



Peter Handke

Narrative Worlds – Pictorial Orders

Rolf G. Renner

palgrave
macmillan

Peter Handke

Rolf G. Renner

Peter Handke

Narrative Worlds – Pictorial Orders

palgrave
macmillan

Rolf G. Renner
Universität Freiburg
Freiburg im Breisgau, Baden-Württemberg, Germany

ISBN 978-3-476-05931-4 ISBN 978-3-476-05932-1 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-476-05932-1>

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s), under exclusive licence to Springer-Verlag GmbH, DE, part of Springer Nature 2023

The translation was done with the help of artificial intelligence (machine translation by the service DeepL.com). The author has subsequently revised the text further in an endeavour to refine the work stylistically.

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors, and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer-Verlag GmbH, DE, part of Springer Nature.

The registered company address is: Heidelberger Platz 3, 14197 Berlin, Germany

*“Ich mache, was ich bin: = Schreiben”
(AF 189).*

*“Wort und Bild sind Korrelate, die sich
immerfort suchen” (J.W. Goethe).*

*“Literatur: Es genügt nicht das Bild – es
muß jenes eine (1) Wort dazukommen,
welches das Bild erst zum Bild-Pfeil macht”
(AF 431).*

For Lisaweta

Contents

1	Narrative Worlds/Image Orders: On the Introduction to the Text . . .	1
1.1	Preliminary Considerations and Course of the Investigation.	4
2	Literary Self-Assertion and Experimentation with Form:	
	The Narrative Beginnings	25
2.1	<i>Die Hornissen</i> (1966).	25
2.2	<i>Der Hausierer</i> (1967).	31
2.3	<i>Die Angst des Tormanns beim Elfmeter</i> (1969)	34
3	Experiment and Design: The Plays, Prose Works and Radio Plays	
	Up to 1973	43
3.1	<i>Publikumsbeschimpfung</i> (1966).	43
3.2	<i>Sprechstücke</i> (<i>Spoken Pieces</i> , 1969–1972)	45
3.3	<i>Kaspar</i> (1967)	52
3.4	<i>Die Unvernünftigen sterben aus</i> (1973).	57
3.5	<i>Begrüßung des Aufsichtsrats</i> (1967)	61
3.6	<i>Wind und Meer. Vier Hörspiele</i> (<i>Wind and Sea. Four Radio Plays</i> , 1970)	64
3.7	Emergence of Postmodernism: <i>Die offenen Geheimnisse der</i> <i>Technokratie</i> (<i>The Open Secrets of Technocracy</i> , 1974)	66
4	Rediscovery of Subjectivity: Lines of Development in Lyric Poetry . .	71
4.1	<i>Leben ohne Poesie</i> (1969–2007)	71
4.2	<i>Gedicht an die Dauer</i> (1986).	78
5	Return to Narrative and New Subjectivity	81
5.1	Search Movements: <i>Der kurze Brief zum langen Abschied</i> (<i>Short Letter, Long Farewell</i> , 1972).	81
5.2	The Power of Others: <i>Wunschloses Unglück</i> (<i>A Sorrow Beyond</i> <i>Dreams: A Life Story</i> , 1972).	90
5.3	The One and His Property: <i>Die Stunde der wahren Empfindung</i> (<i>A Moment of True Feeling</i> , 1975).	97
5.4	A Path to the Soul: <i>Die linkshändige Frau</i> (<i>The Left-Handed</i> <i>Woman</i> , 1976)	105

6	Return to the Beginnings of the Ego and the Promise of Images	111
6.1	Spaces of Experience: <i>Langsame Heimkehr</i> (1979)	111
6.2	The Way into the Image: <i>Die Lehre der Sainte-Victoire</i> (<i>The Lesson of Mount Sainte-Victoire</i> , 1980).	120
6.3	Signs of the Other World: <i>Kindergeschichte</i> (<i>Children's Story</i> 1981) . .	128
6.4	Construction of Origin: <i>Über die Dörfer</i> (<i>Walk about the Village</i> , 1981)	135
7	Re-founding the Narrative in the Reconnection to Tradition	141
7.1	The Double Home: <i>Der Chinese des Schmerzes</i> (1983)	141
7.2	Rediscovery in the Urtext of Poetry: <i>Die Wiederholung</i> (<i>Repetition</i> , 1986)	153
7.3	Forms of Poetic Initiation: <i>Die Abwesenheit. Ein Märchen</i> (<i>Absence</i> , 1987)	160
7.4	The Language Development of the World: <i>In einer dunklen Nacht ging ich aus meinem stillen Haus</i> (<i>On a Dark Night I Left My Silent House</i> , 1997)	169
7.5	On the Eros of Storytelling: <i>Don Juan (erzählt von ihm selbst)</i> (<i>Don Juan (His Own Novel)</i>) (2004)	175
7.6	Image, Writing and Narration: <i>Der Bildverlust oder Durch die Sierra de Gredos</i> (2002).	182
8	Self-Reflection and Poetological Sketches: The Journals, Sketches, and Notes.	207
8.1	Poetological Notations: <i>Das Gewicht der Welt. Ein Journal</i> (<i>November 1975–März 1977</i>) (1977), <i>Die Geschichte des Bleistifts</i> (1982) and <i>Phantasien der Wiederholung</i> (1983)	207
8.2	Writing, Seeing, Drawing: <i>Das Notizbuch, 31. August 1978–18. Oktober 1978</i> (2015)	213
8.3	Seeing by Night and by Day: <i>Am Felsfenster morgens. Und andere Ortszeiten 1982–1987</i> (1998).	215
8.4	Visual and Reflexive Miniatures: <i>Noch einmal für Thukydides</i> (1990).	223
8.5	Fragments of Authorship: <i>Gestern unterwegs. Aufzeichnungen November 1987 bis Juli 1990</i> (2005).	225
8.6	Semi-somnolent Images: <i>Ein Jahr aus der Nacht gesprochen</i> (<i>A Year Spoken from the Night</i> , 2010)	232
8.7	Completely Different Mirror Images: <i>Vor der Baumschattenwand nachts. Zeichen und Anflüge von der Peripherie 2007–2015</i> (2016) . .	233
9	The Transformation of One's Own Writing	239
9.1	The Narrator's Double History: <i>Mein Jahr in der Niemandsbucht. Ein Märchen aus den neuen Zeiten</i> (1994)	239
9.2	Reconstruction of Life: <i>Die Morawische Nacht. Erzählung</i> (2009) .	258
9.3	The Dialectic of History and the Journey into the Utopia of the Aesthetic	273

10	The Experiment of Recollective Description	277
10.1	On the Way to Writing: <i>Nachmittag eines Schriftstellers</i> (1987). . .	278
10.2	The Narration of the “Inbilder”/Guiding Images: <i>Versuch über die Müdigkeit</i> (<i>Essay About Fatigue</i> , 1989).	281
10.3	Signs of Technology and Signs of the Landscape: <i>Versuch über die Jukebox</i> (<i>Essay About the Jukebox</i> , 1990).	283
10.4	Writing Attempts: <i>Versuch über den gegückten Tag</i> (<i>Essay on the Successful Day</i> 1991).	289
10.5	The World Circle of Narrative: <i>Versuch über den Stillen Ort</i> (2012).	293
10.6	Searching for One’s Own in the Other: <i>Versuch über den Pilznarren</i> (<i>Essay on the Mushroom Hunter</i> , 2013).	296
11	The Fundamental Other of Poetry: Handke’s Double Discourse on Serbia	303
11.1	The Context of ‘Post-War Literature’ and the ‘End of the Post-War Period’	304
11.2	The Discourse Rule of Media Society	306
11.3	The Media Discourse on Handke and Serbia.	310
11.4	The “bösen Fakten”: <i>Abschied des Träumers vom Neunten Land. Eine winterliche Reise zu den Flüssen Donau, Save, Morawa und Drina oder Gerechtigkeit für Serbien</i> (1996), <i>Sommerlicher Nachtrag zu einer winterlichen Reise</i> (1996), <i>Unter Tränen fragend. Nachträgliche Aufzeichnungen von zwei Jugoslawien-Durchquerungen im Krieg, März und April</i> (1999), <i>Rund um das Große Tribunal</i> (2003), <i>Die Geschichte des Dragoljub Milanović</i> (2011)	312
11.5	The Challenge of Politics and the Promise of Poetry	316
11.6	Places of Resistance and Imagination: <i>Die Tablas von Daimiel. Ein Umwegzeugenbericht zum Prozeß gegen Slobodan Milošević</i> (2005), <i>Die Kuckucke von Velika Hoća. Eine Nachschrift</i> (2009) . .	323
12	Between Drama and Epic: The Plays After 1989	329
12.1	“Zum Dreinschlagen fremd”: <i>Das Spiel vom Fragen Oder die Reise zum Sonoren Land</i> (1989)	329
12.2	Theatrical Experiments: <i>Die Stunde da wir nichts voneinander wußten</i> (1992) and <i>Spuren der Verirrten</i> (2006)	336
12.3	Under the Law of History: <i>Zurüstungen für die Unsterblichkeit. Ein Königsdrama</i> (1997)	340
12.4	Nema problema. Nema Jugoslavije: <i>Die Fahrt im Einbaum oder Das Stück zum Film vom Krieg</i> (1999)	344
12.5	“Endstation des Theaters”: “Warum eine Küche?” (2003), <i>Untertagblues. Ein Stationendrama</i> (2003), <i>Bis daß der Tag euch scheidet oder Eine Frage des Lichts. Ein Monolog</i> (2008/9).	353
12.6	Homecoming to the Ancestors: <i>Immer noch Sturm</i> (2010)	356

