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**THEME OF MADNESS IN A SHORT STORY “THE SYSTEM OF DOCTOR TARR  
AND PROFESSOR FETHER” BY EDGAR ALLAN POE  
AND IN A SIMILARLY-NAMED FILM BY CLAUDE CHABROL**

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**Anna Stepanova. Theme of madness in a short story “The System of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether” by Edgar Allan Poe and in a similarly-named film by Claude Chabrol.** The article considers the theme of madness as a cultural phenomenon in its romantic (Edgar Poe) and postmodern (Claude Chabrol) film interpretation. The study is based on the cultural and philosophical concept of madness grounded by Michel Foucault. The historical existence of madness phenomenon has two types of its perception distinguished, ‘cosmic’, which is the tragic madness of the world, and ‘critical’, which is peculiar to human consciousness and behavior, generating the ironic understanding. According to the philosopher, the cosmic and critical cultural experience of madness is embodied in visually plastic (pictorial) and verbal (literary) forms respectively. The verbal and literary specifics of creating an aesthetic image of madness within the romantic canon in Edgar Allan Poe’s story is compared with the peculiarities of the visual-sound plastic form of the images in Claude Chabrol’s film, created in the style of surrealism. In Poe’s story madness appears as a local phenomenon, a state of human consciousness determining the way of thinking and the specifics of behavior. The main way how the writer creates the characters includes their behavioral characteristics and speech. In Chabrol’s film interpretation the theme of madness unfolds gradually, being embodied in visual images, the pace of the film, the changing intraframe composition, the specific movement in the frame, the speed and rhythm of cutting, the color and sound of the film. Within the postmodernism aesthetics the director, inserting surrealist Buñuel’s intertext, using the techniques of playing with the audience and varying interpretations of the end, focuses on the cosmic experience of madness, transforming Poe’s romantic-ironic interpretation into a understanding the “tragic madness of the world”.

**Key words:** film adaptation, phenomenon of madness, postmodern aesthetics, romantic canon, surrealist style, a verbal image, a visual-plastic image.

**Анна Степанова. Тема божевілля в оповіданні Едгара По “Система доктора Смоля та професора Перро” та в його однойменній екранізації Клода Шаброля.** У статті досліджується тема божевілля як культурного феномену у його романтичній (Едгар По) та постмодерністській (Клод Шаброль) кіноінтерпретації. В основу дослідження покладено культурфілософську концепцію божевілля, що обґрунтована М. Фуко. В історичному бутті феномену божевілля філософ виокремлює два види його сприйняття – ‘космічного’, що являє трагічне божевілля світу, та ‘критичного’, що властиве людській свідомості й поведінці та породжує іронічне осмислення. Згідно з думкою філософа, космічний та критичний досвід божевілля втілюються відповідно у візуально-пластичній (живописній) та словесній (літературній) формах. Словесно-літературна специфіка створення естетичного образу божевілля у межах романтичного канону в оповідання Едгара По зіставляється з особливостями візуально-звукової пластичної форми образів у кінострічці Клода Шаброля, створених у стилі сюрреалізму. В оповіданні Е. По божевілля представлено як локальний феномен – стан людської свідомості, що визначає образ мислення та специфіку поведінки. Основним засобом створення образів персонажів у письменника стає їх поведінкова характеристика та мовлення. У кіноінтерпретації К. Шаброля тема божевілля розвивається із зростанням, втілюючись у візуальних образах, темпі кінокартини, що задається змінами у внутрішньокадровій композиції, специфіці руху в кадрі, скорості та ритму чергування монтажних кадрів, кольорової та звукової партитур фільму.

У межах естетики постмодернізму, вбудовуючи сюрреалістичний бунюелівський інтертекст, використовуючи прийоми гри із глядачем та варіативності трактування фіналу, режисер акцентує увагу на космічному досвіді божевілья, трансформуючи романтично-іронічне трактування Е. По в осмислення “трагічного божевілья світу”.

**Ключові слова:** візуально-пластичний образ, екранізація, естетика постмодернізму, романтичний канон, словесний образ, сюрреалістичний стиль, феномен божевілья.

