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***SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN MEERUMSCHLUNGEN AND THE CALL FOR
NATIONALISM:***

NATIONAL IDENTITY UNDER CONSTRUCTION ON THE GERMAN AND
DANISH BORDER IN SELECTED WORKS

BY THEODOR STORM, THEODOR FONTANE, AND HERMAN BANG

By

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

***Schleswig-Holstein meerumschlungen* and the Call for Nationalism:**

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Dissertation Director:
Martha B. Helfer

My dissertation examines selected German and Danish literary texts of the late nineteenth century that employ ideological notions of nationalism for the purpose of constructing and stabilizing national identity. The groundwork for the research centers on specific times in nationalist movements in Europe and a specific setting on the border region of Schleswig-Holstein. The urgency of this project lies especially in the effort to understand the shifting qualities and perceptions of nationalism as both a destructive and productive force in current discourses of globalization.

In my analysis of four literary narratives, Theodor Storm's novellas *Ein grünes Blatt* (1850) and *Abseits* (1863), Theodor Fontane's *Unwiederbringlich* (1891), and Herman Bang's *Tine* (1889), I demonstrate how national identity is constructed on the basis of a firm nationalism and constantly destabilized when confronted with the presence

of an Other by the border. In the chosen literary works, national identity, at all stages of its formation and in all classifications and depictions as German, Prussian, Danish, or Frisian, is fundamentally about attaining the subject's recognition as sovereign and universal. And because the subject functions as a representation of the nation with which it identifies, the construction of the subject's national identity is ultimately about achieving international recognition. In the selected narratives, national identity—whether German or Danish—is constructed by the authors in a very similar fashion. While nationalism is criticized and condemned to different degrees, it also serves as the necessary ground for shaping effectively one's national identity. The three authors under discussion operate with a nationalist project in which they set out to construct a national self: in the texts under consideration, nationalism functions as a temporary but necessary formative stage in the construction of the subject's national identity. The selected authors also experience and triumph over nationalism in their personal lives. Ultimately, this dissertation will point to the crucial significance of the regional particularity—given by the margins of a border area—for the representation of the national totality.

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Introduction

I. The Urgency of the Current Border Discourse in Germany and Denmark

This dissertation examines selected German and Danish literary texts of the late nineteenth century that employ ideological notions of nationalism for the purpose of constructing and stabilizing national identity. The groundwork for the research centers on specific times in nationalist movements in Europe and a specific setting on the border region of Schleswig-Holstein. The urgency of this project lies especially in the effort to understand the shifting qualities and perceptions of nationalism as both a destructive and productive force in current discourses of globalization.¹ The interest in the subject of nationalism grows by decades in new and revised editions of works that tirelessly aim at defining and analyzing the phenomenon of nationalism and its developmental forms. Benedict Anderson comments on the current awareness of nationalism in his revised edition of *Imagined Communities* that “the ‘end of the era of nationalism,’ so long prophesied, is not remotely in sight. Indeed, nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time” (3). With a contemporary view on nationalism, Michael Billig claims in his *Banal Nationalism* that nationalism must be understood as an endemic condition that we experience daily in routine and familiar forms, like the seemingly innocent flag that hangs outside a public building (5-6).²

¹ Nationalism in the context of globalization, although limited only to Europe, is recently discussed in a number of writings in the essay collection edited by Ireneusz Pawel Karolewski and Andrzej Marcin Suszycki: *Multiplicity of Nationalism in Contemporary Europe*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield/Lexington Books, 2010.

² Hardly interested in the origins of nationalism, Michael Billig investigates the current ideological habits of nationalism, by which nations are reproduced as nations. Concerned with the general attitude that nationalism as a peripheral and exotic force is problematic only in the case of extremists, Billig identifies the banality and thus the danger of nationalism in the established nations, which, located at the center, are led to see nationalism as the property and the problem of others, but not of theirs (5-7).

The presence of nationalism and its role in reinforcing national identity prove to this day that nationalism still appeals excessively and subtly to individuals and groups in our modern societies. Two recent events in 2011 draw attention to an aggressive nationalism in the established nations of Northern Europe: Denmark's reinforcement of border controls with Germany and Sweden in May; and the Norwegian nationalistic terror attack in Oslo, accompanied by the shooting of more than eighty young members of the governing Labor Party on the island of Utøya in Norway, in July.³ These happenings are clearly furious forms of a nationalism that is called to serve a national purpose. While these events endangered people's freedom and safety at an individual and national level, they also serve to remind people of their national identity and fortify its nature through a clear distinction from the identity of others.

Even in established nations today, nationalism in its many guises still is evident in the construction of national identity. Denmark is a case in point. In May 2011, Denmark made international news by reinforcing the border control with its two neighboring countries, Germany and Sweden. Attention and criticism was directed at the stubborn little Scandinavian country, which, with this unilateral decision, was accused of shaking the very foundations of the European Union.⁴ The current border debate revolves more ardently around the particular relationship that Denmark has with Germany, rather than with Sweden, for the relationship with the former has long marked a historical significance between the two nations and it now points at the tension between them. Denmark's intention of fortifying its borders by building a

³ The Norwegian terrorist attacks both in the middle of Oslo and in the island of Utøya were carried by the Norwegian citizen Anders Behring Breivik, who claims to be against multiculturalism and Norway's openness to emigrants. For some details on this event, see, for example, Anita Bay Bundegaard's article "Samfundet efter Anders Behring Breivik" in *Politiken*, 25 July 2011.

⁴ The first to acclaim border control were, in fact, Italy and France. One of their primary concerns was the wave of refugees fleeing from Middle East and North Africa.

number of new custom houses and increasing video surveillance is explained by the leader of the *Dansk Folkeparti* [Danish People's Party],⁵ Pia Kjaersgård, as a way to reduce cross-border crime and illegal immigration in Denmark. In her conviction that the dream of attaining a Europe without borders has become a true nightmare,⁶ Kjaersgård clearly reveals her disappointment with the Schengen Agreement ("Pia K.").⁷ Germany has reacted quite critically to these measures and its Foreign Minister, Guido Westerwelle, regards Denmark's decision to build border fortifications as an ill omen for Europe.⁸ Similarly, the former governor of Bavaria, Edmund Stoiber, expresses his concern about the deterioration of Europe and warns of a renaissance of nationalism in the European capitals (Schult). Despite the seemingly positive purpose of such controlling measures, a heated discussion regarding Danish nationalism has been ignited within and outside the country's borders. Danish nationalism and its recurring expressions accentuate one of Denmark's recent images as, to borrow Günther Grass's terminology, "a small hysterical country" (qtd. in Koefoed and Simonsen 311). As if to accentuate even more this newly discussed image of the small Scandinavian country characterized by a Lilliputian chauvinism, as Uffe Østergård terms it ("Dänen" 54), matters became worse when the leader of the *Dansk Folkeparti* reminded the German ambassador in Denmark of his country's nationalist past.⁹ The current border debates aggravate a long historical conflict between the two nations.

⁵ All translations from Danish and Swedish in this dissertation are my own, unless otherwise noted.

⁶ In Danish: "Drømmen om et grænseløst Europa er blevet et mareridt for Europas befolkninger" ("Pia K.).

⁷ The objective of the Schengen Agreement is to eliminate internal border controls in the European Union and it is now disturbed by Denmark as the first country to actively reinforce border control.

⁸ Focusing on Europe's freedom of travel, according to an article in *Nordschleswiger*, Guido Westerwelle maintains: "Das ist weit mehr als eine deutsch-dänische Frage, das ist eine Frage der Freiheitsrechte der Bürger Europas" ("Bundesjustizministerin").

⁹ Pia Kjaersgård scandalously criticizes Germany for its Nazi past. See, for example, the article written by Lars Husum on 25 June 2011 in the official homepage of Denmark Radio, also retrievable in: <<http://www.dr.dk/P1/Kanten/Udsendelser/2011/06/24104745.htm>>.

The border between Denmark and Germany, geographically marked by the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, has been the central space of a long and vital intellectual discourse that has contributed to shaping both German and Danish culture and identity. Over centuries, this border has molded politics, art, literature, the way of life, and even the attitudes in and between the two neighboring nations. Heinrich Detering uses the tantalizing metaphor of living organisms and their protective membranes when he speaks of the border as an utterly productive force that is necessary for the survival and development of the bordering nations (“Grenzgänge” 22-23).¹⁰ However, since the establishment of the European Union and its agenda to bring European nations in closer collaboration with each other by eliminating borders, certain insecurities and questions have surfaced. Denmark—an EU member since 1972—does not shy away from expressing its annoyance with the possibility of being part of a homogenized whole. With a stubborn attitude, as previously revealed and recorded throughout history, Denmark wishes to deviate from following the example set by the great powers of Europe.¹¹

The two great powers, and certainly the most influential nation states of the European Union, are Germany and France. Germany, with its central position in Europe, plays a vital role in the international arena. It is no coincidence that the concept of a soft great power—first introduced by Josef Ney in 1990 to refer to the indirect exercise of power—is applied to post-1989 Germany by the Danish academic

¹⁰ Deterich calls the linguistic and cultural border a “semipermeable Membran” and formulates the following: “Organismen müssen, und als selbstständige Organismen überhaupt existieren zu können, sich abgrenzen, sich einkapseln und abschließen. Sie brauchen eine Haut, die das Innere vom Äußeren abgrenzt und so erst die Entfaltung eines halbwegs autonomen Stoffwechsels ermöglicht; das Außen erscheint in dieser Perspektive als undifferenziertes Medium gegenüber einem sich ausdifferenzierenden Innenleben. Andererseits aber brauchen dieselben Organismen, um diesen Stoffwechsel aufrechterhalten, um überhaupt am Leben bleiben zu können, Austausch mit der Außenwelt. Ihre Haut muß also durchlässig bleiben. Wäre es nicht, würden die Organismen im eigenen Mief ersticken. Wäre sie aber gar nicht vorhanden, löste sie sich also einfach auf – der Organismus würde selbst verschwinden, sich auflösen ins diffuse Umgebungsmedium” (“Grenzgänge” 22-23).

¹¹ Denmark, for example, still refuses to employ the Euro, so well supported by Germany and France.

Lykke Friis.¹² Friis explains how Germany functions today as a state that has the ability to persuade other states to change their preferences without using force or threats (69).¹³ According to Friis, such an ability “focuses to get others to want what you want, not getting the others to do what you want” (Friis 72). Friis’s eloquent formulations represent to a great degree Denmark’s opinion of Germany. This Danish attitude cannot hide an evident insecurity, an old inferiority complex, and perhaps even a degree of apprehension regarding its southern, and historically bigger, neighbor.

While the reinforcement of border control between Denmark and Germany makes news today, there is certainly nothing new about it. For the reintroduction of such a control is a sophisticated repetition of the use of the border as a political instrument, which the Danish government fiercely instated in the nineteenth century through the intense control of passports and the setting up of the border police, called *grænsegendarmeri* (Teebken 358). This act of repetition reveals the circularity of previous historical experiences and confrontations in this region.¹⁴ Despite the fact that Schleswig-Holstein nowadays enjoys the reputation of a region where the border conflict between two nations has been solved in an exemplary manner, it seems that within and by that same border there still lurks a provoking tendency which, deeply rooted in historical events, may challenge the future political cooperation between the two nations.

With the desire to understand some of the current tensions concerning Germany and Denmark, tensions which give rise to engaging debates on nationalism

¹² Lykke Friis, a Danish citizen with a German background, was once the rector of Copenhagen University. Until 2011, she held the office as Denmark’s Minister of Climate and Energy.

¹³ Friis clearly identifies Germany as a soft great power, despite the uncertain title of her article that ends with a humble question mark and despite the repetitive attempt to point at Germany’s mediocre power at a cultural and economic level.

¹⁴ To be precise, the new border control now reintroduces checks and controls, but not necessarily passport control.

and national identity, this dissertation traces the border conflict between these two nations, focusing on the Revolution (or the Three Year's War) of 1848-1850, and the War of 1864. These decisive events have left their mark on the body of fictional literature of both nations in the nineteenth century. At these two historical junctures, nationalism and national identity vigorously occupied both intellectuals and the easily influenced bourgeoisie.¹⁵ The timeliness of this dissertation is demonstrated by present-day border conflicts, which lend urgency to an understanding of both the borders and what lies beyond them.

II. Argument Outline

This dissertation determines the specific discourses of German and Danish nationalism that three authors, Theodor Storm, Theodor Fontane, and Herman Bang, utilize to construct and reinforce their national identities on a border that presents constant confrontation, instability, and change in the nineteenth century. The concern with national identity becomes even more urgent when the subject is confronted with an Other, a foreign manifestation of identity that takes on a dual role: a force that both threatens and obsessively reinforces the construction of the subject's national identity. In the chosen literary works examined in this dissertation, national identity, at all stages of its formation and in all classifications and depictions as German, Prussian, Danish, or Frisian, is fundamentally about attaining the subject's recognition as sovereign and universal. And because the subject functions as a representation of the nation with which it identifies, the construction of the subject's national identity is ultimately about achieving international recognition. In the chosen narratives, national identity—whether German or Danish—is constructed by the authors in a very similar

¹⁵ Each chapter of this project will reveal how the three authors under discussion refer to and incorporate representatives from society's various classes, who all play a role to different degrees in the construction and spread of nationalism.

fashion. While nationalism is criticized and condemned to different degrees, it also serves as the necessary ground for shaping effectively one's national identity. The three authors under discussion operate with a nationalist project in which they set out to construct a national self: in the texts under consideration, nationalism functions as a temporary but necessary formative stage in the construction of the subject's national identity. The selected authors also experience and triumph over nationalism in their personal lives. In the selected narratives, the inability to overcome nationalism is followed by inevitable consequences that shatter national identity and fragment the subject, thus rendering it incapable of functioning in society. Ultimately, this dissertation will point to the crucial significance of the regional particularity—given by the margins of a border area—for the representation of the national totality.

The scope of this dissertation will be limited temporally and geographically by focusing on the second half of the nineteenth century and on events occurring at this time in the border region of Schleswig-Holstein. The interest in this particular time-span emerges from a series of political developments, reflected in literary works of Realism, that imbued this period with expressions of nationalism, national awakening, and rising nations. Particularly for the duchies, this designates a time that gives the region a new definition, both in terms of status and identity. The geographical choice of this border region as the basis for the discussion of the specific literary works is determined by this region's double role in the frequent shaping and defining of the German and Danish nation states, as well as in Schleswig's and Holstein's lingering struggle to become independent from both nations. While they were viewed as inseparable entities in the Ripen Agreement of 1460,¹⁶ the duchies

¹⁶ The popular phrase *Up ewich ungedeelt*, which became Schleswig-Holstein's motto, derives originally from the Ripen-letter at the time of Christian I in 1460.

were utilized as hostages between Denmark and Prussia.¹⁷ Since the Ripen Agreement, they endured several uprisings; they were separated by force after the revolution of 1848-1850 and failed to achieve independence; and they finally became Prussian provinces in 1864.¹⁸ Only in 1920 were the duchies able to decide their own fate in being Danish or German. At different points in time, the authors under discussion consider their homes, located in this unstable geographical territory, as a lost and regained essence. With national sentiments, these authors come across and reflect upon political shifts and conditions in the border region. Furthermore, it is here that recognizable references to nationalism are evident throughout the nineteenth century. And finally, in the specific area of Schleswig-Holstein, the modes of German and Danish nationalism and national identity develop quite similarly, even though they are practiced for opposite purposes.¹⁹

In order to demonstrate how national identity is constructed on the basis of a firm nationalism and constantly destabilized when confronted with the presence of an Other by the border, I will examine four literary narratives: Theodor Storm's novellas *Ein grünes Blatt* (1850) and *Abseits* (1863), Theodor Fontane's *Unwiederbringlich* (1891), and Herman Bang's *Tine* (1889). I have based my selection of these works by

¹⁷ Schleswig and Holstein were both part of the Danish conglomerate state; however, only Holstein was under the German Confederation, while Schleswig was not.

¹⁸ Excellent publications on the detailed history of Schleswig-Holstein are provided in *Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*. Ed. Ulrich Lange. Neumünster: Wachholtz Verlag, 1996.

¹⁹ The following chapters will reveal how nationalism and national identity are constructed similarly by Storm, Fontane, and Bang, while employing the border territory. Furthermore, beyond the literary examples investigated in this project, the border region provides proof of the resemblance between German and Danish national symbols, such as Germania and Mother Denmark, the double oaks of Schleswig-Holstein and the Girls of South Jutland (or Schleswig), the *Dannebrog* [Danish flag] and the German flag. These symbols were illustrated and reproduced in drawings, paintings, almanacs, posters, stamps, bank notes, plaques, as well as erected *Denkmale* mainly from 1850 to 1914. Inge Adriansen argues in a number of publications that these national symbols, which became important tools for the government to build a common nation, testify to the proclamation of the same ideology by German and Dane, and they are merely transformed and placed into a German or Danish context. On this subject, see particularly Inge Adriansen's work in "Danish and German National Symbols." *Grundtvig-Studier* 44, (1993): 61-90.; and "Die nationale Symbolik in Schleswig in der Periode 1864-1900." *Geschichte Schleswigs vom frühen Mittelalter bis 1920*. Eds. Ulrich Lange & Henrik Becker-Christensen. Aabenraa: Institut for Grænseregionsforskning, 1998. 137-159.

three central Realist authors primarily on their common setting in the troubled region of Schleswig-Holstein in the second half of the nineteenth century, and more precisely in the time of the revolution of 1848-1850 and the war 1864. Secondly, I have taken into consideration the authors' interest and involvement in the events of the region at this time, as well as their respective backgrounds—Frisian, German-Prussian, and Danish. Thirdly, the forms that nationalism and national identity take in these works present a tremendous range of similar techniques for constructing and viewing nationalism. Finally, the chosen texts share a series of germane themes, such as war, language, *Heimat*, memory, sacrifice, and the figure of woman. Particularly with regard to the latter, this dissertation will also explore to an extent the role of woman as an active participant in the construction and reinforcement of a subject's national identity.

In each chapter, I examine these parameters and their functions closely in relation to national consciousness and identity. The authors discussed write and set their narratives before, after, and during major political tensions, thus becoming critical foreseers, reminders, and commentators of the conditions and developments during their troubled time. Drawing on Anthony Smith's conviction that warfare reinforces national identity—it mobilizes ethnic sentiments and national consciousness (*Identity* 27)—I contend that the three authors under scrutiny regard the political conflicts as a reinforcing appeal for the construction of their national identity. With this belief, they set their narratives at a specific time of crisis. While constructing their national identity—whether German or Danish—they are not always occupied with providing a realistic picture of Denmark, Germany, or their people. These authors' concern lies in constructing a particular national identity on the basis

of nationalism at a particular point in time characterized by particular political events in a particular geographical setting.

The three authors under discussion maneuver within the literary scope that Realism provides them; however, they all present different nuances of this literary period. I first consider Storm's and Fontane's *bürgerlicher Realismus*. Within the confines of Poetic Realism, Storm's grand but fragmentary lyrical style still reveals Realism's struggle with the remnants of Late Romanticism. By contrast, Fontane's *Gesellschaftsroman* is all-encompassing. I end with an extension of Modern Realism, namely Impressionism, which Bang masterfully develops in his work. This nuanced stretch of Literary Realism demonstrates how aesthetic works that stage the constant formation of national identity through nationalism, coincide with, mirror, and even reconstruct actual political happenings.

The impetus for the various analyses in this dissertation is provided by the modern hermeneutical operation, namely in the desire to understand the works more deeply than what the investigated authors claim about their own texts. Beyond Schleiermacher's differentiation of the grammatical and psychological interpretation in a text analysis (Holm 85), and further than Dilthey's strategy to set oneself in the author's place in order to see the world through his lenses and thus understand his meanings (Holm 89), I operate with modern hermeneutics in the spirit of Gadamer, who aims at reaching a common, higher horizon of understanding that incorporates both the author's and critics' understandings of the text (Holm 94).²⁰ Gadamer

²⁰ The Danish scholar Andreas Beck Holm offers a great deal of assistance when he elucidates the German tradition of classical and modern hermeneutics, as represented by the theologian Schleiermacher (1768-1834), the historian Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), and the philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002), accordingly. Schleiermacher's grammatical and psychological interpretations mentioned in the paragraph above refer, respectively, to the understanding of the text through other texts of the same time and discipline, and through the author's thoughts and visions (Holm 85). Schleiermacher develops the notorious hermeneutical circle, according to which understanding is contextual, namely that totality (context) is understood from the fragments (texts) that compose it, and vice versa—the fragments are understood from the totality they compose (Holm 85-

recognizes the culmination of understanding a text in the discovery of its use and purpose at the present time, thus highlighting the process of producing new meaning relevant to the present, rather than reproducing the author's original intentions (Holm 94). Gadamer's hermeneutical approach makes the examination of historical texts through modern methods possible. The works under examination call for this modern hermeneutical operation, for they are not mere visions of the moment when they were conceived. The works need to be understood not only in relation to the time in and about which they are written, but also in the present context, into which they reach, and into which the past, along with the records that show how it is variously perceived and interpreted, is communicated. This double process of understanding the authors' reality and connecting their work with our present reality is central to the philological purpose of this dissertation.

III. An Overview of Nationalism and National Identity

Both nation and nationalism are ambivalent conceptions regarded first and foremost as products of modernity and consequently associated with the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.²¹ This section presents a brief survey of recent

87). Regarding the approach to this circle and working with it, Schleiermacher is concerned with the entrance to the circle, which, he believes, is accomplished by guessing or presupposing the text's totality, which can later be corrected, if assumed wrong (86-87). Dilthey suggests that entering the circle could be easily succeeded by drawing parallels with our own existence (Holm 88-89). As for Gadamer, such entrance never constitutes a problem, for we already are in the circle; a critic never begins his analysis from scratch, for the past is always communicated into the present and he is always accompanied by preconceptions, which also become his point of departure (Holm 90-92). To illustrate this, Gadamer uses the term *Horizontverschmelzung* (311). According to Gadamer, "[i]n Wahrheit ist der Horizont der Gegenwart in steter Bildung begriffen, sofern wir alle unsere Vorurteile ständig erproben müssen. Zu solcher Erprobung gehört nicht zuletzt die Begegnung mit der Vergangenheit und das Verstehen der Überlieferung, aus der wir kommen. Der Horizont der Gegenwart bildet sich also gar nicht ohne die Vergangenheit" (311).

²¹ The account of nation as a modern category certainly derives from modernists such as Deutsch, Lerner, Kedourie, J. H. Kautsky, Tilly, and Tom Nairn. Anthony Smith, too, in "Gastronomy or Geology? The Role of Nationalism in the Reconstruction of Nations" regards nationalism as "a force generated by the needs of modernity, that is, of modern societies. Hence, nationalism and nations are intrinsic components of a modern capitalist, industrial and bureaucratic world" (8). Regarding time precision, the beginning of nationalism is often linked to the period of French Revolution. However,

theories of nation and nationalism, which also constitute the theoretical pillars for this dissertation. These theories connect and further pursue the notions of nationalism and national identity. In a defensive article,²² Walker Connor provides the reader with an unembellished and clear glossary that defines specific terms regarding nation and what derives from it. For Connor, nation is “a group of people sharing a myth of common ancestry; it is the largest grouping that can be mobilized by appeals to common blood” (39). And further, in connection to the previous definition, Connor understands nationalism as the “identity with and loyalty to one’s nation in the pristine sense of that word,” thus distinguishing it from patriotism, which marks one’s “devotion to one’s state and its institutions,” a devotion that sometimes is misrepresented as a form of nationalism (39). While these terms are often regarded as exclusive practices within the political realm, they cannot be divorced from their cultural significance. Anthony Smith highlights that “national identity comprises both a cultural and political identity and is located in a political community as well as a cultural one” and, notably, “any attempt to forge national identity is also a political action with political consequences” (*Identity* 99). Thus, literary texts play an invaluable role in politics, despite their authors’ claims of having no political interest or motivation.

Simon During in “Literature – Nationalism’s Other? The Case for Revision” recognizes the preservation of its origins at least as early as in Renaissance, in the history of nation state’s legitimation (140). Even earlier than During, Hans Kohn, too, in his *Idea of Nationalism* argues that the idea of nationalism was revived in Europe at the time of the Renaissance and Reformation (19). However, according to Kohn, both the idea and form of nationalism were developed before the age of nationalism; the idea of nationalism goes back to the ancient Hebrews and Greeks (19). Despite the many attempts to date the nation, it is noteworthy to accentuate Walker Connor’s belief in his “Timelessness of Nations” that the issue of dating the emergence of nation is not of great significance, for despite a nation’s factual/chronological history in recent vintage, it is the perception of a nation’s members that is “eternal,” “beyond time,” and “timeless,” and it is, thus, perceptions of facts, and not facts at all, that shape attitudes and behavior (35).

²² With his article “The Timelessness of Nations” Walker Connor responds to Anthony Smith’s critique of one of his previously presented papers “When is a Nation?” at a conference in London (35).

In the last two centuries nationalism has been perceived and interpreted quite differently. The nineteenth century, for example, experiences the symptomatic spread of nationalism, which mobilizes national consciousness in the form of nationalist movements and revolutions that lead to the concrete formation of nation states, as in the case of Germany and Italy.²³ In a different spirit, the twentieth century perceives nationalism as an anomaly and it attacks the phenomenon by labeling it an abstraction, an allegory, a construct, invention, imagination, or a mere state of mind. When Ernest Gellner contends that “nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness; it invents nations where they do not exist” (168), he follows Elie Kedourie, who proclaims that “nationalism is a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century” (1). In a similar vein, Anthony Smith, too, argues that “in the modernist image of the nation it is nationalism that creates national identity” (*Identity* 71). Such claims further complicate the conception of nationalism. For now, more than being just a mere construct and invention, nationalism is given a productive quality, thus becoming a fertile construct that further conceives other constructs that it longs for, like nation, nationality, and national identity, which provide nationalism with both form and essence. Already in 1882, in a lecture “What is a Nation?” delivered at the Sorbonne, when describing the sentimental side of nationality, Ernest Renan claims that while “a nation is a soul, a spiritual principle” (19), nationality “is both soul and body at once” (18). This facilitates the understanding of nationalism as a less abstract experience. Jim McLaughlin explores

²³ Koppel S. Pinson, who reveals the influence of German Pietism on German nationalism in the 1800s, explains how in nineteenth-century Germany and Italy, there was greater need for the development of a theory of nationalism, unlike England, France, and Spain, which had practically solved the political aspects of nationalism long before the eighteenth century (156). Pinson, however, differentiates between the national movements in Italy and Germany that lead to the creation of the unified national states. Italy was more concerned with the struggle for emancipation from foreign oppression and dominion, whereas Germany’s only problem was the unification of the many independent states and principalities (156).

the concreteness of nationalism in terms of the territorial integrity and the historical inevitability of the nation state by maintaining that nationalism is a historical and geographical happening, which holds people and places them together in concrete social and political settings (6, 33).²⁴

One of the most famously quoted scholars on the subject —although also criticized for his cultural reductionism—is Benedict Anderson, who sets a milestone in the discussion of nationalism when he employs the faculty of imagination as crucial in constructing the nation. According to Anderson, “nationality, or [...] nation-ness, as well as nationalism are cultural artifacts of a particular kind” (4), and a nation “is an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign,” distinguished from others by the style in which they are imagined (6). Nation, however, despite or perhaps because of its being an imagined construct, is dependent on certain conditions that allow imagination to be at work. Such conditions are constituted by literary fictions, which open up the perfect ground for imagination to flourish. Thus, Timothy Brennan rightly determines that “nations, then, are imaginary constructs that depend for their existence on an apparatus of cultural fictions in which imaginative literature plays a decisive role” (49). So decisive, indeed, is this role that the nation comes into being exclusively in and through the narrative. In Anderson’s opinion, the narrative—particularly the novel as a profoundly fictitious cultural product—accompanies and reflects the rise of the nations. Furthermore, the medium of the newspaper speeds up this process through the standardization of language and the encouragement of literacy. Anderson states that “fiction seeps quietly and continuously into reality, creating that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nation” (36).

²⁴ McLaughlin’s recent work, although based on the essential findings of students of nationalism, attempts to deviate from them by pointing at their shortcomings.

The crucial significance of the narrative is buttressed yet again a bit later in *Culture and Imperialism* by Edward Said, who turns to narrative as the method used to assert one's identity—as is the case of colonized peoples—and as the ground in which political battles are “reflected, contested, and even for a time decided” (xiii).

Imagined nation and fictional narrative, then, both circumnavigate the very medium that constructs them, namely language itself. The practice of this always ambivalent and problematized language is brought under scrutiny by Homi Bhabha in *Nation and Narration*. Here, he places nation and narrative on the same horizon and invites an investigation of what he calls—borrowing Tom Nairn's terminology—the “Janus-faced” ambivalence of language in the construction of the Janus-faced discourse of the nation (3). On similar premises, nationalism, too, is constructed in and through that same ambivalent language that contains and conceives it.

Nationalism's ambivalent nature is to be understood in the cultural perspectives and perceptions, from which it rises, for, as this dissertation will show, both German and Danish authors use similar strategies to narrate their nation and identity. Nairn eloquently recognizes its Janus-face, as nationalism appears to be “both communal and authoritarian, friendly and bellicose, all at the same time” (qtd. in Brennan 45). Don Luigi Sturzo explains the difficulty of defining nationalism by giving it boundaries that are accepted by all precisely because nationalism “takes on a broad variety of colors ranging from the most extravagant to the quite moderate and all the way from the philosophic to the sentimental” (22). Nationalism may even be a blessing, in Louis L. Snyder's words, when it fosters pride in the national character, culture, and destiny, but when carried too far, as in the Nazi perversion, it becomes a curse to the human race (2). Nationalism, thus, proves to be conveniently variable, as it is always in accordance with the specific conditions that generate it—such as those

created and demanded by the modern society—and in accordance with those particular actors who see in nationalism the possibility of regenerating their national community.²⁵

The most influential thoughts that have come to invent and shape nationalism, as it is discussed today, can be easily traced to the ideals of Early German Romanticism, and more precisely to the nation-building philosophy of Johann Gottfried von Herder and Johann Gottlieb Fichte.²⁶ Herder, a herald of German Romanticism and a founder of historical nationalism in Germany, through his promotion of the national folk spirit—the *Volksgeist*—lays the foundation for a set of national characteristics that were continuously employed to awaken national consciousness.²⁷ Herder's innocent and humanitarian understanding of nationalism, "built around the principle of the essential unity of mankind as a whole," however, is quite different from aggressive forms of nineteenth-century nationalism (Ergang 139). Following Herder's footsteps regarding language and cultural individuality, but misinterpreting him to a degree, the Danish Lutheran priest Nicolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig, Denmark's leading cultural nationalist of the eighteenth century, becomes a champion of Danish nationalism. Grundtvig transfers and re-uses the ideas of German Romanticism for the purpose of shaping Danish nationalism at this time.²⁸ Grundtvig's lessons, rooted in Christianity, employ the ideology of regarding the

²⁵ I refer here to Anthony Smith's identification of nationalists as political archaeologists whose activities consist in the rediscovery and reinterpretation of the ethnic past and through it the regeneration of their national community ("Gastronomy or Geology?" 19).

²⁶ See, especially, Hans Kohn's take on the German Romantics' encouraging development of German nationalism in his third chapter of *The Mind of Germany. The Education of a Nation*. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965.

²⁷ Enlightening accounts on Herder could be found, for example, in Frederick M. Barnad's *Herder's Social and Political Thought: From Enlightenment to Nationalism*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1965. See also a more recent approach by Richard White in his article "Herder: On the Ethics of Nationalism." *Humanitas* 18. 1/2 (2005): 166-181.

²⁸ Grundtvig's contribution to Denmark's nation-building is beyond doubt. However, he is also accused at times of his racist understanding of national identity, as one of his original songs "Folkeligt skal alt nu være" [Everything shall now be folkish] (now used in its shorter version) is pure nazistic *Blut und Boden* (Østergård, "Georg Brandes" 38).

Danes as a “chosen people” (Brincker 416).²⁹ Another of Herder’s misinterpreting adherents, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, the “philosopher of war,” demands that “nations declare war upon each other, so that a more developed nation’s spirit can manifest itself in world history” (Oxfeldt 43). Germany and Denmark have different understandings of concepts of nationalism developed by the German Romantics. The task of nationalism, at this time, to distinguish nations and reinforce their uniqueness, emerges solely from individuals’ daring claims for superior recognition.

With this grave task in hand, nationalism develops into both a creative and destructive force and proceeds beyond the intellectual elite that conceives and constructs it, to the masses that foster and nurture it. The nineteenth century denotes precisely this characteristic transmission of nationalism to the people, recognizing it as a mass phenomenon.³⁰ In the process of accomplishing the mission given at its origins and in the name of the nation, nationalism becomes selective in its nature: it creates what it lacks but requires and destroys what hinders its progression. On these grounds, employers of nationalism—whether social or political engineers or archeologists,³¹ who recognize the very mission that brings nationalism into being—make their contribution through the same selective mode. The foundation that supports nation and national identity is one designed by nationalism itself and developed further by its zealous pursuers. Thus one cannot study national identity and nation without examining the very basis that grounds these constructs. This dissertation will provide a thorough investigation of three authors who turn to

²⁹ Benedikte Brincker refers to the phenomenon of chosenness as not exclusively Danish, for British historians discover the same unifying force of Protestantism among the peoples of Britain in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century (416).

³⁰ For the case of Denmark, see particularly Benedikte Brincker’s “A ‘Small Great National State’: An Analysis of the Cultural and Political Factors that shaped Danish Nationalism 1760-1870.” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 16.4 (2003): 407-431.

³¹ I bring these terms into play from Anthony D. Smith’s “Gastronomy or Geology?”

nationalism and its services with the aim of contributing to the formation and reinforcement of national identity.

IV. Chapter Outlines

In the first chapter I trace Theodor Storm's political views, which in the novellas *Ein grünes Blatt* and *Abseits* call into question the politics embraced by both Prussian and Danish regimes. Storm's concern with national identity is especially evident in his attention to *Heimat* and language. *Heimat*, appearing as an idyllic construct, is always problematized and destabilized. Just as problematically, language functions as a subjugating medium that threatens and frames the community. Storm is a unique case to study on the subject of German and Danish nationalism, for he experiences a shift of beliefs from being born as a Danish citizen to becoming a Prussian admirer, until his disappointment alienates him from both and makes him embrace with loyalty one small locality, the atomic *Heimat* of Husum, where he feels at home at all times. The presence of the Other, the *Fremde*, which appears as Danish, but turns out ultimately to be German, in both of his novellas highlights Storm's daring critique of both nations. The excessive nationalistic tones that depict his characters pave the way to such criticism. Similarly to Bang's *Tine*, the Other discovered in the *Heimat* in Storm's novellas constitutes the danger from within.

Chapter Two focuses on Fontane's concern with the human subject and its fragmentation in the name of nationalism. In *Unwiederbringlich* Fontane problematizes national identity through excessive expressions of nationalism and calls into question the stability of such an identity. The role of memory in the novel determines the fate of the subject. Its inability to compromise through forgetting becomes the subject's dangerous and inevitable downfall. I contend that forgetting, or

rather the obligation to forget, as nationalism's selective mode, becomes the subject's necessary task to effectively construct its national identity. I consider *Unwiederbringlich* as Fontane's work of historical redemption, for, in the distance he creates through this novel, he inspects objectively Prussia's and Denmark's representations.

In Chapter Three I discuss how Herman Bang reveals nationalism and its inevitable consequences as dangerous internal forces in Danish culture. In *Tine* the construction of national identity demands sacrifice, as well as humiliation. Memory and forgetting are imperatives for moving forward. Both are necessary for the purpose of attaining recognition of one's national identity. With the example of Bang, I view Impressionism as an extension of Realism. Eric Dalga's humble motto with regard to Jutland's landscape and territory "hvad udad tabtes skal indad vindes" (Christiansen 155), famously translated in German as "Was nach Außen verlorengiht, muß nach Innen gewonnen werden" (Frandsen 11), conveys the essence of the new nationalist attitude of the Danish society after the war in 1864. Memory in Bang functions just as significantly as in Fontane; however, the role of memory is quite the opposite: in *Tine* forgetting equals death. It is this forgetting that for Homi Bhabha constitutes the beginning of the nation's narrative. One of the missions undertaken with *Tine* is to testify as Denmark's own independent narrative free of any German influence.

This dissertation makes a contribution to the existing scholarship on two levels: First in relation to the three selected authors whose narratives I view as driven by a nationalist project with a common purpose; second, with regard to the representations of nationalism in German and Danish literature. The approach I take in this study allows me to develop fundamentally new readings of the four texts under consideration. In my analysis in the individual chapters I demonstrate that the critique

of nationalism promoted in these narratives is more extensive and subtle than has been recognized in the scholarship to date.

Chapter One

Theodor Storm's Novellas *Ein grünes Blatt* and *Abseits*:

Destabilizing the *Heimat* and Discovering the Other

I. Introduction

Theodor Storm, a Frisian writer with a Danish background, forced into exile in Prussia, subjected to the loss of home, and with a life-long dream for a free and independent Schleswig-Holstein,¹ constantly experiences his identity to be under threat. Part of this danger results from Storm's heritage in an unstable region, where the struggle for national identity reaches its peak during the author's youth.² Another source of Storm's national identity threat is that the author does not quite identify exclusively with the Prussian and Danish nations. He becomes an aggressive agitator of the two, generally articulating his strong sentiments against Denmark in his fiction and those against Prussia in his correspondence. Storm identifies explicitly with the region of Schleswig-Holstein, and even more precisely, with the town of Husum. All of his novellas take place in this area and they are a reliable testimony of his loyalty for and identification with this particular region. Storm poses a challenge with regard to nationalism, for he has thus far been viewed through local, rather than national, lenses.

In order to elucidate the ground of Storm's national discourse, I employ Arne Koch's *Between National Fantasies and Regional Realities*. This work draws on

¹ One of Storm's early Danish scholars, Anna Simonsen, formulates: "Storm's Traum war ein unabhängiges Schleswig-Holstein gewesen, frei von jedem fremden Einfluß, ob vom Norden oder vom Süden kommend" (qtd. in Rasch).

² The people of Schleswig-Holstein struggle for their identity as Danish, German or Northfrisian. Their struggle peaks in the *Bredstedter Nordfriesenfest* in 1844, in which Storm also participates (Roebeling, "Prinzip" 64).

Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, which provides the main theoretical framework for establishing both nation and region as imagined political communities (Anderson 6).³ Koch, however, recognizes a theoretical limitation in Anderson's model, in that it does not connect region and nation. For Anderson, provincialism and nationalism still remain as if two binary opposites (Koch 12). Koch utilizes Celia Applegate's historical study *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* and Alon Confino's *The Nation as a Local Metaphor* to remedy this shortcoming in Anderson's model. While Applegate's work promotes a great interest in the role of the regions and their relation to the nation as a whole,⁴ Confino examines the concept of *Heimat* and "the ways people turn national" by imagining the nation in terms of the local (xii). Assisted by these studies, Koch employs regional narratives that bring the text and reader together in a dialogue, thus revealing how these regional narratives dictate the process of identity formation (18). Storm's fiction in and about the factual region of Schleswig-Holstein constructs a German national belonging. This is indicated in Storm's forsaking of his Danish origins and his full embrace of the German homeland. Koch thus facilitates my following discussion on Storm as the regional writer, in whose fiction lurks a nationalistic discourse clearly concerned with the territory of Schleswig-Holstein, but strongly associated with the German nation.

This nationalistic discourse, I argue, generates a national identity that is constructed with the same tools used by nationalism. Storm's characters and narrators actively participate in this construction. Storm's narratives become the playground of political, cultural and social factors required for identity formation. Schleswig-Holstein—considered by the German nationalists as Germany's open wound and

³ Anderson states: "In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (6).

⁴ According to Applegate, after the 1871 "the traditions of the Heimat bridged the gap between national aspiration and provincial reality" (13).

hence indicative of the weakness of the German nation (F. Müller 101)—is a territory that also weakens and endangers the loss of one's national identity. Storm's regional framework protects identity by differentiating between the local subject and the Other. With the same agenda at hand, the author also safeguards his homeland by exclusively embracing a territory that represents his nation. Storm's fiction provides the ground for a national identity that arises from the hatred for the Danish Other and the idealizing of his German *Heimat*. In the spirit of an intense nationalism that promises a great nation through war, the author's narrators construct a strong and stable identity that overcomes the danger of weakness or loss. Storm's fiction provides then the possibility of overcoming nationalism through a concealed critique of Prussia, the inner danger that lurks within Storm's local *Heimat* and is about to occupy it anew.

In this chapter I first provide a brief update on the literary criticism on Storm, as well as an overview of the political and historical framework in which he wrote. I then investigate Storm's novellas *Ein grünes Blatt* (1850),⁵ produced right after Prussia's and Schleswig-Holstein's failure in the revolution of 1848, and *Abseits* (1863), written at the beginning of the war between Prussia and Denmark in 1864. These narratives provide a continuity of the identity construction through nationalism and point at a criticism of Prussia in the name of that same nationalism. Storm's novellas, however, do not get stuck in a nationalistic discourse, for they point to an exit from nationalism by letting the characters' national consciousness filter through the narratives. While *Ein grünes Blatt* transmits the idea of the pristine regional homeland in its idyllic state by means of memory and creativity, *Abseits* reaches over the local home's scope and takes on a national scale and perspective through action and sacrifice.

⁵ *Ein grünes Blatt* is Storm's fourth novella after *Marthe und ihre Uhr* (1847), *Im Saal* (1848), and *Immensee* (1849).

II. Updating Storm's Identity

The urgency of re-evaluating the North Frisian author Hans Theodor Woldsen Storm (1817-1888) is motivated by two principal challenges, namely the deficient and unreliable biographies of the author, as well as his work's reputation as plain, sentimental, provincial, and passive. Recent scholarship on Storm undertakes to correct precisely these two aspects, which have long misconstrued the author's image and work. One of the latest biographical works on Storm from 2003, Clifford Bernd's *Theodor Storm: The Dano-German Poet and Writer*, clarifies misunderstandings in the history of Storm criticism, particularly those created by Storm's daughter's misleading biography. For more than a hundred years, the mainstream scholarship on Storm has been blindly based on the deceiving and forged information in Gertrud Storm's two-volume biography, *Theodor Storm. Ein Bild seines Lebens*. By concealing all Danish cultural influence on her father's life and work, Gertrud Storm manages to create a strongly German nationalistic and anti-Danish image of Storm. In his revision of Storm's biography, Bernd sheds light on certain aspects of Storm's life that have been neglected, such as his education, which was rooted not only in Danish territory but also in Danish culture and literature, thus attesting to the author's creative experience essentially nourished by Danish literature rather than German.⁶ Bernd demonstrates Storm's fundamental connection to the Danish cultural world both as a student and an experienced writer.⁷ Bernd's study, while eye-opening and imperative⁸

⁶ Bernd calls attention to one of Storm's earlier biographers in particular, Franz Stuckert, who ignores Storm's formal education in Danish language and literature for nine years at Husum's Latin School and inexplicably claims that Storm neither learned nor understood Danish (*Dano-German* 47-54).

⁷ Bernd demonstrates the Danish heritage in Storm's fiction. He draws parallels, for example, between *Immensee* and *En Landsbydegns Dagbog* [The Diary of a Parish Clerk] by the Danish writer Steen Steensen Blicher. The novella *In St. Jürgen*, which Bernd calls "a Danish novella in German disguise" also contains literary borrowings from Hans Christian Andersen's *Isjomfruen* [The Ice Maiden]. Furthermore, Bernd discusses *Aquis submersus* and *Der Schimmelreiter* as novellas whose quality

in acknowledging the author's incomplete and misconstrued image, also raises questions about his radical turn against his Danish national origins and his shifting reaction and relationship to Prussia. Providing complete answers to these questions today is not easy, especially because the current re-evaluation of Storm is complicated by statements made by renowned writers and critics, who cannot be easily discredited. Their influence also partially explains why it has taken so long to extricate Storm from a one-sided, overtly German nationalist scholarship.

The narrow and reductionist criticism of Storm was already initiated by his contemporaries, most notably by Theodor Fontane, who starts a long-standing tradition of judging Storm, directly and indirectly, on both a personal and professional level. Fontane bears part of the responsibility for the underestimation of Storm by both his contemporaries and later scholars.⁹ The Prussian author is certain of Storm's simple nature and his work's limitations. During one of his stays in London, Fontane provocatively contrasts his own cosmopolitanism to Storm's provincialism:

Ich bin nicht zufrieden hier mit meinem Leben und
wünschte tausenderlei anders, das aber segne ich und
stimmt mich zum herzlichsten Dank gegen mein
Geschick, daß ich aus dem heraus bin, was ich mit
einem Wort das 'Theodor-Stormsche' nennen möchte,
aus dem Wahn, daß Husum oder Heiligenstadt oder
meiner Großmutter alter Uhrkasten die Welt sei. Es
steckt Poesie darin, aber noch viel mehr Selbstsucht und
Beschränktheit. (qtd. in Perrey 61)

derives from Storm's Danish literary heritage. See Bernd's complete section "The Novellas" on this topic in *Theodor Storm: The Dano-German Poet and Writer*, 149-213.

⁸ Some of Bernd's repetitively forced formulations show the urgency for a different interpretation, when the author works with certain details. Some obvious examples include: "must have been," "must have seemed," "must have starred," "almost certainly present," "would have approved" etc. (*Dano-German* 43, 48, 53, 59, 61, 68, 98). This reference is merely to point out the challenge in reconstructing Storm's life, and to call for an awareness of the uncertainties presented in the process of this reconstruction.

⁹ Fontane also creates space to praise Storm. He ends his essay on Storm in *Zwanzig bis Dreißig* with great nostalgia and respect for the poet from Husum: "Alt und jung hatten eine herzliche Freude an ihm und zeigten ihm die Verehrung, auf die er so reichen Anspruch hatte. Als Lyriker ist er, das Mindeste zu sagen, unter den drei, vier Heften, die nach Goethe kommen. Dem Menschen aber, trotz allem, was uns trennte, durch Jahre hin nachgestanden zu haben, zählt zu den glücklichen Fügungen meines Lebens" (250).

Fontane regards Storm's choice of lyrical themes as *Husumerei*, indicating his limited framework that does not include Prussia's eminence. In this context, Fontane confesses how lightheartedly he takes Storm's naïve reactions against Prussia.¹⁰ Echoing Fontane, the Hungarian critic Georg Lukács, too, comments on Storm's literary limitations as reflected in the author's geographically marginal writings. While discussing German realists of the nineteenth century, Lukács refers to Storm's (as well as Raabe's) work: "wenn dieses Lebenswerk in der Geschichte des europäischen Realismus nicht mehr darstellt, wenn es mit provinziellen, engen und skurrilen Zügen behaftet ist, so deshalb, weil die Opposition Raabes and Storms nicht entschieden, nicht prinzipiell genug war" (*Realisten* 13). Although Lukács esteems Storm highly, he also underestimates him as a regional writer when he claims that "[n]othing was ever problematic in Storm's life" and that Storm "was not a problematic man, and therefore fate could approach him only from the outside" (*Soul* 78), thus stamping Storm's life experiences as unchallenging.¹¹

Judgments on Storm's provincialism do not rise out of the blue, given his persistent depictions of the quiet idyllic home, peaceful landscapes, and textual still life. While his themes have long been simplified and their isolation misunderstood, Storm himself poses a greater challenge that hinders the interpretation of his works

¹⁰ Fontane comments ironically on Storm's anti-Prussian attitude: "Er machte zwar aus seinem Antipreußenthum niemals ein Hehl und stand noch ganz auf dem Standpunkt wonach ein Gardeleutnant entweder unbedeutend oder nichtssagend oder ein trauriges Werkzeug der Tyrannei sei, aber ich müßte lügen, wenn ich sagen wollte, ich hätte daran je Anstoß genommen. Im Gegenteil, es amüsierte mich bloß, weil man daran studieren konnte, was selbst so hervorragende Menschen an naivem Vorurteil leisten" (qtd. in Perrey 66).

¹¹ Lukács, however, does Storm justice when he praises his talent in writing short stories in a modern fashion. He is perhaps the first critic who identifies Storm's renewal of the German novella, exceeding Goethe's, Kleist's and Tieck's definitions of it. Lukács writes: "Storm anticipates the modern impressionistic development which completely interiorizes the short story, filling the old framework exclusively with inner content. [...] The modern short story [...] transcends the short story's possibilities by its content. The theme becomes more delicate, deeper, broader, more powerful than the old form would allow, and for this reason—although at first glance this appears paradoxical—these short stories are less deep and less subtle than the simple old stories used to be" (*Soul* 91-92).

and veils his objectives. Storm creates confusion and does very little to facilitate the process of understanding his texts. In his own writings, he often remains unclear. Even when asked for further clarifications by editors, Storm gives only vague explanations regarding certain details in his texts.¹² Whether he does this deliberately or not, is perhaps of little importance, since the confusion serves to generate the awareness for new readings of the amorphous aspects of his writing. This awareness marks the new era in Storm studies.

A conscientious restoration of Storm's image and a more complex interpretation and validation of his work begins quite late, most notably in the second half of the twentieth century.¹³ A substantial number of critical works remove the reductive labels with which Storm's fiction is associated and free him from the stigma of sentimentality and simplicity. Most importantly, the writings of David Artiss, Margaret Peischl, W. A. Coupe, and Eric Downing reveal the quality and challenge of ambivalence and two-sidedness in Storm's Realist fiction. Furthermore, an emergent attention to Storm in the discourses of psychoanalysis¹⁴ and gender studies¹⁵ in the last years contributes to further understanding and interpretation of Storm's not so

¹² A particular example is that of Theodor Fontane who publishes Storm's novella *Ein grünes Blatt*. Some details of a letter exchange between the two authors will be shortly discussed to show Storm's unsatisfactory explanations and Fontane's irritation because of it.

