

Architectural Project and the Agency of Representation: The Case of Nowa Huta, Poland

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Henri Lefebvre's theorizing of space addresses the conjunctures between material environments, their representations, and their ways of use and experience: the three 'moments' of space discussed in *The Production of Space* as spatial practices, representations of space and spaces of representation (Lefebvre 1991, Stanek 2011).¹ Rather than positing an ontology of space that would explain the relationship between its moments; or normalizing this relationship within an ethics or aesthetics of space, Lefebvre described the moments of space as related to each other from within a social practice, governed by an open-ended 'spatial dialectics'. In other words, the production of space always-already implies aggregating its moments, and in this chapter I argue that an architectural project is to be defined by the labour of such aggregation (Stanek 2012).

Architects are 'producers of space', wrote Lefebvre, but never the only ones (Lefebvre in Sturge-Moore 1972: 4). More specifically, they are producers of representations of space and hence Lefebvre writes half seriously, half ironically that their specific space is 'a sheet of white paper' (ibid.). Architects produce drawings and models, but in so doing they respond to representations of space produced by other agents, from individual desires and embodied memories to institutionalized images and collectively shared symbols. Whether theorized as 'collective unconsciousness', 'habitus', 'way of life' or 'cultural model', the two last concepts examined by Lefebvre's collaborators at the Institut de sociologie urbaine in the course of the 1960s (Stanek 2011), these shared representations are reference points, negative or positive, for the social processes of production of space and for the design practices themselves.

In what follows, I discuss how representations of space intervene in the dynamics of space production in a specific geographical and historical conjuncture: that of Nowa Huta, the 'first socialist city in Poland' constructed by the post-war socialist regime near Kraków from the late 1940s. Since the foundation of this city, representations have been the defining factor of the development of Nowa Huta and continue to play this role: at the end what gathers together five districts of

Kraków referred to by the name 'Nowa Huta' is a set of representations strongly embedded in various social practices, rather than an administrative or a spatial whole. (Following these representations, in this chapter, I will refer to Nowa Huta as a 'city', in spite of the fact that it ceased to be an independent administrative entity already in 1951.) In this way, Lefebvre's stress on representations as a necessary part of the processes of space production, rather than their reflection, result or effect, offers a promising starting point for discussing the urban space in Nowa Huta.

This chapter focuses on the representations of Nowa Huta between the end of the Soviet-dependent People's Republic of Poland (1989) and the entry of Poland into the European Union (2004). It is based on a study of printed mass media, in particular local ones, such as the weekly magazine *Głos Nowej Huty* (*The Voice of Nowa Huta*), changed in 1991 to *Głos Tygodnik Nowohucki* (*The Voice. The Weekly of Nowa Huta*), which was established in 1957 as *Budujemy Socjalizm* (*We Are Building Socialism*). All issues of *Głos* between 1988 and 2003 were reviewed, thus enabling quantitative comparisons. Other sources were the Kraków dailies *Gazeta Krakowska* and *Dziennik Polski* (both existed during the socialist period), and dailies that were set up after 1989: *Czas Krakowski* and *Gazeta w Krakowie* (the Kraków edition of the national newspaper, *Gazeta Wyborcza*). These periodicals were confronted with other regional and professional journals, such as *Suplement*, as well as the national daily *Rzeczpospolita* and some articles in the national weekly magazines *Przekrój* and *Polityka*.

This chapter contributes to a larger debate on 'representational cities' developed in ethnographic and anthropological research towards a reading of cities as reservoirs of messages deciphered and reinterpreted by inhabitants and visitors (Jacobs 1993). Hence, for example, in his ethnography of Brasília, James Holston (1989) shows the negotiation between the utopian image of the city and its everyday reality. While several authors stressed the active role of inhabitants in deciphering these urban messages, architects are often opposed to inhabitants and seen as producers of 'dominant' representations, resisted by inhabitants and their narratives. Against this bipolar image, which replaces the heroic narrative of an architect by that of an inhabitant, often equally heroic, I will theorize this negotiation of representations as multipolar and heterogenous. Looking at Nowa Huta with Lefebvre's theory allows not only a better understanding of what architects do when they draw up a design, but also a broader rethinking of architectural practices within the processes of space production (Awan et al. 2011, Stanek 2014).

