

TRACING THE CHAINS OF THOUGHT IN THE APHORISTIC WRITING OF LUDWIG  
HOHL (WITH REFERENCE TO SEVERAL ASPECTS OF THE APHORISTIC WRITING  
OF FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE AND PETER HANDKE)

by

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the use of aphorism in the work (*Notizenwerk*) of Ludwig Hohl and selected passages of Friedrich Nietzsche and Peter Handke in order to demonstrate the connections (*Zusammenhänge*) between aphorisms, taking seriously what aphoristic writers say about their own work, i.e. that aphorisms are the result of long secret chains of thought (Nietzsche). The study thereby addresses a gap in the research identified by Neumann. Concurring with Fedler, this thesis understands aphorism as combining conceptual with metaphorical (non-conceptual) thought and chains of thought are investigated on different levels. The dissertation illustrates that aphoristic writers dissolve conceptual boundaries and have elaborate concepts of phantasy (*Phantasie*), confirming Blumenberg's view that wherever the conceptual is questioned, phantasy will be re-evaluated. In the course of this, Kassner's influence on Hohl and Hohl's influence on Handke will be shown. With the help of *Begriffsgeschichte* the thesis will demonstrate unity underlying Hohl's *Notizen*, that aphorisms are capable of expressing a complex life-affirming theory, and that furthermore the aphorism cannot be understood without an existential, ineffable and personal dimension. An ontological fragmentariness underlies aphoristic writing, meaning that there is no opposition between aphorism and fragment and that instead aphorisms are inherently fragmentary.

**DEDICATION**

To R. W.K.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

Generally: All emphases and omissions by the quoted writers themselves and their spelling idiosyncrasies (e.g. Arno Schmidt) are not corrected.

### References to Ludwig Hohl's Work

References to Hohl's work will be made according to their abbreviation and page number, apart from the *Notizen*, the *Nachnotizen* and *Nuancen und Details* which constitute Hohl's Notizenwerk. Regarding the *Notizen* and the *Nuancen und Details* the reference will consist of the roman numbers referring to the chapters and arabic numbers referring to aphorism number, for example: N II 121, NuD III 4. When referring to proverbs or the introduction of the *Notizen*, page numbers will be used, for example: N, p. 6. For the *Nachnotizen* reference is to the aphorism number: example NN 334. References from the *Jugendtagebuch* and *Mut und Wahl* will be given by page number, example: JT p. 20, MW p. 56.

- NuD — Hohl, Ludwig, *Nuancen und Details* (Olten und Freiburg: Walter Verlag, 1964).  
N — Hohl, Ludwig, *Die Notizen oder von der unvoreiligen Versöhnung* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1981)  
NN — Hohl, Ludwig, *Von den hereinbrechenden Rändern: Nachnotizen* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1986).  
JT — Hohl, Ludwig, *Jugendtagebuch* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1998).  
MW — Hohl, Ludwig, *Mut und Wahl. Aufsätze zur Literatur* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1992).

### References to Peter Handke's works

- GW — Handke, Peter, *Das Gewicht der Welt* (Salzburg: Residenz Verlag, 1977).  
PH — Handke, Peter, *Phantasien der Wiederholung* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1983).  
LH — Handke, Peter, *Langsame Heimkehr* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1984).  
GB — Handke, Peter, *Die Geschichte des Bleistifts* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1985).  
NS — Handke, Peter, *Nachmittag eines Schriftstellers* (Salzburg & Wien: Residenz, 1987).  
ZW — Handke, Peter, *Aber ich lebe nur von den Zwischenräumen: Ein Gespräch, geführt von Herbert Gamper* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1990).  
NB — Handke, Peter, *Mein Jahr in der Niemandsbucht* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1994).  
FM — Handke, Peter, *Am Felsfenster morgens (und andere Ortszeiten 1982 - 1986)*, (Salzburg, Residenz Verlag, 1998).  
GU — Handke, Peter, *Gestern Unterwegs* (Salzburg und Wien: Jung und Jung, 2005).  
EF — Handke, Peter, *Das Ende des Flanierens* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1980).

## References to Friedrich Nietzsche's Work

References to Nietzsche's work are to the *Kritische Studienausgabe* KSA and, where applicable, according to the system of the Nijmegen Nietzsche Research Group, using the following German abbreviations for Nietzsche's different works and aphorism/section number, which is followed by a reference within the KSA, example: FW 244, KSA 3.514 = *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* Section 244, KSA volume 3, page 514.

- AC — Der Antichrist. Fluch auf das Christenthum
- EH — Ecce Homo. Wie man wird, was man ist
- FW — Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft
- GD — Götzendämmerung
- GM — Zur Genealogie der Moral. Eine Streitschrift
- GT — Die Geburt der Tragödie
- JGB — Jenseits von Gut und Böse. Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zukunft
- M — Morgenröthe. Gedanken über moralische Vorurteile
- MA — Menschliches, Allzumenschliches. Ein Buch für freie Geister
- NL — Nachgelassene Fragmente
- UB — Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen
- Z — Also sprach Zarathustra. Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen

KSA Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Colli & Montinari, (Munich/Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1988).

Reference to Nietzsche's Letters will be given as follows: addressee, date, volume and page reference from KSB, example: To von Meysenburg, 13.7.1882, KSB III.1.223.

KSB *Sämtliche Briefe. Kritische Studienausgabe*, eds. Colli & Montinari, 8 vols (München/Berlin: DTV/de Gruyter, 1986).

## Other abbreviations:

HdWPH — Ritter, J., ed, 13 vols, *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971 - 2007).

## I INTRODUCTION

This thesis traces the chains of thought in the aphoristic writing in the *Notizenwerk*<sup>1</sup> of Ludwig Hohl. This investigation arose from the need to show the interconnectedness of the aphorism, which stems from the fact that aphoristic writers tend to describe the aphorism as a result of a long chain of thought. Therefore I take up Neumann's suggestion<sup>2</sup> that the aphorism's connection with other aphorisms ought to be researched in order to show that it is, in contrast to Fricke's view, not an independent entity.<sup>3</sup>

I follow largely Stephan Fedler's description<sup>4</sup> of the aphorism as conceptual play (*Begriffsspiel*) that combines concepts with poetic means. This thesis investigates the conceptual and the metaphorical part of the aphorism, examining the use of metaphors and concepts by aphoristic writers. This investigation is aided by brief considerations of the aphoristic writing of Friedrich Nietzsche and Peter Handke. On a theoretical basis, it makes use of the insights of Hans Blumenberg's work on metaphor and the unconceptual.

On a general level, using the example of Hohl, this thesis aims to show that aphoristic writing is able to express an aesthetic theory that is egalitarian and life affirming, and that the aphorism stands in the tradition of health, preservation of the individual and a life that escapes subsumption under a broad notion of the 'systematic'. Regarding Hohl in particular, a solution

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<sup>1</sup> *Notizenwerk* is a name for the following works of Hohl:

NuD — Hohl, Ludwig, *Nuancen und Details* (Olten und Freiburg: Walter Verlag, 1964).

N — Hohl, Ludwig, *Die Notizen oder von der unvoreiligen Versöhnung* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1981).

NN — Hohl, Ludwig, *Von den hereinbrechenden Rändern: Nachnotizen* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1986).

<sup>2</sup> Gerhard Neumann, 'Einleitung', in Gerhard Neumann (ed.), *Der Aphorismus* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1976), pp. 1-18, (p. 11).

<sup>3</sup> Harald Fricke, *Aphorismus* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1984).

<sup>4</sup> Stephan Fedler, *Der Aphorismus: Begriffsspiel zwischen Philosophie und Poesie* (Stuttgart: M&P Verlag für Wissenschaft und Forschung, 1992).

to the problem of unity in Hohl's writing is presented in three ways: as a process of reflection, on a conceptual level, and by way of personality. All those three elements inform each other. Furthermore, this thesis emphasises that the goal of Hohl's thought is life affirmation.

### **I.1. Methodological and Theoretical Considerations**

At the start of any such investigation is the question of what methodological and theoretical preconditions are assumed, and with what theoretical conditions the subject under investigation will be approached. Theoretical considerations will be first stated in general terms and thereafter specifically with regard to the aphorism and certain secondary literature on the aphorism (I.1.1). To focus on theoretical preconsiderations is particularly important because the problems related to the aphorism can partly be explained by certain theoretical assumptions. Those areas affected by wider theoretical implications are the worldview<sup>5</sup> with which one undertakes an investigation, the question of the aphorism's relation to philosophy and literature, the concept of phantasy and rationality, questions of the system and the individual (or in other words, the problem of the particular and the universal), structure and order of aphoristic writing and problems of interpreting the aphorism (whether the aphorism contradicts itself and how to interpret those contradictions). In the widest sense this thesis

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<sup>5</sup> 'Daß wir in mehr als einer Welt leben, ist die Formel für Entdeckungen, die die philosophische Erregung dieses Jahrhunderts ausmachen.' Hans Blumenberg, *Wirklichkeiten, in denen wir leben* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1981), p. 3.

stands in the tradition of a Humboldtian understanding of science, under the obligation to understand not just that what is visible but also what is invisible:<sup>6</sup>

Denn das Sprachstudium muss zwar allein um seiner selbst willen bearbeitet werden. Aber es trägt darum doch ebensowenig als irgend ein anderer Theil wissenschaftlicher Untersuchung seinen letzten Zweck in sich selbst, sondern ordnet sich mit allen andren dem höchsten und allgemeinen Zweck des Gesamtstreben des menschlichen Geistes unter, dem Zweck, dass die Menschheit sich klar werde über sich selbst und ihr Verhältnis zu allem Sichtbaren und Unsichtbaren.<sup>7</sup>

The focus on the invisible is relevant because the aphorism is characterised by an indicative element; it points beyond what it expresses and incorporates an element of language<sup>8</sup> that according to Liebrucks allows us to experience ‘jene stummen Gestaltqualitäten, an denen alles höhere Leben, nicht nur in der Kunst, hängt’.<sup>9</sup> This insight, that the most important things in life and art cannot be expressed entirely,<sup>10</sup> is of fundamental importance for the aphorism, and any description of the aphorism needs to take this into account. This has consequences for the problem of definition because the aphorism has escaped traditional

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<sup>6</sup> ‘I thought I might turn around, draw their attention to the subject of my attention, but what could I say to them, I wondered: how to tell them something that had no name, how to tell them something that officially does not even exist?’ David Albahari, *Words are something else* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press 1996), p. 169.

Apart from the focus of that what has no name and officially doesn’t exist, two aspects of this quote are important: the mention of attention and of ‘official’. It is no coincidence that philosophers such as Blumenberg who described that which did not officially exist also explored concepts of attention. It may well be a shift of attention that is required of the aphorism and the way the aphorism shifts attention.

<sup>7</sup> Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Über den Dualis* (Gesammelte Schriften (Akademieausgabe), ed. Leitzmann, 1st edn, 17 vols (Berlin: B. Behr’s Verlag, 1903 - 1936), vi, p. 6).  
Olga Tokarczuk, *Unrast* (Frankfurt/Main: Schöffling & Co., 2009), p. 87.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Der Mensch denkt, fühlt und lebt allein in der Sprache, und muß erst durch sie gebildet werden, um auch die gar nicht durch Sprache wirkende Kunst zu verstehen. Aber er empfindet und weiß, daß sie ihm nur Mittel ist, daß es ein unsichtbares Gebiet außer ihr giebt, in dem er nur durch sie einheimisch zu werden trachtet. Die alltäglichste Empfindung und das tiefstinnigste Denken klagen über die Unzulänglichkeit der Sprache, und sehen jenes Gebiet als ein fernes Land an, zu dem nur sie, und sie nie ganz führt. Alles höhere Sprechen ist ein Ringen mit dem Gedanken, in dem bald mehr die Kraft, bald die Sehnsucht fühlbar wird.’  
Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Über den Nationalcharakter der Sprachen*, iv, p. 432.

<sup>9</sup> Bruno Liebrucks, *Sprache und Bewußtsein*, 1st edn, 7 vols (Frankfurt/Main: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1965), ii, p. 83.

<sup>10</sup> ‘Gedanken und Worte. -- Man kann auch seine Gedanken nicht ganz in Worten wiedergeben.’ FW 244, KSA 3.514.

models of definition that demand that everything can be defined without anything remaining hidden or invisible. The aphorism, however, is an entity that is partially incomprehensible, due to the fact that it reflects a state of affairs according to which not everything is immediately accessible<sup>11</sup> and, according to Hohl, it is the very task of the artist to focus on the ineffable.<sup>12</sup> Morson's approach does justice to that inaccessible or 'mystic' element in the aphorism. Blumenberg's theory of the non-conceptual gives philosophical vocabulary to this aspect of its necessary and inevitable muteness, and this helps to explore the double nature<sup>13</sup> of the aphorism: the non-conceptual (metaphorical) and conceptual element. Therefore the recourse to the tradition of *Begriffsgeschichte*<sup>14</sup> is useful for the investigation of the aphorism. In order to understand Hohl's view of the unity of his aphorisms, Stadler made reference to

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<sup>11</sup> 'Ich will sagen, dass die Welt übervoll von schönen Dingen ist, aber trotzdem arm, sehr arm an schönen Augenblicken und Enthüllungen dieser Dinge.' FW 339, KSA 3.569.

Aris Fioretos writes of the poems of Nelly Sachs that they are like enigmas due to their partial inaccessibility, and the same can be said for the aphorism. This also requires a specific skill of reading which is in turn often demanded by aphoristic writers in their explicit formulations of how they would like their perfect reader to read their enigmatic aphorisms. 'Like enigmas, they illuminated without explanation. Thus implying that a different sort of reading was required: one that doesn't assume the meaning of a poem as a treasure to be unearthed and exported. Inaccessibility was part of its appearance. As was obscurity.'

Aris Fioretos, *Nelly Sachs. Flight and Metamorphosis* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> cf. VI.3.1

<sup>13</sup> 'Man kann sagen, daß mit der modernen Denkweise zwei Grundüberzeugungen in Beziehung auf die Selbstverständigung des Menschen verbunden sind: dass sich diese Selbstverständigung unter der Bedingung einer grundsätzlichen Ungewissheit vollziehen muss; und dass keine Selbstverständigung überzeugen kann, die nicht zugleich auch verständlich macht, dass sich das Leben des Menschen in Ambivalenzen, in Antinomien und in einander widerstrebenden Tendenzen vollzieht.'

Dieter Henrich, *Denken und Selbstsein* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2007), p. 56.

<sup>14</sup> *Begriffsgeschichte* can be described as such: 'Sie erweist die geschichtliche Wirksamkeit der Begriffe und bringt Aufklärung über ihren funktionalen Stellenwert im philosophischen Begriffssystem.' *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. J. Ritter, 13 vols, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971 - 2007), i, p. 807.

'Aufhellung der geschichtlichen Wirksamkeit macht Begriffe für die philosophische Reflexion brauchbar und schafft den genügend begründeten Rückhalt für ihre stringente Anwendung; dadurch kann Begriffsgeschichte den Graben zwischen Historismus und normativer Bedeutungssetzung schliessen' HdWPH, i, p. 799. This means that conceptual history can combine a historical and systematic approach towards concepts, this is relevant when one considers the double nature of the aphorism.

the work of Blumenberg. According to Stadler, this unity lies in the shape of the book, as it is the ability of books to give disparate elements a unity.<sup>15</sup>

This thesis stands also in the methodological tradition of Peter Szondi's idea of *philologische Erkenntnis*. In this sense the method of exegesis of texts is: 'Sie [Die Auslegung A.S.] versucht, den statischen Zusammenhang des Faktischen, den die Verzettlung zu Belegen allemal zerreit, in der Rekonstruktion des Entstehungsvorgangs dynamisch nachzuvollziehen.'<sup>16</sup> The focus on *Zusammenhnge* relates directly to the question of how aphorisms are connected with each other. According to Szondi, change is necessary in how one looks at *Zusammenhnge*. This must be done in a dynamic way if a work of art is to be properly understood, and that means a historical rather than ahistorical reading – and here Szondi refers to Adorno who claims that the only way aesthetics can be possible nowadays is by way of looking at the 'Logik ihres Produziertseins'<sup>17</sup> and finding a way of understanding works of art beyond the purely conceptual and the naive. This by no means necessitates giving in to relativism, but it does involve tracing and analysing the innate order of, in this case, the aphorism. In order to understand the 'Logik des Produziertseins', two concepts have been developed by me in the context of my study of Hohl's work. These are the concept and method of *Zusammenhnge* and the concept of ontological fragmentariness. The concept of

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<sup>15</sup> Ulrich Stadler, "Die Notizen" oder Von der unerreichbaren Vollendung einer Sammlung. Versuch einer Gattungsbestimmung', *Text + Kritik: Ludwig Hohl*, 161, I (2004), 43-60., p. 53.  
Hans Blumenberg, *Die Lesbarkeit der Welt* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1996), pp. 17-18.

<sup>16</sup> Peter Szondi, 'Über philologische Erkenntnis', in: Peter Szondi, *Schriften I*, 2 vols, (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1978), i, pp. 263-283 (p. 280).

<sup>17</sup> 'Die Fähigkeit, Kunstwerke von innen, in der Logik ihres Produziertseins zu sehen - eine Einheit von Vollzug und Reflexion, die sich weder hinter Naivetät verschanzt, noch ihre konkreten Bestimmungen eilfertig in den allgemeinen Begriff verflüchtigt, ist wohl die allein mögliche Gestalt von Ästhetik heute.' Theodor W. Adorno, 'Valéry's Abweichungen', in: Theodor W. Adorno, *Noten zur Literatur* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), pp. 158-202 (p. 159).

*Zusammenhang* is one of Hohl's own and has consequences for our understanding of *Beweise*.

Hohl, echoing Tennyson,<sup>18</sup> said that nothing worth proving can be proven. This raises in a

more secular sense the question of justification.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, Hohl insisted on the

importance of attempts to prove because the attempts show us the connections

(*Zusammenhänge*) between things (cf. III.4). The concept of *Zusammenhänge* is the ordering

principle of the chains of thought (cf. III.3). Ontological fragmentariness is a concept

developed by me out of Hohl's concept of being, which says that all our actions remain

fragmentary and that we also have only a fragmentary perception of being and reality

(therefore there is a twofold concept of reality in Hohl, *das Wirkliche* and *das Reale*).

### **I.1.1 Theoretical Considerations regarding previous Research into the Aphorism**

The aphorism has always been haunted by the problem of definition, it is almost impossible to

define the aphorism with reference to other short modes. As Gerhard Neumann states:

Letztendlich bleibt wohl nichts anderes übrig, als das Problem solcher  
Gattungsbestimmung dialektisch zu behandeln: die Eigenart jedes Autors in  
aller Differenziertheit sich zu vergegenwärtigen und sodann auf einen mit

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<sup>18</sup> N II 179, VII 116

'For nothing worthy proving can be proven, / Nor yet disproven: wherefore thou be wise, / Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt, / And cling to Faith beyond the forms of Faith!'

Alfred Lord Tennyson, *Tiresias and other Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1885), p. 57.

<sup>19</sup> cf. 'Sokrates und Schopenhauer war gemeinsam, daß sie auf die Frage *Wozu Philosophie?* keinesfalls die Antwort zulassen wollten: *Weil man davon leben kann*. Einer, der von Philosophie lebt, muß vorsichtig sein mit der Konfession, er lebe für die Philosophie, gar mit der Pathosformel eines der großen dieses Jahrhunderts, er hätte ohne die Philosophie nicht leben können. Daran muß Zweifel erlaubt sein: Es läßt sich auch ohne Philosophie leben. Der Mensch ist nahezu dadurch definitionsfähig, daß er ohne das meiste leben kann. Mir würde die Stärke der Erklärung bei weitem genügen, jemand möchte *nicht mehr* ohne Philosophie leben. Nur wenn es das gibt und weil es das geben kann, ist die Frage nach dem *Wozu?* der Philosophie lästig: Sie wird von den Falschen an die Falschen gestellt.'

Hans Blumenberg, *Zu den Sachen und zurück* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2002), p. 15.

cf. 'Muß es immer noch sein? Drängt die gleichmütig-gleichgültige Welt immer noch den Künstler, den Dichter in die Enge, so daß er nicht bloß schaffen und das Geschaffene darbringen kann, muß er es immer noch beweisen, daß es auch etwas ist, daß es zuverlässig ist, Fülle des inneren Lebens, die sich im Wort gestaltet.'

Konrad Bänninger, 'Rechtfertigung des Künstlers. *Zu Ludwig Hohls Nuancen und Details*', in Johannes Beringer (ed.), *Ludwig Hohl* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), pp. 13-16, p. 13.



Elastizität zu handhabenden Oberbegriff zu beziehen, der den Spielraum der Gattung eher öffnet als abschließt;<sup>20</sup>

Therefore a description<sup>21</sup> of the aphorism as it appears in Hohl, rather than a definition<sup>22</sup> of it, is attempted here. The aphorism will be analysed in a descriptive way instead of applying old definitions. Some definitions, Fricke's for instance, are so narrow that most of the commonly known aphoristic writers would not fit it. In order to avoid disfiguring and distorting the phenomenon of the aphorism by blindly applying a definition of the aphorism that would not do justice to it and, moreover, not shed any more light onto the nature of the aphorism, it seems preferable to describe the aphorism and to take seriously what aphoristic writers say about their own aphorisms; for instance, their statements that the aphorism is a result of a long, secret chain of thought.

A description in this context is based on what is common to aphoristic writing; more specifically, on characteristics shown by certain aphoristic writers. This will be explored more methodically using the concept of *Zusammenhänge*, which is a concept immanently developed out of Hohl's philosophy and which is related to the idea that according to him it is impossible to prove anything. But this does not exclude the possibility of certain connections that can be traced in aphoristic writing. This implies a shift from 'proving' to 'finding connections' and means that ultimately this thesis will attempt to find connections between

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<sup>20</sup> Neumann, *Der Aphorismus*, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> cf. 'Wiederum scheint die Formel einer *Welt von Welten* das Erfordernis zu bestimmen, das sich angesichts solchen 'Weltzerfalls', solcher Schwierigkeiten mit dem Wirklichkeitsbegriff stellt. Dabei wird man nie sicher sein können, ob die immanenten Prozesse in den an unserer Lebenskonstitution beteiligten 'Sonderwelten' je einen Reifegrad erreicht haben, der ihre Integrationsfähigkeit - oder zumindest: ihre deskriptive Kommunikationsfähigkeit - gewährleistet. Es mag auf viele Experimente ankommen. Und auf viele Anstrengungen, die Divergenz im Weltbegriff präziser zu erfassen, einleuchtender zu beschreiben.' Blumenberg, *Wirklichkeiten*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>22</sup> Fedler as well opted for a description of the aphorism instead of a definition. cf. Fedler p. 4.

different aphorisms – their *Zusammenhänge* – and to understand the nature of these connections as the secret chains of thought that lead to an aphorism. This will show that Fricke’s assumption that the aphorism is a singular entity is mistaken and addresses a gap in research into the aphorism. As Gerhard Neumann writes, in general the focus of research has examined the aphorism only as a single, independent entity and rarely in its connections to other aphorisms or groups of aphorisms.<sup>23</sup>

Fedler describes excellently how an analogous-metaphorical mechanism is at the basis of the aphorism, and concludes by describing the aphorism as a *Begriffsspiel*, meaning that the aphorism uses concepts in metaphorical ways. The aphorism in its shortest form, as a *Kompositum*<sup>24</sup>, is a metaphor. In its longer forms the aphorism tends to use concepts in metaphorical ways. This may already explain why the aphorism occupies an uncomfortable limbo position between literature, generally characterised by a language using metaphors, and philosophy, also generally characterised by a language of concepts that strives to exclude the poetic, for example in the long tradition of expelling the metaphor from philosophy.<sup>25</sup>

In this sense this thesis attempts to fill a gap in aphorism research. Most researchers of the aphorism regard the aphorism as a singular, arbitrary unit that is not connected to other aphorisms or capable of ordered thought. Others have tried to establish the aphorism as something that establishes an order contrary to traditional system:

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<sup>23</sup> Neumann, *Der Aphorismus*, p. 16. Neumann identifies another aspect of the aphorism that is underresearched: the aphorism’s relation to knowledge.

<sup>24</sup> cf. Fedler, p. 69.

<sup>25</sup> cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1976), p. 25 & p. 287.

John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), p. 508 (III, X,34) cf. Trabant, Jürgen, *Mithridates im Paradies: Kleine Geschichte des Sprachdenkens* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2003).

Während die meisten Autoren an der Vorstellung seiner Vereinzelung, Zusammenhanglosigkeit und Antisystematik festhalten, wobei sie ‘aphorizein’ mit ‘abgrenzen’, ‘abschneiden’ oder ‘abtrennen’ übersetzen, versuchen andere, ihn als Form einer Gegenordnung zur herkömmlichen Logifizierung und Systematik zu begreifen, indem sie eine verschüttete Etymologie wieder zur Geltung bringen: ‘von einem Horizont abheben’, ‘in einen neuen Horizont stellen’.<sup>26</sup>

I argue that aphoristic writers employ both elements, and that they reject the systematic when it is understood as a congruency between truth and world. It will also be argued that a philosophy based on rationality and the idea that all concepts can be defined, in an Aristotelian sense that a concept has limited and fixed meanings,<sup>27</sup> are an impossibility to Hohl. But at the same time Hohl does not reject order and still uses concepts, but re-evaluates them to suit his needs. As such, this thesis attempts to approach gaps in the research of the aphorism as outlined by Neumann,<sup>28</sup> in particular by showing how the aphorisms are connected to each other.

## **I.2 General Outline of the Argument**

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter presents a literature review and considers various critical approaches to the aphorism, mainly the views of Harald Fricke, Stephan Fedler, Heinz Krüger and Gary Saul Morson. The thesis contests Fricke’s definition of the aphorism, which sees the aphorism as an independent entity and instead employs an

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<sup>26</sup> Neumann, *Der Aphorismus*, p. 11.

<sup>27</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics (The Complete Works of Aristotle)*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 12th edn, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995). ii, p. 1589, 1006b).

<sup>28</sup> ... haben andere wesentliche Aspekte noch kaum Berücksichtigung gefunden: so die (von philosophischer, wissenschaftsgeschichtlicher und sozialpsychologischer Seite zu überprüfenden) Zusammenhänge von Aphorismus und Erkenntnis, die in ihm angelegte Verknüpfung von mimetischen und kognitiven Impulsen; so der Zusammenhang zwischen der ‘asystematischen’ Logik des Aphorismus und dem ‘wildem Denken’ (Levy-Strauss); so die Aphorismengruppe als Denk-, Darstellungs- und Verstehensorganismus;... Neumann, *Der Aphorismus*, p. 16.

extended version of Fedler's definition of the aphorism, which sees the aphorism using concepts with poetic means. Fedler's account of the aphorism is then combined with Krüger's and Morson's approach, which adds the dimension of the worldview to the aphorism. It takes from Fricke the indicative character of the aphorism, meaning that the aphorism points beyond what it says. This means then that the aphorism can be described as expressing a certain worldview by using concepts with poetic means, but never expresses it completely. My contribution to this description of the aphorism is the condition that aphorisms are connected, in contrast to Fricke's definition, and, furthermore, that the aphorism's partial inaccessibility is due to the fact that it mirrors the ontological fragmentariness underlying language and life. Also, following Krüger, aphorisms always contain an existential dimension that is an expression of the aphoristic writer's view on life. This emphasises the personal element inherent in the aphorism.

This description of the aphorism as a combination of concepts and metaphors requires close examination of both these latter phenomena. Therefore, after the examination of general problems of aphoristic writing in the second chapter, the third and fourth chapters examine first the concept and then the metaphor, both with reference to their relevance for the aphorism, thereby preparing the ground for the fifth and last chapter, which outlines Hohl's theory of art and life.

The second chapter combines the theoretical discussion of the aphorism with an investigation into Hohl's and Nietzsche's aphoristic writing. It addresses several problems related to the aphorism and the structure of aphoristic writing, starting with an investigation of the

influences on Hohl and Nietzsche. Then it addresses questions of mode, asking whether Hohl's writing can be described as aphoristic, fragmentary or note-writing. For Nietzsche this involves a reflection on his use of the *Sentenz* and *Betrachtung*. The rejection of the term aphorism, common to aphoristic writers, will be examined along with their rejection of the system. Thereafter there will be special focus on Hohl's rejection of the aphorism and how he viewed the unity of the *Notizen*, a contested question in the literature. After this Nietzsche's rejection of classification will be looked at. As Hohl's main aphoristic works are called the *Notizenwerk*, it is necessary to examine whether Hohl's writing can be called note-writing. The same needs to be done for the fragment. The fragment will be examined in two respects, as a mode and as an ontological category. Whilst the fragment and the aphorism are not regarded as being in opposition, I argue that the aphorism is innately ontologically fragmentary. This argument is developed out of Hohl's concept of being. A result of this investigation is that aphoristic writing is ontologically fragmentary and this explains Hohl's problem with conclusions and beginnings as well as his distinction between *Wirklichkeit* and *Realität*. The next section deals with the structure or order of aphoristic thought, several aphoristic writers expressed that their aphorisms can be described as a result of a chain of thought.<sup>29</sup> This is followed by an investigation of Hohl's approach to analogical thinking, the way of finding connections, or *Zusammenhänge*. Finally, this chapter will be concluded by discussing a number of approaches to reading the aphorism and dealing with its difficulties and challenges on reading the aphorism. This will be followed by a representation of Hohl's

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<sup>29</sup> NL 1885 37[5], KSA 11.579

also: NL 1885 35[31], KSA 11.522: 'Die tiefsten und unerschöpftesten Bücher werden wohl immer etwas von dem aphoristischen und plötzlichen Character von Pascals Pensees haben. Die treibenden Kräfte und Werthschätzungen sind lange unter der Oberfläche; was hervorkommt, ist Wirkung.'

ideas of reading, in Chapter IV of the *Notizen*. At the same time, this reading of his chapter is used to show how Hohl ordered his aphorisms.

The third chapter analyses the conceptual dimension of the aphorism in Hohl's writing. This begins with an examination of how aphoristic writers reinvented the concept. Firstly, Nietzsche's critique of the concept will be explored and then his concept of fluid sense. Nietzsche's concept of perspectivism will help to understand the structure of aphoristic writing better and the criticism of objectivity expressed by aphoristic writers. Hohl's complex concept will then be presented. Both Nietzsche's and Hohl's reinvented views of the concepts share the dissolution of the clearly defined boundaries of the traditional concept. This echoes the difficulty in defining the aphorism. The boundaries of the mode are dissolved. In Hohl, one can also say that, in contrast to the traditional view of a concept abstracting particulars under a universal, the particulars are here subsumed under an activity.

Thereafter this chapter sheds light on Hohl's key concept of *Kraft*, which is traced in its development in Hohl's thought from his *Jugendtagebuch* to his later uses and, finally, to his *Geisteskräfte*. The discussion of the four *Geisteskräfte*: courage, choice, patience and belief, prepares Hohl's philosophy of life, which will be taken up again in the fifth chapter. The *Geisteskräfte* form a habitus, a way to live one's life and/or create art. The *Geisteskraft* of phantasy will be discussed in the following chapter. The chapter concludes with a discussion of Hohl's two basic elements of art, tenderness (*Zartheit*) and the immense (*das Gewaltige*).

The fourth chapter examines the metaphorical dimension of the aphorism in conjunction with an exploration of Hohl's key concept of phantasy. It starts with an investigation of Hohl's concept of phantasy, which is his main *Geisteskraft*, and is therefore the conclusion of the

discussion of the *Geisteskräfte*. This involves an exploration of how Hohl viewed phantasy and rationality and how his concept of phantasy was influenced by Kassner. Thereafter the chapter will discuss Hohl's image by introducing Blumenberg's absolute metaphor and Blumenberg's emphasis that a focus on the metaphorical aspects also requires a re-evaluation and re-appraisal of phantasy,<sup>30</sup> as was shown in Hohl's understanding of his elaborate concept of phantasy. This will be followed by a tracing of the stone metaphor as an absolute metaphor in aphoristic writing, how aphoristic writing is described with a stone metaphor by others and also how aphoristic writers themselves use the stone metaphor. Finally, the use of the stone metaphor will be compared by briefly examining selected aphorisms of Hohl and Jürgen von der Wense. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the influence of Hohl's concept of phantasy on Peter Handke by tracing Handke's reading of Hohl in Handke's own aphoristic writings.

The fifth and last chapter is devoted to an explication of Hohl's theory of art and life, in light of the analyses above. His theory of creativity is an aesthetic that is based on an ethic of how to lead one's life, because art is understood by him as an intensification of life.

This chapter is organised around his key concept of work (*Arbeit*) and proceeds to his views of identity, value and his rejection of *Genieästhetik*. Hohl's concept of work deviates from the traditional concept of work in that he requires work to be non-alienating and to be born out of the personality of the individual itself. His concept of the integral – meaning that individuals should be measured solely according their own strength and the constraints they are under – adds a strong ethical component to his thinking. This leads to a discussion of the relationship

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<sup>30</sup> cf. Hans Blumenberg, *Paradigmen zu einer Metaphorologie* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp: 1998), p. 11.

between art and life. Hohl views art as an intensification of life. This means that he is a thinker of degrees, of difference, rather than of essence, and this requires an explication of his views on degrees (*Grade*). According to Hohl, the task of the artist is to focus on the ineffable, which necessitates an investigation of the ineffable. This chapter concludes with a discussion of Hohl's concept of love, which he understands as *Hinwendung* to the world, *Hinwendung* echoes the engagement required from the reader of aphorisms. Hohl's worldview or philosophy can finally be described in terms of the title of his book *Die Notizen oder von der unvoreiligen Versöhnung* (Notes or about non-premature reconciliation<sup>31</sup>). Reconciliation is meant to be a non-superficial form of life affirmation.

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<sup>31</sup> An English translation of the *Notizen* by Tess Lewis is in preparation. Tess Lewis, 'About'. Last Accessed: 6.12.2015 <<http://www.tesslewis.org/about/>>.



## II APPROACHES TO THE APHORISM

### II.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline and comment upon the main features of research on the aphorism by Harald Fricke, Heinz Krüger, Stephan Fedler and Gary Morson in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of what the aphorism is and to begin to answer the related questions of whether Hohl's and Nietzsche's writing is aphoristic and how aphoristic writing can be characterised. Fricke, Fedler, Krüger and Morson have been chosen because of their different yet complementary approaches to the problem of what constitutes the aphorism. Fricke in his book *Aphorismus*<sup>32</sup> defines the aphorism from the perspective of literary studies and linguistics. He is successful in establishing a narrow, prescriptive definition of the aphorism that is able to separate the aphorism from other modes. Furthermore his approach needs to be investigated because a great deal of the literature dealing with Hohl and Nietzsche refers to his work.

Fedler in his 1992 dissertation *Der Aphorismus. Begriffsspiel zwischen Philosophie und Poesie*,<sup>33</sup> writing from a literary studies perspective, situates the aphorism between poetry and philosophy, understanding the aphorism as a mode that can bridge these two entities. This is why his approach is useful, since aphoristic writing is often dubbed poetic, especially in the case of Nietzsche, and yet, in the case of Nietzsche and Hohl, it is also philosophical. Fedler's starting point is disagreement with Fricke's definition of the aphorism, and he arrives at a two-fold description of the aphorism: on the one hand he provides a close description of the

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<sup>32</sup> Harald Fricke, *Aphorismus* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1984).

<sup>33</sup> Stephan Fedler, *Der Aphorismus: Begriffsspiel zwischen Philosophie und Poesie* (Stuttgart: M&P Verlag für Wissenschaft und Forschung, 1992).

deep structure (*Tiefenstruktur*) of the aphorism that he calls conceptual play (*Begriffsspiel*), which means that the aphorism combines concepts (*Begriffe*) with poetic means (*Spiel*); on the other hand Fedler thinks that Wittgenstein's concept of family resemblance (*Familienähnlichkeit*)<sup>34</sup> is apt to describe the mode of the aphorism in relation to other modes. That means that the aphorism cannot be entirely separated from other modes; rather, these modes have a 'family resemblance'.

Krüger in his dissertation *Studien über den Aphorismus als philosophische Form*<sup>35</sup> tries to justify the aphorism as a philosophical form that expresses a certain worldview that can only be grasped with philosophical means and not solely by literary studies. He sees the aphorism as distinct from other modes, such as the fragment. His definition of the aphorism could be called existential because in his view the aphorism is directly linked to the expression of a certain view of life, or worldview. Krüger has been chosen for investigation because the second half of his book is an important interpretation of Nietzsche's aphoristic writing.

Gary Morson in his essay *The Aphorism: Fragments from the Breakdown of Reason*<sup>36</sup> describes the aphorism in an almost aphoristic way and sheds light on the ineffable element – or mystery, as Morson calls it – of the aphorism. In those two senses he is different from Krüger, Fedler and Fricke.

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<sup>34</sup> Wittgenstein's concept of family resemblance will be explained in more detail in the section that deals with Fedler's concept of the aphorism.

<sup>35</sup> Heinz Krüger, *Studien über den Aphorismus als philosophische Form* (Frankfurt/Main: Nest-Verlag, 1957).

<sup>36</sup> Gary Saul Morson, 'The Aphorism: Fragments from the Breakdown of Reason', *New Literary History*, Vol 34, No.3 (2003), pp. 409-429.

The chapter will investigate the approaches of Fedler, Fricke, Krüger and Morson to the aphorism, the definitional problems they encounter and the methods they use to overcome these, as well as their respective views of the aphorism's defining characteristics. It will conclude with a discussion of how useful these respective definitions are when evaluating the writing of Ludwig Hohl and Friedrich Nietzsche.

This will be followed by a proposed new description, because – as will be shown – only a combination of Fedler's and Krüger's accounts can do justice to the way in which Hohl and Nietzsche write. This combined description of the aphorism uses Fedler's concept of the aphorism as conceptual play (*Begriffsspiel*) that uses universal concepts and expresses thoughts through poetic means. It can further be characterised – and this involves Krüger's definition – as expressing a certain view of life. This view of life is seen as a view that stands in contrast to everything that harms the individual. In this sense the aphorism is regarded as something that aids the individual. The aphorism is concerned with themes such as a critique of language, a certain way of life, and the life of the philistine. This also involves a re-evaluation of life, language and art. Because the aphorism is concerned with such questions, one can regard it as a primarily philosophical form. Yet, since it operates with poetic concepts and expresses its views on life through poetic means, it is appropriate to characterise the aphorism as a bridging element between philosophy and poetry.

## II.2.1 Harald Fricke

Fricke's book *Aphorismus* is often referred to as a standard work. His definition of the aphorism has been used widely, for instance by Stadler<sup>37</sup> and Fedler, who make it the starting point of their arguments. The advantage of Fricke's definition of the aphorism is that he provides a methodologically and logically sound definition of the aphorism. The disadvantage of his definition is that it is very narrow.

A main feature of this definition is Fricke's idea that an aphorism must be isolated in order to be a proper aphorism. In other words, only if the aphorism is on its own, detached from other aphorisms, can it qualify as aphorism. This needs further explanation, because Fedler takes up this idea and bases his own interpretation on this aspect of Fricke's definition. But, before that, Fricke's general position on other interpretations of the aphorism will be outlined. Fricke criticises two dominant tendencies in the existing literature on the aphorism. Firstly, he disagrees with the assumption that the aphorism represents a certain way of thinking and, secondly, he criticises those who assume an opposition between the aphorism and the system<sup>38</sup> as such, because Fricke sees a discussion between the aphorism and the system as invalid when the system is not defined in a logical, linguistic or pragmatic way. The opposition between aphorism and system is one which, if differently formulated, can be

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. Stadler who uses Fricke's definition in order to state that Hohl's texts are not aphoristic. Stadler, p. 46. Stingelin uses Fricke's definition to classify *Menschliches*, *Allzumenschliches*, *Morgenröthe*, *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* and the Sprüche und Zwischenspiele from *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* and the Sprüche und Pfeile from *Götzen-Dämmerung* of Nietzsche's works as aphoristic. Martin Stingelin, 'Aphorismus', in Henning Ottmann (ed.), *Nietzsche Handbuch* (Stuttgart/Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 2000), pp. 185-187 (p. 186).

<sup>38</sup> The system can be defined as such: 'Das vollkommene System ist keine Hypothese und keine zu didaktischen Zwecken vorgelegte "artistische" Ordnung von Lehrsätzen mehr, sondern die abschließende Gestalt der Wahrheit.' HdWPH, x, p. 830. Aphoristic writers revolt against the system because they do not believe in a 'concluding shape of truth.' They do not assume a congruency between the world and a view of truth and instead experience a gap between the two.

understood as the conflict between the particular and the universal. Fricke strongly disagrees with the position that ascribes a certain worldview to aphoristic thinkers, or a specific way of aphoristic thinking. This is due to a view of philosophy that excludes existential questions.<sup>39</sup> This view of philosophy has consequences for his judgement and estimation of the aphorism, because Fricke rejects a line of philosophy to which many aphoristic writers, such as Nietzsche and Hohl, or Kierkegaard, belong. To him the assumption of such an ‘aphorism-specific’ worldview is unfounded, a form of psychologisation or existential chatter, which is both irrational and speculative.<sup>40</sup> We cannot know how these thinkers thought, Fricke writes, we can only read what they wrote. He also finds it hard to assume a similarity between authors seemingly so heterogeneous as Nietzsche, Goethe, Seume, Novalis, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach and Lichtenberg. However, the belief that the aphorism does convey a certain way of thinking, or a certain way of life, is advanced in some of the secondary literature on the aphorism, and Krüger also subscribes to this idea. Fedler does not state an opinion on this problem.

According to Fricke, for the reception of the aphorism one needs to consider many aspects, such as ‘Faktoren im Wortlaut des Textes selbst, Faktoren im Kontext seiner verbalen Umgebung und Faktoren im situativen Kontext seiner Präsentation’.<sup>41</sup> To Fricke, *Text*, *Kotext* and *Kontext* determine whether something is an aphorism. *Kotext* can be understood as the

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<sup>39</sup> Fricke measures philosophy against the ideal of the natural sciences to which philosophy has to live up to and philosophy should operate with rational speech according logical rules, where the notion of a *Weltanschauung* is explicitly excluded (p. 40) and speaks about a *längst verschwundene Lebens- oder Existentialphilosophie* (p. 6). Consequently, Fricke regards Kierkegaard not as philosopher but as someone suffering from depression (p. 42).

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Fricke, pp. 1-4.

<sup>41</sup> Fricke, p. IX.

verbal surrounding of a text while *Kontext* is the non-verbal surrounding. Fricke looks for objective characteristics of an aphorism in order to establish his definition of the aphorism. He does this by starting from the specific *Aussparungsstelle* (things that the aphorism lacks, which are a situative context and integration in a verbal cotext). This constitutes the blank space (*Leerstelle*) of an aphorism, what Fricke calls its *Torsocharakter*. *Leerstelle*<sup>42</sup> means that the reader has to fill in what is missing, which leads to questions of the reception of the aphorism. This *Leerstelle* is a certain source of the power of the aphorism, here the aphorism unfolds its metonymic strength.<sup>43</sup> In other words, aphorisms refer to something beyond their literal meaning. They have an indicative character (*Verweisungscharakter*). Fricke concludes on the basis of this *Torsocharakter* that aphorisms are isolated, they can be seen as independent from one another. This is what Fricke calls ‘kotextuelle Isolation,’ something that he regards as one criterion of something being an aphorism. Cotextual isolation can be demonstrated by means of permutation, it must be possible to exchange the order of the aphorism arbitrarily without those permutations having any impact on how they are understood.<sup>44</sup>

Fricke ultimately comes to the following definition of the aphorism and this definition is modelled according to the Carnap model of definitions.<sup>45</sup> It is divided into necessary and alternative characteristics: something is an aphorism if it fulfils the following three necessary criteria: 1) cotextual isolation; 2) it has to be written in prose; 3) and it is not fiction. Further,

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<sup>42</sup> Fricke refers to Iser’s concept of *Leerstelle* here: Wolfgang Iser, *Die Appellstruktur der Texte: Unbestimmtheit als Wirkungsbedingung literarischer Prosa* (Konstanz: Konstanzer Universitätsreden, 1974), p. 15; Fricke, p. 9.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Fricke, p. 23.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Louis Hjelmslev, *Prolegomena zu einer Sprachtheorie* (Munich: Huber, 1974), pp. 73-74.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Fedler, p. 188. cf. Carnap’s view of definition: HdWPH, ii, pp. 40-41.

it has to fulfil one of four possible sub-criteria: 1) it has to be a single sentence; 2) and/or it has to be concise; 3) and/or has a punchline related to language; 4) and/or has a punchline related to facts.<sup>46</sup> Fricke does not include the *Verweisungscharakter* in his definition of the aphorism because it is not an ahistorical criterion, and Fricke wants to establish an ahistorical definition.<sup>47</sup>

Fricke (like Fedler<sup>48</sup>) leaves out the criterion of brevity, as he deems this to be insufficiently specific; furthermore, it might be included within the criterion of the single sentence. Just as brevity is relative, very long texts can be concise. Fricke tries to distinguish all the forms apart from the aphorism, for instance the essay, the joke, the epigram and so on, by successfully applying his definition. But he does not mention the fragment.<sup>49</sup> The form that is most closely related to the aphorism is, according to Fricke, the riddle. But a riddle has only one solution, while there are may be many for an aphorism or none at all.

Fricke concludes his study by outlining several aphoristic techniques<sup>50</sup> that illustrate how the aphorism is able to challenge, and demand more work from, the reader. According to Fricke, it is never possible to read an aphorism passively.<sup>51</sup> Fricke refers here to Greiner,<sup>52</sup> who points

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<sup>46</sup> Cf. Fricke, p. 14.

<sup>47</sup> Fedler, p. 27.

<sup>48</sup> Fedler, p.9.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Fricke pp. 18-25.

<sup>50</sup> Fedler calls them ‘poetische Verfahren’.

<sup>51</sup> ‘...man kann ihn gar nicht geistig passiv rezipieren.’ Fricke, p. 140

<sup>52</sup> ‘Bedeutsame Untersuchungen über Wesen und Gestalt des Aphorismus vermerken stets diese Verwiesenheit des Aphorismus auf eine aktive Rezeption, wenig erörtert bleibt dabei aber, wie der Aphorismus der hieraus sich ergebenden Aufgaben zu dieser Rezeption anzuregen und sie zu fördern, jeweils gerecht zu werden suchen.’ Bernhard Greiner, *Friedrich Nietzsche: Versuch und Versuchung in seinen Aphorismen* (Munich: Fink, 1972), p. 14.

to a gap in the literature about the aphorism when it comes to understanding how specifically the aphorism demands an active reception. Greiner suggests that it always has been stated that the aphorism demands an active reader, but that no-one has actually demonstrated how the aphorism does this. Fricke refers to four different main techniques that challenge the reader to the active reception of what is being read, and explains the different ways these main techniques are used. These four main techniques are exaggeration (*Überspitzung*), ellipsis (*Aussparung*), being taken by surprise (*Überrumpelung*), and riddle (*Verrätselung*). First, the aphorism challenges the reader by exaggeration. Exaggeration has the goal of exaggerating a thought obviously and recognisably. The reader is challenged to ponder whether this exaggeration is correct, and this leads to, or provokes, (self-)reflection. The aphorism does this by using superlatives.<sup>53</sup> The superlative may force the reader to look for a counter-example (*Gegenbeispiel*). Another way the aphorism uses exaggeration is the mode of *antithesis*: via antithesis a polarisation can be created that again might force the reader to see whether what is being said is correct. The general statement (*Allaussage*) works in a similar way. General statements claim total validity and thereby challenge that very validity. A normative rule (*Allgemeine Verhaltensregel*) works in a similar way. Commonly, they are expressed in an imperative form. The definition (*Definition*) hypostasises a certain aspect and exaggerates it, and thereby provokes the reader.

The ellipsis says too little, in contrast to the exaggeration that says too much. Here the reader is challenged to add what has not been given or mentioned. One way of doing this is an

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<sup>53</sup> Hohl for instance uses a lot of superlatives in his texts which has been used against him without considering that this could be a poetic technique.. cf. Loetscher, Hugo, 'Ludwig Hohl und die voreiligen Herbergen', in Hugo Loetscher, *Lesen statt Klettern: Aufsätze zur Literatur* (Zürich: Diogenes 2003), pp. 210–233 (passim).



example (*Beispiel*). The example is not commented on by the aphoristic writer, but invites comment from the reader. Banality (*Banalität*) or triviality says things that are obvious, but the obviousness forces the reader to look beneath the surface and try to find a deeper sense of what has been said and may be extrapolated out of that banality. Incompleteness (*Unvollständigkeit*) forces the reader to complete whatever has been said. Much the same thing happens when the aphorism leaves something open (*Offenlassen*).

Exaggeration and ellipsis can be both regarded as quantitative modes that stimulate the reader. To take the reader by surprise is more a qualitative mode; it can work, for instance, by way of a neologism (*Neologismus*). This forces the reader to construct sense. Further modes are wordplay (*Wortspiel*), allusion (*Anspielung*), the counterfactual (*Kontrafaktur*), reversal (*Umkehrung*), unmasking (*Entlarvung*) and punchline (*Schlusspointe*). The riddle aspect of the aphorism works in a similar way to the ‘surprise’ technique. It alienates the reader and forces him thereby actively to resolve the verbal problem. This solution can take the form of a question, a metaphor, a priamel,<sup>54</sup> by way of proportion,<sup>55</sup> by way of the paradox<sup>56</sup> as a connection of, for instance, a deep mistake with a deeper wisdom.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> ‘Dieses Zusammenpferchen semantisch völlig heterogener Elemente durch ein ihnen gemeinsam übergeordnetes Satzglied ist die uralte Formel der “Priamel”[...]’ Fricke, pp. 77, 150.

<sup>55</sup> ‘die Herstellung quantitativer Relationen zwischen Verschiedenartigem’ Fricke, p. 150.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Asemissen, ‘Notizen über den Aphorismus’, *Trivium*, 7 (1949), 144-161.

<sup>57</sup> Fricke, p. 151.

## II.2.2 Stephan Fedler

Stephan Fedler's book is a dissertation on literary studies, entitled *Der Aporismus*.

*Begriffsspiel zwischen Philosophie und Poesie*.<sup>58</sup> His book is the most recent of those discussed here, and it relates closely to Fricke's and discusses a perceived problem with Fricke's interpretation of the aphorism. Fedler thinks that Fricke's definition is problematic for two reasons: because of its logical approach, and because his definition of the aphorism is too narrow. The problem lies within Fricke's idea of the cotextual isolation of the aphorism. But before discussing these objections in more detail, Fedler's general approach will be outlined.

Fedler's is a literary approach, and his goal is to gain insight into the 'no man's land' between poetry and philosophy. He assumes that literary studies can be a mediating factor which leads to increased knowledge of this area.<sup>59</sup> Fedler assumes a difference between poetic and philosophical language. Philosophical language is characterised by concepts and by its concern with general statements, while poetic language tends to be concerned with the particular. Fedler does not aim to define these languages, only to describe the differences between them. His approach is descriptive, while Fricke's is prescriptive. According to Fedler, the aphorism is equidistant from philosophical and poetic language. He also claims that the use of the aphorism as a philosophical mode is older than its use as a literary mode.<sup>60</sup> Fedler also assumes an equality between philosophy and poetry, that neither is superior to the other,

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<sup>58</sup> Stephan Fedler, *Der Aporismus: Begriffsspiel zwischen Philosophie und Poesie* (Stuttgart: M&P Verlag für Wissenschaft und Forschung, 1992).

<sup>59</sup> Fedler, p. 3.

<sup>60</sup> Fedler, p. 11.

and that literary studies can mediate between them. Fedler starts with a very general and broad definition of the aphorism, using Mautner's definition of it as 'jede sonst nicht definierbare kürzere Prosaaufzeichnung'.<sup>61</sup> Fedler sees problems in definitions, as it is not easy to separate the aphorism from other short modes. Yet, to him, it is not necessarily a problem that an aphorism cannot be distinguished from other modes; indeed, it can be several modes at once. Fedler chooses Schopenhauer as an example, because his aphorisms are no longer purely philosophical and because they replace general argumentation with quotations, rhetorical figures, comparisons; they use words with ambiguous meaning and they play with metaphors.<sup>62</sup> The reason for using metaphorical figures or speech is to help to inspire thinking in the intuition (*Anschauung*) of the reader.<sup>63</sup> One question that Fedler explores is whether metaphorical speaking is a characteristic of the aphorism.

Aphorisms are, however, not expressing a thing or an action, but a thought; furthermore, they are provocative, they demand from the reader that s/he takes up a position.<sup>64</sup> According to Fedler, aphorisms express thoughts by way of concepts that are connected by poetic means:

Es wird sich nämlich unter der Leithinsicht der Isolierbarkeit der Texte zeigen, daß im Aphorismus notwendigerweise allgemeine Begriffe vorhanden sind, die dem Diskurstyp philosophischer Sprache entsprechen. Die Begriffe sind durch poetische Verfahren verbunden, deren Zusammenspiel mit den allgemeinen Begriffen die Gattung Aphorismus bestimmt.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Franz Mautner, 'Der Aphorismus als literarische Gattung', in Gerhard Neumann (ed.), *Der Aphorismus* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976), p. 31; quoted in Fedler p. 13.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Fedler p. 20.

<sup>63</sup> Fedler, p. 17.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Fedler, p. 41.

<sup>65</sup> Fedler, p. 9.

Fedler then bases his argumentation on Fricke's definition of the aphorism, which he sees as problematic because it is too narrow. The specific problem with this definition is Fricke's criterion of cotextual isolation. Cotextual isolation means that an aphorism is regarded as a text that is not bound in any order to the other aphorisms in a group. If one changed the order of these aphorisms, it would not change anything in one's understanding of any individual aphorism. This would lead to the problem of having a definition so narrow that the prime examples of German aphoristic writing such as Goethe's *Maximen & Reflexionen* would not be regarded as aphoristic writing.<sup>66</sup> Fedler says that there is a problem with this isolation because, even if you have a text standing in isolation, it need not necessarily be an aphorism; it could just as well be a plain sentence. To him, a fourth criterion needs to be added to Fricke's possible criteria for an aphorism, namely 'Verweisungsfähigkeit eines Satzes, um überhaupt als Aphorismus lesbar zu werden'.<sup>67</sup> Fricke does mention this indicative character (*Verweisungsfähigkeit*),<sup>68</sup> and calls it metonymic potential, but for him this is not an important part of the definition of an aphorism, while for Fedler this *Verweisungsfähigkeit* lies at the heart of the matter. *Verweisungsfähigkeit* means the following:

Aphorismen können nur solche Sätze sein, die - wie schon erwähnt - verweisungsfähig sind. Verweisungsfähig meint dann, daß ein Satz unabhängig von seinem Kon- und Kotext Sinn ergibt. Sinn ergibt ein Text dann aufgrund sprachlicher Verfahren, die dazu führen, daß ein Satz seinen Kontext gleichsam selbst begründet, wie etwa ein Roman eine bestimmte fiktionale Welt eröffnet.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Fedler, p. 28.; Fricke, p. 105.

<sup>67</sup> Fedler, pp. 26-27.

<sup>68</sup> Fricke, pp. 9, 23.

<sup>69</sup> Fedler, p. 35.

In other words, the aphorism is independent of its co- and context in the sense that it is able to create its own (sometimes new) sense. Fedler says that at the basis of a text is a semantic centre.<sup>70</sup> The semantic centre of an aphorism is constituted by its combination of concepts. They are combined by a metaphorical-analogical process that allows the text to stand isolated. How does this metaphorical-analogical process work? Fedler demonstrates it by using very short, one-word aphorisms that are made up of more than one concept, for instance: *Zweifeldrechsler* or *Ehren-Schneider*.<sup>71</sup> Metaphors are able to combine disparate concepts by way of analogy and in this way create thoughts, and *Leerstellen*, that are to be filled in by the reader. This means that even the smallest aphorisms contain a thought or a thesis. However, while not all aphorisms are metaphors, most of them have this metaphorical-analogical process at their root. The concept as such is characterised by being historical and ahistorical at the same time,<sup>72</sup> which is why aphorisms can still have such acute actuality. This has consequences for the aphorism because the aphorism takes over both ahistorical and historical characteristics. Therefore, old aphorisms still can have such a strong effect today.

According to Fedler, this makes the aphorism a place where many contradictions meet in one text. They are brought together and expressed on equal terms. This constitutes the tension within an aphorism. Contradictory things are brought together that do not belong together, such as art and philosophy: ‘Die Bedingung der Möglichkeit der Konvergenz von Philosophie

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<sup>70</sup> Cf. Fedler, p. 48 - 61, p. 69.

<sup>71</sup> Those aphorisms are by Canetti, quoted in Fedler, p. 69.

<sup>72</sup> Fedler, p. 93. ‘Daran zeigt sich die merkwürdige Zwischenstellung, die begriffliche Sprachzeichen zwischen historischer Gebundenheit und Ahistorizität einnehmen, was für den Aphorismus von Interesse ist. Zwar unterliegen die begrifflichen Bedeutungen einem historischem Wandel – Aristoteles hat sicherlich unter *logos* etwas anderes verstanden, als *ratio* wiedergibt und wir heute unter ”Denken” verstehen --, doch bleibt die Definition in ihrer vagen Begrifflichkeit auch heutzutage verständlich und merkwürdigerweise gültig.’

und Kunst ist aufzusuchen in dem Moment von Allgemeinheit, das sie in ihrer Spezifikation – als Sprache sui generis – besitzt.<sup>73</sup> Fedler states:

Aufgrund seiner Begrifflichkeit nähert sich also der Aphorismus der Philosophie an, auf Grund der Verknüpfung der Begriffe der Poesie. Dadurch hält sich aphoristische Sprache einerseits an die Allgemeinheit philosophischer Begrifflichkeit, andererseits sind die Verknüpfungen der Begriffe nicht in logischer Begriffsexplikation intersubjektiv überprüfbar, sondern durch poetische Verfahren ersetzt. Diese scheinen sich somit wiederum dem Medium des Besonderen anzunähern und in der Subjektivität des Aphoristikers ihren Grund zu finden.<sup>74</sup>

Fedler concludes that Fricke's 'Carnap method' of defining the aphorism does not do justice to the aphoristic mode.<sup>75</sup> Instead he offers a two-fold description of the aphorism, one related to the way the aphorism actually operates, the deep structure (*Tiefenstruktur*), which he calls conceptual play (*Begriffsspiel*), and secondly, one describing how the aphorism relates to other modes. Here, Fedler refers to Wittgenstein's concept of *Familienähnlichkeit*.<sup>76</sup>

Fedler describes the aphorism as a *Begriffsspiel*.<sup>77</sup> A *Begriff* (concept) emphasises the philosophical side of the aphorism, whereas *Spiel* (play) belongs to the poetic realm. If there is metaphorical speech in an aphorism, this speech is at the service of explaining the thought. The concept of *Begriffsspiel* is a descriptive one and relating to the *Tiefenstruktur*; it is therefore abstract and 'kann die Gesetzmäßigkeit der Konkretion in den einzelnen Texten nicht erfassen'.<sup>78</sup> An aphorism is thus a *Begriffsspiel*, meaning that it uses concepts and

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<sup>73</sup> Theodor Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2003), p. 197.

<sup>74</sup> Fedler, p. 97-98.

<sup>75</sup> Fedler, p. 188.

<sup>76</sup> 'Ich kann diese Ähnlichkeiten nicht besser charakterisieren als durch das Wort "Familienähnlichkeiten"; denn so übergreifen und überkreuzen sich die verschiedenen Ähnlichkeiten, die zwischen den Gliedern einer Familie bestehen: Wuchs, Gesichtszüge, Augenfarbe, Gang, Temperament, etc etc.' (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1995), pp. 277-78; §§66-67).

<sup>77</sup> Fedler, p. 10.

<sup>78</sup> Fedler, p. 196.

expresses a thought or a thesis. The way the concepts are operated, by poetic means, is what Fedler calls the *Spiel* aspect.

Fedler says that Wittgenstein's concept of *Familienähnlichkeit* is much more useful as a way of characterising the aphorism, for three reasons: it allows one to describe related modes, to explain the differences between varieties of aphorism, and to describe the position of the aphorism between philosophy and poetry. This means that the aphorism can be described by a set of characteristics, some of which it shares with other modes. The disadvantage of the concept of *Familienähnlichkeit* is that it does not allow for a strict separation between modes. However, Friedemann Spicker sees in Fedler's use of *Familienähnlichkeit* a valuable contribution and progress regarding the problem of definition of the aphorism.<sup>79</sup>

Fedler thus arrives at a descriptive definition of the aphorism, while that of Fricke is prescriptive. As we shall see now, Krüger's definition of the aphorism is neither prescriptive nor descriptive, but existential.

### **II.2.3 Heinz Krüger**

Heinz Krüger wrote his dissertation – *Studien über den Aphorismus als philosophische Form*<sup>80</sup> – in 1956 under Adorno and sees the aphorism as a strictly philosophical form. The main themes in his thesis are that the aphorism should be closely related to a certain view of

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<sup>79</sup> Friedemann Spicker, 'Reviewed Work: *Der Aphorismus: Begriffsspiel zwischen Philosophie und Poesie* by Stephan Fedler', *Zeitschrift für Germanistik*, Neue Folge, Vol. 4, No. 2 (1994), 469-472 (p. 470).

<sup>80</sup> Heinz Krüger, *Studien über den Aphorismus als philosophische Form* (Frankfurt/Main: Nest-Verlag, 1957).

life, that it is an expression of *entstelltes Leben*,<sup>81</sup> and that the aphorism always stands outside the system, and sometimes contradicts this system when it or the *Zeitgeist* harms the individual. As we saw above, Fricke rejects this view. Krüger's view is valid because, as we have seen in Fedler, the aphorism is the mode *par excellence* in which contradictory positions – for instance those between the individual and a system, or the particular and the universal – can find an expression or can be pitted against each other. First we need to examine which difficulties Krüger sees in previous research of the aphorism. He distinguishes two aspects. The first is prejudice against the aphorism, while the second is the problem of its definition. Krüger sees prejudices against the aphorism in the inability of much secondary literature to recognise the aphorism's philosophical significance:

Offenbar aber schlägt der Aphorismus als philosophische Form selber aus jener literarischen Gattung, der man seinen Namen gibt: weder erprobte Weisheiten nur konservierend - wie meist die alten Sprüche, noch konservierte Weisheiten nur erprobend - wie oft die modernen Maximen, erhebt der Aphorismus zumindest seit Nietzsche den sehr ernststen Anspruch, eine integrale Denkform zu sein, die korrektiv ins System eingreift. Nicht einfach Spruch oder Maxime, sondern Einspruch gegen die herrschenden Tendenzen seiner Zeit, sofern sie das Leben entstellen, und Maximum philosophischer Erfahrung, übersteigt der Aphorismus aber Neigung und Kapazität jener üblichen Methoden, die ihn als bloß literarisches Phänomen zu erfassen suchen.<sup>82</sup>

According to Krüger, the aphorism contains a 'Maximum philosophisch bedachter Erfahrung'<sup>83</sup> that sees in the aphorism only a literary phenomenon. Even though the aphorism was a common mode in France, French-speaking research did not focus on the aphorism as a form of philosophical thinking. However, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche regarded the aphorism

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<sup>81</sup> It is obvious here that Krüger was strongly influenced by Adorno who discusses at length in *Minima Moralia* the consequences and dangers of an *entstelltes* or *beschädigtes Leben*. Adorno uses both *beschädigt* and *entstellt*. Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1997), passim.

<sup>82</sup> Krüger, pp. 9-10.

<sup>83</sup> Krüger, p. 9.



as an appropriate form in which to express thoughts, which ought to have qualified the aphorism as a mode to be taken seriously. Reasons for the widespread suspicion of the aphorism may be firstly (and here Krüger agrees with Fedler) that the aphorism operates in the ‘no man’s land’ between literature and philosophy. Furthermore, the aphorism is seen as a child of literature and philosophy, belief and knowledge, speculation and reflection. An additional problem is that the term aphorism is not properly defined.

According to Krüger, literary research has tried to define the aphorism as either an objective literary genre (*Gattung*) or, on the other hand, as a subjective mode of expression of the aphoristic writer.<sup>84</sup> Although it is important to look at the aphorism solely from a literary point of view in order to discover more of the history of the aphorism, literary approaches are not sufficient if they have no foundation in philosophy, states Krüger.<sup>85</sup>

It transpires that it is not easy to define the aphorism and that the decisive characteristics of the aphorism changed over time and that therefore one cannot find a definition that is valid for all time.<sup>86</sup> Requadt demonstrates that it is possible to trace a line in the tradition of the aphorism from Cicero to Lichtenberg and shows also that, historically, the aphorism was not used for the expression of grandiose thoughts but, rather, to articulate mundane events and

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<sup>84</sup> Krüger, p. 10.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Krüger, p. 14. cf. Section IV.2.1.2 that discusses Nietzsche’s view of the concept, Krüger raises similar objections to the problem of definition

issues in daily life. Fedler and Fricke both emphasise this point as well. Requadt was the first to show a connection to the philosophical basis of the aphorism.<sup>87</sup>

A further characteristic of the aphorism is the emphasis on thinking for oneself (*Selbstdenken*) and an opposition to philistine erudition (*philistine Gelehrtheit*). To continue with Krüger's examination of the prejudices towards the aphorism that occur in secondary literature,<sup>88</sup> a further prejudice claims that the aphorisms are said to have been written too rapidly. But this stands in contrast with, for instance, Nietzsche's insistence that the aphorism be read slowly. Although some writers fall into a routine (even Nietzsche), spontaneity can be regarded as a characteristic of the aphorism that directs itself against the schematic nature of logical systems and also against apparently fixed and immutable literary definitions. The relation to logic is this: the aphorism regarded it as a necessity to get rid of the force of discursive logic and instead wanted to use logic in an infinitely playful and insightful way.<sup>89</sup> It does not do justice to the aphorism to regard it as a mistake<sup>90</sup> of human thinking, because this would be to ignore the actual meaning and significance of the problem. Krüger emphasises the importance of the aphorism by stating that after the big systems of Hegel, Schelling et al., the only meaningful philosophy took an aphoristic shape.<sup>91</sup> Krüger's example is Nietzsche.

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<sup>87</sup> Paul Requadt, *Lichtenberg: Zum Problem des deutschen Aphorismus*, (Hameln: Verlag der Bücherstube Fritz Seifert, 1948), p. 107.

<sup>88</sup> Krüger, p. 12. n. 2.

<sup>89</sup> Krüger, p. 14. This seems counter-intuitive, but it implies a change to the relation to logic. Logic is regarded not any more as a shackle, but instead is used by the aphoristic thinker in infinitely playful ways.

<sup>90</sup> Krüger quotes Kurt Besser who regards the aphorism as a 'Fehlerquelle des menschlichen Denkens und Schaffens'  
cf. Kurt Besser, *Die Problematik der aphoristischen Form bei Lichtenberg, Fr. Schlegel, Novalis und Nietzsche* (Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt, 1935), p. 135.  
cf. Spicker's judgement of Besser: Friedemann Spicker, *Studien zum deutschen Aphorismus im 20. Jahrhundert*, (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2000), p. 67.

<sup>91</sup> Krüger, p. 13.

In terms of its place in the history of ideas (*Ideengeschichte*) this would then mean that the aphorism in history was mostly used in a time of crisis, which Krüger characterises as a time in which the ability to think against one's own advantage is lost<sup>92</sup> and a lack of faith in the *großen Systemphilosophien*. Another characteristic of the aphorism is that it is a dangerous form, in the sense that 'it pushes what falls'.<sup>93</sup> According to Krüger, the aphorism is a philosophical form whose roundness and autonomy is not the result of artistic efforts but instead of 'denkerischer Bemühungen'.<sup>94</sup> This in a way relates to Fedler and the importance he gave to the role of the concepts and of play in the aphorism. Krüger says that many of Lichtenberg's aphorisms are 'kunstlos'.<sup>95</sup> The aphorism was measured<sup>96</sup> by the critics against more polished, pretty maxims and *sententiae* but, due to their profanity, the aphorisms of Lichtenberg, for example, were regarded as less literary and less worthy of consideration. There is a strong streak of anti-aestheticism in the aphorism, if aestheticism is understood as beauty for beauty's sake. This leads us to the relation of the aphorism to beauty and aesthetics. Krüger sees the aphorism as a form that rejects beauty. The aesthetic cannot – as long as it as beauty stands in a primitive contrast to ugliness – be regarded as a decisive criterion of the aphorism. The aphorism is characterised not by an expression of a will to beauty but by a 'Wegspur eines desillusionierenden Denkens, das der Wahrheit zuliebe eher häßlich sich

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<sup>92</sup> 'Geistesgeschichtlich besonders hervorgetreten ist der Aphorismus daher in jenen Zeiten, die zwischen dem Niedergang einer festgefügtten Wissens- oder Glaubensordnung und dem Entstehen eines neuen Bewußtseins liegen, in dem das bis dahin herrschende Denken, zu einer Apologie seiner selbst werdend, die entscheidende Fähigkeit verliert, gegen den eigenen Vorteil denken zu können.' Krüger, p. 13.

<sup>93</sup> Krüger, p. 13. 'er stößt, was fällt'

<sup>94</sup> Krüger, pp. 15-16.

<sup>95</sup> Krüger, p. 16.

<sup>96</sup> Krüger, p. 16.

offenbarte, als im schönen Schein sich zu verlieren'.<sup>97</sup> The aesthetic moment of the aphorism is directed against conformism, philistinism and mediocrity. Like the caricature, the aphorism produces an opposite ideal. Everywhere the aphorism has a beautiful appearance, this beauty has a polemic, agonal aspect,<sup>98</sup> and it can never be seen without relation to ugliness as well. Because, according to Krüger, the aphorism is an expression of a certain worldview that represents the view of those outside the system (or status quo), then the aphorism sees that system (or status quo) as ugly and tries to give a new sense of that which is ugly or makes no sense. Fundamental to the aphorism is 'das Ewig-Schaffende und Ewig-zerstören-Müssende gebunden an den Schmerz',<sup>99</sup> therefore the aphorism relates to healing, and this focus on health or a rehabilitation<sup>100</sup> of a certain form of life is important, because health was an important theme to both Hohl and Nietzsche.<sup>101</sup> Related to the theme of healing, Krüger sees a decisive difference between the fragment and the aphorism: the fragment first damages something in order then to heal it. In contrast to this, the aphorism always appears as a remedy for something sick, but also counters dishonest attempts to heal it. Krüger decides the question whether the aphorism is a literary or philosophical mode by stating that the aphorism is a philosophizing 'next to' philosophy:

[...] eine äußerst strenge und autonome Form des Denkens ist, die neben den großen Glaubens- und Wissensordnungen einhergeht, gleichsam als eine Buffonerie des entstellten Lebens, das gegen seine Entstellung im System

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<sup>97</sup> 'Unterscheidet man nach Form und Gehalt, so ist gerade die Form des Aphorismus nicht mehr Ausdruck des Willens zum Schönen, sondern Wegspur eines desillusionierenden Denkens, das der Wahrheit zuliebe eher häßlich sich offenbarte, als im schönen Schein sich zu verlieren.' Krüger, p. 16-17.

<sup>98</sup> Krüger, p. 17.

<sup>99</sup> Krüger, p. 17.

<sup>100</sup> 'Das Leben vor Schaden bewahren.' Krüger, p. 23.

<sup>101</sup> Initially the aphorism was used, for instance by Hippocrates, as 'medizinischer Lehrsatz'. cf. Gerhard Neumann, *Ideenparadiese: Untersuchungen zur Aphoristik von Lichtenberg, Novalis, Friedrich Schlegel und Goethe* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1976), p. 18. Krüger, p. 25.

jener Glaubens- und Wissensordnungen protestiert, und zwar anmaßend und vorsichtig zugleich. Ein Philosophieren neben der Philosophie im engeren Sinne, lebt der Aphorismus aus jener Diskrepanz, die sich dadurch herausstellt, daß Sein und Denken offenbar nie völlig zur Deckung gebracht werden können.<sup>102</sup>

Krüger's assumption that being and thought can never be brought to convergence is also the reason why he believes Fricke's approach is not suitable, because Fricke implicitly assumes that being and thought can be brought to convergence. Krüger speaks of a certain dialectic within the aphorism: the aphorism poses a fact as dogma (which the aphorism actually really might recognise as valid) against language which, as form or opposition, contradicts the content. This is why the aphorism is inherently undogmatic, because it contradicts itself. The aphorism demands from the aphoristic writer a great skill for managing language; it is the most difficult condition of aphoristic thinking. The difference to the poet is that the poet uses language as 'edles'<sup>103</sup> material, while the aphoristic writer uses language in order to make language express something that is directed against the actual essence of language.<sup>104</sup> One needs a closeness to language that also includes distance from that very language.<sup>105</sup>

Krüger says of the relation of the subjective and the objective that the relation between 'I' and the world is much closer than could ever be expressed in an opposition of the subjective and the objective, but the movement towards some subject and back to the object is constitutive of the self, and both can only be imagined in an unsolveable merging of subject and object.<sup>106</sup>

The aphorism can be that melting place. This looks like another formulation of Fedler's idea

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<sup>102</sup> Krüger, p. 7.

<sup>103</sup> Krüger, p. 18.

<sup>104</sup> Krüger, p. 18.

<sup>105</sup> Krüger, p. 18.

<sup>106</sup> Krüger, p. 20.

that in the aphorism the particular and the general can be expressed at the same time without the one subsuming the other. According to Krüger, the aphorism does not have the task of transferring knowledge about an object but it is able to give a new perspective, to look at something from a different angle. The aphorism is also able to convey criticism in a way that other modes cannot.

To look at the aphorism from a literary perspective is to see the aphorism only as a descriptive entity without grasping its inner dialectic. A philosophical investigation, when it is based on logical principles, falls short of doing justice to the aphorism, as the aphorism is characterised by a discontinuity that cannot be grasped by logic alone. This is because the aphorism is not a straightforward statement. Aphoristic thinking is not a thinking of thinking ('Denken des Denkens')<sup>107</sup> as it was for the Romantics, and in contrast, Nietzsche's critique of language allows us to understand why he needed the aphorism for his philosophising which is a constant critique of rationality.

According to Krüger, the aphorism, like all other small modes of writing such as the maxim, the fragment and so on, originates as a form of philosophising that is based on direct life experience. The aphorism is capable of 'das Leben im Griff zu halten ohne im Begriff gerinnen zu lassen'.<sup>108</sup> This again reminds us of the importance of concepts for the aphorism; the aphorism needs concepts, but not concepts alone, because this would make this mode too sterile and kill the vigour of the aphorism. In place of Fedler's metaphorical-analogical

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<sup>107</sup> Krüger, p. 78.

<sup>108</sup> Krüger, p. 32.

process at the basis of the aphorism, Krüger places the dialectic of language at the centre of the aphorism. According to him, the aphorism has a relation to language that at the same time also includes the aphorism's distance from language.<sup>109</sup> This idea becomes clearer when one compares and contrasts the aphorism with other modes, such as the fragment.

Krüger is the only one of the theorists discussed in this chapter who tries to find a way to distinguish the fragment from the aphorism. Before looking at the difference between fragment and aphorism, which for Krüger lies mainly in their different approach to language and totality, we must first examine how the aphorism has been regarded by tradition. Only rarely has the aphorism been recognised as a form of philosophy. The aphorism has been regarded as belonging to both the old and new group of small modes where the old group consists of: gnomes (*Gnome*), Apophthegmata (*Apophthegmata*), adages (*Sprüche*) and sententiae (*Sentenzen*), and the new group also includes maxims (*Maximen*), reflections (*Reflexionen*) and fragments (*Fragmente*).<sup>110</sup> The aphorism and the fragment have in common the complexity of life around which the thinking is beginning to circle and which also changes the thinking. But they deal with this complexity in different ways. Adorno, while quoting Krüger further below in the next quote, says the following about the difference between fragment and aphorism:

Fragmentistisches und aphoristisches Denken ist beides "Denken in Brüchen"; das romantische Fragment lebt jedoch vom Einverständnis mit der Sprache, kraft deren es im Endlichen das Unendliche meint beschwören zu können, während im Aphorismus Kritik auf die Sprache selbst übergreift. Denken, das abbricht, möchte mit den Mitteln der Sprache von der Unwahrheit heilen, die unabdingbar der Sprache selbst innewohnt. "Die Intention des Aphorismus ist es, die Sprache für die Einsicht der Wahrheit

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<sup>109</sup> Krüger, p. 18.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. Krüger, p. 32.

durchlässig zu machen - man möchte beinah sagen: sie wegzusprechen -, ohne die Mittelbarkeit des Gesprochenen zu zerstören.”<sup>111</sup>

Similarities between the aphorism and the fragment are that both are ‘fractured’ modes of thinking. At the basis of etymology one would tend to assume that the fragment is the more ‘broken’ of the two, yet Adorno sees Romantic fragments as *not* contradicting language, unlike the aphorism. The aphorism is a site where language is critiqued, but in a constructive, healing manner. Language is seen here as something that contains untruth, immanently so, as something essential to language, and the aphorism as the site in which this conflict of language with language itself can be expressed and be made fruitful. The aphorism wants to open language for insights of truth, to make language transparent, yet without destroying the mediacy (*Mittelbarkeit*) of what is spoken.

The difference between fragments and aphorisms is, to Krüger, a fundamental distinction; they stand in opposition to each other, even though they are often used synonymously, and both are forms of a thinking in fractures (*Denken in Brüchen*).<sup>112</sup> Yet as philosophical forms they stand in opposition to each other, because they have a different relationship to totality. The fragment aims for the whole; in the fragment the thought of the whole is already implicit, whereas the aphorism stands in conflict with the whole or totality. In Romantic thought the system as a whole is understood to be capable of a permanent, indeed infinite openness, and the fragment ‘ist Keim schon zu einem solchen System.’<sup>113</sup> The fragment is about showing an absolute idea that is not able to show itself on its own. The aphorism in contrast does not

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<sup>111</sup> Krüger, p. 7.

<sup>112</sup> Krüger, p. 62.

<sup>113</sup> Krüger, p. 68.



balance thoughts like the fragment<sup>114</sup> and unlike the fragment stands in direct contrast to its own speculations.

The Romantics, according to Krüger, do not have the distance to language and the fragment does not have this distance either. The Romantics<sup>115</sup> dreamt of an *Ursprache* in which the different singular languages appear as fragments of that *Ursprache*. But the aphorism rather gives expression to what cannot be subsumed or what is in discordance with each other and is able to express those discordant things by giving them both a voice. The Romantics and their view of the fragment have been discussed in more detail in order to prepare for the discussion of Hohl's view of the fragment (cf. Sections III.2.5.1 & III.2.5.2).

#### **II.2.4 Gary Saul Morson**

This section briefly discusses what Morson writes about the aphorism in his book *The Long and Short of it. From Aphorism to Novel*<sup>116</sup> and his essays 'The Aphorism: Fragments from the Breakdown of Reason,'<sup>117</sup> and 'Aphoristic Style. The Rhetoric of the Aphorism'.<sup>118</sup> The book, written after the essays, expands their arguments. Morson's main idea is that the aphorism is defined by way of its worldview. Specifically, he has a dualistic approach, describing two opposite worldviews ascribed to the dictum and the aphorism: the worldview

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<sup>114</sup> 'Das In-sich-Zurückgehen (Steigerung der Reflexion), das Ich des Ichs, ist das Potenzieren; das Aus-sich-Herausgehen (Verminderung der Reflexion).' Schlegel, quoted in Krüger, p. 68. Krüger quotes Schlegel in order to show the dialectic or better, the movement within the fragment.

<sup>115</sup> Krüger, p. 72.

<sup>116</sup> Gary Saul Morson, *The Long and Short of it: From Aphorism to Novel* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012).

<sup>117</sup> Gary Saul Morson, 'The Aphorism: Fragments from the Breakdown of Reason', *New Literary History*, Vol 34, No.3 (2003), 409-429.

