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Monuments and space: Exercises in political imagination

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Abstract

The monument to the Polish Romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz, erected in 1898 in Kraków's Main Market Square, is one of the most dynamic spots within the space of the Old Town, in its physical, symbolic, and social aspects. This article discusses historical and contemporary usages of the monument. Its beginnings are analysed in terms of proto-patrimonial practices associated with the emergence of the canon of national heritage, understood as specific, existing cultural assets, either material or symbolic, which a given community inherited from previous generations and feels obliged to preserve. Dedicated to a poet whose oeuvre was recognised as a priceless national treasure shortly after his death, the monument transformed the space around it, imbuing the very centre of Kraków with new semantic codes, associated with the idea of a nation as an autonomous cultural and political community. The statue's annihilation during the Nazi occupation of Poland and its post-war reconstruction led to a major revaluation of its essential form. The monument changed its patrimonial status and became a kind of a secular relic. Well-integrated into the urban landscape, the Mickiewicz Monument is regarded as one of Kraków's landmarks, continuously entering interactions with various people around it.

KEYWORDS: monuments, heritagisation, Adam Mickiewicz, Kraków, Poland

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Introduction

> *All monuments, regardless of the material used in their construction, are meant to invite what the computer jargon calls "interactivity". If this invitation is disregarded, stone will remain stone, no thoughts will emerge in the head, no emotion will rattle the body. Monuments only exist in interaction. It is the interaction that constitutes a monument—marble or stone is nothing more than a mnemonic technique, a spur for memory, a recollection catalyst, an invitation to a dialogue. A block of stone becomes a monument the moment this invitation is accepted—when the living initiate a conversation with the dead. If this does not happen, it is—as befits a stone—entirely mute, and as dead as those whom it was supposed to revive through the rite of dialogue. If the living turn a deaf ear to the invitation to dialogue, if they do not initiate "interactivity", a block of stone may only be a monument in name. It is no different from other elements of landscape, too familiar to draw anyone's attention, let alone hold it for a longer while—which would be needed for minds to focus and for emotions to be given into; it is too ordinary and everyday a sight to even be noticed by the eye. (Bauman, 2011, pp. 20-21).*

As the above quote by Zygmunt Bauman explains, *interactivity* constitutes the essence of monuments as living channels of social communication. While anchored in specific spaces, monuments also function within the dynamic sphere of social imagination (Baczko, 1984). It is social imagination that leads to a monument's erection and determines its further existence. Monuments can evoke emotions and trigger social and political actions. If their semantic programmes refer to values and symbols that are considered important for a given community, the monuments can be recognised as specific "goods" deserving public attention and protection. Dedicated to carefully selected figures and events from the past, they are sensitive barometers of social life embedded in physical and symbolic spaces.

Furthermore, due to their imagination-related nature and the relative durability of their material form, monuments delineate the future horizon of social expectations, which is why they are so often used as convenient socio-semantic tools in political and social games played by official governing institutions as well as grassroots civil movements. However, when the message encoded in a specific monument is no longer seen as important, it becomes illegible to its audience. In other cases, monuments are physically removed from public spaces as unwanted, sometimes seen as painful traces of a difficult

past. Such removals may occur when, for instance, the semantic programme of a given monument clashes with the official or dominant ideological imagery.

Referring to the interactivity of monuments, this paper aims to analyse the historical and present usages involving one particular monument: the Mickiewicz Monument located at the Main Market Square in Kraków. Considered worthy of special protection and regarded as a "secular relic" by many Poles, the monument is a subject of numerous social practices and has been embraced by various political and social imaginations in the course of its history. To unravel the complexity of meanings attached to the Mickiewicz Monument in the present, I suggest examining the events connected with the erection of the monument in 1898 and analysing them within a broader European context of the nineteenth century "monument mania" and the relations between monuments, national ideologies, and proto-patrimonial practices. The paper will then examine the Mickiewicz Monument's turbulent history, meanings attached to its demolition in 1940, the "second unveiling" after the Second World War, and its present life at Kraków's Main Market Square. The example of the Mickiewicz Monument provides a good illustration of the complexities of patrimonialisation processes that involve space, time and social imagination.

Monuments and patrimonial practices

The contemporary process of heritage certification, initiated by UNESCO, the creation of specialised institutions tasked with managing it, and its commodification and transformation into a separate subject of study may all create the impression that this phenomenon is a relatively new element in culture. Not without reason, experts in heritage studies regard the fashion for heritage as a consequence of the post-war memory boom (Macdonald, 2003), an attribute of post-modern culture (Kowalski, 2013), and—most of all—a powerful social movement focusing on the search for and the construction and management of cultural phenomena, both those that have a material form and those that lack it. However, this does not mean that earlier periods had not developed any philosophical and political concepts or specific practices that could be considered the forerunners of modern heritage culture (Gillman, 2010). In this respect, the *fin de siècle*'s fascination with "pastness" and "folkness" played a more important role than the eighteenth-century antiquarianism and nineteenth-century processes of historisation that grew from the Romantic period's passion for the past and the emergence of national ideologies (Eriksen, 2014), or the growing interest in the folklore of their native countries observable among the elites of the day, which resulted in folklore studies becoming an

academic discipline (Bendix, 1997). At the end of the nineteenth century, when the idea of a nation-state had captured Europe, certain elements of culture were not only hailed as "national treasures" worth being protected and preserved for future generations, but also experimented with in various ways. This process is visible, for instance, in attempts to create new "national traditions" (Hobsbawm, 1983), developing "national styles" in architecture or applied arts (Barucka, 2020; Dmitrieva, 2020; Ashby, 2020). However, it should be remembered that the concept of national heritage (or rather "national legacy/treasures", as it was called at that time) used to have a specific scope of meaning. It was understood as an existing cultural asset, either material or symbolic, which a given community inherited from the previous generations and felt obliged to preserve.