CONTESTED REPRESENTATIONS IN NOWA HUTA

Located 10 km from Kraków, the historical capital of Poland, Nowa Huta ('new steelworks') was founded as an independent industrial city for the workers of the steel production plant being developed nearby, but it became a district of Kraków as early as 1951. After the administrative reform in 1991, Nowa Huta was divided into five smaller districts which today count 220,000 inhabitants, with Kraków's

total population reaching nearly 760,000. The urban plan of the city was based on the concept of the neighbourhood unit, which regulated the distribution of housing and social facilities. The architectural idiom of socialist realism, with numerous quotations from Kraków Renaissance, was abandoned in the early 1960s for modernism, which became sadly impoverished in the years that followed (Irion and Sieverts 1991, Juchnowicz 2002). The city witnessed much political unrest and in the 1980s Nowa Huta was one of the most important centres of popular protest against the regime in Poland. After the political transition in the year 1989, the steelworks were privatized and restructured by their new owner, Mittal Steel, and workers encouraged to leave with comparatively generous compensation were not replaced. At the time the Nowa Huta districts came to be associated with criminality and unemployment. Since the official statistics do not support this association,² sociologists studying the transformation of the city in the course of the 1990s feared a 'self-fulfilling prophecy of social crisis' (Bukowski 2003).

This hiatus between the representations of Nowa Huta and its material reality was, in fact, specific to the city from its beginnings. This started with its 'foundation myth' depicting a young man who is lured to the 'first socialist city in Poland' only to discover that the city has not been yet built, and who decides to stay in order to contribute to the construction of Nowa Huta. Omnipresent in the state-controlled press in the 1950s and repeated since then, this narrative introduced mass media representations as the primary framework for the experience of Nowa Huta and the desire to catch up with these representations as the subtext of the city's development.

State socialism was all about 'catching up' and 'taking over', and Nowa Huta was at the forefront. Renata Siemieńska, whose 1969 book *Nowe życie w nowych miastach* [A New Life in a New City] included the first systematic investigation of the mass media representations of Nowa Huta, pointed out that the claim of Nowa Huta as 'not yet a socialist city, but a socialist city in becoming' can be found in the mass media articles as early as the 1950s (Siemieńska 1969: 48). The distinction between the project of the city and its dynamic development also appears in a 1952 article by Tadeusz Ptaszycycki, the head designer of Nowa Huta, who wrote that 'the designers of the city of Nowa Huta see in their work two forms of the city: a prospective form and a form of the city under construction with all the pressures of the living conditions; a city which is "not there yet" but which lives and which builds itself' (Ptaszycycki 1952: 10).

After 1989, this narrative of 'catching up' with the socialist city was replaced, almost overnight, by that of 'moving beyond' it. The most important change in the discourse about the city after the end of socialism was its pluralization. The official discourse on the 'socialist city' did not disappear but rather clashed in the local mass media with other, competing representations, all supported by historians' discourses, personal recollections, private archives and photographic sources. These discussions, often politically motivated, were characterized by a clash between the local discourse, supported by Nowa Huta's local media, and narratives in Kraków's press and the majority of the national press. These two were joined by professional discourses (architectural, sociological, historical, geographical)

that permeated the mass media and by discourses tied to particular institutions (the steelworks and the district authorities, but also various cultural centres and organizations, including those of tenants). Orientation points for the discussion on Nowa Huta were provided by some of the most active participants of these debates, including Stanisław Juchnowicz (a member of the Tadeusz Ptaszyccki team of designers of Nowa Huta and professor at the Technical University Kraków), Maciej Miezan (the director of the Nowa Huta Museum), Jan Franczyk (the editor-in-chief of the local weekly *Głos Tygodnik Nowohucki*), Mieczysław Gil (one of the leaders of anti-socialist opposition in Nowa Huta), and Niward Karsznia (a sociologist and rector of one of the parishes in Nowa Huta).

In the course of the 1990s, the modalities of the representation of Nowa Huta as a 'socialist city' were nuanced: some claimed that Nowa Huta was planned to be a socialist city but failed,³ while others attributed such status to its past⁴ and even to its present.⁵ The political motivations of the city's construction were considered sufficient to call it 'socialist', followed by the supposed attachment of the population to the former regime, motivated either by nostalgia for the social facilities and the communitarian atmosphere in the city, or by political convictions.⁶ The latter were manifested during the municipal elections of 2002, when the left-wing candidate, Jacek Majchrowski, received strong support in Nowa Huta. Election results show, however, that inhabitants rather than voting left tend to vote extreme: both the far left and the far right political parties have many supporters. The architecture of socialist realism in the central part of the city led to its numerous comparisons with an 'outdoor museum', an 'experiment', and a 'theme park'.⁷ In fact a theme park called 'Socland', which simulated the socialist reality, was temporarily opened in Nowa Huta, while the peculiarity of the city has been exploited as a touristic asset (Stenning 2001, Stanek 2007).⁸ Yet at the same time, the representation of Nowa Huta as 'socialist' was challenged by a very strong and homogeneous representation of the city as one of the most important centres of opposition to the regime in Poland: the city of strikes, riots and rebellions.⁹

