Logos
ΛÓΓΟΣ Revista de Lingüística, Filosofía y Literatura

# Literary Film Adaptation for Screen Production: the Analysis of Style Adaptation in the Film *Naked Lunch* from a Quantitative and Descriptive Perspective

## Adaptación fílmica literaria para la gran pantalla: análisis de la adaptación de estilo en el film *El Almuerzo Desnudo* desde una perspectiva cualitativa y descriptiva

### Alejandro Torres Vergara

University of Sheffield
United Kingdom

*alejandrotorresvergara@gmail.com*

**Abstract:** The study of film adaptations, particularly those coming from literature, has been growing at a rapid rate during the last years due to the amount of adaptations coming from both mainstream and independent film industries. The focus of these studies though is generally addressed to best sellers where the literary style is clearly adaptable to the screen; however, there are cases where the adaptive process has resulted in an entirely different outcome. *Naked Lunch*, written by William Burroughs and adapted to screen by David Cronenberg, represents a bold change if compared with other novels turned into films. The purpose of this article is to descriptively analyse the literary style in order to understand how it has been represented and adapted into Cronenberg's film. The analysis will be performed helped with computer-based tools to support statements, using the novel itself as corpus and adding theoretical ideas from Leech and Short's perspectives. The results suggest that the author's corrosive, sexually-fuelled claustrophobic style has been translated following three patterns in terms of adaptation theory, although Burroughs, in the hands of Cronenberg, becomes an almost new classification of adaptation, not only adding literary features to the film, but also distinguishable core moments of the writer's life to the final product. The analysis conducted encourages the study of other uncommon adaptations from literary authors in order to understand the adaptive process followed by filmmakers.

**Keywords:** film adaptation - literary style - routines - screen production - computer-based

**Resumen:** El estudio de las adaptaciones fílmicas ha ido en considerable ascenso los últimos años, particularmente aquellas que provienen del ámbito literario, debido a la gran cantidad de ellas provenientes tanto de la industria convencional como de la industria independiente. El foco de estos estudios se dirige principalmente a best sellers cuyo estilo literario es adaptable a la pantalla. Sin embargo, existen casos donde los resultados del proceso adaptativo son totalmente diferentes. *El Almuerzo Desnudo*, novela escrita por William Burroughs y adaptada a la pantalla por David Cronenberg, representa un atrevido cambio si se compara con otras novelas adaptadas a cine. El propósito de este artículo es analizar descriptivamente su estilo literario para comprender cómo ha sido representado y adaptado por Cronenberg. El análisis se realizará con la ayuda de herramientas computacionales para apoyar las aseveraciones, además del uso de la novela misma como corpus y las ideas teóricas a partir de las pespectivas de Leech y Short. Los resultados sugieren que el estilo claustrofóbico y corrosivo del autor ha sido traducido siguiendo tres patrones ligados a la teoría de la adaptación, aunque Burroughs, en las manos de Cronenberg, se convierte en una nueva clasificación en términos de adaptación: no sólo agrega al producto final rasgos distintivos literarios sino que también momentos importantes de la vida del autor. El análisis realizado estimula el estudio de otras adaptaciones no clásicas de autores literarios de manera de entender el proceso adaptativo que siguen los directores.

**Palabras clave:** adaptación fílmica - estilo literario - rutinas - producción audiovisual - computer-based

## 1. Introduction: exterminate all rational thought

Since the beginning of cinema as industrial discipline, adaptations have played an important role as source of ideas and themes to attract the general public (Corrigan, 2012: 17). The first registered adaptation, a clear referent to Goethe's oeuvre, is found in the work of the Lumière Brothers: *Faust - apparition de Méphistophélès* (1897), it's a film which together with other adaptations developed during the period may serve as an example of filmmakers using different thematic sources. Among these themes, it is possible to find passages from the Bible, fairy tales such as *Cinderella* and others written by the Grimm Brothers, and detective stories, particularly from *Sherlock Holmes* adventures, all of them used as inspiration and to create screenplays. In terms of popularity/revenues, *Greed*, directed by Von Stroheim in 1924, it's considered the most celebrated adaptation of these decades (Corrigan, 2011: 189). As countless examples appear, it is possible to establish that the use of literary texts as main source for adaptations is not a new trendy process which belongs to contemporary filmmaking, but a practice related with screen production commonly used since the early days of cinema (Andrew, 2009: 422).