¹³ See Bollenbeck's commentary on the resurrection of Storm's image after the fall of National Socialism (337-8). Furthermore, the 1970's mark a turning point in Storm scholarship, most significantly represented by the publications of Helmut Vinçon, W. A. Coupe, Ingrid Schuster, and David Artiss, who all demonstrate Storm's complexity as a writer. Even more devotedly, the research is extended in the 1980's and 90's especially by Günther Ebersold, Eckart Pastor, Margaret T. Peischl, Karl Ernst Laage, Dieter Lohmeier, Heinrich Detering, David Jackson, Irmgard Roebeling, Clifford Bernd, and Harro Segeberg. The last decade has generated further enlightening works that focus on more critical, intimate and taboo aspects of the author's life and fiction. Some examples include the research by Christine Geffers Browne, Malte Stein, and Louise Forssell. Furthermore, the consequential biographical writings by David A. Jackson (1992 in English, and 2001 in German), Regina Fasold (1997), Clifford A. Bernd (2003), and Paul Barz (2004) testify of the growing interest and urgency of reading Storm in new ways.

¹⁴ See, for example, Andrew Webber's analysis in "The Uncanny Rides Again. Theodor Storm's Double Vision." *Modern Language Review* 84 (1989): 860-873. Eric Downing, too, in his discussion on Storm in *Double Exposures. Repetition and Realism in Nineteenth-Century German* makes use of the theoretical approach of psychoanalysis (129-169).

¹⁵ Louise Forssell marks a great example. See her published dissertation: "*Es ist nicht gut, so ganz allein zu sein ...*" *Männlichkeiten und Geschlechterbeziehungen in Theodor Storms später Novellistik*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2006.

simple fiction. For his work must not merely be regarded as a product of German Realism, rooted in and conditioned by the German bourgeoisie, as well as its ideologies and dilemmas in the nineteenth century. Time and again, there appears evidence in Storm's work that transcends the realm of Realism and points towards a more modern dimension than what is generally assumed. Georg Bollenbeck regards Storm as an author with "Modernitätserfahrung" (336).¹⁶ Harro Segeberg more forcefully claims that Storm's "Husumerei" provides "etwas mehr Weitblick" and it effectively paves the way to modernity ("Regionalismus" 132).¹⁷ And more recently, Louise Forssell's research on Storm's representation of fictional male characters substantiates Storm as a writer of modernity. Forssell, furthermore, views the meta-poetic reflections in Storm's texts as postmodern in nature (248-9). Such rectifying and renewing forces at work in the current scholarship make Storm quite exciting to read today. In the same spirit, revived attention must also be drawn to the political context, from which portions of Storm's fiction originate and thus cannot be disconnected.

Regarding the political affairs in his time, Storm reacts paradoxically by claiming to be of a nonpolitical nature, and yet by revealing in the body of his written work—letters, poetry, and novellas—his highly political interests and efforts to make a difference. He depicts himself misleadingly as a nonpolitical being, or rather as an "unpolitisches Thier," as he writes to his friend Theodor Mommsen on 4 March 1854 (*Storm-Mommsen* 114).¹⁸ He considers the time period of Biedermeier as "eine

¹⁶ Albeit not quite "Autor der Moderne" (Bollenbeck 336).

¹⁷ Segeberg's argument is worth being cited in length, for Storm's regionalism proves quite effective as a strategy towards modernity: "Storms Rahmen begnügt sich vielmehr damit, Regionalität als Transzendental-kategorie einer sich selber begrenzenden Moderne anhand einer fiktiven friesischen Dorfgemeinschaft ins Spiel zu bringen. Wichtig ist dies Denkmodell und nicht das inhaltliche Substrat, an dem es erprobt wird" ("Regionalismus" 132).

¹⁸ This form of abbreviation refers to the individual letter correspondences between Storm and others, such as *Storm-Fontane*, *Storm-Esmarch*, and *Storm-Turgenjew*. This chapter will also refer to other

praktisch unpolitische Zeit” (qtd. in Ebersold 11). These deceptive claims continue later in his life, even after he already provides clear proof in his creative work that directly responds to the political happenings. To Theodor Mommsen, he stresses in April 1862 that “die Politik nicht eben meine Domaine ist” (*Storm-Mommsen* 117). Even later in 1885, to Paul Heyse, he again declares himself a “zoon apolitikon”¹⁹ (*Briefe* 2, 324). And yet research has shown that Storm was highly engaged in politics and participated dynamically in the political reality in Germany. This is how one of his biographers, Georg Bollenbeck, enumerates Storm’s political activities, which early on demonstrate the author’s involvement in representing the duchies through a national framework:

Storm beteiligt sich nicht nur am “Volksfest der Nordfriesen”, er unterschreibt verschiedene Petitionen,²⁰ die immer wieder den Erhalt der Herzogtümer fordern; er übernimmt im Frühjahr 1848 die Leitung der “Liedertafel”, die gegenüber dem kunstbeflissenen “Singverein” als politisierter Liederzirkel in Sachen Schleswig-Holstein gelten kann. Schließlich sammelt er als Sekretär des “Patriotischen Hilfsvereins” Geld für Kriegsgefangene und Verwundete, aber auch für den Bau deutscher Kriegsschiffe. Er engagiert sich sogar als Journalist²¹ und liefert, auf Bitten des Redakteurs Th. Mommsen, vom Frühjahr bis in den Herbst 1848 Berichte aus Husum für das Presseorgan der “Provisorischen Regierung”, die *Schleswig-Holsteinische Zeitung*. (106)²²

Storm’s later occupations as lawyer, judge, administrator, and writer place him in a problematic position, from which he closely follows political developments and is

correspondences covered in the two-volume work *Theodor Storm: Briefe*. Ed. Peter Goldammer. Berlin: Aufbau, 1972. This will be abbreviated as *Briefe 1* and *Briefe 2*.

¹⁹ Greek for *unpolitisches Wesen*.

²⁰ For a survey of Storm’s involvement with petitions in 1848, see for example Dieter Lohmeier’s “Die Berichte der Husumer Behörden über Storms politische Haltung während der schleswig-holsteinischen Erhebung.” *STSG* 34 (1985): 39-48.

²¹ Storm’s journalistic occupation for the *Schleswig-Holsteinische Zeitung* is short-lived, from April to December 1848. His reports on Husum are marked with a star and do not identify him as the writer (Teitge 17-20).

²² For more details on Storm’s activities, see particularly Löding (17-98).

closer to state affairs. As a result, Storm must react carefully and tone down his sentiments against the political powers at the time.²³

Despite the risk, Storm finds a way to state some of his views through his writing, with which he believes he will make a difference. Convinced that his poetry can change the political reality, Storm conveys in a letter to his father Johann Kasimir Storm at the end of December 1863: “[...] meinen Beruf hab ich zunächst dahin erkannt, durch das poetische Wort die nationale Begeisterung zu unterstützen” (*Briefe I*, 435). Storm strongly believes that the purpose of his work as that of a poet and thinker is to achieve a political effect in form of influencing the actions of his readers, as he tells his son Hans in May 1868:

Habe ich keine Wirksamkeit auf die Gemüter und in letzter Instanz auf die Taten der Menschen, so haben es Dichter und Denker überhaupt nicht. [...] Bin ich ein Dichter, so habe ich mit dem aus meinem Innersten Ausgeprägten auch eine Wirkung auf mein Volk. (*Briefe I*, 523).

Among Storm’s first lyrical contributions to the political situation in Schleswig-Holstein are poems written between 1848 and 1851, such as “Oktoberlied,” “Nach Reisegesprächen,” “Im Herbst 1850,” “Gräber an der Küste,” and “1. Januar 1851.” These are purely political poems that comment on the revolution and condemn the Danish reign in the duchies. Dieter Lohmeier recognizes a connection between Theodor Storm and Herman Bang, whose novel *Tine* reflects the same pathos and attitude against the political rival evident in Storm’s poetry (“Politik” 34-5). On these tendencies, Lohmeier adds: “Diese sind kennzeichnend für die deutschen wie für die dänischen Nationalliberalen und für ihre Politik der ‘heiligen Leidenschaft’” (“Politik” 35). Storm’s poems mentioned above express particularly his anxiety for

²³ His friend Ludwig Pietsch warns Storm on 22 December 1864 “vor einer möglichen Ungnade im preußischen Justizministerium” (qtd. in Fasold 48).

the uncertain turn of events. A number of these poems did not make it into print right away because of the publisher's fear at the time.²⁴ The author manages to publish them much later in his volume *Gedichte* in 1864.²⁵

Storm openly despises the Danish rule in the duchies, but he also turns against Prussia, in which he sees the duchies' new colonizing enemy. Storm's rage grows out of his previous admiration for the two nations. Born a Danish citizen (Goldammer 43-44) and previously a young admirer of the Danish King Christian VIII, Storm praises the king with a song he himself writes and composes.²⁶ Storm later experiences a new-found enthusiasm for Prussia, which does not keep him seduced for long. During and after the revolution years, Storm is clearly hostile toward the Danish rule in Schleswig-Holstein.²⁷ In October 1850, he writes to Laura Setzer: "Wie sehr mich wenig politischen Menschen denn doch diese Zeit aufgeregt hat, mögen Sie daraus entnehmen, daß es unter den Dänen hier heißt, ich rase vor Patriotismus" (*Briefe I*, 130).²⁸ Recognizing the potential in Prussia, he quickly but briefly identifies with it and hopes that the new rising nation supports the war against the Danes. However, he soon realizes his futile hopes and does not hide his disappointment. In a festive ball in Segeberg, he comments on the Austrian officers, who at the time are allies of Prussia: "Nein, mit den Offizieren eines deutschen

²⁴ See, for example, Frithjof Löding's review of these poems (65-81).

²⁵ For a detailed overview of Storm's lyrical production, see Fritz Martini's "Der Lyriker Storm" in *Deutsche Literatur im bürgerlichen Realismus 1848-1898*. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1962. 286-294.

²⁶ Storm was the choir leader of the *Singverein*. The song is sung by twelve female singers who appear as water nymphs (*Nixenchor*): "Heil dir, heil dir, hoher König, / Nimm den Gruss der Meereswogen! / Dir entgegen silbertönig / Sind wir rauschend hergezogen" (Bollenbeck 74-75).

²⁷ This does not go unnoticed. Storm suffers consequences due to these ruptures against the Danish authorities; he is forced to close his praxis in 1850 (Löding 90-91).

²⁸ A few months later, on 7 May 1851, Storm reports to Brinkmann about the Danes' violence on the people of the duchies: "Der allgemeine Zustand hier ist der, daß Volk, die Bauern und der kleine Bürgerstand vom Polizeidiener oder Polizeimeister oder Kommandanten mit Stöcken und Fäusten geschlagen wird, wenn sie es für gut finden, d.h. wenn sie die Mütze nicht ziehen, wenn die Bauer ihre Wagen verkehrt gestellt haben, wenn sie sich nach der Polizeistunde auf der Straße treffen lassen etc. etc. Das ist der Durchschnittszustand, der kommt immerfort vor, daneben die elendesten Denunziationen" (qtd. in Löding 90).

Stammes, der diesen Notzustand aufrechterhalten hilft, statt uns davon zu befreien, sollen unsre Frauen nicht tanzen" (*Briefe 1*, 143). Storm's attitude remains unchanged even years later. After Prussian rule replaces the Danish, the author remarks with the same hopelessness to Ivan Turgenev on May 30, 1868:

Heimathlich ist's hier nicht mehr für mich in dem alten Lande; die neue Regierung und die neuen Landsleute wollen uns überall die höhere Einsicht bringen, und dabei machen sie uns Alles caput, Preußen kommt mir mitunter vor wie ein Kind, das ein neues Spielzeug sich ergattert hat und nun nichts anderes damit anzufangen weiß, als daß es das Ding entzwei bricht. Die Regierung hat auch bei uns gezeigt, daß sie kein Recht der Nation respectirt, als das, wozu sie auf den Barrikaden gezwungen wird. (*Storm-Turgenev* 104)

Progressively, Storm verbalizes great hatred for Bismarck's *Räuberpolitik* and Prussia's violence in Schleswig-Holstein. He goes as far as to refer to Prussia as "der Feind aller Humanität" (*Briefe 2*, 17). Storm's political perspective, however, becomes somewhat complicated with time, for Prussia's rising power also provides seductive possibilities in the European arena. By August 1870, at the time of the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war, Storm seems optimistic. In a letter to the young Austrian author Ada Christen in the summer of 1870, Storm supports the unity of Germans against the French and rejects the possibility of Austria's collaboration with France against Prussia:

Niemand kann das spezifisch preussische Wesen mehr hassen als ich, denn ich halte es für den Feind aller Humanität; aber es gibt Dinge, die selbstverständlich sind, wie das Atmen zum Leben; dazu gehört bei dem Angriff einer fremden Nation das Zusammenstehn aller Stämme der eignen. Ich meine, so weit sollten wir jetzt doch sein. Was liegt an Österreich, was an Preußen? Deutschen Herd und deutsche Gesittung haben wir jetzt zu verteidigen gegen die Romanen. (*Briefe 2*, 17)

It seems that the unstable political situation in the German territories kindles nationalistic feelings in Storm, if not in the name of Prussia, clearly in the name of a

united Germany.

While the war of 1864 serves Schleswig-Holstein merely as the means to change its oppressors from Danish to Prussian and Austrian, the new rule shatters Storm's hope for an independent state. The author must learn to bring his bitter anti-Prussian pronouncements under control at a time when Prussia denies the duchies their independence and weakens them through division by giving Austria its share, namely Lauenburg.²⁹ Storm becomes careful in his writings and cannot criticize the Prussian system as he openly does with the Danish regime. David Artiss describes the decline of critical material by Storm, as he is confronted with Bismarck's intimidation of the North German press:

Prior to 1864 he [Storm] had been able to count on editors and readers eager to see Schleswig-Holstein depicted as an oppressed German outpost longing to be liberated and welcomed into the national fold. After 1866, on the other hand, if any depiction of the Schleswig-Holstein struggle was to be palatable to the North German, National-Liberal middle classes, it had to praise the exploits of the Prussian forces against the Danes. Any suggestion that Prussia had betrayed Schleswig-Holstein and that the annexation was a rerun of Danish rule had to be avoided. (*Humanitarian* 148)

While Storm, a keen adversary of any oppressive regime, whether Danish or Prussian, cannot utter his opinion as openly and as often as he wishes, he still manages to subtly express traces of his unwavering criticism by putting his technique of elusiveness and subversion to use. The author even disguises his identity and publishes anonymously.³⁰ Additionally, Storm writes his political fiction immediately before or

²⁹ Storm is, of course, beside himself. In 1862, the Prussian government even tries to influence the judges during the election. On this subject, Storm writes to Mommsen from Heiligenstadt on 15 April 1862: "Mein lieber alter Jens Mommsen, Sie wissen von Alters her, daß die Politik nicht eben meine Domäne ist; nun hat mich aber doch der Justiz-Ministerial-Erlaß mehr en rage gebracht, als man es hier für nöthig befindet" (*Storm-Mommsen* 117).

³⁰ The poem "Gräber an der Küste" (1850), for example, was published only in 1856 with no reference to Storm's identity. Storm publishes anonymously even earlier. With the poem "Aus Schleswig-Holstein" (1845), he reacts to a Danish law that bans the choirs from exploiting the flag of Schleswig-Holstein for propaganda purposes. This poem, published in newspapers without Storm's name, gains a

after the major political events, which indicates a sense of urgency; however, these texts are published and discussed only later.³¹

The novella *Ein grünes Blatt* presents precisely such a case, for it was written in 1850 and published in 1854 only after a thorough revision, in which the work's concluding poem was forcibly "amputated," thereby concealing the target of Storm's attack. The analysis of this novella (as well as *Abseits* in section four) exemplifies Storm's criticism not only of the Danes—which he is very open about in his letters and fiction—but also, albeit subtly, that of the Prussians, as their treachery in the political affairs of Schleswig-Holstein becomes public. That Storm hates Prussia is no secret. His letters show this clearly, but that he channels this rage and disdain for the Prussians in his novellas is something less obvious. The only scholar to discuss at length Storm's anti-Prussian views in a literary work is Margaret T. Peischl, who examines the novella *Herr Etatsrat* and regards it as a fictional protest against Prussia. Her analysis is truly compelling; however, it remains limited to only one work that is written quite late, in 1880, after much has already happened in Europe's political arena. Storm's critique of Prussia can be detected long before *Herr Etatsrat* comes into existence. The analysis of the novellas below, *Ein grünes Blatt* and *Abseits*, will delineate precisely this early critique and will further illustrate a development in Storm's own nationalistic instincts as well as that of his fictional characters. The author does not merely narrate political events; he comments on the politics of the current situation and foresees the dangers of what is about to approach.

lot of popularity. The author is thrilled to hear the rumors from Kiel that the poem was composed and sung aloud, thus making it just as famous as Chemnitz's song "Schleswig-Holstein meerumschlungen," which since 1844 had become a hymn of the freedom movement in the duchies (LL 1, 956-8).

³¹ Storm's repertoire of fiction includes several political novellas, such as: *Im Saal* (1848), *Ein grünes Blatt* (1850), *Unter dem Tannenbaum* (1862), *Abseits* (1863), and *Es waren zwei Königskinder* (1884). See Ingrid Schuster's analysis of these novellas in their political context (54-72). See also Löding (81-133).

III. *Ein grünes Blatt*: Documenting Early Awareness by Means of Nationalism

The novella *Ein grünes Blatt* documents Storm's early nationalistic sentiments concerning the situation of Schleswig-Holstein after 1848. Frithjof Löding justly views it as "reinpoltisch" (85) and Eckart Pastor calls it "eine patriotische Novelle" (*Sprache* 34). The year 1850, at the end of which the author conceives his story, is particularly critical, for this year denotes the end of the First Schleswig War with a discouraging outcome for the duchies. After the Convention of Olmütz, Prussia withdraws its military troops back from Idstedt and abandons the Schleswig-Holsteiners, who continue almost alone in the war against the Danes and are inevitably defeated (Carr 295-6, Löding 81-7). The novella *Ein grünes Blatt* is particularly interesting and will be central to this section for two reasons. First, it contains an example of Storm's political commentary already in the early years of his productivity. Second, the same novella reveals a second narrative, literally, that is produced from the author's correspondence with Fontane about the text before and after its publication. The double narrative in the novella discloses Storm's courageous and subtle writing. The primary reputation of the novella *Ein grünes Blatt* among scholars and readers lies in its urgent appeal for war against the Danes. Less obvious, and overlooked in the secondary literature to date, is its critique of Prussia. The following discussion will reinforce Storm's critique of the Danish oppressor and target his critique of the Prussian intruder in Schleswig-Holstein.

The publication of the novella becomes possible for the first time only in 1854 in the "Belletristisches Jahrbuch" *Argo*, under the editorial review of Theodor Fontane and Franz Kugler.³² Storm's original version differs significantly from the text that later appears in print. The novella is not merely revised, it is amputated, to

³² In 1855 and without Fontane's help, Storm makes possible another publication of this text (together with the novella *Angelica*) in book form, with the title *Ein grünes Blatt. Zwei Sommergeschichten*, incorporating a few changes.

borrow Eckart Pastor's phrase (*Sprache* 33), in order for Storm to please Fontane and his Prussian colleagues. Storm originally concludes his novella with the poem "Des Dichters Epilog," which the author uses to clarify the actuality of the problem and to highlight the upsetting situation in the duchies after their failed revolution of 1848. Storm is highly critical of both Denmark, for forcefully integrating Schleswig into the Danish *Helstat*³³ and of Prussia, for neglecting to help the duchies and letting Denmark tear them apart. The poem causes nervousness for Fontane and his Prussian functionary friends, who find the poem "politisch zu heikel" (LL 1,³⁴ 1043). Although Storm changes and softens his sentiments regarding Prussia, Fontane does not allow its publication. He rips it out of the manuscript to preserve it and notes: "Sehr schön! Aber in diesen Tagen nicht gut zu brauchen" (LL 1, 827). Fontane's gesture, I argue, shows his literal removal of Storm's visible criticism of Prussia, as presented in a sheet of paper, a *Blatt*. Storm's attack on Prussia still returns metaphorically in the form of the leaf contained in the novella's title and preserved in the narrative's diary.

The poem removed by Fontane is not included as part of the novella; instead, Storm publishes it separately much later in his volume *Gedichte* (1864) with the title "Ein Epilog." The poem's first verse gives a clear idea of its political directness: "Ich hab' es mir zum Trost ersonnen / In dieser Zeit der schweren Not, / In dieser Blütezeit der Schufte, / In dieser Zeit von Salz und Brot" (LL 1, 61). With the specific word "Schufte" [traitor, betrayer] the author refers to the act of betrayal by Prussia. This is evidently met with very little sympathy by Fontane's circle in Berlin. On behalf of *Argo*'s editorial committee, Fontane informs Storm of his colleagues' and his own

³³ The term *Helstat*, or *Gesamtstaat* in German, denoted Denmark's Federal State from 1814 to 1864. *Helstaten* comprised the Danish Monarchy, the regions of Schleswig, Holstein, and Lauenburg, the Faroe Islands, Iceland, as well as the colonies in Greenland, Gold Coast, Trankebar, and the Danish West Indies.

³⁴ The abbreviation "LL 1" stands for Theodor Storm's *Sämtliche Werke*. Eds. Karl Ernst Laage and Dieter Lohmeier, vol 1. Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1998. It will be used as such throughout this chapter.

reaction to the novella on 11 April 1853:³⁵

Die ersten 15 Seiten vortrefflich, ein Kabinettstück, kein Jota zu wenig oder zu viel, da plötzlich rollt uns die 16. Seite einen Stein in den Weg, vor dem die meisten von uns das Springen sofort aufgaben, während Kugler und ich, die wir im besten Rennen waren und uns nicht Einhalt gebieten lassen wollten, jämmerlich zu Falle kamen. (*Storm-Fontane* 27-28)

Fontane explains in the same letter the problem that the poem “Des Dichters Epilog”

poses, despite the revisions Storm is encouraged to make:

Wir waren über den *Wert* des Gedichts verschiedener Meinung [...] stimmten aber darin alle überein, daß wir es in unseren resp[ektiven] Stellungen nicht riskieren könnten, die Äusserungen solches Grimms und solcher Hoffnungen mit auf unsre Kappe zu nehmen. Ich soll Ihnen deshalb – da ein Epilog an und für sich sehr wünschenswert sein würde – proponieren, ob Sie nicht vielleicht geneigt wären, diesen Strophen eine bestimmte schleswig-holsteinische Färbung zu geben. Das deutsch-patriotische kann sich natürlich in den stärksten Ausdrücken äußern, aber was nach der einigen unteilbaren deutschen Republik schmeckt, könnte uns “Beamten” doch sehr verübelt werden. (*Storm-Fontane* 28)³⁶

What Fontane means with the “einige unteilbare deutsche Republik” is Prussia’s

German nation, including the duchies. Storm is fully aware of the poor reception of

his poem. He also knows that it risks being rejected for publication in *Argo*.³⁷ Yet it

can be seen as a revolutionary act that Storm targets his poem to the Prussian

audience comprised of Fontane and his Berliner circle. Storm is challenged to revise

the poem, but that still does not satisfy Fontane.³⁸ Storm finally responds to his

³⁵ The letter exchange between the two authors already begins on 8 March 1853.

³⁶ The following analysis relies heavily on the letter exchange between Storm and Fontane as it appears in the critical edition *Theodor Storm-Theodor Fontane: Briefwechsel*, which here is abbreviated as *Storm-Fontane*.

³⁷ Storm responds to Fontane’s critical letter: “Hinzufügen will ich noch, daß ich Ihnen a priori den Abdruck des Epilogs im Herzen gar nicht zugemuthet habe; ich erkenne Ihre Gründe als vollkommen triftig an. Da er aber einmal geschrieben war, so wollte ich ihn doch mitschicken, und wenigstens von Ihnen mitlesen lassen” (*Storm-Fontane* 31).

³⁸ Storm changes the poem by softening the vocabulary with regard to Prussia. “Ich hab es mir zum Trost eronnen / In dieser Zeit von Schmach und Schuld, / In dieser schweren Noth der Zeiten, / In

“Berliner Freunde” and stubbornly refuses to give any satisfactory explanations regarding his narrative. In an undated letter (after 11 April 1853), he makes the following attempt to leave out the poem, as long as the novella is published:

Übrigens beziehen meine Bedenklichkeiten sich nur auf die ersten 2/3 der Erzählung (d.h. bis zum Epilog). Das letzte Drittel habe ich mit ganz bewußtem Instinkt (kein Widerspruch) geschrieben. Ich kann es daher nicht ändern, und weiß nur einen Rat: Lassen Sie den Epilog weg und lassen Sie das Übrige stehen! (*Storm-Fontane* 29-30)

Even though Storm decides to discard the poem, his novella contains the same exact agenda as his highly criticized “Epilog.” Despite the fact that *Ein grünes Blatt* is not Storm’s most discussed and praised prose, its narrative has tremendous significance due to its daring political criticism.

Ein grünes Blatt is one of Storm’s first novellas and, as such, its plot unfolds somewhat simply. Without referring specifically to this text, Goldammer regards Storm’s early prose as something that lacks the epic component and where “es handelt sich im Grunde gar nicht um Geschichten – denn es geschieht kaum etwas in diesen ersten Prosaszenen –, sondern um Stimmungsbilder, die von Erinnerungen und Erlebnissen lyrisch gesättigt sind” (66-7). At the same time, it is precisely this reduction and isolation of certain historical moments that make possible a clear presentation of a part of the German reality (Goldammer 67). To understand the structure of the sparing narrative in *Ein grünes Blatt*, Schuster’s clear-cut division of it into three parts serves well: First, the depiction of the current war against the Danish enemy; second, the contrast to the memory of the idyllic past; and third, the optimistic call for the future after the hopes of the past become attainable, and serve as motivation for the present (66).

diesen Zeiten der Geduld.” Despite the revisions, Storm never publishes this poem as part of his *Ein grünes Blatt* (Löding (87).

The story in *Ein grünes Blatt* is framed by the conversation of two soldiers from Schleswig-Holstein, namely Gabriel and his friend, the narrator, who both fight on the battlefield. Their enemy is assumed to be the Dane. The narrator reads from Gabriel's diary, a "Kriegstagebuch" (Ebersold, 25) that becomes the narrative's site of a discourse between past and present. As customarily happens in Storm's novellas, the inner story is framed by an outer one, thereby complicating and obstructing meaning. The story within the story usually carries the essential message of the narrator, who tells or retells what he has heard or read somewhere. In the short narrative of the diary, the main character, Gabriel, who must reach the front, gets lost in a forest in Schleswig-Holstein. A young girl named Regine finds him sleepy and readily shows him the way to her home, where she lives with her great-grandfather. Under no circumstances should Gabriel mention to him anything about the war, for according to the girl "er glaubt doch nicht daran" (LL 1, 63). Later at night, Regine leads Gabriel to the other side of the forest, from where he can easily find his way to the front. As Gabriel's friend finishes reading this story, he is advised to continue reading the poem with the title "Pagina 113" that concludes the story of the diary. This poem reads as follows:³⁹

Und webte auch auf jenen Matten / Noch jene
 Mondesmärchenpracht, / Und ständ' sie noch im
 Blätterschatten / Inmitten jener Sommernacht, / Und
 fänd ich selber wie im Traume / Den Weg zurück durch
 Moor und Feld – / Sie schritte doch vom Waldessaume /
 Niemals hiunter in die Welt. (LL 1, 347-8)

The poem, loaded with overtexualization of nature (*Waldessaume*) and fairy tale troping (*Mondesmärchenpracht*), also indicates the obscurity and ambiguity of the

³⁹ There is textual evidence for reading the *Blatt* as both "page" and "leaf." The poem's title "Pagina" contains the word "page" and it calls attention to the *Blatt* that the poem occupies as text. The poem itself is (in part) about what stands in the shadows of natural leaves and there is resonance with the title of the novella itself. I pursue this argument further in my analysis of the *Blatt*.

overtly textualized natural elements (*Blätterschatten*). Unsurprisingly, Gabriel's friend does not understand this poem. His confusion reflects Fontane's own reaction, when he calls every line of the ending into question and asks for further clarification from Storm:

Was heißt das: "Sie schritte doch am Waldessaume /
Niemals hinunter in die Welt." Was heißt (in Folge
dessen): "und wenn sie doch hinunterschritte?" und was
heißt schließlich: "dann wollen wir die Büchse laden;
der Wald und die Prinzessin sind in Feindes Händen!"⁴⁰
Wir haben uns darüber zwei Stunden lang in
Vermutungen — — — — nein, das ist falsch! nicht in
Vermuthungen, denn was Sie wollen glauben wir
einigermassen herausgeföhlt zu haben, aber in
Erklärungen erschöpft und mußten schließlich davon
abstehn, da kein Schlüssel vollständig schließen wollte
und im einen Falle ein Widerspruch, im andern ein
Sprung uns in diesen Schlußworten vorzuliegen schien.
(*Storm-Fontane* 28)

These lines still remain "leidlich verständlich" to Fontane even after Storm's attempt to explain them in his response (LL 1, 1045). Storm's *Ein grünes Blatt* is the only novella that generates an intense correspondence between the two authors and, despite Fontane's observations of the narrative's lacunae, misunderstandings, and riddles, it finally makes its way into print. The confusion that the text creates is traced in the inner frame of the narrative.

The frame narrative in *Ein grünes Blatt* begins with a dichotomy of perceptions, which is then later transcribed into the inner story of the novella. The first sentence presents the narrator's ambiguous depiction of Gabriel's book: "Es war ein altes Buch, eine Art Album; aber lang und schmal wie ein Gebetbuch, mit groben gelben Blättern" (LL 1, 333). This old book, presented with the quality of a picture album but also with that of a prayer book, which then turns out to be a diary, contains

⁴⁰ This line concludes Storm's original version. The printed text reads slightly differently: "Der Wald und seine Schöne sind in Feindeshänden" (LL 1, 348).

withered yellow pages, thus creating an image that stands in stark contrast to the one presented in the title: *Ein grünes Blatt*. This dissonance between the title and the opening text is a strategy that challenges the reader's ability to remember due to the immediate confusion that it creates. Remembrance is also the primary objective of this diary that keeps a record of its owner's experiences, whether lived or dreamt. The documenting quality of the diary lies in its preservation of Gabriel's fantasies and memories. At the same time, the diary accompanies him everywhere on the battlefield: "im nächtlichen Gefechte hatte es ihn begleitet, es hatte den Krieg mitgemacht," and it visually preserves the experience of war: "die letzten Seiten waren mit Zeichnungen von Schanzen und Fortifikationen angefüllt" (LL 1, 333). This diary is essential, for it obscures the boundary between the inner and outer narrative frames. It also plays a dual role, in that it contains Gabriel's and Regine's story and is simultaneously contained within the narrator's novella. Ultimately, the diary represents the novella's self-reflexivity, and it is marked by the same qualities, objectives, and questions as the novella itself.

The novella's self-reflexive questioning of itself as a pure product of Poetic Realism is replicated in the diary's content, which imitates characteristics of Poetic Realism and ultimately calls into question its program. The Realist program undertakes to utilize *Verklärung* as the poetic means that make the reality appear bearable and thus preavailable (Kohl 112). This Realist fiction, however, that pretends to be no fiction, subverts its own structure and objective by reflecting self-consciously on its own fictionality, as Eric Downing argues (12). *Ein grünes Blatt* takes the form of a lyrical prose that integrates verse and prose organically. The diary at its core, too, contains a mixture of Gabriel's composed verses, his life records, and drawings, thus showing its ironic imitation to merge imagination and reality, so that it forces its

categorization as a Realist work. “Verse und Lebensanalen wechselten mit einander, wie sie durch äußere oder innere Veranlassung entstanden waren” (LL 1, 333). The diary, as the novella’s mirror, poses a number of problems. While reality and imagination are interspersed in its filled pages, the veracity of what, in fact, is real is called into question. Furthermore, the diary testifies to its writer’s lack of fantasy and his bad writing:

Es waren meistens unbedeutende Geschichtchen oder eigentlich gar keine; ein Gang durch die Mondnacht, eine Mittagsstunde in dem Garten seiner Eltern waren oftmals der ganze Inhalt; in den Versen mußte man über manche Härte und über manchen falschen Reim hinweg. (LL 1, 333)

The narrator warns of the disappointing content of the diary. He warns of a poet who lacks poesy. The narrator informs us of Gabriel’s objective in his writing, in which:

pflegte er sich selbst als dritte Person aufzuführen; vielleicht um bei gewissenhafter Schilderung das Ich nicht zu verletzen; vielleicht – so schien es mir – weil er das Bedürfnis hatte, durch seine Phantasie die Lücken des Erlebnisses auszufüllen. (LL 1, 333)

The diary serves as the site for Gabriel’s construction of his own identity, an identity based on a distancing of the subject from the first to the third person, and an identity based on the need for imagination. However, with Gabriel’s poor fantasy, as the narrator informs, the construction of the subject “I” is endangered, for the subject’s experience of reality is incomplete, characterized by tears and holes, unable to be filled by the inadequate imagination. The narrator assists in the process of Gabriel’s identity formation by reading his diary’s story, carrying on a dialogue with him, and calling into question aspects of his work. This dialogue also invites the reader to participate in a critique of Storm’s own writing. Pastor is quite right to recognize in the novella the evidence of Storm’s own dilemmas with his profession as a writer: “Wir wollen *Ein grünes Blatt* als Künstlernovelle ernst nehmen und als Zeugnis für

Storms eigene Auseinandersetzung mit seinem dichterischen Beruf" (*Sprache* 35). In his autobiography *Von Zwanzig bis Dreißig*, Fontane describes Storm's storytelling in one of the evenings in his guests' company. Strikingly, he employs the same vocabulary that Storm's narrator uses to depict Gabriel's writing.

Die Geschichten an und für sich selbst waren meist
unbedeutend und unfertig, und wenn wir ihm das sagten,
so wurde sein Gesicht nur noch spitzer, und mit
schlauem Lächeln erwiderte er: 'Ja, das ist das Wahre;
daran können Sie die Echtheit erkennen; solche
Geschichte muß immer ganz wenig sein und
unbefriedigt lassen; aus dem Unbefriedigten ergibt sich
zuletzt die höchste künstlerische Befriedigung.'
(*Zwanzig* 240)

Gabriel's diary serves as the ultimate site that documents the self-conscious reflection, to borrow Downing's terminology, of Storm's Realist novella on its own fictionality. The diary marks precisely the novella's self-conscious reflection and denotes it as the effect of the Realist work.

The inner narrative presents a synthesis of reality and fantasy that indicates Storm's use of Romantic and fairy-tale elements⁴¹ to strengthen the perception of reality, despite the confusion created. This becomes evident within Gabriel's story, for it is here that the *Heimat* is perceived to the fullest and with all the senses. Gabriel's entrance into the home territory is associated with a teasing parade of nature's elements, from the sounds to the aromas, and from the summer heat to the summer wind. The singing birds and the humming bees, the aromatic flowers and the berry bushes, the crawling insects and the flying butterflies (LL 1, 334-5),⁴² all present a

⁴¹See Herbert Feuchte's dissertation "Theodor Storm und die Romantik" that explores these elements in Storm's work. Some of the Romantic stimuli that Storm employs in his *Ein grünes Blatt* remind of E.T.A Hoffman's style. See for example Feuchte (76), Böttger (237), and Laage's *Bibliographie* (54-55). See also Andrew Webber's article that establishes reflections of Hoffmann's uncanny projections in Storm's work: "The Uncanny Rides Again. Theodor Storm's Double Vision." *Modern Language Review* 84 (1989): 860-873.

⁴²The presence of natural elements such as melissa plants, bees, and butterflies illustrates a nuance of superstition in Frisian tradition, which Storm incorporates consciously. For extended examples on Storm's employment of superstition, see Christine Geffers Browne's *Theodor Storm. Das*

full image of the *Heimat*. As Gabriel walks through the heath, he gets lost and falls asleep. He remains in a dreamy state for some time until he is found by Regine, whom he first mistakes for a princess:

Der Schlafende wandte den Kopf, und halb erwachend sah er in das kleine Auge der Schlange, die neben seinem Kopfe hinkroch. [...] Das Auge der Schlange liess ihn los und verschwand; er sah nichts mehr. Dann kam der Traum. Da war er wieder der Hans im Märchen, wie er es oft als Knabe gewesen war, und lag im Grase vor der Schlangenhöhle, um die verzauberte Prinzessin zu erlösen. [...] Da küsste er die Schlange, und da war's geschehen. (LL 1, 335)

Confusion is created for both Gabriel's character and the reader, who no longer is certain whether this is a temporary dream or the novella's transition to a genuine fairy tale. Just as Gabriel lies there "zwischen Traum und Wachen" (LL 1, 335), so the reader struggles to determine the borders between reality and imagination within and beyond this diary journal. The characteristics and motives of the fairy tale are not merely present; they demand to be explicit. Even though the *Märchen* loses status by the mid-nineteenth century when it becomes only a genre for children, Storm returns to the *Volksseele* as a means of promoting new values (Jackson, *Humanitarian* 62). This notion of *Volkstümlichkeit* becomes dominant in the agenda of Poetic Realism; this is also shown by poetry's striving for *Volkstümlichkeit*. David A. Jackson summarizes the new demand for fairy tales in Storm's time as follows:

Democratic writers could first isolate commendable aspirations in folk material and then feed them back into the popular imagination via genres like the *Märchen* and the *Volkslied*. Modern fairy stories would not rely on supernatural agencies; nor would they engineer happy endings where none were available. But they could lend momentum to the search for alternatives by making readers of all cultural and educational levels conscious of the defects of existing norms and

institutions. (*Humanitarian* 62-3)

Storm occupies himself seriously with fairy tales in the 1860s. On this subject, Storm writes, for example, to his friend Hartmuth Brinkmann in January 1864: “Trotz dieser politischen Aufregungen, vielleicht grade durch sie, weil sie ihr Gegengewicht verlangte, ward mir in dieser Zeit, was ich mir seit zwanzig Jahren vergebens oft gewünscht hatte, die Fähigkeit und der fast dämonische Drang zur Märchen-Dichtung” (*Briefe* 1, 438). While the author’s desire and need to work on *Märchen* matures only later,⁴³ it is already prior to and around 1850 that Storm finds the presence of fairy-tale elements necessary to his novella. *Ein grünes Blatt* certainly offers no fairy-tale solution in the end. Its purpose coincides fully with one of literature’s objectives, namely to shed light on problems. And in this case, the concrete problem lies in the threatened state of Schleswig-Holstein, and the novella urgently calls for awareness and vigilance. The fairy-tale-like world in which the hero Gabriel meets the princess Regine stands by no means as a model of reality, for every inch of what is presented as *Heimat* is carefully coded as an idyllic construction, from its landscape to its ambiance, and from the language that describes it to the mood that it creates.

The idyllic setting of the *Heimat*, into which Gabriel sets foot, and which is home to Regine, is quite problematic, for it poses the threat of deception by disabling Gabriel’s senses. While the construction of idyllic havens is, indeed, Storm’s signature trademark in poetry and fiction, this must not be misunderstood as a simplifying device, for such sanctuaries are significant and therefore demand attention.⁴⁴ From the first moments of Gabriel’s entrance into the forest, the *Heimat*

⁴³ Storm’s repertoire of later fairy tales includes, for example, *Die Regentrude*, *Bulemanns Haus*, and *Der Spiegel des Cyprianus* (1864-1865).

⁴⁴ Josef von De Cort’s article “Das Idyllische in Storms Novellistik” is crucial for its significant attempt to discover and analyze the ambiguity of Storm’s idyllic constructions. However, *Ein grünes Blatt*

appears to him intoxicating: “Die Heide blühte, die Luft war durchgewürzt von Wohlgerüchen”; and in the presence of “ein Faden weißen Rauches” (LL 1, 334), which indicates the textual quality of nature, it makes him high. The passivity and quietude that reign in the forest of Holstein pose the danger of paralysis. This is where Gabriel falls into a dormant and stagnant state—“da überkam ihn unbezwingliche Sommermüdigkeit”—during which he is incapable of doing anything against the threatening serpent around his head: “er wollte die Hand erheben, aber er vermochte es nicht” (LL 1, 335). In this peaceful area that he claims to be his homeland, Gabriel becomes disoriented: “Ich bin irregegangen, [...] in der eigenen Heimat” (LL 1, 336).

To buttress even further the influence of this scenery on the character, the narrator explains that Gabriel loses his sight: “er sah nichts mehr” (LL 1, 335). Time and again, the narrative hints at Gabriel’s failure to see properly, literally and figuratively. Eckart Pastor notices that “[a]uch scheinen da, wo Gabriel wirklich ‘sieht’, seine Blicke ins Leere zu schweifen, ohne die Welt aufzunehmen (*Sprache* 44-45). Pastor problematizes Gabriel’s inability to see in connection with the uninspired artist: “Solch folgenloses Sehen ins Nirgendwo ist sicher das deutlichste Zeichen für die lückenhafte Erlebnisfähigkeit des Dichters” (*Sprache* 45). The tranquil scenery of the *Heimat* is doubly threatening. First, it calls into question Gabriel’s safety at home; and second, it disarms Gabriel of his ability to accomplish his mission. One must recall that at this time of war, he is expected at the front, where combat operations are to be carried out against the Danish enemy.

In the center of this problematic and deceiving *Heimat* stands the female character of Regine, an utterly allegorized figure. First appearing to Gabriel in the middle of his reverie, and often referred to in the narrative as an “enchanted”

receives only minimum attention. Other scholars warn against Storm’s idyllic homeliness. See, for example, Andrew Webber’s “The Uncanny Rides Again: Theodor Storm’s Double Vision,” Eckart Pastor’s *Die Sprache der Erinnerung*, and David Artiss’s *Studies in Ambivalence*.

(“verzauberte”) “Prinzessin” with golden hair, blue eyes, “doch kräftigen Baues” (LL 1, 335-6), Regine seems to embody German virtue. Storm himself describes her as an “Art Genius der Heimat” (*Storm-Fontane* 37). In April 1854, Eduard Mörike sends Storm his comments on the novella, in which he praises the distinctive scenery of the forest but criticizes the inadequate way Regine is treated.

Jener Sommertag, brütend auf der einsamen Heide u.
über dem Wald, ist bis zur sinnlichen Empfindung des
Lesers wiedergegeben; das vis à vis mit der Schlange,
der Alte bei den Bienen, seine Stube – unvergleichlich.
Dagegen hat die Schilderung des Mädchens [...], mir
einen Zweifel erregt; in der Art aber, daß es sich nur um
ein Paar Striche zu viel und Etliches zu wenig handeln
würde. [...] andererseits sollte die allzu skizzenhaft
behandelte Regine ein großer Stück sprechen, am besten
vielleicht, indem sie ein kleines Abenteuer oder
Märchen erzählte. Dadurch träte ihr reizendes Bild von
selbst mehr heraus und Alles bekäme zugleich mehr
Fülle. (LL1, 1047)

Storm follows Mörike’s advice and in the published version adds more details, which do not really change much of Regine’s character.⁴⁵ Ebersold insists that Regine alludes to the goddess of freedom, who “träumerisch und versponnen im Walde lebt,” and for whom “nötig [...] wäre eine Konfrontation mit der Realität” (25). However, this does not happen. Regine is not a mere romantic figure that reigns in her fantastic venue. Her character embodies illusion, and as such she poses the same grave menace as the *Heimat* she represents. Her own name—from the Latin *regina*, “queen”—points to her authoritarian function in the forest. Her power lies precisely in the illusion she creates. More than just the fairy-tale princess, as she is first introduced to the reader, and despite her *skizzenhaft* depiction, Regine easily deceives. Almost as a work of art, Regine’s appearance astonishes. Pastor, for example, who construes

⁴⁵ Storm changes only a few things before he publishes the final version (see Lohmeier’s commentary in LL 1, 1049-1052). He also takes into consideration Mörike’s comments on Regine’s character; however, Storm is quite unhappy with the changes, as he reports to his friend on 27 August 1854: “Das Grüne Blatt ist wesentlich nach Ihrem Rate, doch leider etwas invita Minerva überarbeitet; an Fülle hat es jedenfalls etwas gewonnen” (*Briefe* I, 290).

Gabriel as an inadequate poet, comments as follows on the topic of art in *Ein grünes*

Blatt:

Die "Erscheinung" Regines wird dem jungen Dichter
zur Kunsterfahrung, zum biedermeierlichen
naturgeahmten Bild, für das die Malerei der Zeit ja eine
ausgeprägte Vorliebe hatte. Auch andernorts wirkt die
Welt, wie Gabriel sie sieht, wie durch einen
gewaltsamen Akt der Stilisierung in Kunst überführt.
(*Sprache* 42)

Regina's deceiving character affects Gabriel's perception of his surroundings. She easily distracts Gabriel from his awareness and vigilance. Regine seems to know nothing of the war and remains indifferent when Gabriel refers to it in his song on the way to her grandfather. "Krieg? [...] Sprich nicht davon zum Großvater [...] er glaubt doch nicht daran. [...] Was geht uns Dirnen der Krieg an?" (LL 1, 338). Both Regine and her grandfather stand for the detrimental unawareness, and furthermore, for the resolution to remain uninformed about the war around them. The danger they embody lies precisely in their carelessness, with which they hope to infect Gabriel. The grandfather is certain of the young man's return, on which he comments "mit schlaudem Lächeln [...] ihn noch einmal an der Kugelbüchse zurückhaltend: 'Wir sehen uns noch wieder, junger Herr; Sie kommen schon zurück - - - morgen oder übermorgen'" (LL 1, 344). Gabriel tears a hole in the illusion this place creates by remembering the military assignment he must accomplish: "eine *sehnsüchtige Ungeduld* befahl ihn, es litt ihn nicht länger in der *ahnungslosen Stille* dieses Ortes" (LL 1, 343, *my emphasis*). The disturbing aspects of such calmness are its obliviousness and passivity, which jeopardize the safety of the forest and its inhabitants, completely unprepared for war.

As a token of his memory from this forest and its people, Gabriel takes and preserves in his diary a leaf, which is the most allegorical sign in the story and after

which the novella takes its title. Based on two relevant meanings of the German term *Blatt* as “page” and “leaf,” there are at least two intersecting perspectives that follow. First, located within the diary, the *Blatt* functions as a component of the organic whole that contains the experiences of its writer. Furthermore, this diary page reflects the writer’s ego. The first paragraph of the novella introduces the content of the diary, in which its owner marks his experiences in the third person “vielleicht um bei gewissenhafter Schilderung das Ich nicht zu verletzen” (LL 1, 333). The *Blatt* as a diary page documents the writer’s ego by modifying his reality.⁴⁶ In other words, Gabriel as the author of his narrative desires that the *Blatt* carries the possible function of performative writing by containing and materializing the most positively depicted elements in it.

A second perspective of the *Blatt* is that of its function as a (tree) leaf made part of the diary. Its appearance is perceived as fresh and green by Gabriel, and as brown and withered by his friend. Moreover, it becomes the ultimate trace of an idyllic *Heimat* that Gabriel visits as if in a dreamy state. The green leaf does not simply indicate Gabriel’s escape from spiritual loneliness in reminiscence, as Wedberg briefly comments (81), but it also serves as a vestige of an idyllic world, toward which Gabriel is constantly pulled. Despite the fading color, Gabriel sees the dry leaf as if it still were green. At first, he shakes his head in disapproval when his friend comments that “[d]as Blatt ist braun geworden” (LL 1, 334). Then, towards the end, in response to his friend, the narrator, who still remains curious of the meaning of the withered leaf, he reacts in an aggravated manner “es ist grün, so grün wie Juniblätter!” (LL 1, 347). The leaf soon becomes an object of Gabriel’s desires, an

⁴⁶ This reflexive function of the written page manifests itself even in Storm’s own experience as writer. He depicts idyllic versions of reality because of his need to change aspects of his existing reality through artistic creation. In the section “Aesthetic Crisis” (228-237) in *Theodor Storm: The Life and Works of a Democratic Humanitarian*, David A. Jackson views the author’s difficult struggle of separation between life and art.

object of a past time and space. Even though it is part of his past experiences, the leaf, as Gabriel describes it, stands for something utopian. The most remarkable quality of the leaf is its captivating ability. The narrator's introduction of the leaf already points towards this interpretation: "so wurden jetzt zum erstenmal meine Augen durch ein eingelegtes Buchenblatt *gefesselt*" (LL 1, 334, *my emphasis*). The character wishes to perceive the leaf as he once remembers it in the forest, but does not accept the reality that shows the leaf in a different state. By believing that this object remains unchanged, Gabriel attempts to keep his own reality just as unchanged. His refusal to view the leaf as it truly is, and not only for what it stands, shows his failure to be fully awake and ready for the differently colored reality.

