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INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT IN THE FILM ADAPTATIONS OF CHARLES BUKOWSKI'S WORK

**Máster Universitario en Investigación en Literaturas Anglófonas e
Hispánicas Contemporáneas**

Presentado por:

D/D^a Lucía Martínez Calzada

Dirigido por:

D/D^a Bruno Echaury Galván

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Abstract:

Film adaptations of literary works have been linked to the problem of fidelity, valuing an adaptation by the degree of fidelity to the original work and not by what they contribute as independent works of art. New adaptation studies theories are emerging that place the adaptation over the literary work, moving away from the problem of fidelity. Specifically, the approach that concerns us in this work is that of the influence of historical and cultural contexts on adaptations. To this end, three film adaptations of Charles Bukowski's works have been chosen: *L'amour est un chien de l'enfer* (1987), *Lune Froide* (1991) and *Factotum* (2005). In order to carry out the analysis, the place of origin of the directors, the historical moment in which they were made, and the specific context of reception of each of the productions will be taken into account. Through this analysis, the importance of adaptations as cultural texts, adapting the original work but also to their own context, can be verified.

Keywords: Adaptation studies, Bukowski, cultural context, historical context, adaptation.

Resumen:

Las adaptaciones al cine de obras literarias han estado ligadas al problema de la fidelidad, valorando una adaptación por el grado de fidelidad a la obra de origen y no por lo que aportan como obras de arte independientes. En el campo de los estudios de adaptación nuevas teorías que se alejan de este problema de fidelidad se han ido desarrollando, primando la adaptación sobre la obra literaria. En concreto, el enfoque que nos ocupa en este trabajo es el de la influencia de los contextos histórico y culturales en las adaptaciones, para ello, se han escogido tres adaptaciones al cine de las obras de Charles Bukowski: *L'amour est un chien de l'enfer* (1987), *Lune Froide* (1991) y *Factotum* (2005). Para llevar a cabo el análisis se tendrán en cuenta el lugar de proveniencia de los directores, el momento histórico en el que se realizaron, y el contexto de recepción concreto de cada una de las producciones. A través de este análisis se podrá comprobar la importancia de las adaptaciones como textos culturales, adaptando la obra original pero también a su propio contexto.

Palabras clave: Estudios de adaptación, Bukowski, contexto cultural, contexto histórico, adaptación.

1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of fidelity in adaptation studies has been the primary case study in analyzing adaptations. Since a few years ago, new theories replacing the issue of fidelity have been created, giving importance to the adaptation of the original literary work. This importance has been approached from different points of view, one of them being the consideration of adaptations as symbols of the culture and historical moment in which they are created.

The main objective of this paper is to conduct an analysis of selected films that have been adapted from the novels and short stories by the American author Charles Bukowski. This analysis will focus on how these films' cultural and historical context has influenced how they have been adapted. Six different adaptations have been made from the works of Bukowski, and three of them have been selected to develop this study: *L'amour est un Chien de l'enfer* [*Crazy Love*] (1987), *Lune Froide* [*Cold Moon*] (1991), and *Factotum* (2005). It is important to note that only three adaptations are going to be the subject of analysis due to time restrictions to ensure a detailed and precise study. However, a study comprising all the adaptations regarding cultural and historical context may be developed eventually. The decision to choose these three adaptations among the rest is due to their context of production, being Belgian, French, and Norwegian, respectively, which can unfold notable cultural and historical features in contraposition with the American context Bukowski wrote his literary works.

The following three aspects will be analyzed to prove these influences: The prominent cultural elements depicted in the films regarding the directors' cultural context; since these films' directors are also screenwriters, it is imperative to identify these elements to demonstrate that culture has a significant influence on these adaptations. In order to prove that different historical contexts can influence these adaptations, we will also analyze the time at which they were produced. A final analysis will be conducted regarding the context of reception. This is because it can have a tremendous influence on the adaptation, as the audience receives the adaptation within a context and with certain expectations, which influence the adaptation from its inception. The analysis will be framed within Adaptations Studies since several branches of this area are devoted to covering the three aspects this study revolves around.

Regarding the content of this paper, two major sections can be identified. The first one will consist of the theory I have compiled for the construction of the framework that will support this study. An overview of Charles Bukowski's literary works is provided,

as well as an approach to his style and influences. Then, an overview of the theories that have demonstrated so far that cultural and historical context should be considered as influences on adaptations, and the importance of the context of reception is given. Since I am offering prominence to the directors' cultural background, a section regarding directors and screenwriters as influences on the film adaptations is provided, discussing their roles in film production and how they can influence it. To close this section, an approach to what culture is and what its features are is also provided since culture is manifested in different ways and may appear differently in each adaptation. The second section will consist of three subsections, each dedicated to analyzing each adaptation in chronological order. Finally, I will introduce the conclusions this study has reached, along with my final thoughts.

2. STATE OF THE ART.

By analyzing the directors' culture, the production time, and the context of reception, this study will demonstrate the influence of the cultural and historical context in which film adaptations are made. In order to provide a background for the study, a state of the art must be established.

Film adaptation has boomed in the last decades to become the growing field it is nowadays. Significant attention has been given to the bibliography that is devoted to adaptation in relation to culture, historical context, and their influence within the process of adaptation. Works such as *Adaptation Studies at a Crossroads* (2008) written by Thomas Leitch provides a summarized state of the art and a massive bibliography of different works related to adaptation studies, where I found Linda Costanzo Cahir's *Literary Hardball: The Novel-to-Screen Complexities of The Manchurian Candidate* (2007), in this essay, Cahir explains the importance to analyze adaptations of canonical and popular literature from the point of view of historical and social context. Karl G. Heider's book *Indonesian Cinema: National Culture on Screen* (1991) gives valuable information about the substantial implications of culture within cinema, describing films as cultural texts. Linda Hutcheon's book *A Theory of Adaptation* (2013) develops a study that analyzes the whole process of adaptation, with an entire chapter devoted to how the culture influences film adaptations significantly when the culture of the adapter and the writer differ from each other. Hutcheon also addresses the influence of the time when the adaptation is made and the power of the context of reception.

Since the importance of the directors' culture as an influence on the adapted literary works is going to be one of the elements of analysis, the bibliography about authorship in adaptations has been revised in order to find works that support the view of the director as primary in the adaptation process. In his essay "How to Write Adaptation History" (2017), Peter Lev devotes part of his study to authorship in the film adaptation. Lev's work revolves around the idea that both the screenwriter and the director are essential parts of the adapting a literary work to film process. *The Intratextuality of Film Adaptation* (2017), written by Jack Boozer, supports the idea of the director as an essential figure in the final screenplay version. However, he or she might not have screenwriting credit. Maryoly Ibarra revolves around the issue of the role of the film director in her article *La dirección de cine: un oficio difícil de definir* (2016). She differs two modes of engagement of the film director, one that serves as the screenwriter too, and another that would be involved only in some parts of this process. Javier Escudero also has an article named *El Director* (1945), where he advocates the idea that the director must be the screenwriter in order to produce a successful film.

There are, however, few studies about the influence of cultural and historical context in the adaptations of Charles Bukowski. Michel Mesnil, in his article *Cinéma Français, Fin de Siècle et Régression* (1991) [*French Cinema, End of Century and Regression*], analyses superficially the film *Lune Froide*, providing some ideas about the influence of the moment of production on the film. Bruno de Paula Barbosa, in his study *Factotum: a tradução de Bukowski para o cinema* (2015) [*Factotum: the translation of Bukowski for cinema*], analyses the adaptation of the novel focusing on the character of Henry Chinaski, providing evidence of the changes in the meaning of some features of Bukowski's novel. In his article *Hollywood's Take on the Working-Class Writer: Filming Bukowski's Factotum* (2007), Russell Harrison provides another analysis of Factotum's film adaptation, stating that some changes are due to the director's cultural influence.

In line with the above, my paper seeks to expand the existing literature on Bukowski and the impact of his work on the film industry. In this vein, the limited literature about the film adaptations of Charles Bukowski's literary works, especially about how cultural and historical context influence these adaptations, I think that my study will help to expand this particular area. At the same time, this study will add a new approach within the field of adaptation studies regarding context influence, helping to nourish this branch of the scope.

3. CHARLES BUKOWSKI: LITERARY WORK AND INFLUENCES

Because this study examines some of the adaptations of Charles Bukowski's literature, I believe it is necessary to devote a section to the author's work to fully comprehend his writing. An overview of Bukowski's literature, style, and influences will help to analyze the changes made by the adapters.

3.1. Charles Bukowski: A prolific author

The German American author Charles Bukowski (1920-1994) has been an extremely prolific author in his lifetime. He has amassed a vast bibliography from poetry to novels and short stories.

Starting with poetry, he has almost thirty poetry collections under his name, where three primary collections marking his evolution should be mentioned. *The Days Run Away Like Wild Horses Over the Hills* (1969), here we can appreciate Bukowski's early work, where he begins to show his personal voice and style, marked by self-experience and closeness to the reader; he addresses topics such as the low-class life, capitalism, sex, and women. It is also the only collection where we can appreciate the address of political issues, a feature that he will not repeat in his following work. The second collection I want to mention is *Love is a Dog from Hell* (1977), where Bukowski speaks in an optimistic way about sex and love affairs within the historical context of the mid-'70s, the sexual revolution was going on, a period of excess in several areas of people's life. At that moment, Bukowski was enjoying the peak of his career, so the poetry he wrote was more egocentric and related to the sweet moment he was living. The last collection I am going to mention is *The Last Night of the Earth Poems* (1992); this is the latest collection he wrote before he died in 1994 and the longest he has written regarding poetry. The collection focuses on themes such as death, memory, childhood and family memories, fate, etc. The reason why this collection focuses on such sad and deep themes is that at that time, Bukowski was suffering from a long chain of illnesses. This situation makes people think about the past, the present, and several important aspects of people's life.

With respect to novels, Bukowski wrote the amount of six novels throughout his career as a writer. The first one was *Post Office* (1971), featuring the character of Henry Chinaski, Bukowski's so-called alter-ego. Set between 1952 and 1958, the novel depicts the years of Bukowski working at the United State Postal Service through the character

of Chinaski. *Post Office* was followed by four other novels with Chinaski as the main protagonist, *Factotum* (1975), which goes back several years before the events of *Post Office* had happened. Set in the '40s, we witness Henry Chinaski's life as a young adult during the World War Two era. *Factotum* is said to be a critic of the American Dream and the work system of that era. The next novel featuring Henry Chinaski is *Women* (1978), where the character is in his adulthood, having cultivated success with his writing; here, Bukowski depicts his later life and focuses on relationships with several women throughout time. *Ham on Rye* (1982) describes Chinaski's early years, set in the period from the '20s to the '40s. Bukowski portrays the life of a teenager who is developing his personality within an adverse atmosphere that triggers his alcohol abuse, violent responses, and toxic relationships with women, which we can see in the previous novels that portray adulthood. *Hollywood* (1989) is the last novel where Henry Chinaski appears as the protagonist of the story. The novel depicted Bukowski's experience when he wrote the film *Barfly* (1987) screenplay, a film adaptation of Bukowski's works. The last novel Bukowski wrote is *Pulp* (1994), published right before Bukowski's death; the novel is a critique of the pulp fiction genre. Starring Nicky Belane, the novel follows his life as a private detective.

With respect to short stories, Bukowski started publishing them in 1965. Following poetry production in number, short stories are Bukowski's second most prolific genre. A total of eleven short story collections have been published, such as *Notes of a Dirty Old Man* (1969), *Hot Water Music* (1983), *Tales of Ordinary Madness* (1983), *The Most Beautiful Woman in Town* (1983), etc. In these short stories, Bukowski encapsulates different situations, with a few characters, sometimes they even do not have a name, in order to address a concrete issue.