**Анна Степанова. Тема безумия в рассказе Эдгара По “Система доктора Смоля и профессора Перро” и в его одноименной экранизации Клода Шаброля.** В статье исследуется тема безумия как культурного феномена в его романтической (Эдгар По) и постмодернистской (Клод Шаброль) киноинтерпретации. В основе исследования лежит культурфилософская концепция безумия, обоснованная М. Фуко. В историческом бытии феномена безумия философ выделяет два вида его восприятия – ‘космического’, являющего трагическое безумие мира, и ‘критического’, свойственного человеческому сознанию и поведению и порождающего ироническое осмысление. Согласно мнению философа, космический и критический культурный опыт безумия воплощаются соответственно в визуально-пластической (живописной) и словесной (литературной) формах. Словесно-литературная специфика создания эстетического образа безумия в границах романтического канона в рассказе Эдгара По сопоставляется с особенностями визуально-звуковой пластической формы образов в фильме Клода Шаброля, созданных в стиле сюрреализма. В рассказе Э. По безумие предстает как локальный феномен – состояние человеческого сознания, определяющее образ мышления и специфику поведения. Основным способом создания образов персонажей у писателя становится их поведенческая характеристика и речь. В киноинтерпретации К. Шаброля тема безумия развивается по нарастающей, воплощаясь в визуальных образах, темпе кинокартины, задающемся изменением внутрикадровой композиции, специфике движения в кадре, скорости и ритма чередования монтажных кадров, цветовой и звуковой партитур фильма. В границах эстетики постмодернизма, встраивая сюрреалистический бунюэлевский интертекст, используя приемы игры со зрителем и варіативности трактовки фіналу, режиссер акцентирует внимание на космическом опыте безумия, трансформируя романтически-ироническую трактовку Э. По в осмысление “трагического безумия мира”.

**Ключевые слова:** визуально-пластический образ, романтический канон, словесный образ, сюрреалистический стиль, феномен безумия, экранизация, эстетика постмодернизма.

## 1. Introduction

The plot transformation in literature is a common phenomenon, often associated with experiencing this or that cultural phenomenon under new historical conditions, resulting in the emergence of new meanings, shift of aesthetic priorities, approval of new ways of expressing the artistic consciousness. Thus, the event – a psychiatric hospital takeover by the mentally ill – provided the basis for the plot of verbal literary form, in Chabrol’s film is transformed into understanding, interpreted by the artistic means in literature and cinema, is an experience of considering the phenomenon of madness in a new cultural situation.

The theme of madness in art was quite often considered within artistic reflection not only because it is a widespread sociocultural problem, but thanks to its archetypal nature, containing archaic, magical-ritual, religious and sacred meanings. Michel Foucault believes this stratification provides the “persistence seems to be an indicator of the dark memory that accompanies madness, condemning its inventiveness to be nothing more than repetition, and often designating it as the spontaneous *archaeology of cultures* (emphasis added). Unreason would be the great memory of peoples, their greatest faithfulness to the past, where history is always indefinitely contemporary (Foucault, 2006, p. 105).

In this article, I will address the theme of madness as a cultural phenomenon in terms of intersemiotic verbal—filmic interface. My aim is to define the close connection and essential form and sense transformations between romantic verbal literary form and its postmodern film interpretation on the material of Poe prose and Chabrol’s film.

The study is underpinned by the cultural and philosophical concept of madness by Foucault, on the one hand, and by the ideas of intersemiosis, on the other. On this basis, I formulate the general hypothesis of transforming Poe's romantic-ironic interpretation of madness into the postmodernism surrealist aesthetic of the "tragic madness of the world" as a result of intersemiosis.

To test this hypothesis, section 3 is an empirical study of the verbal and literary characteristics of an aesthetic image of madness within the romantic canon in Poe's story as compared with those of the visual-sound plastic form of Chabrol's filmic images, created in the style of surrealism. To anticipate, section 2 analyses the theoretical background for the study of madness in literature and the arts; and section 4 sums up the argument.

