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The Hybrid Poetological Model in Peter Handke's Work: Intertextuality, Language Innovation and Cultural Border Crossings

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ABSTRACT

This article presents an innovative, Hybrid Poetological Model for analyzing the works of Peter Handke. Drawing on Julia Kristeva's "Revolution of Poetic Language", it integrates linguistic, visual and semiotic elements to interpret Handke's intricate aesthetic and cultural expressions. Focusing on intertextuality, the model examines the interaction between two language registers: the semiotic, which encompasses rhythm, sound, figurative language, and unconventional structures, and the symbolic, which reflects social norms, cultural identities, and historical contexts. The model emphasizes that this interplay is essential for comprehending Handke's linguistic innovations, particularly his exploration of hybridity through visual and semiotic influences. Handke's adoption of Hölderlin's meditations on nature and Cézanne's painterly fragmentation translates visual techniques into poetic textures, challenging traditional boundaries and creating layered narratives across cultural spaces. His adoption of American semiotics further expands aesthetic possibilities by employing sign-based frameworks. Since the late 1980s, Handke's stylistic innovations, such as fragmentation, minimalism and meta-poetry, have demonstrated a radical shift towards experimental and avant-garde practices. This interdisciplinary study aims to analyze Handke's texts, offering new interpretive perspectives that emphasize critique and reflection. The model emphasizes the interconnectedness of aesthetic, social and cultural dimensions, aligning with Kristeva's vision of poetic revolution. This transdisciplinary approach can be applied to other authors, thereby enriching our understanding of modern literary aesthetics and cultural negotiations.

Keywords: Peter Handke; Literary Theory; Hybrid Poetics; Cultural Border Crossings; Transculturality

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ARTICLE INFO

Received: 14 August 2025 | Revised: 19 September 2025 | Accepted: 29 September 2025 | Published Online: 9 October 2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55121/card.v5i2.679>

CITATION

Glišič, M., 2025. The Hybrid Poetological Model in Peter Handke's Work: Intertextuality, Language Innovation and Cultural Border Crossings. *Cultural Arts Research and Development*. 5(2): 132–144. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55121/card.v5i2.679>

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1. Introduction

This academic article introduces a comprehensive, interdisciplinary theoretical model for analyzing the hybrid poetics in Peter Handke's work. The Hybrid Poetological Model, which is grounded in the theory of the "Revolution of Poetic Language" by Julia Kristeva ^[1], particularly her concept of intertextuality ^[2], serves as the study's fundamental framework. In the theory of Intertextuality formulated by Julia Kristeva, the concept that every text is constructed as a "mosaic of quotations" occupies a central position. Kristeva postulates that "every text is the absorption and transformation of another" ^[2]. This view emphasizes that texts cannot be considered in isolation but are in a dynamic dialogue with a multitude of other texts. Furthermore, Kristeva emphasizes that the idea of intertextuality replaces the traditional notion of intersubjectivity in literature. In this context, it becomes clear that poetic language cannot be interpreted solely as the expression of a single subject but rather must be read "at least twice" ^[2]. This double reading makes it possible to recognize the complexity and multi-layered nature of literary meanings that result from the manifold connections and interrelationships between the texts. Overall, Kristeva's approach demonstrates how intertextual references broaden the understanding and analysis of literature by focusing on the interactions between texts and their cultural contexts, significantly enriching the way in which meaning is created and perceived. Cultures create boundaries to define and reproduce the necessary undefined spaces; ultimately, the restructuring of cultural fields is linked to the existence of culture. Only with the help of ambivalences and their interplay can the self-organization of culture function ^[3]. This model is specifically designed to examine the interaction between two key linguistic levels: *the semiotic*, which encompasses rhythm, sound, figurative language, and unconventional structures, and *the symbolic*, which is associated with social norms, cultural identities, and structured language. The model employs a multidimensional approach to literature, thereby establishing avenues for further empirical research and offering a nuanced understanding of the complex relationships between art, culture, and society, both in Handke's oeuvre and in contemporary hybrid literature. To ensure clarity and consistency,