Gabriel's passivity and inability to deal with the present as evidenced in his misperception of the unchanged *Blatt* is reflected in the novella on a larger, political scale. The reader is presented with a political critique not only of the Danish enemy, but also of the actual situation of the passive inhabitants of Schleswig-Holstein, who ignore their responsibility to protect their homeland. Decades later, Storm will refer to this novella as an "Aufruf" and "Erwachen aus poetischer Träumerei" (Pastor, *Sprache* 48). The peacefully undisturbed *Heimat* located at the heart of the novella is doubly dangerous: First, it is a deceiving construction, and second, it is a threatening illusion that both numbs one's orientation and keeps its residents in a passive state at a time of torment and war. Storm criticizes the lack of seriousness in his fellow Germans and draws their attention to certain shortcomings. In the center story of the novella, Gabriel is first introduced with uncertainty as a young doctor, or perhaps a student, who has a hard time properly carrying and handling the gun, which "schien ihm schwer zu werden" (LL 1, 334). Moving it uncomfortably from one shoulder to the other, the soldier seems to be burdened by it. Once he enters Regine's home, he

places his rifle in a corner of the room and forgets for some time his urgent mission on the other side of the forest. Storm is so determined to accentuate Gabriel's passivity at home that he adds a long scene in the final version of the text, in which the soldier remains in complete passivity and decides to continue on his mission only after he hears sounds of explosions from the other side of the forest: "Da hörte Gabriel einen Ton, dumpf, als käme er aus der Erde; und der Boden unter ihm schüttelte kaum merklich" (LL 1, 343).⁴⁷ It is only outside the idyllic *Heimat* that Gabriel can be active. Outside, Gabriel is found busy cleaning his friend's and his own rifles, a task that shows his alertness for war.

In addition to a critique of political passivity of the inhabitants of Schleswig-Holstein, the novella instigates a subtle critique of Prussia through a critique of the family. In *Ein grünes Blatt* there is no fully developed model of a family that would fairly represent a quality of *Heimat*. In a letter to Fontane, Storm discloses this fault of *Ein grünes Blatt*: "Es fehlt nämlich offenbar in der Mitte die Schilderung des Familienlebens, das den Kern des Heimathlichen bildet. Leider kann ich nichts mehr daran ändern" (*Storm-Fontane* 30-31). Strikingly, Regine is a lonely character who comes from a broken family. She tells Gabriel that her father, a school principal, died a year ago, while her mother recently married an administrative officer of the town. Gabriel even calls into question the existence of her mother when he first sees Regine and queries her about her very blue eyes: "'Ganz blau!' sagte sie, 'die sind von meiner Mutter!' 'Von deiner Mutter? - Hast du denn eine Mutter!'" (LL 1, 336). Regine has no present mother and she lives with her only relative, her grandfather, who turns out to be, in fact, her great-grandfather, an even more distant blood relation: "Er ist eigentlich mein Urgroßvater [...] er ist schon undenkbar alt" (LL 1, 339). While it is

⁴⁷ See Lohmeier's reference to the original scene ("heraufkam [...] noch einmal") that Storm later on expands by 47 lines (LL 1, 1051). The added scene accentuates the author's typical depiction of still life.

difficult to determine whether Storm purposely formats a meager novella that points out limitations of its characters and its narrative, it seems that he is fully aware of what is missing in his story and yet refuses to undertake its completion or further development. While my argument cannot be fully substantiated, the lack of a family in the center may indicate a crucial detail in Storm's political situation at the time. Schleswig-Holstein is left alone to carry out the war against the Danes in 1848. Prussia deliberately withdraws its troops from the zone and abandons the inhabitants of Schleswig-Holstein. The outcome of the withdrawal is seen in the catastrophes in areas such as Idstedt, Missunde and Friedrichstadt (Ebersold 24). Storm has reason to criticize Prussia for letting the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein fight the war on their own, which was certain to prove unsuccessful. The careful construction of a novella that purposely lacks an established and healthy family at its center may aim at a critique of the Prussians' refusal to help their "relatives" in Schleswig-Holstein, which Fontane identifies as part of the unified undivided German Republic. The novella's shortcomings may suggest the unfavorable political atmosphere in Schleswig-Holstein, as well as Prussia's and Denmark's political approaches to this territory. In the name of its interests, Prussia refuses to offer help to the duchies, thus making difficult their unification process for the purpose of occupying them for a year along with Austrian troops.

Storm presents his grave concern on both sides of the conflict between German and Dane. First, he shows the lack of preparation of his fellow Germans for the ongoing war; and second, he predicts their intention to disturb what is presented as idyllic and untouched by a fierce desire for possession. Storm hints at the word *Besitz* very carefully in a letter to Fontane. According to the novella's author,

ist die Erscheinung des jungen Mädchens mit ihrer ganzen Umgebung zu einer poetischen Erinnerung

geworden, zu einem von den Dingen, 'die man nicht anrühren soll,' die nicht ins tägliche Leben hinein *verpflanzt* werden können. [...] An den *körperlichen und dauernden Besitz* des Mädchens hat Gabriel, bei dieser Auffassung des Erlebnisses, nicht gedacht. Der Freund giebt ihm diesen Gedanken durch die Worte "Und wenn sie doch hinunterschritte?" Gabriel fasst diesen Gedanken lebhaft auf, und weil der Theil der Heimath, worin der Wald und das Mädchen sich befinden, vom Feinde *occupirt* ist, so will er die Büchse laden, um den Ort vom Feinde zu befreien.
(*Storm-Fontane* 30, *my emphasis*)

The noble task of the soldiers to free the homeland seems to be tied to the danger of the turbulence they are about to bring, namely their invasion of the peaceful forest.

Fontane critically picks up on this and in a reply to Storm regarding the last lines, he conveys:

Dieser Ausruf gehörte allerdings in den Mund eines Liebhabers, der plötzlich die Möglichkeit gegeben sieht, sein Liebstes zu *besitzen*; aber wir kennen ja den Gabriel von Anfang an der Erzählung als Einen, der den vom Feinde *besetzten* Wald wieder *erobern* will und noch seine Abschiedsworte, die er an die Prinzessin richtet, drücken diese Absicht klar und deutlich aus. Doch nun genug davon! (*Storm-Fontane* 32, *my emphasis*)

In his status as an armed soldier, and despite the assumption that he is there to protect and fight for the homeland, Gabriel embodies characteristics of a violent and possessive being, whose homeland may stretch beyond the region and encompass the whole German nation. This would completely subvert his mission that aims at the duchies' freedom.

The possibility of the independence of *Heimat* vanishes in the novella. The problematic of freeing the land from the Danish enemy is merely replaced with the problematic of yet another invasion of Schleswig-Holstein. The appearance of the dubious character of the German soldier Gabriel represents the beginning of the second invasion. Gabriel is the ultimate menace that disturbs the *Heimat*. Due to his

biblical name—“nach dem Lukas-Evangelium ist er der Engel der Verkündigung” (LL 1, 1050)—Gabriel seems to function as the messenger in the novella where he communicates to the inhabitants of the forest the necessity of the liberating war against the Danes. However, the figure of Gabriel is more complex than this. Gabriel’s arrival in the forest alludes to something uncanny and dangerous.

In the purely Freudian sense, in which the origins of the uncanny are traced to the home as the site of primary experience, Gabriel’s uncanny presence is highlighted by his return to the place he calls his *Heimat*. While the narrator notes Gabriel’s dreamy state when he first encounters Regine, he introduces the presence of a veil (*Schleier*), through which Gabriel first sees the unaware inhabitant of the forest. Even though this is mentioned only once as if in passing—one must be aware of Storm’s sparing use of his writing devices—such a striking element reinforces the danger of deception posed by both Regine (her awareness is veiled) and Gabriel (unable to remove the veil). For the latter, the veil represents the means by which he as soldier conceals his true (forthcoming) purpose in the forest. Under the veil of his military mission to protect people and land, he embodies a true menace to the *Heimat* he is about to occupy. Storm never reveals Gabriel as a menace and he does not comment much on his character in his correspondence. However, the fear, the eeriness, that derives from such a figure is not only symptomatic within the narrative; it also causes discomfort and unease in Storm’s contemporary critics. Fontane seems suspicious of this narrative from the very beginning and the rejection of the “Epilog” does not quite remove the disturbing presence of Storm’s open criticism of Prussia, for that is quickly embodied in the uncanny presence of the German soldier. While roaming in the duchies’ territory, getting lost, falling asleep, and picking cherries in the midst of a revolution, Gabriel does not prove fit and adequate to protect

Schleswig-Holstein.

The last part of the novella reveals Gabriel as a sternly authoritarian character who shows the first symptoms of violence. Even though he still appears unstable by easily falling into a dreamy state—“[d]as Klirren des Gehenkes weckte ihn” (LL 1, 345)—he demands time and again that Regine shows him the way through the forest. “Komm nur [...] und weise mir den Weg!” (LL 1, 345). Towards the end, Gabriel forces his way into the untouched forest, as he moves forward “quer in den Wald hinein” (LL 1, 345). Nature seems to scold him for his violence. Gabriel is “von unsichtbaren Dornen geritzt,” and when “Baumwurzeln krochen am Boden hin und fingen den Fuß des Wanderers; niederhängende Zweige schlugen ihm in’s Gesicht oder zupften ihn an der Büchse” (LL 1, 345). The idyllic landscape of the *Heimat* previously introduced no longer seems innocent. The depiction of nature here is loaded with a vocabulary that highlights attack and combat. Regarding nature and its coding, David Artiss notes that Storm’s sensitivity and interest in nature does not lie in its depiction per se, but in the effect it has on the individual (6). Gabriel cannot feel at ease. Nature’s reaction to his wanderings in what he calls his *Heimat* contradicts his claim that he is in his own homeland. Despite the hospitality of Regine and her great-grandfather—figures that remain problematic in and of themselves, as argued previously—Gabriel’s presence is clearly unwelcome in the forest.

As Gabriel leaves the forest, he composes and aims at Regine the most significant lines that unfold the political dimension of the text. To her question “Sag mir noch Eines; ... weshalb mußt Du in den Krieg?” Gabriel responds, although after a long silence that disturbs Regine:

Es ist für diese Erde ... für Dich, für diesen Wald - - -
damit hier nichts *Fremdes* wandle, kein Laut Dir hier
begegne, den Du nicht verstehst, damit es hier so bleibe
wie es ist, wie es sein muß, wenn wir leben sollen, -

unverfälschte, süße, wunderbare Luft der Heimat! (LL 1, 347, my emphasis)

Gabriel's moving speech underlines the novella's objective. Instead of being comforted by these words, by Gabriel's certainty in fighting the enemy, Regina reacts nervously, her body revealing for a brief moment her horror: "Sie strich mit der Hand über ihre Haare, als wenn ein Schauer sie berühre" (LL 1, 347). In fear, she asks Gabriel to leave. It is understood from Gabriel's speech that the term *Fremdes* relates to the Danes. However, Storm ascribes this characteristic unjustly, for Danes are by no means foreigners in Schleswig-Holstein. Lohmeier notes in his commentary regarding this context:

Der politische Konflikt wird hier von Storm parteilich verzeichnet: Staatsrechtlich war der König von Dänemark, gegen sich die Schleswig-Holsteiner erhoben, kein Fremdherrscher, sondern seit 1460 legitimer Herzog von Schleswig und Holstein. (LL 1, 1052)

Storm certainly does not lack this piece of historical information on Schleswig-Holstein. The *Fremde* may very well refer to Danes, even though the text does not trigger any direct feelings of antipathy towards them. The reader merely assumes that the Other is the Dane, based on the background information on Storm and his statements to friends and family. However, what comprises the greatest danger in *Ein grünes Blatt* is the present *Fremde* embodied by someone like Gabriel, that which lurks inside the *Heimat* and finds no place as guest.

Storm's novella contained something unpleasant and disturbing from the very beginning for the Prussian advocates' taste. Gabriel is a character who subtly bears out the signs that cause this disturbance among the Prussians. There are two intriguing comments that Fontane makes in one of his letters to Storm. If understood correctly, they both substantiate the fact that Storm's novella aims for an

unmistakable criticism towards Prussians, and much more forcefully than what his reader later is given to perceive. In the first part of his letter, Fontane conveys:

Herzlichen Dank dafür, daß Sie so schnell bereit
gewesen sind, Ihren Epilog dran zu geben und
doppelten Dank dafür, daß Sie, falls die Stimmung dazu
kommt, nicht abgeneigt sind, den erstgeborenen wilden
Kain durch einen leise tretenden Abel zu ersetzen.
(*Storm-Fontane 32, emphasis in the original*)

It is not certain what exactly Fontane means by this and there exists no later reference to such a comment. If Fontane alludes to the previous version of the novella (containing the epilogue) as the *wilden Kain* and to the final one as the *leise tretenden Abel*, one may then comprehend Storm's initial intention with the work to point at the annihilating danger his fellow Germans in Prussia pose. Similarly, another comment by Fontane written at the end of the first part of the same letter discussing Storm's novella, draws attention to revealing the author's possible objective.

Bevor ich nun aber weiter gehe, bitt' ich Sie um's
Himmels Willen, diese breitausgespinnene
Splitterrichterei nicht missverstehen zu wollen; wir
wissen nach wie vor, welch frische schöne Blüte wir in
Ihrem "grünen Blatte" haben und wenn meinerseits so
viele Seiten schönes Papier an allerhand Anfragen und
Auseinandersetzungen vergeudet worden sind, so
erklären Sie sich's damit, daß man eben nur an der
schneeweißen Schürze das kleinste Fleckchen bemerkt
und es fortwünscht, um die seltne Freude des
Makellosen zu haben. (*Storm-Fontane 33, my emphasis*)

Without elucidation from any further references, this comment remains just as enigmatic as the first. A first simple interpretation is possible by regarding Fontane's allusion to *schneeweißen Schürze*, *Fleckchen*, and *Makellosen* literally, as his concern for a perfect and flawless literary work that must be wholesome in itself in order to be fully appreciated. At the same time, Fontane's vocabulary in this part of the letter also alludes to a moral dimension. Could Fontane direct Storm's attention to his responsibility as a writer who might endanger his professional status at a moral level

if his work contains delicate affairs (*Fleckchen*) such as open criticism against Prussia? Does Fontane, to whom Storm later refers as his political opponent,⁴⁸ warn Storm rather than simply comment on his *Ein grünes Blatt*? Fontane's comments remain unclear and they provide no stable ground to suggest the above interpretation, but if this is relevant to the political context, it becomes even more intriguing that the novella still contains the shifty and dangerous bits the Prussian editors so earnestly fear in the first place. It is appropriate in this context to briefly return to Fontane's gesture of ripping the poem "Epilog" apart from Storm's text, for the novella's objective disguised under the sentimental *grünes Blatt* returns to attack its very adversary. It seems that the "Epilogue," which Fontane had literally ripped out, comes back metaphorically in the form of the leaf, now made part of Gabriel's story and essential to the narrative's core.

Storm's *Ein grünes Blatt* stands as a critique of both German and Dane for their aggressive behavior and intentions regarding Schleswig-Holstein. Storm calls for an alertness of war against the neighboring Danes but most importantly for a vigilant awareness of the situation with the Prussians. The latter's betrayal by leaving Schleswig-Holsteiners to their own fate in the battlefield is soon followed by their occupation of the duchies. Storm is most concerned with the state of affairs within his nation, rather than that what happens outside of it or at its borders. In one of his letters to Professor Karl Pyl in November 1870, he states: "Ich habe [...] mehr Begeisterung für den Kampf im Staate als für den um seine Grenzen" (*Briefe* 2, 29). Even though Storm merely treats only a particular regional locality (such as the forest in Schleswig-Holstein), his *Ein grünes Blatt* nonetheless generates a sense of national

⁴⁸ Storm writes to his publisher George Westermann on 22 July 1868: "Fontane ist politisch fast mein Gegner" (Laage, *Kritische* 18).

belonging (Koch 20).⁴⁹ Storm's identification with Germans, and yet his alertness against Prussians make his narrative more complicated and effective⁵⁰ than has been previously recognized. Moreover, in *Ein grünes Blatt*, Storm already establishes one aspect of the antithesis *Fremde-Freunde*, which he develops much more strongly in the novella *Abseits*, as it is shown in the following section of this analysis. The two novellas contain a number of significant similarities, but they differ in the forcefulness of the presented criticism towards Prussia's political agenda.

IV. *Abseits*: Storm's *Fremde* and the Matter of Succession

Storm conceives the novella *Abseits*⁵¹ during his stay in Heiligenstadt in 1863.⁵² It appears for the first time on 19 December 1863 in the *Leipziger Illustrierter Zeitung*. While its extended title *Abseits. Eine Weihnachtsidylle*⁵³ conceals any possible crisis of the time, the story refers to several political occurrences such as the national uprising of Schleswig-Holstein in 1848, its defeat, the hostile reactions of Prussians towards the Danes, and the suffering years from 1851-1863. The novella also has been discussed in the context of the resistance against the Eider-Danish politics of the Danish regime.⁵⁴ The year 1863 denotes the time when the Eider-Danes

⁴⁹ Koch argues the same also for Storm's other novella *Eine Halligfahrt*.

⁵⁰ Pastor calls into question the quality of *Ein grünes Blatt* (*Sprache* 46).

⁵¹ Storm writes in 1848 a poem that also carries the title "Abseits," which demonstrates the typical "Stormschen Realismus." See for example the analysis in Harro Müller's *Theodor Storms Lyrik* (82-87) and Fritz Böttger's *Theodor Storm in seiner Zeit* (96-98). To the title of both the novella and the poem, Wolfgang Preisendanz properly refers that "'Abseits' muß als Signatur des Gesamtwerkes herhalten" (26).

⁵² For a detailed view on Storm's literary experiences and creativity in Heiligenstadt, see the collection of letters, novellas, poems, and fairy tales in *Heiligenstädter Storm-Lesebuch: Briefe, Novellen, Märchen und Gedichte aus und über Heiligenstadt*. Heiligenstadt: Literaturmuseum "Theodor Storm," 1992. See also the collection of essays in *Theodor Storm und Heiligenstadt: Beiträge zur Theodor-Storm-Ehrung*. Heiligenstadt: Das Kreiskabinett, 1988.

⁵³ The work then later appears in *Zwei Weihnachtsidyllen* together with the novella *Unter dem Tannenbaum* (LL 1, 1166, 1179).

⁵⁴ Eider-Danishism was a movement in Denmark for the union of Schleswig with Denmark. Eider-Danes were Danish nationalists who strongly believed that the natural border between Denmark and Germany was the river Eider, which also served as the border between the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. (See Steefel and Carr for a historical approach of the Schleswig-Holstein Question).

forcefully demand Schleswig's union with Denmark. Just a few weeks later after the novella's publication, on 1 February 1864, Prussia and Austria begin their war against Denmark. Storm's *Abseits* is clearly a direct reaction to the foregoing events of the time and it foresees their forthcoming developments. Fritz Böttger rightly remarks: "Nie ist Storm mit einem erzählenden Werk dem Geschehen seiner Zeit so nah gewesen wie in der Novelle, die den Titel 'Abseits' trägt" (219). Four days after the novella's publication the Prussian troops enter into Holstein and Lauenburg (Löding 112). With his work, which he depicts in a letter to Pietsch as "ein sehr stilles Lebensbild," written "trotz des unbehaglichen Zustandes der letzten Monate" (LL 1, 1180), Storm shows once again his masterly capacity as a politically engaged and effective writer during critical times, but also as one who must be read cautiously and beyond the limits that he presents to the reader. This section will take up some of the issues already established in *Ein grünes Blatt*, such as family, *Heimat*, *Fremde*, and approaches to the German and Dane, and will demonstrate how they progressively develop in *Abseits*. The nationalism in *Abseits* is expressed in the German characters' awareness and their expressions of hatred for the Dane, as well as in the nostalgia and desire for war against Denmark. National identity is constructed by these nationalistic means, which, in the end, turn out to deceive the characters, who are ultimately criticized for their ambivalence. This illustrates the novella's utilization of nationalism as a way to criticize Prussia, Germany's inner danger.

Abseits tells a patriotic story in the northernmost German territory at a time when Schleswig is under Danish occupation. Set between two frames, as is Storm's technique, the plot unfolds in an idyllic heath land, a senator's farm, where he spends the summers with his family. The main character, Meta Hansen, is an aging spinster who has the position of the housekeeper in charge of this property. In Stormian

fashion, Meta is both a narrated and narrating figure in the outer and inner frame of the story, respectively. She recounts to the old schoolteacher her own tale regarding her past relationship with her friend, Ehrenfried. As the novella unfolds, Meta renounces a life together with him, for she gives away her inheritance in order to assist her bankrupt brother, Christian. Ehrenfried dies after several years and Meta reunites with her brother, who purchases the senator's heath land, and his son. In the end, Meta is pronounced the legal co-owner of this property.

The positive reputation this novella enjoys among Storm scholars is due to its expression of hope for the future of Schleswig-Holstein, since the story ends on what is considered an optimistic note for its German inhabitants, who, by purchasing an estate, attempt to settle down on their own homeland. This is precisely what suggests the beginning of a stronger German nation. Günther Ebersold claims that Storm's own opinion is to be found in the words of Meta's brother (29): "Wir wollen einen jungen festen Fuß auf unsere heimatliche Erde setzen, denn trotz alledem [...] die Herrlichkeit der deutschen Nation ist im Beginnen, und wir von den äußersten deutschen Marken, wir Markomannen, zu Leid und Kampf geboren, wie einst ein alter Herzog uns geheißen – wir gehören auch dazu!" (LL 1, 646). This may very well be the positive attitude of the narrator, characters, and perhaps the author himself regarding the possible unification of Germany. However, in *Abseits*, just as in the novella *Ein grünes Blatt*, there is a subtle but tenacious criticism toward the Prussians, while obvious hatred is shown against the Danes. The following analysis will focus precisely on both of these critical attitudes by pinning down the nationalistic sentiments expressed both through chauvinistic raptures and precarious reproach. The purpose is to show Storm's capacity as a foreseer of the unfair politics that Prussia undertakes in the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, as well as in Lauenburg, which

in 1866 are officially divided as territorial possessions between Prussia and Austria. My analysis further demonstrates how the novella builds a case against the narrative's German figures, behind whom the Prussian hegemony hides.

The nationalistic sentiments in *Abseits* are articulated most directly by the narrator and by the character Meta. The primary site that makes these expressions visible is that of the concrete *Heimat*. A strong distinction is made between the inhabitants of the German territory that “jetzt mehr als jemals in der Gewalt des fremden Nachbarvolkes war” (LL 1, 619) and the “übermütigen Fremden,” who transform the characters' home into an “unheimlich” zone (LL 1, 620). This depiction of the estranged home comes directly from Storm's own experience. To his friend Hartmuth Brinkmann he confesses in April 1851: “denn die Heimat ist so geworden, daß man hier doch ganz wie in der Fremde lebt” (*Briefe 1*, 137). With regard to the *Fremde*, Meta Hansen, shows her extreme pathos when she does not wish to go into her home town now inhabited by Danes. Meta's xenophobia takes on dramatic proportions when she depicts her pain caused by playful innocent Danish children: “Als ich im Vorübergehen die geputzten Kinder mit ihrem lauten *fremden* Geplapper die schönen dunkelroten Rosen vom Spalier herabreißen sah – mir war's, als müßte Blut herausfließen” (LL 1, 624, *my emphasis*). The attribute *fremd* is employed generously throughout the text, and at first, it seems as if it only conveys the attitude towards the Danes.

The *Heimat* in this novella is a threatening and deceiving construction in Stormian fashion. In order to be away from the “unheimlich gewordene Heimatstadt,” and the “verhaßte Sprache” of the Danish newcomers, the senator builds a sort of “ländliche[s] Heimwesen” (LL 1, 620-21), which is depicted as a heavenly retreat. This blissful construction, “wo im Glanz der Junisonne die blühende Heide lag, wo

singend aus dem träumerischen Duft die Lerche emporstieg und drunten über dem Strom die weissen Möwen schwebten” (LL 1, 621), evokes something optimistic that is situated *abseits*, despite the effects of the grueling war. Its stark contrast to the occupied city is meant to reveal its function as an undisturbed *Heimat*. The blissful place of the heath land reminds one of the idyllic constructions in *Ein grünes Blatt*. Also quite similarly, grave dangers emerge from it. This place problematizes the issues of money, loneliness, and exile (De Cort 26). This idyll does not offer much comfort. On the contrary, the constructed *Heimat* is highly unproductive and it denies happiness. The peaceful heath is a wild terrain and rarely productive due to flooding. Although the beginning of the novella announces that “das zum ersten Mal in dieser Jahreszeit nicht überschwemmte Wiesenland versprach auf den Sommer eine reiche Heuernte” (LL 1, 620), very little productivity is visible in the following passages of the narrative. Ehrenfried, who takes care of the garden during the holidays, gives Meta an account on the asparagus production: “Es gibt nicht viel [...], die Beete sind zu alt” and again later: “Wir gingen suchend an diesem und noch zwei anderen Beeten auf und ab, aber die Ernte war nur spärlich” (LL 1, 628). In this territory, nothing grows in trees. In fact, the only useful place is a small kitchen garden, a *Gemüsegarten*, where products are hardly visible above the ground. The characters must dig to seek them. Besides the asparagus, radishes are the only other vegetable mentioned as a product of this poor garden. Despite the presence of the baskets (at times full with radishes, and at times empty), this idyllic *Heimat* is nothing more than a wild territory that contains thorny bushes, whose hostility the narrator comments on when they tear Meta’s clothes.⁵⁵ This futile land discourages the characters’

⁵⁵ Meta’s torn clothes, as she passes by the bushes, stand for Ehrenfried’s and her torn dreams for a future together. In the story, this takes place precisely when Meta is on her way to communicate to her friend the news about both her brother’s bankruptcy and the impossibility of purchasing a common property with him (Ehrenfried).

happiness.

The unproductive and deprived *Heimat* in *Abseits* reflects the lack of family unity. Despite Ehrenfried's and Meta's plans, it becomes impossible for them to build their own family together in their *Heimat*. Only after many years, when Ehrenfried lies on his deathbed, can he finally make Meta his bride. But by no means can this relationship secure life and happiness. When Ehrenfried utters to Meta regarding his decision: "wir haben es doch mal so im Sinn gehabt" (LL 1, 635), he refers to his shattered dream of a future with her. Somewhat similarly to the poorly presented family in *Ein grünes Blatt*, but even more forcefully, *Abseits* points to the impossibility of a healthy and complete family. Moreover, Christian's family, in the name of business, is about to split up. Christian decides to go away once again and leaves his young son with Meta. Friedrich, just as Regine in *Ein grünes Blatt*, serves to draw attention to the important pattern of an inadequate family.

Along with the depictions of a deceiving *Heimat* and an incomplete family, language, too, is problematized. Comments against the despised language of the Danish administrators are one form of anti-Danish sentiment in the novella. The schoolteacher, whose vocation is at stake, complains that the German language is not permitted to be taught in schools any longer: "denn auch in meiner Schule soll nächstens, wie es heißt, die deutsche Sprache abgeschafft werden. Mein Wirken ist dann zu Ende" (LL 1, 626). The Danish language subjugates German⁵⁶ and it functions as a medium that both threatens and frames the community. The teacher will soon be unemployed, and Meta is repulsed by the "lauten fremden Geplapper" of the Danes (LL 1, 624). Indirectly, Storm refers to the Eider-Danish politics and the *Sprachreskripte*, according to which Danish is used in schools, while German is

⁵⁶ Steefel traces the use of German and Danish languages in Schleswig-Holstein throughout the 1800s.

taught only four hours a week (Löding 89). In *Abseits*, language takes on physical characteristics. According to Christian, the German language is represented by “das rechte Wort” that “wandert landaus und –ein, rastlos, untastbar, bis es sein Fleisch und Bein gefunden hat” (LL 1, 647). In the name of the right language, he also declares his objective in physical terms to the others: “Wir wollen einen jungen festen Fuß auf unsere heimatliche Erde setzen” (LL 1, 646). Both characters and their language operate on corporeal grounds, thus suggesting the possibility that both the characters and language may become physically rooted in the region.

As Storm constructs each protagonist in his narrative, he gives the most significant space to the figure of woman. The aging virgin character of Meta Hansen stands at the core of the narrative. Her Danish last name Hansen has a stem that contains a masculine element, for the Danish word *han* means “he,” and *hans*⁵⁷ means “his.” Furthermore, the first name Meta strikes as somewhat strange at first. While it may be a possible abbreviation of “Margareta” or another name, I suggest that the character’s name invokes the Greek prefix *meta-* and hence alludes to a transcending quality of the person. Meta overcomes difficulties of life, including the sacrifice of her own happiness. She exceeds the traditional limitations of woman. Meta remains unmarried at a time when a life together with Ehrenfried may be possible.⁵⁸ One must keep in mind that Storm rarely develops strong women of such caliber in his writings.⁵⁹ While Meta Hansen is depicted as an old and lonely person, she shows no sign of desperation. Wedberg briefly comments on her lonesome figure, in which he identifies certain inner resources such as friends, religious beliefs, and

⁵⁷ Interestingly, the stem of such a name reminds one of Storm’s own first name, Hans, as well as his older son’s.

⁵⁸ According to Jackson, the novella *Abseits* problematizes the social issue of the servants’ impossibility to marry and to have their own household. However, this is not completely true in the novella, as both Meta and Ehrenfried have this choice.

⁵⁹ Another example of strong women in Storm’s fiction is Jenny in *Jenseits des Meeres*. Her appearance and wildness are depicted in terms of her exotic origins.

even a sense of humor (99). Meta's strength can be recognized in her self-confidence that protects her from a disparaging solitude and secures her a respected position in the senator's house. Meta's significance in the novella lies in her competence to make her own decisions. First, she decides to buy property together with her friend Ehrenfried, which would possibly guarantee her an orderly life with him. Later, she changes her mind and chooses instead to assist her brother Christian by giving him her own savings, which he promises to return to her after some years. In the end, Meta possesses her own and even Ehrenfried's inheritance, with which the senator's property is purchased. Meta and her nephew, Friedrich, will be the independent administrators of this estate. The sharp difference between Meta in *Abseits* and Regine in *Ein grünes Blatt* indicates the different function each woman has in the story. The fairy-tale-like and illusory figure of Regine, who is unaware of the war around her and yet represents a *Genius der Heimat*, as Storm himself comments, stands in stark contrast to Meta. The latter signs a contract in the end and decides to purchase a territorial property. Meta's power is even more significant for she stands alone among men who await her resolution.

With the figure of Meta as a strong woman and the power given to her, Storm returns to a critical time in history, the 1848 revolution, during which certain democratic demands, such as the emancipation of women were made but remain unfulfilled. The president of Schleswig-Holstein Estates declares in the same year:

Natur und Sitte haben ihnen einen anderen
Wirkungskreis angewiesen als eine Teilnahme an dem
politischen Treiben der Männer und an der
Volksrepräsentation. Bei der Ordnung des Hauswesens
und der Erziehung der Kinder räume ich gern dem Weib
Mitwirkung ein, und wenn es sich darum handelt, die
Regeln des Schicklichen und schönen zu bestimmen,
überhaupt im Gebiet der Ästhetik, bin ich nicht
abgeneigt, dem Weibe den Vorrang zuzugestehen; aber
nicht in der Politik. (Jackson, *Humanitarian* 57-58)

Storm goes back in the history of Schleswig-Holstein not only to revive memories of the 1848 rising, but also for the purpose of highlighting the critical matter of women's rights.⁶⁰ With Meta, the author no longer presents an allegory, as he does with Regine. On the contrary, he creates the possibility of permitting women with capable intellects to participate in other spheres like politics and business. Meta is no poetic memory, as is Regine in *Ein grünes Blatt*. Nor is she merely a keeper of hearth and home, as one first perceives her at the start of the narrative. The success of every man around her, young and old, depends on her sole decision at the end of the novella. She becomes both an heiress and a leader. Unlike Regine, the *Genius der Heimat*, Meta represents its practical intellect that secures success.

The woman in the function of leader in *Abseits* can be seen in an additional female character, the maid Wieb. While her name hints at an altered version of the word *Weib*, she is given a vital assignment from the first moment when she appears in the narrative. In a less manifest way than Meta's function as a leader, she becomes the guide for the school teacher at night. Moreover, Wieb is the only one around who can show him the right way. Similarly to Regine, who directs Gabriel to the front on the other side of the forest in *Ein grünes Blatt*, Wieb leads the teacher through the territory she inhabits. The quality of leadership is detectable in both Meta and Wieb, who are entrusted with the task of guiding their fellow men. Although Wieb's character appears only briefly in the narrative, read alongside the complex figure presented in Meta, she confirms the author's attempt to give woman a particular space by exploring and redefining her function and status within family and society.

⁶⁰ Regarding Storm's own opinion on women's emancipation, see David A. Jackson's section "Radicalization" in his *Theodor Storm: The Life and Works of a Democratic Humanitarian* (34-44). For a general perspective on this topic see Ute Gerhard's "Die Rechtsstellung der Frau in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft des 19. Jahrhunderts. Frankreich und Deutschland im Vergleich." *Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert*. Bd. 3. Ed. Jürgen Kocka. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995. 167-196.

By contrast, the male characters are all viewed as incompetent and feeble individuals. Particularly in their business endeavors, they are inadequate either due to their dependence on inept assistants or due to their own inability to make the right business choices. Ehrenfried cannot manage to buy a property on his own, because he depends on Meta's money, which he never receives. In addition, the senator suffers great losses in his business, as Meta expresses with great distress "daß auch unsern Herrn Senator schwere Verluste getroffen hatten" (LL 1, 631). Even more dramatically, Meta's brother, Christian, finds himself bankrupt. Leaving his business in the wrong hands, he is about to lose everything if Meta does not help him with the capital she had saved for the purpose of starting her own family and household with Ehrenfried. Finally, Friedrich, Meta's young nephew, is not trusted to be the only purchaser of the land. His success in managing the newly-bought business is not to be understood in his independence, but rather in his supervision by a woman. Meta's support clearly serves as the means to success for the men present in the story. And similarly, her refusal of support, as in Ehrenfried's case, results in inevitable failure.

While the novella elevates Meta to a certain pedestal due to her leading abilities, at the same time it issues a critique of her figure, her family, and her fellow Germans. Since the narrator refers time and again to the occupiers as *Fremden*, it is intriguing when the beginning of the novella informs of the new inhabitants of the senator's house, labeled by the narrator with the term *Kolonisten*: "Im Frühjahr darauf zogen die Kolonisten ein; in das Haus ein alter Knecht, eine kleine Magd und eine ältliche 'Mamsell'" (LL 1, 620). Even more substantially, in the end, the notion of otherness labels Meta, her brother, and her nephew, who all turn out to be the actual *Fremden* in the story. Before the schoolteacher takes leave from her, he informs Meta: "Der Eichenbusch soll verkauft sein [...]. An einen Fremden" (LL 1, 637). The end of

the story reveals that the purchasers are not the Danes, who are referred to and differentiated by the inhabitants throughout the text as *Fremden*, but Meta herself and her family members. Christian informs Meta of the details of this purchase: “Die Vollziehung einer andern Punktation über den Eichenbusch – denn der, wie die Sachverständigen und Dein alter Marten sagen, gehört notwendig mit dazu – wartet nur auf den Abschluß dieses Handels” (LL 1, 646). In light of this business-related process, Meta’s brother is depicted and recognized as *fremd*. When Meta visits the senator at home, she hears two men’s voices; “die eine kannte sie, die andere war ihr fremd geworden” (LL 1, 645). The foreign voice is her brother’s.

What makes Meta and her family *fremd* in the story is their interest in and occupation with business. Throughout the whole narrative, it is only the Germans who constantly preoccupy and busy themselves with the process of *Handeln*. The characters of Ehrenfried, Christian, Friedrich, the senator, and Meta turn out to be distinctly business-related people. Ehrenfried tries, but never succeeds in purchasing a common property with Meta. He even wishes “einen eigenen Kram zu beginnen” (LL 1, 627). Christian is first helped by the senator to lead a *Kommissionsgeschäft* until he faces the danger of economic failure. He finally buys a property in his sister’s and son’s name. Friedrich seems to be a promising heir of the newly purchased land, after he has been trained by his father in how to run a business. The senator assists in the sale process. Finally, Meta is assigned as the ultimate head of the estate. The narrative builds on a foundation that distinguishes friends (*Freunde*) from enemies (*Feinde*) based on their occupation. The senator’s citation of four poetic lines from a newspaper underscores the connection between doing business and thus being a *Feind*.

Die fremde Sprache schleicht von Haus zu Haus
Und deutsches Wort und deutsches Lied löscht aus;

Trotz alledem – es muß beim Alten bleiben:
 Die *Feinde handeln*, und die *Freunde schreiben*.
 (LL 1, 647, *my emphasis*)

This line from the senator's mouth reveals the unequivocal attitude of the author.

While his literary figures are infected with the attribute of the enemy, the foreign, the Other, who trades for financial gain, the author identifies himself as the friend, whose writing reveals the critical truth of his fellow Germans and their intentions.

The complex concept of foreignness is not new in Storm's work. In his dissertation Robert Elmer Ward explores this dominant theme in a number of Storm's writings. While he concludes that Storm's work reveals both a preoccupation with psychic and social phenomena, as well as the author's manifestation of his latent fears and anxieties (208), nowhere in his analysis does Ward depart from the traditional way of viewing the foreign as anything but the far-away, the opposite of *Heimat*, and the threat of happiness. It is rather Storm's own people, including both German and Dane, who are identified as foreign in Storm's fiction.

The political commentary in *Abseits* deals not only with the present, such as with the Eider-Danish politics of the Danish regime, but also with Storm's intuition of an intensified conflict between Denmark and Prussia. Storm publishes his novella in December 1863, just a month after the death of the Danish King Friedrich VII. The king had already approved a common constitution for the Danish monarchy and both duchies in October 1855; however, the Danish parliament endorses yet another constitution on 13 November 1863,⁶¹ without consulting their estates, thus precipitating a critical state of affairs (Vanchena 140). Since the king dies on 15 November without leaving any heirs, he never signs the new constitution of the Danish parliament. With the names of two characters, Storm refers to the evident

⁶¹ This new document implemented the Eider-Danes' agenda, thus annexing Schleswig to Denmark, abolishing its status, and dissolving its legal and historical ties with Holstein (Vanchena 140-141).

quarrel between the mounting political powers following the king's death. In *Abseits*, the names of Christian (Meta's brother) and Friedrich (Meta's nephew and Christian's son) explicitly harken back to two political figures, namely the Danish-minded Christian of Glücksburg, who ascends the Danish throne as Christian IX (according to the Treaty of London⁶²), and the German Prince Friedrich von Augustenburg, who becomes Duke of Schleswig-Holstein as Friedrich VIII.

In the political arena during the second half of the nineteenth century, Christian of Glücksburg and Prince Friedrich von Augustenburg represent different agendas that are also employed by other political representatives for nationalistic purposes. Christian IX is pressured by the Eider-Danes to sign the constitution against his better judgment, while the German prince Friedrich von Augustenburg challenges Christian's right over the duchies by separating them from Denmark and declaring himself to be the sole ruler of the independent Schleswig-Holstein (Carr 313). While Friedrich VIII is favored by most German states, Christian IX is merely embraced by political representatives such as Otto von Bismarck—Prussia's minister president since September 1862—who has absolutely no interest in creating yet another independent state in North Germany that could later be a center of intrigue against Prussia; Otto von Bismarck rather upholds the obligations of the Treaty of London that recognizes Christian IX as king of Denmark and ruler of Schleswig-Holstein (Carr 314-315). This attitude would certainly determine the outcome of the approaching conflict, as the Federal Diet enacts restrictions against Denmark for violating the Treaty of London and authorizes German troops to march into Holstein, occupying most of the duchy south of the Eider River (Vanchena 141).

⁶² The Treaty of London, signed by the five Great Powers, Denmark, and Sweden on 8 May 1852, guaranteed Danish sovereignty provided Denmark did not annex Schleswig or change the constitutional status of the duchies without consulting their estates. In addition, the treaty declared that Prince Christian of Glücksburg inherits the Danish throne upon the death of Friedrich VII (Vanchena 140).

The literary characters of Christian and Friedrich reflect the advance of Christian IX and Friedrich VIII as possible rulers of the duchies. Christian and Friedrich are father and son who burn with the same ambition to have their agency made known in the northernmost German territory. Christian tells his sister Meta: “denn meine Kräfte reichen hier nicht zu. Ich selber kann nicht bleiben [...] ich muß zurück an meinen Herd, aber ich schicke einen Jüngeren, der die Sache aus dem Fundament gelernt hat” (LL 1, 646). While King Christian IX is pressed by the Eider Danes into signing the new constitution, Storm’s Christian persuades his own sister to sign the contract that would signify the further expansion of his territory. When the senator seems to distract Meta and others by reading the poem aloud, Christian insists that Meta focus on the document: “Lass Dich nicht irren von dem, Schwester! – Lies nur die Bedingungen; der Verkäufer hat uns nirgends übervorteilt” (LL 1, 647). Storm draws a parallel between the historic Dane Christian IX and his fictional German Christian, whose authority depends on those around them.

The historical and political aspects of Storm’s *Abseits* also play out more subtly in the literal *abseits* of the idyllic space that seems undisturbed and quite innocent, through the character of Ehrenfried and his relationship to Meta. Ehrenfried’s name decoded as *Ehre* and *Frieden* exemplifies the *abseits* idyll. Ehrenfried is presented mostly in a good light throughout the narrative. Despite his inability to start his own business due to the lack of financial means, his honor lies in his word and his goodheartedness. Ehrenfried helps his sister selflessly at a time when he wishes to have his own household. “Die Zinsen seines kleinen Vermögens und ein gut Teil seines Verdienstes gab er einer älteren kränklichen Schwester” (LL 1, 627). Ehrenfried is also a peaceful character who avoids conflicts. This passivity, however, illustrates his inability to have a meaningful life, an existential problem in many of

Storm's literary figures. Ehrenfried's submissive behavior threatens Meta's and his own happiness. After Meta breaks her promise to assist him with her capital, Ehrenfried reacts quietly and he withdraws into silence. The narrator Meta tells the school teacher: "Zwischen mir und Ehrenfried ist dann von diesen Dingen nicht mehr die Rede gewesen; wir lebten wieder still neben einander fort, und allmählich war es zwischen uns fast wie es sonst gewesen" (LL 1, 634). The death of Ehrenfried, who is depicted as a lonely character without any living relatives, replicates the death of King Friedrich VII, who has no heirs, thus raising the question of inheritance and succession. As Ehrenfried lies on his deathbed, he tells Meta, whom he could never marry during his lifetime:

Es ist ja nicht um dich, Meta, aber dein Bruder Christian hat einen Sohn; ich weiß, er hat ihn tüchtig angehalten und er wird einmal *dein Erbe* sein. Vielleicht, um was sich viele bemüht haben, daß es nun einmal Einem zu einem ganzen Menschenleben helfen mag. Darum habe ich in meinem Testament meine verlobte Braut, die Jungfrau Hansen, zu meiner Universalerbin eingesetzt. (LL 1, 635)

Meta does, indeed, become the legal heiress of Ehrenfried's wealth. He offers Meta a golden ring as a symbolic gesture of his union with her. However, their wedded relationship remains unconsummated, for Ehrenfried dies shortly thereafter. Similarly, the state of affairs in Schleswig-Holstein remains just as unresolved after the death of King Friedrich VII, who never signed the new constitution. What the king could never execute in reality, Storm's character seals in legal terms in *Abseits*. In both cases, the situation remains just as problematic and open to new conflicts. Ehrenfried weds Meta on his deathbed but this offers no change to Meta's lonely existence. From a single woman, she immediately becomes a widow. King Friedrich's decision to let his successor sign the constitution is no solution to the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, which, by then, had become a playground for the political powers. The

king's weakness to make possible the separation of the duchies is lucidly mirrored in Ehrenfried's inability to create his own independent household.

The correlation between the narrative and the historical political state of affairs is made symbolic through the oak tree in *Abseits*. The presence and the location of the oak tree are by no means coincidental in the narrative. There are at least two interpretations of this symbol that connect it directly to the actual historical setting. The lonely rising oak tree perpetually associated with Germany and its strength may stand for a possible unification of the duchies. The very well-known song "Schleswig-Holstein meerumschlungen"⁶³ by Matthäus Friedrich Chemnitz from 1844 (reprinted in 1864) already presents a similar picture that depicts two oak trees joined at the base.⁶⁴ Vanchena explains the meaning of this symbol as the unity of Schleswig-Holstein and their ties to Germans and the German Confederation (145). In addition, the oak tree functions as a safe natural border that separates the old and the new in both time and space.⁶⁵ The young girl, Wieb, who is assigned to guide the teacher home in the darkness, explains how "der neue Weg ist unter Wasser; wir müssen unterhalb über den alten Steg, und dann den Fußweg durch den Eichenbusch" (LL 1, 637). The oak tree located "über dem Wasser" (LL 1, 644) in *Abseits* functions very much like the existing border set by the Eider River that divides Schleswig and Holstein, with the signal difference that the previous is veiled with a Germanic symbol, namely the oak tree. The Danish nationalists, also known as Eider Danes,

⁶³ Storm even teaches this song to his son Hans (*Briefe 1*, 129).

⁶⁴ These lines read in German: "Deutschlands Spross, du Doppel-Eiche / Unter Einer Krone Dach." See also Inge Adriansen's articles on this and other symbols utilized in the duchies: "Danish and German National Symbols." *Grundtvig-Studier* 44, (1993): 61-90; and "Die nationale Symbolik in Schleswig in der Periode 1864-1900." *Geschichte Schleswigs vom frühen Mittelalter bis 1920*. Eds. Ulrich Lange & Henrik Becker-Christensen. Aabenraa: Institut for Grænseregionsforskning, 1998. 137-159.

⁶⁵ Storm problematizes the clash between the old and the new time in a number of his novellas, but most manifestly in *Im Schloß* and *Auf dem Staatshof*. In a letter to his father, Johann Kasimir Storm, in December 1863, the author reinforces this theme: "Es ist mir sehr wohl bewusst, daß der überall unausbleibliche Kampf zwischen der alten und der neuen Zeit bei uns ein sehr hartnäckiger werden muß. Diesen sozialen Kampf in meiner Heimat noch zu erleben und rüstig durch das begeisterte Wort mitkämpfen zu können ist in bezug auf das äussere Leben mein allerheißester Wunsch" (*Briefe 1*, 436).

fanatically believe the river to be the natural border between the duchies, thus propagating the natural division between Denmark and Germany. With Christian's purchase of the territory that stretches as far as the oak tree, there exists a resemblance to the Eider Danes' execution of their objective as represented in the November constitution that incorporates Schleswig into Denmark.

Christian is a strong German patriot, whose interest in increasing his control over the new territory does not differ very much from that of the Danish nationalists. With the figure of Christian, Storm does not necessarily generate hope, as Löding, Schuster, and other scholars claim. The new *Heimat* that Christian so eagerly wishes to create "aus der braunen Steppe" (LL 1, 646) is nothing more than a newly occupied zone. Christian presents the same serious threat as the Danes, for his mere interest is to take over a territory that is already presented as "Heimatwesen" (LL 1, 619). Meta's somber words to her brother are to be understood as her criticism of his actions: "Christian, Du zahlst Dich arm dabei" (LL 1, 647), an assessment that he clearly perceives as an accusation. His physical and verbal reaction reveals this perception: "Der lebhafteste Mann schüttelte sein buschiges Haupthaar, als wolle er das Gefühl abschütteln, das ihn überkam. 'Nein, nein!' rief er, die Hand wie abwehrend vor sich hinstreckend; 'aber ich dachte, Schwester, Du hüldest gern Deinem Bruderssohn zu Haus und Hof!'" (LL 1, 647). With Christian, Storm seems rather to utter the despair, as he foresees the impending replacement of political rulers in his Schleswig-Holstein. German and Dane focus on their own gain while the Schleswig-Holsteiners remain just as dependent on others' dominance as before.

Abseits establishes an awareness of Prussia's political intentions by drawing certain parallels between the historical figures and the main characters, thus unfolding their threatening agendas. The aggressiveness contained in *Abseits* is carefully veiled

by the religious façade of the narrative. Christian's name, for example, clearly directs attention to a possible religious meaning, although he is by no means a Christ-like figure. Furthermore, Meta is led to her solemn decision to help her brother after she looks at the biblical inscription which the schoolmaster has carved on the tombstone of his son: "Niemand hat größere Liebe, denn die, daß er sein Leben lasset für seine Freunde" (LL 1, 632).⁶⁶ Storm's nephew comments on *Abseits* as the most Christian story he knew (Wooley 70). This carved inscription, however, is an ironic comment, for no one in the narrative sacrifices his or her life for any friends. The novella is exclusively about business negotiations and contracts among the characters.

As the narrative revolves around the protagonists' financial difficulties and business deals, they are all labeled very specifically with the terms *Fremde* and *Feinde*. The theme of inheritance remains central in the novella. The examples of Meta's father, and especially of Ehrenfried, who both leave behind legatees, deliberately, echo the alarming situation regarding the possible successors of Schleswig-Holstein. Storm already gives up hope and expresses his skepticism in one of his letters to his father regarding the German Duke Friedrich von Augustenburg (later Friedrich VIII): "Der Herzog ist wie alle Gekrönten, meinem demokratischen Herzen eine sehr gleichgültige Person" (*Briefe 1*, 435).⁶⁷ The supposedly positive and hopeful note at the end of the novella remains just as problematic as the situation in Schleswig-Holstein. In his German characters, Storm foresees the inevitable menace of the approaching occupation of the duchies by the Prussians, Germany's inner danger.

⁶⁶ The school teacher's reply gives the correct citation of the inscription: "Evangelium Johannes, Vers dreizehn im fünfzehnten Kapitel" (LL 1, 632).