Presently, multiple adaptations have been developed for cinema, ranging from classic novels, theatrical plays, and short stories, to comic books, teen novels, and even video games (Corrigan, 2012: 12-16). According to Hutcheon, only in 2010 there were only two original productions and five adaptations among the top ten grossing list (US only), contrasting with the five

original productions and only three adaptations during 2000 (2006: 4). Due to the attention adaptations have received academically, the number of scholars studying film adaptation and developing new research and theories has increased— a phenomenon which has led to the rise in studies and frameworks towards cinematic adaptations and its relation to literature. This *new dawn* has also led to the development of new categories and frameworks particularly focused on analysis. Although some researchers have dedicated to the study of fidelity, there have been others interested in the descriptive analysis of such adaptations, that is, research embedded with the ideas of Gideon Toury and the influence of an empirical, descriptive (how it is) rather than prescriptive (how it should be) approach (Cattrysse, 1996: 168-169), an view which will be revisited in this article.

In today's film industry, there is a tendency among film directors and producers to avoid literary sources with a certain style or author, as the results may undermine their careers, particularly those sources which are cherish by a strong fandom, an all-time classic, or pieces which contain complex, distinctive writing styles, almost impossible to translate to celluloid: the notion of *unfilmability*. What would happen when an adaptation's source material has a completely distinctive style —an unfilmable material— which aims to be adapted for screen production? Such adaptation may not be available under the three main categories in terms of adaptations suggested by Andrew: transposition (literal transfer), commentary (text is somewhat altered) and analogy (text is used as departure). Examples have been observed of brave filmmakers using these types of texts as base for adaptations with more than modest results: Hunter S. Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, directed by Terry Gilliam (1998), Cormac McCarthy's *No Country for Old Men*, directed by Ethan and Joel Cohen (2007)— and of course, *Naked Lunch*.

This article will descriptively analyse the style of a literary work and its adaptation for film production aiming to compare both pieces. The author proposes that as there are too many and varied forms to assess style in a literary work, there has to be a selection of particular linguistic options made by the author, that is, to select which style markers to use, then the main focus is not lost. Further, it is inferred the final product in the chain of production, the adapted film, escapes the current classifications available in adaptation theory; therefore, the film belongs to a new category. Thereafter, the author will refer to the Canadian director David Cronenberg and the transfer from the novel's literary style to the film of the same name, with Peter Weller in the main role as William Lee, the exterminator and Burroughs' alter ego. To support this statement, the term *style* will be defined in relation with literature and film, then the style of the novel *Naked Lunch* (William S. Burroughs, 1959) will be analysed descriptively, and finally the film style will be discussed. Even when most of the analysis will be descriptively made, the author will also use two freeware, analytical tools in order to analyse the text: *Tropes*, developed by Pierre Molette and Agnes Landré on the basis of the work of Rodolphe Ghiglione, and *AntConc 3.4.4*, a corpus analysis toolkit for concordancing and text analysis developed by Laurence Anthony from the Waseda University, Japan. For the text analysis, the author will use *Naked Lunch - The Restored Text*, edited by Grauerholz and Miles (2005 edition) and the already mention methodologies. For the film analysis, the author will base the analysis on Kress and Van Leeuwen's *The Grammar of Visual Design* (1996) and the Bluray version of Naked Lunch published by Criterion Collection in 2013.

## 2. Theoretical Framework: I liked the book better

### 2.1. Literary Style: definition and delimitation

As it was mentioned in the introduction, before discussing and analysing *Naked Lunch* as novel, it is necessary to establish what has been considered *style* in relation with the type of texts which will be discussed, i.e.: the literary style. The definition of the term style is a battle that is still being fought: authors Carter and Simpson (1995: 2-3) describe a paper published by Roman Jakobson in 1958 as the first landmark, from an historical perspective, regarding the union of linguistics with literary studies. One of the first purposes of the new trend in stylistics during this period was to define *style*, and in the process several areas of knowledge contributed

with aspects from their own disciplines: anthropology, literary criticism, and linguistics. From a psychological view, for instance, style is considered as a form of deviation:

> Style is defined as an individual's deviations
> from norms for the situations in which he is encoding,
> these deviations being in the statistical properties
> of those structural features for which there exists
> some degree of choice in his code (Osgood, 1960: 293).