the analysis will systematically apply this model across a carefully selected corpus of Handke's works. This corpus will include *The Lesson of Mont Sainte-Victoire* ^[4], *Repetition* ^[5], *Crossing the Sierra de Gredos* ^[6], *The Moravian Night* ^[7], and *Storm Still* ^[8]. The selection of these works is predicated on their shared foundation in movement and transition. As Kim ^[9] observes, "in almost all of his texts, Peter Handke describes changes of location, signaling movement or his own departure on the very first page", thereby underscoring the significance of movement as a recurring and defining element within his oeuvre. For each text, a structured analytical framework will be employed, focusing on identifying and mapping the interaction between the semiotic and symbolic registers. This approach entails meticulous textual analyses aimed at identifying recurring linguistic patterns, stylistic characteristics, and references to social and cultural norms. The present study maintains a consistent approach across multiple works, to reveal thematic continuities, stylistic shifts, and the evolution of Handke's hybrid poetics over time. Moreover, the model incorporates Julia Kristeva's notion of the "Revolution of Poetic Language" ^[1], underscoring poetry's potential to interrogate and deconstruct prevailing linguistic, social, and cultural conventions by revitalizing pre-linguistic and rhythmic components. The semiotics of space, as emphasized by Lotman ^[3], plays a crucial role in shaping a culture's worldview, as it involves forming an image of the world through spatial models that reflect the properties of space itself. This process of spatial formation fosters the development of new spaces for meaning and expression that go beyond traditional structures. In the context of Handke's work, such spatial dynamics enable layered and nuanced interpretations of his language and form, highlighting how space in semiotics offers a crucial framework for understanding the complexity and depth of his literary expression throughout his career. In sum, this article presents a systematic and innovative framework that not only advances the analysis of Handke's works but also contributes to broader discussions on hybrid and intercultural literature. The objective of this study is twofold: first, to demonstrate a clear interpretive stance that highlights the ongoing evolution of poetic language in contemporary literature; and second, to open new perspectives for both literary analysis and cultural critique. To achieve these goals,

the study combines theoretical rigor with a methodical application. This article proceeds by first elaborating the theoretical foundations of the hybrid poetological model, then demonstrating its application through detailed analyses of selected texts by Handke and finally reflecting on the broader implications of hybrid aesthetics for contemporary literary theory. The aesthetic stance involves a semiotic interpretation of reality, in which objects are viewed as signs that carry meaning. Emphasis is placed on the diversity and fluidity of these meanings ^[10].

2. Situating Current Research: Recent Studies on Peter Handke and Hybrid Literary Theory

Mecklenburg ^[11] argues that literature is not solely rooted in cultural contexts but has always extended beyond them. Without this expansion, the concept of “Weltliteratur”, as understood since Goethe, would not be possible. Similarly, hybridity is regarded as a central category in intercultural literary studies, describing the blending of identity components, cultures, languages, and lifestyles, which underscores the ongoing dynamic interchange beyond fixed cultural boundaries ^[12]. In contemporary discussions, hybridity often relates to identity, suggesting that identity isn’t something permanently obtained but rather something continuously shaped and refined through ongoing discourse ^[12]. It manifests through narrative perspective shifts and the challenge of negotiating multiple viewpoints ^[13]. Intercultural literary studies are founded on principles of transgressiveness, heterogeneity, and perspective shifts, which serve to promote the visibility of hybrid forms of expression and cultural identities ^[14–16]. The theory of hybrid forms, as developed by Opacki ^[17], emphasizes the transformative potential of hybrid literature—transcending genre boundaries, questioning social norms, and fostering innovative trends. This diversity of expressive forms creates dialogic spaces that facilitate recognition and understanding of complex identity constructions within pluralistic societies.

According to Renner ^[18], from the very beginning, all description in Handke’s work functions as a form of shaping, wherein conscious and unconscious observations, theoretical patterns, and aesthetic images intertwine, reflect-

ing his unique poetic approach. Peter Handke’s literary works question the relationship between perception and language and can be traced back to the common denominator of deconstruction. In addition, they attempt to use narrative techniques to reveal new perspectives on poetic language ^[13]. An analysis of Handke’s work reveals that, despite extensive textual scholarship, the interplay of intertextual references and cultural implications remains insufficiently explored ^[19]. Brady and Leal emphasize the “*programmatic hybridity*” characteristic of Handke’s literature, advocating for an intermedial reading that foregrounds intertextual relations—through quotations and allusions—as a central interpretive principle ^[19]. Durzak ^[20] notes that Handke perceives the external world as a construct rooted in inner experience; thus, deeper engagement with the intertextual dialogue between inner perception and social norms is critical for understanding his literary technique. Similarly, Krstanović ^[21] underscores fragmentary elements and intertextual allusions that generate a dialogic space, shaping and reflecting identity. A detailed analysis of concrete examples could further clarify how texts interact with social norms and cultural references. Renner ^[18,22] stresses that Handke questions cultural norms and conventions—particularly through his work with translation, which plays a central role in questioning language and cultural frameworks. Analyzing the intertextual dimensions of Handke’s translations could deepen insights into his complex literary approach. Borovnik ^[23] shows that Handke’s oeuvre fosters intercultural dialogue and engages with European diversity but lacks a broader perspective that situates his work within indigenous and global cultural exchanges. Amann ^[24] emphasizes contextualizing Handke’s poetics within a historical and social framework, although further analysis of intertextual references would strengthen this contextualization. While Hafner et al. ^[25–28] emphasize the importance of linguistic identity and Slovenian heritage, it is essential to recognize the influence of other cultural factors. A narrow perspective on Slovenian culture fails to capture Handke’s rich diversity and the complexity resulting from multiple cultural influences.