⁶⁷ Storm continues his letter with a poem that begins with the following lines: "Und haben wir unser Herzoglein / Nur erst im Lande drinnen, / Dann wird, mir kribbelt schon die Faust, / Ein ander Stück beginnen" (*Briefe 1*, 435).

V. Conclusion

Both of the novellas discussed above present a construction of German characters, whose reputation becomes questionable by the end of the narrative. Storm's ultimate concern is the calculated and revealing portrayal of such German characters and their identification as the Other in the narrative. Rather than the Danish enemy, who is absent and vaguely mentioned, the narrative discloses the German menace rising from Prussia. The presence of the Other—the *Fremde*—which appears as Danish, but turns out ultimately to be German, highlights Storm's daring critique of both Germans and Danes. Storm's criticism is concentrated on the German protagonists who exemplify the true dangers the author so unmistakably anticipates in reality. The threat posed by Gabriel in *Ein grünes Blatt*, as well as by Christian and Friedrich in *Abseits*, is the new invasion of the *Heimat*. The idyllic settings of the *Heimat*, so crucial in Storm's work, advocate a further danger, for this is where reality is misconstrued and the Other fostered. The coded and loaded *Heimat*, constructed in nationalistic terms, is ultimately destabilized, only to reveal its deception.

The narrators in *Ein grünes Blatt* and *Abseits* deal with the construction of two very different female characters who, while problematic in themselves, still point towards the possibility of tearing the illusion created around and about them. Constructed as poetic and illusionary from the very beginning, Regine remains in the end isolated and as if paralyzed, "unbeweglich im schwärzesten Tore des Waldes" (LL 1, 347), framed self-reflexively in this description as both a natural and an aesthetic object. Meta, on the other hand, realistic and independent, is not made fit to create a family of her own. Although she proves strong and even emasculating to the men around her, Meta still remains caught in the middle of her brother's family needs. Both Regine and Meta, although drastically different from each other, participate in

discovering the Other in their midst. The establishment of the dichotomy *Fremde-Freunde* is made possible by the women figures who identify both the *Fremde* and the *Freunde*. This already begins in *Ein grünes Blatt*, and is further developed in *Abseits*, where the notions *Fremd* and *Feind* conclusively label the German protagonists. The German subject is thus criticized progressively for its dubious intentions in the territory of Schleswig-Holstein through the technique of subversion.

In his status as a *Heimatsdichter*, Storm expresses fundamental views of hatred through his characters, as shown in the previously discussed novellas. It is only logical to ask the simple question why the Frisian author, born of Danish citizenship, raised and educated both as Danish and German, would accumulate such hostile emotions against his fellow Danes and never see a solution in the conciliation of the two nationalities. Storm finally confesses the injustice done to the Danish nationality in the north only in 1870, after years in exile, where his political aversion against Prussia becomes just as strong as it initially was against Denmark.

Established Storm scholars have attempted to assess the author's position and often arrive at thought-provoking conclusions. Ebersold and Jackson, with whom it is easy to agree, both insist that Storm was against any oppressive regime, thus explaining the author's views as an anti-Danish and anti-Prussian agitator.⁶⁸ Detering critically conveys that Storm applies the technique of "eine ätiologische Um-Erzählung der eigenen Erinnerung nach der Bedürfnissen der neuen Gegenwart" ("Spielmann" 10). Similarly, Lohmeier embraces the idea that Storm becomes selective in his memories (of the Danish *Helstat*) by shrinking them only to the

⁶⁸ Storm even identifies himself as such, especially when he expresses in one of his long letters to his friend Brinkmann in January 1864: "In diesem Kampf der Tyrtäus der Demokratie zu sein ist mein heißester Lebenswunsch, denn der Kampf wird heiß bei uns" (*Briefe I*, 441).

national conflict (34).⁶⁹ These are all valid conclusions that provoke and open the path to yet another possible argument: Storm reflects not only as an author, but also as a human being situated in the midst of clashing patriotic concerns. In this challenging position, he sees the opportunity to change reality. More of a Danish poet and writer, as Bernd so forcefully brings to light, and yet unmistakably an anti-Dane at the time of national wars; a temporary supporter of the German side⁷⁰ and the Prussian system,⁷¹ and yet its passionate hater, Storm undergoes profound psychological experiences of two different nationalities, experiences that are identified with extreme patriotic and nationalistic sentiments. Plotke once comments on the author: “keine allgemeinen Gedanken über Krieg und Völkerungsschicksal konnten sein dichterisches Gefühl erwecken, sondern nur Liebe und Hass den Dingen gegenüber, die in sein persönliches Leben ergriffen” (qtd. in Ward 99). It seems that only the presence of extremes could make Storm the complex author he was. Moreover, the occurrence of war and the author’s situation in its midst stimulate his creative craft a great deal. Through the narrator in *Abseits*, Storm expresses an intriguing sentiment that supports Plotke’s thought quoted above: “Endlich, wir müssen wohl sagen, leider Gottes, wurde es Frieden” (LL 1, 630). While the author wishes for an independent and free *Heimat*, the outstanding work of his enthusiastic patriotism certainly does not derive from his peaceful and serene soul. Storm regards the war as the definite time for intellectual excitement and artistic efficiency. His insecurities about the outcome of the war in and about Schleswig-Holstein make him hold onto his *Heimat* more firmly than any other writer of his time.

⁶⁹ Both Detering and Lohmeier agree that Storm serves as an exemplary case for the nationalization of the European cultures in the nineteenth century (“Spielmann” 9, “Frage” 33).

⁷⁰ In a letter exchange with Marcus von Heise-Rotenburg, Storm writes in 1887: “Dann kam das Jahr 1848. Ich war ganz auf deutscher Seite, selbstverständlich” (Lohmeier, “Frage” 33). Lohmeier problematizes this in his article (“Frage” 33-44).

⁷¹ His profession as a Prussian functionary proves this support after he returns from his exile to Husum in 1864.

Storm's early nationalism rises out of his culturally converting experiences from a Danish citizen to a Prussian believer and an adversary of both. By choosing sides, the author hopes to shape and support his high patriotic ideals of being associated with the Prussian prominent power. However, later disappointed by what he embraces, Storm soon becomes an ultimate fanatic and cherisher of his own *Heimat*. It is perhaps the fear of being *heimatlos* or of belonging to a "no-man's-land" located by the border of two potent nations such as the vast *Helstat* of Denmark and the rising Prussia that drive Storm to cling to the atomic Husum, around which his everlasting patriotism revolves. Despite the myopic label as *Husumer*, Storm manages single-handedly to magnify Husum and put it on a map, as no one else before.⁷² He ultimately becomes an advocate of his own region that in reality is both German and Danish.

⁷² Fontane writes about Storm's artistic labor on Husum: "Szenerie. Die Stadt. Die Marsch, die Geest, der Deich, die Koogs oder Kroogs, die Polder, das Meer, das Watt, die Flut – ich zähle es nur auf, wer wollte es beschreiben, denn es gibt wohl keine Lokalität in Deutschland, die von derselben Hand so oft u. so meisterschaft beschrieben worden wäre. Diese Hand ist die Th. Storms, der in Husum geboren, den größten Teil seines Lebens daselbst verbrachte" (qtd. in Perrey 60).

Chapter Two

Theodor Fontane's *Unwiederbringlich*: Retrieving the National Subject

I. Introduction

This chapter has at its core the human subject in Fontane's novel *Unwiederbringlich*. Fontane's increasing concern is the deterioration of the human subject and its weakening and splitting national identity at a time of rising nations and increasing nationalism. I first provide an overview of Fontane's shifting political views as a background that aids the understanding of *Unwiederbringlich*. In the analysis of this novel, I examine two subject cases, male and female, and demonstrate the inevitable collapse of the human subject that proves incapable of change and thus unable to overcome excessive tendencies. I argue that the novel puts forward the urgency of constructing a stable national identity as a possible solution against this collapse. While the female subject is negated and can no longer be retrieved in one case, the solid formation of the male subject is suggested, and sustained throughout the narrative via women and at their expense. This hints at Fontane's concern about the deterioration of masculine identity that reflects on the possible failing of the nation. Nationalism, on which both male and female subjects project their ideas and agencies, serves as the basis for both cases. *Unwiederbringlich* identifies nationalism as the absolute means by which the human subject can be constructed and destroyed. The solution to the collapse of the human subject, my analysis suggests, can be found in a sensible formation of a national identity that is adjusted to and in accordance with the outside world. Only so can the danger of nationalism be overcome and finally utilized as a normalized and beneficial solution in society.

II. Fontane's Nationalistic Split

The work of Theodor Fontane (1819-1898), one of the most prominent German realists¹ of the nineteenth century, continues to be discussed thought-provokingly in today's scholarship. Fontane's notorious connections with Prussia, as well as his patriotism, extend to extreme nationalist tendencies and he does not shy away from entering into and indulging in nationalist discourses. The author's political views certainly change critically with time and a split can be established in his beliefs, as his written production also shows. Fontane shifts from being Prussia's loyal advocate and press agent to its sternest literary critic, thus dividing his oeuvre into the young and the old Fontane.² This shift, while it reflects Fontane's maturation in both politics and literature, also reveals his doubts in the process. From an excited supporter of the revolutionary forces, the old Fontane becomes uncertain and unreliable.³ This can also be observed in Fontane's participation in a number of newspapers serving opposing political camps.⁴ Fully aware of the eventful and transforming time in which he lives, Fontane is on a mission to articulate the split he experiences through his fictional work, in which he generates highly ambiguous characters with blurred and shifting identities which are difficult to pin down. This process of projecting his own identity onto his characters, both male and female,

¹ Kenneth Hayens, for example, distinguishes Fontane as early as in 1920 as the "foremost realist" of his time (v). Furthermore, regarding Fontane's historical contribution, Richard Brinkmann reminds the reader that Fontane is the only one who writes *Zeitromane* during his era (11). Georg Lukács, who esteems Fontane as highly as Turgenjew, Gontscharow, Jens Peter Jacobsen, Pantoppidan, Flaubert, and Thackeray, comments on him as "einer der ersten, die die deutsche Literatur der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts aus ihrer provinziellen Enge herausheben" (*Realisten* 293).

² The transition years between the young and the old Fontane consist of the time-span after Fontane's return from England (1858) and the appearance of his first novel *Vor dem Sturm* (1878). Charlotte Jolles explains that the same concept of "der alte Goethe" is to be understood in that of "der alte Fontane" who matures in the aspects of "Lebenshaltung und Weltanschauung" (*Politik* 141).

³ Georg Lukács writes: "So wird Fontane – je reifer, desto mehr – zur schwankenden Gestalt, zu einem Menschen und Schriftsteller, der für keine der kämpfenden Klassen oder Parteien wirklich zuverlässig ist" (*Realisten* 274).

⁴ Although this is due to Fontane's financial difficulties, his job positions are all-embracing; he works for the radical democratic *Dresdner Zeitung*, the antidemocratic *Literarisches Kabinett*, the emphatically conservative *Kreuzzeitung*, and finally the bourgeois liberal *Vossische Zeitung* (Krause 416).

reveals Fontane's identity formation as a continuous process that involves the split as an inevitable part of this process. With nationalism as the biggest obstacle in shaping a stable and balanced national identity, Fontane suggests the possibility of overcoming the dangers of nationalism, and addresses it as a beneficial medium in identity formation. This section will present an overview of Fontane's shifting political beliefs, grounded in contemporaneous political changes and articulated in his writing. Only by looking at Fontane's time through his blurred lenses can one understand the grounds for his own and his protagonists' confusion, disbeliefs, and misinterpretations.

Fontane's interest in the historical and political events of his century can be easily detected in his work, which reflects the author's ambiguous perceptions regarding Prussia. Fontane is not limited to merely writing about them. Even more enthusiastically than Storm, Fontane participates in a number of political activities. As early as April 1, 1844 Fontane willingly enrolls in the Prussian army, only to return again in March 1848, partaking in the Berlin uprisings. Furthermore, in his occupation as journalist, he travels to battlefields during 1864, 1866 and 1871. There he observes the Prussian wars closely enough to generate detailed travelogues and semi-historical works. Among Fontane's exemplary war records count the voluminous chronicles, which include four-thousand pages of installments of Prussia's three wars against Denmark, Austria, and France, respectively: *Der Schleswig-holsteinsche Krieg im Jahre 1864* (1866), *Der deutsche Krieg von 1866* (1870-71), and *Der Krieg gegen Frankreich 1870-71* (1873-76).⁵ These particular works play a tremendous role in paving his long career as a writer. With regard to the last one, the author confesses: "Ich sehe klar, daß ich eigentlich erst beim 70er Kriegsbuche und dann beim

⁵ Fontane confesses, however, that "ihm seien die Bücher über die drei Bismarckschen Einigungskriege keine Herzenssache gewesen" and he is forced to write them for financial reasons (Jessen 56).

Schreiben meines Romans (*Vor dem Sturm*) ein Schriftsteller geworden bin” (qtd. in Gebauer 78). In his war account about Schleswig-Holstein, he lacks any criticism of Prussia, and strongly believes that the duchies are to be freed by Prussian power. So certain is Fontane of the Prussian right to war that he even attempts to justify the war on religiously moral grounds. Right before the fatal battle on 18 April 1864 in Schleswig-Holstein, the author tells of a pious man who shows up and blesses Prussians for their rightful deed:

‘Ihr geht aber mit dem Bewußtsein in den Kampf, für eine gerechte Sache zu streiten. Vertraut auf Gott und gehet mit Gott; verzaget nicht! Der Herr segne euch und gebe euch seinen himmlischen Frieden. Amen! [...]’ Eine lautlose kurze Pause folgte, dann schlugen die Tambours den Sturmmarsch, drei Regimentschöre spielten: ‘Ich bin ein Preuße’, und mit tausendstimmigen Hurrah ging es auf die Schanzen los. (*SHK*⁶ 196)

John Osborne identifies the uncanny feeling Fontane’s writing awakens, as he reviews the author’s declarations in his war reports both in content and technique (444). Fontane confesses his dissatisfaction with his book when he recognizes more than just its compositional defects and he refuses the offer to publish the work anew in 1894.⁷ Fontane gives way to caution and criticism in his later war books, as his account of the war with France *Der Krieg gegen Frankreich 1870-71* makes evident. This shift coincides with Fontane’s imprisonment by the French. In *Kriegsgefangen* (1871), he describes objectively and in great detail his experiences as a war captive, revealing some of his critical observations of Prussian ideology. Fontane maintains a similar critical attitude in his later book, which he produces after his second trip to the battle

⁶ The abbreviation *SHK* stands for Fontane’s work *Der Schleswig-Holsteinsche Krieg im Jahre 1864*.

⁷ In a letter to Decker in 1894, Fontane confesses: “Ich müßte nun wohl eigentlich froh sein, daß Sie das Buch noch ‘mal drucken wollen, aber ich bekenne Ihnen offen, daß ich die Wiederherausgabe mit so und so vielen, vielleicht vorgedruckten fürstlichen oder ministeriellen Handschreiben, einfach schrecklich finde. Halten Sie mir dies zugut, aber ich kann nichts andres sagen. Und nun eine Vorrede! Ja, wenn ich auch nur den leisesten Schimmer hätte, was da wohl zu sagen wäre. Damals, vor genau 30 Jahren, habe ich das Buch so gut gemacht wie ich konnte, jetzt seh’ ich nur seine Mangel und Fehler. Und das kann ich doch in einer Vorrede nicht sagen” (qtd. in Jessen 61).

front in 1871, *Aus den Tagen der Okkupation. Eine Osterreise durch Nordfrankreich und Elsaß-Lothringen 1871* (1872).

Fontane's devotion to experiencing battles personally for the purpose of writing accurate reports demonstrates a seemingly optimal quality of a trained journalist; however, these war reports must be read cautiously. The accuracy of the war books is questionable. Karsten Jessen informs:

Wir wissen, daß er [Fontane] für die Kriegsbücher sowohl Generalstabsberichte, Zeitungsartikel wie auch Erinnerungen und Briefe benutzte. Aus diesen sehr unterschiedlichen Quellen mischte er sein Werk; es ist vor allem ein Werk der Redaktion, der Disposition. (58)

Fiction and nonfiction intertwine in a slippery way in the author's production, whether literary or not. *Reisenotizen aus Schleswig-Holstein*, for example, documents Fontane's careful observations before the war in 1864 in the border region between Germany and Denmark, the territory with which this dissertation is most concerned. A number of passages in *Reisenotizen aus Schleswig-Holstein* reappear verbatim in his later work, such as in the war chronicles and in the novel *Unwiederbringlich*. Fontane creates confusion by blurring the borders between fiction and nonfiction, thus causing debates among critics, who cannot quite categorize the author's writings and who warn about a possible misunderstanding of his fictional work.

Fontane's ambiguous writings in his reports can be understood in his own shifting perception of history. He writes and reports history as he perceives it at the time, thus inviting for interpretations, not only of his work, but also of history itself. His short poem with the title "Geschichtschreibung," written as a mini-dialogue, hints at this idea: "'Bei hellem Tageslichte / hab' ich es anders gesehn.' / 'Gewiß. Geschichten und Geschichte / wachsen und wechseln im Entstehn!'" (*Werke* 387). For Fontane, history becomes significant and useful when it serves a purpose. In

Fontane's perspective on history, Osborne recognizes Nietzsche's judgment that follows just a few years later. Osborne explains that Fontane values "die Geschichtsschreibung nicht nach ihrem Wahrheitsgehalt, sondern nach ihrem Nutzen" (439). This purpose of using history, which in itself is debatable, leads to discussions among a number of scholars, who call into question Fontane's general perception and narration of history. Richard Brinkmann, for example, investigates *Wanderungen durch die Mark Brandenburg*, and despite the history accuracy, Brinkmann still insists that Fontane's occupation with grand historical dimensions is not quite the author's fort   (51). Self-critical, Fontane once confesses in a letter to Storm in 1854: "Von Kindesbeinen an hab ich eine ausgepr  gte Vorliebe f  r die Historie gehabt. ... Ich darf sagen, da   diese Neigung mich geradezu beherrschte und meinen Gedanken und meinen Arbeiten eine *einseitige Richtung* gab" (qtd. in G  rtner 147, *my emphasis*). Fontane most likely comments here on his fervent reaction to the political revolution of the year 1848,⁸ a time that he clearly recognizes as a determining factor of his later intense occupation with historical developments. Despite his misleading declarations such as "das Machen in Politik ist zwar eigentlich nicht mein Fall" (qtd. in Attwood 88), or that he by no means was a *zoon politikon*, Fontane demonstrates in his work how literature and politics operate hand in hand to give a complete and clear perception of the state of the society in which he lived. Fontane's conflicting views regarding major political occurrences not only point to his opaque and complex ways of scrutinizing his time, but also his uncertainty about it. Regarding Prussia, Fontane experiences an attitude shift similar to Theodor Storm's. The Prussian author is just as firmly determined as Storm to communicate his ideas on the political situation, despite the fact that he makes it quite difficult for the reader to strictly classify them

⁸ In his own autobiography, Fontane dedicates five chapters to reporting the events of 1848. See also Arthur L. Davis's "Fontane and the German Revolution of 1848." *Modern Language Notes* 50.1 (1935): 1-8.

as such. Kenneth Attwood and Arne Koch, for example, constantly point to the impossibility of pinning down Fontane's political opinions.

One of the most evident aspects in Fontane's life is his fascination with Prussia, which becomes obvious both through his letters and his literary works. Similarly, no other political personality fascinated and occupied Fontane as much as Bismarck (*Politik* 153). *Wanderungen durch die Mark Brandenburg* remains one of the early significant works that exemplifies Fontane's pro-Prussian views—so explicitly pro-Prussian that Hans-Heinrich Reuter regards the work as the author's "preussischstes Buch" ("Entwicklung" 57). This work, for example, along with the early war reports, gives Fontane the reputation as Prussia's most loyal writer. Fontane's preference in depicting Prussia in such an exclusive fashion is famously labeled as his *Brandenburgerei*.⁹ This is why a fraction of the early criticism on Fontane is directly concerned with the author's keen rapport with Prussia and categorically views him as Prussia's uncritical admirer.¹⁰

Fontane's early political ideas about Prussia and Germany materialize most distinctly when he concerns himself with Denmark and the turbulent border territory of Schleswig-Holstein. The border conflict in this region engages the Prussian author from the very beginning of his writing career. With regard to Denmark, Fontane is known to change his opinion over time. Julie Kalani Smith Allen states that the younger Fontane looks at Denmark with the eyes of a conqueror, while the older Fontane is a true connoisseur who realizes Denmark's rich cultural heritage ("Parole" 84-85). There is already a considerable difference, for example, between Fontane's depictions of Danes and their land in his *Paris des Nordens: Impressionen aus*

⁹ Karl Ernst Laage refers to Fontane's *Brandenburgerei*. This label brings to mind one of Fontane's own criticism of Storm with the term *Husumerei*, which points at the latter's lack of sophistication and his insufficient themes concerning Prussia (Koch 108).

¹⁰ See for example Attwood's critique of two specific scholars, Linn (1949) and Reuter (1968), who interpret Fontane's work misleadingly and unjustly (15-28).

Dänemark (1864) and *Unwiederbringlich* (1891). However, even as a connoisseur, Fontane is found later in his career to justify Prussia's conquest of Schleswig-Holstein. In a letter to James Morris on 8 February 1897, Fontane writes:

Gewisse Dinge ... braucht ein Staat, um weiter zu leben,
und solche Dinge müssen auch die rivalisierenden
Staaten ihrem Nebenbuhler ruhig gönnen. So brauchten
wir Schleswig-Holstein. Wir mußten es haben, und wir
haben es gekriegt. (*Briefe* 635)

Even as a mature writer, and at this point critical of Prussia's imperialistic politics, Fontane seems to agree with its triumph, as a force that secures Germany's unification and dominance in Europe.

The scholarship on Fontane's political relation to Prussia is vast and intriguing, and it continues to open up new avenues and generate interest in further research.¹¹ However, this is only one portion of a uniquely strained affair, as Koch so well formulates (108). Just as a number of scholars, such as Charlotte Jolles and Kenneth Attwood, attempt to free the Prussian author from any one-sided verdicts and thus misleading interpretations, it is important to view Fontane in a complete frame and be aware of his expressions on political matters. The author is also regarded as a perpetual critic of Prussia. In *Fontane und die Politik*, Jolles sheds light on Fontane's critical stance to Prussia. Koch also argues that Fontane's work creates room for anti-Prussian opinions. In addition, Fontane's shifting criticism throughout his life is also followed by shifting interpretations. The outstanding achievement of Helen Chambers in *The Changing Image of Theodor Fontane* is to unfold the author's numerous facets in a systematic manner as worked out by scholarship since the beginning of the last century to today.

¹¹ Particularly, Charlotte Jolles's and Paul Irving Anderson's discoveries in the last decade are very engaging.

Fontane's novels are categorized as *Gesellschaftsromane* and a number of them are declared without hesitation as novels about Prussia, especially due to their respective temporal and geographic settings.¹² One exceptional work, *Unwiederbringlich*, which only recently has attracted the attention it deserves among Fontane scholars, carries special significance, as it treats sensitive themes by reaching outside of Prussia and containing Denmark in its narrative. Because of the factor of distance in time and space during and about which the author writes his novel, *Unwiederbringlich* is less accessible than the author's other works.¹³ However, the historical and political emphasis in this novel is evident and, as in most of the novels by Fontane, the human subject is placed at the center of the narrative.

Precisely this human subject, inevitably and constantly under transformations, concerns Fontane the most. Through an analysis of *Unwiederbringlich*, the rest of the chapter demonstrates Fontane's perception and treatment of the human subject at a time of increasing nationalism, and his quest for solutions to a weakening national identity within that same human subject that rises out of nationalism. The author utilizes Denmark's nationalistic state as a concrete locus that best reflects Prussia's imperialistic views and undertakings in the second half of the nineteenth century.

III. *Unwiederbringlich*: Source Material and Politics

Fontane's novel *Unwiederbringlich* is a political novel that, anchored in specific times and settings, comments on Prussia's and Denmark's ventures for political dominance in Europe. The narrative is produced during the years between 1887 and 1891 and is not particularly loaded with events, despite its substantial

¹² Most importantly the major novels *Vor dem Sturm*, *Der Stechlin*, *Effi Briest*, and *Unwiederbringlich*.

¹³ There are several cases in scholarly interpretations of *Unwiederbringlich* that ignore or underestimate Fontane's choice of place.

length. Its immense importance lies in the historical time and the geographical space concerning the Danish-Prussian war in 1864 and the question of Schleswig-Holstein. The author sets his narrative from 1859-1861, prior to the war, in the area near Glücksburg (Schleswig) and in Copenhagen (Denmark). Fontane bases his novel on a tragic story that had taken place in Strelitz in the 1840s and about which Fontane learns in a letter from a relative, Marie Brunnemann.¹⁴ According to the actual story, Baron Plessen-Ivenack, married for eighteen years and Kammerherr at the court in Strelitz, decides to divorce his wife after meeting a certain young Pommeranian lady at court.¹⁵ Rejected and ridiculed by the latter, the baron lives a difficult life in exile for two years until he is finally forgiven by his wife, to whom he returns. His second marriage to her is not consummated, as she soon drowns herself in a lake. In her room, a letter is discovered containing the single word “Unwiederbringlich” (*UW*¹⁶ 301-2).

This is the story that Fontane communicates further to Julius Rodenberg, the publisher of *Deutsche Rundschau* on 21 November 1888, thus presenting a vision for his forthcoming novel. The rest of the letter reveals the author’s deliberate efforts to relocate the material from the court in Strelitz to the most critical milieu in the European arena at the time. His letter to Rodenberg continues:

Dies ungefähr das, was mir Frau Brunnemann in Damenstil und Damenhandschrift schrieb. ‘Ich könne damit machen, was ich wolle—ich hätte es zu freier Verfügung.’ [...] Ich bin aber doch kluger Feldherr gewesen, was ihr nachträglich sehr lieb zu sein scheint, und habe die Geschichte nach Schleswig-Holstein und Kopenhagen hin transponiert, so daß sie jetzt zu

¹⁴ Since this letter was never found, it remains uncertain how much of the material Fontane uses in his novel (*Unwiederbringlich* 303)

¹⁵ The story of the historical people at the court in Strelitz is traced carefully by Günther Pistor in his article “Auf den Spuren von Holk und Ebba: ...die Geschichte nach Schleswig-Holstein und Kopenhagen hintransponiert ...” *Fontane Blätter* 32 (1982): 54-58.

¹⁶ The abbreviation *UW* stands for the latest critical edition of Fontane’s *Unwiederbringlich* by Christine Hehle (2003), and it will be used as such throughout this chapter.

kleinerem Teil auf einem Schloß in der Nähe von Glücksburg, zu größrem in Kopenhagen und auf der Insel Seeland spielt. Solche Transponierung ist nicht leicht. Ich ging sämtliche deutsche Höfe durch, nichts paßte mir, als ich aber Nordschleswig und Kopenhagen gefunden hatte, 'war ich raus'. Nur Strelitz selbst wäre vielleicht doch noch besser gewesen und hätte meiner Geschichte den Ton des politisch Satirischen gegeben; nun klingt nordisch Romantisches mit durch.
(*UW* 302-3)

Fontane's plan to conceive a narrative that would indicate its appropriate political significance is clear from the beginning. Despite the author's humble formulation of this work as something merely *nordisch Romantisches*, the novel *Unwiederbringlich* is perhaps his most substantiated literary commentary on the political state of affairs in the Danish-Prussian conflict, for which he himself shares responsibility as Prussian writer.

At the core of the narrative is the deteriorating marriage of two characters, namely the count Helmuth Holk and his wife Christine. Their internal marital conflict clearly reflects the external political rapport between Germany and Denmark in the late nineteenth century. Holk and Christine do not merely differ from each other in their nature, but also in their profound nationalist attitudes and their expressions. Holk identifies himself with Denmark and idolizes a strong Danish nation. He eagerly confirms his beliefs through several conversations with his brother-in-law, Arne, as well as with others. Furthermore, his official occupation as *Kammerherr* of the Danish court in Copenhagen indicates his loyalty to Denmark. Christine, on the other hand, leans towards Germany and hopes for an independent union of Schleswig and Holstein. Christine's moral virtues, however, are rooted in Prussian morality, thus making her a pro-Prussian advocate. In addition, her firm Christian religion, as her very name highlights, collides with her husband's aspirations for freedom and enjoyment in life. Holk's divorce from his wife occurs after a long stay in

Copenhagen, where he becomes acquainted with women and even seduced by two of them, most notably by the princess's young companion of Swedish origin at the Danish court, Ebba von Rosenberg. Ironically rejected by Ebba and embarrassed by his hasty decision to leave Christine, Holk sets out on a journey and spends two years in exile in London. He is finally persuaded by Arne to return to his residence in Holkenäs and remarry Christine. The reunion happens, indeed, only to end shortly thereafter with Christine's suicide by drowning in the sea.

The novel did not immediately receive the attention Fontane hoped for, despite his own high esteem of the work.¹⁷ Conrad Ferdinand Meyer is among the few critics to respond positively. His letter to Rodenberg on 28 March 1891 documents the very first reaction to the novel: "feine Psychologie, feste Umrisse, höchst-lebenswahre Charaktere u. über Alles doch ein gewisser poetischer Hauch" (*UW* 340).¹⁸ Even though it is commonly known as the other psychological novel on marriage after *Effi Briest*, *Unwiederbringlich* fully illustrates Fontane's own idea on the mission of the novel: "Der Roman soll ein Bild der Zeit sein, der wir selber angehören, mindestens die Widerspiegelungen eines Lebens, an dessen Grenze wir selbst noch standen ..." (qtd. in Gärtner 106). Despite the narrative's strong allusions to previous and current political events in Fontane's time, the novel has been underestimated and it only begins to be discussed seriously in a political context much later. Georg Lukács, for example, is not quite convinced of Fontane's familiarity with Danish history and renders Fontane "nicht fähig, solche Züge mit der Halbheit des erotischen Handlungszentrums organisch und darum dichterisch sinnfällig und evident zu

¹⁷ The novel is also received poorly in Denmark, where it appears in translation in 1894. The translator informs Fontane of the publisher in Copenhagen who turns bankrupt right after the book's publication (Erler 212).

¹⁸ For further immediate reactions to the novel see Christine Hehle's commentary in the section "Wirkung" in her edition of *Unwiederbringlich* (340-347), as well as her list of book reviews during 1891 and 1893 (502-3).

verbinden” (*Realisten* 294). Similarly, Peter Demetz, whose *Formen des Realismus* still remains one of the most often-quoted scholarly works on Fontane, resists the idea that the novel is political. Demetz instead evaluates the work in a section titled “Meisterschaft” and praises it as:

das makelloseste Kunstwerk Fontanes: – ohne Schlacke und Sentimentalität; kühl gefasst, kontrolliert; ein Buch ganz aus Elfenbein; der einzige deutsche Roman der Epoche, der den Wettstreit selbst mit Turgenjew oder gar Trollope und William Dean Howells nicht zu scheuen hat. (166)

At the same time, by regarding the novel “ohne historischen Ballast und politische Bürde” (165), Demetz limits the novel’s perspective and hence triggers a number of opposing reactions, such as those found in Vincent J. Günther’s work. In contrast, later research points to Fontane’s serious attempt, as in no other novel, to establish the novel’s political dimension. Stefan Blessin, for example, recognizes the parallel between the beginning of the second war in Schleswig and the couple’s separation. He systematically records the consequences of the Schleswig-Holstein question in a pan-European context. Although Blessin identifies Fontane’s intent to symbolically integrate international political events in the work by means of the couple’s psychological relationship, he still contends the novel fails in its attempt:

der Roman *Unwiederbringlich* sagt in dem, was er nicht zu leisten vermag, weil es der Gegenstand der schleswig-holsteinischen Krise sachlich nicht zuläßt, die Wahrheit über den zeittypischen Bruch zwischen Politik und Privatsphäre. (701)

Clinging to the same kind of miscalculated criticism, Helmuth Nürnberger seems to agree with Lukács when he believes to see Fontane’s unfamiliarity with Denmark and his inadequacy of depicting it accurately. Nürnberger views the author’s poor portrayal as “eine durchschaubare, notwendig vereinfachende epische Illusion”

(“Bemerkungen” 990), completely ignoring the crucial significance of the geographical setting.

Much earlier than Günther and Blessin, the first scholar to associate the novel’s context with the political reality of Fontane’s time is Jørgen Hendriksen. In *Theodor Fontane og Norden: Et Kapitel af “Det Nordiske” i Tysk Opfattelse* [Theodor Fontane and the North: A Chapter of “the Nordic” in German Perception] from 1935, Hendriksen presents the first study to focus on Fontane’s use of linguistic, cultural and historical information in connection with Denmark. According to the Danish scholar, the novel presents Fontane’s “inderste mening om norden” [most inner opinion about the north] (111). Another substantial example that turns against Lukács and Demetz is Vincent J. Günther, who rightly deciphers the true meaning of the novel through its political side (72). Similarly, Walter Müller-Seidel and Dieter Lohmeier call attention to the couple’s marital relationship and focus on the inevitable parallels drawn into Prussia’s political context in the nineteenth century.

In *Unwiederbringlich*, Fontane presents, as in no other novel, the correlation of a personal story with historical records by grounding his work in the appropriate milieu. Very similarly to Herman Bang’s novel, *Tine*, which is discussed in the following chapter, Fontane’s novel discloses political dilemmas between and within nations through individuals’ troubled relationships. The locus where politics is mirrored through a couple’s marital problems is Schleswig-Holstein, a region where nationalism knows no limits and national identity, caught between extreme tendencies, suffers confusion and fragmentation and is constantly called into question. Fragmentation, while an inevitable experience when the individual confronts nationalism, creates or annihilates the individual’s identity, depending on the subject’s willingness to transform. The following section will focus particularly on the fatal

damage of nationalism in the form of the subject's continuous fragmentation, which leads to its malfunction in the family and society and causes its ultimate annihilation.

IV. Fragmentation in *Unwiederbringlich*: Totality Beyond Recall

Fontane's novel establishes fragmentation from the very beginning of the narrative as an indicator of different nationalistic interests articulated in its characters. With the tension between the two spouses, Holk and Christine, who stand for different political agendas, fragmentation is a process experienced by both, but leads to two very different results. Fragmentation destroys Christine's identity, clearly characterized by means of her excess, strength, and dominance, for which she is punished and made to capitulate gradually in the form of slow muteness, limited presence in the text, unwillingness to change, lack of choice, and finally death. Holk's identity, on the other hand, is constantly challenged and successfully shaped through love affairs, world travels, courageous confrontation, a change of attitudes, unlimited agency, and male dominance. The narrative may mislead its reader when it addresses fragmentation only in regard to Holk, pointing at his incompleteness. It is on Christine, in fact, that the focus must be shifted, for she is the only character who suffers fragmentation to its final course, escorted out of the text into her inevitable death. Christine's fragmentation illustrates not only the disintegration of Holk's family, but also that of the nation, Prussia.¹⁹

Unwiederbringlich revolves around halves, or rather broken totalities.

Fragmentation is an aspect made frequently evident by a number of characters regarding the main protagonist Helmuth Holk. His very name draws attention to the

¹⁹ The family was regarded as the mirror image of the state and society (Mosse 31). W. H. Riehl's book *Die Familie*, which appeared in 1854, acclaimed the family's hierarchical structure that secured the patriarchal order: "Der deutsche Staat wird die Frucht ernten, die von solch einer Familie gesät wurde" (qtd. in Mosse 31). Mosse explains that "[j]edwede Bedrohung des Fortbestandes der Familie gefährdete die Zukunft der Nation" (31).

tension between wholeness and fragmentation. The first component of the first name contains the word “hel,”²⁰ which in the Danish language translates as “whole” or “complete.” The meaning of Holk’s name, although only a tiny marker of the importance of totality, highlights the aspect of fragmentation not only in Holk and other characters, but also in the narrative’s presented themes. It is no coincidence that the plot takes place in Schleswig-Holstein, a territory separated into two regional entities. The Holk family is also divided in halves with respect to the couple’s political orientations, as Christine feels a greater loyalty to the Germans, while Holk clearly embraces the Danes. The couple’s inner separation begins, however, much earlier in the novel, when as if in passing, the reader learns of the death of their third male child, Estrid Adam. The fusion of the female (Estrid) and male (Adam) names is thought-provoking and strongly suggests the child’s transsexuality.²¹ The child, whose gender is divided within its self, ultimately reflects its parents’ discord and anticipates their forthcoming separation. The child’s death is the omen of the spouses’ breach, which cannot be repaired despite their moving to the new castle. Even beyond this, Estrid’s name and gender split signals Holk’s own forthcoming fragmentation. For Estrid Adam is initially named Estrid Helmuth, in accordance with Christine’s wishes, but as the couple’s older daughter Asta confides in her girlfriend, Elisabeth, Holk insists on naming him Adam

weil er gehört hatte, daß Kinder, die so heißen, nicht
sterben, und da habe denn die Mama gesagt [...], das sei
Heidenthum und Aberglauben, und es werde sich
strafen, denn der liebe Gott lasse sich nichts

²⁰ The word *Hel* in German means “hell” or “underworld,” which may point at yet another layer of Holk’s complex character. The rest of the name *Mut(h)* means “courage” or “mood” in German, whereas in Danish, used as an adjective, *mut* means “morose,” “gloomy,” or “sullen.” This is to offer yet another complicated reading of halves and dichotomies within Holk.

²¹ The confusion of the male child’s name emerges when his first name is that of a female—Estrid. This is unusual in German and Danish tradition. Michael Masanetz, who is the first to pick up on this detail, also comments further on the child’s illegitimacy (470-471).

vorschreiben, und es sei lästerlich und verwerflich, ihm die Hände binden zu wollen. (UW 58)

Estrid Adam dies and the unwished prophecy is fulfilled. The initiated fragmentation inaugurated in the child continues its natural course in Holk's character.

Holk is the most noticeably fragmented character in the narrative, depicted time and again as a divided being, thus accentuating his weakness. This is clearly illustrated in the unsympathetic comments Ebba makes to the Danish princess regarding Holk: "Er ist unklar und halb, und diese Halbheit wird ihn noch in Ungelegenheiten bringen. Er gerirt sich als Schleswig-Holsteiner und steht doch als Kammerherr im Dienst einer ausgesprochenen dänischen Prinzessin" (UW 154). Ebba insists on this opinion and does not shy away from confronting Holk regarding his inadequacies: "Sie wollen Hofmann und Lebemann sein und sind weder das Eine noch das Andre. Sie sind ein Halber und versündigen sich nach beiden Seiten hin gegen das Einmaleins, das nun mal jede Sache hat und nun gar die Sache, die uns hier beschäftigt" (UW 266). Christine points just as critically to Holk's incompleteness and refuses to be in a fractional relationship, as she wishes to have a whole being to herself, "einen ganzen Mann und ein ganzes Herz" (UW 253).

The distinguishing characteristic of *Halberei* denotes one of the most problematic aspects in the behavior of the characters at the Danish court. In the conviction that they merely have a fractional status in relation to others lies the excuse for their lack of responsibility in certain circumstances. Holk regards himself as only partially obliged to fulfill his duties at the Danish court. When the princess urgently calls for Holk, in his capacity as the *Kammerherr*, along with Pentz, to discuss a newspaper article regarding Prince Friedrich, Holk, fully aware of his status at the court, feels no need to take part in the discussion: "Holk, dem als einem halben Fremden keine besondere Leseverpflichtung oblag, blieb ruhig" (UW 138). The

Danish princess, who stands for the ancient régime, functions similarly, for she is only a half-aunt to the prince (“eine Halbtante”), and in her distanced status as relative, she comments with indifference: “Der Prinz ist mir auch durchaus gleichgültig, und je mehr er sich ruiniert, je mehr kommt es *dem* zu Statten, der bestimmt ist, an dieses sogenannten Erbprinzen Stelle, wirklich der Erbe dieses Landes zu sein” (*UW* 140). The characters’ fragmentary status allows thus for more liberty, as they believe themselves to be released from certain obligations and find themselves excused for their passivity and negligent behavior.

The phenomenon of fragmentation in *Unwiederbringlich* is first discussed quite effectively by Dagmar Lorenz, who in “Fragmentierung und Unterbrechung als Struktur- und Gehaltsprinzipien in Fontanes Roman *Unwiederbringlich*” rightly remarks on disturbances within the novel due to interruptions that come from the outside world. While Lorenz discusses the fragmentation in the novel as a “Desintegrationsprozess [...], der alle traditionell erzogenen Individuen erfasst (496),²² and calls into question their autonomy, she does not consider the characters’ dilemmas and political beliefs as a possible cause of this fragmentation. Particularly the case of Holk and Christine’s failed relationship exemplifies the failure of political compromises between people with different beliefs and visions. Holk appears first as a determined man in his views. As he praises “gamle²³ Dänemark” (*UW* 31), he rejects Prussia’s authority and firmly declares: “Preußen [...] ist kein Gegenstand

²² Lorenz sums up the series of fragmented individuals in the novel: “Christine nimmt in ihrem Freitod die weitreichendste Selbstauslöschung vor, die Prinzessin ist nach dem Brande nur noch ein Schatten ihrer selbst, Brigitte erscheint bereits bei ihrem ersten Auftritt als fragmentiert und Holk’s Existenzgrundlage, Ehe und Familie wird zerstört (496).

²³ The Danish word *gamle* (the definite form of *gammel*) translates as “old” and is the only Danish word used in *Unwiederbringlich*. Allen regards this in her work as the narrator’s diminishing attempt regarding language, as he generally uses Latin, English, and French phrases and expressions (“Parole” 119-121). However, one must be aware of Fontane’s very poor knowledge of the Danish language. The author actually admits that he never learned Danish properly, a fact that is verified by his few sentences written in bad Danish in his war reports. For some examples on the subject, see Hendriksen in *Theodor Fontane og Norden* (38-41).

meiner Bewunderung” (*UW* 30). However, it is soon discovered that these are not even Holk’s own words. Christine, who knows her husband’s lack of critical thinking, immediately picks up on this and scornfully interrupts his ardent speech: “Holk, das sind nicht Deine Ideen” (*UW* 30).²⁴ In addition, Holk is depicted as unstable in his opinions and incompetent in making decisions, something that Christine, again, cannot tolerate. On the question of education,²⁵ for example, she attacks Holk and mercilessly points at his weakness: “Ich verlange keine Zustimmung von Dir, ich verlange nur eine feste Meinung, sie braucht nicht einmal begründet zu sein” (*UW* 44). By openly criticizing Holk’s weakness in others’ company, Christine declares her unquestionable authority over Holk, whose vulnerability is firmly established within his family and is further manifested at the Danish court.

With Holk as the most obviously fragmented figure in the narrative, it is easy to neglect what happens to Christine, whose potency eventually disturbs and destabilizes the family order. The constant references to Holk veil the inevitable as well as irreparable fragmentation in Christine, whose identity is called into question despite her apparent authority. Christine’s strong character is often criticized among scholars perhaps more harshly than any other in *Unwiederbringlich*. While Holk is both narrated in the text and discussed in the secondary literature with sympathy²⁶ despite his unstable nature and egoistic tendencies, his wife’s forceful decision-making and her outspokenness at the outset of the novel are usually associated by scholars with her negative air and aggressiveness. Hence, Christine’s death in the end

²⁴ Holk’s incapacity to think critically is evoked repeatedly in the narrative, as Holk will again be “caught” copying someone else’s verses to describe his newly built castle. The following section will also consider this detail.

²⁵ Christine follows a fanatic tradition and is determined to send her children away to be educated in pensions, whereas Holk clearly disagrees.

²⁶ Holk is often associated with Fontane himself. Jolles even notices a similarity in the letter exchange between Fontane (during his stay in London) and his wife, Emilia, and that between Holk and Christine in *Unwiederbringlich* (“Irrweg” 77).

does not surprise and may not even be regarded as anything mournful, especially because she is constantly surrounded by elements that evoke death.²⁷ She is not categorized as a victim of society, as are Fontane's other heroines such as Effi Briest (P. Anderson 54). In "Der Irrweg des Grafen Holk," Jolles accentuates the understanding of Christine as a vicious figure when she notes the maliciousness in her speech, unequaled by the other female characters in Fontane's works (70-71). Christine's sternness plays an essential role in the narrative, because it makes visible the conflicting positions between Holk and Christine. Despite her initial depiction as a strong and determined woman, Christine undergoes a slow but determined process of psychological fragmentation throughout the novel, ultimately leading to the complete dissolution of her subjectivity at the end of the narrative.

The medium of the letter, which is frequently utilized in the narrative and is very significant at the end of the text, functions as the main catalyst in Christine's fragmentation. While Friedrich Schiller in his celebrated work *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* employs letters for the purpose of man's formation, letters in Fontane's *Unwiederbringlich* fragment the subject and finally determine its loss of identity. Fontane's initial plan when he begins his conception of this text is to write a novella in epistolary form; however, he abandons this idea as the work expands into a novel (Avery 527).²⁸ The epistolary factor is thus fundamentally important in the completed work. Gottfried Honnefelder and Frances Subiotto have done influential research on the epistolary factor in Fontane's novels. While Honnefelder generally establishes the significance of the letter as a narrating element that makes possible the continuation of the story despite the absence of the narrator himself, Subiotto argues

²⁷ Christine is predestined to die. To mention just a few details that associate her with death are her black clothing and veils, Waiblinger's poem "Der Friedhof" that appears in the beginning and end of the narrative, and the cemetery flowers of ivy she insists on having at her second wedding.

²⁸ The technical device of the letter-form is also present and just as vital in *Effi Briest*.

more specifically for the letter's fundamental role in both the narrative's structure and its psychological core. Letters preserve the unity of the novel, even when narrators and characters are absent. At the same time, they also cause and depict the confusion and fragmentation of the characters who write and receive letters. Both Christine's and Holk's fates are determined by the exchange of letters between themselves and with others. After all, the couple is initially separated due to a letter sent by the Danish princess, who orders Holk to present himself at the court in Copenhagen. Holk leaves against his wife's wishes. The couple's alienation begins and increases through the letters that Holk and Christine exchange. Furthermore, their reunion becomes possible only through an encouraging letter that Holk receives while in exile from his brother-in-law, Arne. And finally, the news of Christine's death is given in the form of a letter that Julie von Dobschütz sends to pastor Schwarzkoppen, thus concluding the final lines of the narrative.

The medium of the letter becomes even more intriguing when it also carries out the mission of foretelling, thus predicting fragmentation.²⁹ The first lengthy letter that Holk writes to Christine from Copenhagen anticipates the tension that will soon disturb the couple's relationship. As Holk rereads this letter with a feeling of satisfaction, a warning sign is immediately introduced: "Hätt' er es gekonnt, so hätt' er gewußt, daß ihn sein guter Engel warne" (UW 131). This omen—so well identified by Subiotto—resides in the letter itself and is evidence of the irretrievable nature of the couple's love (310). Most importantly, the letter presents the mode in which Christine is soon to be disarmed of her authority over Holk. When Holk emphasizes in his writing that his wife may freely make decisions—"Ich habe Dir gern und voll Vertrauen freie Hand gelassen" (UW 130),—he strictly means matters that do not

²⁹ Gertrude Michielsen's *Preparation of the Future: Techniques of Anticipation in the Novels of Theodor Fontane and Thomas Mann* deals with anticipation in all of Fontane's novels but letters are hardly mentioned in her work.

occupy him much, such as the children's education. The first letter reports Holk's opinions about Ebba and Brigitte Hansen, depicting his subtle interest in these women, who fully distract his attention from home and immediately create an estrangement between the married couple. Holk's opinions return later in the narrative with a much more forceful effect, when quoted in a letter from Arne to Holk. The latter's solemn reception of this letter predicts the seriousness of its content: "Und dabei nahm er [Holk] den Brief und schnitt ihn mit einem kleinen Elfenbeinmesser auf, aber langsam, denn er stand unter einem *Vorgefühl*, daß ihm der Brief nicht viel Erfreuliches bringen werde" (*UW* 203, *my emphasis*). And indeed, in the letter, Holk is harshly criticized and blamed for the insensitive tone in his correspondence with Christine, who, as Arne informs, is troubled and sick: "krank, krank im Gemüth" (*UW* 204). Christine slowly resigns from her authoritarian position and allows Arne to step up and write, or rather speak, for her. Despite the fact that Christine is never seen to receive any letters, the reader remains constantly aware of her troubled state of mind brought about by them.

The epistolary factor in the novel, while maintained by Christine and Holk, plays a fully fragmentary function only in Christine's character. Holk's lack of desire to write letters—"was ihm fehlte, war auch die Briefschreibepassion" (*UW* 128)—begets his negligence and finally his dismissal of Christine from their marital relationship. Although Holk suffers when confronted with the burdensome activity of writing correspondence, so clearly labeled by him as "Briefschulden" (*UW* 156), he is much less afflicted than Christine due to his distraction at the Danish court. Christine's own letters reflect just as well as Holk's her imminent downfall. Her first message is a mere telegram, which is later followed by letters with dull and irksome declarations, sometimes even characterized by "Sticheleien," as Holk notices with

irritation (*UW* 151). Christine's own process of writing accelerates her alienation from Holk until she falls into a disturbing silence that can no longer rectify her state.

