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**Creating Urban Heterotopia:
Užupis in the Focus of Literature and Film
(*Tūla* by Jurgis Kunčinas and *Ten Minutes Before
the Flight of Icarus* by Arūnas Matelis)**

Objectives and approach

Užupis is a part of the Old Town in Vilnius which has undergone probably the most extensive urban transformation in post-Soviet Lithuania. Following the processes of real estate development and gentrification, this once deprived neighborhood became a fashionable and expensive residential area promoted by developers and branded as the “Montmartre of Vilnius”. It can be assumed, then, that the economic value that Užupis has acquired derives from its symbolism, which was co-created by artists and a network of art institutions – the Academy of Fine Arts, the whole cluster of artists’ studios and art galleries, as well as the Republic of Užupis, established by an active art community at the dawn of the restoration of Lithuanian independence. Before the real estate capital discovered and destroyed this authentic neighborhood, it had been explored by artists and preserved in their works. In this way, the “eternal Užupis”

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will live forever in our minds and dreams, and we will perhaps even encounter it in future works of art, since the tradition of seeing and representing, as we know from the history of art, is more potent in reproducing texts than the flux of reality itself.

This article is devoted to the literary and cinematic images of Užupis as depicted in the novel *Tūla* by Jurgis Kunčinas (Kunčinas, 1993) and the documentary *Ten Minutes Before the Flight of Icarus* by Arūnas Matelis (Matelis, 1990). The two works were created around the same time and marked the esthetic shift in how Vilnius is represented – a move from more representative parts of the city to the peripheral and impoverished urban spaces. As we can see today, their focal points have also been targeted by the gaze of financial and industrial power. The significance of the works of Kunčinas and Matelis consists in a novel esthetic canon they established and a new trend to privilege the deprived cityscape that they developed along with other artists, such as Ričardas Gavelis, Leonardas Gutauskas, Audrius Puipa, and Šarūnas Bartas. However, I intend to focus only on the tactics used by Kunčinas and Matelis to render their experience of urban space and the result of these tactics – the image of Užupis as a heterotopia in Vilnius.

The urban experience in art and literature involves the intersection of the city and its literary/cinematic representation. Such interference between “reality” and texts is seen as a specific intertextuality of the city or a thirdspace (Soja, 1996). To investigate this issue in the two works under scrutiny, the present study applies the geocritical perspective. The main analytical tools of this model originate from narratology and literary urban studies (Westphal, 2007), and it is applied in close reading of both cinematic and literary texts (Tally & Drakakis, 2012; Westphal, 2007). Such a methodological approach refers to the French tradition – the early ideas of Roland Barthes on semiology and urbanism (Barthes, 1988, pp. 191–202), as well as Michel de Certeau’s dichotomy of viewing and walking in a city, and different esthetic/ethical effects of these urban practices (de Certeau, 1980, pp. 91–111). This approach has already been applied in the research on Vilnius literature.

To start with, the project “Vilnius Literature” (Vidugirytė-Pakerienė et al., 2014) was the first of its scale in digital humanities in Lithuania; it relied on geocritical methods (Westphal, 2007) and the practice of mapping literature developed by Franco Moretti.¹ Among others, the project reconstructed the map of Vilnius as described in *Tūla* by capturing the city’s topography marked in the text and tracing the protagonist’s movement. Different aspects of Vilnius literary urban space were analyzed: the “syntax of Vilnius” (tracing the protagonist’s steps and considering them as a specific syntax, whereby walking in the city joins places together as words in a poem connect into phrases) (Vidugirytė-Pakerienė, 2014, pp. 252–258); the contrast between panoramic and street-level views and the issues of power relations (Снежко, 2015,

¹ Moretti offers an approach to literary history using visual tools (graphs, maps, trees) (Moretti, 2007).

p. 264); the link between the construction of the fictional urban space and the structure of the novel itself (Bidlauskienė, 2019).

Another approach to the same novel stems from the notion of “Petersburg text” by Vladimir Toporov (Топоров, 2003), stressing a crucial link between the history of the city and its literature. Despite the limits of this idea, it became widespread in the study of Russian literature. In a similar vein, Tomas Venclova has applied the concept of the city text in his analysis of Kunčinas’ novel (Venclova, 2014). He concludes that *Tūla* is one of the works which form the Vilnius text – one of the Lithuanian voices in the multilingual palimpsest of the city’s literature. According to Venclova, this text follows up and extends the pastoral tradition of Vilnius literature.