This article aims to fill these gaps by conducting a detailed analysis of the hybrid and intertextual aspects of Handke’s work. By adopting a new theoretical perspective, it systematically explores the interdependence of hybridity,

intertextuality, and cultural exchange—both within intercultural literary studies and specifically within Handke’s oeuvre. The objective is to deepen understanding of his narrative techniques and the multi-layered cultural references that characterize his work, thereby contributing to an interdisciplinary approach that broadens conceptual boundaries and enhances the understanding of contemporary hybrid literature. By employing narrative play and simultaneously transgressing boundaries, the context is deconstructed^[13].

3. The Hybrid Poetological Model: Intertextuality and the Interaction of Semiotic and Symbolic Registers

The developed model assumes that the poetic function in Handke’s texts arises from the dynamic interaction between *the semiotic* and *the symbolic register*^[1]. This function plays a crucial role in creating emotional resonance and aesthetic experiences^[1]. According to Kristeva’s theory, the poetic function serves as a means of destabilizing rigid structures of meaning in language, thereby enabling the dynamization and fluidity of meaning. The current findings suggest that this interaction between semiotic and symbolic elements significantly contributes to Handke’s use of the poetic function. It fosters a transformative relationship between the recipient and the language, stimulating the unconscious and transcending the boundaries of the familiar. In summary, Kristeva emphasizes that the poetic function destabilizes rigid meanings and energizes the significance of language. In this context, the intertextual anchoring of his works is particularly emphasized. Postmodern sign theory’s focus on signs and their interpretation directly relates to semiotics, as both emphasize understanding how signs function within cultural texts. The shift from analyzing signs in isolation to examining their broader cultural implications reflects a semiotic approach, which considers how semiotic elements contribute to the complex process of postcolonial hybridization and aesthetic transformation. This connection highlights how semiotic analysis provides a framework for exploring the deeper cultural and aesthetic shifts influenced by postmodern sign theory^[12]. The semiotic register encompasses a variety of

aspects, including rhythm, sound, unconventional sentence structures, fragmentary elements and figurative language. Translations, foreign language expressions and metaphors play a central role. The present register is characterized by its flexibility and emotional imprint, which can express complex emotional states and perceptions. “*The power of language lies in its rhythmic dimensionality*”^[1].

In contrast, there is the symbolic register, which is subject to stricter, more standardized and more social characteristics. It encompasses social norms, social structures, the construction of identity as well as cultural and historical dimensions. “*The symbolic is the system of order that structures our social reality*”^[1]. This is characterized by social criticism, references that question norms and references to historical contexts and cultural practices.

The analysis is guided by the influential theories of Mikhail M. Bakhtin^[29], Homi K. Bhabha^[30], Edward Said^[31], and Wolfgang Iser^[32], whose respective concepts significantly shape the interpretive framework. Specifically, Bhabha’s notion of hybrid space, Iser’s concept of transculturality, Bakhtin’s ideas of polyphony and dialogicity, and Said’s critique of Orientalism are applied to illustrate how social norms are transgressively challenged and cultural differences negotiated productively. Building on this theoretical foundation, the subsequent chart presents the Hybrid Poetological Model, an innovative analytical framework designed to examine Peter Handke’s oeuvre through a multidimensional lens. This model emphasizes the central role of the poetic function in generating emotional resonance and aesthetic experience^[1], functioning as a means of destabilizing rigid linguistic structures, thereby enabling the dynamization and fluidity of meaning. It highlights how language’s poetic function fosters a transformative relationship between the recipient and the text, stimulating the unconscious and transcending conventional boundaries. The model is structured graphically to facilitate understanding and visualization of its complex interplay. It organizes the text into two primary registers: *the semiotic*, comprising rhythm, sound, unconventional sentence structures, and figurative language—all contributing to the emotional and aesthetic dimensions; and *the symbolic*, which engages with social norms, cultural identities, and historical contexts, revealing the socio-cultural underpinnings of Handke’s work. Both registers are

complemented by interdisciplinary frameworks from previously discussed scholars such as Bakhtin ^[29], Bhabha ^[30], Said ^[31], and Welsch ^[32], providing a broader cultural, theoretical, and philosophical context. Polster ^[33], suggests that Handke's exploration of language typically leads to a sense of disconnection from conventional linguistic concepts and practices, which serve primarily as tools for communication.

Bakhtin's theory plays a decisive role in the hybrid poetological model, emphasizing the polyphonic and dialogical nature of linguistic and cultural forms of expression. Bakhtin emphasizes that language is never monological but is always characterized by multiple voices engaging in dynamic exchange. This dialogue-based polyphony allows diverse cultural, linguistic and social perspectives to be visualized and actively processed within the text. Within the hybrid poetological framework, the fusion of different languages and cultures is not just a stylistic innovation, but an interactive, polyphonic practice in which voices influence, challenge and transform each other. Bakhtin's concept of "polyphony" emphasizes the importance of this in developing independent poetic expression characterized by creativity, complexity and openness to dialogue. Therefore, Bakhtin provides the theoretical foundation for understanding linguistic hybridity as a lively dialogue between cultural voices — a central element of the poetological model. Similarly integral to the hybrid poetological model is Bhabha's concept of the "Third Space", which describes a space of hybridity where meanings, cultural texts, and identities interact, overlap, and evolve. This space allows cultural boundaries to be questioned, new meanings to be created, and dynamic, hybrid identities to be cultivated. The "Third Space" thus offers a theoretical basis for understanding and interpreting the multilayered, transcultural and hybrid practices prevalent in literature and cultural experience. Within this framework, Edward Said's postcolonial theory of Orientalism is essential, as it illustrates how language and representations can reinforce cultural stereotypes and power structures. Said shows that cultural narratives are not neutral but actively contribute to hierarchies and the construction of the "Other", impacting the perception and formation of identities. This insight is crucial for analyzing complex cultural texts and identities shaped by the juxtaposition of "self" and "other", which