Starting with the opposition between a socialist and a rebel city, the contradictory representations of Nowa Huta proliferated during the 1990s. They included, first, the contradiction between an 'atheistic' city, designed and built without churches, and the supposed centre of coalescence between labour and religion, which was strengthened by the struggles around the construction of a church in Nowa Huta, and the symbolic visit of John Paul II (1979) (Karnasiewicz 2003). The local priest and sociologist Niward Karsznia claimed that the socialist – atheist – ideology brought about 'antisocial and immoral behaviors' and 'some marriages were broken due to the laxity of morals triggered by the new environment' (Karsznia 1994: 35); he added that it did not improve much after the end of socialism and the dominance of capitalist 'ideology of consumerism' (Karsznia 1997: 12).

Another opposition was that between Nowa Huta and Kraków: while some described the relationship between them as a 'crusade', others called for a 'reconciliation'.¹⁰ This antagonism was a favourite trope of the official narrative of the 1950s and 1960s, which presented Nowa Huta as a 'young' city where social facilities were evenly distributed and favourably compared to those of Kraków, the

'old' metropolis as based on feudal domination, real-estate speculation and social segregation (Ostrowski 1952: 1). After the political change, these evaluations were reversed, and Nowa Huta was by then characterized as 'deprived of tradition' and 'criminal'. This contrast was further strengthened by the assumption that the main explanation for the social reality of Nowa Huta lay in the incongruence between the migrants from the countryside and the emerging urban reality. The interference of both urban and rural rhythms – the industrial shifts on the steelworks employing 80 per cent of the inhabitants and the habits of the population of whom 74 per cent were of rural origin (according to a 1979 survey) – has traditionally been considered a specific feature of the city, even after 1989 when the workers' population significantly shrunk (Siemieńska 1969, Bukowski 2003). Yet another contrasting pair of images was that of Nowa Huta as a site of ecological catastrophe, with the steelworks harming both the people and the ancient monuments of Kraków, and the vision of a green city, a city of parks.

Most of these contradictions were present in the media before 1989, but the official narrative forced them either into the scheme of evolution (the transformation from peasants to workers) or into a reductive version of Marxist dialectics, according to which the peasants change the material conditions of their life by taking up work in the steelworks and can thus overcome the contradiction between the city and the countryside by creating a new socialist society (Werekziej 1976). After the end of socialism in Poland both schemes became obsolete. Deprived of a metanarrative that would allow subsuming the contradictions into a single argument, the commentators accept the impossibility of interrelating the representations of Nowa Huta and frame it as a 'city of paradoxes' (Stenning 2001). This suspends the discussion about the city by reducing its descriptions to a collection of contradictory, yet equally justifiable, representations. This crisis of representation is often treated as a symptom of the general failure of Nowa Huta as a city; and speaking shortly after the political change in 1989, one commentator claimed that 'Nowa Huta and its paradoxes testify against programming the future in the name of any intellectual idea, despite the fact that these ideas might be considered today, here and now, correct.'¹¹

INSTRUMENTALITY OF REPRESENTATIONS: THE HOUSING QUESTION IN NOWA HUTA

Rather than accepting the stasis implied by the discourse on the 'city of paradoxes', Lefebvre's theory requires interrogating the agency of these contradictory representations of Nowa Huta that are constantly renegotiated and frequently changing hands. In what follows, these negotiations will be shown as vessels for a collective experience in which the production of material enclosures and shared subjectivities go hand in hand. The hints are taken from Lefebvre's analysis of Mourenx (1960), a new town in south-western France, where he discerned a conflict between the imagination of the community built up around the factory, and the urban sphere about to replace the factory in its role as the site of socialization, production and struggle. Speculating

about the end of Fordism in post-war Europe, Lefebvre registered a conflict between alternative collective imaginations, which not only reflected the changes in the production of space in Mourenx, but also revealed possible crystallization points for political coalitions (Lefebvre 1960, for discussion, see Stanek 2011).

The representations of Nowa Huta intervene in the struggles over what was one of the most contested issues in the city after 1989: the housing question. Post-socialist liberalization of the real estate market undermined the main urban promise of Nowa Huta: the availability of housing.¹² In the face of the commercialization of the housing cooperatives, which owned the vast majority of the housing stock in the city, and the dramatic rise of rents, local leaders argued for the necessity of defending their rights to the apartments and supported individual ownership of real property.¹³ The fact that the housing cooperatives had roots in the socialist system enabled framing those opposing the rapid privatization as supporters of the old regime.¹⁴ These demands were endorsed by new legislation allowing the members of housing cooperatives to buy their flats for a fraction of their market value, and paralleled by the policy of privatization of communal real estate.