<sup>118</sup> Gary Saul Morson, 'Aphoristic Style: The Rhetoric of the Aphorism', in Walter Jost and Wendy Olmsted (eds.), *A Companion to Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), pp. 248-265.

of the dictum that assumes a system and certainty, and the aphoristic worldview that assumes uncertainty and incompleteness. The two have in consequence a different approach to ethics and morality, as will be explicated in more detail in the following discussion. Morson's ideas are interesting especially because, unlike the aforementioned thinkers, he takes into account what he calls the 'mystic' aspect of the aphorism; further, because he ties the aphorism to a particular worldview, and because he explains a connection between the short and the long genre, the aphorism and the novel. This section looks at: how Morson views the problem of definition and how he ties the aphorism to a specific worldview, because this will be relevant when looking at Hohl's worldview and how his worldview is connected to his writing; how Morson describes the mystic element in the aphorism, because Hohl often emphasises an entity called the ineffable, which has a key function in his aesthetic theory and that it is the task of the artist to translate the ineffable (cf. Section VI.3.1); and how Morson relates the aphorism as a short form to the novel as a long form, which is relevant in the context of Hohl's preference for Proust. Morson, like Fedler, situates the aphorism in the area between literature and philosophy;<sup>119</sup> however, he regards aphorisms as sources of wisdom,<sup>120</sup> and this makes them essentially more philosophical than literary.<sup>121</sup> Influenced by the genre theories of Mikhail Bakhtin and the way genres can be 'form-shaping ideologies,'<sup>122</sup> Morson approaches

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<sup>119</sup> Morson, *The Long and Short of it*, p. 2.

<sup>120</sup> Morson, *The Long and Short of it*, p. 3, passim.

<sup>121</sup> One could also say that, following Morson's Nietzsche interpretation, it is also possible to say that the aphorism has a strong psychological element. Morson follows here Pippin Robert Pippin, *Nietzsche, Psychology, and First Philosophy* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010). but Pippin's interpretation is itself problematic because it is not based on sufficient textual evidence: Neil Sinhababu, 'Review of Robert Pippin's Nietzsche, Psychology, & First Philosophy'. Last accessed: 29 May 2014 <<https://ndpr.nd.edu/news/24476-nietzsche-psychology-and-first-philosophy/>> Zachary Thomas Settle, 'Review of "Nietzsche, Psychology, & First Philosophy"', *Essays in Philosophy*, 15 (2014), 219-222.

<sup>122</sup> Morson, *The Long and Short of it*, p. 5.

the problem of defining the aphorism by shifting from defining the concept of aphorism towards focussing on classification in terms of the worldview, which any such genre expresses. In avoiding the terms he is consistent and shares the same critical behaviour towards well-defined concepts that aphoristic writers exhibit.

Each classification system is to be judged by the insight it yields about the problems it sets. There is no single correct classification system. We do best when we cease trying to account for the multiple and incompatible uses of a term and focus on specific classes of works. Identifying classes, rather than account for terms: this is a maxim of genre study.<sup>123</sup>

Just as Morson rejects the strongly defined term in favour of a more open category of classification, he also has in common with aphoristic writers a tendency to be critical towards the system. Morson writes that he regards the assumption of a single system as intellectually dishonest, because life is characterised by incompleteness.<sup>124</sup> The following statement by Joachim Günther illustrates this opposing view between the single system and those that deny the possibility of such a system, comparing the aphoristic writer to a hunter who is not certain of his prey,<sup>125</sup> whereas the systematic thinker has a complete certainty.

Der echte Aphoristiker ist ein Jäger des Geistes, ohne Bewusstsein von und gleichgültig gegen den ruhenden "Raum", in dem sich sein "Wild" bewegt. Der große Systematiker ist umgekehrt Grandseigneur, mit dem sichern Bewusstsein, dass alles "Land" und somit auch alles über ihm hinlebende Inventarium ihm sowieso virtuell angehört, ohne dass er es noch im einzelnen zu erjagen brauchte.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Morson, 'The Aphorism', p. 410.

<sup>124</sup> Morson, *The Long and Short of it*, p. 5.

<sup>125</sup> This relates very much to Hohl's view that *Erkenntnis* always has to be gained anew (cf. sections 2.5 - 2.5.2.2) cf. Jattie Enklaar, 'Ludwig Hohl: Zur Hoffnung des Tragischen' in Zygmunt Mielczarek (ed.), *Flucht und Dissidenz: Außenseiter und Neurotiker in der Deutschschweizer Literatur* (Frankfurt/Main, Berlin, Bern, New York, Paris, Wien: Peter Lang, 1999), pp. 93-102 (p. 93).

<sup>126</sup> Joachim Günther, Nietzsche-Spiegel I-V, in Karl Anton Rohan (ed.), *Europäische Revue* 13,2 (1937), 664-668 (p. 665).

The ethical worldview that corresponds to the ‘systematic’ worldview is, then, one of the imperatives, it does not accept doubt or hesitation, demands action without question and views in principle every problem as soluble. It is not based on the individual’s (direct) life experience, but instead on a set of norms that the individual has to conform to. The aphoristic worldview is the opposite of this. Morson bases this distinction loosely on Isaiah Berlin’s approach to this problem, which rejects the system or idea of a perfect whole:

The notion of the perfect whole, the ultimate solution, in which all good things coexist, seems to me to be not merely unattainable – that is a truism – but conceptually incoherent; I do not know what is meant by a harmony of this kind.<sup>127</sup>

According to Morson, different genres have a different rhetoric and they express different worldviews that can stand in conflict with each other:

I decided to classify genres according to their worldviews, the distinct sense of human experience that each conveys. How does each genre imagine life, what does it value, to whom does it appeal and why? When genres dispute each other, what issues shape their disagreement? What kind of arguments do they use and to what emotions do they appeal? What forms of expression does each genre find most suitable and effective?<sup>128</sup>

According to him genre determines how a text is read, and arguments about the meaning of certain texts or the worldviews they represent can be hidden in arguments about genre.<sup>129</sup>

Morson’s notion of different classes of worldview seems to be a very similar to Fedler’s application of Wittgenstein’s concept of family resemblance. From this it is obvious that

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<sup>127</sup> Isaiah Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity* (London: John Murray, 1990), p. 13.

<sup>128</sup> Morson, *The Long and Short of it*, p. 5.

Also, Morson subsumes all the short forms under the name of aphorism: ‘I therefore prefer to classify the works themselves and then, merely for the sake of consistent usage, apply a term to each class -- with the understanding that a different term could have been chosen and that I am not trying to regulate the proper use of terms. With this proviso, I will use the term “aphorism” to refer to the entire family of short genres, although others may prefer a different designation.’

Morson, *The Long and Short of it*, p. 4.

<sup>129</sup> Morson, ‘Aphoristic Style’, p. 251

Morson's approach is strongly tied to the idea of the aphorism expressing a certain worldview and he does this more strongly than Krüger, who also already assumed that the aphorism expressed a worldview. This is very different from the definition of Fricke. Morson's approach is practical, utilitarian one because it allows us to study the ideas that particular genres convey.<sup>130</sup> In this respect, reintroducing the notion of the aphorism as carrier of a certain worldview based on Mikhail Bakhtin's genre theories is very valuable, because many aphoristic writers do share a certain worldview. This initially rather general observation is expressed in a statement by Elias Canetti: 'Die großen Aphoristiker lesen sich so, als ob sie alle einander gut gekannt hätten.'<sup>131</sup> And also Robin Small emphasises the dialogical aspect of aphoristic writing.<sup>132</sup> This is very important because it assumes familiarity among aphoristic writers, something that is common to them; and in the investigation into the nature of the aphorism it is necessary to take seriously what aphoristic writers say about themselves, in order not to end up with a description of the aphorism, such as Fricke's, which excludes many aphorisms and aphoristic writers and the possibility of a worldview peculiar to the aphoristic writer. Yet it is the question of what is the nature of such a worldview, and how this worldview, despite the overarching similarities between aphoristic writers, might also accommodate difference.

While in his essay 'Aphoristic Style. The Rhetoric of the Aphorism' Morson still argues that the short forms are more difficult to classify than long forms, he subsequently abandons the idea of a narrow definition of short forms and says: 'There can be no final and no systematic

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<sup>130</sup> Morson, 'Aphoristic Style', p. 251.

<sup>131</sup> Elias Canetti, *Die Provinz des Menschen: Aufzeichnungen 1942 - 1972* (Munich: Hanser, 1973), p. 49.

<sup>132</sup> Robin Small, *Nietzsche and Rée: A Star Friendship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 59.

classification of short forms from this perspective. Their number is as large, and as changeable, as views of human experience.’<sup>133</sup> In my opinion, this echoes Wilhelm von Humboldt’s investigation of language as a vehicle of worldview, which understood the difference between languages not just as a difference of signs and sounds but as a difference of worldviews. According to him the world can be represented only in an inexhaustible number of worldviews. Humboldt wrote that ‘[...] der in der in der Welt sich offenbarende Geist durch keine Menge von Ansichten erschöpfend erkannt werden kann, sondern jede immer etwas Neues entdeckt.’<sup>134</sup> Trabant has equated *Weltansichten* with the concept of *Perspektiven*,<sup>135</sup> which makes it possible to connect Humboldt’s view with Nietzsche’s perspectivism.<sup>136</sup> While Humboldt acknowledges an infinite number of worldviews, Morson’s use of the worldview is of a different kind: it is dualistic and is primarily concerned with pitting two worldviews against each other, worldviews that are represented by the aphorism and the dictum. Morson also mentions the riddle and the quotation, which are to a lesser extent representatives of the dictum (riddle) and aphorism (quotation). In the following, Morson’s ideas on those modes will be summarised, starting with the quotation.

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<sup>133</sup> Morson, ‘The Aphorism’, p. 412.

<sup>134</sup> Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Latium und Hellas*, iii, pp. 167-168).  
cf. Jürgen Trabant, *Apeliotes oder der Sinn der Sprache* (München: Fink, 1986), p. 63.

<sup>135</sup> Jürgen Trabant, *Weltansichten. Wilhelm von Humboldts Sprachprojekt* (München: C.H. Beck, 2012), p. 135. also cf. Morson when he writes about the perspective of a dictum:

‘I propose to examine short forms from the perspective of genres as carriers of worldviews. There exists an aphoristic consciousness that differs from that of a maxim, a dictum, a witticism, a hypothesis, a thought, and many other forms. In the following pages, I shall be primarily concerned to identify the basic worldview of the aphorism by contrasting it with an opposite form, the dictum. To read a short expression as an aphorism is to read it as incompatible with the perspective of a dictum.’

Morson, ‘The Aphorism: Fragments from the Breakdown of Reason’, p. 411.

Benedetta Zavatta emphasises that Nietzsche’s view of *Weltansichten* is that they are not a ‘purely intellectual product.’

Benedetta Zavatta, ‘Nietzsche’s Linguistics’, in Helmut Heit and Lisa Heller (eds.), *Handbuch Nietzsche und die Wissenschaften* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2013), pp. 265-289, p. 272.

<sup>136</sup> a discussion that will be taken up in section III.2.1

The quotation shares with the aphorism that it can be easily memorised; Morson says that the aphorism can be a kind of quotation. The difference between aphorism and quotation is that the quotation is characterised by the reader's ability to make sense of it out of context.<sup>137</sup> According to Morson, in contrast to the riddle, the aphorism cannot be solved, and this insolubility is a characteristic of the aphorism.<sup>138</sup> The riddle is characterised by its being a question that does have an answer.<sup>139</sup> Riddles are similar to dicta in the sense that dicta express the solution to a riddle.<sup>140</sup> A decisive difference between riddle and the aphorism is that the aphorism is characterised by a mystery, which is precisely the element that constitutes the unsolvability of the aphorism. 'The world of the riddler is a different world from that of the aphorist, for the riddler lives outside the mystery. For the riddler, there are only unsolved problems.'<sup>141</sup>

Regarding the aphorism Morson states that in this sense the insolubility that is innate to the aphorism means that the aphorism corresponds and responds to the insolubility of life. The element of the mystical or insolubility causes difficulties when defining the aphorism. Morson hints<sup>142</sup> at a characteristic of the aphorism which he calls the mystical. It is worth investigating what he means by this because it seems to be closely related to the issue of

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<sup>137</sup> Morson, 'Aphoristic Style', p. 250.

<sup>138</sup> 'If life were a riddle, everything could be solved. But it is not. It is a mystery. This is the sense of the aphorism.' Morson, 'The Aphorism: Fragments from the Breakdown of Reason', p. 415.

<sup>139</sup> Morson, 'Aphoristic Style', p. 264.

<sup>140</sup> Morson, 'Aphoristic Style', p. 269.

<sup>141</sup> Morson, 'The Aphorism:', p. 413.

<sup>142</sup> Gary Saul Morson, 'The Aphorism', *passim*.

ontological fragmentariness and the indicative character of the aphorism. None of the other authors who have written on this subject has discussed the mystic or enigmatic character of the aphorism. However, it is necessary to approach the mystic aspect of the aphorism because mystery seems to be one of the aphorism's sources of power and because Lafond emphasises that Hohl's work had a mystical dimension already in the *Epische Grundschriften*,<sup>143</sup> Hohl's precursor of the *Notizen*. According to Morson, interpretation of any aphorism leads not to more clarity, but to a deepening of mystery.<sup>144</sup> This again is due to a certain worldview, in which the mystery is not visible to everyone. There is also an element of repetition<sup>145</sup> attaching to the mystery: sometimes it seems that different aphorisms repeat the same insight with different words. The way the aphorism uses repetition will be further examined in section V.4 with particular reference to Peter Handke.

The dictum is described by Morson as having no mystery and complexity: everything already appears to be solved. Therefore further characteristics of the dictum are that it is ahistoric, certain, aiming for clarity and tending to express an axiomatic truth from the perspective of those in power: 'Dicta proclaim knowledge and demand power. A dictum demands that we attend to it. ... An aphorism, by contrast, seems to be found in hiding.'<sup>146</sup> The dictum's relation to language is that it is on the side of logic, mathematical or formal language. The dictum is also seen more as a conclusion than as a beginning.<sup>147</sup> This very much places the

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<sup>143</sup> Barbara Lafond, 'Ludwig Hohls Wahrnehmung von Welt. Über die unveröffentlichten "Epischen Grundschriften (1926-1937)"', *Text + Kritik: Ludwig Hohl* 161, I (2004), pp. 7-22 (p. 7).

<sup>144</sup> Morson, 'The Aphorism', p. 413.

<sup>145</sup> 'The mystery repeats itself.' Morson, 'The Aphorism', p. 414.

<sup>146</sup> Morson, 'The Aphorism', p. 418.

<sup>147</sup> 'The dictum is a conclusion, the aphorism a beginning.' Morson, 'The Aphorism', p. 422.



aphorism into the realm of the uncertain and incomplete. The aphorism has a quite tentative nature according to which – as Morson states – it proposes statements:

Sometimes we may make a statement into an aphorism by taking it as such, even though it was meant quite differently. And sometimes it is unclear how the statement was meant – as an aphorism or as something else, so we try out an aphoristic reading to see what happens. Then we hear it as transcending its speech center, sense that it does not so much say something as something as *show itself* through its speaker, who cannot control it:<sup>148</sup>

Again the aphorism is described as expressing a statement, as expressing the statement in an ambiguous way, and not necessarily with a clear intention: it is experimental in nature, a *Versuch*. Moreover, there is again an indication of the aphorism's capacity to transcend things: the aphorism is not saying or stating something, but showing it, without those who express it having much control over the transcending capacity of the aphorism.<sup>149</sup>

Morson describes a consciousness that is unique to the aphorism. In addition this leads to the question as to whether there is a reality that is unique to the aphorism and how this reality can be described.<sup>150</sup> What is important here is that the aphorism does not have a direct access to the world,<sup>151</sup> meaning that this might indicate a boundary between world and reality. The aspect of the aphorism being in hiding seems to be important because it hints at the

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<sup>148</sup> Morson, 'The Aphorism', pp. 421–422.

<sup>149</sup> 'An aphorism is not so much proclaimed as posed.' Morson, 'The Aphorism', p. 421.

<sup>150</sup> This might be why Hohl distinguishes between two concepts of reality, Wirklichkeit und Realität (cf. section III.2.5.2.2).

<sup>151</sup> 'For the aphorist, the world does not give itself away.' Morson, 'The Aphorism', p. 413

aphorism's very nature, that what it expresses is out of its reach.<sup>152</sup> In consequence this means that the aphoristic worldview is characterised by uncertainty, incompleteness and mystery. The relation of the aphorism to the fragment according to Morson is that our most important knowledge is incomplete.<sup>153</sup> In holding this he strongly resembles Hohl. Morson does not compare the aphorism with the fragment because he sees aphorisms as fragments, as having a fragmentary quality.<sup>154</sup>

As we read such fragments, their incompleteness seems a part of them, because they speak of the necessary incompleteness of our knowledge of what is most important. They gesture beyond themselves, and the white space that follows seems a part of them. They are momentary probes, or flashes that die out before we have quite made out what they reveal.<sup>155</sup>

Morson's essay further has similarities to Krüger's discussion of the aphorism in opposition to the fragment. He contrasts the aphorism with the dictum, with the dictum taking the place of

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<sup>152</sup> 'Despite their variety in tone, form, and language, these aphorisms all share a sense that what it is most valuable to grasp lies beyond our reach. God does not reveal himself *in* the world. The essence of the thing, the way to live, the true philosophy, self-knowledge and our deepest self—all lie occluded, beyond a barrier, beyond which we can see only dimly. The little we can see only invites us to peer farther. Mystery upon mystery, the gateway of the manifold secrets: language, reason, the mind, and introspection all fail, though not utterly. We sense that there is no single discovery to be made and no method for arriving at a definitive answer. There is no system, nothing generalisable and sure, and we must probe, guess, explore as best we can. Each tool we use to explore also partly deforms. All tools are defective, though not useless, so we must try many and see what results. A sort of uncertainty principle reigns, in which the way of investigation introduces its own distortions. Language points beyond itself, but we are never quite free of its entanglements. The Way that can be spoken of is not the true Way. But we may learn something by speaking of it, as Lao Tzu does. The aphorism senses the world as dim, though not absolutely opaque. The window to the truth is translucent. We grope endlessly through obscurities.'

Morson, 'The Aphorism', p. 421.

<sup>153</sup> Morson writes about the fragments of Heraklit the following 'They (the fragments) speak of the necessary incompleteness of the most important knowlegde and, gesturing beyond themselves, almost make the white space following each fragment a part of it.' Morson, *The Long and Short of it*, p. 46.

<sup>154</sup> 'We sense it to be fitting that aphorisms often come as fragments. The full intelligence is not there, only hinted at. Part of the whole is missing, as is always the case with truth itself. This fragment—it is a fragment of what?: that question is always implicit.'

Morson, 'The Aphorism', p. 422.

<sup>155</sup> Morson, 'The Aphorism', p. 423.

the fragment, and dictum and fragment being described as conflict-free in their relation to totality in the same way the aphorism stands in conflict with totality.<sup>156</sup>

Morson also explicates how the long and short genre relate to each other. This is especially of importance considering that both Hohl and Nietzsche indicated a preference for long novels: for instance, Hohl had a strong preference for Proust<sup>157</sup> and Nietzsche counted Stifter's *Nachsommer* as one of the five books that ought to be preserved for posterity.<sup>158</sup> One could regard this preference for the long novel as uncharacteristic of an aphoristic writer, but this is a further indication that length or brevity are not appropriate characteristics according to which to define the aphorism. Morson answers the question as to the way how the long and the short genre are connected in two ways. Firstly, a long and short work might express the same worldview; they could be counterparts. Worldviews can be expressed in an aphorism or by a long novel. A long novel might explicate the worldview of an aphorism, or show the development of such a worldview, or share other characteristics of an aphorism, such as its innate fragmentariness.<sup>159</sup> And, secondly, long genres, such as long novels, may contain short

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<sup>156</sup> cf. for a view that attributes a tendency to totalitarianism to the aphorism and a lack of that to the fragment Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), pp. 151-170.

<sup>157</sup> 'Eine Literaturgeschichte der Gegenwart sollte in diese zwei Teile zerfallen:  
I) Proust  
II) Die Kleineren'  
NN 77

<sup>158</sup> MA II WS 109, KSA 2.599.

<sup>159</sup> Franco Rella attests Proust fragmentariness. Franco Rella, 'The Voice of Silence', in Verschaffel & Verminck (eds.), *Wordlessness* (Antwerp: The Lilliput Press, 1993), pp. 18 - 24 (p. 22). This fragmentariness is the same ontological fragmentariness that the aphorism exhibits:

'We sense it to be fitting that aphorisms often come as fragments. The full intelligence is not there, only hinted at. [...] the fragmentary quality of his sayings seems to be essential to them.' Morson, 'Aphoristic Style', p. 261.

genres.<sup>160</sup> Morson's examples here are Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*<sup>161</sup> or George Eliot's *Middlemarch* in which for instance Eliot 'formulates maxims worthy of a La Rochefoucauld.'<sup>162</sup>

The great benefit of Morson's analysis is his acknowledgement of the innate fragmentariness of the aphorism and its capacity to transcend itself; in other words, the aphorism's indicative character in showing something that it is not able to say. Basically the aphorism's ontological fragmentariness is arguably an extension or consequence of its indicative character. The second great benefit of Morson's analysis is that it outlines two divergent worldviews that are tied to certain modes. Morson, however, does not provide an analysis of the inner workings of the aphorism in the way Fedler does. While Morson's reading of Nietzsche as a psychologist is not convincing, for the purpose of this study it is more important that he showed convincingly that genres indeed can be tied to a particular worldview. The contrast between two worldviews, encapsulated in the aphorism and the dictum, seems to mirror the general conflict between the particular and universal, with the aphorism as a representative of the particular and the dictum as a representative of the universal.

### **II.3 Conclusion**

I shall conclude this chapter by investigating the question of whether, according to Fricke, Fedler, Krüger and Morson, Hohl's and Nietzsche's writing can be termed aphoristic.

According to Fricke, parts of Nietzsche's work could be called aphoristic. With Hohl, this

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<sup>160</sup> Morson, *The Long and Short of it*, p. 9.

<sup>161</sup> Morson, *The Long and Short of it*, pp. 9, 83-85.

<sup>162</sup> Morson, *The Long and Short of it*, p. 9.

characterisation is more difficult, as he presented his *Notizen* not as a system but nevertheless with a strong order, which violates Fricke's principle of *kotextuelle Isolation*. Fricke and Fedler agree, however, that shortness is not a good criterion in defining the aphorism. According to Krüger's and Fedler's definitions, both Hohl's and Nietzsche's work can be called aphoristic because it contains thoughts, uses concepts with poetic means, such as metaphorical speech, and displays a certain view of life. Krüger's account of how the aphorism promotes health is helpful. Of the four theorists discussed, only Krüger and Morson devote some attention to the question of how the aphorism differs from the fragment. Krüger saw the fragment as diametrically opposed to the aphorism, due to their different relations to totality and language. This problem of the difference between fragment and aphorism was approached by Morson by looking at the fragment not in opposition to the aphorism but by assuming the fragmentary nature of the aphorism. This leads us on to the concept of ontological fragmentariness (explored more in section III.2.5.2). Fricke does not discuss conflict between the aphorism and the system; he thinks even that this discussion should be omitted in the research of the aphorism.<sup>163</sup> This is a problem when a large part of the thinking of Hohl and Nietzsche is precisely concerned with the question of how to live against a system. It is clear from a sociological or political view of power, the aphorism is on the side of the powerless in many ways, and that is again something that Morson's description of the aphorism has in common with the position of Krüger. Failure to discuss the conflict between individual and system would thus mean discarding large areas of their thought. This is why one cannot exclude discussion about how the system relates to the aphorism. Similar concerns arise regarding Fricke's problematic exclusion of the aphorism as a way of expressing a

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<sup>163</sup> Fricke, pp. 3-4.

certain form of thinking. He rejects an innately aphoristic worldview as psychologising. Even if he rejects it from a linguistic point of view one cannot ignore the fact that many aphoristic writers share a certain worldview and that after the system-building philosophers the only major philosophers were aphoristic thinkers.<sup>164</sup> This is problematic, because thinkers like Hohl and Nietzsche could be characterised as belonging to a line of philosophy that is explicitly excluded by Fricke. He admits that large parts of Nietzsche's writing are aphoristic, but his approach excludes the examination of very important connections between Nietzsche's style of writing and his thinking. And yet the question remains, when one accepts the idea that there is no innate aphoristic thinking, how does one explain the apparent similarities of worldview held by many aphoristic thinkers?

Furthermore the prescriptiveness of Fricke's account is problematic because Hohl and Nietzsche are thinkers who wish to find their own laws by way of re-evaluation. So they inherently revolt against prescriptiveness, and the aphorism has an innate resilience towards dogmatism<sup>165</sup> simply because it can be interpreted in many ways. Any approach that is descriptive and existential is able to do more justice to them and their writing. This is why Fricke's approach is less useful for the evaluation of Nietzsche's and Hohl's writing.

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<sup>164</sup> Krüger, p. 13. also, cf. Höft who fundamentally ties the aphorism to a world view: 'Das fundamentale Kriterium für die Geburt von Aphorismen, so oft sie im Wandel des schöpferischen Gestaltens auftauchen, ist das Aufleben einer neuen Blickweise. Bei ihrem frühesten Eindringen in die Philosophie und damit der Eroberung ihres eigentlichen Schaffensfeldes schon ist die aphoristische Form verknüpft mit einem Wandel in der Grundkonzeption der geistigen Welt.'  
Albert Höft, 'Das historische Werden des Aphorismus', in Neuman (ed.), *Der Aphorismus: Zur Geschichte, zu den Formen und Möglichkeiten einer literarischen Gattung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1979), pp. 112-129 (p. 112).

<sup>165</sup> Requadt, p. 106.; Small, p. 63. confirm this.

I propose an approach to the aphorism that aims to do justice to the writing of Hohl and Nietzsche. This approach is based on the accounts of Fedler, Morson and Krüger and combines their findings, producing a combination of the descriptive and the existential. Starting with Fedler, the aphorism is regarded basically as an expression of thought, where thought is expressed by concepts using poetic means, situating the aphorism between poetry and philosophy. This is a very useful idea, because especially Nietzsche's writing seems to be both philosophical and poetic, while Hohl's writing is philosophical, but less poetic and his aphorisms do not express insight in a beautiful, ornamental way. Fedler's account can thus help to elucidate the complicated position that Nietzsche and Hohl occupy in the history of philosophy and literature.

The advantage of Morson's approach is that his is the only account which seeks to understand the more enigmatic nature of the aphorism or what he calls its mystery. This is a particular strength of the aphorism and therefore should be accounted for in the discussion, however difficult it is to put into words. It must especially not be discarded because to Hohl an ineffable element is key to his aesthetic theory. Even though Fricke omits the specific inductive character of the aphorism in his definition, even he noted it and could not ignore it. It is useful to combine the three approaches of Fedler, Krüger and Morson. Fedler's description of the aphorism as using concepts with poetic means can be combined with Krüger's idea of the aphorism being primarily philosophical and an expression of a certain view of life. In addition, Morson's notion of the aphorism representing a certain worldview, his description of the mystery, and his shift towards the fragmentary nature of the aphorism is

useful because it adds an existential and ontological dimension to Fedler's theoretical description of the aphorism.



### III LUDWIG HOHL, FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE: GENERAL PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE APHORISM AND THE STRUCTURE OF APHORISTIC WRITING

#### III. 1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explain why Hohl's and Nietzsche's writing is aphoristic according to the definition I proposed at the end of the first chapter. This definition suggested that the aphorism uses concepts with poetic means, is primarily philosophical and expresses a certain view of life, meaning it always possesses an existential dimension. In this chapter an additional characteristic of the aphorism will be investigated: ontological fragmentariness. This sees the aphorism not in opposition to the fragment, as Krüger proposed, but as inherently fragmentary in an ontological sense, which means that the fragment is not understood as a genre or mode but as an ontological category. This means that the aphorism, due to its ontological fragmentariness, can only set out to present partial views and is never able to represent a totality or total knowledge.

First, however, the question of whether Hohl and Nietzsche regarded their own writing as aphoristic needs to be addressed and, if they did not, how they and others describe their writing, and what conclusions need to be drawn from this divergence of opinion. With regard to Hohl, descriptions of his writing by others are exceedingly wide-ranging, from *Denkprosa* to *Notizen* (cf. III.2.1), and it is important to find out what has created this wide range of opinion, because the differing descriptions given to Hohl's writing might illuminate certain of its characteristics.

The question of the classification of Hohl's writing is quite complicated. In the secondary literature there is no agreement on whether to call his writing aphoristic, fragmentary or writing in note form. Therefore the appropriateness of these modes needs to be compared and examined as descriptions of what is generally called *Das Notizenwerk*.<sup>166</sup> The problem of categorisation is due to the general problems of definition in relation to the aphorism, the fragment and the note, and also to the fact that Hohl himself claims that his writing is not aphoristic, which is a trait common to almost all aphoristic writers.<sup>167</sup> Similarly widespread is their rejection of the idea of a system. Here it is important to note that aphoristic writers tend not to define what they mean by system. Generally, they reject the system for two reasons: firstly, the system violates the individual and his/her particular worldview and, secondly, a system tends to assume a congruence between the system and life and truth. This is true, for instance, of the system broadly understood in a Leibnizian sense, where it is equated with truth and has an 'abschließende Gestalt der Wahrheit.'<sup>168</sup> Aphoristic writers do not assume such a congruency but rather see an opposition between a rigid, rational system on the one hand and life and experience and individual truth on the other. In addition they are very aware of the partiality and limits of their insights<sup>169</sup> on the one hand and of the infinite possibilities of life that can never be totally brought under a system on the other. Nietzsche's concept of

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<sup>166</sup> *Notizenwerk* is a name for the following works of Hohl:

NuD — Hohl, Ludwig, *Nuancen und Details* (Olten und Freiburg: Walter Verlag, 1964).

N — Hohl, Ludwig, *Die Notizen oder von der unvoreiligen Versöhnung* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1981).

NN — Hohl, Ludwig, *Von den hereinbrechenden Rändern: Nachnotizen* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1986).

<sup>167</sup> cf. *Ideenparadiese*, p. 37.

<sup>168</sup> HdWPH, x, p. 830.

<sup>169</sup> 'Jeder Mensch ist nur ein Stück von sich selbst.' Friedrich Schlegel, quoted in Neumann, *Ideenparadiese*, p. 566.

perspectivism<sup>170</sup> is the result of a similar insight: we do not have access to a full truth and only the entire multitude of particularities, of singular viewpoints, is able to constitute objectivity, which means a view of objectivity where the particulars are not subsumed under the objectivity, but create this objectivity instead.<sup>171</sup> This reverses a concept of objectivity that sees particulars as inferior and instead prioritises the particulars. This will be discussed in more detail in III.2.1.

In this respect it is important to remember the dual nature of the aphorism using concepts with poetic means. The aphorism is therefore inherently determined by conflicting forces or opposing entities such as, for example, the conceptual and the metaphorical. With respect to the system and abstraction, the aphorism always exhibits rational traces by creating structure and order, but these are also always counterbalanced by the poetic or arational element of the aphorism. As a consequence, the aphorism is able to create structures, but these are never total and do not allow for particularities to be subsumed or abstracted. One could say with Schlegel: ‘Es ist gleich tödlich für den Geist, ein System zu haben, und keines zu haben. Er

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<sup>170</sup> ‘...het heeft een beetje te maken met het begrip Perspectivisme, dat bij iemand als Gottfried Benn zo'n belangrijke rol speelt (het komt eigenlijk van Nietzsche); het begrip dat de werkelijkheid als zodanig niet te vangen is, maar dat alles een kwestie is van het standpunt dat je inneemt en daarmee van het perspectief dat zich dan aanbiedt. Waar het in het hele sonnet in feite ook om draait, dacht ik, tenminste als het gelukt is, is dat er in feite geen waarheden zijn en geen denkbeelden waaraan je je vast kunt knopen, maar dat je je ervan bewust moet zijn dat elk denkbeeld dat je je maakt, van wat dan ook, niks anders is dan een kwestie van perspectief. En dus nooit een objectieve geldigheid heeft.’

C.O. Jellema & Jan Kuijper, Het verdwijnpunt verplaatst zich steeds verder. Over ‘Ruiter in weids landschap’ *De Revisor. Jaargang 11*. (Amsterdam: Em. Querido's Uitgeverij, 1984), 37-41 (pp. 39-40).

<sup>171</sup> ‘Perspectivism of all understanding, showing reality in an inevitable one-sidedness, hinders our ability to do justice to it. It is possible, however, to successively assume many and varied standpoints, going through them.’ Beatrix Himmelmann, ‘How to Make Sense of the World’, *New Nietzsche Studies*, 8 (2009/2010), 19-33, (p. 27). In Hohl the concept of ‘Perspektiven’ is closely related to his concept of ‘Kette’ NN 263, see section IV.3.2.2.

wird sich also wohl entschließen müssen, beides zu verbinden.<sup>172</sup> This raises the question of the unity of the *Notizen*, and how it can be understood. Hohl emphasised this unity strongly. I suggest that the unity of the *Notizen* can be understood in three ways: by concepts, by a process of reflection and by a process of ongoing reflection. This will be discussed in III.2.2.1 and throughout the thesis. The structure of aphoristic writing is constituted by the chains of thought, which are examined in III.3.

For Nietzsche, too, questions regarding the mode and the rejection of the aphorism need to be considered. He does not reject the aphorism so much as reject classification. For him, the question is not whether he used the note but to what extent his aphoristic writing evolved out of the *Betrachtung*, the *Sentenz* and the essay. These terms all need to be examined more closely (III.2.3). After this, the possibility of whether Hohl's writing is note-writing (III.2.4) will be examined beside the work of Susanne Niemuth-Engelmann: *Alltag und Aufzeichnung*<sup>173</sup> and the book *Notieren, Skizzieren. Schreiben und Zeichnen als Verfahren des Entwurfs*<sup>174</sup> edited by Karin Krauthausen and Omar W. Nasim. Niemuth-Engelmann's account is also of special importance because it is based on Fedler's account of the aphorism and how she reinterprets Wittgenstein's concept of family resemblance, using this concept to concentrate on the connections (*Zusammenhänge*) between the different modes.

Thereafter the element of fragmentariness in Hohl's work will be explored (Section III.2.5).

Fragmentariness needs to be considered in two ways: firstly, whether his writing can be called

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<sup>172</sup> Friedrich Schlegel, Athenaeumsfragment 53, quoted in Neumann, *Ideenparadiese*, p. 444.

<sup>173</sup> Susanne Niemuth-Engelmann, *Alltag und Aufzeichnung: Untersuchungen zu Canetti, Bender, Handke und Schnurre* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann: 1998).

<sup>174</sup> Karin Krauthausen and Omar W. Nasim, (eds), *Notieren, Skizzieren: Schreiben und Zeichnen als Verfahren des Entwurfs*, (Zürich: Diaphanes, 2010).

fragmentary and, secondly, whether fragmentariness plays another role in Hohl's writing, namely as ontological fragmentariness. This will be explored with the help of Rafael Ferber's essay 'Bemerkungen zu Ludwig Hohl als Philosophen'.<sup>175</sup> I suggest that Hohl does not write in fragments and instead that he does use the fragmentary as an ontological category throughout his work. The origin of this ontological fragmentariness will then be explored, in particular how it originates out of Hohl's concept of being (III.2.5.2). Morson has confirmed this by showing the incompleteness inherent in the aphorism. As such the concept of ontological fragmentariness can help to shed light on various aspects of aphoristic writing that are problematic; for instance, the definition of an aphorism, why it is often experienced as enigmatic or mystic and how it can combine different levels of reality, surface and depth. Furthermore, ontological fragmentariness has consequences for how any order of aphoristic writing can be understood and how far aphorisms can be understood as connected to each other. This relates to the question of unity in Hohl's *Notizen*, something which he himself emphasised very strongly in the preface to the *Notizen*. The question is what such a unity looks like when aphoristic writers reject the notion of the system as such. One approach to the structure of aphoristic writing is to focus on the chains of thought (III.3), another notion common to aphoristic writers. In order to understand chains of thought and how they connect, it is necessary to understand Hohl's ideas on connections and how he developed a method of *Zusammenhänge*, which means that he stands in the tradition of analogical thinking as will be explained in section III.4.

Section III.5 examines the problem of how to read the aphorism and the specific challenges that the reader faces. Different methods of reading the aphorism will need to be discussed

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<sup>175</sup> Rafael Ferber, 'Bemerkungen zu Ludwig Hohl als Philosophen', *Schweizer Monatshefte* 72, 5, 1992, 405-411.

here. In addition, chapter IV of Hohl's *Notizen*, dealing with *Lesen*, will be examined for two reasons: to show the structure of his chapter composed of aphorisms as an example of the structure of aphoristic writing, and to understand what he means by *Lesen*.

In the following two chapters (IV and V) of this thesis, chains of thought in Hohl's aphoristic writing will be traced on a conceptual and metaphorical level. It will be shown how, on a conceptual level, the concepts (*Geisteskräfte*) are connected throughout his work, how the aphorism is not an independent entity, following Adorno's argument that aphorisms share an *unterirdischen Zusammenhang*.<sup>176</sup> Secondly, the chains of thought will be traced on a metaphorical level, which involves tracing the stone metaphor, an absolute metaphor according to Blumenberg<sup>177</sup> (to be explained in more detail in Section V.3). The focus on the *Geisteskräfte* was chosen firstly, in order to understand the way Hohl used concepts so as to better understand the conceptual side of aphoristic writing, and secondly, because *Geisteskräfte* are constitutive parts of Hohl's theory of creativity which will prepare for a discussion of this theory in chapter VI.

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<sup>176</sup> Adorno calls them *Notizen* instead of aphorisms: 'Notizen, deren unterirdischer Zusammenhang ihnen mehr an Einheit und Form verleiht, als Außenarchitektur ihnen hätte verschaffen können.' Adorno, 'Valéry's Abweichungen', p. 158.

<sup>177</sup> Blumenberg, *Paradigmen*, p. 10.

### III.1.1 Influence

To begin with it is useful to understand the literary traditions by which Nietzsche and Hohl were influenced. Both had preferences in common such as Lichtenberg, Pascal, Montaigne, Heraclitus, Hölderlin and Goethe. Nietzsche is indebted to the tradition of aphoristic literature<sup>178</sup> and acknowledges this influence several times.<sup>179</sup> For instance, he was influenced very much by his reading of Lichtenberg,<sup>180</sup> as well as by Leopardi and French Moralists such as La Rochefoucauld, Pascal and Chamfort.<sup>181</sup> Westerdale suggests that Nietzsche ‘...positions himself as heir to both the French and German aphoristic traditions.’<sup>182</sup> Unlike Nietzsche, and despite his knowledge of French and period of residence in Paris, Hohl seems to be less influenced by the French Moralists, although he certainly read La Rouchefoucauld, Vauvenargues and probably the other French Moralists. Other influences on Hohl were

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<sup>178</sup> for a general overview of Nietzsche’s library cf. the work of Thomas Brobjer: Thomas H. Brobjer, *Nietzsche's Philosophical Context: An Intellectual Biography* (Urbana-Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008). and: Thomas H. Brobjer, Nietzsche’s reading and private library, 1885 - 1889, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58, 4 (1997), 663-680.

<sup>179</sup> ‘Wenn man von Goethe's Schriften absieht [...]: was bleibt eigentlich von der deutschen Prosa-Literatur übrig, das es verdient, wieder und wieder gelesen zu werden? Lichtenberg's Aphorismen, das erste Buch von Jung-Stilling's Lebensgeschichte, Adalbert Stifter's Nachsommer und Gottfried Keller's Leute von Seldwyla, – ja und damit wird es einstweilen am Ende sein.’  
MA II 109, KSA 2.599.

Hohl refers to Nietzsche’s list in NN 438

Hohl’s list of five books N IX 99:

‘Diejenigen Bücher, die man *immer* um sich haben sollte sind (fünf):

- 1) Ethik von Spinoza
- 2) Faust von Goethe
- 3) Sprüche und Divan von Goethe
- 4) Essays von Montaigne
- 5) Lichtenberg (kleine Stücke).’

<sup>180</sup> *Nietzsche-Wörterbuch*, ed. by Paul van Tongeren, Gerd Schank and Herman Siemens (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), i: Abbrviatur - einfach, p.78.

Brendan Donnellan, *Nietzsche and the French Moralists* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1982), p. 122.

<sup>181</sup> For a general discussion of the influence of the French Moralists on Nietzsche cf. Donnellan, *passim*.

<sup>182</sup> Joel Westerdale, *Nietzsche's aphoristic challenge* (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2013), p. 33. cf. Westerdale for a discussion of the differences between French and German aphoristic traditions and Nietzsche’s indebtedness to both: pp. 24-33.

Proust, Balzac, Katherine Mansfield,<sup>183</sup> Karl Kraus and André Gide.<sup>184</sup> Both Hohl and Nietzsche started using longer forms and only later developed their aphoristic style. Hohl wrote a diary, short stories and novellas. In Nietzsche's case, the so-called middle phase of his writing (1878–82) is often regarded as the one in which he turned to the aphorism.<sup>185</sup> Often one can find many literary modes in his writing. Donnellan describes the early style of Nietzsche as follows:

In the works of the early period Nietzsche had favoured the long continuous discourse written in an eloquent, often flowery and overladen, scholarly style. The influence of his classical studies is so evident in his prose that von der Leyen was able to claim that Nietzsche's early essays read like Latin rhetoric translated into German.<sup>186</sup>

While knowing Latin and Greek, Hohl did not train as a classical philologist and his style could not be described as flowery. Andreas Langenbacher, in his essay *'Die Nachtigall fiel erfroren senkrecht zum Boden.'* *Ludwig Hohls Poetik der Ernüchterung*<sup>187</sup> describes the rather plain and matter of fact style of his writing; Hohl's sober (ernüchtert), unpretentious

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<sup>183</sup> Katherine Mansfield was also an aphoristic writer. In 2012 Chris Mourant discovered aphorisms by Mansfield; they are published in Katherine Mansfield, *The Poetry and Critical Writings of Katherine Mansfield*, eds. Gerri Kimber and Angela Smith, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014).

<sup>184</sup> cf. Anna Stüssi, *Ludwig Hohl: Unterwegs zum Werk. Eine Biographie der Jahre 1904 - 1937* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2014) for the various authors Hohl appreciated in different stages of his life: pp. 11, 46, 127, 208, 261, 274, 285, 299.

Stüssi assumes that poverty was a major factor in determining which books were accessible to him and which were not. She writes about Hohl's reading while he was living in The Hague: 'Hohl hat die in Amsterdam erscheinenden Bücher der Exilautoren - Heinrich Mann, Ernst Toller, Lion Feuchtwanger, Anna Seghers, Arnold Zweig, Erich Maria Remarque. Emil Ludwig, Alfred Döblin, Bruno Frank, Leonard Frank, Ludwig Marcuse, Joseph Roth usw. - kaum beachtet oder keine Worte darüber verloren, wohl aus dem einfachen Grund, weil er kein Geld hatte, sie zu kaufen. Die deutschen, französischen und englischen Klassiker, die die belesenen Holländer in den Krisenjahren dem Trödler bringen, stehen Hohl näher, auch, weil sie erschwinglicher sind. Die Preise richten sich nach Größe und Gewicht.' p. 274.

cf. for Hohl's experience of poverty: Traugott Vogel, 'Würde und Unwürde der Armut: Über Ludwig Hohl', in Johannes Beringer (ed.), *Ludwig Hohl* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), pp. 163-185.

<sup>185</sup> *Nietzsche-Wörterbuch*, p. 78.

<sup>186</sup> Donnellan, p. 125.

<sup>187</sup> Andreas Langenbacher, "'Die Nachtigall fiel erfroren senkrecht zum Boden'" *Ludwig Hohls Poetik der Ernüchterung*, in Erismann, Probst, Sarbach (eds.), *Ludwig Hohl. 'Alles ist Werk'* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2004), pp. 95-107.



style. However, Langenbacher concludes that there is depth to this sobriety and applies Hohl's statement about Walser to Hohl himself: 'Robert Walser. Er hatte so viel Phantasie, daß er sich sogar in die Nüchternheit hineinphantasierte, - und die Nüchternen an Nüchternheit übetraf'.<sup>188</sup> This emphasises the role of *Phantasie*, a concept to be investigated in Chapter IV. Beringer suggests that Hohl used a 'kunstlose Sprache'.<sup>189</sup> *Kunstlos* for Beringer does not mean 'einfach' but 'schlicht', this kunstlose Sprache has the aim of accessing 'aussersprachliche Erfahrungen'<sup>190</sup> such as the experience of the *hereinbrechende Ränder*, which will be discussed in section III.2.5.2.1. Therefore this perceived lack of elegant language is intentional in order to open language for something else, something that Hohl calls the *Unaussprechliche* (discussed in Chapter VI.3.1).

Both Nietzsche and Hohl have a preference for the very long novel; Hohl having a high regard for Proust and Nietzsche for Stifter,<sup>191</sup> which on the surface might seem surprising considering they were predominantly writers of short forms.<sup>192</sup> Theodor Lessing explains Nietzsche's preference for Stifter being due to aiming for a state of mature contemplativeness:

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<sup>188</sup> NN 231.

<sup>189</sup> Beringer, *Hohls Weg*, pp. 121-123.

<sup>190</sup> 'Die Kunst der *kunstlosen Sprache* geht eine möglichst direkte Verbindung zwischen Anschauung und Begriff ein, hält mit wachem Sinn für das Aussen und Innen den "Fang" fest (spontan und reflektiert) - versucht, die primären Reize und Empfindungen sprachlich so zu fassen, dass der Reibungsverlust (im Abstraktiven) gering ist, das Geschriebene nicht wieder "verschleimt und verglast", also der Atem des Anschauens und Denkens durch es hindurch geht.' Beringer, p. 123, he refers to N II 33.

<sup>191</sup> cf. for a detailed discussion of Nietzsche's love for Stifter, Ernst Bertram, *Nietzsche. An Attempt at Mythology* (Chicago and Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), pp. 203 - 213. Duncan Large, who discusses Proust and Nietzsche, does not mention Stifter: Duncan Large, *Nietzsche and Proust* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001). Hohl's view on Stifter: NN 438.

<sup>192</sup> cf. also Neumann's discussion of the aphorisms in Goethe's *Wahlverwandtschaften. Ideenparadiese*, pp. 683-710, p. 716 & p. 720. The aphorism in this case is considered to add complexity into a seemingly simple story. Goethe uses the aphorism for superordinated poetological purposes. Cf. also Morson, *The Long and the Short of it*, passim.

‘ein Zustand nicht mehr wollender, nicht mehr tuender, reiner Lebensschau. Die durch Denken und Wollen hindurchgegangene Schlichtheit der höchsten Reife.’<sup>193</sup>

### **III.2 Addressing Questions of Mode: Aphorism, Fragment, Note, *Sentenz*, *Betrachtung***

This section is divided into the following parts: firstly, the general rejection of the aphorism, in which the problem of abstraction and Nietzsche’s concept of perspectivism will be discussed (III.2.1) and, secondly, the rejection of the system (III.2.1.1) by aphoristic writers, then Hohl’s rejection of the aphorism (III.2.2), the insistence of the unity in his writing and suggestions of how to understand this unity (III.2.2.1) and, finally, to Nietzsche’s rejection of classification (III.3).

#### **III.2.1 Rejection of the Term ‘Aphorism’ by Aphoristic Writers**

Aphoristic writers tend to resist a description of their writing as aphoristic and instead invent new names and genres for it. Hohl and Nietzsche are no exception to this, and while Hohl has called his writing ‘notes’ (*Notizen*), his rejection of the aphorism is stronger than Nietzsche’s, who occasionally called his writing aphoristic but also used the word *Sentenz* to describe his writing alternately with the *aphorism*.

Regarding Hohl, there is a large group of researchers calling his writing ‘note-writing’ such as Loetscher and Probst (whose approach on the note will be discussed in III.2.4 and whose approach on their idea of unity will be discussed in III.2.2.1) and others who tend to call

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<sup>193</sup> Theodor Lessing, *Nietzsche* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1925), p. 77.

Hohl's writing aphoristic, such as Rafael Ferber<sup>194</sup> or Weber who calls Hohl 'einen grundsätzlichen Aphoristiker'.<sup>195</sup> Jattie Enklaar in following Weber describes Hohl's aphoristic practice as one which 'blitzartige Einfälle zu formulieren weiß und sie innerhalb des Satzgefüges der Sprache wie in eine Denkspirale mit zwei offenen Enden einköchert.'<sup>196</sup> Max Frisch<sup>197</sup> and Gert Mattenklott<sup>198</sup> call Hohl's writing aphoristic as well. However, in Hohl's case the problem of how to name his writing is compounded because he actually does not find neologisms for his writing, but other researchers have invented new descriptions<sup>199</sup> for his writing. For instance, Sabine Haupt who also tends to call Hohl's writing aphoristic,<sup>200</sup> but in addition suggests the alternative *Denkprosa* while at the same

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<sup>194</sup> Ferber, p. 405.

<sup>195</sup> Werner Weber, 'Im Zeichen der Spirale: Zu Ludwig Hohls Notizen', in Johannes Beringer (ed.), *Ludwig Hohl* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), pp. 37-40 (p. 37).

<sup>196</sup> Jattie Enklaar, 'Spuren nur von endlosen Stoffen - Ludwig Hohl: Ein Portrait', in Jattie Enklaar & Hans Ester (eds), *Die Schweiz: Zwischen Wunsch und Wirklichkeit* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1992), pp. 145-171 (p. 151).

<sup>197</sup> Max Frisch, 'Vom Arbeiten', in Johannes Beringer (ed.), *Ludwig Hohl* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), pp. 17-22 (p. 17).

<sup>198</sup> Gert Mattenklott, 'Ludwig Hohl als Goethe-Leser', in Jean-Marie Valentin (ed.), *Ludwig Hohl (1904-1980). Akten des Pariser Kolloquiums/Actes du Colloque de Paris 14.-16.1.1993* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1994), pp. 22-33 (p. 23).

<sup>199</sup> Such as George Steiner who calls Hohl's writing 'language-mosaic': 'Hohl, who believed that creation in any fundamental sense lies outside human reach, developed acute powers of observation. He was a voyeur into the nuances and tremors of sensibility. Hohl experiences physical and psychological phenomena as interminably fragmented. With disenchanted scruple, he fitted these fragments into a language-mosaic of exceptional lucidity.' George Steiner, *Grammars of Creation: Originating in the Gifford Lectures for 1990* (London: faber and faber, 2002), pp. 185-186.

Peter Bichsel calls Hohl's writing a writing or series of statements and not aphorisms: 'Ludwig Hohls Sätze sind nicht Meinungen, es sind Feststellungen. Sie sind nur begreifbar, wenn man sie anerkennt als die eigene oder die andere Front.'

Peter Bichsel, 'Der große Untalentierte', in Johannes Beringer (ed.), *Ludwig Hohl* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), pp. 92-94, (p.92).

Dominik Müller speaks about a Denkprosa, an expression which was first coined by Sabine Haupt. Sabine Haupt, '*Schwer wie weißer Stein*'. *Ludwig Hohls ambivalente Bewältigung der Melancholie*. (Bern: Peter Lang 1996), pp. 274-276.

Dominik Müller, '... so unstill, mit so viel Donner... Ludwig Hohls Notizenschreiber als "Rufer in der Wüste"', in *Text + Kritik: Ludwig Hohl*, 161, I (2004), 33-43, (p. 33).

<sup>200</sup> Haupt, pp. 214-216, 274-276.

time hinting at the limiting dimension of this term.<sup>201</sup> Her rationale for calling the *Notizen*

*Denkprosa* is as follows:

Dennoch scheint gerade bei Hohl die Verbindung von Reflexion und bildhaft narrativer Gestaltung in einer eigentümlichen Schweben, in einem steten Unentschieden oder Gleichgewicht zu stehen, so daß die Vagheit des vorgeschlagenen Begriffs womöglich über seine Funktion als kleinster gemeinsamer Nenner hinaus doch eine besondere Qualität der Texte Hohls bezeichnet.<sup>202</sup>

It is relevant here that the mention of Hohl's capacity to reflect is encapsulated in the term *Denkprosa* (literally 'thinkprose'), reflecting what Haupt calls Hohl's 'bildhaft narrative Gestaltung' and, more importantly, in Hohl's own idea of image (*Bild* – discussed in Chapter V) to which he devoted the last chapter of the *Notizen*. This observation ties in with Stephan Fedler's insight that the aphorism is a *Begriffsspiel*, combining concepts with poetic means. Gerhard Neumann in his seminal study *Ideenparadiese* points out that the aphorism generally can be characterised as the place in which two main oppositions of human thinking meet, the rational and the arational.<sup>203</sup> Neumann writes about this phenomenon of aphoristic writers rejecting the aphorism and in turn giving their writing a new, pristine name in the wider context of the problem of definition:

Eine letzte Schwierigkeit der 'Abgrenzung' manifestiert sich darin, daß beinahe alle Autoren von Aphorismen, auch nach der Etablierung des Wortes als Gattungsbezeichnung, sich beharrlich weigern, diesem ihre Texte unterzuordnen. [...] Der Autor gesteht also einerseits, einer Gattung zu 'begegnen', die unabhängig von ihm schon längst existiert [...], sieht sich

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<sup>201</sup> "Dieser Begriff kann aber aufgrund seines hohen Verallgemeinerungsgrades eigentlich nur zwei Aspekte des Hohlschen Notizenwerks berücksichtigen, das reflexive Moment (in Abgrenzung zur reinen Fiktion) und seine literarischen Form (in Abgrenzung zur systematisch philosophischen Abhandlung), was nicht bedeutet, daß diese Abgrenzungen unproblematisch wären." Haupt, p. 274.

<sup>202</sup> Haupt, p. 276. Image (*Bild*) is an important concept for Hohl and will be explored in greater detail in the fifth chapter of this thesis.

<sup>203</sup> Neumann calls that part of the aphorism arational and not irrational, because irrational connotes less worthy pejorative meaning while the alpha privativum of the arational suggests something equal to the rational that is not rational. *Ideenparadiese*, passim.

andererseits aber gezwungen, die Gattung mit einem unabgenutzten Namen zu taufen.<sup>204</sup>

I interpret this rejection of the aphorism as a direct consequence of actual aphoristic thinking. The aphoristic writer resents being classified and systematised, problems (established) definitions and aims to be self-legislating. The question of subsumption and abstraction in which the individual and particular is subsumed under a universal is problematised by all aphoristic literature.<sup>205</sup> On the one hand, aphoristic writers again tend to use their own descriptions for their writing. This is a reflection of the aphorism's dual, rational and arational, nature. On the other hand, there is the aphoristic writers' resistance to classification and being defined, and, furthermore, his or her lack of resistance to the classification of writing or a rational, ahistorical order as such, as long as it is self-defined. J. P. Stern has called this the paradoxical element of the aphorism.<sup>206</sup> However, in my opinion, there is no paradox in resisting a defining concept and replacing it with another. Instead, I would suggest that the aphoristic writer resists subsumption under a system and resents not so much the defining concept as such but the fact that it has been used by someone else or that it has been given by someone else; hence this is not an expression of the individuality and particularity of the aphoristic writer or, in other words, of self-legislation and self-definition. There is a strong case to be made that the self-descriptions of aphoristic writers express their individuality and hence emphasise and prioritise the particularity of their own worldview. Their use of a huge

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<sup>204</sup> *Ideenparadise*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>205</sup> cf. *Ideenparadiese*, p. 351.

<sup>206</sup> "Defining a paradox as that formulation of a partial or ostensible contradiction which originates from a particular experience and in its effects elicits an abundant range of insights, we conclude that the aphorism is *the literary emblem of paradox*." J. P. Stern, *Lichtenberg: A Doctrine of Scattered Occasions* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959), pp. 216 - 217. cf. *Ideenparadiese*, p. 387 which regards the Paradox as the traditional way the aphorism tries to disrupt the system.

variety of descriptions<sup>207</sup> shows a preference for ‘all things counter, original, spare, strange’<sup>208</sup> rather than merely subscribing to the generic ‘aphorism’. This means that aphoristic writers simultaneously use and dismantle the generalising influences of rationality and abstraction of definition by using a multitude of names, and also by self-legislation. This echoes Nietzsche’s notion of perspectivism, in which objectivity can only be achieved by having as many different viewpoints as possible.<sup>209</sup> It is against human nature to be singular,<sup>210</sup> and, according to Hohl, humans have an obligation to complexity: ‘Der Mensch hat die Pflicht reich zu sein.’<sup>211</sup> Nietzsche compares human growth with the growth of a tree that grows in all kinds of directions.<sup>212</sup> Perspectivism is a concept of objectivity where particulars constitute that objectivity and not where objectivity is constituted by a general concept that subsumes and abstracts the particulars. The allowing for an equal value of each particular is an

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<sup>207</sup> ‘die Reihe der Benennungen ist lang: “Sporaden” (Hilsbecher) und “Blütenstaub” (Novalis), “Splitter” (Jellinek und Bukofzer) und “Brocken” (Hamann), “Späne” (Goethe) und “Grillen” (Hamann), “Lichtstrahlen” (Bruno) und “Apokryphen” (Seume), “Senker” (Novalis) und “Fingerzeige” (Jean Paul), “Ideenwürfeln” (Jean Paul) und “Brokardika” (Jean Paul), “Sprikker” (Wilhelm Busch) und “minima moralia” (Adorno), “Fermente” (Novalis und Baader) und “Hobelspähne” (Vierordt), “Funken” (Ritter) und “Monogramme” (Adorno).’

cf. *Ideenparadiese*, pp. 37-38.

cf. Szondi about the difficulty of finding a German title for Valéry’s *Tel Quel*. Peter Szondi, *Briefe*, 2nd edn, (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1994), pp. 79-80.

<sup>208</sup> Gerard Manley Hopkins, *Poems and Prose* (London: Penguin, 1985), p. 30.

<sup>209</sup> ‘Es giebt nur ein perspektivisches Sehen, nur ein perspektivisches „Erkennen“; und je mehr Affekte wir über eine Sache zu Worte kommen lassen, je mehr Augen, verschiedene Augen wir uns für dieselbe Sache einzusetzen wissen, um so vollständiger wird unser „Begriff“ dieser Sache, unsre „Objektivität“ sein. Den Willen aber überhaupt eliminieren, die Affekte sammt und sonders aushängen, gesetzt, dass wir dies vermöchten: wie? hiesse das nicht den Intellekt castrieren?...’

GM III 12, KSA, 5.365.

<sup>210</sup> cf. Walt Whitman

‘Do I contradict myself?

Very well, then I contradict myself;

(I am large, I contain multitudes.)’

Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass with Autobiography*, (Philadelphia: Sherman & Co, 1900), p. 92.

<sup>211</sup> N II 25 which Hohl explains further in II 118 II 144 XII 115 meaning an inner richness, a *Begeisterung*, the capacity to imagination VIII 49.

<sup>212</sup> FW 371, KSA 3.623.

*Ideenparadies*.<sup>213</sup> Stegmaier describes perspectivism as follows: ‘Wir haben es bei Moral, Natur und Geschichte nach Nietzsche mit Perspektiven aufeinander zu tun, mit einem Netz aus Perspektiven, in dem jedes aus dem andern und nur aus dem anderen verstanden werden kann’.<sup>214</sup> Politycki suggests that the perspectival way of reading seems to be the most promising in order to understand Nietzsche. Politycki uses perspectivism also as a way to explain apparent contradictions in Nietzsche's writing. The perspectivist<sup>215</sup> method to understand Nietzsche is a way to understand the contradictions in his philosophy without levelling them. Politycki suggests thinking of Nietzsche not as someone who thought in contradictions but in oppositions:

Der Begriff des (Selbst-)Widerspruchs, angesiedelt zwischen Irrtum und Willkür, wäre demnach auf Nietzsches Denken gar nicht anzuwenden, wohl aber ein mit jenem verwandter: “denn Gegensätzliches wäre etwas ganz Artiges und Einfaches – ich liebe die Gegensätzlichkeit”. Solches Denken in Gegensätzen, von der “Geburt der Tragödie” bis in die Wahnsinnszettel fast unter jedem Gesichtspunkt auszumachen, muß im Unterschied zur reinen Widersprüchlichkeit als konstruktiv interpretiert werden.<sup>216</sup>

Contradictions should not be confused with oppositions, and they should not be regarded as mistakes, but as the product of chance. As such they are a constructive element in Nietzsche's thinking and echo the dual nature of the aphorism. Politycki strongly emphasises that

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<sup>213</sup> The concept *Ideenparadies* was coined by Novalis. It means the following in Neumann's interpretation: ‘Eine Vorstellung, die nicht mehr auf die widerstandslose Vereinigung von „Buch des Geistes“ und „Buch der Natur“ zusteuert, sondern ihre Kraft gerade aus deren Konflikt zieht: durch stärkste rationale Anspannung gleichsam „zum zweitenmal vom Baum der Erkenntnis zu essen“. Damit erscheint der Mensch auf beispiellose Weise auf sich selbst und seine Situation zurückverwiesen. Er muß — und dies führt in den Zusammenhang der „Buch“-Vorstellung zurück — lernen, sich selbst zu schreiben und sich selbst zu lesen.’ *Ideenparadiese*, p. 203.

<sup>214</sup> Werner Stegmaier, *Nietzsches Genealogie der Moral* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1994) p. 11.

<sup>215</sup> However, Blondel is critical of this: “So we speak about 'perspectivism': but isn't Nietzsche merely used as an alibi here, in order to establish a kind of ideological 'tidy' that some would claim juxtaposes disparate elements without displaying too much concern for coherence?” Eric Blondel, *Nietzsche: The Body and Culture. Philosophy as a Philological Genealogy* (London: The Athlone Press, 1991), p. 9.

<sup>216</sup> Matthias Politycki, *Umwertung aller Werte? Deutsche Literatur im Urteil Nietzsches* (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1989), p. 51.

Nietzsche is a thinker of contradictions, and it would be wrong to dismiss the contradictions as chaos, strife or incoherence.<sup>217</sup> Instead it is more useful to assume with Neumann a relational view in the sense that those oppositions are fundamental to human thinking and only in their interplay can knowledge and an understanding of the world come to exist. Therefore abstraction is an integral part of aphoristic thinking. (The critical dimension of this will be evaluated in chapter IV.) This means that in general there are always traces of rational thinking in aphoristic writing but, unlike in a traditional view of philosophy, there is no primacy of rationality in the aphoristic writer who aims for a subsumption or, better, an order that is not destructive.<sup>218</sup> This will be shown by the later investigation of Hohl's elaborate concept of *Phantasie* that integrates rational aspects, rather than placing them into opposition to the imagination/*Phantasie* and sees the imagination as inferior to rationality, as was the standard view. The conception of the aphorism as a conflict between the conceptual and the metaphorical is based on the notion of its being innately defined by its ability to express polarities: in the first instance the one between poetic and conceptual, but this can mean similar constellations, such as the conflict between the particular and universal or the conflict between the individual and a system. The aphoristic writer regards phantasy and rationality as a double organ of human understanding: 'in dem Begriffspaar "Verstand" und "Fantasie" als einem Doppelorgan menschlichen Erkennens, als einem Deutungszusammenhang aus rationalem und arationalem Vermögen.'<sup>219</sup> Understanding takes place in the self and is a reciprocal, oscillating process.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> Politycki, p. 53.

<sup>218</sup> *Ideenparadiese*, p. 537.

<sup>219</sup> *Ideenparadiese*, p. 540.

<sup>220</sup> cf. Hohl's concept of movement (*Bewegung*) section IV.3.1.3



Abstraction is, then, regarded not as the ultimate goal of a process of recognition (*Erkenntnisprozess*), but is a mere part in it.<sup>221</sup> Novalis writes:

Vor der Abstraction ist alles Eins - aber eins, wie das Chaos - Nach der Abstraction ist wieder alles vereinigt - aber diese Vereinigung ist eine freye Verbündung selbstständiger, selbstbestimmter Wesen - Aus einem Haufen ist eine Gesellschaft geworden - das Chaos ist in eine mannichfaltige Welt verwandelt.<sup>222</sup>

As indicated by Fedler, with the aphorism being a conceptual play with poetic means, one can say with Neumann that the aphorism pursues a different method of *Erkenntnisprozess*. Instead of subsumption, the aphorism is an attempt to mediate between poetry and knowledge, and instead aims for a process of gaining Erkenntnis by way of ‘der Erkenntnis als eines Vergleichens, Übersetzens, Erweiterns, Kontraktierens, Lösens und Bindens.’<sup>223</sup> In this, the abstraction is but a process among other processes such as comparison for instance and, as seen above, is readily used by way of self-determination and the individual description and definition of one’s work. This individuality is a *sine qua non* because only the self<sup>224</sup> is able to create the decisive connections; only the individual is able to find analogies and comparisons and thereby open a way to understanding the relational structure of the world, as shown by Neumann, with whom I concur. This relational structure of the world implies that there is no

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<sup>221</sup> “‘Abstraction’ erscheint nicht als Endziel des Erkenntnisprozesses, sondern als Vermittlung zwischen Chaos und freier Ordnung selbstständiger, selbstbestimmter Wesen.’ *Ideenparadiese*, p. 361.

<sup>222</sup> Novalis quoted in *Ideenparadiese*, p. 361.

<sup>223</sup> *Ideenparadiese*, p. 368.

<sup>224</sup> ‘Das: I c h d e n k e, muß alle meine Vorstellungen begleiten k ö n n e n; denn sonst würde etwas in mir vorgestellt werden, was gar nicht gedacht werden könnte, welches eben so viel heißt als: die Vorstellung würde entweder unmöglich, oder wenigstens für mich nichts sein.’  
Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, (Frankfurt/ Main: Suhrkamp, 1995), p. 136 §16.  
*Ideenparadiese*, p. 369.

solid ground on which to stand: ‘We have to regard “instability” and the interminable openness of everything that is the central characteristic of life’s reality.’<sup>225</sup>

### III.2.1.1 Rejection of the System

Hohl expressed himself often in a negative yet nuanced way about what he understood as a ‘system’. It is necessary to look at his rejection of the system in order to understand better how the unity of his *Notizen* might be structured. Hohl does accept the system as a mundane (*irdische*) help, as a construct, as a ladder that has to be thrown away at some point, and he says that all great thinkers have had a system at some point.<sup>226</sup> In comparison, another aphoristic thinker, such as Nietzsche, has a similar insight, stating that systems often occur to scientists but in the end are full of empty promises and an illusion instead of the solution to a problem.<sup>227</sup>

But a system does not replace intelligence.<sup>228</sup> Hohl strongly rejects those who think or work to create a system in order to impress the Philistine; the Philistines are the ones that strive for fame. Nietzsche does not trust thinkers who use systems.<sup>229</sup> Furthermore, Hohl states that it

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<sup>225</sup> Himmelmann, ‘How to Make Sense of the World’ p. 31.

<sup>226</sup> ‘Alle großen Geister haben irgendwo ein System, sogar Goethe; das System aber ist ein irdischer Notbehelf (eine Einschränkung). Im Geist wären alle eins; so aber hat Goethe auch einige ablehnen müssen (Kleist, Beethoven), sogar Goethe.’ II 30

<sup>227</sup> cf. MA II, VM 31, KSA 2.393.

<sup>228</sup> ‘Es gibt kein System (für das Leben, für irgendeine Lebensabteilung), das die Intelligenz überflüssig machte.’ N II 195

<sup>229</sup> NL 1887 9 [188], KSA 12; expression of mistrust to the system also: NF 1887 11 [410], KSA 13.189; GD Sprüche 26, KSA 6.63.

is impossible to think in a way so that thoughts really would build a house,<sup>230</sup> a system. This, according to Hohl, is impossible, because one can never build a system out of pieces of truth (*Gesteinsbruchstücken*) which Hohl compares to stones, because there are always gaps around them.<sup>231</sup> A system for Hohl is ontologically impossible;<sup>232</sup> he regards it as an enforced wholeness. To create a system would mean to enforce artificial explanations for the gaps between pieces of truth, which, according to Hohl, is wrong. The system is seen as the opposite of the living (*das Lebendige*), similar to the way the system is seen as being in

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<sup>230</sup> Cf. Kierkegaard's rejection of the system in: Søren Aabye Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), cf. especially Chapter I An Expression of Gratitude to Lessing and Chapter II Possible and Actual Theses by Lessing and passim.

<sup>231</sup> Hohl's affinity to André Gide's thought is very visible here. Gide writes: 'The love of truth is not the need of certainty and it is very unwise to confuse one with the other. One can love truth all the more while not believing it ever possible to reach an absolute toward which nevertheless that fragmentary truth leads us.' André Gide, *The Journals of André Gide*. Vol. III: 1928 - 1939 (London: Secker & Warburg, 1949), p. 73.

<sup>232</sup> 'Ich möchte meinen Abscheu ausdrücken können vor jener gewissen Denkweise, die um des Systems willen arbeitet, um des Vorzeigenkönnens des Systems willen! Die ein 'Denkgebäude' zustandebringt! Kein Mensch kann zwar so denken, daß ein Denkgebäude entsteht, aber man stellt doch ein Gebäude hin und erweckt bei den Apothekern Eindruck; man hofft überhaupt bei den Menschen Ruhm zu ernten für diese hochgefüllte Form, mehr als es mit den schlichten Dingen möglich ist, den ewigen Fragmenten, den immer neue Lücken zeigenden Teilen, den aus dem Berg gebrochenen Gesteinsstücken, die die Wahrheit sind. Solche Stücke Wahrheit, wie sie Heraklit, Goethe, Lichtenberg und andere hergebracht haben, haben den Menschen wenig Eindruck gemacht; lieber gleich ein volles Weltgebäude, mit genauer Einteilung, zuoberst drauf sitzt Gott und weiter unten an der Pyramide sind Schubladen für all die anderen Säckelchen.' N II 235. Noteworthy the use of a stone-metaphor in this quotation.

contrast to nature<sup>233</sup> and the living is characterised as being without contradiction.<sup>234</sup> Thinking is courage, says Hohl, and this introduces the concept of courage as one of Hohl's mental powers (*Geisteskräfte*), to be discussed in Chapter IV. However, the very detailed structure of the *Notizen* allows for the conclusion that he devised his own personal view of the system<sup>235</sup> or at least did not object to structuring his writing.

### III.2.2 Hohl's Rejection of the Aphorism

Hohl rejects the aphorism in a very distinctive passage in the preface to *Die Notizen*. It is necessary to analyse this passage in order to understand why his writing can nevertheless be

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<sup>233</sup> 'Das ist zuviel – jenes ist zuviel; das heißt, das schlägt um ins Ungute, jenes ins Ungute. Was denn tun? Es kommt auf die richtige Dosierung an: die Ernährung ist das Absolute! Die Jugend sucht ihr Heil immer in Systemen – statt in der Natur.' N II 248.

<sup>234</sup> 'Die Philosophien sind nicht durch das, was sie an wirklichem Erkennen enthalten – und sie enthalten es in sehr ungleichen Quantitäten –, in Widerspruch. Sondern darin sind sie übereinstimmend oder sich ergänzend. Der Widerspruch besteht nur durch das, was zurechtgeteufelt werden muß, damit ein System entsteht, eine erzwungene Ganzheit; zwischen den Systemen also, den über die Erkenntnisse hinaus erzwungenen Ganzheiten. Alles wirklich Erkannte ergänzt sich nur; von sehr entfernten Punkten aus Erkanntes läßt sich für uns natürlich nicht zusammenfügen, wenn sehr viel Dunkles, d.h. nicht Erkanntes, dazwischen liegt. Widersprechen sich die Dichter? Die Philosophen auch nicht mehr, soweit sie nicht Systemerzwinger, sondern Weise, Arbeitende, Entdeckende waren. – Das Systemerzwingen ist ein Ding für sich, und das übelste. Die starrgewordenen Konturen widersprechen dem Lebendigen. Das Lebendige widerspricht sich nicht. Denn wo ein Lebendiges ist, ist nicht das andere. [...] Das Denken ist ein Mut und dann ein Übermut. Das Denken ist eine verhängnisvolle Fähigkeit des Menschen: er vermag (ohne daß die Schelle erklingt wie bei der Schreibmaschine – und ohne daß an einen Rand angestoßen wird –) über wirkliche Orte, über Wege *hinaus* zu gehen. – Verklärer solcher *einen* Art des Denkens ist der Apotheker mit seinem ewig wiederholten 'logisch denken!'; als ob nicht alles Denken logisch wäre, als ob es darauf ankäme! Die Frage ist nicht, ob das Denken logisch sei, sondern, ob es *am Orte* sei.' N II 236

In saying that thinking is courage he also anticipates Blumenberg's description of the courage of mind at the end of the preface of the *Paradigmen zu einer Metaphorologie*. Blumenberg, *Paradigmen*, p. 13.

<sup>235</sup> 'Was ich dagegensetzen habe - als Bedürfnis bloß und vielleicht als abwegiges - ist nicht mehr und nicht weniger als das elementare Verlangen nach etwas persönlichem System. Solche Systeme bilden sich nicht en bloc und gewiß nicht gleich als haltbare literarische Formation. Eher schon unter dem Zeichen der persönlichen De-formation, des charakterologisch Absonderlichen oder der sozialen Mißweisung: Abweichungen insgesamt, die gar nichts Edleres und Höheres zu ihrer Rechtfertigung vorzutragen haben, als daß sie auf dem vorgeschriebenen Ordnungsweg nicht aufgehen und auch in den üblichen Alternativnischen kein Unterkommen finden. Dichtung ist Ausnahmezustand und wird es immer bleiben, und die erste notwendige Voraussetzung für das Entstehen von originellen Versgebilden ist eine eigentümliche Schiefstellung zur Welt, gemeinhin als neurotische Verkantung zu besichtigen. Besagte Wesensverkantungen oder, bitte, Verschrobenheiten sind freilich nicht gleich mit erhöhter moralischer Erigibilität zu setzen.'

Peter Rühmkorf, *haltbar bis Ende 1999* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1987), pp. 94-95.  
cf. Nietzsche's rejection of the system, Westerdale, p. 1.

called aphoristic. Two aspects in the following passage will be examined: Hohl's rejection of the aphorism and the way he describes a unity in his work.

Das ursprüngliche Manuskript, bedeutend umfangreicher als die endgültige Fassung, welches Anfang 1937 vorlag, enthielt die Texte in der chronologischen Reihenfolge ihres Entstehens; und in den folgenden Jahren ist dieses Manuskript umgebaut worden nach rein thematischen Gesichtspunkten, d.h. ohne die mindeste Rücksicht auf das Datum des Entstehens der einzelnen Stücke (Das letzte Stück des XII. Teils, zum Beispiel, ist früher entstanden als das erste des I. Teils usw.) Und zwar erfolgte die Aufteilung prinzipiell – d.h. soweit dergleichen praktisch möglich ist – gleichzeitig. Das Umbauen war dem Willen entsprungen, dem Ganzen eine – offenbar bis jetzt noch kaum von jemandem beachtete – Struktur zu geben. [...]  
Aber das Werk – was immer es sei – kann nicht richtig erfaßt werden, bevor man seine Einheitlichkeit erfaßt hat. Es ist nicht eine Sammlung von Aphorismen.<sup>236</sup>

Hohl does not give a reason for his rejection of the aphorism, but with the rejection of the aphorism he also rejects the term collection (*Sammlung*) for his work. Instead he insists on the idea of a structured unity, emphasised by the words *das Ganze* and *Einheitlichkeit*. He claims that almost no one so far has taken notice of this structured unity, and indeed this unity has caused divided opinions in the secondary literature, leaving many perplexed and assuming that Hohl has erred. Thoughts on that unity will be discussed after this section in III.2.2.1. One could assume with Schlegel that the origin of such a unity<sup>237</sup> has always to be obscure, but it is one aim of this chapter to shed light on what Hohl meant by unity and how it can be described. Unity is a much stronger concept than *Sammlung* because there must be more

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<sup>236</sup> N p. 5.

<sup>237</sup> 'Ja das Köstlichste was der Mensch hat, die innere Zufriedenheit selbst hängt, wie jeder leicht wissen kann, irgendwo zuletzt an einem solchen Punkte, der im Dunkeln gelassen werden muß, dafür aber auch das Ganze trägt und hält, und diese Kraft in demselben Augenblicke verlieren würde, wo man ihn in Verstand auflösen wollte. Wahrlich, es würde euch bange werden, wenn die ganze Welt, wie ihr es fodert, einmal im Ernst durchaus verständlich würde. Und ist sie selbst diese unendliche Welt nicht durch den Verstand aus der Unverständlichkeit oder dem Chaos gebildet?'

Friedrich Schlegel, *Über die Unverständlichkeit (Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, ed. Hans Eichner, 1st edn, 35 vols (Munich/Paderborn/Wien: Schöningh, 1967), ii, 370).

coherence in a unity than in a *Sammlung*, which suggests a more loose kind of unity. The unity is described as having an intentional, achronological, thematical structure because it is a result of Hohl's reordering of the notes. An implication of Hohl favouring an achronological order is that he opposes a historical view in which one can see again a rational, logical and systematic intention of his writing. This is relevant when evaluating the rational and poetic aspects of his thinking. Several writers emphasise Hohl's ability to combine thoughts with image. Loetscher for instance writes about Hohl's way of thinking: 'Eine Art zu denken, die sich sowohl bei den Begriffen wie bei der Bildersprache Unterstützung holt,'<sup>238</sup>; Heißenbüttel speaks about 'die Verschmelzung von Begrifflichem und Anschaulichem.'<sup>239</sup> Hilsbrecher describes Hohl's language as follows: 'Sie tendiert zum Bildwerk, aber sie spiegelt auch die Arbeit am Bildwerk, die Bewußtseinsarbeit, die Reflexion wider.'<sup>240</sup> Chris Bezzel's characterisation of Hohl's thought shows how the boundaries between image and terminology dissolve and a new conglomerate consisting of both emerges: 'befreites, terminologisch entfesseltes, konkretes Bilddenken.'<sup>241</sup> This means also that one can say with Kleist that when people are divided into those who are able to understand a metaphor and those who understand a formula, there is a rare group of people who are able to understand both.<sup>242</sup> Hohl

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<sup>238</sup> Hugo Loetscher, 'Ludwig Hohl: Notizen', in Johannes Beringer (ed.), *Ludwig Hohl* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), pp. 41-43 (p. 42).

<sup>239</sup> Helmut Heißenbüttel, 'Zu Ludwig Hohls *Nuancen und Details*', in Johannes Beringer (ed.), *Ludwig Hohl* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), pp. 66-72 (p. 69).

<sup>240</sup> Walter Hilsbrecher, 'Das Leben bedeutender. Zu Ludwig Hohls *Nuancen und Details*', in Johannes Beringer (ed.), *Ludwig Hohl* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), pp. 73-77 (p. 77).

<sup>241</sup> Chris Bezzel, 'Einzelheiten, alt und neu: Zu *Daß fast alles anders ist*', in Johannes Beringer (ed.), *Ludwig Hohl* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), pp. 80-81 (p. 81).

<sup>242</sup> 'Man könnte die Menschen in zwei Klassen abtheilen; in solche, die sich auf eine Metapher und 2) in solche, die sich auf eine Formel verstehn. Deren, die sich auf beides verstehen, sind zu wenige, sie machen keine Klasse aus.' Heinrich von Kleist, *Berliner Abendblätter (Sämtliche Werke)*, eds. Roland Reuß und Peter Staengle, 8 vols (Frankfurt/ Main, Basel: Stroemfeld Verlag, 1997), II/7BA I, p. 310).

in his writing is an example of the complementary use of the conceptual and metaphorical,<sup>243</sup> as chapters V and VI will argue in more detail.

Another reason for Hohl's rejection of the aphorism might be an overuse of the word whereby it gains connotations that Hohl resists. Although one cannot point to a specific statement in support of this theory, one could extrapolate this from Hohl's rejection of the phrase *fragmentarische Andeutungen*, which he rejects because it is overused and he does not agree with the meaning with which it is used.<sup>244</sup> While Hohl rejects the fragment in this sense, as a genre, he does not reject it as an ontological category. This way of using the fragmentary will be discussed later (III.2.5.2). Therefore it might just be possible to speculate that Hohl would not reject the aphorism if it did not have bad connotations. I assume the problem of Hohl's rejection lies in there not being a good definition of the aphorism available that would fit his idea of writing, one that would contain an ontological or existential dimension.

For practical reasons, as Neumann suggests, all agree to the aphorism being called an aphorism. Neumann observes here a tendency to agree to call this short mode aphorism while at the same time honouring the obligation to consider the particularities of each writer.

However, regardless of what to call his writing, one always has to take into account that, to Hohl, it is first and foremost linked to a unity, and that it is a necessity to keep the *Begriffsspiel* between the two realms of the conceptual and metaphorical, which will be evaluated in chapter IV and V. It will be argued that the metaphorical and conceptual are in a *Wechselprozess*, which allows the aphorism to reconcile contradicting realms and positions;

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<sup>243</sup> 'Metapher und Begriff koexistieren im Modus funktionaler Differenz.' Ralf Konersmann, 'Figuratives Wissen', in Ralf Konersmann (ed.), *Wörterbuch der philosophischen Metaphern* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2011), pp. 7-20 (p. 13).

<sup>244</sup> N VII 146n1.

above all that of the conceptual and metaphorical, of the particular and universal, of the daily life and the life beyond it.