The fusion of literary criticism with stylistics derived then into what was later called *New Criticism*, whilst the influence of Chomsky during 1960s gave life to a transformational-generative approach to stylistics (Moss, 2014: 17-18). The formalist linguists influenced by the Russian School did also address the question all were trying to unveil: what is style. During 1970s, formalism and functionalism clashed; the first is system-dependent and at the same time independent of the context, functionalism was defined by its uses and functions (Carter and Simpson, 1995: 2-3). All these previous examples help to illustrate that the definition of style has been difficult to establish, and therefore it has to be defined and set in a given context, that is, according to what will be its used. Too wide and too narrow definitions will not help to delimit the concept for the purposes of this analysis. In this regard, authors Leech and Short offer a more practical and functional approach to the same question, that is, the identification of style with Saussure's *parole* ("particular uses of a system or code"), and by doing so they have defined and limited the concept of style based on the particular domain from which the corpus for its definition will be obtained (2007: 9-10). Although narrowing too much the target corpus has proved to be negative in the past by favouring "short lyric poem [analysis] rather than larger macro-structural units," as Carter and Simpson argued (1995: 3), Leech and Short's approach to stylistics starts with the basic premise that literary style is "the linguistic characteristics of a particular text" (2007: 11).

Based on Leech and Short's discussion over the meaning of style, it can be argued that their comprehensive and unifying perspective aims to set style's wide definition in the context of its purposes: "style is the way a language is used, it is associated with Saussure's parole rather than langue, and is characterised by the "choices made from the repertoire of the language" (2007: 28-33). In addition to this, the domain or particularities will be the main elements used to define style. Leech concludes:

> (i) Style is a way in which language is used […].
> (ii) Therefore, style consists in choices made from the repertoire of the language.
> (iii) A style is defined in terms of a domain of a language use (e.g.: what choices are made by a particular author, in a particular genre, or in a particular text.) […].
> (vii) Stylistic choice is limited to those aspects of linguistic choice which concern alternative ways of rendering the same subject matter (2007: 31).

To set an example, among of the particularities of *Naked Lunch* can be mention that Burroughs was part of a North American countercultural group of authors labelled as *The Beat Generation* (along with Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg as main references) who used semi-journalistic, drug-induced written constructions and had similar particular thematic interests. Finally, and most importantly (and controversial among authors) is the notion that only the linguistic options which are used to address a subject from different perspectives will be the ones limiting style as concept (Leech and Short, 2007: 32), in contrast with earlier theorization which included all types of linguistic options.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. *Novel descriptive and quantitative analysis*

The analysis of the text's style has to be done identifying patterns of these linguistic options, not analyse them in isolation (Leech and Short, 2007: 34). Under these terms, the notion of

frequency, the reduction of cohesion and coherence, which is important for the identification of style (ibid, 2007: 35). According to this, frequency is measurable and quantifiable, particularly with the use of computational tools. Nevertheless, Leech and Short themselves (2007: 38) are emphatic in stating that the quantification is useful only to prove a point regarding a particular feature, not the whole style of a particular text. For that reason, and appealing to create a complete analysis of parts of an oeuvre which would need extensive further analysis, this article will use both, a quantitative evidence for frequencies and descriptive, "stylistic intuition" (2007: 38) for the *Naked Lunch* excerpts. As per his words, "numerical data should be adapted to the need" (2007: 38). Even when quantitative data can measure the obvious, in the case of Naked Lunch analysis there will be assessed the style markers: salient features which combine literary and linguistic discrimination (2007: 56). Along with this statement, Biber also points out that the analysis of a literary text "depends on both quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques" (2011: 16).

