Generative heterotopies: the representation of the Arctic in modern Russian cinema

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Abstract. The article analyzes the main ideas about the nature and methods of forming heterotopies. Michel Foucault has proposed to call “heterotopias” places in which are formed alternate versions of the relations of Power, social relations and culture. Today, the prevailing view in the Humanities is that heterotopia is a byproduct of socio-discursive practices of Power (political and social relations). We know that the natural and climatic conditions in the Arctic are very different from those that most people of planet Earth. The geography of this region influences the formation of special labor, socio-economic and cultural processes. These processes are an alternative to the processes that were typical for the "basic culture". Studying and understanding the uniqueness of the Arctic region forces us to introduce another concept - "generative heterotopies". With this concept, we propose to denote heterotopies that not only transform the systems of signs and systems of relations of Power ("heterotopias-as-given"), but also generate fundamentally new configurations of culture. In Russian popular culture (primarily in Russian movies), there is an unconscious sense of the Arctic as a special "other place". In contrast to the usual types of heterotopias, the formation of a special "Arctic culture" is inevitable in the Arctic.

1. Introduction
The process of active development of the Arctic, in which the Russian Federation is actively involved, poses for researchers a specific problems, impossible in any other conditions, because of the extreme specificity of this region.

2. Main body
The attention of the scientific and expert community is concentrated on its technical, economic and political aspects of the development of the Arctic climatic space. However, behind these visible, “surface” (like the surface part of the iceberg) processes lies a deep, important, but almost no attention “hidden” or “underwater” side.

Features of the Arctic region require the formation of a holistic, systemic and conceptual comprehension. This assertion has already become the commonplace of “Arctic discourse”. The modern sciences are faced with the task of not only analyzing the actual processes taking place here and now, how much to predict the future. There are various options for the “foreseeable,” from relatively easily predicted environmental and geological-climatic scenarios to the possible unfolding of political, legal, and even military processes.

Since people ceased to focus on direct, physical contact, and switched to various types of distance symbolic process control, using sophisticated technologies [1], the concept of a region has become
semiotic, symbolic. Now we need to not only occupy a certain land or sea area (to mine ore, oil or other minerals, plant or chop wood, change the direction of the river flow, control the passage of ships, etc.), but also give it a symbolic shape, include it in our existing sign system.

Thus, by “territory development” we understand not only the most efficient extraction and use of natural resources and the location of people, but also the “placement” of a certain physical region in the mental space of specific social groups, communities and all of humanity. Modern culture and politics are connected in a single whole. Politics is realized as cultural practice, culture as a political struggle.

This need for cultural development, occurring at the level of semiotic processes, requires taking into account what (and how) is fixed by us as creatures endowed with consciousness and cultural “applications” to it. The way our body adjusts to the territory is extremely important, but the way our mind, transformed by culture, assimilates it is much more important, because it is larger and has more serious consequences. Speaking of “mental consumption of territories”, we mean not so much the adaptation of the psyche of the polar explorer to extreme conditions of life, but any “work” of the human psyche on the mental appropriation of the territory. In other words, the main question of the modern philosophy of space is: how does “alien” become “ours”. Accordingly, there also have their own patterns and sub-problems.

When we start exploring the Arctic, an ambivalent task arises before us. in one respect, for a long time the Arctic was on the periphery of Russian culture and Russian public consciousness (as well as world culture and local variants of world sociocultural consciousness). That is why she could not condense a significant amount of symbolic material. In other words, we must understand that the Arctic in this sense is rather what is being constructed at this particular moment than what is being mastered (in the semiotic sense of these concepts).

On the other hand, we are not dealing with uninhabited space. People settled in the Arctic zone from time immemorial, mankind in one way or another knew about the endless lands in the distant cold north and included this knowledge in various forms of discourse. In this sense, the Arctic is not “alien”, but precisely “unfamiliar” (“not own”, “undeveloped”) space.

This region has finally become a part of the Russian and universal cultural spaces after a person reached the North Pole and subsequent Russian Arctic expeditions. However, the low level of accumulation of symbols and related meanings is still preserved. It will be incorrect to use the term “marginality” in relation to the Arctic, but the term “heterotopy”, that is, “foreign or other space”, is ideally suited for its description and understanding.