Such proto-patrimonial practices, which became increasingly common in European cities in the final quarter of the nineteenth century (Michalski, 1998), included monument mania—a drive towards erecting special artefacts to honour fallen heroes or past events, recalling them for future generations (Choay, 2001). Thus, historical monuments began to play a role as symbols of national remembrance (Kaschuba, 2012). The initiative usually came from local authorities, political organisations or cultural associations. As noted by Anne Eriksen, in the nomenclature of the patriotic discourse of the day, the monuments 'were erected by citizens to celebrate and commemorate fellow citizens for their "civic virtue"' (2014, p. 119). Similarly as in contemporary heritage practices (Lowenthal, 1998), the iconic character of such structures was meant to facilitate the emergence and integration of communities centred around strategic values and aims defined by their leaders (who initiated these projects).[1] It imbued those who identified with it with political power and social prestige (Domański, 2019), mythologising the past and referring to carefully selected aspects of history—feats of glory or sometimes common suffering. It also gave its creators symbolic control over the passing time, becoming a material testimony to their right to this past.

However, the strength of monuments lay not only in their iconographic programme but also in their location, which is why so much attention was devoted to selecting a spot that would suit the gravity of the subject. The new type of public monuments erected in Europe from the late eighteenth century onward brought a redefinition of public space, transforming it into the modern civic and public sphere (Eriksen, 2014). Essentially, however, after the unveiling, the monument and its location remained interconnected

[1] I deliberately choose not to include the concept of cultural memory (Assmann, 1999) and refer to the notion of collective imagination (Castoriadis, 1987; Baczko, 1984; Tylor, 2003). In my estimation, monuments belong, first and foremost, in the domain of collective imagination, i.e., a set of commonly shared beliefs that hold the power to activate, normalise and integrate social practices, giving them moral and ethical meaning.

and influencing each other on several levels. Space provides a significant frame for a monument, facilitating its interpretation and affecting the ways the structure is used. In turn, a monument adds new meaning to space and makes it more dynamic, provided that it focuses the attention of passers-by and becomes the subject of various individual or communal practices. Invoking Henri Lefebvre's concept of social space (1991), it is easy to see the transformative potential that lies in monuments as their element. It rests in their presence in everyday spatial practice, their role in creating the 'representation of space' that reflects officially sanctioned ideology, knowledge and power (Lefebvre, 1991, pp. 38, 50), as well as their use in developing 'representational' or 'lived space' in order to contest and symbolically transform the existing order (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 39). It should also be noted that monuments are works of art, symbols carrying strong messages coded in several contextual structures, and, as such, they are open to varying interpretations (Lotman, 1977). The multitude of levels of significance makes monuments remain informative and subvert the onlookers' expectations stemming from their individual and collective sensitivity to codes (Porębski, 1986).

The Mickiewicz monument and "monument mania"

To exemplify the abovementioned processes of public space transformation through the erection of monuments, I will focus on the Mickiewicz Monument located on the Main Market Square in Kraków. Adam Mickiewicz (1798–1855) was a famous poet of the Romantic period. He was born in Lithuania (his birthplace presently lies in Belarus) and after a very turbulent life (mostly spent in political exile in Paris and other Western European countries) he died in Istanbul. Although he never visited Kraków, in 1890 his remains were brought to this "historic capital city" and buried in the Wawel Cathedral – the traditional place of final repose of Polish kings. The burial of this "National Bard"—as Mickiewicz has been called—in such a symbolic location was used as an opportunity for public manifestations of patriotism.

Only eight years later (in 1898) a monument dedicated to Mickiewicz was erected at the very heart of Kraków, to commemorate the centenary of his birth. The unveiling ceremony also marked the end of the long process of modernisation and reorganisation of the Main Market Square. The addition of the monument was to transform the square from a large centre of trade (originally a medieval market site) into a landmark salon, the prestigious centre of the city (Purchla, 2018). The ongoing process of the aestheticisation of the Main Market Square was connected with the city authorities' political and

metropolitan ambitions.[2] The designers and executors of successive stages of the renovation (local politicians, social activists, architects and artists) wished to transform that space into a representation of "Royal Kraków", demonstrating the crucial role the city had played as the historical capital of Poland, where the rulers of the country had been crowned and buried. In the nineteenth century, when Poland no longer had the status of an independent state, such initiatives also served as a kind of a manifesto, or symbolic and physical compensation for the loss of formal sovereignty of the country now divided between three foreign powers.[3] The Mickiewicz Monument, with its ideological programme, was to play a special role in this process. It was meant not only to pay homage to Mickiewicz's literary genius but also to add new messages to the ideological programme secretly encoded into the spatial layout of the Main Market Square and associated with the national policy implemented by the pro-patriotic elite circles of Kraków. The designers of the monument also wanted it to portray the idea of the unity and permanence of "the Polish nation".

