure to take action would result in Czechification of Germans. The lawless behavior of Vienna parliamentarians became the subject of comparison with the dispensation of justice of the

early “Wild West.”

Archduke Franz Ferdinand expressed the elites’ disdain towards the Slavs in his letter to the German Kaiser Wilhelm, where he complains about the insubordination of Slavs:

Who, even a few years ago, had heard of the Young Czechs or the radical antimilitarist Czechs; who had heard of the Slovene question, of trialism, of Czech schools, of the South Slav question, of Slavization of entire communities and countries etc., etc.? ...I am completely convinced...the Slavs would end their violent onrush and would again submit calmly and quietly to the culturally superior Germans. (qtd. In Dedijer 137/*Nachlass* ... Letters, Box 6)

Prussia was bound to feel threatened by developments in the Habsburg Empire because as always, nationalization process, such as germanization and magyarization during the last decades of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, produced the opposite of the desired effect. If Polish nationalists succeeded in building a massive national movement the eastern provinces with their large Polish populations were no longer secure. This is precisely how Innstetten felt in Pomerania.

The relevance of the “Kashub Question” in *Effi Briest* cannot be overestimated, since the polonization of Kashubs, which was underway during the production of the novel played an important role in preventing Prussian further expansion in Poland. National minorities within Germany and Austria-Hungary, especially Czechs and Poles lobbied the Western allies during the War in favor of creation of succession states by calling for boundary changes, on the basis of an ambiguous ethnic/national self-determination of peoples in areas of largely mixed ethnic and national identities and overlapping claims. The new nation-states included within their borders large numbers of disgruntled German minorities. These unresolved national conflicts continued and provided an ideological instrument of legitimation for the German eastward expansion

and the annexation of both Czechoslovakia and Poland in the drive towards the Urals later on in the twentieth century. Nazi state, similarly recognized Kashubs and Wends as those Poles and Slovenes, respectfully, loyal to the Reich and as ethnic Germans or as germanizable Slavs liable to German citizenship. Those who claimed their Polish or Slovenian separate identity were cast as non-patriots and were expelled. The long history of eastern colonization finally ended with ethnic cleansing between 1938 and 1948.

CHAPTER VIII

ÜBERMUT KOMMT VOR DEM FALL

In the introduction to his study on Fontane, Walter Müller-Seidel historically contextualizes Fontane's fiction within the changes in contemporary metropolitan Europe. Thus he notes that the formal shift of the German nineteenth-century novel towards the European tradition of the social novel, after the foundation of the German imperial nation state in 1871, was directly related to Germany's socio-political transformation. Müller-Seidel relates Fontane's development as a novelist with that of the Prussian state by observing that Fontane's maturity as novelist coincides with the rise of the Prussian state and suggests that the same shift of social awareness about this change can be detected in the style and structure of Fontane's novels. In other words, the novel became the vehicle for Fontane's expression of his experience of the profound social and political changes in the unified Germany.

Müller-Seidel has also acknowledged Fontane's sustained interest in Polish themes, and he discussed them in the context of Fontane's early works – his *Vormärz* poetry dealing with the Polish anti-Russian insurrection in 1830/1, and his first novel *Vor dem Sturm* (written between 1862 -78 and set in 1812/13), in which he observes Fontane's detailed representation of proto-Polish and proto-Prussian identities. Strangely enough, Müller-Seidel finds only Fontane's early work of interest for Polish-German relations, while he considers Polish themes in Fontane's late novels to be redundant (Neumann 284).

Thus in his historically contextualized analysis of *Effi Briest*, where Müller-Seidel discusses the dramatic changes in the Prussian/German society following the creation of

the German Empire, he passes over in silence Fontane's dramatization of German-Polish relations in Eastern Pomerania against the background of Bismarck's anti-Polish measures during the *Kulturkampf* in the 1870s and the anti-Polish measures from the 1886 onwards.

In other words Müller-Seidel approaches *Effi Briest*, as a German story that unfolds against a fixed and insignificant background. Yet even if the focus of *Effi Briest* is on the core society, as seems to be the case in Müller-Seidel readings, still the novel's Polish context and the related facts of empire can hardly be missed, not the least because the third person in a marriage triangle is a half-Pole. Even though Müller-Seidel points out the centrality of Bismarck's ghostly but palpable presence in the narrative and in the life of Fontane's protagonists, he finds little relevance in the fact that Fontane's protagonist Innstetten is not only Bismarck's trusted senior civil servant, but is also appointed by him as Landrat with jurisdiction over a rural district with a large Polish and Kashubian population in Eastern Pomerania against the background of the *Kulturkampf* and anti-Polish measures carried out in the 1870s and 1880s. However, Müller-Seidel overlooks these facts of Empire and fails to entertain the possibility that these Polish margins might have played a role in shaping internal developments of Germany and as such are articulated in structure and context of *Effi Briest*.

Indeed, it is Müller-Seidel failure to recognize changing Polish identity in Fontane's late novels, to see the Poles as subjects of history and to acknowledge their claims to recognition of their equal rights as well as the transformative potential of Polish society that I find particularly striking. Surely, even though Poland was proverbially wiped from the map of the world, and effaced from the great politics arena, Polish society as depicted

in *Effi Briest* did not remain the same as represented in Fontane's early historic narratives dealing with the early nineteenth century, but was affected by the world processes of capitalist modernity and was much like the Germans undergoing profound changes.

In this chapter I would like to challenge readings that assume that the Polish-inflected setting is just a chance backdrop against which the metropolitan story plays out. Since I argue for an understanding of cultures and identities as historically and materially produced, I contend that no comprehensive interpretation of *Effi Briest* as a literary text dealing with the German empire can neglect the particular historical, social and political realities of its production. While most scholars approach *Effi Briest* from within the boundaries of metropolitan German culture and society, I contend that the socio-economic changes of the German/Prussian metropolitan society and culture depicted in *Effi Briest* cannot be properly approached without addressing its imperial aspects. This is especially true of the historic formation of the Prussian society, which cannot be understood without accounting for the Polish influence in shaping Prussia. Nor can, for that matter, the late nineteenth-century socio-economic transformations of Prussian metropolitan society be viewed in isolation from the developments in the Polish margins since they impinge on Fontane's fictional representation of Prussia and are articulated in both the context and structure of *Effi Briest*.

This is not to say that in much important work attention has not been devoted to Polish themes in *Effi Briest*; indeed, it has. For example, both Christine Hehle and James N. Bade treat the topographical transposition Fontane made from Posen to Kessin as not simply a substitution of one provincial town for another, but rather as an important element of the structure and content by pointing out that Fontane made a move from an

outlandish, antagonistic and inland Posen to the more familiar, friendlier Baltic mainly because the Baltic as a setting offers a much more appealing material to Fontane's creative sensibilities.

In his article Benjamin Breggin points out *Effi Briest's* extensive and highly visible contacts with cultural issues of the period involving in particular race and notes that Fontane was "far from immune to turn-of-the-century Europe's problematic fascination with race." Breggin also acknowledges that Slavs play pivotal role in the development of the novel's plot and that Polishness is deeply implicated in Effi Briest's fall from grace; however, he also states that "whatever Fontane's conception of the Slavic race might have been, the casual, playful and artistic way in which he portrayed it reveals that his intentions were aesthetic rather than political" (213). Breggin suggests that while Polishness, may be a vehicle in moving the plot in whatever direction, it only serves for the unfolding of the metropolitan story, since he considers *Effi Briest* to be essentially about German domestic, metropolitan issues. However, he overlooks Fontane's ironic tone e.g. in his approach to race and ethnicity, e.g. in the description of his character Hulda as an embodiment of the Aryan blondness, in Effi's and Innstetten's view. Furthermore, by constructing Effi Briest as a hybrid character whose physical appearance also sets her apart from this Aryan ideal of blondness Fontane subverts the whole racial concept. I will deal with these aspects in more detail later on in chapter nine.

For Kristin Kopp the Polish population played quite a negative role in the German national imagining at the turn of the century when Germans developed a sense of panic of being threatened by what they perceived as Polish numerical ascendancy. Political nationalism saw the Poles as the threatening "flood" which had to be contained and

prevented from spreading further within Germany's borders. The notion of "imagined geographies" is central to Kopp's postcolonial reading of *Effi Briest* as a narrative of reverse colonization enacted as fear of being swamped or penetrated at the hands of Poles. She also notes two persistent tropes Fontane relies on in his description of the Polishness: different and not socially acceptable behavior and the threat of being seduced by it, and the representation of the Slavic East as a source of natural threat. While Kopp notes that the Polish figures in Fontane's texts are highly varied and complex, she concludes: "Prussian Poles nonetheless frequently function as peripheral elements both provocative and seductive because they have taken on those behaviors and attributes which the Prussians themselves are so concerned with repressing" (117). Kopp too fails to detect how the challenges of the Polish competing cognitive modes and social forms increasingly impinged on Fontane's apprehensions concerning Germany. Kopp's eschewing the periodization of Fontane's changing attitudes towards the Polishness (expressed before and after the 1863 uprising, during the period of unification, and from 1890s onwards) results in conflation, in her rather unproblematic reading of Fontane's representation of the German/ Polish relation as one of German superiority and Polish inferiority.

While the aforementioned approaches have greatly enriched our understanding of *Effi Briest* by calling our attention to its specific cultural historic conditions informing the text and by taking Polish/Slavic context into consideration, I will also have issues with them most significantly in their failure to account for change as a discontinuous and contagious process, their tendency to overlook resistance, and for their absolutizing the concept of nationalism or ethnicity/race over class, (as if servants, small-scale peasants,

members of lower middle-class and workers shared the same interests with the privileged large estate owners and industrialists).

I suggest that the strategies used to explore perceptions, imagology, tropes, symbols and metaphors of Polishness and Poland have not been able to avoid the pitfalls of reification, reinforcing the very constructions they set out to undo by insulating these ideological constructs from the intellectual and social developments everywhere else in the culture. While I do not deny the all too obvious tendency of the period to represent Polishness in particular and the Slavic in general as the cultural or even racial inferior other to the German self, an approach to such complex social relations mediated through images and tropes of otherness occludes a much more fragmented, contradictory and overlapping picture within which power struggles take place and where oppression, resistance, belonging and solidarities are constantly renegotiated.

The notions of inferiority and superiority were not part of “constituting” the Slavic East, as such, but rather, were components of an ideology of subjugation and subordination of others in general. Consequently the attempts to inferiorize cut across regions, race, and continents. The inferior other also embraced large sections of German working class. For instance, the second serfdom was introduced in Eastern Europe at the same time as the slavery in the “New World” and served a similar purpose of capital accumulation contributing to the industrial development in the West and dependency and pauperization elsewhere. The late nineteenth century colonial mappings of space and time also informed the terms in which the otherness of the urban poor in the metropolis and the “primitive” from the imperial frontiers were both combined and juxtaposed. The imagery of the “backward” associated with the “dark places” – the outer reaches of

empire as Kate Flint observes about Victorian England “looped symbiotically back to the metropolitan centre, as parallels between the ‘savage’ state in which the urban working classes were found and the condition of those who inhabited more far-flung corners of the Empire became commonplace”(156). In Imperial Germany these “primitives” who made connection between the wilderness of the outer eastern reaches and industrial wilderness of the urban areas were primarily Polish-speaking migrants. Since capital ethnicizes peoples to promote labor segmentation, and since the floodgates of rural Polish immigration were opened wide and closed tightly depending on the flows of capital, the resultant confusion, dislocation and feelings of uncertainty, fear and xenophobia, are byproducts of the contradictions of the capitalist modernity.

It should be remembered that the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized in Europe has been made more complex by the fact that some of the colonized countries were colonizers as well. While Poles were themselves objects of colonization by Russians and Germans, a number of peoples were objects of Polish colonization, notably Ukrainians (Ruthenes) whom they continued to dominate even after the partitions. Poland was not always the inferior other in relation to Prussia/Germany. Nor did individuals and social groups – the Polish *szlachta* – view their culture as inferior to Western Europe. In fact in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Polish elites nurtured their own form of uniqueness and elitism – the so-called *Sarmatism* – and the myth of Sarmatian /Asian origin of the Polish aristocracy, and looked down upon not only their Slavic serfs but also their German-Prussian noble counterparts. (e.g. Hagen; Berend). These two aspects of Polish identity have to be taken into account together to produce a balanced approach. On the other hand, *Kleinstaaterei* was one of the most persistent

symbolic images of German space defined by a multitude of petty states, dialects, social and religious divisions and delayed social and industrial development. As a cultural construct *Kleinstaaterei* denoted rural, parochial, marginalized, and belated – symbolic locations of Europe where there is a protracted sense of obsolescence, insignificance and the terrain of “national incompleteness” at the borders of the Western modernity.

While imaginative geographies and a network of motives and tropes may be a useful means of decoding the submerged Slavic and Germanic past and even a no-land like Poland, they nevertheless fail to do justice to the variety of existence by occluding dynamics, overlaps and contradictions of the period. Even if Poland did not exist as an independent political entity, laws of motion and change also applied to Poland and its population and it is important to pay attention to political and economic formations among the Polish population. For instance, Poland gave birth to various often contradictory ideological, cultural and socio-political movements such as both Jewish Zionism and anti-Zionism, the socialist movement and anti-communism and feminism.

I argue the following: the people, the landscape and events from the Polish peripheries are more than artistic props serving as a background for the unfolding of the metropolitan story and negotiating domestic issues. Rather their presence in the novel is Fontane’s acknowledgement that they exerted a centripetal force to be reckoned with and that this awareness found its expression in both the content and style of *Effi Briest*. Obviously, one has to take relations and resources outside metropolis very seriously if one wants to understand the contradictory narratives of capitalist modernization, “Prussianization,” “Germanization” and “Polonization” that took place in Imperial Germany during the period between 1871-1900. Fontane’s opinion about Poland changed

over time influenced by the changes both German and Polish societies underwent and the impact it made on Prussia come to expression in Fontane's novelistic practices. The failure to trace those changers will result in the failure to challenge those aspects of culture which reinscribe ethnocentrism by not taking into consideration the specific ways capitalism-as-imperialism structured and sanctioned power, resources and social agency in the margins e.g. the conflict between the political and economic interest of cheap and flexible laborers from the east.

I am interested in the dynamics of the interaction between Germans and Slav/Poles and consider the categories of Poles as well as Germans to be the products of multiple, complex, overlapping constitutions. I also take into account the geographic transposition from Poznanian to Eastern Pomerania, but in my reading the move is discussed in the light of political urgency against the background of the ever deepening and widening German-Polish conflict. I find relevant the fact that *Effi Briest* not only takes place in the vicinity of Bismarck's country estate Varzin in the provincial district of Eastern Pomerania at the time of an intensified anti-Polish campaign, but that the novel follows the trajectory of the private and public life of one of Bismarck's favored and trustworthy officers, who is holding the highest position as the district governor. In this respect *Effi Briest* represents Fontane's reflection on the previous decade from the vantage point of the 1890s, a period when it was obvious that the intended anti-Polish measures misfired: not only did they fail to nip the Polish national movement in the bud by demoralizing, denationalizing and deterritorializing the Polish minority, but on the contrary, they intensified animosities and strengthened the Polish resolution to persevere.

The problem of German-Polish national incompatibility reached an unprecedented intensity at the turn of the century. Poles not only represented the majority in several eastern provinces but were also becoming a prominent element in Berlin and the Ruhr by 1900. During the *Kulturkampf* they were among the commonly cited internal enemies, *Reichsfeinde* including Catholics and socialists. While the Imperial Government reached a compromise with both the Catholics and the socialists by the end of the century the campaign intensified against the Poles who remained the sole unequivocal and irreconcilable enemies. The *Kulturkampf*, for all its adverse impact on Prussian-Polish relations, was merely a preview of the much more intense national struggle which began in earnest in the 1880s and will culminate in the following century.

In fact, the major “Poland debate” in the *Landtag* (Lower House of the Prussian Parliament) of January 28-29, 1886, during which Bismarck delivered the most extensive and probably most important speech of his career on the Polish question, was remarkable for its renewed vehement anti-Polish tone. The immediate background for this long speech was the brutal expulsions of the Poles and the Polish Jews from Prussian territory carried out in 1885. Painting the Slavic East in darkest colors, Bismarck stated bluntly that not only the expulsion, the expropriation of the Polish nobility, and the “Germanisierung des Bodens” but the entire *Kulturkampf* would never have been necessary but for the Poles and the need to combat the “Polish-Catholic” (not the German-Catholic) forces. And he stressed that the recreation of a Polish state would never materialize, since it would ruin the established European order whose “honest broker” he was. In Bismarck’s opinion the Poles should not complain about the demise of their state since Poland also achieved its greatness only through aggressive expansion.

Prussia too acquired eastern provinces (such as Posen) through subjugation and “diese Eroberung ist durch voelkerrechtliche Verträge besiegelt worden. So entstehen alle Staaten . . . Wenn Sie gegen das Recht der Eroberung ankämpfen, so haben Sie Ihre eigene Geschichte nicht gelesen, Ich glaube Sie haben sie gelesen, versweigen eie aber sorgfältig” (110) ⁹⁵

The year 1886 marks a significant watershed in Bismarck’s policy towards the Polish minority. While the *Kulturkampf* did have an emotional impact on the Polish population, it was from 1886 on that the Imperial government sought to reduce the Polish impact on Prussian society, politically, economically and numerically, by taking harsh measures (Blanke 211). This official state policy, which implied germanization, lasted until World War I. There was little doubt in the Prussian Polish population’s mind that Bismarck’s speech justifying violent territorial expropriation amounted to a declaration of war by the Bismarck’s government against them. This signaled the beginning of a new era in German-Polish relations, one in which Polish citizens were viewed as enemy aliens in the German state. Thus, during the time the novel unfolds, Bismarck launched a whole series of anti-Polish government measures, in which the expulsion measure (Homesteading Act) in 1885 (which lasted through 1887) was meant to be only the beginning of a wide-ranging anti-Polish offensive.

In Fontane’s initial opinion Bismarck’s leadership promised national unity and community, along with a better life for all Germans, —and by their compliance in the exclusion of all so-called elements hostile to the unity. Himself a Prussian patriot and an enthusiastic supporter of the National Liberal establishment of the Bismarckian age who

⁹⁵ Bismarck’s Speech of January 28, 1886.

rejoiced in the creation of Bismarck's Reich, a strong and powerful empire, and who thought that Prussia's horizons had been immensely widened by it, Fontane rejoiced and gave his contribution to the self-congratulatory jingoism which flourished in the age of Prussian expansion. However, Fontane's confidence in Germany's progress became increasingly eroded and in his old age he felt rather at odds with developments in imperial Germany and uneasy about German future, especially its rule over subjugated peoples. Disgusted by the moral compromises he was forced to make, Fontane broke ranks and produced the great literature of disillusionment—Fontane's gradual change of heart especially from the 1880s onwards culminated in the last years of his life, to which his correspondence is substantive documentary evidence, that clearly chronicles this gradual shift and disillusionment with the achievements of Bismarck's politics and his increasing critical stance towards Bismarck's character.

I wish to propose that, over the years, and evidently in the course of the four years that elapsed between the beginning of his writing on the novel in 1889 and the publication of the novel in 1894/5, developments in the empire, and especially in its Eastern Prussian fringes, where he transposes his fictional Kessin in Polish Prussia, increasingly impinged on Fontane's apprehension of the German imperial project and can be detected both in the novel's representational and formal structures. Whereas his contemporaries might have considered Germany's Polish possessions as a natural extension of their own national boundaries Fontane expressed his anxious fears for the future of the expanding Germany, especially in relation to the future of the Prussian Polish territories.

It is thus instructive to read *Effi Briest* in the light of Fontane's imperial anxieties about the future of Germany and his recoil from Bismarck's imperialist ethos and bellicosity of his *Realpolitik* as expressed in his infamous speech in which he justifies the use of brute force in politics and especially against the Poles whom he intended to keep subjugated in the future and to treat as a vanquished people. Yet, in spite of Bismarck's triumphalist rethoric and outwards display of power, Fontane detected cracks, lack of confidence, mistrust and imperial anxiety in the new Imperial Germany. In his letter to August von Heyden of August 5, 1893 Fontane expresses serious doubts about the future of Germany in what seems to be a response to Bismarck's speech:

Der Zusammenbruch der ganzen von 1864 bis 1870 aufgebauten Herrlichkeit wird offen diskutiert . . . ist niemand . . . im geringsten von der Sicherheit unserer Zustände überzeugt. Das Eroberte kann wieder verlorengelien. Bayern kann sich wieder ganz auf eigene FüÙe stellen. Die Rheinprovinz geht flöten, Ost- und Westpreußen auch, und ein Polenreich (was ich über kurz oder lang beinahe für wahrscheinlich halte) entsteht aufs neue. (*Briefe* 272)

Moreover, he points out that his skepticism is not a result of his pessimistic imagination but rather of a sober assessment of facts: "das sind Dinge, die sich 'wenn's losgeht,' innerhalb weniger Monate vollziehen können und die auch in fast jedes Deutschen Vorstellung als eine Möglichkeit leben." In his late years Fontane rejects and exposed the triumphalist narrative of Germany's destiny as elaborated by historians like von Treitschke – who coined the term "Sonderweg" that is, because it was destined by historic contingency to emerge late in the march of power, Germany is privileged to inherit, overtake, and surpass prior stages of universal development since allegedly specific Germans values (spiritual over material, *Kultur* vs. Civilization) were superior to Western capitalism and selfishness. From the time of its creation late in the history of European imperialism, the first German "nation" state had been in perpetual crisis and

demonstrated all the contradictions of an uneven development. As a latecomer in the overseas colonial race, Germany was eager to compete with other imperial powers, especially Britain, on one front, while on the other, it was challenged by the Polish minority from its own underdeveloped eastern margins.

Fontane warned against the readiness with which Germany picked up these imperial European traditions. Rather than a model to follow, Fontane uses the British Empire as an example to learn from and avoid, and considered England to be at its lowest point. Fontane was following the development of the wars Britain waged in India and on the Nile with critical attention, which prompted him to pronounce in a letter to James Morris of October 26, 1897: “Die englische Herrschaft in Indien *muß* zusammenbrechen, und es ist ein Wunder, daß sie sich bis auf den heutigen Tag gehalten hat” (*Briefe* 671).

Both Thomas Mann and Georg Lukács seemed to think that Fontane was anti-imperialist. In his letter of 1898 not only did Fontane express his deep doubts about British imperialism, but also profound foreboding about the future of Germany. The evidence for Fontane’s anti-colonialism comes in the same letter: “Die ganze Kolonisierungspolitik ist ein Blödsinn: Bleibe zu Hause und nahre dich redlich.” In a subsequent letter to James Morris of January 6, 1898, Fontane even predicted the collapse of the far-flung British Empire because of its imperialism’s expansionist momentum and its imperialist overstretch. Thus he wrote: “Am bedrohtesten ist England, weil es seine Flügel über die Erde hin am weitesten ausgebreitet hat. Überall schwere Gefahr” (*Briefe* 687). Once again Fontane’s assessment is not based on his moral indignation only but on a sober and penetrating analysis of imperialism as a system – thus he was able to see that the British Empire ran its course at the moment

when it apparently stood at its peak. In other words there is no such a thing as a special path a country develops but most countries tend to spread outwards and channel their energies in pursuit of their various missions.

Something not quite dissimilar Fontane detected in the trajectory of the rise and fall of the Polish state. Thus he notes that even though Polish (leaders) were endowed with kindness and harmony of character (in contradiction to their German counterparts?) and were no less chivalrous than their opponents and even possessed more ability for passion and sacrifice they nevertheless failed because they spread their wings beyond their means. Rather than focusing inward they channeled their energies outward.

(“Ausgerüstet mit liebenswürdigen und blendenden Eigenschaften, an Ritterlichkeit ihren Gegnern mindestens gleich, an Leidenschaft, an Opfermut ihnen vielleicht überlegen, gingen sie dennoch zugrunde, weil sie jener gestaltenden Kraft entbehrten. Immer von Neigung, ihre Kräfte nach außen hin schweifen zu lassen, statt sie im Zentrum zu einen, fehlte ihnen das Konzentrische, während sie exzentrisch waren in jedem Sinne, dazu die individuelle Freiheit höher achtend als die staatliche Festung – wer erkannte in diesem allen nicht polnisch-nationale Züge?” (*Wanderungen* 26-27).

Indeed, some Polish historians shared Fontane’s opinion. For instance J. Szujski (1835-83), a Galician politician and historian, blamed Polish anarchy and lack of political understanding for partitions and saw Polish weakness in its lack of maturity. Thus he praised Poland for fulfilling its own European mission by carrying out civilizing activities in its own barbarous zone and by extending European borders eastwards (in Lithuania and Ukraine), yet Poland was a loser because it was not up to its task in coping with its vast frontiers (Piskorski 100). In other words, the nature of the Polish-

Lithuanian commonwealth as hybrid and competitive was seen as a weakness for a permanent internal organization.

Fontane was certainly familiar with the history of Poland and with the fact that the Poland of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Polish Commonwealth “Rzeczpospolita Polska” (the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth formed in 1569) was a polyethnic federation among Poles, the Lithuanians and the Russians (White Russians and the Ukrainians) and a regional power and one of the largest, most populous, countries in Europe when Germany did not exist and Prussia was an insignificant kingdom. It was a far-flung multi-ethnic, multi-confessional, federal aristocratic republic that stretched from the Baltic Sea in the north from what would become Latvia, south and west along the Baltic coast, skirting only the East Prussian enclave, to west of Gdansk (Danzig), to the Black Sea in the south, it had bordered on Hungary and to the east it had extended into Russia as far as and including Kiev while the two provinces that formed the nucleus of modern Romania, Moldavia and Walachia as well as the Czech Hussites, became close allies. At certain point it achieved a high level of religious tolerance and local authority, thus in many respects it was more progressive than any of its neighbors, but it was also increasingly unable to solve its own internal problems because of its decentralized organization and became an easy prey of interventionism resulting in Poland’s demise and disappearance from the world map in the three partitions. Poland presented itself as a country with a historic mission and as a defender of Christendom in Europe.

The Polish Commonwealth had also been a granary of Europe whose economy was significantly dependent on the Baltic export of wheat from Danzig/Gdansk. The Junker and Polish magnate-dominated lands east of the Elbe served as a supplier of food for

Western Europe. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the society, east of the Elbe had regressed to an earlier stage of feudalism, the so-called “second serfdom,” as landowners saw advantages in the new corn market in the West. The “second serfdom,” entrenched by the expanding demand of Western Europe for eastern European grain exports in turn established profound differences with cultural and moral dimensions influencing popular and elite attitudes down to the present day. The penetration of Western capitalism into Eastern Europe was thus determined by the same forces that brought about the introduction of slavery in the New World (Braudel 92-3).