As we can see, saying that Bukowski was a fruitful author is not by chance. In addition to his vast production, something that characterizes Bukowski is the way he wrote all of those stories, and the themes he addressed with them, which I am going to discuss in the following section.

3.2. Raw and straightforward: Bukowski's style and themes

Bukowski's writing style could be described as simple, but that would not fulfill all of its nuances. It is simple because he uses colloquial language and does not employ any flourishes, but this makes his style very straightforward too, addressing themes without

losing time in lines and lines of details. He saw life as it was, complex and simple, and so he reflected it in his writing style. The writing style was an issue that Bukowski discussed a lot in his letters and interviews. He thought that a good writer does not get lost in the details; their writing must be speedy, breathing life, as he shared in an interview: “Like any other writer there is not pace and there is no quickness in his lines. There is no life. There is no sunlight.” (Bukowski).

With this directness, Bukowski has written about several controversial themes in a controversial way too. Social taboos such as violent relationships and sexual practices, including necrophilia, the everyday life of the low-class society, emphasizing the work system and the not ideal at all American Dream, etc. It is important to note that Bukowski, although he criticizes some aspects of society that affect everybody, focuses on the individual. This distance from the multitude is also part of his own view of society and criticism of the system, showing his disgust towards mass movements.

These themes and style have been an issue of controversy within society. Criticism has focused on the raw aspects that Bukowski depicted in his writings, especially on the issue of Bukowski’s depiction of sex and women, considering him misogynous. Women, especially in Bukowski’s early years as a writer are, most of the time, depicted as objects because of their genitalia, only valid for sex, and driven by money (Harrison 183). These portrayals, as I said above, are a matter of controversy. A lot of criticism towards this issue has been made. An example is Alta Gerry, the founder of Shameless Hussy Press, the first feminist press in the United States, who said to be shocked by some of the rape imagery towards women in Bukowski’s work (Bukowski 113). Bukowski, although he may look like an impassive person towards criticism, wrote a letter to the Nola Express editor, Darlene Fife, who had published Gerry’s critique:

Your Alta is confused. There are men who rape and men who think of rape. Writing of this does not mean that the author condones rape, even if it is written in the first person. The right of creation is the right to mention what does exist. I even know some women—personally—whose greatest desire is to be raped. Creation is creation. For instance, just because a man is black does not mean he can’t be a son of a bitch and just because a woman is a woman does not mean she can’t be a bitch. Let’s not censor ourselves out of reality from a goody-goody stance. (113)

Aside from the criticism for his portrayal of women, Bukowski’s style and themes have served to make a common opinion of his writing. Represented as the Dirty Old Man, a popular alias tied to him, Bukowski’s literary work is seen as hostile, gloomy, and

violent. It seems that Bukowski only narrates dark themes, with no light or hope within them, and this may be in some way unfair. Bukowski explains this in a letter he wrote to Hans van den Broek, the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, in 1985. One of Bukowski's shot stories collections, *Erections, Ejaculations, Exhibitions and General Tales of Ordinary Madness* (1972), had been removed from one of their libraries due to content issues:

In my writing I do not always agree with what occurs, nor do I linger in the mud for the sheer sake of it. Also, it is curious that people who rail against my work seem to overlook the sections of it which entail joy and love and hope, and there are such sections. My days, my years, my life have seen ups and downs, lights and darkneses. If I wrote only and continually of the "light" and never mentioned the other, then as an artist I would be a liar. (149)

Bukowski wrote about what he knew, and what he had experienced. His bold style could bother some people, but what he was telling about were situations that actually happen in real life. Although Bukowski may seem an isolated author, focused on the depiction of his own experiences, it is important to highlight that he was influenced and supported by other colleagues, who saw light in his writing. These influences are going to be discussed below.

3.3. Influences of a Dirty Old Man

This massive set of literary works, with all of its features, themes that it addresses, style, etc. is what makes Charles Bukowski one of the most significant references of the Dirty Realism¹ literary movement; he has covered the movement from top to bottom. This is not by chance because one of the significant influences on his literary production was John Fante (1909-1983), one of the founding fathers of Dirty Realism. Bukowski even names him his god in the introduction he wrote for one of the books of Fante, *Ask the Dust* (1939):

¹ "It is instead a fiction of a different scope – devoted to the local details, the nuances, the little disturbances in language and gesture – and it is entirely appropriate that its primary form is the short story and that it is so conspicuously part of the American short story revival. But these are strange stories: unadorned, unfurnished, low-rent tragedies about people who watch day-time television, read cheap romances or listen to country and western music [...] This is a curious, dirty realism about the belly-side of contemporary life, but it is realism so stylized and particularized – so insistently informed by a discomfiting and sometimes elusive irony – that it makes the more traditional realistic novels of, say, Updike or Styron seem ornate, even baroque in comparison." (Bufford)

I had a library card. I checked the book out, took it to my room, climbed into my bed and read it, and I knew long before I had finished that here was a man who had evolved a distinct way of writing. The book was *Ask the Dust* and the author was John Fante. He was to be a lifetime influence on my writing [...] Fante was my god and I knew that the gods should be left alone, one didn't bang at their door. Yet I liked to guess about where he had lived on Angel's Flight and I imagined it possible that he still lived there. Almost every day I walked by and I thought, is that the window Camilla crawled through? And, is that the hotel door? Is that the lobby? I never knew (5).

If we read and compare both authors' works, Fante's influence upon Bukowski is a certainty. A remarkable case in point would be the character of Henry Chinaski; there is a resemblance between him and Fante's Arturo Bandini, both being the embodiment of recklessness and boldness. Bukowski also played a role in Fante's life; he helped to promote Fante's literary work. We could say that Fante gave inspiration to Bukowski, and Bukowski gave promotion and late success to Fante. They also developed an epistolary friendship that is palpable if we take a look at the book *On Writing* (2015), a collection of letters from 1945 to 1993, where Bukowski addresses some of his fellow writers. In the book appears a letter as well to Fante's wife, Joyce, where the close relationship they have is illustrated:

That I was able to meet my hero (if you'll pardon that term) late in his life and under the most painful conditions, was both a very sad and a very great thing for me. And I hope that the few words that I had with John helped him in the middle of that most terrible hell. For it all, I will always remember reading *Ask the Dust*, which I still consider the finest novel written in all time, a novel which probably saved my life, for whatever it is worth. Nobody is ever on top of their game at all times; in fact, few ever get very close. John did, and more than once. You lived with a very bitter man who overcame his bitterness, finally, with a love that rang and filled and jostled each line into a memorable miracle (153).

Another literary movement to which Bukowski is related is the Beat Generation². This association between the writer and the movement is due to the fact that both share

² "Beat movement, also called Beat Generation, American social and literary movement originating in the 1950s and centered in the bohemian artist communities of San Francisco's North Beach, Los Angeles' Venice West, and New York City's Greenwich Village [...] They advocated personal release, purification, and illumination through the heightened sensory awareness that might be induced by drugs, jazz, sex, or the disciplines of Zen Buddhism." ("Beat Movement")

eras, but this does not mean that Bukowski was a Beat. The Beat Generation was formed several years before Bukowski bloomed as a writer. Furthermore, he rejected some of the central topics of this literary movement, such as bisexuality, spirituality, etc. And was against addressing political and ideological issues at that time. As is explained by Paul Clements in his book *Charles Bukowski, Outsider Literature and the Beat Movement* (2013):

He is positioned as the apolitical beat outsider or anti beat, although heavily influenced by the beat writers and William Burroughs in particular, who offers a highly singular antiheroic focus and anarchy associated with deviancy, narcissism and cool. This is appraised in terms of the recuperation and ideological co-option of Bukowski, the major beat writers and subculture (77).

In like vein, we could say that Bukowski was quite conservative in comparison with the Beats:

Moreover, the first-wave beats were middle class and well educated, in contrast to Bukowski, who was working class and hated both school and college, which he dropped out of. There were homosexual elements to the beat culture which Bukowski would have found difficult as he paraded stereotypical heterosexual male qualities in his writing and manner. He repeatedly criticized Ginsberg for his homosexuality and showed much ambivalence towards him (82).

In the book *On Writing*, Bukowski mentions Allen Ginsberg several times in his letters, but not to say good words particularly. In a letter he wrote to Lawrence Ferlinghetti in 1971, the aversion Bukowski felt towards Ginsberg is palpable:

while you run around the country with Corso and Ginsberg, giving readings at the univercities and fucking all the young co-eds and while I lay up here creating Art, things happen . . . oh, forgive me, I didn't mean to infer that Ginsberg fucked any chicks. I know he's on the ecology trip (Bukowski 109).

It is important to note that Bukowski considered Ginsberg a good poet, at least when he wrote *Howl* (1956). Bukowski was fascinated by this poem, full of richness in language and imagery (Clements 76).

However, Bukowski's literary work shares some features with the style and theme of the Beats, such as alienation, marginal characters, childhood as a conflicting matter, etc. Spontaneity is another feature he shared with the literary movement, as well as the reflection in the same early works because they shared the same historical background.

There are beat writing influences in his novels, not least Kerouac's folksy

storytelling craft, use of personal narrative and spontaneous prose which runs through his texts [...] There is a nihilistic aspect to his writing and the low-life alcoholic lifestyle represented has marked similarities with Burroughs' early grotesque realism (Bukowski 82).

Fiódor Dostoyevsky and Louis-Ferdinand Céline are also said to influence Bukowski's work hugely. Regarding Dostoyevsky, Bukowski wrote a poem where he claims that the Russian author influenced him from an early age: "but as a young man I know that he/got me through the factories,/past the *****/,lifted me high through the night/and put me down/in a better/place." (Bukowski). Reflections of Dostoyevsky can be seen in Bukowski's literary work, starting from the focus on the representation of the society he was living, the choice to portray the life of conflictive characters, and the dissection of that conflict. When it comes to Céline, it is clear that Bukowski idolized him too. He represents the philosopher almost like he was a deity:

But *Celine* made me ashamed of the poor writer I am, I felt like tossing it all. A god damned master whispering into my head. [...] Celine was an angel and he spit into the eyes of angels and walked down the street. Celine knew everything; I mean he knew as much as there was to know if you only had two arms, two feet, a cock, some years to live or less than that, less than each or any of those. Of course, he had a cock (Bukowski 67-68).

Hateful for a few, beloved for others, Bukowski seemed a difficult character because of his sharp opinion about literature and fellow writers, but he found his place. The respect he felt for some authors influenced and enriched his writing, becoming the outstanding author he was, and still is.

4. ADAPTATION STUDIES: THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURE AND TIME

This study is based on the field of Adaptation Studies. As mentioned in previous sections, the approaches associated with the influence of culture and historical context will be discussed below. The articles already mentioned in the *State of the Art* section and others will be used.

In his review article *Adaptation Studies at a Crossroads*, Thomas Leitch summarizes the current status of Adaptation Studies. He gives a vast bibliography of essays that try to revitalize the field. Why does it have to be revitalized? From Leitch's point of view, film adaptations are asking for their independence from literature, always remaining for most critics as inferior to their literary sources (63). Linda Hutcheon, in her book *A Theory of Adaptation*, states that popular contemporary adaptations are placed as secondary or as a derivation of the source, making adaptations seem as culturally inferior: "The move from the literary to the filmic or televisual has even been called a move to a willfully inferior form of cognition" (Hutcheon 2-3).

