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**'Emotive Figures': Evoking Emotions by 'Things' in Public Space**

Dominika Czarnecka,

Independent researcher

Corresponding author's e-mail: [d.czarnecka@hotmail.com](mailto:d.czarnecka@hotmail.com)

**Abstract:** *The text attempts to explain why some monuments situated in public spaces tend to evoke people's emotions, while other such objects are met with complete indifference. It discusses the issues of collective emotional experience, emotional dynamics in the context of changing social situations, and the forms of emotions' manifestation 'around' monuments. An important aspect of the analysis is the concept of 'agency' in relation to 'things'.*

**Keywords:** agency, emotions, memory, monument, public space.

Yevgeny paced in agitation  
Around the statue's massive base  
And wildly gazed upon the face  
Of him who straddled half creation. (...)  
And quivering with fury, raising  
His fist, as if compelled by some  
Dark force to blind, impulsive action,  
He hissed through teeth clenched in distraction:  
'You ... builder of grand schemes!  
(A. Pushkin)

## **Introduction**

Not only encounters with other people but also direct confrontations with nonhuman phenomena can stir emotions and induce a person to undertake specific actions. This analysis focuses on mechanisms of evoking human emotions in confrontation with a precisely defined group of objects – secular monuments situated in public spaces. The uniqueness of this type of 'things' consists in the fact that people do not become emotionally attached to them as a result of using such objects over a prolonged period of time, taking possession of them, or staying in direct contact with them in private spaces perceived as isolated, 'safe' and generally facilitating a freer and fuller expression of a diversity of emotions (see: Briggs 1976 (1970)). Monuments which are under discussion here are erected in open-access spaces which gather people characterized by different experiences, convictions or temperaments. The repertoire of social interactions taking place in public spaces is not only different from, but also more diversified than those which occur in private spaces. Thus, the type of space is meaningful from the point of view of emotional responses expressed by people and the ways in which these responses are manifested. It is also worth stressing that monuments do not belong to the category of 'small objects'. Statues are 'immobilized' objects of significant sizes. They do not have any specific owners, they cannot be passed from

hand to hand, exchanged or sold, which results in social interactions taking place 'around' rather than through such objects.

The aim of this article is in no way to name or describe the variety of emotional responses which occur as a result of direct confrontation with monuments. It is rather an attempt to explain how it happens that these 'things' are able to evoke human emotions, how these emotions become manifested, when and in which situations emotional dynamics take place, and why monuments evoke emotional responses in some people, while remaining completely indifferent for others. The following discussion pertains to emotional constructs within West European and North American traditions.

### **Ambiguity of emotions**

Firstly, it is necessary to take a moment to consider the basic question without which any further discussion would be at the very least inconsistent and incomplete. Namely, what are emotions, actually? The issue lies at the root of the debate of the anthropology of emotions. An exhaustive presentation of the broad range and complexity of approaches in this area goes considerably beyond the scope of this paper. Solely for the sake of clarity of further argument it might be constructive to mention the variety of theoretical approaches resulting from arranging emotions around the dichotomies which organize them: body-mind, biology-culture, sensation-meaning. The theories which derived emotions from biology understood them as bodily and universal (e.g. Darwin 1959 (1872), Gerber 1985, Spiro 1984). The opposite pole was represented by the approaches within which emotions were shaped socially and were to be characterized by radical variability, belonging to a specific socio-cultural tradition and thus forming "an aspect of cultural meaning" (Briggs 1976 (1970), Geertz 2005 (1974), Lutz, White 1986: 408, quoted by Leavitt 2012: 62). Novel approaches, initiated in the 1980s, strived to transcend the earlier divisions. John Leavitt and many other scholars understood emotions as

inseparable from thinking and feeling, and combining the individual with the societal (Leavitt 2012: 63; Harding, Pribram 2002: 411).