The result of such economic policy was that by the eighteenth century the Polish Commonwealth was a country of pronounced inequalities of peasant backwardness and poverty on the one hand and virtually no Polish-speaking middle class and the nobility, on the other, which, despite the decline in its lower ranks, still lived in abundance and led a parasitic lifestyle (Hagen). As the Polish nobility became increasingly disruptive, the magnates’ ambitions and struggles for power opened the way to the foreign intervention of their expansionistic neighbors, which blocked and undermined all attempts at economic and political reform and finally put an end to it. When the three partitions in 1772, 1793, and 1795 entirely dismantled the Polish state, after an existence of over eight hundred years, its disappearance affected the course of Polish history profoundly by stripping the Polish-speaking gentry of their sovereignty, and also contributed greatly to the future divisions of eastern and western Europe, and the distinction between the historic and non-historic nations of Europe.

Moreover there is evidence that Fontane’s opinion about imperial Germany in the nineties was very much aligned with that of the younger generation of Polish

intellectuals: scholars and writers, who while they were passionate Polish nationalists, rejected violent armed struggle to achieve political goals and advocated instead positivist ideas of creating cultural, economic and political conditions of well being and survival of the Polish population divided in the partitions of Poland. Prominent among them was Henryk Sienkiewicz who was very much publicly engaged in the period between 1895 and 1910. In a letter to Friedrich Stephany of April 3, 1895, Fontane praised the insights Sienkiewicz expressed about Bismarck's power politics and called Sienkiewicz' critical contribution "eine Perle von so hohem Wert." Thus he wrote: "Verfasser ist ein Pole (lächerlicherweise Romanschriftsteller): Heinrich Sienkiewicz. Auch nicht annähernd Ähnliches ist, wenn ich nur einen Schlimmer von Bismarck habe, einfach nicht zu Übertreffen, Schlägt alle Historiker aus dem Felde; schlechtweg großartig" (*Briefe* 442). In his criticism of Prussian dominated Germany, Sienkiewicz noted that while the use of force was probably necessary to achieving Germany's unification, the new German state could not continue to rely on violence. In spite of its enormous power the contemporary condition is only a passing phenomenon, while Poles will have to live together with Germans. A state that plays some of its subjects against the others has lost its reason to exist (Lawaly, 60–72).

It is not known whether or not Fontane ever read Sienkiewicz' historical fiction, most of which appeared during Fontane's life,⁹⁶ but it is to Fontane's credit that he recognized and praised the exceptional political insights and a sense for history of a

⁹⁶ The Trilogy consists of *Ogniem i mieczem* (By Fire and Sword) in 1883, followed by *Potop* (The Deluge) and then in 1888, by *Pan Wolodyjowski* (Pan Michael). The Trilogy reached virtually every literate Pole and became almost obligatory reading not only for Polish youth but elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

Polish fellow journalist and novelist, the author of the historic novel *Quo Vadis: A Tale of the Time of Nero* (1895), an immediate best-seller in partitioned Poland, and arguably one of the most widely read novels in the world for which Sienkiewicz was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1906. Between 1897 and 1900, Sienkiewicz wrote his critical novel “The Teutonic Knights” one of the most influential novels among the Poles under German rule. Like Fontane, who spent four years as a reporter in England, Sienkiewicz spent three years in the United States, from where he sent a series of reports back to *Gazeta Polska*, a Warsaw daily and later published in bookform titled *Letters from America* (1880).

Yet Fontane was not only a prescient commentator on Germany and on the world-historical convulsions of his own time. Even before Lenin famously proclaimed backward Europe and advanced Asia, predicting in 1913 a revolutionary storm in the East, Fontane had been clear-sighted enough to predict people’s movements in the colonized world and prophesied that moment of colonial revanche marked by the wars of national liberation. He saw that the process of the imperial dynamic of capitalist modernization will also impact the Third World to become aware of its own power (nichtzivilisierte Welt will ihre Kräfte bewußt sein), and consequently these transformations would bring about a quite changed world. As he wrote to James Morrison in 1898:

Ist mein Blick in die Zukunft richtig, so zeigt das Gewitter diesmal noch vorüber; die Wolken sind noch nicht geladen genug, die Regierungen führen noch das Wort, nicht die leidenschaftlichen Volksempfindungen; sprechen aber erst *diese* mit, so werden wir furchtbare Kämpfe haben, nach deren Abschluß die Welt und die Landkarte anders aussehen wird als heute (*Briefe* 687)

It is noteworthy that Fontane's notions of the social-formations in Asia were in effect similar to those of Karl Marx's, who thought that the brutal introduction of capitalism in India had a two-fold destructive and regenerative effect which was laying the fundamentals for a social revolution. In other words like Lenin, Bakhtin and Lukács later on Fontane predicted "the decline of the West" and the rise of alternative civilizations in the East.

Fontane's change of heart found its expression in his later fictional narratives as well as in his letters. Whereas the awareness and urgency of an unsolved "Polish Question" is evident from Fontane's private correspondence, where an independent Poland is envisioned as a certainty in conjunction with his pessimistic but clear-sighted disillusionment regarding the destiny of Imperial Germany, direct reference to Poland is absent from his fiction. Instead, in *Effi Briest* Fontane resorts to a network of metaphors of void, silence, displacement and erasure through which Poland intrudes as a shadowy realm with its lurking presence pervading the narrative and contributing to its ambivalence and precluding its closure. The recurring adage in the novel "Übermut kommt vor dem Fall" is repeated several times by several different speakers in reference to Effi and Crampas. But there is another reading beyond the character and conduct of individuals but referring to social formations and thus serving as a lesson in history. While the saying can be traced back ultimately to the demise of the presumably Wendish Vineta and alludes to the rise and fall of Poland, Fontane may be addressing the self-congratulatory high spirit and arrogant conduct of Imperial Germany in particular if not imperialist tendencies and missions in general.

Both time and location in *Effi Briest* convey cultural climate and political constraints of this particular historical conjuncture. Published in 1894-5, but set in the later 1870s

and 1880s, *Effi Briest* is Fontane's evocation of the *Gründerzeit* and *Gründerkrise* of the Second Reich, a time of both intense debates about national identity and a period in which Germany emerged as an imperial power. Since Fontane obviously takes personal relationships as his point of reference to address vexatious issues of public domain I propose to read *Effi Briest*'s subversive reworking of the Bildung-narrative of the historically specific moment of German imperial national building. *Effi Briest* enacts the country-to-city movement characteristic for the later nineteenth century European novel of disillusionment. The novel covers a period of a crucial decade in the heroine's life, from her premature engagement and marriage until her premature death. At the end of the novel Fontane's heroine is brought back to the starting point when the story comes to rest in her childhood home. By returning home Fontane's protagonist rounds off the cycle of experience, but her journey seems to be in vain, because she has only completed a circle. Moreover, it is obviously a fatal mistake, since a person who is initially shown to be full of the will to live ultimately returns home to die at an age when she finally reaches maturity. Effi's death is both real and symbolic, since the trajectory of her journey can serve as an allegory for the trajectory of Germany itself, as Reuter noted "Lebenslauf wird zum gesellschaftlichen Paradigma und Menetekel" (680). Fontane's counter-narrative offers possibilities to discern refractions of German imperialism.

Since the story of *Effi Briest* follows the narrative pattern in which the outcome fails to match the expectation, the novel's deliberated performance offers a disenchanted and ironic perspective on the empire by reflecting ironically and critically on its own failed project, most notably in German-Polish relations. The circular trajectory of the narrative together with the visible erosion through the dispersal of narrative authority

constitutes the fiction's historiographical demystification of the national project by exposing its uncertain politics especially at the imperial eastern frontiers against the background of the impoverishment of the Eastern Prussian estates, Polish resistance and socio/economic ascendancy.

Fontane was writing his novels at the time when the nation was still in the making and when unity was being stressed and what still prevailed and was even required was the monologic form of the national epic as a means to achieving rather than simply legitimating acknowledgement of national unity. Since according to Bakhtin the heteroglossic/polyphonic novel replaces the monoglossic epic of the national unity, it follows that Fontane's *Effi Briest* with its polyphonic characteristics can be considered a counter-discursive narrative for the motion of expansion is followed by receding and return with the aftertaste of failure. This, I suggest, poses for Fontane not so much the problem of *what* but rather *how* to go about the story of his protagonist Effi Briest as a narrative of empire to trace the trajectory of the failed imperial mission in the East. What I hint at is: if monologic epic is indeed what was expected and even required by cultural nationalism, what more effective means of subverting it than polyphonic "adulteration" – setting it free from restricting coercions of the single-minded, monological vision, and as a radical equivalent at the stylistic level of the story of Effi Briest's real adultery and divorce as allegory of the future of Germany? While the phenomenon of the licentiousness of Western men in Eastern Europe has been a topic of fascination widely acknowledged, by the turn of the nineteenth century it is through a female and often aristocratic character that the subversion of a nation is epitomized and articulated as a

part of endangered “Western civilization” paradigm expressing constant preoccupation with crisis, demise and fear of survival.⁹⁷

In *Effi Briest* Fontane not only transforms the opponents in his fictional marriage triangle and increases the age difference between the married couple, but by topographic transposition and the substitution of class by ethnic/national difference, he also strikes a significant new note, since “Polishness” or rather “half-Polishness” and hybridity thereof plays an important role in the novel’s conception. By representing the third protagonist in the love triangle as a half-Pole, Fontane not only gives the story precisely those national dimensions with important political implications for his contemporary readers but by dramatizing the liaison in the Polish-Kashub Eastern Prussian setting, an obscure space both in and outside of familiar modes of discourse, he is opening a discursive space where there is a possibility of different and contested forms of interpretation in the approach to social reality. Conversely, by representing some of his main characters as monoglossic Eastern Prussian nobility, precisely that Prussian consciousness that had already begun to break down, he also anticipates greater social and political changes of fortune in precisely these contested areas.

My point of reference in what follows are the theoretical frameworks developed by Fredric Jameson and Edward Said, as a more complex material and politically engaged criticism, which opens up the possibility of an alternative discourse to displace inherited ethnocentric literary practice. In different and compatible ways they offer a framework

⁹⁷ For the temptation of Western males by Eastern females see for instance Larry Wolff’s *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*. Chapter two: “Possessing Eastern Europe: Sexuality, Slavery, and Corporal Punishment.” An example of aristocratic decline represented through female debauchery against the background of the Balkans is Heinrich Mann’s trilogy *Göttinnen* (1902).

for a “cognitive mapping” of historical trends that marked the breakdown of developmentalism, modernization theory, and other theoretical solutions to the crisis and contradictions of capitalism-as-imperialism on a global scale by ascribing the excess of instrumental reason not to the teleology of progress but instead to the logic of capitalism and its presuppositions. Both Jameson and Said also offer for my purposes of reading *Effi Briest* compelling explanations for the emergence of modernity in Fontane’s literary project, by associating the emergence of an aesthetic modernism with fiction’s engagements with issues of empire at the margins, and by relating the late nineteenth-century loss of the narrative’s confidence to Fontane’s serious doubts about colonialism in general and the future of the German empire/Prussian state in particular.

Fredric Jameson, following Lukács, traces the novel from its beginning as a privileged form of capitalist society and the appropriate mode for the expression of a bourgeois subjectivity to a crisis intensified by the expansion of capitalism as imperialism. Thus he associates transformations in novelistic practice at the turn of the twentieth century with the cognitive effects of expansionism on metropolitan social forms and experiential modes. As Jameson notes, the expansion of Western economic and political interests into an ever more highly integrated world-wide system goes together with creating new peripheries of exploitation through fragmenting peripheral economies and the increasing rationalization of human experience in general. This new situation of imperialism (characterized by industrialization and commodification) in the modernizing metropolis is (paradoxically) experienced in terms of a generalized loss of meaning (declining of traditions, certainties, moral norms). The impossibility of representing an absent imperial order, according to Jameson, meant that the effects of

imperialism came to be inscribed in “the very syntax of poetic language itself,” thus prompting a generic shift to modernism in literary form. Thus he observes: “[D]aily life and existential experience in the metropolis – which is necessarily the very content of the national literature itself, can now no longer be grasped immanently; it no longer has its meaning, its deeper reason for being, within itself. As artistic content it will now henceforth always have something missing about it, but in the sense of privation that can never be restored or made whole simply by adding back in the missing component: its lack is rather comparable to another dimension, an outside like the other face of a mirror, which it constantly lacks, and which can never be made up or made good” (1990: 43-69). It is this loss, which presents a radically altered situation, to which a fresh aesthetic response is demanded generally by way of formal, structural, and linguistic invention and improvisation in which Jameson locates the shift to modernism in metropolitan literature. This can also help reconfigure the notion of “poetic realism” traditionally used to describe Fontane's unique narrative style that refuses a firm distinction between the two supposedly distinct traditions of realist conventions and modernist innovation, but can be most appropriately designated by its transitional deployment of different genres.

In the preface to *Political Unconscious*, Jameson emphasizes history as an ultimate horizon of literary and cultural analysis since a text cannot be examined without considering the interpretive frameworks that construct any interpretation. Aesthetic choices that are usually viewed in purely aesthetic terms, Jameson suggests, should be recast in terms of both explicit formal and thematic choices of the writer and the unconscious frameworks guiding these. Jameson's general paradigm can also be employed as a model for analyzing *Effi Briest* in keeping with his conviction that all

stories are products of their social/political/ and cultural moment. Jameson's argument about the "political unconscious" of political allegory, as well as devices such as analogy, reenactment, displacement, is a compelling suggestion that can be brought into reading of *Effi Briest*, long considered to be a fictional text dealing exclusively with "domestic" issues of the metropolitan society by looking at how adultery committed in a (semi)colonial setting can be interpreted in terms of "political allegory," especially since this consciousness of imperialism has been often overlooked.

Effi Briest was produced in Imperial Germany within the Central European context, at the moment of German imperial nation-state building amidst the accelerated social changes and all the contradictions thereof. In this global division the Eastern European predominately rural hinterland was assigned the same role the Third World colonies had been, to provide the center with both material and human resources. The continued state of partition, reterritorialization, underdevelopment, suppression of minorities and violence against Poland, and Prussia's central position in the area were necessary preconditions for Prussia's mission to forge the unification of a new Germany and to achieve and maintain its position as one of the European Great Powers. Thus the very possibility of the restoration of an independent Polish state was a source of much anxiety for Imperial Germany and especially for Prussia, because it would be a devastating blow to the aspiration of the state dominated by Prussia. Therefore, Poland's partition had to be justified by promoting images and tropes of Poland as backward and barbaric. The "inferiority" of colonized people in turn justified their exploitation and domination over them. Ethnic fragmentation, traditionalization, parochialization and essentialization were essential preconditions for Imperial German aims at world policy. Therefore the official

discourse was promoted by the Willheminean clerics: administration, academics and literary elites.

In order for the “German” to be a full signifier replete with positive meanings, it required and had to create its cultural others, which cast as the necessary “primitives,” “irrational” or “decadents” reinforced “German” identity as self-confidently “progressive,” “modern” and “rational” and compensated for its own complexes vis-à-vis Western European empires, Britain and France. Even though these stereotypes obviously contradicted the tangible benefits the Polish society achieved through the efforts of the *Organic Work* underway, the derogatory point of reference for any description of Poland was the so-called “Polish economy,” a self-serving explanation for the failure of the Polish state of over hundred years earlier because of the alleged incompetence, misrule and backwardness of its elites and the reason to continue to keep Poland deterritorialized and subjugated.

Since the German state was not only unable, but unwilling to win the consent of the ethnic minorities whose interests it refused to recognize, these Prussian Polish territories, although territorially part of German empire, were largely written off as a part of European culture and modernity precisely at the time when integration of the Polish masses into a national movement was in full swing. Because there were vast areas in the life and consciousness of the peoples in the eastern reaches of the Empire which were resisting forced assimilation and integration into the state hegemony, and to whose consciousness Germans were denied access, they were perceived as that empty content of the German consciousness of itself, defined by lack, ambiguity and uncertainty. Furthermore, seen as potentially dangerous minorities, Poles were officially deprived of

their own voice, thus the attempt to de-humanize them by relegating them to metaphysical emptiness.

Even though the historic Polish province of Posen/Poznan, once the center of the Polish state and nation, became again the center of national activity and socio/economic modernizing and cultural changes, imperial supporters continued to invoke anachronistic, ahistorical and debasing images of Poznan in terms of a “non-place” by relying on Freytag’s notorious depictions of Posen in *Soll und Haben* from almost half a century earlier, perhaps for similar reasons: underway was the implementation of the intended “Germanisierung des Bodens” in Posen by the expropriation of Polish estates and by expelling Poles eastwards into Russian territories and by encouraging German colonization in their place.

In *Effi Briest* it is the imperial officers, the promoters of Bismarck’s policy, who are, as we find out in the text, trustworthy and handpicked by Bismarck to implement the policy in the East not the least because of their anti-Polish attitudes. They are the ones who amuse themselves and others with the scornful couplets about Poznan, which they represent as a dystopian or a “non-place”: “Schrimm Ist schlim /Rogasen Zum Rasen/ Aber weh dir nach Samter/Verdammter.”

Effi Briest abounds in such an ambiguous “empty context” which is often reconfigured as “empty spaces” and non-places in the description of Kessin and its surroundings at the “frontier of western civilization.” *Hinterpommern* outside of its German/Prussian connotations is depicted as being without identity and non-relational, lacking coherence between history, culture and physical space and society. e.g. that of the Polish/Kashubian domain is represented by wilderness and shiftiness such as symbolized

by the schloon, signs of decay such as remnants and memory of Slavic temples and submerged cities etc.

What appears to characterize Kessin as a non-space is the lack of relationship or the mutual mistrust between the local population and the Imperial Landrat, as well as the disregard for the inhabitants of Kessin by the German-Prussian landowners and aristocratic imperial administrators. As senior civil servant in charge of the large rural district Innstetten sees his duty to protect the interests of the landowners primarily. Significantly, both the public and the private spaces related to Innstetten as an extended hand of empire abound in “empty context.” Even Innstetten’s private residence is a strange, inhospitable, haunted and similarly (half) empty house in Kessin. The absence of either reception or dining room in Innstetten’s house points not only to lack of social life but of mutual mistrust between the imperial administration and the local population. In fact, in both his house and the office quarters the second floor is empty. Most significantly Innstetten’s house is haunted by a ghost, the prime “representation of absence” in F. M. Subiotto’s words (141). All this could be translated into the political realm of the German anti-Polish campaign during Bismarck's era, as the absence of Polish/Kashub population from the political, social or cultural life of Imperial Germany, palpably felt during Innstetten's tenure in *Hinterpommern*.

The duel which takes place in Kessin several years afterwards, falls around 1885/86, when the relations with Poles were further aggravated.⁹⁸ The duel can be taken to symbolically represent the encounter between German and Poles, in which Crampas’

⁹⁸ According to Grawe, Innstetten discovers Crampas’ letters on June 30, 1885; and the duel takes place on the first day of the following August (Grawe 1985: 51-53).

physical death can be understood as an act of attrition in Bismarck's sense happening against the background of implementation of his measures for expropriation of the Polish nobility's land and their physical removal to make the "Lebensraum" for Germans in the attempted Germanization of land in Polish Prussia underway since 1885.

Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) is grounded in the cultural aspects of historical materialist tradition informed by Lukács, Gramsci, Fanon, Adorno, C.L.R. James and Williams rather than in Foucauldian psychoanalysis and deconstruction. By drawing on Lukács' theory of the sociology of novel, Said considers the novel (literary narrative) as the central cultural form in the history and culture of empire by arguing that metropolitan culture has long been permeated by an imperial consciousness. While Said draws on Lukács' theory of the novel as inseparable from historical and social context, he also distinguishes the Gramscian grasp of social history in spatial/geographical terms (such as "terrain," "territory," "region"), which Gramsci applied to South Italy from the more temporal Lukácsian ones, since he considers that it better illustrates the way empires are engraved in the very nineteenth and twentieth centuries' novelistic form. Curiously, however, while Said acknowledges the spatial turn in literature, he does not take into consideration Bakhtin's chronotope.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, Gramsci's concept of space is also historicized to those places in Southern Italy left out of the main capitalist trend of industrialization because of the stranglehold of the landlord class. The Saidian/Gramscian conceptualization of topography is also relevant for my reading of Eastern Pomerania: much like the political subordination of the agrarian economy to the financial power of

⁹⁹ Gramsci's concept of space in Southern Italy left out of industrialization and dominated by landed class in his essay on "Some Aspects of the Southern Question" is relevant for the East Elbian Polish provinces.

the Italian bourgeoisie in the North and the landowners in the South, Eastern Elbian provinces are similarly subordinated to the industrial power of the West, landowning Junkers and the political power of Berlin.

In *Culture and Imperialism* Said writes about the contrapuntal analysis/reading that he uses in interpreting colonial texts as a way of considering the perspectives of both the colonizer and the colonized. It is a reading with “awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts” (1993: 51). By contrapuntally analyzing literary materials produced in the imperial powers of the late nineteenth century Said detects an irreversible turn from the “triumphalist experience of imperialism into the extremes of self-consciousness, discontinuity, self-referentiality and corrosive irony, whose formal patterns have come to be recognized as the hallmarks of modernist culture . . . “ (1993: 188) that are articulated both in the themes and structures of the late nineteenth century novels of Conrad, Foster, Malraux, D.H. Lawrence, and also in the main works of Joyce, T. S. Eliot, Thomas. Mann, and Yeats. Many of the prominent characteristics of modernist culture, such as moderation, irony or loss of narrative authority are derived in part from the experience of empire according to Said, and are inseparable from the enlargement of metropolitan consciousness to include the response to difference and agency from the colonial and non-Western world.

Fontane wrote *Effi Briest* on the eve of the dissolution of the German empire and as a narrative, perhaps more than any other of Fontane’s novels, it demonstrates a subversive text of disillusionment and premonition of the imminent collapse of the German imperial state. The point I want to make is that even though *Effi Briest* is a good

example of a text in which the convulsions of the late capitalism as imperialism are acted out in the (semi)colonial location of the eastern imperial margins demonstrating asymmetry in relations between Germans and Slavs as circumscribed by the German imperial nation state, the novel has not attracted attention of Anglo-American Marxist or postcolonial scholarship of which Fredric Jameson and Edward Said are certainly among the pioneering and most prominent representatives. Perhaps some of the explanation lies in the fact that Erich Auerbach proved to be a lasting influence on both Jameson and Said when an expertise in German nineteenth century novel is concerned.

As I have already mentioned, Erich Auerbach was one of the most influential critics responsible for the pervasive negative view of the nineteenth-century German novel in general and Fontane in particular, until the establishment of Thomas Mann's post 1920-opus. Both Edward Said and Fredric Jameson acknowledged Erich Auerbach's influence on their approach to literature. Jameson had studied under Auerbach and described him as "his teacher." In Said's case it was his life-long concern and preoccupation with exile and border intellectuals, among whom Erich Auerbach occupied a privileged position, as he expressed in his short introduction to a 1952 essay by Auerbach entitled "Philology and Weltliteratur" that Said co-translated. As Terry Eagleton expressed in an interview: "His [Said's] trajectory was really from Auerbach to Foucault and back to Auerbach."

Said, for instance, considers only Thomas Mann's writing worthy of including in the literary works of great achievement in the context of the realist tradition, passing over Fontane in silence and overlooking his influence on Thomas Mann and other subsequent writers even though Mann himself expressed his admiration for *Effi Briest* which he considered as one of the six most important novels ever written. However, Mann

responded to Fontane enthusiastically but not always understandingly. Thus in his influential essay “Der alte Fontane” Mann qualifies Fontane’s style as balladesque, and closer to poetry than apparent, a result of many years of his writing poetry, thus suggesting that Fontane’s own brand of realist writing was incompatible with European Realism of the time. Given Mann’s prestige, his critical assessment of Fontane’s realist style was a contributing factor for marginalization of Fontane from the discussion of the European nineteenth-century novel.¹⁰⁰

Furthermore late in life Edward Said became increasingly preoccupied with the concept of *Spätstil* (late style) a critical category that he had borrowed from Theodor Adorno, who had written about Beethoven’s late style at length by arguing that rather than providing a complete and unproblematic closure of the author’s life and of all their previous works, the style of late works is fundamentally fragmented, rebarbative, discontinuous and dissonant and their style discontinuous, and dissonant. Said found examples of this including Thomas Mann’s *Dr. Faustus* among others, yet again there is no mention of Fontane, even though as a fine example and almost unique phenomenon of

¹⁰⁰ Thomas Mann’s public tribute to Fontane entitled “Der alte Fontane” *Adel des Geistes*, first appeared in *Die Zukunft*, Berlin, 19. Jg. V.1, January 10, 1910. Despite this declaration of admiration, Mann never mentions the influence of Theodor Fontane’s *Effie Briest* on his creation of *Die Buddenbrooks*. James N. Bade, editor of the Princeton lectures, comments on the originality of *Buddenbrooks*, “Mann read *Effie Briest* by Theodor Fontane, in 1896, a year before starting his work on *Die Buddenbrooks* and it appears to have influenced his first novel in both form and content.” In his letter to his friend Otto Grautoff, Feb 2, 1896, Mann describes *Effie Briest*, which he had “recently read,” as “absolutely first rate.” Mann later denied having read *Effie Briest* or any of Fontane’s later novels before he wrote *Die Buddenbrooks*. On Feb. 17, 1896, Mann wrote to Grautoff: Heute lass ich auch Fontanes neuen Roman Effi Briest, der ganz vortrefflich ist” (Mandelsohn, 69). In the same letter he also disclosed to Grautoff that he had burned his diaries since, “It became embarrassing and uncomfortable to have such a mass of secret—very secret—writings lying around” (Cullander).

a late-bloomer in literary history, who started at the age of sixty and reached his climax at eighty, Fontane would have made a perfect candidate to fit Said's paradigm.

Both Said and Jameson were familiar with the concept of *pastiche*. T.W. Adorno used to describe the recourse of Igor Stravinsky, James Joyce, Stefan Georg, Hugo Hofmannsthal or Thomas Mann as masters of montage, a skillful juxtaposition, of the condoned past, dead styles and artistic languages of the past as vehicles for new works. Mann revealed about the writing of *Buddenbrooks*, "I sought for support and aid among the giants of the declining century for I remember having read especially Tolstoi's *Anna Karenina* and *War and Peace*, to draw strength for a task of which I could show myself capable by constant reliance on the greatest" (Cullander). As Jameson reminds us: "[T]exts come before us as always already read; we apprehend them through sedimented layers of previous interpretations or – if the text is brand new- through the sedimented reading habits and categories developed by those inherited interpretive traditions" (1981: 9). How much of Mann's context and ironic, self-referential, ambivalent and detailed style in the *Die Buddenbrooks* (1901), *Der Zauberberg* (published in 1924, but which Mann started in 1912), and even *Der Tod in Venedig* (1912) is pastiched from Fontane's novels and it can be traced back to the magic of his Finnessen ("the devil is in the detail!")?

