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**“denk an Pasolinis »verzweifelte Leere von Casarsa«”:
Considerations on the Influence of Spanish Mysticism
and of Pasolini’s »Friulian« Poems on Peter Handke’s
Noch einmal für Thukydides and Versuch über die Jukebox**


Abstract

The aim of this paper is to reflect on Handke’s reception of Spanish and Friulian traditions. The first part of this paper will mention Miguel de Cervantes’, Teresa of Ávila’s and John of the Cross’ influence on Handke’s works, while also focusing on Handke’s fascination with the Spanish tradition and Pasolini’s works through the use of the comparative method. Pasolini’s vision of modern cultural customs is also taken into consideration in Handke’s Essay on the Jukebox, where clear references to Spanish authors also appear. The same occurs in Handke’s Glowworm Epopee, where Pasolini’s critical view of the “vanishing of the fireflies” indirectly shines throughout a tribute to the Poems in Casarsa. In the second section, an anthropological perspective will be employed, seeing as Handke’s ‘mysticism’ can be said to have drawn inspiration from the Romantic motif of “Mother Holle” (Höller 2013). In this regard, Ginzburg’s (1989) and Nardon’s (1999) studies will be used to assume Handke’s attachment to Friulian folk topics dating back to the 17th century. As opposed to Handke’s reception of Pasolini’s critical views and of Spanish mysticism, the influence of Friulian ethno-anthropological aspects on the Carinthian author’s works still needs to be demonstrated and its study improved.

Keywords: Peter Handke, essay on the Jukebox, Once Again for Thucydides, Pier Paolo Pasolini, poems in Casarsa, comparative method, ethno-anthropological perspective

**Between mysticism and folklore: Handke’s reception of the
Romance tradition**

The first section of this paper draws attention to Peter Handke’s first-hand reception of Spanish tradition and of Pier Paolo Pasolini’s works.

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In this part, Handke's fascination with the Spanish tradition will be considered by relying on García's (2019), De Llano's (2019) and Bassets' (2019) articles and interviews. If it is true that Linares and Soria deserve to be considered as the two Spanish cities dearest to the Carinthian author, great affection is also shown for Spanish-speaking authors such as Miguel de Cervantes, Teresa of Ávila and the "Doctor Mysticus" John of the Cross. Handke put *Essay on the Jukebox* together while he was staying in Soria between 1989 and 1990. In this work the device is celebrated, but also criticized. In the *Essay* a direct reference to Pasolini's Friulian poems and to his polemic view about music is noticeable. The same lines, taken from Pasolini's Friulian-language poem *Mostru o Pavea?*, appear in Handke's *Glowworm Epopee*, whose title itself seems reminiscent of Pasolini's topic of the "vanishing of the fireflies".

In the second section of this work, Handke's possible reception of the "Mother Holle" figure (Höller 2013) will be considered. In order to discuss this apparently nonsensical connection, Ginzburg's (1989) and Nardon's (1999) studies, as well as Hack's (2016) considerations, will be taken into account. In this regard, the "Frau Holle", a Friulian folk element dating back to the 16th and the 17th century, will be the main focus.

Finally, Kitzmüller's (2001) studies will be used to support the thesis concerning Handke's reception of Pasolini's *Poems in Casarsa*.

A «despairing emptiness of Casarsa». Handke's tribute to Pasolini's poems: regarding the *Essay on the Jukebox*

Born in Griffen, on the Slovenian side of Carinthia in 1942, Peter Handke can be considered as one of the most well versed and versatile authors of the 20th and 21st century.

Whereas Homer's *Odyssey*, Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* and von Eschenbach's *Parzival* can be considered as the "World-System" (Moretti 1994) works that most influenced the Austrian author in the 20th century (Höller 2013: 137), Handke's reception of Pasolini's works may reflect a singular correlation between his prose and modern Romance literature. As stated by Kitzmüller (2001), the *Essay on the Jukebox* (1990) could be seen as Handke's tribute to a device that is considered a symbol for the generations of the 20th century, especially during the post-war period. Published in 1990, after his previous *Essay on Tiredness – Versuch über die Müdigkeit* (1989) – and before his *Essay on the Successful Day – Versuch über den geglückten Tag* (1991) – the *Versuch über die Jukebox* has Handke's auto-fictional third-person essayist retire to Soria, a town far from the chaos of present times and from communication routes. "Auch daß er den 'Versuch über die Jukebox' gerade in Soria angehen würde", to quote the essayist,

war schon länger geplant gewesen. Es war jetzt Anfang Dezember, und im Frühjahr zuvor war er während eines Flugs über Spanien auf einen Revuebericht von dieser abgelegenen Stadt im kastilischen Hochland gestoßen. (Handke [1990b] 1993: 9–10)