I use the terms 'emotions' and 'feelings' interchangeably, although 'emotions' is a term which suggests a state of being seized or overwhelmed, whereas 'feelings' does not. I understand 'emotions' as a cooperation of the body with the image, the thought, the memory; a cooperation of which an individual is aware (Hochschild 2012: 213). Hence, emotions are 'embodied thoughts', inseparably connected with understanding that 'this concerns me', while this awareness is bodily perceptible (Rosaldo, quoted by Leavitt 2012: 78).

When examining emotions, it is impossible not to notice their central feature: ambiguity. "The ambiguity of emotions is not just a matter of their nature, but is also reflected in the eventual ambiguity of their meaning. The latter, however, is partially overcome through their contextualization in emotional regimes<sup>1</sup>, which regulate their expression and create social expectations that determine the range of meaningful emotions for any given situation. Emotional regimes are possible because emotions are not merely physical episodes, but embody values (...)" (González 2012: 2) (although not every valuation is emotional).

Emotions are effective means of communication and "(...) as phenomena experienced and expressed by individuals, help to constitute communities in a number of ways" (Milton 2005: 220). Embodiment of emotion, which takes place due to social interactions, requires the presence of relevant 'others' who act as emotional agents. Into this category not only human beings need to be included, but also animals, landscapes, objects, works of art. People are capable of forming "what are evidently social relations with >>things<<" (Gell 1998: 18). However, this is not a case of a 'thing' forming a social representation of a human being. Only in certain contexts *persons* can be substituted for by *objects*. Agency can be invested in things, or can emanate from things in many different ways.

### **'Primary' and 'secondary' agents**

One of the key issues is related to whether (and how) 'things' – in this case, inanimate objects – are able to evoke people's emotions. Ana Marta González made a general observation that: "(...) emotions have always revolved around objects. Objects present themselves as 'carriers' of emotions both in an ordinary way – the admiration we feel when contemplating a painting, for instance – and in a deeper way, when we associate personal experiences to that particular painting" (González 2012: 7)<sup>2</sup>.

In this context, the concept of 'agency' is of fundamental importance. Essentially, 'agency' is defined as capability to be the source and originator of acts, and agents are the subjects of action (Rapport, Overing 2000: 1). According to Alfred Gell, 'agency' may be related to both people and things "who/which are seen as initiating casual sequences of a particular type, that is, events caused by acts of mind or will or intention, rather than the mere concatenation of physical events. An agent is one who 'causes events to happen' in their vicinity" (Gell 1998: 16). These actions are 'caused' by agents, by their intentions, not by the physical laws, although specific events which finally happen do not necessarily have to be 'intended' by the agents. According to Gell, 'agency' can be attributable to things as well because in practice people attribute intentions to objects and images. "The idea of agency is a culturally prescribed framework for thinking about causation, when what happens is (in some vague sense) supposed to be intended in advance by some person-agent or thing-agent" (ibid.: 17). The problem lies in the fact that 'prior intention' may be attributed to the agent, who has a mind, and therefore, to a human being. "Animals and material objects can have minds and intentions attributed to them, but these are always, in some residual sense, human minds, because we have access 'from the inside' only to human minds (...)" (ibid.: 17). As 'things' *by themselves* cannot independently want something, cannot have intentions, they cannot be 'self-sufficient' agents (only human beings can be those). Rather, the issue lies in the outcome of some process within which people struggle to realize their particular aims in other domains. In

consequence, Gell suggested a distinction between 'primary' and 'secondary' agents. 'Things' are 'secondary' or 'second-class' agents. 'Primary' agents are "intentional beings who are categorically distinguished from 'mere' things or artefacts". 'Primary' agents use 'secondary' agents to "distribute their [own primary] agency in the casual milieu, and thus render their agency effective" (ibid.: 20). It is important to note that primary agents are not just those who produce objects, but also those who use or display them in different ways (Gell, quoted by Svašek 2007: 232). The concept of agency as related to objects, and in this case – monuments, is relational and does not occur always but only in very specific social contexts, in particular social situations.