This dependency between adaptations and literary works has its origin in the idea that adaptations must be faithful to the source text, judging their value as films depending on how faithful they are or not. These assessments are based on what he calls "taxonomies of adaptation" that try to measure how faithful the film is; the problem with these taxonomies is that they are driven by value judgments and a categorization that highly concerns the literary side instead of the film (Leitch 64). An example of these taxonomies Leitch revolves around could be the categorization the author Geoffrey Wagner makes in his book *The Novel and the Cinema* (1975). What Wagner does is identify three different types of adaptation, which are: transposition, when the novel is directly represented on screen; commentary, when the original is taken to screen but suffers some changes deliberately or accidentally; analogy, when the original context of the film is completely changed, it is not about a couple of scenes, but mostly the whole film, leaving little of the original source (223). Then, Leitch sets that the current adaptation studies must deal with the old ideas like literature as the context of the adaptations, the taxonomies of adaptation as categorization, etc. Because even though we might think these ideas are very restricted, they are part of the field's material (Leitch 65). The discourse of fidelity is seen as a moral discourse that takes for granted that the adapter's only aim for adaptation is to reproduce the literary text. Adaptation repeats but does not replicate the source (Hutcheon 7).

Although the fidelity issue is deeply rooted in Adaptation Studies, due to the fact

that adaptation appears to be stuck with the question of fidelity, several scholars and theorists are working on these ideas and managing to challenge them. Leitch summarizes the new approaches and theories that are emerging: If an adaptation is still an adaptation, if it betrays its literary source, if an adaptation seeks to be an interpretation of the source text, if the film moves away from the original because of the new cultural context it addresses, what happens if the adaptation transcends its source, etc. (Leitch 63)

The approach that concerns us is the one that leads to this question: “Is the movie as well as its source subject to cultural and historical contextualization?” (Leitch 66). To explain this, Leitch lists several essays, such as Linda Costanzo Cahir’s *Literary Hardball: The Novel-to-Screen Complexities of The Manchurian Candidate*, which will help me to explain how culture might influence adaptations of literary works, along with several other essays. The idea I will be developing is the following: “contextual forces, from biographical circumstance to ideological assumptions, are assumed to play a pivotal role in shaping the source text as well as its adaptations, undermining its claims to stability and centrality in any debate about adaptations and their sources” (Leitch 66)

In her essay *Literary Hardball: The Novel-to-Screen Complexities of The Manchurian Candidate*, Cahir’s first statement is that canonical and popular literature need to be analyzed from the point of view of historical, artistic, and social contexts. She illustrates this with examples such as the Bible or Shakespeare, claiming that filmmakers adapt these works taking advantage of their quality as “cultural artifacts” in order to spread their viewpoints about social or cultural issues (201).

Bearing in mind these ideas, she brings to the table the novel *The Manchurian Candidate* (1959) by Richard Condon and its two adaptations to film, the first one by John Frankenheimer in 1962, starring Frank Sinatra, and the latest by Jonathan Demme in 2004, starring Denzel Washington. Cahir provides this plot summary of the novel:

Unrelenting assault on Cold War tactics, on the use of pernicious means to secure ascension to American political power, and on the hypocrisy, chicanery, and simple indecency that are the hidden, but abiding, values behind American success stories. The story centers on Raymond Shaw, stepson to Senator John Yerkes Iselin, who, with the aid of his wife, Eleanor Iselin (Raymond’s mother), is engineering a bid to be president of the United States (201-202).

According to what Cahir states, the novel is a revelation of the most obscure parts of human behavior and society, showing the reader what is behind the curtain of the American dream, criticizing the Cold War and the morals of whom were there. Its first

adaptation, the one by John Frankenheimer in 1962, provides a very faithful adaptation of the film but focuses above all on the corruptness and the processes of American politics. “This 1962 movie is unabashed in its assertion that political ascendancy frequently is achieved through duplicity and crime” (207), and it was released while John Fitzgerald Kennedy was the president, whose father had obtained all their fortune through duplicity and illegalities (207). The second adaptation in 2004 is located in contemporary times, and some events are changed from the literary work in order to fit the social and political problems that were happening in America at that time.

The 2004 *The Manchurian Candidate* is an adaptation that tells much about the time in which it was made, a period which witnessed an uneasy melding of politics, big business, and entertainment in America. Lines became blurred in an age when politics became a spectator sport, packaged and pushed by cable news networks, media conglomerates, and publishers taken over by megacorporations, all seeking to attract viewers and readers. Filmmakers have entered the fray, as well, making films to express political viewpoints and to sell tickets (211-212).

The two adaptations, according to Cahir, provide information about their respective period and spread the message of awareness towards the corrupted system people live in:

John Frankenheimer’s 1962 film shows how the anti-Communist paranoia that reigned during the Cold War was used by corrupt politicians who manipulated that fear in order to gain political power. Jonathan Demme’s 2004 film, with its multiple references to America’s war on terror, shows how adroit political marketing can be used to exploit the fears of an entire nation victimized by the terrorist threat (212-213).

With this study, what Cahir proves is that adaptations can serve as a tool to show different points of view and raise questions about different events that have happened, focusing on the cultural, social, and historical context the directors live while they are creating the adaptation.

This theory is supported by Karl G. Heider; in his book *Indonesian Cinema: National Culture on Screen* (1991), he claims that movies are strongly implicated with culture. Depicting them as “cultural texts”, they portray the cultural behavior of their own context, from the motives by which it arises to the processes through which it passes (1). Although he focuses his study on how Indonesian cinema depicts its culture, he leaves us some ideas that help to support the analysis this paper is about:

Movie cameras, tape recorders, editing tables, and projectors are the same around the world. But these tools are wielded by people, and the films which emerge are shaped by the ideas -the culture- of those people [...] even when Indonesians do remake the American film *Blue Lagoon* it turns out Indonesian. Not just the language or the players but the most basic features of the plot have become Indonesian. It is like wax set on a surface in the heat of the sun. It remains wax, but takes its form from its surroundings (3).

Wendy Zierler, in her essay *Midrashic Adaptation: The Ever-Growing Torah of Moses* (2017), a study devoted to how several interpretations of the Torah and the figure of Moses have been adapted, gives us information about how culture has played a role in the adaptation process. She explains that the film *The King's Speech* (2010) is an appropriation of the key elements of Moses' story, but it transposes all these elements to a different cultural context that examines "*The King's Speech* examines a time in British history marked by new technologies of speech communication (the radio) and rising tyranny (the ascent of Hitler)" (142). This film is a clear example of how an adaptation of a literary work, such as the Torah, can be used and transposed to tell a story within the cultural context of its production. Zierler states that more adaptations of Moses may not be needed, but it is necessary to recount this story in relation to our contemporary context.

In her book *A Theory of Adaptation* (2013), Linda Hutcheon devotes a whole chapter to the issue of culture in adaptation studies. She states that as well as the literary work, the adaptation is framed in a particular context, time, and place, with a concrete society and culture. The adapters have to also deal with the context of reception; they have to update the literary work in order to find "*contemporary resonance for their audiences*" (142). According to Hutcheon, the change in an adaptation is inevitable, subjected to multiple possibilities such as the adapter himself, the audience towards which it is directed, and both the contexts of reception and creation.

In her book, Hutcheon introduces the term "Transcultural Adaptation" in reference to the process of adapting from one culture to another. Adaptations from one culture to a different one may involve changes in the language, but the main difference lies in the place and period of time where the adaptation is set. According to Hutcheon, even the adaptations of the same piece of work that are separated by time must differ from each other: "cultures change over time. In the name of relevance, adapters seek the "right" resetting or recontextualizing. This too is a form of transculturation." (146). Other

changes that transcultural adaptations may suffer deal with racial and gender politics. Adapters may deal with elements that their own culture at that time and place could find inappropriate or controversial, but it may happen vice versa; adapters of previous works may serve as a way of liberation because in their particular context, what later works wanted to express now is accepted (147).

Hutcheon gives special attention to the context of reception regarding transcultural adaptations, as well as what I am going to give to it in our analysis. She states that it is as important as the context of creation: “Imagine an audience watching any of the new adaptations of *Othello* during the O.J. Simpson trial: the fall of a hero, the theme of spousal abuse, and the issue of racial difference would inevitably take on a different inflection and even force than Shakespeare could ever have imagined” (149). The contemporary events of an audience condition the perception and the interpretation as well as the one of the adapters. “There is a kind of dialogue between the society in which the works, both the adapted text and adaptation, are produced and that in which they are received, and both are in dialogue with the works themselves” (149).

We could say that stories travel due to the fact that they are adapted across time, place, etc. Hutcheon states that this travel brings up the “processes of representation and institutionalization”, a term that she borrows from the literary critic Edward Said. These processes of representation revolve around the idea that, when theories travel, four different elements are involved: the initial circumstances, the distance they traversed, a set of conditions that accept or resist, and the transformation of the initial idea in the new time and place. Hutcheon uses this explanation because adaptations are transformations of earlier works within a new context. The local features that characterized the previous work are transplanted to a new context where a new result of the earlier takes place (150).

To explain this intercultural encounter of ideas, Hutcheon borrows the anthropological term “indigenization”, a term coined by professor Susan Stanford Friedman in 2004. This term is used in political and religious discourse to explain how the dominant discourse is recontextualized within a context. Hutcheon employs this term because the main feature it implies is agency; people choose what they want to be part of their own politics and beliefs. Adapters do the same; they decide what they adapt. To explain this concept of indigenization and how it works, I am going to borrow Hutcheon’s example, where she makes an analogy between indigenization and electrical converters:

Power comes in different forms, in addition to AC/DC and 120v/220v, of course, and it can be adapted for use in different contexts (different countries); the adapter

plug and the converter allow the transformation of power to a useable form for a particular place or context. This is how indigenization functions as well (150).

With this, what Hutcheon explains, is that a work's cultural power must be adapted as well in the process of adaptation within a different cultural and historical context.

Pat Kirkham and Sarah Warren made a study revolving around cultural influence in adaptations too, being the object of study the three adaptations of the novel *Little Women* (1868), the novel written by Louisa May Alcott. Kirkham and Warren see adaptations as social and cultural appropriations of the original. The first adaptation they analyze is the one from 1933, starring Katharine Hepburn. This adaptation was written while America was suffering a dreadful moment in its history, the Great Depression, which was followed by the Wall Street Crash of 1929. The screenplay was centered on the longing for the days of plenty. The film begins with depictions of material difficulties during the Civil War era, which resonates with the moment of suffering American people were living during the Great Depression (84).

The following adaptation they analyze is the one from 1949, which was released a few years later of the end of World War Two. The film puts emphasis on the depiction of the ideal home environment before the war, re-emphasizing the femininity that was thought lost due to the "masculinization" of women during this period. The film conveys the message of wanting, the willingness to move from a period of austerity. This is depicted in the characters' opportunities to get a home and a husband in the film (87-88).

The last adaptation they analyze regarding the influence of culture and social context is the one from 1994. Said to be strongly related to the feminist ideas of the feminist movement which the film followed at the moment of production, it depicts the feminist ideas that accepted the staying at home and raising a family way of life, complemented by the return of the Victorian and Christian home values at that time (90).

In this journey through the theories of Adaptation Studies, it has become clear that this field is in a process of revitalization; generating more and more new theories that try to move away from the typical comparison between literary work and adaptation, which always values the original work over the film, due to the assumption that a literary work is much more valuable than the film genre. Above every new theory on adaptation, the one that concerns us, and that has been developed here, revolves around the issue of adaptations subjected to cultural and historical contextualization, which is what this paper is trying to prove regarding adaptations of Bukowski's literary works. In a summary, we have seen that ideology and contextual features play an important role in the process of

adaptation, they serve as an instrument to show several points of view and raise awareness about concrete events. Having settled the ideas that help me to prove that cultural and historical context are a huge influence in the adaptation process. In the following section, I will be focusing on the role of the director, as primal in the adaptation.