## 2. Theoretical background

There are two periods in the European history of madness phenomenon and its reflection in Foucault's art such as the early and late Renaissance. It should be noted that emphasizing the conjugation of plastic and literary forms of madness expression, the philosopher correlates the process of aesthetic understanding of madness with the well-known image of the ship of fools, reflected in closely related and at the same time unique works Hieronymus Bosch's painting "Ship of Fools" (this tradition was continued in the works of Albrecht Dürer and Pieter Bruegel) and Sebastian Brant's eponymous satire (thematically continued in "Praise of Folly" by Erasmus of Rotterdam).

"Bosch, Brueghel, Thierry Bouts and Dürer line up beside their silent images. For madness unleashes its fury in the space of pure vision. Fantasies and threats, the fleeting fragments of dreams and the secret destiny of the world, where madness has a primitive, prophetic force, revealing that the dream-like is real" being "*the tragic madness of the world*" (Foucault, 2006, p. 26). This experience is characterized by the involvement of the artist and the audience in the aura of images captured on the canvas in order to achieve a tragic perception of the world as universal madness.

But Foucault (2006) notes that "by contrast, in Brant, Erasmus and the whole humanist tradition, madness is confined to the universe of discourse. There it becomes ... disarmed. It changes scale: born in the hearts of men, it rules and disrupts their conduct" (p. 26). Shaped in this way madness turns into an object of laughter and belongs to the "critical consciousness of man" (Foucault, 2006, p. 27). Here, the key role is played by the effect of removing the author and the reader, an attempt of not-involving, but observing as a stranger.

So, Foucault (2006) has two experiences of madness opposed: "cosmic experience of madness in the proximity of fascinating forms, and a critical experience of the same madness, as seen from across the unbridgeable gap of irony" (p. 25), which correspond to visually plastic (pictorial) and verbal (literary) forms. Both of these experiences will provide the ground for artistic understanding the madness phenomenon in the course of time. According to the philosopher, the confrontation of the tragic experience and critical consciousness will result in the victory of the latter, the language experience will supersede the visual-plastic. But implicitly, the presence of the tragic experience of madness will be felt under the shell of critical consciousness, being brought to light in the era of historical cataclysms, causing an explosion (Foucault, 2006, pp. 26-27).

In our opinion, the works selected for analysis –Poe's short story "The System of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether" (1844) (Poe, 2016) and Chabrol's film "Le Système Du Docteur Goudron Et Du Professeur Plume" (1981) (Chabrol, 1981), – reflect both experiences of artistic understanding of madness in two forms which are purely verbal and visual-sound, plastic.

## 3. Results and discussion

The theme of madness, the anxiety of personality in the work of Poe has undoubtedly attracted the attention of scholars having been reflected in the works of Percich (2014), Bryant (1996), Cleman (1991), Drabeck (1972), Frank (1995), Obaid (2011), Miranda (2017), Sievers (1999). The scholars

dealt with the unique inner world of characters, the verbal organization of the text, the ironic mode of assessing the insanity, etc. Given the experience gained, we find it interesting to consider the phenomenon of madness in literary and cinematic works through the prism of Foucault's cultural concept.

The experience of madness critical understanding is realized in Poe's short story "The System of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether" (1844). Here, we have madness as a local phenomenon, being a state of human consciousness determining the way of thinking and behavior. "The unbridgeable gap of irony" can already be seen in the title, which in the literal, non-adapted translation sounds like "The System of Dr. *Tar* and Professor *Feather*". According to the author's intention, this system is a method of treating patients in accordance with the principle "*the patients were menages-humored*" which resulted in the rebellion of the mentally-ill headed by the mad-house superintendent who joined their club. They tarred all the keepers, carelessly feathered, and then shut up in underground cells, having seized, thereby, Maison de Sante and undertaken the role of medical staff. Once in the hospital, the guest storyteller who has an excursion visit, feels that an atmosphere of the Maison de Sante is a bit strange, however, he manages to realize what happened only when the tarred and feathered keepers looking like "*big black baboons*" restore their status quo. This is how the plot of a short story looks like having realized the eternal "idea of how difficult to draw the line between the sick and healthy consciousness" (Kovalev, 1984, p. 193), fuzzy edge of norm followed by the madness is reflected ironically in the narrator's remarks ("*I was cautious in what I said before the young lady; for I could not be sure that she was sane*" (Poe, 2016)); in the descriptions of a mad-house, in the remarks of gone-insane superintendent: "*Mon dieu! what is it you imagine? This lady, my particular old friend Madame Joyeuse, is as absolutely sane as myself*" (Poe, 2016); in the author's stance:

*"We found it, sir," he [superintendent] said, with a sigh, "absolutely necessary to return to the old usages. The danger of the soothing system was, at all times, appalling; and its advantages have been much overrated. I believe, sir, that in this house it has been given a fair trial, if ever in any"* (emphasis is mine – A.S.) (Poe, 2016).