The idea to erect a monument to the national poet in Kraków's Main Market Square was hardly original in its time. It fit into a broader trend of the above mentioned monument mania.[4] This trend followed the changes in collective imagination associated with the experience of political revolution (Baczko, 2010) and the new style of an economy based on mechanised production. Such elements of collective identity as "a citizen", "a member of a nation", "a capitalist", and "a proletarian" emerged in almost the same period. It was also when the role of ideologists was taken by politically and socially involved intellectuals. The Romantic idea of a nation created the perfect conditions for the development of thought focused on historical past, shaping collective imagination on a scale unprecedented in Europe. The practice of tangible commemoration, known since Antiquity, was popular once again, though serving a different purpose this time (Eriksen, 2014). In contrast with the earlier practice of statues and obelisks being funded by rulers or the Church, the erection of monuments could now be a political gesture of emancipation, a community project pursued by various groups of interest not associated with central authorities and fighting for political prestige or the preservation of their integrity.

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[2] After the partitions of Poland, Kraków became a part of the Habsburg Empire. The renovation of the city coincided with the period of the so-called Galician Autonomy (1866–1918), associated with the liberalisation of the internal policies of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The municipal government was restored, as was the right for the city to elect its own president.

[3] Poland ultimately lost its independence after the third partition, conducted in 1795 by Russia, Prussia and Austria.

[4] Good examples include the "statue mania" in Paris, which began with the monument to Marshal Jeannot de Moncey erected in Place de Clichy. The circumstances in which this was done (in 1870, while Paris was besieged by Prussian forces) made it into 'the first statue of the fledgling Third Republic' (Michalski, 1998, p. 14).

This was also the case with national liberation movements in countries under Habsburg rule, where monuments funded by local elites became instrumental in pro-independence policies. The phenomenon is well exemplified in the Czech hero "monument fever" that took over Bohemia in the late nineteenth century, in response to the erection of statues of Emperor Joseph II (Paces & Wingfield, 2005).[5] A similar process took place in former Polish lands. In the case of Kraków, the scale of the phenomenon becomes apparent if one remembers that between 1874 and 1914 alone, more than ten monuments were constructed in the very centre of the city. At least eight of them were dedicated to artists and scientists, two to the progenitors of the Jagiellonian Dynasty; the rest commemorated activists who contributed to the development of the city. The monuments were mostly commissioned by associations, social activists and municipal authorities, and financed from the city's coffers and citizen donations. The iconic properties of newly created monuments portrayed the concept of national culture, which, through monuments, was now present in public space and equipped with some power of persuasion. With the help of various ritual practices, national culture could now be hailed as the supreme value that needed to be perpetuated.[6]

The first unveiling

The initiative to erect the Mickiewicz Monument on Kraków's Main Market Square, and to make it a votive gift to the "National Bard" became something of a joint venture of its times. Contributions were made even by landowners and the new-bourgeoisie from regions of Poland under Russian and Prussian administration, who identified with the idea. Individual donations aside, funds for the construction were collected mainly during charity concerts, balls and social gatherings; the task of coordinating the crowdfunding campaign was taken on by a group of students of the Jagiellonian University. The Committee for Monument Construction, composed of members of Kraków's political and intellectual elite, wrote in an address to all donors: 'Thus, contributions ought to come from everywhere and everyone, be they rich or poor, landowners or burghers; for each of us owes Him [Mickiewicz] inspiration, or solace, or a lesson' (Król, 1999, p. 26).

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[5] Within five years, Prague alone erected monuments to František Palacký (1911), a historian and politician regarded as one of the instigators of the Czech National Revival; King Wenceslaus I of the Přemyslid Dynasty (1912), regarded as a symbol of Czech statehood; and Jan Hus, a large statue of whom was placed in the Old Town Square (Paces & Wingfield, 2005).

[6] Regina Bendix argues that the idea of heritage originates from two key concepts: heredity and hybridity, associated with the new perception of culture developed by elites, which went alongside the transformation of European feudal systems into more democratic national states based on cultural homogeneity. So defined, heritage is the product of Western Romantic nationalism (with its updated version: ethno-nationalism), as well as of capitalist economy (Bendix, 2000).

The contest for the monument's design proved rather controversial, as the chosen work was, to say the least, of debatable artistic value. However, the people behind the project did not intend to adorn the Main Market Square with a sublime work of art but provide a clearly legible symbol, an apologist representation of both the National Bard and the nation. Thus, the executed work included a statue of Mickiewicz crowned with a laurel wreath, towering above carefully posed figures in a classicist style, representing Homeland, Science, Poetry and Valour (it is no coincidence that the last sculpture is also called Patriotism or Fame), as well as two children. The message of the monument as an "altar to the nation" was augmented further by the addition of an eagle standing on a fasces[7] with its wings spread to take flight, (placed at the feet of the Homeland), and by two inscriptions: 'To Adam Mickiewicz – from the Nation' and 'He loved his nation.'[8]

The chosen design instantly became the subject of criticism that did not abate for half a century. Even though artistic elites described the monument as composed without proper "taste", and thus as not fitting into Kraków's public space, the tall, grandiose composition of the sculpture became the dominant visual element on the eastern side of the Main Market Square. The various expectations and the contradicting ideas that resulted from it were hard to reconcile (the dynamic vs the static; the allegorical vs the realistic; simplicity vs monumentalism) effectively predestined the statue to be described in critical artistic circles as an aesthetic failure.

However, even if artistically dubious, the easy-to-understand form of the monument immediately helped it appear in Kraków's social space. This process began with the official unveiling of the monument. Given that Poland had remained under foreign administration for almost a century, the unveiling of the Mickiewicz Monument in 1898 intended to call back to the past and reconfigure it in accordance with the current needs of the national community (Connerton, 1989). This commemorative ceremony (recalling the centenary of the National Bard's birth) sanctioned the monument's status as a site with a remarkable symbolic potential.