### **III.2.2.1 The Unity in Hohl's *Notizen***

The problem of the unity of Hohl's *Notizen* is important for an evaluation of the aphorism in the context of the question whether the aphorism can be understood as an independent entity or not. This has consequences, according to Fricke, for whether the aphorism can be legitimately called an aphorism when it is still bound into some form of unity. However, the aphorism in Hohl can only be understood as a contextual entity and the questions are what these contexts look like, what the connections – the *Zusammenhänge* (III.4) – between the aphorisms are, how the aphorisms are embedded in this unity or structure, and how this unity can be characterised. First, Hohl's own view on the unity will be examined, and then Probst and notably Hugo Loetscher's view will be represented. Hohl also says that no one yet has tried to discover the structure and unity of the *Notizen*. Any kind of unity, therefore, has to be looked for in the realm of principal themes or concepts or metaphors; a unity that is structured.<sup>245</sup> As with the aphorism that says something but never says it completely, the unity is stated, but one is never sure what to make of it completely, which raises the question as to whether the unity has the same indicative character (*Verweisungscharakter*) as the aphorism. On this basis, I will make further suggestions about how to interpret this unity at the end of this section, namely by way of concepts, personality and a continuous process of reflection. From the way Hohl has structured his work, his index and the way he refers to passages, not

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<sup>245</sup> 'Er sieht in aller Schärfe, daß diese Gebilde nicht isoliert, sondern stets in Bezug auf ein Verstehensganzes, einen vorgegebenen Verstehenshorizont aufgefaßt werden müssen.' *Ideenparadiese*, p.14.



just throughout the *Notizen* but also to other of his books<sup>246</sup> in which he explains other passages, one can strongly conclude that in Hohl's case the pieces of writing are all more or less connected with each other even if those connections are not obvious at first sight. Hohl is not the first person to operate like this: Robert Walser, for instance, described a similar phenomenon in his writing.<sup>247</sup> Then there is the problem of order. When there is an order that is not clearly recognisable, an order characterised by themes, following Luhmann,<sup>248</sup> there needs to be something like a reliable order of place, a *Stellordnung*, a place for each aphorism, and that this order needs to be the reliable order of reference. But in Hohl there is both, a *Stellordnung* and a thematic order. Similar to the problems of how to describe Hohl's writing, the secondary literature is very uncertain<sup>249</sup> on how to interpret the unity in Hohl's *Notizen*.

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<sup>246</sup> His explanations of the concepts *Mut*, *Geduld* and *Wille* in *Mut und Wahl*. Concepts that play a huge role in the *Notizen* and *Nachnotizen* and are often explained from different angles so that one needs all those explanations in order to make sense of the concept as a whole. cf. MW p. 59.

<sup>247</sup> Meine Prosastücke bilden [...] nichts anderes als Teile einer langen, handlungslosen, realistischen Geschichte. Für mich sind die Skizzen, die ich dann und wann hervorbringe, kleinere oder umfangreichere Romankapitel. Der Roman, woran ich weiter und weiter schreibe, bleibt immer derselbe und dürfte als ein mannigfaltig zerschnittenes oder zertrenntes Ich-Buch bezeichnet werden können. Robert Walser, 'Eine Art Erzählung' (unveröffentlichtes Manuskript), *Sämtliche Werke in Einzelausgaben*, ed. Jochen Greven (Zürich/Frankfurt Main: Suhrkamp, 1985) Bd. 20. pp. 322–326 (p. 322).

<sup>248</sup> 'Für das Innere des Zettelkastens, für das Arrangement der Notizen, für sein geistiges Leben ist entscheidend, daß man sich *gegen eine systematische Ordnung* nach Themen und Unterthemen und *statt dessen* für eine  *feste Stellordnung* entscheidet. Ein inhaltliches System (nach Art der Buchgliederung) würde bedeuten, daß man sich ein für allemal (für Jahrzehnte im voraus!) auf eine bestimmte Sequenz festlegt. Das muß, wenn man das Kommunikationssystem und sich selbst als entwicklungsfähig einschätzt, sehr rasch zu unlösbaren Einordnungsproblemen führen. Die feste Stellordnung braucht keine Sachordnung. Es genügt, daß man jedem Zettel eine Nummer gibt, sie gut sichtbar (bei uns links oben) anbringt und diese Nummer und damit den Standort niemals ändert. Diese Strukturentscheidung ist diejenige Reduktion von Komplexität möglicher Arrangements, die den Aufbau hoher Komplexität im Zettelkasten und damit seine Kommunikationsmöglichkeit erst ermöglicht.'

Niklas Luhmann, 'Kommunikation mit Zettelkästen: Ein Erfahrungsbericht', in Horst Baier, Hans Mathias Kepplinger Kurt Reumann (eds.), *Öffentliche Meinung und sozialer Wandel: Für Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann*, (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1981), pp. 222–228 (p. 224).

<sup>249</sup> Sabine Haupt for instance denies that there is an order based on thematic principal themes. She writes that the *Notizen* are no systematic treatise, but a rather arbitrary collection of texts: 'Wie eingangs bereits dargelegt wurde, handelt es sich bei Hohls Denkprosa um keine systematische philosophische Abhandlung, sondern eine, zum Teil auch in sich widersprüchliche, Sammlung von lose einander zugeordneten Texten.' She emphasises the arbitrariness of the structure of the *Notizen*: and calls this order rather arbitrary to a large extent: 'Dennoch entsteht beim Lesen von 'Die Notizen' der Eindruck, daß die den Texten *nachträglich verordnete Reihenfolge, zumindest in ihren makrostrukturellen Zusammenhängen in beträchtlichem Umfange beliebig bleibt*.' Haupt, p. 207, p. 228.

Several suggestions have been made to explain, for instance, unity as a process of reflection, as an intellectual autobiography or as a book of physics.<sup>250</sup> The unity has also been explained as a result of Hohl's concept of work, and that the unity can be understood via Heraclitus's concept of harmony. Probst for instance says<sup>251</sup> that Hohl was capable of giving unity to the *Notizen* but that he did not succeed in doing so with the *Nachnotizen*, yet Probst does not characterise this unity of the *Notizen* in any great detail. For some, such as Loetscher, the unity is a much stronger feature of Hohl's writing than the single aphorisms:

Man fühlt sich veranlaßt, gleich vom “Werk” zu reden und nicht einfach von diesem oder jenem der (wenigen) Titel, auch wenn die Erzählungen für sich genommen werden können. Nun wird man dieses Werk kaum als etwas Geschlossenes nehmen, aber doch als etwas Zusammenhängendes; nicht zufällig notierte sich Hohl einmal die Heraklitsche Formel von der “unsichtbaren Harmonie”. Damit ist in seinem Fall mehr als eine Summe von Fragmenten gemeint oder die Sammlung von Aphorismen: Was zusammenhält, ist ein kontinuierlicher Reflexionsprozeß.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> Rafael Ferber sees the *Einheitlichkeit* in Hohl's *Notizen* in the way that he compares it to a book of physics and attributes this incorrectly to Hohl, N II 39. Ferber states further that the *Notizen* are structured according several maxims (*Hauptsätze*) that are not shown in a linear order, but they are presupposed and gradually introduced by many examples. Ferber sees a *Hauptsatz* in das *Wesen des Lebens* (XI 15), he sees another *Hauptsatz der Bewegung* (partly XI 15), a first *Hauptsatz des Strömens* (II 330), a second *Hauptsatz der Produktivität* (II 60, cf. VII 159), a further *Grundsatz* that there is only one direction of development (II 156) and then actually the *Wesensgesetz* of Productivity or Arbeiten (I 1). The *Grundsätze* of the Strom and productivity are united in II 332, an aphorism about eternity. cf. Ferber, *passim*.

The decisive fragment is not II 39 but II 62, Hohl writes here: ‘Das Studium, das Vorbild der Physik hat etwas Versöhnliches; begleitet glänzend bei den geistigen Entdeckungen.’ N II 62 This is the only entry for physics indexed by Hohl, there are three for mathematics. In addition Hohl sometimes uses mathematical vocabulary. One could make a stronger case for mathematics being a *Vorbild* for his thinking, although this is problematic too because of Hohl's rejection of the system. However, he speaks much more favourably about physics in the *Nachnotizen*.

One could also make a case for reading the *Notizen* (N II 324) and especially the *Nachnotizen* as a code of laws, as Hohl tends to speak of different laws, for instance das *Gesetz der Vergeudung* or *Gesetz der hereinbrechenden Ränder*... etc NN 141, 156, 202, 357, 358, 422, 428, 445, 449, 460, 480, 485, 486, 493, 498, 542, 543, 556, 575, 576.

That Hohl, especially in his later work, the *Nachnotizen*, thought in laws shows his interest in universal principles and how they underlie his aphoristic writing.

<sup>251</sup> Rudolf Probst, ‘Notizen, Zettel und Notate: Zu Ludwig Hohls Schriftprinzip’, in Erismann, Probst, Sarbach (eds.), *Ludwig Hohl. ‘Alles ist Werk’* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2004), pp. 39–47 (p. 47).

<sup>252</sup> Loetscher, p. 212.

It seems that the priority or emphasis for Probst and Loetscher is more on the unity of Hohl's work than on the question of whether he wrote in fragments or aphorisms. It seems also that the unity has more weight than single aphorisms. It is important that Loetscher acknowledges *Zusammenhänge*, which is something that was important to Hohl, because for him the notion of seeing *Zusammenhänge* was fundamental (further discussed in III.4). Loetscher speaks of two things when he characterises the unity of the *Notizen*. Firstly, he mentions Heraclitus's idea of invisible harmony. Secondly, he states that an ongoing process of reflection gives cohesion to Hohl's *Notizenwerk*. Related to this is Loetscher's observation that something equivalent to this ongoing reflection is Hohl's *ständiges Umkopieren* or rewriting in the process of structuring the *Notizen*. Another characteristic of the process of reflection is its timelessness. It is not possible for the reader to recognise the chronology of the pieces' production. The *Notizen* are timeless in another aspect as well: they do not say much about contemporary history and politics, which is noteworthy especially considering when they were written.<sup>253</sup> There is little that allows one to conclude what Hohl's political views might have been apart from a few positive remarks on socialism.<sup>254</sup> Loetscher tries to explain this process of reflection by way of constant rereadings and Hohl's use of recurrent themes. For

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<sup>253</sup> The *Notizen* were written from 1934 - 1936, with a final version in early 1937. N, p. 5. Stüssi suggests that Hohl started to write the *Notizen* as early as in 1930, but they became a proper project only in 1934. p. 284.

<sup>254</sup> N VII 26.

Werner Morlang, *Die verlässlichste meiner Freuden: Hanny Fries und Ludwig Hohl: Gespräche, Briefe, Zeichnungen und Dokumente* (Munich/Vienna: Nagel Kimche, 2003). p. 84, passim.

Cf. for Hohl's political awareness of the dangers of National Socialism Stüssi, p. 194, 259, 270, 271, 283. 'Er verteidigte die Arbeit des Künstlers als ein nicht minder soziales, die Welt verbesserndes Tun, gerade weil sie einfache Lösungen erschwert, die unauflösbaren Ambivalenzen am Grund der Existenz enthüllt und dadurch die Menschen unabhängiger macht gegenüber politisch-ideologischer Vereinnahmung.' Stüssi, p. 195.

In the *Nachnotizen* Hohl mentions politics in NN 103, 277, 330, 352, 416.

example, Loetscher picks out two notes that both deal with the topic of harmony.<sup>255</sup> But those notes say almost the same thing. From this Loetscher concludes that the method of the ongoing process of reflection is not a fruitful one when one does not gain something new by reading those two notes. While Loetscher is correct that in this particular case those aphorisms are very similar, this is a rare occasion. Loetscher does Hohl a gross injustice, because there are many counterexamples possible where a lot of additional insights are gained when one compares several aphorisms that have a common topic. This will be explored in the third chapter with the example of complex concepts. All the aphorisms with a common theme thus contribute to the complexity of a theme as each aphorism expresses one or several particular aspects of that theme.

At this point it becomes necessary to examine a positive notion of the concept of *Wiederholung*. This is not just relevant in the context of Loetscher's critique of Hohl, but also because aphoristic writers tend to emphasise the need to read aphorisms repeatedly and, further, it is a key concept for the understanding of Peter Handke's work. Hohl himself has not written much on the notion of repetition but, as also will be seen in later examples, especially at the discussion of the concept of *Phantasie* (Chapter V), he repeats insights in certain instances; his sentence about *Zaubern*, for example. He occasionally starts his aphorisms with 'noch einmal'<sup>256</sup>. Hohl does not regard repetition as having a negative

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<sup>255</sup> Loetscher, p. 213.

He refers to two aphorisms, one from the *Notizen* and one from the *Nachnotizen*:

The aphorism from the *Notizen*: 'Von Schriften, die irgendeinen Wert haben, hatte er fast nichts gelesen. Aber dafür hatte er dieses Wenige, damit ihm doch eine gewisse Harmonie nicht fehle, auch nicht verstanden.' VIII 132

The corresponding aphorism from the *Nachnotizen*: 'Der Mann hatte zwar nicht viel gelesen; aber das Wenige, was er doch las, das hat er, damit doch Harmonie bestehe, auch nicht verstanden.' NN 185.

<sup>256</sup> NN 119, 127, 415.

meaning, except for his example being authors who write repetitive novels<sup>257</sup> instead of using their own creativity. This is consistent with his rejection of mimesis. Beringer suggested<sup>258</sup> that Hohl's working method can be compared to what Hans Geyer called the first and second repetition. Geyer developed this thought in response to Kierkegaard. By first repetition Geyer means the general activity of work, 'mechanisch-lebendige, unbewußt-bewußte, unverändert-veränderte und verändernde Arbeit des Geistes der Menschheit an sich selbst.'<sup>259</sup> The second repetition is the moment of actual creativity; a leap of creative faith that cannot be predetermined.<sup>260</sup>

In a parallel sense, Hohl's concept of work is equivalent to the first repetition, while the second repetition is the equivalent of what Hohl calls *die hereinbrechenden Ränder*.

Loetscher characterises Hohl's writing as a process of reflection and as a dialectic between the impossibility of achieving wholeness and the achievable formulation:

Einem Schreibverhalten, das sich als Reflexionsprozeß versteht, entspricht die Bemerkung in den *Nachnotizen*: "Der Fehler, in den man immer wieder fällt, besteht darin, das Leben als etwas Definitives zu betrachten." Man erinnert sich an entsprechende Sätze in den *Notizen*: "So viel ist mir nun klar geworden: daß ich nie die Vollendung meines Werkes erreichen werde; um so mehr muß ich mich um Definitives bemühen." Und worum es sich zu bemühen gilt, ist "die letzte, die höchste erreichbare, gegenwärtige Formulierung allein."

Mit dieser Absichtserklärung eines hohen Anspruchs steckt Hohl eine Dialektik ab zwischen dem unerreichbar Ganzen und der erreichbaren Formulierung. Das ist aber zugleich auch ein fataler Konflikt, wie sein

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<sup>257</sup> NN 25.

<sup>258</sup> Johannes Beringer, *Hohls Weg* (Berlin: Pro Business, 2013), p. 60.

<sup>259</sup> Hans F. Geyer, *Arbeit und Schöpfung* (Freiburg: Rombach, 1970), p. 47.

<sup>260</sup> Geyer, p. 48.

Spätwerk zeigt, und von einem solchen ist angesichts der *Nachnotizen* zu reden, die zwischen 1937 und 1951 entstanden sind.<sup>261</sup>

Loetscher identifies the process of writing with a process of reflecting. At the same time he understands the unity of the *Notizen* as an ongoing process of reflection. Yet, on the other hand, Loetscher understands this process of reflection as having failed, as can be seen from his example with the two notes that do not explain but repeat themselves. Loetscher also mentions a very high demand<sup>262</sup> or, better, aim that Hohl pursues and interprets this as a fatal conflict. This is not a fatal conflict, but a necessary quality of Hohl's work itself which tries to reach the *hereinbrechende Ränder*, and the overcoming of obstacles (as will be elaborated later in Chapter IV) is part of this process. According to Hohl the best formulation does have to be a definition, as will be evident from the discussion of Hohl's views of the concept (Section IV.2.2).

Loetscher's approach relates in two ways to Rafael Ferber's essay while not directly referring to him. Firstly, Loetscher says it would be questionable to identify selected sentences in

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<sup>261</sup> Loetscher, p.214.

<sup>262</sup> Cf. Hans Saner on a more nuanced view of Hohl's high demands, use of superlatives and general relation between the big and the small: 'Hohl's Philosophie der Dimensionalität macht, falls unsere Untersuchungen stimmen, im Verlauf von etwa 30 Jahren eine doppelte radikale Kertwendung: – von der faktischen Vorherrschaft der Dimensionalität über Leben und Kunst zu ihrer deklarierten Bedeutungslosigkeit und – innerhalb der Dimensionalität von der selbstverständlichen und idealistischen Vorherrschaft des Großen über das Kleine zur reflektierten und praktischen Vorherrschaft des Kleinen über das Große. Zwischen beiden Kehrtwendungen herrscht eine paradoxe Spannung. Denn auch die Vorherrschaft des Kleinen bedeutet noch Vorherrschaft der Dimensionalität, da ja nicht allein das Große dimensional ist. Das Paradoxon ist nur lösbar, falls das Kleine aus der Quantität rein in die Qualität umschlägt und als Qualität nun quer zum Quantum steht. So sind die Nuance zu verstehen, das Detail, das Einzelne und die kleinen Schritte, durch die allein ein Werk wird. Man könnte also noch von einer dritten radikalen Kehrtwendung sprechen: vom frühen Hang Hohls, alle Qualitäten als Quantitäten darzustellen, und vom späten Hang, alle Quantitäten in Qualitäten umschlagen zu lassen. Das Überraschende des Befundes mag für viele eher sein, daß Hohl, dessen Pathos und dessen Liebe zur Größe doch so unüberhörbar sind, in Wahrheit je länger je mehr ein Künstler und Philosoph der kleinen Dimension geworden ist, die sich schließlich ins Nicht-Dimensionale transzendieren.' Hans Saner, *Das Große, das Kleine und das Verkleinerte: Zu Ludwig Hohl's Philosophie der geringen Dimensionen*, in *Ludwig Hohl (1904 – 1980) Akten des Pariser Kolloquiums / Actes du Colloque de Paris 14. – 16.1.1993* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1994), pp.112–125 (pp. 124 – 125).

Hohl's work as his main sentences or main principles or laws, as Ferber does, because this would not do justice to the development of a search or to this ongoing process of reflection. And, secondly, it is also questionable to refer, like Ferber, to Heraclitus' notion of invisible harmony as a clue to the unity in Hohl's *Notizen*. Loetscher seems to equate this invisible harmony with the ongoing process of reflection. A harmony that cannot be found in the formal appearance of the *Notizen* but rather in something invisible, such as the *hereinbrechende Ränder*. In attempting to address the question of the unity in Hohl's work in the following chapters, I endorse Neumann's description of the unity in aphoristic writing and aim to show this in the following chapters:

Eine *Vielheit* von Definitionen, eine stets wechselnde, stets neue Nuancen wechselnde Konstellation von Begriffen ergibt so etwas wie die *Einheit* der Struktur; erst die zunehmende Komplizierung enthüllt sich als *Definition* im eigentlichen Sinne; die Ausbreitung als Konzentration, die verschiedenen Brechungen als ein und derselbe Sinnstrahl.<sup>263</sup>

My suggestion is therefore that the assumption of a complex unity of Hohl's writing can only be understood as consisting of several elements that inform each other, echoing what Neumann says above, a multiplicity of definitions. The elements creating that unity are firstly on a conceptual level the *Geisteskräfte* (chapter IV) which at the same time form the basis of Hohl's aesthetic and ethical theory (outlined in chapter VI). This method shows how Hohl's last aphorism of the *Notizen* is a consequence of everything that went before (cf. IV.3.2.2) and therefore shows that the order of the *Notizen* is not arbitrary, as for instance assumed by Haupt.<sup>264</sup> One can also show, by way of focussing on Hohl's concept of *Geisteskräfte*, how the aphorisms illuminate different aspects of one concept or one such *Geisteskraft*. This is

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<sup>263</sup> *Ideenparadiese*, p. 544.

<sup>264</sup> Haupt, p. 208.

done to show that there are indeed some secret chains of thought underlying the aphorism and to show those connections – or *Zusammenhänge* – means that the aphorism can be understood as a contextual entity. Secondly, following Loetscher, the unity of the *Notizen* can be understood as a continuous process of reflection. As *Erkenntnisse* cannot be kept, this process is ongoing. Thirdly, one can understand the unity on a personal level, as personality. This is what informs all of Hohl's work. His theory of art and life has as its origin the personality and a habitus<sup>265</sup> of work (*Arbeit*) which is constituted by the *Geisteskräfte*.

### III.2.3 Nietzsche's Rejection of Classification

This section will outline the way Nietzsche used and viewed the aphorism in order to contrast it with Hohl's view and to see whether there are similarities between aphoristic writers. It will first look at his apparent rejection of the aphorism, then at other forms such as the *Betrachtung*, *Sentenz* and *Maxime* and at what the aphorism tries to articulate in contrast to the system and rationality. The question of the structure of Nietzsche's writing, his views on how to read the aphorism and how the reader is implicated in explicating the aphorism will be considered further in the section dealing with the chains of thought (III.3).

Like many other aphoristic writers, and like Hohl, Nietzsche at first sight rejected the aphorism, but Nietzsche's rejection is not so much directed against the aphorism as against its classification: 'Es sind Aphorismen! Sind es Aphorismen? – mögen die welche mir daraus einen Vorwurf machen, ein wenig nachdenken und dann sich vor sich selber entschuldigen –

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<sup>265</sup> The concept of habitus is useful for the description of how Hohl viewed the process of creativity. cf. Peter Nickl, *Ordnung der Gefühle: Studien zum Begriff des habitus*, (Hamburg: Meiner 2001).



ich brauche kein Wort für mich.<sup>266</sup> To say that he does not need a word for himself implies a refusal to be defined, if needing a word for oneself means being defined, and a refusal to be subsumed under a concept. However, in the above quotation Nietzsche explicitly talks to the reader and exhorts them to think about genre and what to call his writing; if writing needs a name or to be subsumed under a genre at all. This implication of the reader in his writing continues in the preface from the *Genealogy of Morals* in which the reader is encouraged to decipher an aphorism and learn to explicate it (cf. Section III.3.1). In the third section of the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche gives an example of what an interpretation of an aphorism might look. As indicated, the question of reading will be discussed in the last section of this chapter (III.5). It is intrinsically intertwined with how Nietzsche viewed the aphorism.

Nietzsche does not reject the aphorism as strongly as Hohl, because he calls his own writing aphoristic with a positive connotation<sup>267</sup> on several passages<sup>268</sup>. For instance, he calls *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* a collection of aphorisms,<sup>269</sup> and also there are several passages in his posthumous fragments from which one can conclude that he understood his writing as aphoristic.<sup>270</sup> Nietzsche's questioning of the aphorism in the above quotation can be understood as a rejection and questioning of classification because his writing ought not to have a label. And hence it is not so much a rejection of the aphorism as such because, after all, there are many occasions he calls his writing aphoristic, especially when he make statements

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<sup>266</sup> NL 1880 7[192], KSA 9.356; cf. NN 41.

<sup>267</sup> *Nietzsche-Wörterbuch*, p. 76.

<sup>268</sup> NL 1885 37[5], KSA 11.579; NL 1878 30[2], KSA 8.522; NL 10[C54], KSA 9.423.

<sup>269</sup> GM I 2, KSA 5. 248.

<sup>270</sup> NL 1876 16[12], KSA 8.290.

about the general nature of the aphorism. In this case, he uses the word *Sentenz* and *Aphorismus* interchangeably, as the Nietzsche Research Group suggests:

Der Aphorismus, die Sentenz, in denen ich als der Erste unter Deutschen Meister bin, sind die *Formen der „Ewigkeit“*; mein Ehrgeiz ist, in zehn Sätzen zu sagen, was jeder Andre in einem Buche sagt, — was jeder Andre in einem Buche nicht sagt...<sup>271</sup>

However, Nietzsche does not use the aphorism in book titles and, instead, like many other aphoristic writers, he uses different and new names for his writing, occasionally calling his aphorisms *Meinungen*, *Pfeile* or *Sprüche*. Furthermore, the *Sentenz* and the *Betrachtung* are connected to the aphorism. After examining Nietzsche's use of the *Sentenz* and then the *Betrachtung*, Nietzsche's aphoristic writing will be briefly examined in relation to the system and rationality. As already noted, Nietzsche tended to view his mode of writing as *Sentenz*.

Donnellan gives the following description of the *Sentenz* in relation to the aphorism:

Related, and practically synonymous forms, particularly in French literature, are the maxim and the sentence (derived from Latin maxima and sententia, both meaning 'opinion'). The maxim originally took the form of a general conduct in life, and is closely similar to the typical function of a proverb, whereas the sentence tends to be a brief and apposite judgement on human nature which, through its striking and easily comprehensible nature (by contrast with the more intellectual aphorism), can be any memorable formulation, even in the context of a play or poem, and often acquires by frequent quotation almost the usage of a proverb.<sup>272</sup>

Donnellan suggests quite a useful – but just as hard to define – description of the difference between the *Sentenz* and the aphorism. The *Sentenz* is compared to the aphorism as more easily accessible. In a sense, the *Sentenz* does not have any ontological fragmentariness, but the *Sentenz* can be a judgement just like the aphorism. The maxim is further away from this

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<sup>271</sup> GD Streifzüge 51, KSA 6.153.

<sup>272</sup> Donnellan, p. 123.

by being prescriptive rather than offering any deep insights. Donnellan continues to explicate Nietzsche's use of the *Sentenz*: 'Particularly at the time of *Human, All Too Human*, however, Nietzsche uses the term *Sentenz* – presumably under the influence of the French models – to refer to short and aphoristic, but by no means prescriptive, statements.'<sup>273</sup> It is important here that the *Sentenz* is described as a non-prescriptive entity. It is this non-prescriptiveness that the *Sentenz* has in common with the aphorism. Also, when Donnellan says that the *Sentenz* can be a short aphoristic statement, it shows again the difficulty of neatly separating the two modes from each other. The main difference is that the *Sentenz* does not exhibit the same dual nature as the aphorism. Westerdale following Stegmaier argues convincingly that the *Sentenz* can be understood as a subset of the aphorism: '... the understanding of the *Sentenz* as a subset of the aphorism that includes shorter variations is sound.'<sup>274</sup> Stingelin<sup>275</sup> and Friedemann Spicker<sup>276</sup> suggest that Nietzsche used the *Sentenz* before he started using the aphorism. It has been suggested<sup>277</sup> that Nietzsche also used the *Betrachtung* before he started using the aphorism. This might be due to the aphorism being a form capable of more subtle expression than the *Betrachtung*, because the aphorism has an element of concealedness and inaccessibility that the *Betrachtung* lacks. However, one important aspect of the *Betrachtung* is that it relates to seeing (*Sehen*) and, in this sense, relates to a sense of insight, of understanding and knowledge, a seeing that is tied to knowledge and not just random perception. This is important because, in section 12 of the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche

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<sup>273</sup> Donnellan, p. 123.

<sup>274</sup> Westerdale, p. 24. p. 32.

<sup>275</sup> Stingelin, 'Aphorismus', p. 186

<sup>276</sup> Friedemann Spicker, *Der Aphorismus: Begriff und Gattung von der Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts bis 1912* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1997), p. 182.

<sup>277</sup> *Nietzsche-Wörterbuch*, p. 78

describes *Sehen* in relation to *Erkennen*.<sup>278</sup> Hohl also connects *Sehen* strongly to *Erkenntnis* (to be discussed in more detail in section V.2.1). Regarding the *Betrachtung*, most interesting is Nietzsche's mention of the aphorism in relation to it:

Sieben unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen – 1873 – 78.  
Zu jeder Betrachtung Nachtrag in Aphorismen.  
Später: Nachträge zu den unzeitgemäßen Betrachtungen (aphoristisch).<sup>279</sup>

This means that when Nietzsche in the last line of the quote above regarded the aphorism as capable of *Nachtrag*, he then used the aphorism to explain things because there is in some way an explanatory capacity in the aphorism. It is also important that the aphorism-as-*Nachtrag* is mentioned in the plural, which might hint at a couple of aphorisms in connection with each other showing that aphorisms are not isolated from each other.

In the following long quotation it is also notable that the concepts get questioned and become a sinister entity rather than the means by which truth can be achieved according to traditional philosophy. Many aphoristic writers share a problematic relationship to the concept, which is another way they deviate from traditional notions of philosophy, as aphoristic writers assume that concepts do not do justice to all of human experience. At the same time, philosophy becomes something that can be characterised by silence and by inaccessibility – here remotely echoing Morson's insight that the aphorism reflects the partial inaccessibility of the world and, in this instant, philosophy resigns itself from chatter, becoming a different philosophy, that of solitariness or, better, of the solitary individual:

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<sup>278</sup> cf. *Ideenparadiese*, p. 127.

<sup>279</sup> NL 1876 16[12], KSA 8.290.

Wohlan: so hab ich keinen Grund mehr, in jener früheren Manier “beredt” zu sein; heute – könnte ich es vielleicht nicht mehr. Wer Tags, Nachts und Jahrein Jahraus mit seiner Seele im vertraulichen Zwiste und Zwiegespräche zusammengesessen hat, wer in seiner Höhle – es kann ein Labyrinth oder ein Goldschacht sein – zum Höhlenbär oder Schatzgräber wurde, wer wie ich sich allerhand Gedanken, Bedenken und Bedenkliches durch den Kopf über das Herz laufen ließ und läßt, das er nicht immer mittheilen würde, selbst wenn er Geister seiner Art und ausgelassene tapfere Kameraden um sich hätte: dessen Begriffe selber erhalten zuletzt eine eigene Zwielficht-Farbe, einen Geruch ebensosehr der Tiefe als des Moders, etwas Unmittheilsames und Widerwilliges, welches jeden Neugierigen kalt anbläst. – und eine Einsiedler-Philosophie, wenn sie selbst mit einer Löwenklaue geschrieben wäre, würde doch immer wie eine Philosophie der “Gänsefüßchen” aussehen.<sup>280</sup>

Man hört auch den Schriften eines Einsiedlers etwas von dem Wiederhall der Oede, etwas von dem Flüsterton und scheuen Um-sich-blicken der Einsamkeit an: seine stärksten Worte und seine Schreie selber klingen gleichsam noch wie eine neue und gefährlichere Art des Schweigens, Verschweigens heraus.<sup>281</sup>

This very much relates to what Krüger writes about the aphorism: that it is a form of existential expression of an endangered individual. Therefore it is relevant here to mention that Nietzsche, in contrast to the prejudice and assumption with which he denigrates the *Herdenmensch*, actually emphasises the value of each individual.<sup>282</sup> Therefore the *Betrachtung* was not enough any more – something was needed that was able to express the

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<sup>280</sup> NL 1885 37[5], KSA 11.579.

<sup>281</sup> NL 1885 37[5], KSA 11.580.

<sup>282</sup> ‘Im Grunde weiss jeder Mensch recht wohl, dass er nur einmal, als ein Unicum, auf der Welt ist und dass kein noch so seltsamer Zufall zum zweiten Mal ein so wunderlich buntes Mancherlei zum Einerlei, wie er es ist, zusammenschütteln wird: [...] Die Künstler allein lassen dieses lässige Einhergehen in erborgten Manieren und übergehängten Meinungen und enthüllen das Geheimniss, das böse Gewissen von Jedermann, den Satz, dass jeder Mensch ein einmaliges Wunder ist, sie wagen es, uns den Menschen zu zeigen, wie er bis in jede Muskelbewegung er selbst, er allein ist, noch mehr, dass er in dieser strengen Consequenz seiner Einzigkeit schön und betrachtenswerth ist, neu und unglaublich wie jedes Werk der Natur und durchaus nicht langweilig.’ UB III 1, KSA 1.337.

Herman Siemens argues that ‘Concepts like “the herd” and the “masses” do not simply enable Nietzsche to dismiss the value of the majority of humankind in favour of an elite. The problem with the herd-like existence of the majority is that it submerges diversity, distance, and the uniqueness of each member.’

Herman Siemens, ‘Nietzsche *contra* Liberalism on Freedom’, in Keith Ansell Pearson (ed), *A Companion to Nietzsche* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 437-454 (p. 452n1).

inner dimension of speech. Nietzsche also writes that, in this new speech, even the strongest words or screams still sound like silence. This relates to the dimension of depth in the aphorism and of an inaccessibility that characterises not just this speech but the aphorism generally, which protects the individual from society in that it allows the individual to express unpopular statements in a veiled way.

To continue with the investigation of Nietzsche's writing in relation to the system and rationality, his partial rejection of the label 'aphorism' might have to do with the problem that this mode was not taken seriously by his contemporaries:

In Aphorismen zu reden, galt Nietzsches Zeitgenossen als Symptom des Unernstes, der Unverbindlichkeit und des Literatenhaften – was sich in abgeschwächter Form teilweise bis heute erhalten hat, wenn dem Aphoristiker etwa Mangel an Kraft für ein größeres Unternehmen nachgesagt werden.<sup>283</sup>

This alleged incapacity to use a longer mode of writing, such as a treatise for instance, is often accompanied by an assumed incapacity for logical thought on the part of the aphoristic writer.

In contrast, Krüger suggests that, for Nietzsche in the course of his critique of rationalism, the logical element in the aphorism was of vital importance. Krüger writes:

So werden die kanonischen Begriffe der Ratio im Prozeß des Aphorismus dadurch zur Selbstkritik gezwungen, daß der Aphoristiker ihnen, und zwar mit ihrer Hilfe, einen Inhalt gibt, der ihrer Form widerspricht, daß er also durchaus logisch gegen den Formalismus der Logik angeht.<sup>284</sup>

Krüger mentions that the logical element of the aphorism ties in accurately with the aforementioned observation of Hohl's use of abstraction, and that the aphoristic thinker combines the rational with the arational with a slight preference for the arational over the

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<sup>283</sup> Greiner, p. 9.

<sup>284</sup> Krüger, pp. 84–85. and Stingelin, p. 186.: 'Mit der Reflexion seiner formalen, d.h. bei Nietzsche genauer sprachlichen, tropischen und grammatikalischen, Bedingtheit wendet das Denken sich kritisch gegen sich selbst und begibt sich dabei in eine Reihe von Aporien – allen voran die Aporie, daß eine selbstbezügliche Kritik sich ihrem erkenntnistheoretischen Ort entzieht –, denen das Paradoxe des Aphorismus sprachkritisch korrespondiert.'

rational. This should remind us of the problem of seeing reason not as a solution to end violence but as violence itself, due mainly to a notion of reason that is understood to subsume the particularities of individuals and life, thereby violating them. These questions influenced, and continue to be investigated by, the Frankfurt School,<sup>285</sup> and remain inherently unsolved to this day in their social and political consequences.<sup>286</sup> Daniel Conway in *Nietzsche and the Political* sees an opposition between the system and the aphorism. He argues that Nietzsche's use of the aphorism indicates his abandonment of systematic ambitions, allowing him to focus on the overlooked details of daily life. This is another example of how the aphorism is seen as being in contrast to the systematic and how the aphorism is seen as being able to represent the experiences of everyday life.<sup>287</sup> Conway calls Nietzsche a great miniaturist, and this focus on the minimal and on detail or nuance is something that Nietzsche has in common with Hohl.<sup>288</sup> This should refute those who see Nietzsche or Hohl as megalomaniac thinkers alone.

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<sup>285</sup> cf. Nietzsche's influence on for instance Max Horkheimer & Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer Verlag, 1985), pp. 74-107.

<sup>286</sup> 'For Reason if it is Right is necessarily exclusive: of certain knowledges and certain subjectivities. It disqualifies most often knowledge acquired from particular practice and concrete everyday experience (i.e., *knowledge available to everyone*) at the same time as it diminishes those subjects who can only speak from these positions — historically women and those men who do physical labor — those who service a ruling class who claim to 'know' and 'rule' by virtue of their superior Reason miraculously untarnished by the 'personal,' 'material,' 'practical,' or 'emotional' constraints that disqualify those over whom they rule from both knowledge and the good life.

Thus Reason serves the ideological (always political) purposes of *ruling out* as ill-founded and irrational and therefore untrue - the only knowledge available to members of certain social classes (the dominated). Since knowledge is power and truth a knowledge-effect, that is, an effect of power, the discourse of Reason effectively deprives members of these classes of social power and maintains and reproduces its concentration in the hands of a ruling and leisured elite.' Geraldine Finn, 'Reason and Violence', in Geraldine Finn, *Why Althusser kills his Wife: Essays on Discourse and Violence* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1996), p. 11-12.

<sup>287</sup> Daniel Conway, *Nietzsche and the Political* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 112.

<sup>288</sup> 'Die Größe des Menschen, die Hoffnung, die der Mensch hat; der *Weg* zur Größe - liegt im Erkennen seiner Geringheit, der Relativitäten, d.h. der Beziehungen in der unermesslichen Nacht um ihn, *nicht in der Beherrschung des Ganzen*, sondern in der Sauberkeit seiner eigenen Linienführung, in der Klarheit *seines* Getriebes: wie eine kleine Uhr ist er inmitten des organischen Chaos der Sahara: In der Klarheit und Richtigkeit seines Funktionierens liegt seine Größe. Und in der Beleuchtung seines kleinen Kreises.' N II 104, 'Ich bin eine Nuance.' EH WA 4, KSA 6.362.

Nietzsche's use of the aphorism has consequences for his philosophising, as Christine Daigle claims in her essay 'Nietzsche's Notion of Embodied Self: Proto-Phenomenology at Work'<sup>289</sup> about Nietzsche's aphoristic style. She says that it is no coincidence that Nietzsche uses the aphoristic style in his middle works such as *Menschliches*, *Allzumenschliches* because, she thinks, the aphoristic style is the only one possible for his philosophy, assuming it is closer to human experience than a theoretical text.

I think that the particular style Nietzsche adopts in this period is the only methodologically appropriate tool for his philosophy. Indeed, because he wants to tackle the lived experience of the individual as an embodied being, his philosophy has to be expressed in this non systematic, non-linear type of narrative.<sup>290</sup>

Ansell-Pearson emphasises that even though Nietzsche does not write in a very theoretical way, he nevertheless is not unsystematic. This underlines the claim that aphoristic writing in general is not arbitrary and is able to combine the disparate and conflicting elements of daily life experiences with those of a system, albeit not one governed by rational subsumption.

Daigle sees Nietzsche's reason for using the aphoristic style in his rejection of a rationalist approach of the self, which he sees as labyrinthine and multifaceted.<sup>291</sup> Here again is the

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<sup>289</sup> Christine Daigle, 'Nietzsche's Notion of Embodied Self: Proto-Phenomenology at Work' *Nietzsche-Studien*, 40 (2011), 226-243.

Daigle does not count *Zur Genealogie der Moral Zarathustra* as aphoristic works without saying why.

<sup>290</sup> Keith Ansell-Pearson, 'The Philosophy of the Morning: Philosophy and Phenomenology in Nietzsche's Dawn', in Élodie Boubilil and Christine Daigle (eds.), *Nietzsche and Phenomenology. Power, Life, Subjectivity* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013), pp. 217-238, p. 219.

Rebecca Bamford suggests that Nietzsche adopted the aphoristic style in order to express his criticism of morality. Rebecca Bamford, 'Mood and Aphorism in Nietzsches Campaign against Morality', *pli. The Warwick Journal of Philosophy*, 25 (2014), 55-75 (p. 55).

Graham Parkes suggests that Nietzsche uses the aphorism for two reasons, firstly for practical reasons as he had problems with his eyesight and secondly because the aphorism is more suited to the unsystematic and experimental nature of his philosophy. Cf. Graham Parkes, *Composing the Soul: Reaches of Nietzsches Psychology* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 116.

<sup>291</sup> Daigle, p. 29.

'Aber der Weg zu neuen Fassungen und Verfeinerungen der Seelen-Hypothese steht offen: und Begriffe wie „sterbliche Seele“ und „Seele als Subjekts-Vielheit“ und „Seele als Gesellschaftsbau der Triebe und Affekte“ wollen fürderhin in der Wissenschaft Bürgerrecht haben.' JGB I 12, KSA 5.27.



opposition between rationality and experience, between one truth alone and many truths, and Daigle assumes the aphorism to be better able to express human experience and the aphoristic style as being directly tied to perspectivism. The aphoristic style Nietzsche adopts is indicative of how he conceives of human experience: not as a rationalistic, systematically organised, continuous, linear narrative but rather as a collection of perspectives gained through experiences.<sup>292</sup> This ties in with Brendan Donnellan's observation that the French Moralists for Nietzsche were 'not merely of bibliographical interest, but indicative of a powerful stream of influence upon him which had far-reaching effects both on his method of moral and psychological analysis, and upon the aphoristic form which he adopted for his investigations'.<sup>293</sup> Stingelin suggests that Schopenhauer was less of an aphoristic influence because his aphorisms as such are too systematic for Nietzsche and are more aligned like a textbook.<sup>294</sup> This immediately implies that Stingelin has a conception of the aphorism as not capable of systematic thought, which is not surprising considering his application of Fricke's definition of the aphorism. Politycki is also a strong advocate of regarding Nietzsche as an aphoristic and systematic thinker, arguing that these do not have to be contradictory concepts:

Wenn Nietzsche nun im folgenden als "Systemdenker" vorgestellt werden soll, so ist eine derartige Bezeichnung nicht nur in provokativer Absicht gewählt. Natürlich hat er sich zeitlebens den Ansprüchen systematischer Philosophie entzogen – gleichzeitig löste er sie aber, zieht man einmal die Verkettung einzelner Aphorismen zu thematisch strukturierten Reihen und ganzen Büchern in Betracht, auf seine spezifische Weise ein als organisches System, das zwar nicht dem Werden den Stempel des (in Kategorien geordneten) Seins aufdrückt, jedoch dieses sein gedankliches "Sein", seine im Grunde recht feste und stets sich verfestigende Weltanschauung, immer

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<sup>292</sup> Daigle, p. 29.

<sup>293</sup> Donnellan, p. ix.

<sup>294</sup> Stingelin, 'Aphorismus', p. 186.

wieder neu sich entrollen läßt als “Werden” einer mit-reißenden Gedankenentwicklung.<sup>295</sup>

In this way the aphorism challenges the treatise as accepted form of philosophising. Politycki emphasises the non-static nature of Nietzsche’s thinking, the dual nature of its becoming (*Werden*) while at the same time being a ‘sich stets verfestigende Weltanschauung’; another way that shows how the aphorism is able to hold tensions between the disparate moments of, on the one hand, the continual changes of becoming and, on the other, the firm worldview. This process is however to be understood better in a higher level order: the many changes are all reflections of that firm worldview. Karl Löwith described Nietzsche’s philosophising as a ‘System in Aphorismen’<sup>296</sup> and states that Nietzsche rejects the system not because of the methodical unity a system offers, but because a system feigns a dogmatically fixated world.<sup>297</sup> It is not just in his rejection of the rational system, or a system or structure as such, but his use of rhetoric in general that puts Nietzsche in conflict with the traditional view of philosophy. Tracy Strong in his essay ‘In Defense of Rhetoric: Or How Hard It Is to Take a Writer Seriously: The Case of Nietzsche’<sup>298</sup> insists that Nietzsche’s use of rhetoric was intentional and cannot be subtracted from his thought without loss and irreparable damage to his thought.

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<sup>295</sup> Politycki, p. 8.

<sup>296</sup> Karl Löwith, *Nietzsche* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1987), p. 111.

<sup>297</sup> ‘Nietzsche bekämpft am philosophischen System nicht die *methodische* Einheit, welche ein “Grundwille der Erkenntnis” erzeugt, sondern, daß es eine dogmatisch fixierte und “verklauulierte” Welt vortäuscht.’ Löwith, p. 113.

cf. The unity underlying Nietzsche’s writing can also be understood as a process ‘For, finally, the very multiplicity of Nietzsche’s texts proclaims the primacy of his sense of creative-destructive process; and every attempt to adequate the Dionysian element by way of interpretation should also suggest the self-cancellation and self-suspension that is paradoxically implicit in the very effort to express the inexpressible unity of contradiction inherent in that process.’ Peter Heller, *Studies on Nietzsche* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1980), p. 46.

<sup>298</sup> Tracy B. Strong, ‘In Defense of Rhetoric: Or How Hard It Is to Take a Writer Seriously: The Case of Nietzsche’, *Political Theory*, 41 (2013), 507-532.

The necessity of exegesis implies that the aphorism conceals something that needs to be brought to light by the efforts of the reader. It also implies another dualism inherent to the aphorism, that of surface and depth. In fact Nietzsche repeatedly emphasises the concealedness of the aphorism. For instance, in the posthumous fragments he states that the deepest and most inexhaustible books will have an aphoristic and sudden character of Pascal's *Pensées*.<sup>299</sup> He then mentions driving forces (*Kräfte*) and values that will remain for a long time under the surface and says that what will surface in the end will be *Wirkung*. To Hohl, the notion of *Kraft* is one of his key concepts around which all his other concepts revolve (to be examined in Chapter IV).

Man soll die Thatsache, wie uns unsere Gedanken gekommen sind, nicht verhehlen und verderben. Die tiefsten und unerschöpftesten Bücher werden wohl immer etwas von dem aphoristischen und plötzlichen Charakter von *Pascals* *Pensées* haben. Die treibenden Kräfte und Werthschätzungen sind lange unter der Oberfläche; was hervorkommt, ist Wirkung.<sup>300</sup>

In another passage, Nietzsche alludes to the chain metaphor. The additional qualifications and descriptions of the concealedness are that there is an element of the forbidden in aphoristic writing, and there is a tendency toward length, which might allude to why aphoristic writers have a preference for long novels. Furthermore, there is a qualification of what Nietzsche's writing is not, namely that he is not writing treatises or speeches. With this, the aphorism is effectively challenging the treatise<sup>301</sup> as the generally accepted form of philosophising.

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<sup>299</sup> Lucien Goldmann emphasises that Pascal too tried to find a relation between the particular and the universal without diminishing a difference between the two by subsumption cf. Lucien Goldmann, *Der verborgene Gott: Studie über die tragische Weltanschauung in den Pensées Pascals und im Theater Racines* (Frankfurt Main: Suhrkamp, 1985), pp. 370-378.

<sup>300</sup> NL 35[31], KSA 11.522.

<sup>301</sup> Westerdale however argues that the treatise and aphorism do not have to be in opposition, but can be regarded as complementary. Westerdale, p. 99.

The notion of depth is for many reasons very relevant to Nietzsche's thinking. In the *Genealogy of Morals* he mentions how the thoughts leading to *Human, All Too Human* are the same that lead to the *Genealogy of Morals*. This is due, he says, to the thoughts being the same, but that the thoughts needed time to mature.<sup>302</sup> In the context of the aphorism, the notion of ripening is important because Nietzsche emphasises the necessity of rereading and ruminating on what one has read or thought. In this, he practised what he preached. The duration and length of thought that went into the aphorism stand in sharp contrast to the common view that its characteristic feature is brevity. The aphoristic writer does not hurry but thinks precisely about their writing. This might be why Nietzsche sees the aphorism as *Formen der Ewigkeit* and also something that would contradict an interpretation of the aphorism as *Versuch*, an attempt or experiment<sup>303</sup>, which is again another expression of the dual nature of the aphorism; on the one hand a form of eternity and on the other the flexibility of change and attempts or experiments. The aphorism can be seen as an attempt because it appears to be separated from its line of development; only the result of a chain of thought is shown and the whole line of thought has to be completed by the reader. The origin of an aphorism is not immediately obvious. This does not mean that the aphorism is merely a draft to become something else, something to be transcended. Krüger too says the aphorism is not a

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<sup>302</sup> ‘...die Gedanken selbst sind älter. Es waren in der Hauptsache schon die gleichen Gedanken, die ich in den vorliegenden Abhandlungen wieder aufnehme: — hoffen wir, dass die lange Zwischenzeit ihnen gut gethan hat, dass sie reifer, heller, stärker, vollkommner geworden sind!’ GM I 2, KSA 5.248.

<sup>303</sup> Cf. Greiner cf. Westerdale who regards ‘experiment as integral part of Nietzsche’s aphoristic collections.’ p. 45. cf. pp. 43-45 for similarities between Nietzsche’s and Lichtenberg’s *Gedankenexperimente*.

*Vorentwurf*.<sup>304</sup> But *Versuch* is an important concept in order to understand Nietzsche's epistemology.<sup>305</sup> The experiment or *Versuch* has the advantage 'das Beispiellose hervorbringen und stabilisieren zu können.'<sup>306</sup> To cast different attempts, try different things, to experiment, is also about learning to live with the uncertainty of the perspectivist situation of life and to find different ways to affirm life while, at the same time, accepting the permanent fragmentariness of life in all its consequences – something that in Hohl's words was called non-premature reconciliation (*unvoreilige Versöhnung*)<sup>307</sup> – in much the same way the aphorism operates while stating something but also always leaving something open.

Nietzsche writes in *Menschliches, Allzu Menschliches*:

Das Unvollständige als das Wirksame. — Wie Relieffiguren dadurch so stark auf die Phantasie wirken, dass sie gleichsam auf dem Wege sind, aus der Wand herauszutreten und plötzlich, irgend wodurch gehemmt, Halt machen: so ist mitunter die reliefartig unvollständige Darstellung eines Gedankens, einer ganzen Philosophie wirksamer, als die erschöpfende Ausführung: man überlässt der Arbeit des Beschauers mehr, er wird aufgeregt, das, was in so starkem Licht und Dunkel vor ihm sich abhebt, fortzubilden, zu Ende zu denken und jenes Hemmniss selber zu überwinden, welches ihrem völligen Heraustreten bis dahin hinderlich war.<sup>308</sup>

Three things in this aphorism are important, firstly, the incomplete incites the phantasy. Secondly, incompleteness is more effective in displaying a thought incompletely than an exhausting treatise. Here again Nietzsche is threatening the traditional modus operandi of philosophy. And, thirdly, the relevance of the work of the spectator, which hints again at the

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<sup>304</sup> Krüger, p. 93.

<sup>305</sup> Politycki, p. 55.

<sup>306</sup> Krauthausen, p. 10.

<sup>307</sup> NN 202. cf. VI.5.3.

<sup>308</sup> MA I 178, KSA 2.161-162. cf. also Westerdale, p. 51.

necessity of seeing and the implication of the reader and/or spectator in the deciphering of the thought.

Joel Westerdale suggests that a majority of Nietzsche's essays could be called 'essayistic aphorism', according to him both the essay and the aphorism share an 'experimental attitude.'<sup>309</sup> Westerdale describes Nietzsche's essayistic aphorism as follows:

The essayistic aphorism approaches the essay in its length (often a page or more), as well as in its shared investment in conceptual experimentation and its suddenness, but it is nevertheless an aphorism. As with many of his maxims, pseudodefinitions, twisted commonplaces, mini-dialogues, and thought-experiments, Nietzsche's essayistic aphorisms come at the end of a long chain of thought and tend to feature a general rather than a personal subject.<sup>310</sup>

All those things could also be said to be characteristic for Hohl's aphorisms, but then Westerdale suggests<sup>311</sup> that many of Nietzsche's essayistic aphorisms follow Fricke's criteria of co-textual isolation. While this is largely but not always correct for Nietzsche, Westerdale then finds examples of Nietzsche that violate Fricke's definition and Westerdale concludes that eventually Fricke's definition is too narrow<sup>312</sup> and states that it is in the nature of aphorisms to violate definitions, that it is in fact a defining feature of the aphorism to escape firm boundaries<sup>313</sup>: '...because pushing the boundaries of what qualifies as an aphorism is itself a natural extension of the aphoristic tradition....'<sup>314</sup> Hohl's essayistic aphorisms violate

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<sup>309</sup> Westerdale, p. 45.

<sup>310</sup> Westerdale, p. 47.

<sup>311</sup> Westerdale, p. 47 'largely adhere'

<sup>312</sup> Westerdale, p. 48.

<sup>313</sup> Westerdale, p. 55.

<sup>314</sup> Westerdale, p. 48.

the criterion of co-textual isolation, for instance Hohl tends to group aphorisms discussing a similar thing together (example, for instance II 151 & II 152, the whole chapter IV). This violates Fricke's criterion of co-textual isolation in the semantic coherence, that is Hohl's essayistic aphorisms exhibit 'argumentative continuity'<sup>315</sup>.

### III.2.4 Hohl and the Note

As Hohl called his work *Notizen* and *Nachnotizen*, it is important to consider whether his writing can be called note-writing. One could make quite a strong case for this because of Hohl's own usage of 'note' in the titles of his books. This question will be examined with the help of Susanne Niemuth-Engelmann's book *Alltag und Aufzeichnung*. Her theory is indebted to Fedler but uses the concept of family resemblance in a different way than Fedler, who used it in order to compare different modes. Niemuth-Engelmann instead uses this concept in order to concentrate on the connections (*Zusammenhänge*) between the different genres of note and aphorism. The group of researchers predominantly focussing on note-writing as a description for Hohl's writing will then be reviewed in this section, including Rudolf Probst and Hugo Loetscher, who are familiar with Hohl's Nachlaß and have thus apparently the strongest familiarity with his work. Within the *Notizen* and *Nachnotizen* Hohl occasionally calls his writing note-writing. He refers, also occasionally, to having made notes, especially in the context of travelling and noting dreams.<sup>316</sup> Rather, he tends to call it fragmentary,<sup>317</sup> and

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<sup>315</sup> Westerdale, p. 47.

<sup>316</sup> 'wo ich mich ordnen, mich klären, Notizen machen will' N VII 18 'Das Fahrrad ist für einige praktisch; doch kann man auf ihm nicht denken, keine Notizen machen.' N VII 57 'Einige Notizen' N VII 87 'Nach den vielen Notizen wieder schlafend' N X 11 'wollte ich eine kurze Notiz zu Papier bringen' N X 13 NN 276, 374.

<sup>317</sup> cf. III.2.5.

therefore the possibility of whether Hohl's writing is fragmentary needs to be examined as well. Firstly, Niemuth-Engelmann's theory of note-writing will be represented. Niemuth-Engelmann sees Hohl as the founder of what she calls the *Aufzeichnungswerk*.<sup>318</sup> According to her, the note is characterised by an openness to every expression of life (*Lebensäußerung*). Niemuth-Engelmann looks at the note (*Notiz*), which she calls *Aufzeichnung*, in relation to daily life (*Alltag*) and has four theses regarding the *Aufzeichnung*.<sup>319</sup>

Her first thesis is that you cannot define the note as an independent mode; it has always to be seen in relation to other notes. Independent modes are the *Aufzeichnungswerk* and the *Aufzeichnungssammlung*, which both consist of notes and give the context for those notes. She distinguishes *Aufzeichnungssammlung* from *Aufzeichnungswerk* in that within the *Aufzeichnungssammlung* the notes are not ordered, without a structure, except for external structures such as the chronological. It is logical then to reject the term *Aufzeichnungssammlung* for Hohl's work because he himself rejected the term *Sammlung*.<sup>320</sup> The *Aufzeichnungswerk* in contrast is the composition of notes. The structure has a direct relation to the content discussed in the notes and the conveying of certain statements. The order of the notes cannot be changed or permuted. Her second thesis states that there is a specific connection between the contents of the notes and the form of the *Aufzeichnungswerk*. Her book aims to explore this connection. Her third thesis says that there are certain hermeneutic principles for the interpretation of the *Aufzeichnungswerk* and the

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<sup>318</sup> Susanne Niemuth-Engelmann, *Alltag und Aufzeichnung. Untersuchungen zu Canetti, Bender, Handke und Schnurre* (Würzburg: Königshausen Neumann, 1998), pp. 50–54.

<sup>319</sup> Niemuth-Engelmann, p. 20.

<sup>320</sup> 'Es ist nicht eine Sammlung von Aphorismen.' N p. 6.



*Aufzeichnungssammlung*. For the *Aufzeichnungswerk* it is necessary to consider contextuality upon interpreting it. For the *Aufzeichnungssammlung* it is necessary to consider contextual isolation; that is, the independence of the note within that very *Aufzeichnungssammlung*. While there is one exception where it is possible that one note can explain another, the decisive distinction is that in the *Aufzeichnungswerk* such a contextuality is a necessity, whereas it isn't in the *Aufzeichnungssammlung*, where it is a possibility. Her fourth thesis states that, apart from some precursors, the *Aufzeichnungswerk* and *Aufzeichnungssammlung* are late appearances in literature. They have mostly been written after World War II or in the 1970s. She sees Hohl as a representative of the genealogical *Aufzeichnungswerk*.<sup>321</sup> This sees the *Notiz* as a relatively late appearance in the history of literature and as not fragmentary.<sup>322</sup>

The note shares with the aphorism the same difficulty of definition.<sup>323</sup> The decisive difference, however, is that in my hypothesis the aphorism is defined by a capacity to contextualise, due to its referential character, and by connections to the chains of thought. This is not the case with the note, and although Niemuth-Engelmann claims that one note is able to explain another one, there is no assumption of a larger context or theory that note-writing can express. The problem here, in separating the note from the aphorism by way of their capacity to contextualise, is that both have the ability to contextualise: a note is able to

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<sup>321</sup> 'Formal gibt es aber dennoch Übereinstimmungen zwischen Schnurres *Aufzeichnungswerk* und Hohls *Notizen*, die, wie ihr Autor explizit in seiner Vorbemerkung betont, eine bewußte Komposition einzelner Notate darstellen. Kapiteleinteilung, Überschriften und vor allem die Verbindung der Eintragungen untereinander sprechen dafür, die *Notizen* als Vorbereiter des *Aufzeichnungswerkes* zu betrachten.' Niemuth-Engelmann, p. 39.

<sup>322</sup> Thomas Lappe, *Die Aufzeichnung: Typologie einer literarischen Kurzform im 20. Jahrhundert*, (Aachen: Alano, 1991), p. 125.

<sup>323</sup> Thomas Lappe writes about the *Notat*, the *Journal*, *Notiz* and *Aufzeichnung* the following: 'daß das Bedeutungsspektrum der *Aufzeichnung* recht diffus ist. Dabei ist sie für viele Autoren zu einem anerkannten und vielgenutzten Mittel geworden, dieses schwierige Jahrhundert möglichst authentisch zu erfassen und zu beschreiben'. Lappe, p. 12. Also, cf. Niemuth-Engelmann p. 13.

explain another note, and maybe even more notes. An aphorism instead is able to achieve a stronger kind of contextuality, and therefore to explain whole chains of thought. This means that contextuality is not a good criterion to distinguish the note from the aphorism, as the different strengths of contextuality are rather differences of degree than of kind. A more genuine distinction between the note and the aphorism is that the note is more arbitrary than the aphorism. While the note may be able to explain another note, due to its arbitrary nature it is not able to sustain a longer chain of thought. The note may have the same ability to permutate that Fricke ascribes to the aphorism.

The most viable way to distinguish the note from the aphorism, however, lies in the way the aphorism uses concepts with poetic means. The note does not seem to do this. Furthermore, there also does not seem to be an underlying philosophy when one uses notes, because notes are more closely linked to daily life than the aphorism and notes are not able to combine disparate elements, and hence do not have the dual nature of the aphorism. Another criterion to examine regarding the distinction between the daily and the existential is the existential moment in Krüger's sense. This seems to be lacking in the note because the note is defined by Niemuth-Engelmann as describing daily life and not especially focussed on special existential views. But Hohl's can be characterised as a writing in which daily life and the existential cannot be separated from each other, precisely because daily life has an existential meaning. In Hohl there is no hierarchy between the existential and daily life because the chains of thought with which Hohl's thought is interlaced – while mentioning daily life – focus not on aspects of daily life but on a theory on how to live and how to create art. This theory in part will be explained when it comes to the exploration of the chains of thought in the following sections. Hohl uses certain concepts repeatedly that are built into his theory. But, since these

rather theoretical features and the use of concepts, or the expression of a certain view of life and a philosophy, are absent from the note-writing, Hohl's writing can only be called aphoristic. The problem of Hohl's rejection of the system also needs to be addressed. This will be done in the section dealing with unity (III.2.2.1). However, he has developed a theory, or better, philosophy of life. The chasm between the aphorism and the system or, better, theory can be explained by the argument that Hohl's theory is an open theory, meaning that light is shed only on some aspects of the theory, so one cannot speak of a complete system. But there is also no disorder in Hohl's thoughts, which means that there is some kind of structure, which also means that the aphorism can be used to express theories or at any rate complex thoughts with no arbitrary elements. One of them – note, fragment or aphorism – needs to be defined along with this capacity to express chains of thought because, if such an aspect is missing in the definition of the mode, it means there is a large aspect of Hohl's or any aphoristic writer's thinking that is left unaccounted for, namely the capacity for some kind of systematic thinking.

An important aspect is the question of contextuality, or the creation of context. This relates to what Fedler called in the first chapter of this thesis the special indicative character (*Verweisungscharakter*) of the aphorism, in that the aphorism independently of its co- or context is able to create a sense of its own. The questions of co- and context relate to the order in which the aphorism is embedded, the structure of the *Notizen*, while the indicative character leads beyond that to a new sense and also to the dimension that Hohl calls *die hereinbrechenden Ränder*, meaning that thought always emerges only from the margins (this will be further explored in the section about the ontological fragmentariness of the aphorism).

Niemuth-Engelmann suggests regarding the note that the reader has to do the contextualising: ‘Die Kontextualisierung ist vom Leser zu leisten.’<sup>324</sup> This is not explained any further. But it should be, since the capacity to create context seems to be so important. However, Niemuth-Engelmann mentions the reader, and it is generally accepted that the reader plays a huge role in the deciphering of the aphorism. One needs to understand how this works, how much of the contextuality is dependent or based in the nature of the aphorism and how much of it is based in the reader. Which capacities ought the reader to have in order to create this very context or reconstruct those chains of thought? This is further explored in the section about personality and in the close analysis of the chains of thought in section III.5: *Lesen* of Hohl’s *Notizen*.

Niemuth-Engelmann refers to Wittgenstein’s concept of family resemblance (*Familienähnlichkeit*) but her use differs from Fedler who employs family resemblance in order to find the family resemblance of the different modi: aphorisms or notes. Instead, she shifts the focus from looking at the connections between singular modi (such as fragment or aphorism or not) to see whether there are family resemblances between the aphorisms of an aphorism collection or a book of aphorisms such as the *Notizen*). She assumes that the structure of an *Aufzeichnungswerk* corresponds to the *Anschaung* of a writer.<sup>325</sup> In simple words: to use the concept of family resemblance in order to look at the connections

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<sup>324</sup> Niemuth-Engelmann, p. 30.

<sup>325</sup> ‘Vielmehr ist die Kenntnis der Programmatik, der Hauptthemen und wichtigsten Anliegen im Werk bestimmter Autoren notwendig, um zu erkennen, daß die Struktur ihrer jeweiligen Aufzeichnungswerke bzw. Aufzeichnungssammlungen nicht zufällig ist, sondern daß sie das Äquivalent zu der durch sie zum Ausdruck gebrachten Anschauung bildet. Erst die Erkenntnis dieses Zusammenhangs ermöglicht die Betrachtung des Aufzeichnungswerkes als Kunstwerk in seiner Gesamtheit – einer Gattung, die sich aus bereits bekannten Textsorten zusammensetzt und dennoch in dieser Zusammensetzung etwas völlig Neues darstellt.’ Niemuth-Engelmann, p. 23.

It is problematic however that she limits her focus to the literary and excludes philosophical works and writers, such as Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Adorno. This also means that she does not see Hohl as a philosophical thinker which in consequence means that the philosophical existential dimension is entirely excluded from her analysis.

(*Zusammenhänge*) within the work.<sup>326</sup> *Zusammenhang*<sup>327</sup> is understood here as something that connects a part with a whole. She suggests that the modi in their totality create a new work of art, the *Aufzeichnungswerk*.<sup>328</sup> The focus on the *Zusammenhang* is vital because it does justice to Hohl in the sense that, to him, the recognition of *Zusammenhänge*<sup>329</sup> was one of the highest things one can hope to achieve in art.<sup>330</sup> Niemuth-Engelmann says that Hohl's *Notizen* are a forerunner of *Aufzeichnungswerk* due to the unity that Hohl emphasises in the preface and the way he ordered them. She bases<sup>331</sup> her argumentation on Heißenbüttel's,<sup>332</sup> Bichsel's, Weinzierl's and Canetti's<sup>333</sup> estimation of Hohl's writing.

Although Hohl's writing cannot be called note-writing, due to its use of concepts and expression of a certain philosophical worldview; Niemuth-Engelmann's work is of value because she follows Hohl in his statement that there is an *Einheitlichkeit* to the *Notizen*<sup>334</sup> and consequently she insists on the importance of the unity in his writing, emphasising the interconnectedness of the pieces. Niemuth-Engelmann's definition of the *Aufzeichnungswerk*

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<sup>326</sup> Niemuth-Engelmann, p. 19.

<sup>327</sup> 'wesentlicher Teil dieses kreativen Gestaltens ist das Erkennen des Zusammenhangs zwischen Teil und Ganzem.' Niemuth-Engelmann, p. 23.

<sup>328</sup> Niemuth-Engelmann, p. 21.

<sup>329</sup> cf. Konrad Bänninger, *Geist des Werdens*, (Zürich, Leipzig und Stuttgart: Rascher Cie A.G., 1932, pp.48-49.

<sup>330</sup> cf. also N IX 31.

<sup>331</sup> Niemuth-Engelmann, pp. 51–53.

<sup>332</sup> Heißenbüttel's afterword to NuD pp. 111–117.

<sup>333</sup> Als ich endlich bei ihm war, reichte er mir Zettel hin [...]. Er erklärte mir, daß es sich um zwei verschiedene Aufzeichnungen handle, die er im Abstand von ein oder zwei Jahren zur 'Provinz des Menschen' gemacht habe. [...] Den 'Wettbewerb', soweit einer in solchen Dingen überhaupt denkbar war, hatte er auf das einzige Feld verlegt, das Gültigkeit hatte, das der Aufzeichnung und huldigte meiner 'Provinz' wie ich seiner Person. Elias Canetti, *Das Geheimherz der Uhr* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1999), p. 90.

<sup>334</sup> N p. 6.

is more helpful in understanding Hohl's idea of unity than it is helpful for understanding the aphorism or note-writing because her work ignores the deeper dimensions of Hohl's use of concepts and the actual formulation of a complex worldview, the chains of thought.

Two further positions, by Rudolf Probst and Hugo Loetscher, on why Hohl's writing is note-writing, will now be examined. While neither gives a convincing explanation, their positions nevertheless shed some light on important aspects of Hohl's writing.

Probst writes in his essay 'Notizen, Zettel und Notate. Zu Ludwig Hohls Schriftprinzip'<sup>335</sup> about the way Hohl worked and what role the notes play in his writing processes. He emphasises the importance of taking notes and, like Niemuth-Engelmann, states that Hohl's contribution to the history of literature was his way of innovative note-taking. First, Probst describes that Hohl had an elaborate system of taking notes.<sup>336</sup> This emphasises the connectedness of what Hohl writes. Furthermore, Probst directly links Hohl's concept of note-taking to his idea of *Alles ist Werk*<sup>337</sup> and consequently identifies a variety of themes and inconclusiveness as a matter of Hohl's principle and the main characteristics of his notes. The contents of these notes are described by Loetscher as follows: 'Notiertes, zu dem ebenso der Gedankenblitz wie das Zitat, Randstriche zu Lektüren wie Maximen, Porträts und Beobachtungen gehören, philosophische Exkurse wie Autobiographisches oder Erzählendes, und es sind gerade die Verschiedenartigkeiten und deren Gleichzeitigkeit, was die Notate

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<sup>335</sup> Probst, pp. 39 – 47.

<sup>336</sup> 'Obwohl er seine Abneigung gegen jegliche Art von 'journal intime' und autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen immer wieder betont, hat er sein ganzes Dasein als Schriftsteller bis in die kleinsten Alltagsverrichtungen in einem ausgeklügelten Notationssystem auf Zetteln festgehalten, aufgeschrieben und dokumentiert, sein Nachlass im Schweizerischen Literaturarchiv gibt da beredtes Zeugnis.' Probst, p. 39.

<sup>337</sup> N VII 150.

charakterisiert.<sup>338</sup> This means there is a capacity in the note to say a multitude of things simultaneously. The question is whether this is valid for the aphorism as well.

Probst emphasises how important the distinction between note and aphorism was to Hohl: ‘Verschiedentlich betont er, dass er seine Form der Notiz vom Aphorismus unterschieden wissen will.’<sup>339</sup> This echoes what Hohl says in the preface to his *Notizen*. Probst decides against the aphorism and the fragment and calls Hohl’s writing note-taking; the pieces are *Notizen*.

Probst argues that Hohl never really adhered to one form of writing, one generic form, such as poetry or fiction. His diary is not really a diary but an accumulation of very heterogeneous notes: autobiographical notes, plans for work, philosophical thoughts, lecture notes, notes on his mountain climbing. Noticeably there are no fictive, descriptive or literary texts.<sup>340</sup> Probst’s statement that Hohl doesn’t write in a descriptive way raises questions about whether the aphorism is either prescriptive or descriptive, whether it is neither of these or indeed combines both descriptiveness and prescriptiveness. At the end of chapter I it was suggested that the aphorism is a form that rebels against the dogmatic, the prescriptive. This rebellious aspect can be based on Krüger’s account of the aphorism, which sees it as a form that especially aids the individual against dogmatic or prescriptive views of life. The question is, however, whether something that fights the prescriptive is itself prescriptive. Requadt<sup>341</sup> suggests that the aphorism is undogmatic because of an awareness that it does not know

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<sup>338</sup> Loetscher, ‘Herbergen’, p. 213.

<sup>339</sup> Probst, p. 40.

<sup>340</sup> Cf. Probst, p. 41.

<sup>341</sup> Requadt, p. 106.

everything and cannot express everything. From this it follows that every concept of prescriptiveness or dogmatism<sup>342</sup> would claim omniscience and is therefore not aphoristic because the aphorism always only expresses one thing of something and only hints at an overarching whole, but never expresses it.

Probst emphasises the importance of understanding Hohl's working process: Hohl did not rewrite his aphorisms but re-ordered them.<sup>343</sup> The aspect of ordering is vital in order to understand that Hohl arrived at the structure of the *Notizen* not by arbitrariness and that he dismissed a chronological order in favour of a structural order. He rearranged his aphorisms by way of attaching his notes to clothes lines under which he operated like a spider to change them. Stadler emphasises the progressiveness of this ordering system.<sup>344</sup> Probst emphasises the systematic approach that Hohl had in dealing with his notes.

Hugo Loetscher's account 'Ludwig Hohl und die voreiligen Herbergen'<sup>345</sup> is quite critical of Hohl. Two aspects are of relevance in this essay: Loetscher's focus on how far the concept of personality is relevant to understand Hohl's work and his approach to Hohl's idea of unity. He emphasises that Hohl's personality and legends about him are too much in the foreground and have prevented a critical evaluation of his work: 'Die Person hatte sich in einem Maße in den Vordergrund gestellt, daß sie eine kritische Auseinandersetzung mit dem Werk bis heute

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<sup>342</sup> Cf. Théodore Jouffroy, 'Wie die Dogmen zuende gehen' in Fritz Schalk (ed.), *Die französischen Moralisten Band 2* (München: dtv, 1974), pp. 319-333.

<sup>343</sup> 'Seine Arbeit bestand darin, seine Aphorismen nicht neu zu schreiben, sondern neu zu ordnen.' Friedrich Dürrenmatt, 'Vallon de l'Ermitage', in Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *Versuche, Kants Hoffnung* (Zürich: Diogenes, 1998), pp. 11-58 (p. 25).

<sup>344</sup> Cf. Stadler who sees in Hohl's method of arranging the notes the anticipation of working with a computer and suggests that Hohl's method is at times even superior to working with a computer. Stadler, p. 43-44.

<sup>345</sup> Loetscher, 'Herbergen', pp. 210-233.



erschwert.<sup>346</sup> This means Loetscher argues from a position that clearly assumes a distinction between a work and the personality of the author; it requires the author to abstract their personality. Loetscher characterises Hohl's writing as follows:

Nun sind die Notizen aber nicht nur Titel eines Opus magnum, sondern eine persönliche Literaturgattung: Notiertes, zu dem ebenso der Gedankenblitz wie das Zitat, Randstriche zu Lektüren wie Maximen, Porträts und Beobachtungen gehören, philosophische Exkurse wie Autobiographisches oder Erzählendes, und es sind gerade die Verschiedenartigkeiten und deren Gleichzeitigkeit, was die Notate charakterisiert.<sup>347</sup>

In Loetscher's description of Hohl's writing as notes (*Notate, Notiertes*), the note is the mode under which all kinds of other modes, such as quotes, are subsumed.

### **III.2.5 Hohl and the Fragment**

In a discussion of Hohl's writing, the category of the fragment needs to be considered in two ways: firstly, whether it is a mode and can be a name for Hohl's writing and, secondly, independently of whether Hohl's writing can be called fragmentary in the formal sense of the word, one also needs to look at the fragmentary in its ontological dimension, because Hohl calls all our doing fragmentary: 'Alles ist Fragment gewesen, was je geschaffen worden ist.'<sup>348</sup> This will be discussed further in the section about the ontological status of the fragment. The answer to whether Hohl's writing is fragmentary has consequences for an understanding of the unity of his writing.

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<sup>346</sup> Loetscher, 'Herbergen', p. 212.

<sup>347</sup> Loetscher, 'Herbergen', p. 244.

<sup>348</sup> N II 178.

### III.2.5.1 Fragment as Mode

It seems that Hohl prefers the fragment over the aphorism as a characterisation of his writing, but one then has to ask why he gave his books the name *Notizen* and *Nachnotizen*. Yet he writes less about the *Notiz* as such than he does about the fragment. Hohl several times uses the word fragment as a headline to one or other of his pieces and occasionally he also calls them pieces (*Stücke*). He does not use the word *Notiz* or aphorism in the same way. So it seems that the fragment has to be judged as having a different quality from both the aphorism and the note. The word *Notiz* is mentioned for the first time in his *Jugendtagebuch*. He describes the entries in that diary as *Notizen*.<sup>349</sup> It might seem that, if Hohl rejects the aphorism, the discussion should centre more on whether his pieces are better characterised as fragment, or notes. One should also ask whether he distinguishes between the fragment and the note. Also, we should ask why one should take Hohl's rejection of the aphorism seriously, as there are hints that he rejected the fragment for the very same reason he also rejected the aphorism, namely because he rejected a superficial, often used understanding of the term aphorism or fragment:

Dieser Ausdruck "fragmentarische Andeutungen" ist mir heute fast unerträglich geworden. Immer Fragment und fragmentarisch! Aber "Literatur ist das Fragment der Fragmente," konnte Goethe sagen, und wenn durch die Fragmente der Strom geht, sind sie eben nicht mehr Fragmente, sondern dann ist das Gesetz wieder da, worauf alles ankommt: und die Andeutung ist dann auch nicht mehr Andeutung, sondern deutlich (worauf gerade alles ankommt.) -- Schließlich aber gar: Wenn schon als Andeutungen das bezeichnet wird, was doch deutlich ist, warum denn dazu noch als fragmentarische Andeutungen?<sup>350</sup>

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<sup>349</sup> Hohl on his plan to take up diary writing: 'Zur Einleitung ist noch zu sagen: Ich bin nicht gewillt mit sklavischer Regelmäßigkeit jeden Regentag eine Notiz zu machen, sondern es werden event. größere oder kleinere Pausen vorkommen, ja es wird event. die ganze Geschichte wieder aufhören, je nach Gutdünken.' JT p. 9.

<sup>350</sup> N VII 146n1.

Yet he rejected the fragment for almost the same or similar reasons as he rejected the aphorism: due to a pejorative judgement of the fragment by the literary environment. This quote also shows that he thought the fragment correlates with something else, a *Ganzes* (whole) which is symbolised by the image of the river (*Strom*) of being. And that means that his worldview is not exclusively fragmentary, but only partly so; there is an interdependence between the fragmentary and the unified. Heißenbüttel interprets this statement as Hohl's wish to have acknowledged a unity in the normally disparate.<sup>351</sup> This in another way proves that Hohl's writing is aphoristic, because the aphorism is able to combine disparate and opposing elements.

### **III.2.5.2 Fragment as Ontological Category: Ontological Fragmentariness**

My development of the concept of ontological fragmentariness originates out of the insight that Hohl does not use fragment as a mode but his assumption that an ontological fragmentariness underlies all our doing (*Tun*). Therefore ontological fragmentariness is of major importance for the understanding of the aphorism and its inner workings; it helps to explain – though not to define – many aspects of the aphorism that are generally hard to fathom.<sup>352</sup>

Ontological fragmentariness has consequences not just for the problem of beginning and concluding (III.2.5.2.1), but also for the unity or the system of any accumulation of

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<sup>351</sup> 'Diese Einheitlichkeit des im herkömmlichen Sinne Verschiedenartigen, ja Disparaten, ist es wohl, die Hohl immer wieder und vor allem anderen erkannt wissen will.' Heißenbüttel, afterword to NuD p. 113.

<sup>352</sup> 'I am beginning to think a fragment is as complete as a thought can be<sup>44</sup>,' writes the poet Adam Clay, thereby hinting at the limited nature of the notion of completeness. Adam Clay, *A Hotel Lobby at the Edge of the World* (Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2012), p. 38.

aphorisms. It is also an explanation for the inaccessibility of the aphorism. Ontological fragmentariness is a concept that allows one to think two realities, and the aphorism with its dual nature is able to express or, more accurately, hint at the elusive moments of experiences of art that every so often open up in our daily lives.

In addition this concept can make sense of how and why Nietzsche's and Hohl's aphoristic writing – and aphoristic writing in general – has been understood as 'enigmatic' or, as Morson called it, 'mystic', as there is something ineffable in it that can't be explained. Perhaps the ontological fragmentariness of this sort of writing was a major cause of the problems in defining the aphorism. And one needs a definition of the aphorism that does justice to this aspect of the aphorism, that includes its own elusiveness. Therefore it is better to speak of a description than of a definition of the aphorism. One can describe the characteristics it exhibits, its dual nature and its ability to express tensions of oppositions, but ontological fragmentariness is another such characteristic, and any definition of the aphorism contains its own ontological fragmentariness, because every definition of the aphorism is essentially incomplete.

This means that my definition of the aphorism is a descriptive and not a prescriptive definition. To include ontological fragmentariness in that definition – that is, all of the unexplained – does justice to the actual being of the aphorism. However, not all remains unexplained. What one can explain with the concept of ontological fragmentariness is how the aphorism can relate two levels: of perception and of reality. By including a characteristic of ontological fragmentariness in the definition of the aphorism one also avoids the issue of the

aphorism's alleged arbitrariness. An aphorism necessarily cannot express all, and this has consequences for our understanding of the certainty of communication and how we answer the question of what it is possible to know or not. According to Morson,<sup>353</sup> the aphorism assumes that not everything can be known and, as such, is more humble than the big systems. This means that, in addition to ontological fragmentariness, one also needs to consider epistemological fragmentariness.

The following aspect of the ontological fragmentariness will be explored regarding Hohl: how he understood the fragmentary as an ontological category, separate from the fragmentary as a literary mode. From this, the concept of ontological fragmentariness will be developed, as it originates out of Hohl's understanding of the fragmentary not as mode of writing (genre) but as fragmentary as a result of his concept of being. This will help to explain Hohl's concept of *Wirklichkeit* und *das Reale*,<sup>354</sup> relating to Hohl's concept – and book – of *Hereinbrechende Ränder*. *Hereinbrechende Ränder* generally means that our insights originate from the margins and not from the centre, from a sphere from which things can barely be named, and that these insights are much more important than anything that can be named with ease. Here, in his interest and prioritisation of the concealed over what can be expressed easily, is Hohl's similarity to Nietzsche. It shows also that aphoristic writers have a preference for the margins; they reject the centre and instead concentrate on perspectival insights on the so-called periphery. This is not only limited to aphoristic writers. According to Lyn Hejinian, Gertrude

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<sup>353</sup> Morson, 'The Aphorism', p. 421.

<sup>354</sup> As there are no adequate English equivalents to *das Wirkliche* and *das Reale*, these concepts remain untranslated and will be explained later.

