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## Irony and Black Humor in Bukowski's *Hollywood and Pulp*: A Study of Linda Hutcheon's Two Postmodern Concepts

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### ABSTRACT

The present article tries to study irony and humor (black humor) in Charles Bukowski's *Hollywood and Pulp* in the light of Hutcheon's theoretical framework on the idea of playfulness to see how they could be interpreted in terms of postmodern fiction. The previous researchers have considered Bukowski's fictions; however, they did not regard them in respect of the concept of play. As a result, the aim of this study is to understand whether there is any relationship between Bukowski's ironical humorous language and Hutcheon's critical theories on irony and black humor as identifiable features of postmodern fiction or not? To achieve the end, the researcher is going to interpret these two novels' verbal ironies regarding Hutcheon's proposed ironic markers as well as the structural ironies and black humors with regard to the doctrines of the mentioned postmodern critic. Therefore, the analysis seems convincing enough not only to indicate the significant importance Hutcheon's critical theories on postmodernism, but also to claim that these two novels consist of the outstanding aspects of postmodern fiction including irony and black humor.

**Keywords:** Linda Hutcheon, Postmodern Fiction, Irony, Black humor, *Hollywood, Pulp*

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### 1. Introduction

What has attracted the attention of the current critics is the role of irony and humor in representing serious and significant issues. Linda Hutcheon is one of the literary critics who has emphasized on such a specific role of humor. As a contemporary Canadian postmodern critic and university professor of English and Comparative Literature, she has extended her contributions to literary criticism by theorizing and politicizing irony in her famous book entitled *Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony* (1994). Indeed, this book might be considered as the basic theoretical framework of this article in which the main focus is on verbal and structural irony. However, Hutcheon's main reputation relies upon her critical theories on postmodernism. In *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, she regards postmodern fiction as being playful; and a work could be

playful by being ironical or using black humor (1988).

Furthermore, Henry Charles Bukowski as the author of *Hollywood and Pulp* is a German-American prolific writer who became an important literary figure in the 1960s (Debritto, 2011:71). His literary works are surrounded through the themes of corruption of capitalism, working-class misery, boredom and absurdity, meaninglessness and unproductivity, poverty, gambling, drinking, and on the whole the failure of human relationships and the subsequent loneliness of individuals. Bukowski claimed that his novels are mostly autobiographical except the last one, *Pulp*. His style of writing also resembles that of Hemingway; it is simple, direct, straightforward, and short. Apparently, humor is the most remarkable element in his writings. In other words, he represented real life events and the facts of city life in a

comical and ironical manner which lead to create hilarious moments for his readers. Accordingly, *Hollywood* and *Pulp* as his last two novels might not be exceptions of employing irony, black humor, and on the whole the idea of playfulness. Therefore, the present article aims to study Bukowski's last two novels in the light of Hutcheon's critical theories of playfulness to see how they could be interpreted in respect of postmodern fiction's characteristics. To achieve this end, various verbal ironies that are recognized through Hutcheon's proposed ironic markers together with structural ironies and black humors existed in these two novels are going to be analyzed with regard to Hutcheon's discussed theories on irony and humor. But before that, the novelty of the following article will also be investigated.

## 2. Literature Review

Considering the previous studies on Charles Bukowski, previous research conductors have mostly focused on the issue of genre and gender, alcoholism, female characters and characterization, his poetry, his autobiographical fictions, and the importance of risk in his literary works. In this case, the researcher provides the most recent books, articles, and theses on Charles Bukowski in the following:

David Stephen Calonne wrote a book entitled *Charles Bukowski: Critical Lives* in 2012. He provides both personal and professional information regarding his life and describes the context in which each book was written. He also adds that Bukowski provided an original style as a mixture of lyric, violence, desperation, and a sense of humor throughout his career.

*Charles Bukowski* written by Gay Brewer in 1997 also could be considered as another critical overview on Bukowski's life. Although he set himself aside from Ernest Hemingway through using his sense of humor, Brewer represents him more similar to Hemingway in the aspect of heavy reliance on death, the male psyche, as well as dialogue.