Fascinated by Soria's Romanesque buildings and by the surrounding countryside, the author remembers how the Spanish poet Antonio Machado had spent the most important years of his life in the same town, as well as his cultural formation working there as a French teacher, then acting as a young husband and finally as a widower:

es gäbe, im Stadtkern und auch außerhalb, alleinstehend im Ödland, mehrere Bauten, samt erhaltenen Plastiken, der Romanik; trotz ihrer Kleinheit sei die Stadt Soria eine Kapitale – die Hauptstadt der

gleichnamigen Provinz; in Soria habe Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts, als Französischlehrer, dann junger Ehemann, dann gleich schon Witwer, die Gegend in vielen Einzeldingen mit seinen Versen erscheinen lassend, der Dichter Antonio Machado gelebt [...] (Ivi: 10)

When discussing Handke’s attachment to Spain, Olga García (2019) remembers how the *Meseta Central* plays a mystical role in Handke’s writing, fascinating the author because of the presence of deserted landscapes and empty spaces, symbols of ‘inner solitude’ and ‘meditation’. Spanish mysticism is considered by Handke as a balm for the soul, that’s why the desolated places in the Meseta often become metaphorical elements in his works, symbolizing an endless personal quest. This is exactly why Eustaquio Barjau, official Spanish translator of Handke’s works, describes Handke’s view of the Meseta as a “paisaje vacío que invita[ba] a la experiencia mística” (De Llano 2019),¹ as a fantastical and mythical place in which our creativeness finally turns into perfection: “Para él”, so Barjau, “la meseta era un desierto, y un desierto es una oportunidad para concebir todo lo que uno quiera concebir” (Ivi).² Spain takes on a double role as influence on Handke’s writing due to its evocative geography and to its literary references: “Imagínes que hizo el esfuerzo de leer el *Quijote* en original con un diccionario, lentamente” (Ivi),³ as pointed out by Barjau himself. Similarly, Höller’s (2013) studies also draw attention to the presence of motifs included in Handke’s works, motifs taken from Ancient Greek literature as well as Chivalric Romances:

Seit *Die Wiederholung* hat Handke begonnen, die Raumkonzepte des alten Epos erzählerisch zu reaktivieren und das Verlorene im literarischen Spiel mit den älteren epischen Formen (etwa Homers *Odyssee*, Wolfram von Eschenbachs *Parzival*, Miguel de Cervantes’ *Don Quijote*) unserer Welterfahrung zurückzugewinnen. (Höller 2013: 137)

While explaining to Marc Bassets the reasons which led him to attend Milošević’s state funerals, the Austrian author rejects the idea that this was a “crime” by establishing a fictive dialogue with authors like Homer, Tolstoy and Cervantes – “¿Es un crimen? ¿A usted le parece un crimen? [...] No tengo nada que cambiar. Cada día me gustaría cambiar” –⁴ comparing his own desire to change to an epic behaviour learned through the three authors’ works: “Pero mi naturaleza es mi naturaleza”, he says, “y es la de un escritor, no de un periodista. Mi sentimiento más profundo es el épico, como Cervantes, como Homero, como Tolstói. Este es mi mundo [...]” (Bassets 2019).⁵

Handke’s bond with Spanish literature shines through the *Essay* in the figure of Antonio Machado – “Y Machado también fue uno de sus grandes amores”,⁶ so Barjau (De Llano 2019) – whose simplicity and humanity are clearly appreciated – “por esa sencillez, esa cercanía liviana al ser humano corriente” (Ivi) –.⁷ Furthermore in *Die schönen Tage von Aranjuez* (2012), in which a man – portrayed by Reda Kateb – and a woman – Sophie Semin – discuss their lives and their erotic experiences, while sitting in a garden

1 “An empty landscape inspiring a mystical experience”. Unless otherwise indicated, translations are those by the authors.

2 “Meseta Central is a desert to him and a desert represents a chance to express everything you would like to conceive”.