By becoming owners, the inhabitants were given the right to organize themselves into what the Polish law calls an 'inhabitants' community', where each owner of an individual flat has a share in the common areas of the property and co-manages it. In this way, the real estate landscape in Nowa Huta after 1989 has been to a large extent defined by frictions between the inhabitants' communities and the housing cooperatives, which were transformed into 'companies' providing 'services' and competing with other 'companies' on the market.¹⁵

The inhabitants' communities often originated from a protest of the inhabitants of a single block of flats against the housing cooperatives: the neighbourhood bond among the members and the informal ties with other inhabitants' communities facilitated flexible alliances when facing the service providers and politicians. In this way, the creation of inhabitants' communities was fuelled by the appeal to communal ties, embedded in the image of Nowa Huta before 1989, with neighbours growing up together and helping each other out.¹⁶ This was a pervasive theme in the official representation of socialist Nowa Huta, with the stress on the shared experience of work and leisure. Yet the strong neighbourhood ties, and social networks in general, outlived socialism and became important assets for the population struggling with the relegation of the provision of services from the state to the market. This included a range of activities that are trivial but often crucial for the subsistence of many households in Nowa Huta: lending and borrowing food and small items (such as light bulbs, painkillers) and small amounts of money, helping out with repairs and watching over vacant flats. As a recent study showed, the frequency of contact in the neighbourhoods built since the 1960s (Dywizjonu 303 and Oświecenia) is lower than in older ones (Willowe and Górali). This is linked, according to the authors, with the large number of pensioners in the older neighbourhoods who have more sustainable ties to their neighbours. But architectural typologies play a role as well; in particular the two-to-three-storey blocks surrounded by green space in Willowe neighbourhood encourage social contacts (Rochovská et al. n.d.: 9–10, Rochovská et al. 2010).

In this sense, the reorganization of the housing stock reveals flexible references to the representations of Nowa Huta, embodied and remembered by the inhabitants, in particular to the representation of the 'socialist city'. The experience of socialist collectivism and of rebellions against the regime are selectively called upon by members of inhabitants' communities and mobilized in their confrontation with housing cooperatives transformed into commercial providers of services. However, the very same collective experience of Nowa Huta is referred to by several activists who blame the inhabitants' communities for blocking new initiatives and preventing the introduction of new functions that could activate the centre of the city. To be sure, this critique of the communities as privatized islands in the urban fabric cannot apply to all of them: for example the inhabitants' community in the Teatralne neighbourhood was not only cooperating with other communities in order to receive European funding for the renovation of the public spaces, but also co-organized cultural events.¹⁷

The negotiation between competing imaginations of collective bonds in Nowa Huta defines to a large extent the social spaces of several cultural institutions in the city, including the Nowa Huta Museum (since 2005) and Klub 1949 (2006–10). Through image campaigns and exhibitions, both institutions merged the sympathy for the quotidian experience of the past socialist city with the image of a new, future-oriented community. A similar sympathy for the city's tumultuous history permeates the activities of Łaźnia Nowa, a theatre and a cultural centre that was established in 2004 in the former workshops of the vocational technical high school for mechanics. Łaźnia started with the attempt to combine artistic relevance with a social mission and, according to Bartosz Szydłowski, Łaźnia's director and himself raised in Nowa Huta, argued that its location in the city is a part of the 'stuff' the theatre works with. This guides to a large extent the choice of plays that confront the everyday in Nowa Huta; they are often written by local authors (see Figure 13.1). The theatre programmatically avoids any convention that would signify the distance from its locale and displace the artist beyond the community; thus neither irony nor sarcasm is allowed. 'We don't want to be critical,' said Szydłowski in the interview, and he proudly mentioned that the priests in Nowa Huta include the Łaźnia newsletter in the announcements after Sunday mass. He admitted that, when facing an opposition between artistic quality and the relevance for the community, he does not hesitate to choose the second; at the same time he stressed that the theatre is not an amateur troupe.¹⁸

Łaźnia sees itself as producer of space of Nowa Huta: both by giving a positive reinterpretation of the city's identity ('we want people to recognize the spirit of the place') and by initiating projects that transform the public space.¹⁹ This included the event 'The Alley of Hope', which, by projecting iconic masterpieces of European painting on to the buildings in the centre of Nowa Huta, linked the badly connoted socialist realist architecture to its Renaissance 'origins' or 'originals'. Łaźnia also launched a programme of social works to tidy up the nearby garden. These events relate the opening towards the community of inhabitants and an appeal to the socialist imaginary – most obviously present in the tradition of socialist work for the community – with the demand of responsibility and professionalism (the inhabitants who participate in the theatre are paid), alongside the entrepreneurial subjectivity endorsed by the EU-funded programmes (Projekt PIW 2006).