The key scene in the story is the dinner, where the superintendent Maillard kindly invites the narrator and where the latter meets the inhabitants of the castle. For Poe the main way of producing characters is their behavioral characteristics and speech, in our case each of the guests at the table talks about their type of insanity in mini-monologues:

*I mean the man who took himself for a bottle of champagne, and always went off with a pop and a fizz, in this fashion... Here the speaker... put his right thumb in his left cheek, withdrew it with a sound resembling the popping of a cork, and then, by a dexterous movement of the tongue upon the teeth, created a sharp hissing and fizzing, which lasted for several minutes, in imitation of the frothing of champagne* (Poe, 2016).

However, despite the confusion created by the characters while demonstrating their eccentricities, a harmonious system could be found in their behavior. In the description of the dinner climactic scene, when great amusement is interrupted by is a loud knock at the door with loud screams of breaking free keepers, Poe remains loyal to his aesthetic principle of harmonious symmetry and harmony as each character, frightened to death by an early debunking, does not rush in panic, but performs their 'role' enthusiastically, i.e. the 'donkey' screams and kicks, the 'a teetotum' spins, the 'frog' croaks, the 'chicken-cock' cock-a-doodle-does, the 'bottle of champagne' hisses, etc.

Thus, there are three types of consciousness distinguished on the verge of reason / madness functioning in a story such as characters, storyteller and author (Kovalev, 1984, pp. 194-195). We agree on Kovalev's (1984) thought about Poe's psychological stories containing:

*...the narrator who personifies the moral and psychological 'norm' and the character being a deviation from it. However, in most cases, one person is the narrator and the character at the same time. He embodies both norm and deviation, so the narration looks like self-observation (p. 188).*

On the other hand, the intersection of three standpoints at the level of three types of consciousness creates a detachment effect in the narrative which is peculiar to the critical experience of perceiving madness, where a clear opposition of *one's own / alien* is built drawing the line between a healthy and a sick consciousness. The narrator cannot get rid of the thought that all he sees is full of weirdness and oddity, the mentally-ill characters are able to look at themselves from the outside critically evaluating their own behavior or it is better to say their deviation from the norm, and to tell about themselves in the third person. The most distant is the author's look<sup>1</sup>. Wellek noted that "in Poe's, the division is terrifyingly complete between the unconscious, which provides the obsessive themes of delirium, torture, and death, and the conscious, which literarily develops them" (Wellek, 1949, p. 83). The literary design of the story with dominating ironic modus of artistry, reflecting the author's intention to control other people's souls, very vividly illustrates Foucault's idea about the development of the phenomenon of madness by the sphere of discourse.

The mad-house castle and the bizarre, mysterious atmosphere, reigning there, are depicted in accordance with the romantic aesthetics:

*It was a fantastic chateau, much dilapidated, and indeed scarcely tenantable through age and neglect. Its aspect inspired me with absolute dread, and, checking my horse, I half resolved to turn back (Poe, 2016).*

Traditional romantic mysticism, however, is destroyed by the inexorable logic of denouement, explaining what happened in the end of the story and representing, thereby, the shimmering verge between reason and madness with the help of parody on the romantic principle of dualism.

Chabrol's film "Le Système Du Docteur Goudron Et Du Professeur Plume" (1981) can be called a direct adaptation with some remarks, as the director strictly adheres to the storyline, sometimes conveying a literary text word-for-word. Nevertheless, having fully paid tribute to the American writer, the French director shows how he sees the theme of madness with the help of expressive means peculiar just to cinema, where the artistic techniques of creating the images in the literary original are elaborated with the visual-plastic ones.