*3.2. Corpus*

*Naked Lunch* was written during 1950s and describes surrealistic periods of William S. Burroughs' life through New York, Mexico, and Tangiers' international quarter. The novel is presented as series of twenty three self-contained vignettes or *routines* (Loranger, 1999), as the author called them: randomly ordered sketches or small passages of his interactions with other drug addicts, descriptions of bizarre hallucinations provoked by *the sickness* (Burroughs' drug addiction), explicit sexual verses depicting bodily functions, and straightforward reflections on his life as homosexual and addict. Hantke however describes the novel as the representation of the interest in "writing machines, competition and collaboration among authors, the origins of creativity in addiction, sexuality, personal and historical trauma, and insanity" (2007: 170). Written with no main protagonist and no continuous narrative context (Beard, 1996), these routines cover Kafkaesque and often cathartic scenarios from first and third person narrators, often using a journalistic approach with abundant underground and drug-related jargon, explicit sexual descriptions and obscenity, and archetypical features of detective stories' plots. Even in the absence of main characters, there are recurrent participants that re-appear in some routines, such as William Lee (Burroughs' alter ego), the obscure Dr Benway, who applies unethical treatment techniques to patients suffering *the sickness*, William Selway, another of Burroughs' alter egos and the detectives Hauser and O'Brien.

Based on the previously explained concept of style developed by Carter and Simpson, the approach to Naked Lunch can be also done by identifying the general stylistic features of the novel. However, as it was mentioned, the style should be used in this case in the context of the film's style analysis, therefore, features such as structure (which *Naked Lunch* doesn't have), syntax, segmentation, and textual relations will not help to emphasize Burroughs' style: lexis appears then to be the most salient, as well as the recurrent thematic themes the writer explores in his novels (drug addiction and his effects). Burroughs' lexis is a vocabulary charged with sexual innuendos, slang, repetition, accurate scientific terminology and drug subculture slang. Due to the dissimilar stories, it is difficult to establish a definite, comprehensive literary style in *Naked Lunch*: part of it is written using "literal, concrete approach" and "almost scientific prose" (Lydenberg, 1987: 12), whilst other is simply surrealistic, automatic madness. Burroughs' style appears closely related with metonymy rather than metaphor, Lydenberg argues, as the beatnik writer preferred "association by contiguity, movement within a single word, combination of one word with another, it is literal, logical, immanent, incomplete, urgent and temporal" (1987: 31). Below there is an example of Burroughs' automatic writing where the use of particular lexis gives the reader an idea of the suffocating and haunting environments *Naked Lunch* describes:

> He stood there in elongated court room shadow, his
> face torn like a broken film by lusts and hungers of
> larval organs stirring in the tentative ectoplasmic flesh
> of junk kick (ten days on ice at time of the First Hear-
> ing) flesh that fades at the first silent touch of junk.
> I saw it happen. Ten pounds lost in ten minutes stand-

ing with the syringe in one hand holding his pants up
with the other, his abdicated flesh burning in a cold
yellow halo, there in the New York  hotel  room...
[...] (1959: 15).

Due to this complexity, after the description made about the text, a quick analysis using *Tropes* tool will back up the some of the previous statements.

## 4. Results and discussion

Tables 1 to 4 show the percentage of verbs, adjectives, connectors and modalities used. The narrative style and in first person used by Burroughs throughout his text relies heavily on the cut-up technique developed by the author before, and the narrative style is seeing in the high percentage of factive and stative verbs. In terms of adjectives, the tendency in the occurrence is to use those which express strangeness, depression, anxiety, and describe human bodily functions (Figure 1). As per Tropes, using the first reference field, 1.244 words are under the category of Body (teeth, blood, penis, palate, semen, and the like), and then those related with Animals (bedbugs, vultures, centipedes), Health, particularly those associated with mental diseases (catatonia, schizophrenia, anxiety, depressant), and Sexuality, where certain routines of the book are charged with sexual ambivalence (free love, homosexuals, ass, whorehouse, cunt). The morpheme sex, in particular, appears 67 times around the text, and its concordances reflect varies examples of adjectives and nouns often used in clinical-related environments depicted in the novel (Figure 2).