Time has shown that the creation of the monument was a success from a social point of view. It became a landmark of the city, one of the most recognisable spots on the map of Kraków, lovingly called Adaś (the diminutive form of the name Adam) by local residents, a destination of tourist pilgrimages, immortalised on postcards since its first days

[7] Fasces, or a bundle of wooden rods and an axe, was an Ancient Roman symbol of authority and jurisdiction. From the 19th century onwards, it began to function as an emblem of republican power and the might and strength of a state. In the 20th century, it became a symbol of Fascist and National-Socialist movements.

[8] The phrase comes from Mickiewicz's poetic drama *Forefathers' Eve* (2016); it is used to describe its protagonist—a rebel patriot who sacrifices his life for his Homeland.

on the Main Market Square.[9] It started to function as a kind of an *axis mundi* within the secular space of the square, competing with the tall silhouette of St. Mary's Church situated nearby. Its semantically heavy iconographic programme, referring to Mickiewicz's image as a "spiritual guide of the nation" and a National Bard allowed for various interpretations and uses. As I will reveal in the following section, Mickiewicz's complex biography and its reception among Poles have encouraged various groups and individuals to interact with the Mickiewicz Monument and add subsequent layers to social space generated by this statue.

Adam Mickiewicz's biography and its reception in Poland

Given that Mickiewicz's literary heritage was regarded as a national patrimonium of the highest quality, that his statue was placed by the end of the nineteenth century in the middle of Kraków's Main Market Square, and that it became the focal point of various celebrations, it makes sense to wonder about the reasons behind this poet's popularity as an item of the collective imagination. In life, Mickiewicz was a highly complex person. To borrow Victor Turner's phrase (1969, pp. 110-111), he could be seen as a 'liminal' person, someone on the edge, who had the sense of mission towards his nation and the world. Deeply attached to pro-independence ideals, Mickiewicz was nonetheless a citizen of Europe, a traveller and a keen observer of the social and political changes taking place on the continent. A political exile in France, in the aftermath of the February Revolution of 1848, Mickiewicz defended the protesting proletariat and oppressed nations in the articles he wrote for *La Tribune des Peuples*. He criticised capitalist economic relations, seeing workers as a force capable of remaking the world; he made appeals for the brotherhood of nations; condemned chauvinism and the imperial policy of the greatest powers of the day.[10] In his *Skład zasad* (Set of instructions) written in 1848 for the Polish Legion, Mickiewicz mentioned Pan-Slavic solidarity and equal rights for Jews, calling them older brothers deserving 'respect, brotherly help on his way towards betterment, both earthly and eternal'. He spoke up for women's rights, stating: 'To our life's companion, the woman, fraternity and citizenship, and equal rights in everything'. A firm believer in Christian ideals, Mickiewicz held anti-clerical views and openly criticised both the Papal State and institutionalised Church. Thus, his Romantic vision of revolu-

[9] The social life of the monument was presented during an exhibition "Maps of the City: Heritages and the Sacred within Kraków's cityscape" organised as a part of the HERILIGION project at the Ethnographic Museum in Kraków (2017–2018). For more information, see the post-exhibition book (Niedźwiedź & Kajder, 2020).

[10] Mickiewicz was well acquainted with the milieu of French socialism and kept track of the development of the socialist movement in Europe. His political views were also influenced by Polish socialist activists in exile: Bogdan Jański and Joachim Lelewel (Haecker, 1925).

tion and Utopian social order formed an original blend of democracy, socialism and messianism (Król, 1998).

The complex, non-obvious nature of Mickiewicz's legacy ultimately proved to be its strength. To the present day, it has allowed various groups to identify with him, regardless of whether they represent the right or the left wings of the political spectrum. Observing historical and contemporary events and interactions with the Mickiewicz Monument, one may see that various groups select those elements in Mickiewicz's oeuvre that fit their ideological agenda. For this reason, irrespective of the political situation, the monument in Kraków becomes the gathering point both for people participating in official state ceremonies and for those contesting such events, publicly demonstrating their opposition to the authorities and demanding for their voices to be heard. The Mickiewicz Monument allows almost all political groups to become visible in public space—be they conservative, nationalist, liberal, socialist or communist—periodically becoming a brightly flickering light on the ritual map of Kraków. The popularity of the Mickiewicz Monument and its involvement in various political demonstrations organised on the Main Market Square appeared soon after its unveiling and has lasted ever since. This popularity is coupled with the monument's symbolic location at the very heart of Kraków—a space perceived by many Poles as connected with Polish history and national symbolism.

The demolition of the monument

This exceptional role of a national symbol, played by the Mickiewicz Monument in Kraków's city centre, was known to Nazi forces, who occupied Poland during the Second World War. One year after invading Poland, they decided to have it demolished.[11] The pathos of the monument located on the Main Market Square, now renamed Adolf Hitler Platz, clashed with the semantic concept adopted by the authorities of the General Government, who saw the square as a representative space reflecting the new political Nazi regime.[12] The fall of the Polish National Bard, immortalised on clandestinely taken photographs, supplemented the monument with the motif of national martyrology, characteristic of the Polish political imagination. The significance of that event for Poles

[11] The Mickiewicz Monument was torn down on August 17, 1940 in preparation for the commemoration of the first anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War and Adolf Hitler's planned visit in Kraków (Wroński, 1974).