The theme of madness in the film is gradually developing, forming a visual-sound crescendo. At first, it is point-like, being realized in visual images hinting at inappropriate behavior and well-being of the characters (a footman with his tongue hanging out, a wig being put in hurry to solemnly announce that dinner is served, the eccentricity of Maillard's clothes, the excessive gestures, a feverish glint in the eyes of Alice, Maillard's pseudo niece, close-up expressive facial expressions of the characters at the table, distorting their faces and giving them an unhealthy expression, etc.). Then it is more intensive, when a whole spectrum of expressive cinema tools is used. The increase in tension and the atmosphere of madness is transmitted at the pace of the motion picture, which is determined by changing intraframe composition, specific movement in the frame<sup>2</sup>, the speed and rhythm of the cut, the color and sound of the film.

At the beginning of the film, the intraframe composition<sup>3</sup> is stable and closed. The scene of conversation between the visitor (in the film his name is Lucien) and Maillard, who talks about his method of treating the mentally ill, is almost static. The director adheres to the principle of aesthetic symmetry of Edgar Allan Poe when the interlocutors are sitting on opposite sides of a small table at

an equal distance from the frame borders. The graceful decoration of the living room in the Rococo style fully corresponds to a casual conversation. For a while the interlocutors sit, without changing their poses, creating the illusion of a pictorial image in the 18<sup>th</sup> century painting. According to Agafonova (2008), the stability of the intraframe composition embodies “a balanced calm image, devoid of vivid dynamic manifestations and with a clear meaning of intraframe details” (pp. 36-37). As the plot develops the composition loses its stability, becoming open; symmetry goes away, giving a way to the diagonal arrangement of images in the frame space, thanks to which the static image is replaced with the dynamic one, creating a feeling of tension and internal drama. A lunch scene is built on the grounds of the same principle, when a leisurely conversation is replaced with an excessively noisy, intense communication between the inhabitants of the castle.

In accordance with the changing intraframe composition, the movement in the frame is also transformed, thus creating an additional effect of forcing an unhealthy atmosphere – both at the level of speed of moving objects (from a smooth, slow conversation in the living room scene, then gradually accelerating while reaching the climax scene, finally it becomes fast, sometimes chaotic in the climax scene), and at the level of the camera tracking (from almost static in the living room scene; then smoothly rotating at the beginning of the dinner scene, creating an effect of turning head and looking around, building a kind of panoramic medium shot; to a quick, jump cut in the climax scene). The same principle of dynamics can be observed in cutting, from continuity cuts at the beginning of the film to a fast, expressive jump cuts in the climax scene, creating the effect of a intermittent transition from one mini-plot to another, when each guest at dinner tells their story and performs the ‘role’. In screen version the episode of Poe’s story, when the castle inhabitants talk about their ‘eccentricities’, loses the elements of romantic aesthetics, so the visual image of this episode intensifies the impression of inadequacy of the situation, representing a kind of montage of attractions which reminds Buñuel’s intertext with its surrealist methods of combining the absurd and sound plans of reality.

The visual *crescendo* of madness expression is realized in the film with the help of color and light, when the cut is intensified with the red color in the actors’ clothing as well as in lighting. The lack of color descriptions in the literary original is compensated by the director’s work in the film, being a visual-plastic way of showing the theme of madness. When Maillard, dressed in a bright red cloak with a wide fur collar, appears in the first shot, it signals about the creation of a tense atmosphere. His robe presents a striking contrast to the elegant, sophisticated rococo decoration of the living room. In the dinner scene the red color builds up a sense of anxiety and tension, being dominant in the castle inhabitants’ clothes, showing the close-up red wine glasses, the characters’ reddened faces in focus.