Having said that, I submit that Fontane's writing exemplifies a trajectory similar to what Jameson and Said observed about late nineteenth century narrative, that can be traced in his oeuvre, as a turn from his earlier historical epic, monologic ballads, and historic narratives devoted to dominant beliefs and values, and in conformity with the German messianic/ imperialistic world-view, to later novelistic narratives characterized

by irony, and increasingly dispersed and self-consciously reflexive discursive modes, culminating in his last two novels *Effi Briest* (1894/5) and *Der Stechlin*, published in 1898, the year of his death.

Jameson's and Said's observations of the impact of imperialism on the emergence of metropolitan modernism are abundantly confirmed in *Effi Briest* where domestic space is reconceived on an imperial scale, and the prospect on the local and familiar is infused by imaginings of the distant and exotic. In this respect, *Effi Briest* reminds us of the pervasive influence of imperial culture in fantasy, fiction and ideology. Fontane's self-consciously circular narrative digression in *Effi Briest* is an ironic subversion of the traditional narrative pattern and a case in point of the late nineteenth century imperialist aesthetics Said observed about the ideology of the late nineteenth century fiction.

Fontane's irony is gentle but unmistakable and also derives from experience at the imperial margins and can be detected in a whole cluster of stances and techniques in *Effi Briest*: double-voicedness, incongruity, humor, absurdity, understatement, overstatement, contrary statement, disparity of intention and result, dramatic irony, romantic irony. Furthermore *Effi Briest* (in its final version of 1894) is considered Fontane's most pessimistic novel because it irradiates an unsettling anxiety and reflects Fontane's increasing doubts about the political fortune of the German state, a development that superseded his personal crisis, which culminated in 1892, a period during which he was writing *Effi Briest*.

Fontane's much admired unique stylistic and compositional art in *Effi Briest* has usually been attributed to the fact that Fontane was a superb conscious stylist, who strived to achieve perfection of his work through careful revisions of his drafts,

sometimes taking place over years. While revisions of *Effi Briest* on which Fontane toiled so laboriously for many years are commonly ascribed to his individual sensibilities, however, against the background I discussed previously, a further reason must be found to explain the genesis of the novel, and to ask whether the act of writing and rewriting and the changes Fontane made in the course of that rewriting might not have been influenced by his artistic mediation of the social/cultural changes of late imperialism and the dynamics of late capitalism that affected these conscious or unconscious stylistic changes in the substance and form of his novel. Rather, it seems to me that Fontane's acclaimed firm story line, the labor of composition, as well as the modernist irony attributed to him derives at least in part from his attempt to come to terms with the German empire and thus also bears witness to his other struggles over the years during which he toiled at the novel.

As a product of the period from the late 1888 to the spring of 1894, *Effi Briest* was long in the making and had undergone substantial revisions. Despite the ease with which the initial draft of the novel took shape, the prolonged and strenuous work at its revisions took its toll on Fontane's health, so that he became seriously ill in 1892 and even temporarily abandoned the project. He had overcome the blockage preventing him from completing the novel by taking up the writing of his childhood evocations spent in Swinemünde, a town on Ostsee and the presumable site of the legendary ancient Slavic town of Jumne. The final stage of writing *Effi Briest* began in 1894, when he completed the novel in the spring of the same year by revising the text, so that the published version included the material from the biography whereby his fictional Kessin was based upon Swinemünde. On a structural level, even a cursory comparison between the initial idea

for the novel, the so called Betty-complex (kept in the Mark Museum in East-Berlin) and the published novel in its final form, would indicate that at some point following the crisis, Fontane altered the earlier version of the novel by relocating his initial setting and made changes in composition by deranging the narrative linear flow, which he took over from the Ardenne source, and which starts in Düsseldorf and ends in Berlin, into a circular return to the beginning which subverts the authorized trajectory. *Effi Briest* is a particularly good example of Fontane's heterotopic/chronotopic paradigm in that it destabilizes the narrative point of view encountered in the life-reflecting realist tradition, because it demonstrates how this destabilizing and dispersion increases as the novel moves spatially and psychologically away from familiar terrains, culminating in the confused and strangely paradoxical account of the mysterious Chinese ghost. It can offer an insight into the relation of Fontane's fiction to the contradictions of the discourse of imperialism and to examine how nationality, power, gender relations, culture and sexuality intersect and clash with German imperialism and colonialism by connecting the formal dislocations and displacements in *Effi Briest* with the moment when the Polish opposition to imperial rule, their locations and cultures impinged on metropolitan consciousness with great intensity expanding, but also fracturing metropolitan horizons, eroding confidence and engendering dissolution in imperialist ascendancy.

Thus I argue that the specific Pomeranian setting in *Effi Briest* is neither a randomly nor innocently chosen eastern location. Rather, I consider it to be a crucial constitutive part of the narrative with historical referentiality and not merely an anonymous, vague and fixed backdrop or a chance Slavic location against which the metropolitan story unfolds, that, for what it is usually taken for granted and subsequently dismissed from the

inquiry. Furthermore, while Russell Berman considers the shift of the Ardenne material away from Düsseldorf in the western part of Empire all the way to eastern Prussia to correspond to Prussia's ascendancy in unified Germany (2002: 348), I contend that the shift reflects not the ascendancy but Fontane's premonition and anxieties of its downfall especially in relation to the imminent loss of eastern provinces to Poland. For it should be remembered that Fontane admonished: "Bleibe zu Hause und nahre dich redlich!"

With its carefully designated circular structure, comprised of thirty-six chapters and four narrative blocks (on structure see Grawe 1985), *Effi Briest* is a novel in which Fontane consciously moves the eastern margins of the German empire into the center of his fictional narrative. The narrative begins and ends at the Briest's estate in the village of Hohen-Cremmen in Brandenburg's heartland Havelland, whereby framing the middle section at the two poles of the German empire, one at the imperial center, Berlin, and the other at its eastern margins, in Prussian Pomerania. However, the eighteen Pomeranian chapters (six through twenty-two as well the chapter twenty-eight) are both central and loom larger than life in the narrative. They serve as a setting in which a relatively short, but formative period of a year and a quarter in the life of Fontane's eponymous protagonist is dramatized and to which all important emotions and events in the novel are tied with, including, the birth of a child, an extra-marital intimate relationship, the mysterious Chinese ghost and the duel-scene in chapter twenty-eight in which Fontane returns to the same location. Moreover, the seduction scene in the nineteenth chapter is not only a structurally pivotal event that divides the two phases of Effi's married life in Pomeranian Kessin, but placed at the virtual epi-center of the narrative, it represents the climax for the whole novel. By comparison, the subsequent time-span of about a decade

in the life of Fontane's protagonist is uneventful and compressed in the remaining thirteen chapters, punctuated by chapter twenty-eight. Notably, the six years of Effi's married life in Berlin, the period from her visit to Hohen-Cremmen after a holiday in Denmark, to her departure for a treatment in Scwalbach and Elms spas, is reduced to a mere sentence.

As conveyed in *Effi Briest*, Pomerania, or rather its Baltic littoral area of *Hinterpommern*, encapsulates all the conventionally acknowledged affiliations with the imperial context and a typical Eastern European colonial situation: it is represented as an exotic, distant, backward and threatening space at the fringes of the German/European world, with an atmosphere pervaded by coldness, uncanniness, subject to natural and supernatural forces and lurking temptation and danger that await outsiders. This space is peopled by resentful native Slav subjects, in the countryside, an alien imperial military-bureaucratic oligarchy, German-speaking landowners, as well as the usual by-products of empire, the local-town set of disparate immigrant population, dubious, eccentric and mysterious non-native characters, associated with distant lands and travel, adventure, money-making, sexual adventure and gossip. It is precisely the history of this impelled cultural meeting and the conflicts they produce at the margins and border zones that is epitomized by the *Hinterpommern*, and that has been of so much interest to literary postcolonial studies.

The late nineteenth-century Prussian/German "mission in the east" was at best intended to allow Poles in the territories seized in the partitions of Poland over a century earlier, to live as beleaguered minorities in the German nation state, as if they had no neighboring co-nationalists, but were confined to the social developments in the metropolis. As long as they lived in supranational Prussia, Poles could adjust and accept

their statelessness. After the 1871 proclamation of German nation-state, Poles refused to be Germans and especially from 1890s onwards, Polish issues became central for imperial politics due to attempts to assimilate Poles, of whom three million (or every tenth citizen) lived in Prussia by 1890. As always, however the nationalization process, such as germanization and magyarization during the last decades of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, produced the opposite of the desired effect. The situation was further aggravated by the fact that subject nationalities were fragmented under different imperial units and administrations and denied political, economic and cultural rights enjoyed by Germans and Magyars. Slav counter-nationalism and especially the Polish and South Slav movements towards unification became a powerful force towards the turn of the century that threatened the survival of the Dual Empire and the European colonial system. Defeat of the Polish nationalist movement in Prussia's eastern borderlands was scarcely less vital to the imperial regime of the German Second Empire, than the suppression of the Slav national movement was for the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

What further confirms my reading of *Effi Briest* by drawing on Jameson's and Said's models is the text's contemporaneity, the fact that it is only one of a whole series of fictional works within the context of German and Austrian *fin-de-siècle* literature that explores the theme of the German-Slav encounter as conflict associated with the unequal distribution of power, wealth and social status. Mostly these artistic representations of German-Slav relations are set in the European Slavic periphery: at the contact zone where the Western civilization meets the Eastern "Other" and where the "superior" metropolitan modernity is pitted against the Slavic cultural inferiority, belatedness and marginality.

After the shift of the 1890s towards the new increasingly aggressive and more influential nationalism, the Polish policy became a public national problem. Under the impact of the Imperial anti-Polish politics, Polish national consciousness, traditionally seen as a privilege of the Polish noble elite and the middle classes, also began to take roots among the common people. Polish resistance to Prussian rule and official attempts at Polish assimilation, which in the course of the nineteenth century, and especially during the *Kulturkampf*, and in 1880s was organized into a formidable national movement for independence and unification of the Polish territories.

CHAPTER IX

POLAND – EIN WEITES FELD? AND THE CHALLENGE OF HYBRID SUBJECTIVITIES

***Gewohnheit der Gegensätze.* - Die allgemeine ungenaue Beobachtung sieht in der Natur überall Gegensätze (wie z. B. “warm und kalt”), wo keine Gegensätze, sondern nur Gradverschiedenheiten sind. Diese schlechte Gewohnheit hat uns verleitet, nun auch noch die innere Natur, die geistig-sittliche Welt, nach solchen Gegensätzen verstehen und zerlegen zu wollen. Unsäglich viel Schmerzhaftigkeit, Anmaßung, Härte, Entfremdung, Erkältung ist so in die menschliche Empfindung hineingekommen dadurch, daß man Gegensätze an Stelle der Übergänge zu sehen meinte.**

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Der Wanderer und sein Schatten*

***Die Wenden von damals waren wie die Polen von heut.* Ausgerüstet mit lebenswürdigen und blendenden Eigenschaften, an Ritterlichkeit ihren Gegner mindestens gleich, an Leidenschaft, an Opfermut ihnen vielleicht überlegen, gingen sie dennoch zugrunde, weil sie jener gestaltenden Kraft entbehrten. Immer voll Neigung, ihre Kräfte nach außen zu lassen, statt sie im Zentrum zu einen, fehlte ihnen da Konzentrische, während sie exzentrisch waren in jedem Sinne. Dazu die individuelle Freiheit höher achtend als die staatliche Festung – wer erkannte in diesem allen nicht polnischnationale Züge?**

Theodor Fontane, *Wanderungen*

What I find interesting in the above statement Fontane made about the Polishness is the way in which he fuses time and space by simultaneously jumping backwards and forwards so that the Polish condition acquires temporal and spatial dimensions in the Bakhtinian sense. Poland had ceased to exist with the onset of modernity, when the modern concept of the future surfaced around the seventeenth/eighteenth centuries and the transition from pre-modern to modern supposedly took place. Until then, human time was measured in cycles, and the Polish condition of interrupted modernity is apparently measured in cycles rather than as a linear progression of history. The Western self-perception of modernity is based on the linear conception of time and belief in historical progress, a secularized form of life and rational knowledge, and the organization of social

relations around individual rather than group interests. Those societies said to be “traditional” have been said to have a circular conception of time, a belief-system dominated by religion and superstition and a type of social organization where group ties are more important than the autonomy of individual subjects. Because Polish society has not achieved this collective conversion to modernity, does it mean that the Poles move in circles and are not getting anywhere?

Another way of describing this likening of the modern-day Poles to the medieval Wends evokes Jean Baudrillard’s “simulacra”: in that the Poles appear to be copies or repetition of Wends. In his *Simulacra and Simulation* Baudrillard starts defining “precession of simulacra” with a contrast drawn from a Jorge Luis Borges’ fable “Exactitude of Science” in which cartographers draw a map in such detail that it ends up exactly covering the real territory of the empire. The map frays as the empire declines. In modernism the reality and the abstraction (map) decline together. By contrast, today, in our postmodern time, that pairing has disappeared. In relying on models and maps we have lost all contact with the origin and reality that preceded the map. This is the hyperreal. And this precessive map, or simulacrum, then “engenders the territory,” such as it is (Baudrillard 1).

The disappearance of the Polish state from the map of Europe in 1794, after an existence of over eight hundred years (in various forms), profoundly affected the relation of the real world of East-Central Europe to its mapping, effecting the change of the course of history not only of Poland and Prussia/Germany but also of Europe as a whole. While Prussian Germans seemed to have relied on maps and models instead on reality in viewing Poles and Poland, this interruption of the historical process of Polish society has

created fractures and traumas not only at the level of their everyday behavior but also at the level of their cognitive map-making and projecting, as well as the discursive conceptualization and theorization of post-partition societal (re)organization and reinvention.

Modern literary criticism's discourse generally holds that postmodernism has arisen as the radical antithesis to Enlightenment as a negative reaction to its ratio/ethno-centric ideals. However Enlightenment and postmodernism are much more complex and dynamic than it may seem at first sight so that it makes sense to suggest that every epoch has its postmodernism. Something similar lies behind the claim made by the Russian cultural critic Mikhail Epstein that Russia has always been postmodern, that is, at least since Peter "the Great" imported Western culture into Russia (Epstein 1995, 189-200). The westward thrust of Russia led to the foundation of St. Petersburg as the new capital in 1703 and the introduction of a hybrid Byzantine-Western culture into Russia by the Romanovs that can be described as a mixture, *sui generis*, of modernity and the rejection of modernity, modernism and archaism, deep religiosity and radical secularism. Ezequiel Adamovsky has written in the context of the nineteenth-century representations of Russia in France that unlike the liberals who dismissed Russia as a land of barbarism and tyranny, many other different groups saw Russia as a model for Europe to follow, although for their own different agendas (411). Russia was perceived as a contradictory mix of myth and reality, both modern and archaic, progressive and backward, religious and godless.

It should also be recalled how much Leibniz admired Peter "the Great" and how subsequently the Russian Tsarina Catherine II "the Great," was admired by Western

Enlightened humanists. In a way Fontane's character Marietta Trippelli, a native of Kessin, is following in the footsteps of her much more famous Pomeranian compatriot predecessor Sophia Augusta von Anhalt-Zerbst, born in Stettin, but who rose to fame as the Russian Tsarina Catherine the Great. In both cases personal and political gains were won for women through the liberating activities and challenges of traveling east. Fontane never loses sight of the fact that even courage and determination may be insufficient, in the long run, to ensure a woman's success or even her independence in Prussia/Imperial Germany; thus he sends his character Trippelli to Russia. Thus another point Fontane makes with his character Trippelli, in terms of her self-expression and professional fulfillment and her choice to live in St. Petersburg, that one way of avoiding the straitjacket of Prussian society is by escaping, in the words of Valery Greenberg, the "prison house of womanhood in the nineteenth-century Prussia" (770). Such examples of women from the German nobility or middle class draw attention to the ways in which ambitious, talented and free-spirited Prussian women sought to benefit from the emancipatory influence of Russia and make the case that in Russia (or elsewhere in Eastern Europe) women, or at least upper class women, enjoyed greater status, more freedom and personal rights than women in the so-called advanced societies of Prussia/Germany, as indeed in Victorian England or the United States.

A similar observation about Russia had been made by the young Serbian political activist and the first important socialist in the Balkans (Stokes 611), Svetozar Markovic. Markovic questioned many patriarchal institutions such as marriage and the family and believed that the Russian Socialism of the 1860s was ahead of Western Europe, and he argued that, "[T]oday the Russian revolutionaries with their passionate hatred of

Establishment, with their radical views on marriage and God, horrify even the most radical members of the International, especially in Germany, where the sacredness of marriage and religiosity are deeply rooted among the people” (qtd. in Dedijer 50).

Not only Russian revolutionaries, but also the Russian high nobility seem to be very progressive in terms of transcending cast and class relations, as Innstetten observes: “die russischen Fürsten sind sehr aufgeklärt, über kleine Standesvorurteile weg” (86).¹⁰¹ The point Fontane makes in *Effi Briest* is that it is the Russian prince Kotschukoff who turned the talented Kessin-born Pastor Trippel’s daughter into the worldwide successful concert singer Marietta Trippelli. By pointing to Russian *grand seigneurs* as patrons of art unburdened by class restrictions, Fontane’s criticism is directed against their contemporary Prussian counterparts, unrenowned as arts patrons or lovers of literature (the old Briest for one), whereas patronage as institution generally survived longer both in Russia and Austria-Hungary than in Germany.

Indeed, one should recall Count Leo Tolstoy and the contradictions of his teaching and his early lifestyle, his own brand of communism and his advocacy of worldwide equality among men and women, the value of hard work and non-violent resistance. Another remarkable figure was Prince Kropotkin, zoologist, evolutionary theorist, geographer and anarcho-communist who advocated communist society free from central government and private property and who for some was the true *imitatio Christi*. As Oscar Wilde described him “a man with a soul of that beautiful white Christ which seems coming out of Russia” (*De Profundis* 180). There is also Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, a complex hybrid from Galicia, and his unorthodox sexual politics and his distinctive

¹⁰¹ “Russian princes are very enlightened, above trivial class prejudice.”

political utopianism of a multi-cultural, property-free communalism not unlike that of Tolstoy's. Despite their failure, utopian movements have for centuries tried to imagine and construct a just society. Heine also observed a greater degree of religious tolerance towards Judaism in Russian Poland than in Prussian Poland in 1823,

Im preußischen Polen erlangen die Juden kein Staatsamt, die sich nicht taufen lassen; im russischen Polen werden auch die Juden zu allen Staatsämtern zugelassen, weil man es dort für zweckmäßig halt (*Über Polen* 564).

The well-travelled Trippelli offers a rather positive image of Russia, which she prefers to America. Thus she comments: “Übrigens schläft man in Russland wundervoll, trotz des starken Tees. Sorgen giebt es in Rußland nicht; darin – im Geldpunkt sind beide gleich – ist Rußland noch besser als Amerika” (95). However, even though Trippelli talks in familiar terms about her patron Prince Kotschukoff as her close friend she nevertheless denies him any understanding of art even though he composes himself: “Kotschukoff ist ein guter Kamerad und mein Freund, aber von Kunst und ähnlichen Sachen versteht er gar nichts, von Musik gewiß nichts” (91)¹⁰² and she ascribes Kotschukoff's inclination to art and that of the Russian nobility in general to their hyper spiritualism due to their hyperreligious dimension, their Eastern Orthodox religiosity, rather than to their understanding of art and music in the secularized/enlightened German/Western sense, invoking Rousseau who denied Russian culture originality and considered Russian civilization inauthentic and imitative. Thus, in Trippelli's opinion Kotschukoff has no understanding of many other things, including interior decoration: “Er ist gerade vornehm

¹⁰² “Kotschuskoff is a good chap and he's my friend, but he doesn't understand the first thing about art and matters of that sort, certainly not about music, though he composes masses and oratorios . . .”

genug, um sich alles als schön aufreden zu lassen, was bunt aussieht und viel Geld kostet (91).”¹⁰³

Furthermore, when Marietta Trippelli wants to assure Effi of her beliefs in the supernatural, she invokes the Byzantine-inflected Orthodox world, as a place where superstition was widespread among the Orthodox Christians and thus seemingly so vastly different from hers: “[W]enn man so alt ist wie ich und viel rumgestoßen wurde und in Russland war und sogar auch ein halbes Jahr in Rumänien, da hält man alles für möglich” (94).¹⁰⁴ And, yet, one wonders why is it that in *Effi Briest* educated, secularized and rational Protestant characters seem to be so fascinated with the supernatural phenomena, rather than the Catholics, lower classes or Poles? Perhaps because widespread occultist movement in the West was signaling the crisis of modernity. Or, as Nils Freytag has recently shown, the traditional narrative of enlightened rationalism did not quite supersede the superstitious credulity of the previous generations in Prussia. Freytag argues that superstitious beliefs did not disappear but rather transformed during the nineteenth century so that attitudes toward superstition came to embrace “modern forms of superstition”(17). And he concludes that tradition and modernity should not be considered contradictory, mutually exclusive concepts (396). According to Freytag the difference between elite and popular attitudes toward superstition has been overestimated, superstition was not entirely a prerogative of lower-class culture as generally assumed rather, “Die Zuweisungen – hier Volkskultur, dort Elitenkultur –

¹⁰³ Something only has to be colourful and cost a great deal of money and anyone can sell to him as a thing of beauty, that’s how much class he has.”

¹⁰⁴ “When you’ve reached my age and taken the knocks I have – been to Russia and even spent six months in Romania – you think anything is possible.”

erzeugten und erzeugen dabei eine soziale Kluft zwischen althergebrachten und modernen Auffassungen, die in ihrer polarisierenden Schärfe so nicht bestand” (316).¹⁰⁵

In *Effi Briest* the “enlightened” ones still think as superstitious “primitives” do on the topic of the supernatural. As Fontane’s character Marietta Trippeli made abundantly clear, both she and her enlightened father, a Protestant pastor, were convinced of the genuineness of the mediumistic phenomena: “Ich bin,” fuhr die Trippeli fort, “aus einer aufgeklärten Familie . . . , und doch sagte mir mein Vater, als das mit dem Psychographen aufkam; ‘Höre Marie, das ist was.’ Und er hat recht gehabt, es ist auch was damit” (94).¹⁰⁶ By creating his character Roswitha, a Catholic subaltern committed to rationality and common sense, Fontane might have wished to mock and expose contemporary Protestant turn away from rationality to “superstition.”

Epstein’s provocative (albeit unhistorical) claim that Russia is the real (albeit unacknowledged) birthplace of postmodern development brings me to the question of Poland: Could the Polish condition and experience be approached in a similar way? Polish partitions became a fixed reference point and at the same time the main trauma and preoccupation for generations of Poles. The point here is that while, according to

¹⁰⁵ One has to think of the sinister image of Wallenstein (Albrecht Eusebius Wenzel von Waldstein/ Albrecht Václav Eusebius z Valdštejna), as a sinister character involved in the world of political intrigue for personal gain popularized by Schiller, in his well-known *Wallenstein-Trilogie*. In his characterization of Wallenstein in his *Gustav Adolfs Page* (1882) Konrad Ferdinand Meyer (1825-98) drew on Schiller’s portrayal of Wallenstein as a great strategist, but ridden by superstition to the point that he cannot make any decision without consulting astrology but he excludes more sinister aspects of the alleged Wallenstein’s diabolical personality.

¹⁰⁶ “I come . . . from a very enlightened family . . . but nevertheless Father said to me at the time of that business of the spirit-writing. ‘Listen Marie, there is something in this.’ And he was right, there is something in it. You’ll find out.”

Baudrillard, the West experienced hyperreality as a postmodern phenomenon only in the 1960s and 1970s and for the first time realized that there are things that are more real than reality itself, Polish culture was built on this hyperreality of the partitions looming larger than reality itself, which is why subsequent development was under the sign of the “post” partition crisis and revolutions. It meant not only a loss of independence but also the interruption of modernity since it put an end to the Polish-Lithuanian Republic, an experiment and arguably one of the most democratic countries in Europe at the time, to be subdued and absorbed by three absolutistic monarchies (Piskorski 97; Friedrich 1999: 49). In 1823, Heinrich Heine who located Poland between France and Russia saw it exposed to two extremes: on the one hand there was hyper-culture (Überkultur) from the West, on the other, barbarism from the East.¹⁰⁷

Polish elites were influenced by the ideas of the French Enlightenment and revolutionary radicalism. The 1794 uprising against Imperial Russia and the Kingdom of Prussia was led by the legendary leader Tadeusz Kosciuszko,¹⁰⁸ who was urging the emancipation of peasants and mobilized all classes of the Polish and Lithuanian population. Like many other Polish elites, Kosciuszko became acquainted with the ideology of the French Enlightenment and revolutionary emancipation in Paris and advocated the modern concept of nation as opposed to traditional Polish political nation (*szlachta*). The radicalized revolutionary sought to transform military insurrection into a

¹⁰⁷ Heine’s opinion of Russia as the land of barbarism and tyranny echoes the liberals, one of the many contradictory French representations of the nineteenth-century Russia.

¹⁰⁸ Revolutionary patriotism was strong among the Polish exiles in Western Europe in the 1830s and 1840s. Polish patriots who lived in comfort in Paris but were imbued with patriotism were target of Heine’s mockery. However, of Kosciuszko Heine wrote in 1823: “der größte Mensch, den Polen hervorgebracht hat und dessen Andenken noch in allen Herzen lebt.” (*Über Polen* 562)

social revolution. Stanislaw Worcell and Kazimierz Alexander Pulaski, for instance, established a London commune – the first populist movement in Eastern Europe. They declared property to be “at the center of all evil which oppressed mankind at present and demanded “dictatorship of the people” (Brock 1977: 11, 17, 27; Berend 2003: 97). On the other hand there was a glorification of the good old times of golden freedom by magnates and aristocrats who desired to restore the old order and keep the social hierarchy in place.