The palimpsestic nature of Vilnius has also been studied by Marta Kowerko-Urbańczyk (Kowerko-Urbańczyk, 2013a, 2013b), who argues that in his prose Kunčinas has distanced himself from the concept of multiculturalism and the metaphor of the city as a palimpsest and tried to rewrite its space using non-nostalgic keys. Importantly, she makes a substantial contribution to the research on the fictional representation of Užupis. In particular, the third chapter of her thesis (Kowerko-Urbańczyk, 2013b) considers the representation of Užupis (or Zazecze, in Polish) and its transformation from a shabby and degraded area to the Republic of Užupis – an area where artists can flourish, which she interprets in terms of the concept of non-places, proposed by Marc Augé (Augé, 1995).

While there have been significant attempts to study Kunčinas’ novel *Tūla* in terms of its urban and/or topographic aspects, Arūnas Matelis’ film *Ten Minutes Before the Flight of Icarus* still remains almost untouched by academic research at all. Indeed, it has only been considered in a study by Natalija Arlauskaitė (2019), who analyzes several films and focuses on the depiction of animals in the urban landscape in Lithuanian documentaries. This means that there have been no attempts made to approach literary and cinematic texts on Užupis in conjunction thus far.

The analysis presented in this article seeks to contribute to the study of the inter-medial image of Užupis by juxtaposing two different texts from the same period. The starting point is the change of the protagonist’s and narrator’s gaze and the dichotomy of the near–far sight (de Certeau, 1980, pp. 91–93). In terms of methodology, de Certeau’s gaze regimes are complemented by the Panopticon model described by Foucault. Panopticism is a privileged view related not only to the rational maintenance of power (Foucault, 1975, pp. 197–229) but also to the specifics of the narrative. In literature, this “divine” perspective is often attributed to the nineteenth-century idea of the omniscient narrator prevalent in the novel.² Meanwhile, in narratology, such

² In one sense the panoptic gaze functions as an architectural framework that breaks down the distinction between “see-be-visible”, and in another as a narrative technique that highlights the “near–far” opposition (Baldick, 2001, p. 98; also, Foucault, 1975, pp. 197–229).

asymmetry is marked by the concept of the focal point or the point of view from which narrative events are witnessed.

Apart from the gaze, the geocritical perspective followed in this analysis requires that other senses should also be considered: tactile, olfactory, acoustic, and taste experiences, which orient the sensorial body in the space where it moves. Therefore, they are considered as geographical competencies (Tuan, 1977, p. 54; also, Westphal, 2007, p. 215). Regarding this approach, the storyline also relies on the relationship between space and time, which emerges thanks to the visual or other sensory capturing of the urban space. Moreover, space is reckoned to be emerging through movement, connecting spatial and temporal points. Here, the geocritical model is supported by the definitions and methods in phenomenology, philosophy of space, and urban studies. This analysis also invokes the ideas of Westphalian geocriticism (Westphal, 2007) coupled with Soja's thirdspace (Soja, 1996), suggesting the convergence of real space and its texts, whereby various facts, fictional heroes, urban myths, legends and literary narratives interweave into the thick fabric of the city. Finally, the Foucauldian concept of heterotopia (Foucault, 1997, pp. 350–356) also contributes to the analysis and allows to qualify the depicted spaces and their heterogeneous nature.

The cityscape in *Tūla*: Užupis as bodily experience

Tūla is a love story that takes place in Vilnius during the final years of the Soviet period. The city depicted here is much more than just a setting, as the story is shaped by and the events occur with reference to the place. Although the novel represents a broader cityscape, the main focus here is set on the neighborhood of Užupis, whose name literally means “beyond the river”. Although at that time Užupis was one of the most deprived areas of Vilnius, its marginal social reality is portrayed with great tenderness and irony at the same time.