Gertrud M. Sakrawa comments properly: "In ihrer völligen Unterwerfung und Fügsamkeit hat sie praktisch die Sprache verloren, und das bedeutet für eine Fontane'sche Gestalt, sie hat aufgehört zu existieren" (27). Christine becomes incapable of representing herself in letters. Her brother Arne must write on her behalf, and Julie von Dobschütz reports her suicidal state and fatal end. The function of Dobschütz, as part of her symbolic name alludes, is not merely to support and protect Christine as her friend and companion, but most importantly to preserve and naturally conclude the inner line of the narrative in Christine's absence. The end of the novel tellingly takes the form of a letter composed by Dobschütz and sent to Schwarzkoppen, which ultimately indicates the special function of the medium: It is the letter itself (and not the characters) that concludes the novel.

The series of letters at the center of *Unwiederbringlich* reveals additionally the self-reflexive quality of the narrative that produces these letters. Especially the letters between Holk and Christine present a construct within a construct, thus pointing to their crucial function in the novel. While letters often refer to actual happenings in the main narrative and are not necessarily detached from it, they also generate a story of their own. This story places Christine at the center of the inner narrative and draws attention to her persistent fragmentation. Without the medium of the letter, this process, and thus Christine herself, would be mostly ignored, especially since she is absent from the action for two-thirds of the entire novel.³⁰ Furthermore, Holk's peculiar resistance to writing letters does not simply refer to his lack of creativity and desire, but also to Fontane's difficulty of writing this narrative. Holk

³⁰ Christine is absent from twenty-one out of thirty-four total chapters.

struggles with the process of writing when he reminds himself time and again: "... und doch mußte geschrieben werden. Aber was?" (UW 157) The use of the passive form of the verb indicates the subject's shift of responsibility to take action and write. It also implies that the obstacle resides rather within writing itself, the very medium that narrates Christine's fragmented subject. It is precisely the agony of writing that designates Christine's own agony, which results in her final alienation and collapse. Without the circle of letters, written to, from and about her, Christine's tragic story cannot be told. In her fragmentation, Christine is also finally recognized as a dissolving subject.

The destiny of Christine's character can be recognized in the novel's appealing title *Unwiederbringlich*. Christine's fundamental *ich*, with which the title word ends, is the irretrievable entity in the story. It is Christine's subject itself that cannot be brought back to its previously accessible state. The title signals the negation of the subject "I." The German and the faithfully translated English title *Beyond Recall* signals, without being specific, the doom of the dissolved subject that is ultimately irretrievable. It is only the first Danish translation of the novel, *Grevinde Holk. Roman fra Frederik den Syvendes Tid* ³¹ [Countess Holk. A Novel from the Time of Frederic the Seventh] that gives away who this subject may be. The Danish title also indicates Christine's essential role in the story by placing her name at the fore of the title. The Danish translator, Jes Thaysen, confirms in his translated work's preface in 1893 Fontane's request for this Danish title: "Romanen ... har efter Forfatterens Ønske paa Dansk faaet Titlen *Grevinde Holk* efter den kvindelige Hovedperson" [In accordance with the author's wish, the novel has been titled *Countess Holk* after the female protagonist] (Lohmeier, "Niedergang" 50).

³¹ *Unwiederbringlich* is also Fontane's first novel to be translated into Danish, already in 1893, by Jes Thaysen.

Unwiederbringlich is, if not entirely about Christine, for the most part a novel about the fragmentation and loss of her subjectivity. Christine is Fontane's most solid example of a strong character who, although at first aware of and articulate about her own as well as others' identity, becomes incompetent to cope with the changing reality and is dismissed as a capable subject. Christine's inevitably tragic fate, inscribed in her name, results from the grave political conflict in which she is situated. As a central entity of a disintegrated family, Christine reveals the grave instability of the German nation, with which she identifies.

V. Something is Rotten in the State of Prussia

Fontane's concern with national identity and the Danish-Prussian conflict evident in *Unwiederbringlich* marks a development of his earlier thoughts on this topic found in his "Tagebuch" and *Paris des Nordens: Impressionen aus Dänemark*. In these texts, the author focuses on the country's heroic past and compares it to its present times, when Denmark is quickly losing its colonies and disappearing from the map. Furthermore, Fontane does not fail to compare Denmark and everything Danish to Prussia, with the apparent objective of demonstrating the latter's superiority. Details are crucial in Fontane's view of Denmark and he does not shy away from commenting negatively on Danish people³² as well as their land and culture, all described as only ordinary. Fontane also places Prussian victorious talent side by side with Danish inferiority and notes:

Es haftet ihnen [den Dänen] freilich etwas an, was als Inferiorität erscheint und in der Tat auch eine sehr wesentliche Inferiorität ist, aber es ist dies nicht der Inferiorität der Race. Ich gehe nämlich davon aus, daß

³² Regarding Danish women in his *Impressionen*, Fontane notes that he expected to find "imposante Nordlandsgestalten, Fingalstöchter, ossianische Schönheiten," but disappointingly discovers only average women. To emphasize their utter plainness, the author adds that the Danish ladies in Copenhagen society "fehlt alles Frappante" (98).

ein vorzügliches Racevolk nichtsdestoweniger sehr inferior unter den Kulturvölkern dastehen kann und daß umgekehrt ein Volk, das weniger oder gar keine Race hat (wohin à la tête die Preussen gehören), von nachweislicher Bedeutung für das Kulturleben sein kann. (*Impressionen*³³ 96)

Race obviously does not pose a problem for Fontane, as he finds no racial difference between Danes and Germans. The Prussian author labels himself “Nordlandsmensch” (*Impressionen* 203).³⁴ However, the point of *Impressionen* is to highlight Denmark’s failure in recognizing its cultural potential, something that, according to Fontane, does not apply to Prussians. By explicitly trivializing Denmark’s cultural accomplishments, Fontane denigrates the entire Danish nation (Allen, “Parole” 80) and places the origins of his Prussia higher. By conscientiously engaging with Danish culture and by establishing the contrast between Prussians and Danes, Fontane identifies the source of his national identity. *Impressionen* may be considered the author’s solid beginning of a serious pursuit of this subject in his later literary writing career.

Fontane revisits Denmark with the same interest in his later novel *Unwiederbringlich*, but this time his agenda is to be understood somewhat differently, for it now also veils his critique of Prussia. He continues to depict Denmark as a deteriorating locus, whose inhabitants are characterized by scandals, gossip, indolence, immorality, disease, infidelity, and deceitfulness. However, Fontane attributes similar characteristics to his fellow Prussians, who, in the end, have much in common with their neighboring Danes. Despite the focus on Danish territory and Danish characters, the author is most preoccupied with his own land and countrymen.

³³ *Impressionen* stands for the abbreviated title of Fontane’s work *Im Paris des Nordens: Impressionen aus Dänemark*.

³⁴ Regarding his belonging to north or south, Fontane expresses various sentiments. He identifies more with the North in his later years. In his chapter on Fontane’s French heritage, Attwood gives a few examples of the author’s manifestations of his southern origins, towards he mostly gravitated. Fontane conveys in a letter to his wife from Italy during his second journey there in 1875: “Wie ungermanisch bin ich doch! Alle Augenblicke (aber ganz im Ernst) empfind’ ich meine romanische Abstammung. Und ich bin stolz darauf” (Attwood 33). And then again in a letter to Hans Hertz in 1891, Fontane claims on his “eigenste südfranzösische Natur” (Attwood 34).

Arne Koch is correct to categorize the work at hand more as a novel about Prussia than Denmark (122). In Fontane's comparison of Denmark and Prussia in *Unwiederbringlich*, the author consciously reveals his concern with the present and the future of Prussia. While Fontane depicts Denmark in a slightly better light than previously, he discloses certain suspicions through his portrayal of his nation that something is rotten in the State of Prussia,³⁵ where the internal decay has already begun its course.

Fontane's most distinct critique of Denmark and Prussia commences in the first pages of the narrative with a detailed description of the castle Holkenäs, property of the Holk family. It is imperative to regard the castle in a careful manner, as its qualities are clearly shared by the people who inhabit it. The very name of the castle, Holkenäs, derives directly from its current owner and architect, Holk, whose name is brought to the fore of his land.³⁶ Even more importantly, Holk represents his national territory on which he constructs himself, as the following section will show in greater detail. This majestic building attracts people from far away, and with good cause: strikingly, it is the nucleus of paradoxes that destabilize the whole narrative. In the first line of the text, the narrator carefully calls attention to the characters' unstable location:

Eine Meile südlich von Glücksburg, auf einer dicht an die See herantretende Düne, lag das von der gräfllich Holk'schen Familie bewohnte Schloß Holkenäs, eine Sehenswürdigkeit für die vereinzelt Fremden,³⁷ die von Zeit zu Zeit in diese wenigstens damals noch vom Weltverkehr abgelegene Gegend kamen. (UW 5)

³⁵ Hamlet is mentioned only once and briefly in *Unwiederbringlich*, however Shakespeare occupies all the characters at the Danish court. Everyone attends and passionately discusses the second half of the historical drama *Henry IV*. Later, Holk takes an increasingly strong interest in Shakespeare's work and attends all of his plays performed in London during his stay there.

³⁶ This is similar in the case of Holk's brother-in-law, Arne, who owns the territory named Arnewiek. Fontane employs the same detail in *Der Stechlin*.

³⁷ Fragmentation also characterizes the strangers that are attracted to Holk's castle.

The narrator highlights the importance of the castle's location by opening his narrative with precisely this phrase "eine Meile südlich von Glücksburg," as if to establish the story through a concrete territorial setting. Regardless of the degree of fictionalization, the factual region takes center stage (Koch 107). In addition, the purposely chosen region by itself signals its geopolitical significance (Bernd, *Scandinavia* 216). As grandly as the castle rises above the sea, its foundation lies on a sand hill ("auf einer [...] Düne") that offers the least security for any considerable form of construction. This is particularly gripping, as the narrator soon reveals Holk's passion to build (*UW* 6). Holk's labor on the castle seems to have futile results, the intriguing appearance of his work notwithstanding.

Holk's decision to build on sand also has geophilosophical consequences, which in turn call his particular construction of a national identity into question. Gary Shapiro explicates a crucial part of Deleuze and Guattari's work on geophilosophy that suggests a typology of three main forms of national thought. Shapiro comments on the Germans as being obsessively committed to the project of "*laying foundations*" (108, *author's emphasis*). Referring to Kant and his figure of philosophy as architectonic, Shapiro continues: "The Germans lay foundations for thought, wanting to assure themselves of a definite ground, one that will not collapse or be stolen by others" (108).³⁸ Holk's decision to lay the foundation of his grand castle on an unstable ground such as a sandy hill becomes thus questionable and contradicts the very ideology of his own forefathers. Although his grandfather had already planned the building of the castle, no word is said about the location of its proposed

³⁸ Along with the Germans' attitude toward building, Shapiro also discusses phenomenally the French and English way of thinking. "The French *build*; they are like landowners living off the *cogito*" and "[t]he English *inhabit*, meaning that they pragmatically and sometimes recklessly adopt whatever shows promise of working" (108, *author's emphasis*).

construction. This may very well be Holk's own choice that bears the consequence of instability.

The ambiguity of Holkenäs in both its appearance and representation further call into question the construction of a German national identity. Its location is in the northern part of Germany, yet its resemblance to classical Italian and Greek architecture makes it appear more southern. The grand building, as the first line of the text reveals, is regarded as a visible attraction, a tourist sight for the passersby, "eine Sehenswürdigkeit," yet parts of the castle remain fully hidden and invisible, thus revealing its disharmonic and disproportional construct:

Denn was man von der See her sah, war wirklich ein
aus Säulen zusammengestelltes Oblong, hinter dem sich
der Untertheil des eigentlichen Baues mit seinen Wohn-
und Repräsentationsräumen versteckte, während das
anscheinend stark zurücktretende Obergeschoß wenig
über mannshoch über die nach allen vier Seiten hin eine
Vorhalle bildende Säuleneinfassung hinauswuchs.
Diese Säuleneinfassung war es denn auch, die dem
Ganzen wirklich etwas Südliches gab. (UW 5)

Depicted with such fusing contradictions, the castle forces one's attention to its possible representations. Holk gives his architectural work the name of "Schloß am Meer" and even recites a little poem, which he steals from an inscription on a jug, a "Kupferstich" (from Arne's property): "Hast du das Schloß gesehen? / Das hohe Schloß am Meer? / Golden und rosig wehen / Die Wolken drüber her –" (UW 7). Certain of its magnificence, Holk suggests that his castle is marked with sublime qualities, with which he hopes to associate himself as the owner and representative of Holkenäs. However, in Holk's perception of the grandiose castle there exists a paradox, as he steals only half of the poem, which turns out to be longer and unexpectedly ends with sorrowful and disheartening tones: "Die Winde, die Wogen alle / Lagen in tiefer Ruh', / Einem Klagelied aus der Halle / Hört' ich mit Thränen zu

...” (UW 8). The narrator proceeds with a hint of irony when he reveals Holk’s view of the castle as an expression of Holk’s own personality. Despite his poor understanding of literature and his reputation as “unliterarisch” (UW 7), Holk ascribes to his architectural work a paradoxical poem that ironically does not quite illustrate what he has in mind, but clearly points to the exact state of the ambiguous territory he represents.

Holk’s castle is viewed differently by various characters and as such generates different interpretations, which again call Holk’s representation of a national identity into question. Arne’s ironical comments, for example, as he teases his brother-in-law by calling the castle a “nachgeborenen Tempel zu Pästum” (UW 5), is not merely directed to the castle’s Italian architectural style, but most intriguingly to the deeper implication of this temple that represents the ruins of Hera’s temple—Hera being the famous protective goddess of marriage. Ironically, Holkenäs becomes the place of a perished marriage. In a similar vein, the castle’s location in the vicinity of Glücksburg (“eine Meile südlich von Glücksburg”), a name literally rooted in *Glück*, ought not to be misinterpreted as the place of marital happiness for Holk and Christine.³⁹ Located at the beginning of the text and described in considerable length, the unstable architectural work of Holkenäs, epitomized by paradoxes and irony, constitutes the ambiguous ground for the narrative’s further construction.

The Holks’ new castle represents the center stage of action and political conflict, despite the narrative’s shifting focus later in the novel. Built in 1852, the year of the Treaty of London after the first war in Schleswig, the castle carries significance, for it clearly reflects on this major political event. The narrator shapes

³⁹ Glücksburg is the favorite residence of the Danish king Friedrich VII and his wife Countess Danner. However, this happiness does not apply to Holk and Christine. Christine already hints at her forthcoming unhappiness when she remains silent to Holk’s question at the beginning of the narrative: “Ich denke, Christine, wir wollen hier glücklich sein. Willst du?” (UW 9).

Germany's historical account by establishing the Holks' familial story. It is Holkenäs that in the opening pages of the narrative reflects the characters' attitudes and even their forthcoming fate. Holk reveals his own political conviction to embrace Denmark rather than Prussia. Koch develops Gerecke's argument that the tension between the couple generates a dichotomy of progress represented by Holk, and tradition denoted by Christine (122). What is ironic, however, and destabilizes Holk's progression, is his desire to identify with Denmark's glory of the past, instead of the present or future.

The Holks' residence contains the marital tension that represents the ongoing political conflict between Germany and Denmark, as well as the space that urgently demands solutions. The border region of Schleswig-Holstein is the locus that projects both nations' agendas and interests, but also their failings. It is also here that the narrative establishes the parallels between the German and the Dane by anticipating activities that will soon follow. In a self-reflexive manner and in order to find a solution to the situation, Fontane operates cautiously with an interesting strategy, in which he views Prussia's threatened state by means of Denmark's decaying image. The narrative provides proof of these two national images in the early stages at Holkenäs during a serious conversation between Holk and Arne regarding animals. Their discourse introduces the phenomenal cure of *Homöopathie*. This medicinal method, which cures a diseased organism by using a certain amount of the same drug that would normally sicken a healthy one,⁴⁰ is the author's own strategy with his narrative. By operating with the approach of *similia similibus*, he ascribes to Germany a deteriorating image similar to that of the collapsing Denmark, with the aim of offering a possible cure to his own land. Vincent Günther is perhaps the first critic to

⁴⁰ This medical method is first established by Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann in 1810 (*UW* 379).

recognize that Fontane's depiction of a decadent Danish society in the late 1850s is his indirect criticism and warning by analogy to German society of the early 1890s. Allen develops this argument further in her dissertation and regards *Unwiederbringlich* as a novel in which the construct of Denmark and Danishness can contribute to imagining the German nation and German national identity ("Parole" 87-88). She concludes that Fontane, by reproducing Denmark's experiences as a guide for Germany's own imperial endeavors, criticizes German imperial ideology in his depiction of Denmark ("Parole" 124). As compellingly as both Günther and Allen argue, Fontane's novel as a convoluted work suggests solutions, in addition to issuing mere warnings. It is particularly Holkenäs—the visually intriguing but architecturally unstable domicile in the border region of Schleswig-Holstein—that houses the main conflict in the narrative: this crucial space not only calls for urgent resolutions, but also offers them.

On the quest for solutions, the narrative veils and unveils its characters, who seem to firmly believe in their national ideals and who attempt to differentiate themselves from other nationalities. Divided due to their national tendencies, but unified as family members or companions, the characters bring forth the central conflict between Prussia and Denmark as two powers with opposite connotations but similar imperialistic ambitions. For every character who loudly and misleadingly announces his- or herself as non-Prussian turns out to be just that. Denmark is clearly established in *Unwiederbringlich* as a decaying land that rests on the ruins of the past, while Prussia represents a rather hopeful and pristine future. Christine categorizes herself as "gut schleswig-holsteinisch allewege," and despite her strict definition of her views as "deutsch, aber nicht preußisch" (*UW* 32), she recognizes that Prussia preserves higher intrinsic qualities: "Und bei den Preußen wurzelt Alles [...] in Pflicht

und Gottvertrauen” (UW 31). The two characteristics, *Pflicht* and *Gottvertrauen*, with which Christine depicts Prussia, are also ascribed to Christine herself by Holk and the narrator throughout the novel. Even more forcefully, Arne, who clearly stands in for the Prussian side, utters with confidence the secure future of Prussia and juxtaposes it to the fall of Denmark. He reminds Holk:

In Preußen, das Du von Jugend an nicht leiden kannst
und von dem Du klein denkst, ist seit anderthalb
Jahrhunderten Alles Vorbereitung und Entwicklung auf
ein großes Ziel hin. [...] Die Werbetrommel geht still
durchaus Land und gamle Dänemark, wenn es zum
Kloppen kommt, wird schließlich die Zeche bezahlen
müssen. (UW 30-31)

Unlike Prussia, which is depicted as a rising nation with higher aspirations towards the future, the picture of Denmark is painted in fading colors of the past and composed of ancient myths. This becomes clear at the Danish court, where characters occupy themselves with discussions of Danish ballads and paintings of the country’s glorious past. Furthermore, it is no coincidence that Fontane’s narrator and characters in *Unwiederbringlich* utilize the Danish word *gammel* [old] on several occasions in the text in order to limit Denmark’s significance only to its claim to age. This may very well be the author’s conscious decision to confirm Denmark’s linguistic marginality in Europe, as Allen suggests regarding Fontane’s lack of effort to include Danish in the novel in the same way he does with French, Latin and English, the languages of power and culture at the time (“Parole” 121).⁴¹ The frequent use of the single word “old” and no other in Danish is remarkable beyond the linguistic discussion, for it accentuates a natural putrefaction of Denmark and its receding direction; this contrasts with the progressing course of Prussia.

⁴¹ It is tricky to assume authorial intent. Fontane’s limited capacity in Danish language must be kept in mind.

The dichotomy of future and past represented by Prussia and Denmark, respectively, results in a dynamic shaping of German and Danish national identity, which for both relies on imagination and beliefs. Arne explicitly explains his enlightening philosophy regarding a country's representation of its nationality:

Es gibt anderen Mörtel und Staatenkitt [...] eine andere Kleinigkeit. Und diese Kleinigkeit ist nichts weiter als eine *Vorstellung*, ein *Glauben*. In den Russen lebt die *Vorstellung*, daß sie Constantinopel besitzen müssen, und sie werden es besitzen. An solchen Beispielen ist die *Geschichte* reich, und in den Preußen lebt auch so was. Es ist nicht wohlgethan darüber zu lachen. *Solche Vorstellungen sind nun mal eine Macht*. In unserem Busen wohnen unsere Sterne, so heißt es irgendwo, und was die innere Stimme spricht, das erfüllt sich. (UW 30, *my emphasis*)

Arne's words bring to mind Benedict Anderson's landmark theory on imagined communities, namely that national communities are necessarily imagined by their members and only differ from each other by the style in which they are imagined (6). Arne's example of the expanding Russian empire reveals Prussia's own agenda to become a major power, which results from the Prussian's belief in a united German empire.

Just as intensively as German national identity is shaped through conversations in Holkenäs, Danish national identity is under construction at the Danish court and in museums, where heated discussions revolve around the glorious past of Denmark. Danish kings and figures of grandeur throughout history are constantly evoked. The famous national exhibition in Copenhagen further buttresses the Danish national idea. In the castle of Fredericksborg, also referred to as a museum itself, a discussion is instigated about the purpose of the museum. While the marginal

character of Schimmelmann⁴² attempts to explain the museum's significance by referring to it as "das Allerunschuldigste" (*UW* 166), the Princess calls into question this innocence. It is evident that the museum collects and houses fragments of the past, thus inviting the masses to interpret them and actively construct national identity at a popular level. The visit to the museum in *Unwiederbringlich* reinforces the country's power and authority over others through images of the past. As Benedict Anderson firmly states, "museums, and the museumizing imagination, are both profoundly political" (178). Fontane's narrator in *Unwiederbringlich* becomes ironic when he informs the reader of the Danish exhibition and he makes a mockery of it. He calls into question this event and destabilizes its very objective to evoke Denmark's influential past:

Aber was bedeutet das neben großstädtischer und nun gar Kopenhagener Vergnügungssucht, die sich diesmal außerdem noch hinter einem großen Worte verstecken und als Patriotismus ausgeben konnte. Denn was es da zu sehen gab, war etwas nie Dagewesenes, eine dänische *Nationalausstellung*, zu der man Alles, was an historischen Porträits in Stadt und Land existierte, sorglich zusammengetragen hatte. (*UW* 142)

The effect of the exhibition is subverted further as the narrator follows his indifferent characters, who generate no consequential conversations while viewing the paintings of war and portraits of monarchs. The presence of two young and unserious girls, the Princess's grandnieces who run and giggle around the museum, illustrates how ineffectively the national exhibition is perceived. The girls' superficial curiosity is deceiving, for it is by no means related to the essential purpose of what they see. The narrator confirms that

das ganze Interesse für Admirale nur *Schein und Komödie* war, und daß die jungen Prinzessinnen immer

⁴² Note that the name "Schimmelmann" [mold man] contains the word "mold" and bolsters my previous argument about putrefaction.

nur andächtig vor den Bildnissen solcher Personen
verweilen, die, gleichviel ob Männer oder Frauen, mit
irgend einer *romantisch-mysteriösen Liebesgeschichte*
verknüpft waren. (*UW 142-3, my emphasis*)

Fontane turns Denmark's grand agenda of a historical exhibition at a national level back on its head, when he calls into question its purpose and demonstrates its failure. While the visual representations of the country's past are thought to induce strong national feelings among visitors, they turn out to be deliberately ridiculed by the narrator and his characters. The visual representations of the historical figures are also understood as markers of a "romantisch-mysteriöse[n] Liebesgeschichte" that denotes Denmark's glory of the past and its own deception in the present.

In *Unwiederbringlich*, Fontane produces a decaying image of a Denmark that can no longer be resurrected, even by its once celebrated past, which is now mapped onto Prussia. The respective agendas of the two countries do not differ much from each other, despite their different perspectives regarding past and future. Allen suggests that Fontane uses Denmark "as a mirror held up to his German audience to demonstrate the folly of believing in political invincibility and ignoring the complexity of imperialist endeavors" ("Parole" 114). After 1864, no other country would better represent the downfall of its colonialist projects than Denmark, whose legacy to Prussia becomes a dangerous phenomenon in Europe. The 1850's in Denmark, with its desires to expand in the form of Eiderdanism and Pan-Scandinavism, correspond to Prussia's 1880's and 1890's and its imperialistic visions and undertakings.⁴³

⁴³ The first official act of German imperialism is considered when Bismarck sends a cable to the German consul in Cape Town and offers to "protect" the territories acquired by a German tobacco merchant from African chiefs in South-West-Africa on 24 April 1884 (Zantop 1). Susanne Zantop argues that Germany's imperialistic obsessions and undertakings, although substantially materialized in the 1880's, come into being by means of numerous fantasies and the drive for colonial possession much earlier in history, generating a colonialist subjectivity in Germany in 1770s (1-2).

With Allen's argument in mind, it becomes easier to pick up on further parallels that Fontane draws between the two cultures. A Prussian exhibition, comparable to the Danish national exhibition in Copenhagen, is also shown in Germany. Fontane himself is quite excited about the "Schlachtenbilder" at the art exhibition in Berlin in the fall of 1864 (Perrey 67). While the novel reveals Fontane's own preoccupation with revisiting his country's past, it also indicates a certain danger that is involved with this. Fontane clearly engages himself much more with Prussia and his fellow Prussians than with Denmark. This can be detected in the way he complicates his characters' backgrounds and nationalities. Hendriksen notices in his analysis of *Unwiederbringlich*⁴⁴ that all the Danes in this narrative have something "Berlinisches" (84). Hendriksen means nothing less than the leisure time and the indulgent lifestyle that characterize life in Berlin for the bourgeoisie and aristocracy at the end of the nineteenth century. Behind the hedonistic figures of Holk, Pentz and Erichsen, who frequently visit the city's taverns and whose main occupation is gossip, hides a passive Berliner who favors idle time and shows little or no work ethic.⁴⁵

While Berlin is not a topic that receives any particular discussion among the characters in the novel, the city's air is always present in their decadent lifestyles. The city of Copenhagen becomes a fair replica of Berlin in the novel. Christine is the first character to criticize the city due to its lack of ethics. Her attitude regarding Copenhagen also reveals an indirect critique of the city of Berlin. As Holk prepares for his departure to the Danish court, Christine cannot hide her dislike of his

⁴⁴ Despite his admiration of *Unwiederbringlich*, Hendriksen criticizes the novel's lack of unity, as the work requires a last polishing touch (74).

⁴⁵ On this subject, David Scott Johnson dedicates part of his dissertation to Fontane's novels that portray Berlin as the center of leisure. Johnson explores the opportunities that the city offers for self-expression and autonomy. He nonetheless strongly argues that these novels criticize society's over-emphasis on amusement and characters' futile life. Johnson's subsequent articles also focus on the problematic of leisure. See for example "The Ironies of Degeneration: The Dilemmas of Bourgeois Masculinity in Theodor Fontane's *Frau Jenny Treibel* and *Mathilde Möhring*."

occupation there and bluntly comments on the nature of the loose lifestyle in the Danish capital: “In Kopenhagen ist alles von dieser Welt, Alles Genuß und Sinnendienst und Rausch, und das gibt keine Kraft” (*UW* 32). And she reinforces again: “Tanzsaal, Musik, Feuerwerk. [...] Alles in Kopenhagen ist Taverne, Vergnügungsort” (*UW* 50). What concerns Christine the most is the decline of the individual in a depraved environment, such as the city. This is why she anticipates her fears about Holk and despairingly confides in Julie: “Er ist gut und treu, der beste Mann von der Welt, das ist richtig, aber doch auch schwach und eitel, und Kopenhagen ist nicht der Ort, einen schwachen Charakter fest zu machen” (*UW* 75). Indeed, everyone is at leisure in this city, which veils its degradation behind extravagance and indulgence. All members of the Danish court are the representatives *par excellence* of the decadent Danish society at the end of the nineteenth century.

The most noticeable activity that denotes this decadence is gossip, which characterizes quite exclusively Danes and Germans. Everyone at the Danish court, both male and female, is occupied with gossip: from the Danish Princess who thirsts more after rumors than serious political discussions to Ebba who confirms: “Je mehr Klatsch, desto besser” (*UW* 188); from Holk who adjusts himself quite well to his new lifestyle by participating “an dem kleinen und großen Klatsch der Stadt” (*UW* 160) to Pentz who is not coincidentally reputed as “nicht bloß ein lebendiges Nachschlagebuch für die hauptstädtische Chronique scandaleuse, sondern ganz besonders auch für die Liebesgeschichten alter und neuer Könige” (*UW* 137). Furthermore, not only Danes are occupied with the futile scandals. The two German women residing in Copenhagen, women of “schleswig’sches Gewächs” (*UW* 134), known as the Hansens, also are regarded in Erichsen’s words as a “Nachschlagebuch für alle Kopenhagener Geschichte... Die Hansens, und speciell die junge, wissen

mehr von der Gräfin Danner als die Danner selbst" (*UW* 86-7). This world of gossip progresses at the Danish court, but its existence is already established at Holkenäs much earlier in the narrative. Christine's and Holk's young daughter, Asta, makes strange remarks regarding a certain Capitän Brödstedt and reveals a desire for participation in hearsay. She even comments on the subject: "Man hat doch auch so seine zwei Augen und hört allerlei und macht seine Vergleiche" (*UW* 70). Similar occurrences are also repeated between Asta and her friend Elisabeth. In addition, Christine herself has an interest in the newspaper's stories from the court, nothing of political importance, but tales about people. Gossip, as the most unproductive activity among people, reveals the futility in both German and Danish societies. The life of leisure that Danes lead is also present in the decaying milieu of Holkenäs, despite its virtuous appearance.

The narrative of *Unwiederbringlich* establishes further viable parallels between the German and the Dane through characters whose status and background are not as transparent as first narrated. Behind the image of the main character, Holk, hides a genuine German, despite his preoccupation at the Danish court and his efforts to conform within the Scandinavian world. Ebba even blurts out: "Holk, Sie sind doch beinah deutscher als deutsch" (*UW* 230). The Danish Princess, who disregards Holk's political views, emphasizes time and again his status as German, as if to make sure he is not mistaken for a Dane. The case of Ebba's character is somewhat more complicated due to her confusing background. Ebba von Rosenberg, "Enkeltochter des in der schwedischen Geschichte wohlbekannten Meyer-Rosenberg, Lieblings- und Leibjuden König Gustav's III" (*UW* 114), is first mistaken by Holk for a Czech descendant of the Gruszczyńskis or Lipinskis family. Ebba turns out to be of Polish origin; she has a Swedish background and is a Jewess. Ebba's Jewishness excites

Holk not only because it will be in opposition to his moral principles, but also because it will make her Christine's strongest opponent (Grimberg 236). As Swedish—or rather in Ebba's own words “als eine reine Skandinavin” (UW 196)—Ebba becomes a tempting target for Holk, who believes in *gamle* Denmark and its territorial expansion and shows a “Vorliebe für das Große” (UW 196). Holk epitomizes the North European imperialist. His choice of words is by no means coincidental, when he reveals his emotions to her: “Sie wissen, wie's mit mir steht; wissen, daß ich vom ersten Tag an in Ihrem *Netze* war, daß ich Alles und vielleicht mehr als ich durfte daran gesetzt habe, Sie zu *besitzen*” (UW 265, *my emphasis*). In this last discussion with Ebba, Holk reveals his objective as a colonizer. To accentuate Holk's agenda even further, Holk uses the same word *halb* that is ascribed to him throughout the novel in connection with the Icelanders to complete the picture of a strong Scandinavia through halves: “die Isländer sind doch unsre halben Brüder und beten jeden Sonntag für König Friedrich gerade so gut wie wir und vielleicht noch besser” (UW 224). Holk's language reveals his desire to relate to the pan-Scandinavian movement in the name of Germanic people. This is exactly what he also sees in Ebba, whose Swedish realm is Holk's grand nationalistic dream. Dreaming perhaps of a pan-Germanic unification, just as German Romantics had already claimed in the beginning of the nineteenth century, Holk divulges his imperialistic ideology.⁴⁶

With an ambiguous appearance and function, Holk becomes an unreliable figure who also reveals his weakness as a man in the course of the narrative. Holk's move from the politically unstable border territory of Schleswig-Holstein, where his controlling wife dominates, to the deteriorating court of Denmark, led by women of leisure, reinforces his instability as a functioning male authority both within the

⁴⁶ Fontane does not examine either Pan-Germanism or Pan-Scandinavism in depth in *Unwiederbringlich*; nonetheless it is important to note bits of his character's nationalism.

family and society. Constantly confronted with the awareness of being an insufficient, incomplete, and weak man, Holk's deteriorating state addresses Fontane's growing concern for the decline of male autonomy. David Johnson argues that German middle-class writers create a narrative of ascent that erases the political failure of 1848 and celebrates bourgeois ingenuity and masculinity; however, by the 1880's this narrative of unity and patriarchal hegemony is under threat ("Degeneration" 147). Examining two of Fontane's novels, *Frau Jenny Treibel* and *Mathilde Möhring*, Johnson points to the crises of men's failing authority and the legitimacy of the hegemonic model of bourgeois masculinity and their decreasing confidence to maintain patriarchal order. Although Johnson never refers to *Unwiederbringlich* and its protagonists in his article, Fontane's preoccupation with the same challenge is recognizable in the novel. Holk's masculinity, already weakened by Christine's dominance at home, is even more severely threatened when he enters the Danish court, a place inhabited mostly by strong and potent women, as well as by weak and manipulated men of uncertain sexuality.

The feeble masculinity in men who constitute Denmark's elite, in the midst of which Holk finds himself, is depicted particularly in the characters of Schleppegrell and Pentz, who show evidence of homosexual tendencies.⁴⁷ Denmark is clearly associated with the feminine world, accentuated by the female reigning figure of the Danish court, the Princess Marie Eleonora, while the figure of King Friedrich VII remains in the background.⁴⁸ Christine even refers to his lack of power:

Aber ein König, der nur groß ist in Ehescheidungen und
sich um Vorstadtpossen und Danziger Goldwasser
mehr kümmert, als um Land und Recht, *der* hat keine

⁴⁷ Wolfram Seibt sheds light on this subject in his article "Kruses Grab: Die versteckten Nicht-Ehen in Theodor Fontanes Gesellschaftsroman *Unwiederbringlich*." *Fontane Blätter* 45 (1988): 45-68.

⁴⁸ The king appears in fact only once and quite briefly on the occasion of the fire at Fredericksborg. His presence clearly materializes the novel's political connotation.

Kraft und *gibt* keine Kraft und wird denen unterliegen,
die diese Kraft haben. (UW 32)

The status of the king himself is contrasted to his strong and independent wife, Countess Danner, who is known to have influenced the king throughout his life.⁴⁹ Although Danner is never physically present, she is the main subject of several conversations among the characters. Her speaking name, which derives from the Danish word *at danne* [to shape, form, constitute], signals her role in shaping her husband's identity. Danner's real name before she becomes a countess and wife to the king is Christine Louise Rasmussen, her first name coinciding precisely with the main female protagonist in the novel, Christine Holk.⁵⁰ With Danner as an indicator of the subject of identity formation, the following section will specifically examine two women's contribution to shaping and strengthening man's identity in *Unwiederbringlich*. Fontane's caveat with the main male character lies in the man's significant role in representing the nation.

VI. Construction of the Male Subject and Identity Formation via Women

Fontane's fixation with men's weakened masculinity reaches beyond the novel at hand and is further articulated in his poem "Ermannung," which translates into English ungendered as "courage" or "taking heart." The poem suggests that the man's courage and his strength are restored through the female figure, a mother.

"Ermannung" sets out to construct the masculine self as an operation of making men

⁴⁹ The Countess Danner, her real name Christine Louise Rasmussen, is frequently called *Putzfrau* in the narrative, as she also is reputed during her lifetime. She is, however, famously known for her great influence on the king. See the interesting biography on Danner by Carl Ewald, *Danske Droninger uden Krone. Grevinde Danner og Frederik VII*. Copenhagen: Høst & Søn, 2000.

⁵⁰ In *Unwiederbringlich* there is an overlapping of women's names which are all part of an erotic constellation: Christine Holk-Christine Louise Rasmussen (Danner, wife to Friedrich VII)-Christine Munk (mistress then wife to King Christian IV of Denmark and Norway, 1615-1629), Brigitte Hansen (Holk's landlady's daughter)-Brigitte Goje (wife of Admiral Herluf Trolle, 1511-1574), Ebba von Rosenberg-Ebba Brahe (affectionate with King Gustavus Adolphus II of Sweden, 1596-1674). Chambers discusses them in the context of happiness, where they are represented as sensual and sexually active women who enjoy life ("Inadequacy" 289-90).

into whole men.⁵¹ The poem ends with the lines: “Was wir in Welt und Menschen lesen, / Ist nur der eig’ne Widerschein.” Despite the doubling masculinity in the title—the third-person masculine pronoun *er* at the onset and the masculine gendered *Mann* at the heart of the word—this operation turns out to be gendered feminine due to the suffix *ung*. Even further than a grammatical circumstance given by this suffix, the female gendering is underscored in the content of the poem itself. The poem reveals that the author’s happiness is retrieved through the mother: “Schau hin auf eines Weibes Züge, / Das lächelnd auf den Säugling blickt, / Und fühl’s: es ist nicht Alles Lüge, / Was uns das Leben bringt und schickt”.⁵² The end of the poem “Was wir in Welt und Menschen lesen, / Ist nur der eig’ne Widerschein,” suggests the projecting quality of woman whose happiness is mirrored in the man. With woman as the actual operator, Fontane addresses the necessity and the possibility of repairing the male subject and stabilizing his identity. The following analysis of *Unwiederbringlich* will demonstrate precisely this in the case of Holk, whose identity formation is gradually made possible through the narrative’s women for the purpose of securing a viable social order that can only be sustained by the complete man. This process, however, is carried out at the expense of the supporting women.

Recent scholarship on Fontane is especially preoccupied with the image of woman in the author’s life and work and explores her function beyond the text.⁵³ The empowerment of women in society poses no challenge for Fontane, and, as it is recorded, he greatly enjoyed and cultivated the intelligence of his intimate circle of

⁵¹ See Bettine Menke for a brief but very compelling suggestion on Fontane’s poem in connection to men’s need of becoming whole men through the Melusine figure, which in return still leaves men incomplete as they are (52, 55-57).

⁵² The poem appears as an ornamental vignette in the collection *Lust und Leid im Liede. Neuere deutsche Lyrik*. Ed. Hedwig Dohm and F. Brunold [pseud. August Ferdinand Meyer]. 4th ed. Leipzig and Steglitz: Albrecht, 1884, 54.

⁵³ Particularly, findings by Eda Sagarra, Regina Dieterle, and Helen Chambers are essential examples on the last decade’s labor on the topic.

women who assisted him professionally and enticed his creative imagination (Sagarra 125). Two strong and extraordinary women in Fontane's life—his wife Emilie and their daughter Mete—are authentic proof of exceptional collaborators in enhancing the writer's productivity.⁵⁴ In his fiction, Fontane's women also possess vital qualities, which are often contrasted against male inadequacies. Fontane turns to women to assist and complement their male companions, thus strengthening and stabilizing man's identity and his position in society. This process, however, leaves woman behind, incomplete and futile, despite her essential qualities. In her research on Fontane's particular relationship to his daughter Mete, the Swiss scholar Regina Dieterle explains "daß sie als Kopfgeburt des Vaters zwar im literarischen Werk Fontanes Leben gewann" but that "ihr selber dabei aber aller Atem genommen war" (135). Mete's experience proves to be universal in Fontane's fictional women. These women assist the men they admire with their values and reflecting qualities, but they are still made to leave Fontane's text unable to work on themselves. These women fail to construct their own independent subject. They mirror their strength in men, but are left as hollow figures who end up either dead or trapped in an imprisoning model which they try in vain to escape. Their story is interrupted and the narrative concludes with incomplete women, whose authority cannot exceed beyond that of the sole aide to the male subject.

In this section, I will discuss the main women figures in *Unwiederbringlich*, who are given the important task of educating the male protagonist and of assisting him in constructing his own identity. By doing so, these women contribute to man's development as a balanced and stable masculine authority in society. The complete

⁵⁴ Both Emile and Mete Fontane serve as the author's best critics by questioning details of his literary productions and inspiring him further in the process. For specific examples, see for example Regina Dieterle's "'Die Insel der Seligen'. Stationen einer Vater-Tochter-Beziehung." *Fontane Blätter* 65-66 (1998): 125-137.

image of the man in the nineteenth century stood for the ideal manhood, the *Männlichkeit* and *Mannhaftigkeit*, which, according to the historian George L. Mosse, “bildete die Grundlage sowohl für das Selbstverständnis der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft wie für die Ideologie des Nationalismus. [...] Darüber hinaus symbolisierte Männlichkeit die geistige und materielle Vitalität der Nation” (34). Mosse argues further that women also played a symbolic role in nationalism by functioning as allegorical incarnations of the nation, as in the cases of Marianne and Germania;⁵⁵ however, women depicted immobility in contrast to men’s dynamic position: “Sie [Frauen] standen für Unwandelbarkeit statt für Fortschritt und bildeten den Hintergrund, vor welchem die Männer die Geschicke der Nation lenkten” (34). With this background in mind, one better understands Fontane’s concern with the male subject’s identity and his employment of women to secure the man’s identity formation and stabilization.

Unwiederbringlich presents a variety of women, who greatly differ from each other in many aspects. However, they are all unified in the common attempt to actively shape Holk’s identity on both personal and national planes. Due to the encounters with these women and their persevering influence on him, Holk undergoes a number of changes, to which he also adjusts himself for the purpose of advancing in life. These changes and adjustments constantly compel his character to move away from tradition and make him suitable for progress. Dagmar Lorenz is right in regarding these women as products of the social classes they represent—“Christine des pietistischen Landadels, Brigitte des Bürgertums und Ebba der ‘parvenus,’ der

⁵⁵ Mosse differentiates between these two female figures. He maintains that Germania had absolutely nothing to do with leadership and the active battle: “Sie [Germania] wurde als Braut gesehen, die den Bräutigam – ein geeintes Deutschland – erwartete, oder als sorgende Mutter ihres Volkes, deren ‘reines Herz’ demjenigen, das in Aschenputtels Brust schlug, nicht unähnlich war. Die ‘Siegreiche Germania’ wies keinerlei Ähnlichkeit zu Delacroix’ Freiheitsallegorie auf; sie war die gesetzte Symbolfigur einer kämpfenden Nation” (115).

sozial Aufsteigenden” (501). As such, their existence and function are limited to the confines of their respective social classes. As representatives of specific social classes and primed with specific qualities, two particular figures, Christine and Ebba, contribute to shaping Holk’s identity so that he can successfully fulfill and advance his personal, social, and national role.

Although the narrator depicts Holk sympathetically, from the beginning of the novel to the end, his character is weak and deficient as a result of his fragmentation, his lack of masculinity, and his questionable morality. Holk is, however, only one example from Fontane’s rich repertoire of weak male characters he depicts in his work. Their multitude clearly signals the author’s concern about the decline of men and their incapacity to shape their own lives and serve as leaders in both family and society. This is why Fontane’s experimentation with Holk’s subject construction and identity formation must be deemed as vital beyond the confines of the text itself. Holk’s fragmentation is particularly pointed out by women, on whom Holk projects his own deficiencies in the process of his *Bildung*. The narrator presents Holk at the end of the novel as the only unified character who ultimately overcomes his limitations, corrects his weaknesses, and balances his extremities by means of woman’s presence and her influence.

In light of woman’s criticism regarding his fragmentation and weakness as a man, Holk becomes aware of his situation and his wishes. Holk lacks passion, balance, and masculinity. While silent at first, Holk learns with time to give voice to his desires, which by no means are temporary.⁵⁶ His distractions in Copenhagen by the unmarried female figures such as Brigitte Hansen and Ebba do not come as a surprise. While their appearance in the novel predicts Holk’s adultery, in the first

⁵⁶ Holk must not be mistaken as a man of impulses. His desire for Ebba is not momentary, for he can imagine a future with her and plans to marry her. Ebba’s passion is one essential contribution to fulfill Holk’s hollowness, as this section will show.

pages of the novel the narrator already hints at Holk's inner torment caused by his wife's excessive virtuosity and his desire for a balance that would better suit his character:

Holk, so gut und vortrefflich er war, war doch nur durchschnittsmäßig ausgestattet und stand hinter seiner Frau, die sich höherer Eigenschaften erfreute, um ein Beträchtliches zurück. Darüber konnte kein Zweifel sein. Aber daß es so war, was Niemand mehr einsah als Holk selber, war doch auch wieder unbequem und bedrücklich für ihn, und es kamen Momente, wo er unter den Tugenden Christines geradezu litt und sich eine weniger vorzügliche Frau wünschte.
(*UW* 11)

Holk's desire that learns to speak—"der Wunsch [hatte] auch sprechen gelernt" (*UW* 11)—as well as the narrator's constant efforts to shed light on Holk's state of mind and his thoughts, make clear what he lacks and how he can attain it. While the beginning of the novel merely hints at Holk's inner struggle against Christine's excess and his silent wish for a more balanced wife, later in the narrative, when he discovers Ebba, Holk loudly articulates his desire for an integration of all life principles incorporated in a single individual:

Ich sehne mich nach einem anderen Leben, nach Tagen, die nicht mit Tractätchen anfangen und ebenso aufhören; ich will kein Harmonium im Hause, sondern Harmonie, heitere Übereinstimmung der Seelen, Luft, Licht, Freiheit. Das Alles will ich und hab' es gewollt vom ersten Tag an, daß ich hier bin. (*UW* 240)

Ebba as a woman is not a balanced being, but Holk sees in her only what he lacks in his relationship with his wife, namely passion. Ebba's sexuality is a significant contribution to Holk's completeness in terms of needs and life enjoyment. As Holk elicits what he wishes, he becomes aware of the characters who qualify to shape his identity and enable him to gain autonomy throughout the narrative. Only the women who surround Holk can truly help, for they either are already or quickly become

aware of Holk's inadequacies, faults, and limitations. They are all deliberately constructed and equipped with qualities to successfully complete this undertaking.

The process of shaping Holk's identity and paving the road to his male autonomy involves sacrifices, as Christine exemplifies through her suicide. Holk's main deficit, fragmentation, is identified first of all by his wife, who also is the first to criticize him. Holk, however, does not maintain his status as a fragmented being for very long, as he soon learns to think for himself and act independently. Holk is soon healed of this short-lived inadequacy once he projects his own fragmentation onto Christine, whose subjectivity experiences a slow but determined dissolution, as section four of this chapter demonstrates. Christine's piety and virtuosity are categorized as excesses that she cannot conquer. Her inability to participate in a sensible reconciliation causes her disintegration as a capable wife and mother. Through Christine's uncompromising demands and very dark attitude to life, Holk becomes capable of better understanding his own being, thus preparing him to make a series of decisions for himself. When Christine opens the discussion of building a family catacomb, Holk ironically is preoccupied with building animal stalls. Similarly, Christine's view on education as an isolating process is strongly opposed by Holk, who argues for the importance of freedom. This tension between freedom in life and eternity in death, represented by Holk and Christine respectively, illustrates their different perceptions of the present and future and further highlights their differences as individuals. The more Christine expresses her cold virtuosity through her demands, the further she pushes Holk to go in a direction that does not parallel hers. Holk argues with himself when he no longer wishes to write to his wife, until he arrives to the conclusion: "Ich habe den Muth, denn was ich will, ist mein gutes Recht. Man lebt nicht zusammen, um immer zweierlei Wege zu gehen. Christine hat

mich von sich weg erkaltet" (*UW* 247). Whereas Christine cannot survive her disintegration as a subject and proves unable to adjust to her surroundings, she stands as an example for Holk, who learns through her to overcome his own limitations. Christine's death functions as a sacrifice in the novel in the name of Holk's subject building. When Christine's task of Holk's subject formation is completed and her educating and complementing role fulfilled, she no longer has any purpose in the narrative, and her death is an organic consequence. Additionally, Fontane utilizes Christine's sacrifice to make a statement on religiousness, as Sakrawa argues: "Fontane bezeichnet die Opferung des 'Ich' im Gegensatz zum Leben auf dieser Welt als 'Heiligkeit' [...] Das ist nicht christlich, aber es ist 'fontanisch' gedacht" (28).⁵⁷ Christine's exit from life is vital to Holk's further development. Her suicide may be regarded for a moment as a grand necessary act that provides Holk with a wholesome space—free from excess and proper balance.

Christine's sacrificial suicide to aid Holk is significantly complicated by the setting in which it happens, namely the waters, which entail a number of exclusive functions such as mirroring and cleansing. The element of water in *Unwiederbringlich* is a repeated symbol that deserves particular attention, especially when references to water are made by and regarding Holk. Holk's dream of Ebba's appearance as a "Meerweib" (*UW* 181) is organically connected to water, which here clearly signifies erotic passion. By contrast, Christine's decision in the end to drown herself may seem confusing, for erotic passion is precisely what she lacks and never attains in her life with Holk. However, Christine dies a feminine death in her feminine element. One must recall Holk's attack on her dominance as lack of femininity: "Dir fehlt alles Weibliche, Du bist herb und moros" (*UW* 254). Waters, preceded by her melancholia,

⁵⁷ For further details on Fontane's critique of the Christian society, see also Peter-Klaus Schuster's *Theodor Fontane: Effi Briest – ein Leben nach christlichen Bildern*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1978.

help Christine retrieve her femininity. Christine's death in water has a double function: Through this mirroring element, Holk makes possible the natural projection of his faults onto Christine. In addition to fragmentation, the water reveals yet another fault that Holk projects on Christine, namely his guilt of adultery. Christine utilizes water as the cleansing medium of sin and immorality.⁵⁸ Holk's further formation of his identity requires that he free himself from the flaws of the past. The narrative suggests that this can be attained through Christine, the most pious and virtuous character in the novel. Her task is to cleanse Holk from his imperfections, which are passed onto her character through his projections. The element of water is Holk's most valuable medium: it evokes passion through Ebba and frees him from guilt through Christine.