12.7	Socialization Games: <i>Die schönen Tage von Aranjuez. Ein Sommerdialog</i> (2012) and <i>Die Unschuldigen, ich und die Unbekannte am Rand der Landstraße. Ein Schauspiel in vier Jahreszeiten</i> (2015)	361
13	The Competition of Word and Image	371
13.1	From Text to Film: Handke as Moviegoer, Author and Director . . .	371
13.2	Experiments of Perception: <i>Chronik der laufenden Ereignisse</i> (1971) and <i>Falsche Bewegung</i> (1975)	377
13.3	Semiotics of Perception: <i>Die Angst des Tormanns beim Elfmeter</i> (1970)	380
13.4	Gender Roles and Patterns of Perception: <i>Die linkshändige Frau</i> , 1978	383
13.5	Textual and Visual Construction of Identity: <i>Der Himmel über Berlin</i> (1987)	386
13.6	Visual Inscriptions of the Own: <i>Mal des Todes</i> (1986), <i>Die Abwesenheit</i> (1992), <i>Die schönen Tage von Aranjuez</i> (2017)	389
14	The Dialectic of History and the Revocation of Modernity	405
14.1	The Fairy Tale of the Other World: <i>Kali. Eine Vorwintergeschichte</i> (2007)	405
14.2	The Revocation of Modernity: <i>Der Große Fall</i> (2011)	413
14.3	Radicalization of Narrative: <i>Die Obstdiebin oder Einfache Fahrt ins Landesinnere</i> (2017)	426
14.4	Telling the World Anew: <i>Das zweite Schwert</i> (2020)	440
15	Basic Lines of Handke's Reception in Literary Criticism and Science	451
	Bibliography	465

List of Figures

Fig. 6.1	Paul Cézanne (1839–1906): <i>La Montagne de Sainte-Victoire vue de Bibémus</i> , 1897 (Baltimore Museum of Art, © Heritage Art/Heritage Images/picture alliance).....	122
Fig. 6.2	Jacob van Ruisdael (1628/29–1682): <i>Der große Wald</i> (c. 1655/60) (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, © picture alliance / Heritage Images Fine Art Images).....	128
Fig. 8.1	Peter Handke: drawing from <i>Notizbuch</i> , 2015, 14–15. (German Literature Archive Marbach; with the kind permission of Peter Handke).....	213
Fig. 8.2	Peter Handke: Drawing from <i>Vor der Baumschattenwand nachts. Zeichen und Anflüge von der Peripherie 2007–2005</i> (VB 409). (German Literature Archive Marbach; with kind permission of Sophie Semin).....	237
Fig. 9.1	Paul Klee (1879–1940): <i>Erinnerung an einen Garten</i> , 1914. (Düsseldorf, Art Collection of North Rhine-Westphalia, © akg-images/picture alliance).....	246
Fig. 9.2	Pieter Bruegel the Elder (c. 1525/30–1569): <i>Der düstere Tag</i> , 1565; from the series of six paintings of the Seasons. (Vienna, Museum of Art History, © akg-images/picture alliance).....	254
Fig. 10.1	Cathedral of Santo Domingo in Soria: Romanesque tympanum of the main portal. (© Yvan Traver/akg-images/picture alliance)	287
Fig. 10.2	‘Gulielmus Hogarth’ (1697–1764): Self-portrait, 1745. (© The Print Collector/Heritage Images/picture alliance).....	292
Fig. 10.3	Still from John Ford: <i>Two Rode Together</i> , 02:30.....	297
Fig. 11.1	Jan (Johannes) Vermeer, gen. Vermeer van Delft (1632–1675): <i>View of Delft</i> , c. 1660/1661. (The Hague, Mauritshuis, © akg-images/picture alliance).....	324
Fig. 13.1	Still from Wim Wenders/Peter Handke: <i>Der Himmel über Berlin</i> , 02:34	388
Fig. 13.2	Still from Peter Handke: <i>Mal des Todes</i> , 31:08 (ORF).....	391
Fig. 13.3	Still from Wim Wenders: <i>Aranjuez</i> , 1:03:50.....	403
Fig. 14.1	Nicolas Poussin (1594–1655): <i>The seasons, summer, or Ruth and Booz</i> , 1640–1644. (Paris, Musée du Louvre, © Heritage Art/Heritage Images/picture alliance).....	436

Narrative Worlds/Image Orders: On the Introduction to the Text

1

Narration and images have been thematic in Handke's work from the beginning, but since the 1980s they have taken on a new weight in his oeuvre. The question of the image has moved to the centre of an increasingly autoreflexive writing since *Die Lehre der Sainte-Victoire* (*The Lesson of Mount Sainte-Victoire*), and that of narrative since *Der Chinese des Schmerzes* (*Across*). At least since the so-called "Tetralogie" (*Tetralogy*), the texts *Langsame Heimkehr* (*Slow Homecoming*), *Die Lehre der Sainte-Victoire*, *Kindergeschichte* (*Children's Story*) and *Über die Dörfer* (*Walk about the Villages*), it can be observed that the mere narration of the real recedes to the extent that a separate reality of narration begins to establish itself. This reality creates images and texts that break away from the paradigm of representation. Narrative worlds or narrative realities emerge that can be recognized as elements of a metatext that is always about narrative itself. This is also possible because the sequence of Handke's texts does not aim for a constant innovation of themes, writing strategies and images, but follows the principle of a creative schematization that uses a limited stock of narrative set pieces to constantly produce new stories and narrative situations.

In the process, different aspects of a comparatively closed field of thematic variations of narrative become clear. In the text of *Kali* (*Potash. A Pre-Winter Story*), apostrophized as a 'fairy tale', the origin of times, of the fairy tale and of narration become one (K 159). The text of *In einer dunklen Nacht ging ich aus meinem stillen Haus* (*On a Dark Night I Left My Silent House*) proves to be part of an overarching narrative play in which several characters are involved and in the course of which the dividing mark between the author and the narrator is systematically crossed again and again (IN 51). The fairy tale of the immediacy of language in the world seems to have become reality there, because even the natural phenomenon of snowing can be evoked by speaking alone. In *Der Bildverlust oder Durch die Sierra de Gredos* (*Crossing the Sierra de Gredos*) narration and language establish a physical relationship between the wanderer and her narrator, while at the same time the dividing line between the story, the actions of the characters and the narration itself disappears. The image of its continued action beyond the coordinates of space and

time vouchsafed by a story becomes a vehicle that stops, but still wavers as it stands. This movement, “which will not have ceased soon”, is the metaphor of narrative itself (BV 759). Consistent with this in *Die Obstdiebin. Oder Einfache Fahrt ins Landesinnere* (*The Fruit Thief*), the work of reading can mobilize and make permanently accessible experiences that transcend mere experience. It enables a perception that can transform everything that shows itself as reality through imagination and language.

At the latest since *Mein Jahr in der Niemandsbucht* (*My Year in the No-Man's-Bay*), it has become clear that Handke's narrative links fictional and autofictional designs in order to insert them into a transtextual system of reference. It is also autoreflexive at every point, placing poetological considerations alongside autoanalytical ones. The resulting text segments can also be read as individual observations or spontaneous reflections and are not dependent on the linearity of narrative.