often reproduce or question stereotypes. Said's theory reveals the ideological underpinnings of hybrid cultural and linguistic exchanges, emphasizing that cultural identities can be shaped, controlled or subverted through discursive power. This perspective enables a nuanced understanding of hybrid literature as a form of creative expression and as a site of struggle for interpretative sovereignty and cultural autonomy. Welsch's concept of transculturality further enriches the hybrid poetological model by emphasizing the dynamism and complexity of cultural identities resulting from ongoing interactions between different elements. Unlike static notions of cultural fusion, Welsch highlights that cross-cultural processes are continuous and fluid, valuing and integrating differences rather than suppressing them. This approach fosters a realistic view of culture and identity as mobile, multi-layered constructs that are continuously reshaped through interaction. Welsch's theory provides a foundation for understanding polyphony and hybridity in literature and cultural expression as living, open-ended processes. It aligns with the model's aim of analyzing cultural and linguistic boundaries as dynamic and transformative. It emphasizes that hybrid forms are creative and autonomous processes with a lasting influence on collective and individual identities, achieved through fluid and appreciative coexistence. It emphasizes the dynamic and fluid interactions between various components, which is reflected in the visual organization. This visualization aims to illustrate the ongoing process of hybridity, highlighting how Handke's poetic and narrative strategies exemplify this continuous interaction and transformation. These perspectives on hybridity, cultural dialogue, postcolonialism, and dialogism underpin the interpretive process, offering nuanced insights into issues of identity—particularly as, in most cases, the crossing of boundaries occurs within the literary character who finds their way to their own identity through movement in space ^[13]—as well as displacement and social critique. By integrating these diverse lenses with detailed stylistic and narrative analysis, the methodology facilitates a thorough and coherent exploration of Handke's complex hybrid poetics, aligning with the study's overarching objectives. The following integrated, interdisciplinary framework (see **Table 1**) provides a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the complex, multi-dimensional nature of hybrid literary and cultural practices with-

in the poetological model.

Enclosed, you will find a further simplified graphic representation of the Hybrid Poetological Model (see **Figure 1**). The visualization aims to clarify the complex relationships between the various components by illustrating

the interaction between the semiotic and symbolic registers and their relation to the poetic function. The categories are arranged in such a way that they illustrate the dynamic hybridity in Handke's work and the theoretical foundation provided by interdisciplinary approaches.

Table 1. Hybrid Poetological Model: An Analytical Framework for the Study of Handke's Opus.

Component	Description
Semiotic Register	Includes rhythm, sound, unconventional sentence structures and figurative language.
Rhythm and Sound	Creates emotional resonance and influences the mood of the text.
Sentence Structure and Fragments	Enable a dynamic narrative style and encourage associative thinking.
Figurative Language	Illustrates emotional and cultural dimensions; contains metaphors, translations and foreign language expressions.
Symbolic Register	Refers to social norms, cultural dimensions and identity constructions.
Social Environment	Addresses how identity and individual experiences are influenced by social structures.
Social Criticism	Questioning existing norms encourages critical reflection.
Identity Construction	Reflects the complexity of identity and belonging in a hybrid cultural context.
Cultural Dimension and Historicity	Consideration of the historical and cultural interdependencies that shape the perception of identity.
Interdisciplinary Theories	The concepts of M. Bakhtin, H. Bhabha, E. Said and W. Welsch characterize the analysis and interpretation of the texts.

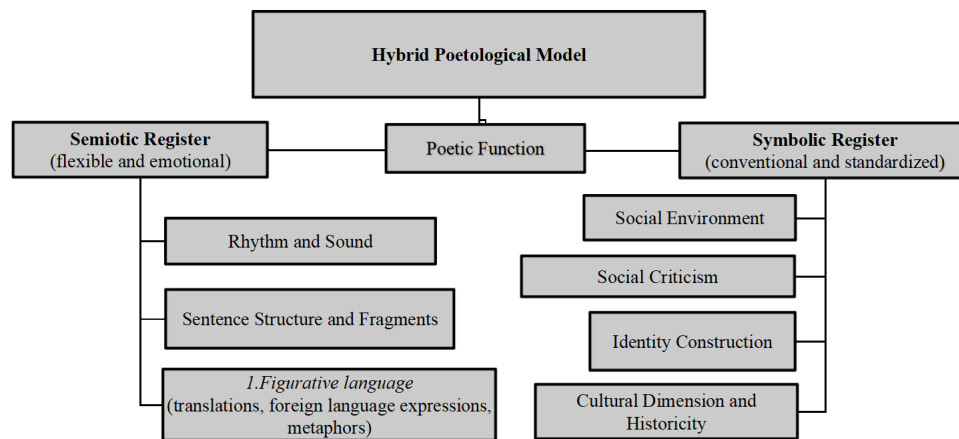


Figure 1. Hybrid Poetological Model — Overview of Components and Relationships.