Stein's statement 'Act so that there is no use in a centre'<sup>355</sup> imagines poetic space as 'landscape with its perspective spread over a largish surface, located on innumerable noninsulating focal points. In terms of writing, this meant, for Stein, that the vanishing point might be on every word.'<sup>356</sup>

Those focal points are like the aphorisms that cannot be regarded independently of each other. For these writers a centre is of no importance, even a hindrance, and in contrast every single word can open up a perspective, a *Weltansicht*. This means that these writers aim in their search for 'den schönsten Gedanken von der Welt',<sup>357</sup> for an order that is not a 'geometrische Epidemie'<sup>358</sup> as Musil formulated it in his *Mann ohne Eigenschaften* and who himself had the insight that too much order is deathly. As Musil's awareness of this problem reveals, this is another similarity between aphoristic writers and writers of very long novels. They represent all artists' attempts to grasp for the stars while at the same time recognising its impossibility, as Hans Wollschläger puts it: 'Aber es gehört ja zur Dynamik aller großen Kreativität, auch nach ihrer Genese: immer greifen die Kunstwerke, auch die der Erkenntnis, so nach dem Alles-in-Einem wie das Kind nach den Sternen.'<sup>359</sup> Ontological fragmentariness is an acknowledgement of this futility and the prioritisation of this futility, of the ineffable and what

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<sup>355</sup> Gertrude Stein, *Tender Buttons*, in Gertrude Stein: *Writings 1903-1932*, eds Catharine R. Stimpson and Harriet Chessman (New York: The Library of America, 1998), p. 344.

<sup>356</sup> Lyn Hejinian, *The Language of Inquiry* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), p. 106.

<sup>357</sup> Robert Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1995), p. 460.

<sup>358</sup> Notably, Musil also mentions the limits of concepts: Robert Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, pp. 465-466.

<sup>359</sup> Hans Wollschläger, 'La Lumière sans Phrase: Hans Blumenberg: Matthäuspasion', in Hans Wollschläger, *Von Sternen und Schnuppen: Bei Gelegenheit einiger Bücher Band II* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2006), p. 14.

cannot be easily named over what can be easily named and easily categorised. (The focus of aphoristic writers on the ineffable/concealed will be examined in Section VI.3.1).

The fragmentary needs to be looked at in its ontological dimension because this distinguishes it from the note and the aphorism. This is a more important aspect of the fragmentary than seeing the fragmentary as a mode, because the underlying fragmentariness of all Hohl's thinking has consequences not just for an interpretation of the aphorism but also for the overall structure of his work, and not only his writing and thinking but for the order and structure of the unity that Hohl claims for his *Notizen*. Such a concept of ontological fragmentariness explains why Hohl has problems with beginning and concluding things. This will be further examined in III.2.5.2.1.

Rafael Ferber's aforementioned essay 'Bemerkungen zu Ludwig Hohl als Philosophen' explores the fragmentary in its ontological dimension. While he does not claim that everything fragmentary has an ontological dimension, he looks at the way in which Hohl relates being to the fragmentary and infinitism, which is important for understanding Hohl's problem of conclusions. However, as a consequence, Ferber calls the mode of Hohl's writing aphoristic and makes a strong case for ontological fragmentariness as a key feature of the aphorism. This raises general questions about the relation between the fragmentary and the aphorism,<sup>360</sup> which in turn lead to a question about whether there is a general fragmentariness to aphoristic writing, whether aphoristic writing in general can have a unity, and Hohl's

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<sup>360</sup> The aphorism can be thought of as an expression of the fragmentary. For instance, Schlegel writes: 'Aphorismen sind zusammenhängende Fragmente.' quoted in Fricke, *Aphorismus*, p. 9; Schlegelreferenz: FS XVIII 200.

*Notizen* in particular. But, first of all, it could actually mean that the fragment and the aphorism are not two modes that can be compared to each other and that the aphorism, by virtue of not being able to express everything, always has a fragmentary character; something that is interrupted, from the Latin verb *frangere*, to break off, past participle *fractus*, *a, um*. For an understanding of Hohl's work, it is necessary to appreciate how he understands the place of individual existence within the larger frame of being. According to Hohl, the relation of the fragment to being is that all our actions are fragmentary and are to be understood as a very small part in the service of imperishable being. This is why it is necessary to look at Hohl's concept of being. For him, being is characterised as something permanent and imperishable:

Das UNVERGÄGLICHE: Gleich einem ungeheuren, unvergänglichen messingnen Gerät: man putzt daran ein wenig, dann glänzt es wieder für eine kurze Zeit; *das* ist die geistige Tätigkeit (sie ist also nicht ein Produzieren im eigentlichen Sinne; sondern ein in Erinnerung Rufen,<sup>361</sup> ein Auffrischen, ein Zeichen). Ein FRAGMENT: ein Fragment ist immer unser Tun, unser aller Tun war es; ein winzig kleines Stück Tun am Unvergänglichem; ein winzig kleines Stück Dienst am unvergänglich Seienden.

-- am unvergänglich Seienden, das wie ein Strom an uns vorbeischießt; wir stehen am Ufer (gehen auch ein winziges Stück mit) und sind vergänglich; jenes schießt vorüber und ist ewig.

-- nur ein winziges Stück gehen wir mit; wir stehen: denn wir sind vergänglich.

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<sup>361</sup> (My footnote) Very interesting is the strong influence of Proust on Hohl: 'Thus I had already reached the conclusion that we are in no wise free in the presence of a work of art, that we do not create it as we please but that it pre-exists in us and we are compelled as though it were a law of nature to discover it because it is at once hidden from us and necessary. But is not that discovery, which art may enable us to make, most precious to us, a discovery of that which for most of us remains for ever unknown, our true life, reality as we have ourselves felt it and which differs so much from that which we had believed that we are filled with delight when chance brings us an authentic revelation of it? I was sure of this from the very falsity of so-called realistic art which would not be so deceptive if we had not in the course of life, contracted the habit of giving what we feel an expression so different that, after a time, we believe it to be reality itself.' Marcel Proust, *Time Regained*, (London: Chatto Windus, 1941), p. 228.



-- denn das eben ist das Wesen der unveränderlichen Ewigkeit, daß sie geht, daß sie sich verändert; und weil wir nicht weit gehen können, darum gehören wir ihr wenig an, bleiben wir nicht.<sup>362</sup>

The imperishable being is compared by Hohl to a stream. He is strongly influenced by Heraclitus here. Humans can connect to this imperishable being by way of their *geistige Tätigkeit*, their creativity. Hohl describes the nature of this creativity not as productive but as rediscovery, of remembering. This has consequences for his understanding of art (to be discussed in more detail in chapter VI). Any such activity can only ever be fragmentary and at the same time is the only possibility for humans to gain immortality. Further, the imperishable, being associated with the stream, is also associated with movement. Humans are separated from this by standing on the shore; in contrast to the stream, humans are static and, as seen before, only their *geistige Tätigkeit* allows participation in this stream. In consequence it is no surprise that in conjunction with creativity comes Hohl's emphasis on the right *Bewegung*.<sup>363</sup> But the movement of humans will never be enough to follow imperishable Being completely, it can only be followed for a very small part, 'nur ein winziges Stück gehen wir mit' and this is further evidence for the fragmentary existence of human life.

This means that Hohl thought about the fragment not so much as a literary form but as a general category. He applied it to everything that people did and not just in written matter: 'Alles ist Fragment gewesen, was je geschaffen worden ist.'<sup>364</sup> Ferber states that Hohl's writing has an innate fragmentary character for two reasons. The first of these is Hohl's

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<sup>362</sup> N XI 12.

<sup>363</sup> N II 70.

<sup>364</sup> N II 178.

inability<sup>365</sup> to be systematic, which he links to Hohl's rejection of the system. Yet Ferber's accusation (for such it is) of an inability to be systematic – a common prejudice against aphoristic writers – is problematic and not correct, as this does not acknowledge the tremendous effort that Hohl put into the ordering of his aphorisms and does not take seriously his emphasis of the unity in his writing. The second and more important reason stated by Ferber for Hohl's writing being fragmentary lies in his (i.e. Hohl's) view of being. According to Hohl, we are not able to understand being<sup>366</sup> as it really is, because it is too fleeting and changing, too fast for us to grasp. What we understand has already changed by the time we have grasped it.

Hohl's writing is not just fragmentary from an ontological perspective, but also from an epistemological point of view, because his concept of knowledge regards it as not having long duration; it is perishable and has always to be gained anew. Consequently he sees death as example that we can't keep as knowledge: 'Es ist ein Beispiel von allen anderen dafür, daß Erkenntnisse nicht aufbewahrt werden können.'<sup>367</sup>

One finds a strikingly similar expression in Nietzsche who also uses the image of the river in order to describe how we are not able to understand everything that happens, what he calls *den Fluß des Geschehens*.

In Hinsicht auf alle u n s e r e Erfahrung müssen wir immer s k e p t i s c h bleiben und z. B. sagen: wir können von keinem Naturgesetz ewige Gültigkeit behaupten, wir können von keiner chemischen Qualität ihr ewiges Verharren behaupten, wir sind nicht fein genug, um den

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<sup>365</sup> 'Auch der asystematische und fragmentarische Charakter der Notizen hat sich nicht nur infolge einer Unfähigkeit Ludwig Hohls ergeben, seine Überlegungen systematisch zu gliedern.' Ferber, p. 409.

<sup>366</sup> N XII 152, XII 22.

<sup>367</sup> N XI 44.

muthmaßlichen absoluten Fluß des Geschehens zu sehen: das Bleibende ist nur vermöge unserer groben Organe da, welche zusammenfassen und auf Flächen hinlegen, was gar nicht existiert.<sup>368</sup>

Humans in this sense create their own reality and constancy; they summarise what doesn't exist and create constancy in this way. Humans are not able to assess reality directly, according to Nietzsche, because humans' sensitivities are not fine enough to see. This is why Hohl knows two levels of reality (*das Wirkliche* and *das Reale*): one we can access and one of which we only ever get glimpses. Nietzsche and Hohl share a similar perception of humans unable to take in everything that happens, all being. This means that there is necessarily a gap between being/what happens and what humans make of it. This gap is the ontological fragmentariness. But humans are not helplessly confronted with this vast stream of being or the things that happen; they are able to order it.<sup>369</sup> And one way to understand this order might be the looking for connections, for *Zusammenhänge* (III.4), and then, finally, for the chains of thought. This is why Hohl can say that the highest thing is indeed the discovery of connections, because this allows us to see more of reality (*das Reale*) than we are normally able to see. Nietzsche also has in common with Hohl that this insight extends to an epistemological dimension, which means we also cannot know not only reality but also our experiences.

This is why there is necessarily always a problem with beginning and concluding things. We may find out some things about reality and be able to structure them, but their actual

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<sup>368</sup> NL 1881 11[293], KSA 9.554.

<sup>369</sup> Gerard Visser writes about Nietzsche's insight of the stream of reality: 'Zijns inziens is de werkelijkheid zo onmetelijk complex en veranderlijk, dat onze kennis nooit aanspraak op waarheid kan maken, dat wil zeggen op overeenstemming met de werkelijkheid. [...] Onze zintuigen en ons verstand zijn niet ontwikkeld voor kennis, maar alleen voor ordening van de stroom van werkelijkheid.' Gerard Visser, *In gesprek met Nietzsche* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2012), p. 205. cf. also pp. 239–240.

beginning or ending falls into that stream. This is also why Hohl can say that every forceful conclusion is similar to killing something, that it cuts off the relation to the stream. Hohl only ever allows such conclusions for the practical reason of preservation:

Was ist aber der Zweck dieser Abschrift? Nur zu machen, daß die Schriften in jenem (bergsturzhaften, vulkanischen, sündflutlichen) Zustand erhalten bleiben, oder doch eher erhalten bleiben, als sie es würden in nur dem einzigen Exemplar der Grundniederschrift, bei aller Drohung durch Krieg, Armut, Feuer (in solchem Haus!), Wasser (Holland), Diebe.<sup>370</sup>

### III.2.5.2.1 The Problem of Beginnings and Conclusions:

The ontological fragmentariness of his thinking and writing has consequences for understanding the unity of Hohl's *Notizen*, that is, the order or structure of that unity. But before approaching the problem of unity, there is the problem that there is no beginning or end to the thinking. Hohl speaks in the *Notizen* about his problem with concluding things:

Ich will nie mehr sagen, daß ich ein Werk fertig habe: *alles ist Werk*.  
“Alles”: ob ich eine Stelle eines Schriftstellers unterstreiche oder  
herausschreibe, einen Brief sende, etwas notiere, etwas denke, eine Stellung  
nehme.  
Nach dem gewaltsamen Abschließen des III. Teils von Nuancen und Details,  
letzthin, hatte ich wieder dasselbe unangenehme Gefühl, Unbehagen, --  
obgleich doch dieses zwangsmäßige Abschließen und Broschieren gewollt,  
vorher beschlossen war und einen Sinn hatte --, wie nach dem  
zwangmäßigen -- und folglich doch nicht die Dinge lösenden -- Abschließen  
von Briefen -- und wie schon oft in ähnlichen Fällen. Dieses Abschließen ist  
etwas *Tötendes*.<sup>371</sup>

Although he says that there sometimes is a sense in concluding things, concluding is never really a solution; it is not regarded as the ultimate goal but only as something necessary and always accompanied by losses. Henning Ottman writes: ‘Aphoristische Form und

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<sup>370</sup> Probst, p. 44. Probst quotes Hohl from the *Grundmanuskript* of the *Notizen*.

<sup>371</sup> N VII 150.

abschlußloses Denken gehören zusammen.<sup>372</sup> For Hohl, everything belongs to the piece of art, not just the actual work of writing it but also everything else as well: the thinking, the underlining, the writing of letters; in fact Hohl occasionally regards art as being a letter and this strongly emphasises the communicative aspect of art.<sup>373</sup> All this in the end may find some expression in an aphorism or in another piece of art. But since sometimes things necessarily have to be concluded, be it a case of finishing a book, or a life that ends, in the end everything that remains is fragmentary.

Similarly, there is a problem of the beginning, as Hubert Thüring writes about the note in the preface to his book *Anfangen zu Schreiben*. He, like Niemuth-Engelmann, emphasises the importance of the unity in which the note takes its place. That very unity, or whole with its telos, remains even though there might not be a recognisable beginning or ending.

Die *Notiz*, als solche selbst dokumentarisches Zeugnis eines Schreibens in einem unbestimmten Stadium des Schreibprozesses, stellt das Auseinanderfallen von Textanfang und Schreibenanfangen nicht nur fest, sondern verordnet es anscheinend als Produktionsprinzip, wobei das Telos des Textganzen implizit erhalten bleibt. Gleichzeitig kann sie natürlich als kritisches, in gewissem Sinn dekonstruktives Rezeptionsinstrument fungieren: Als ironischer Vorsatz macht sie erst recht auf das latente Paradox aufmerksam, daß der Anfang und das Anfangen erst nachträglich und vielleicht nie endgültig bestimmt werden können.<sup>374</sup>

Hohl writes in the *Notizen* that there is never really a beginning: ‘Es kommt nur darauf an, *irgendwo* zu beginnen, nicht, am Anfang zu beginnen: da es ja keinen Anfang gibt.’<sup>375</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> Henning Ottmann, *Philosophie und Politik bei Nietzsche* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1999), p. 173.

<sup>373</sup> N VII 131, XI 16, XII 40.

<sup>374</sup> Hubert Thüring, Corinna Jäger-Trees, Michael Schläfli (eds.), *Anfangen zu schreiben: Ein kardinales Moment von Textgenese und Schreibprozeß im literarischen Archiv des 20. Jahrhunderts* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 2009), p. 11.

<sup>375</sup> N II 108.

This means that for the aphorism and not just for the note there is the impossibility of assigning a beginning, because the beginning is in that gap, in the ontological fragmentariness. The problem, however, is that there is a unity, but how can this unity be understood when it does not have a beginning? Furthermore, there is the problem of the ending; the problem of closure. In this sense Hohl is consistent: neither beginning nor closure are desired. There is only the whole, the unity. To Hohl, everything is the work – *Alles ist Werk* – and this does not just mean the writing but also the thinking, brooding and everything else where thoughts flow into the work. This could mean a part of the unity is not that what is written down but what, in a way, is thought. The reader is able to fill what could be called that unity with their own knowledge.

Another reason why Hohl's writing is ontologically fragmentary is that, according to Hohl, there is no centre in his work. He speaks of a middle or a centre, but the middle is something that is not interesting to Hohl. According to him we make all the discoveries at the margins of our thinking, where it is difficult to put them into thoughts. To begin or to end would cut off the margins and thereby cut off the possibility of discovering new thoughts. He writes in his *Nachnotizen* about 'das Gesetz der hereinbrechenden Ränder' – the law of the irrupting margins:

Die Mitte hat keine Kraft, sich zu erneuern; das menschliche Entdecken schreitet nicht so vor, daß man vom Allgemeinen, dem von allen Gesehenen, "Wichtigen" aus endlich zu den Randbereichen, den Nuancen gelangte, wo dann allmählich Verblässen und Auslöschen einträte; sondern umgekehrt: zuerst wird ein Neues gesehen in den Randbezirken, an den zerfasernden Orten der Nebenerscheinungen (...), des Subtilen der unmerklichen Spannung, des fast Unsichtbaren  
[...] Wir gelangen nicht vom Allgemeinen zum Speziellen (abgesehen von untergeordneten Abschnitten), sondern (im Gesamten der Entwicklung) vom

Speziellen zum Allgemeinen. Nicht vom Zentrum aus geschieht die Entwicklung, die Ränder brechen herein.<sup>376</sup>

Therefore there cannot be a clearly defined beginning and ending in his writing. Hohl says that there is a centre in thinking, but this centre does not have the strength to renew itself and the important discoveries come from the margins, from those areas of thinking that cannot be described easily, that sometimes fall outside of language. Hohl's writing and the special indicative character (*Veweisungscharakter*) of the aphorism is exactly the leaving open of that sort of space for the new to form.

### III.2.5.2.2 *Wirklichkeit and Realität*

One aspect necessary to explore is: what kind of space it is in which the margins operate, and how this space can be described. Hohl distinguishes between *Wirklichkeit* (actuality) and *Realität*, or *das Reale* (reality), and how it relates to the reader is described as follows:

...er vermag nicht jene Berührung mit dem Unaussprechlichen, oder was ich kurz nennen will das REALE, wahrzunehmen; sondern gefangengenommen sind all seine Blicke von dem leicht Nennbaren, dem Programmäßigen, dem Stoff – denn alles mühelos Nennbare gehört zum Stoff – ; nicht jenes sieht er, das in der Kunst das Entscheidende ist, sondern allein das, worauf nichts ankommt...<sup>377</sup>

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<sup>376</sup> NN 141.

cf. about Hohl's observations on Lichtenberg's approach to the *hereinbrechende Ränder*: Beate Maeder-Metcalf, 'Auf dem Flohmarkt: Über Ludwig Hohls Begegnung mit Georg Christoph Lichtenberg', in Jean-Marie Valentin (ed.), *Ludwig Hohl (1904-1980). Akten des Pariser Kolloquiums* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1994), pp. 13-21, p. 18.

<sup>377</sup> N IV 2. The *Reale* is also strongly connected to life affirmation: 'Was ist das Kriterium des Realen? Das Maß des Bejahenkönnens.' VIII 28.

It becomes very clear that for Hohl the decisive element in art is one that cannot be named,<sup>378</sup> that it is ineffable and yet, at the same time, it is the real thing, more real than the actuality. Everything that can be named is attributed to the realm of *Stoff* (matter) while everything that cannot be named, the *Reale*, stands in closer relation to the image; the *Reale* can take the shape of an image. Again, this is life affirming, not only because the criterion of the *Reale* is affirmative but because, according to Bänninger, we only live as long as we trust the image.<sup>379</sup> The hunt for the *Reale* is something that according to Hohl all great poets and thinkers have in common:

Ich möchte einmal das hören, worin alle großen Dichter und alle großen Denker miteinander einig sind. Denn das muß das Reale sein. Versuche es zu sagen, und du gehörst auch zu ihnen – wenn dir das *Versuchen* nur gelingt. Denn wenn einem es je gelungen wäre, es klar zu sagen, also das *Ganze* des Realen hinzustellen (statt es nur berühren), dann brauchten wir die anderen nicht mehr.<sup>380</sup>

Canetti's saying that the great aphoristic writers can be read as if they all knew one another thereby acquires a new significance. Similarly, Nietzsche writes that philosophers don't have the right to be alone, or to have singular existences.<sup>381</sup> He speaks of a common root, out of a will that all philosophers share and that this will have its source in depth. This means that this

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<sup>378</sup> 'Een filosofische weg werkt veelal toe naar het onuitsprekelijke, in zekere zin naar het niets dus, maar hij begint in geen geval bij het niets.' Visser, p. 11.

Hohl 'Jede reine Spekulation führt notwendig zum Nichts.' N IX 30.

<sup>379</sup> N XII 115.

<sup>380</sup> N XII 114.

<sup>381</sup> 'Dass ich aber heute noch an ihnen festhalte, dass sie sich selber inzwischen immer fester an einander gehalten haben, ja in einander gewachsen und verwachsen sind, das stärkt in mir die frohe Zuversichtlichkeit, sie möchten von Anfang an in mir nicht einzeln, nicht beliebig, nicht sporadisch entstanden sein, sondern aus einer gemeinsamen Wurzel heraus, aus einem in der Tiefe gebietenden, immer bestimmter redenden, immer Bestimmteres verlangenden Grundwillen der Erkenntnis. So allein nämlich geziemt es sich bei einem Philosophen. Wir haben kein Recht darauf, irgend worin einzeln zu sein: wir dürfen weder einzeln irren, noch einzeln die Wahrheit treffen. Vielmehr mit der Nothwendigkeit, mit der ein Baum seine Früchte trägt, wachsen aus uns unsre Gedanken, unsre Werthe, unsre Ja's und Nein's und Wenn's und Ob's — verwandt und bezüglich allesamt unter einander und Zeugnisse Eines Willens, Einer Gesundheit, Eines Erdreichs, Einer Sonne.' GM Vorrede [2], KSA 5.248.



statement, the obvious similarities, allows for extrapolation, and strengthens the case for the view that the aphorism is not arbitrary or singular and the similarity of certain expressions, metaphors or thoughts of aphoristic writers at least admits the possibility of a common worldview among them.

The aphorism is able to unite the two levels of reality, which is an advantage, a strength of the aphorism, but also a disadvantage, because it in turn hinders accessibility or, rather, while it allows access to that space, it lacks a superficial accessibility. One does not know in which part of reality one actually is, which part of reality one reads, because the ambiguity of an aphorism leaves this undecided. This leads us now to the long-promised consideration of the notion of chains of thought.

### **III.3 Chains of Thought**

This section first discusses the chain of thought as a general notion and thereafter its prevalence among aphoristic writers, and then, specifically, Nietzsche's treatment of the chain of thought, with special attention to the *Genealogy of Morals*. It will be concluded that the notion of the chains of thought is the way aphoristic writing is structured and that the chains of thought are a viable alternative to the rational system. Finally, the chains of thought are strongly reflected in connection with the demands that the aphorism places on the reader (discussed in III.5), as Ansell-Pearson sees: 'what might be called trains of thought that sometimes lead to decisive insights but also leave much for the reader to engage with and to complete'.<sup>382</sup>

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<sup>382</sup> Keith Ansell-Pearson, 'The Philosophy of the Morning', pp. 217-238 (p. 219).

The expression of the chains of thought is used by many<sup>383</sup> aphoristic writers. Goethe writes in the *Maximen Reflexionen*: 'Alles wahre Apercu kommt aus einer Folge und bringt Folge. Es ist ein Mittelglied einer großen, produktiv aufsteigenden Kette.'<sup>384</sup> Here the chain is seen as large, productive and ascending. Hohl mentions this Goethe quote in the *Nachnotizen* as well<sup>385</sup> and regards it as a defence of his way of working and of art in general.

Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach writes: 'Ein Aphorismus ist der letzte Ring einer langen Gedankenkette'.<sup>386</sup> Here the sentiment is clearly expressed that the aphorism is the last link in a long chain of thought and, again, the size of such a chain is emphasised. Chains of thought are potentially without end.<sup>387</sup> Garcin writes about Joubert's aphorisms: 'Chacune des réflexiones qu'il énonce porte à la fois le reflet d'un long effort de pensée, la trace d'un vif souci esthétique et déjà la marque d'une ample suite de déductions probables.'<sup>388</sup> Hohl uses the concept of *Kette* as well, although not in the context of reflections of his writing. He speaks rather about an eternal chain of ennui<sup>389</sup> on one occasion. In general however, Hohl has as an equivalent to the chains of thought: not the word *Kette*, but the word *Linien* (discussed in IV. 3.2.2). It is possible to suggest that aphorisms express a kind of knowledge 'das sich nicht von

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<sup>383</sup> Apart from those above Neumann, *Ideenparadiese*, p. 382 also mentions Chamfort and Novalis, who express a notion of chains of thought.

<sup>384</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Maximen und Reflexionen* (Goethes Werke, ed. Erich Trunz, 10th edn, 14vols (Munich: Beck, 1982), xii, p. 414, Nr. 365).  
cf. Greiner, p. 16.

<sup>385</sup> NN 395.

<sup>386</sup> Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, *Das Gemeindeglied. Novellen. Aphorismen* (München: Winkler, 1956), p. 865.

<sup>387</sup> *Ideenparadiese*, p. 435.

<sup>388</sup> P. Garcin, 'Joubert ou la rhétorique efficace', *Critique*, 10 (July - Aug. 1954), 592-608 (p. 600).

<sup>389</sup> N XII 141.

Beginn an in eine Region von Wissbarem eingrenzt.<sup>390</sup> According to Henrich their relation to reality (*Wirklichem*) cannot be explained in all totality, but it is possible to state a convincing relation to reality. However, this relation is not a fixed one but one that can be described as a 'Kette von Auslegungsweisen.'<sup>391</sup>

Nietzsche writes more explicitly about the chains of thought in connection to his writing:

In Aphorismenbüchern gleich den meinigen stehen zwischen und hinter kurzen Aphorismen lauter verbotene lange Dinge und Gedanken-Ketten; und Manches darunter, das für Oedipus und seine Sphinx fragwürdig genug sein mag. Abhandlungen schreib ich nicht: Die sind für Esel und Zeitschriftenleser.<sup>392</sup>

This relates to the *zusammenhängenden Gedankenentwicklungen* mentioned by Krüger with which Nietzsche's more 'systematic' works can be characterised, but Krüger suggests that there are also traces of the aphorism in Nietzsche's more systematic writing.<sup>393</sup>

Nietzsche uses the word chain (*Kette*) mainly with two different meanings: mostly chain, with the meaning of shackle (*Fessel*) and, secondly, differently, with the meaning of connection, as in the chains of thought. He uses it not just as a chain of thought *Gedankenkette*, but also as

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<sup>390</sup> Dieter Henrich, *Werke im Werden: Über die Genesis philosophischer Einsichten* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2011), p. 160.

<sup>391</sup> Henrich, *Werke im Werden*, p. 161.

<sup>392</sup> NL 1885 37[5], KSA 11.579.  
also: NL 1885 35[31], KSA 11.522 'Die tiefsten und unerschöpftesten Bücher werden wohl immer etwas von dem aphoristischen und plötzlichen Character von Pascals Pensees haben. Die treibenden Kräfte und Werthschätzungen sind lange unter der Oberfläche; was hervorkommt, ist Wirkung.'

<sup>393</sup> '... nämlich in den Werken: *Zarathustra*, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, *Zur Genealogie der Moral*; auch der streng gegliederte Bau des *Willens zur Macht* lasse die Absicht auf systematische Darstellung zu erkennen. Dagegen ist von vornherein einzuwenden, daß der Aphorismus als Denk- und Sprachform überall sichtbar bleibt, auch in den sogenannten *zusammenhängenden Gedankenentwicklungen*.' Krüger, p.104.

*Betrachtungskette*,<sup>394</sup> the *Sentenz* is a link in a chain of thought and the *Maxime* is seen in relation to the chains of thought as well.<sup>395</sup> In the posthumous fragments Nietzsche writes the following about the *Sentenz*:

Eine Sentenz ist ein Glied aus einer Gedankenkette; sie verlangt, dass der Leser diese Kette aus eigenen Mitteln wieder herstelle: diess heisst sehr viel verlangen. Eine Sentenz ist eine Anmaassung. – Oder sie ist eine Vorsicht: wie Heraclit wusste. Eine Sentenz muss, um genießbar zu sein, erst aufgerührt und mit anderem Stoff (Beispiel, Erfahrungen, Geschichten) versetzt werden. Das verstehen die Meisten nicht und deshalb darf man Bedenkliches unbedenklich in Sentenzen aussprechen.<sup>396</sup>

Noticable here is the reference to the chain of thought. Nietzsche says the same about the aphorism in 11.579. There is in the *Sentenz* a similar demand on the reader to recreate the chain of thought that lead to the *Sentenz*. Nietzsche also says that this is a very high demand, which might be a reason why not everyone is able to understand the *Sentenz*. Not everyone is able to find the chains of thought that lead to the *Sentenz*: *die Meisten verstehen es nicht*. This is the reason why problematic content can be hidden in a *Sentenz*. Furthermore, about the chain of thought: it is not just thoughts that fill the *Sentenz* with content. There is also other matter that goes into the *Sentenz* in order to make it palatable, such as examples, experiences and stories. Nietzsche mentions in the quotation above the possibility of expressing *Bedenkliches* in a veiled way. The *Sentenz*, then, might allow one to express problematic or questionable content; and as such it can be used in a context of power. This connects the

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<sup>394</sup> So wird Selbst-Erkenntnis zur All-Erkenntnis in Hinsicht auf alles Vergangene: wie, nach einer andern, hier nur anzudeutenden Betrachtungskette, Selbstbestimmung und Selbsterziehung in den freiesten und weitestblickenden Geistern einmal zur All-Bestimmung, in Hinsicht auf alles zukünftige Menschenthum werden könnte.  
MA II VM 223, KSA 2.478.

<sup>395</sup> Donnellan, p. 128 (pp. 82, 189)

<sup>396</sup> NL 1876-1877 20[3], KSA 8.361.

*Sentenz* strongly to an ethical dimension and, according to Krüger, the aphorism is the form that is able to give expression to the outsider worldview.

In Nietzsche, the *Sentenz* is a *Vorsicht* and an *Anmassung* (a ‘care-caution’ and an imposition). It is careful because it hides something in those chains of thought that is not immediately accessible yet; on the other hand, it is an *Anmassung* because it knows that there is some kind of offensive content to be expressed, only it is doing this in some way by hiding. The ethical dimension will be explored in more detail in chapter VI. In the following quote one can see that a title can be the end of a chain of thought. This emphasises the importance of a nonlinear reading of Nietzsche because, counter-intuitively, the title, which is generally assumed to be a beginning to Nietzsche, is the endpoint of a chain of thought: ‘...und habe eben die Correctur meines letzten Buches zu besorgen; es führt den Titel „die fröhl. Wissenschaft“ und bildet den Schluß jener *Gedanken-Kette*, welche ich damals in Sorrent zu knüpfen anfieng...’<sup>397</sup> The next quote mentions a multitude of chains of thought and Nietzsche mentions a long rewriting. This allows one to assume that the aphorism does not just require repeated reading but also repeated writing:

Alles ist, wenige Zeilen ausgenommen, unterwegs erdacht und in 6 kleine Hefte mit Bleistift skizziert worden: das Umschreiben bekam mir fast jedesmal übel. Gegen 20 längere *Gedankenketten*, leider recht wesentliche, mußte ich schlüpfen lassen, weil ich nie Zeit genug fand, sie aus dem schrecklichsten Bleistiftgekritzel herauszuziehen: so wie es mir schon vorigen Sommer gegangen ist. Hinterher verliere ich den Zusammenhang der Gedanken aus dem Gedächtniß: ich habe eben die Minuten und Viertelstunden der „Energie des Gehirns“ von der Sie sprechen, zusammenzustehlen, einem leidenden Gehirne abzustehlen.<sup>398</sup>

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<sup>397</sup> To von Meysenburg, 13.7.1882, KSB III.1.223.

<sup>398</sup> To Köselitz, 5.10.1879, KSB II.5.450.

Here Nietzsche speaks about the chains of thought in the process of writing, and this gives an insight in the logic of productivity. He talks about twenty chains of thought that escaped him, due to lack of time in the creative process. This leads to the assumption that the aphorism is of an abbreviated nature, with abbreviation being a necessary consequence of this way of writing (the notion of abbreviation will be discussed in chapter IV). Furthermore, Nietzsche mentions a *Zusammenhang* in this quotation: a *Zusammenhang* between thoughts; thoughts are connected to each other. The problem that things remain hidden and unexpressed beneath what is actually discussed on the surface is further emphasised by Nietzsche's idea of subterranean seriousness. This is especially vital because this passage is in section 7 of the *Genealogy of Morals*, which precedes the very important section 8 in which Nietzsche speaks about the aphorism as such and how he wants to use the whole of part III of the *Genealogy* in order to explain it. In section 7 he writes: 'Die Heiterkeit nämlich oder, um es in meiner Sprache zu sagen, die fröhliche Wissenschaft – ist ein Lohn: ein Lohn für einen langen, tapferen, arbeitsamen und unterirdischen Ernst, der freilich nicht Jedermanns Sache ist.'<sup>399</sup> This quote emphasises that there is a twofold way of reading Nietzsche: on the surface and underground. To read the subterranean Nietzsche requires a lot of effort – which relates to the characteristics that are demanded from the reader of aphorisms or Nietzsche – and seriousness. The reward of this is joy – what Nietzsche terms 'Heiterkeit' or 'fröhliche Wissenschaft'. One could conclude that one has to read Nietzsche in two ways: firstly, what he says on the surface<sup>400</sup> and, secondly, what he says below ground. Nietzsche thought in a

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<sup>399</sup> GM Vorrede [7], KSA 5.255.

<sup>400</sup> Politycki speaks about an *Oberflächenstruktur* and how the secondary literature generally agrees on how Nietzsche in this surface aspect is not a systematic thinker. But, from 1886 on, Nietzsche did intend a more systematic approach and therefore this systematic intention always has to be taken into account when one faces contradictions in Nietzsches work. Politycki p. 48.  
cf. for Nietzsche and the subterranean connection of his thoughts: Politycki, p. 49 n180.

duality of surface and depth.<sup>401</sup> Politycki suggests that Nietzsche's dictum *oberflächlich - aus Tiefe* or almost all his thinking about this contrast was influenced by reading Schiller and by a wish to express the opposite of Schiller, who was more inclined to the surface than to depth.<sup>402</sup> Also Adorno emphasises an 'unterirdischer Zusammenhang' in aphoristic writing in his essay on Valéry: 'von Notizen, deren unterirdischer Zusammenhang ihnen mehr an Einheit und Form verleiht, als Außenarchitektur ihnen hätte verschaffen können.'<sup>403</sup>

### III.3.1 Nietzsche: Repetition and Connectedness

Nietzsche himself gave an example for the exegesis of an aphorism. He does this in the third section of the *Genealogy of Morals*. This work is of further interest regarding the aphorism because he reflects on the concept and on perspectivism, which helps to understand the aphorism in the context of its order. *The Genealogy of Morals* was published in 1887 and is said to expand<sup>404</sup> on *Beyond Good and Evil*. *Beyond Good and Evil* in turn was written partly in order to explain *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. *The Genealogy of Morals* is also subtitled 'A Polemic' (*Zur Genealogie der Moral. Eine Streitschrift*). It is important that it is not only about morals but also thinking and more fundamental problems than morals alone.<sup>405</sup>

Moreover, one can only reach these problems when one has left morality. This means there is

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<sup>401</sup> M 125, KSA 3.116; FW 256, KSA 3.517.

<sup>402</sup> Politycki, p. 18 n67.

<sup>403</sup> Adorno, 'Valéry's Abweichungen', p. 158.

<sup>404</sup> Stegmaier, p. 26.

<sup>405</sup> 'Aber es gibt noch grundsätzlichere Probleme als die moralischen: diese kommen Einem erst in Sicht, wenn man das moralische Vorurtheil hinter sich hat, wenn man als *Immoralist* in die Welt, in das Leben, in sich zu blicken weiß...' Nietzsche, To Constantin Georg Naumann 5.10.1887, KSB 8.163.

a discourse on the surface, on morality, and deeper below, on other problems. There is a hierarchy in that the deeper problems beyond morality are regarded as more important.

As it is agreed by many that the *Genealogy of Morals* is one of Nietzsche's most systematic works, it is interesting that Nietzsche chose a part of it for an explication of the aphorism.<sup>406</sup> If the *Genealogy* is systematic it would also show that the aphorism is much more embedded in systematic thought than previously assumed. However, the *Genealogy of Morals* is not a closed system. The three treatises of which it consists are loosely connected to each other and Stegmaier, for instance, assumes that it is a combination of systematic thoughts and, where there are gaps in that thought, personality<sup>407</sup> takes over, which relates to a similar problem of the aphorism: that a lack of the rational system is replaced by personality, which will be discussed in the section about reading the aphorism (III.5). Or, because the *Genealogy of Morals* is assumed to be systematic, is it therefore assumed the *Genealogy of Morals* is not aphoristic? For instance, Ansell-Pearson describes Nietzsche's writing as follows:

Nietzsche is often referred to as an 'aphoristic' writer, but this falls short of capturing the sheer variety of forms and styles he adopted. In fact, the number of genuine aphorisms in his works is relatively small; instead, most of what are called Nietzsche's 'aphorisms' are more substantial paragraphs which exhibit a unified train of thought (frequently encapsulated in a paragraph heading indicating the subject matter), and it is from these building blocks that the other structures are built in more or less extended sequences.<sup>408</sup>

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<sup>406</sup> Keith Ansell-Pearson, 'On the Genealogy of Morality', in Robert Pippin (ed.), Introduction to Nietzsche, Robert Pippin, (ed), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2012), pp 199–214, (p. 199). cf. Stegmaier, p. 7.

<sup>407</sup> Stegmaier, p. 7.

<sup>408</sup> Ansell-Pearson, 'On the Genealogy of Morality', p. 201.



Ansell-Pearson does not give an example or definition of what he means by a genuine aphorism, but the important aspect of his description is that he says that the thoughts are connected, that there is a unified train of thought, which continues to prove the chain of thought theory. It is not so much about the variety of small modes but the connections between them. The *Genealogy of Morals* is divided into a preface and three parts, or better, treatises. Nietzsche writes the following in a key passage in section 8 of the preface:

In andern Fällen macht die aphoristische Form Schwierigkeit: sie liegt darin, dass man diese Form heute nicht schwer genug nimmt. Ein Aphorismus, rechtschaffen geprägt und ausgegossen, ist damit, dass er abgelesen ist, noch nicht "entziffert"; vielmehr hat nun erst dessen Auslegung zu beginnen, zu der es einer Kunst der Auslegung bedarf. Ich habe in der dritten Abhandlung dieses Buches ein Muster von dem geboten, was ich in einem solchen Falle "Auslegung" nenne: – dieser Abhandlung ist ein Aphorismus vorangestellt, sie selbst ist dessen Commentar. Freilich thut, um dergestalt das Lesen als Kunst zu üben, Eins vor Allem noth, was heutzutage gerade am Besten verlernt worden ist – und darum hat es noch Zeit bis zur "Lesbarkeit" meiner Schriften –, zu dem man beinah Kuh und jedenfalls nicht "moderner Mensch" sein muß: das Wiederkäuen.<sup>409</sup>

Nietzsche emphasises the strong connection between reading and understanding the aphorism. He stresses especially the moment of repetition and rumination in reading. This means that his reading is against a one-time, straight, linear reading, and for a reading that needs depth, that needs repetition. It needs this repetition because, as with Hohl, knowledge cannot be kept and must always be won anew.

There is, however, a problem that it is not quite clear which aphorism Nietzsche is actually interpreting: whether it is the aphorism introducing the third section from Zarathustra:

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<sup>409</sup> GM Vorrede 8, KSA 5.255-256.

‘Unbekümmert, spöttisch, gewalthätig – so will uns die Weisheit: sie ist ein Weib, sie liebt immer nur einen Kriegermann’.<sup>410</sup> Alternatively, it could be the first section of the third part of the *Genealogy of Morals*, which is much longer than the Zarathustra epigraph.<sup>411</sup> There is a great deal of discordance in the literature regarding this question<sup>412</sup> reflecting the general problems of arriving at a straightforward answer when dealing with aphorisms in all kinds of ways. Regardless which aphorism is the one that is to be explicated, in both ways a connectedness is assumed, and the third part of the *Genealogy* is to be understood as the interpretation of one of the aphorisms in question. Therefore the important results from this

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<sup>410</sup> GM III 1, KSA 5.339.

<sup>411</sup> GM III 1, KSA 5.339.

<sup>412</sup> Nehamas offers a tentative interpretation and observes that Nietzsche does not mention this very aphorism again: ‘It does not mention it again. It does not offer to explicate it. It does not even *concern* itself with it at all. In fact the essay almost seems designed to make its readers forget that it is intended as an interpretation of the sentence that stands at its head.’ Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche. Life as Literature* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press: 1985), p. 114. He then concludes: ‘The third essay of this work is therefore primarily a self-reflexive application of the aphorism that precedes it, and it is by applying it that it interprets that is, extends, draws out, and complicates it. The essay also in a way masters, or appropriates, the aphorism in that it gives this general and vague sentence a very specific sense and direction, which may or may not have been part of its original intention. The application is self-reflexive because Nietzsche interprets the aphorism by applying it within a text that is itself an interpretation of something else.’ Nehamas, p. 115.

The last sentence is important in the way that Nehamas describes the self-reflexivity of the aphorism. However, according to John Wilcox the Zarathustra quote is not the right aphorism to be explicated. (John T. Wilcox, ‘What Aphorism Does Nietzsche Explicate in *Genealogy of Morals*, Essay III?’, *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Volume 35, Number 4, October 1997, 593-610). Maudmarie Clark in her essay suggests that it is the first section of essay III that is being explicated and not the Zarathustra epigraph. (Maudmarie Clark, ‘From the Nietzsche Archive: Concerning the Aphorism Explicated in *Genealogy III*’, *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Volume 35, Number 4, October 1997, 611-614). suggests that it is the first section of essay III that is being explicated and not the Zarathustra epigraph. Maudmarie Clark in her essay ‘From the Nietzsche Archive: Concerning the Aphorism Explicated in *Genealogy III*’ looks at the archives and confirms Wilcox’s claim on grounds of the writing and print processes: the first section was added later together with section 8 in which Nietzsche announces his intention of using the first aphorism of Part III in order to show a commentary on the aphorism. Clark, p. 611 ; Kommentar GM, KSA 14.380. Therefore it is the first section of Part III of the *Genealogy* that Nietzsche is explicating in the whole of Part III. It is also interesting in this respect that Nietzsche calls the sections of the *Genealogy of Morals* aphorisms.

There is a variety of consequences as a result from this change of opinion in the literature. Wilcox states that this change has implications for the interpretation of the whole of the *Genealogy*, but there are also other consequences regarding the chains of thought, for instance.

When the Zarathustra epigraph is not the one that is explicated it means that, at first, the connection, the chains of thought between the *Genealogy of Morals* and other works of Nietzsche, seems to be cut off but, in Part III of the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche several times refers to his other works, especially the *Gay Science* and *Beyond Good and Evil*. However, Westerdale suggests that Marsden assumes that the Zarathustra quotation is indeed the one that is to be explicated. (Westerdale, p. 105). Jill Marsden, ‘Nietzsche and the Art of the Aphorism’, in Keith Ansell Pearson (ed.), *A Companion to Nietzsche* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 22 - 37, pp. 32 & 37n5. According to Westerdale, both Marsden and Wilcox offer convincing reasons, but none of them satisfying enough. Considering the archival evidence, I follow Wilcox and Clark.

chapters are Nietzsche's emphasis on the connectedness of the aphorism and the necessity of repeated reading.

### **III.4<sup>413</sup> Ingenium and the Capacity to Create Context: Hohl's Notion of *Zusammenhänge*<sup>414</sup>**

This section aims to explore how the indicative character of the aphorism relates to the ability to create context and how this in turn relates to Hohl's notion of *Zusammenhänge*. It also aims to place Hohl's notion of *Zusammenhänge* in the 'context' of a tradition of thinking in *Zusammenhänge* by way of analogy. Finally, how the reader creates context will be explored. First, it will be stated that there are two sorts of context, then Hohl's notion of *Zusammenhänge* will be explored and placed in the tradition of the finding of *Zusammenhänge* or 'similarities'. This will be done by investigating Aristotle's notion of metaphor, specifically the metaphor found by analogy. This takes up concepts such as *Pistis*, *Beseelung* and *Ingenium*, and is continued with an investigation of the muses theory of knowledge developed by Fulgentius and Salutati that shows how metaphorical knowledge comes into existence prior to rational knowledge. This will be interpreted with the help of Ernesto Grassi's work. Furthermore, Hohl's notion of communication, which is vital for the understanding of his work, will be discussed. It will be shown that Hohl has a life-affirming worldview and communication has a vital function in that. After discussing the

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<sup>413</sup> In accordance with the *Regulations of the University of Birmingham Section 7 - Assessment, Progression and Award, Point 7.4.1 (f)(i)-(iv)* I state the following: some references in III.4 to Aristotle and Grassi relate to results of my 2008 Leiden University MA thesis *Die Unsichtbarkeit des Unbegrifflichen - Darstellung der Metaphorologie Hans Blumenbergs mit Berücksichtigung der Entwicklung einer Theorie der Unbegrifflichkeit aus eben jener Metaphorologie*.

<sup>414</sup> 'Es geht also darum, aus "Fragmenten" einen Zusammenhang wieder herzustellen, sie in eine "Nachbarschaft" zu versetzen, ein "Ideen Paradies" zu bilden.' Neumann, *Ideenparadiese*, p. 283.

*Zusammenhänge*, Hohl's views of communication and the challenges of reading the aphorism will be examined. Several questions need to be addressed at this point: What is context? Is it the same as a *Zusammenhang* or *Ähnlichkeit*? At any rate, when Niemuth-Engelmann mentions a capacity to create context and that this capacity has to be in the reader, this also relates to Hohl's insistence on the finding of *Zusammenhänge* and the question of what role they play in Hohl's thought. To recapitulate, the indicative character of an aphorism is, according to Fedler, the aphorism's ability to create its own sense and meaning; the aphorism creates its own context. However, this jars with the view of Niemuth-Engelmann, who states that the reader is the one who has to create the context. That means there are at least two notions of context<sup>415</sup> present: a twofold character of context, the context of the aphorism next to other aphorisms, and the context the aphorism creates itself, namely creating its own reality; its own fictional world. This is the ability of the aphorism to get in touch with what Hohl calls *das Reale*. This is the only notion of context dealt with in this section. First, that Hohl's concept of *Zusammenhänge* has its origin in the need for finding proofs must be examined. Hohl writes:

Alles Beweisen ist relativ. Beweisen heißt nur, ein Ding mit mehr Dingen in (richtige!) Verbindung zu bringen. Den besten Beweis liefern heißt mit am meisten Dingen in richtige Verbindung bringen. Statt 'Beweisen' kann man

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<sup>415</sup> Definition of context:

'[...]context, those parts of a 'text preceding and following any particular passage, giving it a meaning fuller or more identifiable than if it were read in isolation. The context of any statement may be understood to comprise immediately neighbouring signs (including punctuation such as quotation marks), or any part of — or the whole of — the remaining text, or the biographical, social, cultural, and historical circumstances in which it is made (including the intended audience or reader).'

*Concise dictionary of literary terms*, ed. Chris Baldick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 45.

I follow the definition of Bakhtin: 'Context and code. A context is potentially unfinalized; a code must be finalized. A code is only a technical means of transmitting information; it does not have cognitive, creative significance. A code is a deliberately established, killed context.'

M. M. Bakhtin, *From Notes made in 1970-71 (Speech Genres & Other Late Essays)*, ed. Caryl Emerson & Michael Holquist, 3rd edn (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1990), p. 147).

auch sagen ‘Zusammenhänge aufzeigen’. Es gibt kein anderes Beweisen als Zusammenhänge aufzeigen.<sup>416</sup>

Hohl’s idea of proving something is to bring something into the *right* connection with something else. The best proof would be to find the right connections between many things. The question then would be what Hohl means by ‘right’. ‘Right’ does not necessarily mean a similarity. But to find a connection between things assumes that there must at least be a similarity in what connects them. Therefore one could argue that for the things that are to be connected, similarity is required not as a totality but as a partiality. They must have something in common or, in general, an assumption that things have enough in common to be able to be connected. Hohl equates the finding of connections with proof. Hohl’s notion of *Zusammenhänge* and unproven connections is equivalent to the principle of analogy, which has a long philosophical tradition. Hohl himself uses the analogy.<sup>417</sup> Analogy is also at the basis of metaphor, which can be seen in Aristotle’s *Poetics*. According to Aristotle, there are four ways of creating metaphors,<sup>418</sup> but only the last and, also according to Aristotle, the best, is of interest here: the method by analogy. This method is further described as a correspondence between four concepts. Inherent in this definition is the notion of a gap needing to be bridged; something is incomplete.

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<sup>416</sup> N II 179 . also: ‘Das Beweisen halte ich für sehr wichtig, aber ich glaube nicht, daß man etwas beweisen kann. (Wichtig wie alles Reden: weil es mit mehr Dingen in Verbindung bringt. -- Irgendwie muß man reden.) (Spinoza wieder gelesen und bemerkt, daß ich nie auf sein Beweisen geachtet habe.)’ N VII 116

<sup>417</sup> N XIII 125, NN 116.

<sup>418</sup> ‘Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; the transference being either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or on grounds of analogy.’ Aristotle, *Poetics*, (*The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 12th edn, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995). ii, p. 2333, 1457b 7 - 9).  
‘μεταφορά δέ ἐστὶν ὀνόματος ἀλλοτρίου ἐπιφορά ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ γένους ἐπὶ εἶδος, ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ εἶδους ἐπὶ τὸ γένος, ἢ ἀπὸ τοῦ εἶδους ἐπὶ εἶδος, ἢ κατὰ τὸ ἀνάλογον.’  
Aristotle, *Poetics*, ed. Stephen Halliwell (Cambridge/London: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 104, 1457b7-9.

In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle writes that the metaphor that comes into existence by way of analogy is the most popular one.<sup>419</sup> This is due to the metaphor being able to help us to learn the meaning of words we do not know.<sup>420</sup> Metaphors also make us see things, however.<sup>421</sup> The nature of that seeing is about seeing similarities in disparate things: δεῖ δὲ μεταφέρειν, καθάπερ εἴρηται πρότερον, ἀπὸ οἰκείων καὶ μὴ φανερῶν, οἷον καὶ ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ τὸ ὅμοιον καὶ ἐν πολὺ διέχουσι θεωρεῖν εὐστόχου.<sup>422</sup> This signifies a belonging or closeness of metaphor to philosophy that is also echoed in the *Problemata*,<sup>423</sup> although Aristotle mentions in *Topics* that metaphors are always obscure.<sup>424</sup> Yet, while they are always obscure, they are also always familiar, because the use of likeness/similarity is involved.<sup>425</sup>

The ability to find metaphors cannot be learned – it is a sign of genius.<sup>426</sup> Genius is here called εὐφυΐα, the Greek word for *ingenium*. *Euphuia* actually means not genius but something that is well grown. At the basis of metaphor, this is the repeated insight: the capacity to see similarities and homogeneity. Aristotle uses here the word θεωρεῖν, which is

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<sup>419</sup> ‘εὐδοκιμοῦσι μάλιστα’ Aristotle, *The ‘Art’ of Rhetoric*, ed. John Henry Freese (London: William Heinemann, 1926), p. 398, 1411a1.

cf. Aristotle, *Rhetoric (The Complete Works of Aristotle)*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 12th edn, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), ii, p. 2250, 1411a1).

<sup>420</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, ii, p. 2250, 1410b13.

<sup>421</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, ii, p. 2252, 1411b25.

<sup>422</sup> English translation: ‘Metaphors must be drawn, as has been said already, from things that are related to the original thing, and yet not obviously so related — just as in philosophy also an acute mind will perceive resemblances even in things far apart.’ Aristotle, *Rhetoric (The Complete Works of Aristotle)*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 12th edn, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995). ii, p. 2253, 1412a).

<sup>423</sup> Aristotle, *Problems (The Complete Works of Aristotle)*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 12th edn, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), ii, p. 1498, 953a 10).

cf. Dettlef Otto, *Wendungen der Metapher* (München: Fink, 1998).

<sup>424</sup> Aristotle, *Topics (The Complete Works of Aristotle)*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 12th edn, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), i, p. 236, 139b34).

<sup>425</sup> Aristotle, *Topics*, i, p. 236, 140a10.

<sup>426</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, ii, p. 2334, 1459a5.

the origin for our contemporary word ‘theory’ and which actually means ‘seeing’ or ‘contemplating’. Aristotle uses this idea of similarity in his elenctic proof,<sup>427</sup> which is not a logical proof but one by way of ‘an indication of an undeniable connection’.<sup>428</sup> Important for Hohl’s notion of proof is that it is important to attempt a proof while at the same time recognising the impossibility of such a proof.<sup>429</sup> In his *Analytica Posteriora*, Aristotle mentions two proofs, the proof of deductive knowledge, and the proof based on premises that cannot be proven.<sup>430</sup> The knowledge achieved by this latter proof is called *pistis* (πίστις). *Pistis* means conviction, belief or trust.<sup>431</sup> This leads to how important the notion of trust is for Hohl, who mentions it very early in his *Notizen* and describes it as a method:

Methode:

Sich hineinlegen in die Dinge: das Schwimmen sei uns ein Bild davon! Zu handeln ohne Ruck und Stoß. Wütendes Umsichschlagen, besonders am Lande, nützt nichts. Besser ist gleich beginnen und wenn es auch sachte wäre; das Element trägt und das ist die Hauptsache.

Es ist nicht Kraft, was den guten Schwimmer macht, sondern das Vertrauen in das Element, das *schon körperlich gewordene* Vertrauen.<sup>432</sup>

This means Hohl follows not just a method of *Zusammenhänge* but, in addition, a method of trust, to which it is strongly connected. One could almost speak of a replacement of a rational

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<sup>427</sup> ‘ἐλεγκτικῶς ἀποδείξει’ Aristotle, *Metaphysics Vol I*, ed. Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), p. 162, 1006a11-19.

<sup>428</sup> Ernesto Grassi, *Primordial Metaphor* (State University of New York at Binghamton, Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies: New York/Binghamton, 1994), p. 8.

<sup>429</sup> cf. Neumann, *Ideenparadiese*, pp. 293-294 in which Neumann understands aphoristic proving of Novalis as ‘...als einen nie endenden Prozeß von analysierenden, bindenden und lösenden Kräften: mit einem Wort, als Lebensprozeß.’ therefore proving necessarily is impossible because it can never come to an end and this would mean the end of life as well.

<sup>430</sup> Aristotle, *Analytica Posteriora (The Complete Works of Aristotle)*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 12th edn, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), i, p. 116, 72a25-37.

<sup>431</sup> Ernesto Grassi, *Die Macht der Phantasie* (Königstein/Ts.: Athenäum, 1979), pp. 38-40. Grassi describes *pistis* as a kind of indicative (*weisend*) proof (knowledge) whereas the deductive proof is a proving one (*beweisend*). p. 38.

<sup>432</sup> N I 10.

proof with trust, for, while for Hohl proofs are desirable yet innately impossible, trust is a permanent possibility and a necessary requirement for life and the creation of art. Despite Hohl's emphasis on *Kraft*, it is vital to understand that prior to *Kraft* another element is required, that of trust and – abolishing the mind-body split – that of a bodily trust. This trust is basically a trust in the world,<sup>433</sup> a requirement for the creation of art and another indication of Hohl's generally life-affirming views. This can not be emphasised enough, as the image of Hohl is still dominated by one of a misanthropic, pessimistic and solipsistic thinker.<sup>434</sup> Hohl's soon to be explicated view on communication will continue to refute this rather negative view. Furthermore, to rely on trust only or the philosophical *pistis* is a consequence of the ontological, fragmentary worldview that does not assume completeness.<sup>435</sup>

The muses theory of knowledge by Salutati will show further how metaphorical knowledge is based on the recognition of similarities. Salutati's muses theory in *De laboribus herculis*<sup>436</sup> is strongly based on Fulgentius' *Mythologies* and outlines a theory of nine muses representing various stages in the acquisition of knowledge: *Nos uero nouem Musas doctrinae atque scientiae dicimus modos*. This is an unusual theory because it places the metaphor – the finding of similarities – rather than rationality at the centre. However, it was Fulgentius who first mentioned this theory before Salutati adopted it without much change. One important thing Salutati omits, however, is the closer description of the muse Erato. The muses are

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<sup>433</sup> N XII 148.

<sup>434</sup> Steiner, p. 186.

<sup>435</sup> cf. also Edward Reed, *The Necessity of Experience* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

<sup>436</sup> Coluccio Salutati, 'De laboribus Herculis, Liber I, Capitulum VIII'. Last Accessed: 3.4.2014 <[http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost14/Salutati/sal\\_h109.html](http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost14/Salutati/sal_h109.html)>. The Latin quotes on this page are from this source.



grouped into three groups of which the first represents the preconditions of knowledge, the second the very origin of knowledge, while the third represents the consolidation of knowledge. The first three muses represent the preconditions for knowledge. These are Clio, Euterpe and Melpomene. The origin of the search for knowledge is here assumed to be a need for fame. No one who does not want to advance themselves would want to search for knowledge (Clio). Euterpe represents as second condition: a joy in learning or, better, the search for knowledge (*quod primum sit scientiam quaerere, secundum sit delectari quod quaeras*). Melpomene represents permanence in thought (*id est meditationem faciens permanere*). This is quite important because the *Geisteskraft* of patience is vital to Hohl's theory of how one ought to create art. The next three muses (Thalia, Polyhymnia and Erato) represent the structure and essence of knowledge. Thalia provides the germs of knowledge or also growth. This is the capacity of perception. Polyhymnia then remembers what was perceived. For this theory the most important muse is Erato, not so much in the sense of a love for poetry but of finding the similarities, just as in the origin of the metaphor. This capacity for finding the similarities lies also in the etymology of her name, coming from the Greek euronchomoeon, a word made up from εὐρών – to find ὅμοιος – resemblance.<sup>437</sup> She is important because perception and memory do not yet create new knowledge. Instead, something else is necessary that adds a new dimension to what was perceived and remembered. This is Erato. Here then comes Salutati's insight stating that it is not enough to just perceive and remember, as this is not yet making a person a scholar. This added dimension is the discovery of similarities, which means that *metapherein* is the origin of

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<sup>437</sup> *Fulgentius the Mythographer*, (ed. Leslie George Whitebread), (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1971), p. 57.

Fulgentius, 'Mitologiarum libri iii, Liber I.' Last accessed: 3.4.2014 <[http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost06/Fulgentius/ful\\_mytl.html](http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/Chronologia/Lspost06/Fulgentius/ful_mytl.html)>.

science, the ingenium, and not rationality. The last three muses (Terpsychore, Urania and Kalliope) represent the consolidation of the new knowledge. Terpsychore represents a muse that judges the new knowledge. Urania limits the realm of the application of the knowledge: what can be rejected and what not. This capacity is described as a heavenly capacity, and therefore Urania is the right muse for this task. Lastly, Kalliope expresses that knowledge. Rationality, here represented by Terpsychore and Urania, has a consolidating function but not a founding function of knowledge.<sup>438</sup>

Grassi's interpretation of metaphor and renaissance rhetoric was criticised by Charles L. Fierz<sup>439</sup> as not being sufficient foundation of philosophy because Grassi, according to Fierz, seems to escape into negative theology. However, Fierz does not discuss Grassi's interpretation of Aristotle, which was also available before 1994, and therefore does not do justice to Grassi's project in the first place, which is not limited to Renaissance philosophy alone. Furthermore, Grassi does not provide his own foundations of philosophy but merely uses those already there and offered by Aristotle. Even so, Grassi's insights into the metaphor certainly are valid in their own right. His account is valuable especially as an expression of the deep conflict between the rational and the metaphorical. Prior to Blumenberg, Bruno Snell also emphasised the notion of metaphorical thinking developing itself in its own right.<sup>440</sup>

The other important aspect of the notion of *Zusammenhänge* is being able to recognise them. Hohl generally places a strong emphasis on Seeing/*Sehen*. Biese emphasises not so much the

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<sup>438</sup> cf. Ernesto Grassi, *Einführung in die humanistische Philosophie - Vorrang des Wortes* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1991), p. 55.

<sup>439</sup> Charles L. Fierz, *Philosophical Implications of Ernesto Grassi: A New Foundation of Philosophy?*, *Philosophy Rhetoric*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (1994), pp. 104-120.

<sup>440</sup> Bruno Snell, *Die Entdeckung des Geistes. Studien zur Entstehung des europäischen Denkens bei den Griechen* (Hamburg: Claassen Goverts, 1946), p. 186, p. 198.

change of concepts in the operation of the analogy but the importance of *seeing* the similarities.<sup>441</sup> The nature of seeing those similarities becomes important, as Aristotle writes in the *Poetics*,<sup>442</sup> and that the only thing one cannot learn is the seeing of similarities: it needs the ingenium, or the Greek word εὐφροιά. Which, in consequence, might mean that, to some extent, the individuality of a person lies in their capacity to find metaphors.

Seemingly at odds with the general view of the aphorism as a short, polemical, brutish form is aphorist writers' preference for the long novel. As mentioned before, Hohl preferred Proust and Nietzsche included Stifter's *Nachsommer* in his five books to keep for posterity.<sup>443</sup> Both Proust and Stifter wrote novels of great quiet and introspection, which stand in stark contrast to the aphorism as an extroverted polemical device. There is also the great difference in the length of the novel and the aphorism to consider. However, many definitions of the aphorism exclude length as a defining criterion<sup>444</sup> and Morson states that the aphorism and the long novel share a certain worldview (*Weltanschauung*, not *Weltansicht*). In *Witiko* Stifter writes about goodness that is connected to everything else, even though the eyes don't see it.<sup>445</sup> This

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<sup>441</sup> 'Denn das Durchschlagende ist eben, dass nicht die vertauschten Begriffe, sondern die Verhältnisse, innerhalb derer sie an den einander entsprechenden Punkte erblickt werden, eine Gleichung bilden.' Alfred Biese, *Die Philosophie des Metaphorischen: In Grundlinien dargestellt* (Hamburg/Leipzig: Verlag von Leopold Voss, 1893), p. 5.

<sup>442</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics* 1459a.

<sup>443</sup> MA II 109, KSA 2.599.

<sup>444</sup> According to Fricke and Fedler length or brevity are not a specific enough criterion. Fricke, p. 14; Fedler, p. 9.

<sup>445</sup> '...ich bin in meinen Werken ein gebrechlicher Mensch, ich konnte die Worte nicht finden, jene Versammlung zu bewegen, und kann meine Klosterbrüder nicht leiten, sie lieben mich, und folgen mir nicht. Die Gemüse gedeihen leidlich, wenn ich sie begieße, und ihnen die gehörige Erde gebe. Ich bin nicht einmal ein rechter Gärtner für den folgsamen Kohl und die gelben Blumen.'  
'Ihr habt aber doch alle Vorkommnisse erkannt', sagte Witiko.  
'Ich habe nur erkannt, was gut ist', antwortete Silvester, 'und das hat mir mein Heiland gesagt, und mit dem Guten ist alles andere verbunden, wenn es auch die Augen nicht sehen.'  
Adalbert Stifter, *Witiko* (Leipzig: Insel 1925), p. 418.

means that Stifter speaks of something similar, something that is required when one aims to read and decipher aphorisms: the recognition of a connecting element that is not necessarily tied to goodness but is not something that eyes are able to see. The ability to find those connections or *Verbindungen* is required as well. It is important here to note that this seeing of connections is described in connection with a lack of power and an inability to find words, which means that, insofar as the aphorism can be interpreted as representing inaccessibility, it also has a way of communicating something without saying it (Kierkegaard's indirect communication). A cryptic expression or an inability to articulate something does not mean a lack of insight.<sup>446</sup> Furthermore, Stifter shares with the aphoristic writers a general life-affirming view and the rejection of generalities.<sup>447</sup>

There is yet another aspect of the metaphor that needs to be explored. This is the aspect of liveliness: metaphor conveys liveliness by way of *Beseelung*: ἐν πᾶσι γὰρ τούτοις διὰ τὸ ἔμψυχα εἶναι ἐνεργοῦντα φαίνεται· τὸ ἀναισχυντεῖν γὰρ καὶ μαιμᾶν καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ἐνέργεια.<sup>448</sup> It is worth looking at this sentence in more detail: by way of *Beseelung* – διὰ τὸ ἔμψυχα – things appear to be lively. For Alfred Biese this very liveliness by way of *Beseelung* is key to

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<sup>446</sup> 'If I could make a thing as I would, it would be simple, clear, transparent, and as soothing as the air. The reader would move in the book through well-known beloved things and be gently entranced and encircled, as one passes the warm air of spring in the sunshine among the sprouting seeds, and grows happy without being able to say why.' Stifter, Letter, 16. 2. 1847, quoted in: Roy Pascal, *The German Novel* (Manchester: The University of Manchester Press, 1957), p. 66.

<sup>447</sup> 'Stifter again shares with Goethe a distrust of generalities, of the very quality of an abstract word -- and this to such a degree that, for him the word *horse* is already too much of an abstraction. He will never write of a rider on a horse but rather of a certain well-described man on a dapple-gray. This extraordinary precision, which never becomes pedantry, has its source in the intimate and altogether happy relationship with reality. It never becomes boring because it springs from an overwhelming gratitude for everything that is.' Hannah Arendt, *Reflections on Literature and Culture* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 111.

<sup>448</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1412a3. English translation: 'In all these examples the things have the effect of being active because they are made into living beings;' Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, p. 2253, 1412a3-4.

the assumption that Aristotle's concept of metaphor was deeper than those that followed.<sup>449</sup> It also relates to Hohl in the sense that he has a similar concept of liveliness, which he calls *zaubern*. The other important word is ἐνέργεια. According to Grassi, it is also important that this metaphorical knowledge is indicative (weisendes) knowledge and not deductive (beweisendes) knowledge.<sup>450</sup> The aphorism has an indicative character. Moreover, this dichotomy between rationality and the metaphorical also relates to differences in speech. Rational speech is monological, not dialogical.<sup>451</sup>

This leads to the question of the reader and communication; reading is one form of communication. Also, even though Aristotle's view of language is very different from Humboldt's, the notion of *energeia*<sup>452</sup> is relevant here. Humboldt saw language as fleeting, which is almost analogous to Hohl's view of being. One could even assume an ontological fragmentariness in language. But, to keep language alive in soul and speech, so to speak, one needs communication, and a strongly dialogical approach too because, in Humboldt's words, the monological mummifies. This is necessary to keep language alive in the first place. But language also has a function between people. This is reminiscent of Kleist's *Über die allmähliche Verfertigung der Gedanken beim Reden* and even more so of Wilhelm von Humboldt's insights formulated in his *Dualis* essay: that language is the only thing that is able

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<sup>449</sup> Biese, p. 5.

<sup>450</sup> Grassi, *Primordial Metaphor*, p. 7.

<sup>451</sup> Grassi, *Primordial Metaphor*, p. 1.

<sup>452</sup> 'Die Sprache in ihrem wirklichen Wesen aufgefasst, ist etwas beständig und in jedem Augenblick vorübergehendes. Selbst ihre Erhaltung durch die Schrift ist immer nur eine unvollständige, mumienartige Aufbewahrung, die es doch erst wieder bedarf, dass man den lebendigen Vortrag zu versinnlichen sucht. Sie selbst ist kein Werk (*ergon*), sondern eine Thätigkeit (*energeia*).' Humboldt, *Über die Verschiedenheit des menschlichen Sprachbaues und ihren Einfluß auf die geistige Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechts*, vii, p. 45.

to mediate between people.<sup>453</sup> Hohl's idea on communication is strongly related to the affirmation of life, and that it is not possible to have a good life without communication:

Der Mensch lebt in dem Maße, wie er kommunikationsfähig ist: ist die Kommunikationsfähigkeit vorbei, so ist auch das Leben vorbei. Es lassen sich drei Stufen - Abteilungen, Arten - von Kommunikation unterscheiden:

1. mit Nächsten (Leistung einer Mutter dem Kind gegenüber, beispielsweise; oder eines Mannes der Frau gegenüber und umgekehrt; einem Freund gegenüber; irgendwessen irgendeinem Nächsten gegenüber);
2. mit *den* anderen (soziale Leistung);
3. mit Fernen (geistige Leistung im engeren Sinne: Kunst, Erkenntnis, Wissenschaft u. ä.). Jede der drei Arten kann die andere ersetzen oder ergänzen. Die Wahl der Art oder Arten hängt von der Beschaffenheit der Person ab. Die drei Arten gehen in einander über, da sie nur drei Formen sind *eines* Elementaren: des Geistigen (im weitesten Sinne), des strebend sich Bemühns, der rettenden Tätigkeit, der 'reinen Tätigkeit' Goethes.<sup>454</sup>

Hohl has a very broad notion of communication that includes not just communication with people, where he makes a distinction between close and not-so-close people, but also communication with what is distant, *dem Fernen*. This third category involves communication with art, science and so on. Reading therefore is always already communication. Hohl in other passages also stresses the life-affirming capacities of communication, and this proves wrong Steiner's view of Hohl's verdict on communication:

'Communication with others is a secondary, almost unavoidably suspect function. [...] Hohl

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<sup>453</sup> 'Es liegt aber in dem ursprünglichen Wesen der Sprache ein unabänderlicher Dualismus, und die Möglichkeit des Sprechens selbst wird durch Anrede und Erwiederung bedingt. Schon das Denken ist wesentlich von Neigung zu gesellschaftlichem Daseyn begleitet, und der Mensch sehnt sich, abgesehen von allen körperlichen und Empfindungsbeziehungen, auch zum Behuf seines blossen Denkens, nach einem dem I c h entsprechenden D u; der Begriff scheint ihm erst seine Bestimmtheit und Gewissheit durch das Zurückstrahlen aus einer fremden Denkkraft zu erreichen. Er wird erzeugt, indem er sich aus der bewegten Masse des Vorstellens losreisst, und dem Subject gegenüber, zum Object bildet. Die Objectivität erscheint aber noch vollendeter. wenn diese Spaltung nicht in dem Subject allein vorgeht, sondern der Vorstellende den Gedanken wirklich ausser sich erblickt, was nur in ein, andern, gleich ihm vorstellenden und denkenden Wesen möglich ist. Zwischen Denkkraft und Denkkraft aber giebt es keine andere Vermittlerin, als die Sprache.' Humboldt, *Über den Dualis*, vi, 26.

<sup>454</sup> N II 50 cf. IX 16.

cf. also N XII 49: 'Es gibt keinen größeren menschlichen Besitz als - genauer: überhaupt keinen als - die Fähigkeit, an möglichst vielen Dingen *teilzunehmen*.'

believed that there is genuine communication only when the listener is  
'appalled' (*entsetzt*).<sup>455</sup>

Even though Hohl probably never read Humboldt, his closeness to Humboldt is not accidental and has been noted before. Adrian Bänninger writes that Hohl understands language like Humboldt as *energeia* or, in Weisgerber's sense, as *wirkende Kraft*.<sup>456</sup> Alfred Döblin's notion of language as *Produktivkraft* also comes to mind. Humboldt and Hohl regard language as a heuristic element because language enables us to understand new *Lebensräume*, to gain new insights<sup>457</sup> or, what was the outset of this investigation, insights into new contexts. The concept of *Beseelung* is especially helpful in order to show how the aphorism creates its own 'fictional' context or what Hohl calls *das Reale*. Trabant equates<sup>458</sup> *Weltansichten* with perspectives that make it possible to see and discuss with the notion of Nietzschean perspectivism another form of context, that between different aphorisms and not just the context that is created by a single aphorism. This will be discussed in the section on the structure of aphoristic writing that will follow after the section that discusses the view of aphoristic writers on reading.

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<sup>455</sup> Steiner, p. 186.

<sup>456</sup> cf. Adrian Ewald Bänninger, *Fragment und Weltbild in Ludwig Hohls Notizen* (Zürich: Juris-Verlag, 1973), p. 24.

<sup>457</sup> 'Zwischen allen Sprachen tun sich Bilder auf. Jeder Satz ist ein von seinen Sprechern so und nicht anders geformter Blick auf die Dinge. Jede Sprache sieht die Welt anders an, hat ihr gesamtes Vokabular durch diese andere Sicht anders gefunden - ja sogar anders eingefädelt ins Netz seiner Grammatik. In jeder Sprache sitzen andere Augen in den Wörtern.' Herta Müller, 'Wenn sich der Wind legt, bleibt er stehen oder Wie fremd wird die eigene Sprache beim Lernen der Fremdsprache'. Last Accessed: 4.4.2014 <<http://www.dhm.de/ausstellungen/goethe/katalog/mueller.htm>>.

<sup>458</sup> Jürgen Trabant, *Weltansichten*, p. 135.

### III.5 Reading the aphorism: Challenges and Methods

This section examines the specific challenges that the aphorism poses to the reader.

Furthermore, this needs to focus on personality as well because the reader is required to make sense of the so-called *Unbestimmtheitsstellen* of aphoristic writing:

Every work of art of whatever kind has the distinguishing feature that it is not the sort of thing which is completely determined in every respect by the primary level varieties of its qualities, in other words it contains within itself characteristic lacunae in definition, areas of indeterminateness: it is a schematic creation. Furthermore, not all its determinants, components or qualities are in a state of actuality, but some of them are potential only. In consequence of this, a work of art requires an agent existing outside itself, that is an observer, in order – as I express it – to render it *concrete*.<sup>459</sup>

#### III.5.1 Methods of Reading

This section outlines a variety of responses to the challenge of how to read the aphorism. It starts with representing Neumann's view, which is followed by Babich's application of counterpoint. Thereafter it briefly mentions Westerdale's two methods and ephectic reading, and concludes with Blumenberg's notion of *Umwege*.

Neumann suggests that the chain of thought is one of the *Lesemodelle*<sup>460</sup> of reading the aphorism. Apart from this, Neumann also distinguishes two further methods. One is the hedgehog method, in which one assumes that a particular aphorism is the centre of any

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<sup>459</sup> Areas of indetermination = *Unbestimmtheitsstellen*. cf. Roman Ingarden, *Artistic and Aesthetic Values* (Munich: Philosophia Verlag, 1985), pp. 91–92.

<sup>460</sup> *Lesemodelle* is a term coined by Arno Schmidt. cf. Neumann, *Ideenparadiese*, p. 381. for a detailed explanation and source.



interpretation and that, from thereon, one in an *igelförmig*<sup>461</sup> direction tries to make sense of that aphorism in the centre. The second possibility suggests that one focusses on several conceptual or metaphorical aspects and tries to understand them via the different ways those concepts and metaphors are referred to in a group of aphorisms. The third possibility looks at isolated categories unique to each writer and tests every aphorism. Neumann concludes that not one of these possibilities is exhaustive and all of them have to be used in a complementary way so as to find what the aphorisms are about: ‘Keine dieser Denk “strukturen” genügt allein, um mit ihr die Gruppe aufzuschließen; sie wirken vielmehr gleichzeitig in-, mit- und gegeneinander’.<sup>462</sup> All of these possibilities have in common their reliance on connections within the aphorisms themselves; the three approaches are only different on the surface. The focus on the connections shows that the approach to an order is contextual and relational,<sup>463</sup> an approach that operates by way of analogy instead of subsumption in order to do justice to manifold experience and viewpoints. It further proves that the aphorisms are connected to each other. How those connections are made will be discussed in the following section (III.4). Babette Babich suggests other ways of reading the aphorism. Generally she understands ‘the complexity of the aphorism as a self-elaborating form of self-deconstruction and,

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<sup>461</sup> It is no surprise that Neumann uses the word ‘igelförmig’ here –, the hedgehog being associated with short genres., Schlegel compared the Fragment to a hedgehog ‘Ein Fragment muß gleich einem kleinen Kunstwerke von der umgebenden Welt ganz abgesondert und in sich selbst vollendet sein wie ein Igel.’ The fragment, however, is here understood as a strongly independent unit. Krüger spoke of the aphorism’s ‘Igelstellung seiner Geistigkeit.’ Krüger, p. 22. By analogy, the polemic nature of the aphorism can be understood as defensive, not as attacking. cf. Hohl’s use of the image of the Hedgehog in N VII 20.

<sup>462</sup> Neumann, *Ideenparadiese*, p. 382.

<sup>463</sup> cf. Cassirer on the relational: ‘Der Grundsatz der “Analogien der Erfahrung” fordert das geregelte Nach-, Mit-, Zueinander der Phänomene, ausgedrückt in den Kategorien der Relation, weil nur so die Natur als ein System objektivierbar wird.’ Heinz Paetzold, *Ernst Cassirer - Von Marburg nach New York* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995), p. 36. cf. Cassirer, *Kant’s Life and Thought* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 53, p. 182. cf. Neumann on the analogy, *Ideenparadiese*, p. 426.

simultaneously, of self-protection'.<sup>464</sup> Furthermore, she describes something like the indicative character 'as something that can be carried beyond the text itself'.<sup>465</sup> She emphasises how the aphorism requires the work of the reader. While I do not concur with Babich's understanding of the aphorism as being characterised primarily by its brevity,<sup>466</sup> she nevertheless suggests a convincing way of reading the aphorism. Her reading of the aphorism is a twofold approach, based on a musical way of reading Nietzsche and assuming contrapuntality between the aphorisms and secondly, the concept of concinnity in reading the aphorism. The idea of reading the aphorism in an concinnuous way was developed before by Mautner,<sup>467</sup> which is not mentioned by Babich. Concinnity derives from Latin *concinnatus*, 'meaning skillfull or professional .... the smooth harmony or unification of disparate and dissonant themes'<sup>468</sup>. For Babich, concinnity has two main elements: '1), what is expressed by the words as a consequence of stylistic play and interplay of texts beyond that, 2), the appropriate (proper) creative response of the reader to the text: what the reader can work out of, or wrest from the text.'<sup>469</sup>

Babich (and Tracy Strong's *In Defense of Rhetoric: Or How Hard It Is to Take a Writer*

*Seriously: The Case of Nietzsche* follows her) further suggests a musical reading of Nietzsche

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<sup>464</sup> Babich, *Right Reading*, p. 179.

<sup>465</sup> Babich, *Right Reading*, p. 182.

<sup>466</sup> Babich, *Right Reading*, p. 181. Babette Babich, *Words in Blood, Like Flowers* (New York/Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), p. 31.

<sup>467</sup> cf. Franz H. Mautner, 'Maxim(e)s, Sentences, Fragmente, Aphorismen,' François Joist (ed.), *Actes du IVe Congrès de l'Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée* (Paris/The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1966), 812-819.

<sup>468</sup> Babette Babich, 'On Nietzsche's Concinnity: An Analysis of Style'. *Nietzsche Studien* 19 (1990), 59-80 (p.59 n1).

<sup>469</sup> Babich, *Concinnity*, p. 59.

based on the concept of the contrapuntal nature of the aphorism. One result of her research is that the aphorism has a ‘dialogical dimension’ and Nietzsche’s statement that the reader needs to have ears for his (Nietzsche’s) words builds the basis for what she calls the ‘acoustic dimension’<sup>470</sup> of the aphorism, and in addition the indicative character of the aphorism allows her to conclude that there is a resonance between the different aphorisms. To read an aphorism in a contrapuntal way means that a linear way of reading is not possible any more and the reader alternates between reading backwards and forwards.<sup>471</sup> Compared to the treatise, the aphorism does offer a potential conclusion only instead of an explicated one: ‘The conclusion, like the related premises invoked by its association, is enthymematic: alluded to but not given and in fact only alluded to *in potentia*: the resolution of an aphorism is not fixed and can always change.’<sup>472</sup>

Further patience is a requirement in reading the aphorism, as Westerdale<sup>473</sup> suggested. His argument is based on Nietzsche’s criticism of a theologian’s shortcomings in philology.<sup>474</sup> Nietzsche understands philology to be the art of being able to read well, without distorting facts and without losing care, and having patience and subtleties in one’s desire for understanding. Nietzsche then introduces the word *ephexis* (ἔφexις); philology is an *ephexis* in interpretation. Furthermore, this way of interpretation is not limited to books but also

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<sup>470</sup> Babich, *Right Reading*, p. 184.

<sup>471</sup> Babich, *Right Reading*, p. 185. cf. NL 1888 [24]1.8, KSA 13.624-625.

<sup>472</sup> Babich, *Right Reading*, p. 186.

<sup>473</sup> Westerdale, pp. 157-163.

<sup>474</sup> AC 52, KSA 6.233.

applied to fate, the weather and salvation. Therefore it can be understood as having general application to life, a way to read life.