In response to those who use historical failures as an argument against revolution, Deleuze calls for distinguishing between becoming and history by recalling Nietzsche:

I became more and more aware of the possibility of distinguishing between becoming and history. It was Nietzsche who said that nothing important is ever free from a “nonhistorical cloud.” . . . What history grasps in an event is the way it's actualized in particular circumstances; the event's becoming is beyond the scope of history . . . Becoming isn't part of history; history amounts only to the set of preconditions, however recent, that one leaves behind in order to “become,” that is, to create something new . . . They say revolutions turn out badly. But they're constantly confusing two different things, the way revolutions turn out historically and people's revolutionary becoming. These relate to two different sets of people. Men's only hope lies in a revolutionary becoming: the only way of casting off their shame or responding to what is intolerable. (*Negotiations* 170-1)

For Deleuze becoming or the emergence of the new is related to the concept of repetition: something truly new can only emerge through repetition. Pure becoming, according to Deleuze, is not a particular becoming of some corporeal entity, a passage from one state to another, but a becoming – itself, thoroughly extracted from its corporeal base. Since the predominant temporality of Being is that of the present (with past and future as its deficient modes), the pure becoming – without-being means that one should sidestep the present – it never “actually occurs,” it is “always forthcoming and already past” (*Logic* 80).

The most important accomplishment Poles achieved through revolutions was the turn to building the movement. As William Hagen notes about Poles: “The experience of revolution had turned many of the Polish gentry and intelligentsia, political conservatives and radicals alike, towards an Organic Work strategy which they were eager to pursue”(139). As a result of repeated defeats, for which Poland paid a very high price, a growing number of Poles were becoming critical of heroic messianism, especially in the wake of the failed national uprising of 1863, and with the intensified Germanization policies in the 1880s the majority of the Polish elite gradually realized the need for radical socioeconomic change.

In *Effi Briest* three characters are identified as (half) Polish/Slavic/Wendish: Frau von Padden, Golchowski and Major von Crampas and defined through this repetitive becoming in Deleuzian sense. I want to investigate in this chapter the ways this “repetitive becoming” is represented by Fontane in terms of these characters’ different responses to being Prussian-ruled Poles/Slavs against the background of the anti-Slav/Polish prejudices and animosities as strategies of adaptations and cooptations but also as resistance both individualistic and as organized movement. In so doing, I want to demonstrate that the most concrete expressions of identity (of the post-partition condition) are unstable, composite, frequently conflicting and even explosive and potentially self destructive *hybrids* who are traditionally perceived as incompatible and even antithetical.

In *Effi Briest*, Poles are neither present nor collectively referred to as a nation (Poland did not exist) but are rather felt to be an ill-defined threat lurking in the background. The native population of Pomerania is represented through obscure

Kashubians, while the much more visible, numerous, powerful and competitive Poles seem to be erased. The only individualized Polish characters that appear in the novel are hyphenated Poles, members of the gentry in the imperial service, who as such seem to represent the only recognized realities of colonialism. Whereas these hybrid characters tend to dilute the hostility of the Polish-German encounter, these half-Poles as composite and unstable identities and divided loyalties, nevertheless, pose an internal challenge and critique and as such they are threatening to the integrity of the new German nation in the making.

I suggest that both Dostoyevsky and Fontane deal with a lot of issues which are relevant in our postmodern times – in particular the experience of rapid social change, difference, hybridization, fragmentation, mobility – and are considered the principles of identity for postmodern cultural studies as well as the problem of individual freedom and resistance and psychological mechanisms of the individual's hierarchiacal behavior of the pecking order based on the infliction of pain. Bakhtin's emphasis on speech-genres, dialogism, chronotope and heteroglossia is salutary in a time when a kind of semi-spontaneous and ego-centered libertarianism, such as epitomized by Crampas, is in an unequal position against imperial forces. I will therefore examine Crampas' character against Bakhtin's theory. Raymond Williams' concept of residual, dominant, and emergent trends intertwined in the sociopolitical conjuncture, complicating the logic of class war for a given historical epoch, is also helpful in understanding these cultural formations changing Polish society in the late nineteenth century. Williams' sense of culture as lived experience constituted and rendered intelligible by its political, economic, and linguistic contexts and the insights of Indian Subaltern Studies, the work on

nationalism and mass movements by Partha Chatterjee and Ranajit Guha respectively, are useful in the approach to the Polish “organic work” in my reading embodied by Fontane’s character Golchowski. But first, I want to discuss the pseudo-scientific discourse of physiognomy and the *Schulstatistik* in my approach to Frau Padden and Effi Briest respectively, which likens these two characters. In so doing, I want to demonstrate how Fontane in using them intervenes in hegemonic contemporary narratives of race and nation.

Contesting the Finalized Gaze on Others

The dismantling of the old polyethnic political organizations, such as the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth, forming new ones, such as an enlarged Prussian kingdom and consequently German empire which purported to be a German nation-state, as well as the experience of mass migrations inside and out of Germany with the rise of industrial capitalism, have effected socio-economic dislocations, a loss of continuity in the popular consciousness of place, and the rise of new ethnolinguistic communities and nationalism in their wake as a way of stabilizing identities. This also brought about the shifting of etymology of the word “ethnic” itself. In pre-modern times ethnicity had a broad religious meaning that in the second half of the nineteenth century was becoming fraught with racial connotations stemming from the growing tendency in scientific discourse to think of humankind as fractured by moral, mental and biological differences. The new meaning of “ethnicity” was further complicated by the intersection with the growth of nationalism, and consequently was synonymously used for “nation,” contributing to the notions of nationality in essentially racial terms by representing ethnicities as races hierarchically ordered upon the evolutionary tree.

The impact of racial biological and anthropological theorizing, following the publication of Darwin's *Descent of Man* effectively transformed "ethnicity" into a concept that deterministically treated human species as a set of irreconcilable racial types – hence the term "ethnology" to designate the putative "science" of race. It operated with a clear racial hierarchy in mind, in which white people inhabited the highest strata of society while the darkest races were placed at the bottom of evolutionary tree. Late nineteenth-century anthropology, for example, conceived of non-Western European cultures as "primitive" unevolved forms of cultural and social organizations.

According to Darwin human virtues like intellectual and moral qualities are a byproduct of evolution acquired "through natural selection, aided by inherited habit." Thus the virtues of primitive people are limited to "social instinct": "their idea of good and evil does not extend beyond the tribe." Interestingly, the members of the Prussian elites – high military officers operate according to the same principles although this is far from their self-image. As Darwin also noted, savages have no notion of "self-regarding virtues" such as temperance, chastity and self-command (*Origin* 489). Innstetten shares the widespread assumptions about Africans as people without civilization or culture. In a moment of despair and under pressure after the duel and estrangement from his wife, he contemplates going to the "Dark Continent," where German colonial activity began in 1884 and attracted lively interest, because he expects to be under no social restraint: "weg von hier, weg und hin unter lauter pechschwarze Kerle, die von Kultur und Ehre nichts wissen"(288).¹⁰⁹ These ideas can be traced to Darwin's "survival of the fittest"

¹⁰⁹ "I have to get away from here, go somewhere where the natives are black as pitch and ignorant of culture and honor."

evolutionary theory, which Peter Kropotkin countered by contending in *Mutual Aid: A Factor Of Evolution* that cooperation and mutual aid are as important in the evolution of the species as competition and mutual strife, if not more so.

But before the “Dark Continent” was “discovered,” Eastern Europe served as the realm of darkness and barbarism. Though the Slavs had converted to Christianity long since, the subjugation of a Christian by a Christian had to be justified by other means, since simply being a Christian did not mean equality. Thus the idea of racism was made useful in justifying the subjugation of the inferior Slavs by the superior Germanic peoples. Language/culture and race became closely linked in the construction of the Aryan myth, which postulated an original Nordic/Germanic race as quintessential of the European. In the symbolic geography of Europe (at least since the Enlightenment) a hierarchy had been established in which the Northwest represents the highest, and the Southeast the lowest value. Eastern Europeans, mostly identified as Slavs but also eastern Jews, were perceived as semi-Asiatic, thus ambivalently positioned between the barbarian East and the “civilized” Germanness, simultaneously included and excluded with regard to the dominant colonial values of the West. Traditional Slav communities in the European eastern fringes thus served as this “missing link” between advanced Western civilization and other “primitive” peoples of the world. Ruled peoples, colonized, semi-colonized and primitive peoples were denied full subjectivity (notably among Europeans the Irish and Polish), non-European peoples are denied full humanity associated with the category of biological inferiority. Racial theories prevalent at the time served as a pseudo-scientific justification for colonial and imperial endeavors

(exploitation) through the construction of an inferior otherness in the need of colonizing or civilizing “mission.”

In the work of contemporary cultural theorists, the term hybridity has become fashionable and widely used to characterize ethnic diversity and celebrated as a site of resistance. However, as Robert J. C. Young has shown hybridity was originally a term of denigration (literally: the blackening or sullyng of thing) and a concept that came to prominence in the context of supremacist Eurocentric accounts of racial origins and racial distinction, in particular during high imperialism’s fascination with the maintenance of racial purity as modes of regulating the social relations of production, in particular the division of global social labor and its reproduction.

While such racial ideology rampant in both academic and popular discourses from the second half of the nineteenth century Europe was mostly directed to denigrate colonized non-European people, Young demonstrates that “in fact much of the work on race, certainly from the 1860s onwards, was devoted to analyses of European ethnicity. Of this only anti-Semitism is widely known, but it was part of a much wider project of analyzing European races” (1997: 127). Racial theories were also applied to explain the criminal behavior of marginal groups and lower classes within metropolitan societies.

One such example in Imperial Germany is the massive *Schulstatistik* conducted in 1870s by the German Anthropological Society to determine the racial composition of Imperial Germany through the study of the hair, eyes and skin color of German school children out of concern for the threat to the Nordic character of the German people by the increasing darkening of the population as a result of the growing presence in its midst of a number of other non-Germanic (dark) races including Jews and Slavs. The study was

published in 1883 and was immediately used in support of the theory of the permanence of racial types, contributing to an increased racist thinking, and especially anti-Semitism, with the Jews becoming an example of a “group apart” as a permanent racial type. The permanence of racial type was promptly extended to class difference, which also allowed a late nineteenth century explanation in terms of racial determinism for the condition of underclasses, not the least for the Polish economic deprivation.

Although Rudolf Virchow, who was also in charge of the project, is considered to represent the liberal tradition of German anthropology, he found the argument of the study useful not only against Darwinism and Herder’s climatic determinism and cultural relativism, but also in furthering the *Kulturkampf* to keep women out of public life and in support of German eastward colonization by encouraging German settlements in Polish areas. Since racial types cannot be changed either by environment or by crossbreeding, the major concern that Germans who leave their homeland might lose their identity could now be dispelled. From then on even the German colonists, unaware of their identity in Eastern Europe and assimilated into another society, remained members of the German national community and able to Germanize the soil, whereby also to expanding national space by transporting the nation to Eastern Europe.

Despite his liberal tendencies, Fontane was not always immune to racial typologizing, to the idea of superiority through racial purity, as he expressed in his first “Brief über Kopenhagen” and in his journal entry on September 20, 1864:

Galenga hat leider doch Recht; die dänische Race steht unbedingt höher, das nordgermanische wie es sich in Niedersachsen, Friesen und Angelnland, bei den Jüten und Danen zeigt, steht allerdings als Race auf höherer Stufe als lausitzisch-schlesisch-polackische. Auch unsere Märker können durchaus nicht dagegen an. Was wahr ist, muß wahr bleiben. Das Menschentum tritt einem in diesen großen,

kräftigen, blonden Gestalten edler und schöner entgegen als bei den Stämmen der Fall ist, die die Mehrzahl unserer Provinzen bewohnen.

This categorization is clearly stated in terms of racial superiority and inferiority: the Nordic north is placed at the top, while the Slavs are at the bottom of Fontane's symbolic scale. It appears that in the Prussian heartland, Brandenburg, the blond Nordic men are not necessarily the natural masters in Germany. Though the racialized language of this letter was not the norm for Fontane's writing, it, nonetheless, reveals Fontane's susceptibility to the contemporary racial definition of nation. However, it should also be remembered that the letter expressing generalized anti-Slav attitudes coincides with the Polish uprising in Prussia, in an atmosphere pervaded with virulent anti-Polish and anti-Slavic feelings. Fontane similarly expressed his ambivalent attitude towards the Polish insurgents against Russian rule in 1830-31 in *Meine Kinderjahre*, where he showed a poetic sympathy for the Poles, on the one hand, and a sense of commitment to the established authority and the law and order for which they stood, on the other (chapter XIV, 115).

I suggest that the problem of race and nation as well as the importance of the conjunction between heredity and environment seems to be especially relevant for Fontane, in Erich Heller's words the most "Gallic" of all German writers of the late nineteenth century, since membership in the German nation was tied to a person's ethnicity and origin in an atmosphere marked by xenophobia (including anti-French feelings) and ongoing discussions and pseudo-scientific explanations of nature and culture, biological notions of race and environment. The difficulty of interpreting physical types at an intersection with anthropology and psychology, which lie at the heart of the conundrum of race and nation, would present Fontane, who once declared himself

as a “Märker but still more a Gascon” (qtd in Craig, 1999: 176), with a dilemma as he would find himself torn by a contradictory set of allegiances, as an ethnic French Huguenot/Prussian of Southern French descent, the son of a Gascon father and a Cevennoise mother, and a non-German-Prussian among the putative nation of the Teutonic German nation.

The close attention Fontane pays to the physical description of some of his characters is interesting in the way in which Fontane both shares and subverts the “science” of race prevalent at the time and the closely related pseudo-sciences with which it overlapped and which projected the belief that there could be a scientific knowledge of a person’s true nature based on physical characteristics, facial features and bodily outline. An apt example is the Kessin apothecary Gieshübler, whose imperfect body (according to contemporary typology) would not qualify him for a positive characterization. And even if one is prepared to make aesthetic allowances, an ancient tenet of aesthetics holds that one who for all his remarkable traits is a repulsive human being is unfit to be a protagonist. However, Fontane defies both classical aesthetics and contemporary anthropology, since his “hunchback” Spanish-German hybrid is one of the most likable characters in his fictional prose.

Racial theories also make use of physiognomy and gesticulation, claiming that racial character and behavior could be determined on the basis of physical appearance. By the end of the century ethnographers and other scientists and pseudo-scientists were engaged in measuring heads and other anatomical characteristics, seeking to correlate their findings with culture and national/racial character. Thus they found that quite contradictory traits such as sexual proclivity, paganism, immorality, submission, laziness,

cruelty etc. were inscribed on the broad Asiatic high cheek-boned features of Slavs as evidence for claims of their racial difference and their half-breed inferiority. The description of Frau Padden illustrates starkly how the supposedly Christian-Germanic self is pitted against the heathen Wendish-Slavic other.

Die Ritterschaftsrätin, eine vorzügliche alte Dame, war in allen Stücken ein Original und suchte das, was die Natur, besonders durch starke Backenknochenbildung, nach der wendisch-heidnischen Seite hin für sie getan hatte, durch christlich-germanische Glaubensstrenge wieder in Ausgleich zu bringen (165)¹¹⁰

The atavism reflected in Frau von Padden's features is an example of how Slavic semi-Asian elemental passions are subdued by Western rationality and discipline. Fontane's ironical description of Frau Padden rests on the binary opposition between the Slavic and the Germanic and based on prevalent cultural and racial theories, attempts to prove the putative inferiority of the Slavic race, which could be only meliorated by the German cultural influence. Late nineteenth century western scientific discourse represented non-Western cultures as "primitive" unevolved forms of cultural organization as opposed to advanced or civilized European cultures which had evolved to their present state by repressing and controlling the primitive elements and drives. In his *Traumdeutung* (1900) Freud advanced his thesis that beneath the veneer of conscious life of the bourgeois Central Europe lies a Slavic rural substratum and his influential generalized concept of the Oedipal complex was based on specific socio historical conditions of the turn-of-the-century Central Europe and the service of nursemaids and nannies performed by the peasant Slavic women and the Slavic folklore. In his

¹¹⁰ "The Ritterschaftsrat's widow, a wonderful old lady and a real eccentric, attempted to counterbalance what nature had bestowed her from the heathen, Wendish side, especially in the form of prominent high cheekbones, with strict observance of the Germanic faith."

subsequent work, *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* (1929), Freud elaborates further on the difference between the civilized and the primitive by identifying Western culture as the most civilized, which had evolved to its present state by repressing and controlling the primitive drives of more primitive earlier phases of development. Thus the threat of regression into an earlier primitive state comes from Slavs, who, by lurking beneath the German veneer, threaten to prevent the completeness of the Occidental/German self.

The most famous example of this modern myth about the primitive duality of men is embodied by the eponymous protagonists of Robert Louis Stevenson's popular novel *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) about the doubling of personality of Jekyll and his alter ego Hyde. There is also a “Dr. Jekyll-Mr. Hyde” quality about Frau Padden: her untimeliness is her “semi-other” Slavic atavism, anarchy and irrationality, which represents the savage beneath the skin of German civilization — the Slav Hyde in her waiting to reclaim both her and every civilized German Jekyll. Thus she has to be constantly on guard by following the strict tenets of Lutheranism. But then, Martin Luther (1483-1546) himself is a famous example which illustrates all the contradictions of Slavophobia: the fact that his opponents sought to attribute his fierceness and fanaticism to his allegedly Slavic/Asiatic ancestry, which was supposedly detectable from his broad cheek-bones, fierce black eyes and raven black hair. Translated into colonial discourse, the difficulties encountered by German imperialism in the East were conditioned by the nature of otherness translated into supremacy, not a simple racial supremacy, but an alleged moral and cultural supremacy, for its simpler comprehension. Thus even though Slavs converted to Christianity a long time ago (albeit they are stuck in

the wrong kind), they still remain imperfect, their cheekbones (much like the Jewish nose) remain a visible sign of their imperfection.

On the other hand good humor, which also distinguishes the elderly Frau von Padden, beams forth from her face and is tracable to her Slavic background and lineage ...“vielleicht weil sie die Radegaster und die Swantowiter¹¹¹ Linie des Hauses in ihr vereinigten – über jenen alten Paddenhumor verfügte, der von langer Zeit her wie ein Segen auf die Familie ruhte und jeden, der mit derselben in Berührung kam, auch wenn es Gegner in Politik und Kirche waren, herzlich erfreute” (165).¹¹² Although not a member, the elderly Frau von Padden is always invited by the Club as a guest and she is delighted to be taking part in local middle-class events. She is also the only lady in the prominent circle of nobility who takes to Effi at once and gives her warmth and counsel, and from whom Effi is sorry to part. Her own inner struggle to attain peace of mind and achieve social acceptability has given her uncanny insight into the unhappiness of others. Thus with all her “racial” faults Frau von Padden is a kind and good-humored, intelligent

¹¹¹ The reference is to Radegast and Swantowit or Sventovid, two of the highest pagan gods of the Wendish/Slavic tribes Veletians and Obodrits. The sanctuary of Swantowit, the sun and war god, was at Arkona on the Baltic island of Rügen. See also *Wanderungen*, “Die Wenden in der Mark. Character. Begabung. Kultur” Vol. 3, p. 27. In the first draft of the text instead of Radegaster, Fontane used “Triglaff Linie,” thereby evoking a wider Slavic background. See also *Der Stechlin*, chapter 8, in which one of the inmates of the Closter Wutz bears the same name Triglaff, a name so old and awe-inspiring that its bearer suffers of “stupende Triglaffvorstellung,” an unlimited aristocratic pride of lineage, intimately connected with profound religiosity.

¹¹² “– perhaps because the Radegast and Swantowit branches of the family were united in her – she had the old von Padden sense of humor which had reposed in the family like a blessing for many a year, and delighted all who came into contact with her, even if they were opponents in church and politics.”

and shrewd but discreet observer, and certainly the only person neither Effi nor anybody else had reason to complain of a want of friendliness.

Like Frantz Fanon's Negro, who for the white person is marked by his/her black skin, for the German, the Slav/Wend is similarly identifiable by his/her prominent cheekbones. In other words, it could be said that what defines the subjectivity of Frau Padden is an inferiority complex created by the death and burial of her local cultural originality (Fanon 1967: 18), a phenomenon Fontane remarks on in *Wanderungen* and Fanon describes in *Black Skin/White Masks*. Like Fanon's black person, whose racial identity overrides every other aspect of his/her existence overdetermined by his/her race/color, a Slav/Wend is historically overdetermined by his/her tainted pagan nature inscribed on his/her facial features. Frau Padden thus similarly attempts to cope by adopting a white/"Evangelical-Germanic" mask to keep her Slavic nature in check and make it somehow less visible. This is what Bhabha calls mimicry and Butler performance.

Fontane's protagonist Effi Briest herself owes her fascination to her hybridity that allows for an interplay of emotions, rationality, impulsiveness, good-nature, calculative intellect. In the introductory description, the narrator describes Effi as follows: "In allem, was sie tat, paarte sich Übermut und Grazie, während ihre lachenden braunen Augen eine große, natürliche Klugheit und viel Lebenslust und Herzengüte verrieten"(8).¹¹³ Effi is at once naturally robust and graceful, vigorous and weak, accommodating and reckless, pleasure seeker and ambitious, communicative and reserved, almost secretive. Effi's

¹¹³ "Grace and careless abandon were combined in everything she did, while her laughing brown eyes revealed much good sense, a great zest for life and kindness of heart."

mother sums up her daughter as “überhaupt ein ganz eigenes Gemisch” (38) to point out the multilayeredness of Effi’s character. On the one hand Effi is a child of nature; on the other, she adheres to all the values of her class and is a declared social climber. Despite her class-consciousness and natural tendencies, as a young woman who enjoys the privileges of her social status, and who dominates her playmates not only by rank but also by character, Effi described as wild, spontaneous and impulsive, is deviant from the prescribed Prussian virtues and therefore bound to collide with established social conventions. The long list of Effi’s un-Prussian traits contribute to her charm and fascination and include playfulness, a mercurial character, frivolity, impulsiveness, wildness, unpunctuality, untidiness, pleasure-seeking.

Even Effi’s physical appearance betrays her difference and sets her physically apart from others. There seems to be some controversy as to whether Effi Briest is blond or dark haired. Peter Utz points out the textual ambiguity and consequently contradictory translations of Effi’s blondness or darkness (160-164). I think that Fontane gives enough clues so that it can be assumed that Effi Briest is not blond. At the beginning of the novel in chapter one Effi recounts to her friends a neighbor’s cryptic prediction of her forthcoming wedding. While Effi mentions that Hulda might marry first since she is the oldest, he replies looking at her seriously: “Nein. Bei einer anderen jungen Dame, die gradeso brünett ist wie Fräulein Hulda blond ist” (11),¹¹⁴ and she understands that he is referring to her. In fact, I consider Effi Briest’s darkness to play an important role in the conception of the novel. Which brings me to the anthropological survey in the 1870s that determined as “pure” Germans only the fair-skinned, blond, blue-eyed threatened by the

¹¹⁴ “No, it will be quite another young lady-who is as dark as Hulda is blond.”

increasing darkening by the “brunette type,” characterized as brown-eyed, olive-skinned and brown-haired, and various mixes of the two types. The method of separating and estimating the pure blond and brown types was used as the physical markers that defined the races in Germany. The blond type was associated with the “German race,” while the “brunette type” characterized as brown-eyed, olive-skinned and brown-haired, with a number of other intrusive races including Slavs and Jews. Through the survey both students and teachers learned to acquire a discriminatory eye for an individual’s racial type. The survey provided important anthropological data on the German nation, but, as Andrew Zimmerman observes, “even more importantly it taught the more than six million students whom it studied, as well as the teachers who collected the data that Germanness could be perceived through “racial” characteristics that were publicly perceivable by any layperson” (135). The experience of participating in the survey, which required that the students were lined up from the lightest blond-blue to the darkest, brunette-brown, that is, from the white Aryan to the non-white, non Aryan type, left a deep imprint in the memories of an entire generation of teachers, students and parents (140-141).

Since the pure brunette type also included those Germans with brown eyes, brown hair and fair skin, a dark haired and brown-eyed Effi would be considered a non-German “brunette type” according to the survey of the *Schulstatistik*. At the time of the survey in 1873, Effi would have been eleven or twelve and at parochial school, a student of Pastor Niemeyer and Cantor Jahnke, and she might have known about or even participated in the statistics. As a school-teacher, Cantor Jahnke must have been familiar, if not himself involved in the survey, and it does not require much imagination to see how as an

enthusiast of Nordic Scandinavia Jahnke would have taken a keen interest in the project of separating his students into Aryan and non-Aryan types and that he would be proud in lining both Hulda and his twins ahead of Effi, who, despite her noble birth, would have to take a back seat.

The Germania cult of the Wilhelmine era portrays a woman as blond, beautiful, noble, proud and strong, an Aryan woman as exemplar of German culture and racial purity. Not belonging to the Aryan type has left a deep imprint on Effi, who is so obsessed with the ideal of “Aryan” beauty and admires its embodiment in the high-born Thora, low-born Hulda despite her “blöden Augen” and Johanna “die hübsche Blondine dem Herzen Effis auch noch nicht so nahe stand” (which also explains the authority Johanna wields in the Innstettens’ household) to whom Effi confides her own self-doubts about her physical and character flaws by commenting that her soft hair betrays her weakness of character (“Wie das Haar ist, ist der Character”) and that men like blond hair best, of which she possess neither (69-70). Even in Italy in the numerous galleries and museums she visited the paintings representing beautiful blond girls attracted Effi’s attention and left such an impression on her that she finds it important to write home about them. Effi also thinks that men prefer blondes and thus she remarks that these painted women remind her new husband of Hulda, “ein Typus wie Hulda,” while Effi also thinks of the twins: “Wobei mir denn auch die Jahnkeschen Mädchen einfallen”(41). Later on in the text during their vacation both Effi and Innstetten are captivated by Thora von Pinzel, an aristocratic young woman from Denmark, and agree that she is a perfect example of Nordic beauty (described to have finely chiseled facial bone structure, fair complexion, clear blue eyes and blond locks etc.). However, Fontane seems to mock this

Aryan ideal of racial purity epitomized by Hulda, described as a “lymphatische Blondine,” with protruding eyes, whose blondness, rather than bespeaking her healthy constitution, suggests an inclination to illness and degeneration in the Darwinian sense. While both Effi and Innstetten are brunette Crampas’ blondness allows him to pass as German and his capacity to mix with any company can be taken as Fontane’s mocking of the widespread acceptance of physiognomy.

Since the right German girl must be blond, blue-eyed and fair-skinned to begin with, bespeaking her true Nordic blood, Effi’s dark hair and brown eyes set her apart from this ideal and make her self-conscious of her darkness, much like Frau von Padden’s cheekbones betray her non-Germans origin. What I want to suggest is that the mutual liking between Effi Briest and Frau von Paden rests in part on their mutual recognition of their own difference and their feeling of self-consciousness of that visible stigma inscribed on their physical features which was believed to betray their social behaviors, intelligence, and personality.