At the same time, these texts design pictorial orders that in different ways organize not only the narrative, but also its self-reflexivity. First of all, the visual evidence of Handke's narrative is grounded in the fact that he ascribes central importance for writing to contemplation and seeing. “Wie schwer ist das Sehen. Und es gibt keine Schule dafür; jeder kann es nur selbst lernen, Tag für Tag neu. Aber dann, in der Betrachtung, hat selbst das Schwarz der toten Blätter jetzt ein Leuchten” it says in *Am Felsfenster morgens* (*At the Mountain Window in the Morning: And Other Local Times 1982–1987*, AF 539). Writing begins as describing and from this already develops an arsenal of fixed images that organizes all texts, albeit in different ways. Not infrequently, these are almost standard images of nature and civilization (IN 209): the unlocations of suburbia, the change of seasons, the beginning of snowfall, or raindrops falling into the dust, to name but a few (IN 78). In addition there are images that are independent of text, they are panel paintings of the painterly tradition or film images that are ekphrastically reproduced, retold or revised. Examples are given by Cézanne's *Montagne Sainte-Victoire* and *Homme aux bras croisés* (LSV 36) in *Die Lehre der Sainte-Victoire* as well as the reflection on landscape painting presented there by Ruisdael (LSV 18, 118 f.) via Courbet (LSV 31–33) up to Edward Hopper (LSV 19 f.). Finally, we should also mention Ruisdael's *Great Forest* in *Die Geschichte des Bleistifts* (*The Story of the Pencil*, GB 214), Breughel's *The Gloomy Day* in *Mein Jahr in der Niemandsbucht* (MJN 629), Vermeer's *View of Delft* in the Serbian Texts (TD 22), Poussin's depiction of the sacraments in *Versuch über die Müdigkeit* (VM 57), or of *Ruth et Booz* in *Die Obstdiebin* (OD 466). Handke's own pictures and sketches, which particularly determine the notebooks (NB 34 f.), also belong in this context. In the narrative these images are not infrequently functionalized by organizing or networking them through personal visual worlds that have to be deciphered developmentally as well as psychologically. These images Handke perceives on his travels and in his immediate environment, and he often condenses them through multiple overwriting. Beyond this, however, above all the so-called “Inbilder” are the guiding images that gain text-structuring and psychological significance at the same time. They have centered Handke's texts since *Kindergeschichte* (KG 28; Bürger 1983, 501), in *Nachmittag eines Schriftstellers* (*Afternoon of a Writer* he explicitly refers to them

(NS 79), and in *Mein Jahr in der Niemandsbucht* he defines them as “Kindheitsinbilder” (MJN 771). These image-guided recourse of narrative to the unmistakably own as well as to the past simultaneously sketch out the basic lines of a poetological program that exhibits an intermedial trace but also always transcends the medial boundaries. The narrative aims to overcome the “Systematik des Sehens” and to achieve a “phantasierendes Sehen”, as the 1978 *Notizbuch (Notebook)* formulates four years before *Die Lehre der Sainte-Victoire* (NB 44). At the same time, this *Notebook* documents that the author’s guiding images formed in this way are also accompanied by drawings, in which precise observation and imagination complement each other. Handke’s detail studies, which often make even the flickering and trembling of the foliage perceptible in just a few strokes (Geimer 2019), are mostly characterized by a striking reduction in size. This gives the impression that the drawn motifs “liberate themselves from the laws of reality in order to cross over into another universe” (Agamben 2019, 14). A transformation comparable to this also determines the linguistic access to reality. Whoever wants to go “Heraus aus der Sprache”, reach his guiding image, his Inbild, and in the end write in images – nothing else is meant by the contemplation on “Innewerden” (PW 40; AR 94, 114) – must first go “ins Innere der Sprache”, where “Welt und Ich” are one (GB 182).

Linked to this consideration in Handke’s texts are not only the question of the relationship between language and text, between narration and reading, but also that of the aesthetic specificity and poetological significance of the media of text and image, whose interrelation is staged anew in each case. It becomes apparent that film has a special significance here. The texts refer to it again and again, and at the same time it shapes their narrative: on the one hand, because it organizes image and narrative strategies in equal measure and relates them to one another, and, on the other hand, because it marks the meaning of image and word in the context of contemporary society. Reflecting on this not only gains central importance for Handke’s collaboration with Wim Wenders and his own turn to film, but it also determines the central theme of *Der Bildverlust (Crossing the Sierra de Gredos)*, which must be seen here as a key text. That film images intertwine the imaginary and the real, inner and outer images, is traced again and again in this and other texts by the author. Although *Der Bildverlust* explicitly describes the destructive power of technical images, it nevertheless sketches out a determination of the peculiarity of images that also seems appropriate for the film image and its staging of an interweaving of conscious and unconscious perception: “Im Bild erschienen Außen und Innen fusioniert zu etwas Drittem [...]” (BV 745; cf. also GU 85).

In accordance with Wenders’s statement on the occasion of the film *Der Himmel über Berlin (The Sky over Berlin)*, “Das Wort wird bleiben” (Wenders 1992, 197), Handke’s *Versuch über den gegückten Tag (Essay on the Successful Day)* does indeed also turn against the illusionism of modern film images, rejecting the claim to autonomy of visual perception with the formulation “Schauen und weiterschauen mit den Augen des richtigen Wortes” (VT 83). Yet in *Am Felsfenster morgens*, word and image are finally determined as an inseparable correlate: “Am Anfang war das Wort? Am Anfang war das Bild? Das Bild gibt das Wort” (FF 493). Consistent with

this, the text *Der Bildverlust* makes a productive interrelation of text and image a precondition of writing.

However, this text marks a change of function within the orders of images that must be overcome. In this text, 'loss of image' does not at all mean that there are no more images. The term does indeed refer to the psychologically momentous fact that the life-guiding images, memory images, and epitomes in modern society have "keine Wirkung mehr" because they threaten to lose their power under the influence of the "gemachten und gelenkten [...] und nach Belieben lenkbaren Bilder" coming from outside (BV 743). Yet at the same time, this text in particular directs attention to an intermedial connection between word and image that is not touched by this historical and social development. Very early on, the protagonist, referring to her memories and her narrator's narrative project, remarks: "auch einzelne Wörter können aus der Zeit- und Raumferne als Bilder ankommen. Und vielleicht kein durchschlagenderes und innigeres Bild als so ein reines Wortbild" (BV 213).

This tension between description and narration, the practice and the poetics of narration, and finally between word and image is pursued in the examination of Peter Handke's work presented here. It attempts to work out how central lines of development and turning points in the history of the work are reflected in the texts. At the same time, however, these texts are also considered in their entirety in order to be able to adequately grasp their internal functional rule, the course of narrative itself in its respective new configuration.

1.1 Preliminary Considerations and Course of the Investigation

The introduction to this volume is oriented towards the sequence of the following individual analyses. In Handke's work, a play of continuity and variation can be observed. Within the metatext to which all texts belong and in which they participate in different ways, however, his writing is characterized by significant twists and turns that do not allow for a clear attribution of this author to a single literary direction. He uses different registers of twentieth-century literature, often with a time lag and in deliberate disassociation from prevailing trends at the time.

In a first phase of his writing, he contrasted the politically committed and realistically oriented literature of the sixties and seventies with experimental texts. They follow avant-garde principles and, influenced by linguistics and structuralism, rely on permanent aesthetic innovation. In a second phase Handke turned to the literary tradition and in the seventies followed the attitude of the so-called 'new inwardness'. In doing so, he repeats a writing attitude that also defines so-called 'classical modernism': In critical reference to the literary tradition, he tries to make the world tellable again from the point of view of the subject. The third phase in the development of his work, which begins with the so-called *Tetralogie* in 1979, combines autobiographical self-reflection with philosophically based poetological reflection. In the subsequent fourth phase, the existential-ontological character of the narrative is even more sharply contoured.

The aesthetic designs of these last two phases decidedly transgress the orientations of modernity. On the one hand, they describe – under the influence of post-structuralism and Heidegger’s philosophy – a reality withdrawn from the disposal of the subject. They show language and nature as orders preceding human control. On the other hand, they aim at a reconstruction. Beyond their philosophical contouring, these texts once again rely on the aesthetic evidence of narration. In doing so, they follow a tendency of remimeticization that is characteristic of a direction of postmodern writing. For this gesture of reconstructing traditional narrative forms is inconceivable without the preceding questioning of linguistic representation, without the subversion of the categories of subject, author and work.

In the fifth phase of the work’s development, these lines are continued, but they establish a new constellation. On the one hand, the orientation towards literary tradition leads Handke’s narrative to fall back on traditional patterns. *Kali, Don Juan (von ihm selbst erzählt)* (*Don Juan – His Own Version*) and *Die Abwesenheit* (*Absence*) fairy-tale features, while in *Der Bildverlust*, *Die Morawische Nacht* (*Moravian Night*) and *In einer dunklen Nacht* narrative strategies of the medieval epic become dominant. On the other hand, the autoanalytical inscription gains even sharper contours in both the narrative texts and the plays. *Mein Jahr in der Niemandsbucht* combines the author’s real life with the history and names of his narrative characters in the mode of an overwriting. In *Immer noch Sturm* (*Storm Still*), an invented family history overlays the author’s real one. A comparable double strategy of writing also characterizes the *Journale* (*Journals*) and the so-called *Versuche* (*Essays*). These texts prove to be at once almost experimental combinations of reflection and pictorial representation. The relationship between observation and narration, image and word, characterizes them in their innermost being and at the same time becomes thematic again and again. In the process, they also trace the author’s fascination with the medium of film.