Ein andres Abzeichen des Theologen ist sein *Unvermögen zur Philologie*. Unter Philologie soll hier, in einem sehr allgemeinen Sinne, die Kunst, gut zu lesen, verstanden werden, — Thatsachen ablesen können, ohne sie durch Interpretation zu fälschen, ohne im Verlangen nach Verständniss die Vorsicht, die Geduld, die Feinheit zu verlieren. *Philologie* als Ephexis in der Interpretation: handle es sich nun um Bücher, um Zeitungs-Neuigkeiten, um Schicksale oder Wetter-Thatsachen, — nicht zu reden vom „Heil der Seele“ ....<sup>475</sup>

Ephexis is then interpreted by Westerdale, following Porter as an ‘infinite patience in interpretation’,<sup>476</sup> with a literal meaning of ephexis as ‘suspended judgement’,<sup>477</sup> as hesitating. Nietzsche himself writes about ephexis in the *Genealogy of Morals* and the adjective ‘ephectic’, translated by Nietzsche as *abwartend*, and it is one of the virtues and drives of a philosopher:

Man rechne sich die einzelnen Triebe und Tugenden des Philosophen der Reihe nach vor — seinen anzweifelnden Trieb, seinen verneinenden Trieb, seinen abwartenden („ephektischen“) Trieb, seinen analytischen Trieb, seinen forschenden, suchenden, wagenden Trieb, seinen vergleichenden, ausgleichenden Trieb, seinen Willen zu Neutralität und Objektivität, seinen Willen zu jedem „sine ira et studio“ ...<sup>478</sup>

I concur with Westerdale’s interpretation of *ephexis* with two additions of meaning of the word *ephexis*. The first because ephexis is used in a poetic way and means ‘guise’. This is relevant in the context in which Nietzsche analysed the use of masks. More relevant in the context of the thesis, the adverb *ephexes* (ἐφεξῆς) means ‘der Reihe nach’ and this meaning is

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<sup>475</sup> AC 52, KSA 6.233.

<sup>476</sup> James Porter, *Nietzsche and the Philology of the Future* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), p. 58.

<sup>477</sup> Jessica N. Berry, *Nietzsche and the Ancient Sceptical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 208.

<sup>478</sup> GM III 9, KSA 5.357.

relevant considering the question of the order of aphoristic writing. Here ἔφεξις is translated with ‘op iets aansturen’.<sup>479</sup> The Dutch translation of ἐφεξιῶς corresponds to ‘der Reihe nach’, ‘na elkaar,’ ‘op een rij’.<sup>480</sup> Considering the chain metaphor, this meaning is not unimportant.

Conforming to the aphorists’ habit of employing contradictions, one can find more than one interpretation of interpretation. Unmentioned by Westerdale, ephectic interpretation is but one way of understanding interpretation, and I agree with Beatrix Himmelmann who suggested that Nietzsche in the *Genealogy of Morals* II 12 & III 24 ‘favors a less restrained, in fact, very straightforward and even violent employment of interpretation’<sup>481</sup> According to Himmelmann, those two ways of interpretation have their origin in the irreconcilability of Nietzsche’s scepticism and his theory of power.

The method of ephectic interpretation relates to a way of philosophising described by Ralf Konersmann in his essay *Geduld zur Sache: Hans Blumenberg*.<sup>482</sup> Konersmann describes Blumenberg’s tendency to digression and explains it is due to an unease with a found interpretation. A result of this, a demand for authority or a longing for the absolute cannot be fulfilled. Patience is a key concept in Hohl’s thinking. Adorno coined the phrase ‘Geduld zur

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<sup>479</sup> It is a minor point, but I dispute Westerdale’s claim that ephexis is not ‘in most dictionaries, English, German or Greek’ Westerdale, p. 158. The Gemoll Dictionary includes it which is a standard school dictionary. p. 349 Furthermore, it is mentioned in the Dutch-Greek dictionary *Grieksch Woordenboek*, ed. F. Muller Jzn (Groningen/Den Haag: J.B. Wolters’U.M.,1926), p. 335. The ‘rare’ ἐφεκτικῶς is mentioned in the German dictionary: *Griechisch-Deutsches Schul- und Handwörterbuch*, ed. Gemoll (München/Wien: G.Freytag Verlag/Hölder-Pichler-Tempskz, 1957), p. 349.

<sup>480</sup> *Grieksch Woordenboek*, p. 335.

<sup>481</sup> Beatrix Himmelmann, Review on: Jessica N. Berry, *Nietzsche and the Ancient Skeptical Tradition* (Oxford University Press, 2011). Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews 2011. Last accessed 18.3.2015 <<https://ndpr.nd.edu/news/24777-nietzsche-and-the-ancient-skeptical-tradition/>>.

<sup>482</sup> Ralf Konersmann, ‘Geduld zur Sache: Hans Blumenberg,’ in Ralf Konersmann (ed.), *Kulturelle Tatsachen* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2006), pp. 247-264.

Sache'<sup>483</sup> and emphasises the *Versenkung in der Sache*, an immersion into that which is to be researched. Immersion is here interpreted positively and does not lead to a loss of identity. Although the efforts required in the interpretation of aphoristic writing might on a superficial level lead to many detours, Hans Blumenberg wrote that *Umwege* are a sign of humanity and shortcuts are barbarism.<sup>484</sup> When any detour is associated with the individuals that use this particular detour, it would mean that only one person would arrive on a particular detour, and no other ways would be available to this person. But, the direct ways lead to uniformity and don't exhaust the richness of the world because, due to their brevity, they necessarily include the individual. The richness of the world can be experienced by allowing every person their detour: 'Jeder hat für jeden, den Voraussetzungen nach, etwas in pectore, was nur er herauszugeben vermag und wodurch er Anspruch auf das erwirbt, was der andere seinerseits auf seinem Weg ad notam genommen hat.'<sup>485</sup> Similarly, other thinkers have an insight of the necessity of detours. Blanchot writes in *The Writing of the Disaster*: 'The shortcut does not allow one to arrive some place more directly (more quickly), but rather to lose the way that ought to lead there.'<sup>486</sup> Digression (*Ausschweifung*) can also be read by Hans Henny Jahnn as

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<sup>483</sup> 'Denken erschöpft sich so wenig im psychologischen Vorgang wie in der zeitlos reinen, formalen Logik. Es ist eine Verhaltensweise, und ihr ist unabdingbar die Beziehung zu dem, wozu es sich verhält. Das aktive Moment des denkenden Verhaltens ist Konzentration. Sie sträubt sich gegen die Ablenkung von der Sache. Durch Konzentration wird die Anspannung des Ichs vermittelt durch ein ihm Entgegengesetztes. Denkfeindlich ist die Gier, der abgelenkte Blick zum Fenster hinaus, der möchte, daß nichts ihm entgehe; theologische Überlieferungen wie die des Talmuds haben davor gewarnt. Konzentration des Denkens verleiht produktivem Denken eine Eigenschaft, welche das Cliché ihm aberkennt. Es läßt sich, darin dem sogenannten künstlerischen Einfall nicht unähnlich, kommandieren, insofern nichts von der Sache es abzieht. Sie öffnet sich der Geduld als der Tugend des Denkens. Der Satz, Genie sei Fleiß, hat seine Wahrheit nicht an der Kärnerarbeit, sondern an der Geduld zur Sache. Der passivische Oberton des Wortes Geduld drückt nicht schlecht aus, wie jene Verhaltensweise beschaffen sei, weder emsiges sich Tummeln noch stures sich Verbohren, sondern der lange und gewaltlose Blick auf den Gegenstand.'

Theodor W. Adorno, *Anmerkungen zum philosophischen Denken*, (*Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, 20 vols (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1972), x.2, pp. 602-603).

<sup>484</sup> Hans Blumenberg, *Die Sorge geht über den Fluß*, (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1988), pp. 137-138.

<sup>485</sup> Blumenberg, *Die Sorge geht über den Fluß*, p. 138.

<sup>486</sup> Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), p. 113.

a way to come back to oneself and a (self-)determined life: ‘Es ist eine Sehnsucht für uns. Sie kann uns in das bestimmte Dasein zurückführen.’<sup>487</sup> The lack of a uniform possibility of reading is interpreted positively. Analogously, Blumenberg states that human capacity to happiness has subjectivity as its precondition: ‘Die Identität der Glücksansprüche aller wäre die vollkommene Katastrophe, weil sie die schlechthinnige Rivalität aller um dasselbe wäre. [...] Auf der Subjektivität der Glücksvorstellungen beruht die Lebensfähigkeit des Menschen.’<sup>488</sup> This leads to the investigation of the role of question of personality.

### **III.5.2 The Role of Personality**

Two aspects of personality as it relates to Hohl’s writing will be considered here. First, how far the role of personality determines the character of the aphorism and the general unity of a work of aphorisms. Robert Musil for instance wrote ‘Wichtig zu Aphorismus: Wer sagt das? Ein Mensch, nicht bloß der Autor! Also: der Autor als Mensch. Ist der Aphorismus Teil eines Ich-Romans?’<sup>489</sup> This question is of special importance due to Hohl’s emphasis of the non-alienation of everything that one does. This is further a general trait in aphoristic writers in that they tend to defend the individuality in favour of distorting influences. The second aspect, role of personality for reading (III.5.2.1) needs to be investigated because many aphoristic writers place huge demands on the reader, as aphorisms require diligent, repeated reading (*Widerkäuen*) in order to be understood.

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<sup>487</sup> Hans Henny Jahnn, *Fluss ohne Ufer: Die Niederschrift des Gustav Anias Horn*, (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1998), pp. 728-9.

<sup>488</sup> Blumenberg, *Theorie*, p. 25.

<sup>489</sup> Robert Musil, Stichworte zu den “Aufzeichnungen eines Schriftstellers”, (*Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Adolf Frisé, 9 vols (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1978) ) vii, p. 921).

For Nietzsche, the moment of unity plays a lesser role because he does not emphasise unity in his writing in the way Hohl does. However, the moment of the personal is not to be underestimated: 'The personal unity underlying Montaigne's subjective reflections on the most diverse topics illustrates Nietzsche's contention that every philosophy is the self-expression and self-interpretation of its author.'<sup>490</sup> This is also alluded to by Görner who suggests that Sallust was of interest to Nietzsche because Sallust introduced a personal element to history writing and used language to emancipate himself.<sup>491</sup> In Nietzsche, and to a lesser extent Hohl, the strong emphasis on personality was also interpreted as a reaction against the system. For some definitions of the aphorism, personality plays a huge role, not just because it emphasises the subjective aspect of the aphorism, but because personality is what gives the aphorisms their unity.

Now the role of personality regarding the unity in the *Notizen* will be examined. Much of the secondary literature on Hohl emphasises the importance of personality for the understanding of Hohl's work. Loetscher for instance writes about a continual process of reflection that is the glue that keeps the work together. Here it is a way of thinking that gives unity to the *Notizen*, already hinting towards the relevance of personality. Müller mentions the concept of habitus and how important the idea of personality is in general for Hohl's writing, which he calls 'Denkprosa' ('thought (in) prose').

Hinter dem grammatikalischen Ich tritt eine Person mit einem klar umrissenen intellektuellen Habitus hervor. Ohne diese persönliche Dimension wäre die emotionale Reaktion des Ärgers angesichts einer

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<sup>490</sup> Donnellan, p. 134.

<sup>491</sup> Görner, pp. 38-39.



Denkprosa, die so ausdrücklich auf Rationalität setzt, nicht recht erklärbar.<sup>492</sup>

Then Müller describes Hohl's writing:

Daß Hohls *Notizen* sich in einem gattungsmäßigen Zwischenfeld ansiedeln, hat mit der sorgfältig dosierten Verpersönlichung zu tun. Anders als der Aphorismus, der als brillant formulierter, autonomer Gedankensplitter sich im Abreißkalender behauptet, brauchen Hohls *Notizen* die Verankerung im Verbund, welcher einem Verfasser-Ich, das für sie einsteht, Kontur verleiht. Und anders als die Tagebucheintragung suchen sie eine Verbindlichkeit, die über das Ephemere, Vorläufige und das Personenzentrierte hinausgeht.<sup>493</sup>

Müller, too, sees the aphorism as an autonomous form, a mode that can be understood independently of anything else and does not need further explanation. But, according to him, Hohl's 'Denkprosa', his splintered thoughts, needs something else, such as personality, as an overarching quality that is able to create unity, connectedness (*Verbund*), to give his writing contours. Personality, however, is applied in a sophisticated way. It is not just about the autobiographical, the diary, but rather something beyond it: a distilled, transcended, abstracted form of personality that is carefully applied (*sorgfältig dosiert*) and different from a mere untranscended understanding of personality. This writing would otherwise lose not just its characteristics but would cease to make sense. The personal element of the writing is here seen as something that is absolutely necessary for the understanding and accessibility of the text.

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<sup>492</sup> Müller, p. 33. Müller sees a strong connection between *Denkprosa* and rationality. It is problematic that Müller ascribes such a strong emphasis to rationality in Hohl. This is true on the one hand (for instance: beim Verstand Rettung suchen. II17), but it is a one-sided perception. Rationality to Hohl is not important enough, for instance, to be mentioned in the index that he made for his *Notizen*. Furthermore, when Müller assumes such a strong focus on rationality, where does this leave Hohl's continuing emphasis on the incalculable (*das Unberechenbare*), which is the goal of all work and which is not accessible to rationality? But, Hohl also looks for Rettung in Phantasie, V27, XII140. To look for Rettung both in Phantasie and Rationalität expresses the very doublesidedness of the aphorism inbetween the conceptual and nonconceptual. Hohl mentions *Phantasie* in his index: 18 entries. *Verstand* has no entry, *Vernunft* one.

<sup>493</sup> Müller, p. 34.

For Boltendal, the influence of personality takes the shape of an intellectual autobiography; personality is what actually shapes the unity of Hohl's writing, but it is not just the personality of daily life but the personality of the mind, the intellect and its autobiography.<sup>494</sup> Here too there is an abstracted moment in the way the influence of personality is revealed. Boltendal adds that Hohl's writings are note-writing and the only thing they have in common with the aphorism is their actual appearance; they are not aphorisms.

Hohl vraagt, beter: verwacht van zijn lezers een volledige inzet. Met een zelfde betrokkenheid als waarmee hij heeft gedacht en geschreven. Wie met *Die Notizen* begint, doet er goed aan enkele dingen voor oogen te houden. In de eerste plaats moet beseft worden dat Hohl's notities wel de vorm met aforismen gemeen hebben maar zeker niet meer. De maneer waarop hij ze uiteindelijk heeft gegroepeerd, maakte er een geestelijke, wil men: intellectuele autobiografie van.<sup>495</sup>

Boltendal sees personality like Müller as an abstracted sort of personality beyond the personality of daily life and sees the unity of the *Notizen* as a form of autobiography.

For some, such as Müller, the aphorism does not create a unity inherently. The aphorism is perceived as an autonomous entity incapable of creating a connection of whatever kind.

Therefore, something else needs to create that kind of unity, or coherence, and, to Müller, this 'something else' is personality. Loetscher argues in a similar way: the singular aphorisms do not have the strength to create that unity themselves, which might also mean that Loetscher and Müller think that the aphorisms do not have an indicative character. Boltendal also mentions a demand on the reader. The reader is expected to read with all the effort they can

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<sup>494</sup> R. Boltendal, 'Bij een in Den Haag ontstaan meesterwerk', *Het Oog In 't Zeil*, 1, no.3, (1984), pp. 14–18.

<sup>495</sup> R. Boltendal, p. 16.

English translation by me: 'Hohl asks, rather, expects from his readers a complete effort. With the same effort with which he thought and wrote. Who starts to read *Die Notizen* is advised to keep in mind a few things. In the first place one needs to be aware that Hohl's notes have the form of aphorisms in common but certainly nothing more. Hohl grouped the aphorisms so they could be understood as a spiritual, or better: intellectual autobiography.'

muster. This leads to the next section: the examination of the question of how far a concept of personality is important for deciphering the aphorism. Due to the occasionally cryptic nature of the aphorism, many aphoristic writers emphasised the necessity of a very diligent, sustained and close reading (*wiederholtes Lesen*).

This raises the problem of personality and autobiography. Hohl has added aphorisms to the *Notizen* that he called ‘Autobiographisches’; most of them are in chapters VII and VIII.

Hohl explains his position on the autobiographical in an addendum to his chapter VII of the *Notizen*. That this addendum is positioned behind chapter VII but before chapter VIII and not right at the end has raised questions of the order of Hohl’s writing. Hohl feels that the autobiographical stands in the service of his work (*Werk*) and he explicates this by following Andreas Ronai’s statement that most writers try to secure the universality (*Allgemeingültigkeit*) of their writing by freeing it from everything personal. However, Ronai states, those sentences only become abstract, not universally valid. The transformation of ‘Leben in Erkenntnis’ is characteristic of universal validity, not the omission of life. Hohl himself emphasised the role of personality in the act of creativity: ‘...die Einheit kann gegeben werden allein durch die Bedeutung der Person, die alles ihr Begegnende auf ihre Art durchleuchtet, belebt,’<sup>496</sup> Martin Raaflaub’s *Ludwig Hohl - Zur Philosophie der Notizen*<sup>497</sup> supports the thesis that Hohl’s life and work are narrowly connected. However, Hohl demands the transcendence of the autobiographical before it can be a part of his work:

*Gibt es aber nicht da und dort, über das ganze Werk verstreut, auch schon Stücke autobiographischen Charakters? Dem Anschein nach. Wenn ein*

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<sup>496</sup> N VII 112.

<sup>497</sup> Martin Raaflaub, *Ludwig Hohl - Zur Philosophie der Notizen* (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, forthcoming), passim.

*Fragment persönlichen Erlebens in eine solche Distanz gestellt wird, so gehandhabt wird, daß aus ihm ein Blitz - ein Bild, ein Gedanke - brechen kann, und wenn dieses Hervorbrechen wichtiger geworden ist, als das, was sich zugetragen hat (so daß man das Letztgenannte auch unbedenklich änderte, indem das Gesehene wichtiger als das Geschehene, das Reale wichtiger als das Wirkliche war), dann ist das Dargestellte objektiviert und kann nicht mehr als autobiographisch betrachtet werden.*<sup>498</sup>

Hohl speaks of the autobiographical as fragments of personal experience, which confirms that ontological fragmentariness is not just limited to matters of language but a fundamental part of Hohl's thought. In order for those fragments of experience to transcend their autobiographical status, they have to be put into a distance or treated in such a way that an image or a thought breaks from this experience. If the urgency of the emergence of a thought or an image or an insight (*das Gesehene*) are of more importance than what actually happened, then this experience has become objectified and is not autobiographical anymore. Hohl also equates *das Reale* with the *Gesehene* and *das Wirkliche* with the *Geschehenen*. Hohl differs here from the usual process of abstraction in that he also regards an image as sufficiently 'objectified' and although he insists on a sphere of objectification, he nevertheless uses the personal as a basis for the transformation to *das Reale*.

### **III.5.2.1 The Role of Personality in Reading**

Hohl, Nietzsche and aphoristic writers in general emphasise the importance of the reader. They expect the reader to be able to understand the inner workings of the aphorism, the aphorism's capacity for expressing disparities without explanation; in short, the reader is the one to make sense of what is written. The writing does not reveal sense immediately due to the inherent, ontologically fragmentary nature of the aphorism. Niemuth-Engelmann writes

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<sup>498</sup> N pp. 437-438. (Hohl's italics)

that the reader is expected to create that very context in which a note is to be understood. But no further explanation is given on how the reader has to do this. The notion of context is not closely examined in secondary aphoristic literature. But what is it that happens between the reader and the aphorism? It is one question to ask what the aphorism does in order to create context and another to ask what is done by the reader to create context.

One suggestion would be that context can be found only after one has read all the aphorisms in a book in order to be able to find the chains of thought, which in turn raises the question of whether it is also possible to find the chains of thought by reading only one aphorism.

Another question is: what could this reader look like? Ulrich Seelbach writes about the ideal reader as follows:

Ein idealer Leser kann in erster Linie als eine ideale Entsprechung der Anforderungen, die der Text stellt, postuliert werden, er muß keine Kopie der Codes des Autors und seiner Intentionen sein. Über die 'herrschenden Codes' sollte er allerdings ebenso wie der Autor verfügen, um dessen 'Umcodierungen' nachvollziehen zu können. Der ideale Leser könnte demnach konstruiert werden als derjenige, der sämtliche Anweisungen des Textes, Leerstellen zu füllen und Mitarbeit zu leisten, nachvollziehen könnte – es bleibt ihm freigestellt, welche Schlüsse er daraus und ob er welche zieht.<sup>499</sup>

Seelbach does mention that the reader's thinking has to be similar to the writer's in order to understand what is written. The reader also has to be able to fill the gaps. It might be suitable to speak of a required habitus of reading, and it is useful here to return to the aforementioned habitus concept of Peter Nickl. The two main characteristics of the habitus are that things have to be done 'mit ganzer Seele'<sup>500</sup> and with attention.<sup>501</sup> These might be the capacities

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<sup>499</sup> Ulrich Seelbach, *Ludus Lectoris: Studien zum idealen Leser Johann Fischers* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 2000), p. 48.

<sup>500</sup> Nickl, p. 2.

<sup>501</sup> Nickl, p. 4.

needed in order to read as Seelbach describes in order to create the context, the connections between the aphorism, and to understand what else the aphorisms refer to; their indicative character (*Verweisungscharakter*).

### **III.5.3 Hohl's Views on Reading**

In order to understand how Hohl viewed reading, and in order to trace the chains of thought in a different way than just how the concepts are connected to each other, an analysis of chapter IV of the *Notizen* will follow. In this chapter, Hohl discusses his ideas on reading. An outline of the structure of that chapter will help trace how the aphorisms are ordered and whether there is an additional order that can be applied to his writing apart from the concepts.

This chapter IV starts quite definitively, setting out what reading is and pursuing that through the first aphorisms. While 1 – 5 outline more fundamental aspects of Hohl's ideas on reading, the following aphorisms explain and add to what he has already said. This already indicates that the order of the aphorism is not arbitrary, and instead is structured, because Hohl very systematically starts with what he understands by reading and what he regards as his most important views. In the following the structure of aphoristic writing will be explored in more detail by tracing the chain of thought in Hohl's *Lesen*, chapter IV of the *Notizen*, which is twenty-three pages long and sub-divided into twenty-one aphorisms. The proverb of this chapter is by Goethe: 'Nicht jeder, dem man Prägnantes überliefert, wird produktiv; es fällt ihm wohl etwas ganz Bekanntes dabei ein.'<sup>502</sup> The first aphorisms outline how Hohl sees the real or, better, true reader. Hohl is very consistent in the sense that the moment of incompleteness recurs because, according to him, the task of reading is never finished. A

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<sup>502</sup> Goethe, xii, p. 524, Nr. 1158. N p. 223.

second reading is also never a repetition because the first impression might be changed or deepened. Finally, Hohl introduces a distinction here by referring to a real reader, which might mean as a result that there is a reader who is not real and not reading in the way Hohl prefers. The incompleteness of reading is described as the reader finding ever new aspects of the text; reading remains unfinished because reading, again, like life, remains unfinished. Reading in another sense means knowing something from the inside, and not just in a superficial manner. It can also be known only ever in part. The knowledge necessarily remains unfinished.<sup>503</sup>

There are two conditions, however, for something to be read in Hohl's sense. Initially, the reader has to like what he has read, and Hohl also mentions the writing; speaking here about the well written. It may be a consequence that not every written word, when it is not well written, can be read in the right way that Hohl suggests:

Was aber tut der Leser, wenn ihm ein Stück gefällt? Ohne Ausnahme das eine: er liest nochmals. Das zweite Lesen wird den ersten Eindruck nie nur bestätigen, sondern aufheben oder vertiefen. Kein wirklicher Leser hat ein Kunstwerk je wirklich ausgelesen.

Der wirkliche Leser wird in dem gut Geschriebenen immer neue Seiten entdecken; in jeder Lage ergeben sich neue Wirkungen. Selbst wenn er das Stück "auswendig" weiß, wird es erst recht inwendig, ein Teil von ihm und erreicht kein Ende, da es fortzeugend ist wie das Leben – da es selber das Leben ist, ein realer Teil der Dinge und unabsehbar in den Folgen.<sup>504</sup>

Hohl does not understand reading as a passive activity and assumes that reading is more difficult than writing. The second aphorism expands the first aphorism by way of explaining what can be done to find out what a real reader is, and has as its theme too what Hohl calls

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<sup>503</sup> David Constantine, *Hölderlin* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 242.

<sup>504</sup> N IV 1.

*das Reale*. The capacities of a reader can be tested, for instance, by having to read two contrasting writers. Hohl suggests here D. H. Lawrence and Proust. The real reader has to be able to understand them both. But it is not just about understanding what opposites have in common but rather what Hohl calls *das Reale*. This is the decisive criterion of literature; that which cannot be named. The reader focussing on everything that can be easily named and recognised – what Hohl refers to as *Stoff* – is rejected by Hohl. He uses here a ladder metaphor: the writers preferred by Hohl use the *Stoff* in order to get to the *Reale*. The second aphorism ends here but, almost seamlessly, in the third section Hohl continues his thoughts on *Stoff* and expands and explains them: to focus on *Stoff* is meaningless. *Stoff* is not a decisive criterion for the artistic value of a work of art. He says that, where there is *Form* there is also always *Gehalt*, so it should be the prime task of the writer to strive for *Form*. Hohl uses his oft-mentioned Goethe quote to emphasise this: ‘Den Stoff sieht jedermann vor sich, den Gehalt findet nur der, der etwas dazu zu tun hat, und die Form ist ein Geheimnis der meisten.’<sup>505</sup> The young Hohl at the age of 17 associates *Form* with *Leere* and inadvertently writes that *Form* is a sign of an immense inner life.<sup>506</sup> This means that Hohl sees emptiness as a potential, that an inner life that can be transformed, for instance by a task, work (*Arbeit*) or the creation of art.

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<sup>505</sup> Goethe, xii, p. 471, Nr. 754. N IV 3.

<sup>506</sup> ‘...ist eigentlich diese "Leere" auch nur eine Form, eine zufällige Form von *großem innerlichem Leben*.’ JT p. 97 (29.12.1921). Gerrit Glas distinguishes four forms of emptiness, emptiness as experience, as diagnostic element in psychiatry and emptiness in an existential sense all have negative connotations. However, a fourth form of emptiness, in Christian and Buddhist traditions, knows a positive meaning. Here emptiness is a preliminary state that necessarily takes place before life affirmation and personal growth can happen. In this sense emptiness is strongly connected to life affirmation. Gerrit Glas, ‘Leegte als betekenis en als concept’, *Tijdschrift voor Psychotherapie*, Volume 34 (2008), Issue 6, 408-421, (p. 414, p. 418).



In aphorism 4, Hohl explores the relationship between reading and writing. According to Hohl, writing stands in close relation to reading;<sup>507</sup> they are just two different expressions of the same thing, namely what he calls the big work (*die große Arbeit*). Aphorism 5 continues by explaining this relationship, also by means of using one of his mental powers (*Geisteskräfte*), choice. Reading and writing are an intensification of each other,<sup>508</sup> but not just that. According to Hohl, they also give life to each other, which might mean that reading and writing cannot exist without each other. Hohl refutes the idea that reading is passive and argues that this has its basis in the incorrect idea of creativity that sees writing as the creative part and reading as the opposite of being creative.<sup>509</sup> Hohl sees the difference between writing and reading in the amount of choice that affects both activities. Writing allows for a wider range of choices (of emphasis and, in turn, of words) while reading has room only for a narrow range of choice. This further emphasises the importance of those *Geisteskräfte*; they have informed his thinking in a very thorough manner.

In aphorism 6 Hohl goes back to focus on reading alone, with the main topic being the difference between fast and slow reading. Aphorism 7 deals with the treatment of books: Hohl favours here the rather shoddy but read copy of a book instead of the polished editions that stand on the shelves and remain unread so that neither the value of the owner or the book see the light of day.<sup>510</sup> Aphorism 8 expands aphorism 7 by illustrating it in discussing two adverts catering to people who treat books in a way that Hohl criticises in aphorism 8. Aphorism 9

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<sup>507</sup> N IV 4.

<sup>508</sup> N IV 5.

<sup>509</sup> N IV 6.

<sup>510</sup> cf. analogously UB I 2, KSA 1.167.

explores the question of the value of a book over time, with Hohl's conclusion being that books that are read a lot in the moment, such as bestsellers, will not be able to gain permanence. It also returns to the theme of fast<sup>511</sup> and slow reading, and that a writer like Proust forces one to read everything with close attention, whereas Dostoyevsky will be read fastly. Aphorism 10 explores another avenue of finding out the real reader and whether a particular reader is worthy of one's company, and the question regarding reading is not what one has read but how one has read it. While, until now, the sections have been quite long, almost every section now has the length of a page. Three shorter sections follow. Aphorism 11 discusses the difference between being clueless about literature and having read a lot. Aphorism 12 defines poetry: it is always the exact opposite of what people think it is. Aphorism 13 says that a message can be best camouflaged by being closest to truth. Aphorism 14 suggests how far some vocabulary is actually alienated from life and people who read. Aphorism 15 is longer again and recounts a personal experience: a reflection on how Hohl experienced his own readership and concludes that readers will not very likely understand but he loves the reader enough in order to still believe in him, and that he might understand one day. This means loving the real reader and not writing for the masses, however seductive that might seem.

Aphorism 16 explains that if someone is not a real reader then at least this person ought to have read a lot, because that can be a start to becoming a real reader and breeding sensitivities for real reading in that person. Aphorism 17 describes a reading experience based on reading

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<sup>511</sup> Hohl further explores different reading speeds throughout the *Notizen*. cf. Ilma Rakusa, *Langsamer!* (Graz/Wien: Literaturverlag Droschl, 2005), p. 9. Rakusa suggests that Dostoyevsky requires a fast reading speed.

writers who do not focus on the *Stoffliche* in their writing and where that reading changes reality, hinting at what Hohl calls *das Reale*. It also describes how the world at which 'das Reale' hints is so much richer than ordinary reality. Aphorism 18 ponders the question of the duration of real reading and assumes that experiences such as those described in aphorism 17 can be of short duration only and that, at such a point, reading is not proper reading any longer, and is rather some form of being carried away. Hohl also concludes that real reading does not induce us to continue reading but instead drives us to think, write and talk and re-read instead of reading something else. Aphorism 19 assesses the reader in German culture. Hohl states that German literature has much to offer and suggests that there are higher achievements in German literature than anywhere else, but that German culture lacks the general average level of education and readers. Hohl introduces here the concept of summary (*summarisch*) reading and contrasts this with precise reading. Precise reading is what characterises the real reader. Summary reading instead looks for the music or the image of the written and does not focus on the words. This is what Hohl criticises. He says what German literature needs is not more excellent books but instead a form of critique that is sharp and able to wake up the senses.

Aphorism 20 describes a dissonance:

Zwischen diesen zwei Gegebenheiten: erstens der Tatsache, daß man mit seiner künstlerischen Arbeit (in der Richtung der Erkenntnisse, im Sinne der inneren Resultate dieses Arbeitens) die umgebende Welt, die Nächsten nicht ändern wollen darf (denn versucht man es doch, so verzweifelt, erstickt man daran; Beispiele dafür wären in jeder wirklich künstlerischen Existenz zu finden); und, zweitens, der Tatsache, daß ein künstlerisches Arbeiten aber nicht ernst (echt) sein kann, ohne die Welt ändern zu wollen: zwischen diesen zwei Gegebenheiten besteht eine Dissonanz von ungemeiner Schwere (...).<sup>512</sup>

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<sup>512</sup> N IV 20.

Hohl writes about the irreconcilable problem of not wanting to change the world with a work of art whereas, in contrast, there is always an immanent drive in every work of art to change the world. He describes the futility of trying to reconcile this problem, which can never really be overcome but from which one always has to tear oneself away. And tearing away from this problem means to turn towards the reader, which Hohl sees as the most difficult work the artist has to do.<sup>513</sup> This means that the reader, or imagining a reader and not giving up on the real reader, is absolutely essential for the creation of the work.

Aphorism 21 examines the question of what the writer does for the sake of keeping the reader. Hohl says that the greatest writer does not care about the reader but has the very strong security of having at least one real reader. His examples for this are Montaigne, Goethe and Hölderlin. The value of a writer is not in his capacity to display his ability to conform with his contemporaries, which is mere opportunism, but, if one has to measure the value of a poet against the time, then the value of a poet lies not in going with his time but instead in his ability to resist the contemporaneous, or contemporaneity, or time as such and to focus only on *das ihm Mögliche*. This means that the aphorism has a strongly built-in focus on potentiality and the actualisation thereof. The importance of a writer is proportional to his capacity to disregard the reader while at the same time having the security of having at least one real reader, because it is not possible to do anything without the social.<sup>514</sup>

From this outline it is clear that all the aphorisms of this section about reading are closely tied together thematically. This section is very structured, as Hohl begins with a definition of what

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<sup>513</sup> N IV 20.

<sup>514</sup> ‘Mehr und mehr habe ich mich überzeugen müssen, daß die Bedeutung eines Schriftstellers proportional ist seiner Fähigkeit, sich über die Leser hinwegzusetzen; – bei einer löwenmäßigen Sicherheit – denn ohne das Soziale geht es nicht – , doch einen Leser zu haben, und einen wunderbaren.’ N IV 21.

real reading is and then explores various differences between real reading and ordinary reading, and how reading relates to writing. The very close relationship or interdependence between reading and writing means that they are not seen as opposites. He then mentions his own experience, the relationship between reader and writer and how the writer ought to be able to disregard all readers while having the security of having at least one real reader. Hohl is starting from a theoretical observation about reading and ending with the social importance of a reader. Without the reader, writing would not be possible.

Hohl's idea of the real reader very much fits the description of Seelbach's ideal reader and the requirements of repeated reading, of attention and commitment to reading, and most importantly, of creating the context around everything that does not belong to the *Nennbare*.

In fact all his aims of using language correspond very much to what Paetzold said of Cassirer's view of language: 'Die eigentümliche Leistung des aktuellen Sprechens ist nicht lediglich eine Abwendung der grammatischen Formen und Verknüpfungsregeln, sondern die Formeln und Regeln werden zum Stimulans, um etwas Ungedachtes auszudrücken.'<sup>515</sup>

### **III.6 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the main results of this chapter are that Hohl's writing is not note-writing but aphoristic, because Hohl's aphorisms explain and illuminate each other, as was demonstrated for instance in the chapter about reading. That Hohl's aphorisms explain each other enables them to form chains of thought. In contrast, the note is not characterised by illuminating other notes or their being connected to each other via different chains of thought. Moreover, notes do not express a philosophical view of life and do not have an existential dimension. If

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<sup>515</sup> Paetzold, p. 55.

connections between aphorisms can be found and chains of thought can be established, this would mean that the unity can be understood as a structure of chains of thought, and that connections between concepts that have no beginning and ending are more flexible than linearity but nevertheless are able to represent complex accumulations of meaning.

The question of whether Hohl's writing is fragmentary or aphoristic is rejected because the fragmentary and the aphoristic are not understood as being in opposition. Instead, the aphorism is understood as having a fragmentary element. This was deduced out of Hohl's concept of being, therefore this is more than a question of mode and one can speak of ontological fragmentariness as a key principle in Hohl's thought. This has further consequences for how he viewed his theory on art and life.

The problem of the unity of Hohl's *Notizen* can be addressed by way of understanding the *Notizen* as a unity that is constituted of three different elements: personality, a process of reflection (for instance reading) and concepts that all inform each other. The nature of this unity will be investigated in the remainder of the thesis, starting in the next chapter with a focus on the concepts.

## IV THE CONCEPTUAL DIMENSION OF APHORISTIC WRITING

### IV.1. Introduction

This chapter analyses the conceptual dimension of the aphorism and shows how Hohl and Nietzsche criticise and redefine the concept as such. The structure and order of aphoristic writing will be examined by tracing the chains of thought on a conceptual level in order to show how aphorisms are connected with each other. In relation to Hohl, this will be done by way of his key concept of *Kraft*, which he further splits up in the several *Geisteskräfte*. It will be shown how consistent Hohl was in his development of these concepts. In addition, the division between *Zartheit* and *das Gewaltige* – not *Geisteskräfte* but, according to Hohl, the *Grundelemente* of art – will be introduced, preparing for Hohl's views on art, to be discussed in chapter VI.

Before looking at Hohl's use of concepts in particular, this chapter will look at how aphoristic writers use concepts in general, and how they tend to reject traditional (platonian) views of the concept. However, they do not discard the concept entirely and instead change and reinvent it for their own uses. Similar things can be said about the aphoristic writers' relation to rationality: while often highly critical, they do not discard it (this will be discussed in V.2.1.1). Hohl and Nietzsche are not unique in exploring or defining concepts in aphorisms, and the same can also be said for Franz Baermann Steiner.<sup>516</sup> Other aphoristic writers, such as

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<sup>516</sup> cf. 'Begriffe zu klären bereitet Baermann Steiner Freude.' Baermann Steiner, Franz: *Feststellungen und Versuche*. Last Accessed: 9 September 2015 <[http://www.stimmen-der-zeit.de/zeitschrift/archiv/beitrag\\_details?k\\_beitrag=2981288](http://www.stimmen-der-zeit.de/zeitschrift/archiv/beitrag_details?k_beitrag=2981288)>. Franz Baermann Steiner, *Feststellungen und Versuche: Aufzeichnungen 1943-1952* (Darmstadt: Wallstein, 2009), p. 139.

Novalis<sup>517</sup> and Schlegel,<sup>518</sup> also reshaped the concept. In the following chapter, a discussion of Handke's approach towards concepts, especially phantasy, will contribute to an understanding of the creativity aphoristic writers display in their use of the concept. First, therefore, this reinvention of the concept will be shown in the example of Nietzsche, who develops a notion of the concept of fluid sense. Then Hohl's idea of the complex concept will be discussed. Both Nietzsche and Hohl have a particular focus on the concept's ability to abbreviate. As aphoristic writers often reject the concept for its perceived harmful tendency toward abstraction, it is necessary to show how far their views on the abbreviative capacity of the concept differs from those of traditional abstraction. It will be concluded that the main difference in abbreviation in concepts is due to intention. Aphoristic conceptual abbreviation is a result of the urgency of a creative experience or, in the young Nietzsche, of *Notlage*, and the late Nietzsche wonders whether it is a result of the superfluity of life.<sup>519</sup> The aphoristic concept does not aim at subsumption and abstraction, and instead dissolves the boundaries of clear definition that characterise the traditional concept.

This will be followed by a section on Hohl that first deals with his concept of *Kraft*, which is a key concept in Hohl's thinking and of importance in understanding not only his writing but also how the aphorism draws its particular strength, which was already understood by this old definition of the aphorism:

Die Kraft subjektiver Erlebnisfähigkeit konzentriert sich, indem sie dem  
Moment absolute Bedeutung verleiht, auf einen Gegenstand, sammelt sich

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<sup>517</sup> cf. for a detailed discussion, Neumann, *Ideenparadiese*, p. 391, p. 281.

<sup>518</sup> Neumann, *Ideenparadiese*, p. 430.

<sup>519</sup> cf. Thomas Bönig, *Metaphysik, Kunst und Sprache beim frühen Nietzsche* (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2014), p. 173-174.



in einem Brennpunkt, den irgendein Objekt, das als erregendes Moment auftritt, darstellt. Die gänzliche Inadequatheit der subjektiven Erlebnisstärke und der Endlichkeit des Objekts nötigt zu einer solchen Konzentration, die für den sprachlichen Ausdruck eine Form schafft, deren Stil durch das Überwiegen der Subjektivität vor der reinen Objektivität und ebenfalls durch stärkste Konzentration gekennzeichnet ist.<sup>520</sup>

As can be seen in the above quotation, an old definition of the aphorism, the prioritisation of a subjectivity that nevertheless contains some kind of objectivity is a characteristic of the dual nature of the aphorism. This old definition contains a concentration and this chapter aims to shed light on the particular strength of the aphorism in a wider sense. The concentration that is mentioned in the quotation might be a result of the abbreviating capacity of aphoristic concepts, condensing and crystallising the creative experience at its height. The prevalent image of the crystal and stone in aphoristic writing will be analysed in chapter V of this thesis.

This chapter will proceed from general observations towards an examination of Hohl's notion of *Kraft* throughout his work in order to trace the chain of thought via the concept of *Kraft*. This will be to show that his aphorisms are far from arbitrary and, instead, that he has a system of thought that is based on concepts as well; in his case the *Geisteskräfte*, which are a catalogue of virtues required in two dimensions: aesthetically for the creation of art and ethically for living the good life (to be discussed in the last Chapter VI). A further foremost characteristic of Hohl's thinking on *Kraft* is the dimension of self-determination: 'Aber der Mensch offenbart seine großen Kräfte nur in dem, was er "in Freiheit" tut.'<sup>521</sup> The decisive

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<sup>520</sup> *Reallexikon der Deutschen Literaturgeschichte*, eds. Paul Merker and Wolfgang Stammeler (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co, 1925/6), p. 82.

<sup>521</sup> N II 206.

difference to traditional systematic thinkers is Hohl's acknowledgement of ontological fragmentariness and a different use of concepts. It is necessary to emphasise strongly the integral moment of Hohl's thinking, integral in his sense meaning strength has to be considered only in relation to one's individual capacities. In this Hohl avoids a hierarchy of strengths, as individuals are only measured according their own standards and not universally. Particularly influential regarding Hohl's thinking about concepts are his essays on Gide's Journal.<sup>522</sup> The insights of Hohl's essays can be extrapolated and are universally valid (not just for Gide) because Hohl says, for instance about courage and choice, that they are necessary for every creator: 'Es wäre bei jedem Schöpfer nachzuweisen.'<sup>523</sup> With Hohl's claim to universal validity, he shows again the aphoristic writer's constant oscillation between universal and particular principles. *Kraft* then will be traced in its different appearances in the *Geisteskräfte*, which have a variety of functions in Hohl's thought: starting with Courage (*Mut*) as a visionary capacity aimed at the future and then Choice (*Wahl*) as a capacity of discernment. The concept of *Wahl* will be discussed in conjunction with Hohl's concept of *Linien*, which can be understood as an equivalent to the chains of thought. Furthermore, it is necessary to remember that Hohl does not understand choice in the neoliberal sense<sup>524</sup> as cut off from context but, on the contrary, as highly determined by context, and further, not characterised by a need to maximise one's advantage. Patience (*Geduld*) and Belief (*Glaube*) have consolidating functions: Patience is consolidating, as in persistence and tenacity in the pursuit of an artistic aim, while Belief offers consolidation in a psychological sense. Tenderness (*Zartheit*) serves to counterbalance the (*das Gewaltige*) which, according to Hohl,

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<sup>522</sup> MW, pp. 46-66.

<sup>523</sup> MW p. 47.

<sup>524</sup> HWdPH, xii, p. 24.

are the two basic elements of art (*Grundelemente*). An analysis of all those concepts prepares for an examination of the general approach towards life affirmation (*unvoreilige Versöhnung*), discussed in chapter VI. The *Geisteskraft Phantasie* will be discussed in chapter V.

## **IV.2. Reinventions of the Concept**

In the following, Nietzsche and Hohl's reinventions of the concept will be presented. It will be shown that Nietzsche reacts strongly against the Platonic view of the concept and connects his discussion of the concept to a discussion on language and, in a lesser sense, on morality. Hohl reacts less strongly against traditional views of the concept and focusses more purely on the concepts in their direct connection to creativity without discussing the concept in the context of language.

### **IV.2.1 Nietzsche: Concept of Fluid Sense**

This section aims to present Nietzsche's views on the concept in order to show how he criticised a traditional view of the concept and how he changed it towards the concept of fluid sense. It will focus mainly on the origin of concept in *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne* and later on how he develops a notion of the concept of fluid sense in the *Zur Genealogie der Moral* with which he aims to replace and criticise the traditional notions of the concept. This is in order to show that Nietzsche, like other aphoristic writers, is critical of traditional definitions of the concept. Nietzsche rejected a Platonic view of the concept which regards it as a means to capture the essence of a thing, and describes that view as follows: 'Glaube daß der Begriff das Wesen des Dings trifft: platonische Idee. Daher

Metaphysik der Logik: Identität von Denken und Sein'<sup>525</sup> Nietzsche rejects the identity of thinking and being and, further, rejects the Aristotelean view of cause and effect, as will be shown in the section that deals with the concept of fluid sense.

#### **IV. 2.1.1 Origin of Words and Concepts in *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne***

Nietzsche's *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne* is a key text in understanding his views on language and the concept. In it he critiques traditional conceptual thinking and asks the question: 'Ist die Sprache der adäquate Ausdruck aller Realitäten?'<sup>526</sup> Languages, according to him, do not have a relation to truth (which he regards as singular 'die Wahrheit') or an adequate expression ('adäquater Ausdruck') because otherwise there would not be so many languages.<sup>527</sup> Language in this sense has no relation to truth but is understood to be relational: 'Er bezeichnet nur die Relationen der Dinge zu den Menschen und nimmt zu deren Ausdruck die kühnsten Metaphern zur Hilfe.'<sup>528</sup> Words are created according to Nietzsche by a nerve sensation that is transformed into an image. This is the first metaphor. This image is then transformed into a sound. According to Nietzsche, this is the second metaphor. Our knowledge of things is a knowledge of metaphors of things that do not correspond to reality. Further, Nietzsche states that the existence of language is not logical.<sup>529</sup>

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<sup>525</sup> NL 1870 6[14], KSA 7.134.

cf. Plato used Dihairesis (διαίρεσις) and Dichotomy (διχοτομία) in order to systematise concepts logically into general and specific concepts.

Platon, *Politikos*, (*Sämtliche Dialoge*, ed Otto Apelt, 2nd edn, 7 vols (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1998) vi, p. 70; (285).

<sup>526</sup> WS I, KSA 1.878.

<sup>527</sup> cf. WS I, KSA 1.879.

<sup>528</sup> cf. WS I, KSA 1.879. Er = Der Sprachbildner. cf. KSA 1.879

<sup>529</sup> cf. WS I, KSA 1.879.

Words become concepts when they are applied not just to a singular event, for which the word was meant to be a memory (*Erinnerung*), but to several similar things that are never the same as the first thing (*Urerlebnis*):

Denken wir besonders noch an die Bildung der Begriffe: jedes Wort wird sofort dadurch Begriff, dass es eben nicht für das einmalige ganz und gar individualisierte Urerlebnis, dem es sein Entstehen verdankt, etwa als Erinnerung dienen soll, sondern zugleich für zahllose, mehr oder weniger ähnliche, d.h. streng genommen niemals gleiche, also auf lauter ungleiche Fälle passen muss. Jeder Begriff entsteht durch Gleichsetzen des Nicht-Gleichen.<sup>530</sup>

This also means that metaphor comes closer<sup>531</sup> than concepts to what humans experience. The concept disregards the individual and reality<sup>532</sup> because it is separated from actual experience and instead refers to an abstracted plurality, to things that are similar but never the same.

Truth according to Nietzsche cannot be found in the concept but is a flexible army of metaphors and metonymies.<sup>533</sup>

#### **IV.2.1.2 Nietzsche's Concept of Fluid Sense in *Zur Genealogie zur Moral***

Before Nietzsche developed the concept of fluid sense in the *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, there were intermediate steps inbetween: he also reflected on the concept in *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft* and *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*. Those insights will be briefly summarised before moving to the discussion of the concept in the *Genealogie der Moral*.

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<sup>530</sup> WS I, KSA 1.879-1.880.

<sup>531</sup> cf. Grassi, *Primordial Metaphor*, p. 14.

<sup>532</sup> WS I, KSA 1.880.

<sup>533</sup> 'Was ist also Wahrheit? Ein bewegliches Heer von Metaphern, Metonymien, Anthropomorphismen kurz eine Summe von menschlichen Relationen, die, poetisch und rhetorisch gesteigert, übertragen, geschmückt wurden, und die nach langem Gebrauche einem Volke fest, canonisch und verbindlich dünken: die Wahrheiten sind Illusionen, von denen man vergessen hat, dass sie welche sind...'  
WS I, KSA 1.880-1.881.

In *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft* Nietzsche repeats previously gained insights about the metaphorical and anthropomorphic character of language<sup>534</sup> and emphasises the perspectival condition (*perspektivische Charakter*)<sup>535</sup> of all our *Dasein* and the infinite interpretability of the world: ‘Die Welt ist uns vielmehr noch einmal „unendlich“ geworden: insofern wir die Möglichkeit nicht abweisen können, dass sie unendliche Interpretationen in sich schliesst.’<sup>536</sup>

In *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* Nietzsche repeats the insight from *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinne* that words are sound-signs (*Tonzeichen*) for concepts and concepts in turn are image-signs (*Bildzeichen*) for returning feelings (*Empfindungen*) or groups of feelings (*Empfindungsgruppen*). Further, he writes that concepts are conventional fictions and their use is purely for communication, thereby anticipating his rejection of the Aristotelian principle of cause and effect.<sup>537</sup> The use of concepts is for things that are of ‘leichte Mittheilbarkeit’, that are of average value, and this is to the advantage of the herd-people and, in turn, everything that is hard to express and ‘die schwer Verständlichen’ are disadvantaged.<sup>538</sup> This is a parallel to Hohl, as both emphasise that the inaccessible or ineffable is of more importance than that which can be easily expressed.

The aspect of the flexible as already present in the flexible army of metaphors and metonymies is so important to Nietzsche that it plays a major role in his redefinition of the

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<sup>534</sup> FW 112, KSA 3.473.

<sup>535</sup> FW 374, KSA 3.626.

<sup>536</sup> FW 374, KSA 3.626-7.

<sup>537</sup> ‘Man soll nicht, „Ursache“ und „Wirkung“ fehlerhaft verdinglichen, wie es die Naturforscher thun (und wer gleich ihnen heute im Denken naturalisirt —) gemäss der herrschenden mechanistischen Tölpelei, welche die Ursache drücken und stossen lässt, bis sie „wirkt“; man soll sich der „Ursache“, der „Wirkung“ eben nur als reiner Begriffe bedienen, das heisst als conventioneller Fiktionen zum Zweck der Bezeichnung, der Verständigung, nicht der Erklärung.’ JGB 21, KSA 5.36 also cf. FW 374, KSA 3.627.

<sup>538</sup> JGB 268, KSA 5.222.

concept of fluid sense in the *Genealogy of Morals*. It may not be a special coincidence that the redefinition of the concept takes place in the second part of the *Genealogy*, in whose third part Nietzsche discusses the aphorism. Nietzsche develops this concept of fluid sense with the example of punishment (*Strafe*) and how the sense of punishment changed during history. He notices that there is also not just one sense of punishment but thinks this sense as a synthesis, and that this synthesis contains the whole history of punishment:

Was nun jenes andre Element an der Strafe betrifft, das flüssige, ihren „Sinn“, so stellt in einem sehr späten Zustande der Cultur (zum Beispiel im heutigen Europa) der Begriff „Strafe“ in der That gar nicht mehr Einen Sinn vor, sondern eine ganze Synthesis von „Sinnen“: die bisherige Geschichte der Strafe überhaupt, die Geschichte ihrer Ausnützung zu den verschiedensten Zwecken, krystallisirt sich zuletzt in eine Art von Einheit, welche schwer löslich, schwer zu analysiren und, was man hervorheben muss, ganz und gar undefinirbar ist. (Es ist heute unmöglich, bestimmt zu sagen, warum eigentlich gestraft wird: alle Begriffe, in denen sich ein ganzer Prozess semiotisch zusammenfasst, entziehen sich der Definition; definirbar ist nur Das, was keine Geschichte hat.) In einem früheren Stadium erscheint dagegen jene Synthesis von „Sinnen“ noch löslicher, auch noch verschiebbarer; man kann noch wahrnehmen, wie für jeden einzelnen Fall die Elemente der Synthesis ihre Werthigkeit verändern und sich demgemäss umordnen, so dass bald dies, bald jenes Element auf Kosten der übrigen hervortritt und dominirt, ja unter Umständen Ein Element (etwa der Zweck der Abschreckung) den ganzen Rest von Elementen aufzuheben scheint.<sup>539</sup>

This means Nietzsche refuses the Aristotelean ontology of cause and effect. According to Nietzsche, the cause of a thing and its use are distinct, and from its use one cannot conclude the origin of a thing; as he stated above, it is impossible to say why punishments are exerted today. Development according to Nietzsche is not teleological, everything that happens – and happening is here equated with overwhelming something – is at the same time a reinterpretation of the world. This means that interpretation is also always overwhelming, and

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<sup>539</sup> GM II 13, KSA 5.317.

is something inherently violent. The result of this is, for instance, that previous senses of a concept disappear: ‘dass alles Geschehen in der organischen Welt ein Überwältigen, Herrwerden und dass wiederum alles Überwältigen und Herrwerden ein Neu-Interpretieren, ein Zurechtmachen ist, bei dem der bisherige ‘Sinn’ und ‘Zweck’ nothwendig verdunkelt oder ganz ausgelöscht werden muss.’<sup>540</sup> However, Nietzsche has also a more positive notion of interpretation: an ephectic interpretation, as was seen before in section III.5. A relevant insight of Nietzsche’s understanding of a concept as a process is that only that which has no history can be defined.<sup>541</sup> Furthermore, he sees those who want to retain the concept as something fixed (*fest*) as tyrannical<sup>542</sup> – flexibility is a sign of life.

According to Nietzsche, the most general concepts are the emptiest.<sup>543</sup> In Nietzsche’s revolt against the conceptual, there is a rejection of the unreflected use of language, as Westerdale describes: ‘Nietzsche and Lichtenberg undertake the critique of language use not so much as a defense of language, but as a critique of the conceptual apparatus perpetuated by language unbeknownst to speakers and writers who fail to reflect upon the presuppositions and ramifications of their language use.’<sup>544</sup> Westerdale adds that this critique of language is not prescriptive: Nietzsche and Hohl are not outlining a new way of how to use language or what to omit from it, such as for example traditional philosophy that wanted to omit the metaphor. They just want to focus on a reflection of the use of language. As we will investigate later on,

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<sup>540</sup> GM II 12, KSA 5.315.

<sup>541</sup> ‘...alle Begriffe, in denen sich ein ganzer Prozess semiotisch zusammenfasst, entziehen sich der Definition; definierbar ist nur Das, was keine Geschichte hat.’ GM II 13, KSA 5.317.

<sup>542</sup> ‘Jene gesetzgeberischen und tyrannischen Geister, welche im Stande sind, einen Begriff fest zu setzen, fest zu halten’ NL 1885 34[88], KSA 11.449.

<sup>543</sup> GD Vernunft 4, KSA 6.76.

<sup>544</sup> Westerdale, p. 65.



all Hohl aims for in his critique of language is that people use a ‘selbstverantwortetes Wort’. *Selbstverantwortet* hinting here at Hohl’s emphasis on a non-alienated way of life and creativity; that in those activities the identity of the person is reflected.

#### **IV.2.2 Hohl: Complex Concept**

This section examines Hohl’s understanding of concepts in general and the complex concept as such using the example of what Hohl calls die *Geisteskräfte* (mental powers). Hohl calls these mental powers complex concepts and, as in traditional philosophical thinking, these concepts are essential parts of his thought, expressing an ethical and aesthetic theory. In fact, a main characteristic of Hohl’s complex concepts is that in some instances they cannot be separated from each other and, as in Nietzsche, the clear and distinct boundaries of the concept in a traditional sense are dissolved. Hohl rejected definitions that have firm boundaries. For instance, he speaks of the infinite definition of the concept of work.<sup>545</sup> Furthermore, he assumes that such things as life<sup>546</sup> and reality<sup>547</sup> are beyond definition.

The existence of concepts in Hohl’s writing is important because Fedler’s definition of the aphorism clearly speaks of concepts that are used by poetic means, and to show that there are concepts in Hohl’s thinking would prove that his writing is aphoristic and not note-writing, as the note clearly does not need to have concepts in order to be a note. To lay open all of these connections (*Zusammenhänge*) between the concepts shows also that they do not only exist within one book, the *Notizen*, or even the *Notizenwerk*, but that they extend to all Hohl’s

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<sup>545</sup> NN 158.

<sup>546</sup> NN 164.

<sup>547</sup> NN 202.

writing, because his idea of the complex concepts can be found in his essays on literature, *Mut und Wahl* (which does not belong to the *Notizenwerk*). This does introduce the complication that not only do the aphorisms illuminate each other but they also explore the content of some of his aphorism and sometimes are of an explanatory nature to some of the concepts. This demonstrates that Hohl's general theory on life and art is far reaching and not limited to just one of his books. First it needs to be identified what those complex concepts are. Apart from the complex concepts, Hohl also sees a beauty in the use of pure concepts: 'Figuren der Begriffe, durch Nacktheit, Reinheit der Begriffe.'<sup>548</sup> However, he does not spend much time pondering the purity of concepts and instead focusses on the complex concepts. Hohl develops his idea of the complex concept in his writings on Gide<sup>549</sup> with the example of patience, previously stating that patience is not a clear concept, 'keineswegs ein eindeutiger Begriff'<sup>550</sup>, then moving on from saying that patience is not a negative characteristic (assuming that people resent patience because it reminds them of school, so Hohl defends it) but instead a strength, and from then on that patience is a complex concept. From this follows that all *Geistesstärken* are complex concepts:

Die Geduld aber, um die es *hier* geht, im Bereich des Schöpferischen, ist vor allen Dingen keine negative Eigenschaft, sondern eine *Stärke*; ist sogar ein komplexer Begriff (und wenn ich mich auf das Wort 'Geduld' festgelegt habe, um jene Eigenschaft des Künstlers zu bezeichnen, die für ihn wichtiger ist als alle andern Eigenschaften ist, so geschah das eigentlich im Sinne einer Abkürzung, -- um ein Kennzeichen, ein Merkwort, einen Namen

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<sup>548</sup> NN 157.

<sup>549</sup> MW pp. 46-66.

<sup>550</sup> MW p. 58. also cf. N XI 9: 'Wer immer genau unterscheiden kann zwischen sich und den andern, ist kein großer Geist.'

zu haben). Kraft, jede Mühsal zu ertragen und immerwährende Bereitschaft; die Grenze sowohl gegen 'Mut' hin wie gegen 'Wille' ist nicht deutlich.<sup>551</sup>

There are many relevant insights in this paragraph. Something needs to be said about the abstract capacity of complex concepts. Hohl writes about them being an abbreviation, a name, a characteristic, that they are not capable of subsumption, as, according to Hohl, complex concept means not just a particular concept like patience but also where patience is no longer to be distinguished from will or courage.<sup>552</sup> Complex concepts signify a state of creative experience in which these concepts coincide so that they can no longer be separated. However, in those aphorisms, the concepts are explicated further and it is possible to understand the richness and complexity of those concepts. It follows that the process of artistic creation is characterised by an overlapping of all those concepts, which in turn signifies that all those mental powers are required for creativity.<sup>553</sup>

But Hohl has something to say about each of those powers in their own right where they can be called concepts alone without the complexity. For instance, he talks also about the concept of *Aufrichtigkeit*<sup>554</sup> without calling it a complex concept. The connections between all these concepts cannot be expressed in an obvious, linear way and only ever as a fragment, a chain

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<sup>551</sup> MW, p. 59.

cf. 'Vertrauen ist Mut, und Treue ist Kraft.' Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, *Aphorismen* (Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1939), p. 5.

<sup>552</sup> Hohl writes: 'Und auch die schärfsten Begriffe, vor den letzten Instanzen zerfasern sie so wie so.' NN 12.

<sup>553</sup> Neumann speaks about a Wirkungszusammenhang von Kräften in the philosophy of Novalis: 'Zentrum dieser vielfältigen Erkenntnisoperationen ist das menschliche „Gemüt“ als ein Wirkungszusammenhang aller geistigen und seelischen Kräfte. In ihm finden die Berührungen statt, die den im Prozeß des Bindens und Lösens sich vollziehenden „Wechsel der Sphären“ in Gang bringen; hier erweitert sich das Einzelne, „Atomistische“ zum Ganzen, hier verdichtet sich das Ganze immer wieder zu merkwürdigen Einzelheiten. Jeder Gedanke und jede Erscheinung vermögen zum Glied eines Ganzen zu werden, ohne dabei ihre unverwechselbare Individualität und „Situiertheit“ einzubüßen. Das Einzelne geht nicht im Ganzen auf, sondern konstituiert sich allererst zusammen mit anderen Individuen jenes lebendigen Wirkungszusammenhangs, der diese „Ganzheit“ ausmacht.' *Ideenparadiese*, p. 288.

<sup>554</sup> MW p. 62.

of thought. A piece of one such a relation can be shown but all of them together reveal a structured theory on a certain way to life and the creation of art. Hohl looks at concepts from either a creative (aesthetic), 'künstlerisch schöpferisch' or a general human (ethical), 'allgemein menschlich' point of view. For instance, the interpretation of a concept like patience for its general human meaning is not in contrast to a creative view of patience, but the creative view demands a stronger capacity for patience than in the normal human realm; it is a difference of degree, not of kind. There is no clear boundary between life and art. This implies a rejection of the assumption that the creation of works of art can only be done by a genius. For Hohl, art is an intensification of life: 'Kunst ist selber *absolut Leben* [...], ist das intensivere Leben.'<sup>555</sup>

Returning to the general idea of the concept, the characteristic of dissolving boundaries of the concept as seen in Nietzsche, Hohl and other aphoristic writers, is not a recent development. Hohl's notion of the complex concept is reminiscent of Vico's concept of *das Universelle Gemeinsame Geistige Wort*: 'Das Universelle unterscheidet sich eigentlich gar nicht scharf vom Besonderen. Das Universelle ist nämlich keine Abstraktion, die alle Einzelfälle auf den kleinsten gemeinsamen Nenner bringt, etwa in der Form: "Alle Wörter für Vater in allen Sprachen bedeuten 'stark'". Das Universelle ist vielmehr eine Sammlung konkreter Züge und hat etwa die folgende logische Struktur: "Alle Wörter für Vater in allen Sprachen haben eine oder mehrere der folgenden Bedeutungen: 'stark', 'Priester', 'Herrscher', 'Göttermacher'...". Dabei ist im Grunde die Liste der ewigen Eigenschaften offen, denn das geistige Wort kann

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<sup>555</sup> NN 370, cf. NN 387.

durch die Empirie ergänzt werden.<sup>556</sup> Vico's mental word (*voce mentale*)<sup>557</sup> is relevant because it has a similar conception of placing characteristics under one word without abstracting them and instead leaving the mental word open for further additions from other languages. Instead, the mental word is a collection of complexity under a name such as Vater in the example, which has no clear boundaries like the traditional concept. In contrast, Hohl's complex concepts do not have an overarching name. Instead, a complex concept is a synthesis of a few concepts, and, as given in the example: courage and choice are not subsumed under a name but under a creative process and, this is a decisive contrast to traditional abstraction, which subsumes any thing under a name and not under an activity.

### **IV.3 Hohl's Concept of *Kraft***

The word *Kraft* is central to Hohl's thinking and from his youth until his last work it occupied his mind. Over the years he refined his thoughts on the concept. It is what one could call his key concept apart from *Arbeit* and *Phantasie*, and *Kraft* is connected to all his central concepts that he called *Geisteskräfte*. This section first looks at *Kraft* in general and then at the *Geisteskräfte* in particular and their specific function in his thought. *Kraft* is not necessarily the *Oberbegriff* under which the *Geisteskräfte* are subsumed, the *Geisteskräfte* are instead different manifestations of the for Hohl vast scope of *Kraft*. This also includes an understanding of *Kraft* meaning both 'power' and 'strength'. Hohl's development of power – *Kraft* – started in his youth, and traces of it can be found in his *Jugendtagebuch*. Johannes

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<sup>556</sup> Jürgen Trabant, *Neue Wissenschaft von alten Zeichen: Vicos Sematologie* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1994), p.107.

cf. for a shorter introduction on Vico's philosophy of language: Eugenio Coseriu, *Geschichte der Sprachphilosophie* (Tübingen und Basel: A. Francke Verlag, 2003), pp. 273-316.

<sup>557</sup> Trabant, *Neue Wissenschaft*, p. 107.

Beringer emphasised the ‘kraftvolle’<sup>558</sup> elements of the *Jugendtagebuch* and its ‘erstaunlich gut ausgebildete, bildmächtige Sprache’<sup>559</sup> and Hohl’s ability to describe the inner forces at work in his mind: ‘das im Innern fast elementar tobende Spiel der Kräfte sichtbar zu machen’<sup>560</sup>. Hohl wrote it when he was seventeen and the maturity of *Jugendtagebuch* is often emphasised. In an analogous way, the *Notizen* are regarded as very mature too, which were written when Hohl was in his early thirties.<sup>561</sup> The analysis of *Kraft*, starting with his *Jugendtagebuch* and present throughout his work, will be undertaken in order to show that Hohl was very consistent with his views on strength and how his view in his youth forms the basis for his further thought and especially the development of the concept of *Arbeit*.<sup>562</sup> Hohl speaks about *Kraft* in the following contexts: relation of *Kraft* and the self, invincibility and obstacles, sport and daily life, social power/authority, and *Kraft* and words. In the first place, *Kraft* is *Geist*. *Geist* is described by Hohl as an awareness of *Kraft* that can change the world. The opposition to this is war and philistinism and religion: ‘Was nennen wir überhaupt Geist?’

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<sup>558</sup> Beringer, *Hohls Weg*, p. 14

<sup>559</sup> Beringer, *Hohls Weg*, p. 27.

<sup>560</sup> Beringer, *Hohls Weg*, p. 27.

<sup>561</sup> ‘Bislang ist kaum beachtet worden, dass die *Notizen* - geschrieben von einem Dreissig- bis Dreiunddreissigjährigen - eine Reife enthalten, die andere erst in späteren Jahren, mit dem Alter ernten: dass sie mithin fast so etwas geben, wie eine “Summe des Lebens”.’ Beringer, *Hohls Weg*, p. 129, also cf. Stüssi, p. 64.

<sup>562</sup> Hohl’s insight about *Kraft* can be compared to the fundamental insight that led to the creation of his work in Dieter Henrich’s sense:

cf. ‘(1) In einer frühen Phase ihres Nachdenkens gelangen bedeutende Autoren zu der Diagnose eines grundlegenden Defizits, welches die in ihrer Zeit vorherrschenden Lehren, trotz aller Differenzen zwischen ihnen, allesamt durchzieht. Aus diesem Defizit erklärt sich ihnen das Ungenügen, das ihr Studium dieser Lehren und ihrer eigenen ersten Versuche untergründig begleitet hatte. (2) Nach anhaltendem Nachdenken und vielen Versuchen, das Defizit zu beheben, geht den Denkern der Entwurf einer philosophischen Konzeption auf - und zwar zusammen mit ihrer Bedeutung für die Lebensführung des Menschen - und beides zumindest sehr oft in einem einzigen plötzlichen Durchblick. (3) In der Folge wird diese Konzeption lange Zeit geprüft, immer wieder auf andere Weise begründet und in Arbeitsgängen zu vielen Problembereichen differenziert. Die Verschiedenheit der Arbeitsweisen von Autoren lässt sich dabei an den Eigenarten der von ihnen überkommenen Notate und Skizzen erkennen. Eine besondere Form solcher Notate sind die partialen Durchblicke durch ganze Argumentationsverläufe. Für sie gebrauche ich den Namen “Sekundenphilosophie”, weil sie sich gleichfalls in momentaner Evidenz aufbauen. (4) Zu Beginn eines vierten Stadiums gelingt dem Autor schließlich ein Plan für die Ausgestaltung seines Werkes.’  
Henrich, *Werke im Werden*, p. 21.

Jenes Anfangsstadium; das Bewußtwerden einer Kraft, die die Welt verändern kann. Der Gegensatz ist das Krieger- und Pfaffentum.<sup>563</sup> *Kraft* is a world-changing concept. In addition, another characteristic of *Kraft* is that it is bigger than what it creates. *Kraft* can create things, but those things may die, while *Kraft* itself has a connection to infinity.<sup>564</sup>

### IV.3.1 Relation of *Kraft* to the Self

Of prime importance is Hohl's view that the self is a mere shell of one's power: 'Die Kraft muß *hervorbrechen* oder sie muß ihr Gehäuse sprengen; ihre Hülle geht zu Grunde u. die Hülle bin ich.'<sup>565</sup> He developed this view in the *Jugendtagebuch* and one question is whether this identification of self and strength is present not just in the *Jugendtagebuch* but also in his later works. In fact, it is more than an identification: the *Kraft* is stronger than the self. One's self is unable to exist without this strength, and strength is prioritised over the self. One loses one's *Kraft* when one is alienated from one's inner self:

Ich muß diese höchsten Dinge klar und gerade darlegen, wie sie mir scheinen, klar und gewaltig, wie meine Überzeugung ist, die im Innersten steckt. Und kann ich dies nicht mehr, muß ich zu feilen anfangen, zu künsteln, auszugleichen – dann *schwindet meine Kraft!*<sup>566</sup>

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<sup>563</sup> N II 208.

<sup>564</sup> N XI 10.

<sup>565</sup> 'Ich brauche viel, brauche Großes; ein *Werk* muß ich haben! Und so liege ich darnieder unter dem elenden Loos: Meine Kraft kann nirgends hervorbrechen, kann nirgends sich ausspannen, so daß ich befriedigt würde. Es ist die Tragik meines Schicksals; ich *kann* fast nicht bestehen so! *Und auf die Dauer kann ich nicht bestehen.* Ich muß verderben, ich müßte verderben, mich auflösen; es ist mir *unerträglich*; es ekelt mich vor einem solchen Dasein. Die Kraft *muß hervorbrechen* oder sie muß ihr Gehäuse sprengen; ihre Hülle geht zu Grunde u. die Hülle bin ich.' JT pp.122-123.

Delacroix writes similarly about a power being stronger than the actual strength of the body: 'There is something in me that is stronger than my body, which is often given a new heart by it. In some people this inner power seems almost non-existent, but with me it is greater than my physical strength. Without it I should die, but in the end it will burn me up - I suppose I mean my imagination, that dominates me and drives me on.'

Eugène Delacroix, *The Journal of Eugène Delacroix*, Hubert Wellington (ed.), (London: Phaidon, 1995), p. 6. (8. October 1822).

<sup>566</sup> JT p. 61.

*Kraft* has the ability to become destructive, when it is not channelled. Hohl was very aware of this insight into the problem of *Kraft* and channelling it led in consequence to his other key term, that of *Arbeiten*. Hohl writes later in the *Notizen*: ‘Man lebt weder in sich noch in den anderen, sondern in seiner Produktion.’<sup>567</sup> In order to channel one’s powers, one needs to direct them toward an activity to which they are most suited:

Denn ein anderer Hauptsatz lautet (Hebbel hat es sehr klar gewußt; -- besser wäre “sehr stark gewußt”: man kann in ganz verschiedener Stärke wissen): *Man muß seine Kräfte dahin tragen, wo das höchste Resultat ist, das diese Kräfte erreichen können. (Hebbel sagte, daß man seiner höchsten Kraft gehört.)*<sup>568</sup>

In this respect Hohl emphasises the importance of discipline; accordingly, those without the ability to discipline themselves are unable to achieve ‘geistige Leistung’.<sup>569</sup> Furthermore, one ought to direct one's strength towards one goal at a time. Unlike Nietzsche,<sup>570</sup> Hohl rejected the burdening of the self with more than the self can carry.<sup>571</sup> From his statements on disease it is obvious that Hohl aims for moderate activity. According to him, the sources of diseases are either too much productivity, no productivity, or wrong nutrition, or a combination of the three.<sup>572</sup>

Es kommt darauf an, daß wir unsere Kräfte vereinigt nach *einer* Stelle lenken – derjenigen, wo wir unser höchstes Resultat bringen können --; und daß wir an die andern Stellen, wo auch gewisse Bewegungen (sekundäre Dienste) nötig sind, keine Kräfte hinfließen lassen, oder das Minimum von

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<sup>567</sup> N II 269.

<sup>568</sup> N II 161, also II 194, II 269, V 5.

<sup>569</sup> N II 194.

<sup>570</sup> GT Versuch 1, KSA 1.12.

<sup>571</sup> ‘Zwar wächst man an der Last, die man trägt (nur durch die Last), ist aber die Last zu groß, bricht man im Nu zusammen. Sünde ist nicht nur, nicht eine Last tragen zu wollen; sondern auch, sich freiwillig eine größere Last aufzubürden, als man tragen kann.’ N II 51.

<sup>572</sup> N II 120.



Kräften: was eben heißt, daß unsere gewöhnlichen Alltagserledigungen  
*mechanisch* geschehen sollen.

[...]

Immer und überall gilt es: Sobald die Vorgänge auf einer Ebene  
mechanisiert sind, treten die schöpferischen Kräfte (die Kräfte schlechthin)  
auf einer höheren Ebene in Erscheinung.<sup>573</sup>

Hohl's concept of work (*Arbeit*) (to be discussed in more detail in chapter VI) means that work is also always connected to other activities, such as the creation of art; it is in essence a form of self-preservation.<sup>574</sup> This idea originates from the insight of having to channel one's strength in order to avoid it becoming destructive to work as a means of participating in infinite.<sup>575</sup> Yet in the *Jugendtagebuch* self-possession is in its most extreme form able to go without strength: 'Mein *Ich* fest in den Händen haben; um *Kraft* bitte ich nicht --.'<sup>576</sup> Hohl formulates this insight in a more elaborate way in the *Notizen*. One's strength is only positive when one belongs to that strength. Therefore only positive strength is one's own strength. When one has many small dispersed, unfocussed strengths, one is not positive and does not have positive strength. In the following quotation from the *Notizen* – again in the context of winning and overcoming obstacles – Hohl also seems to prioritise the unity of a single strength over the variety of different strengths and has elaborated his concept of strength by way of understanding strength no longer as one simple power but as a contrast of power as a whole and power as fragmented, dispersed.

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<sup>573</sup> NI 17.

<sup>574</sup> JT p. 85, p. 112.

<sup>575</sup> N XII 115.

<sup>576</sup> JT p. 131.

One's strengths will suffer when they are not connected to the self, are not self-determined, but the self will die without those strengths. This clearly repeats the previous insight that the self is a shell for one's strength:

“Mich kann niemand besiegen.”

So konnte einer sprechen. Er fügte hinzu: “Man kann mir nur Leid zufügen.” Was heißt das? Jede positive Kraft ist nicht zu besiegen.

Was heißt “positive Kraft,” ist nicht Kraft immer positiv?

Jede Kraft ist positiv; wenn du aber aus vielen einzelnen Kräften bestehst, die alle anderswo hingehören, denen du nicht gehörst, so bist (die Kräfte sind ja wohl positiv) du nicht positiv, nicht positive Kraft, du wirst nicht die Treue haben, die Kräfte im Ungemach zu begleiten, da sie ja nicht dein sind; die Kräfte leiden nur; du aber, dich getrennt habend von ihnen, bist ohne alles. Stirbst.

So heißt “positive Kraft” genau gesehen “eigene Kraft”; nicht Dinge (Kräfte), für die du dich vorgibst, sondern, mit denen du identisch bist.

Denn man kann sich sehr wohl für Dinge vorgeben und sie sind auch Kraft.

Es existieren viele ohne zu existieren, zwanzig Jahre, mehr, ein ganzes Leben. *Aber man kann sie töten.*<sup>577</sup>

This leads to thoughts about invincibility and *Kraft* in Hohl. The problem of invincibility and obstacles is a recurring one and plays a fundamental role in Hohl's views on *Erkenntnis* and therefore requires further investigation.

#### **IV.3.1.2 Invincibility and Obstacles**

Hohl often talks about *Kraft* in conjunction with invincibility and obstacles. Invincibility is not to be understood as invincibility in a worldly sense. *Siegen* is described by Hohl like this:

‘Die beste Technik des Siegens besteht darin, keine Technik des Siegens zu haben, sondern eine Sache, und die Technik des ergebensten Dienstes an dieser Sache.’<sup>578</sup> This means there is

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<sup>577</sup> N XI 39.

<sup>578</sup> N II 284.

no actual technique of winning as overcoming something but, in contrast, the way to invincibility is to have an object – or work – and to serve this project. Furthermore, in order to achieve this kind of *Siegen*, one needs to have self-possession, as Hohl wrote in his

*Jugendtagebuch*:

Aber ich werde all dieses äußerliche Hindernis-Kramzeug zusammenschlagen, wenn ich nur *mich* habe! Wenn ich *mich, meine Kraft* ganz besitze, dann gibt's nur einen Siegeslauf! Gehe es außen wie es wolle – solange ich mich, *meine Kraft* ganz besitze, bleibe ich Sieger.<sup>579</sup>

This passage is about self-possession and how strength is related to winning, and is also related to obstacles – worldly or exterior obstacles – and that one can overcome all obstacles as long as one is in full possession of one's strength, and not feeling alienated in any form, from oneself or others or the world. The opposition of outside and inside is important, as this is also an opposition that Hohl will use throughout his writing. Hohl in general did not regard – while acknowledging the damage they can do – problematic circumstances as an obstacle to one's productivity. Instead, he saw the work on a change of circumstance as an adequate response and as a way to use one's strength: 'Hindern dich die Umstände an der Entfaltung deiner Tätigkeit? Dann wirke auf die Änderung der Umstände hin und du hast darin deine Tätigkeit.'<sup>580</sup> It is almost impossible not to encounter obstacles because one's attention, according to Hohl, focusses on what is difficult.<sup>581</sup> Obstacles have a fundamental meaning in Hohl's work, as they are the source by which insights are gained. Hohl often talks about the difficulties of work: 'Jeder einzelne Schritt ist das Brechen eines Widerstandes; jedes Brechen

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<sup>579</sup> JT p. 59.

<sup>580</sup> N I 1.

<sup>581</sup> N VII 41.

macht Schmerzen.<sup>582</sup> According to him, only those who have to fight obstacles have *geistige Stärke*.<sup>583</sup> This is explained further in another aphorism: mental strength is a result of the overcoming of obstacles because the overcoming of them yields insights: ‘Jeder in ihm vorher angetroffene und überwundene Widerstand übermittelt ihm eine Kenntnis.’<sup>584</sup> This knowledge can be a weapon or a strength. Therefore obstacles as a source of insights and of strength are a necessary accompaniment to ‘geistige Entwicklungen.’<sup>585</sup> The overcoming of obstacles can lead to life affirmation.<sup>586</sup> But there can also too much resistance which leads to an exaggeration and distortion of strength.<sup>587</sup> The value of a writer or any person lies in their resistance to contemporaneity.<sup>588</sup> Consequently, resistance is what makes one a poet<sup>589</sup> and is a characteristic of high art (‘höchste Kunst’<sup>590</sup>). Invincibility finally finds expression in an accumulation of obstacles overcome, which leads to the power of a mental position, meaning the *geistige* power of a view, or an attitude, that is all the stronger the longer the path (*Weg*) that leads to that view and the more obstacles that have been overcome.

Die Gewalt eines geistigen Ortes erwächst vor allem aus der Länge des Weges, der zu ihm hinführt.

-- Der Mann der größten Widerstände, der dann aber, in später Stunde (denen zur Überraschung, die ihn nur oberflächlich kennen), doch der

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<sup>582</sup> N I 25.

<sup>583</sup> N II 60, II 189, NN 144.

<sup>584</sup> N II 132. Hohl uses the third person masculine form often in a way that compares to Kafka’s aphorisms in which *er* means the indefinite -pronoun *man*, which means that Hohl speaks to a universal audience by focussing on the individual, which relates to the aphorism in which Hohl talks about finding the universal laws of art by looking at the individual, as can be seen in N II 119.

<sup>585</sup> N II 249, NN 369.

<sup>586</sup> NN 556.

<sup>587</sup> NN 182.

<sup>588</sup> N IV 21, NN 195.

<sup>589</sup> NN 324.

<sup>590</sup> NN 465.

größten Entschlüsse fähig ist: dieser ist dann, infolge der angesammelten Kenntnisse (durch die Widerstände, die er in sich überwand), ungefähr *unbesieglich* (in seinem Aufbrechen; in seiner Überzeugungskraft gegenüber anderen).

This echoes the sentiments in his *Jugendtagebuch*: being invincible as long as one is in control of oneself and therefore is a consistent idea in Hohl's thought.

#### IV.3.1.3 The *Integral*<sup>591</sup> Nature of Power, Competition and Movement (*Bewegung*)

Hohl takes into account individual possibilities of strength. Strength is not measured against an objective, universal standard but according to the individual's potential. Hohl calls this 'integral'. Integral means to work in accordance with one's own strength 'langsam, im Maße deiner Möglichkeit, *deiner* Kräfte nur, eins nach dem andern'<sup>592</sup> Behind this is an idea of proportionality<sup>593</sup> and the overcoming of alienation. This has consequences for Hohl's understanding on competition and on his concept of movement (*Bewegung*). It is the task of the individual to find his or her own unalienated movement. The *integral wahre Beziehung*<sup>594</sup> is according to Hohl the right way of creating art. *Integral* is then used not just for strength or movement but also as a measurement of *Erkennen*.<sup>595</sup>

According to Hohl, the idea of the integral is strongly connected to the idea of the *adäquate Bewegung*. From the quotation given below it is obvious that it is necessary to find the right

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<sup>591</sup> cf. N II 124, II 151, II 152, II 200, V 9, IV 6, IV 20; related to politics NN 277, N II 319, II 253, II 321.