The next one is *Contemporary Novelists* as a book edited by D. L. Kirkpatrick. Jay Dougherty as the author claims that Bukowski's style of writing like Hemingway includes simplicity, directness, straightforward without using any literary devices. He also states that humor which creates attraction is the most important element in his writing.

Don Strachan wrote an article entitled "Bukowski in Jet Stream of Words," in 2018. In this article, Don refers to

Bukowski's autobiographical fictions in which the main character is himself; an aging, alcoholic, ugly persona. Don adds that Bukowski most of the time got trapped by excess of writing; the concept which made him a prolific and sometimes even a hyper-prolific author.

Abel Debritto, on November 2017, also wrote an article entitled "Charles Bukowski Wrote So Fast His Publisher Couldn't Keep Up," discussing such a prolific American writer. In this article, the author describes Bukowski as a womanizer, drinker and dirty old man who was considered as a prolific author with just five thousands poems. He adds that Bukowski started to publish his works with the little magazine.

Furthermore, Mark Conway wrote another article entitled "Charles Bukowski" on July 2017. In this article, the author refers to Bukowski as a prolific poet, novelist, and short story writer who depicted both beauty and brutality of the world. Then he adds that Bukowski became wealthy from his writings at the end of his life. He describes Bukowski's life with a great focus on how he became a well-known author. According to him, Bukowski was highly influenced by Ernest Hemingway because he read most of his literary works.

Another work on Bukowski is "The Portrayal of Women in the Novels of Charles Bukowski," an extended essay written by Jani Korhonen on 2006, in which the author describes how Bukowski's attitude toward women has changed his novels as a result of the feminist movements to improve their position in the society. Bukowski saw positive points about women in *Hollywood*; however, he looked at them just as an object in his earlier novels.

The next article written on the author's work is William Anthony Nericcio's "Review of *Pulp* by Charles Bukowski" (Autumn 1995) in which the author describes Bukowski's last novel as a pulp fiction and sometimes as a detective story together with providing a brief summary on it. Moreover, Lauri Leinonen from University of Tampere submitted a thesis titled "'Magic and Terrible': Female Characters and Characterization in Charles Bukowski's *Post Office*, *Factotum* and *Women*" on April 2014. As the title shows, the researcher analyzes female characters as flat; discussing how Bukowski characterized them.

In addition, Mike Ryan from University of Louisiana in 2014 submitted a



thesis titled “‘no hope, just/booze and madness’: Connecting Social Alienation and Alcoholism in Charles Bukowski’s Autobiographical Fiction.” In this study, Ryan explores social alienation as a result of alcoholism in five autobiographical novels of Bukowski.

Another instance is “‘If you don’t gamble, you’ll never win’: The Importance of Risk in Charles Bukowski’s *Ham on Rye*, *Factotum*, *Post Office*, *Women*, and *Hollywood*,” a thesis submitted by Nathan Franklin from Middle Tennessee State University on 2013. Franklin focuses on the risk of gambling as a motif in his already-stated novels.

According to what have been said, it could be inferred that the following perspective on Bukowski’s works especially on his *Hollywood* and *Pulp* has been untouched by previous researchers. Therefore, the scholar tries to add a new study on Bukowski’s literary works through applying Hutcheon’s critical theories of the idea of playfulness on *Hollywood* and *Pulp*.

### **3. Theoretical Framework: Hutcheon’s Theories on Irony and Humor**

As stated in the introduction, Hutcheon as a postmodern critic who theorized irony in her *Irony’s Edge* relies mostly on irony, humor (black humor), and on the whole the idea of playfulness as postmodern strategies and also the remarkable characteristics of postmodern fiction. According to her, the definition of irony has been changed through times from “limited classical rhetorical trope” (1994:2) to “a more positive mode of artistic expression with renewed power as an engaged critical force, that is to say, as a rhetorical and structural strategy of resistance and opposition. In other words, irony today is neither trivial nor trivializing.” (Hutcheon, 1992:11-12). Apparently, Hutcheon’s perspective on irony is distinct from its classical definition as a pessimistic and absurdist notion. In other words, irony is not that simple literary device; the capability which is called ‘postmodern irony’ in her *Double Talking* (1992). Indeed, irony has the ability to make people uneasy or put them at the level of uncertainty; the process that not only is called ‘edge’ by Hutcheon, but also makes it different from other figures of speech. Therefore, she concentrates on the ‘transideological’ nature or politics of irony; that is to say irony might be used in political situations, dealing with variety of interests

which is resulted in undermining or authorizing set of beliefs or principles. According to her, such capability is also derived from the need to treat irony as a discursive strategy (1994).