The plot follows the unnamed protagonist, who is also the narrator. As he wanders around the city, the cityscape reminds him of his long-gone love affair with a girl called Tūla. His occupation is a philologist, but at that point he has neither a job nor a home. In addition, he is also a *flâneur* (Benjamin, 1999, p. 21), which means that he can dive into the poetic sensation of the city experienced as the intensity of vision and walking. In effect, firstly, the novel deals with various modes of vision, and, secondly, it depicts movement, which could be traced as the character's footsteps.

Starting from sight, visual variations are important as one of the sensual dimensions in the depiction of the city. The perceiver is often plunged down between the walls and to the very texture of Vilnius. In this case, the image of the city is captured by a very close look (“I lowered my eyes to the eroding pavement”) (Kunčinas, 1993,

p. 27).³ Another mode alters the field of vision, while the direction of seeing changes from horizontal to vertical and to panoramic view (“frozen outskirts with the Visitationist Church and the pale block of prison overlooked the moonlit valley beyond”; “I also have found another panorama with the forests, the hill and the old depot in the foreground”) (Kunčinas, 1993, pp. 82, 114).

Unlike the street-level view, which speaks of everyday life, the panoramic perspective is distant and voyeuristic, to use Michel de Certeau’s distinctions. This gaze belongs to city planners or cartographers with their ability to read the city. Hereby, the distance also refers to the strategic level and rational and penetrating sight. In this case, the panoramic point of view perceived by the protagonist, and, at the same time, the narrator, enables the reader to connect topographical points on the map of the city or the area portrayed in the novel. In the first case, this gaze connects the important area where the main action takes place: the church, the prison and the valley where the district of Užupis is located. In the latter, the view from a different hill, but with the same Užupis in the valley. Meanwhile, in formal terms, the panoramic point of view also indicates the broader plan of the narrative. This panoptic or god-like scope often foretells the events that follow. For instance, the picture of the prison mentioned above implies the subsequent sentencing of the protagonist and the place of his imprisonment. Also, the view of the Bernardine Church is always described using the imagery of redness and fire (“our Bernardines blast furnace”; “the red roof of the Bernardines”), a harbinger of the tragic death of his lover by burning – as if this fire had broken out of the flaming gothic facades of St. Anne’s and the Bernardines (Kunčinas, 1993, pp. 6, 12). Overall, the potent vertical sight in the narrative is also related to the novel’s structure, not only to the referential reality.

However, these objects are not always fatal. The same Bernardine Church and the whole architectural complex is also comforting and serves as a landmark providing orientation in space. First of all, it functions as a metonymy, whereby it represents a larger area – the whole block where both the Bernardine Church and the nearby home of the protagonist’s lover Tūla are located. In fact, this location frames the entire story: it not only starts there (Kunčinas, 1993, pp. 5–8), but eventually also ends there when the main character brings his lover’s ashes and buries them under the floor of her former home (Kunčinas, 1993, pp. 191–194). Thus, when Tūla is not there anymore, and the protagonist cannot access her house, the whole area, especially the Bernardine Church, becomes a personal cathedral or the mausoleum of his former lover. In the text, in turn, the area functions as a reference point that organizes the protagonist’s recollections along with the story. After all, in terms of the structure, the church becomes a landmark of the whole narrative, as well as a central element of

³ This and all subsequent quotations from the novel *Tūla* have been translated from Lithuanian by Gintarė Bidlauskienė.

the scenery (Bidlauskienė, 2019, p. 141). Ultimately, the significance of this place is also confirmed by the quantitative factor, i.e. the abundance of its image in the text.

The constant presence of the silhouette of the church is a matter of the dynamics of seeing and not seeing. Its presence is similar to that of the Eiffel Tower as pinpointed by Barthes: the Tower is visible from a distance, yet invisible when the perceiver approaches too close. Likewise, the Bernardine Church enters the blind spot as soon as the character finds himself right next to it, at Tūla's house: the surrounding space remains undistinguished ("We rarely looked through those [Tūla's] windows") (Kunčinas, 1993, p. 12). Instead, the narrator's and protagonist's gazes are focused on the loved one ("we did not lose sight of each other for a week") (Kunčinas, 1993, p. 69). On the one hand, the shifting field of vision is a distinct stylistic feature of Kunčinas' prose. On the other hand, the differently articulated gaze is an intrinsic tool to shape the composition and build up the content.