5. AUTHORSHIP IN FILM ADAPTATION: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DIRECTOR'S ROLE

Since one of the elements of analysis in this paper is how directors' cultures directly influence the adaptations of Charles Bukowski's literary works, questions such as why only the director's culture is taken into consideration may arise. When dealing with film adaptations of literary works, the first thing that comes to mind is the role of the scriptwriter. The scriptwriter is the person in charge of the script itself, and when it comes to adaptation, he or she is the first that translates the narrative language of the book into cinematographic language. That is why we might think that his or her culture is going to be the most powerful regarding the issue of influence.

In the article *How to Write Adaptation History*, Peter Lev devotes part of his study to authorship on film adaptations as an essential part of film adaptation history. Lev's approach revolves around two different theories, the auteur theory that focuses on the figure of the director as the only creative force in the adaptation process, being his or her own personality and context, which must be taken into consideration when talking about film history. The alternative to this auteur theory is the one that concerns the screenwriter, depicting this figure as the shaping force in adaptation (714). Lev revisits the idea of the screenwriter as the one that sits down with the literary work at hand and spends weeks or even months crafting the script. This is an actual situation, but what Lev highlights is that the process is not as solitary as it seems; it is teamwork, and the director's opinion plays a higher role when it comes to the script:

One popular image of how film adaptation works is that the screenwriter sits down with a book or play and over weeks or months crafts a production-ready script. This does in fact happen, but the process is far from solitary. Via story conferences, various higher-ups, including the producer, the director, and perhaps the head of production counsel the writer on what should go into the script. It is a team job, and the writer is not the team leader (724).

The adaptation process would not be completed if only the screenwriter's work

was taken into account. The script is transformed by the director's contributions alongside the rest of the crew members. According to Lev, questions about the director being the primary influence in the adaptation process may arise due to the fact that sometimes they base their adaptations on the script. Lev's point of view about this issue is that the director does not want to replicate the literary work; they want to make a film that pleases the receiving audience (726).

Another study that tries to shed light on the authorship issue is *The Intratextuality of Film Adaptation*. In this essay, Jack Boozer states that, although directors may not take screenwriting credit, they play an important role in the final screenplay version before shooting the film. This role may involve collaboration with the screenwriter or not, but it is central in the process of script development. He tries to make a distinction between the scriptwriter and the director in the adaptation process, being the former a critical and interpretative part that conceives the main objectives of the adaptation and the latter a more financial, casting, and performance-related part. However, Boozer also notes that sometimes screenwriters also direct their own scripts (218-219).

Maryoly Ibarra revolves around the issue of the role of the film director in her article *La dirección de cine: un oficio difícil de definir* from the INMÓVIL magazine:

En ocasiones, el director es la persona que tiene una idea, decide adaptar una experiencia o una novela y escribe una historia. De modo, que la dirección es la forma de concretar una concepción que se tiene desde el guion. En otros casos, el realizador es completamente ajeno al proceso de escritura del libreto que va a dirigir y su trabajo empieza desde la preproducción con la búsqueda de actores, *scouting* de locaciones, reescritura de guion, elaboración de guion técnico y/o storyboard, conformación del equipo técnico, trabajo de arte y ensayo con los actores seleccionados (14).

Thanks to the information Ibarra provides, we can see that the director may be involved in the process of scriptwriting. On the one hand, according to Ibarra, we would have a director who also serves as the scriptwriter. On the other hand, we would have a director who, regarding the scriptwriting process, is only present in the rewriting of some parts. With regard to what this paper is talking about, both types of directors would be valid because even the second one might only make an impact in the final stages of the scriptwriting, there is still time to change some things and, therefore, influence the adaptation with his or her culture.

As the film director's role varies from one production to another, it may involve

nuances that sometimes blur the boundaries of what has historically been attributed to him or her, making the director responsible for more aspects of the film.

Reprising Ibarra's theories from above, I want to develop some of her ideas further. In her opinion, the issue outlining the role of the director stems from an ambiguous image conferred to the filmmaker, divided between a deity and an individual that has no tangible task in the filming process (2). The vision of a director's duties as intangible is due to the fact that he or she is not assigned a specific task, such as operating a camera, recording audio, arranging lights, and adjusting the art, and sometimes he or she does not take part in the final cut. However, the director is the most renowned figure of the whole movie crew when it is awarded and the most criticized when the film is a failure. Considering the fact that he must work with every single professional in every field, the director may fall into a dichotomy of being everything and nothing. He is the manager, technician, psychologist, and artist all rolled into one person. A director's distinctive quality is the ability to translate the script into images and sounds in order to convey a message (3). The director might also be the figure that adapts an experience or a literary work, being the task of the direction the canal through which the director concretes his own idea (4).

In a book I have mentioned before, Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation*, the theme of authorship in adaptations is addressed in a very broad way:

Film and television are perhaps the most complicated media of all from this point of view. Is the major adapter the often underrated screenwriter who 'creates or (creatively adapts) a film's plot, characters, dialogue, and theme' (Corliss 1974: 542)? Although this seems the most obvious answer in one sense it is not the one most people would offer. One of the reasons why not is the possible complexity of a script's 'authorship' (81).

She takes into account almost every worker in film production as a possible adapter, discussing to which level they take part in adaptation. Starting with the music director or composer, this is not a figure that comes to mind when adaptation is addressed, despite he or she plays an important role: "creates the music that reinforces emotions or provokes reactions in the audience and directs our interpretation of different characters, perhaps solo violins for sweet innocence or a snarling bass clarinet to make us uncomfortable around ambivalent characters." (81). The problem with the interpretation of the composer, although music is a very important part of a film, as an adapter is that he usually creates this music working from the script instead of the adapted text, "they

have to write music specifically to fit the production's action, timing, and budget.” (81).

Another role Hutcheon inserts in the authorship theory of adaptation is the costume and set designers. When it comes to adapting a literary work to screen, these designers admit to take inspiration from these literary sources, but ultimately, to what they must be faithful is to the director's vision of the original text. The television editor is another figure considered by Hutcheon; a figure she states to be overlooked by film critics. “When it works, film edition— which could just as easily be called ‘film construction’—identifies and exploits underlying patterns of sound and image that are not obvious on the surface” (82). With this, Hutcheon wants to say that the editor builds the whole in a unique way that nobody could emulate; but again, she discards the idea of the editor as an adapter, because generally none of the above roles are considered as primary adapters, nor is the editor.

Taking the film theorist Peter Wollen ideas, Hutcheon states that the director is the auteur, and should never be considered as another adapter. He is not subordinated to other authors, the source from his or her adaptation is originated is just the pretext to adapt; is the catalyzing force that produces the director's own scenes, resulting in a brand new work. “In stage productions as in cinema, the characteristic preoccupations, tastes, and stylistic trademarks of the director are what stand out and become identifiable, perhaps all directors should be considered at least potential adapters.” (82)

According to Hutcheon, films are huge productions that bring together several artists that get involved in the process of their creation. However, if we take into account the press reports the studio provides along with the critical response to them, the director is the responsible figure for the whole vision of the movie, therefore he is too the major responsible for the adaptation (85).

Javier Escudero, one of the founding members of the Cine Experimental magazine, wrote an article named *El director*, where he shares his point of view about the tasks of a director and their relationship with the script, taking the idea of Ibarra a little further.

Así, las tres figuras fundamentales, guionista, escenarista y director, las concebimos reunidas en una sola persona, a quien creemos justo llamar <<director>>, porque él es – pasando de las palabras a la realidad – el verdadero creador del film. De hecho, ¿qué vale un guión si no se sabe realizar?; y realizarlo es misión del director. No aseguramos que la preparación y la realización de una obra de arte sean una misma cosa, pero sí afirmamos que no pueden separarse y encargarse a distintas personas.

Si queremos un cuadro, no encargaremos a un pintor la composición del tema, a otro el dibujo y a un tercero el colorido, sino que lo haremos todo junto a uno determinado. Así, un guion redactado por quien no sepa resolverlo en planos, y una planificación compuesta por quien tampoco sabrá realizarla, podrá ser, quizá, una maravilla de habilidad técnica, pero nunca será más (278).

As we can see, Escudero advocates the idea that the director influences the script but goes to the next level claiming that the director must be the scriptwriter; if he is not, the film may fall into mediocrity.

This section has provided us with an insight into the roles of director and screenwriter. As can be seen, the issue of authorship in adaptations is an important one, as it can lead to misunderstandings due to the fact that we have the author of the literary work, adding to the dichotomy of director and screenwriter. The theories that have been discussed in this section provide the idea that the role of these two figures in the film industry may vary depending on each film production. The useful information that we can draw from these theories for the present analysis is that the director, whether at a deeper or superficial level, influences the creation of the adaptation. There can be a director who also acts as a scriptwriter, taking charge of the whole process, or a director who, after reading the script, makes the changes he or she thinks appropriate, influencing in both ways the adaptation of a literary work to film. Within this dichotomy, we find differing opinions as to whether it is better for the director to also be the scriptwriter, or for the work to be divided between the two. In the cases that concern us in this analysis, the directors were also the screenwriters, along with a co-screenwriter, thus ensuring that their culture and historical context had a strong influence on the adaptation process.

6. WHAT IS CULTURE?: DEFINITION AND FEATURES

Although this study does not focus solely on the question of culture as an influence, I think it is essential to develop a section on this concept, as we will deal with different aspects of culture. In the following, I will develop the concept and its characteristics from two different but converging points of view, anthropology, and cultural studies drawing on different studies.

The linguist Helen Spencer-Oatey in her article *What is Culture?* gives a comprehensive view of this concept under the premise of culture as a problematic term to define. In the mid-20th century, around 164 different definitions of “culture” were compiled by anthropologists, proving blatant disagreements between the members of this community.

This difficulty in understanding the concept of culture has its origins in the different usages that were employed of this term during the nineteenth century. Three different ways of the use of the term were the most employed. The first one, by the poet Matthew Arnold, used the term culture to represent intellectual and artistic efforts, which has evolved to what we know today as high culture and popular culture. The problem with this sense of the term culture is that it is very restrictive, addressing more an aesthetic issue rather than a social science one. (1)

As a reaction to this aesthetical use, the anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor gave his own view of this term, this is the one that I have chosen, and that appears in the introduction of this paper. When talking about culture, Tylor states that it is a quality intrinsic to everybody: “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (1)

This definition, seen as extremely inclusive, is the one that has been more accepted within the anthropology field. The anthropologist Franz Boas reacted against Tylor’s definition, emphasizing that there are several and varied cultures, and each one is unique (1). In my opinion, both Tylor’s and Boas’s definitions are accurate, complementing each other.

Spencer-Oatey follows her article by summarizing the key characteristics of culture, according to several of the most important academics within this field. Starting from its manifestation “at different layers of depth”, in Edgar H. Schein’s article *Coming to a new awareness of organizational culture* (1984), he states that when it

comes to analyzing culture, we have to pay attention to three different levels where culture is manifested: observable artifacts, values, and underlying assumptions (5). When talking about artifacts, we refer to the physical features, such as the dress code, the way people address everybody, etc. This level of analysis answers two questions, how a group constructs its environment and what patterns of behavior are followed by the members (5). When it comes to answering why the members of a group follow these behavior patterns, we should analyze the second layer, the values. Values are analyzed by interviewing different members, arriving at a common conclusion: that they behave this way in an unconscious way. The third layer of analysis appears at this point, which is the analysis of the underlying assumptions, which are unconscious but determine how a group thinks and feels. They are learned replies that find their origin bounded to values (6).

Spencer highlights too that culture impacts behavior, but it impacts the interpretations of that behavior too. Taking Geert Hofstede's idea from his book *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* (1991) where he states that while some cultural aspects are visible, the meaning of these aspects may be invisible. The meaning lies in the way the insiders interpret these aspects. An example Spencer provides is the ring gesture; when our thumb finger touches our forefinger, if an American interprets it, the result will be an agreement gesture, but if we do this in Mediterranean countries, members of those cultures might interpret it as an insult (6).

