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## THE 'DISSONANT' HERITAGE OF NOWA HUTA'S SHELTERS: BETWEEN EDUCATION AND ENTERTAINMENT

**Abstract:** The following article attempts to show how the heritage space of Nowa Huta undergoes gradual transformation under the influence of tourism. An example, which is going to be examined, is a new tourist route presenting the heritage of shelters at Nowa Huta. The context for this discussion is the concept of edutainment, which is a form of education through entertainment. It will be discussed that the inclusion of entertainment elements in the process of dissonant heritage interpretation, is a solution that facilitates noticing ambivalences resulting from the complex nature of the past, and thus contributes to more profound understanding and opens a space for the acceptance of the heritage.

**Keywords:** Heritage, tourism, education, Nowa Huta, shelters.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Nowa Huta has, in recent years, gained the attention of the researchers of various disciplines focusing on the different aspects of life in the district (Gądecki, 2012; Golonka-Czajkowska, 2013; Poźniak, 2014). The thread that connects most studies on Nowa Huta is a reflection on its current situation but seen in the context of the past. These writers specifically highlight that it is difficult to study today's Nowa Huta without reference to history which penetrates the present and determines the fate of the people and places there. The following article attempts to show one situation where heritage space has undergone a process of gradual transformation under the influence of tourist demand. Owing to its specific history the district may be termed 'dissonant' heritage. However, this does not change the fact (or perhaps is the main reason) that more and more tourists come to Nowa Huta every year. As a result, the

cultural and tourist offer, addressed to both tourists and the district's residents, has been modified and expanded. An example, which is examined, is a new tourist route presenting the heritage of shelters at Nowa Huta. The context for this discussion is the concept of 'edutainment', a form of education through entertainment. The argument presented here is that the inclusion of entertainment elements in the process of dissonant heritage interpretation, is a solution that facilitates the exhibition of ambivalences resulting from the complex nature of the past, and thus contributes to a more profound understanding while opening a space for the acceptance of that heritage. The method of gathering data for this project mixed desk research (local press, local authority documents, project documentation) with autoethnography and observations based on the involvement of one of the authors in the process of creating the new tourist route.

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## 2. NOWA HUTA AS 'DISSONANT' HERITAGE SITE

Nowa Huta, being currently the easternmost and the most populous district of Kraków, appeared as a result of the establishment of the Lenin steelworks in the 1950s. Paradoxically, although the town was supposed to fulfill the idea of a socialist-realist perfect city, where all the inhabitants would live and work with the aim of constructing the 'bright future' of the socialist utopia, Nowa Huta became one of the most ideologically defiant parts of Kraków, struggling in the 1960s against the policy of atheization and in 1980's by joining on a mass scale the Solidarity trade union movement (Dzieszyński, Franczyk 2010; Jagło, Lempart 2013; Lebow 2013).

After the collapse of socialism, Nowa Huta had to confront a completely new situation, both from an economic and social perspective (Poźniak, 2014; Stenning, Smith, Rochovská, Świątek, 2010). Simultaneously, built as Poland's flagship socialist city embodying the utopian political project (Majewska, 2011), Nowa Huta was still considered to be a symbol of the former epoch. As such, in the new reality of democracy and a free economy, it was, for the most part, connected with the negative stereotype of a gloomy, dangerous and deadend site (Poźniak, 2014, pp. 100-123). This ambivalent attitude consists of a number of factors which have become specific myths over time and their origins should be sought in the very early days of the district. The first was the fact that Nowa Huta was designed as a separate city, which was perceived as an attempt to deprive Kraków of its due rank. It was also related to the demographic composition of the new residents, mainly peasants and workers, which resulted in the district's image as a dangerous place prone to out-breaks of violence. Another issue contributing to the negative perception was urban planning itself. Although its urban design is an excellent example of architecture from the period of socialist realism, it was considered to be in a Soviet style. Even though the building project was introduced by the very talented Cracovian architect Tadeusz Ptasiński, who drew inspiration from such prominent architectural ideas as St. Peter's Square, Place Vendôme and Hausmann's work in Paris (Klimek, 2013; Kłaś, 2016), the project was treated as one enforced by a foreign ruler, therefore was aesthetically rejected by many citizens. Last, but not least, the steelworks were accused of pollution both nearby and more distantly, which was particularly highlighted in the transitional period.