<sup>592</sup> N I 20.

<sup>593</sup> N IV 6, cf. also N II 200.

<sup>594</sup> N II 152.

<sup>595</sup> 'Unser Erkennen auf *richtigem* Wege ist zwar grenzenlos; hier aber zeigen sich die Grenzen... *solchen* Weges des Erkennens. Der zweitgenannte Weg ist der individuelle, menschlich aufzeigbare Weg; der erste der des integralen Erkennens: sozusagen der übermenschliche Weg.'  
N II 151, Hohl's ellipsis.

movement, which again stresses that it is a movement that is one's own movement, without any alienation. His example for this is swimming. Hohl criticises the way records are measured: 'Man müßte eben edlere, höhere Rekordregistrierungen haben... solche, die nur dem Rechnung tragen, der integral schwimmt (= seinen momentanen gemessenen Kräften gegenüber einen Rekord aufstellt).'<sup>596</sup> Achievements are to be measured in terms of overcoming one's own limitations and taking into account individual circumstances, not according to external standards. However, movement is not limited to just swimming, but this example can be extrapolated especially to the realm of art, where art has to be judged according to immanent standards. This is closely related to another key concept of Hohl: *Arbeit*, cf. VI.2. The work one does to create art needs to be done with the right kind of movement and thereby work and movement share the same requirement of non-alienation:

Deutlicher müßte es werden am Schwimmen, vor allem dem Schwimmen, das nach Rekorden trachtet. Aber kein Gleichnis genügt da mehr ganz. Nur 'das Leben', das heißt das Gegenstück, das parallel Verlaufende, die Erweiterung, die Schwester der Kunst kann es lehren. Daß nur adäquate Bewegung Weg überwinden, daß aber jede unadäquate Bewegung die Überwindung von Weg verunmöglicht, ist nicht mehr ausdrückbar, sondern nur an zwei Orten, in der Kunst und 'im Leben' zu erfahren.<sup>597</sup>

Despite making a distinction between adequate<sup>598</sup> and inadequate movement, Hohl speaks in this context also about an integral movement. This means that it is not about the one who wins or is stronger by an objective standard, but instead the actual winner is the one who makes the best use of his or her strength at any given time. Applied to art, this means that works of art have to be judged according to their *Werkimmanenz*. Other important observations resulting

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<sup>596</sup> N II 172, Hohl's ellipsis

<sup>597</sup> N II 172.

<sup>598</sup> In N II 171 Hohl mentions an adequate idea which means that he extends the concept of 'adequate' beyond the concept of movement and also applies it to the realm of ideas and art.

from the above quotation are that Hohl sees a parallel between art and life: art is an extension of life. This will be discussed in more detail in Section VI.3. The integral further requires the artist to focus on the small: ‘Er soll nie aufhören, jeden kleinsten Teil seiner Formen zu prüfen und dem Gewollten entsprechender zu machen. Jede Anstrengung zur Erweiterung seines Bereiches, zum Ausfüllen anderer und größerer (“größerer”) Formen, als durch seine Natur und seine Zeit bedingt sind, sei ihm verboten.’<sup>599</sup> Hohl applies the concept of the integral to his view on writing as well.<sup>600</sup>

In I 10 he mentions this idea of movement so early that it indicates its importance. This mention of movement is in close proximity to his ideas on art; he speaks about the necessity of trust in the element and to act in art and life without anger. ‘Es ist nicht Kraft, was den guten Schwimmer macht, sondern das Vertrauen in das Element, das schon körperlich gewordene Vertrauen.’<sup>601</sup> Finally, Hohl may have found his inspiration for his idea of swimming in the poem ‘Dichtermuth’ by Hölderlin, although he mentions this only in the *Nachnotizen*.<sup>602</sup> This poem emanates a very life-affirming spirit and speaks of a worldview or a way of being a poet that is strongly positive, relating to courage and in general to Hohl’s theme of non-premature reconciliation in the *Notizen*. In II 70 Hohl describes the idea of movement related to a centre in which the centre is still but life-giving. This echoes his idea of *hereinbrechende Ränder*, but the contrast here is that the centre is regarded as stagnant and

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<sup>599</sup> N V 9.

<sup>600</sup> NN 243.

<sup>601</sup> N I 10.

<sup>602</sup> NN 37.

not productive of new ideas. The exploration of *Bewegung* leads directly to the examination of a specific kind of *Bewegung*, sport, in the following section.

#### IV.3.1.3.1 Sport and Daily Life

*Kraft* was of importance to Hohl in the seemingly mundane aspect of sport<sup>603</sup> which he called *culture physique*.<sup>604</sup> Throughout his life he was known for taking regular exercise, ambitious mountain tours and of repeatedly swimming across Lake Geneva.<sup>605</sup> Achievements were noted down meticulously and sporting activities were accompanied by his knowledge of food, cooking and the right nutrition.<sup>606</sup> For him, health was a condition for mental (*geistige*) activity. Pellin writes about Hohl's view on the healthy body: 'Der (trainierte) Körper ermöglicht und unterstützt geistiges Tun, Arbeiten, das Hohl als weltverändernd versteht. Und dieses Verhältnis von Körper und geistiger Tat ist es auch, die ihn so aufbringt gegen den Kraftmenschen Robert Hurluschka, bei dem die Muskeln so überentwickelt sind und die mit grosser Emphase präsentierten Produkte seiner geistigen Tätigkeit – die Gesundheit als

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<sup>603</sup> Stüssi suggests that Hohl's sporting activities prevented him from being damaged seriously from substance and alcohol abuse. In fact Hohl sometimes planned his alcohol abuse methodically and compensated it with sport. Stüssi, p. 164.

<sup>604</sup> NN 268.

<sup>605</sup> cf. for Hohl and his sportive activities: Elio Pellin, 'Mit dampfendem Leib': *Sportliche Körper bei Ludwig Hohl, Annemarie Schwarzenbach, Walther Kauer und Lorenz Lotmar* (Zurich: Chronos Verlag, 2008).

<sup>606</sup>cf. Hohl on nutrition (*Ernährung*): 'Das ist zu viel - jenes ist zu viel; das heißt, das schlägt um ins Ungute, jenes ins Ungute. Was denn tun? Es kommt auf die richtige Dosierung an: die *Ernährung* ist das Absolute! Die Jugend sucht ihr Heil immer in Systemen - statt in der Natur.' N II 248.

'Jede Tätigkeit, der die Komplemente, die Wurzeln, die Nebengewichte, die *Ernährung* fehlen, jede Tätigkeit, die *allein* alles sein muß, alles Leben bestreiten soll, - sie macht zuletzt bankrott.' N VII 159.



Selbstzweck – so dürftig sind.<sup>607</sup> This confirms the view that Hohl does not employ a mind-body split but sees both in conjunction with each other.<sup>608</sup>

Regarding daily life, for Hohl there is essentially no strong separation of daily life and the creation of art: ‘mächtige Schöpferkraft entwickelt auf dem Gebiet der Backkunst’.<sup>609</sup> Daily life, however, can also be experienced as obstacle. This is where young Hohl’s idea of duties belongs.<sup>610</sup> He distinguishes between two groups of duties: one that contains great things, being made for great humans, and the second that contains all smaller things and menial duties. Having to fulfil things belonging to the second group gives Hohl the same feeling of diminished power and leaves him feeling dissatisfied. This in fact reflects the problem that Rilke called the ‘alte Feindschaft zwischen dem Leben und der großen Arbeit’<sup>611</sup>. The older Hohl’s response to bridge this conflict is the notion of *Arbeit*, which, while it might mean the creation of art, it also used by Hohl for working towards a change of circumstance. It is here that the older Hohl of the *Notizen* abandons the idea of great humans that are beyond the menial tasks.<sup>612</sup> This has its roots as well in the *Jugendtagebuch* where he formulates the following insight:

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<sup>607</sup> Elio Pellin, ‘Dicker Bizeps und kerzendünne Ärmchen. Die “culture physique” bei Ludwig Hohl’, in Peter Erismann, Rudolf Prost and Hugo Sarbach (eds.), *Alles ist Welt* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2004), pp. 116 - 125, p. 124. Pellin mentions in this essay that Hohl at some point had worked as a sports teacher.

<sup>608</sup> Stüssi, p 57 supports this view. cf. N. VII 137.

cf. for Nietzsche, the aphorism and the body: Jill Marsden, ‘Nietzsche and the Art of the Aphorism’, pp. 22 - 37. It is worth pursuing the question to see whether other aphoristic writers also reject the mind-body split.

<sup>609</sup> JT p. 100. Beringer, *Hohls Weg*, p. 31.

<sup>610</sup> ‘I ist das Große, für große Menschen Geschaffene  
II ist das Kleine, Elende, Verächtliche, dessen Erfüllung nie Freude bringt. Für Stümper u. Schafsköpfe aber ist alles dasselbe.’ JT, p. 81.

<sup>611</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, *Requiem* (Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1921), p. 15.

<sup>612</sup> N I 1.

Denn wenn der Künstler Werke schafft: Am Ende ist es nichts anderes, als etwas aus seinem Innern ans Licht fördern, einen Teil von seinem Ich in die Außenwelt stellen, damit er etwas sieht von sich! Und damit draußen etwas ist, das ihn versteht!<sup>613</sup>

In the *Nuancen und Details* Hohl resumes this thought and makes it a definition of his main concept *Arbeit*:

Arbeit ist immer ein Inneres; und immer muß sie nach einem Außen gerichtet sein. Tätigkeit, die nicht nach einem Außen gerichtet ist, ist keine Arbeit; Tätigkeit, die nicht ein inneres Geschehen ist, ist keine Arbeit.<sup>614</sup>

In the *Notizen* Hohl refers to this very passage in his very first aphorism about *Arbeit*. This shows *in nuce* how interconnected his work and his writing is, and how consistent he was. Hohl acknowledged also how much *Kraft* is required to maintain one's dignity when one is poor and has no money,<sup>615</sup> leading to a discussion of how he viewed authority and social power.

#### **IV.3.1.4 Authority and Social Power**

Hohl had a strong awareness of social forms of power as well. Two people may be opponents and one may be stronger than the other, yet this other weaker person may be able to muster some kind of external authority (social status, money) which is seen as another weapon not available to the other person, and against which the other person is powerless. He writes in the *Jugendtagebuch*:

Wenn der Mensch dem Menschen gegenüberstehend den andern besiegt,  
wenn die Kraft des Menschen nicht mehr ausreicht, dann kommt eine

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<sup>613</sup> JT p. 114.

<sup>614</sup> NuD II 51.

<sup>615</sup> N II 163, II 233, II 259, II 272, VII 101 where Hohl states that lack of money is a cause of disease and illness.

weitere Waffe zur Geltung: Eben die Schulmeisterautorität: Und was habe *ich* dieser Waffe entgegensetzen? *Nichts!*<sup>616</sup>

In the second chapter of the *Notizen* Hohl writes about this more elaborately. He distinguishes several sorts of strength. It is furthermore a very important passage, as this clarifies the relationship between *Kraft* and *Wirklichkeit* and sheds light on how Hohl thought about authority. It also shows what he regarded as a remedy against authority:

Es ist zu begreifen, daß der gewöhnliche Mensch so über alles der Autorität, der Macht huldigt. Wer nicht in ihrer Endlosigkeit die Fäden erblickt (die dynamischen Verhältnisse), der hält sich an das, was wenigstens *einige* Fäden in ihrer (vorübergehenden) Vereinigung darstellt. Gegenmittel also (unfehlbares, selber handelndes:) die Erkenntnis. Die Kraft existiert erstens als überall, universal vorhandene, dann aber auch als in einem Menschen momentan vorhandene und uns sehr sichtbar gegenüber tretende. So ein Machthaber *ist* ein Stück Kraft (Wirklichkeit) und es ist also nicht unlegitim, wenn jene, denen kein anderes Erscheinen, Sichtbarwerden der Kraft (Wirklichkeit) (in einem vergleichbaren Ausmaß) möglich ist, ihm huldigen. Der im Erkennen fortschreitende Mensch aber schreitet auch fort im Erscheinenlassen der Kräfte; Kräfte werden sichtbar in größerem und größerem Kreis: für ihn gibt es nicht mehr so eine Autorität. Für ihn ist jener Machthaber schon wie ein Steinblock geworden und er besitzt die Erde; nur wie ein Stück Strick (Verbindung *einiger* Fäden) und er besitzt (durch Erkennen) die Natur: ewig hervorbringende Milliarden Fäden, aus denen man Millionen Stricke drehen kann. Den Milliarden Fäden der Natur gegenüber steht *ein* Strick: Hund und Katze, die zufällig in seiner Nähe sind, wenn er sich bewegt, verehren ihn. (Verehrung und partielle Abhängigkeit sind zwei Dinge.)<sup>617</sup>

This aphorism says a number of things about the nature of *Kraft* and authority. Hohl distinguishes two kinds of powers. First, power is a universal principle; it exists everywhere and universally. Secondly, it does exist in humans, for instance in a powerful person (*Machthaber*). In this way such a person can become an element of reality (*Wirklichkeit*), *Kraft* is here equated with reality. Power becomes more visible the more one knows.

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<sup>616</sup> JT, p. 62.

<sup>617</sup> N II 181.

Knowledge is connected to power via nature: Hohl has a metaphor for nature, eternally recreating strands (*Fäden*). This corresponds to Hohl's concept of *Linien*, to be discussed in the section about choice (IV.3.2.2). The ability to find connections (here *Verbindung*, but links to the aforementioned *Zusammenhänge*) between strands is equivalent to growing knowledge and an increased ability to see power. As soon as the *Erkenntnis* grows, one is less vulnerable to authority.

Finally, Hohl refuses to measure himself against social authorities and the young Hohl preferred to test his strength in the mountains, which he regarded as *eine natürliche Kraft*,<sup>618</sup> as natural authorities.

### **IV.3.2 Geisteskräfte**

The following sections outline the characteristics of the *Geisteskräfte*. Special attention is given to the function of the *Geisteskräfte* in Hohl's theory of creativity and, secondly, what additional meanings these concepts have for Hohl. They are represented in the following order: first courage, because this is a future-oriented power: then choice, because a decision is required before one can pursue a creative project; and finally, the patience that is needed to succeed with that project.

#### **IV.3.2.1 Courage (*Mut*)**

This section discusses Hohl's concept of courage, which has a visionary meaning directed towards the future. A second important meaning or task for courage is the overcoming of

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<sup>618</sup> JT p. 46.

obstacles or difficulties, ‘das überaus Schwere’.<sup>619</sup> Hohl identifies thinking with courage, ‘Denken ist vor allem Mut’.<sup>620</sup> Courage in Hohl is regarded as a capacity that is directed at the future, something necessary to maintain the visionary, which was also emphasised by other thinkers: ‘Künstlerische Richtungen leben nicht allein von ihren Verwahrungen und Gegnerschaften, sondern von der Kraft ihrer Imagination und dem Mut, etwas Unerkanntes an den Himmel zu heben.’<sup>621</sup> Hans Blumenberg also describes courage in relation to the visionary, and, importantly, Blumenberg (the absolute metaphor of the crystal will be discussed in the following chapter), like Hohl, describes courage in relation to the image and uses the word *Kristallisationen*:

Durch dieses Implikationsverhältnis bestimmt sich das Verhältnis der Metaphorologie zur Begriffsgeschichte (im engeren terminologischen Sinne) als ein solches der Dienstbarkeit: die Metaphorologie sucht an die Substruktur des Denkens her anzukommen, an den Untergrund, die Nährlösung der systematischen Kristallisationen, aber sie will auch faßbar machen, mit welchem ›Mut‹ sich der Geist in seinen Bildern selbst voraus ist und wie sich im Mut zur Vermutung seine Geschichte entwirft.<sup>622</sup>

The future-orientated intention of courage is emphasised by Hohl’s statement that courage is the secure knowledge that one does not die.<sup>623</sup> In this sense, courage is one of the most life-

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<sup>619</sup> ‘Das heißt: Wo immer wirklicher Mut und wirkliche Kraft gezeigt worden sind, war es überaus schwer.’ NN 550.

<sup>620</sup> This is an important aphorism in which Hohl outlines his development regarding different stages of Denken. At the age of 30 he reached a state when he was able to think in a way which he describes as follows: ‘...sondern *Welt* Denken, das allseitige, das eine immer größere Summe von Gegenständen ergreifende (nicht die Summe ergreifend, sondern die Summanden), das immer mehr *verlangende*, das dynamische, mit der Welt fortschreitende, das Lernen verlangende Denken, das Denken ad infinitum, - kurz, das wirkliche, dauernde Denken.’ N VII 166/

<sup>621</sup> Peter Rühmkorf, *Werner Riegel '...beladen mit Sendung Dichter und armes Schwein'* (Zurich: Haffmanns Verlag, 1988), p. 27.  
cf. Nietzsche and Courage: Alexander Maria Zibis, *Die Tugend des Mutes: Nietzsches Lehre von der Tapferkeit* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2007).

<sup>622</sup> Blumenberg, *Paradigmen*, p. 13.

<sup>623</sup> ‘Angst ist meistens Unkenntnis der Dinge, aber der wahre Mut ist das sichere Wissen, daß man nicht sterbe (Wissen, das vielleicht sogar die Denkmöglichkeit in sich schließt, daß, falls man doch bei der Unternehmung unterliegen sollte, es unwichtig, auch das noch das richtige Leben sei).’ N XI 43.

affirming *Geisteskräfte*. According to Hohl, the dimension of art is not to be measured in dimensions, but by how courageous the artist was.<sup>624</sup> For Hohl, dimension means the length or brevity of a work of art. Here he is replying directly to the reproach to those who write short forms – and Hohl mentions aphoristic writers such as Lichtenberg, Pascal and Valéry – that they have not achieved the ‘große Form’.<sup>625</sup> Hohl emphasises this in the following aphorism in which he says that art should never be about imitation but is self-determined; it is about applying one’s creativity to ‘das dir Gegebene, Unbesiegte’.<sup>626</sup> One needs courage in creativity because some creative decisions are made in peril and loneliness.<sup>627</sup> Courage is necessary in art because something is created that before was thought not to be possible. Courage is the visionary element that enables us to go beyond the conceptual, and this ability is actually what constitutes freedom;<sup>628</sup> courage, not rationality, is the prerequisite of freedom

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<sup>624</sup> ‘Aber die Dimension der Kunst ist nicht die Dimension, *sondern der Mut.*’ N V 25.

<sup>625</sup> cf. Josipovici: ‘But that does not stop Wittgenstein, in this so typical of the great Modernists, struggling, in the Preface to the *Philosophical Investigations*, with the conundrum of whether he has written the series of fragments which follow because he is, whether through personal weakness or because of the temper of times, *not up to* writing the kind of large, coherent argument which came naturally to Locke or Kant, or whether he wrote it as a series of fragments *because that is precisely what the argument he was trying to put forward demanded.* Sometimes he thinks it is the one, sometimes the other. There is no-one to tell him which is right. All he knows is that he, being who he is, could have done it in no other way.’

Gabriel Josipovici, *What Ever Happened to Modernism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), p. 142

It is important that Josipovici contrasts the prejudice of the mental incapacity of the aphoristic writer with *werkimmanente* reasons for fragmentary writing. Josipovici’s phrase ‘series of fragments’ might indicate chains of thought kind of thinking in fragmentary writing.

cf. also: ‘If Nietzsche must provide his writing in pieces, it is not because language fails him, but because of the demands of his intellectual conscience and the demands of scientific discourse as he envisions it.’ Westerdale, p. 84.

<sup>626</sup> N V 26.

<sup>627</sup> N VII 14.

<sup>628</sup> ‘Diese Erkenntnisse haben ihre Wahrheit immer nur wieder im Ganzen, in dem sie einzelne Bilder sind, eingebettete, abgerungene oder schön kontrastierende Bilder. Wenn wir nicht über unsere Begriffe immer hinausträumen, dann nehmen wir uns, was wir sind. Wir sind im genauen Sinne immer mehr, als wir wissen können. Daß wir uns wissend nicht haben, ist gerade die Freiheit, die die Landschaft mit uns hat, auch da, wo sie uns bedrohlich scheint: denn wir sind ja nicht Herr über unsre Träume. Aber es sind doch immer unsere Träume, die wir haben.’

Rolf Vollmann, *Jean Paul: Das Tolle neben dem Schönen* (Frankfurt/Main: Eichborn, 1996), pp. 169-170.

according to Hohl: ‘Ich glaube, die Frage der Willensfreiheit ist je und je nur entschieden worden durch Mut.’<sup>629</sup>

#### IV.3.2.2 Choice (*Wahl*)<sup>630</sup>

The concept of choice is of relevance not just because of its literal meaning but also because it is inherently connected to Hohl’s concept of line (*Linie*)<sup>631</sup>, which can be understood as an equivalent to the chains of thought. Choice is Hohl’s capacity of discernment.

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<sup>629</sup> NN 19.

However, Hohl regards the question of Willensfreiheit partially as one of the three Irrlehren:

‘Die drei Irrlehren lauten:

A) Der Mensch ist das Produkt der äußeren Umstände

B) Der Mensch ist das Produkt seiner Erbmasse

C) Der Mensch ist das Produkt seines Willens

Also:

A) Der Mensch ist unfrei und zwar ganz unfrei

B) Der Mensch ist unfrei und zwar ganz unfrei

C) Der Mensch ist frei und zwar ganz frei’

Hohl states that all those three aspects at the same time have an effect on one’s life and each of them affects any different person to a different proportion. Hohl concludes that:

‘Das einfache Geheimnis ist: Irrlehren werden sie erst wenn sich eine (sobald sich eine) (sofern sich eine) zur Alleingebieterin über menschliches Sein aufwirft.’

both Hohl quotes: Ludwig Hohl, ‘Die drei Irrlehren’, in: *Drehpunkt. Die Schweizer Literaturzeitschrift*, 118 (2004), pp. 75-77.

<sup>630</sup> The importance of choice as one of the important mental powers of Hohl is further enhanced when one looks at Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* in which Aristotle speaks of virtue being a habitus of choice.

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics (The Complete Works of Aristotle)*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 12th edn, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995). ii, p. 1748, 1106b36).

cf. Nickl, p. 28.

Although it is not clear how much Aristotle Hohl had read, he did appreciate him, albeit not as much as Heraclitus. ‘Heraklit, sicher der größte Geist des Altertums (womit ich gegen Plato, Aristoteles, und noch einige, Pythagoras, nichts sagen will; diese haben Einzelaufgaben gelöst, die Heraklit nicht löste).’ N IX 55 n1

<sup>631</sup> cf. examples in which Hohl uses the *Linie* or related expressions: N I 19, N I 36, N II 2, N II 94, N II 109, N II 138, N II 241, N II 273, N V 17, N VI 5, N VI 16, N VI 31, N VII 94, N XI 10, N XI 22, N XII 9, N XII 72, N XII 153, N II 181.

Paul Good rejects the view that Hohl’s thinking uses a line metaphor and instead he suggests that it is circular.

This however disregards the textual evidence in the *Notizen* and Hohl’s own use of the *Linie*.

Good, Paul, “‘Einzelnes eigenes Leben zur Erkenntnis bringen, das ergibt allemal Kunst’: Ludwig Hohls

Philosophie vom Standpunkt des Schaffenden aus’, in Jean-Marie Valentin (ed.), *Ludwig Hohl (1904-1980)*.

*Akten des Pariser Kolloquiums/Actes du Colloque de Paris 14.-16.1.1993* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1994), pp. 84-111. (p. 84).

In his essay on Gide, *Bemerkungen zu Gides Tagebuch*, Hohl starts by pondering the relation of a centre of a work, in this case Gide's Journal, to its margins. The centre of a work of art is described by Hohl by being accessible via particularities: '...welche Einzelheiten werden imstande sein, dem dunklen Zentrum, welches man nie nennen kann, welches man aber spüren muß, <sich> anzunähern, für es zu zeugen?'<sup>632</sup> Hohl asks the question how to approach this centre of a work, of any work, and characterises the work as being made up of a 'Nebeneinander von zahllosen Linien'.<sup>633</sup> This means that Hohl uses this concept of *Linien* in order to analyse literary works and not just in his own aphorisms.

In order to come to an understanding of a work of art, one needs to trace lines (*Linien*), and in particular those one assumes might lead to that concealed centre. That Hohl speaks here of a concealed centre is a reversal of his idea of the *hereinbrechende Ränder* where the centre is visible and the margins are concealed. In order to uncover the concealed, whether it is at the margins or the centre, one needs the capacity of choice. Choosing in this context means to choose the one line to follow: 'Die verschiedenen Linien kann man freilich nicht zusammenfassen, es wird wirklich nur möglich sein, an Einzelnes anzuknüpfen oder einzelne Linien aus dieser Vielheit von Dingen hervortreten zu lassen. Aber: welche Linien? Oder: diese Linien, die man zeigen will, muß man wählen.'<sup>634</sup> Specifically, because there are so many lines in any work, to choose the right line requires another *Geisteskraft*: courage. Those choices also always imply the sacrifice of the unchosen lines. To trace lines in a work of art is necessary not just for the understanding and interpretation of a work but also for the creation

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<sup>632</sup> MW pp. 46 - 47.

<sup>633</sup> MW p. 46.

<sup>634</sup> MW p. 46.



of a work where the artist needs to invent those lines of thought. Hohl expresses his doubts about his creative abilities in the *Epischen Grundschriften*: ‘zweifle aber bisweilen an der Kraft der Erfindung der großen Linien’<sup>635</sup>.

To Hohl, then, courage is another example of the complex concept because it works in conjunction with choice. The point at which courage and choice meet is the place (*Ort*) in which ‘das Heroische mit der Reinheit der Formen zusammenfließt, – das künstlerisch Schöpferische’.<sup>636</sup> This means that courage and choice are of existential necessity, and not just in the process of reading and trying to understand a creative work, but also in writing. Hohl mentions *Wahl* in the *Notizen* in an aphorism discussing the difference between writing and reading, which Hohl does not regard as in opposition to each other. The only difference between reading and writing according to Hohl is choice; the choice of which thoughts to follow, which to emphasise (*Betonung*), or which words to write.

*Wahl* here becomes a criterion of direction and discernment; a line that is also a consequence of analogical thinking: ‘Das Ergebnis eines solchen Erkenntnisprozesses ist nicht ein starrer Begriff, eine unumstößliche Regel, sondern vielmehr eine höchste Ahnung der immerwährenden Lebensformel, die sich im Gefühl abbilden lässt. Das Prinzip, das zur Erkenntnis des Gesetzlichen in seiner lebendigen Anschaulichkeit führt, die naturgemäße Methode, ist die Reihe.’<sup>637</sup> This is why Hohl’s *Geisteskräfte*, with the exception of choice, are

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<sup>635</sup> Stüssi, p. 151. Stüssi quotes Hohl from Hohl’s unpublished *Epische Grundschriften*, EG 6, 5.7.1926.

<sup>636</sup> MW p. 46.

<sup>637</sup> Werner Fuchs, *Möglichkeitswelt: Zu Ludwig Hohls Dichtung und Denkformen* (Bern, Frankfurt/Main, Las Vegas: Peter Lang, 1980), p. 57.

feelings. Hohl mentions the image of the *Kette* once in the *Nachnotizen*. In this aphorism Hohl says that there is nothing permanent in life and speaks of a chain of states (*Zustände*), of changes (*Veränderungen*) that constitute an image for eternal life.<sup>638</sup>

#### IV.3.2.3 Patience (*Geduld*)<sup>639</sup>

This section discusses Hohl's concept of patience and how it was influenced by Goethe and Gide by following the approach in *Mut und Wahl* where Hohl feels that patience is generally not understood. He mentions it in II 308 of the *Notizen* in relation to Goethe. 'Zu Goethe. Daß das Höchste Geduld ist, ja. Aber von zehn werden neun *diese* Geduld mißverstehen.'<sup>640</sup> Hohl is strongly influenced by Goethe in his thoughts on patience, and also in this: 'Glaube, Liebe, Hoffnung fühlten einst in ruhiger, geselliger Stunde einen plastischen Trieb in ihrer Natur: sie befeißigten sich zusammen und schufen ein liebliches Gebilde, eine Pandora im höheren Sinne, die Geduld.'<sup>641</sup> In V 24 Hohl discusses patience in relation to Gide's admiration (*Hochschätzung*) of patience and connects patience to sincerity: 'Künstlerische Äußerung ist nicht eine Summe von vielen Dingen, die mühsam zusammengehalten werden, sondern die unmittelbare Auswirkung eines gesteigerten Daseins, das man erreicht hat - erreicht durch

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<sup>638</sup> NN 164.

Tim Ingold in *The Life of Lines* contrasts lines with blobs. Blobs are described as having 'volume, mass, density' and as constituting a monopoly. Lines in contrast are described as having 'torsion, flexion and vivacity. They give us life. Life began when lines began to emerge and to escape the monopoly of blobs. Where the blob attests to the principle of territorialisation, the line bears out the contrary principle of deterritorialisation.'

Tim Ingold, *The Life of Lines* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), p. 4.

<sup>639</sup> Ssecondary literature on Hohl and patience:

Antonin Moeri, 'Hohl und die Geduld', *Drehpunkt. Die Schweizer Literaturzeitschrift*, 118 (2004) 47-50.

Jean-Marie Valentin, 'Hohl, lecteur et critique d'Andre Gide', in Jean-Marie Valentin (ed.), *Ludwig Hohl (1904-1980). Akten des Pariser Kolloquiums* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1994) pp. 51-64.

<sup>640</sup> N II 308, N XII 91.

<sup>641</sup> Goethe, xii, p. 372, Nr. 56. cf. N V 24.

also 'Nicht Kunst und Wissenschaft allein, *Geduld* will bei dem Werke sein.'

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust I*, lines 2370-2371 (Goethes Werke, ed. Erich Trunz, 10th edn, 14vols (Munich: Beck, 1982), iii, 76).

Entwicklung seiner Gaben auf einem langen Weg der Gewissenhaftigkeit - ; die einfache Äußerung von einer Stufe, einer Ebene aus, auf der man *lebt*.<sup>642</sup>

Hohl's *Dreistufenlehre*<sup>643</sup> might also have been influenced by Gide's observation: 'Yet I know from experience, and I go about repeating to myself that the triumph in art is achieved only through a series of successive slight victories. Only the second-rate is easy. I must struggle above all against this new enemy: impatience.'<sup>644</sup> Hohl formulates a very similar insight with his *Dreistufenlehre* in which he explicates his concept of work (*Arbeit*). It is also an instruction. When one has a big idea one ought to divide that big idea into small ideas, which are then to be transformed into small deeds:

Das menschliche Arbeiten, das weltverändernde Wirken, vollzieht sich in drei Stufen. Diese sind:  
Die große Idee  
Die (der großen Idee entsprechenden) Einzelvorstellungen; anders gesagt: die Applizierung der großen Idee, ihre Auflösung in kleine Ideen, Ideen des Einzelnen  
Die (den Einzelvorstellungen entsprechenden) Einzelausführungen.  
[...]  
-- Diese drei Stufen sollen das Ganze des menschlichen Handelns bilden?  
Sie bilden das Ganze, sind alles. - Wo bleibt dann die große Tat?  
"Folgt dann die große Tat etwa von selber?" Nein. Sie ist schon geschehen.<sup>645</sup>

Hohl writes about patience in the *Nachnotizen* that it is the entry to art and rates it more highly than courage: 'Mut kann jeder haben [...] Aber eine Sache zu tragen durch die Not

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<sup>642</sup> N V 24.

<sup>643</sup> Hohl very often tends to formulate statements in three steps cf. N II 10, 23, 50, 74, 120, 224 & cf. NN 4, 6, 161, 361.

<sup>644</sup> Gide, *Journals III*, p. 310, (18. August 1934).

<sup>645</sup> N I 18.  
cf. for a different formulation: N II 224.

seiner Bedingung hindurch...'<sup>646</sup> One can conclude that patience in this respect is a requirement for the creation of art that has a function of consolidation and tenacity. André Gide writes: 'I have never produced anything good except by a long succession of slight efforts. No one has more deeply meditated or better understood than I Buffon's remark about patience.'<sup>647</sup> One could suggest that patience is preparation for those revelations and that this does contradict with Hohl being against preparation.<sup>648</sup> But this is only an apparent contradiction, because it was important to Hohl to develop a kind of attitude to work to find unalienated ways of working so that those revelations, the *hereinbrechenden Ränder* could be experienced.<sup>649</sup>

A striking example of Hohl actually having lived out this very patience can be seen in the complicated publication history of the *Notizen*. The publisher Artemis, having published the first half of the *Notizen*, refused to publish the second half. Hohl sued and ten years later won.

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<sup>646</sup> NN 306, last omission Hohl. cf. also NN 538

cf. also Henrich, *Werke im Werden*, pp. 72-73. *On Beharrlichkeit*: 'Die Bedeutung einer philosophischen Position lässt sich auch von dem Maß an Beharrlichkeit her verstehen, in der sie sich im Verlauf ihrer Genese einem der Antagonismen ausgesetzt hat, die für die Problemlage der Philosophie charakteristisch sind.'

<sup>647</sup> André Gide, *The Journals of André Gide*, Vol II: 1914 - 1927 (London: Secker & Warburg 1948), p. 104. Buffon's remark is this: 'Genius is but a greater aptitude for patience.' quoted in Gide, p. 104.

cf. also: 'Piano practice. It is useless, even harmful, to persist in working too long at one time over the same passage. It is better to return to it often; this is what constitutes real patience. Nothing is less romantic. To a vehement capture by assault, it prefers a slow and methodical siege.

Likewise, for profound difficulties in artistic creation. Likewise in piety and knowledge of God: the apparently most sudden revelation is preceded by a gradual, slow preparation. The work of art is always the result of an unsatisfied perseverance.'

Gide, p. 129.

<sup>648</sup> N II 118, N II 197. Hohl is generally against any form of preparation of creativity, but activities done for themselves, as outlined in N II 118, show that Hohl distinguishes between a 'right' and a 'wrong' preparation.

<sup>649</sup> cf. Kafka: 'All human errors stem from impatience, a premature breaking off of methodical procedure, an apparent fencing-in of what is apparently at issue.' Franz Kafka, *The Zürau Aphorisms* (London: Harvill Secker, 2006), p. 4.

This case was a landmark case strengthening the rights of authors.<sup>650</sup> This long-term approach speaks against characterising the aphorism as short or brief, which might be an explanation for why aphoristic writers might value long novels. This in consequence leads to the notion of *Weg*. For Hohl this is not unimportant. As seen before, he wrote that the length of a way is equivalent to the strength of a *geistige Position*. This makes length an even more important criterion in understanding the aphorism. The notion of *Weg* in the *Notizen* is quite important. He mentions *Weg* nine times in the first two sections, with two further mentions later on and a number of mentions in the *Nachnotizen*.

This raises the question how *Weg* is different from *Kette* or *Linie*. The main difference is that *Linien* are to be traced in a work, or a mental (*geistige*) development, whereas a *Weg* is something that is related to the actions of the individual. In the very first aphorism *Weg* is connected to Hohl's main concept *Arbeit*: 'Der richtige Weg ist die Entfaltung der vollsten Tätigkeit, die uns möglich ist. Der vollsten: an unserem Vermögen (unseren Bedingungen) und an der Wirkung auf andere (uns wie andere) gemessen.'<sup>651</sup> The right path of direction, of *Weg*, is linked to the unfolding of our capacities within our possibilities. It is very noticeable that Hohl's focus on the activity is directly linked to the individual's capacities. The full unfolding of human activity is not to be measured according to an objective standard, but instead according to the inner conditions and constraints the individual is subjected to. Hohl is also concerned with the effect of our actions on others.

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<sup>650</sup> cf. Charles Linsmayer, "'Ein typischer Fall von wehrloser Qualität': Ludwig Hohl und der Prozess gegen Artemis", in Peter Erismann, Rudolf Prost and Hugo Sarbach (eds.), *Alles ist Welt* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2004), pp. 57-68.

<sup>651</sup> N I 1, p. 11.

#### IV.3.2.4 Belief (*Glaube*)

Belief plays a fundamental role in Hohl's thought, mainly as a consolidating function. This section outlines his various interpretations of *Glaube*, which is occasionally interchangeably used with *Treue*. Hohl distinguishes four different meanings, firstly belief as *Treue*, secondly belief in the religious sense, thirdly, belief in the social sense and, fourthly, belief in an epistemological sense. *Treue* is not so much understood as faithfulness in a relationship but strongly related to one's own personality, or better, in the consolidation of or belief in one's own personality: 'Treue wahrt uns die Person'.<sup>652</sup> Belief is understood in the religious sense: unlike Nietzsche, Hohl did not reject religion but advocated an individual approach to belief, not just the repetition of religious phrases.<sup>653</sup> However, in his ruminations on the problem of death or the fear thereof, he rejected the traditional belief in the church, paradise and salvation (*Erlösung*). A belief in those things he calls 'manic belief'<sup>654</sup> and, for him, this kind of belief is not enough to enable one to find a reconciliation with death. In that case *unvoreilige Versöhnung* is required (to be discussed in the last chapter).

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<sup>652</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust II*, lines 9984 (Goethes Werke, ed. Erich Trunz, 10th edn, 14vols (Munich: Beck, 1982), iii, 301).

Furthermore, Hohl discusses belief in the world in relation to Goethe NN 438 & 454.

also cf N XI 39.

cf. 'Der Treueste aber wird der Stärkste sein.' NN 537.

<sup>653</sup> 'Hohl erlebt als junger Erwachsener eine intensive religiöse Phase in Abstoßung von institutionellem Christentum, Kirche und Dogmatik. Gerade die Verarbeitung seiner Kindheitsleiden bringt ihn dazu, aus der Bibel etwas anderes herauszulesen, als die Generation seines Vaters in sie hineingelegt hat: nicht moralische Ängstlichkeit, Opferhaltung, Jenseits-Trost, sondern Ermutigung zu freierer Entfaltung des Lebens und Widerstand gegen abwertende, demütigende Konzepte.' Stüssi, p. 37.

cf. Hohl's views on religion according to Stüssi pp. 129, 131, 146, 185. Lafond, p. 15.

cf. Hohl's views on religion and Richtigkeit, NN 151.

cf. Haupt, pp. 51-65.

<sup>654</sup> N XI 3, cf. NN 164.

cf. also: There are similarities to Konrad Bänninger whom Hohl has read and who writes about belief:

'Freilich ist Gott ein Wort, und alles, was wir von ihm wissen, sind Worte; daß aber mehr da ist, als ich weiß, und daß es mehr und besser als all das ist, daß wir jenem dunklen Grund trauen dürfen, wenn sonst auf nichts in der Welt, das muß ich bejahen. [...] Wir zeugen immer von Gott aus eigener Kraft heraus. Das wahre Zeugnis ist nur das persönliche.' K. Bänninger, *Geist des Werdens*, pp. 19-20.

As a third meaning, according to Hohl there is a social dimension to belief, in that belief of others is needed in order to achieve something.<sup>655</sup> The more people believe in a certain person, the more that person might achieve. In this sense it is consistent that Hohl then writes that ‘Kraft ist akkumulierter Glaube’.<sup>656</sup> Belief is a requirement, a precondition for the creation of art and in an additional meaning it is comforting: ‘Der Glaube wärmt uns’<sup>657</sup> which is where it is life affirming, but only when it is a belief in the positive while not being naive.<sup>658</sup>

Regarding the epistemological relation of *Glaube* and *Erkenntnis*, Hohl states – true to his insight that *Erkenntnisse* cannot be kept and have to be gained anew – that *Erkenntnis* becomes belief. That does not mean belief as such but a new form of belief that has its foundation in *Erkenntnis*.<sup>659</sup> For Hohl there is no opposition between *Glaube* and *Wissen*; rather, they are very similar: ‘nur in Schattierungen verschieden.’<sup>660</sup> *Glaube* has more permanence than *Erkenntnis*. According to him, any belief can only be conquered by a deeper belief.<sup>661</sup>

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<sup>655</sup> N II 44.

<sup>656</sup> N II 63. ‘Was ist ein starker Muskel? Akkumulierter Glaube, niedergeschlagen ins Körperliche.’ N II 63.

<sup>657</sup> N XII 24.

<sup>658</sup> NN 8.

<sup>659</sup> ‘Erkenntnis kann sich nicht lange erhalten. Es sinkt dann zurück in die dauerhaftere Form des Glaubens. (Natürlich des neuen, des auf der Erkenntnis ruhenden Glaubens. [...])’ N II 263.

<sup>660</sup> ‘Der subjektive Wert von Glauben und vollem Wissen ist genau derselbe. Differenzen zeigen sich nur in der Beziehung zur Außenwelt.’ N II 292. cf. also NN 540.

<sup>661</sup> NN 399.

#### IV.4 Tenderness (*Zartheit*) and the Immense (*das Gewaltige*)

This section deals with the complementary counterforce to what can be termed the more heroic *Geisteskräfte*, such as courage, patience and choice. As seen before, Müller for instance has accused Hohl of pomposity,<sup>662</sup> but this section will show that his theory of art relied also on a focus on nuances and details, smallness, receptivity and trust,<sup>663</sup> as already indicated in reference to Hans Saner's essay on the relationship in Hohl between the *das Große* and *das Kleine*. This relationship is not to be underestimated because: 'Der Aphorismus zieht gerade daraus seine evokatorische Kraft, daß er sich als Einzelnes auf ein Ganzes hin entwirft, das nur für Augenblicke, das nur durch höchste intellektuelle Anstrengung sich vergegenwärtigt - und zwar als Ganzheitsutopie, als die nie ganz aufgegebene Hoffnung des Menschen, zum zweitenmal vom Baum der Erkenntnis zu essen.'<sup>664</sup> *Zartheit* is not a *Geisteskraft* as such but, instead, rather a counter-polarity, reflecting here the dual nature not just of the aphorism but of Hohl's theory of creativity. For instance, Hohl sees the world as not entirely solid, as having *zarte Stellen*<sup>665</sup> which can be described as moments in which one can change the way of the world. *Zartheit* is further understood by Hohl as one of the two basic elements (*Grundelemente*) in art.<sup>666</sup> The other *Grundelement* is the *das Gewaltige*. Hohl mentions this in a different but analogous formulation in the *Epische Grundschriften*: 'Die Tat des Geistes besteht aus höchster

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<sup>662</sup> Müller, p. 34.

<sup>663</sup> cf. 'Es ist nicht Kraft, was den guten Schwimmer macht, sondern das Vertrauen in das Element, das *schon körperlich gewordene* Vertrauen.' N I 10. cf. N II 211.

<sup>664</sup> *Ideenparadiese*, p. 225.

<sup>665</sup> NN 313.

<sup>666</sup> N V 30.  
cf. also NN 418.



überschwenglicher Kraft u. feinstem Maß zugleich.<sup>667</sup> Hohl contrasts *Zartheit* in the *Notizen* twice in combination with *das Große*. Here Goethe is the example in which *Zartheit* and *das Große* meet. In the *Nachnotizen* Hohl characterises the world as not being entirely solid, and *zarte* is equated here with dynamic patches<sup>668</sup> in which the *Hereinbrechen der Ränder* takes place.

Hohl distinguishes *Zartheit* from *Zärtlichkeit* where *Zartheit* is what is important to Hohl and *Zärtlichkeit* in contrast is rejected because it is regarded as vulgar and crude in comparison to *Zartheit*.<sup>669</sup> Hohl thinks of *Zartheit* in connection with humility, in *Mut und Wahl* he writes about Albin Zollinger whom he characterises as *zart* and *demütig*.<sup>670</sup> A more general statement about tenderness and humility describes tenderness as a humility that does not demand a diminishment of the self: ‘*Zartheit ist jene Demut, die uns nicht vermindert.*’<sup>671</sup> This is a view of *Demut* that differs from the traditional view of, for instance, Meister Eckhart, who describes *Demut* as something that leads to a disappearance of the self: ‘Aber ich lobe abegescheidenheit vür alle dêmüeticheit, und ist daz dar umbe, wan dêmüeticheit mac gestân âne abegescheidenheit, sô enmac volkomeniu abegescheidenheit niht gestân âne volkomene

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<sup>667</sup> Stüssi, p. 151, referring to Hohl’s unpublished *Epische Grundschriften* EG 7, 27.7.1926. Further on in this paragraph from EG 7 Hohl also mentions *Ausdauer* as the third necessary ingredient. cf. also NuD I 29, 39, NuD III 9 where Hohl replaces the *delikate* with *Leichtigkeit* and *Kraft* with *Druck*.

<sup>668</sup> cf. Beringer, Hohls Weg, p. 152, NN 313.

<sup>669</sup> cf. N VI 39, VII 160, VII 161.

<sup>670</sup> MW, pp. 69, 74.

<sup>671</sup> N VII 161.

cf. also Max Mell on Stifter ‘...die echte Demut, die immer nur aus Kraft kommt...’ Max Mell, *Adalbert Stifter* (Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1939), p. 59.

cf. VII 26 where Hohl rejects a *Demut* that reduces life.

also: cf N VII 94 & IX 21.

cf. regarding Literature & *Demut*: IX 74.

dêmüeticheit, wan volkomeniu dêmüeticheit gât ûf ein vernihten sîn selbes.<sup>672</sup> However, this disappearance of the self is not a disappearance in the negative sense, and Hohl knows a disappearance of the self too in, as seen earlier, the disappearance of the self in *Kraft*. This is not a loss of identity, but rather an immersion of the self in the act of working.

In a more superficial sense of *Demut*, Hohl is not interested in the humiliation of people, nor in their elevation, but instead in their positive capacities: ‘Es ist überhaupt weitaus besser, daß man die Menschen nach ihrem Positiven beurteilt, als nach ihren übrigen Eigenschaften, - nicht danach, ob sie sich selbst erniedrigen oder erhöhen; daß man dies ganz außer acht läßt.’<sup>673</sup>

Furthermore, *Zartheit* and the *Gewaltige* represent different types of artists. Hohl’s examples for *Zartheit* are Albin Zollinger<sup>674</sup>, Katherine Mansfield<sup>675</sup> and Chekhov. Examples for the *Gewaltige* are Hölderlin, Dante and Michelangelo. An artist that combines both elements is Goethe.<sup>676</sup>

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<sup>672</sup> Meister Eckhart, Von Abegescheidenheit, (*Meister Eckharts Traktate*, ed. Josef Quint (Kohlhammer: Stuttgart 1963), pp. 405-406).

cf. Meister Eckhart, *Over God wil ik zwijgen* (Groningen: Historische Uitgeverij, 2014), p. 351.

‘But I extol detachment above humility for this reason: humility can exist without detachment, but perfect detachment cannot exist without perfect humility, for perfect humility ends in the destruction of self.’

Meister Eckhart, On Detachment, (*The Complete Mystical Works of Meister Eckhart*, ed. Maurice O’C. Walshe, (New York: Crossroad, 2009), p. 567).

<sup>673</sup> N VII 94.

‘Am Guten muß man die Dinge messen, nicht am Negativen.’ N XI 33.

<sup>674</sup> MW p. 69, p. 74.

<sup>675</sup> N V 30.

<sup>676</sup> N V 30.

## IV.5 Conclusion

In both Hohl and Nietzsche (as discussed in IV.2.1) it is obvious that the clear boundaries of the concept are distorted and finally disappear, and in this they reject the traditional view of the concept and, in Nietzsche's case, the Aristotelian notion of cause and effect. But Nietzsche was much closer with his insight to von Humboldt than he wanted to admit.<sup>677</sup>

Die Menschen verstehen einander nicht dadurch, dass sie sich Zeichen der Dinge wirklich hingeben, auch nicht dadurch, dass sie sich gegenseitig bestimmen, genau und vollständig denselben Begriff hervorzubringen, sondern dadurch, dass sie gegenseitig in einander dasselbe Glied der Kette ihrer sinnlichen Vorstellungen und inneren Begriffserzeugungen berühren, dieselbe Taste ihres geistigen Instruments anschlagen, worauf alsdann in jedem entsprechende, nicht aber dieselben Begriffe hervorspringen.<sup>678</sup>

Humboldt focusses on the individual itself, which has a priority over the concept as such.

Each individual can never find or understand the same concept as another person, but is able to find a similar one. In the case of Hohl, concepts are constitutive for his aesthetic theory, as they are in any traditional philosophical system. The decisive difference is that his concepts cannot be clearly defined, they can only be described in their various functions. Furthermore, it is important to note that, if concepts in aphoristic writing are used in an abbreviative sense, this is not due to an intention of subsumption, to neutralise the particular under the universal, but is instead a result of the urgency of a creative process. Those concepts constitute a habitus not just supportive for the creation of art but also for a good way of leading a life:

Courage (*Mut*) acts in a future-orientated, visionary life-affirming capacity. Courage is also related to freedom; our ability to be free depends on our ability to be courageous. Patience

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<sup>677</sup> Despite Nietzsche's critical attitude towards Humboldt (M 190, KSA 3.163; NL 1879 41[67], KSA 8.593-594; NL 1888 16[61], KSA 13.506) Trabant shows similarities in their thoughts. Trabant, *Mithridates*, pp. 296-298. especially Trabant, *Weltansichten*, pp. 35, 41. on how Humboldt's contributions have been ignored.

<sup>678</sup> Humboldt, *Über die Verschiedenheit des menschlichen Sprachbaues und ihren Einfluß auf die geistige Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechts*, vii, pp. 169-170.

(*Geduld*) is persistence, the ability to finish a work and to consolidate it. Belief has a consolidating function as well and is intrinsically linked to *Kraft*. Without belief one is unable to use one's *Kraft*. The ability to make the right decision, choice (*Wahl*) is a capacity of discernment or judgement in the traditional sense, and to decide to follow a line (*Linie*) to pursue. *Linie*, sometimes used interchangeably with *Faden*, is Hohl's equivalent of the chains of thought. That Hohl also uses a chains of thought construct shows the prevalence of this form of ordering thought in aphoristic writing. *Zartheit* and *das Gewaltige* are not so much *Geisteskräfte* but the two dimensions in art; again representing a duality that finds its expressions in aphorism. Both those dimensions represent different types of artists. *Zartheit*, together with the small ideas, is a necessary artistic counterforce to the heroic and a fundamental part of creative activity and connected to a certain notion of *Demut* that does not involve the loss of identity. Similarly, like the small ideas, it stands in an inseparable dialectic with the heroic. But apart from this, all these concepts have a range of meanings which makes them truly complex. This supposed conceptual imprecision<sup>679</sup> is precisely the condition of the possibility of thinking in concepts and aesthetic ideas, and it is the metaphorical side of the dual nature of aphoristic writing discussed in the next chapter.

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<sup>679</sup> 'Diese Unexaktheit ist die Bedingung der Möglichkeit des Denkens in Begriffen wie auch des Denkens in ästhetischen Ideen.' Bruno Liebrucks, 'Wilhelm von Humboldts Einsicht in die Sprachlichkeit des Menschen' in Bruno Liebrucks (ed.), *Erkenntnis und Dialektik* (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972), 196 - 218 (p. 215).

## V THE METAPHORICAL DIMENSION OF APHORISTIC WRITING

### V.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to investigate the metaphorical dimension of the aphorism in Hohl's writing<sup>680</sup>, focussing mainly on the concepts of phantasy and image. It is no coincidence that Hohl discusses both *Phantasie* and *Bild*, mostly in the *Bild* chapter of the *Notizen*, which is at the same time the last chapter of the *Notizen*. First I will look at Hohl's concept of phantasy, then at how Hohl views the relationship between rationality and phantasy and how his views on phantasy were influenced by Rudolf Kassner. According to Hohl, phantasy is the most powerful capacity of the human mind and enables us to discover the connections in the chains of thought. To put phantasy into a philosophical context, the next section V.3 briefly outlines Blumenberg's metaphorology, which is a part of his theory of non-conceptuality. This is in respect to both Hohl and Nietzsche having elaborate ideas on the concept: Hohl with his complex concept and Nietzsche with his concept of the fluid sense both deviate from the traditional Platonic idea of the concept.<sup>681</sup> This is very much in line with Hans Blumenberg's insight that with a change of emphasis towards the non-conceptual, which also includes the metaphorical, the role of rationality will change and requires a new assessment and a renewed focus and higher appreciation of phantasy. As we will see, Ludwig Hohl's concept of phantasy is quite elaborate, as it is an idea of phantasy that incorporates rationality rather than the other way round (where rationality subordinates and assimilates phantasy). In addition, this section introduces Blumenberg's absolute metaphor (the stone metaphor) and, after a discussion of Hohl's concept of the image, an absolute metaphor in Blumenberg's sense will be traced in

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<sup>680</sup> Moeri, p. 49.

<sup>681</sup> cf. IV.2.1.

aphoristic writing. The prevalence of the stone metaphor will be shown and traced on two levels, namely, how other writers assigned the stone metaphor, and how aphoristic writers themselves used the stone metaphor. This in addition involves a comparison of passages by Hohl, Nietzsche and Jürgen von der Wense who is introduced here in order to demonstrate general similarities between aphoristic writers. This comparison will be done in order to show that the chains of thought can also be found on a metaphorical level, as for instance Gerhard Neumann has indicated.<sup>682</sup> This chapter concludes with a brief consideration of the wider significance of Hohl's aphoristic practice, examining its influence on Peter Handke. This will prove in addition that aphoristic writers each have their own elaborate concept of phantasy. The chapter concludes with Handke's views on life affirmation, which prepares the ground for the discussion, in the final chapter, of Hohl's approach to life affirmation.

## V.2. Phantasy

This section serves to present introductory remarks that illustrate the connection of phantasy with the image and seeing in the history of thought. Already Augustine was very aware of the closeness between thinking and phantasy: 'figuram sibi fingit cogitatio, quae graece sive phantasia sive phantasma dicitur'<sup>683</sup>. This shows the closeness between image and phantasy. Also other aphoristic writers have recognised the great importance of phantasy for their work. In a discussion of Lichtenberg, Neumann regards 'Phantasie' as a 'lebenserhaltendes Element'.<sup>684</sup> The imagination was fundamental to Joseph Joubert's aphoristic thought as well.

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<sup>682</sup> '[...] ganze Ketten solcher "Metaphern" einer neuen Ordnung [...]', *Ideenparadiese*, p. 391.

<sup>683</sup> Augustine, Soliloq II. 20, 34, quoted in HdWPH, ii, p. 77.

In translation: 'Thinking builds a figure that in Greek is called phantasy or phantasma'.

<sup>684</sup> *Ideenparadiese*, p. 129. Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, *Sudelbücher I (Schriften und Briefe)*, ed. Wolfgang Promies, 4th edn., 6 vols (Frankfurt/Main: Zweitausendeins, 1994), i, p. 840, K 14).

Independently of Blumenberg's view of the proximity of the ineffable to metaphorical language, David Kinloch comes to a similar insight as Blumenberg: 'Poets... are men who instinctively reach for analogy, image and metaphor in order to articulate immaterial truths and express mental ideas, because they know that figurative language is the only kind that will provide them with a perspective upon these invisible worlds.'<sup>685</sup> This in addition shows that aphoristic writers have in common an attempt to grapple with the ineffable aspects of poetry. According to Joubert, the task of phantasy it is to bring images to the fore<sup>686</sup> and it is intrinsically linked to sight.<sup>687</sup> The combination of sight and phantasy can also be found in Hohl's thought.

### **V.2.1 Hohl's Concept of Phantasy**

This section takes up again Hohl's *Geisteskräfte* and concludes the discussion of the *Geisteskräfte* begun in the last chapter by focussing on phantasy, which is Hohl's most important *Geisteskraft*. The examination of the complexity of this concept was left until now because it fits more into a discussion of metaphor and image. The investigation into phantasy is another occasion to demonstrate the interconnectedness of aphorisms in Hohl's writing. In the following discussion several facets of this concept will be presented, starting with Hohl's use of the word phantasy, the relation between phantasy and rationality, and, finally, how phantasy relates to seeing (*Sehen*) and thereby enables us to create analogies and to find *Zusammenhänge*, distance (*Ferne*) and life affirmation. To be able to create distance is for Hohl a form of life affirmation.

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<sup>685</sup> David Kinloch, *The Thought and Art of Joseph Joubert 1754 - 1824* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 159.

<sup>686</sup> Kinloch, p. 174.

<sup>687</sup> Kinloch, p. 170.

To begin with the discussion of phantasy, Hohl quite late in the *Notizen* states why he chose the word *Phantasie*: ‘Handelt es sich um die Wahl des Wortes? Nun, zu einem Wort müssen wir greifen, ich habe mich für Phantasie entschieden, weil mir dies das schönere Wort schien für den umfassenden Gegenstand als etwa “Vorstellungsvermögen”, “Einbildungskraft” und ähnlich vielfältig zusammengesetzte Wörter.’<sup>688</sup> In order to maintain this intention, the English word phantasy is used for Hohl’s *Phantasie*.

### V.2.1.1 Phantasy and Rationality

This section discusses briefly how Hohl viewed rationality. This is relevant for the understanding of the double nature of the aphorism; despite the elaborate concepts of phantasy that can be found in aphoristic writing, rationality is not rejected. Similarly, as we saw, concepts are not rejected either, but aphoristic writers change the role of concepts and rationality according to the requirements of the underlying theory of their thought. However, phantasy is prioritised by Hohl over rationality already in a formal sense: phantasy has a much higher number of entries in Hohl’s *Stichwortindex*<sup>689</sup> while rationality has one. This prioritisation of phantasy over rationality is exemplified here: ‘Was ich unter Phantasie verstehe – die höchste menschliche Tätigkeit – ist die Summe von dem, was das Kind überreichlich besitzt, *und* Erfahrung und allen dirigirenden Kräften des Verstandes.’<sup>690</sup> Phantasy – and Hohl emphasises it as being the highest human capacity – is made up of three things: the sum of

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<sup>688</sup> N XII 81.

cf. Peter Handke, *Mein Jahr in der Niemandsbucht* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1994), p. 83.

<sup>689</sup> N II 275, V27, XII140, VII 70, XII57. 81, VIII 26, XII 82, XII 80, XII 97, XII 100, XII 140, XII 109, XII125, XII 139.

<sup>690</sup> N XII 140.



what the child possesses, experience, and rationality. Hohl describes rationality as ‘all directing powers of rationality’ which is a reversal of the philosophical tradition that sees rationality as superior to phantasy. Instead, phantasy here is superior to rationality, and even includes it. This does not mean a devaluation of rationality. Furthermore, there is no opposition between experience and rationality, but both are included in this overarching concept of phantasy. It is obvious here how appropriate Vico’s concept of the mental word is,<sup>691</sup> with one concept under which several characteristics are added. Hohl’s complex concept suggests that, in the process of creativity, several concepts synthesise and become indistinguishable from each other. It could be suggested that this is the same with rationality and experience. In consequence, rationality and phantasy do not have opposing functions, just as phantasy enables life affirmation. For Hohl, rationality has a primarily life-affirming function as well, and further, he connects rationality to seriousness. In one aphorism, Hohl says that *Vernunft* is the most serious thing in the world, and only the world is more powerful.<sup>692</sup> This does not signify an underestimation of rationality: seriousness as such is understood by Hohl as a liberating capacity.<sup>693</sup> Frisch emphasised the seriousness in Hohl’s writing, calling it an ‘Ernst zur Präzision.’<sup>694</sup> In Hohl’s thought, rationality plays a role foremost in the context of distress and rescue. In II 17 Hohl describes this psychological function of rationality. He uses *Vernunft* and *Verstand* interchangeably here:

Die Geistesstärke eines Menschen ist zu messen im Zustand der Angst.  
Nicht, daß nicht jeder in gewaltige Angst gestürzt werden könne - jedoch ist

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<sup>691</sup> Vico had a very elaborate concept of phantasy as well, cf. Karl-Otto Apel, *Die Idee der Sprache in der Tradition des Humanismus von Dante bis Vico* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1975), p. 376.

<sup>692</sup> II 130.

<sup>693</sup> N XI 28.

<sup>694</sup> Frisch, p. 21.

der Unterschied der, ob er in diesem Zustand noch auf Überlegungen des Verstandes zu hören vermag oder nicht. [...] Der geistig Starke sucht eben in der höchsten Gefahr am ehesten Zuflucht bei der Vernunft, er sucht durch den Verstand Rettung vor allem!<sup>695</sup>

However, Hohl also describes *Phantasie* as a rescuing capacity, again emphasising the importance of distance: ‘Jeden Kämpfenden rettet nur die Phantasie: daß er sich bisweilen gleichzeitig von außen sehen kann.’<sup>696</sup> This reflects again the double nature of the aphorism, oscillating between phantasy and rationality, and both are elements in the service of rescuing the human. Phantasy is connected to seeing and distance (*Ferne*) and phantasy’s ability to create distance is a form of life affirmation. Hohl aims for something that can be described with Nickl’s words as a habitus, which as we saw generally means something that accompanies an action when this action is executed ‘mit ganzer Seele’<sup>697</sup> Nickl describes his concept of habitus as one that is able to combine rationality and imagination and thereby overcomes the onesidedness of each, as does the aphorism.<sup>698</sup>

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<sup>695</sup> N II 17.

Hohl repeats this insight in VII 105 with the variation that it is not a sign of *Geistesstärke*, but of *Intelligenz* to rely on rationality in the face of adversity. In a political respect, this compares to what Robin George Collingwood requires of political leadership, namely acting independently in difficult situations: ‘25.45. Where the strains are greater, greater strength of will is needed to resist them and to make a free decision. 25.46. The ruling class may, therefore, be subdivided into a multiplicity of graded subclasses demanding as their qualification for membership strength of will in different degrees. 25.47. ‘The highest subclass will consist of those members who are able to resist the severest emotional strains and make a free decision about the hardest political problems in the hardest circumstances.’ Robin George Collingwood, *The New Leviathan* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 187. It is also relevant that Collingwood uses a gradual/by degree classification, not one of kind.

<sup>696</sup> N V 27.

<sup>697</sup> Nickl, p. 2.

<sup>698</sup> ‘Einheit der verschiedenen Seelenteile herzustellen, insbesondere die Momente des Rationalen und des Affektiven als Basis gelungenen Handelns auszuweisen.’ Nickl, p. 198.

### V.2.1.2 Phantasy: Seeing and Distance

This section will continue the discussion of phantasy's relationship to sight by taking up Joubert's insight. Joubert meant that the imagination was 'dependent on the organ of sight'.<sup>699</sup> Hohl also emphasises the importance of seeing. For instance he writes in XII 34: 'Schauen ist tatsächlich alles, Wissen geht immer fehl.'<sup>700</sup> Hohl explains this further: the difference between seeing and knowing is fundamental. Knowing goes wrong when it wants duration; according to Hohl, knowledge only lasts for a moment. Seeing, however, can look into eternity: 'durch Ewigkeiten hin immer ein Ding als Ersatz des andern erkennen.'<sup>701</sup> Seeing is able to detect the different manifestation of the same thing, which is again a relevant insight considering the several aspects of a complex concept. Seeing also has an ability to connect to eternity and is therefore able to establish a connection to duration. Knowledge instead has to limit itself to one view.<sup>702</sup> The question then is how Hohl continues to characterise seeing. In XII 125 Hohl discusses *Phantasie* and its relationship to *Sehen*, distinguishing two kinds of seeing:

Geistiges Sehen ist kein Gegensatz von sinnlichem Sehen, sondern dessen Erweiterung. Darum kann jeder dazu entwickelt werden, das 'Jenseits', die Ewigkeit zu sehen.

Das Geistige Sehen geht von der sinnlichen Wahrnehmung aus, verfährt durch Analogien, ist der sinnlichen Wahrnehmung *Erweiterung*. Und zwar sind seiner Erweiterung keine Grenzen gesetzt. 'Wenn Phantasie sich ... zum Ewigen erweitert.' Was ist Phantasie? Das Wort bezeichnet nur einen *Grad* geistigen Sehens. Darum ist zwischen geistigem Sehen und sinnlichem Wahrnehmen die Grenze nie genau zu bestimmen. Im letztgenannten ist schon geistiges Sehen.<sup>703</sup>

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<sup>699</sup> Kinloch, p. 170.

<sup>700</sup> N XII 34.

<sup>701</sup> N XII 34.

<sup>702</sup> N XII 34.

<sup>703</sup> N XII 125.

According to Hohl, there is seeing that depends on the organ of sight. This Hohl calls sensual seeing (*sinnliches Sehen*). And then there is the seeing that is done with the mind (*geistiges Sehen*). The seeing of the mind is an extension of sensual seeing. This extension is unlimited, and everyone is capable of achieving it. In making the seeing of the mind an extension of sensual seeing, Hohl is here consistent in regarding the sensual as a basis for the capacities of the mind that are capable of reaching eternity. Hohl then speaks about how the seeing of the mind is based on sensual perception and operates by way of analogy. Phantasy according to Hohl is a degree (*Grad*) of the seeing of the mind. Phantasy is actually seeing of the mind, not just sensual seeing but based on sensual perception, and the latter already has traces of the seeing of the mind, which is why those two kinds of seeing cannot be completely separated. The other important result of Hohl's investigation into phantasy is that it operates by analogy. Hohl repeats in another aphorism that the human capacity to create connections is phantasy: 'Die Fähigkeit der Verbindung in ihm, die Phantasie...' <sup>704</sup> This means that because phantasy is a kind of seeing of the mind that operates by way of analogy, it is able to create connections (*Zusammenhänge*) as discussed in III.4. The next question is why or how phantasy comes into being; why there is a need for phantasy. This need for phantasy is related to distance.

Hohl defines phantasy as the most powerful mental capacity and the origin of *Phantasie* is described as a necessity. <sup>705</sup> It is furthermore the ability to imagine things in the distance, but in the right way. Hohl does not say what he means by 'the right way' of imagining things. This would not be far from Nietzsche, who often sees phantasy as something negative, as

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<sup>704</sup> N XII 100.

<sup>705</sup> N XII 80.

consisting of nonsensical illusions, but for a change he writes in *Morgenröte*<sup>706</sup> that phantasy is the decisive characteristic of an artist and, like Hohl, he also relates phantasy to a capacity of imagining, or better, anticipating things the right way. Hohl illuminates his idea of ‘the right way’ of understanding phantasy: ‘the right way’ is an ability to imagine something distant in the right way, meaning adequate to the imagined thing:

Phantasie ist das gewaltigste geistige Vermögen. (Aber unter 'Phantasie' ist das Richtige zu verstehen! -- 'Phantasie ist das Vermögen, sich Fernes, eine andere Lage, richtig vorzustellen, nicht, wie meistens angenommen wird, falsch und irgendwie – denn das könnte ja jeder.')<sup>707</sup>

It is likely that Hohl was influenced here by Bänninger, whom Hohl has read and to whom he refers throughout the *Notizenwerk*. Bänninger writes: ‘Die stärkste Kraft seines Denkens wirft der Mensch doch auf die Gebilde der Phantasie. Wer dies am treuesten tut: der Dichter.’<sup>708</sup> In respect to the previously discussed *Geisteskraft* of *Glaube* it is worth noting here Bänninger’s mention of *Treue* in conjunction with phantasy.

Another concept that occasionally occurs in connection with phantasy is that of distance. Hohl mentions it in this conjunction several times. This happens noticeably often in the context of rescue. As noted above, Hohl writes about phantasy as the capacity to imagine distance, a different situation. He repeats the previous insight about phantasy being the capacity to imagine distant situations in the right way. ‘Right’ is emphasised, yet it is again hard to understand what can be meant by it, except by assuming that ‘right’ is equivalent to Hohl’s

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<sup>706</sup> M 254, KSA 3.206.

<sup>707</sup> N XII 81.

<sup>708</sup> K. Bänninger, *Geist des Werdens*, p. 33.

concept of the ‘integral’. He also writes that phantasy is not a luxury but a means of salvation.

At that point it is not clear how distance and salvation are connected:

Das Wichtigste über *die Phantasie* liegt in diesen zwei Sätzen:

1. Phantasie ist das Vermögen, sich ferne (andere) Verhältnisse *richtig* vorzustellen – nicht falsch, wie immer gemeint wird (denn das könnte ja jeder).
2. Phantasie ist nicht, wie immer wieder gemeint wird, ein Luxus, sondern eines der allerwichtigsten Instrumente zur menschlichen 'Erlösung,' zum Leben.<sup>709</sup>

The next aphorism describes distance again in connection with rescue, but it becomes clearer how those two concepts exactly are connected: ‘*Phantasie*: Er hatte Gewalt über das Ferne.

Folglich auch, wenn das Nahe ungünstig war, konnte er sich retten durch das ferne *Gute*. (Er hatte Gewalt über das Ferne: das heißt auch, daß in Friedenszeiten ihm der Krieg gefährlich war.)<sup>710</sup> Distance is described as something that can be in someone’s power. It is described in opposition to that which is close. If the close is unpleasant, distance, described as the good, can be a source of survival once one has power over distance. In this sense, phantasy has a prime function in the role of life affirmation. In XII 81 Hohl repeats the insight of the aphorism XII 57: phantasy being the capacity to imagine distance in the right way. He takes up the aforementioned question of what ‘rightness’ means in this context. Rightness<sup>711</sup> means here – and Hohl describes it as ‘geistige Richtigkeit’ – to imagine a circumstance of invincibility, where ‘der Geist wird siegen’. Hohl imagines this circumstance as a country, an imagined country, and the difficulty is that it is very hard ‘im Unsichtbaren weiter zu bauen, in der *Unrealisation*.<sup>712</sup> In this way phantasy has the capacity to extension (*Erweiterung*).

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<sup>709</sup> N XII 57.

<sup>710</sup> N VII 70.

<sup>711</sup> cf. NN 151.

<sup>712</sup> N XII 81.

To distinguish the difference between the right and wrong imagining, Hohl introduces the notion of *Einfall*. An example of a not-right (*unrichtig*, Hohl calls it also *krank*) imagination (Hohl uses *Vorstellung* here) is someone in a fever who can have many ideas and thereby his imagination is in some sense extended. However, those ideas remain confused because, according to Hohl, they do not reach eternity the way phantasy does. As seen here, like the complex concepts, ‘Rightness’ has a number meanings and is therefore another example of aphoristic concentration of meaning that needs repeated reading and exegesis. In conclusion this means that phantasy as life affirmation is a mental attitude; phantasy is not to be confused with deeds. The relation of phantasy to deed (*Tat*) is such that phantasy cannot replace the deed. Phantasy that is supposed to do this paralyses the deed. This aphorism legitimises phantasy: phantasy has a legitimation only when it either leads to a deed or is more than a deed. When those instances occur, one can speak of real art:

Alle großen menschlichen Fähigkeiten werden leicht mißbraucht; das ist kein Beweis, daß sie keine großen Fähigkeiten waren.

Wenn die Phantasie so arbeitet, daß sie die Tat *ersetzen* soll – die mögliche Tat lähmt –, ist sie mißbraucht. Es gibt Fälle, wo man 'Tat' der Phantasie gegenüberstellen kann; damit dann Phantasie Berechtigung habe, zu sein, muß sie: entweder hinführen zu dieser Tat; oder mehr sein als diese Tat (mehr *Tat!*). Dieses ist der Fall bei aller wahren Kunst.<sup>713</sup>

One can see here again how Hohl expresses a similar thought with different nuances.

Hohl uses all those aphorisms to address each singular aspect of phantasy as a whole and all of those together show the richness of his concept of phantasy. In the *Nachnotizen*, Hohl mentions phantasy in similar contexts as in the *Notizen*. He states again the capacity of phantasy to imagine distances, in this case the past, and the more a person is able to imagine this distance, the greater a person is: ‘Die Größe eines Menschen ist proportional der Größe

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<sup>713</sup> N XII 82.

der Vergangenheit, die er zu beleben vermag.<sup>714</sup> This capacity of phantasy becomes especially urgent when Hohl considers the hardship of life in an aphorism about altruism. Hohl says there that absolute altruism is impossible because it would lead to death with the fastest possible speed. Hohl therefore asks the question of how to respond when being exposed to general suffering:

Denn wie kann er noch einen Schritt tun, wenn er einen Teil all jener vor sich sieht, die an Mangel an Nahrung dahinsiechen, die gefoltert werden, die soeben in der Nacht verenden, die unter unsäglichen Bedingungen in Gefängnissen dahinschmachten - und von denen einige sind wie Du, und die auf dich hoffen (soweit sie noch hoffen können) -; wie kann er noch atmen?  
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In the quotation above, phantasy is a capacity of liberation that helps to breathe because it enables the envisioning of a better distance; *Ferne*. Hohl explains *Ferne* in an aphorism (NN 404) that follows very shortly after the one just quoted (NN 401). He states here that one can only imagine that what is distant.<sup>716</sup> According to Hohl, the artist needs phantasy. Again Hohl emphasises phantasy's capacity to remove us from our life. Hohl further outlines the task of the poet, not to remain with examples of misery but instead to refer to a more positive world. This, according to Hohl, is the only obligation of the poet and his only virtue.

Eine außerordentliche Sensibilität, eine alles mitreißende Einbildungskraft, welche imstande ist, uns zu scheiden, uns zu entfremden (verrücken) von dem Rest unseres Lebens. In solchem Sinne ist er fremd (ver-rückt) und macht er fremd (Ver-rückte). Nicht ist es Sache des Dichters, bei einzelnen Fällen des Elends zu verweilen. Er hebe uns hinauf in eine positive Welt, das ist seine einzige Pflicht und seine wirkliche Tugend.<sup>717</sup>

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<sup>714</sup> NN 3.

<sup>715</sup> NN 401.

<sup>716</sup> NN 404.

<sup>717</sup> NN 74.



It is noticeable that Hohl deviates here from the word *Phantasie* and uses *Einbildungskraft*. In the *Nachnotizen* it also becomes more obvious that phantasy is employed more strongly in the context of life affirmation than in the *Notizen*.

### V.2.1.3 Kassner's Influence on Hohl

This section investigates Rudolf Kassner's influence on Hohl who, in the *Notizen*, indicated that his concept of phantasy was influenced by and similar to Kassner's concept of *Einbildungskraft*.<sup>718</sup> Hohl's mention of Kassner in the *Notizen* prompts me to investigate Kassner's influence on Hohl with reference to Kassner's book *Von der Einbildungskraft*,<sup>719</sup> Theodor Wieser's *Die Einbildungskraft bei Rudolf Kassner*<sup>720</sup> and Xaver Kronig's dissertation *Ludwig Hohl. Seine Erzählprosa mit einer Einführung in das Gesamtwerk*<sup>721</sup> which devotes a short chapter to Hohl's reception of Kassner, outlining differences and similarities. Kronig bases his argument mainly on Theodor Wieser's book, and states that a decisive difference between Kassner and Hohl is the importance of magic for Kassner, unlike for Hohl. In this context Hohl's view on *Zaubern* will be explicated, as to Hohl *Zaubern* is another function of phantasy. I will argue that Hohl's intuition of his concept of phantasy being similar to Kassner's concept of *Einbildungskraft* is correct.

Hohl mentions Kassner in relation to the *Einbildungskraft* late in the last chapter of the *Notizen*: 'Hat vielleicht Kassner's Begriff "Einbildungskraft" zu tun mit dem, wofür ich die

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<sup>718</sup> N XII 140.

<sup>719</sup> Rudolf Kassner, *Von der Einbildungskraft*, (Lepizig: Insel, 1936).

<sup>720</sup> Theodor Wieser, 'Die Einbildungskraft bei Rudolf Kassner', in: *Studien zur Literatur- und Kulturgeschichte* (Zürich: Speer Verlag, 1949).

<sup>721</sup> Xaver Kronig, *Ludwig Hohl. Seine Erzählprosa mit einer Einführung in das Gesamtwerk* (Bern/Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 1972).

Bezeichnung Phantasie gewählt habe?’<sup>722</sup> Hohl in a footnote to this aphorism concedes that he does not know ‘Genaueres’ about Kassner’s *Einbildungskraft*. Although Hohl is not certain about his intuition, it is nevertheless worth investigating this assumed similarity because it might shed light on the richness of concepts of *Einbildungskraft* itself. The only other mention of Kassner in the *Notizen* is evidence that Hohl was aware of Kassner’s work.<sup>723</sup> It is clear that he appreciated him because he puts him in direct comparison with Karl Kraus and Valéry:

... und wird der wertvollste Prosaist, der aber nur die ihm angemessene Form schreibt (wem aber ist der Roman heute angemessen?), im allgemeinen einfach übersehen: wie viele lesen Lichtenberg, Kaßner? (Ich wiederhole, daß ich die Zustände der deutschsprachigen Literatur im Auge habe; den größten Gegensatz dazu bilden diejenigen der französischen. Ein La Rochefoucauld und sogar ein Vauvenargues, heute Valéry, sind weltberühmt - und Lichtenberg? Einen Rudolf Kaßner, einen Karl Kraus - Valéry ebenbürtig und zur selben Zeit schreibend -: wer kennt sie?)<sup>724</sup>

Important in this quote is not just the comparison between the more highly regarded culture of the French but also the reflection on form: it is the artistic goal to write only in the form that suits the writer and his artistic project. In order to show those similarities to Hohl, Kassner’s views on the imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) will be presented, based on *Von der Einbildungskraft*. Three main features that Hohl’s and Kassner’s thought have in common are an elaborate concept of imagination, the strong emphasis on the importance of personality and the overcoming of the alienation between language and the person. Personality and imagination are key concepts in Kassner’s thought. Furthermore, Kassner had a high regard

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<sup>722</sup> N XII 140.

<sup>723</sup> Hohl owned Rudolf Kassner, *Zahl und Gesicht: Nebst einer Einleitung: Der Umriss einer universalen Physiognomik* (Wiesbaden: Insel, 1956).  
Ludwig Hohl: Nachlassinventar. Last Accessed: 10 Dec 2015 <<http://ead.nb.admin.ch/html/hohl.html>>.

<sup>724</sup> N VI 3, also, Kronig, p. 149.

for the small forms, such as the *Aperçu*,<sup>725</sup> the *Sentenz*<sup>726</sup> and the *Fragment*.<sup>727</sup> External similarities between Kassner and Hohl are that both experimented with form, although Kassner wrote less in aphorisms than Hohl, and both were commercially not very successful. Kronig states that this lack of success has its roots in their being regarded as difficult due to their inventive use of literary genres.<sup>728</sup>

To begin with, Kassner distinguished between phantasy (*Phantasie*) and imagination (*Einbildungskraft*)<sup>729</sup> but did not explicate this difference and also was not consistent with it, because he also uses Phantasy and imagination interchangeably.<sup>730</sup> As with Hohl, the imagination has a role in life affirmation because Kassner equates happiness (*Glück*) with phantasy.<sup>731</sup> Kassner sees imagination as having a connecting ability,<sup>732</sup> just like Hohl, and believes that it is therefore able to overcome alienation between the world and people and alienation between people themselves. Kassner calls the alienation between people the ‘*Inkommensurabilität von Ich und Du.*’<sup>733</sup> Language is a result of this incommensurability, according to Kassner, if people were commensurable, language would not be needed and instead equations would suffice for human communication. Hohl shares with Kassner the

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<sup>725</sup> Kassner, *Einbildungskraft*, pp. 62, 111, 137.

<sup>726</sup> Kassner, *Einbildungskraft*, p. 80.

<sup>727</sup> Kassner, *Einbildungskraft*, p. 141.

<sup>728</sup> Kronig, p. 151, Wieser, p. 36.

<sup>729</sup> Kassner, *Einbildungskraft*, p. 21.

<sup>730</sup> Kassner, *Einbildungskraft*, p. 35.

<sup>731</sup> Kassner, *Einbildungskraft*, p. 35.

<sup>732</sup> Kassner, *Einbildungskraft*, p. 34.

<sup>733</sup> Kassner, *Einbildungskraft*, p. 39.

focus of overcoming alienation. Like Hohl, Kassner viewed rationality and feelings not as an opposition: ‘daß wir bis zum Empfinden zu verstehen und bis zum Verstehen zu empfinden haben.’<sup>734</sup> To separate rationality and feelings leads to isolation.