In the humanities, the concept of “heterotopy” came from medicine. Heterotopy (from the Greek. Heteros - “other” and topos - “place”), according to the big medical encyclopedia, is an atypical localization of tissues or parts of organs, in other words, their presence in an unusual place for them (R. Virchow). An example of heterotopy is the findings of the gastric mucosa in the esophagus. “ So, in medicine, “heterotopy” is a term denoting that which is not in place in the body.

The term “heterotopy” as a concept of humanitarian knowledge was introduced by the French philosopher and historian of thought systems Michel Foucault. He forms the humanitarian dimension of this term, making it a full-fledged tool for philosophical analysis of space in his work “Words and Things” (1966), then in a short report “Other Spaces”. For M. Fuko, heterotopy is a typical case of the connection of Power and Space, moreover, this is a visual situation in which Power acts, realizing itself through the possibilities of Space. Obviously, reflection on this ratio led M. Fuko later to construct the concept of “Space of Discipline”.

Heterotopies are spaces of other, unusual relationships, a different sociality and a different “vision” of oneself (it’s not for nothing that M. Foucault cites the mirror as the first illustrative metaphor that explains the essence of the phenomenon of “heterotopy”. There is space, but there is a different system of relations and another “sociality.” This is already “not our” and “not familiar” space.

It is important to note that the term “heterotopy” by M. Foucault fills with meaning in the late 1960s, at the peak of the “post-structuralist” stage of his work. At that time, he fundamentally departed from the idea of subject and personality. Foucault saw the totality of the essential properties of man
and their manifestations as the result of interaction, as the result of systems of relations. In this sense, his interpretation of the term “heterotopy” is a manifestation of his conceptual view of the “nature” of the phenomenon of “human”.

So, Julia Bedash uses in her work on the Fuko’s interpretation of the term “heterotopy” a reference to the opinion of J. Deleuze. It consists in the fact that Gilles Deleuze calls Foucault “the new cartographer” for a topographical analysis of power. Fuko considers power not as a certain property or entity “belonging” to any individual or class, but as a specially organized social and spatial relationship. The effectiveness of power does not depend on appropriation, but on location” [2]. Location in the system of relations, that is, in relation to other acting actors - we add.

Heterotopy is usually considered only as an object of human formation. This tradition, or trend, was formed after the death of M. Fuko. Heterotopy is considered as a product of socio-semiotic and sociopolitical and sociocultural activity of a person, a direct consequence of his ability and need to interrupt discursive integrity, create gaps in the prescriptions of discursive forms.

This applies mainly to the study of the organization of megacities (heterotopy is a characteristic of “open” or creative “spaces of a metropolis) [3, 215], forms of subcultural development of modern urban space (they are the result of a shift in the center and periphery) [4], the results of the evolution of sociopolitical practices [5], the study of forms of a special class of cultural and political practices [6], or the transformation of space experiences (sacrificial heterotopies of a provincial city), etc.

However, in the vision of heterotopy, as a pure object of human activity, there is nothing "Fucoldian.” The French thinker formulates the question of space and designates the problem in a completely unexpected way: “the problem of the location of people is not just a question of finding out if there will be enough space for a person in the world, a problem that is ultimately very important, it’s also the problem is to find out what types of accumulation, circulation, location, classification of human elements should be preserved in the first place in order to achieve a particular goal” [7]. In essence, it is precisely this formulation of the question of spaces that will determine the whole further course of the arguments presented later in this article.

The connection between the Territory and the Government is carried out through the introduction of a symbolic figure, an image-concentrate, expressing the nature of existing relations, as if their reflection and embodiment. The symbolic figure is that "type" in which the processes of "accumulation, circulation, location, classification of human elements" take place. These symbolic figures are not just assigned to some symbolic projection of the real territory, but also express its social relations and those interwoven into it. Through them, heterotopy gains independence (or at least some autonomy) from a person. So it gains subjectivity.

Traditionally the interference of mass culture and politics (in the broadest sense of this concept) is considered in two planes. Firstly, as a manifestation of “cultural policy” (which tends to be the formation of a social order by political actors and their stimulation of a social reaction to certain cultural products) [9]. It is done through direct ideological interaction. Not only the state can act as a source of cultural policy in contemporary world, but also professional communities, large social groups, nonprofit organizations and various corporations [10].