All of these issues were rooted in reality, however the scale to which they were inflated, greatly exceeded the underlying problems of their origin. That is why, today's perception of Nowa Huta as heritage is strongly marked by the myths that shaped narrative about the district. The shaping of heritage is related to

a process of negotiation, questioning and counter arguing by the participants in the debate. Even if the urban design of Nowa Huta has entered the city of Kraków as a representative example of cultural and social realism of urban planning in Poland, it does not mean that it is automatically regarded by the people (i.e. Kraków's citizens) as heritage (Kłaś, 2016; Salwiński, Sibila, 2008).

Heritage can be perceived as a form of social/cultural/collective memory that explicitly draws identification through the concept of ownership of the past (Smith, 2006). In a society of the contested past, the narrative about its heritage is far from being 'shared' (Tunbridge, Ashworth, 1996). Therefore, probably the most appropriate term which could be applied in the case of Nowa Huta is 'dissonant' heritage which, as Ashworth concludes, "generally means a lack of harmony in time and space between people and their heritage" (Ashworth, 2002, p. 363) This dissonance, according to Tunbridge & Ashworth (1996), reveals itself in two situations. First, when the dominant narrative does not match the interpretation(s) of different interest groups, when it omits aspects they consider important, or highlights those which should not be so prominent. As Smith & Hall indicate, much of Central and Eastern Europe's common recent heritage is "likely to be a contested battleground where political, economic, social and cultural priorities often become gridlocked" (Smith, Hall, 2006, p. 36).

The second situation causing dissonance occurs when heritage is subject to commercialization which transforms it into a product for sale. In this case, the main catalyst is the volume of tourism leading to heritage becoming a tourist attraction. Both tangible and intangible cultural assets are then faced with market realities, in which the ethics of sustainable development often give way to temporarily to the values of the market. On the other hand, noticing the value of its own cultural heritage when it starts to arouse interest among visiting tourists, is a characteristic phenomenon. Such a relationship has been observed at Nowa Huta in recent years where the local population (especially new residents) start to appreciate the uniqueness of the place regardless of the negative myths that prevailed previously (Poźniak, 2014). Undoubtedly, a very specific tourist product, the so-called communist tours, has become an important factor contributing to the rise in popularity of Nowa Huta among a growing number of mostly foreign visitors (Knudsen, 2010; Whigham, 2013). As Banaszekiewicz (2018) depicts at the beginning, the tours aroused very mixed feelings among district residents both by the commodification of the their district as well as the interpretation of its past: many felt disinherited by means of the specific narrative offered by guides (with a large amount of irony, based on anecdotes, and treating the past with a cool distance). However, what aroused the greatest doubts, was the

form of touring the district offered by 'crazy guides', which was very different from the standard guide service and drifting towards a 'mini-show'. At the time when the 'crazy guides' began operating, the element of entertainment, treated as part of the cognitive process, was a radical novelty in the local tourist space. Nowadays, a growing number of tourist products have elements of entertainment aimed at pleasing customers. The following part of the article will allow the current situation to be looked at in the broader context of global cultural changes in recent decades.

### 3. EDUCATION AND ENTERTAINMENT IN TOURISM

An attempt at a holistic explanation of the phenomenon of tourism can be reduced to two concepts. The first, recognizing tourism as a 'secular pilgrimage' implies that a tourist is motivated by a search for meaning, the discovery of authenticity and the transformation of a subject that offers different experiences, finding them in the search for pleasure and entertainment, thus allowing detachment from everyday worries and responsibilities (Boorstin, 1964; Pfaffenberger, 1983). The concept reaches into the roots of humanistic reflection on the condition of man, perceived as a working being. As Okoń wrote, referring to Aristotle: "Fun is a consequence of work understood as fatigue. Where is there has been work, there must now be fun, because tiredness requires rest [...]" (Okoń, 1995, p. 60). Leisure time intended even for travel, stands in opposition to economic activity and, therefore, is to give pleasure impossible to get while work is identified with duty, seriousness and responsibility. According to Huizinga (1997), the author of a classic view of man as *homo ludens* (a playful creature) this 'unseriousness', which is a free action, is the quintessence of fun.