Contesting the Finalized Word on Others

“Aber er ist so’n-halber Pole, kein rechter Verlaß, eigentlich in nichts, am wenigstens mit Frauen.”¹¹⁵

Innstetten to Effi

Previously I contended that the chronotope is the most productive way to approach *Effi Briest*, whose social commentary could be seen as foreshadowing that representative twentieth-century condition — social crisis. I suggest that in constructing his character Crampas as living in the present moment Fontane is fusing the time-space relation to its

¹¹⁵ But he’s half-Polish, as good as, and not entirely reliable, not in anything actually, least of all with women.”

extreme in the Bakhtinian sense that embodies postmodern characteristics. Major von Crampas is a character whose untimeliness, his being “out of joint” with the time and place, also sidesteps the present and brings his downfall. Most approaches to Crampas’ character in Fontane scholarship are from a perspective of modernism or Western humanism underpinned by the basic ideas of Enlightenment and characterized by a sharp dichotomy in value system. Crampas is thus seen not for himself but in terms of his assumed shortcomings, his lack of character and moral integrity, his hypersexuality, and as being a rogue as one critic has recently summed him up (Berman 2002: 358). All these make Crampas deviate from the ethnocentric norms established by the Enlightenment episteme. In Leela Gandhi’s view it is Western humanism that produces the dictum that since some human beings are more human than others, they are more substantially the measure of all things (30). I would like to hold out against that tendency and offer an interpretation that seems to me a more productive way of thinking about Crampas by recalling Fontane’s self-reflexion on the constructed and relative nature of humanity and his approach to identity as relational rather than essential. In this chapter I want to analyze Crampas’ character through Bakhtin’s approach to Dostoyevskyan characters to find out how the various characteristics Bakhtin ascribed to Dostoyevsky’s characters can also be attributed to Crampas to test my contention. In so doing I wish to widen the framework of analysis to include a postmodern perspective. I also want to draw attention to the discourse of psychology and its (ab)uses of which I detect examples in the novel.

In the nineteenth century, the emergence of a German national state under Prussian leadership was closely connected with the policy of preventing the reconstitution of a Polish state. It was then that the stereotype of the frivolous, licentious, and extravagant

Polish nobleman was reinforced and contrasted to the image of the solid, rational, frugal, morally superior Protestant German nobleman. In 1784 Friedrich of Prussia enlightened Count Louis Philippe de Ségur about the curious nature and shortcomings of the Poles. “The Poles,” he claimed “were keen warriors but their armies undisciplined. Polish men were brave and *chevaleuresque*, but Polish women seemed to have more firmness of character, even heroism.” And he added, “the women are truly the men”(Wolff 1994:18).

Friedrich Hebbel did not mince words either, when expressing his anti-Slav feelings, e.g. when he disparaged Czech and Croat recruits as stupid (*Tagebücher* III 330) especially during the 1848 Revolution. He supported his claim that the Slavs were a dishonorable kind and thereby betrayed a value system so unspeakably odd that hostility against it was warranted, with the absurd observation “daß Polen so wenig wie die Croaten, ein Wort für Ehre haben; sie sagen: honor.” (*Tagebücher*, IV 15).¹¹⁶ Hebbel also offered the “crown of Poland” to any reader who manages to finish Adalbert Stifter’s novel *Nachsommer*, a task both worthless and impossible in his opinion.

Crampas may possess the military prowess of a “Kavalier,” but he is still not worthy of an “Edelmann” (154), certainly not in the Prussian sense of the word. In an authorial aside Crampas is characterized thus,

denn so rücksichtslos er im Punkte chevaleresker Liebesabenteuer war, so sehr war er auch wieder gut Kamerad. Natürlich alles ganz oberflächlich. Einem Freund helfen und fünf Minuten spatter ihn betrügen, waren Dinge, die sich mit seinem Ehrbegriff sehr wohl vertrugen. Er tat das eine und das andere mit unglaublicher Bonhommie (128).

¹¹⁶ In a similar vein the U.S. military during the Vietnam War claimed that the Vietnamese had no word for “Individual.”

While Fontane uses these inherited and well-worn German prejudices about Poles, they appear as an overstatement, that is, they are at odds with Fontane's characteristically subtle style and contribute to ambiguity because oftentimes the line between sardonic critique and simple affirmation in these assertions becomes blurred. Could not Crampas' inconsistency be symptomatic not so much of an absence of honor as much of an absence of choice in relations of imperialism that spawns split personality? Why would Fontane use an assertive authorial aside after giving enough clues for the reader to make up her or his mind? Perhaps he felt obliged to satisfy the market demand for anti-Polish propaganda? Maybe he intended his portrayal of Crampas as parody by harking back to von Treitschke's well-known representation of Ludwig von Mieroslawski, an icon of Polish patriotism from the German Revolution of 1848/49 and an embodiment of the Polish aristocrat, whom he described as:

Die Seele der demokratischen Gesellschaft war ein echter Vertreter des vornehmen internationalen Demagogen­tums, in Frankreich geboren und der französischen Sprache mächtiger als der polnischen . . . ; ein leichter Talent . . . , aber noch mehr bewundert als Redner und Improvisator, ritterlich, eitel, geschwätzig, liebenswürdig, nach Sarmatenart bald sanft, bald gewalttätig, ein Freund der Weiber, des Tanzes, der Toilettenkünste, so durch und durch frivol, daß er in einem Atem die Jungfrau Maria, das polnische Vaterland und seine eigene Geliebte hoch leben ließ. (541)

Treitschke has drawn up a long list of flawed traits of complex Polishness yet his attempt to categorize and stabilize Polish identity tells more about the complexity and ambivalence which mark Treitschke's own attitudes, which seem suspended between his fascination with Polish cosmopolitanism, flamboyancy, likeability, "Anmut," *joie de vivre* and his thinly veiled anxiety in the face of the disturbing and unpredictable Polish subject position with the capacity to destabilize his security and challenge his value system. Treitschke feels the need to categorize Polish identity in negative terms in order

to make sure that it does not threaten him, since there is nothing to fear from a frivolous person. However, it is also apparent that Treitschke reveals his own parochial fears and insecurity in the face of unsettling cognitive modes and syncretic (combined) cultural forms derived from heterogeneous sources and incongruous elements, a result of cross-cultural interactions (here French and Polish) and its unavoidable intersections and contestations of local and global knowledge. Friedrich Nietzsche, however, once wrote in 1881: “Die Polen galten mir als die begabtesten und ritterlichsten unter den slawischen Völkern: und die Begabung der Slaven erscheint mir höher als der Deutschen, ja ich meinte wohl, die Deutschen seien erst durch eine starke Mischung mit slavischem Blute in die Reihe der begabtesten Nationen eingerückt ” (*Werke* V/II: 580; qtd. in Ehlich 145).

Heine similarly appreciates Polish peasants in 1823 by comparing them to German ones, even though they live in abject poverty. Heine writes:

Leugnen läst es sich indessen nicht, daß der polnische Bauer oft mehr Verstand und Gefühl hat als der deutsche Bauer in manchen Ländern. Nicht selten fand ich bei dem geringsten Polen jenen originellen Witz (nicht Gemütswitz, Humor), der bei jedem Anlaß mit wunderlichem Farbenspiel hervorsprudelt, und jenen schwärmerisch – sentimental Zug, jenes brillante Aufleuchten eines Ossianischen Naturgefühls, dessen plötzliches Hervorbrechen bei leidenschaftlichen Anlässen ebenso unwillkürlich ist wie das Insgesichtsteigen des Blutes (*Über Polen* 559-560)

Heine had an interestingly complex attitude towards the multifareous character of the Polish aristocrats:

Ich lieferte Ihnen sehr gerne eine Characterschilderung der polnischen Edelleute, und das gäbe eine sehr kostbare Mosaikarbeit von den Adjektiven: gastfrei, stolz, mutig, geschmeidig, falsch (dieses gelbe Steinchen darf nich fehlen), reizbar, enthusiastisch, spielsüchtig, lebenslustig, edelmütig (*Über Polen* 566)

While Heine warns against generalizations by suggesting that identity is relational in terms of temporal and local specificities he nevertheless sees the heterogenous characteristics of the Polish character as:

Den heterogensten Einflüssen war Polen dadurch ausgesetzt. Eindringende Barbarei von Osten, durch die feindlichen Berührungen mit Rußland; eindringende Überkultur von Westen, durch die freundschaftlichen Berührungen mit Frankreich: daher jene seltsamen Mischungen von Kultur und Barbarei im Charakter und im häuslichen Leben der Polen. (*Über Polen* 566-67)

Yet in contradistinction to the Manichean dualist logic of either/or, the Polish character may be seen to favor a more dialectical logic of both/and: an intellectual ability to hold the traditional oppositions of classical reason together in creative convergence, and Bakhtin's approach can help see this alternative system of thought not as innate ethnic characteristics but as cultural phenomena that develop and change in response to historical circumstances in Malinowski's sense.

In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin introduces his important concepts: unfinalizability, unfinalizable self, relation between the self and others and self and polyphony. According to Bakhtin Dostoyevsky's characters have no biography do not remember their past, are not determined by their upbringing (19). They are most themselves not by the definitions that others can give to them, not by the objective realities of class, occupation, marital status, physical appearance. They are most themselves in their freedom to be something beyond all these definitions and external qualities. The "man in man" is that which "does not submit to an externalizing secondhand definition"; it is an "internally unfinalizable something." This is because neither their past nor their present is conclusive. There were past events, as distinct from the present ones, but they are not essential; they have meaning only as events in the past.

And the same argument applies for any segment of time, past, present, or future. This is the reason why in Bakhtin's opinion causal relationship is missing from Dostoevsky's world and why everything "will always be in the future"; as Dostoyevsky writes there is "no causality, no genesis, no explications drawn from the past, no influences from surroundings or education" (40).

Fontane shows how preserving the legacy of the past and continuity of rootedness is crucial for the self-image of Prussian elites like Innstetten and von Briest, who in their intent to preserve and represent continuity overemphasize themselves at the expense of the non-elites and often tend to mystify facts. Innstetten seems especially intent on preserving security of society through stabilizing and ossifying identity. Conversely, Major von Crampas manifests a lack of essentialized or fixed identity and can be taken as an example of poststructuralist understanding of the preference for pluralism, ambiguity and non-fixity. For instance Crampas appears to be as rootless as von Briest is rooted and dismissive of tradition and authority and principles which Innstetten so strenuously upholds. He leads a nomadic life serving in the military and arrives in Kessin seemingly out of nowhere. Instead of information about Crampas' origin and background we have only traces. In the climate of competing values and identities and Polish-German animosities Crampas is reticent about his national feelings and has nothing to say about his upbringing or origin. He is well liked by most characters and in turn shown to be on good terms with everyone regardless of their background, caste, class, nationality, religion or sex. Unlike Innstetten and other German Pomeranian characters Crampas is never shown to pass any racial or ethnic slurs. While Kristin Kopp interprets the repeated depiction of Poles as stateless drifters as evidence of Fontane's willingness to

compromise Poles in the name of a strong Prussian state (120) in much of contemporary poststructuralist/postcolonial cultural theorizing there is a celebration of the nomadic, the contradictory, the marginal and the ambiguous because of the inherent instability that subverts and resists modernist binaries. However, Fontane's description of the town of Kessin, populated by drifters from all four corners of the world, and the experience of being unwelcome intruders of the Prussian imperial administrators in Posen is evidence enough as to Fontane's more comprehensive understanding of the condition of uprootedness and flux as the condition of the period.

According to Bakhtin, Dostoyevsky's novels are characterized by multiple voices that are never merged into the author's single voice. Thus he never tires of commenting on the "independence" of the characters in Dostoevsky's novels. In a way Crampas also exercises what Mikhail Epstein considers to be a most meaningful freedom – the freedom from one's own culture, in which one was born and educated (Epstein 2007). As a hyphenated character of an undetermined half-Polish background, Crampas' hybrid subject position can facilitate multivocal communications and produce syncretic cultural forms and life style as a result of cross-cultural interaction with genuine transcultural potential.

Dostoyevsky also remarks that there is "no objective representation of milieu, of manners and customs, of nature, of things" (133). While we learn a lot about the milieu Effi Briest comes from, and it is often said that Innstetten and Effi represent typical products of milieus, Crampas' lifestyle and attitudes are untimely and "out of joint" in contemporary Prussia. But as Bakhtin observes of Dostoyevsky's protagonist from *Notes From Underground*: "man is no final and defined quality upon which firm calculations

can be made; man is free, and can therefore violate any regulating norms which might be thrust upon him” (59). Innstetten ascribes negative traits of Crampas’ character to his Polishness, and also admonishes Crampas for his unreceptiveness to the Protestant-Germanic/Prussian civilizing influence: “Aber einer wie Sie der unter der Fahne der Disziplin großgeworden ist und recht gut weiß, daß es ohne Zucht und Ordnung nicht geht, ein Mann wie Sie, der sollte doch so was nicht reden, auch nicht einmal im Spaß . . . ” (129).¹¹⁷ Innstetten is a “man of strict principles” for whom reason is the ultimate judge of what is true, and therefore of what is right, and what is good, what is legal and what is ethical. However, even though he is a pursuer of legal knowledge and truth (based on scientific objective knowledge) as opposed to narrative, considered to belong to popular culture, the primitive and irrational (associated with women, children, subaltern and uneducated people), he is himself engaged in narrating ghost stories. While Innstetten’s ghost narratives and especially his contradictory and incoherent narration about the events involving the Chinaman and his ghost do not exactly comply with his pursuit of truth, they serve his pedagogical purposes in establishing his authority through fear. According to Ernest Gellner, the relativistic-functionalist view of thought can also be traced to the Enlightenment: “The (unresolved) dilemma which the thought of the Enlightenment faced, was between a relativistic-functionalist view of thought, and the absolutist claims of enlightened Reason. Viewing man as part of nature, as enlightened Reason requires, it wished to see cognitive and evaluative activities as part of nature too, and hence varying from organism to organism and context to context” (qtd. in Asad 147).

¹¹⁷ “But someone like you, Crampas, who’ve grown up under the banner of discipline and know very well that obedience and order are of the essence, a man like you really shouldn’t talk like that, not even in jest . . .”

Crampas sees through Innstetten's manipulation with scary ghost stories as nothing more than "putting on an act" (131). In other words he exposes Innstetten – who is familiar with the legal system, that is, the system which defines the limits of people's behavior – for his use of the narrative in prosecuting the law – but who knowingly bends the rules by making up narratives. Effi also relies on narratives during her love-affair and like the witnesses and suspects who have to provide a credible account when they are interrogated, she too resorts to a careful and coherent account about her whereabouts in Kessin. Innstetten also relies on what is a coherent narrative of his class to explain his motives for wishing to divorce his wife and to challenge Crampas in a duel. Innstetten's narrative is accepted as valid and plausible not only by his colleague but also by the society that matters; he even gets the promotion in imperial service.

Conversely, what appears as Crampas' disreputable flaunting of law and norms may be seen as his inherent resistance to fixed binaries as well as his systematic skepticism about established knowledge as truth. Polish elites and politicians were routinely suspected of insurrections, and of acting without the limits of legality in the face of obstacles of all kinds. In the light of this, what appears as Crampas' flouting law and order might be understood as defying Prussian law and order and social norms upheld by the Prussians like Innstetten. For instance, when Crampas approves of shooting seals, which Innstetten insists is illegal, what seems to be Crampas' dismissal of harbor regulations might be seen as an expression of his challenge to them from the perspective of the local fishermen. The enforcement of "progressive" regulations may and has been detrimental to local interests, since they directly affect the livelihood of the poor local communities. Namely, Baltic Sea fishermen have had to cull the population of grey seals

when their numbers significantly increase because the grey seals destroy fishing tackle and devour catches of salmon and cod, making them a threat to the livelihoods of the fishermen. While on the one hand ordinary locals are expected to obey the law even if it affects their livelihood, on the other, the upholders of law who claim to do everything by the book are willing to be lenient towards the elites who despoil the region of their game, as suggested by the luxurious hunting parties organized by Golchowski for the local and outside dignitaries.

Bakhtin believed that Dostoyevsky's characters are organized and shaped by the ideas that possess them (23), that "the hero in Dostoevsky is a man of the idea" (85) in the sense that the idea has "taken control of the deepest core of [the character's] personality" (87), but his character also mainly represents a particular point of view on the world and on oneself. Fontane's protagonists e.g. Innstetten, Effi and Crampas, are all associated and intertwined with different and partially conflicting values, affinities, priorities and ideologies. If we take Kopp's suggestion that sexuality (Crampas characterized as Damenmann) is the "central sign of his identity," then sexuality is the idea that possesses Crampas (Kopp 124). Crampas' sexuality can be explained in terms of the political subjugation that has substantially defined Polish national identity since the partitions. Thus Crampas' seeking erotic pleasure can be seen as a consequence of surrender to a dominant German partner and fitting a definition of masochism both as an affirmation of the self and an escape from the self. Crampas values freedom of living for the moment and takes everything less than seriously and with a trace of irony. Reflecting on Innstetten's remark about Crampas' easy-going-and playful outlook, or as he put it, of being in possession of "einen himmlischen Kehr-mich-nicht-dran" (129), points to what can

be taken as a carnivalesque perspective on life. According to Bakhtin carnival as a mode of language is an expression of freedom from official norms and values, and since all value-orientations can be equally well founded (as Fontane once expressed), the choice becomes increasingly meaningless. So why waste good time on making life meaningful? As Crampas observes: “Überhaupt ohne Leichtsinn ist das ganze Leben keinen Schuß Pulver wert ” (129).¹¹⁸ Oscar Wilde’s reflections on sadness while serving his harsh sentence well captures Innstetten’s condition after the duel and divorce: “Prosperity, pleasure and success, may be rough of grain and common in fibre, but sorrow is the most sensitive of all created things”(De Profundis 4). Dante’s Inferno is one of the texts to which Wilde refers often in *De Profundis* as a text that had strange influence over his life and that he had found peculiar in the first year at Oxford.

how Dante places low in the Inferno those who willfully live in sadness; . . . in the *Divine Comedy* where beneath the dreary marshes lie those who were sullen in the sweet air saying for ever and ever through their sighs . . . Nor could I understand how Dante who says that ‘sorrow remarries us to God’ could have been so harsh to those who have been so enamoured to sorrow, if any such there ever were (*De Profundis* 12)

Throughout his writing Bakhtin reiterated that human beings are “expressive and speaking” . . . “spontaneous and unpredictable:” “Such a being never coincides with itself, because it is less than fully itself and always in the process of becoming” (59). The genuine life of “I” takes place at the point of non-coincidence between a person and her/himself, at his point of departure beyond the limits of all that he/she is as a material being. Bakhtin also points out that “[T]he genuine life of the personality is made available only through a dialogic penetration of that personality, during which it freely

¹¹⁸ “Indeed, without a bit of frivolity life isn’t worth a charge of buckshot.”

and reciprocally reveals itself (59).” Crampas is not only amusing and an excellent conversationalist in the opinion of other characters, but he is shown to be also persuasive in undermining Innstetten’s authority by debunking his pedagogy as a fear-mongering strategy to keep his subordinates and his wife in a state of fear and subjugation. What Bakhtin refers to as “dialogic intuition,” which allows Dostoyevsky’s character Porfiry to “penetrate the unfinalized and unresolved soul of Raskolnikov” (61) in his novel *Crime and Punishment*, is also true of the way Effi’s young soul can be penetrated by her seniors. Thus the genuine life of the personality is made available only through a dialogic penetration of that personality, during which it freely and reciprocally reveals itself. Crampas’ intimate conversation with Effi, far away from prying eyes and ears in the dunes, can be seen as a penetration into the deepest reality of Effi’s consciousness, but they are also an expression of Crampas’ own genuine nature.

Because, according to Bakhtin, Dostoyevsky’s characters live in the moment and lack causality, Dostoevsky always represents a person on “the threshold of a final decision, at a moment of crisis, at an unfinalizable – and undeterminizable – turning point for his soul” (61). The effect of being constantly derided, essentialized and besieged as a Slav/Pole in Imperial Germany, especially since the mid-1880s, means to be in a state of constant crisis of self defense and representation. Because Imperial Germany was constantly on guard against anyone who might disrupt order, it thus relied on continually establishing a binary opposition between “order” and “disorder.” In Prussia/Germany Poles represented the “disorderly others” defined in all sorts of contradictory binary terms. Official Germany was so mistrustful of the Poles even when they were civil, since their civility is not to be trusted because the civility of the inferior cannot be sincere. This

is illustrated by the Polish-hyphenated characters who cope with this double-bind in different ways: Frau Padden attempts to meliorate her Slavic side with strict evangelical Lutheranism, Golchowski by positivism and political negotiation, and Crampas by seeking erotic pleasure. Even though and especially when they abandon the use of force in favor of political negotiation and economic and social reform, and in the process become prosperous and influential like Golchowski, they give rise to more suspicion. The *Kulturkampf* and anti-Polish measures introduced in the mid 1880s not only failed to crush Polish nationalism and weaken the Polish social and economic base but on the contrary, as a result of oppression the Polish national movement broadened its social base and extended geographically contributing to the metaphysical crisis of this period.

According to Bakhtin the psyche of Dostoyevsky's heroes is public or at least it is, from time to time, possible to penetrate it (61). Rumors circulate about Crampas and Innstetten considers him frivolous and shallow, but his identity cannot be taken at face value. It is never clear how serious Crampas is or how much he is involved with Effi, but at the point of Effi's departure he is described as "sichtlich bewegt" (214). As in the case of Dostoevsky's characters, we often do not know what goes on inside Crampas and we are left in the dark about his motivations. Crampas is playful and his mocking language is not transparent, his words do not serve only as representations of thoughts or things.

Unfinalizability and coexistence are Bakhtin's two favorite categories. Bakhtin himself speaks of this lack of "finality" in Dostoevsky's heroes who are unfinalized because the thoughts they have are unresolved, which means the conclusions of the thoughts are not drawn, or not seen: "every thought of Dostoevsky's hero senses itself to be from the very beginning a rejoinder in an unfinalized dialogue" (32). In the duel scene

the dialogue between Innstetten and Crampas ends with the last words uttered by dying Crampas (his ultimate word), but we don't know what it was he wanted to say and thus the dialogue/conflict is open-ended; it remains unresolved.

Bakhtin observes that Dostoyevsky's characters are often self-contradictory, "internally" dialogic or polyphonic as it were. But in depicting the complexities of his characters, Dostoevsky was revealing their basic humanity, which is to say, their freedom. One can characterize Crampas' behavior by lack of causality for his alleged lack of constancy of being at the same time in Innstetten's words "das eine und das andere," which is why Crampas' actions and behavior appear to be superficial, inconsistent and even paradoxical, e.g. Crampas "lebt gern und ist zugleich gleichgültig gegen das Leben" (269). On the one hand, there is Crampas' sensual indulgence, his extravagant anti-normative inclinations, pleasure-seeking, including his undisciplined eroticism; on the other, his character also shows signs of asceticism and professional discipline — he swims in the icy cold Baltic sea and he is a respected military officer.

Moreover, Major Crampas is a flamboyant, witty and irresistibly outspoken person who combines riotous living with intellectual and artistic pursuits. This is what Fontane had to say about Swedish Pomerania, which happens to be Crampas' homeland, in a letter to his daughter Mete of February 13, 1891:

Du hast ganz Recht, in Schwedisch Pommern und . . . Stettin sind ganz andere Menschen zu Hause wie in unserer lieben Mark . . . Die Mecklenburger haben vor den Märkern mehr Wohlhabenheit und mehr breites Behagen voraus, alle Pfenningfuchseriei fehlt, aber sie sind . . . ledern und philiströs, während die Vorpommern das heiter und unterhaltlich Lebensmännische bis zu Kunst ausgebildet haben. Die See thut nur das Halbe dazu, die zweite Hälfte wird durch die Landesherrschaft von alter Zeit bedingt. Die Pommernherzöge lebten beyond their means und das Vorbild, daß das schwedische Leben gab, lag nach der selben unängstlichen Seite hin. Es kam nicht darauf an, zu sparen und reich zu werden, es kam darauf an, den Tag so angenehm wie möglich zu verbringen. Saatllich,

national-ökonomisch und moralisch steht das Märkische höher, menschlich und poetisch anesehen, ist das Pommersche sehr überlegen. Was das Poetische angeht, so bedeutet die Mark das denkbar Niedrigste . . .

Effi's interest in literature or artistic talent is encouraged neither by her Mark parents nor during her married life, by her husband. As for Innstetten's didactic lessons about Italian renaissance art during and after the honeymoon, they seem to have the negative effect of alienating Effi further from the world of art. The only exception is the Kessin amateur theater performance directed by Crampas, which gives Effi the opportunity to express her corporeal and sensual aspects. She also attempts to pursue painting during her life as an outcast, after making the acquaintance of an artistic cantor's daughter who happens to be from Polzin, Pomerania, and a would-be painter, but she soon gives up painting.

In a society that hardly encourages natural self realization of individual aspirations, talents and inclinations Crampas resorts to small diversions as compensation for an unfulfilled and dull life: an unfulfilling marriage (though unlike Innstetten he declines to leave his wife and children in the lurch) and occupation in the state bureaucracy and army. It is a "small scale" freedom that Crampas seeks and partially realizes through literary pursuits. As a man of title, alienated from middle-class moralism, domesticity and "respectability," Crampas is unconventional and likened to a dandy persona, symptomatic of decadence but also of revolutionary anarchy. Yet he is unable or unwilling to appropriate his radical potential or fully realize his talents and interests. What is potentially within him cannot come to fulfillment. Crampas' individualism, however, cannot be separated from his transgressive desires.

Historically, the story of humanity has been the struggle between the freethinking individual and structures of power controlled by elites that seek to dominate land, resources and people. Individualism, as conceived by Oscar Wilde, generates disobedience: “Disobedience, in the eyes of any one who has read history, is man’s original virtue. It is through disobedience that progress has been made, through disobedience and through rebellion” (*Soul* 131).¹¹⁹ In other words, the greatest human achievements are where individuals have broken free the shackles that bind the mind and let loose the inherent and undeniable power that lies in each and every individual.

Having said that, it comes as no surprise that Crampas’ favorite poet is Heinrich Heine, one of the most controversial imaginative poets, an unapologetic critique and twice baptized (as both Protestant and later Catholic) Jewish German exile who had been condemned for inspiring a revolution and who chose to spend most of his life in France after his writings were banned in Germany in 1835. By his own admission, Crampas is also something of a poet himself who apart from admiring Heine artistically might have also been drawn to Heine’s rebellious personality, who felt that his individual liberty was confined by society and was consequently attacked for the lack of moral integrity. Like Heine Crampas is concerned with restrictions not only to artistic creativity and imagination but to human potential as well.