In terms of the formal narrative technique, the novel is organized as a journey through space (a homeless character wanders in Vilnius) and a journey through time (certain elements of the imagery of the city evoke the protagonist's memories of his lover). The Bernardine Church becomes a landmark which appears in the field of vision if it is sufficiently distant from the eye. On the other hand, it also functions as a central point which structures the protagonist's memory as well as the whole story ("This place attracted me even then, when I didn't know anything [...]. [...], didn't realize those actual coordinates. Now at least I know why I drop in by this place [...]. Tūla, that is why") (Kunčinas, 1993, p. 29). On the whole, the Bernardine Church and Tūla's home as a conjoint place acquire a central position in the city and the entire novel.

Content-wise, the substantiality of this quarter (where Tūla's house and the Bernardine Church are located) is amply confirmed by the character's experiences. It is also highlighted in terms of structure by its occurrence throughout the novel. Apart from this, its significance is expressed and confirmed by the artwork accompanying the novel: three illustrations by the graphic artist Valentinas Ajauskas featuring Užupis, which appear on the front cover and at the end of the book. Consequently, the above mentioned intratextual relations are also supported by the paratext. There are references in the novel itself linking the text to other artistic media, specifically, watercolors by Juozapas Kamarauskas (Kunčinas, 1993, pp. 68, 79). The paratextual relationship is created by making a connection to a particular genre of landscape known as the *veduta*, or view painting. Kamarauskas, an engineer and architect who served as the conservator of the urban architecture of Vilnius, sought objectivity in his depictions of the city or its particular areas, and developed the type of image featuring a remarkably detailed view of the area, with its monuments and buildings. Therefore, his watercolors are seen as revealing in both artistic and documentary terms. Kunčinas' references to Kamarauskas' watercolors emphasize the affinity

of his novel with both visual arts and documentary representation. Indeed, topographical accuracy is an intrinsic feature of the text, reinforced by comparing Vilnius as depicted in the novel with the topographic military plans and maps of the city (Kunčinas, 1993, p. 68) and with “a carefully drawn old city plan” (Kunčinas, 1993, pp. 6–7). These depiction strategies, likewise, imply a contrast between the ability to capture the city’s image with the human eye and the visual/graphic representation of the city: “A particular bridge, the monastery, the water protection board headquarters at Malūnų Street, in the topographic and military plans of the city” (Kunčinas, 1993, p. 68).

Despite the panoramic gaze, most of the story, content-wise, is focused on the micro-level, which involves the use of the street-level view. The switch to this point of view in the novel means returning to the everyday life of the city (de Certeau, 1980, p. 93). This territory belongs to residents and walkers, or, in general, tacticians. As a tactician, the protagonist is perpetually going afoot, and his steps write the text of the city. Walking in the city, then, is another primary technique of depiction applied in the novel.

The geographical sense of the city enables the protagonist to drift around Vilnius’ streets, thereby connecting topographical points and appropriating the space haptically. Thus, the story is not limited to the character’s sight but is supplemented by his bodily experience of touching the ground, which is equally essential as a representational strategy. As it is here, such means of portrayal support the topographical imagery. At the same time, they lean toward the phenomenological tradition (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, pp. 46–49).

The examination of how the city is experienced by walking may benefit from the idea of a dichotomy between reading and writing (de Certeau, 1980, pp. 97–99). The character’s steps connect locations in space into an integral itinerary, while the events happening along this route make up a story. Usually, such wandering is conveyed as walking and narrating. While the main character moves, the narrator (who is the same as the protagonist, yet a temporal distance separates them) tells the story that is happening now and explains how it is related to the past and the future. This walking and talking mode of representation is intrinsic to the whole text and it comes close to a real-time impression. In particular, the most extended scene elaborately depicts a day of the protagonist’s life just before he meets his lover for the first time, and this episode takes up more than a dozen pages (Kunčinas, 1993, pp. 54–68). As a result, the perceiver is immersed in the environment and the event and approaches a real-time experience. From this perspective, as the character follows a particular pathway and reflects on it, the reader travels through the text as if it were the content of the character’s consciousness, the urban images he reproduces, and his sensory experiences.