The sixth phase of Handke’s oeuvre expresses a new, partly covert but thoroughly purposeful engagement with the modern lifeworld and the political conditions of contemporary society. *Der Bildverlust* had already marked historical dissonances and confronted societies of different stages of development. In *Der große Fall* (*The Great Fall*), on the other hand, the contours of a future social reality and its conflicts appear in a pointed form. The life worlds that *Kali* and *Die Obstdiebin* establish are first and foremost counter-designs to the prevailing social reality. Their utopian potential lies precisely in the revocation of traditional drafts of social utopias. All this is preceded by a slow process of differentiation, which co-determines the interplay of constancy and variation in the guiding themes and writing strategies.

The second chapter of this volume deals with Handke’s attack on so-called ‘descriptive literature’. It is directed both against the magically and metaphysically exaggerated realism of Böll, Andersch and Kolbenhoff, which began immediately after the end of the war, and against Dieter Wellershoff’s concept of ‘New Realism’. Against this “Manier des Realismus” (E 20) Handke wants to show “daß die Literatur mit der Sprache gemacht wird, und nicht mit den Dingen, die mit der Sprache beschrieben werden” (E 29 f.). His demands also follow the guiding

principles of the Vienna Group, which considers the fable to be used up. In addition, the author opposes any political engagement of literature. This rejection also applies to Sartre and Brecht, whom the *Journal* still refer to as the destroyer of “freie[.] Literatur” in a formulation that was later deleted (GW 110). In contrast to him, Handke invokes the poetic as well as the consciousness-altering power of the confused sentences of Horváthian figures, the “begriffsaflösende” and “zukunfts-mächtige Kraft des poetischen Denkens” (W 76), which relies not on the clarity of the concept but on “Verstörung”.

Handke’s narrative beginnings follow these considerations’. The text *Die Hornissen* (*Hornets*), described as a novel, develops meticulous descriptions of details and situations from an experimental situation. A blind narrator reconstructs what has been forgotten; in the process, images told, remembered and fantasized overlap for him, they cut up and fragment “die weiße und leere Ebene des Gehirns”. A psychologically haunting image of this is the “Mann mit dem Seesack” who walks through a village flooded by boiling water and whose scalded eyes are “hinter den Blicken schutzlos geworden” (HO 15, 132).

Der Hausierer (*The Peddler*) is more formalistic. There, italicized chapter prefaces quote set pieces of crime stories and are subsequently varied. This “satzweise Zusammenstellung der wahren Geschichte” (H 40) does not allow a coherent text to emerge; even the immanent order of the text proves to be a confusing game with narrative patterns. If one follows this irregular play of quite different sentences, it can be seen that not even the protagonist of the text is clearly outlined. He is a shifter, a reference figure who changes in changing contexts.

Die Angst des Tormanns beim Elfmeter (*The Goalie’s Anxiety at the Penalty Kick*) transforms the language experiment even more decisively psychologically. A murder committed by the protagonist Bloch at the beginning of the text subsequently determines his perception; the criminal plot is intertwined with a psychogram. Handke thus shows “wie sich jemandem die Gegenstände, die er wahrnimmt, in Folge eines Ereignisses [...] immer mehr versprachlichen, und, indem die Bilder versprachlicht werden, auch zu Geboten und Verboten werden” (Arnold TK 1, 3). In the end, Bloch’s perceptions, which are subject to a relational constraint, unfold a hieroglyphic pictorial script that is as difficult to decipher as the asymmetrical communication of the football game, because there each player bases his actions on trying to fathom the hidden intentions of the other.

The third chapter shows how the plays, prose works and radio plays continue this line of experimental writing into 1974. The play *Kaspar* in particular confirms this. It is a language experiment, a story of psychogenesis and a historical parable at the same time. Kaspar’s first sentence refers to the historical Kaspar Hauser: “Ich möchte ein solcher werden, wie einmal ein anderer gewesen ist”. He becomes the starting point of a socialization story that aims to show “wie jemand durch Sprechen zum Sprechen gebracht werden kann”; the play shows a “Sprechfolterung” (ST1 103). Its instances are the “Einsager” who exorcise Kaspar’s first sentence and then make him speak again. It becomes clear that the attempts at individual linguistic articulation, socialization through language, and speech torture merge into one another. On the one hand, the one made to speak realizes that he has “in die Falle

gegangen" (ST1 194), on the other hand, he defends himself against his conditioning with supposedly meaningless sentences, and in the end he asserts himself as a lonely speaker with the formula "Ziegen und Affen" (ST1 197 f.). His counter-sentences, literary quotations from Horváth's *Faith Love Hope* and from Shakespeare's *Othello*, resist the power-occupied discourse order of the Einsager.

In parallel, the spoken plays written between 1964 and 1971 and the play *Die Unvernünftigen sterben aus* (*They Are Dying Out*) demonstrate the role of communicative language, speech formulae and speechless gestures in given situations. They unfold a "Welt in den Worten selber" (ST1 201) and do not release any theatrical effect. In accordance with this, *Publikumsbeschimpfung* (*Offending The Audience*) is on the one hand a play, on the other hand an essay dealing with the laws of effect of the theatre, the expectations and reactions of the audience. Its opening sentence, "Dieses Stück ist eine Vorrede" (ST1 19), links it to the spoken plays, which, as plays without images, are also plays on words without action (ST1 21). The actors' sentences and the interpolated comments ironize conventional theatre and its staging of 'meaning', 'time' and played reality. However, it becomes apparent that the theatre business effortlessly absorbed the provocation of Handke's anti-theatre. The plays after 1989 already take this into account when they radicalize the early approaches in different ways.

The fourth chapter shows that Handke's poetry, with the exception of the 1986 poem *An die Dauer* (*To Duration*), also initially follows his experimental approaches. The programmatic title of the first volume of poetry, *Die Innenwelt der Außenwelt der Innenwelt* (*The Inner World of the Outer World of the Inner World*), suggests a relationship between the perception of reality and subjective sensations, which the texts collected there do not want to confirm and probably cannot. Rather, they demonstrate the functional rule of grammatical models or ingrained idioms and phrases, as exemplified by *Der Rand der Wörter* (*The Edge of Words I*, IAI 31) or *Wortfamilie* (*Word Family*, IAI 99–103). Many texts show that the power of the given and the handed down also challenges a creative countermovement. Moreover, recourse to traditional forms at least begins to contour a lyrical self. The essay *Was ich nicht bin, nicht habe, nicht will, nicht möchte – und was ich möchte, was ich habe und was ich bin* (*What I Am Not, Do Not Have, Do Not Want, Do Not Want – and What I Want, What I Have and What I Am*, IAI 23–26) bears the bracketed subtitle *Satzbiographie* (*Sentence Biography*) not without reason. It shows how, under the cover of ordinary sentences, names, and designations, the consciousness of being a distinctive self emerges.

The fifth chapter is a first return by Handke to traditional narrative. It combines a conscious orientation towards literary tradition with a concentration on subjective perception and intensive self-reflection. This mode of writing, apostrophized in its reception as a 'new inwardness', is prepared in *Der Kurze Brief zum langen Abschied* (*Short Letter, Long Farewell*). During a journey from the East to the West of the USA, the protagonist experiences the foreign continent as a place of alienation and at the same time as a dream world that opens up for him the possibility of discovering himself anew. However, the views of nature, perceived solely in perspective and from within the space of civilization, initially show the narrator only his "leidende

Erinnerung". He counters the fears of his childhood that recur in it with a new order of signs (KB 105). Sudden epiphanies transform his suffering memory into an 'active' memory. Nature, moreover, shows him how "[aus] Verwechslungen und Sinnestäuschungen Metaphern [entstehen]". In the end, memory, experience, and aesthetic contemplation can lead him to the attitude of "systematischem [Erleben]" (KB 124).

This journey into the "land of consciousness" contrasts *Wunschloses Unglück* (*A Sorrow Beyond Dreams: A Life Story*) with a way back. The story of his mother, which the author writes after her suicide, also leads him into his own past. The writing preserves the "Momente der äußersten Sprachlosigkeit und das Bedürfnis, sie zu formulieren" (WU 11). Yet at no point does the mother allow herself to be presented as a "Kunstfigur" (WU 47). In her description of life, even the childish language games appear as repressive socialization games, as adaptation to relations of ownership and domination, or even to the "Gemeinschaftserlebnisse" staged by the National Socialists. Under these circumstances, even the encounter with literature only leads to the awakening of a stunted ego that is neither physically nor psychologically capable of starting anew. The formula "Selten wunschlos und irgendwie glücklich, meistens wunschlos und ein bißchen unglücklich" (WU 19) does not accidentally negate a common linguistic formula. In the end, death is the only wish the mother can fulfill for herself. In tracing this development, the narrator himself changes and loses his distance. His last sentence, "Später werde ich über das alles Genaueres schreiben" (WU 105), becomes the program of a future narrative that is meant to mediate memory and poetic imagination with one another.