Function and Significance of the Hybrid Poetological Model

The present model aims to systematically capture the multidimensionality of Handke's texts. The analysis of the interactions between the *semiotic* and *symbolic registers* enables the visualization of the manifold levels of meaning and effect. The present investigations show that linguistic innovations (neologisms, multilingualism, sound games) develop into socio-critical means and social subversion. Handke uses linguistic expression to critically scrutinize existing norms. Intertextual interconnections themselves refer to hybrid structural elements, illustrating how signs and references function within a semiotic framework to

facilitate transcultural dialogue and cultural hybridity^[12]. The universal applicability of the model demonstrates the interaction of Handke's work with other cultures, whereby individual and collective identities are in a continuous process of renegotiation. His texts are characterized by polyphony and make polyphonic cultural references. The model also emphasizes social criticism, which relies on subversive linguistic processes that deviate from the norm to question social structures. The poetological model emphasizes the fluid and dynamic nature of language, which aligns with the idea that language should not be seen as a fixed and stable structure. In today's context, language is rooted in pluralistic concepts that reflect heterogeneous

lifestyles and diverse cultural expressions ^[12], highlighting its adaptability and its role in accommodating multiple perspectives within a fluid, hybrid framework.

4. Brief Analysis of Exemplary Works Using the Model

This chapter provides a focused examination of selected works through the lens of the hybrid poetological model introduced earlier. Building on the comprehensive theoretical framework, the analysis employs deep, close textual reading to differentiate between the semiotic and symbolic categories within the model. As Czeglédý ^[34] states, “[t]he new language that prevails in performance is actually an achievement of poetic language and enables the construction of a new self.” This highlights how specific stylistic and thematic elements in the texts reflect a shift towards poetic language, facilitating new forms of self-identity. By analyzing passages, this chapter illustrates how these stylistic features align with either the semiotic or symbolic registers—thereby demonstrating how the model captures the complex interplay of form, meaning, and cultural reference in Handke’s works. These detailed analyses serve to validate the model, emphasizing its effectiveness in interpreting the transformative power of language in fostering new self-constructions.

4.1. The Lesson of Mont Sainte-Victoire

In *The Lesson of Mont Sainte-Victoire*, Handke’s poetic language vividly exemplifies the dynamic interaction between the semiotic and symbolic registers—central components of his hybrid poetics. The semiotic register’s rhythmic sound patterns, such as “*Yes: this dawning side path now belonged to me and became nameable*” ^[4], evoke visceral, sensory experiences that challenge fixed perceptions and foster associative, emotional resonance. This rhythmic, experimental use of language aligns with Handke’s aim of dissolving boundaries between nature, art, and identity. Figurative language, such as the description of Cézanne’s mountain as “*the brightness and the dolomitic lustre of the limestone*” ^[4], exemplifies how cultural and artistic references operate within the semiotic domain to activate layers of meaning beyond the literal, fostering a complex perception of landscape and self. Simultaneously,

the symbolic register anchors these sensory and figurative elements within social and cultural contexts. According to Krstanović ^[13], the protagonists’ efforts to reconcile separation involve seeking a casual interdependence between the self and the social environment—one that moves away from imposed social mechanisms. This pursuit aims to establish a new way of life that maintains individual identity while fostering a balanced relationship between the self and the world. This process highlights how symbolic elements function within a semiotic framework to facilitate personal and social transformation. Landscape descriptions, like the Cézanne reference, serve as cultural symbols that reflect collective memory and identity, blending personal perception with broader societal narratives. From a narrative standpoint, various perspectives converge and merge, creating an overarching hybridity ^[12]. Handke’s language addresses social norms and cultural dimensions, questioning and redefining identities in a hybrid, intercultural landscape. His approach reveals how emotional, cultural, and social layers intertwine, constructing multifaceted identities and aesthetic experiences that reflect the hybridity of perception and belonging. These conceptual interactions are deeply resonant with overarching theoretical frameworks. Bhabha’s notion of hybridity and the “Third Space” elucidates how cultural identities are continuously negotiated and reshaped within this hybrid landscape, creating fluid spaces where art, nature, and identity converge. The landscape—the “*brightness and lustre*”—becomes a site of intercultural dialogue, as Bhabha ^[30] emphasizes. Bakhtin’s dialogism ^[29] underscores the layered, multi-voiced nature of Handke’s language; the rhythmic sound patterns evoke multiple, interacting voices—personal, cultural, artistic—that coexist within the text. This dialogue fosters an open-ended, fluid perception characteristic of Handke’s aesthetic. Said’s critique of cultural representations ^[31] highlights how landscapes and descriptions serve as loaded symbols, shaped by historical and power discourses. Handke’s detailed figurative language, especially references to the landscape’s “*lustre*”, implicitly questions these dominant narratives and invites critical reflection. Welsch’s aesthetics of hybridity ^[32] emphasize how diverse cultural influences and sensory experiences generate new perceptual spaces. Handke’s merging of landscape, art, and language—expressed through metaphor and intercultural