Red color intensification is accompanied by access of tone. At the beginning of the film in the scene when Lucien and Alice have a conversation, two layers of intraframe sound are distinguished, they are a piano music performed by a girl and a voice in a conversation at the *mezzo-forte* level. In the dinner scene, the sound is amplified, combining the unstable music created by the mini-orchestra, the noises and screams of the characters, imitating chicken-cock singing, frog croaking, donkey roaring and others, reaching a full-fledged *forte*. Sound cacophony reaches its climax in the scene of eating baked veal. It should be noted that Poe’s story does not contain this scene, the fact that a whole baked veal is brought into the dining room is just mentioned without indication *how* the characters eat it. The director develops this moment, thus shifting the climax point of the film. As mentioned above, the climax in Poe’s short story is the episode when after lunch the mentally ill get afraid, having heard the cries of released keepers, and all together start to show their insanity, becoming a frog man, a chicken-cock man, a teetotum man, a bottle-of-champagne man etc. In Chabrol’s interpretation, the characters perform their roles during the lunch, being the beginning of the climax, but its peak could be observed in the *inserted* episode when baked veal is served and all the present grab it with wild shouts and begin to sink their teeth into the meat. Chaotic characters’ actions, multiplied by the accelerated movement in the frame, finally destroy the aesthetic harmony of Poe’s symmetry. Changing close-ups of the distorted faces and torn veal are intensified by wild

sound cacophony reaching *fortissimo*, thus forming a powerful sound-visual counterpoint based on a comparison of sound and image, embodying the apogee of madness.

The shift in emphasis in the climax to the inserted episode described above, along with other director's novelties, building on the meaning of Poe's story, is a turning point in Chabrol's reconsidering and transforming the idea of the literary original. The director claims to have his own vision of the problem of madness and it is already seen in the first part of the film, in an inserted episode, when after a conversation in the living room Lucien and Maillard go to the dining room, a way to which lies through a mirror corridor. The composition of the episode is built on changing close-ups of the characters' faces, doubled in the mirror, actualizing, on the one hand, the moment of a split personality, due to which the key opposition *one's own / alien* in the story is filmed and Lucien enters the dining room as a participant rather than an observer (his identity with respect to the other castle inhabitants is also confirmed by his behavior in the frame, Lucien does not show any signs of surprise, unlike his literary prototype, taking everything for granted). On the other hand, the artistic concept of the film includes the image of the looking glass as an entrance into another reality, the reality of subconscious impulses, the reverse side of the psyche.

Through the same prism we may consider the climax scene of tearing baked veal, with the frames of an orgy of the mentally ill and the veal remains interchanging with a repeating close-up of an inverted figurine of a black savage, a primitive tribe representative. The image of the black figurine suggests Chabrol's interpreting madness as the release of irrational energy, the primitive instincts of 'civilized' humanity, the dark side of the subconscious, again revealing Buñuel's surreal overtones of film narrative, thereby, projecting the madness of the characters to the madness of the whole world.

Two inserted episodes, the mentioned above climax and the "mirror" one, play a key role in shaping the space of the film, in which, according to Agafonova's grading (2008), three levels are clearly visible: *the space of the event* characterizing the scene (exteriors, interiors, open airs), *the expressive space*, or the inner (mental) space of the character, being the audiovisual projection of the character's psychological state, and *the symbolic space*, the author's space of the film, which is formed by the director as a transition from the specific visible space to the ephemeral, associative one (pp. 16-17). Chabrol's film has these levels smoothly flowing into each other, i.e. the space of the event (an old castle in the forest with an elegant Rococo interior, having social characteristics as it is a shelter for the mentally ill isolated from the society) modulates to the expressive space of characters whose psychological state is seen in their facial expressions (faces are distorted by crazy grimaces), gestures, behavior, clothes. The author's space, built in a "wave-like" way above these levels, is a conductor of the director's idea of the film and is formed on the basis of three key images, symbolically representing the idea of the world tragic madness. They are a mirror corridor, a figurine of a black savage and the glasses filled with wine to the brim, being a symbol of exuberant madness escaping from a limited space. The illusion of a picture in the Rococo style, appearing at the beginning of the film, is replaced by the illusion of paintings by Bosch, Brueghel, Dürer, where, in Foucault's opinion, "madness unleashes its fury" in visual-plastic images (Foucault, 2006, p. 26), building a postmodern intertext.