Secondly, the perception of culture and politics relationship is customary to study in the approach developed by Antonio Gramsci, the Italian thinker of the first half of the twentieth century. The essence of the concept of “cultural hegemony”, proposed by A. Gramsci, is that political and social forces constantly and in small doses throw in new “molecular” (i.e. small) doses of “representations” (i.e. cultural stereotypes) into the space of “big culture”. The purpose of such throw-ins is to change the system of representations and assessments of the society gradually, step by step. In case some of the representations gain acceptance amongst the majority of the population (region, country, entire Earth), they create conditions for the cultural and political hegemony of those who created and promoted them.

These approaches have not lost their relevance. Yet in a world based on the reality of symbolic and on its “materialization” when we have significantly advanced in knowledge of the laws of symbolic functioning, they need to be clarified. Today the boundaries between the real and the virtual are almost
blurred, and the symbol is no longer just a carrier of social energy. It has become an independent force, an independent form of energy.

It is worth noting that: "the World of modern art can be considered as a global network, which is connected by art artifacts."[11]. In this network, cultural, political, and economic production are now linked together. As John Urri reveals in detail in his book that it is information and its coding signs become the main force in a post-industrial, information society [12].

Control over the symbol-force is the ability to determine the subsequent ways of forming symbolic structures and developing other, subsequent number of symbols. This is a special form of symbolic management, the management of a new reality. If we consider culture as a set of strategies and tactics for mastering reality [13, 31], then we should talk about the need to build a new Russian culture adapted to the realities of the Arctic. This is the generative capacity of the Arctic as a heterotopia. Hence why the "Struggle for the Arctic" today is a struggle for the image of building a "alternative Russian culture" in conditions different from the «normal type of Russian culture». Anyone who offers a scenario for such a new cultural construction will offer a new strategy for symbolic development (symbolic domestication) of the Arctic region.

This kind of tasks have not yet been set for national cultures. In this sense, the analysis of mass culture is a kind of analysis of the collective unconscious. Human civilization has come close to posing a new type of problem, but these problems have yet to be formulated in the language of science and philosophy. They are felt rather than realized.

The sphere where this unconscious perception of the contour of new problems occurs and the platform for "unconscious" modeling of such models/scenarios is art. It is also a way to relay the received symbolic product, and a way to consolidate the presence of the producer country on the world market of symbolic products [see 14].

According to M. Foucault, Territory and Power are connected through the introduction of a symbolic figure, which can also be an artistic image "concentrate" that expresses the nature of existing connections. The symbolic figure is the "type" in which the processes of "accumulation, circulation, location, classification of human elements" take place. These figures are not just anchored to some symbolic projection of the real territory, but express it and the social relationships intertwined with it. Through them, the heterotopia takes on the independence (or at least some autonomy) of man. This is how it becomes subjective.

For a long time, the Polar Explorer was a symbolic figure. Its distinctive features, its characteristic that worked as a skeleton-frame of this figure was fundamental temporality. The polar Explorer is an agent of the "outside world", one who plunges into the space of heterotopia, in order to "emerge" from it sooner or later. Failure of returning to the "normal world" was fraught with complete annihilation (not to mention that for many years such failure meant only one thing – the death of a particular person).

However, the symbolism of the Polar Explorer works only in the mode of mediation. Penetration into the unknown and bringing along particles "of alternative world" into "our world is the groundwork of the figure. This undoubtedly heroic and noble emblematic motif has no semiotic resources to encode three important points: 1. the man can become complete and stable part of "alternative world" (to move to "permanent residence"); 2. to link their own future with this heterotopic space; to agree to transform their symbolic world in accordance with the new semiotic rules. In other words, "Polar Explorer" is not a "Migrant".

However, we will face a number of serious problems during the study of the figure of the "Migrant". Firstly, the figure was not created in Soviet times. As the authors of the article on the peculiarities of Arctic logistics during the Great Patriotic War there was simply no need in such figure [15]. The Arctic was perceived as the business and destiny of a small group of specialists, and there was no room for other, expanded groups.

The figure of the Polar Explorer is not associated with rooting and is not related to the symbolic absorption of a new place by the "Big world". Nevertheless, today we see a large-scale change in the
nature and quality of the "symbolic figures" produced by modern Russian culture as the question of the prospect of permanent residence of people in the Arctic Circle arises.