references—creates a layered aesthetic that embodies hybridity and fluid perception. Welsch^[35] emphasizes that, beyond describing societies as diverse in their cultural models (“cultural diversity”), it is crucial to recognize that individuals themselves are influenced by multiple cultural patterns, integrating and blending various cultural elements within their identities.

4.2. Repetition

In *Repetition*, Handke’s use of the semiotic register is vividly demonstrated through rhythmic, energetic language that articulates subjective perceptions and inner conflicts. The short, concise sentences, such as “*See what our name means: not the broad-legged one, but the border nature*”^[5], utilize rhythm and sound to evoke emotional resonance. This energetic cadence amplifies the hybridity between the narrator’s inner world and cultural references, aligning with the semiotic’s focus on visceral, pre-linguistic expression that destabilizes stable meaning. The strategic use of fragments and contrasting sentence structures, exemplified by the shift in social priorities among the Maya^[5], reinforces the dynamic flow of perception and history. These structural choices generate tension and highlight the complex negotiation between individual perception and collective memory, emphasizing the semiotic’s capacity to evoke multiple, layered voices—an idea central to Bakhtin’s dialogism. The contrasts reflect the fragmented, polyphonic reality of cultural and social identities. Polyphony, as a process of hybridization, highlights the aesthetic significance of words that appear foreign, emphasizing their added value. In intercultural literature, this polyphony of words is deliberately employed to evoke an intrinsic ethical value^[12], enriching the narrative with multiple voices and perspectives. Figurative language, such as “*terra rossa*”^[5] (“the red earth”), links geographical and cultural descriptions, establishing a hybrid connection between place, memory, and identity. The term embodies a geographical symbol that synthesizes physical space with cultural meaning, illustrating how landscape functions as a nexus in the semiotic register—conveying emotional and cultural hybridity. The symbolic register is foregrounded in the negotiation of social norms, expectations, and cultural identities. Handke underscores the importance of origin, language, and geographical space in shaping individual and

collective identities. For example, the references to cultural motifs—such as Greek mythology or Austria’s heritage—are interwoven throughout the text via repetitive allusions. These intertextual references serve as a form of cultural memory, anchoring personal identity within broader social and historical discourses. Through repetition, Handke consolidates identity in language, creating a stable yet fluid site where collective and individual histories intertwine. This repetitive pattern functions dialectically: it strengthens identity while simultaneously questioning its stability. As Bakhtin’s polyphony^[29] suggests, multiple voices, perspectives, and cultural references coexist, producing a multi-voiced, dialogic text that reveals the difference and tension inherent in Handke’s narrative style. The interplay of linguistic contrasts, cultural references, and socio-critical elements embodies the overarching hybrid poetics: a layered, intercultural narrative where perceptions, history, and social norms are continuously merged and negotiated.

4.3. Crossing the Sierra de Gredos

This multimodal work exemplifies a sophisticated use of intermedial hybridity, where texts, photographs, music, and media elements interact to create a multisensory space that anchors perception and memory. The boundaries between word and image are intentionally blurred, making emotional experience directly tangible—a clear reflection of the semiotic register’s focus on pre-linguistic, visceral modes of expression. The use of rich metaphors, figurative language, and complex rhythmic structures—such as in “*You, on the other hand, the decided stranger [...]*”^[6] further demonstrates the semiotic register. The rhythmic and tonal design produces a restless, pulsating rhythm that embodies the characters’ uncertainty and internal conflicts; this resonance affirms how rhythm and sound evoke subjective perceptions and emotional states that operate beneath or alongside conscious articulation. The semiotic dimension’s activation of pre-linguistic, associative modes aligns with Bakhtin’s concept of dialogism^[29], where layered, layered voices—here, inner conflicts and contrasting perceptions—interact within the text’s rhythmic fabric. The fragmented, rhythmic structures generate a sense of instability, echoing the fluid and often ambiguous nature of perception and identity. The symbolic register becomes evident through Handke’s critique of social norms and

cultural boundaries. The reference to “*And just like the ancient Chinese, some still borrowed [...]*”^[6], highlights the cultural exchange and diversity that expand the space of hybrid identity. This reference invokes cultural history and tradition, positioning landscape, language, and culture within a broader societal framework. Here, norms of belonging, cultural affiliation, and social expectations are challenged, emphasizing the fluidity and contested nature of identity. Bhabha’s concept of hybridity and the “third space”^[30] is particularly relevant here, as it underscores how such boundary-questioning and cultural exchange foster new, hybrid identities that transcend exclusive cultural or social borders. Furthermore, the questioning of boundaries, belonging, and social norms accentuates the layered, dialogic process of identity construction that intersects Said’s critique of cultural narratives and Welsch’s view of hybridity as an aesthetic principle of cultural coalescence. The text’s interweaving of visual, linguistic, and cultural references illustrates how collective and individual memories are fluid.