In addition, she introduces two participants involved in irony: ‘the ironist’ and ‘the intended audiences’ (1994:10). However, sometimes the intended audiences fail to perceive the intended ironic meaning or even misinterpret it. In this case, she proposes ‘the interpreter’ along with ‘the ironist’ as two active parts in production and reception of irony (1994:11). Therefore, her main focus is on the interpreter rather than the ironist unlike previous studies on irony. As far as the interpreter might also fail to make ironist’s intended meaning, irony absolutely is a risky business according to her.

Another concept that has been discussed by Hutcheon is emotional impact of irony that is referred to level of irritating, mocking, attacking, as well as humiliating and embarrassing level that irony is able to provide. Consequently, it might be inferred that irony includes different affective responses from anger to delight together with various degrees of motivation from engaging to detaching emotion that would not be separated from its political nature. Therefore, depending on who uses irony and why (for what purpose) it is applied, it might bring a wide range from anger to delight (1994).

Accordingly, Hutcheon proposes two possible contradictory functions of irony that are derived from its transideological nature: one is affirmative or constructive; and the other is destructive or negative. Affirmative or constructive function appears when irony is used as a weapon against an authority and dominant power. In contrast, destructive function occurs in a position of being attacked or for those who expect absolute seriousness (1994:26).

Moreover, she insists on the seriousness of irony: “Of course, even humorous ironies can be deadly serious” (1994:25). Seemingly, irony-whether to be humorous or absolute serious-deals with seriousness and significance according to Hutcheon. For her, it is an appropriate way of being serious nowadays in order to show an awareness of facts and actual incidents. There are also some functions/roles of irony known as communicative functions that have been classified by Hutcheon in order to avoid any confusion in discovering ironical

values and appropriateness. These functions include: Reinforcing role as the most basic function with less critical edge; Complicating role that reflects richness of all art; Ludic role as the irony of teasing associated with wit and humor; Distancing role which connotes the idea of indifference; Self-Protective role that rejects any superiority; Provisional role which subverts any fixed position; Oppositional role that is mostly applied in race, class, gender, and sexuality; Assailing role as a destructive attack in order to have a corrective function; as well as Aggregative role as a social function to include those who comprehend irony and exclude those who do not (1994:44-50).

Unlike many theorists who believe that it is irony which creates a relationship between ironist and interpreter, Hutcheon claims that irony by itself needs a community to happen. Indeed, such a community is called 'discursive community' by her that is: "the norms and beliefs that constitute the prior understanding we bring to the utterance" (1994:137). It could be said that it refers to beliefs, expectations, knowledge, norms, habits, and even communicative strategies that are shared in a specific group as initial understanding to ironical utterances. As a result, irony as a social act needs a particular community not only in comprehending ironic meaning, but also in its coming into being and enabling it to happen. Therefore, it could be inferred that the same discursive community in production and reception of irony might help the interpreter to get ironic meaning properly.

Another important Hutcheon's theories on irony is the need for existence of ironic markers or signals. Indeed, these signals are employed by ironist as a clue to give hint to interpreter in recognition of irony (1994:144). She classifies these ironic markers into two broad categories of 'Paralinguistic or Paraverbal markers' and 'The five categories of signals'. 'Paralinguistic markers' include Gestural markers, Phonic markers, and some Graphic Punctuation signs. On the other hand, 'The five categories of signals' include exaggeration, literalization, repetition, contradiction, various changes of register, and some other signals that later were added by her.