According to Hans-Heinrich Reuter Heine was Fontane’s favorite poet. Asked in 1894 what he was reading Fontane counted among his favorite works *Deutschland ein Wintermärchen* and *Romanzero*. The incorporation of Heine subtexts allows Fontane’s

¹¹⁹ Oscar Wilde developed his anarchist philosophy in his essay *The Soul of Man Under Socialism*, 1891, after reading Kropotkin. Wilde was found guilty on charges of sexual immorality in 1895.

subtle mode of criticism to come to expression. For it allows him to voice general reflections by putting them conveniently in the mouth of the half-Polish Crampas. The evocation of Heine, one of the most perceptive critics of the German mentality, whose unashamed subjectivism went hand in hand with his perceptive, unorthodox concern for social and political realities, invites the same criticism as the whole scope of Fontane's novel, yet its representation through the half-Polish character make us forget whose personal opinion it really voices. Heine's admiration for France and mockery of German chauvinism earned him the hatred of many German nationalists, so he became a public enemy because he challenged the stability of the proclaimed "order" in which privileged social relations are securely entrenched.

In his *The Romantic School* (1836), Heine pointed out the differences between French patriotism, which broadens the heart and embraces everyone, and the German one, which rests on animosity towards foreigners and outsiders, narrows the heart and acts like frost on leather. The Kessin/Pomeranian atmosphere in *Effi Briest* is similarly associated with animosity towards "strangers" and frosty coldness and Effi also compares Innstetten's lack of warmth with "frostig wie ein Schneemann" (73).

Crampas' preference for Heine would support the argument for his anarchistic tendencies and his anti-Prussian criticism, and reads also as an obvious demonstration of his cultural resistance. It has been established in the scholarship that Crampas did his best to ingratiate himself with Effi for his own selfish purposes, and that he accomplishes his goal of seducing Effi through Heine's subtext. Thus Crampas' qualification of Heine as a belated Romantic, a poet of "mood," is readily taken for granted. By concentrating on the mood critics lose sight of Heine's entire social critique and the way Crampas makes

use of it in contradiction to his statement: “Bei Heine liegt es aber anders: alles ist Leben, und vor allem versteht er sich auf die Liebe, und doch die Hauptsache bleibt . . . Er ist auch sehr für das Romantische, was freilich gleich nach der Liebe kommt und nach Meinung einiger sogar damit zusammenfällt. Was ich aber nicht glaube”(137).¹²⁰ While Fontane scholarship focuses almost entirely on Crampas’ use of the Heine’s subtext as a pretext to seduce Effi, I think that there is another legitimate reading of Heine’s poems within the context of colonized Poland in Fontane’s narrative. Indeed, Crampas’ own suggestion of Romanticism and love themes of Heine’s lyrics should not be taken at its own face value but rather for Fontane’s own comment about prevalent aesthetics which considers that lyric poetry has less to do with political and social concerns. If we understand Crampas’ use of Heine as a metadiscourse in the sense of discursive event, that does something rather than merely to mean something or express the mood, then Effi’s new self-awareness is an outcome of her initiation into Heine through Crampas’ discourse. Christian Grawe, among others, points out the active role Heine’s metatext plays in Effi’s turning away from Innstetten towards Crampas as a gesture of liberation from Innstetten’s authority over her towards asserting her independence (1982: 148-49).

Todd Samuel Presner argues that Heine's *Reisebilder*, of which “Seegespenst” is a part, represents a break from the traditional travel narrative as established by Goethe. Heine, according to Presner, “uses the form of the travel narrative, not to convey the history of his trip to Italy or to map out the pathway leading to a strong, nationally

¹²⁰ “But Heine’s different: it’s real life somehow, and above all he knows about love, which is the main thing in the end . . . He’s very much for the romantic, which comes close behind love and in some people’s view can’t be separated from it. Not that I believe that.”

grounded subject, but rather to question the presuppositions behind any such claims and to critique the attendant ideas of national legitimacy and historical inevitability” (521). He suggests that *Reisebilder* are to be read as Heine’s writing back to Hegel’s lectures on history Heine attended, his deconstruction of the Hegelian historical development, which places the Germanic peoples at the apex of the world history with the mission to civilize and improve the unfortunate Jews who lack cultural tradition. According to Presner, Heine mocks the genres of the great narrative, mimicking them with a Jewish difference in order to ultimately deconstruct their built-in claims about historicity and national belonging.

A similar mocking tone can be detected in Fontane, evident from Effi Briest’s account of her cultural honeymoon in Italy, which she finds rather boring and tiresome and finds it relevant to report to her parents that she is tired and her feet hurt because her new husband makes her spend most of the time walking through art galleries, and standing in front of exhibits against her natural inclination and in view of the fact that the honeymoon would be an occasion for the couple to spend their time in more intimate circumstances.

As Hegel observed in his lectures, nations only enter history when they acquire their own state, and the Prussian monarchy was an exemplary state in which the world *Geist* was realizing itself objectively. However, nations only become powerful, and hence world-historical, by their relation to the sea. Hegel considers colonial expeditions and “voyages of discovery” (*Entdeckungsreisen*) as pivotal historical moments, along with the invention of printing and gunpowder. In other words, – as geographic and material prerequisites – closeness to the sea and colonialism are crucial for the direction of world

history. Thus the Germanic world (by which Hegel means Western Europe), which fulfilled these prerequisites by mastering the Atlantic ocean, represents the culmination of world history, the product of all the dialectical movements of *Geist* from east to west, and from Europe radiating outwardly in realizing universal Geist.

Steve Taubeneck has investigated more recent literature for the interplay of citations and prose texts and found e.g. in Peter Handke's texts examples of what he calls "Scheinzitat" (272) as Form und Stil-Imitationen oder Persiflagen" (269) or in other words they represent: "typische Reminiszenzen einer Tradition die sie evozieren ohne sie zu folgen" (274). For instance, in his story *Falsche Bewegung* Handke imitates/parodies Goethe's language rather than using authentic citations. Presner's and Taubeneck's compatible observations are relevant for understanding the interplay of citation/*Scheinzitat* in the way Fontane incorporates Heine-subtexts in *Effi Briest*.

It is of relevance too to note that Heine published his text *Über Polen* in 1822-23, around the time he heard Hegel's lectures on the philosophy of world history, in which Hegel excludes Slavs collectively from the contemporary spirit of world history even though not from the possibility that the spirit might some day show in one or the other Slavic peoples. In the passage in which Heine describes the abject poverty in which the Polish peasants live (much like the Jews), he concludes on a more positive note by observing the transformative capabilities of submerged Polish peasants as I referred to above.

This explanation throws another light on the appeal Veneta /"Seegespenst" has for Crampas, who as a half-Pole could have detected the mockery with which Heine approaches the Hegelian historical teleology of development, which excludes certain

peoples from world history. In this context Crampas assumes (correctly) that Heine's poem is about the legendary Slavic Vineta though it appears under a name "Seegespenst." Yet even though he knows Heine by heart, Crampas interprets "Seegespenst" rather than using authentic quotation. In so doing, he offers an exemplary illustration of Taubeneck's *Scheinzeit*, an imitation/persiflage of Heine's language with a Polish difference. The poem is about a poet voyager who embarks on a journey, survives a terrible storm, but after it has calmed down has to be saved by a captain from falling off the side of a ship while beguiled by a young woman "sea phantom" (Seegespenst) from the city sunken deep beneath the waters.¹²¹ The point of Crampas' *Scheinzeit* is not so much in sexual overtones, (as expected of a habitual womanizer) but in its displacement from the pre-Christian Baltic to what can be taken to represent the Christian Spanish Netherlands (women in hoods [*Kapothüte*] with hymnbooks hurrying to church), in a move that invokes the Polish submerged condition by drawing attention to Holland under Spanish rule. Nor does Crampas think in Christian terms, since his interpretation does not include the conclusion of the cycle, which ends with a tribute to Christ the voyager's ultimate savior.

What makes me think along these lines is the fact that Crampas invokes two other poems about Spain, the grisly contents of both not appropriate or facilitating the seduction of a young woman. The one is about the fourteenth-century King Pedro of Castile, called "Pedro the Cruel" from "Spanische Atriden"; the other is the epic poem "Vitzliputzli" (Huizilipochtli), about the Mexican war god to whom Spanish

¹²¹ "Seegespenst" is from the first of the two cycles of North Sea poems, originally published as *Reisebilder I* and *Reisebilder II*. The immediate inspiration for the poems were Heine's vacations to the North Sea in 1825 and 1826.

conquistadors were sacrificed and informed by savage irony. The latter is about the discovery of America by Spain, and the beginning of world history and modernity with Western Europe casting itself at the center of the universe since 1492 and with Spain in the role of the first modern country. But since “Vitzliputzli” is a poem evoking the colonial experience of greed and destruction caused by the Spanish colonial enterprise in the wake of Cortes’s conquest of Mexico, it casts a very negative light on European modernity. The poem ends with Huitzilopochtli/Vitzliputzli’s prophecy to come to the Old World and haunt the colonizer. As Susanne Zantop notes: “By assuming the perspective of the colonized, and ending the poem with Vitzliputzli’s anguished prophecy, Heine underscores the plight of cultures that have been violently subjected. By lending his voice to a bloody war-god, who, through priests and ritual, had repressed his own people, Heine rejects any form of domination and control” (*Colonial* 206).

Heine’s account of the Spanish/Catholic colonial enterprise in Mexico and the ritual sacrifices of the Aztecs invokes the pre-Christian Germanic Hertha blood sacrifice and the violent medieval crusading of the Teutonic Order, the precursor and founder of Prussia. By connecting the fate of the natives in the Americas with that of other colonized peoples, Heine exposes colonialism as a barbarous enterprise of powerful regimes, which take territories and destroy peoples.¹²² Here we see the double-talk since we know Effi’s wrong assumptions that the bloody sacrificial ritual was practiced by the Wends against whom she therefore feels aversion.

¹²² One can also think here of Herder, a descendent of Germanized Lithuanians, who protested against German oppression of the Baltic Slavs and his anti-colonialism and interest in the native life which was acknowledged by the South Americans and his Slavophilia, his fondness of Slavic literature, a vision of eastern Europe as a “space of hope” his influence on Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Serbs and Croats is notable.

The island of Rügen was an old center of Slavic culture and remained the last pagan stronghold on the Baltic coast, which held out until 1168. The village that bears the same name Crampas, that Effi stumbles upon during her holidays, is located close to the sacrificial rocks on the Baltic island of Rujana/Rügen and the Slavic pre-Christian sanctuary in Arkona, devoted to the Slavic sun and war god, Svento Vit. The cult of the Slavic god Vid or Vit in the Rügen deities Sviantovid, Rugevit and Perovit is variously interpreted as “warrior” or “sight,” Sviantovid being “holy sight” or “holy warrior ” and celebrated on the day of the summer solstice, indicating his role as a sun god. The Baltic Slavs were among the last defenders of heathendom (Lithuanians only converted in the fourteenth century) who guarded the sanctuary with the statue of the four-headed deity of their supreme god Svento-vit in the sacred city of Arkona on the island of Rügen until recently Christianized Danes stormed the place in 1168 and reduced it to ashes, while taking the statue along with the treasure guarded there. The Danish conquest of Rujana also put an end to the small Slavic maritime power and placed the island under Danish overlordship. The island was Christianized and colonized by Germans and by the fourteenth century it was completely Germanized. However, Viddo has lived on in collective memory as the Christian St. Vitus, and with it the promise to avenge and resurrect the independence of the Slavic people.¹²³

¹²³ The Slavs who settled in the western Balkans upon migrating from their Central European homeland, took possession of the vacant sites of the lower Narenta and built a new town out of the ruins of Roman Narona (near Metkovic in present Herzegovina) where on the site of the Roman temples they had erected their own temple, dedicated to the god Vid(do). This site became the stronghold of paganism among the Balkan Slavs until 873, just as with the Baltic Slavs, when they were prevailed by Byzantine to accept Christianity, whereby the temple underwent conversion and Viddo lived on as a Christian St. Vitus. In the next century the country of the Narentines was still known as Paganía, the land of the Pagans as Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus mentions it in his accounts of

By invoking Heine in the contemporary colonial context of Pomerania, and within the framework of neither exorcised nor forgotten ghosts and gods of the past, Fontane/Crampas asserts the links between past and present oppression and resistance by underscoring the affinities between Germanic crusades, Spanish *conquista* and contemporary Germany's anti-Polish policy. Slav/Wendish ghosts, similarly, convey a sense of vengeance and menace to the intruder (e.g. Mistiwoi's promise to revenge), for they haunt in dreams and everyday encounters in Pomerania. They even follow Effi and Innstetten to Berlin seeking to reclaim and destroy them. Even after the brief dangerous liaison with Crampas was seemingly forgotten, Effi could not bring herself to destroy his letters, which are disclosed by Innstetten six-and-half years after the affair had been over.

As a hyphenated Pole in German-dominated Prussia, Crampas is himself a colonized subject, albeit a member of the half-Prussianized aristocracy, both an insider and outsider. Such an ambivalent location exposed Crampas to conditions known by both parties to the imperial divide. As a member of the Polish nobility, a community which was politically and culturally dominated by Prussia, and in turn traditionally exercised domination over their Slavic serfs, a colonized dominant group that was not only

the Serbs. The fact that Vid was celebrated on the day of the summer solstice indicates his role as a sun god. The precarious temporality of modernity in the Balkans and the Slavic East relies on European high standards of civilization and is perpetually threatened by violence which is both historically necessitated and part of some natural law. Recently, these connections between the paganism and barbarism of the war-like pre-Christian past have been attributed exclusively to the Serb's vengeful and war-like character by associated with the Kosovo Battle of 1389 on the St. Vid day, the assassination of Arch Duke Ferdinand in Sarajevo in 1914, the proclamation of the resolutions pertaining to the Balkans of the Berlin Congress, the signing of Versailles Peace Treaty in 1919, Stalin issuing the condemnation of the Yugoslav party leadership in 1948 and Milosevic's speech in Kosovo on the occasion of 600th anniversary of the Kosovo Battle in 1989 and allegedly an instigation to violence and revenge against the Muslim Albanians.

colonized but also colonialist, thus being simultaneously an agent and a subject of a “doubling consciousness” with the sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others which sometimes borders on the schizophrenic, seems to resonate with the double-voicedness and dialogue. In other words, since the partitions, Poles have always harbored more or less open insubordination and knowing contestation of German/Prussian (as well as Russian) culture and mentality.

To understand Innstetten’s cold manipulation with the “supernatural,” which appears worse than any spontaneous outburst of rage or physical threat usually attributed to the less civilized societies we need a psychological discourse, but not that of Sigmund Freud’s routinely invoked. But first I want to recall Goethe’s *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten* (*Diversions of German Emigrants*) from 1795, and the two stories from the “frame” relevant for *Effi Briest*. The one, “Die Geschichte von der Sängerin Antonelli” because its eponymous character is herself haunted by the ghost of her rejected lover evocative of Effi’s experience and Sängerin Trippelli’s discourse about ghosts and haunting in her conversation with Effi. The other is “Die Geschichte vom ehrlichen Prokurator,” with a similar constellation to that in *Effi Briest*: a mismatched newly-wed couple who lives in a seaport town. In Goethe’s story, a fifty-year old prosperous and respectable merchant suddenly decides to marry and a sixteen-year old woman is selected for him in an arranged marriage. After a year of married life, the merchant feels the urge to resume his occupation, but he is afraid that he would lose his young and beautiful wife if he leaves her behind alone. He is aware that by leaving her alone he is exposing her to temptation but because he understands that the desire of the flesh is natural — a healthy young woman who finds herself lonesome and bored will

sooner or later succumb to the entreaties of lovers — he encourages her to seek companionship and sexual gratification from another man during his long absence but counsels her to choose an honorable person worthy of her. She follows his advice and in the end remains loyal to her absent husband. Innstetten is also absent from his young wife's life and he too encourages Effi to go off alone with Crampas. But knowing Crampas' reputation for seducing women is he thereby concerned that his young wife needs companionship in his absence, or is he testing her?

By having Innstetten belong to the elite reserve officer corps Fontane shows the most important privilege on which the social and political prestige of the officer rested: namely his direct access to the highest representatives of the Imperial Government and the Imperial Court. The oath of allegiance the officers gave, not to the people but to the Kaiser, was a relic preserved from the old feudal order. The notion that the king or emperor was by virtue of blood and the grace of God, “the charismatic leader of the *Teutonic* levies, to whom the warriors were bound by personal loyalty, remained the ideal of the Prussian ruler even as late as the early twentieth-century” (Wehler 151). Innstetten, who had made Bismarck's acquaintance at Versailles at the conclusion of the Franco-Prussian War, visits the Imperial Chancellor regularly at his country estate of Varzin. Remarkable about these habitual visits is the fact that Innstetten might be the most distinguished man in Kessin district, but, nevertheless, he is no more than a rather lowly Imperial administrator, so that his access to the chancellor rests on his status of trusted German-Prussian nobleman and officer of the reserve. Pomeranian-born aristocrat, Crampas is also a Prussian officer, who does not have the same access to Bismarck, since

as a half-Pole he neither belongs to the pure “Teuton race” nor is he considered trustworthy.

Crampas also mocks Bismarck’s “honorable” intentions by alluding to his ruthless manipulative political pragmatism (per Hegel’s axiom that conflicts determine history i.e. the creation of conflicts and wars can bring about determined outcomes) by wishing that Bismarck make another little war and he amuses himself at the Innstetten’s expense as Bismarck’s loyal disciple. Innstetten echoes the Bismarckian fiction that the newly founded Germany has no bellicose intentions, at least not for the next thirty years (“Hier ist die Geschichte, Glauben Sie mir, auf dreißig Jahre vorbei,”¹²⁴) and suggests that if Crampas desires to die a hero’s death he should find his cause as a mercenary or a soldier of fortune in those remote areas where the fighting is currently going on, as for instance in China, (Franco-Chinese War of 1884-85) or the Ottoman Empire (Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78). The latter one invokes Tolstoy’s protagonist Count Alexei Vronsky in *Anna Karenina* (1878), who following Anna’s suicide goes to fight in Serbia with the intention of expiating his guilt and with the hope of dying a honorable death in a battle.

Critics tend to understand Crampas’ death wish quite literally, as his pretentious desire to die a hero’s death, by overlooking his fine irony i.e. Crampas does not take Innstetten’s explanation for granted but continues his mocking provocation, which is heavy with ironic overtones: “. . . Der muß sich erst bei Bismarck einen Krieg bestellen. Weiß ich alles Innstetten, aber das ist doch für Sie eine Kleinigkeit. Jetzt haben wir Ende September; in zehn Wochen spatentens ist der Fürst wieder in Varzin, und da er ein

¹²⁴ Innstetten’s /Bismarck’s prediction was correct: thirty years on would have been the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. Which Bismarck predicted would start in the Balkans.

liking für Sie hat — mit der volkstümlicheren Wendung will ich zurückhalten, um nicht direct vor Ihren Pistolenlauf zu kommen — , so werden Sie alten Kameraden von Vionville her doch wohl ein bißchen Krieg besorgen können. Der Fürst ist auch nur ein Mensch, und Zureden hilft” (124).¹²⁵

By self-mockingly wishing of Bismarck to provide for another war to be able to die a honorable death, Crampas might be alluding to Bismarck’s reference to the willing “Pomeranian Grenadiers” who fight for their masters, but even more importantly he was invoking a traditional German stereotype about Polish “Sarmatism,” the lifestyle of the *szlachta*, whose ideals were allegedly to live extravagantly but not rationally, and to die a magnificent death. Ironically, Crampas did die from the wound of the bullet from Innstetten’s pistol.

It is Crampas who describes Innstetten’s fear-mongering pedagogy as behavior conditioning by suggesting to Effi that her husband is deliberately fostering her fear of the Chinese ghost in order to keep her submissive and faithful by recalling how Innstetten’s similarly used ghost stories in order to discipline his cadets, that is to keep them in subordination while he was in the army. Crampas’ description of Innstetten’s pedagogical methods, which is based on learning through fear, draws attention to Wilhelm Wundt’s new experimental psychology. While a great deal of attention has been accorded to Fontane’s psychological insights into Effi’s inner life by pointing to

¹²⁵ “— will have to order a war from Bismarck. I know all that Innstetten. But that will be a trifle for you. It’s the end of September now, in ten weeks at the most the Prince will be in Varzin again, and since he has a *faible* for you — I resist the vernacular term for fear of looking down the barrel of your pistol – you will be able to fix up an old comrade from Vionville with a little war. The Prince is only human after all, and a little persuasion can go a long way.”

Fontane's affinities with Freud, there is absence of any reference to Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920) and his contemporary work. And yet Wundt, who is now generally considered the "founding father" of modern/experimental psychology and who also laid the foundation for cultural psychology (*Völkerpsychologie*) was one of the best-known psycho-pathologists of Wilhelmine Germany. Wundt was also Fontane's contemporary, whose long career that spanned sixty years considerably overlaps with Fontane's own novelistic one: Wundt established the first research laboratory for experimental psychology in Leipzig around 1879 and founded a journal of psychology, *Psychological Studies* in 1881, while between 1883 and 1893 at least twenty-four labs were established by Wundt's students. This new and burgeoning field of experimental psychology gained immediate currency, as the American psychologist Edna Heibreder comments.

Naturally Leipzig became the Mecca of students who wished to study the "new" psychology — a psychology that was no longer a branch of speculative philosophy, no longer a fragment of the science of physiology, but a novel and daring and exciting attempt to study mental processes by the experimental and quantitative methods common to all science. For the psychology of Leipzig was, in the eighties and nineties, the newest thing under the sun. It was psychology for bold young radicals who believed that the ways of the mind could be measured and treated experimentally (qtd. in Keith 29).

Wundt was also a student of Hegel's who subscribed to the Hegelian axiom that man is subordinate to the State and only finds fulfillment in obedience to the dictates of the State. Fontane's protagonist Innstetten is a high state bureaucrat who espouses this Hegelian ideal.

Human experimentation can be traced back to Wundt's experimental psychology, which he conceived as "experience in its relations to the subject" (*Outlines*: 3), thus the definition: the study of experience. Wundt maintained that man's soul could not be measured scientifically, because it did not exist. By redefining man as an animal without

a soul, he suggested and legitimized at least for his associates and their employers that human being could be manipulated as easily as a dog could be trained to salivate at the sound of bell. Ivan Pavlov, a student of Wundt's, is known as the father of "Classical Conditioning" whose work on dogs – Pavlov's description on how animals (and humans) can be trained to respond in a certain way to a particular stimulus drew tremendous interest from the time he first presented his results – and was of particular interest to the development of the Behaviorism of Skinner and Watson. Wundt was "funded by and worked with the Prussian military and political establishment" (*Mind Control* 30), and his ideas exerted a great deal of influence on modern education (German, Central European, Russian and US). Wundt's notion that all psychological studies should be scientifically quantified based on body reactions redefined psychology as a speculative study of the psyche/soul. In rejecting the moral aspect in his dealing with mankind Wundt opened the door to many of the dehumanizing effects of psychology that followed in the twentieth century, including the horrors of mind control. Wundt's psychology was a welcome rationalization for social controllers (e.g. Innstetten) who could kill in cold blood without fear of ultimate spiritual retribution or accounting.

The essence of Wundt's research that man was a machine, albeit a soft one, is also a point Musil was making in *Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß*. A similar rationalization informs his text which reflects critically on the turn of the century educational institutions and the oppressive impact they exert on personal development, exposing educational role as institutionalized coercion. Military academies, as Musil shows, were primary sites of social conditioning/disciplining; primary agencies of repression that sought to break young individuals, stamp them into the mold of societal expectations. Musil's depiction

of the torture to which Basini is subjected by three other fellow-students in the attic torture chamber of a school represents a case study of treatment of the human being as less than human or as machine, through calculated acts of human experimentation measured with a verbal introspective report serving as a preview of the later Nazi, USSR or US interrogations and experiments on hapless victims in concentration camps, gulags and secret war prisons. Was it just a coincidence that Robert Musil's *Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törleß* appeared in 1906 when Pavlov was driving dogs crazy by cutting holes in their cheeks to insert tubes to measure salivation at the St. Petersburg Military Medical Academy in Russia?

However the plot surrounding the torture of Basini is not too dissimilar from Innstetten's educational methods described in *Effi Briest*. As Crampas points out there is something of the pedagogue about Innstetten. Crampas also alleges Innstetten's inclination to torture, his fear-mongering tactics by means of ghost stories as an instrument of creating obedient cadets who take orders to better serve the military and state. It is an allegation that Innstetten may inflict mental anguish no less harmful than physical pain. Innstetten applied a similar manipulative/fear mongering technique by using the Chinese ghost as an instrument to control and keep submissive his young wife. Innstetten seems to want to dominate and control Effi rather than reassure her about her "spooky" experiences in the house he seems to promote them. To Effi's reports of disturbing aspects of his house and their frightening effect on her, he shows little compassion and responds with an ironic and arrogant smile or remark. Innstetten keeps rather bizarre reminiscences of the house's past – stuffed sharks and crocodiles, and

strategically tells inconsistent and contradictory stories of the mysterious Chinaman, and he refuses to move out of the haunted house even though Effi entreats him.

There are not only parallels between Basini's humiliation at the hands of Beineberg, Reiting and Törless and Effi's humiliation at the hand of her husband, parents and society proper but also between the punishment they receive which in both cases is disproportionate to their misdemeanor and age, entailing a sacrifice with similar social implications, a ruin of one's life so that even Dante's contrapasso "punishment that fits the crime" appears liberal by comparison.

Furthermore, while Innstetten does not seem to be interested in his young wife erotically he encourages Effi to go off alone with Crampas, knowing Crampas' reputation for seducing women. Innstetten is in effect using Crampas for negative programming. By characterizing Crampas in largely negative terms and by using labels, the ostensible purpose is to warn Effi not to make a mistake and take Crampas seriously or on equal terms. However, this is exactly the wrong way to teach the young and inexperienced Effi what to do. Visualization, suggestion and positive reinforcement are the main tools of learning, as Goethe's story exemplifies – humans do not react well to negative programming unless, of course, the goal is to teach them negative behavior. The negative and forbidden can be used as embedded commands to produce the opposite effects. Thus, while Effi was instructed to resist Crampas, during his constant absence and neglect, the effect produced on her was to do the exact opposite. Effi does precisely what she is supposed not to do: she cannot help feeling attracted to Crampas and eventually succumbs to his entreaties. In other words, she cannot resist the reflexive reaction of desire (like Pavlov's dog) that Crampas' attentions arouse in her.