Fig. 13.1 'I Live Here': a production in Łaźnia Nowa (2004)

The locations of Klub 1949, the Nowa Huta Museum and Łaźnia facilitate these institutions' production of social space in the city (see Figure 13.2). The positioning of the theatre within the fabric of the Szkolne neighbourhood became the starting point for several projects: the theatre garden is used on a daily basis by the inhabitants living nearby; its cafeteria, with an entrance independent from that of the theatre, becomes a meeting point for youth; and the building in front of the theatre is often included in the spectacles to which its inhabitants contribute. Similarly, the museum and the club are located on the ground floors of blocks of flats, in contrast to older cultural institutions in Nowa Huta, housed in tailor-made, isolated, often monumental buildings designed in the idiom of socialist realism. With the museum grafted on to the former scouts' storeroom and the club in the old second-hand shop, these institutions inherited big shop windows, which ensured constant contact between the street and the interior. Both institutions became members of inhabitants' communities of their respective buildings, which made it necessary for them to negotiate constantly about their activities with the other owners; it is in the course of these, often difficult, negotiations that the use of the spaces of the museum and the club was worked out.

ALLEY OF ROSES: THE AGENCY OF AN ARCHITECTURAL PROJECT

In three volumes of *Critique of Everyday Life* (2002 [1961], 2006 [1981], 2008 [1947]) Lefebvre described how representations of space penetrate everyday practices, the



Fig. 13.2 Klub
1949 in 2008

quotidian language, ways to use spaces, and their experiences. In *The Production of Space* (1991 [1974]) this approach was developed into a more general questioning of the ways in which representations of space are mobilized in the processes of space production.

Nowa Huta's recent history reveals a variety of such roles. The representations inherited from the socialist period were referred to as arguments in the discussion on the investments in the district and municipal credit guarantees for the steelworks.²⁰ The opponents of such help argued that Nowa Huta was founded as a 'revenge of Stalin' and 'hostile to Kraków'; this is why its interests are supposedly divergent from those of the old royal capital.²¹ This proved to be a successful argument: the first decision on financial guarantees for the steelworks was negative.²² The leaders of the community of Nowa Huta opposed this representation with the image of a rebel city that 'resisted the communist indoctrination'.²³ On top of these polemics, mass media representations of Nowa Huta became reservoirs of new street names: those referring to socialist heroes, institutions and events were more often than not renamed after 1989.

The representations also provided reference points for the architectural and urban design competitions in Nowa Huta. For example, the narrative of a city that 'expressed' the socialist ideology was the starting point for the 2002 Kraków IX International Biennale of Architecture, held in Nowa Huta under the slogan: 'Less Ideology – More Geometry'. The introductory text claimed that the city was built as an entity uniting 'ideology' and 'geometry'; the ideology has come to pass whereas

the geometry has not been completed (Kozłowski 2002). To 'complete' the city was hence the aim of the Biennale, taken up by the majority of the designs submitted to the competition. More generally, representations of space constitute an important part of the architectural context both for public buildings, such as churches, and residential complexes, including the postmodern housing complex Centrum E, which was claimed by the designer to be a 'protest against the architecture of socialist realism' (see Figure 13.3).²⁴

This close relationship between the representations of space and urban design can be traced in the Alley of Roses, located at the central axis of Nowa Huta, where before 1989 the Lenin monument stood: a broad passage closed to vehicles that connects the Central Square (Plac Centralny) with the City Hall Square (Plac Ratuszowy). This site was not designed as an urban square and it hardly was one: the buildings surrounding the site are exclusively blocks of flats and the only entrances accessible from the site lead to staircases connecting apartments. Following the original masterplan, a rose garden was created in front of them, shown in a photograph published in 1959 (Ptaszycki 1959; see Figure 13.4). The layout was symmetrical with the main axis of the ensemble, but the position of paths and seats stressed the direction perpendicular to the axis. These transversal paths were directed towards the entrances to the blocks of flats, making the rose garden easily accessible to the inhabitants. Thus the rose garden was designed as a calm spot between two spaces to be enclosed by monumental buildings, which were never constructed: the planned theatre for the Central Square on the one side and, on the other, the city hall, which was no longer needed after Nowa Huta ceased to be an independent city.