Die Stunde der wahren Empfindung (*A Moment of True Feeling*) is also about self-loss and self-discovery. At the beginning of the text, the protagonist Gregor Keuschnig dreams that he has become a murderer and continues "sein gewohntes Leben nur der Form nach" (SE 7). A resulting fragmentation of consciousness, a relationship delusion, and abrupt sexual aggressiveness are signs of his psychological regression. The words of Horkheimer used as a motto, "Sind Gewalt und Sinnlosigkeit nicht zuletzt ein und dasselbe?", point to his unconscious desire to return to a state before culturalization and socialization. What appears to be a psychopathological case study simultaneously unfolds a poetological perspective. For Keuschnig wants to overcome a language that only shows "wie man Leben vortäuscht". He is looking for a new form of perception and a different system of description, a "nouvelle formule", which erases the individual in the same and precisely through these releases the imagination. (SE 8 f.). His surrender to the accidental gaze is a "romanticizing" in the sense of Novalis but demands a retreat into an inner world (SE 166).

Die Linkshändige Frau (*The Left-Handed Woman*) also shows a solution from given contexts. Her resistance to the game of seduction and love determined by male desires is portrayed scenically, pictorially and distanced. The narrative is phenomenological, unfolding a sequence of images, dispensing with psychological explanations. Goethe's sentence, quoted by Handke elsewhere, "Auf ihrem höchsten Gipfel wird die Poesie ganz äußerlich sein" is redeemed in just this way (PW 45). The change in the consciousness of the "woman", as Marianne is called, is

outlined through images or other texts. Her wishing finds its image in the wishing text of her child, the fantasy of living on an island without tension or relationship. This results in a utopian configuration in the full sense of the word. At the end of the text, the protagonist's gaze through a window transforms rigid nature into moving nature; she herself appears to be included in a picture of nature through a reflecting pane. In her case, too, a productive force emerges from the unconditional concentration on herself. In the end she looks out of the window and begins to draw. Her double view of her own body and nature, inward and outward, becomes a metaphor for Handke's writing of this time.

The sixth chapter deals with the texts of the so-called *Tetralogie*. With them, the author attempts to translate the "fixen Ideen einzelner als den Mythos vieler" (GW 242). In *Langsame Heimkehr* (*The Long Way Round*), images of nature refer to psychic processes and projections. *Die Lehre der Sainte-Victoire* (*The Lesson of Mount Sainte-Victoire*) adds to this an autobiographically informed mythification of authorship. In parallel, Handke reconstructs developmental stages of his own socialization in *Kindergeschichte* when looking at his daughter Amina. In doing so, he makes clear the kinship between childlike and aesthetic imagination. In the dramatic poem *Über die Dörfer*, he thinks back to his real home and to the experiential space of the family. In his speech on receiving the Nobel Prize 2019, the significance of this return is once again emphasized and made recognizable as a prerequisite for his own writing.

Within the *Tetralogie*, *Die Lehre der Sainte-Victoire* forms the center and paradigm of autobiographically shaped poetological reflection. The earth explorer Sorger from *Langsame Heimkehr* has transformed himself into the author of *Die Lehre der Sainte-Victoire* and lives on in it in "vielen Blicken" (LSV 80). Handke's return to the aesthetic and philosophical tradition of Europe, which is consummated in *Die Lehre*, is thus put into the picture. In doing so, the narcissistic focus on the self combines an aesthetic orientation with a philosophical one. His search for a "Lehrmeister" (LSV 27) leads the narrator, like the author of *Die Lehre* to Cézanne, to the tradition of landscape painting. His descriptions of images design "Sehtafeln" to capture a "wiederkehrendes Phantasie- und Lebensbild" (LSV 18). He emphasizes the intrinsic relationship of text and image, viewing landscapes as systems of signs that can be read like writing.

This is connected to a philosophical consideration. The interpretation of Cézanne follows precisely the "Eindringen in die Gefahr der äußersten Beziehung zu den einfachen Dingen" (Laemmle 1981, 426–428) that Heidegger discovers in the latter. From the recognition of the connection that the images establish, the desire for a "Freiphantasieren" of the landscapes is founded, which is mediated to the narrative (LSV 79). This is not a presuppositionless inventing, but an 'unhiding' in the philosophical sense. It confirms a fundamental intertwining of poetry and thought. For the author, Cézanne's procedure of 'réalisation' corresponds to his own attempt to transform the aesthetic text into a theory in the original sense of Greek natural philosophy. At the same time, this form of imagination is intended to link aesthetic "fantasy images" with life-historical memories. The productive confusion as well as

the naming establishes a unity between the narrator's "most ancient past and present" (LSV 11).

This mythical genealogy of authorship frees the narrating self for memories. On the Montagne de Sainte-Victoire, the narrator can now discover what Cézanne's paintings first show him. Following this, he succeeds in a comparable perception in the 'Morzger Wäldchen' near Salzburg. As a primeval landscape and district of childhood, it links geographical spaces of experience, life-historical images and signs of memory in his imagination. It is no coincidence that this existentially exaggerated aesthetic experience is linked to a familial fantasy. The pair of eyes that the narrator fantasizes at the end of *Die Lehre der Sainte-Victoire* is its sign; it points directly to *Kindergeschichte*. The dramatic poem *Über die Dörfer* later continues this familial recoding of the aesthetic.

The seventh chapter shows how the convergence of aesthetic and philosophical design that defines the *Tetralogie* continues in *Der Chinese des Schmerzes* (*Across*) and *Die Wiederholung* (*Repetition*). In these texts, a dissociated self attempts to find new security through narrative. This attempt to rediscover the identity-creating power of language and poetry can be called Handke's 'Kehre' with reference to Heidegger's philosophy. Just as the philosopher searches for places of "Wohnen" and "Bauen" in order to be able to speak of the origin of man (Heidegger VO 25), the protagonist Loser uncovers the thresholds of ancient buildings in order to reconstruct them. His archaeology becomes an image for an aesthetic reconstruction of the lost. In keeping with a phrase from Handke's *Journale*, the threshold now reveals itself to him as "Schrift und Bild" (PW 78). It points to the architectonics of the world as understood by Heidegger and is at once a sign of the historical past and of an existential situation. Writing has to reconstruct both.

Unlike Heidegger, however, Handke's ontological dimension, which he simultaneously translates into a poetological one, is prepared at every point in the text by a psychological one. Vergil's formula of the "Tilia Levis", the light lime tree, transforms Loser into the name of a stranger whom he awaits at the airport. Aesthetic and erotic fantasy, conscious orientation and unconscious desire thus coincide. In the end, Loser becomes capable of a new life, grounded in the succession of Virgil, which also makes him a storyteller. He becomes a "Meister der Wiederholung" (GB 20, 209).

Die Wiederholung follows this existential-ontological orientation. Its title, which refers to Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* (*Being and Time*, SuZ 385; Heidegger UN 131), points firstly to the inclusion of themes and motifs from Handke's previous texts. Secondly, he follows their autobiographical trail. More clearly than before, the media of socialization, writing and language, gain significance. Thirdly, this leads to the protagonist Kobal also having to experience that every step into language is necessarily an appropriation of the given, a "Hören"/"hearing" and "Entsprechen"/"corresponding" in the existential-ontological sense (W 257; Heidegger UN 33). He seeks out a script painter as a teacher, and as a result, landscape images and script images overlap for him. Both become signs of a prior order that must be deciphered and transmuted into the space of the imagination as "Luftschrift".

However, stepping back behind things and images, renouncing descriptive and ordering categories, at the same time makes Kobal aware of the constraints of socialisation. On his return to the Slovenian countryside, the space of his own origins, the language of his childhood, which he has to learn again, appears to him as a medium of both liberation and limitation. The freedom of origin seems possible only beyond history; the new beginning had as its precondition a catastrophe, the signs of which are preserved in writing. At the same time, the true goal of the search for the brother becomes clear. It is not Kobal's intention to find him, but to tell about him. But this narration must not congeal into a writing which alone transmits the violence of socialization. Rather, according to the final fantasy of the text, it must "go further" by staying away from the concept.

The central theme of narrative, which consistently orients Handke's later texts, is already sketched out here as a decisive guideline linking autoanalytical and poetological reflection. Handke's subsequent texts continue this programme and condense it in ever new variations.