When human bodily experience is insufficient, other senses come into play – flying over the city and seeing the world from the perspective of a bat, which is the case

when the protagonist is a patient in a mental institution. Another important element in the text is the parallel between the city and the human body. Visceral imagery is used to describe the space of Užupis: its courtyards are paralleled to bowels, and the whole area – to Vilnius' liver. This imagery refers not only to the mythical punishment of Prometheus but rather ironically points to Užupis' drunken reputation. In effect, the city's image contributes to the grotesque tradition, while the imagery of a belly is also a typical carnivalesque device.

The eccentric Užupis – in ten minutes

The same Užupis district is portrayed in *Ten Minutes Before the Flight of Icarus*, a ten-minute documentary released in 1990, a few years before the publication of Kunčinas' novel (Kunčinas, 1993). Its gaze is also focused on the deprived urban space of the district.

Like Kunčinas, the film director, Arūnas Matelis, focuses on the tactical level and his work reflects the spirit of the phenomenological tradition, which is manifested in both content and form. In terms of content, the film portrays the everyday life of the so-called commoner and his surroundings. In terms of form, the street-level camera eye matches the gaze of the potential perceiver and his bodily ability to grasp the space haptically, that is, by footsteps. It is also important that the image of Užupis is presented through a visual oxymoron: the technique contradicts the content – although the film is shot in color, it depicts everyday urban life in grey. The impression is created both by the time of the year – it is early spring – and by the greyness of the location itself: its walls, streets, and people. Despite the minimalistic story and moderate effects, the colorful texture of Užupis is apparent in its otherness and vivid characters.

The film opens with the establishing shot of a panorama of Užupis. Apart from this shot, the camera does not exceed human physical capacities. The story begins when we see the protagonist in the street. Secondly, we meet him again in the courtyard. Thirdly, we see him in his apartment, where we learn his name – Misha. This narrowing sequence is like a matryoshka: the framing moves from the whole (the establishing shot of the whole district) to smaller units or parts (the street, the courtyard, the apartment), and this structure is significant for the composition of the narrative. Since the whole area is walkable, the story begins with footsteps, and this movement by foot is essential as it connects all those particular points in space into an itinerary. Although the scene is too short to walk this distance empirically, the prolonged take verges toward real-time effect and allows measuring this range by the protagonist's motion.

This technique relies on a parallel, theoretically described by de Certeau, between the city and the text actualized by the practices of its inhabitants, highlighting

a permanent relation between walking in the city and storytelling as reading or writing. De Certeau describes this embodied experience of the city as poetic. According to the phenomenological tradition, the density of the steps, as bodily experience, enables the residents to interweave into the city's fabric and sensually claim its ownership. In the film under scrutiny, the man-like movement is a way to experience the thickness of the district by scrutinizing every detail. The static street-level camera eye enables us to follow the commoner and examine even the smallest element of his surroundings, which is similar to what we are involved in *Tūla* while following the protagonist's footsteps.

Although the film depicts everyday life, the practices we observe are based on disregarding external social rhythms, something that we can also notice in the protagonist's experience in Kunčinas' novel. Despite the reality of an ordinary working day, with children coming back from school, workers mending the sewer, and taxis going back and forth, the spaces in the film do not overlap with conventional social rhythms (Lefebvre, 1991, pp. 80–92). For instance, some locals drink booze in a gateway or have a cigarette break in a courtyard. A group of youngsters chanting religious songs contributes to this deregulation – worshipping God in open space rather than a church is normative in their behavior; the action itself breaks the default scenarios of the backyard. The youngsters, then, recognize the potential of space and invent new ways of doing things, and they do not succumb to the conformist, structured rhythm of the working day. They appropriate this space as tacticians, shaping its objects according to their needs and finding a specific slot in time.

As portrayed in the film, then, Užupis does not always coincide with established social rhythms. Rather, it functions as an autonomous topographic unit that does not necessarily depend on the general socio-historical context. Regardless of the cars and modernization, and the presumed socio-political change, Užupis remains the same as a hundred years ago: its residents still live without amenities and they follow different parameters of space and time. They assimilate this space with their bodies, and their experience of time is also related to bodily practices. In this case, time that is significant is neither historical nor social or economic, but merely physiological, i.e. the reproductive cycle (a rutting boxer dog on the street), old age (a struggling old man), a cigarette break (a neighbor smoking on a balcony), time to eat (a cat waiting for food in the yard). At the same time, the space and time of this everyday life are full of carnivalesque manifestations: songs, drunkenness, and at the same time – intimacy and otherness.