Likewise, Hutcheon regards black humor as the most frequent form of satire that embodies corrective functions of deviations, lost norms, lost confidence,

sudden shocks in humorous and playful manner in *A Theory of Parody* (1985:79). Additionally, black humor like irony might be considered as a form of resistance against socio-political oppressions according to her. Thus, Doru Pop states: "As Linda Hutcheon has also put it, humor is about power relationships, and in any "tensioned" critical context, the subversive nature of dark humor, sometimes provides the only possible form of resisting social oppression (1994)" (2014:160). Seemingly, Hutcheon believes that dark humor along with irony, both as a kind of humor, might be functioned in the form of resistance and opposition while encountering social and political oppressions. In this case, these kinds of humor have the capability to deal with political situations and power relations and could be considered as postmodern strategies. It might also be inferred that Hutcheon has an optimistic attitude toward black humor comparing to previous critics. Indeed, critics mostly have relied on pointlessness of life and helplessness of modern man in defining black humor. For instance, Soukhanove and et al. define black humor in *The American Dictionary of The English Language*: "The juxtaposition, as in writing or drama, of morbid or absurd elements with comical or facial ones, especially so as to produce a shocking or disturbing effects" (1992:847). Accordingly, previous critics rely on the pessimistic aspect of irony rather than on its productivity like Hutcheon.

#### 4. Function of Playfulness in *Hollywood*

*Hollywood* as Bukowski's fourth novel was published in 1989. It is about Bukowski's personal experience of writing *Barfly* as the screenplay which is called *The Dance of Jim Beam* in the novel and the step by step process of making it into a movie. In other words, it is about the complicated process of making a film in Hollywood with all those difficulties and threats. Given the instances of playful utterances including the structural ironies and black humors together with the identified verbal ironies through the mentioned ironic markers that all derived from Bukowski's *Hollywood*, it could be inferred that Bukowski's intended audiences are not only Barbet Shroeder along with other members of Hollywood but also the existed absolute powers throughout the novel as well as heavy drinkers. In fact, Bukowski dedicates his novel to Barbet Shroeder through which he determines his main intended audience. Moreover, he entirely points to Hollywood and its



members through his ironical language in this novel. As far as he refers to the existed powers like Lido Mamin, Jean-Paul Sanrah, the community of whites, along with Friedman and Fischman whose manner of behaviors as the absolute authorities undermine and suppress their inferiors, the author also intends to make them as another intended audiences of the related ironies. Additionally, Bukowski admires drinking and considers it as an essential means in his writing which leads to make barflies and heavy drinkers as the intended audiences of some of his ironical utterances.

Furthermore, Bukowski in *Hollywood* discusses political issues like race discrimination or power relations through employing ironical and black humorous ways of speaking. As previously stated, Hutcheon concentrates on the 'transideological' nature of irony and relies on the role of black humor in political situations to provide resistance against existed social oppressions. In this novel, Bukowski reflects the problems of the blacks as a result of race discrimination without giving any commentary or moral judgement about such a political issue: "In passage such as this, Chinaski adapts the role of an observer, recording what he sees without adding anything further that might suggest he was prepared to discuss the plight of his neighbors in political terms. His depiction of the poverty characterizing his neighborhood is also noticeably free of moral judgement" (Bigna, 2005:141). According to Daniel Bigna, it could be inferred that Bukowski just wants to make his intended audiences aware of such a problematic issue through his playfulness. For instance, Chinaski states in *Hollywood*: "My tax consultant had suggested I purchase a house, and so for me it wasn't really a matter of 'white flight.'" (Bukowski, 1989:62). Through this ironical utterance, the author as the ironist probably intends to inform the problem of race discrimination by keeping himself away from the community of cruel whites. Additionally, Bukowski discusses Friedman as the existed absolute power dominated through the process of filmmaking, as well. According to the context of the novel, Friedman's cruel behavior as a financial backer of the film creates power relation in companion with Jon Pinchot and his team of shooting through repeatedly cancelling the movie which reminds the picture of the capitalist society in which the authority just expects

hardworking from the lower workers. According to Hutcheon, the ironical utterances related to the represented power relations bring delight for the suppressed like Jon Pinchot on the one hand, and bring anger for the dominated existed powers including Friedman and the community of whites on the other hand. Consequently, these utterances also act affirmatively when they are used as a weapon against the absolute authorities; however, they have the capability of being destructive for the existed powers like the whites which put them at the level of uncertainty. Besides the ironical utterances, the existed black humors are also able to provide a form of resistance against the existed absolute powers throughout the novel. As an example, Bukowski depicts the existed power relation among Friedman and Pinchot as his inferiors:

"I LOVE it when men work for NOTHING! I LOVE IT!"

