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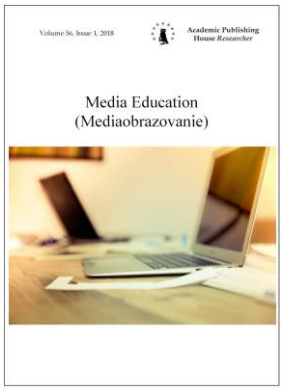

The Mechanism of Contextual Confirmation of the Symbol in the Cinema Language

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Abstract

The subject of consideration in this article is the analysis of the specifics of identifying the thematic belonging of symbols that function in feature films, in particular, the Masonic symbols used in world cinema of the second half of the 20th – beginning of the 21st centuries. The authors propose, corroborate and test a formal and substantive mechanism that includes a number of interrelated procedures, which allows identifying the particular thematic field of a symbol that has homonymous analogs in various symbolic systems. The issue of the specifics of the thematic relatedness of the symbol is extremely important for the theory and practice of cinema analysis. It becomes even more significant due to the direct dependence of the adequacy of the interpretation of the cinematographic work on the correct reading of the symbolism contained in it and the correct perception of the nature of the appositional interaction of symbols and their mutual conditionality within the artistic whole. The research methodology refers to the semiotic discursive approach. The authors analyze the features of the cinema language and the contexts of the use of symbols, which lead to the ambiguity of their interpretation, and then formulate procedures that allow this ambiguity to be removed. The article formulates a new type of analysis, summarizing the advantages of context, semantic and distributive analysis of cinema language units. The authors proceed from the idea of a feature film as an aesthetically significant text, an adequate interpretation of which involves taking into account not only the visual, but also the actual informative components. They point out that consistently carrying out the analysis mechanism proposed by them will allow, with a high degree of reliability, not only to remove controversial points, but also to identify the author's intent in cases where it seems unclear and indirectly expressed. The problem of homonymy, peculiar to all semiotic systems in the language of cinema, is exacerbated in cases where ideologically biased units are used as graphic material, summing up a wide cultural experience. In order to avoid arbitrariness in evaluations in these cases, the authors offer to use the mechanism proposed by them. The high level of heuristic power that the mechanism possesses is manifested in the fact that it makes it possible to distinguish between outwardly identical, but meaningfully deeply different frames. All these provisions are illustrated by a large number of convincing examples.

Keywords: cinema language, feature film, interpretation, polysemy, sign, symbol, identification, audiovisual media literacy.

1. Introduction

The problem of accurately establishing a clear relationship between the signifier and the signified or the answer to the question: "What is the meaning of this or that language form?" is

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relevant for all language units, since most of them are polysemantic. This problem is partially eliminated in respect to commonly used units of natural languages due to the existence of basic meanings, identifying contexts and automatism of speech perception. On the contrary, as regards symbols it is exacerbated for two reasons. First, within the framework of developed national languages there simultaneously function several symbolic systems that differ from each other. Secondly, for the most part the semantics of symbols is a result of historical development, during which different symbolic systems interact with each other.

This problem is even more complicated with the identification and interpretation of the symbol in the language of cinema, since the verbal text in cinema is fused with a multitude of elements of both the auditory and visual series. The idea that cinema has its own language was first expressed by the Russian formalists Y.N. Tynyanov (Tynyanov, 1977) and B.M. Eichenbaum (Eichenbaum, 1989) in 1910s–1930s. This concept was thoroughly explored by U. Eco (Eco, 1976), R. Barthes (Watts, 2016), C. Metz (Metz, 1990) and Y. Lotman (Lotman, 1973) in the 1960s–1980s. This was the time of the advent of semiotics in general and film semiotics in particular.

To this day, semiotics of cinema remains the dominant research strategy in analyzing the film. So, J. Ehrat throughout his book convincingly proves that "our understanding of cinema advances when it's a sign process" (Ehrat, 2005: 15). Based on the works of the classics, modern researchers propose novel approaches to cinematic meaning on a variety of levels. Among such works, one should highlight the studies of cinematic codes (Erokhina, 2017), of the semiotic characteristics of film discourse (Zaichenko, 2013), of the grammar of cinema language (Tecucianu, 2014), of the methodological aspect of film research strategies (Varkhotov, 2008), of problems of media education (Fedorov, Kolesnichenko, 2013). In addition, a number of studies on cinema will be reviewed and cited in the next section.

2. Discussion

Analyzing and interpreting symbolism in cinema, one should always have a clear idea the unit from which symbolic system is included in the text. It will keep from mixing the units which are similar in external form but different in semantics and interpreting the text arbitrarily or incorrectly. The implementation of symbols within the framework of a feature film displays a picture of the mutual intersection of various symbolic systems, that is, the state of symbolism that has developed and caused by various reasons. By its virtue all local symbolic systems use a set of signs that are to a greater or lesser extent similar or identical in their external expression. For example, it is practically impossible to find a symbolic system in which the symbols of *light* and *dark* would not be represented with these or other values, estimates, specific gravity and functional load. This situation increases the likelihood that the data receiver will perceive a unit of one symbolic system as a unit a different symbolic system and inadequately interpret the text. And this, in turn, speaks of the need to develop a mechanism that, with a high degree of accuracy, would make it possible to conclusively state the belonging of a given symbol to a particular symbolic system.