4.4. The Moravian Night

In *The Moravian Night*, Handke’s integration of cultural elements from the Balkans, intertextual quotations, and geographical references creates a multilayered network of hybrid identities and interdependencies. The regional myths, languages, and places meld together to form a polyphonic cultural landscape, exemplifying Bhabha’s concept of hybridity and the “Third Space,” where diverse cultural narratives intertwine and negotiate their boundaries^[30]. Transcultural practices are not only reflected in an appreciation for cultural, linguistic, and social diversity but also in efforts to incorporate these varied reference systems while preserving their distinct differences^[36]. This dynamic process exemplifies how transcultural differences are not fixed; instead, they are actively negotiated, reshaped, and integrated within a hybrid narrative, emphasizing the fluid and interactive nature of cultural identity. The semiotic register manifests in metaphorical descriptions such as “*the water veins*” and “*thunderbolts*”^[7]. These metaphors evoke physical sensations and emotional depths that reflect the characters’ inner turmoil and alienation. The rhythmic and tonal qualities of the long, convoluted sentences reinforce a meditative, dynamic atmosphere, producing a sense

of physical and psychological disorientation—mirroring Bakhtin’s dialogic and layered perception of identity^[29]. The rhythmic complexity evokes a pulsating, restless interiority, emphasizing the unconscious and affective states that underpin the characters’ responses to cultural boundaries. The symbolic register plays a crucial role in framing cultural and social values through references to nature, tradition, and social practices. The mention of “transcultural practice” of transhumance exemplifies how natural cycles, cultural traditions, and community life fuse together in a hybrid space—an embodiment of Welsch’s aesthetic of hybridity^[32] where natural and cultural elements coalesce. This practice illustrates the interconnectedness of human and natural cycles, emphasizing how identity is constructed through fluid interactions within these hybrid spaces. Erfurt^[37] asserts that “*transculturality assumes that cultures encounter each other in their diversity and that contact between them depends on negotiation.*” This idea is reflected in how references to place, tradition, and social practices illustrate that cultural identities are not static but are constantly negotiated through embodied, hybrid practices that blend collective narratives with personal experience, emphasizing the dynamic and ongoing nature of intercultural dialogue.

4.5. Storm Still

In *Storm Still*, Handke employs the semiotic register to evoke the emotional and sensory dimensions of the characters’ inner worlds. The quote, “[...] *the soft breeze, the rustling of the leaves, the seagulls staring at the sky, the inconspicuous movements of people, the stillness of nature—all this was a language for me that I understood*”^[8], exemplifies how sound and rhythm underpin subjective perception. The rhythmic quality of these descriptions creates a musical, meditative atmosphere that mirrors Bakhtin’s idea of dialogic layering^[29]—where multiple voices and layers of perception coexist within a layered, rhythmic space. This rhythm functions as a conduit for the characters’ inner states, establishing a hybrid connection between sensory experience and emotional perception, blurring the boundaries between external natural phenomena and internal consciousness. The symbolic register is vividly present in the reflection on nature as a cultural and existential symbol: “*The storm, which appeared again and again in*

the old stories, was nothing unusual for us, but a natural movement that determined the flow of life"^[8]. Here, the storm acts as a metaphor for ongoing existential and cultural change, negotiating a hybrid space between the past and the present. This suggests that natural phenomena embody cultural memory and identity, aligning with Welsch's theory^[32] that hybridity reflects ongoing processes of renewal and transformation. The storm signifies perpetual change and uncertainty, while also symbolizing the continuous renewal and reinterpretation of cultural identity amid social change. By combining concrete sensory impressions with poetic imagery and layered cultural references, Handke creates a hybrid narrative style that integrates subjective perception, natural symbolism, and social memory. This interweaving illustrates how individual experience is embedded within larger cultural and historical processes, emphasizing the field of tension between tradition, change, and identity—highlighting the fluid and dialogic nature of cultural belonging. The hybrid individual can choose to embrace specific elements from each society while discarding others, based on personal preference. Recognizing and valuing hybridity is both feasible and essential, especially within the cultural domain. Culture—defined as a society's means of self-communication—reaches its full potential through the ambivalent and fluid space of hybridity^[10].

5. Social Criticism, Identity Construction and Global Intertextuality

For Handke, the emphasis is placed less on the descriptive aspect of language and more on its expressive and impactful dimension^[9]. In Handke's works, characters search for the appropriate articulation of the sensually perceptible world^[13]. This quest is closely linked to his use of hybrid poetics, which challenge established norms and reveal the dynamics of social transformation. The semiotic register plays a vital role in this process, providing the means to articulate emotional states and subjective perceptions, thereby bridging visceral experience with broader social and cultural contexts. Together, these approaches underscore how Handke's literature uses semiotics and innovative poetics to explore and express the complex interplay

between individual perception and social change. In this sense, as Kristeva^[1] asserts, "[t]he sound of language becomes a vehicle of social criticism". The symbolic register analyses social norms and shows how cultural traditions, power structures and national narratives are reproduced or deconstructed through linguistic means.