3 “Let us just think about the fact that he made the effort to slowly read Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* while looking words up in a dictionary”.

4 “Is it a crime? Do you find it to be a crime? [...] I have nothing to change. I’d rather change myself, every day”.

5 “But my temperament is an author’s temperament, not a journalist’s temperament. My deepest feelings are for the epic, just like Cervantes, Homer or Tolstoy. This is my world [...]”.

6 “And Machado himself is to be considered one of Handke’s most beloved authors”.

7 “For his simplicity and his tender affinity with the feelings of common human beings”.

outside of Paris, an indirect reference to Machado's poems can be noticed. In the end of the play the young man talks about the non-existence of perfect romances by using the metaphor of a hungry she-wolf taken from Machado's poem *Desnuda está la tierra* – lit. *Naked is the Earth* –:⁸

DER MANN: Es gibt keine glückliche Liebe. Il n'y a pas d'amour heureux. No hay amor feliz.
Solamente la loba famelica. Nichts als die hungrige Wölfin. (Handke 2012: 69)

The Andalusian city Linares acts as setting for the *Versuch über die Müdigkeit* (1989) – *Essay on Tiredness* – and Salzburg is the place where the “Successful Day” gets contemplated (Grazioli 2014). In Soria, namely the dearest city to Machado, “der Leser und Betrachter” (Handke [1990b] 1993: 16) writes about the main features of “Wurlitzer und Seeburg” (Ivi: 14). He tries to explain the meaning given by the generations of the 1950s and 1960s to the jukebox (Kitzmüller 2001: 128–130). De Llano (2019) remembers how the Carinthian author conceived this essay by roaming the desolated *Calles* and the several empty streets in Soria filled with history and Romanesque architecture. In front of the *Church of Saint Dominic* – the *Iglesia de Santo Domingo de Soria* – Handke admits that “la fachada era música. Cuando la miras, escuchas música. Era como un jukebox diferente” (Ivi).⁹

The topic of jukeboxes was discussed in the 1960s by Italian authors as well. E.g., Pier Paolo Pasolini (1922–1975) thinks that this instrument is able to reflect a kind of “orgiastic sound”.

Concerning the role played by Popular and Folk Music in the 1950s and in the 1960s, Pasolini points out how jukeboxes can bring young people together, since these devices are often located in cafés or beach resorts (Porciani 2020: 181–182). According to Pasolini, the power of jukeboxes consists in enhancing these ancestral and atavistic features of human nature by describing a correlation between sound, music and sexuality (Porciani 2020: 182).¹⁰ To his Marxist critical view, these music devices appear as real arms of American imperialism in the second post-war period (Porciani 2020: 181–185).

In contrast with Pasolini's considerations referenced in Handke's *Essay*, the jukebox may be considered a sort of globalizing musical mechanism, even though a sort of ‘quiet’ polemic against the American imperialism can still be remarked. The main character considers in fact the jukebox “a simple toy”, the “dearest to Americans”, reminiscent of the post-war period and *Saturday Night Fever*:

8 “Desnuda está la tierra, / y el alma aúlla al horizonte pálido / como loba famélica. ¿Qué buscas, / poeta, en el ocaso?” (Machado [1907] 2006, verse 1, ll. 1-4) – “Naked is the earth, / and the soul howls at the pale horizon / like the hungry she-wolf. What are you looking for, / you Poet, in the twilight?”

9 “The <Church of Saint Dominic's> facade was like music. When you see it, you can hear music. It was just a different kind of jukebox”.

10 A jukebox plays an important role in the first part of Pasolini's *The Hawks and Sparrows* (1966), in which Totò – Antonio de Curtis – and his son Ninetto – Ninetto Davoli – enter a farmhouse used as a café while roaming a waste land in an anonymous suburban area of Rome. The young Ninetto can't resist the temptation to join a bunch of young boys from the neighbourhood, who are dancing to Rock'n'roll being played by a jukebox. Pasolini's critical view of music's anthropological mutation can be noticed in this movie, since the young boys no longer embody that classical perfection produced by Ancient Greek customs. Although these ‘country boys’ seem to share fit and healthy bodies worthy of classical art, they nevertheless show confused and apparently senseless movements, as well as clumsy steps. That “ancestral Rock'n'roll ecstasy” (Porciani 2015) gets deconstructed by the ‘commercial’ nature of Pop Music which led them to lose their atavistic gracefulness. The young characters turn into “modern Italians”, victims of a capitalistic and neo-fascist legacy, while the jukebox falls victim to a sudden anthropological shift (Porciani 2015).