In response to the need for a symbolic site suitable for political celebrations in the city, in 1973 the site was redecorated and the monument of Lenin was built on the axis of the ensemble (Miezian 2004: 85ff.). The roses were removed and the area covered with stone slabs. The rhythm of the site changed: the slow pace of the rose garden was replaced by the supervised void (a sentry box was built nearby) interrupted by official mass demonstrations and occasional riots. By removing the transversal paths and placing the monument on the axis, the site was given a new direction. At the same time, since the theatre and the city hall were not built, this site was the only place in the centre of the city that was completed in terms of urban design (see Figure 13.5).

The monument was attacked several times by anti-government protesters and once even with a bomb that amputated one foot of the Soviet leader. Shortly after the first non-socialist government was formed (1989), the monument was defaced with paint by demonstrators, who demanded its removal. Under this pressure, the municipal authorities reluctantly decided to remove the monument. (It is a historical irony that the former leaders of the democratic opposition defended the Lenin monument, trying to avoid one more irritation to the Russian authorities whose troops were still deployed in Poland.²⁵) The monument was sold to the highest bidder, who happened to be the owner of a theme park in Sweden. The Lenin monument, however, dominated the popular imagination about Nowa Huta; the poet and musician Marcin Świetlicki confessed in 1997: 'when I think about



Fig. 13.3
Romuald Loegler
and team, Centrum
E housing complex
(1988–95), as seen
from behind the
Lenin monument



Fig. 13.4 Alley
of Roses in 1950s

Fig. 13.5 The Lenin monument in the Alley of Roses, after 1973

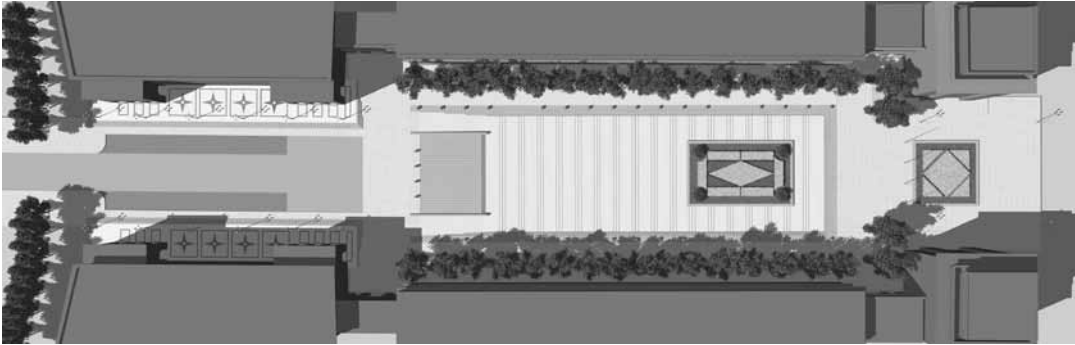


Nowa Huta I see the monument of Lenin, although it is no longer there.²⁶ With the removal of the monument, the site was deprived of an element that gave it its name; it has since been known colloquially as ‘the square after Lenin’, or the ‘void after Lenin’. This name not only shows the branding power of the monument, but also demonstrates that the site was accepted as a ‘square’ in spite of the lack of commercial, cultural or administrative functions that could generate urban activity (for a period of time at least one of the staircases in an adjacent block of flats was used as a temporary shop).

In yet one more attempt to ‘complete’ Nowa Huta, in the course of the 1990s the inhabitants and the local press called for a redecoration of this site.²⁷ The discussion about future development encompassed all competing representations of the city. The context of this demand was a broader discussion in the late 1990s about the future of Nowa Huta, when the local press registered the rapid degradation of the city, accelerated by insufficient municipal investment that many argued was unjust (according to an article from 1999, Nowa Huta districts provided 35 per cent of the municipal income of Kraków, while the municipality invested only 10 per cent

of the available money in these districts).²⁸ Thus the feeling of discrimination was widely expressed in the local press and the discussion was dominated by the old antagonism between Nowa Huta and Kraków.

What followed was a new design commissioned by the city council and delivered by a Kraków-based architectural office, Aarcada. The design, realized in 2001, suggested lowering the inner part of the square by three steps, and flanking this depression by two rows of stone socles. In the depression, in the place where the Lenin monument used to stand, an elevated flower-bed for roses was constructed, continuing to preserve this geometrically privileged spot as inaccessible to passers-by. Opposite the flower-bed, a podium for 'artistic performances' (as the designers put it) was erected.²⁹ Thus the gaze of the spectators was redirected: they were supposed to look in the opposite direction to that of the participants in official ceremonies held in front of the Lenin monument. This was the only potentially critical intervention in the design, which closely followed the geometry set by the 1950s masterplan of the site (see Figure 13.6).