"But...this is not *right*...those men have worked for *months*! You must give them *something*!"

"All right, I'll give them 15 thousand..."

"Only 30 thousand, for all those months of work?"

"No, the 15 thousand is for *both* of them..."

"But this is impossible..."

"Nothing is impossible..." He looked at me:

"Who's this guy?"

"He's the writer."

"He's an old guy. He won't live long. I cut him 10 thousand..."

"No, he's paid through me..."

"Then I cut you ten and you cut him ten."

"Harry, stop it, please..." (1989:116)

In this black humorous context, Bukowski represents the cruelty of Friedman as the existed power in filmmaking in which Pinchot's suffering is depicted absurd and pointless. Indeed, such a humorous context bring a form of resistance against Friedman's oppression as the dominant authority over Pinchot and his group.

In accordance with what has been said, it is clear that Bukowski proposes the complicated process of filmmaking in Hollywood, race discrimination, along with the existed authorities and power relations with all their injustices and oppressions as the existed serious issues through ironical and humorous language in this novel relying on the significant nature of playfulness. In this case, he reflects his awareness of the represented actual events and significant issues through his playful language rather than being trivial and ridiculous.

Whereas Hutcheon presents multiple functions of irony, Bukowski's represented ironical utterances in *Hollywood* are no exception of following some of these communicative functions. By concluding the identified ironical utterances in the novel under study, it could be claimed that Bukowski mostly operates the Ludic role and then the Assailing role of irony. For Hutcheon, these two functions include the similarity of having playful teasing, except for the Assailing role which also includes the corrective function of satiric irony:

Another related and also relatively benign function of irony would be the **LUDIC**. When viewed favorably, this is seen as the affectionate irony of benevolent **teasing**; it may be associated as well with **humor** and wit; of course, and therefore be interpreted as an estimable characteristic of **playfulness**.

The next function is one that I have rather awkwardly called the **ASSAILING** one, because I want to be able to draw upon the meaning of its Latin root, *assilire*, to leap upon. Yet, there does exist what could be interpreted as a positive motivation for "leaping upon" something, however vigorously, and that lies in the **corrective** function of **satiric** irony, where there is a set of values that you are correcting toward. (1994:46, 49-50)

Accordingly, Bukowski probably intends to reform the existed deviations including the Hollywood absurd lifestyle as well as the represented relentless power relations in the light of employing these two particular roles of irony.

As far as *Hollywood's* ironical utterances based on the content of the novel criticizes some issues regarding the Hollywood members and their futile way of life as well as the existed power relations, it is obvious that the interpreter is better to be belonged to some certain discursive communities related to the discussed issues. In other words, if the interpreter is a participant in the film industry or even belongs to the minor groups in relation to the dominant powers like Jon Pinchot and his team as certain discursive communities, he/she gets a better comprehending of Bukowski's ironical intents in this novel.

Considering Bukowski's existed verbal ironies in this novel, it could be stated that he uses both types of ironic signals including Paralinguistic markers and the mentioned categories of signals in recognition of *Hollywood's* verbal ironical statements depending on Hutcheon's

proposed ironic markers. In comparison to other signals, he mostly uses exaggeration, ellipsis, and changing tone of voice to give hint the existence of ironical utterances to the interpreter as one of his reader. For example, Chinaski states: "The business hasn't killed you yet" (Bukowski, 1989:138). Apparently, Bukowski operates the exaggerated way of speaking with changing from disappointment to delighted tone of voice in this ironical statement that is said by his alter-ego to Hector Blackford.