[12] Kraków was chosen for the capital of the General Government, a new administrative and territorial unit established by the authorities of the Third Reich in autumn 1939, comprising a part of occupied Poland (Chwalba, 2002).

was aptly captured in the memoirs of writer and art historian Karolina Lanckorońska, who witnessed the demolition of the monument:

> Crowds gathered around the cordon of police; women weeping loudly. They were made to disperse time and again, the numerous photographers beaten or arrested. Actually, as with many efforts made by the occupier, this initiative was entirely futile, since only two days later Kraków was in possession of over a dozen photographs of the falling statue; by the Cloth Market, boys would come up to people who seemed worthy of trust, and offered them, for a relatively high price, postcards: 'Of Mickiewicz, as he's falling'. Naturally, I too purchased one, and was looking forward to showing it to foreigners after the war. For two more days, the statue, with the back of its head cracked, lay in the Market Square. Several women were arrested for tossing flowers onto it. The peaceful Kraków was deeply shaken—for the first time, the ones that got furious were the simple people, who had initially admired the Germans quite a lot. (Lanckorońska, 2001, p. 73).

The act of destroying the monument, captured in photographs, was perceived by the Poles as an attack on themselves and a rape on their patriotic feelings. Paradoxically, it strengthened the symbolic value of the Mickiewicz Monument as a representation of the national and local community and consolidated its extraordinary position within social imagination. It is important to note that the photographs mentioned by Lanckorońska, which substituted the original *signans*, were also issued after the Second World War and distributed as souvenirs "from Kraków". Owing to their persuasive power, they not only became a striking memento of Nazi violence in occupied Poland but entered the "canon" of images that have been used in Polish historical publications as iconic representations of wartime Kraków.

The second unveiling

After the end of the Second World War, when Poland became a part of the Eastern Bloc, the empty space left by the monument provided a rare opportunity for the new communist government to legitimise its power. The idea of the statue's reconstruction appeared shortly after the war, when remains of the original monument were discovered in Germany.[13] The Mickiewicz Monument's return to the Main Market Square in Kraków turned into a "national project", but this time with the communist authorities as its executors. The authorities of the Polish People's Republic, whom the political and civil opposition accused of betraying national interest, had the chance to prove that they,

[13] The monument was reconstructed from elements found at a scrapyard in Hamburg in 1946 (Okoń, 2006).

too, were successors of the Polish Romantic tradition, worthy of representing the Polish nation.[14] This mental construct—convoluted from the perspective of Marxist-Leninist ideology and the political climate of the Stalinist period in post-war Poland—was possible to defend because Mickiewicz was recognised as a progressive writer, a Romantic tribune whose vision of the future was now to come true. Thus, the ceremony of re-unveiling the monument, organised in 1955, the date marking the centenary of Mickiewicz's death, was transformed into a dazzling spectacle featuring the most important political players of the communist state. The prime minister of Poland, Józef Cyrankiewicz, who had lived in Kraków in his youth, acted as the master of ceremonies (Kos, 1955).

The solemn ritual of the monument's unveiling resembled modern ritualised practices of "constructing" heritage. Mickiewicz's return to the Main Market Square also fit Dean MacCannell's model of creating tourist attractions, called (and this is hardly a coincidence) 'the stages of Sight Sacralization' (1999, p. 43).[15] The unveiling was preceded by a ceremonial laying of the monument's cornerstone, and by a series of press publications reporting on the progress of reconstruction works. The preparations and the ceremony itself contained elements that made it resemble the consecration of a statue (ritual unveiling, formal speeches, laying flowers). The monument subjected to these practices received new social status, being transformed from "inanimate" passive statue to an object endowed with a set of social meanings incorporated in various social actions happening in the public space of the Main Market Square.

However, the most important difference between the 1955 re-unveiling and the original ceremony from 1898 lay in accentuating and positively valuating its material aspect. It proved instrumental in reinforcing the monument's symbolic potential as something sacred for the nation. Reconstructed from authentic pieces of the original monument destroyed by the Nazis, it became more than a votive gift from the nation; its metonymical relation with the original turned the monument into a national relic. The focus on the material substance of the monument evokes associations with rhematic behaviour—a specific type of religious experience described by Joanna Tokarska-Bakir in terms of non-differentiation (the concept borrowed from Hans-Georg Gadamer). During such an experience, the line between the *signans* and the *signatum* blurs (Tokarska-Bakir, 2000).

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[14] It is worth noting that after the Second World War similar reconstructions were also carried out in other Polish cities (see Main, 2004).

[15] In his (already classic) study on the semiotics of tourism, entitled *The Tourist*, MacCannell distinguished five phases of constructing a tourist attraction: 'naming, framing and elevation, enshrinement' [emphasis MGC], mechanical reproduction, and social reproduction (1999).

Noteworthily, Tokarska-Bakir's list of situations in which a fusion of the *signans* and the *signatum* may occur includes the cult of memorabilia. Applying this idea to the reconstruction and the "second unveiling" of the Mickiewicz Monument, one may assume that the theme was transformed into the rheme on Kraków's Main Market Square. The material substance of the monument gained crucial importance, as it testified to the new monument's "authenticity", to its direct connection with the remains of the recovered original.