Und jetzt, da die Geschichte als das große Märchen der Welt, der Menschheit, dem Anschein nach Tag für Tag weiterging, sich weitererzählte, fortzauberte (oder war es doch bloß eine Abart der alten Gespenstergeschichte?), wollte er hier sich, fernweg, in dieser von Steppen und Felswüsten umgebenen, geschichtstauben Stadt – [...] – versuchen an einem so weltfremden Gegenstand wie der Jukebox, einer Sache “für Weltflüchtlinge”, wie er sich jetzt sagte; einem bloßen Spielzeug, laut Literatur wohl dem “der Amerikaner liebsten”, doch nur für die kurze Zeit jenes “Samstagnachtfiebers”, nach dem Ende des Kriegs. (Handke [1990b] 1993: 27)

In the first part of the text, Casarsa, the town where Pasolini spent most of his childhood, is mentioned by Handke’s alter ego, whose aim is to compare Casarsa’s abundance of jukeboxes to the ‘jukeboxgesäubert’ Udine:

Einen solchen Jukebox-Parade-Ort, abgesehen von dem seiner Geburt, hatte er einmal in der friaulanischen Tiefebene mit Casarsa angetroffen, das sich wegen der im Umkreis geernteten Traubensorte den Zunamen “della Delizia” gegeben hat. Von der anmutigen, reichen und jukeboxgesäuberten Kapitale Udine war er an einem Sommerabend hier, “hinter dem Tagliamento”, angekommen, als Grund nur sechs Gedichtworte von Pasolini, der in dieser Kleinstadt einen Teil seiner Jugend verbracht hatte und später die Jukeboxen von Rom, im Verein mit den Flipperautomaten, als die amerikanische Fortführung des Krieges mit anderen Mitteln geschmäht hatte: “in der verzweifelten Leere von Casarsa”. (Handke [1990b] 1993: 55)

“after the laborious, barren day”: Pasolini’s motifs in Handke’s *Glowworm Epopee*

Pasolini’s “Gedichtworte” (Handke [1990b] 1993: 55) quoted in the *Essay* remind of *Mostru o Pavea?* – lit. *A Monster or a Butterfly?* –.

The natural element in this poem, included in the first edition of “The Best of Youth” (1941–1953), seems connected to topics such as childhood, homosexuality and the search of an identity. Specifically in the final verse of the poem we can read about a butterfly flying “from the chest to the thighs” (Pasolini [1942] 2016: 76, l. 26) of a narrator feeling alone in his “despairing emptiness of Casarsa” (Pasolini [1942] 2016: 76, l. 30):

[...]

IV.

No, a è una pavea di belessa,
mi svuala dal sen a li cuessis:
cun ic jo i pos vivi instès
encia se four di me mai a no ès.

No, al è un mostro di speransa
 tal vagu disperàt di Ciasarsa:
 al mi fai no essi un omp cu'l nut
 suspièt di no vej mai vivùt. (Pasolini [1942] 2016: 76, ll. 25-32)¹¹

The aforementioned “despairing emptiness” also appears in further prose works of Handke’s.

E.g., in *Noch einmal für Thukydides* (1990a) – *Once Again for Thucydides* – seventeen “micro-epics” can be found. In each journal the author notes the smallest things he has observed and attempts to focus on apparently meaningless images in order to capture their essence. So Handke has the reader focus on the image of snowflakes falling into the sea in Hokkaido, contemplates the clouds forming above the Untersberg massif near Salzburg and the colours of an ash tree in Munich. These fragments are featured in *Epopöe der Glühwürmchen*, a *Glowworm Epopee*, which was first composed in 1987 and then included in the aforementioned collection. During the night “from the 29th to the 30th of May, 1988” (Lewis [1998] 2008: 43) a third-person narrator roaming “the path through the fields between Cormons and the village of Brazzano in Friuli” (Lewis [1998] 2008: 43) plays the role of a further Handke alter ego. This fragment’s poetic nuances, which Lewis (1998) perfectly succeeded to convey into English, also shine through the description of glowworms sweetly “illuminating the ground with their glowing bodies” (Lewis 1998) while one of them lights up the ‘romantic’ wanderer’s hand – “On the palm of the night stroller’s hand one lit up the lines, a long glow just next to his life-line” (Ivi: 43–44) –. The glowworms glitter on the railway road while a “train to Trieste passed by in the distance” (Ivi: 45) turning into a metaphor for a divine gift aimed at giving peace, “after the laborious, barren day” (Ivi: 46), to a stroller that is clearly tributing “Pasolini’s ‘despairing emptiness of Casarsa’” (*Ibid.*):