However, while according to Huizinga, fun can be a deadly serious matter and is simply a property of culture that cannot be assessed as good or bad, entertainment is a product of consumer culture and threatens adults with remaining infantile on a scale of alarming proportions. According to Combs (2000) and Postman (2000), we are entering a phase in human history permeated by fun to such an extent, it can be described as a 'world of fun'. Entertainment is a distinctive form of mass culture, which at the same time is a consumer culture. Therefore, there is no consumer culture without entertainment (Kantor, Paleczny, Banaszkiwicz, 2011; Paleczny, Kantor, Banaszkiwicz, 2012). Consequently, tourists are hedonistically oriented consumers, desirous for new experience to stimulate this emotion (Bauman, 2010; Salazar, 2010).

Tourism based on products that give pleasure and relaxation, referred to as 3S (sun, sea, sand), has become a designate of the most popular type of mass, i.e. holidays at resorts in warm countries. However, with the tremendous development of tourism over the last 25 years, part of global consumption trends, the needs of tourists and consequently a change in offers has occurred. Shifting significance from product (collecting possessions) to experience (collecting experiences) (Pine, Gilmore, 1999), which has become a pillar of consumerism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, has found its reflection in travel (Urry, Larsen, 2011). In many cases, the 3S has been replaced by 3E (entertainment, education, excitement). Moving away from mass tourism based on the environmental values of a destination, and consequently turning to individual tourism based on active involvement from a tourist, as well as an increasing share of cultural tourism, is a characteristic trend globally observed in recent years. Entertainment has not been abandoned, but has been put in a triad along with education (i.e. cognitive element) and excitement (i.e. 'experience'), as a strong and positive emotional stimulus (Robinson, Picard, 2016).

Highlighting the correlation between the effectiveness of education and the presence of elements of entertainment in the cognitive process, is by no means new, however it has grown in importance in recent decades both at heritage sites as well as in museums that are tailored to tourists' needs for entertainment. The latter are specifically undergoing a major transformation by trying to adapt their offer to trends in culture (Caulton, 2006; Gawel, Kostera, 2018; Hooper-Greenhill, 2007; Parry, 2013). More and more emphasis is put on an educational mission filled with the spirit of deeper involvement from a recipient who actively perceives an exhibition space. This objective is achieved by a whole range of multimedia solutions, stimulation of all the senses, as well as a diversification of the narrative offered by a museum allowing a more personalized message to the subjective needs of a visitor. The quality of an offer is, of course, very diverse, ranging from 'gadget' solutions, which are merely ornamental without contributing to a deeper understanding of presented content, to well thought-out concepts, significantly improving the level of customer perception.

It is noteworthy that not only scenarios of exhibitions or 'ludic' projects translate into an effective educational process. The spectrum of motivation is an indispensable element as it guides a recipient (visitor, spectator, tourist). According to research cited by Falk and Dierking (2000, p. 79), better cognitive results are achieved when a museum visitor has a high level of motivation:

As would be expected, individuals voicing a strong educational motivation demonstrated significantly greater learning than did those expressing a low educational



both under residential buildings and under public facilities such as a cinema, a theatre and a hospital. One shelter was located in the basement of the Świątowid cinema and another on the premises of the Museum of the Polish People's Republic (Mierzwa, 2015) (Fig. 1).

### 3.2. MYTHS ABOUT SHELTERS

Contrary to a popular Nowa Huta urban legend, often repeated, the shelters did not protect against nuclear attack but were designed to protect against conventional weapons. At the planning stage of the shelter infrastructure in the early 1950s, people were conscious of the threat of the nuclear bomb. The decision makers were aware that both the Soviet Union and the United States were in possession of such bombs. However, their number and means of transport were not advanced enough at the time to take a massive attack into account. The situation changed during the 1950s, which resulted in new guidelines being released in 1959 concerning the construction of shelters taking this threat into account. At that time, the modified protective shelters built in Nowa Huta, protected against some of the effects of a nuclear explosion, but were not capable of providing security in the event of a direct attack.

Another urban legend is the story of the network of corridors running underground and interconnecting the shelters. A probable origin is the fact that evacuation corridors that ran underground from basements had a common exit (so-called 'hatch') to the surface. The extreme version of the legend says that a secret underground shelter under the current Museum of the Polish People's Republic was connected to the Administrative Centre of the former Lenin Steelworks, a few kilometers away (Mierzwa, Semik, 2015, pp. 23-27).