The fact of a probable discrepancy between the information laid down by the author and the information received by the viewer is one of the obvious postulates of linguistic and semiotic studies: "the question of whether sending and decrypting messages are always based on same code. The answer to this question given not only by the theory of communication, but also by the whole history of culture and all the data from the sociology of communication, is unequivocal: no" (Eco, 1998: 44). This discrepancy is caused by multiple reasons, the combination of which is called *noise*. Noise interference between the work and its interpreter is manifold. Below are considered only those that are directly related to the research topic.

The urgency of the problem of a sign identification, that is, the establishment of correspondences between the object being analyzed and the units of a particular symbolic system, is predetermined by a number of significant, among which there are historical and cultural, linguistic and psychological proper. All of them are closely intertwined with each other, so the identification process is of a decoding nature. The brief characterization of the reasons is not only a description of objective difficulties, but also a starting point in the quest for true correspondences.

The countability of the main plots, motifs and images used in world culture is not a new topic that has received scientific and artistic expression. Perhaps the most radical way of its perception can be found in J.L. Borges, who reduced all world stories to four stories: "about the fortified city, which the heroes storm and defend", "about the return", "about the search", "about the suicide of God". He concluded this enumeration with the words: "There are only four stories. And no matter

how much time we have left, we will retell them in one form or another" (Borges, 1992: 425–427). No less eloquent is the remark of N.S. Gumilyov: "The number of images is limited, prompted by life, and the poet is rarely their creator. His personality manifests itself only in his attitude towards them" (Gumilyov, 1990: 69–70). The data collected by D.Yu. Matasheva prove that the total number of screen versions of L. Tolstoy's novel *Anna Karenina* throughout the world exceeded thirty versions, including silent films, ballet films and television series (Matasheva, 2015: 24). The scientist characterizes the reasons for the correspondence and discrepancies between the films and the novel, the specifics of the artistic methods used in them, the ways of interaction between screen versions and various layers of national cultures.

The next is a high degree of probability of random, but sometimes seemingly plausible correspondences between unrelated units, quantities, objects, and concepts located in the noninteracting parts of the microcosm and macrocosm. The correspondences can be random coincidences and regular matches. They manifest themselves at various levels, depending on the characteristics, volume, and abstractness of the correlative values, and acquire in connection with this different characteristics. Within the framework of a feature film, the problem of correspondences is a question about random coincidences and the natural orientation of one text (its part) to another. So, exploring intertextuality in Hamlet's adaptations made by A. Kaurismäki *Hamlet Goes Business* (1987) and M. Almereyda *Hamlet* (2000), P. Rybina notes that the intertextual layer of Almereyda's "version is 'annoyingly' rich with its orbit engulfing the texts very distantly connected to its plot" (Rybina, 2017: 126) and that Kaurismäki's version "becomes for Almereyda a kind of 'secret' source of inspiration and citations" (Rybina, 2017: 127). "Of course, <...> the area of coincidence is wider than the area of borrowing, but in a cento context or a stance on it, even coincidences <...> can be induced by this very stance, arising at a subconscious level" (Tsivyan, 1995: 615).

A wide and varied homonymy and polysemy of symbolism are characteristic of almost every symbolic system. Even the generally accepted mathematical symbology has some ways to use individual characters to convey multiple values. Herewith, the homonymous pair can be located within a different symbolic system. The example of homonymy is "the use of square brackets | |, which means: in the theory of numbers – taking a real number modulo; in the theory of sets – cardinality of a set; in logic – the truth value of a formula" (Shiyan, 2008: 223). The example of the intrasystemic polysemy is the Masonic symbol of a pair of compasses, which at the same time is a reminder of the Great Architect of the Universe, of a vow to lead a strictly thought–out life, of the circle of actions intended for a Mason; a call to fraternal unity; a designation of the Sun, of St. John the Baptist, of Janus, of Fire, of Mercury, of Spirit, of will, heart and beauty (Sokolovskaya, Lotareva, 2007: 82). In addition, the designations of Masonic symbols may have analogues among the names of real objects: a hammer, an apron, compasses, gloves, etc. One more example is given by N.S. Polyakov who considers the symbol of the world tree on the material of the films *The Fountain* (2006) by D. Aronofsky, *Avatar* (2009) by D. Cameron and *The Tree of Life* (2011) by T. Malick. In the first case, it is a repetition of the mythical motive of the creation of the world by the first Maya father through his death and the germination of the tree of life through his body. In the second case, the Tree of Souls (Voices) is the mystical "heart" of the planet Pandora. In the third case, it is the biblical version of the world tree, connected with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in Torah (Polyakov, 2015: 39–37).