wie ich ganz natürlich dabei – während in der Ferne der beleuchtete Zug nach Triest dahinfuhr, vor dem die Würmchen umso heftiger zu flittern schienen – an einen Gott dachte, der mir nach einem schweren, öden Tag ein Muster zurückgab, dieses kleine, liebe, weithin durch die Nacht sich verzweigende Blinkmuster der oft noch so schwankend unterwegs befindlichen neugeborenen Glühzwerg in der über ihnen allmählich riesenhaft aufwachsenden friulanischen Ebene – ein bewegliches Muster, das mir nach dem schweren öden Tag (denk an Pasolinis “verzweifelte Leere von Casarsa”) die Seele zurückgab. – Und das endlich wäre das kleine Epos der Glühwürmchen in der Nacht vom 29. zum 30. Mai 1988 zwischen der Stadt Cormons und dem Dorf Brazzano in Friaul. (Handke [1990a] 1997: 60–61)

Despite the indirect references to Pasolini’s polemic against the Italian Christian Democracy’s Neofascism, which he believed to have brought Italy to a clear “financial, environmental, urban and anthropological failure” (Pasolini 1975), metaphorically described through the motif of the “vanishing of the fireflies” (Kitzmüller 2001: 129–130), this passage could be nevertheless read as a clear tribute to Pasolini’s intimist writing. In the same way Handke’s alter ego finds, through the natural elements, a way to consider himself part of the world, trying to capture the essence and the spiritual features of those elements. In Pasolini’s works this particular spiritual view is related above all to an anthropological perspective used to analyse the corruption of values caused by the Italian neofascism’s promotion of consumer patterns (Scarane 2020).

11 “No, that is a butterfly made of beauty, / it flies across my body from the chest to the thighs: / I can live with it all the same / though it never flies outside of me. // No, it is a monster of hope / in the despairing emptiness of Casarsa: / it makes me not a man, with the genuine / suspicion of having never lived.”

The motif of “snowstorm” and the “elder(berry)” : Considerations on a possible reception of Friulian culture. An ethno-anthropological perspective

It is possible to use an ethno-anthropological approach to point out Peter Handke's reception of Friulian tradition.

To bring further evidence about this correlation, the influence of Spanish mysticism on Handke's works should first be analysed, because of the possible correlations between mysticism and folk elements in Handke's novel *Don Juan*.

Teresa of Ávila and John of the Cross should be mentioned among the most important mystics who influenced the works of the Carinthian author. As stated by García (2019), Handke's stay in Spain during the 1990s could have led to him improving a more introspective style of writing. García also remembers how Spain may be considered an epic landscape in Handke's literature, a place in which the intersection of myth and reality, of mysticism and emptiness, runs deep.¹²

In this regard, the motif of “Schneien”, as well as that of “wind”, should be noted as one of the most philosophical, emotional and mystical topics appearing in Handke's works (Höller 2013).¹³ The motif of snow as it appears in Wenders' movie *Falsche Bewegung* (1975), adapted by Handke, is chosen to describe the main character's creative inspiration. In the politically connoted *Fahrt im Einbaum oder Das Stück zum Film vom Krieg* (1999) – *The Journey by Dugout Or the Play of the Film of the War* – the correlation between the image of the author and the image of Classicism is represented through the motifs of “snow” and “snowing” (Höller 2013: 162–164). In the novel *Don Juan (erzählt von ihm selbst)* (2004) – *Don Juan: His Own Version* (2010) – “snow” and “ruins” are used to describe the correlation between “eros” and “mysticism” through a Romantic perspective. Handke's character, taken from Tirso de Molina's *Trickster of Seville* (1616–1630), finds refuge in a hostel situated near the ruins of the Cistercian *Port-Royal-des-Champs* abbey, which was effectively razed in 1711 at the behest of Louis XIV of France. An image of elderflowers which, like snowflakes, intertwine in the air with hairy cottonwood seeds, appears in the first section of the novel. Meanwhile, during early summer, the main character sits in contemplation in the garden of a hostel, under an elderberry tree. This passage was deeply analysed by Höller (2013) who, in this regard, finds a correlation with the Romantic motif of *Mother Holle* (Höller 2013: 164–167). This “sporadic hail of blossoms” (Winston 2010: 15):