In modern Russian art, the image of a new Russian Arctic culture is being formed. This is highly related to the cinema.

The film "How I ended this summer" released in 2010 (dir. A. Popogrebsky) can be considered as a classic model of the formation of ideas about the value of a new space at the level of a literary text. Its saturation with senses, the ability to encode new meanings introduced into the fabric of a special space. The image of the Polar Explorer is preserved, but it is no longer a symbolic figure. This is the "Settler", the one whose home is the icy desert.

The events of the film take place on the fictional island of Archym, somewhere in the Arctic Ocean (this localization perfectly outlines the "other" "heterotopic" character of the scene). The head of the weather station Sergey (actor Sergey Puskepalis) and his trainee Pavel (actor Grigory Dobrygin) live and work at the station, which is isolated from the rest of humanity. The term of internship is nearing completion but the main character – Pavel is dissatisfied. He fantasized about the many adventures that would happen to him at the station. This is a typical attitude of a person from the "normal world" towards the "alternative world". Of course, the most unique and the most important events happen by themselves on the other side. However, no "special events" happened during the practice.

Sergei's wife and son are waiting for him on the mainland. Seemingly we have a classic story of "Polar Explorer" - the heroic residence in the "alternative world" is coming to an end and now he is waiting for a triumphant return to the "Big world" to take a suitable place there. However, it’s not that simple.

The existential essence of events are revealed in the film in a completely different way. During the absence of Sergey, Pavel receives a radio message about the death of Sergei’s relatives. The authorities have made a decision to evacuate inhabitants and close the station. Upon Sergei’s return, a professional conflict occurs between him and his assistant. Pavel understands that the tragic news will make Sergei’s life meaningless he starts to hinder the communications with the mainland in order to delay the moment reaching Sergei (reversionary ethical position in consequence of the special conditions).

During the second absence of Sergei, Pavel receives a message that an evacuation helicopter has been sent for them. He tries to leave his boss and reach the helicopter landing point alone, but falls off the riverbank into the water. Sergey, who was returning to the base on a boat pulls him out (the action of stable stereotypes from the "Big Land"). Pavel has to reveal the truth to the superintendent, which triggers a series of tragic and ridiculous events. The result of these events is the final "merging" of the dying Sergei with the dying station. But Pavel who was irradiated is now as though part of the station. He is a stranger (infected) to the world of people and, ironically, “local” in the "other world".

In fact, this is a story about the "wrong" merging of a person and "another space" caused by the fact that the young man – the main character did not participate in the formation and assimilation of a new culture (Pavel spends all his free time distancing himself from what is happening, immersed in a computer game).

The act of "Returning" is written not so much as a natural ending, but as an inevitable collision with the reality of the "normal" world, with almost complete loss of connections with it. A turnover of the "normal-odd" opposition takes place. The "normal world" becomes the "other world". But this is not the result of a typical inversion of cultural consciousness, when the "other" becomes "local" (like the main character's entry into the community of "savages" in "eastern" genre films). There is no world, no heterotopia the hero has "faced". There is a new cultural reality built by his own hands (actually built - "polar station").

The film "the Tragedy in Rogers Bay" released in 2015 (dir. F. Abryutin), in the key of the above-mentioned examples, can be considered as a strengthening of this semiotic trend. Here we see an increasing tendency forming a "reverse vision of the world", in which a different natural space becomes the foundation for the formation of a new type of ethics, new powerful relations (neutralized or even directly opposed by the characters of the film to the relations of the "big Earth").
The film tells the story of a murder investigation back in 1935, at the polar station on Wrangel Island, in the Arctic zone. The events in the film take place in 1935. The tasks of the main character who arrived on the island – the inspector of the Chief Directorate of the Northern Sea Route Department Nikolay Zherdevev, who arrive to record the circumstances of the death of one of the station's employees – Dr. Wolfson. However, the case is not limited to plain paperwork and, almost immediately, it turns out that the doctor's death was not an accident, but is a real crime – it occurred as a result of murder.

Here we have an even more expressed example of the generative abilities of the "superheterotopia" - the Arctic. Remoteness from the centers and hubs of "normal" social life in the film is shown as clearly as possible and is shown as the result of a special quasi-world of the Arctic. It is a heterotopia. But in order to overcome it, it is not enough for the heroes to "restore justice", they need to create a social life from scratch.