The nature of a human language predetermines the presence of a large number of very different tautologies representing a repetition of the same or similar signs and symbols: "To speak means to wallow in tautologies" (Borges 1992: 149). But repetition in cinema is a unique means, moderating real values and emphasizing logical or associative values, and because of that intensively used. "The repeating things in the cinema acquire a 'facial expression' that can be made more significant than the thing itself" (Lotman, 1973: 45). The illustration of the use of tautology in cinema is the film *Laughter in the Dark* (1969) by Tony Richardson based on V. Nabokov's novel *Camera obscura*. Throughout the film, the same key moments are repeated in different variations: the display of opening and immediately closing doors which creates closed spaces; the demonstration of the inability to see and really assess the situation in the dark or blindness; the inclusion of the sound range – loud evil laughter – in the visual range. Tautology on a wider stratum – on the totality of foreign sound films from 1931 to 2015 devoted to the civil war in Russia – was revealed by A.V. Fedorov, who, on the basis of a comparative analysis of plot schemes,

characters, and ideology of films, concluded that there is a "essential similarity of their media stereotypes" (Fedorov, 2016).

The interpretation of any message depends on the situation, which can change the meaning of the message, its function and information load. This is clearly represented in the film *The Diamond Arm* (1968) by L. Gaidai in the scene in front of the pharmacy. Initially, the smugglers are waiting for a prearranged signal and Gorbunkov's accidental fall is perceived by them as a password. When the real messenger Kozodoyev falls, he had to bob up and down and repeat the password before the smugglers suspected that something was wrong. That is, at first the natural situation was taken as a conventional sign, and then the conventional sign was taken as a natural situation.

A similar case can be revealed by comparing the films *Young Karl Marx* (2017) by R. Peck and *The Limehouse Golem* (2016) by H.K. Medina. Although the prototype of both heroes is a real historical character, the Karl Marx, who lives in exile in Paris and is deeply in debt, is not the Karl Marx, who has lived all his life in London and is suspected of serial murder. The word "labyrinth" in his phrase "this is a sacred sacrifice in the labyrinth of London" does not mean the labyrinth that is present in different semantic meanings in the film *The Name of the Rose* (1986) by J.–J. Annaud. In the first case, it is a city structure consisting of entangled intertwined streets; the same in which the smuggler Kozodoyev from *The Diamond Arm* got lost. In the second one, it is not only a library maze, which, in principle, coincides with the previous meaning, but also the labyrinth of Kildare's investigation and, taken even more broadly, the labyrinth of the plot of the film.

The nature of the artistic text also complicates interpretation. It is sufficient to note only two characteristics directly related to the decryption mechanism. R.O. Jakobson drew attention to the fact that the statement, performing an aesthetic function, tends to ambiguity: "Ambiguity is an intrinsic, inalienable character of any self– focused message, briefly a corollary feature of poetry" (Jakobson, 1960: 370). K.G. Tomaselli showed that an artistic message is distinguished by a small measure of information redundancy, resulting in an increase in entropy: "Communication, whether by film or any other means, is subject to the inexorable tendency for entropy to increase" (Tomaselli, 1985: 56), "Television relies heavily on the use of conventional signs which are low in information and dominated by entropy (Tomaselli, 1985: 59). The less redundancy, the less the message's ability to withstand noise, the more likely is the distortion of the original meaning.

These two qualities of a literary text are widely used in detectives and thrillers to create different variants of plotting in order to find the only correct conclusion. But where the author wants to clearly and unambiguously express his view on the problem being addressed, they are an obstacle that needs to be circumvented. One of the ways is a long take, the centrepiece of Tarkovsky's theory of film, which functions were dissected by R. Bird (Bird, 2008: 195–197). The second way is the appearance of zero signs when watching movie adaptations and historical films. A zero sign is a meaningful, functionally and semantically independent absence of an object or action within the framework of a certain text, the necessity of which presence is strictly prescribed by the context (Shuneyko, Chibisova, 2016). For example, a "knowledgeable" viewer who has read the novel *Roadside Picnic* written by the Strugatskys may, based on his / her reader's memory, correctly interpret those passages from the film *Stalker* (1979) by A. Tarkovsky, which for an "unaware" viewer may be incomprehensible. An informed viewer can provide a reasonable explanation why in the film adaptation of P. Süskind's novel *The Story of a Murderer* (2006), the director T. Tykwer replaces the smell of mist, presented as the stifling smell of a murderer, with the perfect scent of a girl who became his first victim (Nesmachnova, 2018: 192–193).

The factors that make it difficult for the viewer to identify symbols are also a combination of systemic views that prevail in a particular state at a specific historical moment. Y.M. Lotman points out that "... at the highest level, the text is encoded ideologically. The laws of political, religious, philosophical order, genre codes, etiquette considerations, <...> all those things lead to additional coding" (Lotman, 1994: 355). The difference in the levels of consciousness and the goals of activity between the author of the text and the person perceiving it creates the highest decoding threshold. From this position, it is worth mentioning the publication of A.K. Bernatonite analyzing D.I. Kiselev's film *The Age of Pioneers* (2017), where the role of Alexei Leonov is performed by E. Mironov. The researcher says that the film "is launching a new ideological line in the cinema", because "the Soviet Union, which actively explored the cosmos, did not make biographical films about astronauts. This can be explained only by the fact that these people were equal to the gods,

and no one could play the gods", besides "the history of cosmonautics was classified as secret in the USSR for many years" (Bernatonite, 2017: 113).