The prime minister's speech delivered at the unveiling ceremony was a peculiar rhetorical hybrid, combining traditional national discourse elements with socialist newspeak (Głowiński, 2009). Representing the government of the Polish People's Republic as the guardian of national heritage, Cyrankiewicz emphasised the universal, international, and anti-war aspect of Mickiewicz's work. In his speech, Mickiewcz was transformed into an 'inspired prophet' and a 'great leader of men,' a true 'warrior, fighting for peace among nations.' Thus, Mickiewicz's oeuvre was incorporated into the 'international treasure trove of thought on the people's common struggle towards freedom and progress—the treasure trove of beauty, poetry and dreams that captivate all nations.' Cyrankiewicz concluded his address thusly:

> A hundred years ago, the flame of the heart and of Mickiewicz's thought lifted us to unparalleled heights, helped us through the toughest of times. Today, the immortal appeal of the great Adam's words, the heat of his noblest desires, his deepest longing, his hatred for evil, his ardent love for all things connected to the sacred Struggle for the liberty of nations, and his feelings of brotherly solidarity of all people—all of this lives within us, and is as dear to us as the air of our independent homeland, as the new, better life to which Adam Mickiewicz was our guide, bard and soldier—he, before whose monument we incline our heads and focus our thoughts. (Cyrankiewicz speech, *Życie Warszawy*, 1955, p. 1).

During the communist period, the authorities tried to control the political activity around the Mickiewicz Monument, yet even then the site was occasionally used by opposition activists to manifest their views. The monument was their raw material, on which they clandestinely conducted various performative operations, placing anti-communist slogans, flags, or flowers. The end of communism in Poland in 1989 and the resulting political transformations brought about a fundamental change in this regard; since then, the monument has officially become a democratic platform used from time to time by various groups for manifesting their activities in the deeply symbolicised public space located on the Main Market Square.

The Mickiewicz monument on today's Market Square

Today, well-integrated into the urban landscape, the Mickiewicz Monument is teeming with life all year, continuously entering interactions with the people around it. In everyday contexts, it is mainly used in spatial practices as an easy orientation point to set a meeting or determine one's position on the Main Market Square's spacious grounds. The Kraków residents' attitude towards the structure is clearly apparent from the familiar diminutive name Adaś, by which they refer to the monument, treating it as their own, well-known site in Kraków's urban space. The monument is also incorporated into various local performative practices of a rather joyful nature.

This involves the so-called urban folklore surrounding the monument, for example, the ritual of hopping around the Mickiewicz Monument on one leg, practised by senior-high-school students one hundred days before their A-level exam. This ritual practice, according to the performers, is intended to ensure good fortune during the exams. The allegorical figures at the foot of the monument are periodically adorned for the annual Kraków's student festival; fans of local football teams transform the entire monument into their bleachers whenever they appropriate the Main Market Square to celebrate a victory. All of these practices are done in jest, within a framework of a jubilant carnival governed by the logic of the "inside out", in which the accepted rules of social order and hierarchies of power no longer apply (Bakhtin, 1968). During these interactions, Mickiewicz stops being a serious, staid national hero and becomes more human, treated with more familiarity. He somehow "steps down" from his pedestal and is temporarily drawn into the game played around him within the space of the Main Market Square.

This stage of our analysis is the right moment to inquire about the reasons for the Mickiewicz Monument's popularity among the residents of Kraków. Is it mainly the question of the monument's central location within the Old Town? At first glance, this indeed seems to be the case. However, if one considers the pedagogy of the Romantic habitus, which has been present in the Polish education system for over a century, the answer no longer seems so simple.[16] The fact that successive generations of Polish students read excerpts from Mickiewicz's works at school is what makes the poet function in the common consciousness of Poland's residents as a National Bard, devoted to the cause of reclaiming independence for his homeland. It is no coincidence that scholars focusing on Poland's social imagery mention a specific Romantic idiom and the canon of experiencing social and cultural reality associated with surviving a 123-year period of foreign rule

[16] Following Pierre Bourdieu (1990), one may speak of a certain pedagogy of habitus, i.e., the successful internalisation of specific rules of cultural arbitrariness through a carefully selected curriculum.

during the partitions (1795–1918), still present in many aspects of Polish culture, in a more or less overt fashion (Janion & Żmigrodzka, 2001; Robotycki, 1992; Buchowski, 2010).

An element of urban folklore that seems interesting in this context is the practice of "presenting Adaś" with a wreath of white-and-red flowers for his name day (24 December), organised by Kraków's female florists, whose stalls are located close to the monument. As they admit, the Mickiewicz Monument is particularly close to their hearts, which is why they feel the need to honour it in this way. The ritual "name day celebration" for the poet has become one of the most important identity practices for this occupational group, celebrated (as its members attest) 'since forever ago.' Not only does it consolidate their community, it also enhances its status in the local social hierarchy. In the conversations I conducted with the florists in 2016, they declared that they considered themselves to be the "hosts" of the Main Market Square and heirs to a long tradition of local flower trade. The work florists put into preparing a wreath for the Mickiewicz Monument (as they say: 'for Adaś') in national colours, and the solemnity with which they "present it", dressed for the occasion in the so-called Kraków costume,[17] allows them to get into the role of Mickiewicz's caretakers and perform this role in their own way and with their own bodies.[18] By laying flowers at the monument on a yearly basis, florists also recreate—pars pro toto—the moment of its unveiling, thereby helping to cultivate the memory of the monument as a "national votive offering" (which is sometimes lost in the permanent hubbub of the square) and breathing new life into the statue of "their Adaś".