The text *Die Abwesenheit* (*Absence*) described as a 'fairy tale', presents situations that are aesthetically haunting and existentially interpretable with a narrowly defined constellation of characters. In the mode of fairy-tale narrative, some typical strategies and orientations of Handke's poetology are even more sharply contoured than in his other texts. This applies in particular to the alternation between descriptive narration and the presentation of places and scenes that seem to be removed from reality. At the same time, some leitmotifs can certainly be read twice. Beyond mere denotation, they take on a philosophical meaning that opens up a reference back to the existential-philosophical contour of *Der Chinese des Schmerzes*.

Poetologically, this text aims at a representation of fulfilled moments to which the act of narration is supposed to lend duration. But all that this can achieve is the endowment of a "Dauer im Wechsel" in Goethe's sense. This results in a contrasting of one's own world ("Eigenwelt"), one's own time ("Eigenzeit"), and historical time ("historische Zeit"), as it also preludes and accompanies philosophical reflection on the "Eigensinn des Ästhetischen" (Adorno). The poetological resolution of this tension occurs here, as in other texts, through a movement of the figures in space. It establishes the rhythm of the narrative, which, as in other texts by Handke, also enables new perceptions and experiences (Carstensen 2013, 189; Honold 2017, 11, 492).

The text *In einer dunklen Nacht ging ich aus meinem Haus* (*On a Dark Night I Left My Silent House*) takes up elements that also define *Mein Jahr in der Niemandsbucht* (*My Year in the No-Man's-Bay*): The focus on visual imagery, the narrative pattern of a circular movement through space, touching imaginary and real places alike. Alongside this is a clear intertextual reference to Chrétien des Troyes' *Lancelot* and a chronotopia that can be ascribed to the adventure as to the narrative in Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. Here, too, the recourse to medieval epic and fairy tale is not escapism but a procedure for sharpening the view of the present. The memory of the traditional texts and the present perception contour each other in superimposition. Moreover, the striking framing of the narrated images follows Handke's poetology of epic storytelling, which allows visual schemes to emerge

again and again. In this way, the Apothecary's walk across the Steppe becomes both a narrative and a perceptual experiment.

Because the protagonist's movement in space, which is also a search for the lost language (IN 86), is carried by an indeterminate "desire" (IN 87), the traditional narrative schema reveals itself to be inscribed with a completely different story. It reenacts the constitution of the ego through language and the related object constitution as described by Jacques Lacan (Lacan Schrr I, 61–70). In the end, Handke eludes the given traditional narrative patterns he uses in this text. When the protagonist of the narrative becomes a narrator himself at the end, he also emancipates himself beyond the reported stories. Moreover, his self-setting gains contour precisely because at other points in this text "history" appears as an autonomous order from which none of the acting characters, not even the apothecary himself, can escape. The ultimately fatalistic view of history that will determine the texts of *Kali*, *Der große Fall* (*The Great Fall*), and *Die Obstdiebin. Oder Einfache Fahrt ins Landesinnere* is already indicated here.

A comparable treatment of a traditional theme also characterizes *Don Juan* (*erzählt von ihm selbst*), (*Don Juan – His Own Version*), which aims at a formal depotentialization of all specifications from the tradition of this material. Firstly, because Handke's story of Don Juan takes on fairy-tale features; secondly, because the love theme is increasingly deprived of its sexual references; thirdly, and finally, because this story also ends up reflecting on narrative itself. Don Juan invades the narrator's garden because he is fleeing from a couple he witnessed having sex. This was not at all out of sexual interest, but rather because he was waiting to see if something different, something new, would show itself in this relationship (DJ 33).

In this way, Handke not only takes his cue from Juan de la Cruz's *Llama de Amor viva* and Nietzsche, but also falls back on a central idea of his earlier texts: Don Juan experiences the "andere Zeitsystem" (DJ 77). His stories with seven women never happen in "der gewohnten Zeit" but in truth "in keiner Zeit" (DJ 102 f.). This notion is directly linked to a fairy-tale fantasy of the power of storytelling. The lover is transformed into a narrator; this transformation is biblically encoded, for it occurs between the Ascension and Pentecost. Moreover, the miracle of language is combined with a fairy-tale miracle of nature (DJ 24). The fantasy seems to be fulfilled that narrative itself could become a "Zeugen im Geist", as Thomas Mann once fantasized as a reader of Plato (TMW 8, 493; Reed 1984, 103). Behind this lies a poetological program that aims at the representation of the immediacy of the moment instead of linear contexts. In the text of *Don Juan*, it is expressed through the dissociation of the unobstructed gaze from the media mediations of language and writing. The last sentence of the book, "Don Juans Geschichte kann kein Ende haben, und das ist, sage und schreibe, die endgültige und wahre Geschichte Don Juans" (DJ 159), calls for abandoning conventional love stories and finding another form of storytelling that gains its persuasive power from itself.

Not unlike in the text of *Mein Jahr in der Niemandsbucht*, which repeatedly crosses the boundary between autobiography and autofiction (Wagner-Egelhaaf 2016, 15–21; Röhnert 2014), in *Bildverlust* both individual images and entire narrative passages can be read multiply because they can be assigned to different contexts

that overlap. The narrated story, which at first glance follows a linear order, is repeatedly interrupted by inserted narratives, foreshadowing or back-referencing. At their points of contact, complex metonymic entanglements occur, whose proximity to Proust's metonymic metaphor is unmistakable (Keller 1991, 248).

In describing the geographical space of the Sierra de Gredos, verifiable place names are mixed with fanciful names such as "Nuevo Bazar", or of those that intertwine near and far, familiar, and foreign, such as Spain, Serbia and Alaska (Luckscheiter 2012, 143). Moreover, from the outset, the text, set in a near future, is as much linked to images of the present as it is to memories of the past. At the same time, it constantly refers to another text, Cervantes' *Don Quixote*. This is shown on the one hand by his complex narrative structure (Pichler 2013, 35), and on the other hand by his memories of Cervantes' descriptions of the landscape (MJN 925). That the actual relationship to this author is more fundamental, however, beyond the quotations and formal similarities, is evidenced by the conclusion of the text (BV 709). There, not only is the fundamental question raised as to who is actually narrating in this novel, but reflection on the medium of writing now moves alongside the reflection on the medium of the image, which determines long stretches of the text. With the central question of how reality can be rendered through the signs of language, the modern author, like his predecessor, finds himself referred to the necessity of "Spielen mit Zeichen und Ähnlichkeiten" (Foucault 1971, 79, 81). In this way, too, a constellation of the early work is repeated; at the same time, it becomes the core of an overarching poetology of narrative.

Chapter eight shows that a comparable poetological differentiation takes place parallel to the narratives in the so-called *Journale*, which appear between 1977 and 1982. They emerge from diary entries and, like the essays published under the title *Langsam im Schatten* in the *Gesammelte Verzettelungen 1980–1992* (*Slowly in the Shade. Collected Dispersals 1980–1992*), are comparable to the fictional texts in terms of structure and content.

Das Gewicht der Welt (*The Weight of the World*) attempts to overcome the "ewige Entzweiheit zwischen einem und der Welt" (GW 105) and relies entirely on the power of the "Ich-Gefühl" (GW 47), on narcissistic self-absorption, and on the attempt to think towards the moments in which the world becomes "spruchreif" (GW 171). The *Phantasien der Wiederholung* (*Fantasies of repetition*) relate poetological and ontological orientations. Their title refers to Sartre, and they define writing as an existential experience (PW 51). The law of succession, the "Freude des Wiederholens" now takes the place of a self-setting, directed at literary and philosophical tradition. Die *Geschichte des Bleistifts* (*The story of the pencil*) transforms the poetological program of succession into a mythically exaggerated idea of authorship, which also relies entirely on the mastery of "repetition" (GB 315).

At the same time, the *Journale* sketch out set pieces of future texts. Their descriptions of nature, which increase in scope and intensity, link aesthetic images and authentic experiences. The desire to grasp the autonomous sign system of nature, not the unbound imagination, guides the writing here (GB 76). This becomes a "Nachsprechen der Welt" (GB 233), the view of the "persönliche Epos" (GW 315)

of the *Journale* evokes the desire to write only of the “Schnee in den Rocky Mountains” (GW 321).

Das Notizbuch (*Notebook*) published in 2015, which provides an insight into the relationship of Handke’s notebooks in the narrower sense to the autoreflexive records of the *Journale*, gains its significance for narrative in the fictional texts by decisively differentiating the opposition of nature and civilisation, which forms a guiding principle not only in *Langsame Heimkehr*. On the one hand, the narrator feels himself to be a “Zivilisationsdämon” (NB 35); on the other hand, nature and landscape are therefore given a special function for him. They mark an area of protection: the fantasy of being absorbed by nature is linked to the image of a shell, which appears as a graphic on the cover of the printed version of *Langsame Heimkehr* (NL 34).