In this structure, Užupis becomes a periphery where time has stopped, but the history of the former city lives on in language, which is a *mélange* of Russian, Polish, Belarusian, Yiddish, and sometimes drunken gibberish. With or without the latter, Vilnius is known to have been a multicultural and multilingual city. From the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to the interwar years, when Vilnius belonged to

Poland, it remained one of Europe's largest Jewish centers, while Slavs flourished as well. The use of Russian was consolidated and made official in the Soviet era. Therefore, the absence of the Lithuanian language in the 1990s documentary discloses an intrinsic linguistic trait of the city. Instead of Lithuanian speech, the inhabitants of Užupis have another vernacular, assembled from the pieces of different languages that prevailed. This vernacular is inherent to Užupis citizens and is represented in the film and the novel. Moreover, it creates the heterogeneity of Užupis and its characters, such as Misha in the film or Pani Daševska in the novel. As a result, both the film and the novel show that the experience of Vilnius is possible through local speech, and that the city's history is inscribed in the language.

Ultimately, Matelis also invokes fine art. The static, picturesque establishing shot of the film makes a reference to Pieter Bruegel's winter landscapes, only without people. This visual context is reaffirmed by the later scenes with sculptor Stanislovas Kuzma working on a model of Vilnius Cathedral in the backyard of his studio in Užupis. Even though at the beginning of the film Vilnius is portrayed anonymously as any other small Central-Eastern European town, the model of Vilnius Cathedral reveals its identity. The replica of the Cathedral has three statues of saints on its pediment: Saint Casimir, Saint Stanislaus, and Saint Helena. They were removed from the Cathedral by the Soviets in 1950 and returned there only in 1997, restored by Kuzma. Therefore, his work on their restoration in his studio in Užupis indicates a particular place and time – the 1990s in Vilnius.

Although the film highlights the bodily register of the district while at the same time alluding to the district's reputation for alcohol and crime at the time, the spiritual dimension is also essential. It is not overtly expressed, yet it is present in the leitmotif of the chanting Catholic youth, in Kuzma's vertical gaze, and, finally, in the film's title. In the epilogue, this dichotomy between the sacred and the profane is confirmed by the image of a spring. On the one hand, the freshwater spring is intrinsic to the lyrical tradition of depicting Vilnius, on the other – the spring is also associated with ritual purification. However, the film's display simultaneously denies the sacral context, as this spring flows from a clogged sewer. Nevertheless, the image of a spring also links the film and the novel. As a matter of fact, one of the final scenes in the novel depicts the opening of a spring in Užupis, in the very place where the protagonist and his girlfriend have just made love.

Užupis as a heterotopia in Vilnius

Altogether, changes over time do not affect the film's or the novel's characters or their surroundings, and their distinctiveness becomes evident in their everyday practices or, in other words, their tactics. Their rebelliousness implies that Užupis is separated

from the general context of the city and exists beyond the power structure. It is a forgotten island in the middle of the city, inaccessible to the Soviet work ethic or to the vigilant eye of the authorities. However, despite being a radically “other” space, it is defined only by its specific relation to the dominant topos. Its extraordinary nature and several other indicators allow qualifying this whole district as a heterotopia. Importantly, in order to enter Užupis one needs to cross a border, both natural and imaginary – the river Vilnia. This border clearly separates it from the ordinary places of the mundane world. Užupis, then, is represented as an unusual and remote place.

Matelis’ idea is to show Užupis as several incompatible spaces which are intertwined, an area where every group has its own agenda: artists work in their studios, the ambulance is on its way to an emergency call, religious youths worship God in a courtyard, while the drunkards share a bottle of booze in a gateway passage. This corresponds to the principle that defines heterotopia as multi-faceted. The different communities could be distinguished on the basis of various criteria: language – Lithuanian, Belarusian, Polish, Russian, Yiddish; occupation – medics, artists, sewerage workers, and the unemployed, etc. Moreover, in this representation the neighborhood is connected to multiple “slices in time”, or “heterochronies”, as captured in the fourth Foucauldian principle (Foucault, 1997, pp. 353–354). Although cars in the streets indicate modern times, the houses with no amenities are a sign of the previous era. In the film, the heterotopian status of Užupis is finally consolidated by the model of Vilnius Cathedral in one of the courtyards. The Cathedral and its statues of saints, a replica of the central architectural object outside the center, find their place in the neighborhood of Užupis.