This reflexive reaction in fact amounts to the (ab)use of psychology for educational/military purposes and can be traced back to Wilhelm Wundt's ideas of social engineering and similar military educational institutions and the oppressive impact they exerted on the personal development of the impressionable youth in the authoritarian structure of Prussia and Austria. The whole magnitude of destructive indoctrination to the Prussian ideal of service can be illustrated by the Prussian/Imperial military, where efficiency in service to the state became (sub)servience to the ultimate, to death. Death in service to the state as educational aim/conditioning was part of a standard introductory speech delivered to 10-year-old boys entering the Prussian cadet academies,

Gentlemen! You have chosen the most beautiful profession there is on this earth. Before your eyes you have the highest aim there can be. Here we teach you to reach that aim. You are here to learn that which gives your life its ultimate meaning. You are here in order to learn how to die. (*Silent* 21)

The prominent role Fontane ascribes to the dog in his novel signals the lack of emotional life of the characters – the relation with the dog is humanized against dehumanized human relations, pointing to the fact that Fontane may in fact have been familiar with the new psychology and its influence on trends in society at large. There is a mention of a touching scene in *Kessin* of a dog saved from the ship licking the humans overjoyed and thankful (167). When Effi visits her parents after the birth of her child and only after a year of being married her father makes a very perceptive observation about her married life by referring to her strong attachment to the dog Rollo: “Immer Rollo, lachte Briest. Wenn man's nicht anderes wüßte, so sollte man beinah glauben, Rollo sei dir mehr ans Herz gewachsen als Mann und Kind” (119).¹²⁶ Effi's denial and explanation

¹²⁶ “Always Rollo,” laughed Briest. “If one didn't know better, one might almost think Rollo was closer to your heart than your husband and child.”

sound unconvincing to the reader who is familiar with the intimate details of her married life and knows how close Briest has come to touching the very core of the problem: “Ach Papa, das wäre ja schrecklich, wenn's auch freilich – soviel muß ich zugeben – eine Zeit gegeben hat, wo's ohne Rollo gar nicht gegangen wäre. Das war damals . . . nun, du weißt schon . . . Da hat er mich so gut wie gerettet, oder ich habe mir's wenigstens eingebildet, und seitdem ist er mein guter Freund und mein ganz besonderer Verlaß. Aber er ist doch bloß ein Hund. Und erst kommen doch natürlich die Menschen” (119).¹²⁷ To which Briest replies: “Ja, das sagt man, aber ich habe da doch so meine Zweifel. Das mit der Kreatur, damit hat's doch seine eigene Bewandnis, und was da das Richtige ist, darüber sind die Akten noch nicht geschlossen.”¹²⁸ This is an example in which the understanding and knowledge shared between reader and a restricted character or number of characters provides a key location for irony. This is how Bakhtin's polyphony works well in dialogue and when through a subtle bonding between a writer, character and reader it is multi-layered because it tends to be against the cultural/constructed meaning.

Rollo remains loyal to Effi all her life and even beyond. After Effi has died the loyal dog does not leave her graveside and refuses to eat and Frau von Briest's remark is quite to the point when she observes: “Sie Briest, Rollo liegt wieder vor dem Stein. Es ist

¹²⁷ “Oh Papa, that would be awful, even though – I have to admit – there was a time when I couldn't have managed without Rollo. That was when. . . well, you know. . . Then he as good as saved my life, or at least that's what I imagine, and since then he's been my good friend whom I rely on quite particularly. But of course he's only a dog. And people do come first naturally.”

¹²⁸ “Yes, that's what they always say, but I have my doubts. The whole question of animals is a very tricky area, and the last word hasn't been spoken yet.”

ihm doch noch tiefer gegangen als uns. Er frißt nicht mehr” (295).¹²⁹ To which Briest replies: “Ja Louise, die Kreatur. Das ist ja, was ich immer sage. Es ist nicht so viel mit uns, wie wir glauben. Da reden wir immer von Instinkt. Am Ende ist es doch das Beste” (295).¹³⁰

The Newfound dog is named Rollo, after Rollo Ragnvaldsson Viking leader, the “blond beast,” barbarian warrior and conqueror of Normandy. This theme of regression into tribal society, and here ironically hints at *furor teutonicus*, sounds repeatedly in *Effi Briest*.

Effi’s married life in Kessin is circumscribed by conventions reminiscent of life imagined to be the condition of Oriental women, caged behind the bars of a harem. A similar image ambivalently resonates in Effi’s vague notions and images about the exotic Orient, especially in relation to her increasing fear of her estranged husband in Pomerania, whom she associates with the “oriental despotism”: “Ich habe mal ein Bildbuch gehabt, wo ein persischer oder indischer Fürst . . . mit utergeschlagenen Beinen auf einem roten Seidenkissen saß . . . und wenn du noch die Beine unterschlägst, is die Ähnlichkeit vollkommen” (53).

The threat of regression into an earlier primitive state comes neither from the Slavs, nor the Muslims nor “Orientals,” as Effi wrongly assumes, but from the pre-Christian Germanic lurching beneath the “civilized” veneer. For immediately after evoking the

¹²⁹ “Look Briest, Rollo is lying in front of the stone again. It’s gone even deeper with him than with us. He’s stopped eating too.”

¹³⁰ “That’s it Luise, dumb animal. It’s what I’m always saying. We’re not all we’re cracked up to be. With them we always say it’s just instinct, but when all’s said and done, it can’t be bettered.”

image of the oriental despot to which Effi compares Innstetten, she remarks about her unwillingness to die young “ich bin ja erst siebzehn and habe noch nicht vor zu sterben” to which Innstetten replies “Freilich, wenn ich dan stürbe, nähme ich dich am liebsten mit. Ich will dich keinem anderen lassen; was meinst du dazu” (53). This conversation is significant because his jocular mood, notwithstanding, Innstetten’s words carry a forewarning. For, in retrospect, the comparison between Innstetten and an Indian or Oriental prince, could be taken for another Oriental displacement. By associating Innstetten’s death wish for Effi with the Indian practice of *sati* (the immolation of Hindu widows) Fontane does not mean to question the Oriental/Indian but the contemporary Prussian social practices, which unmistakably bear traces of their own ancient past: Germanic natural law and the pre-Christian Germanic practice of burying the member of the warrior cast together with his horse, weapons and his wife.

In view of all this, Crampas’ influence on Effi with his debunking Innstetten’s educational fear-tactics, even if for reasons of his own, is emancipatory, since the ghost loses its grip on her while her affair with Crampas is a defiant rebellion against rules, morals, norms and the constraints imposed by contemporary society. In fact, Crampas’ timely appearance at the scene and his intervention into the “ghost affair” is crucial in preventing Effi from finding herself in the sorry and helpless condition resembling that of a conditioned dog that pathetically lay in the corner of the hammock even when the door was open, because it learned that trying to escape from the shocks is futile. Effi too was similarly thought to be helpless!

Finally, I want to comment on the peculiarities of Crampas’ name, which, as some scholars point out does not seem to be Polish (Kopp), but does not incidentally bear

resemblance to the Viennese or Alpine devil Krampus (Jamison 20 - 32), a survival of the fertility god of the classical world Dionysus or Bacchus in Central Europe. It is plausible to suppose that by associating Crampas with the original Dionysian meaning of the demon figure in Austrian folklore, Fontane might be hinting at the Dionysian and Apollonian principle respectively embodied by Crampas and Innstetten invoking Nietzsche's influential ideas.

Crampas' corporeal, sensual, showy, theatrical and/or carnivalesque aspects are juxtaposed to Innstetten's restraint and disciplined routine, lack of sexual interest and emotional warmth. As a man who had made the concepts of self-denial, restraint and duty, the guidelines of his conduct, Innstetten is an embodiment of the Apollonian with the emphasis on those aspects of ego which serve the purpose of suppressing the tendency towards disruption of order and libidinal fulfillment, showy, seductive and theatrical, precisely those tendencies manifested by Crampas which Innstetten equates with insincerity.

This further leads to the relevance of Gilles Deleuze's definition of masochism by its symbolic structure and sharply distinguished from sadism, in contrast to the traditional view that sadism and masochism are complimentary. While sadism, according to Deleuze, is driven by the desire for possession, masochistic relationships are constituted by pact and mutual initiation. Deleuze sees this formal difference as reflected in the prose of Sade and Sacher-Masoch. Where Sade is demonstrative and descriptive, Sacher-Masoch is dialectical and persuasive. In certain respects Innstetten and Crampas reflect these two principles. But as Bakhtin wrote

Oppositions between individuals are only surface upheavals of the untamed elements in social heteroglossia, surface manifestations of those elements that

play on such individual oppositions, make them contradictory. (DI 326)

The Alpine/Austrian or Central European Krampus also known as a Viennese devil, has degenerated into a bogeyman for children, represented as black, furry and horned with a disfigured face, long tongue and a lizard's tail. He appears as a companion of St. Nicholas on his rounds, but unlike him he attends to bad children, whom he can carry off in his sack or a basket. However, Krampus' chief attribute is evidence that he is an inverted fertility god: he carries a bundle of dried twigs, and the belief is that if he strikes someone they will be sterile for a year. He appears in December, a month of winter solstice, when nature is most barren.

There are hints in the novel that Effi was initiated into womanhood by Crampas rather than by her sexually disinterested husband. Like his namesake, Crampas "abducts" and "seduces" Effi in December between Christmas and New Year's Eve under the guise of darkness and subterranean natural forces (Dionysian).¹³¹ Consequently, a healthy young woman such as Effi initially appears to be, who promptly brings her first child to life, exactly nine months after the wedding, is unable to conceive again. Thus Crampas' demonic role is communicated by the fact that he is symbolically and literally robbing the Prussian aristocracy of their progeny and thus of their future.

Crampas' "rotblonder Sappeurbart" (155) raises the suspicion which Johanna shares with Innstetten when she echoes her master and justifies his deed: "Der ganze arme

¹³¹ In the Roman imperial sources, the ancient Slavs were described as independent and disorderly tribes, whose delight it was to lure enemies into dark recesses of woods or narrow defiles, or to lie in wait, hidden by reeds, for foes that trod the dangerous paths across the marshes. No enemies could ultimately be more formidable than the Slavs, for their virility rendered their extermination and absorption impossible. Secure behind ramparts of hill, wood, or water, the Slavs multiplied exceedingly and developed their strength, until they were ready to move forward and destroy the cities of the plain.

Major taugt nichts; wer solchen rotblonden Schnurrbart hat und immer wribbelt, der taugt nie was und richtet bloß Schaden an” (247). She also expresses a popular assumption about the connection between red-hair and congenital wickedness. Crampas’ feminine counterpart is Cora, the Rings’ fourteen-year old daughter, invoking the godless and sinful “Red Korah” (4. Mose 16). Cora’s father is the forest keeper described as a “nature worshipper” (which makes him akin to the Wends and their pagan nature-worshipping, of which, as Trippelli assures everyone, traces survived in many Eastern European and Balkan customs). It is a commonplace that nature is envisioned as female. Therefore Cora is a very embodiment of the femininity of nature, since she also recalls Kora or Kore, the Paleolithic Earth Daughter ready for initiation into womanhood during the rule of Earth Mother, related to growth and fertility rites, corresponding to the later cults of Kouros (or Dionysus, Adonis, Osiris and Hermes). The Balkan Slavs linked the growth and fertility rites with St. George’s day (April 23/May 6), which the young people in Macedonia and Bulgaria celebrated by swaying on swings (Stoianovich). The swing and swinging, which symbolizes growth, sexual awakening, vitality, virility, and fertility, is a leitmotif in *Effi Briest*, serving as a symbol for the novel’s eponymous heroine's natural inclinations including the tendency to flirtation and courting danger, which she shares with the half-Slavic Major Crampas and which ultimately leads to their downfall.

Cora, whose evocative name complies with her earth-bound and licentious character, shows affinities with what are assumed to characterize the Slavic/Wendish — the lurking temptation and implied danger of the East is often portrayed as embodied in a tempting female — and is contrasted with refinement and purity of the Germanic Thora von Pinzel. Eroticized and eroticized Cora thus symbolizes both Effi’s awakening sexuality

but also the feminized Pomeranian land, made available for the German man's gaze, thus also legitimizing the need for the German controlling and civilizing presence.¹³²

Displacement of the masculine or emasculated sexual desire onto female seductive powers renders the masculine Prussian not as territorial aggressor but rather as a passive object of the Slavic land's desire to be possessed. In fact the treatment of women (and the feminized) in capitalist society parallels the treatment of nature: both served as objects of conquest and penetration and were to be controlled, romanticized, and ravaged. Not only must Innstetten control and condition Effi but he must also own her to use or discard her as he pleases, a fact evidenced early on in a conversation in which Innstetten said he hoped to take Effi with him when he died.

Hybridity and Cultural Transformation

Following unification the German Empire was affected by the tension between the rapidly industrializing Western regions and the largely agrarian East; however German problems and emigration overseas were blamed on the Poles, both the Prussian citizens, but especially the migrant non-citizen Poles from Russian dominated Poland. Although more than half of the foreign workforce was engaged in industry, both in the industrialized western areas in Prussia and the Ruhr, as compared to one third in agriculture, public debate was concentrated primarily on the Polish migrants in the Eastern-Elbian agricultural areas, because these were the erstwhile Polish territories resistant to Germanizing policies and the Polish presence there was considered a danger

¹³² In Meyer's *Gustav Adolfs Page* there is a beautiful Catholic/Croatian/Slavonic young woman Korinna described as wild, reckless, guided by unbridled sexuality and seductive powers and contrasted with the Gustel, who embodies ideal northern virtues whose non-sexual qualities pertain to moral puritanism, sacrifice, selflessness, whose character and role are completely in the service of men's enterprise.

for the new German nation. Any growth of the Polish population in the erstwhile Polish territories was seen as threatening the legitimacy of the Reich in the east. This was most pronounced in the Polish province Posen/Poznan, the core land of the former Polish state, where Polish-German tensions were traditionally notorious. As the *Posener Zeitung* wrote on March 29, 1885: “Stellen doch gerade die östlichen Provinzen ein großes Kontingent der deutschen Auswanderer! Ist das nicht ein Beweis dafür, daß unsere eigenen Reichsgenossen durch Fremde aus der Heimat vertrieben werden?” (qtd. in Herbert 17) The alleged “Slavic threat,” previously largely a regional conflict, however, was carried to the west and assumed national proportions by the 1890s. It seemed to be a wide-spread feeling at the time that German *Volkstum* was indeed threatened by the Slavs, a feeling reinforced by the events in the Habsburg Monarchy.

Max Weber among many other prominent Germans had expressed a paranoid political delusion, namely that an ever-increasing “modernization” of the world at large poses a threat to “Western civilization.” Weber’s modernization theory similarly contributed to the turning of the division between Protestants and Catholics into a major and irreconcilable conflict between Germans and Poles. Even and especially after the *Kulturkampf* against the Catholics was over, fantasies of reverse colonization of the Polish/Slavic barbarians started to circulate in late nineteenth century Germany. A view of German superiority over their Polish neighbors found many adherents who felt compelled to defend Germanness against Slav “barbarism.” This was one of the typical contradictions of the late nineteenth century German discourse of imperialism: the conflict between economic interests and the demand for cheap labor from the east and the

political nationalism which considered the Poles, in particular, to be a threat to national interests; therefore the anti-Polish politics were intended to suppress them.

In his widely read *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), Weber postulated his model of Western rationality by suggesting that Protestant ideas are the prerequisite for capitalism and progress of the modern world, and, conversely, that the socio-economic “backwardness” of the Catholic community in Germany was a result of a lack of affinity between the Catholic religion and rational economic activity rather than of discrimination. Weber’s much-celebrated Protestant ethic thesis was a direct outgrowth of the protracted and virulent debate since the *Kulturkampf* of the Bismarckian era that lasted until World War I, over the social and economic backwardness of the Catholics, and its corollary, that the Poles are an ethnic-religious obstacle to Germany’s progress, to which Weber lent his reputation and his voice both as a German nationalist and as National liberal modernizer.

Migration and emigration created a huge shortage of farm labor in east-Elbian agriculture, and even though a foreign/Polish labor force was desperately needed in German agriculture, their presence was at the same time fiercely attacked. Among the fierce opponents of the recruitment of Poles was Weber, who already as a young scholar was entrusted with the directorship of a policy study sponsored by *Verein für Sozialpolitik* of the socio-economic changes in agriculture in the provinces east of the Elbe (East and West Prussia, Pomerania, Silesia, Brandenburg, Posen, Mecklenburg and the Duchy of Lauenburg) conducted in 1892 and 1893 (*Schriften* 470-507). Weber used the study to intervene in public debate by making controversial recommendations on the grounds of national interests. In Weber’s opinion Polish agrarian labor was the

“existential question for the Germans,” as he argued in 1893: “We can cope with our Polish *Volkgenossen*, we hope to raise the domestic Polish proletariat to the German cultural level, but this becomes impossible if the continued incursion of swarms of eastern nomads regularly destroys and contradicts this civilizational effort.”

In his inaugural lecture at Freiburg University in 1895 on “The nation-state and economic policy,” Weber warned against immigration from Poland by invoking naturalism and social Darwinism – as a philosophy of life against the Poles. The danger of the Polish invasion, according to Weber, lay in their “physiological cleft” from the Germans, their “racial” characteristics that both serve and impede colonial expansion in the East (*Schriften* Vol. 4: 535-74; especially 545, 551 and 553). The Poles are not only culturally but also “naturally” inferior to Germans, thus the justification of the right of the latter to use the former. On the other hand, as Weber explained, German agricultural workers were ousted from their jobs by virtue of the Polish/Slavic race’s superior physical strength and resilience which links them to proverbial “beasts of burden” and predestines them to hard physical work. The “Polish race” according to Weber is better equipped to survive in harsh and hostile conditions, since if need be, Poles can graze from the earth (“das Gras vom Boden essen”) and subsequently would prevail in the eastern reaches of the Empire. Thus the Poles were gaining the upper hand in the ongoing economic struggle between the Germans and the Slavs. While in the United States and England Darwinism was applied to aggressive business ethics, Weber advocated it in Germany as a guide to the differentiation of national space according to the territorial division of labor; he advocated a mix of assimilation and repression and an active

settlement policy, in order to impose minority status upon Poles in the Prussian partitioned territories.

It should be remembered that the German homesteading law against the Polish minority of 1885 was devised by Max Weber's father, Max Weber Senior, who also set on the drafting committee. The enterprise, however, proved a costly failure. Weber resigned from the Pan-German League because it capitulated to the East-Elbian Junkers, who managed for a time to keep the higher tariffs and also succeeded in having the ban on recruitment of Poles from the east lifted in 1890, but the Polish migrants were discriminated against, i.e. by comparison to their Italian counterparts, as they were allowed to be employed as strictly agricultural seasonal laborers.

To solve the economic problem of a huge shortage of labor in the East Elbian agriculture created by German migrations overseas and to the industrialized West and at the same time prevent the Slavic threat in the Prussian East, there were proposals to "import" other cheap workforce of the kind, which due to their obvious and visible "foreignness" would not pose a threat because they would not be able to assimilate into the German culture and therefore endanger its cultural level. The East-Elbian landowners submitted an official demand for the recruitment of Chinese coolies to the Ministry of Interior which was apparently taken into serious consideration. Namely, when in German Samoa large scale plantation operations were introduced Chinese (coolie) laborers were imported to work on them, and they became an essential aspect of economy elsewhere through Imperial German meditation (Moses). There was a serious debate about introducing Chinese coolies as an alien workforce in East Prussian agriculture (Herbert; Lucassen 190) although it was foremost intended as putting pressure on the Prussian

government to lift the ban on the Polish migrant workforce, which was finally achieved in 1890.

No less a public figure than Max Weber advocated for the Chinese workforce. For Weber, from a “civilizational” point of view, the recruitment of Poles was more dangerous than the recruitment of Chinese, because the “half-Germanized Slavs of our east” (presumably Kashubs and Masurians) would assimilate with the Poles (qtd. in Schönwalder 206; *Arbeitsverfassung* 165-96). Weber was well aware of the fact that the central condition for capitalist exploitation is the control of labor by capital in the global distribution of labor (Euro-core capital-labor relations and colonial-periphery capital-labor relations). As a capitalist *rentier* familiar with conditions of contemporary advanced capitalism across the international division of labor, through his family background, i.e. as investors and speculators in the American railroad, Weber could draw on the example of the USA multinational railroad capitalism which employed multi-ethnic cheap labor, including tens of thousands of Chinese coolies, and expected its profits to come primarily from land sale to immigrants.

The genealogy of much of the subsequent German anti-Slav racism can be traced to Weber’s allegations of the advancing “Slavic flood” driving Germans from eastern Prussian areas and threatening to engulf the superior German civilization e.g. *Deutschtum*, which gave weight to the traditional official stereotypes Germans were led to believe about the Catholic Poles as semi-Asiatic, lazy, incompetent and rebellious primitives, whose vices were summed up by the notorious *liederliche polnische Wirtschaft*.

In the context of a partitioned and resentful Poland, Fontane's meditation on borders has particular poignancy and throws up to scrutiny the artificiality behind the divisions in relation to world capitalism and the global distribution of wealth and work force, that is, it demonstrates that the events in one part of the world resonate in unexpected ways in unsuspectedly related part: the tenuousness of imperial borders does not keep apart but reflects sameness. Therefore the contemporary political perspective would throw more light on the presence of the Chinaman in Fontane's narrative, because it reflects the general anxiety at the rising power of the East; thus the similar fear that the swarming immigrants from the East will displace German and American labor. Sustained hostilities against Chinese immigrants following the 1873 market crash, and infamously expressed in the term "yellow peril," in the USA resulted in the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. Only a few years later, the enforcement of similar racialized laws resulted in the expulsion act of 1885 against Poles and Jews in Imperial Germany. The anti-Polish politics of deportation were also intended to prevent the "Slavic flood" threatening the Nordic character of the German people. Furthermore, by the early 1890s, as a number of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe began to arrive in the USA, white Anglo-Saxon protestant Americans began to worry that these "alien hordes" were not assimilable and that unrestricted immigration would change the ethnic, political and cultural balance in the USA, where the prevalent stereotype was that immigrants, especially Eastern Europeans, were "the scum of Europe." Max Weber expressed similar concerns about immigration from "uncivilized" eastern Europe into the USA where culturally and racially inferior groups seemed even more serious than in Germany because of: "the Negro question and the terrible immigration from the big black clouds"

(Mariane Weber 302). As imperialism became more dynamic and pervasive it had greater impact on the territories subject to its influence, both in eastern Europe or Asia, affecting the Jews, Slavs, Irish, Chinese or Africans in similar ways. Unsurprisingly, it is Fontane's imperial official Innstetten who is dismissive of Africans, prejudiced against Poles and incoherent and contradictory about the Chinaman.

In his long career, Fontane also had his share in the popular prejudice against the Poles and faith in the rising German Protestant middle-class and enthusiastic devotion to the German nation under the Prussian leadership much in line with Gustav Freytag, who in his novel *Soll und Haben* (1855), depicts his protagonist Anton Wohlfahrt as a *Kulturträger* in the East, and who as the son of a provincial Protestant family works his way up from his humble surroundings to become a tradesman. In his review Fontane was in agreement with Freytag who defined social and confessional Protestant Prussian-German values in contrast to Catholic Poles:

Das alles ist nicht nur Labsal für ein deutsches und preußisches Herz, es ist auch ebenso wahr, wie es schön ist. Die Polenwirtschaft ist durch sich selbst dem Untergange geweiht; Preußen ist der Staat der Zukunft, weil er, solange es einen Protestantismus gibt, immer 'einem tiefgefühlten Bedürfnis' entsprechen wird, und das Bürgertum. . . ist unbestritten die Stütze jedes Staates und der eigentliche Träger aller Kultur und allen Fortschritts (*Sämtliche Aufsätze* 303)

Kristin Kopp notes that Fontane's criticism of Freytag's notorious portrayal of Jews in *Soll und Haben* does not extend to his similarly negative representation of Poles. This claim is true; however I suggest that Fontane's Huguenot/Calvinist ancestry has something to do with his literary attitudes and the praise of Freytag's new novelistic form as the birth of modern German realism. As Ian Watt wrote in his seminal *The Rise of the Novel* (1957): "It is. . . likely that the Puritan conception of the dignity of labour helped to bring into being the novel's general premise that the individual's daily life is of sufficient

importance and interest to be the proper subject of literature” (74). The point I want to make is that the novel as a social literary form helped forge a collective Prussian identity much as it had done in forging French and English identity in the eighteenth century. As a literary historian and critic Fontane was involved with notions of “canon” and “tradition” in the writing of German novelistic history and was aware of the fact that the German novelistic tradition was not renowned. Thus when this new Protestant literary form was announced by Freytag, Fontane hailed its appearance in which internal differences among the Protestant Germans were sublated under their shared world-view and their common political and religious ideology in opposition to Polish Catholics, alleged to have a world view alien to the Protestant tradition and thus also to have different views of time and space. The Poles did have a different world-view as far as they considered themselves to be a colonized nation whose independence was hampered by alien partitioning powers, which is why they became an irreconcilable culture, unable to live together or to live apart from Protestant Germans on a disputed territory.

Fontane’s observations about Poland in the 1850s and 60s and early 70s correspond to the Polish “heroic period” of hopeless revolutions, apathy, and self-destruction caused by repeated defeats led by the Polish nobility without attempting any radical socioeconomic change. However, during the almost forty years that elapsed between Fontane’s enthusiastic review of 1855 and the publication of *Effi Briest* in 1894 many things changed. As Phillipp Ther remarks: “Die Antwort der von Preußen beherrschten Polen war anders als in *Soll und Haben* beschrieben. Sie machten sich die vermeintlich exklusiv deutschen Tugenden zu eigen, bauten sich ein autarkes Genossenschaftssystem

in der Wirtschaft auf und reagierten auch auf dem Feld der Kultur.”¹³³ William Hagen similarly observes: “The Poles’ most enduring accomplishment in the four decades after 1950 was the creation of Organic Work institutions which strengthened Polish society economically while they integrated into the gentry-dominated national movement sizeable contingents of the urban and rural common people” (139). In what follows I want to discuss Fontane’s character Golchowski as an exemplary model for the response of the Prussian-ruled Poles to the anti-Polish measures to draw attention to Fontane’s depiction of the Polish periphery as a source of a considerable transformative power in terms of its cultural and economic achievements.