In general terms, the factors listed above produce the hermeneutic problem of a plurality of text interpretations, within which the true / false categories acquire the character of relative ones, since they are associated with the information background of the person interpreting the text. This, in turn, makes a viewer approach the interpretation of certain facts in the framework of feature films with greater attention and measure of evidence. For example, back to the film *The Limehouse Golem* based on the novel by P. Akroyd. Already in the original copyright title of the novel *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* there are two poles: a man and a woman. The main characters Dan Leno and Elizabeth Cree throughout the film are dressed in the clothes of the opposite sex, thus symbolically combining the male and female elements. This fact can be interpreted in at least five ways. Firstly, cross– dressing may be associated with the meaning of masculine and feminine symbols Ankh or Yin–Yang, which have powerful energy potential enabling music hall actors to reach a high level of their creative development. Secondly, cross–dressing may be related to the meaning of the Star of David (the Seal of Solomon), which has the same meaning as Ankh or Yin–Yang, but can be understood as intention (along with the wish of death to the Jews on their Rosh Hashanah holiday and the killing of Solomon Weil) to desecrate Jewish shrines. Thirdly, cross–dressing may be associated with "an ancient cultural tradition which birth coincides with the birth of theatrical art" (Povalyaeva, 2015: 42). Fourthly, cross–dressing may be associated with the tradition of "literary transvestism as a way to protest against the artificiality of modern civilization (Akhmanov, Khabibullina, 2009: 304). Fifthly, Transgender disguise (along with hints of inspector Kildare's love for men) may be associated with a particular interest in this topic caused by the sexual orientation of Peter Ackroyd (Anthony, 2005).

3. Materials and methods

Modern cinema is actively using several ideologically biased systems of symbols. The units of these systems partially overlap. The intersections create a vast field of homonymy, which consists of signs with a similar external shape, but different semantics. The active translation of these symbols into films makes it difficult to comprehend the meaning and creates the ground for a speculative interpretation, suggesting that the director's work is considered in light favorable to those or other forces. For these reasons, visual and verbal references to Masonic symbols in feature films are used as analysis material. For these reasons, visual and verbal references to Masonic symbols in feature films are used as analysis material.

In the course of their broadcast, they become units of the cinema language which do not only complicate the narration but create informational reasons for mutually exclusive conclusions. The desire to overcome situations of this type predetermined the choice of research methodology. The research methodology is based on the tools and operations of the semiotic discursive approach, which perceives cinematic narration as a system of signs, inextricably linked with the totality of its artistic and ideological tasks. This approach allows analyzing the features of the cinema language and the contexts of the symbols use, which lead to the ambiguity of their interpretation. On the basis of this analysis it is possible to formulate procedures removing this ambiguity.

The new type of analysis formulated below summarizes the advantages of context, semantic and distributive analysis of cinema language units. Synthetic in nature, it takes into account and consistently reveals the characteristics of semantics to the extent that they are predetermined by the data of a widely understood context and various types of distributional relationships.

4. Results

This whole range of problems makes it necessary to say that the presence of any symbolism or orientation of a text to any tradition always requires special proof. These factors demand contextual confirmation through taking into account extralinguistic and linguistic signals proper. This confirmation is designed to overcome the information interference created by the listed reasons, and, thus, to avoid arbitrary comments, that do not correspond to the actual content of the text. "Only in contextual relationships do the signifiers acquire their meanings; it is only in the context that they come to life, now becoming clearer, now obscure; referring to a value, which – and so it is very often – is not the last, suggesting the next choice. If I change one thing in the context, everything else moves" (Eco, 1998: 81).

The need for contextual confirmation is eliminated in two cases: if the analyzed symbol does not have homonymous pairs among the symbols and realities of other systems, or if the text contains a direct indication, comment, or reference. The first case can be illustrated by such examples as the Dreamcatcher, an amulet of North American Indians; Sakura blossoms, a symbol of Japan, Haka, a ritual dance of New Zealand Maori or corrida, bullfighting in Spain. The second case includes the moment in the film *They're Back, Aren't They?* (2017) by C. Gaviola, when Amenadiel gives a big white feather to his brother Lucifer. The very name of the series *Lucifer* contains a direct indication that it will involve divine scenes. Although the both men look like people, and the action takes place in one of the apartments of modern Los Angeles, the reference to the frame with the wings lying on the floor gives an unambiguous interpretation that this feather belongs not to the bird, but to the angel. By the way, in the same series the film *Sympathy for the Goddess* (2017) by L. Milito contains an episode where each of the characters gives their own interpretation of the studio logo seen on the home screen of the found cell phone: two eyes, human female breasts, a woman's perfectly freckled rump; a pair of butt–boob–eyes.