For Kunčinas, in turn, Užupis is in many ways akin to the garden from Foucauldian third principle (Foucault, 1997, p. 353). Like the Foucauldian garden with its variety of flora, Užupis is a space of the density of the city and the complexity of its tapestry: “Here dirty chickens are kept, motorbikes are taken to pieces and put back together again, moonshine is distilled; the cultural layer grows here at least a millimeter a day” (Kunčinas, 1993, p. 23). The protagonist of the novel also displays behaviors that are deviant in relation to the norms. In order to be true to himself, he escapes from the system and pursues subversive tactics instead of conventional top-down scenarios.

Užupis displays features that are characteristic of heterotopias of deviation also in broader terms: both the youth and the elderly are all deviant in their own ways in relation to the norms. Overall, the novel portrays a detached social reality that goes beyond the standard time-and-space experience of a typical Soviet citizen. Užupis functions as a heterotopia – an alternative reality or a false mirror, operating by its own inner laws. Here one is not obliged to work and build communism. Rather, homelessness, alcoholism, and self-action thrive in this area. Thus, Užupis is depicted as a small alternative town within the city. On the one hand, it is a hidden and

separate community that looks unaffected by modernization and urbanization, as residents of Užupis still live without amenities. On the other hand, this area could be easily located, so its realness and relation to the center are unquestionable. Importantly, it is the opposite of the dominant topos, as if a reflection in a mirror, reflecting the city center with its objects, residents, and myths. The main character of the film, Misha, is one of those inverted citizens and a crooked double of the mythical Icarus. In turn, the aforementioned model of the Cathedral with its statues of saints is a reflection of the actual architectural object in the center. Both of these reflections are significant in terms of the narrative.

Paradoxically, heterotopic features do not only exclude Užupis from the city of Vilnius but also include it. Marginal, peripheral identity is usually attributed not only to Užupis but to Vilnius as the fringe of Europe, the Russian Empire, or the Soviet Union. Therefore, we deal with an eccentric identity which is both odd and out of the center. In this structure, Užupis is a periphery of the periphery, where time stagnates and where urban history is still alive in language, which is also a bodily practice.

Conclusions

To conclude, both authors contribute to the image of Užupis as a thirdspace, and their works are a documentary of the early 1990s, which means that artistic creativity can capture, on footage or paper, the image of a place and an era that will soon be gone.

The literary and cinematic narrative techniques employed in the works under scrutiny linger between panoramic and street-level depictions. The camera moves from the panoramic to the particular, while Kunčinas' narrator goes the other way – from part to the whole. Despite a different logic, the panoramic view functions as a pause button in both works. In the novel, the protagonist goes up above the city, where he acquires a broader view and comprehends the events of the story. In the film, the panoramic angle enables the viewer to grasp the cityscape and locate the setting of the events.

Considering the imagery of the city, Kunčinas employs the bodily and carnivalesque paradigm; Matelis also relies on the physiological time, yet the film seems to be a little less ironic. Kunčinas captures the multifaceted city experience in terms of religious confessions and language practices, while Matelis highlights its multinationalism. They both use the image of the liver and they focus on cultural layers while disregarding the everyday social rhythms, contrasted with the tactics of Užupis inhabitants. Moreover, both works involve an intrinsic haptic experience of grasping the space by footsteps. Following those itineraries, one will discover the fine thread of Vilnius historical diversity.

Ultimately, the analyzed works reflect a new artistic trend of the 1980s and 1990s, which focused on unrepresented city spaces, alternative itineraries, peculiar characters, and bohemian and marginal experiences. In the film and the novel, such an exemplary place becomes alive and authentic in Užupis. Overall, such depictions attest to the shift in thinking about the city and the representation strategies evolving in cinema and literature, the fine arts, and the wider artistic and critical context. Moreover, later on, the different artistic manifestations served the interests of developers and real estate agents, who branded the area as “artistic” and used this image as a unique selling point.