Therefore, monuments as a special type of 'things' may only act as 'secondary' agents, and only in specific social contexts. In this discussion, the concept of 'agency' is connected with emotions. From the point of view of emotional agency it is not relevant what kind of monuments are capable of evoking people's emotions, but how and in what situations they can do that and why this phenomenon only concerns a specific group of both monuments and their viewers. It is also significant whose 'primary' agency becomes effective in these circumstances. Ultimately, the effects are similarly not the discrete expressions of individuals' will, but rather the outcomes of mediated practices within which people and 'things' are implicated in complex ways.

Bearing in mind the above findings, it seems advisable to consider the description of the mechanisms of evoking emotions by 'things', proposed by Maruška Svašek. Objects may be experienced and imagined by people as subject-like phenomena only in given relations and social situations. In this contexts inanimate objects are attributed with 'agency' of a kind (cars, computers and many other items may appear as emotional agents). The alleged 'desires', or 'intentions' of objects have an ability to evoke emotional peoples' responses, while simultaneously the users are aware that in reality these objects are lifeless. Likewise, objects with which people form a connection over a long period of time, or which move in time or space, can be imagined and experienced as subject-like phenomena.

Many years of travelling with a tattered backpack, evening rituals of sitting down in a favourite armchair – they may be a reflection of an owner's emotional attachment to things. Finally, inanimate agents may appear as emotional agents if they bring back the memories of what was related to emotional encounters in the past (a photograph of a loved one, a book with a personal inscription of a friend) (Svašek 2007: 231).

### **Before a monument becomes erected**

The objects 'around' which 'embodied thoughts' occur are monuments<sup>3</sup>. And this by no means concerns only the admiration which people can feel in an ordinary way – when contemplating a monumental sculpture.

In certain situations the very undertaking of a discussion regarding the erection of a new monument excites strong emotions in the society<sup>4</sup> (e.g. the abandoned project of a monument to the victims of Nazism in Oświęcim-Brzezinka in 1958 (Grzesiuk-Olszewska 1986), Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington in 1982 (Grant 2011), or current discussions concerning the erection of a new Warsaw monument to the victims of the plane crash in Smolensk<sup>5</sup>). In such situations, emotional agency is not connected with the monument-object, which does not exist as yet, but with the agents, who are human beings. The fact remains, however, that already in this first stage there may appear emotions which – as complex combinations of what is experienced with what is discursive – often function in the form of moral judgments expressed in the context of specific situations. Undoubtedly, the majority of initiatives for monuments' erection in democratic societies do not evoke an emotional response and people are indifferent towards new such structures. It is interesting, however, why some monuments, or even the very discussion on the subject of their construction, raises emotions all the same.

Some of the monuments erected in the public spaces seem to be highly symbolic signifiers that "transform otherwise neutral places into



ideologically charged spaces” (Whelan 2005: 63). These objects in the cultural landscape perform an important role in the legitimization of certain political regimes and social orders and in contributing to narratives of group identity<sup>6</sup>. Monuments, or even the very discussion about them, can both divide and unite people because “within cultural limits each group interprets the symbols according to its own interests” (Sax 1991: 205). No monument is able to ‘fulfil the expectations’ of all members of the society, although it can meet the expectations of the majority. “By creating spaces for memory, monuments propagate the illusion of common memory”<sup>7</sup> (Young 1993: 6).

A discussion with regard to the erection of a new monument may be related to commemorating events/persons significant for the living (owing to personal memories, images, relationships with those who passed away). If an individual understands that “this concerns me”, their thoughts may become ‘embodied’. Such an individual may respond emotionally and become strongly involved in a discussion regarding erection/stopping the construction of a new commemoration. One example may be the initiatives related to the funding of monuments to the victims whose relatives participated in the debate.

Numerous emotional experiences, although felt by specific entities, turn out to be extremely stereotypical in their nature and are related to recurrent social situations and common definitions. Affective or perceptible associations, similarly as the semantic ones, are simultaneously collective and individual. They operate through common or similar experiences of the members of a group which lives in similar conditions, through cultural stereotypes of experience and through common expectations, memories and fantasies (Leavitt 2012: 83). Although the emotions are felt and interpreted subjectively, individuals experience them in specific social contexts. Hence, as well as symbols, monuments may be treated as ways to trigger and channel common emotions and associations for social purposes (Munn 1974, quoted by Leavitt 2012: 82).