The dissonances connected with an appreciation of the shelters as a tourist attraction rely predominantly on popular beliefs that have little in common with 'historical truth'. Although they stimulate a perception of the shelters, they are not the 'axes of tension' that appear in the context of creating the tourist route. The first controversy corresponds with the attitude towards industrial heritage *per se*. The acceptance of its symbolic value still causes many debates among local authorities or/and residents who do not necessarily perceive them as tangible properties that deserve preservation and development (see further: Gawel, 2011; Xie, 2015). Secondly, this scepticism results from the very practical aspect of the management of such heritage: the shelters are situated under the buildings that are still in use for other purposes (in the case of Nowa Huta blocks of flats, a hospital or the offices of steelworks administration), which generates problems harmonizing the needs of the various stakeholders.

### 3.3. TOURIST ROUTE

In an attempt to challenge these myths, and in consequence the obstacles with a positive valuing of such heritage, the Museum of the Polish People's Republic (since the beginning of March 2019 known as the Museum of Nowa Huta; see Muzeum PRL-u, Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Krakowa) organized an exhibition "Nuclear threat: Shelters in Nowa Huta" in the basement of the Museum, the historic, socialist-realist building of the former Świątowid Cinema, whose aim was to present the history of the shelters and their propagandist, cold war atmosphere (*Nuclear threat. Shelters in Nowa Huta*, 2015). The Museum has been operating since 2013 and until 2019 was co-run by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the Municipality of Kraków (currently only the second such). The museum produces an annual academic publication, *Świątowid*, and catalogues accompanying exhibitions, made educational by inviting visitors to participate in debates, lectures, discussions, book promotions, as well as exhibitions. Organizing and hosting exhibitions helps to understand various aspects of the functioning of the communist system, both in Poland and in the world. At present, the Museum does not have a permanent exhibition; this will be opened simultaneously with the full adaptation of the former cinema to the Museum's needs.

To fully use the potential of protected buildings in the area by the Municipality of Kraków, the Museum coordinates the creation of a tourist route which will show the shelters in a broader context. The planned route will make four locations available to tourists: three situated in the Szkolny housing estate and one in the Krakowiaków housing estate (reserve location). In the original idea, emphasis was put mainly on reconstructing interiors and presenting the functions once served by the shelters which are part of the route (a standard shelter for residents, an improvised hideout, a retrofitted shelter protecting against certain effects of a nuclear explosion and a medical point). In the scenario based on the route, it was decided to look at the topic of shelters from different perspectives using these locations.

When drawing up the scenario, Zarzycka and employees of the Museum of the Polish People's Republic, the creators of the concept, relied on Tilden's (1957) interpretation of heritage as a tool for experiencing, understanding and relating the history of the shelters to the present, as well as using the personal experiences of visitors. The creators intended to present the exhibition in modules (divided into individual segments and scenes) situated in four locations with an option of adding further sites 'under' Nowa Huta. On the one hand, they will constitute a whole, functioning under the title "The Shelters of Nowa Huta: Cold War legacy",

while on the other, the exhibition will be treated as elements of a puzzle, with the possibility of selecting a location according to tourists' expectations and interests (Zarzycka, 2013).

The most important goals mentioned, in the context of the emerging route, are popularizing shelters as part of Nowa Huta's cold war heritage, presenting their history, building an attractive offer for leisure time, provoking intellectual activity, encouraging visitors to compare the past with the present by seeking analogy, creating a message for different groups of visitors as well as intensifying tourism within Nowa Huta.

In the previously completed part of the route located at Szkolne 37 there is a module entitled the "State of threat". In the shelter space underneath the Nowa Huta Technical School No. 3 there is content concerning the need for a shelter, universal for both people and animals ("The need for shelter") presented by dioramas that illustrate various examples of what life was like there. Guides who lead tours on the basis of the visual material are invited to encourage visitors to participate in a discussion on the strategies of protection and reactions to danger. The reflection also draws attention to instincts as well as the role of culture in shaping behavior. The exhibition features a narrative entitled "Shelters in the World" about the history of shelter construction from the First World War until the present day, as well as a presentation of modern projects. This part is illustrated by means of pictures and a special 'cartoon' and in addition to these images there is also a model of a representative shelter from the 1980s which protects against some of the effects of a nuclear explosion (a 'Mock-up' scene). The exhibition is concluded with a room entitled "Fortunately Unfinished History" containing a selection of questions encouraging reflection which help visitors feel the claustrophobic situation of existing in the shelter.