| * Verbs : | | |
|---|---|---|
| Factive | 51.60% | 5119 |
| Stative | 27.80% | 2756 |
| Reflexive | 20.30% | 2012 |
| Performative | 0.40% | 42 |

**Table 1.** Verbs: results from text analysis in Tropes tool.

| * Adjectives : | | |
|---|---|---|
| Objective | 71.00% | 4811 |
| Subjective | 22.50% | 1523 |
| Numeral | 6.60% | 445 |

**Table 2.** Adjectives: results from text analysis in Tropes tool.

| * Connectors : | | |
|---|---|---|
| Condition | 3.00% | 99 |
| Cause | 4.30% | 140 |
| Goal | 0.20% | 6 |
| Addition | 63.00% | 2063 |
| Disjunction | 5.60% | 184 |
| Opposition | 6.00% | 196 |
| Comparison | 11.70% | 382 |
| Time | 6.20% | 204 |
| Place | 0.00% | 1 |

**Table 3.** Connectors: results from text analysis in Tropes tool.

| * Modalities : | | |
|---|---|---|
| Time | 20.80% | 716 |
| Place | 23.40% | 805 |
| Manner | 16.80% | 577 |
| Assertion | 5.90% | 203 |
| Doubt | 1.40% | 48 |
| Negation | 16.70% | 574 |
| Intensity | 15.00% | 517 |

**Table 4.** Modalities: results from text analysis in Tropes tool.



**Figure 1.** Each reference appears as a sphere, whose surface is proportional to the words it contains.

| Concordance Hits 64 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Hit | KWIC | File |
| 1 | Remember the Bismarck Archipelago. No overt homosexuality. A functioning police state nee | 4. Benway.txt 3 13 |
| 2 | force me to commit all kinda awful sex acts in return for junk" I could | 1. And start west.txt 0 1 |
| 3 | what circumstances you have uh indulged in homosexual acts???" His voice drifts away. "If | 18. The Examination.txt 17 10 |
| 4 | cases of halitosis and unpopularity with all sexes, ages and conditions of homo sapiens. In | 4. Benway.txt 3 22 |
| 5 | the sky. Carl stared back at a homosexual American tourist who dropped his eyes | 18. The Examination.txt 17 2 |
| 6 | of the Bismarck Archi- pelago. No overt homosexuality among them. God damned matr | 4. Benway.txt 3 9 |
| 7 | , 21, El Morocco, Stork, but no time for sex, and all the time worrying about his | 14. Ordinary Men and Women.txt 13 2 |
| 8 | the Zone is transacted. A hum of sex and commerce shakes the Zone like a | 17. Interzone.txt 16 1 |
| 9 | the actual ex- citement is not primarily sexual, and the climax is the separation when | 7. Hospital.txt 6 6 |
| 10 | thread of blood... I am forget- ting sex and all sharp pleasures of the body -- | 7. Hospital.txt 6 2 |
| 11 | the American Cemetery... And Lee back to sex and pain and time and Yage, bitter | 24. Atrophied Preface - Wouldn't you.txt 23 1 |
| 12 | out fore and aft like an innaresting sex arrangement. This book spill off the page | 24. Atrophied Preface - Wouldn't you.txt 23 3 |
| 13 | is a means he degrades the female sex by forcing his chicks to swallow all | 3. The Rube.txt 2 1 |
| 14 | as of right now... Put in that sex-changed Liz athlete... She's a fulltime | 7. Hospital.txt 6 1 |
| 15 | an Elder in the First Denominational Non- sextarian Church and I ain't had a | 16. The County Clerk.txt 15 1 |
| 16 | and hypnosis. You can make a square heterosexual citizen queer with this angle... that | 4. Benway.txt 3 3 |
| 17 | 23, 86, 57 and 97... and the laboratory." "Are homosexuals classed as deviants?' "No. Remember | 4. Benway.txt 3 12 |
| 18 | some men and women prefer the uh sexual company of their own sex. We do | 18. The Examination.txt 17 5 |
| 19 | d damned matriarchy. All matriarchies anti- homosexual, conformist and prosaic. Find yours | 4. Benway.txt 3 10 |
| 20 | get back to this uh matter of sexual deviation. Frankly we don't pretend to | 18. The Examination.txt 17 4 |