Therefore, the discussion on the subject of erecting an object may serve to induce and catalyze the emotions which are common for the members of a given memory community and which could not be manifested otherwise. Emotions appear as the means to communicate certain states, desires or fears. However, in every society different memory communities exist. A collective emotional experience concerns the members of a specific memory community, at the same time deepening the sense of separateness with regard to the representatives of other groups.

The situation is different within non-democratic systems, where monuments are usually 'imposed' on a top-down basis. Neither before nor after a new commemoration is erected is there a possibility for having a public debate. In the initial stage, then, the emotions are evoked by the 'imposition' of the monument's construction, while the groups which hold the power officially ban the manifestation of emotions reflecting social discontent in the public space.

### **Monuments past and present**

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, le Chevalier de Jaucourt claimed that "in every period of history, those who have governed people have always made use of paintings and statues, the better to inspire the feelings they wanted them to have, be it in religion, or in politics" (quoted by Warner 1996 (1985)). The above passage indicates that in the past the monuments were not neutral representations, that they reflected the power relations and inequalities in the public sphere. One of the functions of monuments was to 'inspire' certain 'feelings' (i.e. neither all of them, nor the accidental ones) in those for whom they were constructed. Collective emotional experiences were exploited by the monumental art as tools in the (re)production of power relations by the ruling groups. Monuments appealed to connotative and emotional categories which were available to the recipients in the given time and place (which has not changed until the present day to any significant extent). Naturally, not all activities related to erecting,

transforming, moving or demolishing monuments guaranteed specific, precise emotional responses, which resulted from the complexity and changeability of emotions themselves. Alternatives were always possible because "(...) as in other hegemonic systems, the possibility of resistance is always present" (Harding, Pribram 2002: 415).

Numerous examples illustrating how these mechanisms operate in the context of monumental art may be found in relation to the history of Poland. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Polish territory was the most explosive region of the Russian empire<sup>8</sup>. Polish history provides an extreme example of national identification with (...) monuments. In no other country was there such a unique sphere of struggle surrounding them, a sphere within which patriotic sentiments had to battle against the brutal violence of the partitioners (Tazbir 2000: 20). Emotional dynamics differed depending on the objects acting as emotional agents. The monuments which in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the enslaved nation considered to be 'Polish' (e.g. the column of king Sigismund III Vasa (1644)), evoked different emotional responses than these which were erected on the order of the tsar of Russia. Emotions were manifested in many different ways. The monument which was a tribute to the generals faithful to the tsar (1841), contemptuously called by the Poles 'the monument to disgrace', was repeatedly subject to attempts to blow it up. In an anonymous account of the ceremony of unveiling the monument, printed in "Demokrata Polski" ("Polish Democrat") published in Paris, it was written that "it forms an insult to the national feelings, which will, nevertheless, ricochet against the tsar and Russia, because the more often 'the people of Warsaw, the people of Poland' will look at this monument 'an infinitely stronger will for revenge shall glow in their hearts (...)" (quoted by Tazbir 2000: 26). On the very first night after its unveiling, the statue of Ivan Paskevich (1870) was smeared with wolf tallow, which attracted packs of ferociously barking dogs. Under the 'monuments to disgrace' people gathered for "five minutes of hatred. These formed a peculiar antithesis of a church service, 'black masses' of national contempt" (Tazbir 2000: 20). Some Poles avoided these objects so as not to have to look at them, some other purposefully walked by in order to be able to spit

at them (Tazbir 2000: 16, 20). The monuments erected on the order of the partitioners were exaggerated reflections of the relations of power and subordination – of the authority of the Russian tsar over the Poles. In this situation it was rather unlikely that the initiators of their erection would count on evoking positive feelings in the Polish society. Not without reason a special watch was established for guarding these monuments. Negative emotions could not be manifested officially, which absolutely did not mean that such emotions did not exist. The described behaviours of the viewers were an expression of emotional resistance.