Water as a natural element also establishes a natural political solution in the narrative. For Holk, Denmark's geographical position surrounded by water makes it invulnerable to Prussia's territorial conquests. In a conversation with Arne, Holk praises the water that guarantees Denmark's favorable position:

Mit Dänemark vorbei! Nein, Herr Preuß, soweit sind wir noch nicht, und unter allen Umständen haben wir immer die Geschichte vom Storch und Fuchs. Der Fuchs in der Fabel konnte nicht an das Wasser heran, weil es in einer Flasche war, und der neueste Fuchs, der Preuße, kann nicht an Dänemark heran, weil es Inseln sind. Ja, *das Wasser! Gott sei dank*. Es ist immer dieselbe Geschichte, was der Eine kann, kann der Andere nicht [...]. (UW 28)

Through the water discourse, Holk also reveals his nationalistic ideas as a supporter of Eiderdanism. Holk states early: "Ein Staat, der sich halten und mehr als ein Tag Tagesereigniß sein will, muß natürliche Grenzen haben und eine Nationalität repräsentieren" (UW 30). The "natürliche[n] Grenzen" can only refer to the river

⁵⁸ Schuster reminds us that suicide in waters, "Ertrinken," is a sign of adultery (147).

Eider, which divides the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. The Danish nationalists, also known as Eider-Danes, regarded the river as the natural border between Prussia and Denmark and instigated the war on such a premise. The mirroring quality of water projects Prussia's imperialistic desires onto Denmark. *Unwiederbringlich* presents the essential function of water as a natural element given in the form of the river that divides (Eider), and the sea (where Christine drowns) that contains. Ultimately, for Holk, water reflects the subject's healthy progression.

Holk's identity construction is further continued by the seductress Ebba, who functions as Christine's counterpart and whose impact on Holk's formation is just as vital. And just as Christine's religious name is indicative of her sacrificial role in the narrative, so does Ebba's Danish name suggests her sensual influence on the male protagonist. In its Nordic form, the name reminds one not only of the seductive Eve of the Bible, but also of the destructive Ebbe, the tide (Michielsen 38). In both significations, her name attains a self-reflexive quality. The sea is the natural setting that secures Ebba's self-reflexivity and determines her explicit role regarding Holk when she appears in his dream in her water element as a *Meerweib*. As a Melusine-figure,⁵⁹ Ebba also rises as the narrative's *femme fatale*, who threatens to be destructive. Although her character is blamed for destroying Holk's marriage, she is only a catalyst in the break-up, for "she merely confirms the flaws that already exist in the relationship" (Subiotto 314). Ebba's seduction of Holk is not accomplished through her looks—she is no classical beauty. In her first appearance in the text, the narrator comments on her "wenig regelmäßigen Zügen" (*UW* 101). Additionally, Holk reports to Frau Hansen: "Das Fräulein ist aber nicht so schön, wie Sie immer annehmen, und jedenfalls lange nicht so schön wie Andere, die ich nicht nennen will"

⁵⁹ The figure of Melusine in Fontane's work is discussed exclusively by Renate Schäfer, Pierre Bange, Vincent J. Günther, and Bettine Menke.

(*UW* 237). Despite her lack of beauty, Ebba exudes passion and desire, which are exactly what Holk lacks and desperately requires for his completion. With Christine early in the narrative keeping her husband's sexuality and masculinity under control, Holk's strength as an independent subject is at stake, thus making Ebba his next aide in the process of his identity formation.

Holk's encounter with Ebba accentuates his weakness as a male character, which Ebba ironically corrects by means of her feminine seduction. In one of her conversations with the Danish princess, Ebba notices Holk's good but "schwaches Herz" and she comments frequently how "sein Character ist das recht eigentlich Schwache an ihm" (*UW* 153). Ebba means here nothing less than Holk's feeble masculinity, which she dangerously decides to test and strengthen. Through play, while ice-skating, Ebba pushes Holk to the limit and provokes him to surpass the borders of safety: "'Hier ist die Grenze Ebba. Wollen wir drüber hinaus?' Ebba stieß den Schlittschuh ins Eis und sagte: 'Wer an zurück *denkt*, der *will* zurück. Und ich bin's zufrieden'" (*UW* 219). Ebba knows no limits and by playing with fire—as the princess also states "Ebba liebt mit der Gefahr zu spielen" (*UW* 220)—presents Holk with the possibility to overcome his own limitations and become a daring man. Holk gains courage, a quality not merely contained by his first name—Helmuth—but also demonstrated in his agency. He plays a hero⁶⁰ when he saves Ebba from the fire at the castle of Fredericksborg. Certain of his future, he also breaks up his marriage face to face with Christine. No longer in the shadow of his wife, but boldly confronting her excessive principles, Holk speaks his mind and acquires agency as a male, despite the consequences he endures.

⁶⁰ This heroic act, however, must be read cautiously in the text, for in this act also culminates his betrayal to Christine. Holk contemplates: "Er las dies und sagte sich, daß er nach dem Allen nothwendig der Held des Tages sein müsse. Der Held! Und wie wenig heldisch war ihm zu Muthe. Er fühlte, daß seine Nerven zu versagen drohten und daß er in Krankheit oder geistige Störung fallen würde" (*UW* 244).

Although Holk's relationship with Ebba evolves only to end in disappointment, Ebba induces Holk's masculinity, which he now furthers independently. This quality finalizes Holk's formation as a male subject and his identification with the nation. On the topic of gender and nationalism in the nineteenth century and in complete agreement with Mosse's argument, Allen Carey-Webb maintains that the masculine subject, also traditionally associated with being active, establishes the foundation of the nation, while women's morality provides a background for the activity of men, who determine the national fate (22-24).⁶¹ An essential version of manliness, according to Carey-Webb, rejects degeneration into effeminate practices, such as uncontrolled passion, for example (24). This detail is crucial with respect to Holk, for, although he becomes an object of manipulation by Ebba (Koch 125), whom he hopes to marry after he confesses his sentiments for her, he quickly learns how to determine his masculinity and to refine his means of action. After the affair, Holk leaves the court and sets off on a number of travels, which comprise his quest for his own personal, cultural and national identity. Holk's journey is his continuous road to change and to be more aware not only of himself, but also of others. After Holk's disappointing episodes with Ebba and Christine, the narrator remarks: "er hatte wieder leben und, was noch wichtiger, sich um das Leben Anderer kümmern gelernt" (UW 270). Holk shows signs of growth as an individual who can function independently as a whole man in society.

Women in *Unwiederbringlich* actively participate in Holk's identity formation, a process that displays their significant function with regard to the male subject but limits their own development. Strong and influential, Fontane's fictional women possess a certain authority lacked by their men. It is in this light that Helene

⁶¹ Carey-Webb is concerned that none of the major theorists of the rise of European national identity including Gellner, Anderson, and Hobsbaum take up the question of gender in their analysis.

Chambers, for example, regards Fontane's work with optimism, for it presents women with the possibility of their own happiness founded on their qualities. Chambers argues that women in both *Unwiederbringlich* and *Effi Briest* can no longer achieve happiness as mothers and wives and therefore seek it outside of the mother and wife model, somewhere where it does not correspond directly to the conditions of men's happiness ("Inadequacy" 296). Tracing happy women who are childless, unmarried, or widowed, Chambers finds that sexuality, sensuality, and female friendship are some of the vital modalities of female happiness as conveyed in *Unwiederbringlich*. As positive and promising as Chamber's argument is, women's happiness still does not secure them their independence. In the narrative at hand, women are left with nothing within that same social order they attempt to escape. They still remain trapped as lonely and badly reputed figures, such as Brigitte Hansen and her mother; dependent on and reinscribed in the patriarchal order, as when Ebba marries; or turned mute and made absent, until completely forced out of the text, such as Christine. Despite the women's grand caliber and their promising strength, *Unwiederbringlich* is far from creating the complete female subject that woman deserves. Instead, it is the male subject and the man's identity that is at stake and thus must be constantly rescued and maintained, at the cost of woman's autonomy and identity.

VII. *Unwiederbringlich*: A Novel of Authorial Redemption

While *Unwiederbringlich* is a narrative of a couple's tragic story that reflects Prussia's troubled political state, the novel also narrates in its subtext Fontane's own story of his resignation, confession of errors, self-criticism, and venture for redemption. In the light of this sub-narrative, the author divulges the continuous formation of his own identity as German citizen and writer. The actual writing process

of the novel from 1887 to 1891, as well as its intended storyline between 1859 and 1861, overlap with and are greatly influenced by Fontane's own experiences.

Unwiederbringlich belongs to the author's repertoire of his mature social novels.

Beyond its aesthetic and analytical achievements, the novel's significance also lies in its absolute connection to the author's reality with his family and professional struggles, split emotions, confusions, and hopes. In the end, the novel proposes sensible solutions in the conditions it creates for identity formation through redemption of loss and tragedy.

Fontane's personal experiences and resulting uncertainties play a defining role in the composition of his work. *Unwiederbringlich* contains bits and pieces of Fontane's private and professional life, which he utilizes productively. In *Der Versteckte Fontane und wie man ihn findet*, Paul Irving Anderson reports on interesting discoveries about the author: "Weiß man, was Fontane in der Handlungszeit 1859-61 erlebt hat und mit wem, dann versteht man die vielen Winke und sieht ihm tief in die Seele hinein" (241). Anderson explains that the novel "enstand als Trauerarbeit um seinem Sohn,⁶² und die Handlung findet in den Jahren (1859-61) statt, als Fontane sich aus dem schlimmsten Karrieretief⁶³ herausarbeiten mußte" (186). *Unwiederbringlich* employs the author's memories of 1859, the year when Fontane experiences drastic financial constraints, and the time of the narrative's outset (P. Anderson 261). Referring to this difficult time with self-criticism, Fontane writes to his daughter on 22 May 1889: "in nichts habe ich meinen glücklich sanguinischen Charakter so sehr bewiesen, als in dem Leichtnehmen der Demüthigungen und Unterschätzungen. Nur vergessen habe ich sie nicht" (qtd. in P. Anderson 261). In Fontane's memory of a distressing past that he cannot let go, one

⁶² Fontane experiences the death of his son George in 1887 in Lichterfelde.

⁶³ Here is meant his terminated career as *Pressepolitiker*.

recognizes Christine's fatal memories that lead her to tragedy. Anderson lists some of Fontane's regretful choices and sorrows and refers to Christine's regrets and her refusal to consummate her second marriage (242).⁶⁴ Reading *Unwiederbringlich* biographically makes it possible to detect Fontane's split emotions, confusions, and regrets. With the attempt to narrate these regrets through his characters' story, he also works through his grief of lost chances, critical decisions, and tragic experiences.

Unwiederbringlich also functions as a legitimate *Trauerarbeit* for Fontane on a political level: Through the novel, Fontane comes to terms with his disappointment with Prussia. Anderson correctly states that "die Holk'sche Ehe geht auseinander wie sein [Fontanes] Arrangement mit der Regierung" (242). In a genuinely patriotic attempt to redeem Prussia and his earlier self from the easily-embraced imperialistic ideology, Fontane constructs a novel that points at limitations and dangers of such nationalism. In the example of the married couple, he deconstructs Christine's identity and experiments with Holk, in an attempt to shape a unified and stable subject. In all the major characters' efforts to start their lives anew, one can perceive one of the challenges that the novel presents about "Versuche [...] neu anzufangen" (P. Anderson 240). This attempt seems successful in the potential of the figures Holk and Ebba, who are prepared for the future—each in his or her own way—and who emerge as the triumphant protagonists in *Unwiederbringlich*.

With Holk and Ebba unleashed into the world, Fontane lays out the premise of a beginning that transcends limiting borders. Ebba's slippery character transcends territorial borders and cultural limits, hence her success at an international level. With Ebba's infamous experience at the Swedish court, her influential stay in Denmark, and finally with her marriage to Lord Ashingham, formerly second secretary of the

⁶⁴ "1859 wurde er [Fontane] zum politischen Bauernopfer; 1861 lehnte er ein Angebot ab, das ihn rehabilitiert hätte. Wie Christine es ablehnt, die Ehe noch einmal zu vollziehen, zog er es vor, im 'fremden Element' der *Kreuzzeitung* 'unterzutauchen'" (P. Anderson 242).

British Legation at Copenhagen, the author explores the possibilities of the individual as a cosmopolitan in the world. Similarly, Holk is exposed to many cosmopolitan references and becomes more mobile throughout the novel. His identity is partially shaped through his later journeys towards the end of the text. There is no coincidence that Holk resides for nearly two years in England, a country which Fontane himself esteems so highly as the land of freedom, and where he further pursues his interest in politics (Jolles, *Politik* 45). Unlike Storm, who fanatically clings to his atomic Husum, Fontane appreciates the advantage of being abroad and states: “[...] die Fremde [...] lehrt uns nicht bloß sehen, sie lehrt uns auch richtig sehen. Sie gibt uns das Maß für die Dinge” (qtd. in Attwood 36).⁶⁵ Fontane regards the experience in the *Fremde* as necessary not only to realize the magnitude of home, but also to be aware of one’s limitations and to learn to overcome them. Fontane’s protagonist in *Unwiederbringlich* does precisely this in his journey. Holk, however, soon discovers that “auch das ödeste Daheim immer noch besser ist als das wechselvolle Draußen” (*UW* 269). This articulates Fontane’s own quest for balance between home and abroad, oneself and the Other.

Holk, who is caught up in the midst of the enthusiasm and desire to be involved in stirring politics at a time of the rising Prussian empire, functions as a *Doppelgänger* for Fontane. Through the *Doppelgänger*, Fontane recalls the exciting experiences of his younger self during the uprisings and attempts to reconstruct these experiences in *Unwiederbringlich*. Conceived and narrated in his creator’s model, Holk is also perceived as a sympathetic character, despite and due to his confusion and uncertainty, characteristics that explain his fluid ability to adapt and thus subsist. Holk is the bridge that connects both German and Danish worlds. While an unstable

⁶⁵ Attwood elaborates further Fontane’s view of “das Ausland als Mittel gegen den provinziellen Dunkel” (263).

and unreliable character at first, Holk soon functions as the ultimate agency that mirrors the deficiencies of both imperialistic worlds. The *Schleswig-Holsteiner* from Holkenäs, who, in the service of the Danish court, quickly turns out to embrace Eider-Danism and fiercely conveys his ambitious nationalistic views, stands as an example of a German equal. Within Holk's layered character there operates successfully not just a German or a Dane, but any other national subject ready for and capable of formation.

Holk is the exemplary figure who has the chance to recover the past. His return to Holkenäs is a kind of redemption that releases him from guilt, an inevitable issue in the text. Reading redemption here is not without its problems, since his arrival home is soon followed by Christine's departure from life. Christine, who is not exactly innocent in the couple's breakup, receives the same chance, only to discover that she does not wish to redeem her past. The final lines of Asta's song "Der Friedhof" fatally affect Christine: "Ich denke verschwundener Tage, John, / Und sie sind allezeit mein Glück, / Doch die mir die liebsten gewesen sind, / Ich wünsche sie *nicht* zurück ..." (UW 289). After the song Christine leaves the room in complete silence and she makes her last decision by repeating the last two lines of the song. Her death, as tragic as it may seem, is a choice she herself makes. Her suicide creates the necessary space for Holk's further development. Returning home, as an experienced and trained man with a richer background and optimistic visions, Holk stands alone with the opportunity to start his life anew on his own territorial backdrop of Holkenäs, as an independent man strengthened by women.

Unwiederbringlich is a work that seeks redemption for the historical past by presenting chances and choices of working through that past and progressing into the future. The author's careful choice of the narration's time-span from 1859 to 1861

after the Dano-Prussian war is an attempt to suggest a means of working through the past. Despite Prussia's military victory, Fontane considers this a past of defeat.

Viewing Prussia's territorial expansion critically, Fontane notes in 1893: "Das eroberte kann wieder verloren gehen" (qtd. in Reuter, *Biografie* 143), thus foreseeing catastrophic consequences of Prussia's imperialism. The novel *Unwiederbringlich*, whose title negates the subject "I," is a work that persistently struggles for its retrieval and optimistically seeks its creator's redemption.

VIII. Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated Fontane's profound concern for the human subject and its national identity, which are severely at stake at a time of rising nationalism. Fontane experiences a drastic shift during his lifetime from being a Prussian admirer who diligently fights for his nation's cause, to a skeptic who warns against Prussia's intentions. Fontane's conversion results from his understanding of Prussia's disintegration and its broken identity.⁶⁶ The novel *Unwiederbringlich* exposes Fontane's personal reflections on his changing beliefs. Depicting Denmark as a decaying land that clings to the glories of the past, and exposing Danes as weak and incapable individuals in society, the author warns his German compatriots against a similar occurrence in Prussia.

The narrative constructs a viable parallel between the political situation at the time and the troubled relationship of the marital couple, Christine and Holk, who are situated in the critical geographic locus of war and instability, Schleswig-Holstein. Embracing and articulating opposite nationalistic tendencies towards Schleswig-Holstein, Prussia and Denmark, both spouses undergo fragmentation, as an inevitable

⁶⁶ Konrad Ehlich argues that Prussia's *Kulturkampf* for integration was a failure, for it revealed "eine mehrfach gebrochene preußische Identität und – die Unfähigkeit zur Herausbildung einer inhaltlichen Integration" (14).

process of nationalism. Fontane is predominantly concerned with his characters' constant formation of their national identity on the grounds of that same nationalism the characters embrace. Examining two subject cases in the characters of Christine and Holk, my analysis has demonstrated the annihilation of the female subject through fragmentation and the stabilizing formation of the male subject who overcomes fragmentation. Holk's achievement is rendered possible via the narrative's women, who serve Holk as projecting mirrors of the necessary qualities he requires for his formation, and as outlets of his errors. Ultimately, women do not succeed in their own identity formation.

I conclude that *Unwiederbringlich* is a novel through which Fontane seeks redemption by presenting chances to recover the past. With himself as the ultimate model of the nationalistic split that makes him a wavering figure representative of past memories, a "schwankende Gestalt," as Lukács's gloss on *Faust* correctly suggests (*Realisten* 274), Fontane constructs by the same means his main protagonist, Holk, whom Christine addresses as "leichtgebig und schwankend und wandelbar" (*UW* 52). In Christine's recognition of Holk's insecurity and unreliability, but also his ability to change himself, lurks part of the solution to overcoming nationalism. Holk's formation in the narrative through fragmentation, loss and definite change is Fontane's strategy to construct new options and possibilities.

Chapter Three

Herman Bang's *Tine*:

Towards a Productive Transgression of Borders and an Optimistic Reading of Nationalism

I. Introduction

Herman Bang's *Tine* operates with a number of border themes that set in motion the literary construction of a female subject which rises out of nationalism; the novel thus views nationalism in a beneficial light as a temporary process in establishing a new Danish national identity. Similarly to Storm and Fontane, Bang presents nationalism as a literary construct and employs it to analyze a critical phase for his nation, as well as to examine the new national identity that derives from this construct. With the year 1864 as the most significant time in Denmark's history of national identity formation, Bang commemorates the tragedy of loss and appeals for Denmark's recognition and progression. Both memory and forgetting are deemed prerequisites in creating the new Danish national identity.

In order to make the Danish novel *Tine* as a transgressive text accessible, I will first establish Bang's double function as a border figure in terms of sexuality and artistic productivity. Marked with "nature's error," as Bang calls homosexuality ("Gedanken" 70),¹ and equipped with the experimental tools of Impressionism, the

¹ In his essay "Gedanken zum Sexualitätsproblem," written in German in cooperation with his Berlin doctor and friend Max Wasbutzki and published only long after his death, Herman Bang explains homosexuality as a *faux pas* of nature. As such, homosexuality is not unnatural or perverted: "Sie [die Homosexualität] ist nichts Naturwidriges, im Gegenteil: das homosexuelle Individuum folgt, indem es homosexuell ist, seiner individuellen Natur, und zwar der Natur, welche ihm angeboren ist. [...] Die Natur irrt sich und schafft ein schiefes Blatt oder ein schiefes Ohr. So scheint es mir, irrt sich die Natur auch im Fertigbrigen des menschlichen Organismus und schafft in einem äußerlich männlichen Organismus eine sogenannte Seele, die weiblich ist. Durch einen Irrtum der Natur oder des Erschaffers selber wird ein menschlicher Organismus ohne Einheit geschaffen. Dieser Irrtum der Natur kann

only artistic strategy of Realism that can depict Denmark after 1864, a Realism that builds on a loss of reality (Sørensen, *Temperament* 106, 332),² Bang transgresses the borders that delineate norms in both Danish society and literature. These transgressions secure an open cultural exchange between Denmark and Germany and lead to Denmark's cultural recognition in Europe. Hand in hand with the leading literary critic, Georg Brandes, Bang promotes this cultural exchange between the two neighboring countries. In my examination of the novel *Tine*, I view these transgressions as means to new paradigms and possibilities. With *Tine* rooted in authenticity and conditioned by Denmark's historical decline since 1864, the novel demonstrates Bang's major fear that a repetition of national disaster would result from the new dawn of Danish nationalism. Locating Denmark's danger of decline, which is internal rather than external and stems from the Danish native rather than from the German Other, Bang depicts Danish nationalism as a threatening construct that is naturally molded within the nation. In *Tine* this threat is illustrated through a parallel of inevitable occurrences of war and desire, both originating and progressing naturally among individuals. Aware that nationalism cannot be obliterated, Bang changes the general perception of nationalism by viewing it at the end of his narrative as the way to new beginnings. Bang turns the dangerous construction of nationalism into something productive. From the very grounds of nationalism, he creates the conditions for a new human subject to be born out of that same nationalism. This subject must be understood as a female subject, which primarily reflects the mother figure, and which plays out on the author's homosexuality. The construction of a female subject allows one to look at Denmark's future with optimistic eyes. The

vorkommen, wo man es am allerwenigsten annehmen sollte, und muß eben deswegen ein Irrtum der Natur sein" (Bang, "Gedanken" 70).

² In this chapter English translations from Bang's novel are cited from Paul Christophersen's *Tina*. All other translations are my own.

recognition of a national identity born from national loss and catastrophe in *Tine* establishes Bang's Impressionist work as ultimately constructive against nationalism's destructive force.

II. Herman Bang's Realism and His Function as a Border Figure

Herman Bang (1857-1912) is one of Denmark's cultural pioneers who paves the way to cultural exchange between Germany and Denmark at the *fin de siècle* in order to strengthen Denmark's national self-esteem and secure its progress in the European arena. He achieves this through an operation on the border, both literally in terms of geographic territories between home and abroad, and figuratively in terms of his sexual orientation and artistic production. Sharing the same agenda as the Danish literary critic, Georg Brandes, Bang participates in marketing Denmark's cultural scene in Germany, which still is regarded as the cultural center of Europe at the time. This becomes an urgent task for Danish intellectuals in general, due to Denmark's fragile situation in Europe, as the country is substantially reduced in size and highly influenced by its German-speaking neighbors. Julie Kalani Smith Allen notes that, even previously, when Denmark enjoyed a reputation as an imperial empire due to its numerous colonies, Denmark still found itself in an unusual position of having a cultural and territorial imbalance, which demarcated it as an imperialist power under foreign cultural domination ("Parole" 19-20).³ As Allen maintains, this historical imbalance consisted of Denmark's cultural dependence on Germany as the center of culture, despite Denmark's extensive territorial empire ("Parole" 19-20). Unlike the

³ Allen commences her Ph.D. thesis with a strong argument, in which she, inspired by Edward Said and Barbara Fuchs, regards Denmark in an historical imbalance of cultural authority. Germany's cultural domination is particularly strong between the mid-sixteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, and even when Denmark's imperial empire was at its peak, encompassing Norway, Greenland, Iceland, the Faeroe Islands, Schleswig, Holstein, and colonies in the West Indies, Africa, and Trankebar, the domestic Danish culture suffers a great deal from its dependence on the dominating German customs and ideas (Allen, "Parole" 19-20).

literary success that the bordering German nation experiences, Danish literature endures a longer and much more difficult process of distinguishing itself, due to both a lack of originality and German influence throughout centuries.⁴

The revolutionary literary critic, Georg Brandes,⁵ who leads a cultural campaign (*kulturkamp*) in the name of his nation, identifies Germany as the crucial country that can secure Denmark's progress and influence in Europe by recognizing Denmark's cultural potential.⁶ Brandes's influential work in the nineteenth century causes not only Germany but also other European nations to pay attention to Denmark. In her thesis, Allen views Brandes's *modus operandi* as a double strategy to create an independent Danish literature. On the one hand, Brandes encourages "Denmark's liberation from Germany's cultural domination by stimulating the development of a modern Danish national literature in the realistic, socially-critical tradition of French and English naturalism" (Allen, "Parole" 27). On the other hand, through his academic work in Berlin,⁷ Brandes creates a market for Scandinavian works by forcefully advertising Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish Realist writers, thus

⁴ Recognition from Danes depended very much on the successful recognition in Germany. Even the few Danish writers, such as Ludvig Holberg, Adam Oehlenschläger, and Jens Baggesen, who were able to compete with German authors, were strongly influenced by German language, literature, and philosophy (Allen, "Parole" 22).

⁵ Because of his groundbreaking ideology and orientation that took the form of a cultural battle in Denmark, and despite his national effort that protected the Danishness in Sønderjylland and attacked German expansion, Brandes still became one of his country's most hated men and called unjustly "udansk" [anti-Danish] and "fremmed" [foreign] (Hertel 56-57, 90; Allen, "Parole" 18, 37).

⁶ Allen's first chapter develops the discourse of Denmark's dependence on Germany, and focuses on Brandes's labor to free Denmark from such dependence. Brandes's goal to strengthen Danish national identity in the nineteenth century is very similar to that of Nicolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig, who is regarded as Denmark's leading cultural nationalist in the eighteenth century. They differ, however, in the way they pursue this goal. Through his work as a church reformer, preacher, historian, philologist, translator, pedagogue, and politician, Grundtvig focuses fanatically on Danish language as the determining factor of national identity. He regards Germany as Denmark's greatest enemy. Brandes, on the other hand, as a cultural nationalist in his nation's modern history, sees Germany as Denmark's chance to exhibit its potential and change Germany's perception of Denmark.

⁷ Brandes writes a series of articles, books, and holds lectures in Berlin, where especially *Deutsche Rundschau* creates the perfect milieu for his campaign of Nordic and especially Danish national literature.

demonstrating the quality and pride of the North (Allen, “Parole” 57-59).⁸ Herman Bang’s work plays a central role in heralding Danish quality.

In the climate that Brandes generates at this time, he links the literary productivity of Germany and Denmark and claims recognition of his nation and his Danish national identity in Europe. In his powerful lecture “Om Nationalfølelse” [On National Feeling] held on 1 February 1894, Brandes reinforces this conviction:

Lad os i Lysten og Viljen til engang paany at hævde
Danmarks Navn i fremmede Havne gøre hvad vi kan for
at fremme Vovelysten, den personlige Evne til
Nybegyndelser, ogsaa hos os. [...] Vi maa foreløbig
gøre hvad vi kan for i Europa at udbrede Kendskaben til
det, vi allerede har, arbejde for at fremme vort eget. (33)

[In the desire and willpower to claim once again
Denmark’s name in foreign harbors, let us do what we
can to encourage the desire to venture, the personal
capability to new beginnings, also among us. [...] For
the time being, we must do what we can to spread in
Europe the knowledge of what we already have, to work
for the purpose of promoting our own ability.]

As Germany’s unification materializes, Brandes commences a *kulturkamp* [cultural campaign] by promoting his compatriots’ talents in 1871. Around 1870 he founds the intellectual literary group *Det Moderne Gennembrud* [The Modern Breakthrough], which includes Herman Bang.⁹ The members’ work gives a boost to Scandinavian literature. Especially the Danish authors, led by Brandes, strive to place Denmark’s intellectual autonomy and vitality on the European cultural map. Bang and Brandes are often read against each other, for they represent the same time period, but each has his own understanding of how to work in it. As one of the young Danish

⁸ See Allen’s further research on Brandes’s assiduous attempt to secure Denmark’s literary autonomy (“Parole” 18-73).

⁹ The Modern Breakthrough, first a Nordic matter and then a European scope, included the Danish realists and critics Jens Peter Jacobsen, Holger Drachmann, Herman Bang, Klaus Pontoppidan, Schandorph, Erik Skram, Chr. Krogh, P.S. Krøyer, Edward Brandes, the Swedish Victoria Benedictson, Strindberg, Ellen Key, and the Norwegians Ibsen, Bjørnson, Camilla Collett, Arne Garborg, Hans Jæger, Alexander Kielland, and Jonas Lie.

representatives of *Det Moderne Gennembrud*, Bang works on two different planes by advocating Brandes's aesthetic agenda for national recognition, but by diverging from him with respect to experimentation. In an attempt to create the necessary space for himself, Bang turns against Brandes's homogeny and his resistance to literary experiments (Sørensen, "Georg Brandes" 179).¹⁰ Convinced that his work can be manifested through the realm of Realism, Bang invigorates this literary school by redefining it as a new form, not a tendency.¹¹ It is within the realm of Realism, where new light is shed on old matters, that both new and recurring challenges of the time can be addressed. While Brandes insists on bringing society's challenges and problems into open debate, Bang focuses more on the writer's psychological task of explaining the restless human subject reflected in the framework of the chaotic time.¹²

Herman Bang operates as a border figure who constructs his characters and themes based on his own border subjectivity and experiences. Bang's material springs from his own life, as he confesses in his writings.¹³ The border on which Bang lives and operates is both ambiguous and unstable. These conditions also determine his

¹⁰ Despite Bang's feelings of inferiority towards Brandes (Jacobsen, *Den unge HB* 114), Bang does not hesitate to confront and oppose Brandes. Peer E. Sørensen further points at Bang's disagreement of Brandes's outdated use of key concepts such as symbol and representation, which Bang problematizes ("Georg Brandes" 179-180).

¹¹ Bang gives at times unclear statements about the concept of Realism; however, in his collection of articles *Realisme og Realister* [Realism and Realists] Bang gives a view of Danish Realism and works on redefining the literary period as a new methodology that experiments with the form of the novel. He conveys powerfully that "Realismen er en Form, ikke en Tendens; en Methode, der kan sætte gamle Ting i en ny Belysning, ikke en Opdagelse, paa hvilken Forfatterne har taget Patent, og som gaar ud paa at have fundet nye Formler for det menneskelige Liv" [Realism is a form, not a tendency; a method that can view old things in a new light, not a discovery, for which authors have received a patent and assume that they have found new formulas for the human life] (*Realisme* 14).

¹² Harry Jacobsen refers to Herman Bang's division of authors in two very different groups: the social and the psychological. He sympathizes most with the latter, the psychological writer, whose main preoccupation is himself—he examines, sinks in, unravels, and almost defines himself (*Den unge HB* 116).

¹³ Although Bang states this in regards to the author, whose job is to explain in his work what preoccupies him in his life, he clearly targets himself as well with the statement: "Hans eget Liv, lagt under et Mikroskop, er hans Stof" [His own life set under a microscope, is his material] (Jacobsen, *Den unge HB* 116). And later, Bang confesses even more clearly: "Jeg ved, at jeg ofte, naar jeg skrev om andre, egentlig skrev om mig selv. Det var mine Haab, naar jeg talte om en Fremmeds, det var saa tit min Sorg, som jeg klædte i en andens" [I know that often, when I wrote about others, I, in fact, wrote about myself. There were my own hopes, when I talked about those of a stranger; it was so often my sorrow, which I put on in another] (Jacobsen, *Den unge HB* 117).

productivity. In terms of this border operation, Bang can freely play with the idea of nationalism and effectively create a national identity that springs from it, but also overcomes it. In light of Bang's contemporary attempts to release Denmark from Germany's claws and make his country a culturally independent nation, the author further contributes with his work, by tragically commemorating the nation's historical loss, but optimistically pointing to the possibility of new beginnings for his people. Bang even takes a political direction starting in the 1880's and he begins to appeal to Denmark to rise again and revitalize itself through trade and sea travel (Sørensen, *Temperament* 39). In his fiction, Bang employs nationalism to view a critical phase for his nation, but he also depicts it usefully in a fashion such that it is clearly recognized as a temporary occurrence, through which the tragedy of loss is overcome. Bang's particular interest, as the subsequent analysis of the novel *Tine* will show, is the female human subject that rises out of the premises of nationalism. The author's various work assignments in Denmark, as well as in other European countries, provide him with numerous vantage points from which he views his nation. This allows him to keep a critical distance to it.

Like Fontane, Herman Bang's productive career as a journalist¹⁴ and novelist underscores his border figure status. Bang also explores dramaturgy and even becomes a theater director. He is particularly dedicated to theatrical performances for a while and attempts to pursue a career as an actor; however, his persistent failures discourage him a great deal. In his novel *Haabløse Slægter* [Hopeless Generations], the main character, William Høg, who struggles to be an actor, replicates Bang's own unsuccessful attempts in the world of theater. The author feels most at home and is somewhat able to earn a living as a journalist and novelist. The ambivalence that

¹⁴ Bang works for a number of Danish newspapers such as *Jyllandsposten*, *Nationaltidende*, *Politiken*, and *Dagbladet*. For an insight on Bang's journalistic achievements and some examples of his work, see Ulrik Lehrmann's *Virkelighed – set i Herman Bangs Speil*. Aarhus: Ajour, 2001.

arises from the overlapping of the two is one of the most distinguishing features of Bang's authorship. Although Bang writes his journalistic and literary material in two different contexts, both his journalism¹⁵ and fiction address the same themes. Peer E. Sørensen regards Bang as a *grænsegænger*, a border operator, by revealing the author's *modus operandi* as transplanting the non-literary material into the literary framework (*Temperament* 44).¹⁶ The language of the discourse generated through the combination of fictional and authentic material defines the author's use of Realism.

With his novels, Bang transgresses the border of Realism by incorporating Impressionist elements. In fact, he is regarded as the first Impressionist author in Denmark. There could be no better judge of Bang's Impressionist achievement than Claude Monet, whose painting "Impression. Soleil levant" in 1874 defines Impressionist art *par excellence*. Monet met Bang by chance in 1895 at a *pension* in Norway. There, he admitted to the Danish author that the novel *Tine*, which had been recently translated into French, was the only Impressionist novel he knew (Jacobsen, *Resignation* 190-1). Bang's Impressionism, caught between journalism and fiction, functions as modernity's Realism that works on and operates in the moment, in the "now"—"nu'ets teknik" [the technique of the "now"], as Peer E. Sørensen formulates (*Temperament* 90). Bang's Realism has nothing to do with German Realism as Georg Lukács understands it in terms of totality formation.¹⁷ Sørensen explains how Bang's Realism is to be grasped in the same way as Adorno understands Balzac's Realism,

¹⁵ It is worth mentioning that the journalism practiced during Bang's time is transitory, as the daily press and the journalism we know today have not yet found their definite form (Lehrmann 23). For a review of the new literary art of rapidity and Bang's contribution to the newspaper, see also Martin Zerlang's "Den nye litterære hurtighedskunst. Herman Bang og bladlitteraturen" in *Det stadig moderne gennembrud – Georg Brandes og hans tid, set fra det 21. århundrede*. Ed. Hans Hertel. Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2004. 225-247.

¹⁶ Heinrich Detering, too, views Bang as a *Grenzgänger* when he comments on the author's erotic and national existence as an outsider ("Grenzgänge" 25).

¹⁷ Lukács understands Realism as a totality. He criticizes German literature for its fragmentation and lack of continuation, when he compares it to other European literatures (*Realisten* 5). German Realism, he contends, is feeble and marginal, so that "alles wirklich Wertvolle, in die Zukunft Weisende an die Peripherie gedrängt wird" (*Realisten* 12).

which is an attempt to capture a diminishing reality and not to express an existing one (*Temperament* 105). Sørensen elaborates further and contends that Bang's Impressionism can thus be best understood as a Realism that builds up on reality loss—"en realisme, der bygger op på realitetstab" (*Temperament* 105). With this new dimension of Realism in mind, Bang's appeal as a border figure between Realism and Impressionism becomes intriguing. The author's work with traditional material and his ambition to redefine it makes him transgress its borders and generate something new in the process. His novel *Tine* shows precisely this transgression and production by means of the Impressionist style and a national theme.

Tine (1889), the work that will be the focus of this chapter, is a novel that celebrates Impressionism as the new era in art as well as the artistic means to depict Denmark's condition during the second half of the nineteenth century. Bang proclaims his technique in the preface of *Tine*. No less evident than Monet's efforts to paint the light of the rising sun as a continuous process, Bang, too, sees his characters in movement, only in picture after picture:

Jeg ser mine Personer kun i Billede efter Billede og kun i Situation efter Situation hører jeg dem tale. Jeg maa ofte bie i Timer, før de ved et Blik, en Bevægelse, et Ord forraader mig deres virkelige Tanker, som jeg jo kun kan gætte ligesom jeg gætter andre levende Menneskers—deres, som jeg omgaas og kender. (*Tine* 14)

[I see my characters only in picture after picture, and hear them speak only in situation after situation. I often have to wait for hours before they reveal their real thoughts by a glance, a movement, a word; I can only guess at their thoughts as I guess at the thoughts of other living beings – those that I know and meet in my daily life. (*Tina* 180)]¹⁸

¹⁸ For this chapter, two versions of the novel will be utilized, *Tine* (1986) in Danish and *Tina* (1984) in English translation by Christophersen, both based on the first Danish edition of Bang's *Tine* published in 1889.

In his writing, Bang depicts the authentic release of every little movement and the intonation of every word from his characters; with these techniques he emulates people he recognizes from his own reality. Thus, Bang's fiction is ultimately anchored in his reality. This significant aspect is also what differentiates his Realism from the writing of his Danish Romantic forerunners.¹⁹ While the Romantics sought a safe escape into idyllic pasts and remained oblivious to the present, Danish Realism marks for Denmark a modern era that requires intellectuals to portray their current time validly and to operate effectively in it.

Bang conducts his Realism on the border with Modernity. Bang's Realism, enhanced by an Impressionist style, is an infinite struggle to depict ever-changing life as he perceives it.²⁰ "Kun Mangfoldighed og Bevægelse kan for mig give Billedet af Liv" (*Tine* 14) ["It is only through multiplicity and movement that I can create a picture of life" (*Tina* 181)]. This restless style, presented by a restless form in *Tine*, suggests an optimistic view of a life that never stagnates and always moves forward. Due to the movement of life as a process, no traditional and definite form can contain such an ongoing progression. This is why Bang insists that the Realist novel must contain the chaos and the diversity that constitute life and reality, which the traditional form of the novel cannot manage to do (Sørensen, *Temperament* 53, 58).²¹ Convinced that the Realist novel could only serve its purpose—that is, to reflect and capture the chaotic and diverse world as he perceives it—by being produced in a restless and non-traditional form, Bang experiments with the form of his own novels. *Haabløse*

¹⁹ Danish Romanticism consists primarily of Adam Oehlenschläger, N.F.S. Grundtvig, and Steen Steensen Blicher. Among the Danish Poetic Realists count above all Hans Christian Andersen, Johan Ludwig Heiberg, Thomasine Gyllembourg, Frederick Paludan-Müller, and Emil Aarestrup.

²⁰ This entire discussion concerning Bang's experimental style in his novels is particularly shaped by an enlightening and insightful three-day seminar led by Professor Peer E. Sørensen in March 2010 at the University of Aarhus, Denmark.

²¹ "Den realistiske roman har ikke en fastlagt form. Da den arbejder med en virkelighed, der er kaotisk og mangfoldig, må den nødvendigvis i sin form fastholde det mangfoldige." [The realistic novel does not have a definite form. Because it works with a reality that in itself is chaotic and diverse, the realistic novel in its form must necessarily contain multiplicity] (Sørensen, *Temperament* 53).

Slægter [Hopeless Generations] in 1880 and *Stuk* [Stucco] in 1887 are both classified as *romaneksperimenter* [experimental novels] and *desillusionsromaner* [novels of disillusion], for they mirror a formless and atomized world stripped of any meaning. Especially *Haabløse Slægter*, a novel about a struggling young actor with an ambiguous sexuality, becomes a scandalous success, for which Bang is condemned for public immorality. His novels' lack of ethical exaltation, compositional firmness, and stylistic uniformity constitute the final breakdown of the traditional German novel promoted by Goethe. This breakdown becomes a gateway to the French novels, precisely the approach Brandes encourages the Danish intellectuals to follow. Bang's famously acclaimed novels *Det hvide hus* [The White House] (1898) and *Det grå hus* [The Gray House] (1901) dedicated to his mother and his grandfather, respectively, are classified as biographical fiction. Bang fuses the fictitious and the factual by operating directly on the border of the two in a process regarded as *grænsegængeri* by Peer E. Sørensen. Elements of such a fusion are also to be found in *Tine*, *Stuk*, and *Ti Aar. Erindringer og Handlinger* [Ten Years: Memories and Events] (1891). Bang also produces works such as *Mikäel* (1904) and *De uden Fædreland* [The Fatherless Ones] (1906), with which he aims at an international audience with the international settings he creates. Additionally, Bang composes a number of novellas, most significantly *Fratelli Bedini*, *Charlot Dupont*, *Franz Pander*, and *Les quatre Diables* (later titled *De fire Djævle*), which recent scholarship analyzes particularly with respect to the discourse of homosexuality.²² Bang is classified as an author of *randeksistens* [marginal existence], from which his own protagonists rise as marginal figures. *Tine* and *Ved Vejen* [By the Road], among others, deal precisely with this theme. In these works, Bang's experimental tendencies take on the form of monotony. Devoid of any

²² The novel *De uden Fædreland* is also discussed in the context of homosexuality. In *Das offene Geheimnis* Heinrich Detering dedicates an appealing chapter—"was ich über die Sexualität weiß"—to Bang's overall work that thematizes homosexuality.

real drama, they are about almost meaningless narratives that revolve around repetition, thus making the practice of repetition the only strategy through which everyday reality can be articulated. Himself a border figure, Bang experiments with Realism: in his writing he swings between opposites in form of authenticity and fiction, scandal and monotony, his provincial Denmark and the international arena.

Bang's Realism is to be understood in the context of the modern world, whose conditions present Bang with a new kind of productivity that stems from chaos. Although not necessarily a revolutionary type, Bang defines himself through chaos. In the liberating space with which chaotic disorder provides him, Bang can freely create. Sørensen views Bang's statement to his younger friend, the author and journalist Christian Houmark, as essential in describing the productive quality of chaos: "Jeg er ingen Personlighed, jeg er kaos, og ud fra det skaber jeg" [I am no personality, I am chaos, and from that I create] (qtd. in *Temperament* 19). For Bang, chaos is the principal feature of modernity. In the midst of such chaos, Bang becomes the representative of modernity during the second half of the nineteenth century, an era characterized by restlessness, nervous tension, and disease. For this reason, the century is reputed as *Nervositetens Aarhundrede* [The Century of Nervousness], when the permanent state of tensioned nerves and anxiety is reflected in all of life's aspects and disciplines.²³ Bang's Realism pulsates outside of the provided confines and transgresses towards the realm of modernity that permits the author to maneuver dynamically as a *grænsegænger*.

In the domain of modernity, Bang as border figure employs the manifestation of himself as an Other. All of Bang's literary and journalistic productivity arises from modernity, which Bang understands as the ever-changing and unruly state of

²³ In his book, *Nervositetens Aarhundrede* (1888), Paolo Montegazza thoroughly diagnoses the century as nervous in all its aspects, from literature, art, and philosophy to the political affairs.

emerging as a different being, as an Other. Even his whole somewhat bizarre appearance mirrors his eccentric way of thinking. This is how Ferslews²⁴ daughter, who also publishes a book about Bang's first years as a journalist, portrays him:

Hovedet syntes for stort til det spinkle Legeme, især var Baghovedet stærkt udviklet. Det mørke Haar dækkede som en *uregelmæssig* Frynse det meste af Panden; Øjnene var dybtliggende, brune, smukke trods en let Skelen med det venstre Øje, der gav Blikket et noget *flakkende Udtryk*. Øret var stort, lidt *degenereret* i Formen; Næsen kraftig, let buet, med *nervøse* Næsebor. Munden var stor, men smuk formet. Læbernes Farve traadte stærkt frem mod den matte, olivenfarvede Hud. (Jacobsen, *Den unge HB* 136-7, *my emphasis*)²⁵

[The head seemed too big compared to the scrawny body; especially the back of the head was quite developed. The dark hair covered like an *irregular* fringe most of the forehead; the eyes were deep-set, brown, beautiful, despite a slight squinting with the left eye, which gave the look a somewhat *flickering expression*. The ear was big, a little *degenerated* in its form; the nose plump, a little curved, with *nervous* nostrils. The mouth was big, but beautifully shaped. The lips' color stood out strongly from the olive-colored skin.]

This facial description already contains the essential vocabulary that depicts Bang's century—irregular, flickering, degenerated, and nervous. Bang very carefully and deliberately constructs his own otherness by means of his dramatic looks and behavior. His homosexuality, a condition that clearly does not fit within the borders that delineate normality and morality at the time, points towards his function as a border figure and his own efforts to pursue this function. Despite his unceasing financial problems, he is notorious for his excessive use of make-up, perfume,²⁶ and

²⁴ Christian Ferslew, Bang's employer at the time, first owns a printing and bookbinding office. He expands his business by sending the most significant newspapers at the time *Dagstelegrafen* that focuses on news about the war front in 1864, *Aftenposten* in 1873, and *Nationaltidende* in 1876 (Jacobsen, *Den Unge HB* 129).

²⁵ The abbreviation "HB" in the source's title stands for "Herman Bang."

²⁶ Bang is compared to and was nicknamed after Hr. Hoff, one of the characters he constructs in his novel *Haabløse Slægter*. "Hans Ødselhed var endnu større end hans Indtægter, og han brugte i den ene

his extravagant dressing.²⁷ He fits the stereotypical picture of a homosexual who usually concerns himself with art, music, poetry, and fashion (Bjørby 230). Von Rosen pins down Bang's role as one of Denmark's first modern public homosexuals, who lives as such as an open secret at a time when the category or type of homosexuals is being constructed in European history (qtd. in Heede 13). The author's life, which his diligent biographer, Harry Jacobsen, compiles in five informative works, gyrates around a number of themes that derive from his fate as homosexual and from being a modern product of the century, which Bang deliberately mirrors.

Despite Bang's ambitions and talents, his otherness both as a choice and condition in his time's modernity makes him live a tragic life at home and abroad.²⁸ He often becomes a victim of trials against homosexuals and his travels are an attempt to escape them (Secher 48).²⁹ Bang's exile is also a choice he often makes to construct his own tragic character. While at home he emerges as an outsider, he recognizes and cherishes the space outside Denmark as the realm of home. Vivian Greene-Gantzberg formulates Bang's aspiration of being the Other as such:

Hjemme valgte han rollen som den fremmede, mens han
føjte sig hjemme i det fremmede. Idet han afveg fra
nogle af de traditionelle normer, opsøgte han det
fremmede for at blive en del af det og for at spejle sig i
det. (*Fremmede* 73)

[At home he chose the role of the outsider, while he felt
at home abroad. As he deviated from some of the

Maaned ligesaa meget Parfume, som han alt i alt maatte leve for i den næste" [His extravagance was even bigger than his income, and he spent on perfumes in one month as much money as he could have lived on for the next one (Jacobsen, *Den unge HB* 136)].

²⁷ According to the portrayal of the author by Ferswlew's daughter, Bang wore very tight clothes. His daily clothing consisted of noticeably stripped or checkered fabric in brown color, dark-blue ties, white silk pocket handkerchief with blue edging and blue monogram (Jacobsen, *Den unge HB* 137).

²⁸ Bang often was a satirical prey of the magazine *Punch* that ridiculed the author through caricatures.

²⁹ Bang refers to these unfair trials in his essay "Gedanken zum Sexualitätsproblem" (72). See also *Danskere i Berlin* [Danes in Berlin], where Susanne Bernth documents Bang's own writing on his exiles to Berlin, Meiningen, Munich, Vienna, and Prague, as he often was expelled from these cities (52-62).

traditional norms, he sought out the foreign, the other, in order to become a part of it and to reflect himself in it.]

Bang seems to share Fontane's cosmopolitan point of view regarding the *Fremde*, as they both aspire to better understand their home and their origins by being and working outside of their native countries. Bang's interest in other cultural realms determines his productivity a great deal, for a number of his best works such as *Stuk*, *Ved Vejen*, and partially *Tine*, are conceived abroad. Sørensen, who, challenges Greene-Gantzberg and regards Bang as homeless and a stranger wherever he goes, defines the exile as a new form of productivity, as a "forsøg på at genskabe hjemlandet i det fremmede" [an attempt to recreate the homeland in the foreign] (*Temperament* 277). Bang's most frequent destination away from home is Germany, to which he has professional and personal connections. Most importantly, Bang deems the southern neighbor as Denmark's way out of its cultural dependency from Germany and Denmark's way into its cultural recognition in Europe.