**Figure 2**. Part of the concordances with the morpheme sex along the Burroughs' text (AntCon Tool).

*4.1. Building the Argument: Possibility.*

*4.1.2. Film adaptation analysis.*

Naked Lunch and its adaptation to screen can be arguably considered a riddle from the point of view of adaptation theory: instead of faithfully translating Burroughs' vision in the script, Cronenberg opted for using the novel as secondary source, alternating routines from the book with passages of the writer's real life, creating an almost unclassifiable final product which explores an artist's writing block and his creative process (Beard, 1996). The film opens with a scene in New York in 1953, with main character William "Bill" Lee (Peter Weller) working as an exterminator whilst his wife Joan (Judy Davis) becomes addicted to the bug killer powder he uses at work. His friends Martin and Hank (analogies for writers Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac) incite him to continue with his writing, and it is during one of their meetings at Lee's place, Joan is accidentally shot in the head in an attempt to play a *William Tell routine*. This scene is probably the most important scene throughout the whole film: in both fiction and real life, the accidental death of Burroughs' wife represented the start of his career as writer (metaphorically, in the film Lee exchanges the gun for a typewriter). Lee escapes to the Interzone, an exotic place full of writers where drug-dealing of uncommon and prohibited substances takes place, and these writers establish creative relationships with their own talkative Clark-Nova typewriters which turn into bugs with speaking rectums. The same scene is also re-enacted towards the end as a sort of deja-vu from which Bill cannot escape and ultimately will haunted him for the rest of his life. The film also depicts Burroughs' exploration of his sexuality by adding characters such as Kiki, Burroughs' Arabic lover in real life, as well as governmental plots and schemes. In the final part of the film, it is revealed Lee is in the process of writing a novel called Naked Lunch, and these scenes are complemented with readings of entire passages from the novel.

The novel's style has been used in the film by adding part of the main characters and sections of the main routines (the novel has no main connectivity and Burroughs himself said it could be read starting from any routine), although Cronenberg has used the very effects provoked by novel (unpleasantness, uneasiness, claustrophobia, horror), the description of the chaotic scenarios, and the lexis and themes and transferred them to his characteristic gruesome directing style. An example of this argument may be the representation of the talking bugs, the representation of the monster *Mugwump* drinking in an Interzone bar, and the lascivious bodily interactions of writers and writing machines, part of Cronenberg' distinctive style already seen in *Videodrome* (1983), *The Fly* (1986) and the posterior *Crash* (1996). In this regard, the film

takes distance from other novels adapted to screen where the source has minimally changed, e.g.: the already mentioned *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (Terry Gilliam, 1998) and *High Fidelity* (Stephen Frears, 2000), adaptations which have been chronologically transferred and include complete verses turned into dialogue using voice over, or *Sin City* (Robert Rodriguez, 2005), which uses the graphic novel of the same name as ultimate storyboard.

Although *Naked Lunch* film starts from the paradoxical premise of its unfilmability (Hantke, 2007), and a Cronenberg stating that a possible faithful adaptation of the book "will be banned in every country," (Rodley: 1992), the director intelligently merges the novel, his typewriter and the writer himself into the film, using important passages of Burroughs' life to appear as main events in the film, such as the mentioned accidental shooting of the writer's wife. Cronenberg also adds characters playing important roles in the development of the novel and helped him to organise his elusive writing, which subsequently resulted in a novel which order was accidentally altered by the printer (Rodley: 1992). Both authors are highly descriptive and concrete, one visually and the other written and the film make possible this union due to their thematic similarity.