In the planned center of the route, at Szkolne 22, there will be an exhibition module entitled "Shelters in Nowa Huta: the spirit of the place, the spirit of the times". It will be divided into three segments: "Nowa Huta: Spirit of the place"; "Cold War: Spirit of the time"; and "To the shelter!". The aim of the first scene of the first segment ("Nowa Huta intro") will be to introduce tourists to the *genius loci* of Nowa Huta. In the "City start" scene, the tourist will learn about the situation of Poland after World War II and the history of the "six-year plan" of which Nowa Huta was a key element. Following scenes will present the propaganda of the 1950s accompanying the construction, urban plans of the district and their creators, as well as the architecture of Nowa Huta with a special place reserved for the socialist realist style. This part of the exhibition will be complemented by a screening of the film "Direction: Nowa Huta" and mock-ups reflecting both implemented and planned projects. In the first scene ("Iron

Curtain – the symbol of the Cold War"); in the second segment, the cold war background with the title "Iron Curtain" and the implications of the division of the world into two blocs will be outlined. By becoming acquainted with stage two, visitors will get to know the most important events of the Cold War relative to its time. In the third scene ("Daily life in the shadow of the Cold War") there will be a chance to look at everyday life in Nowa Huta in the shadow of a potential conflict. In the third segment containing the positions "Shelters under Nowa Huta" and "Shelter construction" there will be information about the network of protective structures under the district and the technical details of these structures. "Fear" in turn is aimed at making visitors aware of the feeling of anxiety that accompanied people on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

Module number three ("Around the atom") will be placed in the shelter at Szkolne 9. Scenes placed there ("Atom – enemy or friend" and the "Nuclear era in pop culture") will present two sides of the use of the atom: as an element of destructive nuclear weapons, and on the other hand its use, for example, in fighting cancer. Scenes will also show pop cultural themes related to nuclear weapons in music, film, books and many more. As a result, again, atomic energy is going to be presented and further discussed by visitors from different perspectives not limited to nuclear power within the frame of the Cold War shadow.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The new tourist attraction opened in Nowa Huta at the beginning of 2019 and will be further developed in subsequent years (the map illustrates the prospective route that unites the four heritage sites). Thanks to the usage of genuine shelters whose space is being transformed by the specific exhibition, it is possible to achieve a double dimension of authenticity: an 'objective/cold' one and a 'subjective/hot' one (Selwyn, 1996). The original interiors that are anchored in the real history of the district guarantee the objective value of the presented site, while the narrative exhibition is a complementary feature that opens the horizon for the emotional experience of 'hot' authenticity. Indeed, this approach fulfills the foundations of the experience economy (Pine, Gilmore, 1999; Urry, Larsen, 2011) that puts in the center of exchange not products or services but experiences. By means of multi-sensory learning that employs visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile stimulation as well as well-trained guides whose role is to support the interpretative process, individuals not only undergo unique experiences but above all gain deeper knowledge and develop more/new skills in an entertaining mode. Educational projects that aim at multi-perspective interpre-

tation of heritage (especially dissonant heritage with its 'roughness' and difficulty of explanation) are a fundamental component of creating a space for dialogue based on understanding the complex nature of reality. As Freeman Tilden highlighted in his six principles of interpretation: "Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical or architectural. Any art is in some degree teachable. The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation" (Tilden, 1957, p. 9). Even if the consumption of experiences has become a difficult challenge that modern museums have to address, it is not a simple war between shallow entertainment and educational enlightenment. Essential to the debate is openness to the provocative nature of interpretation. Allowing people to experience heritage sites in their own, individual, subjective way means accepting the fact that they perform as co-creators, not only visitors or even participants. This results from two presumptions adopted by creators of the project. The first is a strategy of encouraging discussion rather than providing ready explanations, both visual material as well as exhibited artifacts or the narratives accompanying them are tailored to stimulate questions from the visitors. The second is the universalization of the problem of shelters, not only limiting it to the remnants of the Cold War but broadening the topic by references to history, various cultural expressions or even the natural environment. This broader frame for interpretation would encourage stepping further from a discussion of the past to a reflection of present and future threats such as avoiding the dangers of cyber wars or the negative consequences of climate change. Thanks to those perspectives, visitors are more aware of the intricacies of the past in order to better understand the present and avoid confusion in the future. An initiative such as the route devoted to the shelters of Nowa Huta, is not only a tourist attraction and a historical education project, but it can also play a major role in shaping responsible social attitudes, and responding to the threats (both real and imagined) of the contemporary world.

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