A typical phrase that one of the characters utters, describing life in the Arctic conditions: "It's kind of beautiful, right, but it breaks a human! And that's not the worst of it! The worst is when human go insane later!" There is a classic position of a "normal" person who finds himself as stranger in a new world. It is closely related to another marker phrase that the main character is told by his opponent: "We are all hostages of our past." These are all symbolic constructs that describe the "old-normal world".

The film opposes the world of the main character, his desire to reveal a crime, to help (read, connect with him in a new, integrative world) to the local society.

Among professional philosophers, the attitude to historical and adventure films is usually suspicious. These films are often associated with the clichéd consciousness and kitsch conventions. In this sense, their position in the rating of intellectual genres of cinema is lower than the corresponding position of the detective. Such products are usually evaluated as devoid of individuality, focused only on profit, result. Sometimes political bias is added to this list of "sins". However, for the study of the social and cultural unconscious, this product is perfect for conducting detailed analysis.

Films of this genre directly express the ideological attitudes of society, refracted through the prism of the unconscious collective, its fears, hopes, stereotypical attitudes, forms of emotional compensation. Watching "The First" (2018, dir. D. Suvorov) for the first time the audience may get the impression that it does not indicate the symbolic figure of the "Settler". It seems that the events described in the film and the plot itself can only be related to the figure of a "Polar Explorer" (not historically established profession, but a character who temporarily resides in the "other world" of the Arctic, transforming it, but at the same time perceiving it as a space alternative to "his own", not initiating new cultural practices of self-transformation). However, this is only seemingly existential orientation of the film.

The film narrates about personal ties and family relationships, as well as the scientific activities of the spouses Vasily and Tatyana Pronchischey – a unique family that participated in the earliest Arctic expeditions in the era of Peter the Great (among the participants of the legendary Lena-Yenisei detachment of the Great Northern Expedition). The great Northern Expedition was to explore the Russian North, within the conventional borders from Pechora to Chukotka. The outcome of the expedition should have been detailed maps and atlases of the region and generalizing works that systematize knowledge about its geographical, geological, botanical, zoological features, as well as a description of the life and customs of the society of the region.

Thus, we clearly see the evolution of the symbolic figure of the "Migrant" occurring (unconsciously) within the framework of Russian mass culture, primarily in cinema. A situational version of the figure of “Polar Explorer” increasingly became an independent symbolic force. This directly and unambiguously shows us how, along which path and in which direction an unconscious movement of thought and desire of society takes place, looking for new forms of significant assimilation of the Arctic region.
3. Conclusion.
In fact, the path we have chosen to present heterotopies showing it not so much as a proper form of space (or perception of space), but as a tool for forming consciousness is not so new. A similar method was used by L. V. Skvortsov, who perceives immersion in heterotopia as a procedure for searching for a different truth about a person [16]. However, we insist on the fact that the heterotopia, as the sooth of human nature is a concept. In contrast to other social constructs, its non-essential nature becomes noticeable only in the most extreme forms of it. In all other situations, heterotopia can easily be taken as a natural given of our daily existence.

This film is suitable because it demonstrates in depth the possibilities of forming those new symbolic systems, that we can call "Arctic Russian culture". Here the existential aspirations of the characters are expressed even more than in the previous films that we have analyzed, they are focused on the desire to build a new symbolic reality. While the film itself is about a physical journey "back and forth", the collision of relations between the main characters tells us that there is no "way back". The "normal world" is supposed to be a kind of starting point, but it is no longer a reference point or a place to return to.

The “Arctic Russian culture "is an example of heterotopia, but a different unknown type of heterotopia until this day. Heterotopy generates symbolic transformations, new sign structures and new forms of semiosis (sign formation). In other words, the Arctic offers us a different perspective on the problem of heterotopia. We are used to seeing this phenomenon as a "given", something that appears in a ready-made form to human. Heterotopia is generally what we encounter in the course of our lives, when we suddenly discover that there is another dimension of sociality, another relationship of power-subordination.

The new "Arctic heterotopia" is a completely different phenomenon. Now we have a situation in which we understand that the previous (normal) forms of interaction, power-subordination relations, etc. are not working. In the Arctic, it is necessary not only to identify and study "heterotopies", but to purposefully create them, intentionally transforming the "familiar into the not familiar”.

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