Bang plays a double role in presenting an interesting picture of Germany to Denmark, with the aim of making his nation recognize its current position. He updates Denmark on German progress and he criticizes Germany for having the wrong effect on Denmark. In his lecture "Det moderne Tyskland" [The modern Germany], Bang advises his nation to distance itself from the year 1864.³⁰ The cultural barrier between the two neighbors can be eliminated if Denmark no longer clings to the memories about a Germany of the past, but is able to recognize Germany's value in the present. Bang deems Germany a confusion for Denmark, in the sense that Germany encourages Danish intellectuals in the wrong direction, in reverting into the German classical tradition (Bohnen 63). The Danish author pursues his labor in minimizing

³⁰ The lecture "Det moderne Tyskland" is found and made accessible by Vivian M. Green-Gantzberg in *Ny Kongelige Samling*. See Klaus Bohnen's hermeneutical take on this lecture in "Historische Vorurteilsformen. Zum Deutschland-Bild in dänischer Literatur." *Aspekte interkultureller Germanistik in nordischer Sicht*. Ed. Klaus Bohnen et. al. Copenhagen, München: Wilhelm Fink, 1987. 51-69.

the cultural barrier between the two nations by operating in German territory, and more precisely in Berlin, which for Bang represents Germany.

Particularly through his journalistic work in Berlin,³¹ Bang imbues the cultural capital with a genuine hope, for he wishes to be recognized here. Although he does not prosper as he anticipates,³² Bang thinks highly of Berlin: “Og jeg vil reussere i Tyskland. Og Tyskland er Berlin. Denne By voxer, mens de andre visner. Her er den Luft, som strammer og styrker Viliene. Og en smuk Dag vil der ogsaa voxer frem en Litteratur” [And I want to succeed in Germany. And Germany is Berlin. This city grows, while the others fade away. Here is the air that tightens and strengthens the volitions. And one beautiful day a literature will rise] (*Liv eller Død* 32). Bang does, indeed, become one of the few authors of The Modern Breakthrough to be translated into German. Yet, despite the fact that he is read with great enthusiasm by German intellectuals,³³ Bang’s influence and readership in the German milieu is not very well known today (Gremler 11-12).³⁴ Bang’s personal ambitions in Germany reflect his national interest in removing Denmark’s stigma that dates from 1864. With *Tine* the author enables his nation to confront its past, thus forcing his Danish compatriots to see how little they have changed through decades and how they still cling to an illusion of the past. *Tine* thus suggests a current national solution based on Denmark’s awareness of its errors. Bang’s objective is, however, not quite grasped and the novel

³¹ From 1885 on, Bang works as a foreign correspondent in Berlin for German, Swedish, Finish, and Norwegian newspapers; from 1886 on, he also works for the Danish newspaper *Politiken* (Sørensen, *Temperament* 278).

³² In 1885 Bang writes a satirical article about the royal family in Germany in a Norwegian newspaper. After his writing was found and reprinted in a German newspaper, he is under strict observation, until he is expelled from the city (Sørensen, *Temperament* 278). Regarding his dangerous article, Bang informs with regret in a letter to Peter Nansen on 15 January 1886: “Jeg havde skrevet – i Bergen – et Par dumme Dumheder om Keiserens Portræt” [I had written—in Berg—a couple of stupid remarks about the kaiser’s portrait] (*Liv eller Død* 32).

³³ Bang is one of Thomas Mann’s favorite writers and is greatly appreciated by Gadamer, Hesse, Musil, and Rilke (Sørensen, *Temperament* 5).

³⁴ Claudia Gremler’s study “*Fern im dänischen Norden ein Bruder:*” *Thomas Mann und Herman Bang* undertakes to bring Bang closer to the German literary milieu by connecting Bang and Mann. She does a remarkable work on reinforcing Bang’s influence on Mann.

is not read with the right lenses at the time, which shows yet again the incessant challenges Bang confronts both at home and abroad.

III. Reception and Criticism of Bang's *Tine*

Tine (1889) functions as the representative novel of Denmark's historical war catastrophe in 1864, the year Denmark is defeated by Prussia and its ally at the time, Austria. The work narrates a simple story on two colliding planes; one containing the tragic fate of two people whose problematic relationship is a dead end, and the second pointing at the background and reasons for war in 1864. At the center of the novel are the innocent sentiments of the schoolmaster's (or parish clerk's)³⁵ daughter, Tine, who falls in love with the married town commissioner, Berg. The narrative takes place in Als, a little island located in Schleswig, where Bang is born. Tine's affection for Berg starts quite innocently, for Tine is often around his wife assisting with childcare and the household, as well as keeping her company. As the war between Prussia and Denmark breaks out, Berg's family, consisting of his wife and son Herluf, is sent to Copenhagen, while Berg stays in Als to protect his home territory. After Mrs. Berg's departure, Tine's and Berg's temptation culminates in a sexual rapport, which ends rapidly with the war's progressive calamity. In the midst of such turmoil, Tine finds Berg deadly wounded and unable to recognize or remember her. Tine's devastation ends in suicide: she drowns herself at night in a pond. The novel ends with Tine being forgiven by the bishop, who permits her mother, Mrs. Bølling, to bury Tine in the churchyard.

³⁵ According to the British translator Christophersen, the terms "schoolmaster" and "parish clerk" were used almost interchangeably at the time, as both jobs were carried out by the same person (*Tine* xiv).

Tine did not enjoy great success in Denmark when it first came out.³⁶ Some of the reviews at the time were quite sardonic and offensive. The newspaper *Aarhus Stiftstidende*, for example, mockingly calls into question: “[...] hvordan skulde vel ogsaa en Mand kunne skrive om Krig, der aldrig har lugtet anden Krudtrøg end den fra Tivolis Fyrværkerier?” [How could a man write about war, when the only gunpowder he has ever smelled is that from Tivoli’s fireworks?] (Nilsson 230). This unenthusiastic review continues to further disapprove of the work: “Som Krigsskildring er ‘Tine’ derfor kun en daarlig Spekulationsroman og som Forsøg paa at tegne pikante Elskovsscener” [As a depiction of war, *Tine* is thus just a bad novel of speculation and an attempt to draw piquant love scenes] (Nilsson 230). In a similar tone, one of the leading newspapers at the time, *Berlingske Tidende*, states that the novel’s content is inadequate due to its lack of psychology. According to the critic, it was not quite clear why the two main characters Tine and Berg were attracted to each other (Nilsson 249). There is no doubt that such reviews do not do justice to Bang’s novel. However, *Tine* does set up the right grounds for such fierce criticism. The novel presents the reader with two significant problems. First, Bang does not experience the war of 1864. He is forced to leave his home in Schleswig, and more precisely Asserballe on the island of Als, in 1863, when he is only six years old. Second, Bang never experiences the romantic love of a woman, around which *Tine* so explicitly revolves. Regarding the latter, Bang himself acknowledges his inability to understand heterosexual love in a letter to Peter Nansen (Bjørby 237). Moreover, *Tine* is even criticized on moral grounds for depicting a cheap and despicable love affair between the two main characters.³⁷ Other negative reviews in leading newspapers at

³⁶ *Tine* is, however, no exception; for other works by Bang suffer a similar destiny during his lifetime.

³⁷ A number of Bang’s works are criticized for their content in terms of morality. Especially his first novel *Haabløse Slægter* in 1880 suffers the harshest criticism as a scandalous text and was banned at first. Bang is forced to revise it thoroughly before the work can be published. Nilsson insists that Bang

the time, such as the strongly conservative *Avisen* and the radical *Politiken*, ensure that Bang's novel is met with little enthusiasm and torn to pieces by other critics.³⁸ What gains immediate recognition in Denmark at the time are patriotic works about 1864, books that lack any artistic sense but are sold right away, such as *Hinsides Grænse* [Beyond the Border], *Fra ottende Brigade* [From the Eighth Brigade], and *En Rekrut fra '64* [A Recruit from '64] (Jacobsen, *Den Unge HB* 19). Bang's *Tine* suffers a poor reception not only at home, but also in Germany.

In Germany, there is no particular interest in Bang's work. The author's genuine hope to grab the attention of the German public is unrealized (Jacobsen, *Den tragiske HB* 183). *Tine* was not translated into German until 1903.³⁹ Its author does not hide his frustration about the lack of publication in German of what he considers his best works. In a particular response regarding the translation rights from Danish to German for his *Ludvigsbakke*, Bang expresses his disappointment:

Übersetzen Sie was Sie wollen. Mich interessiert die Sache gar nicht. Solange meine besten Bücher—"Am Wege" und "Tine"—nicht in Deutschland erscheinen können sondern seit Jahren in deutscher Übersetzung von Verleger zu Verleger erfolglos gesandt werden müssen, hat meine Stellung der deutschen Lesewelt gegenüber für mich gar keine Interesse. Man hat in Deutschland meine schlechtesten Sachen verdaut—die Besseren will man nicht haben. (qtd. in Jacobsen, *Den tragiske HB* 183)

In France, however, where *Tine* is translated in 1893 swiftly enough after its first appearance in Denmark in 1889, the novel quickly becomes a much appreciated and acclaimed work. This success is clearly due to Bang's Impressionist style, which

has been misunderstood, when read as a representative of a writing style themed by degeneration and decadence, for this is clearly not the case (297).

³⁸ Torbjörn Nilsson collects some of the critical reviews on the book. See especially pages 230-231 and 249-251.

³⁹ During his youth, Bang used Emil Jonas as his German translator. *Tine* and a number of his works were translated and published in the publishing house and bookstore Fischer, which became the author's standard connection in Berlin (Jacobsen, *Den tragiske HB* 183). Regarding English translation, *Tine* is first translated in English almost after a century, in 1984 (*Tina* xiii).

secures him a larger audience in France than at home. Another reason for the author's quick recognition in France is perhaps due to the themes in *Tine*, namely war and sex. According to Jacobsen, war and sex were already current motifs in French novellas at the time (*Resignation* 185), thus making the literary market ripe for the reception of novels such as *Tine*. Zola himself, inspired by the subject matter, writes the war novel *La Débâcle* [*The Downfall*] (1891), about the Prussian-French war, shortly after *Tine*. Although Bang and Zola share a number of the same views and opinions on Realism and Naturalism, their writing styles differ fundamentally from each other. While Zola presents the war in the foreground of the novel, Bang does not describe any war scenes at all. The cannons are merely in the background and the reader becomes aware of the war's consequences through the characters' erratic psyche (Nilsson 247). Despite the generally unsuccessful reception of the work in Denmark and Germany, one of *Tine*'s grand values lies in its authenticity, which provides an objective depiction of reality as seen by Bang.

IV. *Tine*'s Authenticity

Although written twenty-five years after the factual events, *Tine* enjoys the ranking of a historical novel, for it is read nowadays as an authentic account of the Danish-Prussian war in 1864. Bang goes to great lengths to study the literature of 1864, interview people, and collect the necessary material before writing the novel. The Swedish critic Torbjörn Nilsson has recorded Bang's cautious work on constructing *Tine* as a historically authentic work, which involved interweaving a number of sources. Bang begins the conceptual work while in exile in Berlin and

Prague and writes the novel in Nakskov, Denmark, and later in Norway.⁴⁰ A number of vital details point to the novel's authenticity. The accurately given dates, for example, make it possible for the reader to trace the historical events from the book's beginning scenes to the end.⁴¹ The narrative starts around 23 December 1863, a few days after the death of the Danish King Frederick VII, and it ends a couple of days after the storming of Dybbøl—Denmark's ultimate breaking point—18 April 1864. The weather details are just as accurate. The weather descriptions in articles published at the time testify to this. On Bang's reporting accuracy, the Swedish scholar, Torbjörn Nilsson, notes:

En förbluffande anpassning efter verkligheten talar ur alla dessa exakta detaljängivelser. Hade solen skinit en viss dag, så hade den det, och Bang var inte den som lät det storma. Hans egen berättelse, den om Tines kärlek och död, fick rätta sig efter verklighetens egen gång och anpassa sig efter den så gott den kunde. (240)

[A stunning adaptation to reality speaks out all these details. Had the sun shone on a given day, so it had it, and Bang was not the one to let it storm. His own story about Tine's love and death had to comply with reality's own terms and to adapt to this reality as best it could.]

The use of articles that report on the battles of Dannevirke and Dybbøl, as Greene-Gantzberg notices, allows Bang to achieve objectivity in *Tine* (Biography 187).

Despite this ambition, however, a number of the characters are based on Bang's personal acquaintances in Als. Tine, for example, is modeled on the daughter of the

⁴⁰ Bang constructs *Tine* by fusing a number of materials from different sources such as articles from old newspapers, especially *Dagbladet* during 1863 and 1864. There are even read bits from this newspaper in *Tine*. Bang uses articles from the correspondences of P.V. Grove and the Englishman Antonio Gallenga, who both publish their articles in book form—"Fra Dannevirke til Dybbøl" and "Krigen i Slesvig 1864," respectively. Of help must have also been Carl Th. Sørensen's "Den anden slesvigske Krig," which by the time of its appearance in 1883 became a standard work. Furthermore, Bang consulted people and veterans of the war, such as Emil Bjerring and Carl Feilberg to inspire and enlighten him on the time (Nilsson 231-238; Jacobsen, *Studier* 76-77).

⁴¹ In a section "Exaktheden i Tine" [Accuracies in *Tine*], Nilsson traces every scene from chapter one to ten in the novel and provides the corresponding sources—Grove, Gallenga, Sørensen, Feilberg—that Bang must have used for the work's completion regarding details of time, weather, geography, and events (292-296).

parish clerk, Kjærbølling, and Bang's nanny in his childhood town in Asserballe.⁴²

The character of Tine's father, Bølling, is based on the true parish clerk Kjærbølling, who is diseased with typhus, from which he never recovers (Hvidt 182). However, this father figure, who experiences hallucinations due to his mental sickness, reminds the reader of Bang's own sick father, who is a pastor.⁴³ The playful character of Herluf Berg is clearly Herman Bang himself, who also performs for his idolized mother (Hvidt 182). *Tine's* authenticity also lies in the fact that its idyllic setting is brought to life in the genuine atmosphere of the pastoral landscape and in the presence of the mundane Danes in Nakskov in Denmark, where Bang spends his days completing *Tine*. Within the walls of Hotel "Skandinavien" in Nakskov, he reports to Nansen in an unpublished letter dated 23 January 1889:

[...] jeg læser, skriver, forsøger at tænke. Og det vil blive mine Dages Historie, til min Bog er færdig. Dette stille Provinsliv rundt om mig rører mig saa dybt. Jeg griber af disse stiltfærdige Folks Taalmodighed, som røgter deres Gerning i halvmørke Butikker, som gør deres Pligt uden at spørge hvorfor, og som bliver paa deres Plads i Livet, som var de stillet paa Post der. (qtd. in Jacobsen, *Resignation* 184)

[I read, write, try to think. And this will be the story of my days until my book is finished. This silent life of the province around me touches me so deeply. I am seized by the patience of these quiet people, who take care of their work in half dark shops, who do their duty without asking why, and who stay in their place in life, as if they were stationed there.]

⁴² However, it is worth mentioning that the author fictionalizes their fates to a degree. In his article "Herman Bang og den virkelige Tine" [Herman Bang and the real Tine] in *Berlingske Tidende*, Morten Kamphøjer traces Tine's life and claims that the real Tine was exactly the same as her character in the novel, except for the love story and the suicide. The real Tine became quite upset with Bang for giving her such a dramatic death. Bang made it up to Tine by presenting her in a better light in *Det hvide hus*. The author has Tine appear in three different works *Tine*, *Stuk*, and *Det hvide hus*. She is, however, a different character in each novel.

⁴³ Bang's father dies of mental illness in 1875 after his mother's death of tuberculosis in 1871 (V. Sørensen, "Efterskrift" 158). The author also uses his sick father figure as a model in *Haabløse Slægter*, where he depicts with diligence the progression of his father's mental illness and the family's shame because of it.

Despite the novel's high level of accuracy regarding time and space, as well as its bibliographical nature, the novel is by no means a biography. Although the author connects the biographical and the fictional material, his characters' destinies are constructed and the narrative is categorized as fiction. Bang's determination to portray the authentic reality of 1864 through facts despite the time distance aims at encouraging his fellow Danes to view that period yet again, this time with critical lenses. Despite *Tine*'s early unenthusiastic reception and criticism, over time the novel has attained the recognition it deserves, for its artistically impeccable style. In the previous decades, the novel was even officially canonized as part of the obligatory readings in Danish literature in Danish schools and it was read as a successful illustration of Denmark's historical struggle with Prussia in 1864.

V. Political and Historical Background

Since *Tine* is a political text about the construction of national identity, familiarity with not only the historical developments in 1864, which are narrated in *Tine*, but also the political affairs at the end of 1880s, when Bang writes the novel, is crucial to an understanding of the text. *Tine*'s narrative is about one particular part of the Danish-Prussian war, which has to do with the decisive battle by Dybbøl. The war of 1864 is inevitable and derives naturally from the first Schleswig war—known as *Treårskrigen* [the Three-Years' War] or as *Erhebung*—from 1848-50 over the duchies of the Danish-minded Schleswig and the German-minded Holstein. The Danes famously win this earlier war, which, in fact, is a civil war within the Danish state. The victory, however, is not a result of the Danish military power, but merely the outcome of the diplomatic intervention by Russia, which forces Prussia to renounce its support of Schleswig-Holstein's movement of independence (Secher 201-2).

Secher calls this a “papirsejr” [paper victory] (202), an insubstantial victory, which is soon to be misconstrued. The Three Years’ War is concluded at a London conference in 1852, when the European powers agree on peace. Yet the situation is still quite ambiguous and the independence of the duchies is not quite resolved. According to the Treaty of London, Schleswig-Holstein is returned to the Danish king, while the Danish government in return promises not to tie Schleswig closer to Denmark than to Holstein. The London Treaty of 1852 is, however, soon violated due to the conflict escalated by the Danish national liberals, who demand a “Denmark to the Eider”—Eider being the river that separates the duchies. The national liberal Danes, certain of Denmark’s status as an imperialistic power and still high on the previous victory, develop a constitution in November 1863 (in Danish known as the *novemberforfatning*). The constitution establishes a separation of the duchies, and more clearly an inclusion of Schleswig into the monarchy proper and an exclusion of Holstein. This is an obvious war declaration, as it clearly stands in contradiction to the Treaty of London of 1852. The stubbornness of the Danish national liberal politicians leads the country in 1864 to an inevitable war that is impossible for Denmark to win.

The newly chosen king of Denmark, Christian IX, after the sudden death of King Frederick VII, is fully aware of the consequences of the November constitution in 1863, but fears the hostile reaction of the Eider-Danes and does not have the courage to oppose their request and not sign the constitution. Denmark loses its most fundamental battle at Dybbøl, which had previously gained national fame during the Three Years’ War as a victorious war site. Despite Dybbøl’s ideal location on the peninsula of Sundeved, Dybbøl soon becomes the scene of the ultimate Danish defeat on 18 April 1864. This tragic date is easily recognized in the last pages of chapter nine in *Tine*. After the battle, a ceasefire is implemented and peace negotiations are

undertaken in London. Although several ideas are suggested for a new border in Schleswig, the Danish delegation stubbornly refuses the proposals. As soon as the ceasefire expires, Bismarck's Prussian army rapidly takes the island of Als (Bang's childhood home), the last bit of Schleswig left in Danish hands. With shattered confidence, Denmark soon surrenders. The outcome of the peace negotiations that follow in Vienna leaves Denmark in a doomed state, with a loss of one third of its territory and two fifths of its population.⁴⁴

This is the devastating national atmosphere among Danes, who seem to have overestimated themselves and underestimated their southern neighbor's power all the way through to their country's defeat in 1864.⁴⁵ This sense of demoralization also clearly marks Bang's *Tine*. Furthermore, what Bang perceives as even more tragic is the imminent repetition of such a defeat. A national turmoil of another 1864 appears on the horizon in the spirit of the discussion about Denmark's defense politics (*forsvarspolitik*). Bang writes *Tine* when Denmark paradoxically celebrates the twenty-five-year anniversary of the 1864 war. According to the author, the once fatal war is not commemorated properly by his Danish compatriots, and instead of being remembered as a vast loss and a valuable lesson for their future, it is cheered as a new

⁴⁴ Even though most inhabitants in both duchies considered themselves German, Schleswig had about 170,000 Danish-minded inhabitants (Christiansen 153). The Danish-Prussian war of 1864 was the first of the three victorious wars (against Austria in 1866 and France in 1870) that Bismarck led towards Germany's unification in 1871. For extensive reviews on the Danish-Prussian wars in 1848 and 1864, consult Carr's *Schleswig-Holstein 1815-1848: A Study in National Conflict* and Steefel's *Schleswig-Holstein Question*. For a detailed history on Schleswig-Holstein, see particularly the compiled work *Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*. Ed. Ulrich Lange. Neumünster: Wachholtz Verlag, 1996. For a comprehensive and refined historical narrative of the conflict in 1864, see Tom Buk-Swienty's consequent works: *Slægtbank Dybbøl. 18. April 1864. Historien om et slag*. Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2008, as well as *Dommedag Als. 29. Juni 1864. Kampen for Danmarks Eksistens*. Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2010.

⁴⁵ Even when it was clear that the 1864 war was an impossible mission for the outnumbered Danish army, the Danes, in denial of their situation and still anticipating victory on their side, accused the Danish Commander-in-Chief, de Meza, a German-born military man, for their loss. By tactically evacuating his Danish troops from the death-trap position at Dannevirke, de Meza saved many soldiers' lives from a certain death. However, his strategy was considered humiliating and intolerable by the Danish public. De Meza, thus, became a scapegoat of the Danish regime, whose orders he had followed, and was dismissed by the Danish government shortly afterwards (Dagbjerg 36; Secher 204).

defense agitation. War lectures are held all over the country, feeding Danes with political illusions and calling for a military defense.⁴⁶ To this, Bang responds quite critically and disappointedly. In a long article in Göteborg's newspaper *Handels- og Sjöfartstidning* during his stay in Nakskov, while writing *Tine*, he captures the despicable mood and condemns Denmark: "Vårt land har ingenting lärt" [Our country has learned nothing] (qtd. in Nilsson 224). Regarding his novel, he confesses in a letter to his friend Peter Nansen that he would give his life for *Tine*, if it only served to give his country a lesson about the past (Nilsson 225). Bang does not wish for war, especially not after what his country had already experienced. By depicting the reality of war in *Tine*, not the action on the battlefield, but the turmoil in his characters' souls, Bang undertakes to remind, warn, and teach his people of their collapse.⁴⁷

With *Tine* and its historically authentic background, Bang strives towards achieving a style that celebrates credibility in Realism, thus persuading his readers to witness the genuine quality of the artistic work that mirrors their current reality, and encouraging them to reflect on this reality. *Tine*, as an artistic expression, mirrors Edward Brandes's conviction at the time that "den kunstneriske kamp måtte være fast forankret i en politisk virkelighed" [the artistic battle had to be anchored firmly in a political reality] (Berthelsen 9). The narration of a past war that the reader experiences through *Tine* is meant to call to attention the concern that history could easily repeat itself. The following analysis will substantiate my thesis about the construction of an inevitable and naturally developed nationalism as an internal danger. The novel presents an understanding and awareness of nationalism as a threat. At the same time,

⁴⁶ One of the war lecturers who awoke a lot of attention was an officer in Lolland-Faster, close to Bang's residence at the time in Nakskov. A number of newspapers published his lecture for a number of days (Nilsson 223).

⁴⁷ Bang's agenda is the same also in the novel *Stuk*, from which *Tine* arises. The work on the latter results, however, effectively in the construction of a national identity on the basis of a naturally developed nationalism. It further draws deliberate attention to the feminine subject and its autonomy.

Tine encourages an optimistic view of nationalism's destructive force. I argue that nationalism in this novel generates the viable construction of an autonomous subject, represented by the eponymous female protagonist, Tine. Bang suggests that this double strategy will remove Denmark from its current stagnation and guide it towards progress.

VI. The Danger from Within

This section will scrutinize the inevitable danger deriving and progressing from within. The inner danger is revealed in *Tine* as Denmark's increasing nationalism, which among the characters takes on the natural form of their problematic desire, their defective language and speech, their misuse of information and communication, their mental and physical deformation, their irresponsible behavior, as well as their illusions about this destructive nationalism. These themes, as will also be explored in this section, are closely interconnected and stand under a common denominator, namely Danish nationalism. *Tine* reveals the danger from within primarily in the form of two occurrences: war and sexual desire, which both derive naturally from within and progress throughout the novel. They uncover a tension caused by their problematic and productive effects. As the following two sections will examine, this tension is carried in the novel by nationalism, which functions both as a dangerous and productive construct. The negative aspect of this tension results from the transgression of norms and conventions both in moral and political terms. The productive effect is born from the conviction that this transgression brings forth the beginning of a new era that promises forgiveness and revelation. The human subject is caught in the midst of this tension. By overcoming the tragic and dynamic experiences of war and desire, the subject participates actively

in the constant construction of its own national identity. This subject is represented by *Tine*'s marginalized character, in which Bang, as a border figure himself, manifests his own concerns.

Tine presents the natural progression of a political war and the natural intimacy between two people who exceed moral norms and suffer tragic consequences that determine their deaths. By developing the analogy of these two progressions hand in hand, Bang suggests that both war and sexual desire are inevitable occurrences in life. War is not necessarily the principal cause of the calamity that follows in *Tine*. War merely sheds light on individuals' already present inadequacies, as well as their dangerous behavior. In a similar vein, war in *Tine* does not change people radically. The analogy between war and sexual desire that the author creates within the narrative serves to depict precisely their same innate source, namely the human subject. Klaus P. Mortensen, in his argument about the novel's purpose that mythologizes the political process,⁴⁸ misinterprets the sexual desire: "Driften er ikke set som noget *i* mennesket, men som noget *uden for* det—en magt, der er dets væsen fjendtlig, og som uden varsel rammer det eller slår ned i det" [The sexual drive is not seen as something *in* the human being, but as something *outside of* it—a power that is foreign to its being, and that attacks it or destroys it without warning] (75-76, *author's emphasis*). Sexual desire is by no means a foreign drive—it is a biological force that comes from within when elicited, just as war and its consequences develop from people's own actions.

Desire, which becomes the novel's driving force both sexually and politically, is one exemplary danger that springs from the characters' inner nature. The novel reveals different types of desire that are thematized in the interactions of

⁴⁸ Regarding the interpretation of determination as a symptom rather than explanation (Mortensen 73-80), Mortensen's argument is attacked by Secher, Heitmann, and Bjørby.

the various characters. While the intimate relationship between Tine and Berg takes center stage, other relationships between women in the house, as well as between the women and the arriving soldiers, flourish beyond norms. Desire, while it thrives naturally among the narrative's characters, also becomes quite problematic as the national war continues.

The developing desire between the schoolmaster's daughter, Tine, and the married commissioner, Berg, comes as no surprise—it is already present and staged to progress from the beginning of the novel, before the war even commences. Already on the third page of chapter one, Tine is caught in a tense scene set up by Mrs. Berg in one of the usual games she plays upon her husband's arrival. Tine is told to lie quietly on Berg's bed under the blanket, so that she would not be noticed (*Tine* 18). This seemingly innocent scene, where Berg ends up sitting on Tine on his own bed, stages their first physical interaction, thus setting into motion their forthcoming exclusive intimacy under the same bed sheets. Tine's reaction after this incident, which embarrasses her so much that she does not set foot in the commissioner's house for three days, is not surprising. Berg's presence stirs feelings in Tine. Her emotions are revealed steadily, and the reader is given to understand her contentment when the commissioner walks her home. Berg, too, lets slip slowly what is on his mind and he does not hesitate to tell his wife sometimes how “Tine kan virkelig være ganske køn – om Morgnerne ...” (*Tine* 39). [“Tina can really look quite pretty—in the mornings” (*Tina* 32)]. As if to nurture each other's biological desire in the most natural manner, Tine and Berg even share the same interest in gardening. They are the only ones who occupy themselves fully with the process of “pruning and trimming and watering,” while Mrs. Berg gazes at the two of them (*Tina* 18).

Erotic scenes, in which Tine is invited to participate, are not limited to her interactions with Berg. Berg's wife exhibits an even more interesting flavor of playfulness. Already in the opening pages Tine and Mrs. Berg are found in the bedroom, the realm where many of their games take place. Here, the nursemaid Sofie wants to take part in these merry episodes between the two, also identified as *lystighed* in the original (*Tine* 17), a term fully loaded with pleasure (*lyst*). The bedroom becomes the perfect scene for staging the women's pleasure. Beyond their laughing, talking, and playing, this is where their intimacy is stimulated behind closed doors, in the Bergs' bed that "vaklede og gyngede" (*Tine* 17) ["shook and swayed" (*Tina* 3)] from the women's fun. "Fru Berg og Tine lo, saa Sengene vaklede og gyngede; og Sofie stillede indenfor Døren med en Slat Kaffe i en Spølkumme for at faa Del i Lystigheden" (*Tine* 17). ["Mrs Berg and Tina would laugh until the beds shook and swayed; and Sophie would come and stay inside the door with a mug of coffee to join the fun" (*Tina* 3)]. Their physically and erotically enhanced contact in the secluded bedroom is extended into the open nature, when Mrs. Berg seizes Tine by both legs (*Tine* 18) and swings her in the romantic scenery of the forest—where they also pick berries—while her skirts fly up and show her legs (*Tine* 28). So physical is their interaction, indeed, that the latter scene is forcefully accentuated by the presence of animals. The dogs Ajax and Hector, named after Greek war heroes and whose company will be even more palpable with the rawness of scenery later in the novel, jump instinctively on Tine's legs, thus making the girl fall down from the swinging branch that is about to break (*Tine* 28).

In the midst of this erotic atmosphere caused by the women's desire, is the Bergs' little son, Herluf, who also appears in *Stuk* (1887), the novel that inspires Bang to create *Tine*. Herluf in *Stuk* is a critic and theater director, who as a child loves to

dance and perform in front of Tine and his mother (*Stuk* 52). It is only natural that he emerges as a little embryo-actor playing roles in *Tine*. Encouraged by the women around him, Herluf pretends to be a Chinaman with long fingernails, dressed in his long nightgown (*Tine* 17).⁴⁹ In *Mærkværdige læsninger*, [Queer Readings], Heede reads Herluf, as well as a number of boy figures in Bang's works, as "moderidentificerede drengebørn" [tomboys identified with their mother] (50-51). She targets the boys' theatrical performances as the archetypical provocative communication form between mother and son, which determines the male children's later erotic and sexual development (Heede 51). When Sofie in *Tine* frowns upon Herluf's role-playing on his mother's bed, she clearly condemns Mrs. Berg and warns against encouraging her son's possible homosexuality.

Men tilsidst kunde Sofie blive fornærmet paa Herlufs Vegne midt som hun stod, og hun sagde: "Barnet ska' vel ikke spring' der og spill' Teater", sagde hun og tog ham ud af Sengen for at bære ham ned i Daglistuen og klæde ham paa i Varmen. (*Tine* 17)

[But eventually Sophie would sometimes take sudden offence on account of Herluf and say, "That boy's done quite enough jumping about 'n' play-acting", and she would take him from the bed and carry him down to the warm drawing room to get him dressed. (*Tina* 3)]

Herluf's play-acting also dramatizes the intimate scenes with Mrs. Berg and Tine together, as he entertains them provocatively in the bedroom, garnished in his exotic disguise.

This domestic erotically charged environment, cultivated by the Bergs and toned with terms of innocence by the narrator, soon turns into a bordello. Smooth reserved caresses are naturally followed by raw intimacy. And just as naturally, the eruption of war makes the Bergs' home the perfect place where sex is to take place.

⁴⁹ The child's energetic and playful character also is present as the unnamed boy (*Drengen*) in Bang's other (biographical) novel *Det hvide Hus*.

All the girls interacting with Tine blossom radiantly as sexual figures, especially when they are surrounded by men returning from the battlefield. The innkeeper's daughter, for example, Tinka, whose name closely reflects that of the main character's, is the perfect example of flirtatious and sexual exhibitions. Tinka's desire is first visible only in private in soldiers' company. "Hun lod dem ganske gavmildt kysse sig væk bag Dørene" (*Tine* 58) ["She was liberal with kisses behind the door" (*Tina* 56)]. Soon enough, Tinka is found exposing herself bluntly with her legs apart, thus also revealing her generous services to the soldiers: "Tinka satte sig med skrævende Ben paa Blokken og pustede: De har 'et jo saa haardt, min Pige, sagde hun til Tine, hun havde maaske en Fornemmelse af, at der kunde tiltrænges en Unskyldning for hendes Tilstand" (*Tine* 87) ["Tinka sat down on the kitchen block with her legs gracelessly apart, puffing and blowing. 'They do have such a hard life, my dear', she said to Tina, seeming to feel that an apology was needed for the state she was in" (*Tina* 91)].

Similarly and almost as if rivaling each other with their flirtatious attempts, the simple maids Maren and Sofie go around attracting attention with both their looks and actions. Maren, whose name contains the word *ren* in Danish, meaning "clean," is ironically surrounded by dirt, just as every other girl in the novel. Her moral status is clearly at stake when Sofie points out and complains about Maren, who "ikke vidst" hvor hun vild' slæng' sig hen til hvert et Par Bukser" (*Tine* 71), ["couldn't throw herself soon enough at every pair of trousers" (*Tina* 72)], and who shamelessly ignores her work to content herself with giggling loudly and carelessly in the company of soldiers (*Tine* 98). Even Sofie, the town girl, dolls up her appearance by getting rid of the shawl and making curls behind her ears like Princess Alexandra (*Tine* 57). Sofie, too, is quite ready to throw herself into the arms of pleasure.

Although she is usually depicted as passive and useless, her hands under her apron hint at her desire early in the novel (*Tine* 42). Sofie becomes quite energetic, excited, and unusually active when soldiers return to the commissioner's house. Time and again she speaks of the soldiers' need for some fun and her readiness to make that fun possible. Running around restless and in all directions, she keeps repeating: "En maa gør' de Krigere en munter Aften – de har fortjent en munter Aften" (*Tine* 90, 91). ["We must give the boys some fun this evening – they deserve some fun this evening" (*Tina* 95, 97)]. And when serving punch, Sofie encourages with her nods more than just drinking.

In the midst of this sexual eruption that signals the progression of war, the intimacy between Tine and Berg advances unsurprisingly. With Mrs. Berg's departure, more space is created for the cultivation of their intimacy. Tine and Berg's physical relationship gradually advances from playful romance to physical intercourse. Their encounters are neatly staged as a striptease for the reader, who soon learns to see Tine's desire on fire underneath her white apron. In the midst of the turmoil, Berg reveals his longing: "Og foran Lugerne, bag Forældrenes Ryg, tog han hende, dækkende hende med Kys" (*Tine* 113). ["And in front of the opened louvres, behind her parents' backs, he took her into his arms and covered her with kisses" (*Tina* 125)]. Berg seals his desire with the final sexual act shortly after this, taking Tine through the storm, followed by the barking dogs: "Og midt mellem Ruinerne af sit Hjem, under sin Hustrus Billede, tilfredsstillede Berg sit pinefulde, sit nagende Begær" (*Tine* 113). ["And amid the ruins of his home, under his wife's picture, Berg satisfied his painful, gnawing desire" (*Tina* 125)]. As if to accentuate Berg's act and this particular scene even more, Bang adds the adjective *fortvivlede* [desperate] in the second edition of his novel: "sit pinefulde, sit nagende, sit fortvivlede Begær" [his

painful, gnawing, desperate desire] (Nilsson 246). Bang's choice of adjectives suggests his difficulty in pinpointing the exact meaning of this desire, especially when the later term "desperate" adds yet another flavor to Berg's desire, that of a violent and dangerous impulse. Berg's name, too, contains and, thus, accentuates his own desire quite literally: The Danish word *begær* means "desire."

With desire embodied in the characters' name and behavior, the narrator holds them accountable as the dangerous initiators of and contributors to the nation's calamity. In his analysis, Claus Secher asserts that Berg ought not to be blamed for his actions, for his desire for Tine is a mere result of the war (230). Secher's argument ignores the fact that Tine's and Berg's actions occur by no means suddenly and in isolation. They tease all along, even before the war ripens the terrain for further undertakings. Their desire grows further with the war's proceedings. Bang expresses his views on desire in the Norwegian newspaper *Samtiden*, just a year after he writes *Tine*. For Bang, desire bears disaster:

Og driften vækkes, driften som er det første, der fødes,
og det sidste, som lever, ti driften er savnets tand – og
alt bliver forgjæves: opdragelsesverket var omsonst,
æresbegrebet bliver et siv. Moral er et bogstav. Alt
opsluges. Driften har talt, som er vort ophav og vor lov.
Og vi er uden vilje. (qtd. in Nilsson 245)

[And the desire awakens, the desire that is the first to be
born and the last to live; for desire is the need's
ravage—and everything is to no avail: the educational
work is in vain, the notion of honor becomes a sieve.
Moral is a letter. Everything is absorbed. The desire,
which is our cause and law, has spoken. And we are
without will.]

The biological drive in *Tine*'s characters can be interpreted as the natural desire to provoke and incite war. Secher's analysis of *Tine* also points to the national liberals' fault for wanting war with Prussia. As feasible as his argument is, Secher seems to completely divorce the national liberals from the Danish organism as a whole, thus

regarding the national liberals as a force that lies outside the Danish realm, as if they do not belong to the Danish people. This reinforces his further statement that in *Tine* “der betones personernes individuelle uskyld, og ansvaret lægges fuldt og helt på krigen” [there is emphasis on people’s individual innocence, and the responsibility falls entirely on the war] (Secher 223). The war is, however, triggered and strongly encouraged by the Danish national liberals, and further pursued by the submissive masses.

The Danes’ blind desire to start a war that they cannot win—mirrored in their unrestrained sexual desire, as shown above,—is depicted in the strong nationalism amongst the Danish characters of all classes in *Tine*’s second chapter. The society as a whole is represented in all its classes and ranks: from the farmer to the student, the surveyor, the postmaster, the curate, and from the doctor to the rural dean, the chamberlain, and the baron. Among them, ardent speeches are held and memories of the previous victory are revived. Bang criticizes his own people from top to bottom for what they are and what they become in the name of nationalism. In light of the battle at Dannevirke, from which destruction will come that same night, he depicts his landsmen’s nationalism as madness and foolishness. When the dean speaks of the Danes’ courage and Denmark’s certain victory, arousing everyone in the room, the scene turns into a circus performance: “De raabte alle Bravo og ‘Hør’ og hede Ord, som ingen forstod, mens de saa paa ham med aabnede Munde” (*Tine* 50). [“Everyone shouted ‘Bravo’ and ‘Hear, hear’ and fiery words which made no sense, while they stared at him open-mouthed” (*Tina* 45)]. And soon afterwards, as the baron speaks of war as a trial that strengthens Denmark’s self-respect, the audience becomes wild:

Kun Kammerherren og Provsten hørte mer; de andre gik
op og ned, rød-blissede, afbrydende, med hinanden om
Halsen, talende i Munden paa hverandre, om tusind

Ting, Hæren, Generalerne, Tysken; og – pludselig
skældte de Kongen, Kong Kristian.
– For han har ikke Danskens Hjerter i sit Bryst. (*Tine* 50)

[Only the Privy Councillor and the Dean heard the rest
of the speech; the others walked up and down, red in the
face, their arms round each other's necks, interrupting
each other and talking all at once about a thousand
things, the army, the generals, the Germans – and
suddenly they started accusing the new king, King
Christian: 'His heart is not truly Danish.' (*Tina* 47)]

The scene contains some powerful speeches delivered by the dean, the baron and the student, the latter representing the intellectual movement of Scandinavianism, enthusiastically supported by the Danish liberals.

The irony of their articulated nationalism is that the scene itself unveils the delusionary and unstable character of their nationalism. Student Klint begins his claim for hope with a nationalist speech, which he starts incoherently. In the process, he admits how nationalism, although an illusion for them all, nourishes their dreams:

Ja, og sig nu ikke – og utaalmodig bevægede han sin
Haand gennem Luften – at der er syner, som er bristet –
de kan vel blive Sandhed endnu ... Men selv, mine
Herrer, om det var Illusioner, de Illusioner har mættet os
og de har været vort Brød ... (*Tine* 51)

['Do not say that these visions have failed,' – he made
an impatient gesture with his hand – 'for they may yet
prove true. But, gentlemen, even if they were only
illusions, it is those illusions that have sustained us and
been our bread.' (*Tina* 48)]⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Bang returns to Denmark's critical state caused by its people's illusions when he starts writing his next novel "Den sidste Dansker" [The Last Dane], which he never finishes: "Vi er Illusionernes Folk og vi vil ikke miste dem, vore danske Illusioner" [We are the people of illusions and we do not want to lose them, our Danish illusions]. In "Den sidste Dansker" the author intends to point at Danes' imperialistic dreams and their difficulty in learning how little they are. Bang informs the newspaper *Politiken* in July 1889 about this new work. Already in August, the Copenhagen's and Göteborg's newspaper *Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* publish a summary of Bang's forthcoming book. Bang postpones his deadlines for completing the novel. Nilsson explains that this has to do with the author's depression at this time. With time, Bang changes his attitude about Denmark's military defense and the subject he intends to narrate in "Den sidste Dansker" is no longer relevant. For further details on this unpublished work, see Torbjörn Nilsson (271-274). The manuscript can also be found in form of fragmented texts in The Royal Library of Copenhagen.

The significance of such fervent and dangerous speeches is, however, called into question and its meaning destabilized, for almost every speech, held while standing on top of a chair, is interrupted by wild, noisy, and senseless reactions. The festive guests are quite confused and do not always understand what is being communicated. Distracted and unreservedly intoxicated, they drink glass after glass – “de skulde vel ogsaa drikke for deres Brødre ved Dannevirke” (*Tine* 51) [“they too, after all, ought to drink to their brothers at the Danevirke” (*Tina* 47)]. Language is heavily problematized in the characters’ ardent speech, which proves to be futile to the audience.

Moreover, the very same speech that inflames the guests leaves the speakers themselves entirely speechless in the end. Klint, for example, becomes incapable of further speech and his last words choke in his throat (*Tine* 52). And a little earlier, after a provoking sermon about the battle at Dannevirke as definitive to the nation’s awakening, the dean can no longer speak: “Han taug” (*Tine* 50) [“He fell silent” (*Tina* 46)]. To further point to the shortcomings in language, the chamberlain lacks inspiration and cannot really say anything. Instead, he merely praises the other speakers “med en Stemme, der var svagt snøvlende” (*Tine* 50) [“in a faintly nasal tone” (*Tina* 46)]. The narrator’s irony presented through and with language, especially in this part of the narration, lies in its powerful dual role as both problematic in its content and in its very own communicator.

Language is further problematized in this chapter in the character of *Tine*’s father, the schoolmaster, whose profession as an educator of the masses stands for society as a whole. He brings the news about Dannevirke’s doomed fall. In the midst of the guests’ festivities at the baron’s, the breaking news about the evacuation of the soldiers from the position of Dannevirke, silences the crowd momentarily. In fact,

Bølling is already almost speechless, as he enters the room, and he can hardly articulate the tragic information he passes on in a telegram. The dean's spoken words, as he questions him, determine Bølling's fate for the rest of the narrative. "Er De gal? er De gal? [...] Men Degnen hørte ikke; han vidste kun en Sætning, som han lallede, to gange, som en Mand, der har faaet et Slagtilfælde, eller som en Idiot" (*Tine* 53) ["Are you mad? Are you mad? ... But the schoolmaster did not hear; he was capable of one sentence only, which he mumbled twice over, like an idiot or a man suffering from a stroke" (*Tina* 50)]. The narrator's and the dean's performative language determine Bølling's madness and his speech impairment. The rest of the narrative will time and again point at Bølling's mental illness, a condition already disseminated in chapter two. The impotence of the characters' language is crucial for the baron's guests, who clearly embrace the national liberals' politics, and for every speaking character who is just as responsible for the tragic development of events.

The narrator criticizes every character and he labels them as inadequate both in their physical appearance and behavior. Physical deformation is one feature that denotes this inadequacy among his countrymen. The one-armed baron Staub has lost his arm "ved Vaadeskud" (*Tine* 23) [because of an accidental shot] (*Tina* 10), and the student Frederick Klint is rejected for military service because he lost a finger "ved Skydeøvelse i en Skytteforening" (*Tine* 47) ["in a rifle-club practice" (*Tina* 42)]. Both the baron and the student exemplify the narrator's ironic depiction of Danish nationalists. Their corporeal defects that do not result from fighting in war are a mockery of their political agenda that irrationally encourages warfare. The chamberlain with a little body and dwarf-like face (*Tine* 55) and the postmaster from Augustenborg with crooked fingers (*Tine* 53) buttress the narrator's critical account of his Danish compatriots. The irony begins already in chapter one when Berg and Tine

talk about the scary cripple who spreads fear. Thatcher Anders's brother, whose legs were shot in the last Schleswig-war (*Tine* 23)—that same war won by Denmark—anticipates the distorted fate for the eager Danes who, by proclaiming war, show that they have already forgotten what that means and what consequences war brings.

The narrator's criticism extends beyond characters who clearly represent Denmark's national liberals. Others from the masses are attacked for their dubious behavior. The maids both at the commissioner's house and at the inn (at Mrs. Henrichsen's) are time and again depicted as clumsy, lazy, and useless. Sofie, reported to have a continuous headache five days of the week, does not do much work around the house: "Hun stod mest og saa til, med Hænderne under sit Forklæde" (*Tine* 42) ["Most of the time she just stood and watched the others, with her hands under her apron" (*Tina* 35)]. The commissioner's wife, Mrs. Berg, is depicted as an irresponsible mother and housekeeper. Her simple-minded and helpless character, always giggling, laughing, and telling funny stories, is inept to do anything, with the excuse that she is a town girl. Naïve and irresponsible, her status as a housekeeper is often at stake. The narrator pronounces this remark with the defining extra information given in quotes when Mrs. Berg's preparation of the choux pastry goes wrong: "der var mer end Vandkringler, som 'altid mislykkedes' for Fru Berg" (*Tine* 39) [Other things besides choux pastry 'always went wrong' for Mrs Berg" (*Tina* 31)]. Secher's interpretation of Mrs. Berg is quite exaggerated when he places her on a pedestal and regards her as an *idealitetsinstans* [idealized instance] (234), and an "ideal, guddommelig instans" [ideal, godly illustration] that reflects Bang's own mother-binding relationship (244). Mrs. Berg is merely a representative of a clearly deficient and careless housekeeping, from which direct consequences are expected to follow quite logically. As if underlining and scolding the particular aspect of laziness,

Lieutenant Løvenhjem, later followed by others, sings repeatedly: “Og hvem der nu i Sengen laa, / naaede knap at faa Buxer paa, / men hvem der stod og sov – Hurra! / Frelste sit Liv og sit Tøj endda. (*Tine* 88, 91). [“Those who lay in their beds till late / Shared the same calamitous fate, / But those who slept on their feet – hooray, / No one saw’ em in their negligee” (*Tina* 93, 97)]. The beginning and the advance of war result as a direct and logical outcome of careless and irresponsible workers and housekeepers, incapable of fulfilling their duties.

Tine unveils the inner danger that does not merely originate from the core of the Danish society, but also fiercely spreads in form of the press industry. One particular character, the one-armed baron Staub, must at all times be informed about the current events, as he gathers and communicates further the reports on the war. He appears to be one of the few people fully aware of the latest happenings.⁵¹ Particularly the baron carries the serious mission of delivering information, after he polishes and adjusts it, as he sees it fit.

The threat lies in the disinformation of the news the baron carries. When he gives the Danish correspondent, who has come to write a report on the war, an account of two Englishmen’s visit on the island, his information is profoundly misleading. The two solemn Englishmen, who coincidentally visit Als “for ‘at se på Krigen” (*Tine* 65) [“to have a look at the war”] (*Tina* 65), are perceived by the baron as admiring heroes who represent Europe’s assistance to Denmark. Moved by their sympathy for the Danes, the baron reports on their behalf: “de siger: *vore* Tropper – de taler om: *vore* Saarede, som var det deres egne, kære Ven, deres egne *Landsmænd*” (*Tine* 65) [“They say ‘our troops’ and talk about ‘our wounded’, as if

⁵¹ In chapter two, when nationalism is depicted at its peak in terms of madness in every single character present, the baron along with the privy chancellor and the rural dean, as society’s elite, are the only ones who stand in the middle of the house, the only ones who do not reminisce about the past, but talk about the present instead.

they were their own men, my dear fellow, their own compatriots” (*Tina* 65)].

Encouraging the reporter to make use of this appealing piece of information in his report, the baron insists:

Og De kan rolig nævne dem i Deres Avis, sagde
Baronen, De kan rolig nævne Dem, min Herre, de vil
intet have imod det, vedblev Baronen, som var det en
kongelig Indrømmelse af de Skindklædte, at de maatte
nævnes i en Avis. (*Tine* 66)

[And you’re at liberty to mention them in your paper,
you’re free to mention them; they’ll have no objection,
he continued, with an air of royal condescension on
behalf of the two leather-garbed gentlemen who were so
willing to be mentioned. (*Tina* 66)]

As the baron feeds such misleading news on England’s help, the conviction that Denmark is not alone in its war against Prussia becomes solid. At the time when Dybbøl is about to fall and Als is bombarded, the dean assures with a commanding voice that “Europa vil ikke se derpaa. Maalet er fuldt. Det er Draaben – det er Draaben – Europa vil rejse sig” (*Tine* 76) [“Europe will not look on passively. Her patience is exhausted. This is the last straw – the last straw... Europe will rise up in resistance” (*Tina* 78)]. The baron shows a quite exaggerated sympathy for his visiting outsiders from England, for whom he seems even more excited than for his own Danish compatriots who actually fight in the battlefield. Overjoyed and with an air of pride because of his acquaintances, the baron is beside himself: “Han var i Ekstase, i ren Ekstase over sine Englændere” (*Tine* 76) [“He was in perfect ecstasy over his Englishmen” (*Tina* 78)]. With the baron’s character, Bang completes the picture of the national liberals and their disruptive compulsion for war. Despite the grand hope for assistance from outside, and led by such madness, Denmark is left to carry alone the war that it itself provokes against Prussia.