In addition to what has been already said, *Hollywood* includes some black humorous contexts whose aims are to correct the existed deviations. Indeed, Hutcheon regards black humor as a humor of deviations that is able to reform the existed inconsistencies and *Hollywood* is no exception of these humorous contexts. As far as he represents Jon Pinchot's feeling of terror and being threatened by that unknown person, privation and suffering of buying a house caused by the capitalist society, as well as Friedman's cruel behavior to subordinate Jon Pinchot and his team in the form of black humor, it could be inferred that he tries to reform such deviations and lost norms.

As stated in the introduction, Hutcheon considers irony, black humor, and on the whole the idea of playfulness as specific features of postmodern fiction. As far as Bukowski also employs the idea of playfulness to some extent in this literary work, it might be inferred that *Hollywood* is among other examples of postmodern fiction according to the critic. Therefore, Bukowski's playful language including both humor and irony makes his *Hollywood* as a postmodern fiction.

### 5. Ironical and Humorous Language in *Pulp*

Bukowski's last novel, *Pulp*, revolves around Nick Belane as a private detective who is trapped by some complicated cases. Initially, Lady Death asks him to find Celine who was dead some years ago according to Belane. Then, he has been asked to investigate some other similar cases like the Red Sparrow or Jeannie Nitro that finally end in his death. Absolutely, this novel that is the only one in which the narrator is Nick Belane rather than Bukowski's alter ego, Henry Chinaski, was published in 1994. Like previous section, studying *Pulp's* examples of playfulness including verbal and structural ironies together with black humorous contexts with regard to Hutcheon's critical perspective bring a series



of results which are going to be discussed in the following:

Bukowski like any other ironist might determine his intended audiences that should be recognized in the first step of analysis process. At the beginning of *Pulp*, Bukowski states: "Dedicated to bad writing" (1994:6). Apparently, Bukowski introduces some of his intended audiences through such a particular dedication together with choosing 'Pulp' for the name of his novel. Furthermore, some reviewers regard this novel as a pulp fiction in which the author criticizes the conventions of this specific genre writing. Consequently, the author determines pulp fiction writers including both detective and science fiction genre writers as his initial intended audiences. In addition, he discusses futile lives of individuals in today modern world from various aspects of life like solving detective cases, romantic relationships, and everyday conversations with bartenders in ironical manner according to the content of the novel under study. As a result, the modern individuals who are trapped in the represented futility might be regarded as another part of Bukowski's intended audience. In addition to what have been said, Alex Thornber declares in his review: "The looming nature of death is prevalent throughout this work. It is perhaps not surprising that Bukowski finished the novel just before his death." (2012:para.7). Consequently, death as the dominant theme is prevailed throughout the novel in the form of Lady Death or Jeannie Nitro. In this case, those who are near to death might be considered as another Bukowski's intended audiences. To conclude, Bukowski intends his ironical utterances to three particular groups of pulp fiction writers, the modern individuals, and those who are close to die.

Unlike the previous novel, this one deals less with political issues. In other words, Bukowski briefly criticizes the ideologies of the capitalist society as a kind of existed power relations through the ironical language of the narrator in this novel relying on Hutcheon's role of irony in political situations and power relations. For instance, Nick Belane says: "I always carried my wallet in my left front pocket" (Bukowski, 1989:66). This statement is said ironical, dealing with the materialistic view of the capitalist society in which money is just important to be considered rather than humanistic values like establishing financial security. Apparently, the author tries to

undermine the resulted ideologies of the capitalist society including the materialistic view or the class conflict through such an ironical language. In this case, it is obvious that the existed ironical language regarding capitalism as the power are able to destruct the position of the capitalists. On the contrary, they have also capability of affirming the subordinates who are always suppressed by these capitalists. Therefore, *Pulp*'s ironical utterances play a minor role in the existed power relations comparing to the previous novel.

As far as the critic insists on the serious and significant role of irony and play in her theoretical framework, the author's last novel might not be an exception of following such a critical theory. As previously discussed, Bukowski proposes some serious issues consisting the convention of pulp fiction writing, the futile life style in the modern world, the idea of death, as well as the destructive ideologies of capitalism through ironical and playful language. For this reason, his employing ironical and humorous utterances are not mean to be insignificant and funny.