While Fontane challenged static assumptions about Polish society in view of the changes that the Polish society was undergoing when the “organic work” replaced earlier reliance on conspiracy and insurrection as the strategy for Polish national emancipation, many of his contemporaries, Weber included, refused to acknowledge the economic and cultural development as well as the growth of national consciousness among the Slavs and other Eastern peoples, who became more assertive and unwilling to live under German leadership and tutelage.

While at first sight it would seem justified to draw Weberian cultural implications in the context of *Effi Briest*, where Catholic minorities like Poles and Kashubians are not represented by Fontane as residents of modern urban centers, either Berlin, the nation’s hub and dynamo, or even the less exciting small towns like Kessin; rather, they seem to

¹³³ “The response from the Prussian-ruled Poles was different to that described in *Soll und Haben*. They appropriated the allegedly exclusively German virtues, of diligence, orderliness, and modesty, built up an independent system of fraternity in the financial sector, and also responded in the cultural sphere.”

be overrepresented in the rural Pomeranian hinterland. However, the reverse argument is being made here, namely, that capitalism has the capacity to rearrange geography into its own image. In *The Modern World-System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* Emanuel Wallerstein traced the emergence of the capitalist core in Western Europe to the sixteenth-century out of an initially minimal economic disparity between Eastern and Western Europe by basing his argument on the example of Poland/the Polish Commonwealth. According to Wallerstein it was the expanded demand in Western Europe for Eastern European primary commodity exports in the West that turned the Eastern European (semi)periphery into a cheap supplier of grain and kept the local peasantry subjected to the feudal property relations called “second serfdom.” Thus the profits that successfully transformed metropolitan Germany and eventually Prussia into an industrial and urban society were generated by the enforced subordination of eastern Europe to the West. It was the wholesale merchants who were the first to acquire wealth in Germany and whose capital enabled subsequent large-scale industrialization and transport development in Prussia. Thus the process of development of the core continued to underdevelop the semiperiphery which provided raw material and cheap labor.

Marxist geography came into being partly as a critical response to the traditional spatial analyses that had dominated the field in which inequality (or differences) became explained away as a natural or original state by failing to grasp the inter-connections between spatial structure and political economy. Political (historical materialist/Marxist) geographers like David Harvey, Neil Smith and Edward Soja have focused on spaces as both real and imagined by elaborating on imperialism as a complex and differential

spatial-temporal order created by the dynamics of industrial capitalism and implementation of a transcontinental program of reterritorialization to draw attention to imperialism's self-presentation as a rational and progressive project.

Whereas the massive differences in (symbolic and real) geography and segregation between Germans and Poles/Kashubians Weber explained in terms of the German Protestant virtues as opposed to the Polish Catholic *liederliche Wirtschaft*, a heavily derogatory term stemming from Frederick II, literally meaning Polish economy, indicating chaos and filth, Smith discards this commonsense notion of "development" that designates not only the geographical area but also a "type of society" or a level of development and argues instead for something deeper in which the binaries of space and society are dissolved through an understanding that there is no such thing as place without social relations, just as there is no such thing as nature without our own articulation of it as a concept.

According to Smith the point of uneven development is not that capitalism creates a fixed geographical world after its own image, where development and underdevelopment are geographical mirrors of the capital-labor relation (as seems to be the case in world-system theory that divided core from periphery), but that the dynamism of geographical space is equally an expression of the image of capital. Smith's argument is based on the idea that each mode of production, capitalism in particular, had its own way of producing nature from which it then produces space. From the global to the local scales, our spatial worlds are constructed and reconstructed as expressions of social relations and especially as expressions of capitalist social relations. Uneven development is in many ways the hallmark of capitalism. Thus he writes: "The logic of uneven development derives

specifically from the opposed tendencies, inherent in capital, toward the differentiation but simultaneous equalization of the levels and conditions of production. For not only does capital produce space in general, it produces the real spatial scales that give uneven development its coherence ” (ix-xv). Rather he points out: “we do not live, act and work ‘in’ space so much as by living, acting and working we produce space” (116). This production of space and scales are deeply political/economic processes which Smith calls “deep space” and describes how the production of a particular kind of nature and space under historical capitalism is essential to the unequal development of a landscape that integrates poverty and wealth, industrial urban with agricultural decline. The culmination of this process is imperialism, which achieves global domination, classification and commodification of all space, under the aegis of the metropolitan center. To the imagination of anti-imperialism, our space at home in the peripheries has been usurped and put to use by outsiders for their purpose.

The division of Poland between Prussia, Russia and Austria into arbitrary provinces, disregarding already existing linguistic and cultural groupings, has further contributed to the decline of these Polish provinces and represents a blatant example of the arbitrary usurpation of other people’s territory and lives. Prussia and later Imperial Germany prevented the creation of Polish centrally organized socio-economic organizations. Therefore Smith calls the production of this scientifically “natural” world, a *second* nature and suggests challenging and displacing received colonial perceptions and relations of the second nature (e.g. such as depicted in *Soll und Haben*) by discovery of a third nature, which is not pristine and prehistorical, but one that derives historically and abductively from the deprivations of the present. It was therefore necessary for the Poles

to discover a third nature, which was not reconstitution of pre-partitioned Poland (Romantic Poland is dead and gone) but one that derives historically and abductively from the deprivations of the present condition.

Prussia, as represented in Fontane's *Effi Briest*, is an exemplary illustration for uneven development in which deep place/space as a structuring agent has produced a particular kind of nature and space under different phases of historical capitalism and is essential to understanding the unequal development of a landscape that integrates poverty and wealth, (Kashubian farmers and farm hands and large estate owners), industrial urban centers like Berlin with agricultural decline in East-Elbian provinces such as Pomerania, demonstrating that the historically produced heterogeneity of the produced social space is not based on mutuality and the fulfillment of physical, material, intellectual, and spiritual needs of the populations but on capitalist dynamics which creates segregation and asymmetries between the agricultural east and the industrialized west.

The Polish reformist movement did not seek to resurrect a pre-colonial past or to blindly reproduce the existing social order by imitating the capitalist present, but to imagine and create conditions in which progressive change can occur. Given the centrality of the peasant question, the Polish situation was not dissimilar from Indian; in both cases there was a recognition of the dynamic conscience of subaltern masses as a motor force in changing history. In his important study *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*, Partha Chatterjee makes the distinction between imperialist and anti-imperialist nationalisms and argues that even if the ideology of bourgeois anticolonial nationalism was inescapably derivative of metropolitan nationalist ideologies, it was nevertheless merely by virtue of its specificity an anticolonial nationalism; it needed to

distinguish itself from the metropolitan, imperialist nationalisms and thus was obliged to go beyond them. Ranajit Guha also reminds us that in theorizing colonialism it is necessary to account for the huge investment of “the masses” of the colonized historically in various kinds of nationalist struggles. Referring to the Indian case, Guha argues that even in those instances in which “the masses” were mobilized very self-consciously and willfully by bourgeois nationalist elites, they managed to break away from their control and put the characteristic imprint of popular politics on campaigns initiated by the upper classes.

Unlike the traditional Polish revolutionary rhetoric, the “organic work” did not attempt to simply replace German power and knowledge by historical rehabilitation of the Polish “golden freedom” for the *szlachta*, the political class which had ran the Commonwealth and remained closely identified with it, but by providing effective means of integrating the Polish masses into new social structures combining and transcending the already existing ones. The new populist nationalism only slowly took shape, gradually replacing the traditional political nation of nobility. The agrarian aspect of the Polish-speaking gentry and political fragmentation of Poland explains why the Polish political class was unable or unwilling to create the conditions in which progressive change could occur earlier but had only been reproducing the existing social order. In the protracted struggle against the occupying powers Polish elites clung stubbornly to their cultural heritage (Berend; Hagen).

On the wretched condition of the Polish peasantry Heinrich Heine wrote in 1823:

Die Unterwürfigkeit des polnischen Bauers gegen den Edelmann ist empörend. Er beugt sich mit dem Kopf fast bis zu den Füßen des gnädigen Herrn und spricht die Formel: “Ich küsse die Füße.” Wer den Gehorsam personifiziert haben will, sehe einen polnischen Bauer vor seinem Edelmann stehen; es fehlt nur der wedelnde

Hundeschweif. Bei einem solchen Anblick denke ich unwillkürlich: Und Gott erschuf den Menschen nach seinem Ebenbilde! – und es ergreift mich ein unendlicher Schmerz, wenn ich einen Menschen vor einem andern so tief erniedrigt sehe. (“Über Polen” 560-1)

Obviously for the Polish “wretched of the earth,” it was not a simple matter of reversing the German/master-Slav/slave dialectic, for the Kashubians (as well as rural Poles) as a designated inferior suffered injustice from both the German overlord and his Polish master. The restoration of the Polish state without social revolution would not remove the gulf separating the common subaltern classes from the nobles, but rather simply mean the replacement of the German master with the Polish one.

This was poignantly manifested in 1846, when the national liberation movement sparked a general uprising. The Polish *szlachta* in Austrian Poland seized control of the “Free City of Krakow” and advanced southward into the countryside in an attempt to rouse peasants against Habsburg rule. To their horror, the peasantry not only did not take part in the “liberation” movement, but also turned against the Polish landowning gentry. The result was a violent peasant uprising against the gentry culminating in the massacre of more than a thousand people in the region. This was the largest peasant uprising in the partitioned Polish lands in the nineteenth century directed against serfdom and manorial owners whom they held responsible for their own impoverishment and undernourishment. To those who still clung to the ideals of the aristocracy, the massacre of the patriots of 1846 sounded a clear call that the old order was dead.

By the 1880s hopeless romanticism finally gave way to “National Solidarity” and sober realism and a pragmatic approach to nation-building even though national ideas still remained the prime mover of Polish politics. There was a conscious effort by the progressive Polish gentry and bourgeois intelligentsia to “raise” the national

consciousness of the peasantry and mobilize the large base. The peasantry and lower classes were won over to the Polish national cause only in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The agrarian reform of 1864 in Russian Poland strengthened Polish society giving peasants larger stakes in society and in the struggle for independence. The “organic work” as an all-encompassing praxis sought to create conditions for the future Polish state through building socio-economic formations by furthering economic development, by stimulating trade and urban crafts and encouraging better agricultural practices. The ultimate goal was a new social consciousness and renewal of the nation.

Among the Polish intellectuals who advocated these ideas were Alexander Swietochwski, Boleslaw Prus, Henryk Sienkiewicz, and others who were widely read and influential. As Swietochwski wrote in his *Political Directions* (1882): “Dreams of regaining external freedom should today be replaced with efforts to acquire an internal independence. Such an independence can stem solely from strengthening of mental and material forces, a comprehensive national progress, linked to general development and democratization of life” (qtd. in Berend 101). This meant turning away from the ideals of the agrarian-conservative *szlachta* towards populism, a political movement representing not just the upper classes but gradually embracing all classes: the petite bourgeoisie, common people and peasantry with the goal of establishing a just society. Specific societal questions addressed by the Polish Positivists included peasants, the establishment of women’s rights, the assimilation of Poland’s Jewish minority, and the defense of the Polish population in the German-ruled part of Poland against anti-Polish measures and displacement by German settlers.

Thus in post-colonial terminology it could be said that during this period the intrinsically antagonistic colonial encounter between Germans and Poles was also reconfigured as one of ambivalence and negotiation. Herein lies the key to understanding the figure of Golchowski, which in most readings of *Effi Briest* is misunderstood or overlooked. For Golchowski is neither a traditional representative of the pre-modern Polish village communalism, as seen through Effi's eye, nor a proof of Polish dishonesty as qualified by Innstetten, but the embodiment of this new sober pragmatism in Polish politics, which works from within to overturn the existing hierarchies and subvert the official ideology by mobilizing the masses.

While Golschowski is despised and suspected by Prussians he is also tolerated for his role of blunting more rebellious elements among the local populace. He is the first and the last native that Effi encounters as the innkeeper, standing in the doorway of his inn, greeting respectfully the "Herrschaften." As a member of the rural *szlachta* and a political representative of the local rural community, and the most prosperous local Slav, Golchowski represents the most powerful Pole in the district, whose name is almost identical to that of the Count Agenor von Goluchowski's, the Galician magnate, twice Galician Viceroy and the Austro-Hungarian foreign minister (1895-1906), and the most powerful contemporary Pole. The similarity of names is hardly coincidental, despite the difference in status — since the example of the Polish nobility in Galicia, who won enviable national and social advantages for all Poles, also served as a model for Poles elsewhere — and could be related to Bismarck's concerns that the autonomy granted to Poles in Austria in 1871 could and did have centrifugal effects on Prussian Poles. On the

other hand, the Polish nobility dominated Ukrainians and by extension all Poles were in a dominant position in relation to Ukrainians.

But is Golchowski a comprador or a Polish patriot? Golchowski is respectfully greeting the district governor but he is mistrusted by the Prussian government, and it is the commanding view of his inn that conveys not only his authority over the land he surveys (as the narrator puts it: “auf zwei Meilen in der Runde wurde kein Ei gelegt, von dem er nicht wußte” (83), but also his centripetal effect on the local peasants who are his clients and his electoral constituency (er hat hier die ganze Gegend in die Tasche).¹³⁴ For his inn, pragmatically named in honor of Bismarck, and conspicuously placed at the foot of the railway embankment, at the point where the road branches off to (fictional) Kessin and (factual) Varzin, the seat of Bismarck’s estate, suggests the power he wields over those who dwell in his field of vision by the position of visual authority and spatial configuration rather than by use of force. As an innkeeper, Golchowski also keeps up with the train timetable to be able to serve clients beyond his visual authority. It does not require much imagination to follow Fontane’s “imaginative eye” in placing Golchowski rather than Innstetten in the position of the real “monarch of all I survey.”

Although he is said to be in the service of the Prussian state, albeit qualified as “ein ganz unsicherer Passagier” (44),¹³⁵ Golchowski is mistrusted by the German authorities and disliked by Bismarck, but tolerated, as his coercion meant an indirect controlling influence on the indigenous Slavic population, an indication that those who dominate are

¹³⁴ “He has the whole constituency in his pocket.”

¹³⁵ “dubious customer”

dependant upon those who are dominated.¹³⁶ Hence his diabolical nature and his subversive role in maintaining uneasiness and instability by simultaneously affirming and undermining authority. Golchowski's position also allows him to sneer at the crude ways of the blundering German overlord with impunity while making the intruder uncomfortable. Golchowski's ironic remarks about the contemporary corruption, aggrandizement and money-grabbing of the Prussian establishment does not spare even its arch-Junker, Bismarck: "Ja, wenn man sich den Fürsten so als Papiermüller denkt! Es ist doch alles sehr merkwürdig; eigentlich kann er die Schreibung nicht leiden, und das bedruckte Papier erst recht nicht, und nun legt er doch selber eine Papiermühle an" (88).¹³⁷ Bismarck's actual acquisition of a paper mill is one example among ample evidence of the extent to which the scions of the old Prussian families, Bismarck no exception, succumbed to the temptations of wealth in the new Reich. This is an example of Fontane's double-voiced style of addressing or understood differently by tone-deaf imperial masters and by Kashubians and Poles who spoke with forked tongues.

Furthermore Golchowski's exotic traditional appearance, his display of Polishness, is both a sign of his cultural resistance and his alignment with the local natives he represents. Being prosperous himself he could surely afford "Western clothes," either to impress the Governor or the better to disguise himself. Yet he appears too honest to masquerade as anyone German. As a "new type" of the post-uprising generation of Poles,

¹³⁶ "Mit 78 ist man ein unsiecherer Passagier" was the expression Fontane used to describe himself. In a letter to his daughter Martha Fontane, March 9, 1898.

¹³⁷ "Yes," said Golchowski, "just imagine the Prince running a paper mill! It's all very odd; in actual fact he can't stand writing, and printed paper even less, and now he has acquired a paper-mill."

Golchowski represents the rising Polish middle class, who as a parliamentary representative, and a man of the people, might be seeking to come to terms with the official conservative Prussia (following the example of the neighboring Galicia, as the linking of his name to Goluchowski's would suggest), while at the same time empowering and organizing a popular Polish front based on hostility against the Prussian regime. Golchowski, with a knack for business "Er hat die ganze Gegend in der Tasche und versteht die Wahlmache wie kein anderer, gilt auch für wohlhabend" (44),¹³⁸ also challenges the stereotypical representation of Poles as either poor nobles or primitive peasants, and represents an obvious contradiction to the sneering reference to "liederliche polnische Wirtschaft."

Golchowski is an innkeeper and a money-lender, both occupations traditionally associated with Jews especially in rural areas in Eastern Europe and based on the myth of the Jew as banker, moneylender, usurer and starver of the people (a type of anti-Semitism that was exploited on a large scale in the past by various political regimes). The combination of a money-lender and a headman in Golchowski's person can imply that the subaltern local Kashubians, who otherwise play no political part and who are stereotypically represented as apathetic drunkards and helpless victims, are manipulated and exploited at the hands of a double-crossing Pole who knows the ways of Germans and their imperial administration as well as the local community over which he presides and is thus able to exploit both the system and the natives for his private advantage.

Money-lending as a trope when disarticulated from the historically shaped political and economic relations of everyday life becomes an abstraction. Therefore, Golchowski's

¹³⁸ "He has the whole constituency in his pocket and knows how to run an election like nobody else and he's supposed to be well off."

money lending occupation requires to be seen in the light of situated practices of place and the lived experience of history of Poland. In rural Eastern Europe including the Polish provinces of Prussia, as elsewhere in the colonized world, there was usually a lack of cumulative growth, because the rather backward agriculture was limited by the lack of an internal market; the accumulated money, the capital from whatever enterprises, was diverted into speculative activities such as real estate, usury and hoarding. The fact that the money-lending changed to Polish hands means that the economic conditions of Poles improved so much that that they were able to build up an independent financial system. In *Effi Briest* it is stressed that neither government, (unless the Kasubians assimilate) not Kessiner business-people, not Junkers care about the Kasubian rural population of Hinterpommern. The only exception is Golchowski whose role as money-lender should be seen in a more positive light. We can think of the positive role small loans that Golchowski granted to peasants or to small craft and trade shops might have played in rural areas where there existed no national banking institutions and no one else was willing to give money on loan to rather poor Kashubian farmers and fishermen. In many cases these loans were instrumental in opening a business.

Here, I think, the reader is invited to question Innstetten's version of reality that shows the impossibility of neutrality and objectivity, even though the potential counter-opinion is strategically suppressed. For to accept Innstetten's judgment of Golchowski means to subscribe to the ideological reflection of a member of the ruling elite, an imperial exponent and a man hostile to liberals, xenophobic towards Jews and Poles, contemptuous of burghers and the lower classes and dismissive of non-Europeans. The fact that Bismarck is frustrated by Golchowski's political activity would rather suggest

that he is a Polish patriot, who has been highly effective in his role as political representative, both as an organizer among the local population of his district, and as elected parliamentarian and as such indeed a formidable political opponent. Though his role is not illegal, his power has its limits, because as a Prussian Polish subject engaged in anti-imperial activities at the height of Bismarck's anti-Polish politics, his actions are of necessity conspiratorial and conducted underground rather than open and direct.

It should be remembered that Heine observed in 1823 that with few exceptions all inns in Poland were in the hands of Jews and that spirits distilleries had a detrimental effect on the country and he mentioned how sad an impression the wretched conditions of Jews and Poles made on him. Another visitor to occupied Poland, a certain Southland Edwards, similarly observed messiness of the border town inns between the Prussian and Russian border. Yet Edwards too seems to be "unaware that the proprietors of inns in Eastern Europe deliberately kept their establishments disorderly to avoid excessive taxes and envy of their Gentile neighbors. And it did not take much to evoke that envy: witness the descriptions of Polish peasants who, in Edwards's words, seem to sink lower and lower as one proceeds eastward" (*Sarmatian* September 2005).

The above observations were made in the early decades of the nineteenth-century. The fact that the patriot-publican-political tribune Golchowski is associated with a traditionally Jewish occupation means that things have changed for Poles in fact so much so that the corrective to the village inn stereotype is in order. Golchowski's place, rather than invoking the trope of a traditional Polish village inn where peasants come to drink themselves to a stupor, is quite a respectable establishment which even has the approval of very critical and disinclined Innstetten. However since public inns have always had a

strong mobilizing effect and traditionally served as institutions of grass-roots political activity for the natives and centers of resistance, Golchowski's inn-keeping occupation can also be understood as suggesting his rational, pragmatic political activity. Colonial discourse, however, often represents the political demands of the subject peoples and the subaltern in general as irrational and demonstrating lower civilizational behavior; their absence of social, national and cultural conscience, their chaotic and violent revolts often brewed up under the influence of alcohol in their inns or in the open spaces prove the point how very inferior they are by comparison to the high standards of the organized and institutionalized political activity of the enlightened imperial nations; e.g. a case in point is the description of the rural Morlacks from the Dalmatian hinterland, in Heinrich Mann's *Diana*, who gather in the local inn to get drunk and plot their violent, irrational peasant revolution against the Habsburg Empire. The inn is an important site where a subaltern public can be mobilized in the absence of legal venues of political representation. As a public institution of the subaltern the inn represents a subversive site, a breeding ground of anti-government activity, as it often serves as a place of conspiracies, agitation, mobilization, revolutions. Inns and coffee houses in Central and Eastern Europe played an important role as traditional centers of male social life and in urban centers became gathering places of intellectuals and artists. The 1848 Hungarian Revolution started from the coffee house in Pest. German liberals also gathered in pubs or coffee-houses as Fontane's reactionary character Domina Adelhide, Dubslav Stechlin's half-sister, sneered at their amateurism in *Der Stechlin*: "Freiheit ist, wenn sie sich versammeln und Bier trinken und ein Blatt gründen." That is why Imperial Germany not

only excluded Social Democrats from the military, but also found it necessary to forbid privates from patronizing Socialist inns.

During the anti-Polish campaign in Imperial Germany when the Polish language was forbidden and educational institutions suppressed and culture denied, and when even the Polish churches were under heavy scrutiny, Poles developed an extensive network of private schooling and underground organizations. The inn remained the only public place which served as a source of information and a forum for exchanging ideas. What more effective method was there for a Polish tribune like Golchowski than to assume the role of an inn-keeper as the gatekeeper to German *Lebensraum* in Poland?

As a middle-of-the-road pragmatist, Golchowski is capable of accumulating capital just as effectively as he is able to intervene in the hegemonic narrative or nation. Thus he seems to have one foot firmly implanted within those conventional political movements that are prepared to take up the cause of reform (such as “organic work”) and perhaps one foot implanted in the radical movements seeking more revolutionary solutions. This straddling of political positions can sometimes be uncomfortable or even unbearable. But I think it wise to recognize that reformists and revolutionaries can often make common cause in a particular conjuncture, the only discernible differences sometimes being the long-term goals rather than the short term actions. Given the political violence of conservatism coupled with predatory economic liberalism of Imperial Germany, it seems to me that a powerful reformist movement deserves support for its future hope.

Thus my reading of Golchowski as an embodiment of the emerging Polish pragmatism in economic and political affairs through a rational approach to nation-building project through reforms and accumulation of capital, which help create

conditions for progressive change. While the Polish population had no control over their destiny and no claim to basic rights and all attempts to an independent Polish statehood had been frustrated and suppressed by concerted efforts of Russia, Prussia and the Habsburg Monarchy, there was hope and both a utopian vision of future and effort to improve material and social conditions and thereby create new “spaces of hope” to paraphrase David Harvey. As Bakhtin has observed:

Nothing conclusive has yet taken place in the world, the ultimate word of the world and about the world has not yet been spoken, the world is open and free, everything is still in the future and will always be in the future (DP 166).

Fontane’s opinion of both the German as well as the Polish societies changed over time, so much so that by 1890s he became disillusioned with the Imperial Germany and convinced that an independent Polish state would rise again, probably sooner rather than later (in the already quoted letter to Friedrich Fontane, dated on 16 June 1898). In another letter to Morris Fontane correctly predicts the rise of the Far East, while his title protagonist in *Stechlin* wonders whether Japan will become a new power in the Pacific Ocean and whether China, with its teeming millions, will suddenly awaken to political consciousness. In *Effi Briest* he negotiates a discursive space for a suppressed Slav/Polish counter-voices to contest or limit the monoglossic discourse, even though they are marginalized or the circumstances may be fewer in which their voices are equal in dialogues. Put another way, *Effi Briest* provides a point at which to broach issues of Poland’s peculiar status as European colony in the era of modernity and new imperialism. What strikes the reader from today’s vintage point is that these Fontane’s observations run ahead of his time.

CONCLUSION

I have demonstrated with my rereading of *Effi Briest* alternative strategies of reading novels of empire that take account of events and processes in the margins as a result of transnational alliances, mixing, rivalries, mass movements, resistance and conflicts. This in turn problematizes the tendency to see a purported nation state like united Germany as a space less territorially and culturally homogenized and stable but rather as fractured into dynamic environments of change and exchange consisting of fragments and “overlapping zones” of contradictory aspirations and traditions rather than juxtapositions of monolithic entities.

In my reading of *Effi Briest* I aimed at justifying the margins by focusing on the Pomeranian chapters because I find them both neglected and strategically important and revealing. I have demonstrated that the Pomeranian setting is not just a background against which the metropolitan story unfolds but an important time-space environment created/represented in Fontane’s fictional narratives. In this respect the shift of the fictional chronotope from Krotoschin to Kessin Fontane made in the course of writing *Effi Briest* was a crucial move towards the polyphonic novel in the Bakhtinian sense. Unlike the circumstances in Posen — where avoidance and animosities prevented communication between Germans and Poles, would have precluded both the dialogue and the genuine polyphony, I have shown how Kessin in Eastern Pomerania represents a connective tissue between Germans and Poles, a third hybridized space which opens up possibilities for a dialogue between the dominant (German) and subaltern (Polish) narrative allowing for authenticity and unfinalizability, which undermines the possibility

of imposing unity by the reconciliation of contradictions in favor of the dominant/colonizer.

I have also examined *Effi Briest* through Bakhtin's chronotope and demonstrated how it foregrounds Fontane's strategies of instability such as dialogue and therefore ambiguity, limits of coherence and unity by focusing on Eastern Pomerania as a site of intersections, cross roads, meeting points and contact zones. I have also shown how Bakhtin's Chronotope captures dynamic changes, exchanges and mutual influence within and among heterotopias, by stressing various forms of interaction, mobility, migration, intermingling within and among those heterotopic spaces and places which are productive of polyphony and hybridized entities within the context of their time and place in the text. Finally through these productive strategies Eastern Pomerania offers a unique position from which Western humanism and universalism can be problematized by casting a skeptical light on what they have distorted, excluded or repressed.

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