To guests from abroad, the Mickiewicz Monument is one of Kraków's "must-sees", advertised by tourist websites as 'the Most Famous Monument in Kraków,'[19] 'One of the most important statues in Poland,'[20] located in the very centre of a space recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. One may sit by it or on it, or shelter in its shade from the scorching sun. Tourists often choose the Mickiewicz Monument as the background for selfies, unconcerned with the iconographic complexities it hides, and recommend it as a

[17] The so-called Kraków costume is a modernised, simplified version of folk attire from the Kraków region, which has, since the late 19th century, functioned in Polish culture as the national costume (Rossal, 2017).

[18] Colin Counsell's remarks on the interdependency of performative physical practices and cultural memory prove very interesting in this context: 'However and where ever they appear, bodies and their action are shaped by, give form to, figures drawn from cultural memories. If they thus comprise a means of reproducing those memories, through time and between individuals, as articulators of an unofficial repertoire bodies also provide an arena in which they can be adapted and contested.' (Counsell, 2009, p. 8).

[19] See http://www.krakowtraveltours.com/en/tours-in-krakow/old-town-walk

[20] See https://www.inyourpocket.com/Kraków/adam-mickiewicz-monument_31309v

local curiosity, perfectly suitable for taking a commemorative a photo. Sometimes, however, the monument becomes the centre of events they do not understand, which clearly disrupts the time-honoured tourist tradition, revealing a clash of interests between the consumers of heritage and those who inherited it (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2004). The disappointment that may occur in such situations is well illustrated in the following comment by a British tourist:

> On our recent visit to Kraków, whilst taking in the view, I ventured upon this statue, well to be fair you cannot miss it, but on this occasion no photos, why because it was covered in political slogans from an ongoing political outing, rally spoilt what is a lovely statue. (TripAdvisor, 2019)

As this entry reveals, the cheerful atmosphere evaporates once the space around the monument is transformed into the central point of a political demonstration. Protesters often use the Mickiewicz Monument, turning it into a rostrum. The recent intensity of these practices is directly linked to the current political situation in Poland and the outburst of rituals of civic opposition observed in 2016–2020 in response to the authoritarian and populist policies of the national-conservative party that currently governs the country.

"Homeland" holding a black umbrella

The processes in which the Mickiewicz Monument is incorporated and transformed into a space of representation will be discussed here through the example of the anti-government demonstration that took place in spring 2017—the so-called International Women's Strike, also known as the "Black Protest" or "Black Umbrella Protests", during which the gathered crowds demanded respect for civil rights and the constitution, the implementation of equality and anti-violence policies, and—first and foremost—the rejection of the proposed restrictive anti-abortion bill.[21] The stately and static Mickiewicz Monument was transformed into a noisy stand teeming with life. Its appearance also changed—the allegorical figures at the poet's feet were given banners bearing the slogans of the demonstration, and thereby spontaneously included into the community of the protesting crowd. The figure of the Homeland, located at the front wall of the plinth,

[21] The Black Protest was, in fact, a continuation of the series of demonstrations coordinated by feminist organisations, which took Poland by storm in autumn 2016 and continued in the following years. In Kraków they were initiated by the Black March of 3rd October 2016. An analysis of the Black March and the White March may be found in the article *Dziedzictwo jako scena rytualna: przypadek Starego Miasta w Krakowie* (Heritage as a Ritual Scene: The Case of the Old Town in Kraków) (Golonka-Czajkowska, 2017). Several passages from the present article originally appeared in that work.

was holding in its raised right hand a model of a black umbrella with the inscription: *Żądamy wdrożenia konwencji antyprzemocowej* (We demand the implementation of the anti-violence convention),[22] and in its left hand—a red tulip. The figure of Poetry was holding an umbrella with the slogan: *Żądamy pełni praw reprodukcyjnych* (We demand full reproductive rights). People standing on the monument shouted phrases which were then taken up by those standing below, who kept chanting: 'We have a voice! We have our rights! I think, I feel, I decide! Freedom is a woman!'

The performance created by the monument during the demonstration shaped something of Bakhtin's world of the inside out, which questioned the current ideological order of the country and the newly implemented changes that infringed on citizens' freedoms and suspended the official hierarchy of power. The grave and solemn mood, manifested by the mourning black of clothes and umbrellas, intermingled with humour and parody, silence coexisted with noise, formal weakness with the spontaneous might of the crowd. The structure, or rather anti-structure, in Turner's understanding of the term (1975), was governed by the anti-hierarchical; the floor was given to the crowds, who entered a lively and spontaneous dialogue with the organisers of the protest perched on the steps of the monument. The suspension of everyday rules was also apparent in the language used by the gathered masses, and the most visible on the banners they carried. Some of them bore colloquial, provocatively blunt phrases criticising the ruling camp; they also spoke of sexuality as a realm of civil freedom.

Defiance against the nationalist, conservative policy of the ruling camp became an opportunity to manifest people's own, tolerant vision of a civil society, women's rights to be heard in public, and a factual separation between the Church and the state. Feminist, anti-clerical and liberal postulates, written out in Polish and English on banners and umbrellas, mingled with appeals for respect for human rights. The polyphony of slogans also included those referring to the national code: *Stop wojnie polsko-polskiej!* (Stop the Polish-Polish War) *Quo Vadis Polsko?* (Where are you headed, Poland), *Polska jest kobietą!* (Poland is a woman). Displayed in the near vicinity of the monument, they unexpectedly entered into semantic interaction with its iconographic programme, adding more current messages. Homeland with an umbrella, sitting at the feet of the National Bard, transitioned from a Romantic guardian and protector of the nation, personifying the cult of