The concept of personality is, according to Kassner, fundamental to Christian civilisation;<sup>735</sup> personality is equated with freedom<sup>736</sup> and imagination and personality have an interdependent relationship.<sup>737</sup> The imagination is the creative centre of a person, a source of creative power ‘schöpferische Macht’<sup>738</sup>: ‘Die Einbildungskraft bildet die schöpferische Mitte und höchste Auszeichnung des Einzelnen. Durch sie erfasst er den Sinn und macht so sein Dasein sinn-voll. Dieser Akt der Deutung schliesst Denken und Leben in eins, womit sich allein der Mensch in ständiger Selbstverwirklichung bewegt.’<sup>739</sup> Furthermore, Kassner’s imagination is able to create what in Hohl’s words is called *das Reale*, and in Kassner’s words ‘die Realität einer Welt der Einbildungskraft’.<sup>740</sup>

Kassner also employs the chain metaphor in his thought: ‘die Kette unserer Deutungen’.<sup>741</sup>

Additional similarities between Hohl and Kassner can be found in Kassner’s use of *Sehen*.

This introduces a discussion of detailed similarities between Hohl and Kassner.

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<sup>734</sup> Kassner, *Einbildungskraft*, p. 39.

<sup>735</sup> Kassner, *Einbildungskraft*, p. 50.

<sup>736</sup> Kassner, *Einbildungskraft*, pp. 58, 131, 166.

<sup>737</sup> Kassner, *Einbildungskraft*, p. 166.

<sup>738</sup> Kassner, *Einbildungskraft*, p. 178.

<sup>739</sup> Wieser, p. 108.

<sup>740</sup> Kassner, *Einbildungskraft*, p. 178.

<sup>741</sup> Kassner, *Einbildungskraft*, p. 127. Wieser, p. 33.

Wieser calls Kassner's method one of literary investigation. For instance, in the case of Rilke, he speaks of Kassner's 'deutendes Sehen'.<sup>742</sup> *Einbildungskraft* is connected to *Sehen* in such a way that only through the use of the *Einbildungskraft* can what is seen become image.<sup>743</sup>

Images are the only way in which we can come to a possession of the world: 'Nur in Bildern besitzen wir die Welt, nicht in kostbaren Gütern und Besitztümern.'<sup>744</sup> *Sehen* in this sense has a relation to *Ganzheit* in that seeing always fuses details into a *Ganzheit*.<sup>745</sup> In this respect *Einbildungskraft* is able to encompass oppositions (just like the aphorism).<sup>746</sup>

Kassner like Hohl employs the image of a stream although, in contrast to Hohl, who talked about the stream of being, Kassner speaks about the stream of imagination.<sup>747</sup> The stream of imagination presupposes an *All-Einheit* within the world, in which the singular thing is already contained in the whole and the other way round.<sup>748</sup> Humans can connect to others or things by way of participating in the stream of imagination. Humans are allowed to give meaning when there is an *Übereinstimmung* of the human and the thing, between the subjective and the objective. Meaning and sense found like this is more than just opinion because, due to the participation of the stream of the imagination, the found meaning and sense connect to all other things.<sup>749</sup> In Hohl, however, there is a difference, as there can only ever be a partial joining of the stream of being, this is not a permanent knowledge or

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<sup>742</sup> Wieser, p. 38.

<sup>743</sup> Wieser, p. 60.

<sup>744</sup> Wieser, p. 111. cf. 'Die Einbildungskraft projiziert aus sich heraus Bilder oder lebt und herrscht im Bereich der Bilder.' Kassner, *Einbildungskraft*, p. 8.

<sup>745</sup> Wieser, p. 62.

<sup>746</sup> Wieser, pp. 77, 85, 92.

<sup>747</sup> Wieser, p. 83.

<sup>748</sup> Wieser, p. 82.

<sup>749</sup> Wieser, p. 83.

experience: ‘Wir selber gehen oder sozusagen ein Inneres von uns geht durch die Dinge hindurch. Dieses Innere lassen wir hindurchströmen, hindurchgehen: wir können es niemals behalten oder besitzen!’<sup>750</sup>

There is a similarity between Hohl and Kassner: according to Hohl, the experience when the subjective becomes objective – ‘wenn unser Denken vom Subjektiven ins Objektive umschlägt’<sup>751</sup> – is the overcoming of death. According to Hohl, humans cannot reach with their senses beyond their subjective world. The objective is what has to be thought. Subjective senses offer a limited grasp of our being (*Dasein*). Objective thinking extends itself to much more, although, Hohl emphasises, it can never understand everything. Seeing with the senses is something that separates, seeing with the mind joins. The two kinds of seeing are not an opposition but, as noted previously, the seeing with the mind is an extension of sensual seeing. The change from the subjective to the objective is sudden and cannot be forced. Hohl and Kassner express it in different words but both mean the same: a brief moment (or, in Kassner, a longer one) of insight in *Übereinstimmung* of the human and his world, and his thoughts and feelings. Both use the word *Übereinstimmung*<sup>752</sup> thereby describing a moment of overcoming alienation.

Kronig’s interpretation of Kassner’s influence on Hohl is problematic mainly due to its brevity; it does not offer an analysis or comparison of Hohl’s and Kassner’s concepts of *Phantasie* and *Einbildungskraft*. Kronig emphasises the differences between Hohl and Kassner. Quoting Wieser, he states that Kassner’s concept of *Einbildungskraft* was very broad

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<sup>750</sup> N XI 15.

<sup>751</sup> N XI 4, 7, 8, 15, XII 125.

<sup>752</sup> N XI 3, Wieser, p. 83.

and also played a role for Kassner's theories on physiognomics.<sup>753</sup> For Kronig, the decisive difference – as far as it is possible to say with this rudimentary approach – between Hohl's concept of phantasy and Kassner's concept of *Einbildungskraft* is that Hohl's concept of *Phantasie* is rather more like *Vorstellungskraft* than *Einbildungskraft*, although Kronig does not state how *Einbildungskraft* differs from *Vorstellungskraft*. Furthermore, this is wrong too, because Hohl decided to remain with the term *Phantasie* and not *Vorstellungskraft*. And, even if Kassner's *Einbildungskraft* is broad, Hohl's concept of phantasy – as seen before – is quite broad as well. I aim to show that Hohl's intuition of a similarity between *Phantasie* and *Einbildungskraft* is not too far-fetched and, while there are differences, the similarities are bigger than Kronig assumes.

These similarities between Hohl and Kassner can be further demonstrated by looking at Theodor Wieser's reading of Kassner, who emphasises Kassner's use of repetition. Repetition means here not the repetition of the same act but to look at one thing repeatedly from different angles.<sup>754</sup> Like Hohl, Kassner can be situated between poetry and philosophy. And again like Hohl, he emphasised activity, *Arbeit*, in a non-alienating way: 'Nicht der bekennende Dichter gilt, sondern der tätige Mensch im weitesten Sinne, der Mensch als Maß aller Dinge.'<sup>755</sup> Courage<sup>756</sup> also plays a role in Kassner's thought. He employs notions of depth.<sup>757</sup> Kassner

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<sup>753</sup> cf. Kronig, p. 150.

<sup>754</sup> Wieser, p. 23.

<sup>755</sup> Wieser, p. 29.

<sup>756</sup> Wieser, p. 32.

<sup>757</sup> Wieser, p. 34.

was a thinker who used analogical thinking<sup>758</sup> as well as an awareness of things that fall out of the systematic and the existence of *Zwischenräume*.<sup>759</sup> Carl J. Burckhardt emphasises the contrast of *Einbildungskraft* and rationality and system, which is relevant when one considers how, according to Blumenberg, a thinking that focusses more on a metaphorical way of thinking has as its consequence a re-evaluation of the role of rationality and phantasy.<sup>760</sup> Despite the differences, such as Kassner's strongly religious later works, there are probably more important similarities between them, even though Kronig writes:

Man darf ob dieser Gemeinsamkeiten die Grenze nicht übersehen, die Ludwig Hohl vom Moralisten Kassner trennen. Das Magische, das Religiöse, das Metaphysische schlechthin spielt in Kassners Werk eine eminent grosse Rolle. Bei Hohl fehlen diese Elemente fast ganz, vielleicht abgesehen vom Irrationalen, das bisweilen in den von ihm aufgezeichneten Träumen sichtbar wird. Hohl ist viel mehr Rationalist. Es ist vielleicht nicht zuletzt das Fehlen (oder nur geringe Vorhandensein) der genannten Grössen, das eine Synthese in seinem Denken erschwert, wenn nicht unmöglich macht, wobei freilich die Frage offen bleiben muss, ob Hohl eine solche Synthese überhaupt als erstrebenswert betrachtet. Man darf nämlich nie vergessen, dass das Fragmentarische, das gewollt Analytische zum Wesen von Hohls Werk gehört und diesem Werk den Charakter des Unverwechselbaren und im Tiefsten Unvergleichbaren verleiht.<sup>761</sup>

Notwithstanding the superficial correctness of this observation, however, there are moments of synthesis too in Hohl, for instance in his complex concepts. Kronig is not entirely correct to

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<sup>758</sup> Wieser, p. 90.

<sup>759</sup> Wieser, p. 99.

<sup>760</sup> 'Das System, der Bereich der Zahl und die lebendige Ordnung, das Reich des Gesichts: dort die Starre, hier die immer neu gestaltende Bewegung. Und doch sind sie komplementär, aber dem Leben gebührt der Vorrang vor dem System. Kassners dichterisches Denken hat das Sich-Verwirklichen, das Sich-Einbilden in die Gestalt und durch diese die Einheit der flutenden Ordnung vollbracht. Dem durch den Rationalismus entleerten Begriff der Einbildungskraft hat er die ursprüngliche Bedeutung zurückgewonnen.'  
Carl J. Burckhardt, *Bildnisse* (Frankfurt/Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1958), p. 271.

<sup>761</sup> Kronig, p. 152.



state that religion does not play a huge role in Hohl's thinking.<sup>762</sup> Hohl does not entirely reject magic and metaphysics either. For example, he speaks occasionally about *Zaubern*<sup>763</sup>, from which a clichéd form of magic, such as cheap tricks, is excluded, and instead he contrasts *Zauber* with Illusion:

Von Illusionen im allgemeinen, gewöhnlichen Illusionen kann ich wohl immer nur abraten, obwohl sie verwandt sind dem, was ich als das am meisten, bald noch allein Reale erkenne, dem positiven Traum, der aber doch wieder was ganz anderes ist: Zauberei.  
Nicht auf Wunder warten: Wer auf Wunder wartet, ist verloren. Wer nicht zaubern kann, der ist verloren.<sup>764</sup>

Hohl uses phantasy to explain this much-used word, *Zaubern*. It was already mentioned in the context of imagining the recipient of a work of art and here it is repeatedly expressed in the sentence. The ability to *zaubern* is directly linked to being lost. In the previous section about Hohl's concept of phantasy, we saw that the imagination has the task to create distance which can mean the imagination of a positive future. *Zaubern* is another expression of this capacity of phantasy:

*Wer jetzt nicht zaubern kann, der ist verloren.* (Beinahe nur, um diesen Satz zu tragen, habe ich ein Werk von 1185 Seiten geschrieben. - Erklärend: 'Zaubern' = Tätigkeit der Phantasie, höchste Arbeit; ich habe mich daher vor allem damit befaßt, darzulegen, was Arbeit ist, das, was ich unter Arbeit verstehe.)<sup>765</sup>

Hohl associates phantasy with *Zaubern*, which is the highest form of *Arbeit*, and this shows already that Hohl's concept of *Arbeit* deviates from a conventional understanding of, for

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<sup>762</sup> cf. Hohl's views on religion according to Stüssi pp. 129, 131, 146, 185. Lafond, p. 15.  
cf. Hohl's views on religion and Richtigkeit, NN 151.  
cf. Haupt, pp. 51-65.

<sup>763</sup> N XII 110, 111, 113, 115.

<sup>764</sup> N XII 113.

<sup>765</sup> NN 225, cf. NN 378.

instance, working for a salary. This will be further investigated in VI.2, and only briefly indicated here: an understanding of *Zaubern* in the light of Hohl's concept of work means the transition from the mortal to the immortal: 'Arbeiten ist nichts anderes als aus dem Sterblichen übersetzen in das, was weitergeht.'<sup>766</sup> Analogous to this, *Zaubern* relates to the sphere of that which is not mortal, of which cannot be lost, but which continues.

In conclusion, one can say that Kronig's estimation of Hohl and the comparison between him and Kassner suffer from the same problem that in some way dominates this thesis' investigation: to find a way beyond the binary interpretation of rational versus irrational, the conceptual versus the metaphorical and so on. Hohl is very much a rational writer, but he does not use his rationality beyond what rationality is capable of, in his view; that is, he has accepted or found some limits to rationality. This is obvious from his rather elaborate concept of phantasy that includes rationality, rather than seeing an opposition between it and phantasy. A similarly point can be made regarding Kronig's assumption that Kassner is metaphysical while Hohl is not. One can very well show that Hohl had a system of thoughts, even based on a few of concepts, such as *die Geisteskräfte*, but it is not a system that is guided in its core by rationality; if metaphysics is understood to be guided by rationality, then Hohl is not metaphysical.

But is it important, and especially remarkable that Hohl was very well able to combine those realms without doing violence to them. Despite his very strong rational and analytical capacities, Hohl did not overestimate the use of rationality. This might explain the exemplary

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<sup>766</sup> N XII 115.

depth of Hohl's writing. Of course Kronig is right in saying that the fragmentary is the very source of this depth, but also a synthesis is possible only by way of the fragmentary; except it is a synthesis that cannot be easily put into words. Imagination in Kassner and *Phantasie* in Hohl are both key concepts in their respective thought, and Hohl's intuition in assuming a similarity between Kassner's *Einbildungskraft* and his *Phantasie* was correct. I would suggest that, apart from *Kraft* and *Arbeit*, *Phantasie* is the third most important concept upon which Hohl's thought hinges.

### **V.3 Blumenberg: Phantasy and Absolute Metaphor**

This section presents Hans Blumenberg's views on the absolute metaphor and phantasy.

Blumenberg's work on the non-conceptual is of value for the investigation into the nature of the aphorism because it sheds light on the non-conceptual side of the aphorism.

In order to understand what Blumenberg means by absolute metaphor and phantasy, it is necessary to begin with his views on metaphor. He distinguishes between two types of metaphors:<sup>767</sup> *Restbestände* and *Grundbestände*. A metaphor as *Restbestand* is a metaphor that is a vestige from a pre-logical language and, in this respect, is to be overcome and transformed into or replaced by conceptual language. This represents the traditional view that sees metaphors as inferior to conceptual language. A metaphor as a *Grundbestand* of a philosophical language is a metaphor that cannot be transformed into a concept, cannot be transferred into logicity. This is why Blumenberg calls them absolute metaphors. The term

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<sup>767</sup> Blumenberg, *Metaphorologie*, p. 10.

Ralf Konersmann, 'Figuratives Wissen', p. 12.

Christian Emden, *Nietzsche on Language, Consciousness and the Body* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005), p. 67.

absolute metaphors was coined by Hugo Friedrich.<sup>768</sup> His key insight was that the absolute metaphor is not a means of comparison any more but becomes ‘identitätsstiftend’<sup>769</sup>.

Blumenberg finds a description of the absolute metaphor in Kant’s *Kritik der Urteilskraft* in which it is described as ‘Übertragung der Reflexion über einen Gegenstand der Anschauung auf einen ganz andern Begriff, dem vielleicht nie eine Anschauung direkt korrespondieren kann.’<sup>770</sup> This relates to the problem of non-conceptuality. Blumenberg regarded his ‘Metaphorik nur als ein schmaler Spezialfall von Unbegrifflichkeit’;<sup>771</sup> metaphorology as a small part of the non-conceptual. While there always has been an opposition between metaphors and concepts, it is not clear what Blumenberg means by the non-conceptual, everything that is not a concept.

This theory of the non-conceptual is again embedded in a theory of the *das Unsagbare*.<sup>772</sup> According to Konersmann, *das Unbegriffliche* is fundamental to humanity: ‘Denn das Unbegriffliche ist nichts anderes als das theorieimmanente Zeugnis für “die Ubiquität des Menschlichen”, das nicht verloren zu geben Blumenberg als “elementare Obligation” der philosophischen Arbeit bestimmt hat.’<sup>773</sup> Blumenberg concludes that the evident existence of absolute metaphors requires us to reconsider the relationship between phantasy and

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<sup>768</sup> Hugo Friedrich, *Die Struktur der modernen Lyrik* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1968), p. 73.

<sup>769</sup> Friedrich, p. 73.

<sup>770</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1995), p. 296, §59.

<sup>771</sup> Hans Blumenberg, *Schiffbruch mit Zuschauer* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1979), p. 77.

<sup>772</sup> Hans Blumenberg, *Theorie der Unbegrifflichkeit* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2007), p. 102.

<sup>773</sup> Konersmann, ‘Geduld zur Sache’, p. 257. Konersmann refers here to Blumenberg’s Cassirer speech. Hans Blumenberg, ‘Ernst Cassirers Gedenkend. Bei Entgegennahme des Kuno Fischer-Preises der Universität Heidelberg im Juli 1974’, in *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, 110 (4) (1974), 456-463 (p. 463).

rationality, the Logos. It requires a re-evaluation of phantasy, in which phantasy is seen as something that needs to be surpassed and transformed into the conceptual:

Der Aufweis absoluter Metaphern müßte uns wohl überhaupt veranlassen, das Verhältnis von Phantasie und Logos neu zu durchdenken, und zwar in dem Sinne, den Bereich der Phantasie nicht nur als Substrat für Transformationen ins Begriffliche zu nehmen - wobei sozusagen Element für Element aufgearbeitet und umgewandelt werden könnte bis zum Aufbruch des Bildervorrats -, sondern als eine katalysatorische Sphäre, an der sich zwar ständig die Begriffswelt bereichert, aber ohne diesen fundierenden Bestand dabei umzuwandeln und aufzuzehren.<sup>774</sup>

This means that Phantasy, or *Phantasie*, on the one hand can enrich the conceptual but on the other can maintain its own sphere of metaphorical richness. In consequence, metaphorology and *Begriffsgeschichte* can be regarded as complementary and are not to be seen as rivals.<sup>775</sup> Baumgarten regarded the *analogon rationis*<sup>776</sup> as the principle of sensual connection and, therefore phantasy has the systematic function as aesthetic truth that, as a truth of art, is equal to the truth of logic and is equal and complementary to it. This requires an investigation into how Hohl viewed the image and whether there are absolute metaphors in his writing as well.

#### IV.3.1 Hohl's Concept of Image (*Bild*)

This section will examine the concept of the image (*Bild*) which is another of Hohl's key concepts. He dedicated the last section of the *Notizen* to the concept or, better, the phenomenon of *Bild*. First, the influence of Bänninger on Hohl's concept of the image will be

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<sup>774</sup> Blumenberg, p. 11.

Blumenberg did not elaborate in great detail how phantasy might look like in its own right, as he focussed primarily on the metaphor, but in the *Paradigmen* there are hints that indicate what his view might have been, pp. 8, 11, 24, 37, 66, 72, 81.

<sup>775</sup> Konersmann, 'Figuratives Wissen', p. 13.

<sup>776</sup> Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Metaphysik* (Jena: Dietrich Scheglmann Reprints, 2005), p. 146, §468.

examined, then the concept of the image as it is represented in the *Notizen*, then a number of specific images used by Hohl and, finally, how the image was used in the *Nachnotizen*.

The focus on the images is necessary because one can show with the image (*Gesicht*) which Hohl used in his last aphorism that the aphorisms have a unity. His use of the image at the same time unites conceptual and metaphorical elements.

Hohl has a high regard for Konrad Bänninger and his book *Geist des Werdens*, which had an influence on Hohl's concepts of *Zusammenhang* and personality. In this context, Bänninger's emphasis on non-alienation is particularly relevant. The absence of research on Bänninger's influence on Hohl is perhaps surprising, given the references to Bänninger in the image<sup>777</sup> chapter in the *Notizen*, where Hohl emphasises the neglect of Bänninger's poetry<sup>778</sup> and, similarly, in the *Nachnotizen*, where Hohl testifies to the high rank of Bänninger's literary essays and especially their 'density'.<sup>779</sup> Bänninger provides the proverb for Hohl's image chapter: 'Wir leben, solange wir dem Bild vertrauen'.<sup>780</sup> The next mention of Bänninger relates to an aspect of life affirmation in the possibility of children, who are seen by Bänninger and Hohl as positive force that can renew the possibilities of humankind.<sup>781</sup> Hohl refers here directly to Bänninger's *Geist des Werdens* but says that he read this book much after he formulated his own insights on the topic. In XII 115 Hohl takes up again the proverb of Bänninger's: we live as long as we trust in the image and explicate it. First it is necessary to find out how Bänninger understood this sentence himself. He mentions the sentence in a

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<sup>777</sup> N VIII 49, IX 39, XII M, XII 65, XII 115.

<sup>778</sup> N IX 39.

<sup>779</sup> NN 503 A.

<sup>780</sup> NN XII M, p. 716.

<sup>781</sup> N XII 65, K. Bänninger, *Geist des Werdens*, p. 91.

piece called *Cogito II*, part of the above-mentioned book. In this section Bänninger discusses first the human capacity to create connections (*Zusammenhänge*). He understands the human as a thinking being, primarily determined by his capacity to establish connections. Thinking is defined by Bänninger as ‘umschaffend, bindend.’<sup>782</sup> To stop thinking would mean to lose connection with the world. Thinking is essentially the bridging of gaps and Bänninger makes no clear distinction between thinking, imagination and seeing: ‘Nur kraft seines Denkens, oder wie viele es ausdrücken, vermöge der Imagination, des Schauens, vermag der Einzelne diese Kluft zu überbrücken.’<sup>783</sup> The result of a form of thinking that establishes connections between what is separated takes place in the image, and the highest form of thinking is that which can encompass separate things in a single image: ‘Alles denkende Handeln ist Umfassung des Getrennten im einzigen Bilde. Das höchste Denken ist das umfassendste.’<sup>784</sup> The image is the overcoming of separation. This is associated with a life-affirming element, thinking that is able to bridge the disparate is confident, and this leads to the sentence that Hohl used as proverb: ‘Kein Schritt auf der Welt ist möglich ohne die Zuversicht des umfassenden Denkens. Wir leben, solange wir dem Bild vertrauen.’<sup>785</sup> Trust in the image is a precondition to life because thinking that leads up to images can bridge gaps. Bänninger concludes this section with the sentence: ‘Freude, als höchste Ahnung der Bindung, erhält auch des Getrennte.’<sup>786</sup> Knowledge of the separatedness is not forgotten in joy, which for Bänninger is the highest intuition (*Ahnung*) of connection. This stresses again the importance

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<sup>782</sup> K. Bänninger, *Geist des Werdens*, p. 48.

<sup>783</sup> K. Bänninger, *Geist des Werdens*, p. 49.

<sup>784</sup> K. Bänninger, *Geist des Werdens*, p. 49.

<sup>785</sup> K. Bänninger, *Geist des Werdens*, p. 52.

cf. ‘[...] einem Wesen, das ohne Bild von der Welt und sich selbst nicht leben kann.’ Liebrucks, ii, p. 93.

<sup>786</sup> K. Bänninger, *Geist des Werdens*, p. 52.

Hohl gave to the necessity of finding connections (*Zusammenhänge*). One could therefore conclude: without connections no image and without image no life, which already indicates the role of the image for life affirmation.

I now turn to the image as such and Hohl's general reflections on the image before moving on to particular and repeated images that Hohl uses. For Hohl, the image requires a receptive capacity. Hohl describes this in relation to work (*Arbeit*): 'Die meisten Menschen freilich führen eine andere Art Dasein, unfähig, sich aufzuheben zur Tätigkeit, unfähig, die zahllosen Bilder zu empfangen, die stetig heranströmen.'<sup>787</sup> Three aspects are noteworthy in this quotation, firstly the requirement *sich aufzuheben in der Tätigkeit*. Initially, this can mean just to start the activity but, in a deeper sense, the self can *sich aufheben in der Tätigkeit*; meaning it can get lost in it. This loss of identity does not have a necessarily negative connotation. On the contrary, one could assume that this *Aufhebung* of the self in the activity leads to the experience of an intensification of life, of the *hereinbrechenden Ränder*. Secondly, there is an infinite (*zahllos*) number of images (an image itself can be infinite, so that one can never see it in its entirety).<sup>788</sup> Thirdly, those images are never exhausted and they are constantly available (*heranströmen*) to people. Fuchs writes about this chapter that for Hohl images are objective and cannot be influenced by the individual.<sup>789</sup>

According to Hohl, the result of any productive work is an image. This means images are not just 'there' but can also be created. In addition, any such image is absolute: 'Jedes große,

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<sup>787</sup> N I 43.

<sup>788</sup> N VII 3.

<sup>789</sup> Fuchs, p. 29.



wirklich produktive Denken stellt die Welt in einer Absolutheit dar. Jedes *Bild* ist ein Absolutes. Die Zeit vergeht, und einmal zeugt sie auch dieses Gebilde, als ein Bedingtes.<sup>790</sup>

Images can be found like this: ‘Man sieht ein *Bild* aus dem Allgemeinen heraus.’<sup>791</sup>

Furthermore, it requires a certain amount of seriousness. This is again an insight that finds its earlier formulation in the *Nuancen and Details*.<sup>792</sup> Hohl repeats it in the *Notizen*<sup>793</sup> and refers to it also in the *Nachnotizen*<sup>794</sup> with a slightly different emphasis. In the *Nachnotizen* Hohl relates that people have their own image, which is tied to their individuality but, once they lose that image, they also lose their individuality. ‘Image’ here can be understood as perhaps an individual worldview. Hohl recognises a pejorative use of the image (similar to the way he resents a pejorative use of the fragmentary), which he describes when philistines ask for the ‘images’ when reading novels instead of focussing on the words.<sup>795</sup>

Hohl then uses certain images. He mentions three that are of importance to him and all of them are located in the last chapter of the *Notizen*, ‘Bild’. The first one, mentioned in the very first aphorism (XII 1), is that of the Glasstein, which will be discussed in more detail in conjunction with similar quotes by Hans Jürgen von der Wense and Nietzsche (Section V. 3.2.3). The two other important images are of eternity as a face and of the perishable. The image of the face of eternity is mentioned twice: towards the end (XII 149) and in the very

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<sup>790</sup> N II 87.

<sup>791</sup> N XII 92.

<sup>792</sup> NuD II 20.

<sup>793</sup> N XII 147.

<sup>794</sup> NN 195.

<sup>795</sup> N IV 19.

last aphorism (XII 153) of this chapter and of the *Notizen*. The image of the perishable can be found rather close to the beginning (XII 31). Due to their strategic position, those images require investigation. I will concentrate on those images in the *Notizen* only, as they are not discussed in the *Nachnotizen*.

Turning now to a discussion of specific images Hohl used in the *Notizen*, he describes an image of the transient (*das Vergängliche*) as a carriage described as black and ghostly drawn by a thin horse and, on the carriage, two figures, a skinny and a fat person, both described as grey and pale from terror. This could be interpreted as his thought emphasizing the brevity of life. He mentions this image only once, but it was plainly important enough for him to include it in his index. The significance of this image is not entirely clear.

The second image, the face of eternity, is initially mentioned in a very brief aphorism: ‘Die Ewigkeit schaut herein durchs Fenster, groß, ein Gesicht!’<sup>796</sup> Hohl explains this further in a footnote in which he says that by *Gesicht* he means *Antlitz*, not a vision. A second further explanation about the face is given in smaller letters following that aphorism. He compares the face with the face of a wanderer who had been there observing for a long time and will continue to be there for a long time. That it is the face of a wanderer might mean that it will not stay, although Hohl says that, while it stays, it might not do so in the long run: eternity is the face of a wanderer. This might also mean that one does not always encounter eternity, and one can do nothing to enforce it; either eternity comes to you or it doesn’t.

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<sup>796</sup> N XII 149.

In the very last aphorism of the *Notizen* Hohl describes this face in more detail. Noteworthy also is the strong anthropomorphism: eternity is a face and the *world is a person*. Hohl describes the face in conjunction with the concept of *Linien* (IV.3.2.2). A first *Linie* indicates the beginning of the face, a *Linie* as a first choice of a small deed; it is not yet visible, but our work can help bring it to appearance. Hohl describes the length of work that is necessary, the work of a life. He takes up the idea of the *kleine Tätigkeit* and how all the small steps of a work finally form that face which takes on enormous dimension: ‘Alle Linien, die einzelnen Arbeitsherde haben sich zusammengefügt; was wir fixiert haben, ist ein winziger Teil seiner Ausdehnung; es geht über uns hinaus und rund um uns herum.’<sup>797</sup> He adds that *Zusammenhänge* are more obvious to humans than the actual dimension of something, such as the face, which is far bigger than assumed. This shows that the last aphorism of the *Notizen* comes full circle, giving an image that represents the whole of the work, the face of eternity which surpasses the human self. Hohl starts from the insight of mortality and the brevity of life and finishes with a perspective on eternity. Productivity might be the only thing that may enable humans to participate in the imperishable. Therefore Haupt’s view that unity in Hohl’s work is not a ‘systematische Zuordnung von Einzelteilen in eine nach bestimmten Prinzipien geordnete Struktur’<sup>798</sup> must be discarded. In contrast, the unity is very much determined according to Hohl’s view on creativity which is a direct and unalienated reflection of his personality. At the same time, the face is made up from lines (conceptual elements) which shows a combination of metaphorical and conceptual elements.

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<sup>797</sup> N XII 153.

<sup>798</sup> Haupt, p. 208.

The image continues to occupy Hohl in the *Nachnotizen*. He distinguishes image and reality (*Wirklichkeit*) and this difference can be found in what Hohl calls *Ahnung*. As seen before, Konrad Bänninger used this word to describe joy as a connecting intuition (*Ahnung*).<sup>799</sup> According to Fuchs, *Ahnung* has a transformative capacity, transforming the image and the big idea;<sup>800</sup> *Ahnung* is a means of gaining knowledge (*Erkenntnisinstrument*).<sup>801</sup> Hohl himself describes it further in the *Nachnotizen*. *Ahnung* is according to him a form of instinctive thinking, of intuition, ‘nichts als eine Zusammenziehung vieler kleiner richtiger (üblicher) Denkvorgänge; ...Aus mehreren richtigen Einzelheiten wird hier etwas gefolgert: einen Moment später sind die Einzelheiten versunken, ist nichts als eine brückenlose Ahnung, ein intuitives Urteil da.’<sup>802</sup> According to Hohl, those *Ahnungen* can be very precise.<sup>803</sup> Back to the discussion of the image: in Hohl’s view, the *Wirklichkeit* represents everything (*alles*). But only a very small part (*ein unsäglich geringer Teil*) of it can be captured in images. And these images are only one possibility of an infinity of possibilities of turning something into images. This shows the consistency of Hohl’s ontological fragmentariness. He emphasises the smallness of that which can be put in images by referring to Goethe’s statement that literature is a ‘Fragment der Fragmente.’<sup>804</sup> In the *Nachnotizen* Hohl continues to stress the life-affirming nature of the image: ‘denn ohne Bild ist sowieso niemandem zu helfen.’<sup>805</sup> The

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<sup>799</sup> K. Bänninger, *Geist des Werdens*, p. 52.

<sup>800</sup> Fuchs, p. 73.

<sup>801</sup> Fuchs, p. 72.

<sup>802</sup> NN 40.

cf. Theodor Lessing’s concept of ‘Ahmung’. According to Lessing humans have access to the world in two ways: “‘lebendig’ als durch “‘Ahmung” (Einsfühlung) gelebten Bildtraumreigen (brahma-vidya); “im Bewußtsein” als eine “Welt” von Gegenständen und Formen’ Lessing, p. 85.

<sup>803</sup> NN 456.

<sup>804</sup> Goethe, xii, p. 494, Nr. 910. cf. NN 56.

<sup>805</sup> NN 164.

concept of work, the drive to produce that is inherent in any human being is equated with the drive toward new images.<sup>806</sup> Hohl relates the image to the tragic and, to this effect, he distinguishes two kinds of *Erleben* (experience): temporal experience and eternal experience, which is an intensification of the former.<sup>807</sup> Old images can only be replaced by new images. Images can be found in nature and, according to Hohl, they are an expression of *das Reale*. One way to come to the image is through work: ‘daß man nur *tun* muß, tun kann; wenn darin Sinn und Treue sich in dem Maße vereinigen, daß die Natur uns das einzige Reale, nämlich ein *Bild* gibt,...’<sup>808</sup> In this same aphorism Hohl also says that one can come to image by way of *unaufhörliches Beobachten*, and his example is Cezanne.<sup>809</sup> One can lose images by tiredness, but sleep and productivity can lead to new ones. However, Hohl states that the relation between image and productivity is not proportional: more productivity does not lead to more images. Instead, states Hohl, most images will come at a moment of weaker productivity, at a ‘frühere Intensitätsstufe’.<sup>810</sup> Hohl uses the image also to describe the nature of the artist. His example here is Wilhelm Tell’s leap to freedom, which to him is the exact image of the artist.<sup>811</sup>

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<sup>806</sup> NN 268.

<sup>807</sup> NN 316.

<sup>808</sup> NN 428.

<sup>809</sup> NN 428.

cf. also Gerard Visser, *Water dat zich laat oversteken* (Amsterdam: Sjobbolet Filosofie, 2011), p. 87.

<sup>810</sup> NN 524.

<sup>811</sup> NN 564.

### V.3.2 Aphoristic Writing and the Stone Metaphor

This section traces the prevalence of the stone metaphor<sup>812</sup> in aphoristic writing to show that it is an absolute metaphor in Blumenberg's sense. This means that the stone metaphor would describe instances that cannot be expressed in conceptual language. In a wider sense I understand the stone metaphor to include metal metaphors and those relating to fire and burning. The examination of the stone metaphor proceeds in three ways: firstly (V.3.2.1), the use of the stone metaphor by aphoristic writers themselves; secondly (V.3.2.2), the use of the stone metaphor to describe aphoristic writing as a genre; thirdly (V.3.2.3), a comparison of three aphorisms by Hohl and Jürgen von der Wense demonstrating the similarity in the use of those metaphors.

#### V.3.2.1 The Stone Metaphor used by Aphoristic Writers Themselves

In *Zarathustra* Nietzsche mentions the idea of writing on ore: 'Seligkeit, auf dem Willen von Jahrtausenden zu schreiben wie auf *Erz*, — härter als *Erz*, edler als *Erz*. Ganz hart allein ist das Edelste. Diese neue Tafel, oh meine Brüder, stelle ich über euch: werdet hart! — —'<sup>813</sup> This is a striking passage because Nietzsche mentions ore three times in this quote. Also, he says the artist needs to be made from *Erz*, such as Wagner. The hardness of metal here is the foundation on which to write. Stüssi mentions Hohl's 'Steinbuch'<sup>814</sup>, a book in which he wrote about bad (childhood) memories. She quotes him also saying in the *Epische Grundschriften* in a crisis 'daß ich mich durchsetze, daß ein innerster Kristall erhalten

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<sup>812</sup> cf. for the philosophical significance of stone: John Sallis, *Stone* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

<sup>813</sup> Z III 29, KSA 4.268, cf. also Görner, p. 51.

<sup>814</sup> Stüssi, p. 34.

bleibe’.<sup>815</sup> This early use of the crystal shows a preference for this type of metaphor that should remain unchanged. Hohl uses the stone metaphor in order to describe the act of writing: ‘Du mußt mit jener ätzenden Flüssigkeit schreiben, die Stein, Metall ätzt, die Leben nimmt, Leben verwandelt.’<sup>816</sup> Unlike Nietzsche, for Hohl the hardness lies in the writing itself, an acidic writing that is able to be stronger than stone and metal and able also to take life and change it. Hohl states in another aphorism that the mind gets its highest power from bordering on insanity ‘gehärtet durch das dort Glühende.’<sup>817</sup> The word iron is used and Hohl often speaks about metal or *Härte*, the degrees of hardness of something that has been written. Hardness is for him a decisive quality, used to determine the value of a certain piece of art. One could regard stone and metal as symbols of strength and power and the concentratedness of the aphorism.<sup>818</sup> Hohl speaks of the pieces of stones that are truth: ‘... den aus dem Berg gebrochenen Gesteinsstücken, die die Wahrheit sind.’<sup>819</sup> He requires words to have the hardness of metal: ‘Das Wort, das Geschriebene: Möge gefaßt und geboten werden, bevor es wieder verschleimt und verglast...solang es noch die Eckigkeit in der Erde geborenen Metalls hat.’<sup>820</sup>

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<sup>815</sup> Stüssi, p. 225.

<sup>816</sup> N VI 28. also: ‘Wie Metall sollen deine Sätze sein: Und zwar nicht Silber, milchig-schwärzliches Weichzeug, sondern Gold soll es sein, oder eines der herrlichsten Metalle, wengleich eine Legierung, Messing; oder Erz. Und wenn nicht Metall, so Stein. Das Göttlichste sind Gesteine.’ N VI 48.

<sup>817</sup> N VII 135.

<sup>818</sup> ‘Und es gibt nur eine Hoffnung: die Kondensation.’ N VI 38.

<sup>819</sup> N II 235.

<sup>820</sup> N II 33.

### V.3.2.2 The Stone Metaphor in the Description of Aphoristic Writing by Others

In general the stone metaphor occurs a great deal in descriptions of aphoristic writing.

Neumann writes in his *Ideenparadiese* that our thinking is ‘mineralisch’.<sup>821</sup> Bänninger writes: ‘Der Stein scheint allen zu dienen.’<sup>822</sup> Other writers, such as Hermann Lenz in his ‘Vielleicht lebst du weiter im Stein’<sup>823</sup> associate the stone with immortality. According to the essayist Idris Parry, ‘Stone is the most expressive material. It is a frozen sea grained with waves. Or a magnetic field of particles suspended in pattern. It is evidence of form and memory of movement, a memory which awakens in the imaginative observer. Movement is its essential and secret quality.’<sup>824</sup> Parry describes the stone as being able to remember movement and also render it accessible to the observer. In this capacity of storing movement it is like the aphorism storing its long chains of thought. Especially noteworthy is the description of crystal that is commonly applied to aphoristic writing. Also, other short forms have been compared to crystal.<sup>825</sup>

A metaphor of fire or burning is fairly prevalent not just in Hohl’s aphoristic writing, but in writing that is based on *Zettelkästen*. This is relevant because Hohl also operated with *Zettel*: ‘So haben sie Alle, die wirklich Guten - der große Jean Paul; Beethoven; die Maler - über ihre

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<sup>821</sup> Neumann, *Ideenparadiese*, p. 533.

<sup>822</sup> K. Bänninger, *Geist des Werdens*, p. 59.

<sup>823</sup> Hermann Lenz, *Vielleicht lebst du weiter im Stein* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2003).

<sup>824</sup> Idris Parry, *Animals of Silence: Essays on Art, Nature, and Folk-tale* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 76.

<sup>825</sup> Im ganzen spiegelt die Reihenfolge dieser epigrammatischen Eintragungen auch die zeitliche Ordnung der Manuskripte wider, aus deren Wachstum sie stammen oder in denen sie Aufnahme finden; doch gibt es starke Abweichungen von dieser Regel, die stärksten immer dann, wenn Ideen oder auch Themen, die ganz verschiedenen Umständen, Lebenssituationen entsprangen, in einem Manuskript konvergieren, scheinbar Heterogenes zusammenschließt wie in einem kleinen Kristall. Ulrich Sonnemann, ‘Grenzübertritte’ in Uwe Schultz (ed.), *Das Tagebuch und der moderne Autor* (Frankfurt/Main: Ullstein, 1982), pp. 83 - 94, (p. 93).



Riesen=Zettelkästen, Notizbüchern mit “Motiven” und Skizzenmappen, gehockt : in den Monaten der Niederschrift dann, wird das Material angewärmt, erhitzt, ja, *glühend gemacht!*<sup>826</sup> The *Reallexikon* definition of the aphorism speaks of the aphorism expressing a ‘Brennpunkt’.<sup>827</sup> It is appropriate to subsume the fire and stone descriptions under the stone metaphor because Hohl uses them synonymously in a key passage, *Mondwald und Igelwald*, about his creative practice:

Da aber außerdem die zwei Dinge eine Spirale bildeten oder in der Bauart einer Fuge, sich gegenseitig verstärkend, ineinander lagen - indem das erste der Beweis der zweiten war, das zweite eine kleinere Wiederholung des Ganzen, das Ganze eine großartige Illustration des zweiten -, schoß mir auf wie eine Stichflamme. (Oder: konnte ich in genauestem Sinne von Kristallisation reden.)<sup>828</sup>

There is another passage in which Hohl combines the stone metaphor with the fire metaphor. This is the image of a writer and Hohl thinks here not about a particular writer but how a writer ought to be: ‘Der Schriftsteller, der mir als Bild vorschwebt, hat keinen saftigen Braten geliefert und seine Prosa ist nicht melodisch aufrauschend. Aber manche Sätze in seinen durch endlose Anstrengungen gewonnenen Schriften haben schwarzen glashellen Eisens Funkeln.’<sup>829</sup> This twinkling of the iron leads to the crystal metaphor. Stüssi observes that Hohl’s diary writing offers ‘Gedanken-Kristalle’.<sup>830</sup> She further describes Hohl’s work as being between ‘Auflösung und Kristallisation’,<sup>831</sup> and remarks that as soon as Hohl reaches a

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<sup>826</sup> Arno Schmidt, ‘Gottfried Benn. Muß das künstlerische Material kalt gehalten werden?’ in Arno Schmidt, *Sämtliche Nachtprogramme und Aufsätze*, Bd 4 (Zürich: Haffmanns Verlag, 1988), pp. 317-322, (p. 319).

<sup>827</sup> *Reallexikon der Deutschen Literaturgeschichte*, p. 82.

<sup>828</sup> N VII 20, cf. Geyer p. 47.

<sup>829</sup> N VI 47.

<sup>830</sup> Stüssi, p. 151.

<sup>831</sup> Stüssi, p. 25.

crystallised insight, he reformulates it; only an unstable result can invigorate thinking and lead to and inspire productivity.<sup>832</sup> Johannes Beringer describes the nature of what is being crystallised in the aphorisms as that which cannot be inferred from the personal, but instead the ‘Unbedingten, das aus dem Bedingten heraus Kunst macht.’<sup>833</sup> Barbara Lafond describes Hohl as being an ‘Aphoristiker kristalliner Prosa.’<sup>834</sup> Unlike Hohl, Nietzsche’s writing is more associated with stones than with crystals. Regarding Nietzsche and his use of stones, Graham Parkes deserves particular mention, as he focussed two essays on Nietzsche and the stone: ‘Nietzsche’s Care for Stone. The Dead, Dance, and Flying’<sup>835</sup> and ‘The Role of Rock in the Japanese Dry Landscape Garden’.<sup>836</sup> According to Parkes, Nietzsche ‘reveres unhewn rock, for what it can teach us about life, and for what its image tells us about what is unteachable in the depths of the soul.’<sup>837</sup> This statement contains like the aphorism two dimensions, one accessible and one inaccessible: something that can be taught, about life, in contrast to the system; and something that cannot be taught but is nevertheless present in the soul. In his second essay Parkes associates stones with the ‘essential energy of the earth’.<sup>838</sup>

Rüdiger Görner writes about the notes that Nietzsche made for *Human, All Too Human* that they resemble stones that can be used or not but, if they are, they become ‘magical language stones’. Görner further employs a ‘light-dark’ metaphor.

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<sup>832</sup> Stüssi, p. 267.

<sup>833</sup> Beringer, *Hohls Weg*, p. 63.

<sup>834</sup> Lafond, p. 21.

<sup>835</sup> Graham Parkes, ‘Nietzsche’s Care for Stone: The Dead, Dance, and Flying’, in Horst Hutter and Eli Friedland (eds.), *Nietzsche’s Therapeutic Teaching* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 175-190.

<sup>836</sup> Graham Parkes, ‘The Role of Rock in the Japanese Dry Landscape Garden’, in *Reading Zen in the Rocks: The Japanese Dry Landscape Garden* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000), pp. 85-145.

<sup>837</sup> Parkes, *Care for Stone*, p. 176.

<sup>838</sup> Parkes, *Role of Rock*, p. 90.

Nietzsche konnte dieses Buch mit einigem Recht ein Dokument der Selbstüberwindung nennen, ein Schattenwerk voll lichter Scharfsinnigkeit, ein gewagtes Denkprojekt, aphoristisch ausgeführt und einem Verfahren folgend, bei dem er, der denkende Wanderer zwischen Meer und Gebirge, sich selbst Stichworte lieferte, über die er dann reflektierte oder improvisierte. Diese Stichworte gleichen Steinen am Weg, die der Wanderer aufnimmt und betrachtet, sie gleichsam geistig betastend sich aneignet, mitnimmt oder wieder fallen läßt: ‘Dunkel-Zeiten’, ‘Der Traum’, ‘Einfach leben’, ‘Zuviel und zu wenig’, ‘Sonnenbahn der Idee’. Magische Sprachsteine, die funkeln und, denkend gefaßt, zu einem Mosaik werden.<sup>839</sup>

Görner compares the reading of Nietzsche with entering ‘den metallreichen Stollen des Lebens.’<sup>840</sup> Theodor Lessing uses the stone metaphor in describing adversities in life such as crime or sin as stepping stones on the way to achieve that amount of beauty and greatness that is possible (*letztmöglich*) for a human.<sup>841</sup> Robin Small compares Nietzsche’s aphorism to a stone,<sup>842</sup> as does Eugen Fink: ‘As a thinker he is intuitive and imaginative, possessing extraordinary powers of concretisation’. And yet they do not just stand on their own but form sequences and (within the unity of a book) a unique whole. Nietzsche is a master of composition; each book has its own spiritual mood which is found in all aphorisms, each has its own pace, its own unmistakable individual sound. No two books of Nietzsche resemble each other.<sup>843</sup> Fink associates the succinctness of aphorisms with cut stones. They are not natural but have been cut by the mind of the writer into their shape. But Fink also says that

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<sup>839</sup> Rüdiger Görner, *Nietzsches Kunst: Annäherung an einen Denkartisten* (Frankfurt/Main: Insel Verlag, 2000), p. 209.

<sup>840</sup> Görner, p. 24. p. 92, p. 209.

<sup>841</sup> Lessing, *Nietzsche*, p. 64.

<sup>842</sup> Small, p. 60.

<sup>843</sup> Eugen Fink, *Nietzsche’s Philosophy* (London/New York: Continuum, 2003), p. 5.

‘Nietzsche’s highly poetical quality and the aphoristic form of his books are disadvantageous to the exposition of his philosophy.’<sup>844</sup>

### V.3.2.3 Comparison of the Stone Metaphor in Hohl and von der Wense

The comparison of three passages by Hohl and von der Wense might shed light on the general nature of the use of the stone metaphor in aphoristic writing beyond Hohl. There are other thinkers in whom the stone metaphor is recurrent and consequential, such as Jürgen von der Wense, who named one of his books, *Epidot*,<sup>845</sup> after a stone:

Das Heft soll den Namen meines Lieblings-Gesteins tragen, das in Röhren kristallisiert, ganz schwarz; wenn man es aber gegen die Sonne hält, ist es strahlend und leuchtend golden: Epidot: 'dargereicht, Zugabe', weil es nämlich mehr Flächen als sonst ein Kristall, wurde ihm dieser Name und es scheint, dass er mir entspricht. 'Epidot' soll es heißen und weiter nichts.<sup>846</sup>

Analogous to the aphorism with its many possibilities of interpretation, von der Wense chose a stone that shines in different colours depending on the light. The colours reach from the deepest black to an illuminating gold, and the stone’s name, *Epidot*, means addition or increase. This again echoes the inexhaustible potentiality of the aphorism. Von der Wense writes:

Epidot ist mein Lieblingsgestein. Von dem ich einige prächtige Stücke mir selbst am Groß-Venediger gebrochen habe. Es ist so, wie man es findet, nicht gerade ein 'buntschimmernder Kristall', sondern tritt zu Tage in zarten, tiefschwarzen Säulen, die aber, wenn man sie gegen die Sonne hält, in

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<sup>844</sup> Fink, p. 5.

<sup>845</sup> Jürgen von der Wense, *Epidot* (München: Matthes & Seitz, 1987). cf. for von der Wense’s general use of the image: Jürgen von der Wense, *Blumen blühen auf Befehl: Aus dem Poesiealbum eines zeitungslisenden Volksgenossen 1933-1945* (München: Matthes & Seitz, 1993).

<sup>846</sup> Hans Jürgen von der Wense, *Werke* (Hans Jürgen von der Wense, Werke, ed. Reiner Niehoff and Valeska Bertoncini, I edn, 3 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 2005), ii, 1244). cf. for an English translation that is in progress: Jürgen von der Wense, *A Shelter for Bells: From the Writings of Jürgen von der Wense*, Kirston Lightowler and Herbert Pöstel (eds), Forthcoming from Epidote Press in Summer 2016, translated by Herbert Pöstel and Kristofor Mintz.

jenem reinsten und gloriosen Golde leuchten, das wir auf den Bildern der alten Meister bewundern, und es war mir dies immer ein Sinnbild, wie denn auch der finsterste Stoff sich verklärt auf dem Goldgrunde dieser Welt, wenn wir ihn und uns nur selbst hineinstellen in den Strahl. Öfter schon wählte man als Titel die Namen von Steinen, und ich erinnere Sie nur an das tief sinnig-liebenswürdige Buch unserer deutschen Dichtung: die 'Flegeljahre' von Jean Paul.<sup>847</sup>

In this quotation from von der Wense an identification of the self with the stone takes place.

This might be similar to Hohl's identification of the self with strength. Hohl writes in the *Notizen*, the first aphorism of his *Bild* chapter the following:

Der funkelnde Glas-Stein

Einmal obsidierte mich diese deutliche und starke Vorstellung, dringend wie ein heftiger Traum und fast wie ein Gesicht, und mir großes Wohlgefallen bringend:

Ein Glas- oder Kristallstück, richtig geschlagen, unerhört erglänzend. In einer mächtig eindunkelnden Welt, auf von brauner Nacht übergossenem Boden liegt es – als Leben – noch allein. Dunkler und dunkler wird alles, nur schief fallen noch Strahlen unter den Wolken durch als eine Unterschichte. Die obern Schichten sind wie Mäntel, unendliche, weiche, schwarzgrüne, übereinander, die Welt immer mehr verdunkelnd. (Die Farben nicht von Rembrandt, sondern von Tizian wohl und vielleicht auch von Greco.) Und unten am Boden, dem braunen, liegt immer, noch und noch, und nur größern Lebens, der unermeßlich funklende Stein.<sup>848</sup>

Here is a prime example of what Hohl means by *Bild* and what could be seen as an absolute metaphor, and it is used by Hans Jürgen von der Wense in a very similar way. Both use the image of a ground on which the stone is lying. Only in Hohl's case this ground is brown, whereas in von der Wense's case it is gold. For von der Wense this 'Goldgrund' is the world. For Hohl, this stone symbolises life. But for both, Hohl and von der Wense, something has to happen to the stone. For von der Wense something relatively passive is at stake; one only has to hold the stone in the sun for it to shine, whereas in Hohl the stone has to be treated in order

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<sup>847</sup> Wense, ii, p. 1187.

<sup>848</sup> N XII 1.

to shine. But the difference to von der Wense is that Hohl's stone does not need the sun: it shines all by itself. Both compare these colours with the colours that painters have used. Both operate with a darkness and brightness contrast. For Hohl, the world and its ground is darker, whereas for von der Wense the stone is dark and the world and its ground golden. The hardness and durability always goes along with something bright, which seems to match the strength of the hardness, being an opposite to it, or perhaps not an opposite but rather a twin, an interdependency between dark and light.<sup>849</sup> Or, if only the written piece has this hardness, the glistening light can emerge, which is a gift, as the name *Epidot* seems to suggest.

#### **V.4 Hohl's Influence on Handke: Combination of Phantasy with Repetition**

This section traces Peter Handke's reading of Ludwig Hohl and is the first exploration of Hohl's influence on Handke. It limits itself to Handke's aphoristic works: *Das Gewicht der Welt*, *Die Geschichte des Bleistifts*, *Phantasien der Wiederholung*, *Am Felsfenster morgens* and *Gestern Unterwegs*.<sup>850</sup> Handke himself met Hohl and gave the laudatio to Hohl in 1980 when Hohl was awarded the Petrarca Prize.<sup>851</sup> Handke also rejected the view of Hohl being a

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<sup>849</sup> cf. Görner, p. 24.

<sup>850</sup> Handke's aphoristic books are:

in particular, as listed by Handke in *Am Felsfenster morgens*, p. 6. - dates in brackets indicate :

Peter Handke, *Das Gewicht der Welt* (Salzburg: Residenz Verlag, 1977). It covers the time from November 1975 to March 1977.

Peter Handke, *Die Geschichte des Bleistifts* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1985). It covers the time from 1976 to 1980.

Peter Handke, *Phantasien der Wiederholung* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1983). It covers the time from 1981 - 1982).

Peter Handke, *Am Felsfenster morgens (und andere Ortszeiten 1982 - 1986)*, (Salzburg: Residenz Verlag, 1998). It covers the time from 1982 - 1987).

Peter Handke, *Gestern Unterwegs* (Salzburg und Wien: Jung und Jung, 2005). It covers the time from December 1987 - July 1990).

<sup>851</sup> Peter Handke, 'Ein Gruß an Ludwig Hohl' in Handke, *Das Ende des Flanierens* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1980), pp. 162-163.

misanthrope and instead characterised him as an innocent, life-affirming thinker.<sup>852</sup> Although there are a few critical remarks about Hohl, these do not overshadow the general positive influence Hohl had on Handke. Handke especially, apart from the concept of phantasy, appreciates Hohl's views on patience and slowness, as Moeri states.<sup>853</sup> Moeri also claims that *Die Lehre der Sainte-Victoire* is an expression of Handke's admiration of Hohl's *Bergfahrt*.<sup>854</sup> A further important similarity between Hohl and Handke is their awareness of the relevance of a *Zwischen*, of the *hereinbrechenden Ränder* with a focus away from the centre. This will be discussed briefly with the help of Heidegger's concept of *Schwelle*.

Handke's reading of Hohl will be examined and in particular how Handke's concept of phantasy was influenced by Hohl. As argued in sections III.3.1 and III.5.3, the concept of repetition is necessary to aphorist thinkers in the sense that they require a repeated reading of their aphorisms and, in a second sense, that they take up the same thought and vary it. Given Handke's novel *Repetition*, it is obvious that repetition is a key term in his thinking. Handke explains the importance of repetition in a description of Hermann Lenz's writing<sup>855</sup> and therefore it is a criterion which he uses to judge other people's writing as well. This

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<sup>852</sup> EF, pp. 162-163.

<sup>853</sup> Moeri, p. 49.

<sup>854</sup> Moeri, p. 50.

Ludwig Hohl, *Die Bergfahrt* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1997).

cf. Peter Handke to Hermann Lenz 23.10. 1975:

'Ich lese gerade [...] ein Buch von Ludwig Hohl, "Bergfahrt". Es sind da Beschreibungen der Natur drin, daß man ganz elektrisch wird. Jeden Satz geht man beim Lesen mit einer Erwartung an, und das ist ja bei Dir auch so. Was für ein Glück die Literatur manchmal vermittelt, ein ganz paradiesisches [...].'

Peter Handke & Hermann Lenz, *Briefwechsel* (Frankfurt/Main: Insel Verlag, 2006), p. 89.

cf. for a further mention of the influence of Hohl on Handke's *Die Lehre der Sainte-Victoire*: Jean-Pierre Mourey, *Le vif de la sensation* (Saint-Étienne: Centre interdisciplinaire d'études et de recherche sur l'expression contemporaine, Université de Saint-Étienne, 1993), p. 38.

<sup>855</sup> Peter Handke, *Aber ich lebe nur von den Zwischenräumen: Ein Gespräch, geführt von Herbert Gamber* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1990), p. 143

investigation will also shed some light on Handke's own aphoristic practice and will conclude that Handke's writing is more than notes of daily observation but also the expression of a theory of creativity, and insights into the creative processes by way of beauty and the necessity of combining phantasy with the notion of repetition.

This section will show in addition that ideas developed in Handke's aphoristic thinking occur in and might have an influence on his non-aphoristic writing as well, as can be seen when one considers his books *Nachmittag eines Schriftstellers* and *Die Wiederholung (Repetition)*. In addition, for instance he writes in the preface to *Gestern Unterwegs*<sup>856</sup> that some notes contained in that book were related to his very long novel *Mein Jahr in der Niemandsbucht*. This will help to show that there can be a similar creative theory underlying long and short forms and that there is no inherent 'disability to systematic thought' in those that prefer the short form such as aphorisms.

#### **V.4.1 *Das Gewicht der Welt***

In order to understand Handke's aphoristic practice, it is necessary first to try to understand the aims with which he writes<sup>857</sup> the following in his preface ('Vornotiz') to *Das Gewicht der Welt*: that his notes – he calls the aphorisms *Aufzeichnungen* – have not been planned. But he did intend to bring the aphorisms in connection with each other, Handke here uses the words *Zusammenhang* and *System* ('in einen Zusammenhang bringen', 'das System, für das sie gebraucht werden sollten,'<sup>858</sup>). However, the *System* and the *Zusammenhänge* were soon

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<sup>856</sup> GU, pp. 5 - 6.

<sup>857</sup> cf. GW, p. 5.

<sup>858</sup> GW, p. 5.



abandoned<sup>859</sup> by Handke in his *Vornotiz* and instead everything is noted and the notes become a foray into a freedom from literary forms with the aim to expose oneself to unknown literary possibilities, as an exercise in reacting towards everything with language, before language would turn again into the language of daily life. Handke aims to experience an ‘Augenblick der Sprache’<sup>860</sup> free from the private. Parry calls this a writing that is subjective but not private.<sup>861</sup> The wish or better, desire, for a *Zusammenhang* is not abandoned entirely; it is mentioned again later in a more positive sense. This means that Handke abandons the concept of *Zusammenhang* only when it means a connection in a static, systematic sense. Handke does not give the system a positive meaning. The positive meaning of *Zusammenhang* is therefore not related to a structuring function but, rather, when a *Zusammenhang* allows the experience of an insight into life: ‘Tage voll von Lebenszusammenhängen, stille Winterstimmung auf den Bahnhöfen ; und dann Tage, da man sich immer auf dieselbe Stelle der Lippe beißt’<sup>862</sup>. For Handke, the importance of *Zusammenhang* is therefore not as strong as in Hohl’s thinking, and outside the context of a ‘system’, the *Zusammenhang* has a positively, life-affirming meaning. According to Handke, *Das Gewicht der Welt* is a book that is not a narrative about a consciousness, but instead a report of a particular consciousness and the attempts of how it understands (*durchdringen*<sup>863</sup>) itself. Another characteristic is the synchronicity of the notes

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<sup>859</sup> ‘So wurde allmählich der Plan zerstört, und es gab nur noch die spontane Aufzeichnung zweckfreier Wahrnehmungen.’ GW, p. 5.

<sup>860</sup> GW, p. 6.

<sup>861</sup> Christoph Parry, ‘Der Prophet der Randbezirke: Zu Peter Handkes Poetisierung der Peripherie in “Mein Jahr in der Niemandsbucht”’, *Text + Kritik: Ludwig Hohl*, 24 (1999), 51-61, p. 59.

<sup>862</sup> GW, p. 15, cf. pp. 113, 182, 234

<sup>863</sup> GW, p. 6.

and the immediacy of experience that leads to them. Labelled a journal by Handke, *Das Gewicht der Welt* coincides with Hohl when he concludes his *Vornotiz* with the insight that there are no endings and everything can only ever be broken off: ‘Das Problem des vorliegenden Journals ist nur, daß es kein Ende haben kann; so muß es abbrechen.’<sup>864</sup>

Hohl is not mentioned in *Das Gewicht der Welt*, but Handke does reflect on the concept of phantasy on a number of occasions. It is for him a general capacity of mind<sup>865</sup>, along with ideas, consciousness and feelings. He connects phantasy to attention (*Aufmerksamkeit*); that a lack of attention is incompatible with phantasy and that having to be practical also stands in contrast to phantasy because, for Handke, being practical means being inattentive.<sup>866</sup> In another aphorism<sup>867</sup> he connects phantasy with aimlessness (*Ziellosigkeit*). For Handke, aimlessness means in the first instance an awareness of existing (*fühlte mich existieren*). This means that Handke assumes a certain anti-teleological character of phantasy and life, which in turn would mean that everything teleological stands in the way of life and phantasy, just as the system or imposed *Zusammenhänge*. Handke connects the teleological with only being able to function, not to exist properly. This is also an insight that is relevant to what Handke writes in the introduction to *Das Gewicht der Welt*. In another aphorism, Handke connects phantasy with looking, in the sense that seeing (*anschauen*) precedes and is a condition for phantasing: ‘So lange auf etwas schauen, bis ich zu phantasieren anfange.’<sup>868</sup> Even though

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<sup>864</sup> GW, p. 7.

<sup>865</sup> GW, p. 293.

<sup>866</sup> GW, p. 167.

<sup>867</sup> GW, p. 267.

<sup>868</sup> GW, p. 312.

Hohl is not mentioned in this book, these insights already show similarities in Hohl's and Handke's thought.

#### **V.4.2 Die Geschichte des Bleistifts**

*Die Geschichte des Bleistifts* was written at the same time Handke wrote *Langsame Heimkehr*,<sup>869</sup> whose title might suggest an affinity to Hohl's *unvoreilige Versöhnung*. *Die Geschichte des Bleistifts* contains the same themes already mentioned in *Das Gewicht der Welt*. It does not have a preface. Handke does mention Hohl in *Die Geschichte des Bleistifts* a couple of times<sup>870</sup> and this work shows a great deal of reflection and a very strong engagement with the concept of phantasy. Here phantasy is combined with *Erwärmung*, which is a direct influence of Hohl and which is mentioned a number of times in Handke's works.<sup>871</sup> The original Hohl quote regarding phantasy and *Erwärmung* is this:

Darüber denkend, was die Macht - die entscheidende Macht der *Rede* ist. Das Rühren an Realitäten, das Aufrühren der Realitäten, die im Zuhörer sind, die für den Zuhörer bestehen. Wie ist es möglich? Durch die Phantasie. Noch und nocheinmal: Die Phantasie ist kein Schaffen. Die Phantasie ist ein Erwärmen dessen, was schon da ist. *Es gibt kein Schaffen*.<sup>872</sup>

Hohl here expresses a fundamental statement about his theory of creativity, which is based on Proust and Kassner and shows that creativity is not about mimesis but instead is about finding and expressing insights about touching the nature of reality (*das Reale*). Phantasy is the main

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<sup>869</sup> Peter Handke, *Langsame Heimkehr* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1984).

<sup>870</sup> GB, p. 42, p. 72, p. 278, p. 294, p. 322.

<sup>871</sup> Handke refers to this Hohl quote several times: FM, pp. 165 & 201. ZW, p. 30. GB p. 278. cf. also Handke & Lenz, *Briefwechsel*, p. 422. for another mention of this particular Hohl quote and where it is stated that Lenz's concept of phantasy was similar to Handke's. Information from Scott Abbott 22.12.2015: Handke mentions this Hohl quote also in a forthcoming documentary (*Bin im Wald. Kann sein, daß ich mich verspäte*) about Handke by Corinna Belz.

<sup>872</sup> N XII 109.

capacity to gain those insights. Hohl rejects a view of phantasy that sees phantasy as creating new things (*schaffen*), but is instead a renewed awareness of something that is already there. According to Hohl there is no ‘Schaffen’. It is a philosophy not against creativity but rather a change of awareness, with a focus on what is already there but which needs to be found and seen again and thereby warmed up. This focus on warmth has a second aspect in that it might recall von Humboldt’s emphasis on Licht and Wärme.<sup>873</sup> Handke mentions Hohl in another instance where Hohl emphasises the importance of being able to distinguish between *Phantasie* and *Einfälle*, which is very consistent, because an *Einfall* may be something new, while phantasy is the capacity ‘to warm’ that which is already there.<sup>874</sup> Handke speaks about the above Hohl quote in more detail in *Aber ich lebe nur von den Zwischenräumen*. Handke’s mention of Hohl’s concept of phantasy and *Verknüpfung* is very poignant:

Ich glaub, bei mir ist die Phantasie, das glaub ich zumindest erkannt zu haben, mehr ein Reinigen des Ortes: also daß ich da die Einzelheiten, die unverwechselbar da sind, erkenne und miteinander verknüpfe, das ist meine phantasierende Arbeit. Also ich möchte überhaupt nichts dazutun. Ich erinnere mich da nur an einen Spruch von Ludwig Hohl, der sagt: ‘Das Phantasieren ist ja nur eine Erwärmung des Vorhandenen’, also des Materials. Daß da keine Zutat passiert, sondern eine Erkenntnis der Einzelheiten und deren Verknüpfung zu einem... sagen wir, ich glaub das ist ein ganz schönes Wort: zu einem einzigen Sachverhalt. Würden Sie die Orte nun angehen oder erleben, die ich versucht hab zu erzählen, würden Sie die Phantasie glaub ich als Treue spüren...<sup>875</sup>

Handke’s reference to *Phantasie* and *Verknüpfung* is very Hohlian, just as is Handke’s mention of *phantasierende Arbeit* in the quote above which shows Hohl’s influence very clearly. This takes up another concept that was relevant to Hohl and shows their affinities. Johanna

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<sup>873</sup> ‘Humboldt verlangt von der Philosophie, sie solle nicht nur Licht, sondern auch Wärme verbreiten’. Trabant, *Apeliotes*, p. 15.

<sup>874</sup> ‘Wichtig also: daß man aufs schärfste auseinanderhält *Phantasie* und *Einfälle*’ (derselbe) p. 278. cf. N XII 81

<sup>875</sup> ZW pp. 30 - 31.

Bossinade interprets Handke's notion of *Zusammenhang* as that which can synthesise the fractures between the self, writing and the world: 'In der 'Sainte-Victoire' figuriert der Zusammenhang als Synthesepunkt der Brüche, welche die Textur von Ich, Schrift und Welt durchqueren.'<sup>876</sup> The Sainte-Victoire is relevant in the sense of repetition as well because Cézanne painted so many pictures of this very mountain. This shows that this problem of *Zusammenhang* and repetition is fundamental to Handke's writing and not just a feature of his aphorisms.

Other mentions of Hohl in *Die Geschichte des Bleistifts* revolve around Hohl's major concept of *Arbeit*. Regarding *Arbeit* (Work) the notion that there is no preparation is important to Handke; everything is already work, a sentiment often expressed by Hohl.<sup>877</sup> Of special importance also is the reflection on form. On two occasions Handke mentions Hohl in relation to form. One is an aphorism where Handke connects Hohl to Schwitters: 'Tragende Form wird illegal geboren' (Ludwig Hohl); so wie Schwitters' 'Formen ist entformeln'<sup>878</sup> The other mention is this: 'Ein größeres Wunder als ein richtig gewähltes Wort gibt es nicht' (Ludwig Hohl; das Wunder sei Formwunder).<sup>879</sup> Both references to form in relation to illegality and wonder allow one to conclude that Hohl does not have a concept of form as a restricting entity. It is rather related to something that escapes rigidity and the predictable; form is accidental and can originate only in the writer's identity, a result of the unique expression of

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<sup>876</sup> Johanna Bossinade, *Moderne Textpoetik: Entfaltung eines Verfahrens. Mit dem Beispiel Peter Handke* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1999), p. 159.

<sup>877</sup> 'Des Menschen Würde erträgt nicht, Vorbereitungen zu machen' (Ludwig Hohl); also werde ich mich auf die Arbeit nicht vorbereiten, sondern sie einfach anfangen?' GB, p. 72.

<sup>878</sup> GB, p. 42. Handke quotes Hohl and Schwitters.

<sup>879</sup> GB, p. 278. Handke quotes Hohl.

creative activity solely determined by the demands of the work of art itself. Schwitters' reference to form as *entformeln* confirms this. Related to the form as *Wunder* is Hohl's notion of *Zaubern*. Handke contemplates *Zaubern* in another aphorism without making any mention of Hohl: 'Die poetische Sprache müßte als ein Zaubern erscheinen. (Heißt das, sie müßte, als Geste, vor allem unauffällig sein?)'.<sup>880</sup> Finally, Handke quotes Hohl in his view of the social and simplicity in the letter writing to a friend. As seen before, Hohl has compared the act of creativity to the writing of letters and this is therefore a fundamental part of Hohl's: "Ich schreibe jetzt meinem Freund, dem Menschen, einen Brief, und er wird ihn lesen. Das ist alles." (Ludwig Hohl)".<sup>881</sup>

In *Geschichte des Bleistifts*, a theory of creativity is developed, based not on rationality, but instead on the concepts of phantasy and repetition. Phantasy in Handke is strongly connected to repetition, because repetition is a way of finding what can be called the structures of reality; to find a connection between apparently separate things, phantasy is exegeting (*auslegen*) repetition: 'Erst, wenn das, was war, in die Phantasie gehoben, noch einmal kommt, wird es mir wirklich: Phantasie als die auslegende Wiederkehr.'<sup>882</sup>

It is not just repetition that is able to discover something about reality. Handke says that beauty has a power to create reality as well; beauty is that which language replies to and beauty is another origin of reality. 'Das Schöne, das in der Sprache (oder sonst einer Form) Antwort findet, erhält Wirklichkeitskraft.'<sup>883</sup> But in fact it is only possible to have an

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<sup>880</sup> GB, p. 294.

<sup>881</sup> GB, p. 322.

<sup>882</sup> GB, p. 305.

<sup>883</sup> GB, p. 304.

experience of reality by way of repetition. It is not just about being attached to something but also about going away and then seeing something again. In the repetitive moment one finds the world and oneself, and this is also analogous to writing. Writing is also repetition, is staying and leaving, revealing and hiding oneself and this process continues until the self is constituted.<sup>884</sup> Phantasy and writing relate to the self in the sense that, in a process of repetition, the self is constituted and gives an awareness of being alive.<sup>885</sup>

Like Hohl with his concept of *Arbeit*, Handke suggests a three-step structure, an instruction of how to approach repetition. Here also something like the *Geisteskräfte* are required, even if not the same ones as in Hohl. According to Handke, one needs to approach the process of repetition with an awareness of repetition, the strength for it and care or caution during all this process.<sup>886</sup> In this life-affirming aspect, Handke's concept of repetition is similar to that of Kierkegaard's:

The person who chooses repetition – he lives. He does not run about like a boy chasing butterflies or stands on tiptoe to look for the glories of the world, for he knows them. Neither does he sit like an old woman turning the spinning wheel of recollection but calmly goes his way, happy in repetition. [...] Repetition -- that is actuality and the earnestness of existence.<sup>887</sup>

Although this is a process strongly described as life-giving, world-, self- and life-affirming, it is also the loneliest thing to do.<sup>888</sup> This means that the social component to life affirmation is

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<sup>884</sup> GB, p. 249.

<sup>885</sup> GB, p. 234.

<sup>886</sup> GB, p. 318.

<sup>887</sup> Søren Aabye Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling/Repetition* (Kierkegaard's Writings, ed. Hong and Hong, 1edn, 26 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), vi, 132-133).

<sup>888</sup> GB, p. 193.

smaller, the way it was earlier described in Hohl. Repetition is related to the spheres of outside and inside, but it seems that repetition is more an activity outside the self while phantasy is inside the self and seems to be the inner capacity that allows an awareness or readiness, a preparedness for the eventual and continuing process of repetition. Phantasy is giving structure to thought: 'Wo sich im Phantasieren endlich die Struktur bildet, setzt mein persönliches Denken ein.'<sup>889</sup> Due to beauty there is more than one way to access reality. Beauty shows an idea in some kind of diaphanous, transparent way, and is more an atmosphere that goes through the self, not something static.<sup>890</sup> There is a two-way approach to beauty: on the one hand it is there and when expressed creates a power to establish reality but, when beauty is not there, it is possible to write and in this repetitive process of writing one can find beauty, or rather, beauty can come into existence as well. This is somewhat related to Handke's concept of the inner that is more real (*das Reale*) than reality (*Wirklichkeit*), but not always accessible. The inner acquires more reality the more resistance one needs to overcome in order to come close to the inaccessible.<sup>891</sup>

It is noticeable how strongly phantasy and repetition are connected to each other. For instance, in *Die Geschichte des Bleistifts*, they are very prevalent. Perhaps this is why the next book of aphorisms is called *Phantasien der Wiederholung*. In Handke's *Phantasien der Wiederholung*.<sup>892</sup> Despite the title, in this book the concepts *Phantasie* and *Wiederholung* receive less explication compared to *Geschichte des Bleistifts*.

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<sup>889</sup> GB, p. 164.

<sup>890</sup> GB, p. 89.

<sup>891</sup> GB, p. 28.

<sup>892</sup> PW, p. 68, p. 75.



### V.4.3 Phantasien der Wiederholung

Handke mentions Hohl on two occasions in this work<sup>893</sup> (Handke reads also other aphoristic thinkers, such as Antonio Porchia<sup>894</sup>). On the first, Handke uses Hohl as an example of a contrast against systematic thinkers, assuming Hohl to be naive and innocent, and praises those characteristics in contrast to the system and, in addition, where the system is used in order to enlighten people. Handke qualifies this, adding that he does not mean the human enlightenment of Voltaire or Diderot but instead those who use this very system in order to see through everything. Yet, by doing this, they have lost the view of what is actually important:

Wer ein bestimmtes Denksystem hat (im Sinn des ‘Spielsystems’), und mit dessen Hilfe nichts tut als unablässig aufklären, aber nicht als jener notwendige, menschenfreundliche, wunderbare Aufklärer des ‘Zeitalters der Lichter’ (Voltaire, Diderot), sondern als professioneller, vor Durchschau-Zwang blickloser Denkpolicist mit Aufklärungsfimmel, der ist verdorben; halt dagegen zeitlebens die unschuldigen, naiven Denker hoch, wie Ludwig Hohl.<sup>895</sup>

Handke’s other mention of Hohl in the following quotation relates to Hohl and the concept of *Schwelle*, a concept that might be comparable to Hohl’s *hereinbrechende Ränder*. Here, Handke uses the word *Verwandlung*, a concept that is relevant to Hohl as well. Handke distinguishes *Wandlungsfähigkeit* from *Verwandlung*. It is important here that the ability to choose is not situated inside the artist but instead is a feature of the work of art; the work of art determines its *Verwandlung*. This is something that in the case of Handke the artist feels a lack of control over and a sort of force against the artist. This is different because in Handke

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<sup>893</sup> PW, pp. 68, 75, 78.

<sup>894</sup> PW, p. 68.

<sup>895</sup> PW, p. 68.

the artist does not have choice. For Hohl the artist does have choice and is able, if not to control the activity, the work of art, to make a choice between the decisive hints of the work, which the artist has to follow:

Picasso wird ständig gelobt für seine 'Wandlungsfähigkeit': aber die Verwandlung ist doch etwas grundanderes als Picassos 'Aussuchen von Möglichkeiten'; sie ist nie ein Charakterzug des jeweiligen Künstlers, sondern liegt in der Natur der Kunst(ausübung); und der Ausübende erlebt sie immer als Gewalt gegen sich, als sein drohendes Ende. Erst wenn sich ein Übergang abzeichnet ('im Leiden fruchten die Übergänge', E. Jünger), war es, im nachhinein, die Verwandlung; er, der Ausübende (der schwermütige Spieler) hatte keine Wahl. - Es gibt keine *Fähigkeit* zur Verwandlung, sie ist das allerschmerzhafteste Muß ('Die Schwelle sei nicht *irgendeine* Schwelle', Ludwig Hohl)<sup>896</sup>

Only a few pages later, Handke ponders the notion of *Schwelle* and regards it as the written and the image ('Schrift und Bild'). Maybe the *Schwelle* is for Handke the place where the image and the written coincide: 'Warum suche ich auf den Schwellen immer die Schrift oder das Bild? Die Schwelle selbst ist ja schon Schrift und Bild.'<sup>897</sup> The *Schwelle* also seems to be prior to the written or the image. Bossinade approaches the notion of *Schwelle* with Heidegger,<sup>898</sup> according to whom the *Schwelle* is something that carries. This stands in striking contrast to the threatening experience of the artist. It is worth trying to understand this contrast. Heidegger writes: 'Die Schwelle trägt das Zwischen. In seine Verlässlichkeit fügt sich, was im Zwischen aus-und ein-geht. Das Verlässliche der Mitte darf nirgend hin nachgeben. Der Austrag des Zwischen braucht das Ausdauernde und in solchem Sinne Harte.'<sup>899</sup> The *Schwelle* is characterised as a reliable entity that allows the existence of a

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<sup>896</sup> PW, p. 76.

<sup>897</sup> PW, p. 78.

<sup>898</sup> Bossinade, p.161.

<sup>899</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (Frankfurt/Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1985), p. 24. cf. Rakusa, p. 16 on Handke's 'getragenes Zeitmaß'.

*Zwischen* and that what can meet in the *Zwischen*. It is here that there are similarities in Hohl's thinking, particularly his concept of the *hereinbrechende Ränder*, that extends to the long form, particularly *Mein Jahr in der Niemandsbucht*.<sup>900</sup> Parry writes that the *Schwellen* are places in which a harmonisation between two realities/worlds can be achieved.

#### **V.4.4 Am Felsfenster morgens**

In *Am Felsfenster morgens* Hohl is mentioned several times.<sup>901</sup> Notably, there is again a mention of Hohl's *Phantasie* as 'Erwärmung des Vorhandenen'. Handke adds here the equation: 'Keine Zeit = keine Phantasie'.<sup>902</sup> He takes up Hohl's insight about *Phantasie* up again and judges many novels not to be using phantasy in the Hohlian sense, but instead misusing it.<sup>903</sup> He later quotes Hohl in conjunction with repetition: "Kaum etwas ist mir lieber als die Sätze, die ernste Geister mit Bewußtsein wiederholen."<sup>904</sup> He then quotes Hohl again: "Bei wenigen wird es klarer als bei Stendhal, daß höchste Prosa ist, wo Unmelodisches im Leser Melodisches weckt."<sup>905</sup>

There are also a number of critical mentions of Hohl in this work: 'Was mich an Hohl abstößt, sind nicht seine (übereiellen) Meinungen, sondern seine Gestik: "Man beginne..."'<sup>906</sup> Handke is not alone in criticising Hohl's *Gestik*, as one could already see in previously mentioned

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<sup>900</sup> Christoph Parry, pp. 51, 55, 56.

<sup>901</sup> FM, p. 165, p. 201, p. 380, p. 381, p. 385, p. 386.

<sup>902</sup> FM, p. 165.

<sup>903</sup> FM, p. 201.

<sup>904</sup> FM, p. 380.

<sup>905</sup> FM, p. 381. cf. NN 58

<sup>906</sup> FM, p. 381.

quotations by Müller or Loetscher. In the same vein he criticises Hohl's presentation of himself as invulnerable;<sup>907</sup> this too is a common point of criticism directed against Hohl. Two other critical mentions dispute Hohl's greatness, one in respect to his visit to Katherine Mansfield's grave, in which Handke states that all great people visit the places of birth of their heroes instead of their graves.<sup>908</sup> Another criticism states that Hohl does exclude characteristics such as tiredness in a process of creativity when, according to Handke, there is nothing to exclude.<sup>909</sup> However, one can refute this last criticism by referring to Hohl's aforementioned and explicated statement 'Alles ist Werk.'

#### **V.4.5 *Gestern unterwegs***

*Gestern Unterwegs* has two references to Hohl<sup>910</sup> and neither is critical of his thought. The first mention shows Hohl's influence on Handke's views on silence which is an appraisal of silence. There is an interdependence between silence and events (*Erlebnisse*). An event only deserves its name if it creates silence in the self and within the silence one experiences (*erlebt*) something. Handke describes an intensification of life that is a result of the silence and therefore silence is life affirming.

Zeichen eines Erlebnisses, das seinen Namen verdient: Indem es sich ereignet, setzt in dir das Schweigen ein, und das Gerede in dir, auch dasjenige, welches das geläufige für sogenannte 'Erlebnisse' ist, vor allem dieses, hört mit einem (sanften) Schlag auf, und in der sich ausbreitenden Stille wirst du erlebt haben, zum Beispiel jetzt das Glitzergrau des Granits von Galizien im Sprühregen: Schneisen der Stille und des Lichts und 'des

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<sup>907</sup> FM, p. 386.

<sup>908</sup> FM, p. 381.

<sup>909</sup> FM, p. 385.

