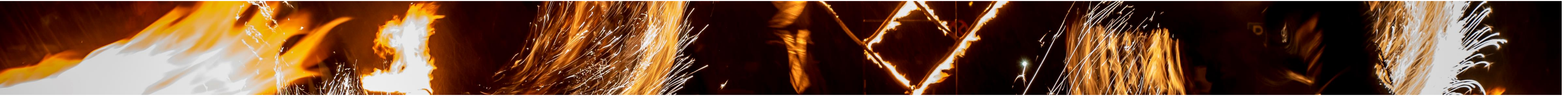




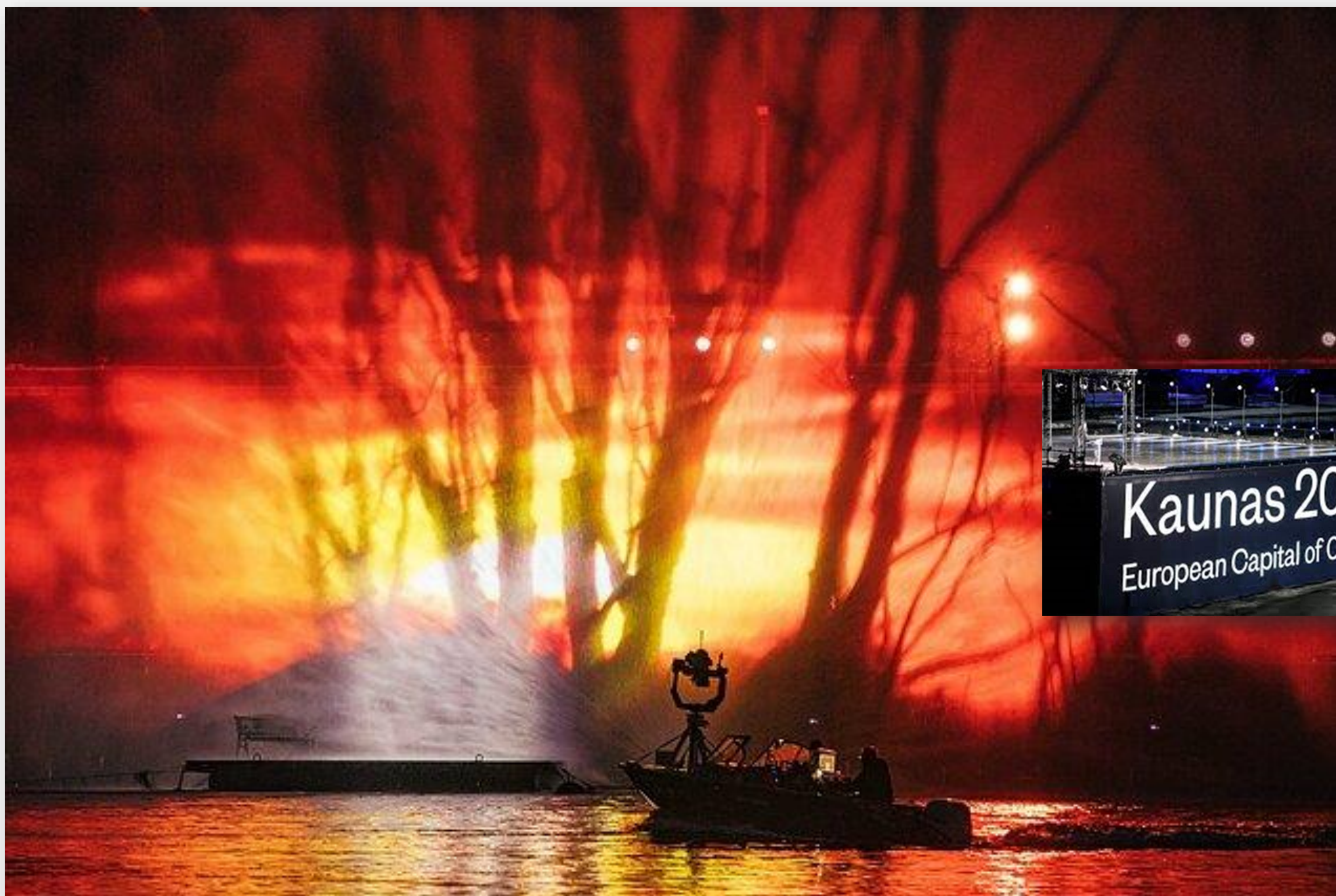
## Introduction

As in the year 2022 we are experiencing “Kaunas - the Culture Capital of Europe” events here in town of Kaunas, the aim of this paper is to present the evolving results of narrative in the personal reflections “Place telling: Culture and Nature Connection”. Placetelling, as a method to create place narratives, a strategic asset to support communication and promotional processes, it is a particular type of storytelling of places that promotes local development and helps to develop a sense of identity and belonging among the members of the community (Pollice et al., 2020). In this case, the placetelling tells the story of the city to the citizens through rivers - as one of the strategic locations representing city - the confluence of Kaunas was chosen for one of the most important events of the Capital of Culture. After all, it is both a historical and cultural place. The discussion goes around the connection between culture and nature. How nature can be used as the key for the cultural event and for telling city story using it even for the scene. How can we make the connection between culture and nature, and individual experience?