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Creating Urban Heterotopia: Užupis in the Focus of Literature and Film (*Tūla* by Jurgis Kunčinas and *Ten Minutes Before the Flight of Icarus* by Arūnas Matelis)

Abstract

This article aims to analyze and compare two representations of the Vilnius district of Užupis: the literary image created in the novel *Tūla* by Jurgis Kunčinas (1993) and the cinematic image provided in the documentary *Ten Minutes Before the Flight of Icarus* by Arūnas Matelis (1990). Applying the approaches of geocriticism, urban studies, and intermedial contexts allows to relate these images in terms of the dominant motifs of the sensorial experience of the city related to two representational strategies: observing and walking in the city. In the novel *Tūla*, different gazing modes make the urban space visible, and the protagonist's walking links particular urban objects to the whole referential space. In this way, the analysis of the representation of Vilnius, especially Užupis, in *Tūla* highlights the links between the construction of the fictional urban space and the structure of the city novel. *Ten Minutes Before the Flight of Icarus* focuses on the district of Užupis and the everyday life of its residents. The street-level camera eye matches the gaze of the potential perceiver and his bodily ability to grasp the space haptically, i.e. by footsteps. The movement on foot is essential as it connects all the spatial points into one entity and highlights a permanent link between walking in the city and storytelling as reading or writing. Ultimately, both representational strategies allow qualifying the area of Užupis as the "other" space or a heterotopia due to its distinctive language, which is also a bodily practice, intrinsic to both texts.

Keywords: geocriticism; literary urban studies; heterotopia; thirdspace; Vilnius; Užupis; Jurgis Kunčinas; Arūnas Matelis

Tworzenie miejskiej heterotopii. Zarzecze (Užupis) w centrum zainteresowania literatury i filmu (*Tūla* Jurgisa Kunčinas i *Dziesięć minut przed lotem Ikara* Arūnasa Matelisa)

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest analiza i porównanie dwóch sposobów przedstawiania wileńskiej dzielnicy Zarzecze: literackiego obrazu Zarzecza stworzonego w powieści Jurgisa Kunčinas *Tūla* (1993) oraz obrazu filmowego przedstawionego w filmie dokumentalnym Arūnasa Matelisa *Dziesięć minut przed lotem Ikara* (1990). Wykorzystanie

podejść geokrytyki, studiów miejskich (*urban studies*) i kontekstów intermedialnych pozwala na powiązanie tych obrazów pod względem dominujących motywów zmysłowego doświadczania miasta, związanych z dwoma sposobami przedstawiania: obserwacji i spaceru po mieście. W powieści *Tūla* różne sposoby patrzenia sprawiają, że przestrzeń miejska jest widoczna, a wędrówka bohatera łączy poszczególne obiekty z całą przestrzenią referencyjną. Analiza sposobu przedstawienia Wilna, a zwłaszcza Zarzecza, w powieści *Tūla* podkreśla związki między konstrukcją fikcyjnej przestrzeni miejskiej a strukturą powieści miejskiej. Film *Dziesięć minut przed lotem Ikara* skupia się na dzielnicy Zarzecze i codziennym życiu jej mieszkańców. Formalnie oko kamery umieszczone na poziomie ulicy zbiega się z potencjalnym odbiorcą i jego fizyczną zdolnością do dotykowego uchwycenia przestrzeni, tj. za pomocą kroków. Jest to niezwykle istotna technika, która łączy wszystkie punkty przestrzenne w jedną całość i podkreśla stały związek między spacerem po mieście a snuciem opowieści poprzez czytanie czy też pisanie. Podsumowując, oba sposoby przedstawiania pozwalają zakwalifikować obszar Zarzecza jako przestrzeń „inną” lub heterotopię ze względu na jej charakterystyczny język, który stanowi jednocześnie praktykę cielesną, nieodłączną dla obu tekstów.

Słowa kluczowe: geokrytyka; studia nad miastem w literaturze (*literary urban studies*); heterotopia; trzecia przestrzeń (*thirdspace*); Wilno; Zarzecze; Jurgis Kunčinas; Arūnas Matelis

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