Am Felsfenster morgens (und andere Ortszeiten 1982–1987) paradigmatically documents the significance of visual perception that informs the *Journale*. Handke refers to the notations presented here merely as “Reflexe, unwillkürliche, gleichwohl bedeutsame” (AF 7). He explicitly rejects the designation ‘diary’ and speaks of a book characterized by the “Einheit zwischen Reflex, Reflexion und Gegenstand” that is, from the outset he wants to mediate seeing and thinking to one another (AF 97). The cover of the first edition combines an ornamental configuration with an arrow and can thus be related to a definition of literature that sketches an interrelation between the visual and the reflexive, between image and word: “Literatur: Es genügt nicht das Bild – es muß jenes eine (1) Wort dazukommen, welches das Bild erst zum Bild-Pfeil macht” (AF 431), notes a notation.

Psychologically, these notes reflect a simultaneously conscious and unconscious fixation on the theme of origins, as had already been indicated in *Über die Dörfer* at the end of the *Tetralogie*. It is a line that finds its clearest expression to date in *Immer noch Sturm*, but equally informs texts such as *Die Morawische Nacht*. This turnaround is expressed in the first place by the fact that the “Felsfenster” is also a time window that opens up vistas into completely different “Ortszeiten”, the most important of which is childhood. However, the expectation of an account of historical events or historical processes aroused by the name Thucydides is expressly avoided. The secret core of the texts is rather their attempt to write a different history, based solely on contemplation. It is a sequence of images that does not generate causalities. It systematically thwarts the law of general history and of events occurring in the context of history.

The journal *Gestern unterwegs* (*Yesterday on the Road*) brings together notes from November 1987 to July 1990. The constant change of location that took place during this time has the consequence that in this text the pure “Mit – Schreiben” is repeatedly replaced by a “nachträglichen, leicht zeitversetzten Notieren” (GU 5). Here, too, a basic figure is formed by the interplay between memory and the present, which establishes a reflection on one’s own productive activity with a view to the history of one’s youth. In doing so, the text records both the author’s traumatic experiences at boarding school (GU 57, 208, 326) and his liberation through an orientation towards antiquity, which – according to a guiding concept of his own writing – was “voll klarer Zwischenräume” (GU 56).

This is different in *Ein Jahr aus der Nacht gesprochen* (*A Year Spoken from the Night*), where the author writes down exclusively sentences and scenes that are directly attributed to sleep. In a conversation he remarks about these notes: “Irgendwie habe ich innerlich aufgehört, ich wurde wach, manchmal mitten in der Nacht, manchmal am frühen Morgen. Ich habe mir die Sätze, die Bilder durch den Kopf gehen lassen und sie dann aufgeschrieben” (Greiner 2010). They do not, however, provide an unbiased view of the author. As dream narratives in the literal sense, they do on the one hand reveal the role of dreams in Handke’s writing. On the other hand, these notations naturally record transformations of the latent dream content into the manifest dream. As such, they are fundamentally concerned with communication and narration, and are thus dependent on adherence to discursive rules.

Compared to the programmatic and condensed reflections on life and work history in *Gestern unterwegs*, the collection of notations in the most recent journal to date, entitled *Vor der Baumschattenwand nachts. Zeichen und Anflüge von der Peripherie* appears considerably less structured. Moreover, it is a sequence of quite different text forms and segmented texts. In accordance with the chosen motto “das Denken ist nicht in den Haupt-, sondern in den Zeitwörtern” (VB 317), the writer repeatedly searches for verbal circumlocutions, for example verbs for love (VB 367) or for poetry (VB 257). Alongside these are aphorisms by the author, speech verses, and quotations from other authors. Many of them are also designed for interpretation or reinterpretation (VB 110, 276) and open up perspectives on the history of the work through the theme of writing and reading.

It is remarkable how this *Journal* repeatedly refers to Goethe. The journalist describes him as “eine Art Vaterloser, hochfahrend-hoffärtig” (VB 404). It is a formula that certainly corresponds to his own self-image, which is now both legitimized and contoured by the reference to another. Moreover, this constellation opens up another central phantasm of one’s own life, called “Mein” myth. It is a thoroughly irritating identification with Christ that follows a reinterpretation of the Isaac story (VB 172, 383). All in all, this continues the reference back to Christ as the Son of God, who already determines *Gestern unterwegs* (*Yesterday on the Road*, GU 390, 514).

Chapter nine deals with the central link between fictional and autofictional writing that is constitutive of Handke’s work, using the examples of *Mein Jahr in der Niemandsbucht* and *Die Morawische Nacht*. For the text *Mein Jahr in der Niemandsbucht*, the tension between these registers is fundamental. It is linked to both in multiple and complex ways. First, because it reconstructs a phase of the author’s life autobiographically and at the same time opens up perspectives on the fictional work. Secondly, because the I who speaks in *Mein Jahr in der Niemandsbucht* bears traits of both the author and his characters.

The I speaking there can be compared to the first-person narrator of Proust’s *À la Recherche du temps perdu*, who is also intertwined with his author. “Der Ich sagt, der Ich aber nicht immer bin” Proust paraphrases this fact (Proust 1963, 61; Keller 1991, 207 f.). However, because Handke’s first-person narrator Keuschnig bears the name of the character in another text, the relationship between fiction and reality, fictional and factual narration, author and character takes on another dimension. By

allowing itself to be related to the history of the author's work, it intertwines his biographical with his intellectual development. The demarcation between the author Handke, the narrator in *Mein Jahr in der Niemandsbucht* and the figures of Handke's work, who appear in altered form in *Mein Jahr in der Niemandsbucht*, is playfully crossed again and again in the narrative.

Die Morawische Nacht opens up references back to both the text *Mein Jahr in der Niemandsbucht* and *Der Bildverlust*. At the same time, it contextualizes images that run through Handke's previous texts on Serbia. Both the concept of an autofiction in the first text and the narrative-theoretical reflection from the second text are now brought together and linked in a new and almost aleatory way. The conclusion of the narrative makes everything that has been told before seem like a phantasmatic configuration that emerges solely from the imagination determining the narrative.

As a foreshadowing of this end, at which the coordinates of space and time dissolve, a passage appears in which the narrator informs us that the journey of the earlier author took place "in keiner Zeit". Explaining this, he adds that what actually counts in this travel story are "alle Zeiten", they are "miteinander, durcheinander, gegeneinander – parallele, gegenläufige, einander zuwiderlaufende, durchkreuzende" (MN 45). In a reflection on narrative itself, the poetological notion of "Erzählzeit" is juxtaposed with the notions of "Zählzeit" and "Erzählzwangzeit" also negotiated in *Don Juan* (DJ 156). In Handke's immanent poetology, they circumscribe different strategies for reproducing and linking life-historical processes in such a way that they explain and correct each other.

The tenth chapter describes the *Versuche* (Essays) produced between 1989 and 2013, the second of which, the *Versuch über die Jukebox* (Essay on the Jukebox), still bears the subtitle of a "Erzählung" in the first edition, and the last of which, the *Versuch über den Pilznarren. Eine Geschichte für sich* (Essay on the Mushroom Hunter), is first described as "eine Geschichte" in its own right. All of them cannot be clearly classified as a type of text. Moreover, they take up considerations that are already prefigured in *Nachmittag eines Schriftstellers* (Afternoon of a Writer). Even before Handke tells the double story of his life and writing in *Mein Jahr in der Niemandsbucht*, some of the *Versuche* establish an intermediate form between auto-reflection, autoanalysis and fictional draft. In doing so, they practice a form of inauthentic speech by developing further and associative reflections from immediate descriptions.

Thus, the jukebox, which is the subject of the second text, is not only a nostalgically considered object of the history of civilization, but it also represents the guiding metaphor for the law of construction of the *Versuche* as a whole. It represents nothing other than an archive of medially transformed memories whose songs provide the leitmotifs for experiences in the past and their mobilization in states of mind in the present (Honold 2017, 317). Similarly, The "*Versuche*" *Über die Müdigkeit* (Essay on Tiredness), *Über den geglückten Tag* (Essay on the Successful Day), or *Über den Stillen Ort* (Essay on the Quite Place), whose observations visualize social contexts, at the same time relate them to their own experiences, especially to memories. This intermedial configuration is joined by other medially mediated memories, especially film sequences. *Versuch über den Pilznarren* is of

particular importance in this series because, like *Mein Jahr in der Niemandsbucht* and *Die Morawische Nacht*, it follows an autofictional line. The story of the *Pilznarren* is that of a doppelganger of the author. It mirrors the latter's memories of his own origins and development, partly in playful irony, but also through indirect references. Because it begins in childhood, refers to Slovenia and, in the end, has the *Mushroom Hunter* become a criminal defence lawyer at an international court, it bears traits of a self-description by the author.