Another feature highlighted in the article is that culture must be differentiated from human nature and individual personality, another theory that appears in Hofstede's book. With this, he tries to explain that culture is not inherited; it is learned from the social environment and does not come with our genes. Human nature is what every single human being has in common: the ability to feel different emotions, to observe the environment, and be able to discuss it with other human beings, etc. Culture shows up when it comes to how you deal with different feelings. On the other hand, individual personality is the unique personal set of mental codes that are not shared with other human beings. It is half inherited, and half learned (9).

Culture may influence our biological processes too. Taking the anthropologist Gary P. Ferraro's idea from his book *The Cultural Dimension of International Business* (1998), where he states that the responses to our biological needs, such as eating, sleeping, etc., are influenced by culture. The need for food, for example, would be related to human nature, but culture would shape which type of food we eat, how many

meals we eat a day, who we eat with, etc. Another feature Ferraro delimits has to do with the idea that only social groups are associated with culture. This means that culture must be shared by more than one person; there is no way that an only human being might have a unique culture, and for Spencer, that would be idiosyncratic. To be considered cultural, a behavior must be shared by a community (10).

Culture is both an individual and a social concept. A feature set by the psychologist David Matsumoto in his book *Culture and Psychology* (1996) explains that it is social because it occurs within a society. Still, we can observe individual differences among the members depending on to which degree they engage with this culture's features (values, behavior, etc.). Although we might think that every aspect of a culture must be relevant for every member, sometimes they are relevant but to different degrees. (11)

The anthropologist Kevin Avruch in his book *Culture and Conflict Resolution* (1998), sets that the definition or delineation of the features that construct a culture may be diffuse. This happens because not all the members of a culture share the same sets of behaviors, attitudes, etc. What they share is what Spencer calls family resemblances, stating that there is not a marked group of features that distinguish a cultural group from the others (11).

Culture is learned as the individual socializes with people from his or her society. It is a matter of learning because, from an early age, an individual is shown by his or her parents how to interact and react to certain stimuli (14). The authors Myron Lustig and Jolene Koester set a perfect example for this in their book *Intercultural Competence: Interpersonal Communication Across Cultures* (1999), which states that two babies that are born at the same time but in different cultural societies will respond in different ways to different stimulus.

Finally, revisiting Gary P. Ferraro's ideas again from his book *The Cultural Dimension of International Business* (1998), he states that the components of culture are interrelated. He sees cultures as an integrated system; therefore, all of its components are not there randomly; they are organized. This helps to understand how cultural traits fit in the whole system and how they make sense in a given context.

Although we have a very clear understanding of culture from these contributions, these ideas are derived primarily from the field of anthropology and its academic environment. In that regard, I believe it is imperative to take into

consideration another field that is highly related to culture, namely cultural studies³.

As well as literary criticism, Terry Eagleton has also dived into cultural studies, as evidenced in his recently published book *Culture* (2016). Throughout the book, the concept is discussed in extensive detail and is the entire subject matter.

As does Spencer in her article, Eagleton starts his book with the premise that culture is a “multifaceted concept”, and this makes it hard to unify a unique vision about it. “‘CULTURE’ is an exceptionally complex word – the second or third most complex word in the English language, so it has been claimed – but four major senses of it stand out.” (9). These four significant senses, according to Eagleton, are: (a) “a body of artistic and intellectual work”; (b) “a process of spiritual and intellectual development”; (c) “the values, customs, beliefs and symbolic practices by which men and women live”; (d) “a whole way of life” (9). As we can see, the first sense Eagleton lists could be related to the first one Spencer mentions, which is Matthew Arnold’s idea of culture as a representation of intellectual and artistic efforts. Meanwhile, senses (b) and (c) may resemble Tylor and Boas’ ideas. Sense (d), in my opinion, would be the most problematic because it covers a lot of ground. A whole way of life seems to include every aspect of a human being’s life, and this would contradict some of culture’s features we have seen above, such as the difference between culture and human nature. Human nature is part of a “whole way of life”, but we have seen that culture differs from human nature; therefore, culture cannot be a whole way of life.

Eagleton focuses his analysis especially on culture as artistic and intellectual work and culture as a whole way of life. Regarding the former, he states that this artistic sense may entail innovation, while the latter is a question of customs. In this latter sense, to Eagleton, there is no place for innovation or evolution: “Culture in this sense is what you have done before – even, perhaps, what your ancestors have done millions of times over” (9). This is the less helpful meaning for Eagleton, stating that the artistic sense may be too restrictive, as we have seen from the anthropologist’s point of view. Still, the anthropological sense may cover too much ground.

Starting from texts by the philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder, who included industry and commerce within culture, and the writer T.S. Eliot who restricted culture to only the activities and interests that characterize a group of people, Eagleton raises the question about including within culture the set of practical and material customs,

³ “Cultural studies, interdisciplinary field concerned with the role of social institutions in the shaping of culture.” (Britannica)

or just restrict it to a “symbolic sphere” (11). To solve this problem, Eagleton introduces the term civilization. In earlier times, these terms tended to be used in the same one; they were equivalent. Over the course of time to our days, these two terms have been increasingly distinguished. Eagleton sets the following example:

Roughly speaking, mailboxes are part of civilization, but what color you paint them (green in the Republic of Ireland, for example) is a matter of culture. You need traffic lights in modern societies, but red does not have to signal ‘Stop’ and green ‘Go’. During the Cultural Revolution in Beijing, there was a demand for it to be the other way round (11).

What we get from this explanation is that culture entails how a group of people does things rather than what they do. The procedures and styles through which things are done (11). We can relate this with the point discussed above, where Ferraro states that culture influences behavior. Taking the same example, all human beings eat, but how they do it, what they eat, and with whom they eat is a matter of culture.

As we have seen, the point of view from cultural studies does not differ that much from the anthropology one. Eagleton shares a lot of ideas that we have discussed before. Tylor’s definition of culture, which is the one that is going to be taken into account in this paper, does not differ that much from what Eagleton says in his book about this concept.

As stated above, this revision of the concept of culture is necessary to complement our analysis. In the theories of adaptation mentioned in previous sections, culture is referred to as a very general concept. The usefulness of developing this concept is to see how many aspects it encompasses in order to be able to justify the aspects analysed in the following study. Different aspects will be addressed, such as the perception of identity within certain communities, racialization in others, as well as aspects related to the work system imposed by different cultures, etc.

7. ANALYSIS

Having addressed all the theoretical grounds needed to develop this study, subsequently I will be analyzing each adaptation, from the earliest to the most recent.

7.1. *L'amour est un Chien de l'enfer* (1987): The Belgian identity

The first adaptation I am going to analyze is *L'amour est un Chien de l'enfer* [*Love is a Dog from Hell/Crazy Love*] (1987), by the Belgium director Dominique Deruddere. This film is based on Bukowski's short story *The Copulating Mermaid of Venice, California* (1970). The film originates from a short film Deruddere had directed, named *A Foggy Night*. The producer Erwin Provoost loved the short film and encouraged Deruddere to create a full-length film. Deruddere decided to, instead of extending the original short film, create two more stories preceding the existing one. Therefore, *A Foggy Night* became the third part of *L'amour est un Chien de l'enfer*. Deruddere borrows the title of Bukowski's poetry collection from 1977, to which he refers in the second chapter of the film, in which the protagonist recites one of the poems that appear in the collection.

Charles Bukowski's short story narrates an episode of the life of two men, Bill and Tony, of whom we know nothing other than that they live in Los Angeles and are drunks. After a night of drinking, the two barflies plan to still a dead body from the mortuary, something that they had been preparing a long time ago. They steal the dead body and run away from the scene to their apartments, where they lay the body on the bed and continue drinking for a while. In the meantime, they discover that the body they have stolen is a young woman's body, a beautiful blond girl. Tony immediately falls in love with her, and the idea of having sex with the corpse begins to take shape in his mind. Although Bill tries to stop him, Tony finally rapes the dead body, encouraging Bill to do the same thing and eventually persuading him. Unexpectedly, Tony seems to have fallen in love with the corpse, a situation that Bill blames on his partner's drunkenness. To get rid of the corpse, both barflies decide to drive to Venice Beach and throw the body into the sea. When they arrive at the spot, Tony brings us another spooky demonstration of love towards the corpse, kissing her before he throws her into the ocean. Finally, both drunks come back to their place thinking about what they are going to drink next, but Tony, still thinking about the corpse, the mermaid as he calls her, starts crying.

As mentioned above, Dominique Deruddere's adaptation is comprised of three parts. Each one is devoted to an important moment in the life of the protagonist, Harry

Voss, from childhood to adulthood. The first part is dated 1955, we meet a young aged Harry Voss who lives in the Flemish countryside. In these opening minutes, we see Harry at the movies, watching a romantic film about a princess who finally meets her prince charming. This situation gives us the hint that Harry believes in romantic love, he has not yet discovered the shades of love and relationships, but this will change soon. We get to know who seems to be Harry's only friend, who has a different conception of love and a more sexual approach. This friend will introduce Harry to sex, showing him that love is not romantic but an exchange of sexual favors. Two critical situations happen within this part of the story; the first one is the attempt to have sex with his classmate's mother, who is depicted as a promiscuous woman while she is asleep. After this attempt fails, the chapter ends with Harry in bed having his first masturbation.

1962 is the moment when the second part of the story takes place. We discover a young adult Harry Voss who is about to finish high school. The first scenes show us that Harry's mother has passed away and that he is suffering from severe acne that covers his whole body, making it hard to look at the screen. Harry is a very lonely guy who is having problems meeting a girl due to his acne, which is also the cause of being bullied at school. The main plot is developed during the prom dance, where Harry appears with his only friend, who seems to be a lady killer. Harry seems to be in love with the most beautiful girl in high school, but again, his friend is going to be the one who encourages him to make some questionable decisions, such as having sex with his friend's girlfriend. The girl rejects having sex with Harry due to his acne, and Harry, visibly affected, comes back to the prom. Finally, he finds a way to reach the girl he likes, wrapping his face in toilet paper in order to hide his acne, which unexpectedly gives results, and finally has a dance with her.

The final chapter of the film unfolds in 1976. We find ourselves in a bar at nighttime where a drunk Harry Voss, in his adulthood, is having another drink. There he finds an acquaintance; both leave the bar together after a fight and wander around the streets. In the meantime, they found their selves near a mortuary when the hearse is arriving with a corpse. It seemed funny for them to steal the body, and so they did. They arrive with the body at an abandoned house, where both drunks find out that the corpse is a beautiful blonde girl. This discovery awakens Harry's inner desires for love and sex, driving him to the decision to rape the corpse and fall in love with her at the same time. This scene happens before the eyes of his mate, who witness the scene in disbelief. After completing this infamous act, they decide to carry the body to the beach and throw it into

the sea. While Harry is entering the corpse into the water, his mate turns away to the car, and when he comes back, Harry and the corpse have disappeared into the deep ocean.

Deruddere uses the first two stories to provide the basis for what happens in the third part, to give background to Harry's inclinations towards necrophilia. However, the film may also be seen as a love story; Harry looks for his princess throughout his entire life and finally finds her, disappearing both in the ocean, a happy ever after ending of a typical love story. The film was appraised by Bukowski and several other American film figures, such as Madonna, Sean Penn, and even the well-known director Francis Ford Coppola. Deruddere obtained a distribution deal with Coppola's company (Zoetrope) for his next film, *Wait until Spring, Bandini* (1989) (Martens 278). Opportunities like this did not frequently happen for a Flemish director, so Deruddere engaged with the opportunity to reach a wider audience. The problem emerged when *Wait Until Spring, Bandini* felt like an American movie that accidentally had a Belgian director. Critics believed that Deruddere was not exploiting his Flemish identity's creative potential. He was falling into the need to follow the American film production style; this is why *L'amour est un Chien de l'enfer* is considered his most Flemish/Belgian resembling film, although it did not arrive to a broader audience because it seems too outsider, Deruddere achieved to carry Flemish cinema to another level (Mosley 176).