Kohns^[38], observes that the auto-intertextual references in Handke's texts are systematically linked to the theme of writing, highlighting the protagonist's role as an author and possibly serving as an alter ego of Handke himself. These spaces allow cultural differences, mythological motifs, and historical narratives to interact productively, enriching the multilayered fabric of Handke's work and illustrating how his self-referential writing simultaneously engages with a broad, transcultural dialogue. Although the plot is static, the protagonists are dynamic, navigating parallel, society-free lives while seeking and protecting their true identities. This evolving interaction with their environment fosters a spontaneous, flexible relationship between self and world, emphasizing themes of freedom, imagination, and authenticity—core messages in Handke's narrative approach^[39]. His work thus corresponds to a feedback polyphonic conception and shows how identity is constructed dynamically and hybrid-operatively. The texts are networks of voices that enter dialog with each other across cultures. The intertextual references in Handke's work, which extend beyond European traditions to foster transcultural exchanges, can be viewed as spaces that exemplify Foucault's idea of spaces as ruptures in the everyday—areas where established ideas and representations are disrupted. These spaces facilitate productive exchanges of cultural differences, mythological motifs, and historical narratives, thereby creating a polyphonic landscape. As Foucault^[40], states, spaces are "*an expression of ruptures in everyday life, in the world of ideas, in the polyphonic representation of life, death, and love.*" In this way, Handke's intertextual spaces serve as sites of rupture and dialogue, enabling diverse cultural elements to coexist and transform within his literary universe.

6. Conclusions

The Hybrid Model as a Further Research Approach

The hybrid poetological model, rooted in intertextu-

ality and the interaction between the semiotic and symbolic registers, proves to be a robust and versatile analytical framework for exploring the layered complexity of Handke's work. It reveals how Handke employs innovative linguistic practices to address both aesthetic and socio-political issues within a richly hybrid space characterized by multiple interwoven levels of meaning. The evidence throughout this study—comprising detailed quotations, stylistic analysis, and explicit references to cultural and intertextual elements—demonstrates convincingly how Handke's use of rhythmic, figurative language and intercultural references creates a layered, hybrid aesthetic. Each example illustrates how the semiotic register produces emotional and sensory resonance, while the symbolic register situates these perceptions within broader cultural and social narratives. Systematic analysis of these instances shows that Handke's linguistic and cultural strategies are deeply interconnected, reinforcing the effectiveness of the hybrid poetological model. Notably, the analysis reveals a surprising capacity of Handke's texts to deconstruct and reconfigure cultural and social norms, highlighting a destabilizing, transgressive potential that challenges fixed meanings and identities, an aspect that critically expands our understanding of his literary innovation.

The analysis underscores the crucial interplay between the registers: the semiotic, with its rhythmic, tonal, and pictorial qualities, constructs an emotional and sensory resonance—Handke's language is thus a symphony of sound and meaning. Conversely, the symbolic register anchors these sensory experiences within the social, cultural, and historical narratives that permeate his texts, reflecting a critical engagement with issues of identity, tradition, and social change. Moreover, Handke's prolific use of intertextual and cultural references demonstrates that his writings serve as transcultural maps—dialogic spaces where diverse traditions and perspectives converge, transcending national borders and fostering a dialogue between local and global contexts. This dynamic interaction fosters a multi-layered interpretive horizon where aesthetic innovation, societal critique, and cultural exchange are inseparable and mutually enriching.

While the model has proven to be effective in capturing the multi-dimensional complexity of Handke's texts, potential limitations should be acknowledged. For

instance, the emphasis on intertextual and cultural references may risk overshadowing the individual agency of the author or the specific contextual nuances of each work. Additionally, the model's focus on hybridity and dialogism might underplay the role of power dynamics or ideological forces in shaping cultural exchanges. Future applications could incorporate alternative principles, such as more explicit socio-political or postcolonial frameworks, to deepen the analysis further.

Moreover, the high degree of adaptability of the model invites exploration of other authors whose work engages with different cultural or aesthetic paradigms. Future research could test the model's applicability beyond Handke's oeuvre, refining it to incorporate additional theoretical perspectives—such as postcolonial theory, gender critique, or eco-criticism—to better address the diverse functions of hybridity in contemporary literature.

Ultimately, this hybrid poetological model offers a powerful methodological approach for analyzing complex, interwoven texts. It opens pathways for future research to critically engage with the global reception of hybrid processes and to develop universally applicable principles of hybrid literature, thereby enriching our understanding of the aesthetic and cultural potentials of contemporary writing.

Funding

This work received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement

No new data were created. The data used in this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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