The eleventh chapter outlines Handke's confrontation with Serbia in the wake of the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia. It marks a turning point that fundamentally changes the author's life and work (MJN 158). When the latter became the focus of a public criticism that he certainly provoked but probably did not really expect in this way, the basic figure of his role as a writer in public discourse after 1966 seemed to repeat itself. On the one hand, this led to an ever sharper contouring of his own stance, and on the other, to self-criticism and self-doubt, which found expression in both narrative and dramatic texts. *Die Morawische Nacht*, *Immer noch Sturm* or *Die Fahrt im Einbaum (Voyage by Dugout)* provide examples of this. The focus on social reality reflected in *Wunschloses Unglück* is now followed by an examination of political reality. It contours the tension between the real and the poetic world that has been dealt with repeatedly in earlier texts, but it stands in a more complex context. On the one hand, this is because the opinion on the appropriate attitude of the West towards Serbia, which began to prevail after 1996, was only possible on the basis of a change of discourse among German literati and intellectuals, which was to be completed only with the year 1989. Secondly, this is also because the formation of public discourse in the developed media society was subject to its own laws. It seems like an irony of history that this very fact also determined the renewed public discussion about Handke's attitude to Serbia on the occasion of the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2019. This radicalized the criticism and certainly took on forms of a "Hetzjagd" (Melle 2019). The self-criticism of the media formulated after the first wave of discussion seemed to be forgotten, partly questionable and partly absurd factual conflations now took place as well as demonstrable misreadings of Handke's texts (Stokowski 2019; Bremer 2019), differentiated statements were the exception (Assheuer 2019; Müller 2019).

With a view to the war in Yugoslavia, Handke not only directs attention to the peculiarities of media-mediated public discourse in the introduction to *Eine Winterliche Reise zu den Flüssen Donau, Save, Morawa und Drina oder Gerechtigkeit für Serbien (A Journey to the Rivers: Justice for Serbia)*. There he also fundamentally and critically addresses the truth content of information in the media age (WR 56). In addition, his examination of Serbia also has poetological consequences, because it takes up and reinforces two guidelines that have always determined his own writing (WR 69). On the one hand, the autofictional recoding leads back to the history of his family, which belongs to the Slovene minority in Carinthia. In it, the author finds coordinates of his own life that already shaped *Die Wiederholung (Repetition)* but can now be related to the West's current conflict with Serbia. On the other hand, the fundamental dissonance between the poetic view of

the world and writing, the medially conveyed image of reality and experienced history, comes to a head.

An example of this is provided by the text *Rund um das große Tribunal* (*Around the Great Tribunal*), in which Vermeer's *View of Delft* becomes a counter-design of a prevailing political system that attempts to make its actions unquestionable in legal terms and through recourse to modern communication media (RT 21, 35). The images and leitmotifs developed in the confrontation with the Serbian war and its legal reappraisal by the International Court of Justice subsequently also organize Handke's plays and texts. Thematically, they are recognizable in *Die Fahrt im Einbaum* and *Die Morawische Nacht*. At the same time, as references and quotations, they permeate all later texts up to *Die Obstdiebin*. *Der Bildverlust* in particular describes social constellations reminiscent of the Balkans before, during and after the war. Moreover, these references to Serbia are closely linked to the general theme of history, which acquires a central role not only in the texts and film adaptations of *Die Abwesenheit* (*Absence*) and *Die schönen Tage von Aranjuez* (*The Beautiful Days of Aranjuez*), but especially in the texts critical of civilization in *Kali* and *Der große Fall*. The essay *Noch einmal für Thukydides* (*Once more for Thucydides*) proves to be a guiding text for opening up this interrelation.

The twelfth chapter describes how Handke, in his plays after 1989, falls back on approaches that already determined his first dramatic drafts, and at the same time radicalizes them. In the process, the recourse to the theme of 'Yugoslavia' leads to a clearer political contouring. With *Die Stunde da wir nichts voneinander wußten* (*The Hour We Knew Nothing Of Each Other*) the author initially follows the experimental approach of *Das Mündel will Vormund sein* (*The Ward Wants To Be Warden*), and the spoken plays operating as "Schauspiele ohne Bilder" (ST1 21). The actors on stage do not represent roles in their "Sich-Einspielen" (DS 9), but remain dancing, fleeting, changing bodily figures. The reduction of the action of the figures to gestures and movements, which also determines *Spuren der Verirrten* (*The Traces of the Lost*), where the stage is transformed into a mere showplace, continues this mode of representation.

A comparable experimental strategy determines the texts Handke writes for Mladen Materić's play *La cuisine*. It continues in *Untertagblues: Ein Stationendrama* (*Underground Blues: a Station Play*) and finally in *Bis daß der Tag euch scheidet oder eine Frage des Lichts* (*Till Day Do You Part, or, A Question of Light*). In contrast *Das Spiel vom Fragen oder Die Reise zum sonoren Land*, (*Voyage to the Sonorous Land or the Art of Asking*) takes up the mythical constellations of *Über die Dörfer*.

In *Bis daß der Tag euch scheidet*, the word 'tempest', which opens a reference to Shakespeare, was already a metaphor for a problematic relationship between husband and wife. In *Immer noch Sturm*, it metaphorizes the relationships of three generations of a family and the particular historical constellation that shaped them (BTS 27). Because this play also opens up a view of the author Handke's real family history, it becomes a paradigm for the interplay of autofiction and fiction that increasingly characterizes the author's later plays and texts. Everything that happens is mediated through the radically subjective gaze of an 'I' who appears as a

character alongside the family members. The drama of his interior is mirrored in a change of scene and setting in the exterior. In *Bis daß der Tod euch scheidet* (*Till Day You Do Part Or A Question of Light*) too, the stage is about a drama of the interior. At the same time, a historical constellation is shown in which the question of the relationship between law and justice in the succession of war and peace takes on a central role (ZU 92).

From this perspective, *Die Fahrt im Einbaum*, performed in 1999, refers to Handke's texts about Serbia as well as to the public debate about them. The spoken word piece, which can be seen as a new "Nachtrag" to the Balkan war, combines basic patterns and images of Handke's poetology with the guiding formulas of the media-driven discourse on the war in Yugoslavia. His intention to challenge the audience to react is already prefigured within the piece through an interaction of actors and observers. This results in a double game with the identity of the ego and a theatre depending on contoured genre forms.

This constellation continues in the two plays *Die schönen Tage von Aranjuez* and *Die Unschuldigen, ich und die Unbekannte am Rand der Landstraße* (*The Innocent, Me and the Unknown Woman by the Side of the Road*). The first text already thwarts the unambiguousness of its designation as a play with its designation as a "Sommerdialog"; the second, under the title *Ein Schauspiel in vier Jahreszeiten* (*A Play in Four Seasons*), deals with formal specifications in a similarly playful manner. It takes up the classification as a play in a literal form. As in *Spuren der Verirrten* (*Traces of the Lost*), the setting of the stage becomes a co-actor, especially as it makes visible a real place and phantasmatic projections of the ego at the same time (SV 14). In this play of forms, splinters of autobiographical references are brought together as in a "bricolage" (Derrida 1967, 418).

The thirteenth chapter describes how the influence of the media of film and images shapes Handke's writing in different ways. It also shows how the productive engagement with film gains a central role in Handke's film adaptations of his own texts and in his collaboration with Wim Wenders, which in turn communicates itself to the texts. The first film projects follow the approach of the author's early plays and texts. *Die Chronik der laufenden Ereignisse* (*Chronicle of Current Events*) and *Falsche Bewegung* (*The Wrong Move*) can be seen as experiments with the forms of representation of this medium and the laws of visual perception. The *Chronik* deals with the competition between film and television images; at the same time, it is a "Chronik der Fernsehbilder, die in der Bundesrepublik in den Jahren 1968 und 1969 [...] gezeigt wurden" (CLE 128 f.). The text of *Falsche Bewegung* has been seen as a "Prosaauflösung" of a screenplay (Durzak 1982, 141); the film of the same name aims both at a demonstration of image-seeing and at opening up the special relationship between image and writing (FB 16, 18). The inner law of television reality also determines the protagonist's writing. Conversely, the film uses the literary model of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, which it retells, retold and used as a blueprint for a new story (FB 77 f.; Pütz 1975, 69). In the same move, Handke inscribes images of his own life and signifiers of his own texts into Wilhelm's story.

Wim Wenders' film version of *Die Angst des Tormanns beim Elfmeter* (*The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick*) translates central motifs and visual