Given various roles of irony arranged by Hutcheon, the writer mostly operates the Ludic and Assailing roles of irony in using *Pulp*'s verbal ironical statements like the previous novel. As Hutcheon claims that these two functions include the similarity of having playful teasing, except for the Assailing role which also includes the corrective function of satiric irony, it is clear that Bukowski intends to highlight the represented problems in subtle and witty manner in order to provide an opportunity to correct them. Consequently, the ironist aims to reform various issues like the psychological sufferings and chaotic situation of the modern life, or the destructive effects of capitalism through employing these two functions.

Relying on the important role of socio-cultural framing in comprehending ironical intent for Hutcheon, it is essential to consider that the interpreter should be belonged to what discursive communities in order to get the appropriate ironical meanings existed in the mentioned novel. Since *Pulp*'s ironical statements are going to criticize the conventions of pulp fiction writing and capitalism along with the existed futility and the idea of death, the interpreters should be belonged to the related communities to get better comprehension of these ironical intents.

Now, what should be considered is to determine which ironic markers Bukowski mostly operates to make the interpreter aware of the existence of ironical utterances in the novel under study. Considering the existed verbal ironies in *Pulp*, the author mostly employs the Phonic marker of changing tone of voice, re-contextualizing the familiar, as well as exaggeration in comparison with *Hollywood*. In this case, the traces of Hutcheon's proposed ironic markers are obviously seen throughout this novel, as well.

In this interpretive level, some corrected inconsistencies through the existed black humorous contexts of *Pulp* are going to be discussed. Relying on the content of the novel, these black humors refer to some issues regarding high depression, fear, threat, mental incapability, hopelessness, betrayal, crime, murder, and on the whole the chaotic and absurd situation of the modern life. Therefore, Bukowski makes his readers to think in order to reform the mentioned deviations and improve the existed situation by presenting these deviations in the form of black humor.

As also mentioned in the introduction, Hutcheon relies on the idea of playfulness as remarkable aspect of postmodern fiction. Accordingly, Bukowski's *Pulp* could be considered as another instance of postmodern fiction as far as the writer employs ironical and black humorous contexts throughout the novel. By the idea of playfulness, Bukowski intends to discuss some serious issues as already said. In this case, the specific language of *Pulp* makes it as a remarkable example of postmodern fiction according to Hutcheon.

## 6. Sum Up

To sum up, both *Hollywood* and *Pulp* as Bukowski's last two novels are considered as remarkable examples of postmodern fiction in which the author employs the idea of playfulness including verbal and structural ironies as well as black humorous contexts in proposing serious and significant issues according to Hutcheon's theoretical framework. Looking more accurately and precisely, it could be inferred that Bukowski discusses the complicated process of filmmaking in Hollywood, the issue of race discrimination, along with the existed power relations with all their injustices and oppressions in his *Hollywood*, while he criticizes the convention of pulp fiction writing, the absurdity of the modern world, the idea of death, as well as the destructive ideologies of capitalism in *Pulp*.

In this case, it is clear that in both novels he presents the political situations and power relations through his ironical and humorous language.

Relying on the issues he has discussed in his novels, he determines the intended audiences of his ironical utterances. The Hollywood members especially Barbet Shroeder, heavy drinkers, and the community of absolute authorities like Lido Mamin or Harry Friedman are consequently among Bukowski's intended audiences of *Hollywood*'s ironical language; however, the pulp fiction writers, the modern people, and those who are close to die are considered as the intended audiences of his last novel. In addition, the author employs the Ludic and Assailing functions of irony in both works under study in order to reform the existed deviations. As a result, he intends to correct the already-said inconsistencies through his black humorous contexts in his last two novels, as well. He also makes his readers aware of the existed verbal ironies in respect of Hutcheon's ironic markers like exaggeration and changing tone of voice. Therefore, Bukowski's both discussed literary works could be analyzed in the light of Hutcheon's theories of irony and humor and include the remarkable characteristics of postmodern fiction.

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