Finally, Chabrol interprets the motif for the tragic understanding of madness as if flickering on the verge of a graceful rococo motif, setting the tone for the director's play with the audience, thus, a love line, absent in the literary original, is introduced and emphasized in the plot of the film. Unlike the narrator, who plays the role of an observer in Poe's work, abstaining from getting close to anyone, thus, creates the effect of detachment, Chabrol's Lucien falls in love with Alice at first sight, their first conversation is almost intimate (opposed to a conversation on general topics between their literary prototypes). Lucien's feeling for the patient of the mentally ill shelter draws him into the action taking place in the castle, thereby, removing the effect of detachment and changing the role of an observer into the role of the participant. The love line unfolding rapidly and naturally and easily in French way stipulates an unexpected ending as the film ends with a scene of lovers fleeing the castle, accompanied by off-screen music. Mozart's Symphony No. 35<sup>4</sup> frames the narrative of the film. At the beginning of

the film it appears inside the frame when Lucien enters the castle and hears the sounds of the piano as Alice plays Mozart. In the end the Haffner Symphony is clearly heard behind the scenes, accompanying the lovers running in the forest and forming another visual-sound counterpoint, where the music embellishes the image of bewitching nature, bringing the runaways into the fold. As Mikheeva (2015) notes, the second part of the Haffner Symphony is “a kind of serenade in which the lovers’ lyrical effusion is heard in the midst of a peacefully frozen nature”.

Despite the aesthetic completeness of the end, its interpretation remains open and suggests several options. The first (literal) variant is the reunion of lovers (in the rococo style as a continuation of the rococo motif of the castle’s interior decoration). The second one hints at madness coming out from the castle limited space to the unlimited space of the world. The third actualizes the film parody, the scene of the escaping characters presents a parody of the story, peculiar both to fairy tale and chivalric romance, when a beautiful lady is imprisoned but a knight in love comes and sets her free. But this parody has a touch of bitterness, freedom is illusory, the castle is only an imaginary, visible imprisonment, the real one, being madness itself, is an irrational element dormant inside humanity, a dungeon for human consciousness.

#### 4. Conclusions

This article considered, both theoretically and empirically, the transformation of the image of madness in its romantic framework by Edgar Poe and postmodern film interpretation by Chabrol. My empirical study revealed that the theme of madness, which in Poe’s story belonged to the “critical consciousness of a man”, embodied in a verbal literary form, in Chabrol’s film transformed into understanding the experience of the “tragic madness of the world” and acquired a visual-plastic form close to pictorial art in the postmodern aesthetics of cinema.

By and large, the analysis confirmed my general hypothesis that the transformation of Poe’s romantic-ironic interpretation of madness into the postmodernist surrealistic aesthetics of the “tragic madness of the world” results from intersemiosis and depends on a number of cultural, national, historical, artistic, and genre- and language-specific issues.

Clearly, further work is needed to receive a more detailed insight into the process of intersemiotic transpositions of literary texts, and the intersemiotic methodology seems to be highly relevant for this challenging perspective.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> As the scholars rightly point out, the widespread idea that Poe’s psychological stories reflect the writer’s mental state – the “painful, abnormal state of his own soul,” which Poe “seeks to recreate in the reader’s soul,” did not stand the test of time. In assessing the writer’s interest in mental pathology, Wellek (1949) turned out to be close to the truth, indicating that Poe “didn’t even think that all these nightmares swarm in his own soul, because he saw himself as a writer-engineer who could control other people’s souls” (pp. 81-84).

<sup>2</sup> A frame is the first principle of cinematic imagery, being a ‘word’ of cinematic speech, the primary element of the screen language. An element of a film containing a particular moment of action (Agafonova, 2008, p. 22).

<sup>3</sup> Intraframe composition is a combination of objects within a frame, the arrangement of all visible elements within a frame (Ward, 2005, p. 9).

<sup>4</sup> As the scholars point out, “The Haffner Symphony was created in one of the brightest periods of the composer’s life. He is the author who has won pan-European fame, whose operas now recognized even in Italy, whose thirty-four symphonies, countless other smaller, instrumental, vocal, including spiritual, works known and he is one of the greatest performers of his time. And he is free! After several years of work in the court chapel of Salzburg Archbishop Count Colloredo, outraged by the attitude towards himself as if he is a servant, he broke up with him and stayed in Vienna, being a free, non-service musician, the first example in the history of music... He is free, and would have been happy already knowing it, one more, no less important circumstance made him even happier – after breaking up with the archbishop, he would marry his beloved Constance Weber” (Mikheeva, 2015).

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