When talking about Flemish resemblances I am alluding to the features that appear in the film that resemble Flemish culture. The major feature regarding the influence of culture that is appreciated in the film is the question of identity. The film may be interpreted, as said above, as a quest for love, but it may also be seen as the search for Harry's own identity and place in the world, an issue that I relate to the Belgian question of identity.

The issue of the Belgian identity dates back to the nineteenth century when Belgium was invaded by the Netherlands, imposing their religion, education, and politics. William I of the Netherlands steadfastly promoted the Dutch language over the French-speaking population of Belgium, having success among the peasants, but causing the detachment and reluctance of the bourgeoisie; William set the precedent for what has become a present-day conflict. When the modern Belgian state arose in 1830, it was divided by a linguistic frontier: the Flemings in the north and the Walloons in the south (Mosley 15). The problematic reached the political and religious level too; being French the prestigious language in Europe, the elites adopted this language, imposing it as the official language of the country; the Catholic church supported this decision, being the

Dutch a remembrance of the Protestant church and the previous invasion. Despite the popular discontent, among the Flemish speakers above all, the political reaction against the language imposition did not arise till the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century:

Between 1870 and 1914, Flemings began slowly but surely to agitate their rights, making steady advances in the status of the Dutch language within Belgium. Some achievements were the acceptance of Dutch as a written and spoken parliamentary language in 1879 and 1888; legal parity for Dutch and its recognition as an official language in 1898. With the principle of linguistic territoriality firmly established, Dutch became the official language of Flanders (as did French in Wallonia) when the linguistic frontier was legally established in 1932 (Mosley 20-21).

In the mid-1950, the Flemish autonomy issue was brought to the table, producing instability once again. The Flemish Nationalism party was created, which worsened the linguistic conflict that seemed appeased; to protect their interests, the pro-French population created the Front Démocratique des Francophones (French-speaking Democratic Front) in 1964. In the late '60s riots due to the attempt to make Leuven University completely Flemish-speaking arose, and several national political parties, such as the Socialist, split into two wings: the Flemish and the Walloon. Was in 1993 when the government, through elections, declared Belgium a federal state, comprising a national government but with three different linguistic communities and three regions: Wallonia, Brussels, and Flanders (Mosley 22-23).

In the course of centuries, these issues and conflicts have created a feeling of otherness among Belgians. In a country divided into regions based on linguistic barriers, the population feels foreign in their own country, which leads to conflict and worsens regional disparities. This feeling of otherness, the quest for identity, is what is reflected in Derudder's film.

Aside from the crazy love story the adaptation depicts, from the beginning we witness how Harry Voss is searching for his identity, his place in the world. This search for identity in the film is represented by the concept of love. In the first chapter of the story Harry is a kid, with no experience in life, and certainly, with no experience in romantic affairs. He believes in the romantic love that is depicted in the films he watches at the movies; this belief is fueled by the stories his mother tells him about how she and Harry's father met. Is Harry's boyhood friend who triggers the dichotomy that will accompany Harry throughout his life, showing him the sexual and raw side of the

relationships between a man and a woman, Harry will start to doubt his own conception of love, making him believe that he does not fit. The dichotomy in this chapter of the story is reinforced when Harry witnesses his parents having sex, realizing that his mother lied to him regarding the romantic part of relationships.

In the second chapter, when Harry is in his teenage years, he is suffering from severe acne, which reinforces this feeling of otherness. He remains a romantic, he has fallen in love with the most beautiful girl in his high school, but these feelings are one-sided, which leads him to take the path of sex; again due to his high school friend, but with the same results, he is rejected again. Here is a clear example of what I am talking about; Harry tries to fit in the society he lives in through his love relationships, but it does not matter what he does because he is rejected by both sides of the dichotomy of love, thus increasing his feeling of repudiation. Finally, in the third chapter of the film, we witness the climax of Harry's search for identity. Being an alcoholic, he is like a ghost, nobody notices his presence. The infamous moment of this film, the act of necrophilia is the single moment where Harry feels that he has found his place, he finally has his girl, who represents the dichotomy Harry has been living; the corpse comprehends the acceptance of Harry's romantic desires because she looks like the girls he was in love before, and the acceptance of the sexual side of relationships, making him feel like if finally, he could fit in the world.

All these issues related to the search for identity in relation to sexual and romantic relationships are connected with what was highlighted above about the Belgian feeling of otherness. Harry is divided into two different ways of relating to women, like Belgians who are divided into two ways to communicate. When Harry tries to fit into one of them, he is always rejected. This would make reference to how Belgians, when trying to communicate with the region they do not belong to, feel. Harry represents this dichotomy between Flemish people and Walloons.

Another element that we could say is influenced by culture are parts of the setting. Deruddere decides to set the first part of the story in a small village; looking a lot like the Flemish countryside. He depicts typical situations such as the fair on the outskirts of the village where people went to ride the attractions, watch shows, etc. However, it is important to note that the final chapter is rather similar to what Bukowski represents in his story. It is clear that is not America where they are, but the moment of the bar is quite similar to what we think when reading Bukowski's works. Deruddere uses American music as background noise, and some Marines appear, creating that vibe of an American

area from 1975; at that time, the Vietnam War had finished, and the scene looks like when the Marines come back home to rest. The third chapter is what makes the first chapter setting look so culturally influenced, being quite evident that Deruddere represents the agricultural area of Flanders countryside.

The two features discussed above may also evince the influence of the context of reception. Since it was a low-budget film, it was going to be released, primarily, in its production country; Deruddere, while respecting the essence of Bukowski's story in the third chapter of the film, he added features that Belgians could identify with. Addressing issues such as identity in such a fine way allows different audiences to engage in the film: the Belgian audience who reflects on the identity issue and the familiar setting, the foreign audience which will engage with Harry's situation, and the knowing audience of Bukowski's works which will find the most important details of the story adapted to a larger scale.

Two further features would be defined by the influence of culture and reception context. The choice of Flemish as the language in which the film was made; Belgian cinema is subjected to cultural expectations (Mosley 3), both people who produce and enjoy Belgian cinema want it to be identifiable, and the use of Flemish is a way to do this. Not choosing French is a way to put distance between French cinema and Belgian cinema, engaging with the national audience. The latest feature related to the reception context would be the choice to romanticize and omit an explicit depiction of the moment where Harry rapes the dead body. This is, of course, a question of culture within society. The issue of rape and necrophilia are not welcome, I dare say, in any context in many societies. Deruddere omits the explicit images of this act, seeming to downplay it or not to find it an infamous act, but this is not the case; he uses the character of the friend, who also has questionable morals, to express that the act is indeed unwelcome. Witnessing this scene even shocks a person with few values, making the condemnation of the acts even more evident. By making Harry disappear into the ocean, we could see the story from two different perspectives: On the one hand, Deruddere frees the character, removing all blame for his actions, on the other hand, by generating a scene in which Harry is reprimanded for what he does would take the story away from the original essence; in Bukowski's stories characters are not usually punished for these infamous acts, in the story that is being adapted, both mates after committing these vile acts, they return to their normal lives as if nothing had happened. We could say that Deruddere intends to respect Harry's unscathed exit from the scene, but, at the same time, by making him disappear,

no longer able to inhabit his world, he makes us see that Harry is in fact condemned.

Taking into account the theories reviewed above, we could say that this adaptation is a clear example of the influence of culture and historical context on adaptations. Moreover, we could say that Deruddere goes even further because he addresses the construction of an identity, something that is a very important component of what we understand as the concept of culture. In addition to this, Deruddere helps the construction of a real Flemish identity; by representing its culture on screen as discussed in this analysis, it helps to generate more cultural support for this Belgian region.

7.2. *Lune Froide* (1991): Post-War Trauma and Immigration

The following adaptation I am going to analyze is *Lune Froide* [*Cold Moon*] by the French director Patrick Bouchitey. The film is based on Bukowski's short stories *The Copulating Mermaid of Venice, California*, and *Trouble with a Battery*. To create this film, Bouchitey assumed the direction of the film, as is highlighted above, but also the screenplay and the acting, being one of the main protagonists of the movie, and taking advantage of family and friends for the rest of the roles. Since the plot of *The Copulating Mermaid of Venice, California*, has been explained in the previous section, I am going to summarize *Trouble with a Battery*.

Bukowski opens the scene with a man and a prostitute having sexual relationships in a hallway. When they arrive at the woman's apartment, her brother is over there, not surprised by the scene he is witnessing. The three drink together, and then the couple has sex again in front of the kid. While the couple is in the prostitute's bedroom, they both talk about several issues, but this seems just drunk talk. We discover that the man has ended up with this prostitute because he was having his car battery recharged, and when he is done with her, he goes back to the mechanic to get his car back. After returning home, we are shown that the man, indeed, has a family. After the sexual situation we have just witnessed with the prostitute, he just reads her daughter a bedtime story and says: "the next time I get a dead battery I'll go to a movie" (153).

Patrick Bouchitey, in his adaptation, introduces us to a couple of friends called Dedé and Simon, two guys in their forties that devote their lives to alcohol and sex, although we witness that they do not succeed when building relationships with women. Both men live between Dedé's motor home, and Dedé sister's place. Dedé's sister,

called Nadine, and brother-in-law are fed up with Dedé's attitudes, occupying their living room to watch TV and drink their beer along with Simon. One day, Dedé is kicked out from their home, so he packages his stuff and looks for Simon, who is working in a seafood storehouse. Simon is also fed up with Dedé's behavior too, they have a fight which leads us to believe that both mates are going to split up their relationship, but in the end, they fix things up. From this moment on, these guys star in a series of events that can be considered as demoralizing. They break into a church and expend the night drinking from the sacred goblet; Simon has an encounter with an Arab prostitute, and they have sex in front of the prostitute's little brother, which overlaps with the events in Bukowski's *Trouble with a Battery*. They also steal a mannequin, which they take for a party in a bar. In the bar, while Dedé is dancing with the mannequin, Simon is flirting with another prostitute and invites her to continue the party with them. A fight breaks out at the bar, and the three of them drive to the beach, where Dedé has sex with the prostitute while Simon, looking at the ocean, starts crying. A flashback scene appears, and we get to know that, some time ago, both mates stole a corpse from a mortuary; they find out that the corpse is a blond girl, and Simon comes up with the idea of having sex with her. At first, Dedé is not convinced with what Simon is doing, but in the end, he rapes the corpse too. We witness how they drive to the beach and Simon throws the corpse into the ocean, the same beach where the present was taking place. After getting rid of the body, both men come back to the car, and we lose them in the distance.

The film is entirely filmed in black and white, located from the beginning in a French harbour village. As we have seen in the adaptation plot's summary, Bouchitey depicts both Bukowski's stories almost literally, using a lot of the stories' dialogues, but he does not use them as the central axis of the story, they are used as illustrations of both men's behavior, helping to construct their story.

Throughout the adaptation, several interesting scenes are set, which will help me to analyze the influence of historical and cultural context on the adaptation. One of them happens at Nadine's home, when Dedé and Simon are watching TV; in the screen we can see mixed images of Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler giving their speeches. This could be a hint of the moment where the adaptation is taking place, implying that Dedé and Simon are living while World War Two is going on, but this is just a distraction; Dedé, who is a passionate about music is always listening to it, one of the song he plays is *Voodoo Child* by Jimi Hendrix, which was released in 1968 in the

album *Electric Ladyland*, so the film should be set as of this date. Another interesting scene happens when Dedé and Simon are in their way to Nadine's, and they stop by a kind of mechanic warehouse, where a young Arab guy is working, this guy will appear in several other scenes, and Dedé will make jokes due to his ethnicity; the prostitute Simon has sex with is also an Arab, while Bukowski's prostitute is Latin.