<sup>910</sup> GU, p. 153, p. 528.

schweigenden Lebens der regelmäßigen Formen der Stille' (frei nach Ludwig Hohl)<sup>911</sup>

The second mention refers to Hohl's prioritisation of small things, of details and nuances above in this case an insight (*Erkenntnis*). The focus on the detail and variation is a key thought of Hohl's: 'Mit dem Älterwerden sagte er statt "Gib mir eine Erkenntnis!": "Gibt mir ein Detail, gib mir eine Variante!" (für Ludwig Hohl, an der Seine)<sup>912</sup> In another aphorism, Handke speaks about *Phantasie* and its maybe most decisive characteristic, namely that phantasy means *richtiges erkennen* in the sense that phantasy does not want to subsume any object it is occupied with but instead to recognise an object in its own right. This means that phantasy, unlike rational abstraction, does not aim to subsume an object under an alienating principle, but lets the object determine its place according its own rights, in a non-alienating sense: 'Noch einmal "Phantasie": Phantasie bedeutet: "Es wird!" Und der jeweilige Gegenstand der Phantasie wird, statt eingeordnet, erkannt, an seinem Platz, in seiner Sphäre.'<sup>913</sup> This shows that Hohl's influence on Handke's concept of phantasy cannot be underestimated. It shows further that Handke shares a number of similar concerns with Hohl, such as the importance of an awareness of *Schwellen*.<sup>914</sup>

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<sup>911</sup> GU, p. 153.

<sup>912</sup> GU, p. 528.

<sup>913</sup> GU, p. 526.

<sup>914</sup> cf. Karl Wagner, "'Von den Rändern her". Eine Einführung', in Klaus Amann, Fabjan Hafner, Karl Wagner (eds), *Peter Handke. Poesie der Ränder* (Wien, Köln, Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2006), pp. 7-20 (p. 17).

#### V.4.6 Life affirmation in Handke

I concur with Niemuth-Engelmann's view that Handke, like many other aphoristic writers, describes 'unshelteredness' in the world and aims to overcome 'Unbehaustheit'<sup>915</sup> by way of language. This is a different way of formulating what Hohl meant by *unvoreilige Versöhnung* in the widest sense: 'Es handelt sich in den Aufzeichnungen Peter Handkes um nichts Geringeres als die Suche nach dem verlorenen Paradies im Medium der Literatur.'<sup>916</sup> This might be due to Handke being unreconciled to modern life.<sup>917</sup> Niemuth-Engelmann concurs with Strasser who assumes that a reconciliation would be impossible because it would mean the death of the individual, either immediately or belatedly, because of the congruency between concept and thing. Here I do not agree with either, but it is worth looking at Strasser's view in more detail. Strasser's intention is philosophical commentary:<sup>918</sup>

‘Die Gottesanmaßung nämlich, das ist die *Anmaßung der Versöhnung*. Denn Versöhnung mit den Dingen hieße, über Begriffe zu verfügen, die den Dingen *gerecht* werden, sie nicht einseitig in die Sprache einbinden, ihr Wesen nicht negieren und ihrer Konkretheit keine Gewalt antun. Versöhnung hieße, so gesehen, letzten Endes: Aufhebung der Natur des Begreifens und damit des Begreifens selber. Dieses macht den Weltstoff nur erkennbar, indem es ihn durch Segmentierung, Selektion, Abstraktion, Individuierung “zurichtet”. Versöhnung hieße also entweder Stilllegung des Begreifens oder Einswerdung von Begriff und Ding, – was beides vielleicht auf dasselbe hinausläuft: auf den Tod des begreifenden Subjekts. Im *realen* Leben des Geistes gibt es keine Versöhnung zwischen Subjekt und Objekt, nur eine Versöhnung im Zeichen des *Als ob*. Dies ist das Zeichen der Kunst, die daher nicht Leben werden kann und darf.’<sup>919</sup>

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<sup>915</sup> Niemuth-Engelmann, p. 93.

<sup>916</sup> Niemuth-Engelmann, p. 95.

<sup>917</sup> Peter Strasser, *Freudenstoff*, (Salzburg: Residenz Verlag, 1990), p. 8.

<sup>918</sup> Strasser, p. 7.

<sup>919</sup> Strasser, pp. 108-109.

Strasser has a traditional view of the concept. He is aware of the danger that concepts can violate things and of the dangers of abstraction. A reconciliation according to him can only occur when it would be possible to have concepts that would do justice to things. But Strasser knows the concept only as a violating entity. A more flexible notion of the concept, for instance Vico's, would do justice as well to things precisely because the boundaries of those concepts are dissolved and leave space for the thing itself without violating it. Strasser further thinks that reconciliation would mean an end to understanding, or the unity between thing and concepts, and both would mean the death of the understanding subject. Strasser then very questionably states that in the so-called real life of mind there is no reconciliation between subject and object and any reconciliation would be a fake reconciliation, a reconciliation of the 'as if'. The next problem with Strasser is that he assumes an unbridgeable gap between art and life. Hohl has precisely the opposite intention; namely, as we will see, he knows only a gradual difference between life and art and understands art as an intensification of life, the very opposite of death. Furthermore, it is hard to understand why Strasser interprets this congruency between thing and concept negatively. Hohl spoke of the height of creativity as a synthesising of concepts, an experience in which the congruency between a concept or several concepts and a thing or an activity are life-affirming. This is especially so considering that Handke was a reader of Eckhart, and Eckhart offers a precise way out of Strasser's dilemma of the either/or.

However, Strasser does employ a concept of *Gnade* in application to Handke's work. But this concept is interpreted negatively by Strasser as being a 'metaphysischer Stupor'<sup>920</sup>. *Gnade* is

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<sup>920</sup> Strasser, p. 29.

further described in Handke as something that can only be experienced in metaphysical and actual isolation, which for Strasser has negative connotations.<sup>921</sup> In a more positive sense, Strasser describes Handke's idea of *Gnade* like this: 'Es handelt sich um das Ein-leuchten des sinnlich jeweils präsenten Weltstoffes, und vielleicht wäre dieser Vorgang der Begriff des Anschauens (in seinem idealen, goetheschen Verstande) zutreffend, sofern die Sache, um die es hier geht, nicht doch beträchtliche mystische Ambitioniertheit erkennen ließe.'<sup>922</sup> Strasser's cynical views of Handke's 'mystische Ambitioniertheit' and 'Gnade' stand in the way of making adequate sense of Handke's views on life affirmation and reconciliation.

Czernin, however, makes a more convincing case for repetition as a life-affirming element. Not only does he see repetition as ordering principle,<sup>923</sup> in for instance *Am Felsfenster morgens*; he also describes Handke's concept of *Wiederholung* as 'eine Verwandlung, eine Aufhebung, sei es in sakralem oder in ästhetisch-profanem Sinn.'<sup>924</sup> Due to this transformative capacity, repetition has the capacity for reconciliation, because a function of this transformation is the overcoming of alienation, 'die Dinge kommen zu sich'.<sup>925</sup> This overcoming of alienation, however, acknowledges the fractures in the world. Bossinade writes about Handke's concept of *Zusammenhang*: 'Neben die ästhetische tritt eine ethische Dimension, denn der Bruch im Gefüge der Welt soll ausdrücklich anerkannt, nicht aber vertieft werden.'<sup>926</sup> As has been argued throughout this thesis, acknowledgement of the

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<sup>921</sup> Strasser, p. 26.

<sup>922</sup> Strasser, p. 30.

<sup>923</sup> Franz Josef Czernin, "'Die Wiederholung'" und "'Am Felsfenster morgens'". Zum Verhältnis von Erzählung und Weltanschauung bei Peter Handke', *Text + Kritik: Ludwig Hohl*, 24 (1999), 36-50. (p. 46).

<sup>924</sup> Czernin, p. 45.

<sup>925</sup> Czernin, p. 45.

<sup>926</sup> Bossinade, p. 160.



fracture in the world, but also the possibility of bridging it partially, is a recurring and constituent feature of which the aphorism is an expression. The *Schwelle* and the *Zwischenraum*, particularly obvious in the title of *Aber ich lebe nur von den Zwischenräumen* may be the places in which something like a non-premature reconciliation can take place.

## V.5 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that to use methods of *Begriffsgeschichte* can be very helpful in tracing concepts, metaphors and images. The exploration of Hohl's use of images has shown one way of understanding the unity in Hohl's *Notizen*: the last image used in the *Notizen* is that of a face made up of lines, thereby combining conceptual (lines) and metaphorical (face) elements, emphasising the complementary aspects of both. In addition it shows that the conceptual and metaphorical can not just be found in single aphorisms but are of overall importance to Hohl's thought and only in considering both one can understand the unity of the *Notizen*. As a result, the tradition of *Begriffsgeschichte* proves to be very fruitful for an understanding of aphoristic writing. The tracing of the stone metaphor has shown that this is an absolute metaphor common to aphorising writers and thereby contributes to an understanding of similarities between aphoristic writers. On a theoretical level the relevance of Blumenberg's statement was demonstrated, that as soon as thinkers give more thought to metaphors and images, their relation to phantasy and rationality changes with very elaborate concepts of phantasy as a result. It was further demonstrated that the *Geisteskraft* of phantasy is another complex concept in Hohl's thought and, after *Arbeit* and *Kraft*, the most important concept in his work. Phantasy is prioritised over rationality, as rationality is a function of phantasy. This means that rationality and phantasy are not seen as being in contrast to one

another. Both stand in the service of life affirmation. Phantasy aids life-affirmation by enabling the ability to see or create distance and envisioning a more positive world. This at the same time is according to Hohl also the task of the poet. However, phantasy has more meanings than that: it also enables one to see the connections (*Zusammenhänge*) by way of analogy. In addition, phantasy aims to recognise things in their own right (*integral*). This chapter has also added confirmatory detail to Hohl's intuition that his concept of phantasy was influenced by Kassner, demonstrating that they have a number of things in common such as the overcoming of the alienation between people and between people and the world. Hohl, in turn, influenced Handke's concept of phantasy. The overcoming of alienation can be regarded as an utopian aspect. Aphoristic writers look for a (lost) paradise in literature, which is another expression of life affirmation. The next chapter will examine the nature of life affirmation more and will seek to demonstrate that Hohl's views on life-affirmation are more than utopian and also have a place in the here and now.

## VI HOHL'S THEORY OF ART AND LIFE

### VI.1 Introduction

This chapter examines Hohl's theory of art and life, as outlined in his aphorisms in the *Notizenwerk*. This is done in order to show that aphorisms, as well as systematic philosophies, treatises or essays are capable of expressing theories. The main life-affirming element is Hohl's key concept of work (*Arbeit*), therefore the chapter begins with this. As with all of Hohl's concepts, work is closely connected to a number of other concepts. Closely connected to Hohl's emphasis on the non-alienating character of work, is his insistence that the work must have the identity of the worker, from which the discussion then moves to the question of the value (*Wert*) of a work of art or a person. This invites a discussion of the ethical dimension of Hohl's ideas: Hohl's interaction with other people and art can be a habitus of *Hinwendung* towards other people, art, work and the world, which complements the habitus of the *Geisteskräfte*. While Hohl rejects *Genieästhetik*, he also rejects beauty understood as a mere aesthetical category. For Hohl, beauty is mainly linked to life affirmation; only expressions of life affirmation can be beautiful. This further implies a rejection of *Genieästhetik*. According to Hohl, there is not a difference of kind but of degree between the genius and the average person, and eventually Hohl rejects the term genius and replaces it with artist, which leads to an investigation of his concept of degree (*Grad*). Thereafter the relationship between art and life is examined, which is analogous to the difference between genius and the average person. Thereafter Hohl's views on the ineffable (*das Unaussprechliche*) will be explored, which is the subject of art; it is the task of the artist to externalise the ineffable. This is in order to link to the necessarily ineffable element in art, towards which the indicative character of the

aphorism points. In conclusion, Hohl's ideas on life affirmation will be explored within the context of his concept of love and his view of *unvoreilige Versöhnung*.

### **VI.1.1 Work (*Arbeit*)**

Hohl's concept of work can be called his main principle and his most important concept aside from *Phantasie* and *Kraft*, it is so important to him that he dedicates the first chapter of the *Notizen* to it, entitled *Vom Arbeiten*. The relevance of this principle of work has been recognised widely in the literature, especially in Rothenbühler's essay 'Seines Fanges niemals völlig sicher', in which Rothenbühler emphasises the modern aspects of Hohl's idea of *Arbeit* and its anti-elitist and democratic nature.<sup>927</sup> Anna Stüssi describes this concept of work as something that is demanding (*anspruchsvoll*) and joyful, and involves an awareness of the following things: 'wache Geistesgegenwart, Aufmerksamkeit für Neues, das sich, vom Mainstream unbemerkt, an den Rändern und Nuancen ankündigt, Widerstand gegen starre Weltbilder, poetische Sensibilität, die die schlechten irdischen Verhältnisse zu 'durchschauen' vermag auf ihre Vollendung hin.'<sup>928</sup> As mentioned before, it originates out of an insight into mortality that stimulates the need for work. Work has its origin in the insight into the brevity of life and the experience of mortality: 'Alles, was wir handeln, muß, wenn es Wert haben soll, vom Betrachtungspunkt der Kürze unseres Lebens aus gehandelt sein.'<sup>929</sup> Work is, according to Hohl, the possibility of saving something from mortality and transferring it into something that continues. By this Hohl means a participation in eternity: 'Arbeiten ist nichts

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<sup>927</sup> Rothenbühler, p. 61.

<sup>928</sup> Stüssi, p. 11.

<sup>929</sup> N I 1.

anderes als aus dem Sterblichen übersetzen in das, was weitergeht.<sup>930</sup> This is also his motto for his chapter on death; and, in another sense, it is a good example of Hohl's use of repetition. *Arbeit* is further described by Geyer like this: 'Die Erfahrung dieser Arbeit ist die Erfahrung des Lebens selbst, des noch ungestalteten Lebens, des Lebens, das aber seine Gestalt in sich trägt, die aus ihm herausgearbeitet werden muß.'<sup>931</sup> In this there is a striking similarity to Proust's view on art.<sup>932</sup> Life is seen by Hohl as unshaped, and work is what gives it shape. However, the shape of the work is predetermined by one's personality. Work is the rediscovery and seeing of what is within one's nature to create. Therefore work is intrinsically personal. The only obstacle to work that Hohl knows is laziness (and a lack of phantasy).<sup>933</sup> While he acknowledges external constraints or obstacles, these do not as such pose a threat to *Arbeit* because, Hohl says, then the right task would be to work towards diminishing those obstacles, as seen before in the discussion of *Kraft* (IV.3.1.2). Hohl gives practical advice on how to work, and in fact one could regard all of his *Notizenwerk* as an instruction on how to work, and while there is a strong focus in Hohl on the creation of art, working is not just limited to this, but includes all kinds of human productivity. Working is a world-changing activity:

Das menschliche Arbeiten, das weltverändernde Wirken, vollzieht sich in drei Stufen. Diese sind:

- 1) Die große Idee
- 2) Die (der großen Idee entsprechenden) Einzelvorstellungen; anders gesagt: die Applizierung der großen Idee, ihre Auflösung in kleine Ideen, Ideen des Einzelnen.
- 3) Die (den Einzelvorstellungen entsprechenden) Einzelausführungen.

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<sup>930</sup> N I 51, cf. XII 115.

<sup>931</sup> Geyer, p. 48.

<sup>932</sup> cf. Proust, *Time Regained*, p. 228.

<sup>933</sup> N VIII 26.

[...]

-- Diese drei Stufen sollen das Ganze des menschlichen Handelns bilden?  
Sie bilden das Ganze, sind alles. - Wo bleibt dann die große Tat?

“Folgt dann die große Tat etwa von selber?” Nein, sie ist schon  
geschehen.<sup>934</sup>

There are several notable elements in this quotation. One of the very important aspects of this outline is that the great idea is only at the beginning of every work, but it can never be left at that, and this big idea needs to be developed out of small ideas, which in turn need to be translated into small actual actions, the executions that make up a work. There is then no need any more for great deeds. Essentially, Hohl is here giving direct instructions on how to undertake work. As work originates out of one's own ideas, it is deeply personal and cannot be understood, as for instance tasks given by others. External forces are experienced as alienating and as a distraction from our actual tasks, whereas inner forces are seen as lifegiving. Hohl writes:

Stehen wir nicht da, so werden wir, auch wenn wir scheinbar tätig sein sollten (äußere Gewalten treiben uns zumeist zu einer scheinbaren Tätigkeit und lassen uns ihr nicht mehr entrinnen), vorwiegend in immerwährender Erwartung leben; stehst du aber da, so willst du vor allem anderen selber rasch noch etwas tun (- und mit einem ganz anderen Ernste, als jenes Tun geschieht, in dem dich fremde, äußere Mächte gefangen halten). Es ist aber etwas tun und solches Tun - eigenes Tun, zu dem dich nicht fremde, äußere, sondern innere Gewaltigen nötigen -, das einzige, was Leben gibt, was retten kann.

Solches Tun nenne ich Arbeiten.<sup>935</sup>

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<sup>934</sup> N I 18 this was discussed in IV.3.2.3 before, but the relevance of this principle requires its repetition. Hohl repeats this himself at N I 20.

<sup>935</sup> N I 1.

Werner Fuchs emphasises that one has to understand work not in the traditional sense as a conscious and teleological activity.<sup>936</sup> Hohl's concept of work understands it not as alienated activity but as the expression of the self.<sup>937</sup> This expression of the self is highly directed, one could even say self-legislating. It involves, as seen above on p. 284, firstly, dividing big ideas into small ideas and then small actions, and secondly, a habitus formed from the earlier discussed *Geisteskräfte* (IV.5). In the passage quoted above, Hohl writes about the inner forces that necessitate work rather than external ones. Only work originating in an inner need is life affirming and able to overcome alienation. This personal character of work leads to the question of identity that Hohl always emphasised: 'Ein wunderbarer Ausdruck: "Ich bin bei mir" (être chez soi.)'<sup>938</sup> It is to this question that we now turn.

#### **VI.1.1.1. Identity (*das Eigene*)**

The assumption from the previous chapter that work can bridge alienation raises the question of how Hohl understands identity or what does it mean to be with oneself (être chez soi).

This section examines how identity is connected to Hohl's concept of work, the question of alienation and how it is also related to a concept of responsibility. Responsibility can be understood as the insistence on the integrity of one's own work. Hohl's concept of responsibility can be demonstrated at the example of Hohl's reflection on how writers use

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<sup>936</sup> 'Grundsätzlich darf der Begriff Arbeit nicht im modernen Sinne des 20. Jahrhunderts verwendet werden, wie ihn die bürgerliche Soziologie gebraucht. Arbeit als zweckmäßige und bewusste Tätigkeit des Menschen zur Behebung seiner materiellen und geistigen Existenzprobleme gehört in den Bereich einer atomistisch-materialistischen Grundeinstellung.' Werner Fuchs, *Möglichkeitswelt: Zu Ludwig Hohls Dichtung und Denkform* (Bern and Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 1980), p. 66. cf. Lessing, p. 96.

<sup>937</sup> cf. 'Diese tägliche Arbeit am Gedicht - aber stellen Sie sich das nicht so einfach vor: es gibt Tage, da spucke ich auf das alles, - diese tägliche Arbeit am Gedicht läßt einen Gesetze der Kunst finden, da bleibt einem der Atem weg vor Lust, Gesetze, von denen man dann nie spricht: denn wer liefert wirklich jemals sein Innerstes aus?' Rühmkorf, *Werner Riegel*, p. 243.

<sup>938</sup> N VII 64.

words. The art of writing consists in not using a word without complete responsibility towards one's own work and also towards oneself:

Und es gibt nichts, das weder Eigenes noch Gestohlenes wäre. Alles, was nicht Eigenes ist, ist gestohlen. Was ist Eigenes? Das voll, das in jedem Teil Verantwortete. Denn die Worte, und sogar die Wörter sind eben keineswegs jedermanns Sache wie die Luft; sie sind von jemand geschaffen worden und dem gehören sie, gehören sie allein, so lange bis ein anderer sie erkaufte. Das Lösegeld ist: volle Notwendigkeit.<sup>939</sup>

Hohl may have been influenced in this by Konrad Bänninger who writes: 'Ich will nur alles entfernen, was ich in mir nicht als lebendig spüre. Ich muß alles selbst verantworten können.'<sup>940</sup> One has an obligation towards one's own creativity.

In this sense Hohl's concept of work is diametrically opposed to capitalist ideas of work.<sup>941</sup> It is also not limited just to the creation of art, it is often directed towards the fulfilment of one's potential:<sup>942</sup> Hohl's concept of work is a way of life, an attitude, a *habitus*.

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<sup>939</sup> N V 130 cf. N IX 37, N IX 73, N IX 79.

<sup>940</sup> Bänninger, *Geist des Werdens*, p. 17.

<sup>941</sup> Marx describes alienated work as follows: 'This fact expresses merely the object which labor produces - labor's product - confronts it as something alien, as a power independent of the producer. The product of labor is labor which has been congealed in an object, which has become material: it is the objectification of labor. Labor's realisation is its objectification. In the conditions dealt with by political economy this realisation of labor appears as loss of reality for the workers; objectification as loss of the object and object-bondage; appropriation as estrangement, as alienation.' Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1988), p. 71. cf. p 68-84 for a detailed discussion of estranged labour.

<sup>942</sup> Nickl, p. 222.

Morgenstern describes the process of '[...]den ungeheuren sittlichen Entwicklungsprozeß, der unser ganzes geistiges Leben ist[...]' as '[...]Persönlichkeitsentwicklung. Hier will ja irgendein dumpf Wollender ganz ersichtlich zur Selbstschönheit...' Christian Morgenstern, *Stufen: Eine Entwicklung in Aphorismen und Tagebuch-Notizen von Christian Morgenstern* (München: R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1918), p. 70. (final ellipsis Morgenstern's). Morgenstern also thought *Phantasie* and *Mut* in conjunction and regarded them as requirements for the thinking person.: 'Mut, Mut, das fehlt dem sogenannten denkenden Wesen, dem Menschen - als denkendem Wesen - am meisten. Und dann Phantasie. (Aber was wäre Phantasie ohne Mut?) Vielleicht ist Mangel an beiden eine der grundlegenden Lebensbedingungen, vielleicht kann der Mensch nur mit einem gewissen Quantum von Feigheit und Trägheit - existieren.' Morgenstern, p. 135.



## VI.1.2 Value (*Wert*)

This raises the question of value in its connection to work (*Arbeit*). We have observed that the only activity of value for Hohl is that which takes into account the brevity of our lives. But value, like Hohl's other concepts, has several aspects to it. Hohl himself replied to the question of what the value of a human being may be by saying that the very value is that they want value.<sup>943</sup> The desire for value is for Hohl intrinsically connected to sincerity. Sincerity is another important component of Hohl's ethical thinking, and it reveals once more the significance of Gide's influence.<sup>944</sup> Sincerity finds expression in Hohl's emphasis on the cleanness of one's work: 'die Redlichkeit unserer Anstrengungen, saubere Arbeit.'<sup>945</sup> There is an inherent value in sincerity (*Redlichkeit*). For instance, Chekhov says: 'if anyone is sincere, he is right.'<sup>946</sup> Hohl equates the wish for value with *Arbeiten*. He also says that value, like *Erkenntnis*, cannot be kept. But work can increase Erkenntnis.<sup>947</sup> Value has to be created again and again. Hohl finds that the sense of change lies in its necessity to create values over and over: 'Das ist ja eben der Sinn aller Veränderungen: die nicht aufzubewahrenden Werte immer wieder gegenwärtig zu machen. Du brennst: die Flamme ist der Wert.'<sup>948</sup> Value has a personal element: intensity (*Flamme*), and this burning – Hohl using here one of his favourite metaphors – is equated with value too. In another aphorism, Hohl formulates the insight that

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<sup>943</sup> N I 3 In the *Nachnotizen* Hohl is still concerned with Wert. In NN 118 he repeats insights he developed in the *Notizen*: 'Eine Wiederholung und Summierung: Es ist ganz unmöglich, daß ein Mensch vom Willen zum Wert durchdrungen sein kann, ohne Wert zu haben. Es ist ganz unmöglich, daß ein Mensch vom Willen zum Wert längere Zeit erfüllt sein kann, ohne Wert darzustellen, d.h. auch für andere zu haben.' This again shows the importance of repetition for Hohl.

<sup>944</sup> MW, pp. 62-66.

<sup>945</sup> NuD I 4.

<sup>946</sup> Anton Chekhov, *My Life* (New York: Melville House, 2004), p. 112.

<sup>947</sup> 'Die größte Zahl von richtigen Arbeiten *ist* die höchste Erkenntnis.' N I 29.

<sup>948</sup> N I 45.

we are very aware that the world will be changed very little by human activity, by the *Geist*, but however small this change is, Hohl says: ‘...*wie klein* auch die durch den Geist geschehende Veränderung sei, wir wissen, *daß darin doch das ganze Leben*, darin allein der Wert ist.’<sup>949</sup> This is again a prioritisation of smallness and details, and however insignificant those changes seem, they are the ones that contain life and value. In regards of value, Hohl distinguishes between the universe and humans. For the universe, value will remain static, as he assumes that the universe is static also, while for humans – who do not remain the same – value will change. Especially so because value, like knowledge, cannot be kept. Hohl here was influenced by Goethe who, according to Hohl, understood *Person* to be ‘diejenige menschliche Form, die Wert hat.’<sup>950</sup> This becomes obvious in another aphorism where Hohl describes how value is added to a building by the person who builds it.<sup>951</sup> The value is in the person, not in the building. Hohl says that ‘menschliche Werte sind fortdauernd’;<sup>952</sup> if they are challenged they will rise to the occasion and be able to withstand challenges, even ‘sich erhöhen.’<sup>953</sup>

## **VI.2 Ethical Dimension**

This section discusses Hohl’s view regarding the social relation to other people because, as has been shown in III.4, Hohl regarded communication as vital to life-affirmation and therefore one needs to look at the social and ethical dimension. Hohl’s thought does have a

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<sup>949</sup> N II 122.

<sup>950</sup> N II 133.

<sup>951</sup> N VII 84.

<sup>952</sup> N II 139.

<sup>953</sup> N II 139.

strong ethical dimension. While he occasionally rejects the philistine – his favourite denominations for them are *Frau und Herr Meyer & Apotheker* – he generally believes in the equality of people. Henrich describes the Apotheker as someone who brings together many things about which he knows a lot but leaves *die großen Probleme unberührt*.<sup>954</sup> It is Hohl's conviction that everyone can be afflicted by and experience *die großen Probleme*. *Große Probleme* mean fundamentally unanswerable questions of art and life. Hohl assumes fundamental equality between people. I follow Fuchs here who describes Hohl's view as '...die Anerkennung der individuellen Möglichkeit. Von Natur aus, in Wahrheit ist jeder Mensch fähig, wahres Sein erkennen zu können.'<sup>955</sup> *Arbeit* is of relevance here as well: for Hohl personal growth is possible through production: '*daß wir durch Produzieren wachsen, nicht durch Ruhe*'.<sup>956</sup> Hohl devotes a few passages in the *Nuancen und Details* to reflect on the relationship to other people. Often in the foreground is an emphasis on an empathic understanding of the other person's life and their constraints. Understanding other people, Hohl suggests, presupposes an understanding and studying of oneself.<sup>957</sup> He objects to the use of people's past as a determining factor of their abilities so that their past is used against them: 'EIN ÜBLES TUN: Einem aus seiner Vergangenheit eine Schleppe machen, alle Steine hineinlegen, die man finden kann, dann zubinden -: und beweisen, wohin dieser nicht gehen kann.'<sup>958</sup> Instead, he suggests judging people only according to their own individual capacities and nothing else. Here again he uses the notion of the integral introduced earlier as a more just and individual way to appreciate people and their achievements. In order to do this, one

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<sup>954</sup> Dieter Henrich, *Sterbliche Gedanken* (Frankfurt/Main: editionfaust, 2015), p. 25.

<sup>955</sup> Fuchs, p. 74.

<sup>956</sup> N VII 20.

<sup>957</sup> NuD II 43.

<sup>958</sup> NuD II 4.

needs empathy to relive their lives within the conditions and constraints of their existence, external and internal (psychological): ‘aber ahme alle Bedingungen nach!’<sup>959</sup> Hohl concludes that people cannot be judged according to objective criteria because this would violate their individual existence. Objective judgements benefit the judge, not the individual in question. One has a right to say something about another person only once one has considered their circumstances and what they did to change them. This means that Hohl’s rejection of objectivity on a theoretical level extends also to a rejection of objectivity on a social level:

Keiner kann sich das Recht nehmen - wenn schon von menschlichem Wert geredet werden soll [und darum handelt es sich hier doch, da du ja menschliches Gericht hältst?] -, des Menschen Wert zu bemessen nach objektiven Wertsetzungen - die übrigens auch nicht objektiv, aber dem Urteilenden gefälliger sind: nach mitgebrachten, schon fixierten Wertsetzungen -; sondern jeder nur, nachdem er gezählt hat mit all jenes Bedingungen, äußeren *und* inneren, an dem, was jener selber tut, um sie zu ändern.<sup>960</sup>

Hohl’s rejection of objectivity shows itself also in another passage dealing with the question of taking someone’s side, of partiality:

Die drei Stufen der Entscheidungen:  
I) Der Apotheker (Parteilichkeit)  
II) Der geistige Mensch (weiss, dass auch die andern, dass alle, irgendwie, recht habe, sieht die Vielheit vor sich ausgebreitet. Nur Prinzipien koennen - niemals Dinge, Menschen, kurz, Erscheinungen - ganz schlecht sein).  
III) Der Höchste (ergreift doch Partei).<sup>961</sup>

The first step represents the taking of someone’s side as an unreflected action by a philistine.

The second step includes the insight that everyone might be right, relativises views and sees everyone’s point of view, which is a form of objectivity in the Nietzschean perspectivist sense. However, Hohl rejects this view in favour of the third step as one of taking a side

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<sup>959</sup> NuD II 24.

<sup>960</sup> NuD II 24.

<sup>961</sup> N VII 115.

again, in contrast to the philistine who takes sides in an unreflected way. Partiality then on this level is always based on reflection and it is a necessity because belief in others, as seen in IV. 3.2.4, is a precondition for the use of one's strength. According to Hohl, only principles can be bad, never people, and they ought to be judged according to their positive characteristics.<sup>962</sup>

Other passages also testify to a kind of thinking that puts the other person first. An example of this is Hohl's discussion of the right way to give gifts:<sup>963</sup> 'Das Schenken von Gegenständen, die der andere nicht verlangt hat, pflegt proportional zu sein der Abwesenheit von Geist.'<sup>964</sup>

The same goes for giving advice. His aphorism and advice on how to deal with people that are deprived<sup>965</sup> shares a similar insight: an emphasis on the importance of empathy, particularly the poor, in how they are misjudged and misunderstood. In conclusion one could say that the *Hinwendung* to the other person is of primordial, life-affirming importance in relation to others and also to the world, to one's production or creativity, and to art. Hohl states that people can remain themselves only by way of giving themselves: 'daß man sich nicht durch Bewahren bewahrt, sondern durch sich Hinwenden.'<sup>966</sup> Hohl advocates conducting a middle way between people that steers well clear of either dominating others or passively obeying them.<sup>967</sup> This is reflected further in another statement that *Arbeit* is not *Arbeit* when it is either of use only to myself or others. *Arbeit* is a 'positive Handlung' when it is done '*für mich und*

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<sup>962</sup> NN 293, 313.

<sup>963</sup> N VIII 119-124.

<sup>964</sup> N VIII 124.

<sup>965</sup> NuD I 21. Jill Stauffer, while not discussing Hohl directly confirms the psychological healthiness of Hohl's approach of the integral and understanding other people's constraints. Jill Stauffer, *Ethical Loneliness: The Injustice of Not Being Heard* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), pp. 69-111.

<sup>966</sup> N II 170, II 171, II 23.

<sup>967</sup> NuD II 11.

für die anderen.’<sup>968</sup> In this sense this is a very balanced account that does justice to social inequalities, individual peculiarities and always prioritises the person over principles.

### **VI.2.1 Beauty**

The examination of Hohl’s views on beauty shows that beauty has an ethical and life-affirming value, and is not regarded as an aesthetic entity as such. Beauty has this ethical value because it is a result of non-alienated life or art. When a person finds its expression and fulfilment in work beauty comes into being. Beauty itself according to Hohl is not beautiful.<sup>969</sup> He rejects a view that associates beauty with preciousness or expensiveness.<sup>970</sup> This echoes Krüger’s earlier insight that the aphorism is not driven by a will to beauty<sup>971</sup> when beauty is only a ‘schöner Schein’.<sup>972</sup> Instead it is focussed on a *disillusionierendem Denken*<sup>973</sup> that according to Krüger has its priority in expressing the truth of the lived experience of the individual. This is where his view and Hohl’s intersect, although Hohl is not primarily concerned with destroying illusions and instead focusses on the nature of the individual and only that, independently of whether the individual may have disillusioning views or not. Therefore it is not surprising that Hohl does not discuss beauty very often. Hohl states that no one really knows what beauty is and that therefore beauty cannot belong to the

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<sup>968</sup> N I 32.

<sup>969</sup> N XII 33.

<sup>970</sup> N VII 82.

<sup>971</sup> Krüger, p. 16.

<sup>972</sup> Krüger, p. 17.

<sup>973</sup> ‘Unterscheidet man nach Form und Gehalt, so ist gerade die Form des Aphorismus nicht mehr Ausdruck des Willens zum Schönen, sondern Wegspur eines disillusionierenden Denkens, das der Wahrheit zuliebe eher häßlich sich offenbarte, als im schönen Schein sich zu verlieren.’ Krüger, p. 16-17.

‘Wesen der Kunst’.<sup>974</sup> According to Hohl, only the word is the most elemental ingredient of ‘Wortkunst’.<sup>975</sup> Hohl in the *Nachnotizen* distinguishes between an easy beauty such as sunrises for the philistines and an enhanced (*gesteigerte*) beauty that is an inner enhancement (*innere Steigerung*) and is experienced in the reading of writers who use concepts such as Proust and Valéry.<sup>976</sup> Hohl continues to emphasise the mystery that beauty is and comes to a conclusion that states that beauty is achieved when the work of art corresponds to the artist.<sup>977</sup> In other words, it means there has to be an identity between the work of art and the artist for beauty to come into existence.<sup>978</sup> For Hohl, art is an intensification of life and therefore beauty is linked to intense participation in life: ‘Volle Lebenserscheinung ist alle Male schön.’<sup>979</sup>

## VI.2.2 Rejection of *Genieästhetik*

A consequence of Hohl’s concept of work and meaning for the creation of art is that the concept of work stands in contrast to the concept of genius.<sup>980</sup> This section explicates Hohl’s view on the genius and how it changed from *Nuancen und Details* to *Notizen* and

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<sup>974</sup> N V 21.

<sup>975</sup> N V 21.

<sup>976</sup> NN 157.

<sup>977</sup> N V 36 cf. ‘Das Rätsel der Schönheit liegt darin, daß ein Ausdruck dann gerade schön ist, wenn er dem Ausführenden, sofern er das Beste auf einer langen Linie gegeben hat, entspricht. Schönheit und also Kunst kommt nicht von woanders her als vom mit Mut auf hohem Niveau wirksamen eigenen Ausdruck.’ Good, p. 97, suggests that Hohl with his view on beauty sometimes abandons a *Philosophie des Schaffens*, but this is not correct. Hohl emphasises an approach to beauty that corresponds to his view of work: beauty can not be calculated and cannot be forced into existence, it occurs only as a side effect by following little steps, the little ideas and little actions.

<sup>978</sup> N XII 58.

<sup>979</sup> N V 36.

According to Hohl, beauty does not have an awareness of itself, and he extrapolates from that that power (Macht) does not know itself either. NN 374.

<sup>980</sup> Stadler, p. 45.

*Nachnotizen*. Hohl does not subscribe to a view that sees only the genius capable of the creation of art and the average human as never being able to achieve this. Instead Hohl shifts the focus to the ability to create work, to give oneself to work, the amount of activity that someone can put into creating a work of art, or any other work and according to Hohl everyone can work. In *Nuancen und Details* there is a first step in this direction:

PRINZIP DER ARBEIT: Daß man überall hinansteigen kann. [- daß man alles, nur mit Zeitunterschieden, bewältigen kann, ausgenommen das, wozu es Genie braucht. - Und diese Einschränkung ist noch sehr fragwürdiger Natur. Wahrscheinlich unterscheidet sich die Leistung des Genies von den gewöhnlichen Leistungen nur quantitativ, - darin allerdings beträchtlich.]<sup>981</sup>

Hohl describes the principle of work as a growing and permanent possibility. According to him everything can be done, but different people will need different amounts of time. In the *Nuancen und Details* there is still a difference between the genius and the average person, where what the genius can do is excluded from what can be overcome in time. But Hohl immediately questions the difference between the genius and the average person. It is not clear what the genius can do and what distinguishes him or her from others. In the *Notizen* and *Nachnotizen*, Hohl still uses the word genius occasionally; for instance, describing a characteristic of the genius as being able to recognise what is necessary<sup>982</sup> or, in the *Nachnotizen*, where there is just one mention of genius, in which Hohl discusses it in conjunction with its limitation and that such limitations are not to be admired even if they are connected to genius as much as possible.<sup>983</sup> But eventually Hohl replaces genius with ‘artist’ and compares his work again with that of the average person: ‘Der Künstler ist nur eine größere *Quantität* als irgendein Mensch – nicht etwas *anderes*. Wir können also, wenn wir

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<sup>981</sup> NuD I 2.

<sup>982</sup> N II 139.

<sup>983</sup> NN 59.



sein Gesetz erforschen – wozu die Umstände eben der größeren Quantität wegen sich vorzüglich eignen -, zu dem für alle Menschen Gültigen gelangen.<sup>984</sup> Hohl here goes a step further than in *Nuancen und Details*, abandoning every assumption of a qualitative difference between artist and average person; the only difference is quantity. This abolition of a qualitative dimension between the artist and the average person allows Hohl to use the artist as an example to show things that are universally valid for all people. With this idea of the universally valid in mind, one could assume that Hohl abandons aphoristic writing as an exploration of the individual, but that would be a shortsighted view. In fact Hohl's writing offers an incentive for everyone to explore his or her individuality and to find his or her own suitable work.<sup>985</sup> He is interested in the general conditions of individuality, of which he takes the artist as an example, one that has no elitist function because there is no essential difference (of kind) between the artist and the average person. The essentially equal nature of the artist and the average person is emphasised in another aphorism where Hohl describes the nature of the quantitative further: 'Eines von den Dingen, die man nie vergessen dürfte: Daß das Gleiche bei verschiedenen Gradationen seiner Quantität verschiedene Farben, verschiedene Eigenschaften hat.'<sup>986</sup> The mention of the quantitative in those contexts is relevant because it leads to a brief examination of Hohl's concept of *Grade* in the last aphorism mentioned in conjunction with quantity as *Gradationen*. The concept of *Grade* will be explored more in the next section.

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<sup>984</sup> N II 119.

<sup>985</sup> cf. for a different expression Norbert Niemann, *Die Einzigsten* (Berlin: Berlin Verlag 2014), pp. 279-280.

<sup>986</sup> N XII 53, cf. N XII 52 & N XII 27.

### VI.2.3 Degrees (*Grade*)

The concept of *Grade* is especially prevalent in the *Nachnotizen*, although Hohl already employs this distinction in the *Notizen* and before. In the *Nachnotizen* Hohl mentions ‘Grade des Wissens’ and also *Kunst* according to Hohl is a *Grad*: ‘Kunst ist ein Grad, kein Körper.’<sup>987</sup> He supports this view with the example of an artist who, in a very short aperçu, is still able to express the same artistic power as that in a longer novel, for instance. It might be no coincidence that Hohl had chosen the aperçu in this example because this description of artistic power in a short genre, such as the aperçu, is a re-evaluation of the short form: the latter is as capable of conveying creative insights as any other form. That both art and knowledge can be described as having a gradual nature means that there is in essence also no difference between art and knowledge. Love is also a *Grad*, as will be explored later in the section on love. Consequently the act of *Arbeiten* leads to creative expressions of different *Hitzegrade*. However, Hohl also emphasises that the same thing in different degrees of quantity: ‘das Gleiche bei verschiedenen Gradationen seiner Quantität’<sup>988</sup> does have different characteristics (*Eigenschaften*). This in conclusion means that the notion of gradual difference is of fundamental importance to Hohl’s thinking: ‘Gradunterschiede sind wahrscheinlich wichtigere Unterschiede als Unterschiede des “Wesens”, des Stoffs einer Sache – sind wesentlicher. (Statt “Gradunterschiede” könnte ich auch und würde ich wohl besser sagen “Intensitätsunterschiede”.)’<sup>989</sup> Rothenbühler describes this shift as one from classic modernity to radical modernity, with the distinctive shift from ‘identitätslogischen zur

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<sup>987</sup> NN 241.

<sup>988</sup> N XII 53.

<sup>989</sup> NN 265.

differentiellen Begründung von Bedeutung in der Sprache'.<sup>990</sup> The importance of this for Hohl can also be seen in the next chapter, discussing the relationship between art and life.

### VI.3 Art and Life

Hohl knows no essential difference between life and art.<sup>991</sup> As mentioned before, art is an intensification of life<sup>992</sup> and the difference between them is gradual, of degree and not of kind. This is analogous to the observation from the discussion of concepts that Hohl regards concepts on two levels: initially on a human level and then on an aesthetical level, with the latter as an expansion of the former, as was shown in section IV.2.2. Art in many ways is the intensification or an extension of life,<sup>993</sup> or a more intimate form of life, as Hohl describes it when he wonders how someone can achieve something in art when they are alienated from their language, in this sense creativity: 'Wie kann nun aber jemand Kunst – das intimste Leben – erreichen durch eine Materie, *mit der er keine intimere Beziehung hat?*'<sup>994</sup> This in turn means that the creation of art presupposes an intimate relationship between the material and the artist, emphasising the point of identity, non-alienation and the personal. If that is

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<sup>990</sup> Rothenbühler, p. 60.

<sup>991</sup> N V 1, V 4.

<sup>992</sup> NN 370, cf. NN 387.

cf. also: 'it has occurred to me that one might define Art as: an expression, satisfying and abiding, of the zest of life. This is applicable to every form of Art devised by man, for, in his creative moment, whether he produce a great drama or carve a piece of foliage in wood, the artist is moved and inspired by supreme enjoyment of some aspect of the world around him; an enjoyment in itself keener than that experienced by another man, and intensified, prolonged, by the power — which comes to him we know not how — of recording in visible or audible form that emotion of rare vitality.' George Gissing, *The private papers of Henry Ryecroft* (London: Constable & Co Ltd., 1910), p. 59.

<sup>993</sup> Görner sees a similar principle at work in Nietzsche's thought: 'Denn dieses Denken wollte zum Leben vordringen und es im Namen der Kunst durchdringen. Es ist das Denken der Selbstbefreiung eines artistisch veranlagten Philologen.' Görner, p. 97.

<sup>994</sup> N IX 12.

lacking it is, according to Hohl, impossible to achieve anything in art. This shows that intimacy (*Nähe*) is in another respect relevant. To Hohl, the actual value of a work of art lies in its intention and is what creates intimate closeness with the reader.<sup>995</sup> He emphasises this in another aphorism: ‘In der Kunst besteht das Primäre im persönlichen Wert; es kann nicht eine persönliche Wertlosigkeit gegenüber einer Kunst geben, die Wert hätte.’<sup>996</sup> Hohl requires ethical soundness from his artists; only those who have a personal value are able to create valuable art. Sincerity is a necessary requirement. Hohl continues by mentioning another important component of his views on art and that is the moment of *Hinwendung*, of inclining or looking into the world. The moment of *Hinwendung* is vital to life-affirmation: ‘...Was aber das Gemeinsame ist – die volle Hinwendung, das Glühen, das in die Welt Schauen (das *reine Sehen*), das auch in einem Pasteur, bei seiner wissenschaftlichen Auswirkung, vielleicht momentweise war–: *Ist ja eben Kunst.*’<sup>997</sup> Art can be shared, but there can only be moments of closeness.<sup>998</sup> Again, this shows the consistency in Hohl that, apart from knowledge, closeness also cannot be kept and has to be gained anew. Art is an essential communication that can bridge loneliness, which is confirmed by his earlier insight into communication and communication with books (III.4). What Hohl wants to achieve in art leads to the next section.

### **VI.3.1 The Ineffable (*Das Unaussprechliche*)**

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<sup>995</sup> N V 34.

<sup>996</sup> N IX 44.

<sup>997</sup> N IX 44. Hohl’s ellipsis.

<sup>998</sup> N II 26, II 151.

This section discusses the ineffable. Hohl often calls this *das Unberechenbare* or *das Unaussprechliche*, translated here as ineffable. This relates to Blumenberg's discussion of *das Unbegriffliche*, but this section discusses the ineffable without regard for its conceptual dimension and instead focusses on its meaning for Hohl. In Hohl, the concept of the ineffable is a goal of *Arbeit*: 'Mysterium der Arbeit: Alles nach und nach zu erreichen, *was gar nicht berechenbar war*.'<sup>999</sup> Further, it is closely tied up to the notion of work as an inner activity directed to the outside.<sup>1000</sup> However, before this is discussed, it will be shown that the ineffable element is a common characteristic in art. As there is no equivalent in language for the ineffable, it has often been equated with ephemeral experiences in art which have a significant impact on the individual and lead to an intensification of life. It is a realm beyond control and Hohl's aim is to approach the ineffable, although it cannot be calculated or planned. In this sense it relates to what Francis Bacon has called 'the accident'.<sup>1001</sup> As this is something that cannot be controlled, it echoes the aphorism's indicative character<sup>1002</sup> and Liebrucks' insight that the most important things in life and art cannot be expressed. This raises the question of the general nature of the relation between art and the ineffable and its concealedness. Many writers have commented on the significance of concealedness. Hermann Lenz writes 'Was klar zutage lag, blieb unverbindlich. Nur das Verborgene verband.'<sup>1003</sup> To Lenz the unconcealed is non-committal, and only the concealed can establish connections. Emmy Hennings talks about the ineffable and calls it the nameless: 'Im Namen des

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<sup>999</sup> NuD II 28.

<sup>1000</sup> N I 1.

<sup>1001</sup> David Sylvester, *Interviews with Francis Bacon* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2004), p. 52.

<sup>1002</sup> cf. N V 11.

<sup>1003</sup> Hermann Lenz, *Der innere Bezirk* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1993), p. 365.

Namenlosen will ich beginnen, obgleich ich mich so weit von ihm entfernt fühle. Gerade aus diesem Grunde: in seinem Namen. Das Namenlose ist die erste und letzte Ursache meines Daseins. Ich ahne es als die Ursache des Daseins aller Menschen.<sup>1004</sup> For Hennings, the nameless is the first and last reason for her being and in consequence the reason for the existence of all people. Proust writes about this in *Time Regained*.<sup>1005</sup> Achim von Arnim as well describes a secrecy in the world that is of more value than that which is expressed explicitly.<sup>1006</sup> All these writers emphasise the value of the ineffable and often they praise this more highly than what can be said. Hohl is no exception to this. He describes the ‘alles mühelos Nennbare’ as belonging to ‘Stoff’<sup>1007</sup> and as not being of decisive nature in art. Instead, Hohl’s aim is to work towards that which cannot be calculated: ‘Das eben ist das Geheimnis der Anstrengung, daß sie das bewirkt, was sich gar nicht berechnen läßt; – daß niemand weiß, wohin sie führt, daß sie Früchte entstehen läßt an den Orten, an die niemand denkt.’<sup>1008</sup> Hohl might have been influenced here by Konrad Bänninger’s insight that

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<sup>1004</sup> Emmy Hennings, *Das Brandmal* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1999), p. 7.

<sup>1005</sup> ‘This is because objects — a book bound like others in its red cover — as soon as they have been perceived by us become something immaterial within us, partake of the same nature as our preoccupations or our feelings at that time and combine, indissolubly with them. [...] It is that essence which art worthy of the name must express and if it fails, one can yet derive a lesson from its failure (while one can never derive anything from the successes of realism) namely that that essence is in a measure subjective and incommunicable.’ Proust, *Time Regained*, p. 233.

<sup>1006</sup> ‘Es gab zu allen Zeiten eine Heimlichkeit der Welt, die mehr wert in Höhe und Tiefe der Weisheit und Lust, als alles, was in der Geschichte laut geworden. Sie liegt der Eigenheit des Menschen zu nahe, als sie den Zeitgenossen deutlich würde, aber die Geschichte in ihrer höchsten Wahrheit gibt den Nachkommen ahnungsreiche Bilder und wie die Eindrücke der Finger an harten Felsen im Volke die Ahnung einer seltsamen Urzeit erwecken, so tritt uns aus jenen Zeichen in der Geschichte das vergessene Wirken der Geister, die der Erde einst menschlich angehörten, in einzelnen, erleuchteten Betrachtungen, nie in der vollständigen Übersicht eines ganzen Horizonts vor unsre innere Anschauung. Wir nennen diese Einsicht, wenn sie sich mitteilen läßt, Dichtung, sie ist aus Vergangenheit in Gegenwart, aus Geist und Wahrheit geboren.’ Achim von Arnim, *Die Kronenwächter* (Frankfurt/Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1989), p. 13.

<sup>1007</sup> N IV 2 & 3 Form is a result of work (*Arbeit*). NIV 3. Stadler is not correct in stating that Hohl didn’t develop a concept of Form, Stadler, p. 50. Instead I argue that Hohl’s concept of form is anti-teleological and integral. cf. NN 353.

<sup>1008</sup> N VII 145.

*geistiges Leben* starts before anything can be verbalised.<sup>1009</sup> There is a strong parallel here as noted above, between Konrad Bänninger's insight and Blumenberg's investigation into the non-conceptual. Bänninger here believes in the power of that life before the words and how it can change words, in some sense, give life (*beseelen*): 'Die Sprache kann nur die Umrisse des Rahmens geben, durch den die Schau des Realen möglich ist.'<sup>1010</sup>

Hohl's division of the inner and the outer (*das Innere und das Äußere*) can also be understood as a division of the explicable and the inexplicable, or that which can and cannot be named. Outer is the realm in which everything can be named ('im Außen (im Nennbaren)'<sup>1011</sup>) and work's direction moves from the ineffable to the expressible. Hohl's concept of work is directly tied to the inner in an insight already formulated in *Nuancen und Details*, and then taken up again in the *Notizen*: 'Arbeit ist immer ein Inneres; und immer muß sie nach einem Außen gerichtet sein. Tätigkeit, die nicht nach einem Außen gerichtet ist, ist keine Arbeit; Tätigkeit, die nicht ein inneres Geschehen ist, ist keine Arbeit.'<sup>1012</sup> The *Das Unaussprechliche*, the ineffable, is further strongly linked to life affirmation and to the length of way needed to arrive at a certain insight, a *geistige Position*:

...daß man längste Wege zurücklege, um endlich zu der Aussichtshöhe zu gelangen, wo man auch in ihre Geistigkeit blickt, auch in ihr reines Wollen sieht und ihre wirkliche Berührung mit dem Unaussprechlichen, welche so lange hinter dem Schwall der Rhetorik verborgen blieb; wo man erkennt, daß man sich ja doch *für* diese Geister, im Grunde doch bejahende, mächtige Geister, erklären muß.<sup>1013</sup>

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<sup>1009</sup> K. Bänninger, *Geist des Werdens*, p. 17.

<sup>1010</sup> Fuchs, p. 30.

<sup>1011</sup> N VII 112.

<sup>1012</sup> N I 1, NuD II 51.

<sup>1013</sup> N V 32.

Artists mediate (vermitteln) the ineffable. The art that Hohl has in mind is a mediation of the ineffable, ('VERMITTLER DES UNAUSSPRECHLICHEN' as Hohl emphasises in capitals).<sup>1014</sup> This is reminiscent of Hohl's reading of Heraclitus, in emphasising this fragment: Ἀρμονία ἀφανῆς φανερῆς χρείσσων' – meaning, in Hohl's translation, 'Unsichtbare Harmonie ist mehr als sichtbare' which, in addition, shows Hohl's interest in the invisible. He emphasises too how Heraclitus' fragment is very closely related (*ganz nah verwandt*) to the subtitle of the Notizen, *Von der unvoreiligen Versöhnung*. Heraclitus's Ψυχῆς ἐστὶ λόγος ἐωπτόν αὔξων was the epigram that Hohl chose for his Notizen. He translates it with 'Der Inbegriff des Innern ist, daß es sich selbst vermehre' and says that another translation for this is: 'Wer wirklich arbeitet, kann nicht mehr aufhören zu arbeiten.'<sup>1015</sup>

#### **VI.4 Life affirmation, *unvoreilige Versöhnung* and Hohl's *teilnehmende Liebe***

This section discusses Hohl's views on life affirmation and non-premature reconciliation (*Unvoreilige Versöhnung*) and what he means by that. Hohl speaks in many instances of life affirmation (*Bejahung*<sup>1016</sup>), whereas he speaks less often of non-premature reconciliation. The discussion of Hohl's ideas on life affirmation will distinguish between individual suffering and general losses, before briefly considering his concept of love and concluding this chapter with an appreciation of Hohl's *unvoreilige Versöhnung*.

In relation to life affirmation, the concept of value again plays a role. Hohl in the *Nachnotizen* displays a somewhat more pessimistic worldview, suggesting that life was not worth living,

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<sup>1014</sup> N V 34.

<sup>1015</sup> after N V 34, all references including the Greek in this paragraph quoted from NN 432.

<sup>1016</sup> In Hohl's *Notizen*'s index mentioned in N XII 61 & II 234, NN 19, 21,94, 281, 282.



but that in the first place this ought not to be told to the young and, secondly, the values one has found in all the turmoil of life become even more important in contrast to all the futility:

#### Das Leben

Nachher sieht man zwar, daß das Leben nicht wert ist, gelebt zu werden (die Nöte, die man aushalten mußte, sind, zusammengesehen, zu übermächtig, als daß man den Mut hätte, es noch einmal mit ihnen aufzunehmen): Aber das heißt nicht, erstens, daß man dies ohne weiteres der Jugend an die Nase hänge (denn die Jugend hat es nötig, das Gegenteil anzunehmen, und nimmt es im Grunde auch immer - fast immer - an); zweitens, daß es einem nicht dennoch, und gerade darum um so mehr, an den *Werten* liege, die man durch all die Unbill, mit ihr, gefunden, erzeugt hat (im Sinne des Wortes von Roger Martin du Gard 'Que la paix soit avec nous!').<sup>1017</sup>

The question is how does this pessimism lead to life affirmation and what it is that is to be affirmed? In Hohl it is the overcoming of suffering; in the last instance, the insight into mortality and the acceptance of it. At the same time Hohl insists also on the possibility of the experience of eternity, by way of work. In this sense he means that all our doing remains fragmentary.<sup>1018</sup>

One could distinguish two kinds of suffering that could be described as an insight into general losses and secondly as the suffering of the individual. To start with a general level of suffering, Hohl speaks of the law of *Vergeudung*, which for Hohl is the 'quantitativ am meisten bedeutende Gesetz der Natur'.<sup>1019</sup> According to Hohl, nature is very wasteful.<sup>1020</sup> Nevertheless Hohl believes humans capable of making progress, and this progress can be described as happening in small steps with persistence and, furthermore and more importantly, that humans never abandon their plans to work, which is for Hohl another word

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<sup>1017</sup> NN 410.

<sup>1018</sup> N XI 5, XI 12.

<sup>1019</sup> N II 225, NN 385, NN 420.

<sup>1020</sup> N II 281.

for realisation. (*Realisierungen*).<sup>1021</sup> Regarding suffering on an individual level, the question is what needs to be affirmed and what this affirmation looks like. In the *Nachnotizen* life affirmation is equated by Hohl with *Geisteskraft*:

Versuch.

Vielleicht ist Geisteskraft gleichzusetzen der Kraft des *Bejahenkönnens*.

Bejahen ist natürlich sehend bejahen, nicht jenes “Bejahen”, das auf dem Ignorieren beruht. Man kann nicht etwas bejahen, das man ignoriert.

(Genau aus solchen Überlegungen stieg mein Titel-Vorschlag, für mein Hauptwerk, Von der unvoreiligen Versöhnung, statt Die Notizen; ein Vorschlag, der noch keineswegs verworfen ist.)

Zusätze:

1)... Und wenn auch das Sehen immer nur relativ ist.

2) Und das Bejahen ruht nicht auf dem Sehen; es geschieht zugleich mit, neben dem Sehen. – Das mit vielem Sehen vermischte Bejahen... – Das Bejahen gewinnt immer höhern Preis, mit je mehr Sehen es gemischt ist.<sup>1022</sup>

*Bejahen* is described in conjunction with seeing, and in addition seeing means that one can only affirm something that one does not ignore. In the *Notizen* Hohl has explicated this in the context of individual suffering. One source of suffering is non-legitimate activities. By this

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<sup>1021</sup> N II 224 ‘Der Mensch ist der Versammelplatz der ewigen Stärke mit der ewigen Schwachheit. Schwachheit: um heute die Tat zu tun, sehe ich mich nach den Bedingungen — nein, sogar nach den Begleitumständen um, unter denen ich das letzte Mal eine Tat getan habe: abhängig soll die jetzige Tat sein wie ein Sohn vom Vater, will sich verkriechen in Geborgenheit - ja, kann sie denn nicht *heraus* treten? (Ihr Wesen wird doch nur dadurch Wesen, daß sie austritt; es wird ihr nie fehlen an Begleitumständen, und an vollständig eigenen.) Das ist Schwachheit.

Aber die ewige Stärke ist, daß der Mensch doch nach und nach alles (das Unermeßliche, das schon geschehen ist, vom Ergreifen des Feuers bis zur Psychoanalyse), durch alle Hindernisse der Latenz hindurch, erreicht hat; daß er nie daran denkt, mögen die hindernden latenten Massen (Milliarden der latenten Menschen) gleich dem Himalaja sein: vor ihm, der schwach und bloß herankommt, ein gebrechlicher Zweibeiner, 1m70 hoch, — daß er nie daran denkt, dieses Vordringen zu immer neuen Realisierungen aufzugeben. Und von den höchsten Leistungen geschahen. Bach und Hölderlin und daß der Mensch durch die Lüfte in wenigen Tagen um den Planeten fährt.’

Skizzierung der *Stufen*, über die eine Realisierung verläuft:

Die erste Leistung besteht in der Förderung einer Ahnung zu starken Träumen (Ahnungen fließen immer neue zu). Die zweite ist die Verwandlung des starken Traums in feste Gedanken. Die dritte (wohl nicht schwerere als die beiden vorhergehenden) die Förderung des Gedankens zu dem, was man gemeinhin allein die Realisierung zu nennen pflegt, der äußerlich sichtbaren Leistung.’

<sup>1022</sup> NN 281.

Hohl means for example doing the wrong kind of work from which one is alienated.<sup>1023</sup> According to Hohl ‘Leben ist wesentlichweise Leiden’.<sup>1024</sup> He also gives instructions for overcoming suffering; they involve the acceptance<sup>1025</sup> and affirmation of it.<sup>1026</sup> According to him, most suffering happens in secret and one way of diminishing suffering is what Hohl calls the ‘Bekanntmachung’ to oneself of the suffering in the first place. As long as there is an element of avoidance, the suffering will retain some of its secrecy; as long as it is secret, it is not diminished. Therefore, the overcoming of suffering requires full acknowledgment and its externalisation.<sup>1027</sup> In the *Nachnotizen* he describes what he means by *unvoreilige Versöhnung*, it is strongly connected to other key concepts, such as *das Reale*. Only the *unvereilige Versöhnung* enables us to see *das Reale*: ‘Wenn ein Mensch unvoreilig zur Versöhnung gelangt, unvoreilig: das heißt offenen Auges, bei voller Kenntnis unserer Bedingung und der grauerregenden Tatsachen der Wirklichkeit – des gewaltigen Gesetzes von der Vergeudung zum Beispiel –, dann sieht er das Reale.’<sup>1028</sup> Life affirmation means in this sense not the *Bejahung* of suffering but the acknowledgement of suffering’s existence. This affirmation is embedded in Hohl’s view that there is nothing more intense or higher than

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<sup>1023</sup> N VII 22.

<sup>1024</sup> N XII 13.

<sup>1025</sup> ‘Denken heißt nicht vertauben - es heißt, seine unangenehmen Empfindungen mit aller ihrer Gewalt wüten lassen und Stärke genug in sich zu fühlen, die Natur dieser Empfindungen zu untersuchen und s i c h s o über sie hinauszusetzen. Diese Empfindungen mit vergangenen zusammenzuhalten, gegeneinander abzuwägen zu ordnen und zu übersehen. Da erst kann man sagen, man fühle sich — und wenn solch ein Strauß überstanden ist, bekommt der Mensch, oder des Menschen Geist eine Festigkeit die ihm für die Ewigkeit und Unzerstörbarkeit seiner Existenz Bürge wird. Glücklich da erst, mit der Überzeugung sich selbst dieses Glück zu danken zu haben.’

Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz, *Über die Natur unsers Geistes* (Lenz, *Werke und Briefe*, ed. Sigrid Damm, 1st edn, 3 vols (Frankfurt/Main: Insel Verlag, 2005), ii, 621).

<sup>1026</sup> N II 111.

<sup>1027</sup> N II 167, II 94.

<sup>1028</sup> NN 202, NN 506.

‘Lebensteilnahme’.<sup>1029</sup> *Teilnahme* is described by Hohl as: ‘an irgendeinem Ding volle Teilnahme’.<sup>1030</sup> As we saw in the discussion of beauty, *Teilnahme* is what creates beauty. This means not just a limitation of participation to art but it means (conscious) participation in anything, just as Hohl’s view of communication includes communication not only with people but also with books. To give up on participation means a separation from the world, and that means ultimately also a separation from one’s own life.<sup>1031</sup>

There is also an utopian moment in Hohl’s thought. Beringer writes that to Hohl *Wirklichkeit* always has remained an open question, remaining ‘innerlich fremd’.<sup>1032</sup> Beringer bases this assumption on a psychological reason, on not overcoming woundedness, and suggests that people like Hohl ‘der “schlechten Wirklichkeit” gegenüber, an etwas festhalten, das weiter weg zu liegen scheint und doch ganz nah ist – ein immer neu zu Erreichendes, Gegenwärtiges, Reales.’<sup>1033</sup> A comparable formulation of Hohl’s can be found in the *Nuancen und Details*: ‘...ja, überall Gefahren und haardünn ist der Ort, wo es gelingt, etwas wirklich zu ergreifen –, zusammenzuraffen – nein, einfach zu greifen und zu sagen: denn es ist ganz leicht dort; aber der Ort ist haardünn, und ringsherum, um ihn alles sind Wege.’<sup>1034</sup> Hohl doesn’t explain any further in the *Notizen* what he means by *Ort*, but there is the double nature common to the aphorism: on the one hand an insight into the precariousness, the dangers and the smallness of the place, and on the other the emphasis on ease and the many ways are there

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<sup>1029</sup> N II 171.

<sup>1030</sup> N II 171.

<sup>1031</sup> NN 44 In addition, there is a strong anthropomorphic element in Hohl’s thinking of the world, for instance in N I 38 where he describes the world as a personality.

<sup>1032</sup> Beringer, *Hohls Weg*, p. 24.

<sup>1033</sup> Beringer, *Hohls Weg*, p. 24.

<sup>1034</sup> NuD I 12.

to reach that place. There is a strong element of love for the world, *amor mundi*,<sup>1035</sup> in Hohl's thinking: 'diese große, dennoch immer bejahende, immer zu bejahende, einschränkungslos geliebte, allgemeine wunderbare Anwesenheit: die WELT.'<sup>1036</sup> This leads to an examination of the question of love in Hohl's *Notizen*. Like all of Hohl's main concepts, his concept of love is fairly complex: apart from speaking of a love for the world, love is also a capacity that is connected to *sehen*: 'Was ist Beobachtung? Liebe.'<sup>1037</sup> It is furthermore strongly connected to work, as his concept of work is an expression of love to humans.<sup>1038</sup> 'Dein Verhältnis sei Liebe. Aber der Mensch ist etwas, das erst geschaffen werden muß, jedenfalls als Vielheit. (Darum wird deine Liebe im Schaffen sein müssen.)'<sup>1039</sup> The question of the sense of life will be decided according to Hohl by one's capacity to love,<sup>1040</sup> one's capacity for *Hinwendung* to the world.<sup>1041</sup> This *Hinwendung* is further described as a 'Lassen'<sup>1042</sup> and is life-giving.<sup>1043</sup> Therefore, one could speak of a *teilnehmende Liebe* in Hohl where any full participation in

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<sup>1035</sup> It is tempting to compare Hohl's concept of love with Nietzsche's *amor fati* and Arendt's *amor mundi*, but due to space-constraints it cannot be done within the scope of this thesis. cf. for an introduction of the concepts of *amor fati* and *amor mundi*: Vasti Roodt, 'Nietzsche and/or Arendt?', in Herman Siemens and Vasti Roodt (eds.), *Nietzsche Power and Politics* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2008), pp. 411-430. cf. also Westerdale, p. 127. cf. 'Dat het leven een waarheidsdimensie in zich bergt die van de orde van het geloof is, niet omdat zij het product zou zijn van naïef of zelf leugenachtig zelfbedrog, maar omdat zij zich alleen kenbaar vermag te maken in de sensatie van een *grondeloos vertrouwen* die de *amor fati* wekt?' Visser, *In gesprek met Nietzsche*, p. 243. My English translation: 'That life holds a dimension of truth in itself that is a kind of belief, not because it is the product of a naive and false self-deception, but because it allows itself to be known only in the sensation of a groundless trust which wakes up the *amor fati*?'

<sup>1036</sup> NN 21, also N XII 150.

<sup>1037</sup> N II 242.

<sup>1038</sup> N I 19.

<sup>1039</sup> N VIII 19.

<sup>1040</sup> N II 22.

<sup>1041</sup> N II 23 N II 171.

<sup>1042</sup> N XI 24.

<sup>1043</sup> N VI 32 NN 21.

life leads to life affirmation and beauty.<sup>1044</sup> Love as such is described in connection with learning and, according to Hohl, the only thing that cannot be replaced (*ersetzt*) in humans is the will to learn. In this context Hohl describes love not as a thing but as a form; love is a degree, the highest one.<sup>1045</sup> Love is also a *Leistung* that requires strength (*Kraft*) and courage (*Mut*)<sup>1046</sup> in the context of life affirmation, and especially of patience, of long-term efforts. Here love can be seen in an ethical sense.

The *Notizen* have the subtitle *oder Von der Unvoreiligen Versöhnung*, translated as non-premature reconciliation. This raises questions what is meant by premature reconciliation. The moment of non-prematureness echoes earlier invocations of the connection of the aphorism to concealed length, and to latency,<sup>1047</sup> to insights that need to mature. The previously mentioned image of the seed<sup>1048</sup> symbolises this. Length is again a characteristic in the process of creative activity; it needs time and also the non-premature reconciliation: ‘Das endlos lange Kreisende jedes schöpferischen Gedankens: wie im Menschen, so in der Menschheit. – Nur Richtung muß gewiesen sein, dann kommt man langsam überall hin. Es dauert lange, aber endlich kommt man doch dahin, wohin seit langem die Richtung war.’<sup>1049</sup> Peter Bichsel writes that the *Notizen* appear irreconciled and inaccessible because, according to him, Hohl

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<sup>1044</sup> Nickl, p. 222.

<sup>1045</sup> NN 156.

<sup>1046</sup> NN 445.

<sup>1047</sup> ‘Nie zu vergessen, in welchem Maße Worte kostbare Dinge sind, die einmal aufgehen wie Samen; die, behalten – man kann sie doch wie materiell behalten, im Gedächtnis --, ihre Zeit abwartend zu größter Aktion, strahlend erwachend in Kraft nach Jahren.’ N II 34.

<sup>1048</sup> N II 34.

<sup>1049</sup> N II 79, N XI 40.

means a reconciliation ‘nach innen’.<sup>1050</sup> A premature reconciliation would be, according to Federspiel, participating in conformity and resignation.<sup>1051</sup>

Gnädig, wunderbar ist dieses: daß jedem am Ende das wird, genauer: geworden ist, als Ausdruck in der Kunst, was in seinem Wesen gelegen hat, was sein eigentliches Vermögen war. “Natürlich” ist es nicht, sondern erstaunlich: Denn unser Streben geht meistens nach etwas, das oben oder unten, außen oder innen von dem ist, was uns gehört (es ist nur an Hebbel zu denken; oder was hat Schiller gemeint zu sein oder zu erreichen!). Unsere Werke sind immer viel tiefer, als wir ahnen; - noch in einer anderen Art tief, als sie es in dem üblichen Sinn sein können.<sup>1052</sup>

It is in this sense that one has to understand Plessner’s account of how a work of art is a true image of a person; ‘face’ is the word that Plessner uses: ‘Das Werk allein kann das wahre Gesicht eines Menschen werden, denn es spiegelt nicht sein bloßes Sein, das Residuum gleichsam seiner Existenz, sondern verklärt es im Lichte seiner Möglichkeiten, seiner verborgenen Wünsche und nie offenbarten Natur.’<sup>1053</sup>

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<sup>1050</sup> Bichsel, p. 93.

<sup>1051</sup> Jürg F. Federspiel, *Fragment und Genie à bâton rompus: Eine Begegnung mit Ludwig Hohl*, in: Ludwig Hohl, *suhrkamp taschenbuch materialien*, ed. J. Beringer, (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp 1981), pp.120-124 (p. 123).

<sup>1052</sup> N XII 58

also cf. Adorno’s connection of undeformed relations with reconciliation: ‘Alle nicht entstellte Beziehung, ja vielleicht das Versöhnende am organischen Leben selber, ist ein Schenken.’ Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, p. 47

‘Alle Poesie, möchte ich sagen, ist dramatisch, das heißt lebendig zeugend und fortzeugend. Der Gedanke, der nichts bedeutet als sich selbst, der nicht auf einen zweiten, dritten und vierten usw. führt und so bis zur höchsten Spitze der Erkenntnis hinauf, der also nicht auf die gesamte Entwicklung, auf den ganzen Lebensprozeß Einfluß hat, ist so wenig poetisch als lebendig, er ist aber auch gar nicht möglich, denn das Leben zeigt sich nur in der Gestalt des Übergangs. Nun aber sind die Veränderungen, die der Gedanke im Innern hervorbringt, völlig so gewichtig als diejenigen, die er, den ihm zunächstliegenden innern Stoff mit dem äußeren vertauschend, in der Welt bewirkt.’ Friedrich Hebbel, *Tagebücher* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1963), p. 144.

<sup>1053</sup> Helmuth Plessner, *Grenzen der Gemeinschaft* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2002), p. 90. cf. Beringer, *Hohls Weg*, p.12.

## VI.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explained the importance of Work (*Arbeit*) as a key concept in Hohl's thought. Work is directly tied to life affirmation and can be characterised as a non-teleological activity that is not limited only to the creation of art but includes any kind of work that is non-alienated and means to the person a full participation in life. Work means the realisation of one's inner potential, and Hohl gives direct instructions on how to work, namely by dividing a big idea into small ideas, which then are divided into small actions. As the art created is based on one's ideas, it has necessarily the identity of the creator. Hohl emphasises the necessity of this non-alienation. Those who are alienated from themselves cannot create art. For Hohl, the task of the artist is to express the ineffable, which cannot be calculated but approximated by a persistent habitus of work, which also requires the *Geisteskräfte*. Hohl was a thinker of difference (*Grad*), which means he sees no essential difference between life and art; art is the intensification of life and, equally, Hohl sees no essential difference between the artist and the genius. The actual activity, work, is prioritised over perceived innate differences between a so-called genius and the average person. The ethical dimension in Hohl's thought can be characterised by *Hinwendung* and communication, whereas this does not just mean *Hinwendung* and communication with people but also with books or the world; a general engagement with everything that one encounters. The capacity to *Hinwendung* is directly proportional to one's capacity for life affirmation. Beauty is to be understood not so much as an aesthetic category but rather as a participatory one; beauty is directly tied to life affirmation. Life affirmation in a second meaning has to be understood as the reconciliation with suffering, and only the acknowledgement of suffering and its externalisation, not the denial, can lead to life affirmation. Non-premature reconciliation means a reconciliation based



not on denial of the gruesome aspects of the world but on a reconciliation that accepts those facts while at the same time fostering a strong belief in life.

## VII CONCLUDING REMARKS AND FURTHER QUESTIONS

This thesis has contributed to the research on the aphorism as a mode in the following ways:

First and foremost this thesis has shown the connectedness of aphoristic writing on a number of different levels, thereby addressing a deficit in the research of the aphorism as described by Neumann. Aphorisms are connected on a conceptual level: different aphorisms explain, for instance, different aspects of a concept, as demonstrated in the example of the *Geisteskräfte*. Aphorisms are also connected on a metaphorical level. Tracing the chains of thought has shown that aphoristic writing is more closely connected than Fricke assumed and, furthermore, that the order of their appearance is not arbitrary. Aphoristic writers give their writing an order that resists immediate accessibility. Consequently, the aphorism resists immediate accessibility and requires sophisticated forms of reading. Tracing the chains of thought is one way of reading aphorisms.

The investigation into Hohl's writing has shown the usefulness of *Begriffsgeschichte* for the investigation of the aphorism. *Begriffsgeschichte* is useful in two respects: because of its focus on concepts and their changing role in aphoristic writing, and, secondly, due its focus on the non-conceptual and the ineffable – which also plays a huge role in Hohl's writing. Furthermore, *Begriffsgeschichte*, especially Blumenberg's work on the metaphorical and non-conceptual, is helpful because it gives vocabulary to what cannot otherwise be put into words, which is relevant to Hohl, as his views on the artist's activities emphasise an engagement with the ineffable. Hohl's division of *das Wirkliche* and *das Reale* allows him to accommodate and verbalise a sphere for the ineffable element in art and life. Using *Begriffsgeschichte* has also helped to show the unity of the *Notizen* - a much contested question in the literature - on a conceptual level, as was demonstrated in the discussion of the aphorism at the end of Hohl's

*Notizen*. This refers to Hohl's use of the image of face made up of lines, which, in a theoretical sense, exemplifies the aphorism's double nature: the conceptual (lines) work together with the image (face) (cf. not quite towards the end of section IV.3.1, p. 248ff.).<sup>1054</sup>

Moreover, with the relevance and occurrence of non-conceptual entities such as the image and the ineffable, phantasy also experienced a re-evaluation in aphoristic writing and, as Hohl's most elaborate concept, it is one of the three key concepts in his thinking, the other two being *Kraft* and *Arbeit*. I have argued that Blumenberg was correct in his assumption that where there are deviations from the purely conceptual, there are also re-appraisals of phantasy. In the case of Hohl this happens without a total rejection of rationality; rather, rationality and phantasy have an interdependent relationship, thereby reflecting the dual nature of the aphorism as outlined by Fedler and confirming that Fedler's definition of the double nature of the aphorism is apposite. In this regard, this thesis has offered the first exploration of Hohl's influence on Handke in demonstrating that both writers place a high value on phantasy. Aphoristic writing thus differs significantly from philosophising in a treatise, in the way it operates on a conceptual level and it is this that contributes to the aphorism's complicated position in literature and philosophy.

Regarding the question whether Hohl's writing is note writing, I have argued that Hohl's writing cannot be notewriting because the note as a mode does not do justice to the complexity of Hohl's writing. Regarding the fragment, I do not see fragment and aphorism in opposition but understand the fragment as a part of the aphorism. My contribution here is to propose the centrality of the concept of ontological fragmentariness in Hohl, a proposal that

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<sup>1054</sup> "Durch seine 'weltschöpferische' Einbildungskraft lebt er in diesen 'Bildern des Lebens, Bildern der Seele'. Augenblicke lang birgt die Imagination so den Einzelnen im 'Glück jener Gesichte, die wir mit niemandem teilen können, die uns mit uns selber einigen oder die allein imstande sind, uns mit uns selber zu einigen.'" Wieser, p. 115.

puts the aphorism not in opposition to the fragment, but insists on the aphorism's fragmentary quality and its ontological motivation.

In conclusion, it can be said that, by tracing the concepts of aphoristic writers it was demonstrated that not just treatises are able to express creative theories or philosophies of life, aphoristic writing is able to do so as well. Hohl's own work can be described in terms of an aesthetic theory that combines ethical with aesthetic thought with the inter-related aims of overcoming alienation, experiencing life-affirmation and providing concrete advice on how to live one's life and how to create art. Hohl's concept of the integral does justice to individual differences. There is an element of equality in Hohl's thought, as his concept of work entails an egalitarian view of creativity; egalitarian because the possibilities of work are given to everyone and, due to the concept of the integral, take into account personal difference.

I would contend that the discussion of the nature of the aphorism in this thesis, focussing on similarities between aphoristic writers, can be extrapolated to a general view of aphoristic writing. I contend that any investigation of the aphorism cannot be separated from the worldview the aphoristic writer is expressing, and this means one needs to take into account an existential and personal dimension: the aphorism is closely tied to the individuality of the writer. The personal cannot be underestimated and is a decisive element in aphoristic writing because the aphorism aims to overcome alienation of the individual from language, systems, society and other people. Personality gives shape to aphoristic writing because, according to Hohl, every individual has their own task, their own work and own individual way of writing. In this connection, as has been shown, the personal does not necessarily mean the autobiographical.

The analysis of Hohl's writings confirms the importance of seeing the aphorism's origin in Hippocrates, as a mode that was used to dispense medical advice. Aphoristic writers have a strong interest in health and how to live, in finding a habitus so to speak. Hohl emphasises a way of life and creativity that is based on the non-alienation of the individual from themselves, which shows itself in Hohl's concept of beauty because beauty can only come into being where there is an identity between the work of art and the artist. Hohl is an aphoristic writer in Krüger's sense, as he strongly focusses on the individual, and beauty is regarded by Hohl not as an aesthetic category but as a life-affirming one. This means that beauty is tied to intense participation in life. Therefore a view of personality, the ineffable and an existential dimension cannot be omitted – contrary to Fricke's suggestion – from a description of the aphorism because they are fundamental characteristics of aphoristic writing.

An abundance of further research questions arise: these relate, firstly, to general questions regarding the aphorism. Further investigations into the writing of other aphoristic writers need to be undertaken into the concepts and metaphors used by other aphoristic writers, in order to test how concepts and metaphors are used in individual aphoristic oeuvres and whether there are similarities in that usage that can lead to insights about the general nature of the aphorism. Here, the methods and uses of *Begriffsgeschichte* could be used more in detailed studies of concepts and metaphors used by aphoristic writers. In addition, aphoristic writers' use of phantasy or the imagination needs to be examined in order to test the thesis that aphoristic writers have an elaborate concept of phantasy as well. At the same time their views on rationality need to be assessed in order to see whether the double nature of the aphorism is prevalent in them too. As conceptual boundaries are dissolved, concepts describing liminality

such as *hereinbrechende Ränder*, *Schwelle* and *Zwischenraum* become more important, and concepts that bridge different realms ought to be explored more and the hypothesis tested that other aphoristic writers have similar notions. The same needs to be shown for the ineffable.

Regarding the question of modes, the mode of the note deserves much more exploration.

With regard to ontological fragmentariness, which occupies a key position in the present thesis, it would be of special importance to investigate whether aphoristic writers explicate their views on being in a similar way to Hohl. Further, there needs to be investigation of whether other aphoristic writers have a worldview that assumes limits on what can be known. It needs to be assessed whether other aphoristic writers also formulate elaborate philosophies of life or creative theories. Those theories need to be explicated. It needs to be shown whether other aphoristic writers pursue themes and concerns similar to Hohl's, and whether they have an interest in avoiding alienation in favour of a pursuit of life affirmation as well.

Specifically for Hohl, this thesis does not take into account archival sources of his writing such as the *Epische Grundschriften* where he might have reflected on the modes of the note or aphorism. It also does not take account of his writings outside the *Notizenwerk*, except *Mut und Wahl* and his *Jugendtagebuch*. Consequently, a further necessary step would be to examine these other works by Hohl in search of other reflections on the note, fragmentariness, concepts, stone metaphors, the *Geisteskräfte*, and his views on art and life affirmation. The development and consistency of those themes across the whole oeuvre need to be traced and explicated in more detail. In a further step, a biographical study of Hohl by Stüssi could be extended to his later life and could prove illuminating in establishing to what extent his life and work coalesce. This should include a deepening reflection on questions of the aphoristic use of personality and autobiography and the differences between the two.

Biographical research is also important for a second reason: as the avoidance of alienation is a key theme of Hohl's work, it is necessary to see whether non-alienation can be lived. This would confirm or reject Raaflaub's<sup>1055</sup> thesis of the strong intertwinement of life and writing of Ludwig Hohl. The parallels and influence noted in Chapter V of this thesis can also serve as a basis and justification for further studies, particularly one on the general influence of Hohl on other writers, specifically aphoristic writers, and also generally on writers such as for instance Max Frisch or Friedrich Dürrenmatt.

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<sup>1055</sup> Martin Raaflaub, *Ludwig Hohl - Zur Philosophie der Notizen* (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, forthcoming), passim.

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