### 4.2. Building the Argument: necessity

### 4.2.1. Adaptation as a reflection of literary style

Directors such as Cronenberg have a distinctive, strong filmmaking style which they use as their signature over their films, e.g.: Quentin Tarantino's 360 shots, Ingmar Bergman's religious themes and close-ups, Martin Scorsese's city environments and gangs stories. Because of this, most of the film directors with distinctive style avoid to use original texts "too strong, too present in the audience's mind" (Hantke, 2007: 180), in order not to disappoint the general public with a less satisfying version. Cronenberg is well-known for his gruesome visual style, gory trademark effects, and suggestive, surreal themes: at the beginning of his career as filmmaker he was called *Baron Blood* by critics. However, the use of *Naked Lunch*, an iconic novel fame for its difficulty and the aura surrounding it, would presuppose an identification of the features of Burroughs' writing style (particularly those related to themes and descriptions) to be transferred to the celluloid to demonstrate the pre-existence of the novel's iconography (Hantke, 2007). According to Cronenberg, he joined Burroughs' sensibility to create "a third thing" which was neither Burroughs nor Cronenberg, but a result rarely seen in adaptations.

At the time of the film adaptation, the novel had already an important group of followers. Whilst some critics labelled *Naked Lunch* as mere pornography, others praised its creativity and boldness, claiming the novel was a true cult phenomenon (Creed, 2000). The adaptation perhaps did not include all the passages from the novel, however, it does preserve its spirit and subsequently the representation of this spirit will take future readers to search for the original source. One of the examples of this representation and irony with which Cronenberg captures the film viewer is found in Lee's lines "these are the remains of my last typewriting machine" whilst he watches a bag full of drugs (1:14:55): although scholars recognise in a film adaptation only a final product regardless its source, the use of these historical inside jokes taken from the personal history of Burroughs contribute to the identification of readers with the film, especially in cult novels as *Naked Lunch*. Therefore, the use at least of small features of the author or novel's literary style plays an important role in an adaptation and should be included as areas to cover by the scriptwriter.

### 4.2.2. Literary Style and Screen Adaptation relation

As it has been mentioned throughout this article, *Naked Lunch* is not an ordinary adaptation. The script was written by Cronenberg, creating a fusion of his directing style and Burroughs narrative, thus very little of the original text's dialogues survive: paragraphs used in other contexts, most of them recited or read by the same characters who wrote them or participated in their creation, e.g.: William Burroughs represented by Lee recites full passages of his previous

book *Queer* (published in 1985), and later tells the infamous *Naked Lunch* routine of a man that taught his rectum to speak (Lydenberg, 1987), whilst the personification of Ginsberg in the film recites verses of the first, nameless chapter. Other passages taken from the novel are part of the routines *The Black Meat, Hassam's Rumpus Room,* and *Ordinary Men and Women.*

In the following extract from the film (23:21 to 24:07), one of the characters, Martin, recites verses verbatim taken form the first chapter of the novel:

> Followers of obsolete, unthinkable trades doodling in Etruscan, addicts of drugs not yet synthesized, pushers of souped-up harmine, junk reduced to pure habit offering precarious vegetable serenity, liquids to induce Latah, Tithonian longevity serums, black marketeers of World War III, excusers of telepathic sensitivity, osteopaths of the spirit, investigators of infractions denounced by bland paranoid chess players, servers of fragmentary warrants taken down in hebephrenic shorthand charging unspeakable mutilations of the spirit, bureaucrats of spectral departments, officials of unconstituted police states, broke [...] (Cronenberg, 2007).

From this extract it can be inferred Cronenberg wanted to "transmit a number of events from Burroughs' life which are seen as determining and accompanying the composition of the book" (Beard, 1996: 824), therefore Cronenberg did not need to use more dialogue taken from the novel, and the parts used are recited exactly as the novel, integrating them without alterations. Regardless, other passages not present in the novel but crafted for the script reveal that the style has been maintained, creating a rich text full of references, e.g.: during a conversation between Lee and his wife whilst she is injecting herself bug powder (07:41-08:10), she reflects on the effects of dope - "It's a literary high [...] a Kafka high, you feel like a bug," reference to the alienating and claustrophobic world depicted in the novel.