The monuments to Paskevich or generals faithful to the tsar as ‘secondary’ agents not only distributed their (Paskevich, generals, the tsar) ‘primary’ agency (whose main aim had been to discredit the previous order and propagate values accepted in the Russian Empire), but also served as a proof of enslavement of the Polish nation. They criticized Polish movements for independence and heroized service for the Russian tsar. This shows that objects can function as active agents, generating emotions and moral judgements. In the cases described here, they had a clear political subtext.

A completely different social context came into being after the Second World War ended, when Polish communists began the construction of the monuments of ‘gratitude’ for the Red Army on a mass scale and without social acceptance. Despite initiating a propaganda apparatus of huge proportions, the monuments sparked the resistance of a substantial number of Poles. For many they were no symbols of ‘liberation’, as the official propaganda wanted, but symbols of a new occupation (more on the process of the mental transformation of monuments in: Czarnecka 2015).

In the past, many monuments were ‘imposed’ on the society by the political authority. Regardless of what separate individuals felt at that time, all the potential feelings were written into specific social situations changing over time. Every situation was accompanied by a stereotypical set of emotions, connected with a common or similar experience of the group’s members. To what extent the emotions felt by individual entities were

authentic and intense, remains a separate issue. In the period of Polish state's non-existence, but also later, during communist rule, the 'imposed' monuments played the role of 'secondary' agents, distributing the 'primary' agency of, for instance, their creators or representatives of political power. Paradoxically, the monuments were also successfully used by the representatives of the opposition to communicate their own passionate opinions. Official 'rituals' which took place around the statues were supposed to serve the purpose of conventional expression and experience of emotions 'desired' by the authorities. The rituals which took place in defiance of the official directives of the rulers focused different collective emotional experiences. They served, among others, to rechannel the social anger. Anger and resentment functioned as a moral judgement and as an attempt to change the current order and to set certain rules. These examples illustrate that objects can be used by different people to generate different types of emotional reactions.

In democracy, monuments are not 'imposed' by the authority and are not a reflection of the relations of subordination. They function as commemorations of the relevant 'others', 'icons of identity' of the given communities, objects which add variety to the urban space, or provide tourist attractions. Their majority is completely indifferent in people's eyes, some may evoke excitement, admiration or joy, similarly to a typical close contemplation of a picture. This does not mean that emotional dynamics never appears, although in democratic systems emotional responses are expressed, as a general rule, during the stage of discussion on the subject of erecting a new monument, in which all interested individuals may participate (e.g. Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Korean Veterans War Memorial in Washington). The position of competing agents is equal, regardless of whether they are institutionalized entities or not. In the countries which, years after, regained their freedom and have undergone political transformation, the emotional dynamics may appear in relation to the monuments which were 'imposed' in the past by the overthrown rule but still function in the public space. "If emotional experiences create and

fix memories, it is also well established that memories generate emotions” (Milton 2005: 219-220).

### **Monuments as emotional agents**

Monuments, just like other inanimate objects, can be experienced and imagined by people as subject-like phenomena. Stone sculptures forming the images of living or long-since-dead figures can be experienced and imagined by the viewers as ‘living’ persons, despite simultaneous, full awareness of their being solely inanimate casts. Owing to that, it sometimes seems to people that figures on the pedestals ‘look at’ or ‘smile at’ them.

Experiencing and imagining monuments as subject-like phenomena becomes particularly visible during the ‘rituals’ of their public demolition. Iconoclastic gestures often constitute visible signs of the viewers’ emotional experiences. Public ‘executions’ of sculptures are practiced during almost every violent political transformations (see Gamboni 2007 (1997)). A typical scenario often includes ‘hanging’ monument statues in front of a large audience which by no means remains calm during this type of ‘spectacle’<sup>9</sup>. When Benedykt Hertz in 1915 gave an account of removal of Muravyov’s monument, which the Russians took with themselves leaving Vilnius, he wrote about “hangman who faced the noose”. In 1989 in Warsaw the statue of Felix Dzerzhinsky was ‘hanged’, which event became engraved in the consciousness of Poles as one of the most important visual symbols of the fall of communism. In 1991 in Cracow, the statue of Ivan Konev was hanged, in 2003 the ‘execution’ was repeated in the case of the statue of Saddam Hussein in Baghdad, and in 2014 the same fate awaited the monument of Vladimir Lenin in Kharkov. One of the eyewitnesses of demolishing the statue of the leader of the revolution stated: “This is a true celebration. We are as happy as on the New Year’s Eve! We have waited for

