

Theodor Fontane, Effi Briest

The Setting

Place -- Hohen Cremen; especially Kessin (dunes, winter, sea, etc.);
Berlin

Prussian society -- the nobility; code of honor and marital behavior;
Lutheran and Catholic religion

Writing Style

realism -- physical descriptions

"master of significant dialogue"

author "breaks through" at end of story

patterns in the plot -- e.g, "Effi, komm!"

use of (unrealist?) symbols -- crocodile, shark, Chinaman, quicksand,
Rollo, acting, etc. -- what are their meaning (Effi's experience)?

Characters

Effi -- pluses and minuses; does she marry too young; does she change?

Innstetten -- the educator; the careerist.

Minor characters -- Herr Briest -- faults?

Roswitha and Joanna

Crampas -- a villain?

Message or theme of the novel -- Which characters are we led to admire?

Examine the (extraordinary) ending of the novel. Forgiveness, peace,
Christian? Where does true nobility lie? Is the author "feminist," or
at least sensitive to women's issues?