The designers called the new Alley of Roses a 'forum', and have seen it as an attractor for the whole city.³⁰ Yet while during socialism the inhabitants gathered on this site in order to participate in or, occasionally, protest against the festivities organized by the regime, the new design could not change its character as a pedestrian passage. Hence, in contrast with the official optimism of the members of the district council,³¹ many inhabitants of Nowa Huta expressed their disappointment with the realized design³² and argued that more greenery, and in particular more roses, were necessary.³³ Some stated that the best solution would be a return to the square as it had been before the erection of the Lenin monument.³⁴

This particularly strong and unanimous demand for greenery cannot be explained by its lack in the immediate vicinity of the site. The blocks of flats flanking the Alley of Roses have generous garden-like courtyards, and there are two parks in the immediate neighbourhood, while Centralny Square faces the Vistula meadow with a unique and protected ecosystem. Rather than by a 'need' for greenery in what was perhaps the only urban place in the whole city, the disagreement with the design can be better understood by referring to Lefebvre's concept of 'space

Fig. 13.6 The design of the Alley of Roses (2002) by the architectural office Aarcada

Fig. 13.7 The picture of the Alley of Roses from the 1960s. It was published by *Głos Tygodnik Nowohucki* in 2002 as a critique of the realized design

W oczach mieszkańców

PLAC CZY KLEPISKO?



Koniec lat sześćdziesiątych: różany kobierzec w al. Róż.

Do naszej redakcji dotarł list od stałego Czytelnika, mieszkańca jednego z osiedli położonych w sąsiedztwie placu Centralnego. List zawiera wiele pytań dotyczących otoczenia reprezentacyjnego placu Nowej Huty. Kierujemy je – jak zrobił to nasz Czytelnik – do Tomasza Urynowicza przewodniczącego Rady Dzielnicy XVIII, mając nadzieję, że tym razem wiele problemów, które poruszaliśmy również w naszych publikacjach, znajdzie odpowiedź i pozytywne rozwiązanie.

(CIAĞ DALSZY NA STR. 9)

of representation'. For Lefebvre, such space refers to an 'elsewhere' that becomes embodied in the everyday experience; space of representation is 'directly lived through its associated images and symbols' (Lefebvre 1991: 39). The Alley of Roses is such a space of representation where, during the socialist regime, the visitor was confronted with the ruling representation of Nowa Huta: that of a socialist city. In this sense, the main change in the Alley of Roses after 1989 was not its material transformation, not even the removal of the Lenin statue, but, rather, the end of one dominant representation of space and the unleashing of a competition between various representations of Nowa Huta.

Spaces of representation were described by Lefebvre as not having a 'signified' but a '*horizon of meaning*: a specific or indefinite multiplicity of meanings, a shifting hierarchy in which now one, now another meaning comes momentarily to the fore, by means of – and for the sake of – a particular action' (Lefebvre 1991: 222). The voices of the inhabitants' concerning the site, both before the new design was presented, and after the project was realized, convey an expectation of an architectural design to negotiate between these various 'meanings'. Their critique of the realized project can be seen as a demand for putting aside one particular representation of Nowa Huta – that of a city caught in the ideological opposition between socialism and anti-socialism – by means of 'putting to the fore' another influential representation, that of a 'green city'. The mass media representations were central in the formulation of these demands, and this can be illustrated by one of the articles that criticized the new design by reproducing a picture of the rose garden taken in the 1960s, that is before the erection of the monument³⁵ (see Figure 13.7 above). In this sense, the choice of the park rather than of an urban square is, perhaps, a response to an instrumental understanding of urbanity before 1989, whether associated with the discourse on modernization controlled by the state, or with urban tactics chosen by the protesters. The desire for a park, the

wish to avoid a monument in the Alley of Roses³⁶ and the rejection of the design as a 'parade square'³⁷ can be seen less as an anti-urban sentiment than a protest against the restriction of 'the urban' to ideological dichotomies entrenched in the post-socialist discourse, and hence as an attempt to open up the urban everyday in Nowa Huta to a new multiplicity of meanings .