this for over 20 years”<sup>1</sup>. Emotional statements of the audience may also be manifested by iconoclastic gestures in other forms. For example, in 1991 the monument to “Three Soldiers” in Świebodzice (south-western Poland) was destroyed. The sculptural group was suspended on ropes, lifted and thrown against the ground. As the sculptures were undamaged, people began to break them, although they did not dare to harm one part of the sculptures – the figures’ ‘faces’. The author of the sculpture who was observing the scene of its public ‘execution’ stated that the sculptures of the soldiers were ‘tormented’. She described the contemporary reactions of the spectators who were against the demolition in the following way: “[people] were authentically crying when the sculpture was being knocked down, they were really <<hurling>> abuse (...) they were cursing in any way they knew how (...) the police had no time to prepare a damages report but they were keeping watch, so that the people would not begin to throw pieces of this sculpture (...)” (at those who were demolishing the monument)<sup>10</sup>. Tears, curses and hooting mentioned in the above fragment indicate discernible signs of emotional experiences. However, it is not the aim of the present analysis to name the particular emotions or to describe them. The forms adopted by the actions undertaken by people under the influence of emotions (hanging, ‘saving the faces’ of the figures) bear clear reference to the treatment of other representations of human beings (e.g. effigies). Using them against inanimate objects indicates a process of their mental transformation conducted by people on the level of imagination and experience. Kissing the sculptures’ feet or mouth, stroking the figures’ hands, embracing the statues (it is worthwhile to mention, for instance, the numerous monuments to the Pope John Paul II), also proves that both the repertoire of emotions which monuments are capable of evoking in people and the forms of their manifestation are extensive and diversified.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/swiat/w-charkowie-obalono-pomnik-wlodzimierza-lenina/zm18r>

Emotional dynamics resulting from the confrontation with a monument change depending on a social situation. Moreover, emotions evoked thanks to monuments may differ from emotions related to the person who was commemorated through monuments. As late as at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century a German traveller, Erich Biester, noted while visiting Warsaw that the column of king Sigismund III Vasa stands “forgotten and unappreciated” (Tazbir 2000: 21). The commemorated king had a notoriously bad reputation while he was still alive. The cult of this column topped with a statue of the Polish king began to develop only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The monument quickly became then a significant national symbol, although the king’s reputation did not improve in the least. This example shows that there is a possibility to transform the emotional response of the viewers under the influence of a change in the social situation.

Not all monuments have the ability to evoke the viewer’s emotions along the pattern outlined above. In numerous cases (e.g. monuments in the form of soaring columns, plain obelisks, triumphal arches) the key role needs to be attributed to embodied memories. Monuments as ‘things’ may influence emotional processes through evoking people’s memories about this which was related to emotional encounters in the past. The evoked emotions do not have to be in any way related to the main idea of the commemoration, they may be associated with the viewer’s private life (e.g. past meetings arranged next to a monument with friends or loved ones)<sup>11</sup>.

It does not, however, change the fact that the basic function of the monuments is to commemorate people or events. During the confrontation of a viewer with a monument memories directly related to this person or event are often evoked, which in turn may cause the viewer to experience an emotional response, also changeable over time<sup>12</sup>. In this context an important role is played by objects which commemorate victims, e.g. monuments to Holocaust or to the victims of the totalitarian communist regime. ‘Remembered’ and ‘re-experienced emotions’<sup>13</sup> are a perfect reflection of the cooperation between body and mind, image and memory. Monuments act as transmitters of certain content which activates personal



memory. As a result, an individual's memories influence the generation of emotions which, in turn, are often related to moral judgments.