These events I have just highlighted are examples of historical and cultural influences. The fact that the time of the action is not set, together with references to different moments in time, tells us that what we are looking at is a collage of post-war situations; being 1991 the year where the film was made, this drives me to think about what Michel Mesnil revolves around in his article *Cinéma Français, Fin de Siècle et Régression* (1991) [French Cinema, End of the Century and Regression]; he states that *Lune Froide* is a metaphysical film, that represents the fear to the present and the future:

À travers les piètres héros de Bouchitey, beaucoup trop humains pour nous être étrangers, beaucoup trop tarés pour ne pas nous transir, peut-être bien qu'obscurément c'est le second millénaire qui se balbutie. Il n'a pas fière allure. Il s'annonce non par un retour du religieux, au sens déjà presque anachronique du terme, mais par une angoisse grandissante du présent, un repli apeuré sur un temps d'innocence (70).

This fear to the present is caused by the situation France had experienced during and after World War Two. Almost from the beginning of WWII, France was an occupied nation by the German troops, dividing the country in two parts, the Vichy France, governed by the Germans, and the Free France, operating in exile. The country was deprived of its freedoms with the imposition of an authoritarian government, similar to Hitler's or Mussolini's. Regarding Free France, it was a conglomerate of French people who had fled from the enemies, who inhabited the Ultramar colonies, and people still living in the occupied France. It was not till Normandy's landing in 1944 that France was liberated from the Germans.

This is why the out of context images on the TV of Hitler and Mussolini are not there by chance. World War Two was a very difficult moment for France, which had a very bad outcome from a political, economic, and social point of view. While Dedé and Simon are watching the speeches, they do not recognize Hitler nor Mussolini, they laugh at the screen saying that those men are crazy, as if they had not lived WWII. At that moment, they are representing the behavior of a nation that, after the war, tries to forget what happened, sometimes looking numb. Furthermore, Dedé and Simon may

represent opposing behaviors. Although both seem to operate outside society norms, we can see some differences between them. While Dedé looks like a kid, doing what he wants with no sense of time and no morality, Simon does feel guilty for his own actions; the rape of the corpse is the best example.

They represent this existentialist vision of life that was developed in France right before and after World War Two, promoted by writers such as Jean-Paul Sartre with *La Nausée* (1938) [*Nausea*], and Albert Camus with *L'étranger* (1942) [*The Stranger*]. Dedé and Simon live in a world that does not make sense; they carry out infamous activities for which they remain unpunished. Bouchitey depicts the sensations people have when the war was over; no hope is depicted, and people get carried away towards an uncertain future. Almost starting a new century when the film was released, I think that Bouchitey wanted to use Bukowski's stories to make a revision of the late XX century in France, and how it had affected people's identity.

Another element I want to mention in this analysis, that Mesnil overlooks on his, is the question of ethnicity. As mentioned above, Bouchitey shows a couple of scenes where the Arab condition is touched upon. The issue of Arab immigrants in France dates back much further, and it is still a reality nowadays. We could say that this phenomenon started in the late XIX century; at first, this immigration was due to work conditions, where, especially men, travelled to France in order to earn some money because of the poverty they suffered in their country. Then, the immigration was fueled by war conditions, France called up almost 300.000 Arab immigrants, from their colonies, to be soldiers and workers during the World War I period. When the war ended, the French government returned the immigrants that had survived to their country of origin. Then, when the World War Two was over, France sought for the assistance of Arab immigrants again in order to reconstruct the country. During the 50s, France experiences another fluctuation of Arab immigrants, but this time due to the hard conditions this people was suffering in the colonies. Despite being a huge help for France in previous years, Arabs are not welcome and disowned by French society. This immigration has been maintained to this day.

In his adaptation, Bouchitey depicts the post-war moments regarding immigration. Although Arabs helped French people, the natives seem to not accept these immigrants a lot. This is due to the reminiscences of colonization. In the late XX century, French people would see Arabs as if they were inferior, promoting old colonial values where immigrants are assessed by their physical constitution but seen as mental

defectives from an intellectual point of view. This is represented in the adaptation when Dedé and Simon are talking with an Arab immigrant that works nearby Nadine's house. In the first place, Dedé addresses this guy as *Cacahuète* (Peanut), although he knows his real name, which is Arachide, making fun of him, implying that immigrants do not need even a name of their own. During this conversation, where both mates are teasing Arachide, he replies by calling them idiots, to which Dedé is surprised because he does not understand how an Arab can speak French, implying this colonial thought about immigrants as mentally defective people.

I think that Bouchitey addresses these issues in order to engage the French audience in the first place, depicting a world in which there is no hope, where two men driven by their most primitive instincts try to find meaning in their lives. This feeling of being lost, without direction, is what Bouchitey wanted the audience to engage with. Regarding the ethnicity issue, here Bouchitey is also trying to engage people with a cause that is still not resolved, addressing the colonial issue which French people still not talk about, as if the French colonization did not have taken place. Regarding the audience that Bouchitey wanted to address by adapting Bukowski's work, I think he did really well, both scenes from the stories are almost identical, using the dialogues and being extremely explicit, but this may have also been its Achilles heel. The way Bouchitey depicted these brutal scenes is what people focused on when the film was released, leaving behind all the important cultural and historical questions he addresses.

In an interview, Bouchitey expressed his grief about this issue, when being asked about the reception of *Lune Froide*:

Elein Fleiss: Vous revenez de New-York où vous avez présenté votre film, comment ça s'est passé ?

Patrick Bouchitey: Mon film a été très mal reçu, il y a eu beaucoup de critiques, même sur ma personne. Beaucoup de gens se sont sentis violentés, mais les plus virulents étaient les hommes. Je n'avais pas revu le film depuis sa sortie il y a un an. Ça a été douloureux. Mais je revendique cette douleur, quelles que soient la maladresse, et l'insistance que j'ai mises à montrer, à dénoncer quelque chose.⁴
(Bouchitey)

⁴ [EF: You just came back from New York where you presented your film, how did it go? PB: My film was very badly received, there was a lot of criticism, even about myself. Many people have felt violated, but the most aggressive were men. I hadn't seen the film since its release a year ago. It was painful. But I claim this pain, whatever the clumsiness is, and the insistence on showing, to denounce something]

As we have seen, Bouchitey's adaptation of Bukowski's literary works is marked by cultural and historical context. He addresses issues such as trauma and ethnicity which are extremely related to culture in the sense of how French people deal with these concrete issues. As stated in the section *What is Culture?* of this paper, culture is not inherited but learned from the social environment; the events depicted in this analysis have huge historical importance, one of the reasons why Bouchitey introduces them, but also because they marked the behavior and the response to several issues within French society. In relation to what we have seen in the *Adaptation Studies* section, we can see this as what Linda Hutcheon talks about transcultural adaptation; these adaptations suffer from racial and gender politics and directors have to deal with features that may be controversial for their culture at the moment they are adapting, but it may be vice versa and adapt earlier works to show controversial moments that their culture suffered at a concrete moment in time.

Taking advantage of the fact that one of the stories that Bouchitey adapts is the same as Deruddere's, this allows us to see, even more, that adaptations are influenced by the culture and the moment of production. Both maintain the essence of Bukowski's story, but at the same time represent it in different ways to address the different problems that each director has chosen to reflect. On the one hand, Bouchitey is more explicit in the sexual scene, to represent the trauma, on the other hand, Deruddere does not show the scene, focusing on the conflict of identity.

7.3. *Factotum* (2005): Influences of the Norwegian work system

Factotum (1975) is the second novel written by Charles Bukowski. It follows the life of his so-called alter-ego Henry Chinaski in Los Angeles. This is the second novel about the life of this character; although the first one, *Post Office* (1971), covers the life of this character around the '50s and '60s, *Factotum* goes backward in time, depicting the life of Henry Chinaski in the '40s when the character has been rejected in the call-up for the Second World War.

Chinaski is depicted as an alcoholic, womanizer, and morally questionable emerging writer who, while trying to make a living from his writing, switches from one job to another for the sake of survival. Additionally, several relationships with different women are depicted, as well as some uncomfortable situations caused by his alcoholism. It is important to note that the novel does not mainly focus on Henry

Chinaski's attempts to earn a living as a writer; instead, it concentrates on the insane number of jobs he tries to fill and how his nonconformity leads to him being fired or resigning from the job. It is this insane amount of work that gives the book its name, *Factotum*, a Latinism from the medieval Latin *factotum* [*fac* (do), *totum* (everything)], which means: a reliable person who performs all kinds of duties (DPD).

Starting in New Orleans, we follow Chinaski as a clerk in the delivery room in a magazine-distributing house and then as a clerk in a newspaper editorial. He decides to go back home to Los Angeles for a little while, settling in his parents' home. Throughout these chapters, we discover that Chinaski's way of life is not accepted by his parents, especially by his dad, a hard-working man who thinks that his son is useless because he cannot find a good job. During this period in Los Angeles, Chinaski ends up in jail due to his drinking and is kicked out of his parents' home, embarking on New York, where he will work as a subway poster remover. After this period in New York, he ends up in St. Louis, where he will work as a shipping clerk in a lady's dress-wear shop. Here is the first time Chinaski let us know that he is a writer, and one of his manuscripts has been accepted by *Frontfire Magazine*. Chinaski decides to go back to Los Angeles and meets a woman called Laura in a bar, a woman that promises Chinaski to introduce him to a rich man, Wilbur Oxnard, who wants Chinaski to write a script for an opera. Instead of taking Oxnard's opportunity to write a script, Chinaski only takes advantage of his money to get drunk and have sexual relationships with Laura and other women that live with Oxnard. After these events, Chinaski goes back to the low-paid work era, working as a clerk in a bicycle warehouse; during this period, Chinaski meets Jan, the most important woman that appears in the novel with whom he will have a tumultuous relationship adulterated by their drug and alcohol problems. In one of these back-and-forth relationship moments, Chinaski breaks up with Jan and leaves Los Angeles for some time, making Miami his next stop. After working in a clothing store in Miami, in a period where he devotes some time to writing, he comes back to Los Angeles, where he comes back with Jan to break up with her later for the last time. During this final period in Los Angeles, Chinaski works as a shipping clerk in a fluorescent light fixture company, as a janitor in Los Angeles Timer, as a clerk in an art supply store, and several other low-rated jobs, ending up in the Hotel Sans where he is finally promoted to a better position, as the manager of the employment office. Here is when we see Chinaski, a man that has always suffered the abuse of power of his superiors, become one of them. Failing in this job too, the book ends with Chinaski

entering a striptease club and watching a woman dance in front of him.

This focus on the work system is not a coincidence. Set in 1944, Bukowski is depicting the situation American people had to deal with during the Second World War. The strong hierarchy between worker and employer, together with the abusive conditions of the system.

In 2005, the Norwegian director Bent Hamer took this literary work to the screen under the same name. Born in Sandefjord, Norway, Bent Hamer is a well-known director, producer, and writer, a member of the so-called "New Norwegian Wave" of filmmakers. After winning the FIPRESCI at the 1995 Toronto International Film Festival for his first feature film, *Eggs* (1995), his career has never stopped growing ever since. Different subject matters have occupied his following works, such as magical realism in *Water Easy Reach* (1999) or the Swedish post-war era in *Kitchen Stories* (2003). In 2004, he started shooting his first adaptation of a literary work, one of the main topics that concern us in this paper, mentioned above, the film *Factotum*.

Starring Matt Dillon, the film was released in April 2005 and won several prizes in different film festivals, like the best director and best actress at the Copenhagen International Film Festival. (IMDb).