## 5. Conclusion

This article has addressed the question whether is it possible or necessary to represent the style of a literary work when adapting it for a screen production, to which the author has interpreted the title to confirm it is indeed possible and necessary to represent narrative style of a narrative text in film adaptations. The interpret the article's title, the author has first discussed what can be understood for style in the context of this film adaptation. Following, the style of the William S. Burroughs' novel *Naked Lunch* has been explained and analysed using both a descriptive approach and a more quantitative approach, helped with computer-based tools, although the analysis has not been thorough due to the complexity of the theme and text's organisation. Then, the main argument has been separated into two parts: Possibility, in order to explain how director David Cronenberg dealt with the adaptation, and Necessity, to elaborate the reasons why style adaptations should reflect the narrative style of a novel, particularly those of iconic status. Regarding the possibility of adapting literary style to the screen, it has been argued that Cronenberg's film reflects Burroughs and his literary world in the way he recreates the atmosphere which surrounds *The Naked Lunch.* In terms of the necessity to transfer a particular literary style to film, in the context of Burroughs and his trademark literary style, the no-inclusion of features of his writing —smartly using scenes from his life in Cronenberg's— would have resulted perhaps in a film lacking the flavour of the original author, and therefore, it would have presupposed the film's commercial failure.

There are areas though where it seems the categories used in adaptation theory are not enough, especially when these adaptations have been forged with other sources and the result borderlines the unclassifiable or when the three categories mentioned at the beginning become insufficient after careful examination of the adaptive process: Cronenberg's *Naked Lunch* is arguably the main exponent of the limits of categories, creating perhaps what it may be called a meta-adaptation or a docu-adaptation where fiction and reality are bound together. In the same manner, there are other film adaptations which tend to expand the limits of both adaptation and filmmaking such as the artist biopic *American Splendor* (2003), film which follows Harvey Peckar, author, oeuvre, and creative process, similar yet different in genre to Cronenberg's adaptation. Therefore, these new categories in terms of film adaptations from literary works

represent a new probable area for future research.

**References**

Andrew, D. (2009). From Concepts in Film Theory: Adaptation. In: L. Braudy and M. Cohen (eds.) *Film Theory and Criticism, Seventh Edition* (pp. 372-380). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Beard, W. (1996). Insert Poetics: Cronenberg's Naked Lunch. *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* 23 (3), 823-852.

Biber, D. (2011). Corpus Linguistics and the study of Literature: Back to the Future?. *Scientific Study of Literature* 1 (1), 15-23. DOI: 10.1075/ssol.1.1.02bib

Burroughs, W. (1959). *Naked Lunch.* Glasgow: Harper Collins Publishing.

Carter, R. & Simpson, P. (1995). *Language, Discourse and Literature – An Introductory Reader in Discourse Stylistics.* London: Routledge Publishing.

Cattrysse, P. (1996). Descriptive and Normative Norms in Film Adaptation: The Hays Office and the American. *Cinémas: Journal of Film Studies* 6 (2-3), 167-188. DOI: 10.7202/1000978ar

Corrigan, T. (2001). *The Essay Film - From Montaigne, After Marker.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Creed, B. (2000). The Naked Crunch: Cronenberg's homoerotic bodies. In: M. Grant (ed.) *The Films of David Cronenberg* (pp. 84-101). Wilthshire: Flicks Books.

Cronenberg, D. (1992). *Naked Lunch* [DVD]. Los Angeles: Criterion Collection.

Hantke, S. (2007). Genre and Authorship in David Cronenberg's Naked Lunch. In: B. R. Palmer (ed.) *Twentieth-Century American Fiction on Screen* (pp. 170-185). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Leech, G. & Short, M. (2007). *Style in Fiction – A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose.* Harlow: Pearson Longman.

Loranger, C. (1999). This Book Spill off the Page in All Directions: What Is the Text of Naked Lunch?. *Postmodern Culture* 10 (1), 1-20. DOI: 10.1353/pmc.1999.0033

Lydenberg, R. (1987). *World Cultures: Radical Theory and Practice in William S. Burroughs' Fiction.* Illinois: University of Illinois Press.

Moss, L. (2014). Corpus Stylistics and Henry James' Syntax (Doctoral Thesis). University College London, London, UK.

Osgood, C., (1960). Some effects of motivation on style of encoding. In T. A. Sebeok (ed.), *Style in Language* (pp. 293-306). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Rodley, C. (1992). *Naked Making Lunch* [DVD]. Los Angeles: Criterion Collection.