“Monuments created to historicise current events give rise to the largest emotions, tensions and conflicts. This is because they are related to direct experiences of the living generations. As these monuments are erected due to deep moral needs, in effect, from among the whole body of monuments they carry the largest political significance” (Wallis 1985: 312). Hence, if figures or events which do not deserve commemoration in the opinion of the viewers are placed on pedestals, the monuments may serve as objects ‘around’ which emotions are evoked and manifested. However, their sources are, *de facto*, embodied memories. In many post-communist countries there are still ongoing disputes on the future fate of the monuments to the Red Army soldiers. In Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, a significant part of the citizens recognizes the Red Army to have been an occupational force, and not a liberation army. Because the harms done by Red Army soldiers in Central and Eastern Europe have never been forgotten or redressed, hundreds of monuments commemorating these soldiers evoke bitter memories in the victims and their descendants. At the same time, other memories embodied by these monuments are capable of inducing completely different emotional responses in those who consider Red Army soldiers as “protectors and liberators”. Diversified emotional dynamics are manifested in the activities of representatives of different memory communities, within which some aspire to save these objects in the public space, whereas others strive to have them demolished, or possibly removed into a different location, if not, at least, redesigned. Thus, emotions are evoked by memory which is embodied and reconstructed around ‘things’. As memory is a material practice culturally mediated in the present time, always in a specific context, the change of social situation influences the (re)construction of memory, and likewise the changes of emotional processes. In such situations we are *de facto* dealing with an interplay of history, memory, emotions and politics.

## Conclusion

Some monuments can, in specific social contexts, evoke people's emotions. Distinct character of this type of objects as compared to other 'things' which may appear in the role of emotional agents consists in the fact that they 'fill' and influence their viewers only in the public space. Removal of a statue to a storage space or a private garden is tantamount to the monument's symbolic 'death'. Not only its prestige, but also its status undergoes a radical change. From that point on the object becomes a mere sculpture. In the context of an emotional experience it is significant inasmuch the monuments, apart from evoking emotions in individual entities, have an ability to trigger and channel a collective emotional experience. Such experience is manifested most fully in the public space. From this point of view, the concept of agency becomes relevant. 'Second-class' agency can emanate from monuments in many different ways and only in specific social situations. In practice, emotional agency of the objects is used by numerous and diverse 'primary' agents who, depending on the context, employ these objects to further their own particular agenda and to provoke various emotional reactions of the viewers. By the same token, those 'things' embody their own desires, fears and convictions.

Still, why is it that within the same category of 'things', formed by the monuments, some objects play the role of emotional agents, while the other do not evoke any emotions in people? It seems that, for instance, the statues of the bards, discoverers, animals or abstract phenomena (e.g. music) do not 'touch' people personally. They function in the public space more like sculptures or attractions. Also, emotions are not evoked by the monuments which are commonly accepted and, thus, which do not inspire emotional resistance. This may – at least partly – explain why in the countries with long democratic traditions monuments did not function as 'tools' of the political struggle, while in the totalitarian states or occupied countries they became symbols around which the resistance was concentrating, with numerous diverse emotions and varied forms of their manifestation. A statue is not only a physical object but also a 'tool' for transmitting specific content. If the interaction with an object triggers an

individual's thoughts, memories, images which personally touch them, then the emotions appear. Emotions announce the agent's response to events perceived by them as essential. Apart from what is felt by separate individuals, common, socially oriented feelings may be triggered and catalysed 'around' the monuments. Monuments may serve to focus, manifest and relieve emotions. Finally, as the desires, fears and convictions of the 'primary' agents change over time and space, the emotional agency of 'things' also is not something constant.

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<sup>1</sup> Emotional regime is understood as a social expectation regarding adequate emotional expression in any given context

(González 2012:1).

<sup>2</sup> The issue of inanimate objects evoking emotions, or more precisely, embodied images evoking them, is an element of the

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discussion taken up by William Mitchell, although his argument is conducted from a different perspective: "(...) I want to begin with the assumption that we are capable of suspending our disbelief in the very premises of the question, what do pictures want? (...) I'm aware that it involves a subjectivising of images, a dubious personification of animate objects; that it flirts with regressive, superstitious attitude toward images, one that if taken seriously would return us to practices like totemism, fetishism, idolatry, and animism" (Mitchell 2005: 28-29).