## Methodology

As autoethnography was used for the study, its important to discuss the place of self reflexivity in social sciences. Scarles and Sanderson (2007) notice, in recent years, there has been a wealth of literature attending to ‘situating’ the researcher through self-reflexivity (see for example: Adkins, 2002; Cloke et al, 2003; Coffey, 2002; Crang, 2003; Denzin, Lincoln, 2000). Rather than moving to deny the inherent reflexivity of research, autoethnography fully embraces the subjectivity of researcher. As Krieger (1996) suggests, there becomes the need to resituate the ‘I’ in research and generating a series of affiliations and insights to develop a fuller sense of self so that our understanding of others will not become fractured or artificial. Hence, as Scarles and Sanderson (2007) notice, we need to link our statements about what we study with statements about ourselves, for in reality neither stands alone.



## Concluding insights

In autoethnography, as Scarles and Sanderson (2016) notice, subjectivity becomes constructive rather than destructive; accessing ‘hidden’ spaces, stimulating creativity and deepening connection. As well, Scarles and Sanderson (2016) notice, autoethnographic writing can therefore facilitate communication when traditional ways of communication are insufficient – when haptic knowledge itself pushes against the boundaries of language. The presented personal reflections reveal thinking about the links between culture and nature, about the placetelling and what does the river means for as person individually, how a person experiences a river and how he/she understands what the creators of the event want to tell him, what it is through the story. And how this story makes a person to be proud of his/her city, to find his/her identity and to feel as the part of the community.



## Results

As the results of study there is presented the story of self experience:

*"This year is an extraordinary year for MY city (MY - I write with pride) this year Kaunas is the cultural capital of Europe. Various events have been taking place since January, where the organizers invite guests from Lithuania and Europe together with Kaunas to experience a personal transformation in the trilogy of the Myth of Contemporary Kaunas with the motto "From temporary to modern". The three weekend programs are Uprising (January 19-23, 2022), Santaka (May 20-22, 2022) and Agreement (November 25-27, 2022). The second event of the trilogy, the reflection of the experience, which is presented here, took place on May 21, as the moment of the awakening of the mythical beast of Kaunas.*

*This event took place in one of the most important (in my opinion) places of the city of Kaunas - Kaunas confluence, where the two most important and largest rivers of Lithuania - Nemunas and Neris - meet. In preparation for the event, on my way to work, I kept seeing how the city was preparing for the celebration, setting up huge floodlights and stages along the river. As soon as we left, it started to rain. We have already experienced several walks in the rain, so we did not expect anything good. However, I wanted to see for myself what spectacle Kaunas had prepared for the citizens. On the way by trolleybus, it stopped raining. We walked towards Santaka and found a place for ourselves. There were many people. The best seats were already taken, so we stood at the edge, where we could still see something.*

*And it started. While I was looking at the scene ahead, I saw nothing to the left, and when I turned, small boats with torches were sailing down the river from there. So wonderful. Music played. Some musicians, singers - opera soloists, sang on stage, while others kept coming and going in those small boats. There was a lot of music, lights created with lasers and fire. The view was unique. I was very satisfied and did not regret coming at all. On the contrary, I was very happy. Then somehow I started thinking about the city, storytelling and rivers. As one of the most important places representing Kaunas, the two rivers of Kaunas were chosen for one of the most important events of the capital of culture. After all, it is a historical and cultural place. After all, Kaunas is also a city of Hanseatic merchants, a shipping port in the Middle Ages. Nemunas and Neris are the two largest rivers of Lithuania. And how the story was told to the townspeople using the rivers. When the stage for most of the actors was the river. Directly. Not only as a scene on the water, but also chosen for action. Like what comes down the river to the city and fills/fills its life. That which comes and goes, or stays with everything. How rivers create a city's history. It was a great impression for me as a placetelling of the city. And I was very proud of my city, its space, the creators of the event, the ideas of this and other events held in the city. Kaunas EU Capital is something wonderful. Grateful to everyone. How much culture was brought to the city and how many personalities and stories of Kaunas were used and told. It ignited a greater interest and love for my city. I wanted to get to know him even more through history, events, personalities, storytelling. Experience what stories the city, rivers and its environment tell us. Such a wonderful idea to use the river as a resource, as a resource. After all, she is the resource of our city. Both physical and spiritual.*

*River, water has a special meaning for me. I always come to Nemunas to spend time with him. to talk When hard and easy. When it's sunny or dark. I call Nemunas my father, sometimes my friend. But more like a father, a guardian. That's how I feel about him. Water has a special meaning for me in my life. I have a deep connection with him. Therefore, the river is also full of my stories, personal stories. It absorbs everything that is bad, that you cannot solve, that you do not understand. And greater clarity emerges".*

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