In Hammer's adaptation the setting is never named by any character; we can figure it out thanks to some details that appear throughout the movie, such as the *New York Times* building. The film starts with Chinaski working in a low-rated job, in this case in an Ice Factory, where we witness how he is fired. Different moments of Chinaski writing are superposed with other jobs, such as a clerk in a Pickle Factory or in a Bicycle Warehouse. After being fired from the Bicycle Warehouse, Chinaski lives a hiatus from working: in this part of the film, we witness Chinaski's toxic moments with his girlfriend Jan, with whom he has several comings and goings. In one of these goings Chinaski comes back to his parents' home, but he is kicked out immediately because he is still waiting to make a living from his writing, against his father's desires to have a standard job. Leaving his family home, Chinaski gets two more jobs from where he is, of course, fired, first as a clerk in a brake shoe company and last as a janitor in the *New York Times*. In the final moments of the film, we witness Chinaski writing and sending his stories to the Black Sparrow Press. Moments later, while he is in the striptease club, a letter to his former landlady arrives, letting us know that one of the stories Chinaski send is going to be published, giving us some light at the end of the tunnel.

Hammer's adaptation of Bukowski's novel clearly has less in common with the work system criticism I previously mentioned. The book shows thirty-two works at least, while the adaptation only depicts five, which could be due to a film, that normally lasts a couple of hours, cannot include such a huge number of jobs, it must compress them. But, in my opinion, it can be due to cultural and historical influences too.

As for Bukowski's novel, we could say that it is influenced by cultural and historical aspects too. Mikel López Prieto in his paper *Hero of the Inglorious Kind: Bukowski and the American Dream* (2020), revolves around the issue of how Bukowski depicts the American Dream as an instrument of alienation and dehumanization, but also legitimizes the sociopolitical and economical ideas of the Dream as cultural due to the fact that are part of the identity of American people. Bukowski depicts the American Dream, from a subversive perspective, because it was crucial in the time he was living, but also it took part in the behavior of the American population.

Regarding Hammer's adaptation, the absence of many jobs is related to this cultural influence too. He is Norwegian, so he is not used to the work conditions Bukowski show in his novel. The Norwegian work style is far different from the American one; following, I will discuss some of the Norwegian work system features that help to understand this change in the adaptation.

Norwegians are more future-oriented, which means that they like planning and investing in the future, giving importance to collective gratification at the expense of individual reward. This future orientation is reflected in the Government planification, with more public investment, and tax contributions, in order to have a fine welfare state for every Norwegian (Warner-Søderholm 2-3). This future orientation is depicted in the adaptation; although we see Chinaski in a dead-end situation several times, the fact that Hammer develops Chinaski's author side, showing him writing, and finally giving him a chance for his stories to be published, gives this sensation that, although he is not succeeding in the menial jobs he has worked, he is looking for a better future while writing his stories.

Assertiveness is another feature that characterizes Norwegian people at work. They are not confrontational nor aggressive, which gives the wrong idea that Norwegians are "cold" people, but this is just an indication of their sense of order, they keep control of situations in order to avoid arguments or disagreements (Warner-Søderholm 4). Bukowski's novel is full of unassertive moments within work situations; this may be attached to Chinaski's own unassertive personality, but the workers and

employers' behaviors he faces in different works also mark the lack of assertiveness within the American work system. Hammer does not change the whole story and depicts an idyllic relationship between worker and employer, nor he changes Chinaski's personality to be more assertive; what Hammer does is to erase a lot of confrontational moments, what makes the adaptation feel more assertive regarding work.

Collectivism, from an institutional point of view, which means that the collective action within the workplace is rewarded is another feature of Norwegians at work: they help each other and share resources (House et al., 2004). American work system, in contrast, is marked by achievement-oriented practices and a huge individualism. Historically, Americans have been encouraged to reach individual accomplishment, this happens through perseverance and hard work which will provide success; each person is an individual entity, detached from a group experience, carrying all the responsibilities, and having the obligation to overcome all obstacles, whatever they may be (Spence 1286-1288). This individualism is depicted in Bukowski's novel, reflecting all the bad outcomes this practice may have. Chinaski himself brings forward a reflection about individual work, how it exploits workers, and why a more collective spirit is needed: "Those in control always preferred to overwork a few men continually, instead of hiring more people so everyone might work less. You gave the boss eight hours, and he always asked for more. He never sent you home after six hours, for example. You might have to think." (Bukowski 68). Like in the case of assertiveness, Hammer does not build another world in which everybody works together and has a collective consciousness, but he does not emphasize individualism at work.

Another feature that characterizes the Norwegian work system, and that can be related with the adaptation is power distance. In an organization or society, it refers to how much power is expected and agreed to be centralized and concentrated at higher levels of management; this power distance is said to be related to the population growth; the more the population grows, the more power is given to the highest posts in workplaces. However, Norway despite its development from World War II, is a low power distance country; they do not use formal titles or dress codes to differentiate workers' status, and practices at work are egalitarian. For Norwegians, they agree and expect an egalitarian distribution of power (Warner-Søderholm 5). The Norwegian work system is also humane oriented, compared with more liberal models such as the United States, in this case, the personal rights of individuals are a matter of universal

welfare, while Americans' offer of a welfare state is proportional to economic resources (House et al., 2004). Norwegian workers live in a comprehensive welfare system, this is due to the avoidance of uncertainty, they are given social security payments when sick or unemployed, as well as maternity and paternity pays (Warner-Søderholm 6).

Per contra, what Bukowski depicts in *Factotum* is a system with a huge power asymmetry. We witness different situations where the employer and employee statuses are widely separated, being the employer several steps up from the employee. In the book this produces several moments where Chinaski expresses his disagreement with how the work system and hierarchy is constructed:

How in the hell could a man enjoy being awakened at 6:30 a.m. by an alarm clock, leap out of bed, dress, force-feed, shit, piss, brush teeth and hair, and fight traffic to get to a place where essentially you made lots of money for somebody else and were asked to be grateful for the opportunity to do so? (Bukowski 142).

This power distance is also enhanced when Chinaski gets promoted at the end of the novel. Instead of being a comprehensive boss, he becomes what he hates, a tyrannical employer. Regarding Hammer's adaptation, these scenes where the power distance is depicted in the novel are not transferred to the screen; the moment when Chinaski is promoted is not transferred too, giving the impression that Chinaski is fired because he is just a spoiled and lazy person, who does not want to work, instead of showing that he behaves like this due to his nonconformity with the work system.

The moment when the film was produced is a matter of influence too. The adaptation was released in 2005, thirty years after the novel was published. In an interview for the IONCINEMA website by the journalist Jameson Kowalczyk while Hammer was promoting the film, he was asked about the time period where the adaptation is set; being difficult for Kowalczyk to delimitate the era the film represents:

Q: There were some period touches, and some very old-school looking bars, some things that looked very old-fashioned, but then there are modern cars. Were you trying to create a sense of timelessness about it, not setting it in any particular era?

BH: [...] But the essence of it is that it's timeless. I mean some people who read the script said that you have to be into dope these days and this and that and people don't drink anymore. I think it's totally wrong. So for me it's timeless, what he's doing, but also the environment was something that we tried to make timeless (Kowalczyk).

Hammer's timeless intention may fulfill the adapting issues concerning the time

period in a general way. Being also a tool to maintain some of the aspects that Chinaski represents, since, as is said in the interview, he was recommended to erase his alcoholism, for example. But, regarding the lack of work depiction, this timeless intention may not justify it; further on the interview, Hammer states that several jobs that are depicted in the novels were hard to depict on the screen due to the fact that at that time a lot of those jobs were obsolete, there were no fabrics where they could emulate these activities, so he decided to change some of the jobs. That is why when the film was released jobs such as the one in which Chinaski is cleaning a huge sculpture seems so out of context.

Reception context also played a role in the adaptation. When a novel is adapted to the screen, the fans of the author are taken into account because they might be the main audience at first, wanting to see the imaginary on screen. But Hammer states, by his own experience talking with Bukowski's fans, that they seem to have a desire to deepen in the darkest features Bukowski depicts in his books:

Q: Bukowski obviously has a literary legion of people who admire his work, do you think that's going to translate over when they see this in the theater?

BH: I don't trust too many of the disciples. What I learned is there are several categories, which is kind of interesting to approach, maybe as a journalist as well. But it seems like more dark is better, that's what it seems like when I talk to these people sometimes. And that's a total misunderstanding of him I think. It's so easy to speak to that part of him. But that is certainly not what I wanted to explore with this film (Kowalczyk).

To fit other audiences, Hammer tries to give a warmer approach to the novel; showing the problem of people that live on the edge but with a more humoristic tone.

As can be seen, Hammer's adaptation of Bukowski's *Factotum*, maintains the essence of the novel, depicting Chinaski as an alcoholic and womanizer writer. However, some important features change due to cultural and historical influences, in this case the depiction of the work system. Taking the Norwegian working-class features, I think it is clear that Hammer has been influenced by his own culture, and at the same time by the time he was living in; likewise, regarding cultural influence, the reception context has its part too, these cultural and historical changes also result of this influence, modifying the adaptation in order to appeal the audience of 2005, as well as Bukowski's literary disciples. All of these cultural and historical influences that we see reflected in adaptation reflect the ideas of the adaptation theories discussed above. This adaptation separates

itself from the context of the original work, representing behaviors from its own context; the original characteristics transferred to this different context generate a new vision of the events. In relation to the predominant cultural element of this adaptation, the work system, we see that they have to do with the levels at which the culture manifests itself, the artifacts, such as the non-distinction in dress or how they refer to each other equally whatever the position, as well as the values and assumptions, which are reflected in the fact that these behaviors are taken for granted in Norwegian society.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The previous analysis has proven that the three film adaptations of Bukowski's works were influenced by their historical and cultural context. Through this analysis, I believe that the aims of the study have been achieved. In this vein, all adaptations work/function as culturally-embedded texts in which each director has decided which aspects of their culture and the time in which they were created appear. This strengthens the theories on this issue within the field of adaptation studies, providing a new case that confirms theories already formulated.

With regard to Dominique Derudder's adaptation, *L'amour est un Chien de l'enfer*, we have been able to verify that aspects of the director's culture have indeed been reflected in the adaptation. Of course, these factors that are represented, such as the construction of the Flemish identity, are also influenced by the historical context, since, as we have explained, the problem of identity in Belgium continues to this day. Moreover, we have seen that the context of reception also influences in this case, because these situations are also represented in order to make the audience, especially the Belgian audience, feel identified with the problems that the director is dealing with.

Moving on to the next adaptation, *Lune Froide* by Patrick Bouchitey, we have been able to appreciate how the director addresses several issues that were a concern for France at the end of the century. Expressing the different traumas after the Second World War, reflecting the numb behavior of the population in his characters, and even using literary and thought currents to his own advantage, such as existentialism, to generate such a crazy world. At the same time, he has also dealt with themes that go back even further, such as colonization and the racism it has generated up to the time when Bouchitey made the film.

Finally, the most recent adaptation, *Factotum* by Bent Hammer, shows us the

reality of Chinaski in a kinder world than the one Bukowski depicted in his literature. The depiction of a kinder work system is palpable, this is because the labour system Hammer has experienced in his native Norway is far more benevolent than the American one of the 1940s. The fact that the film was made in the early 21st century has also been seen as an influence as many of the jobs Bukowski named in his novels, based on the low-skilled jobs that emerged after the Second World War, did not exist at the time Hammer created the adaptation.

No matter how one feels about his work, the impact of Bukowski's work on popular culture cannot be overstated. These are but some of the film adaptations of his work. Future research may extend the tenets of this paper to the study of other movies based on the bibliography of L.A.'s enfant terrible to state that one of their common points, apart from being adaptations of the same author's works, is that they are all influenced by cultural and historical contexts. Furthermore, the extension of the study would help to increase the area of adaptation studies with regard to the influence of these contexts on adaptations of literary works to film.

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