<sup>3</sup> A monument is traditionally understood as "(...) a type of structure of sculptural or architectonical-sculptural character, erected to commemorate a person or a historical event" (Grzesiuk-Olszewska 1995: 12).

<sup>4</sup> According to Aleksander Wallis, the history of every monument consists of two separate periods. The first one begins when the idea of erecting the object is born and ends on the day of its official unveiling. The second follows the day after the act of unveiling. In a democracy, the first period is connected with a public debate on the subject of the planned monument, reflecting, in fact, the society's struggle to define its current ideological position via its attitude towards the past (Wallis 1985: 310-311).

<sup>5</sup> It concerns the plane crash of 10<sup>th</sup> April 2010, in which 96 people died, including the President of Poland, Lech Kaczyński with spouse, and many other representatives of Polish public scene. The



Polish delegation had been on its way to Smolensk as part of the celebrations of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Katyn Massacre.

<sup>6</sup> Collective or community identity is in this case understood as the image of itself, created by a given community, whose members identify with this image (Assmann 2008 (2005): 146).

<sup>7</sup> The understanding of the memory is not limited here to the strictly personal sphere. Rather, it seems “a culturally mediated material practice that is activated by embodied acts and semantically dense objects” (Seremetakis 1994: 9, quoted by Svašek 2007: 246). Although memory concerns the past, it is a ‘practice’ mediated in the present time, always in a specific context.

<sup>8</sup> The Partitions of Poland took place at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (1772, 1793, 1795). They ended the existence of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, resulting in the suspension of sovereign Poland for 123 years. Three partitions were conducted by the Russian Empire, the Kingdom of Prussia and Habsburg Austria.

<sup>9</sup> As long as the 16<sup>th</sup> century hanging people was still a social event, whose spectators were supposed to enjoy the spectacle. In time, this feeling rule (guidance for the assessment of agreement or lack of agreement between a feeling and a situation) became extinct (Hochschild 2012: 231). Some remains of this rule survived in relation to ‘hanging’ the material representations of human beings, and in this case, of monumental sculpture.

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<sup>10</sup> The quotations come from an interview with the sculptor conducted in October 2013.

<sup>11</sup> During an interview conducted in 2014 and related to a long-standing debate on the removal of the Warsaw monument to Polish-Soviet brotherhood in arms, one of the informants stated that for him this monument is not a symbol of totalitarianism. The object evoked his positive emotions because in his youth he frequently used to arrange to meet his future wife there.

<sup>12</sup> Memories and experiences of people who survived a war (or another commemorated event) are different from those of the people who 'got to know' the war indirectly (e.g. through stories told by their closest relatives). However, in the second case a confrontation with a statue may also evoke the viewer's emotions. The object becomes then the embodiment of memories related to emotional encounters with the relatives who had shared the stories of their experiences.

<sup>13</sup> In this context it is worth mentioning the so called 'remembered' and 're-experienced emotions'. ">>Remembered emotions<< are *memories* of past emotions that do not cause a similar emotional reaction in the person recalling them" (Svašek 2005: 200). It means, for instance, that visiting the grounds of the former extermination camp years after, the victims may recollect the past emotions (e.g. fear they felt while being the inmates of the camp). On the other hand, simultaneously, their emotional dynamics in the present time

may be shaped completely differently (e.g. they may feel joy related to the fact that they managed to survive). “(...) ‘re-experienced emotions’ are past feelings that are remembered *and* re-experienced in the present. In the case of trauma, these memories can be highly selective and compulsory (...) The adjective ‘re-experienced’ in ‘re-experienced emotions’ does not imply that people experience and interpret their feelings in exactly the same way as they did in the past. Even though feeling and thinking bodies may be affected by past emotions, they exist in the present as ‘being-in-the-world’ (...), and are therefore partially influenced by present-day predicaments” (ibid.).