With regard to Masonic symbolism, the problem of context dependence acquires a relatively well–defined framework and manifests itself in juxtaposing several types of texts that are dissimilarly interpreted in different situations: Masonic texts proper intended for use within the order which are oaths, ceremonials, odes and hymns for performance during meetings, regulations; Masonic texts addressed both to the brothers in the order and the profanes, usually published in periodicals with propaganda goals; literary texts containing Masonic symbolism.

The interpretation of these texts by different readers can be diametrically opposite in different situations (in the circle of initiates or knowledgeable people and among those who are not such). In a situation of Masonic communication, all three types of texts can count on an adequate interpretation. On the contrary, outside the Masonic environment, the first type will not be understood at all, the second one is most likely to be perceived as moral and ethical reflections with unexplained confessional attribution, and the third one will be evaluated first of all from the point of view of their artistic merits regardless of the Masonic symbolism contained in them. In another way, this factor can be described as an addressee factor, orienting the interpreter towards the need to take into account to whom exactly the text is addressed. The consideration of this factor makes it essential to pay special attention to the artistic texts that one Mason devotes to another, as the potential possibility of the presence of Masonic symbols in it increases. The very fact of such a dedication can be one of the confirmations of the presence of Masonic symbolism in the text.

In general, the context confirmation mechanism, which includes the necessary set of interrelated procedures that allow identifying a symbol as belonging to the symbolic system of Masons, looks like this.

(1) It is indispensable to find out if the author of the analyzed work has real knowledge of the history, rituals and symbols of Freemasonry. This first stage of confirmation involves the mandatory recording and reproduction of extra–linguistic information of the most varied plan: data about the biography, the environment of the author, the history of the text, etc. Without substantiated reproduction of information of this kind, the evidence of specific conclusions can be significantly reduced.

(2) Having received a positive answer to the first question, it should be established if the analyzed text contains language units that correspond in form and value to Masonic symbols. It should be emphasized that the mere fact of the presence of a certain unit, which causes associations with the Masonic tradition, does not mean anything, no matter how legitimate and believable these associations may seem without contextual confirmation. The indefinite name "language unit" in this case is due to the fact that the Masonic symbol can be realized by a wide range of language means: from a specific use of the sign to a whole text.

(3) Having established that the text contains a language unit that correlates with the Masonic symbolism, it is necessary to find out whether in this text or in the context of creativity (apart from the noted fact hypothetically associated with the Masonic tradition) there are other facts that can be interpreted in a similar way.

(4) If it is determined that there are several facts, one should find out whether they interact with each other, that is, whether it is possible to trace between them some fairly well formalized relationship, which can be of a different nature: from several repetitions of similar examples to complementarity relations, intersections or participation in the creation of similar situations in micro or macro contexts. If several interacting facts are detected in the text, it is required to answer

the question whether their cumulative interpretation implies a reference to any other, non–Masonic (household, cultural, historical, and esoteric) objects. And only if there is an interconnected set of facts, the perception of which is coordinated only (!) with the Masonic tradition, can one say that the text contains Masonic symbolism.

(5) The presence of the symbolism of the Freemasons does not at all cancel the possibility of secondary layering of other associative fields on the Masonic symbolism and reading the text as referring not only to it or orientation of the text to several thematically different spheres. In addition, the Masonic symbolism performs a certain aesthetic function in the text. Therefore, at the final stage, after characterizing the symbols, one should answer the question what function the symbols perform in the text, how they participate in the implementation of the content structure and what kind of structure they implement.

It is needless to emphasize that the effective implementation of all these procedures is possible only if the metadata of the researcher contains a fairly complete and consistent view of Freemasonry and the rules for the semantic combination of language units. An ignorant spectator may encounter "the appearance of understanding where there is no true understanding" (Lotman, 1973: 6). When analyzing and interpreting symbolism in cinema, one should always have a clear idea the unit of which symbolic system is included in the text. It will prevent from mixing the units which are externally similar but semantically different and will save from arbitrary or incorrect interpretation of the text. The lack of a clear idea of the thematic affiliation of the sign in terms of the audience's perception leads to the fact that any meaning no matter how far it is from the author's intention is arbitrarily attributed to the films. This is especially pronounced when exploiting the Masonic theme, which the viewer or critic (professional or armchair) can see everywhere.