A distorted press, carried by operational actors such as the baron in *Tine*, is the fundamental medium that makes this war possible. The baron keeps up with the news, feeds the media, and stands for gathering and delivering information. His very name, however—*Staub*—(“dust” from German), casts light on his concealing function to cover up information. Time and again, the baron polishes and adjusts his accounts, despite their lack of truth. By these manipulating means, he also controls their content and delivery, showing the profoundly fictitious quality of news, which crucially determines the explosion of war. Benedict Anderson’s theory on the fundamental role of the press (along with the novel) in quickly spreading nationalism during the nineteenth century finds application in *Tine*. Anderson views the consumption of the newspaper as that of fiction, thus drawing attention to this customary consumption as people’s ongoing imagining of their community, visibly rooted in their everyday life (35). The Danish newspaper *Dagbladet* is read word for word in two occasions in the novel, as Harry Jacobsen justly observes (*Studier* 85). The fabrication of news in the newspaper becomes even clearer when Bang inserts a scene in his original edition of *Tine*: “Et Par Korrespondenter, der var kommet i et Køretøj, gik rundt og søgte ‘virkelige Oplysninger’ fra Stue til Stue, hvor de stod foran de faamælte Officerer som komplaisante Jøder, der vimser for Handel” [A couple of correspondents, who had come in a carriage, ran around and sought “real information” from room to room, where they stood in front of the taciturn officers like complaisant Jews who rush around for trade (“Korrektur” 128)]. The value of news, which is exchanged and profited in this unserious market, is highly questionable.

Bang intentionally uses *Tine* to further point to the responsibility of the press and its dangerous function in society. In an article in 1890, he earnestly blames the deception of the press that leads people to disaster:

Under mine Forstudier til “Tine” og nu til den Roman,
 som skulde følge efter den, har jeg set det med Angst,
 hvorledes Nationalliberalismens Presse Morgon paa
 Morgon knyttede og dannede det Net af Fordomme,
 Illusioner, Begrebsforvirring, Københavneri—som, da
 Dagen kom, slæbt vort Land til Dannevirke. Denne
 Presse [...] som selvglad svælgede i sine egne
 Fordomme, og som forherligede sin egen Uvidenhed i et
 bestandigt ”*Laissez-aller*”. Det var først og fremmest
 den, som ledte Landet vild.
 (qtd. in Nilsson 232-3)

[During my preliminary research for *Tine*, and now for
 the following novel,⁵² I have seen with fear, how the
 national liberalism’s press unified and constructed day
 by day that net of prejudice, illusions, confusion of
 concepts, *Copenhagerie*—which dragged our land to
 Dannevirke, when the day came. This self-satisfied
 press ... that fell for its own bias and glorified its own
 ignorance in a perpetual *laissez-aller*. It was first of all
 this press that misled the country.]

To highlight the significant function of the press, Bang already depicts in the first pages of the novel the great effect it causes on the main female character: “Det var en af Tines Fester, naar Skovridderen læste højt, af Aviserne, naar de kom, Onsdag og Lørdag Aften” (*Tine* 24) [“It was one of Tine’s great treats when Berg read aloud the Copenhagen papers when they arrived on Wednesday and Saturday evenings” (*Tina* 11)]. The unifying role of the newspapers is to be further seen in chapter two when the dean takes on an authoritarian air and reads the news in front of the crowd. The baron’s and the dean’s flaming speeches follow only naturally in the heat that the newspapers so hazardously activate among the guests.

The inner danger in *Tine* results in the foundation of nationalism, which is zealously embraced and encouraged by the characters. The nation’s threat is represented in the characters’ problematic and inevitable desire, their deformed language and appearance, their irresponsibility as well as in their misleading

⁵² Here, Bang most probably refers to the unfinished and unpublished work “Den sidste Dansker” [The Last Dane], which is meant to take shape as a novel and follow right after *Tine*. Bang never finishes writing this novel.

communication illustrated by the press. By examining Danish nationalism as the nation's internal force that drags the nation to its decline, Bang advocates for a Danish national consciousness that is grounded on the Danes' remembrance of their past and their own recognition in the present.

VII. Bang's Appeal for Danish Remembrance and Recognition

As the loss of the war in 1864 amputates Schleswig and Holstein from Denmark and leaves the nation paralyzed for the remainder of the nineteenth century, Bang recognizes the urgency to stimulate a Danish identity that builds on commemorating the nation's loss and recognizing the nation's potential to progress. Denmark's gloomy state after the war is an organic continuation of its disadvantaged situation at the beginning of the nineteenth century. At that time, the small Scandinavian country is condescendingly regarded by most Germans as part of Germany, and as Herder even states in his time, Copenhagen is nothing more than "das dänische Ende Deutschlands" (Rühling 66-7). Pointing at the nation's lack of influence in the international arena, Brandes calls Denmark "dette Lilliput-Land" [this Lilliputian country] (16) and further coins the frequently-used phrase about Denmark as "der Blinddarm Europas" (Lauterbach 35). The nation's endangered status finds expression in the phrase "le Danemark s'efface" [Denmark is being wiped out], so often heard in the streets of Paris in the 1870s and which Brandes intentionally uses to remind Danish intellectuals of their nation's threatened existence (16).⁵³ The anger

⁵³ Brandes explains in his lecture: "Le Danemark s'efface betyder: Danmark udviskes, svinder hen, gaar ud af Sagaen. Danmark bliver i Kulisserne, kommer ikke ind paa Skuepladsen mere, eller snubler over sine Ben, naar det kommer og gaar" [*Le Danemark s'efface* means that Denmark is being wiped out, fades away, is out of the running. Denmark stays in the wings, it no longer enters the scene, or it stumbles over its own legs when it comes and goes] (16-17). On Brandes's *kulturkamp*, see Allen's article "Kampen mod 'Le Danemark s'efface': Georg Brandes' forsøg på at markedsføre Danmark som 'Kulturnation' i tysk litteratur omkring århundredskiftet." *Georg Brandes og Europa*. Ed. Olav Harsløf. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 2004. 319-327.

towards Germany and its colonizing power gives way to a Danish national identity, ultimately hostile to Germany. This is a time when Denmark, blinded by its inward nationalism that excludes possibilities from the outside, risks losing ground again and proceeds without responsibility, leading to yet another national loss. In such conditions, Herman Bang perceives with fear his people's willful stubbornness and expresses with *Tine* his critique of Denmark's own commemoration of the past as it was, and its current recognition as an independent and still fertile nation, capable of progress. In the novel at hand, the author shows how the nation's development is still possible despite the losses that result from the Danish nationalism. Narrating *Tine* as a tribute to the national defeat due to nationalism, Bang also narrates the birth of a new subject, whose national identity is constructed on the grounds of that same destructive nationalism.

Tine revolves around the necessity of remembering and being remembered, and furthermore, the tragedy of forgetting and being forgotten. In the novel, memory functions as the imperative means to construct and stabilize national identity. A number of strong women characters are conceived by the memory of loss, and the main figure, Tine, is narrated as an independent subject that tries to regain the past through memories. Furthermore, *Tine*, beyond a mere criticism of Denmark's excessive nationalism, calls for a sensible recognition of itself as a national narrative. When Ernest Renan contends that forgetting is a historical error, he also regards that error as a crucial factor in the creation of the nation, due to its unifying effect, for "the essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common, and also that they have forgotten many things" (11).⁵⁴ Pursuing Renan's thought, Homi Bhabha

⁵⁴ Renan continues by referring to the case of France where "no French citizen knows whether he is a Burgundian, an Alan, a Taifale, or a Visigoth, yet every French citizen has to have forgotten the massacre of Saint Bartholomew, or the massacres that took place in the Midi in the thirteenth century" (11).

maintains that it is precisely this forgetting that constitutes the beginning of a nation's narrative ("DessemiNation" 310). And furthermore, "being obliged to forget becomes the basis for remembering the nation, peopling it anew, imagining the possibility of other contending and liberating forms of cultural identification" ("DissemiNation" 311). It is, however, against this forgetting that the novel *Tine* struggles from its beginning to its end, for its author generates his work precisely because of the danger posed by people's irresponsible forgetfulness. And yet, with the theme of forgetting, the author finally recognizes the possibility for new beginnings. The obligation to forget, as Bhabha suggests, in the form of selective memory establishes the right conditions for people to overcome past tragedies and create space for new paradigms. What Herman Bang achieves with *Tine* is a rightful condemnation of forgetfulness and the promotion of his nation's recognition in the name of this very condition of forgetting.

The novel becomes Herman Bang's means to commemorate the Danish national catastrophe of 1864 in the right spirit. Afraid of the possibility of a new tragic war encouraged by the politics of Danish militarism at his time, Bang recalls and retells history to warn his people and defy their possibly imprudent actions. It seems to Bang that Denmark has already forgotten its immense losses in 1864. This is why remembering the past becomes the author's crucial drive with the novel. Even before its narrative begins, already in the novel's preface, Bang clearly states the purpose of his opus, which he dedicates to his mother. Here Bang recalls the unforgettable past with her and her solemn request to inscribe her name on one of his books in the future. "Naar jeg nu er død og du min Dreng, en Gang er bleven en Kunstner, vil du saa se, love mig saa at se til, at de ikke – helt glemmer mig?" (*Tine* 9) ["When I am dead and you, my boy, have one day become a writer, will you promise, will you

promise me to see that they don't – completely forget me?" (*Tine* vii)]. *Tine* is brought to life through the author's memories of his childhood and his mother. It is a desperate cry to keep the faculty of memory at work. Despite the novel's beginning in the present when Mrs. Berg and her son Herluf depart from their home, the narrative struggles with both retaining memories of the past and with the difficulty of continuing in the present. The first pages, although very fragmentally, attempt to establish an idyllic past, which both the narrator and the characters persist in vain to keep as vivid as possible.

The first chapter resists the transition from past to present, and it discloses the challenge of anchoring the story in a present that is not interrupted by memories. After Mrs. Berg's departure, *Tine* cannot look at the bare spots on the wall, from which the Berg family portraits are taken down. She covers the emptiness by first hanging three paintings—King Frederick, The Battle of Isted, and Fredericia (*Tine* 21)—all of which are a genuine reminder of Denmark's victorious past. The fourth portrait is that of the current King Christian in the uniform of the Horse Guards, as heir to the throne. *Tine* places the latter underneath the deceased King Frederick, underscoring its lower standing, and thus the difficulty of letting the present, represented by King Christian, dominate the wall.

The past in chapter one is reconstructed by *Tine*'s memories revolving around the happy time when loud national songs about Denmark are heard from the school, when she innocently reproduces ballads in her blue book, when she remembers every word from Berg's love letters to his wife, and when she enjoys with tears in her eyes being read the tragedies of the Danish romantics Oehlenschläger and

Paludan-Müller.⁵⁵ By constructing an idyllic setting as such on his home island of Als, where the best memories of his life are rooted, Bang evokes a desire to regain that past. Memories seem to allow him to recapture that lost past. In *Tine*'s preface, Bang introduces a forceful vocabulary regarding his own memories that compel him to write the novel. Alluding to an imagery of war, he proclaims:

Og siden har disse Minder ikke villet forlade mig. De har hidkaldt fler. De har *væbnet sig* med selve Livets Tydelighed og *Magt*. Og som de første Gang pludselig *brød frem* fra Lag i Erindringen, som Bevidstheden ikke kendte, saaledes har de ogsaa inde i Egne af mit Sind, hvis Liv er mig dunkelt, langsomt, men alt sikrere samlet sig uimodstaaelig just til et Billede af det tabte og hærgede Hjem.
(*Tine* 12-13, *my emphasis*)

[Since then these memories have refused to leave me. They have called up more of their kind, and they have *armed themselves* with the clarity and *power* of life itself. And just as at first they suddenly *broke through* from layers of memory unknown to the conscious mind, so in regions of my psyche whose life is obscure to me they have slowly but more and more surely and irresistibly assembled into a picture of the lost home in disarray. (*Tine* 179)]

And a little bit earlier phrases like *Tvekamp*, [battle], *Minderne ... brød frem* [memories ... came to the fore], and *jeg erobrede* [I recaptured/seized] extend the image of combat for recognition. In this combat, Bang and his narrator join forces as one, for they both narrate their lost past. These childhood memories of the war in 1864 determine Bang's adult life and his productivity, which revolves around the loss of his home.

⁵⁵ Here, the illusionary atmosphere, in which the characters are wrapped, is emphasized by the narrator's reference to the Romantic writers. Particularly the poet Paludan-Müller zealously and with great courage expresses his nationalistic attitude towards Denmark's enemy, encouraging his people to prepare for revenge. With his poem "Maalet" – "Brat af Slaget rammet" [The goal—Suddenly struck by war], which appears on 13 November 1864 in the newspaper *Illustreret Tidende*, he wishes for a return of Schleswig to Denmark. Hence the lines: "Slesvigs Land gjenvundet! / Det er Kampens Maal!" [The land of Schleswig again won! / This is the fight's goal!] (qtd. in Flemming, "Danskhed i krige og kriser" 150).

In the attempt to narrate what Denmark and the author tragically lose at this time, *Tine* also preserves the past. Tine's desolation in the end by Berg's side, when he lies on the verge of death, is much more rooted in her awareness of being forgotten than in her shameful affair or in Berg's death: "Hendes Liv var kun et Haab: at han vilde kende hende igen" (*Tine* 141) ["Her life centred on one hope: that he would recognize her" (*Tina* 158)]. When Berg recognizes the dogs but cannot recall Tine—a scene that ranks Tine lower than the animals—her suicide becomes definitive:

Tine Tine rørte sig ikke. En Time sad hun. Hun ventede,
han skulde nævne hendes Navn – blot i en Forbandelse,
der aabenbarede hendes Skændsel. Men han huskede
hende ikke mere (*Tine* 141)

[Tina did not stir. For a whole hour she sat by him,
waiting for him to say her name, if only in execration,
revealing her shame. But he no longer remembered her.
(*Tina* 159)]

Tine's death becomes analogous to the political suicide of Denmark at the time when the latter tenaciously provokes Prussia to start a war. Peer E. Sørensen correctly regards *Tine* as a novel about loss—loss of national territory, national feeling, loss of home and identity (*Temperament* 255). And yet, it is this loss that determines Denmark's accomplishment in being recognized as a nation that must now learn to function as a small dominion within its own confines. "I skulde lære den vanskelige kunst at være smaa" [You should learn the difficult art of being small], is the line of argument spoken by the character of Sundt⁵⁶ in Bang's previous novel *Stuk*, published in 1887 (232). With this phrase, Bang attempts to remind his Danish compatriots that the present cannot contain the bombastic and misleading illusions of the past. While the war progresses and fails in the name of nationalism, it is also by means of that same nationalism that Denmark can genuinely learn its lesson. For Bang,

⁵⁶ Note that the character's name *Sundt* is translated as "healthy," clearly referring to a speaking healthy logic in the narrative.

commemorating and recognizing the danger and failure of nationalism renders a victory in itself.

Tine provides this reading of victory, which is, however, subjected to and made possible through sacrifice. Bang's intention with *Tine* to hinder Denmark from starting another war is explicit from the beginning. In a letter to Nansen on 23 January 1889, he explains that he would give his life for this book, if it could only give "dette stakkels Land en Lære" [this poor country a lesson (qtd. in Nilsson 225)]. While the author does not give his own life, he does, indeed, sacrifice the protagonist's life for this purpose within the novel. Tine's death takes on a sacrificial form in the end of the narrative. In fact, Tine's whole existence becomes a sacrifice even when she is alive: "hun, der havde givet alt og hvem alt var berøvet" (*Tine* 122) ["she who had given all and lost all" (*Tina* 136)]. Tine's destiny must be, however, understood in the context of the discussion at hand.

Although her death may be perceived more tragically than Berg's, Tine reclaims a crucial victory in the liberating space that death allows her, for she transgresses as a new paradigm and slips into Christ's role.⁵⁷ When the sympathetic figure of the bishop⁵⁸ grants her forgiveness, the religious hymn about the sacrificial lamb is heard from the church. "Men for hele Verdens Brøde / Den Uskyldige maa bløde" (*Tine* 153) ["One without guilt must suffer death / For the sins of all mankind" (*Tina* 173)].⁵⁹ The biblical reference clearly signals Tine's tragedy as a result of the

⁵⁷ While the Danish name "Tine" is used as a complete name in itself and not as an abbreviated form, one could argue that it derives from the name "Christine," thus relating Tine more directly to her Christ-like function.

⁵⁸ The bishop is portrayed by the narrator quite positively throughout the novel. However, he still stands as a representative of the church, whose indifference regarding life's principles is often problematized in Bang's authorship (Heede 231). Heede regards the last instance of the book when the bishop does not recognize the midwife, Mrs. Esbensen, as an illustrating example of religion's blindness (231-2).

⁵⁹ The biblical song, which is originally written by Grundtvig in 1858, contains two more stanzas. Mortensen discovers that Bang quotes only the first and the third, but skips over the third and fourth,

unjust actions of the Danish nationalist regime. Yet, her death becomes determinant for the nation's destiny. In order to perceive Tine's subject formation in the narrative, one must keep in mind Bang's demand for a psychological examination of the work. In the preface, Bang wishes to entice his reader; he wants to set into play the reader's ability as a psychologist, for only so "maaske vilde man saaledes faa mer et Vink, der tændte hastige og fjerne Lys inde i Sjælelivets Halvmørke" (*Tine* 13) ["this procedure might well throw up a few suggestions that might cast brief and scattered gleams of light into the semi-darkness of the soul" (*Tina* 179)]. The human subject composed by its soul and behavior is at the core of Bang's authorship.

The novel's main character, Tine, is narrated as a subject that emerges from the dynamic of the author's memories that call for his nation's commemoration of its past losses. With Tine in the title and in the center of the novel, Bang places her as a subject in the heart of the narrative and its undertaking. Her suicide does not indicate Tine's destruction as a subject. In her theoretical study, Meyda Yeğenoğlu warns against misunderstanding the subject's death as such: "the well-celebrated gesture of the 'death of the subject' or the 'decentring of the subject' does not imply its final annihilation" (3). It is namely in her suicidal act that Tine is ultimately recognized, legitimized, and even forgiven for exceeding moral norms because of her sexuality and her actions. Tine's marginalized figure becomes central, for it ultimately rises as a subject that signals its own recognition through her female agency. After all, when Tine recognizes both Berg's desire for her, as well as his indifference towards her, she clearly and determinedly acts upon this recognition. She must not be mistaken as a mere product of the society's conditions and people, for she decides on her own for her actions and destiny. It is an essential detail that Tine dies in the pond, which is on

and that he modifies the word *påskelammet* [Easter lamb] in the original to *offerlammet* [sacrificial lamb] in *Tine* (64).

the commissioner's property, whereas Berg himself takes his last breath in a distant territory, away from home, somewhere between the towns of Ulkebøl and Augustenborg. The return to Berg's home and the committing of suicide in his waters give Tine the power to colonize his space that all along has preserved her happy memories. With Tine, who rises as an autonomous subject in the confines of her death, the novel appeals to Denmark's recognition as a self-ruling nation despite and due to the tragic failure of nationalism.

Memory in *Tine* functions to construct and stabilize national identity by means of a genuine appeal for Denmark's remembrance and recognition of its past. There is one particular character whose very name compellingly articulates such an appeal. The young lieutenant Appel takes very little space in the novel, but his presence and destiny are indispensable. Appel has never fought in a war before and fears battle. He is a melancholic and tragic type who constantly reminisces about the happy time in his hometown Viborg. Bang's biographer, Harry Jacobsen, recognizes in Appel's character a meaningful person for the author, namely Max Eisfeld, Bang's lover and cohabiter in Prague during 1886 (*Resignation* 137-8).⁶⁰ Dag Heede traces the frequent appearance of such a pale young man in a number of Bang's productions—fiction, essays, and journalistic articles—and regards him as the means by which the author intentionally accentuates a moral matter or adds a particularly sentimental dimension to the text (127-129). Such implications regarding Appel buttress the fact that his sympathetically constructed character serves as a genuine memory of an innocent and happy past before the war. However, his very name, meaning literally “appeal” in both Danish and German—anchored in the author's

⁶⁰ Max Eisfeld was his name as performer, by which he was most known. His real name was Max Appel (Secher 216). For further details on Max Eisfeld, see Raimund Wolfert's article “Max Eisfeld – Die große Liebe Herman Bangs.” *Forum Homosexualität und Literatur* 33 (1998): 5-42.

reality and pursued further in his narrative—contains the rhetorical function of the novel's genuine appeal for remembrance and recognition in the present. His death underlines this commemorating function even more forcefully.

Appel's significance, as both loss and remembrance of the past, extends even further to his mother who, referred to by the same name, also bears the memory of this loss in her continuing life. In the presence and company of Mrs. Appel, the purpose of narration is fully carried out as an effective appeal. She appears from the beginning and maintains her poise as a godly figure, triumphing over the narrative by steering forward the bishop, religion's representative. As she drives out of the text, dressed in mourning, she is a manifestation of a tragic but continuing life: "Foran ham kørte Fru Appel. Hun sad alene paa et underligt, højt Køretøj, mens Vinden tog i hendes lange Slør og løftede det højt – op over Vejen" (*Tine* 154) ["In front of him (the bishop) was Mrs. Appel, sitting alone in a curious, high carriage. The wind caught her long veil and lifted it high, so that it fluttered out over the road" (*Tina* 174)]. Mrs. Appel's veil, as a sign that creates a unifying aura of femininity, dominates the road at the end of the narrative and it triumphs over the text, which she is about to leave. Memory and forgetting are two crucial parts of the dichotomy that creates the new Danish national identity; however, they become substantial and effective only when they are carried further. This is secured by the function of the woman figure that often embodies characteristics of the mother. Mrs. Appel is clearly one of these figures. The following section shows that other female characters prove to be instrumental and take on the role of the mother for the purpose of bearing a stable national identity after the war. Besides Mrs. Appel, Mrs. Esbensen and Tine exclusively bear the essence of motherhood as female representations. As such, they

leave the narrative victoriously promising a way out of national desolation into the productive realm of the new Danish identity.

VIII. Fathers' Legacy to Mothers: The Female Realm of National Identity

In this section, I focus on various female characters to identify the function of woman in Bang's critique: women represent a meaningful and optimistic solution despite and in light of Denmark's castration after the war. With nationalism as an occurrence encouraged by male characters, Bang suggests a new national identity that makes women figures its primary constructors. With this in mind, I offer a new reading of *Tine* by interpreting it as a productive narrative that releases a national optimism in terms of both theme and form. First, thematically, while examining Bang's general construction of the woman figure, I draw attention to the mother figure, as one particular facet of the female subject that provides the fertile ground of the novel. Second, *Tine*'s Impressionist form, as Bang so well explains in the preface, perpetually captures moments and visions. This form continually releases life in pictures and it never signals any stops in the process, despite the occurrences of death. Thus, Bang bases his optimism for a national solution on women's potential to construct and stabilize a new Danish identity, emerging from the ruins of the misguided nationalism that has previously defined his fatherland.

Bang's concern with the figure and function of woman is subject to enticing and, at times, also conflicting discussions in the current scholarship on the author.⁶¹ Despite the fact that women do not dominate his personal life, Bang recognizes their significance and gives them space in his writing. A number of his substantial works (besides *Tine*)—*Irene Holm*, *Hendes Højhed* [Her Highness], *Fædra*, *Ellen Urne*,

⁶¹ See particularly the discussions provided by Annegret Heitmann, Heinrich Detering, Claudia Gremler, and Dag Heede. Some of their outstanding arguments are also incorporated into this section.

Frøken Caja [Miss Caja]—whose titles already contain a woman’s name or status, strongly prove Bang’s interest in the woman figure. Other works as well, such as *Ludwigsbakke* [Ludwigsrise]⁶² and *Ved Vejen* [By the Road], deal primarily with female characters and bring their fate to the fore. In Bang scholarship, the literary composition of woman is completed through various, often contradictory, arguments on the author’s thoughts on the subject. Annegret Heitmann, for example, generalizes all Bang’s female characters as tender beings and sums up: “Die weiblichen Hauptpersonen verkörpern Fürsorglichkeit, Mitmenschlichkeit, Frieden, Güte – das dänische Wort ‘ømhed’⁶³ trifft ihre Eigenschaften am besten” (152-3). Pål Bjørby, with a more scrutinizing focus on the author’s homosexuality and its historical context, maintains that Bang’s depiction of diverse women, based on social observations, often “follows in the solid tradition of clichéd female representation” (241). Furthermore, Bang does not work against the social stereotypes and he “preserves a conventional male and female nature as a faithful representation of reality” (Bjørby 248).

While some scholars, such as Harry Jacobsen and Villy Sørensen, refuse to see Bang’s female characters as women, and instead deem them veiled homosexual men, Heinrich Detering forcefully opposes such judgments and argues that “Bangs Frauengestalten [sind] alles andere als camouflierend verkleidete homosexuelle Männer” (*Geheimnis* 258). Following in Detering’s footsteps, Claudia Gremler recognizes woman’s functionality in the author’s work. However, in her lengthy study that examines Bang’s influence on Thomas Mann and creates interesting parallels between the two authors’ oeuvres, Gremler disagrees with Detering and contends that

⁶² A German translation by Marie Franzos in 1908 makes utterly visible in the title that the novel deals with a woman figure *Lugwigshöhe. Roman einer Krankenpflegerin* (Gremler 337).

⁶³ [tenderness]

beide Schriftsteller in mehreren ihrer Texte eine Instrumentalisierung der Frauengestalten vornehmen, eine Instrumentalisierung, die sich auf geschickte Weise tradierte Darstellungsmuster zunutze macht und sich dadurch tarnt. Diese Funktionalisierung von Frauenfiguren entfaltet sich, wie zu erwarten, besonders im Rahmen homoerotischer Camouflage. (259)

While it continues to be a challenge to understand Bang's views on women, it is clear that his own homosexuality provides him with the beneficial means to work on the subject of woman in an exciting fashion that allows him to operate on the border of genders. Despite the author's confession that his sexuality is a diseased condition, not fit for literature (Bjørby 246), it is by means of his homosexuality that he sets into motion a two-level plan by transgressing the limits of heterosexual representation and by being closer than heterosexual male authors to producing a genuine female ideal.⁶⁴

In his essay "Gedanken zum Sexualitätsproblem," Bang writes about his understanding of homosexuality and how it is reflected in his work. The author describes here the productive art of the homosexual male poet: "Er kann nach zwei Seiten das Seelenleben erforschen. Er bleibt Mann und fühlt doch mit der Seele einer Frau" (76). Especially concerned with depicting a particular group of women also known as *stille eksistenser* [silent lives],⁶⁵ Bang employs marginalized women figures in a sensitive fashion and identifies with their fate in society. There is, however, one exception that institutes another category of women in Bang's case, namely his mother, whom he idealizes since childhood, and with whom he has an eccentric relationship.

⁶⁴ This argument is in opposition with Annegret Heitmann's study. She reads in Bang's works (as well as in works by other male authors of *The Modern Breakthrough*) the contradiction between the author's intention to fight for women's rights and the intentionality of his text, so heavily influenced by the author's male awareness and his own position. "Wie bei allen hier behandelten männlichen Autoren reflektiert auch Bangs Frauenbild das männliche Bewusstsein, dem es in erster Linie um die Problematik der eigenen Rolle, der männlichen Situation, seiner historischen Situation geht" (Heitmann 156).

⁶⁵ This is also Bang's text collection with the same title *Stille Eksistenser* (1886).

Bang's relationship to his mother invites for further interesting case studies, for his written productivity is highly determined by this relationship. *Tine* hints, in particular, at Bang's experimentation with the female subject, which very often appears in the form of the figure of the mother. The preface to the novel—a work in miniature that can almost stand by itself, independent of the narrative—already draws attention to two other tragic women figures: Nina Hoëg and Katinka Bai, who originate in Bang's *Haabløse Slægter* and *Ved Vejen*, respectively. These women, conceived by the memory of loss, are to be unified in the image of the mourning mother:

Det er min Overbevisning, at den sortklædte Sørgende i Adserballig Stue – som en sortklædt Alabasterstatue saa jeg hende siden – er den første Moder til Nina Høeg og Katinka Bai. Det Indtryk har født deres stumme Sorg og deres Resignation. (*Tine* 11)

[It is my conviction that from the mourner in black⁶⁶ in the Asserballe drawing room – I saw her later as an alabaster statue dressed in black – grew Nina Hoëg and Katinka Bai. It was that early impression which produced their silent sorrow and their resignation. (*Tina* 177)]

Bang's memories—saturated by the loss of home and safety—appear time and again, as he claims, in the form of leitmotifs (*Ledemotiver*) in his work and generate a vital body of literature that is, however, not dictated by and reduced to the tragedy of loss. Bang's tremendous production is unthinkable without the recognition of this loss. In the center of Bang's memories that revolve around gloomy feelings of separation, abandonment, destruction, dissolution, and removal, stands his own mother, in whose name and memory *Tine* is born.

⁶⁶ The image of a mother in mourning reappears in Bang's short prose. See for example the story "En Moder" [A Mother] in *Romaner og Noveller* Bd. 9. *Noveller og Skitser. Avis- og tidsskriftstryk 1878-1886*. Ed. Sten Rasmussen. Copenhagen: Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab, 2010.

The mother image, with whose memories Bang associates his own loss, bears the author's desire to retrieve and reconstruct the lost mother. His efforts begin with the simplicity and generosity of the provincial Mrs. Bølling, continue with the naïveté and carelessness of the city woman, Mrs. Berg, and peak with the devoted and mysterious Mrs. Appel. Even Tine, who does not have biological children—at least not explicitly—is a mother figure. These mothers, who suffer loss and death each in their own way, give *Tine* a fertile quality that makes the narrative continue further, beyond the borders provided by the text.

Although there is no mention of a pregnancy in the text, Tine stands as an active motherly figure from beginning to end—by taking care of the young Herluf Berg and assisting his childish mother, by being in charge of the household, and by nursing tenderly the wounded soldiers from the battle. Dag Heede, even hints at Tine's potential pregnancy (185), buttressing further her representation as a mother figure.⁶⁷ Tine, as a possible mother figure, undergoes certain steps: from her construction within a narrative embedded in reality, to her loss in the textual suicide, and finally, to her own retrieval through forgiveness, commemoration and recognition as a subject of its own. It is not insignificant that Tine is identified by Mrs. Heinrichsen—yet another mother in the narrative—as “det grønne Træ” (*Tine* 149) [“the green tree” (*Tina* 169)], pointing at her strong nature and nurturing quality. Klaus P. Mortensen, who examines Bang's conscious use of colors, explains that the color green stands for growth, health, happiness, and free development (108). Tine incorporates to a great degree all of these characteristics, especially her healthy being, so proudly remarked on by her sick father. The biblical image of the green tree associated with her character further points to the three phases Tine undergoes: from

⁶⁷ Heede, however, does not substantiate this hint.

the beginnings in paradise—constructed from her own memories in the first chapter—to the fall from paradise—caused by the nationalistic war—to the return to paradise—provided by Tine’s emergence as a newly restored self through another mother figure, Mrs. Esbensen, who, always in motion, generates her female subject anew.

The midwife, Mrs. Esbensen, triumphantly expands the function of mother further. She appears with an energetic air three times in the novel. Within the text’s structure, her emergence transpires quite symmetrically. In his postscript to *Tine*, Villy Sørensen delineates the midwife’s significant appearances that designate her as an incarnation of eternal life and sexuality on earth: first, in the beginning, in the idyllic settings of the pre-war time (166); second, in the middle of the narrative, in the midst of the war’s misery and chaos when Mrs. Esbensen still succeeds in bursting through the blocked roads filled with mud, refugees, and wounded soldiers (166); and third, in the end, when she almost drives into the bishop’s carriage, as a dogmatic expression of the clash between spiritual and carnal life (166). Pointing further to the midwife’s highly allegorical figure that celebrates continuous life and sexuality, Heede regards Mrs. Esbensen’s carriage as the very medium that has the appropriate authority to conclude the text: “Det er denne driftsvogn, der i *Tine* synes at køre ud af teksten som den egentlige sejrherre. Jordmoderen Madame Esbensens vogn får det sidste ord i *Tine*” [It is this wheel of sexual desire that seems to drive out of the text as the actual victor. The carriage of the midwife, Mrs. Esbensen, has the last word in *Tine*] (231).⁶⁸ Mrs. Esbensen’s profession in itself indicates a very interesting notion of transplanting in the novel, when analyzed in the original language. The Danish word for “midwife” is *jordmoder*—a fusion of *jord* [earth] and *moder* [mother]. With

⁶⁸ The bishop speaks, in fact, the actual words in the end, shortly before the movement caused by the carriages’ motion: “Giv os at fatte dine Vidensbyrd” (*Tine* 153) [“Teach us to understand Thy testimonies” (*Tina* 173)]. The same words are repeated once again as a reminder at the very end of the narrative’s last page, almost as if outside and disconnected from the text.

her vigorous motion in, through, and out of the text, the midwife reinforces a conceiving and nurturing quality of the novel, despite and because of the loss manifested in Denmark's nationalistic war and its people's selective memory.

As a central mother figure, but not an actual mother herself in the text, the midwife establishes a direct connection to Tine by reflecting the quality of motherhood in her character. As a reaction to war and chaos caused by male characters and as a reflection of fostering mother figures such as Mrs. Esbensen and Mrs. Appel, Tine rises anew, as a reborn female subject. Tine also implies the quality of the mother. In fact, she is even connected to the origins of motherhood. Heinrich Detering, for example, refers to Tine, as “die neue Eva [...] gegen den alten Adam” (*Geheimnis* 283). In his discussion of Bang's last novel *De uden Fædreland*, Detering motivates his argument and states: “Aus der auch in diesem Roman wiederholten Ineinsetzung von aggressivem Nationalismus und patriarchalischer Ordnung ergibt sich diese soziale Neubestimmung als eine zugleich dezidiert feminine” (*Geheimnis* 283).⁶⁹ Bang's pursuit of the female subject, and even more specifically, of the category of the mother as a reaction to the patriarchal order and realm, is further developed in his later writings.

The notion of fatherland, for example, that results in the female image of the mother is manifestly revealed in the poem “Fædreland” [Fatherland],⁷⁰ which Bang composes after *Tine*. This poem, whose title bears the image of the father, turns out to

⁶⁹ Focusing on explicit examples from *De uden Fædreland*, Detering regards the figure of the mother rising against “das alte Vaterland” as “das Vaterland meiner Mutter” [min Moders Fædreland], then as “Mutters Vaterland” [Mo'rs Fædreland], until it finally becomes “das Mütterland” [Mødrenelandet] (*Geheimnis* 283).

⁷⁰ “Fædreland, / Plet af Jord paa Jorden; / Fædreland, / du, vort Sekels Polen, / indad sønderlidt / og udad sønderlæmmet; / Fædreland, / Sørgeklædte Moder, / lær os: / smaa at være. / Lær med / Taalmod os / Hverdagsdragt at bære / Arbejdsdragt — / Moder, / Dig til Ære” [Fatherland, / spot of earth on the earth; / fatherland, / you, the pole of our century, / torn up inside / and dismembered outside; / fatherland, / mourning mother, / teach us: / to be small. / Teach us patiently / to bear the daily clothing / the work uniform – / Mother, / in your honor] (poem quoted in Danish in Nilsson 275).

be an explicit dedication in the mother's honor. In the middle of the poem, two subsequent lines melt the fatherland into the mourning mother, until the end establishes: "Moder, / dig til Ære" [Mother, / in your honor]. In the concept of fatherland, Bang identifies the disguised mother, whose mourning veil flickers in the author's memories since his childhood. It is also the mother who determines the female identity that is grounded in the nation's losses. The poem "Fædreland" is yet another appeal to Denmark in the mother's name to focus on constructing its image as a small working nation within its own confines. The mother is asked to take control and lead. Therefore the significant lines: "lær os smaa at være. / Lær med Taalmod os / Hverdagsdragt at bære / Arbejdsdragt" [teach us to be small. / Teach us patiently / to bear the daily clothing / the work uniform]. From the combating fathers rises the patient mother as the nation's solution. The new female identity is thus inaugurated in the transgression from the destructive violence—resulting from nationalism—to productive work—indicated by the active mother.

The father's legacy to the mother in *Tine* is provided by the grounds of the masculine nationalism, on which the paradigm of the mother transgresses from the old and patriarchal order to the active and fertile image of the feminine, so well represented by the various mother figures. *Tine*'s men take on the characteristics of their despairing time. Heitmann notices how a number of male figures in Bang's novels mirror the time's nationalism through their selfishness: "Deren wichtigstes gemeinsames Merkmal stimmt mit dem vorherrschenden Zug der Zeit überein: Egoismus, der unterschiedlich zum Ausdruck kommt in "drift", Krieg, Aggression, Konkurrenz, Heuchelei und sinnlosem Handeln" (153). Particularly in *Tine*, nationalism even infects with this masculine symptom of nationalism, when the main female character towards the end, and in the midst of chaos, loses her sense of

assisting the wounded, as she has previously done, when she promises help but never returns with it. Such infection is to be noticed further, when Tine loses her gender in Berg's eyes: "Og mens han gik bag ved hende – hun gik saa tungt, med halvbøjet hoved – spurgte han kun sig selv, hvordan han nogensinde havde kunnet attraa *dette Menneske*" (*Tine* 125-6) ["And walking behind her – her gait so heavy, her head bowed a little – he could only ask himself how he had ever desired *this creature*" (*Tine* 140, *my emphasis*)]. This is not a mere loss of femininity. This is a loss of gender altogether. The noun articles—*en* and *et*—in Danish language do not reflect a difference between masculine and feminine genders. They do, however, show the difference between gendered and non-gendered nouns. Thus, Tine becomes a genderless being in the narrative, an *et* (*dette*). Tine does not make peace with these conditions and in the act of death, she overcomes both the genderlessness that is given to her and the nationalism that is constructed around her.

The author's successful effort to present the possibility of overcoming nationalism and of encouraging the nation's new beginnings must be recognized in Tine's character. Tine's death feeds precisely this new Danish national identity. Tine's suicide, self-defeating as it may seem, must be read optimistically, for it still conveys the novel's positive message generated and channeled by the novel's Impressionist style. *Tine* refuses to be defined in terms of unity and totality, for the novel's form reflects the restlessness that defines the very conditions of Impressionism. It is Bang's conviction that the total perception of life as movement and multiplicity emerges from the restlessness that produces this perception. Death is a mere symptom of this restlessness that cannot be avoided. Bang asserts in the novel's preface:

Selv derude over Markerne, hvor Horisonten lukker sig,
selv der maa vi vide, at Livet fortsættes og at der leves –

en rullende Vogn, en Hund, der gøer, en Sang, der høres
fjernt, maa fortælle det og minde os derom. (*Tine* 14)

[Even far away in the fields where the horizon closes in,
even there we must be made to feel that life goes on and
is being lived. A rattling cart, a barking dog, a distant
song must tell their tale. (*Tina* 180)]

Tine's marginalized character bears the possibility of an autonomous subject provided by the novel's restless form, which generates movement and multiplicity. As the novel's Impressionist style provides a continuous motion of pictures, Tine's death comprises only a brief moment, or rather a fleeting picture, in this progressive process, and must not be misunderstood as a rupture in this motion of life in pictures. Bang argues that the ambition of his art is to catch precisely these ever-shifting pictures: "at fæste dette levende, dette ubegribelige og ubegrebne, dette bestandig forandrede Liv" (*Tine* 15) ["to catch this living, this unknown and unknowable, this ever-changing life"] (*Tina* 181). And since movement and multiplicity are inescapable (*Tina* 180), death paradoxically does not mark any stop signs or symptomatic standstills.

The scene of Tine's suicide, in itself, presents the perfect example of the Impressionist technique that resists any halting or stagnation and reinforces continuous life. This scene is an endless collection of pictures in the form of memories that Tine tries to recapture. Once again, memory proves crucial for redeeming the lost past and recognizing the potential of the present. In the description of Tine's memories, one easily recognizes Bang's own account of employing Impressionism as the technique of the moment:

*I et Nu mindedes hun tusind Ting, og det var som alle
Stemmer, hun elskede, talte til hende paa en Gang. [...]
En Gru greb hende og rejste alle Nerver – her skulde
hun dø – dø. Nej, hun kunde ikke, hun maatte leve –
kunde ikke – tusinde Udveje, tusinde Paaskud, tusinde
Udflugter drev hende hjem til Livet i et Nu*

(*Tine* 143, my emphasis)

[A host of memories flashed in upon her, and all the voices she had loved seemed to be speaking to her at once. [...] A horror seized her, and all her nerves shuddered: here it was she would die – die ... no, not that ... she wanted to live ... she couldn't do it. A thousand scruples and evasions, a thousand excuses rushed on her all at once, to drag her back to life ... (*Tina* 161)]

This scene that begins and ends with *et Nu* [a now]⁷¹ illustrates the restless struggle to capture this “now,” which for a moment implies death. Bang’s optimism in *Tine* relies on the transitory achievement of seizing death momentarily—*i et Nu* [in a now]—and depicting it as a fleeting moment among the moving and multiple pictures that the novel’s scenes continuously exhibit. In *Tine*, the mechanism of life is conveyed as a continuation that overcomes death and further produces life’s multiple pictures. This perception is only made possible through Impressionism, which constantly releases these pictures.

By overcoming *Tine*’s death as part of the total perception of life presented in the narrative, the novel also promises a triumph over nationalism, which marks only a temporary and natural stage in identity formation. Bang’s *Tine* constructs and spreads nationalism primarily in and through the male characters. This nationalism is overcome within the female realm, in which illusions are removed and action is taken by women figures. With the woman and particularly the mother figure as a positively productive essence, Bang presents his struggling fatherland with a new possibility that encompasses the female identity and promises an optimistic future for the nation. This new type of Danish identity is envisioned as a national identity that is not only based on loss, but also on ways of working through loss.

⁷¹ My observation is not very clear in the translation; hence my emphasis in the original.

IX. Conclusion

This chapter has interpreted Herman Bang's *Tine* as a transgressive work that views borders as the new grounds of identity construction. As a *grænsegænger*, Bang is equipped to transgress the borders that demarcate order and chaos, tradition and modernity, morality and sexuality, fiction and reality. Concerned with the definition of his own self, Bang is on a never-ending quest for his own identity, composed of layers of his nationality, personality, profession, and sexuality.

The analysis of *Tine* in this chapter offers new perspectives on understanding the novel, despite its death frames, as a more optimistic text than has been recognized in the scholarship to date. *Tine*'s goal as an Impressionist novel is to work through Denmark's trauma by narrating the war experiences of loss. Bang suggests that the process of mourning the past in the right spirit may result in overcoming loss. Troubled by Denmark's current situation that cultivates a newly rising nationalism, Bang anchors his novel in his nation's tragic past during the Danish-Prussian war of 1864 and reminds Denmark once again of the disastrous consequences of nationalism. By connecting the past and present and by fusing fictional and authentic components, the novel makes its claim to be recognized as a national narrative. The novel relies, furthermore, on the faculty of memory that secures such recognition.

Tine criticizes nationalism, which the narrative constructs as an inner danger deriving from people's inner desires for power and domination. Bang shows this through an organic progression of war and the natural development of a problematic intimate story between the characters of Tine and Berg, whose sexual desire develops organically with the progress of war. The narrative's construction of nationalism is reflected primarily in the male characters who embody its destructive characteristics. While the author criticizes nationalistic attitudes, he is fully aware that nationalism

cannot simply be eradicated. Instead, he employs nationalism for the beneficial purpose of new possibilities. Making the best out of an existing nationalism in Danish society, Bang turns this dangerous construction into something productive. The author's intention is not very far-fetched from the post-war reality, for it clearly coincides with Enrico Dalga's proclamation in 1865 regarding the landscape and territory in Jutland, devising what becomes Denmark's new motto: "hvad udad tabtes skal indad vindes" [what was lost outside, must be won in the inside] (Christiansen 155). The conversion from destructive to productive is made possible through the female subject that arises from the same grounds, as a natural progression of Denmark's national subject. This subject secures the successful overcoming of nationalism. Despite the occurrence of the main female character's death, the novel's Impressionist form makes possible that death, too, is overcome through the continuous multiplicity and motion of pictures that produce a total perception of life.

The female dimension of national identity, at which Bang aims via women and mother figures, does not merely provide new transgressions through birth and productivity, but also sheds light on the author's opinion of women's cause and their independence. Even before *Tine* comes to life and with regard to other female characters, Bang expresses in an article in *Nationaltidende* on 16 May 1880 that only when woman's potentials, intellectual as well as personal, are recognized and defended, can she finally become an independent human subject (Nilsson 56). The novel's Tine further augurs this, paving the road for her recognition as an independent subject. In this light, one can see the new optimistic meaning and the author's conviction of Denmark as a strong nation, whose people's nationalism must be understood as a temporary illusion on the verge of being torn and thus overcome. Bang's *Tine* encourages the recognition of such illusion and presents the possibility of

a stable Danish identity that is celebrated for conquering the destructive force of nationalism.

Conclusion

Further Implications and Future Avenues of Research

This dissertation has examined selected writings by Theodor Storm, Theodor Fontane, and Herman Bang, who all employ nationalism as the effective means to construct and stabilize national identity. In the specific setting of the border region of Schleswig-Holstein, German and Danish national identities are shaped on the basis of an intense cultural and political relationship between Germany and Denmark during the second half of the nineteenth century. In the chosen narratives, the authors present nationalism as a temporary phase that points the way to national consciousness by reinforcing national identity. Storm's identity construction is understood through an awareness of the Other's presence and the Other's destabilizing role within the *Heimat*. Fontane works through the formation of the subject and the shaping of its identity by adjusting this process to the conditions of the outside world. Bang envisions a new, strong Danish national identity that is based on the memory of loss. In all these cases, national identity is perceived and shaped differently, albeit with nationalism as the common formative factor.

While this study is limited to these three authors' life time and creative work, as well as to the border region between Germany and Denmark, the ambition of the present work is to illuminate some of the challenges that nationalism poses today beyond national borders. Even more than a hundred years later, after nationalism has gone through a tremendous range of perceptions and interpretations, nationalistic manifestations and tendencies are employed to this day to reinforce national identity. In our current societies, there is a growing concern that the European Union may

weaken national identities of the member states and that the ideology of globalization may corrode the national and regional cultures. This leads to the emergence of new forms of nationalism that aim at protecting national identity at an individual and collective level, as well as at a cultural and political one.¹

Just as nationalism once arose to oppose imperialism, so it seems that its current role is to oppose globalization. Recent occurrences in Western nations such as the border controversy between Denmark and Germany and the nationalistic terror attacks in Norway come as no surprise, for nationalism is continually present. Michael Billig reminds us that “[d]aily, the nation is indicated, or ‘flagged’, in the lives of its citizenry. Nationalism, far from being an intermittent mood in established nations, is the endemic condition” (6). Despite the fact that national borders establish the typical space for nationalism to be at work as an ideology, nationalism is no longer confined to borders only; its assumptions have been diffused internationally (Billig 9). This leads to a new avenue in the study and understanding of nationalism; an avenue that focuses on nationalism stretching beyond borders and encompassing the multiplicity of its forms, such as those associated with border-transcending nationalism.

This study invites further examinations of nationalism within the literary period of Realism. First of all, there are a number of works by Herman Bang that are not yet fully explored in Bang scholarship. Especially the novels *Stuk* and *De uden Fædreland* may be relevant to examine with regard to nationalism and national

¹ New terms such as supranationalism and Euronationalism come into play. In *Multiplicity of Nationalism in Contemporary Europe*, supranationalism is applied to the phenomenon of a new form of nationalism that stretches beyond the nationalism of the European nation states (Suszycki and Karolewski 2). According to Andrzej Marcin Suszycki and Ireneusz Pawel Karolewski, “supranationalism should strengthen unity, solidarity and parity between the member states and their citizens; hence it is believed to have ‘good’ and calming effects on the European politics. On the other hand, however, it might also have excluding and discriminating effects with regard to non-members, even if the strategies of exclusion and discrimination occur in a subtle way” (2). Relating to Euronationalism, both scholars depart from the observation that the European Union “supports the idea of fluidity and hybridity and yet forges European collective identity, a contradictory endeavor of ‘unity in diversity’” (Suszycki and Karolewski 3).

identity. In my chapter on Bang, I also refer to some connections between *Tine* and these works. It would also be useful to take into account other Danish authors such as Meir Aron Goldschmidt and Johannes V. Jensen who, like Bang, also deal with Danishness during their nation's critical times. With respect to the dichotomy of borders and German national identity, nationalism and regionalism, a number of authors would be worth considering for further research, for example, the Realist writers Wilhelm Raabe, Fritz Reuter, Klaus Groth, Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, and Gottfried Keller. Such examinations could enrich and stretch the scope of the present study by exploring further cultural and political dichotomies between Germany and its neighbors.

With the motivation to view nationalism and national identity through present-day lenses at a time of globalization, this dissertation suggests a new understanding of nationalism by focusing on it as a constructive and dynamic philosophy that does not always have to be associated with extreme forms in its manifestations. This alternative interpretation reveals nationalism's malleability in constructing national identity. Nationalism, as a way of thinking, can today be challenged and channeled for beneficial purposes, such as the sensible construction of a solid national identity that is distinctly different, but still in compliance and harmony with the outside world, which consists of other distinctly different national identities.

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