[22] This slogan refers to the attempts by Polish ultra-Catholic activists to challenge the *Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence* (*Istanbul Convention*) prepared by the Council of Europe in 2011.

instinct and the heart (Janion, 1986), to a fearless Warrior ready to fight another battle for liberty, this time on her own terms, a woman's terms.[23]

From the semiotic point of view, the use of the Mickiewicz Monument as the nexus of the protest reminded people of the essence of Romantic rebellion, transcending the nationalist motto of GOD – HONOUR – HOMELAND currently applied in the policies of the ruling camp. It helped translate new, feminist, leftist, and liberal slogans into elementary, familiar figures of Mickiewicz's discourse referring to the essence of patriotism, as well as those less known ones associated with his democratic concept of political order and a social state. During the protest, the ideological programme embedded in the monument, especially the liberty and independence that used to sublimate defiance against Poland's political enemies—the foreign powers involved in the partitions, occupiers and the communist authorities—was inadvertently incorporated into the new political context of fighting for equality, freedom of choice, and a secular state. Adorning the monument with black slogan-bearing umbrellas was an overt manifestation of this new nomination. Moreover, the structure's message, translated into the language of today, became integrated into a new reality, far beyond any local political and social context. Within just a day, images of the Mickiewicz Monument with a black umbrella, immortalised on photographs and put in virtual circulation, became one of the most recognisable symbols of Kraków's iteration of the black protest.

As we have seen, during this event, *Adaś* was once more brought to life by the protesters. Appropriated by the chanting crowd, decorated with signs of protest, the monument was included in a new situational context, becoming a visual and symbolic *axis* of the rally and organising the space used by the protesters. It helped to change the Main Market Square, transforming the usually ordered public space into the arena of a dynamic, subversive fight. Due to its status as a visual representation of the city, the images of the Mickiewicz Monument were also used as a legible representation of Kraków's protest.

Conclusions

The case of the Mickiewicz Monument in Kraków is an almost textbook illustration of the dynamic relations between space, time, and the realm of social and political imagination. Dedicated to a poet whose works were declared priceless national heritage, the

[23] According to Alicja Kusiak (2006), the Romantic period developed two parallel models of female patriotism. One of them presented the Polish woman as a guardian of the home and the hearth and a Mother of the Nation, while in the other she was a Militant Patriot. Both these images were allegorical and melodramatic and therefore doomed to "chronic essentialisation".

monument was also intended to be a representation of the idea of a nation as an imagined community (Anderson, 1991). At the time of its unveiling in 1898, the structure added a finishing touch to the Main Market Square as a representative modern urban space. The monument started to interact with the urban space transforming it physically, symbolically, and socially. Its central location and accommodating semantic message made the Mickiewicz Monument a very pliable substance, used in various communal and individual identity practices, marking one of the hottest spots on the city's political map. In time, the structure achieved the status of a favourite landmark of Kraków, depicted on countless photographs and postcards shown and viewed worldwide. Looking at the monument's history through the lens of processes of patrimonialisation, one may also note that its physical annihilation during the Second World War and its reconstruction in 1955 led to a major revaluation of its essential form. The monument changed its patrimonial status and became a kind of a secular relic—a structure whose status was nearly equivalent to that of contemporary material heritage.

Additionally, the eventful history of the Mickiewicz Monument confirms that the processes of patrimonialisation cannot be understood if one prescinds from diachrony, especially when analysing such a unique sphere of social and cultural practices, interwoven with specific time and space. We would not be able to recognise the discursive nature of patrimonialisation, if we did not understand the ongoing processes of cultural translation between the present and the past. Invoking the reconfiguration of elements from the past or the arbitrary manipulation thereof, we should first and foremost determine the object of these practices—which means that we have to delve into the past. Only then, having studied the subject matter, will we be able to discover the meanings of the heritage game, which are often more complex than initially expected. If we abstain from it, we run the risk of succumbing to presentist reductionism wrapped in ornate rhetoric, which effectively prevents any further discussion.

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Povzetek

Spomenik poljskemu romantičnemu pesniku Adamu Mickiewiczu, postavljen leta 1898 na glavnem trgu v Krakovu, je v svojem fizičnem, simbolnem in družbenem vidiku eno najbolj dinamičnih mest v starem mestnem jedru. Članek govori o zgodovinski in sodobni rabi spomenika. Njihovi začetki so analizirani z vidika proto-dediščinskih praks, povezanih z nastankom kanona nacionalne dediščine, ki se razume kot specifična, obstoječa kulturna dobrina, bodisi materialna bodisi simbolna, ki jo je neka skupnost podedovala od prejšnjih generacij in jo čuti dolžna ohranjati. Posvečen pesniku, čigar opus je bil kmalu po njegovi smrti prepoznan kot neprecenljivo nacionalno bogastvo, je preoblikoval prostor okoli sebe in središče Krakova nasičil z novimi pomenskimi kodami, povezanimi z idejo naroda kot avtonomne kulturne in politične skupnosti. Uničenje kipa med nacistično okupacijo Poljske in njegova povojna obnova je privedlo do velikega prevrednotenja njegove bistvene oblike. Spomenik je spremenil svoj dediščinski status in postal nekakšna posvetna relikvija. Spomenik Mickiewiczu, ki je dobro integriran v urbano krajino, velja za eno od znamenitosti Krakova, ki nenehno vstopa v stike z različnimi ljudmi okoli sebe.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: spomeniki, dediščina, Adam Mickiewicz, Krakov, Poljska

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