An example of the dual identification of Masonic symbols is the video *Masonic symbols in the Hollywood cinema* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cV4JaLpHFyU) made by an anonymous author and having 12.315 views as of today. Paying tribute to the author for the large amount of work done, it should still be said that in 10 out of 30 films the symbols are not Masonic: *Monsters Corporation, Inc.* (2001), *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), *Back to the Future* (1985), *Gangs of New York* (2002), *Brazil* (1985), *Kids in the Hall* (1992), *South Park* (2000), *Halloweentown* (1998), *Anatomie* (2000), *Hard Core Logo* (1996). Another example is the active multi–voiced discussion around the film *Lermontov* (1986) by N. Burlyaev. Its participants discussed the artistic merits of the film in the plane of figuring out exactly how the author assesses the role of Masons in the history of Russian culture (https://document.wikireading.ru/57950). Finally, the list of "Masonic Films 2018" which includes *Westworld, Ready Player One, Lucy, Geostorm, The Humanity Bureau, Altered Carbon, The Handmaid's Tale* (https://evalinger.livejournal.com/).

The author of this list considers Masonic any film with a secret meaning, preferably a post–apocalyptic type or catastrophe genre. An additional reason for attributing a film to this list is the presence of a line related to the search for unlocking the mystery. Any hint of conspiracy and the manipulation of individual or social consciousness is enough to find the film Masonic. Such an expanded perception of the word "Masonic" should alert a reasonable expert, because it is a way of disorientating public consciousness and outright playing on stereotypes.

The way the confirmation mechanism works is shown with the help of the shots and sequences from the film *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) by S.M. Eisenstein. None of the numerous researchers have previously paid attention to the presence Masonic symbols in it, although their conclusions appear to be reasonable and non– trivial.

T. Neff (Neff, 2017: 49) writes that symbols are an important component of propaganda and therefore the spoiled meat that the sailors were forced to eat for their meals symbolizes how the tsarist government treated its people. The same point of view is held by the author under the nickname briandiep7 (briandiep7, 2012), who asserts that the maggots in the meat and the doctor's disregard of them represent the contempt of the rich for the poor. He quotes the words of a sailor about the better treatment of Russian prisoners of war by the Japanese, than that of their own sailors by the Russian officers. In addition, he quite correctly relates the inscription on the plate, which the sailor is washing, as belonging to the symbolism in the Christian faith. Bread symbolizes life as it is the nourishment that sustains life. According to the author, the greatest injustice is that the officers eat off these morally sound plates, agree with the quote, but do not share the same benefits to their sailors. E. Doise develops this idea, but clarifies that although some objects in the film, such as the crucifix and the paten destroyed by the soldier washing dishes, are associated with Orthodox practice, they are not actual Orthodox icons, known to anyone, even the laziest viewer.

This is because "the church is invariably portrayed in Eisenstein's films as immoral, corrupt, and obscurantist through withering cameos of its representatives that are often deliberately and provocatively blasphemous" (Doise, 2009: 56–57).

A.V. Fateeva (Fateeva, 2007: 39) considers the symbols of the revolutionary time, among which she marks the pince–nez, hanging on a yard, and the cross stuck in the deck, as symbols of the destruction of the tsarist era. The scientist considers the movement of the masses and the hand clenched into a fist as symbols of the dictatorship of the proletariat. According to E.A. Eliseeva (Eliseeva, 2011: 83), a pince–nez on a rope bent like a worm is a detail reminding not of the doctor, but of his crime against sailors. R. Taylor (Taylor, 2001: 65) claims that the doctor's pince–nez left hanging on the ship– side ropes testify to its demise. He claims that in the film pince–nez mean a middle–class person, which leads to the ambiguity of the signifier. They become an aid to blindness in the case of the doctor. They represent the clarity of vision for the woman on the Odessa Steps. So the Cossack has to slash not just her face, but her pince–nez as well to restore the "proper order of society". H. Choubassi draws attention to the fact that during the execution of a woman with a child the shades from soldiers, falling on the Odessa stairs, symbolize prison bars that separate ordinary people from basic rights to survival and freedom (Choubassi, 2012–2013). H.A.V. Bulleid (Bulleid, 1941) also notes that in this scene the shadows are used to create a dramatic effect. He emphasizes the overthrown pram as "an unforgettable symbol of innocence, caught in the chaos of horror". Another symbol highlighted by the researcher is a purely cinematic symbol of the lion jumping to life. In his opinion, this is a brilliant concept, emphasizing the battleships power. R. Taylor (Taylor, 2001: 10), in turn, interprets the image of three stone lions – asleep, half–awake, and leaping to its feet – shot by Eisenstein in Alupka and later included in the film as a symbol of "popular revolutionary awakening".

So the mechanism of contextual confirmation of the symbol in the cinema language works as follows.

(1) In 1920 the director of the film S.M. Eisenstein was admitted to the Minsk lodge "Stella", one of the provincial lodges of the Neo–Rosicrucian *Order of the Knights of the Spirit*. This fact is recorded by the director himself in a letter to his mother of 1920 (Nemirovsky, Ukolova, 1994: 97) and in memoirs of 1946 (Nemirovsky, Ukolova, 1994: 293–296). It does not matter whether this lodge was stagy or regular. It does not matter how the director himself treated his dedication at different times: his assessments in the letter to his mother and in his memoirs are different, and the events of life indicate that the incidents connected with the dedication were deeply experienced. What matters is that in fact S.M. Eisenstein for some time belonged to the Rosicrucians, and the lodge itself was a translator of Rosicrucian knowledge. That is, the author of the film has a certain amount of knowledge about the Masonic symbolism and is able to use the Masonic symbols, homonymous to the units of other symbolic systems or lexical–semantic fields, precisely in their order value.