kreuzte sich mit den beständigen, tagelang, die ganze Woche lang nicht nur hier durch den Garten und die Port-Royal-Überreste, sondern das gesamte verzweigte Bachtälersystem der westlichen Ile de France fast dahinvagabundierenden Pappelsamenflocken. Alles Schwere, Lastende, Steinige,

12 Handke's “attachment” – “apego” – to the Spanish tradition is also confirmed by Marc Bassets, who interviewed Handke the day after the Austrian author had been awarded the Nobel Prize. We can read here about Handke clearly admitting his attachment to Spanish cities like Soria and Linares and to Spanish authors like Teresa of Ávila, John of the Cross or Miguel de Cervantes: “El laureado también mencionó la influencia de España, país donde ha pasado temporadas y que aparece en libros suyos como *Ensayo sobre el jukebox*, *Ensayo sobre los días silenciosos* y *Ensayo sobre el cansancio*. Habla de Cuenca, de Soria y de Linares. Cita a San Juan de la Cruz, a Teresa de Ávila, a Cervantes. ‘También los paisajes, sobre todo’, añade. ‘Me gusta Castilla: mil metros sobre el mar, y está vacío. Pero gustar no es la palabra. Siento apego’” (Bassets 2019).

13 “Das Schneien, eine der vielen Möglichkeiten, den bewegten Raum erfahrbar zu machen und die menschlichen Sinne anzusprechen, ist, wie der Wind, eines der humorvoll mit philosophischen Bedeutungen aufgeladenen Naturphänomene im Werk Handkes.” (Höller 2013: 164).

Festverfugte, ins Erdreich Gerammte schienen diese luftigen und lichtdurchschienenen Flugscharen zu lockern und für den Moment ihres Vorbeistreifens gewichtlos oder zumindest weniger gewichtig zu machen. Es war in den Tagen zwischen den Festen von Christi Himmelfahrt und Pfingsten [...]. (Handke [2004] 2019: 26–27)¹⁴

Höller assumes a possible link with the mythical “Frau Holle” because of female features being traditionally connected to the topic of “snow”: “Er sitzt”, so Höller, “es ist Frühsommer, unter einer Hollerstaude, in Handkes Poetik des Schneiens naheliegend, weil das Märchen von der ‘Frau Holle’ als matriarchaler Mythos vom Schneiden geläufig ist [...]” (Höller 2013: 165).

Conversely, by using a philological perspective, we can notice how the German noun “Holunder” – “elder” – as well as the noun “Holler” – “elder”, “elderberry(-ies)” – could be related to the motif of ‘Holda’, a young fairy with golden hair who is supposed to dwell in elderberry shrubs. This thesis becomes more interesting if we think that the forms of the mod. Eng. “elder(-berry)(-berries)” and of the mod. Ger. “Holunder” could perhaps be derived from the Old High German “Holuntar”, passing through the Middle High German “Holunder”.¹⁵

In his anthropological essay concerning the Friulian Inquisition’s oppression during the 17th century, Nardon (1999) points out that Friulian historical documents dating back to the 17th century show how people persecuted by the Holy Inquisition often talked about cult processions which followed a young goddess named “Frau Holt”, whose name also appears in German legends dating back to the 16th and the 17th century (Nardon 1999: 45–46). These theories are supported by Ginzburg’s (1989) ethno-anthropological studies who note how other inquisitorial courts’ accounts often involve women being forced to join processions led by a night goddess known among the Scottish as the “Fairy Queen” and by the Germans as “Frau Holle”. This young and beautiful creature seems to wander woods and forests at the head of ghost and spirit armies (Ginzburg [1989] 2017: 75–91). Throughout Ginzburg’s thesis concerning Friulian folklore, the ‘Benandanti’, namely mystical figures following a young goddess’ cult processions, seem to appear in several statements. More related to a Slavic background than to a Germanic or a Celtic one, the Benandanti could be considered, especially in Hack’s opinion, a symbol of the Friulian struggle for religious freedom represented by a legendary “Frau Holle” (Del Fabro & Hack 2016; Ginzburg [1989] 2017: 71–112).