NOTES

- 1 This is a development of my paper 'The Instrumental Use of Representations of Space in the Practices of Production of Space in a Postcommunist City', in *De-signing the Urban. Technogenesis and the Urban Image*, ed. P. Healy and G. Bruyns. Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2006, 284–301.
- 2 *Dziennik Polski/Nowa Huta* 2004 (151): 2; *Gazeta w Krakowie* 2004 (106): 12. Because of their large number, the references to newspaper articles will be given in footnotes in an abbreviated form: title, year, issue number, page number.
- 3 *Głos Nowej Huty* 1989 (1693): 6, 7, 8; *Dziennik Polski* 1993 (288): 10; *Polityka* 1999 (30): 92–7.
- 4 *Głos Tygodnik Nowohucki* 1996 (275): 7; 1997 (350): 4; *Przekrój* 2001 (38): 30–31.
- 5 *Gazeta Krakowska* 1996 (207): 10–11; *Przekrój* 2001 (38): 30–31.
- 6 *Głos Nowej Huty* 1989 (17–18): 8, 9; *Głos Tygodnik Nowohucki* 1998 (373): 1, 10; *Gazeta w Krakowie/Gazeta Wyborcza* 1999 (131): 6, 7; *Gazeta w Krakowie/Gazeta Wyborcza* 2000 (211): 1; *Gazeta Krakowska* 2000 (77): 12; *Dziennik Polski* 2001 (172): III.
- 7 *Dziennik Polski* 2000 (11): 37; comp. *Gazeta w Krakowie/Gazeta Wyborcza* 1999 (131): 6, 7.
- 8 *Głos Tygodnik Nowohucki* 1995 (224): 7; *Dziennik Polski* 1997 (124): 45; *Polityka* 1999 (30): 92–7; *Dziennik Polski* 1999 (260): 13; *Przekrój* 2001 (38): 30–31.
- 9 *Głos Nowej Huty* 1989 (1693): 6, 7, 8; *Tygodnik Małopolska* 1991 (18): 10; *Czas Krakowski* 1991 (83): 6; *Rzeczpospolita* 2000 (99): 6; *Głos Tygodnik Nowohucki* 2001 (553): n.p.
- 10 *Głos Nowej Huty* 1990 (1706): 1, 3; *Głos Tygodnik Nowohucki* 1991 (1769): 1, 2.
- 11 *Głos Nowej Huty* 40 (1693): 7.
- 12 *Głos Nowej Huty* 1989 (1677): 1, 8; 1989 (1695): 5; 1989 (1697): 5; 1990 (1706): 3.
- 13 *Głos Nowej Huty* 1990 (1707): 3; 1990 (1708): 3; 1990 (1709): 1, 3; 1990 (1710): 1, 3; 1990 (1711): 1, 2, 4, 5; 1990 (1712): 2; 1990 (1713): 2; 1990 (1714): 5; 1990 (1717–18): 7; 1990 (1719): 5; 1990 (1729): 4; 1990 (1730): 1; 1990 (1732): 9–10; 1990 (1741): 6–7.
- 14 Interviews with M. Lorenc, interview with K. Wąchal, interview with P. Wolak, interview with P. Adamczyk; interview with M. Mieziań (Kraków, December 2006).
- 15 Interview with M. Lorenc, interview with P. Wolak (Kraków, December 2006).
- 16 Interview with K. Wąchal, interview with P. Wolak (Kraków, December 2006).
- 17 Interview with K. Wąchal, interview with P. Wolak, interview with P. Adamczyk, interview with M. Mieziań (Kraków, December 2006).
- 18 Interview with B. Szydłowski (Kraków, December 2006).
- 19 Ibid.

- 20 *Głos Tygodnik Nowohucki* 1992 (73): 1, 2; 1999 (449); 2000 (457): 1, 9.
- 21 *Głos Tygodnik Nowohucki* 1993 (123): 3; 1993 (124): 1, 4.
- 22 *Głos Tygodnik Nowohucki* 1991 (1766): 6, 7; 1991 (1768): 3.
- 23 *Głos Tygodnik Nowohucki* 1992 (45): 3; 1992 (46): 3; 1991 (50): 3.
- 24 *Magazyn Gazety Wyborczej* 1994 (292): 16–18.
- 25 *Polityka* 1989 (50): 7.
- 26 *Gazeta Wyborcza* 1997 (307): 20–21.
- 27 *Polityka* (18): 30–31.
- 28 *Gazeta w Krakowie/Gazeta Wyborcza* 1999 (13): 2.
- 29 *Głos Tygodnik Nowohucki* 2000 (491): 1, 9; 2000 (462): 1–2.
- 30 *Głos Tygodnik Nowohucki* 2000 (491): 1, 9.
- 31 *Głos Tygodnik Nowohucki* 2001 (550): 12.
- 32 *Głos Tygodnik Nowohucki* 2001 (550): 12; 2002 (584): 16; (598), 1, 16; interview with J. Franczyk (Nowa Huta, May 2003).
- 33 *Głos Tygodnik Nowohucki* 2001 (550): 12; 2002 (584): 16.
- 34 *Głos Tygodnik Nowohucki* 2001 (550): 12.
- 35 *Głos Tygodnik Nowohucki* 2002 (594): 1, 9.
- 36 *Polityka* 1996 (18): 30–31.
- 37 *Głos Tygodnik Nowohucki* 2002 (584): 16.

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