(2) The first symbol under analysis is the sequel that has already been reviewed above (briandiep7, 2012; Doise, 2009), in which a sailor washes a black plate with an inscription on the rim "Khleb nash nasushchnyy dazhd' nam dnes'" (Give us this day our daily bread), looks closely at this plate, and then breaks it. This plate contains images correlated with the Masonic tradition: the Eye of Providence or the all–seeing eye of God on the rim, a sheaf of corn in the center of the pate, a scythe and flail behind the sheaf of corn.

The all–seeing eye is "an emblem in the degree of Master Mason, reminding us of the superintending Providence perceiving the most secret things" (Mackenzie, 2012: 31). The eye was also the symbol of Osiris. His wife Isis "discovered and made known the valuable properties of wheat and barley as food" (Mackenzie, 2012: 345). The mysteries of Isis are peculiar interesting to the Dionysian Architects, "from whom so many symbolical rites have emanated, and of which not a few are perpetuated in the various degrees of Masonry" (Mackenzie, 2012: 346)

A sheaf of corn as a vertically set bundle tied up with a rope appears in many symbolic images (poverty, abundance, peacefulness, summer, the emblem of the Penza province) and according to the book "Emblems and Symbols" has three independent meanings: "A spike or a sheaf of ears of corn means the fruitful land, the bringing of bread from foreign lands, summer, harvest, and Ceres" (Emblems, 1995: 53); "He who does not reap, but sows, owns it" (Emblems, 1995: 90–91) and "A great bundle is made up of small pieces. A heavy sheaf is made up of small greenery" (Emblems, 1995: 174–175). Its last meaning is close to that given by Masons: a sheaf of corn is depicted in the

General Grand Chapter logo of Order of the Eastern Star (Mackenzie, 2012: 172) and "The Sheaf of Corn is part of the machinery of the second degree in Masonry" (Mackenzie, 2012: 152).

The symbol of the crisscross scythe and flail is not found in the collection of symbols which indicates the limited scope of its use. It is partially similar to the symbol of the crook and flail which can be commonly seen in depictions of Osiris crossed over the chest, where the shepherd's crook stood for kingship and the flail for the fertility of the land. On the plate the shepherd's crook is replaced by the scythe, tiller's labor tool. It is most probable that the scythe alluded to Isis's personification of Nature (Mackenzie, 2012: 345). The scythe reaps its harvest not only on the field. In Masonry it is an emblem of time as well. "Behold! What havoc the scythe of time makes among the human race; if by chance he should escape the numerous evils incident to childhood and youth, and with health and vigor arrive to the years of manhood, yet withal we must soon be cut down by the all– devouring scythe of time, and be gathered into the land where our fathers have gone before us" (Webb, Morris, 1859: 93). So, "since the time of Webb, the scythe has been adopted in the American system of Freemasonry, as an emblem of the power of time in destroying the institutions of mankind' (Mackenzie, 2012: 657). What leaps to the eye is that the scythe and flail on the plate are arranged in such a way that they create two horizontal triangles.

(3) In addition to this sequel, the film contains a number of functionally significant images that directly correlate with the tradition of Freemasonry, reflect it and have homonymous pairs. They function as accented details in the artistic whole. First, it is a bow in the form of two horizontal triangles which are visually similar to those made by the scythe and flail on the plate. No doubt that a triangle is important in Masonry as a symbol of Deity and as the most perfect of figures. "It constantly recurred in Craft Masonry as well as in the Koyal Arch" (Mackenzie, 2012: 743). There is a triangle of operational masons, each side of which symbolizes one of the three masters or the Great True (Churchward, 2013: 144). The Sign of the Grand Directory of Astrei (Sokolovskaya, Lotareva, 2007: 441), the Order of the lodge Neptun zum Hoffnung (Sokolovskaya, Lotareva, 2007: 439), the Sign of the lodge Trols Flambeaux (Sokolovskaya, Lotareva, 2007: 446) and many other lodges are also in the form of a triangle. Sometimes the triangles doubled and overlapped in various ways. Connected by tops, they designated the ancient Brotherhood, becoming the ideogram representing their "land of the spirits" (Churchward, 2013: 51). The Star of David (Churchward, 2013: 73) and the five–pointed star are formed from two triangles as well (Churchward, 2013: 144). Freemasons are directly named "the servants of a triangle" in the title of a book from the "National Missionary Library" series, published in Russia before the revolution (M.A.G., 1912). Besides, the bow is an element independently used in Freemasonry, in particular for fastening the Order as in the case of I.N. Nikitin's portrait of Chancellor G.I. Golovkin (Sokolovskaya, Lotareva, 2007: 401) or the Order of the Neptun zum Hoffnung (Sokolovskaya, Lotareva, 2007: 439). In Eisenstein's "Battleship Potemkin" there is a bow above the tent in which the dead Vakulinchuk lies, on the blouse of a young lady that passes by the tent and a young lady during the shooting on the Odessa Steps.