By relying on Höller’s (2013) assumptions about the possible correlation between “snow”, mysticism and the motif of “Mother Holle”, it could be interesting in future studies to assume Handke’s possible reception of Friulian folk elements and literary motifs.

14 Concerning this “hail of blossoms” Höller theorises a correlation between Handke’s novel and John of the Cross’ poems and prose works: “Die Mystiker und Mystikerinnen gehören zu Handkes poetisch-materialistischen Gewährsleuten, ob es Teresa von Aquila ist oder Juan de la Cruz, und es liegt auf dieser Linie, Don Juan für sein siebentägiges Erzählen, das die Schöpfungsgeschichte wiederholt, in diesen geschichtlichen Gedächtnisraum zu versetzen” (Höller 2013: 165). Höller also remembers how a profound union of “body” and “spirit” is symbolized through the topic of ‘falling snow’, considered as a mystical and erotic experience in Handke’s fragments *Am Felsfenster morgens* (und andere Ortszeiten 1982–1987) (1998) (Höller 2013: 166–167).

15 The image of a featherbed being shaken until the feathers fly about like snowflakes, as it appears in the Brothers Grimm’s *Frau Holle*, can be compared to the image of a hail of blossoms from Handke’s *Don Juan*, as pointed out by Höller when he says that “Das Schneiden wird von einem Mädchen bewirkt, das der alten Frau das Bett so ‘gewaltig’ aufschüttelt, dass, wie es im Märchen der Brüder Grimm heißt, auf der ganzen Welt ‘die Federn wie Schneeflocken umher flogen’” (Höller 2013: 165).

Wie eine Viole in Casarsa: Concluding remarks

The present paper has tried to consider Peter Handke's reception of Spanish and Friulian traditions.

Handke's references to Pasolini's Friulian poems, mainly to *Mostru o Pavea?*, led us to better understand Handke's view of an apparently ordinary symbol, the jukebox, filled with autobiographical nuances, a symbol present in Handke's prose and having social-political elements in Pasolini's theories.

The “despairing emptiness of Casarsa” may appear in the *Glowworm Epopee* of Pasolini's Marxist polemic against the new consumer society, but it also illustrates the first-person narrator's quest for a deeper introspection and for the wonders of small details. Through García's (2019), Bassets' (2019) and De Llano's (2019) considerations, the influence of Spanish mysticism on Handke's works has been mentioned and can shine through indirect motifs such as the topic of snow and the motifs of contemplation and ecstasy.

Handke's reception of Pasolini's poems is stated by Kitzmüller (2001) as well, who also mentions *Wie eine Viole in Casarsa* (1988) – lit. *Like a Viola in Casarsa* – a German edition of an anthology of Friulian poems which included Pier Paolo Pasolini and other authors. In the context of a cultural project aimed at promoting Friulian, Slovenian and German co-existence in Gorizia, the Friulian poet Amedeo Giacomini and Anna-Maria Kanzian were chosen in 1988 as official translators for the anthology focusing on Pasolini's poems, whereas Handke himself was asked to work as reviser and proofreader for Giacomini's and Kanzian's translations. He was then particularly fascinated by Pasolini's *Mostru o Pavea?* whose lines appear in the already mentioned works of Handke (Kitzmüller 2001: 129–130). Peter Handke's reception of Friulian folklore and the possible connection to *Don Juan's* snowstorm and the motif of *Mother Holle* are still arguable. However, in the absence of indisputable data, it is not possible to assert with complete confidence that Handke's attachment to Friulian writing was the result of Pasolini's *The Best of Youth*.

With the support of Benjamin's *Passagen-Werk* (1927–1940), namely “one of the cornerstones of cultural studies in the 20th century” (Cometa 2004), the act of translating can be seen as an act of reading and *vice versa*.

From this perspective, Handke's tributes could lead us to a deeper and more diversified reading of Pasolini's works. In the same way, Pasolini's verses may allow us to more deeply examine Handke's “despairing emptiness” and his quest to marvel at small details, in contrast to modern society's alienating essence.

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