Second, the buckle on the dress of the woman with the pram; on the buckle there is a bird similar to a stylized pelican. Pelican is an image of philoprogenitiveness, fatherly love for children and the Sacraments of the Holy Supper (Emblems, 1995: 50). The single image of a pelican symbolizes "Life in death" (Emblems, 1995: 126–127), together with the chicks it means "For my own" (Emblems, 1995: 262). In Freemasonry, the pelican is the third symbol of the Rosicrucians, usually placed at the foot of the cross and rose. Pelican feeds its chicks on its blood and flesh and protects them with outspread wings. According to this sign, the Rosicrucians must not only comprehend secret knowledge, but also feed it with their spiritual substance (Nemirovsky, Ukolova, 1994: 6). The Degree "Prince of Rose Cross", regarded as a distinction by all Masons, had a jewel: a compass between the legs of which was a cross with a full–blown rose in the center, together with the figure of a pelican wounding its breast to feed its young (Mackenzie, 2012: 610). In the film, the camera repeatedly shows the buckle close up, including the moment when the woman is being killed. The blood is sliding down the buckle, which directly indicates the sacrificial pelican, which is being washed with blood for the sake of the future generation.

(4) The context and semantic links do not allow interpreting the totality of these units other than as belonging to the Masonic tradition. Let us consistently relate to each other the totality of the meanings of the homonymous and polysemantic units; enumerate all possible variants of their combination among themselves. It turns out that only those meanings that are directly related to Freemasonry are added up in a consistent, holistic, logical syntagmatic series. It organically fits

into the overall communicative plan of the text and its semantics, while demonstrating the simultaneous implementation of a single, thematically clearly oriented complex. Other ratios give rise to conflicting or distinctly inconsistent series.

(5) All listed Masonic symbols are implemented in this case at the level of the frame–detail and appear in the meaning mentioned above. Symbols play a significant role in organizing the content and graphic structure of the film. They appear throughout the cinema narrative, they are represented in its various parts, and everywhere they are consistently associated with the semantics of destruction: the plate is broken, the bow hangs over the corpse, and the blood pours on the buckle. "The Rosicrucian Cosmo–Conception or Mystic Christianity" (Heindel, 1909) had a diagram which fixes the ratio of the visible and invisible worlds on the example of a projection lamp. It is quite possible that during the acquisition of Rosicrucian knowledge S.M. Eisenstein got acquainted with this diagram, which is made in the form of a projection apparatus (a primitive prototype of a motion picture projector relevant for the director) and includes as an example not only two horizontal triangles but also a schematic image of the ship – the main character of his future film. Thus, the symbolism of the sheaf of corn, directly and differently reflecting the semantics of the unity of the masses, the symbolism of the scythe cutting down everything on its way and the symbolism of the pelican denoting the sacrifice of innocent people for some worthy causes on the Odessa stairs merge with the symbolism of the unity of the different worlds and their mutual overflowing.

In its integrity, the mechanism of contextual confirmation of the symbol is a procedure for removing units from a weak semantic position to a strong one. Thanks to it, the possible set of readings of the text is narrowed down to its adequate perception. It turns out to be a structured, purposeful movement from the amorphous, indefinite perception of the text to the concrete one. At that it should be emphasized that the search and detection of a specific perception does not at all signify a statement of unambiguous perception. Even with a specific perception, in this case within the framework of the Masonic tradition, the text can be ambiguous, have several plans and semantics which is simultaneously correlated with Freemasonry and beyond its limits. In other words, a specific perception of the text within the framework of the Masonic tradition does not at all cancel the simultaneous realization of additional meanings in it. The mechanism of contextual confirmation can be used to identify and prove the presence of any symbols in the texts. The above procedures being applied, actions should be carried out with units of the symbolic system under analysis.

5. Conclusion

Thus, the semiotics of cinema is a sphere of knowledge that is necessary not only for those people whose professions are in one way or another connected with cinema or semiotics. Since we live in the age of audiovisual technology, the ability to correctly understand the information becomes a new kind of literacy. As V. LoBrutto accurately noted "The average adult has seen hundreds, if not thousands of films and yet many fundamentals of the cinema remain a mystery to the movie– going public" (LoBrutto, 2005). This is due to the fact that the language of cinema, like the language of any other art, must be specially studied. Only then will the viewer be able to separate significant components from insignificant and adequately perceive the artistic image. Print–oriented literacy wants recognizing words and the patterns of their combination, and film literacy wants recognizing cinematic methods. "Cinema semiotics provides the tools to better understand Visconti as well as a YouTube clip, inter–media installations as well as product advertisements, The Lord of the Rings as much as the nine o'clock news" (Walldén, 2012: 71). Mastering the mechanism of contextual confirmation of the symbol in the language of cinema can be another step towards the audiovisual media literacy.

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