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TOWARDS THE SOURCE. ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ARCHIVES IN THE PRACTICE OF CONTEMPORARY HUMANITIES¹

Abstract. The article focuses on the importance of archival research, especially conducted in Polish and emigration institutions, and its impact on the quality of literary studies. What are the effects of a literary scholar's work in the archive when it is carried out diligently? Undoubtedly, thanks to the archival foundation obtained through in-depth thematic queries, there is a real chance of reaching not only lesser-known cultural phenomena (including literary ones), previously insufficiently described or entirely new, but also arriving at real (not merely presumed) findings based on difficult-to-challenge evidence, ego-documents, and artifacts. Frequently, such findings contradict well-established and firmly circulated stereotypes of cultural reception. Moreover, source collections enable the creative development of the case-study technique, with the assumption that specific cases and contextual discussions of issues or themes contribute to building a more comprehensive account of research findings, leading to a panoramic view and perhaps even synthesis. No critical biography or monograph can be fully valuable – that is, grounded in a solid source-based and genetic reflection – if the researcher does not draw on authorial or institutional collections of ego-documents, autographs, and other accompanying iconographic materials.

Keywords: archives, archival research, emigration, sources, literary studies.

1. Archives, hermeneutics, and the illusion of obviousness

I place myself as the author of this article in a rather uncomfortable position, although its title suggests a statement that is true if not trivial and perhaps unworthy of repetition, because there seems to be a consensus in the community surrounding the importance of archives for philological (literary) studies. Moreover, it may seem that the status of archives and archival material is indisputable and well established both in the tradition and in the practice of the humanities. At first glance, one might be

tempted to conclude that there is nothing new here. Who among the representatives of the discipline, even today, having abandoned the practice of source research, would be willing to strongly deny the traditional belief in the importance of source documents and artefacts for the expansion of knowledge or for the epistemological and interpretative corrections made possible thanks to these sources? Who would be willing to radically question the effectiveness of interpretation methods and practices oscillating around heuresis and hermeneutics, which are, especially in the 20th century, happily applied to historical and literary studies? In the practice of literary studies, where the focus on a single text, or a single artistic object is common today, relying on hermeneutics still seems fully justified. In turn, hermeneutics – as long as it is practised in accordance with its intention, i.e. the art of “listening” to both the work and its historical reminiscences – gives the interpreter a chance to approach the mystery of understanding this materialized, yet symbolic being, to grasp the expression of the creative subject, their psyche and intellect that are locked within it. It enables one to lead one’s thoughts not only toward the recognition of cultural objects in their complexity, but above all toward capturing their contextual, in-depth and original meaning. I mention hermeneutics here to recall its significant role in the history of the practise of literary studies and the inexhaustibility of its epistemological-axiological and instrumental status, especially bearing in mind its openness to various “methodological schools”, “theoretical fusions”, or “turns”, which are today so very variable and capricious at the same time.² I am also drawn to hermeneutics in the context of the study of sources by the respect it has for both a single work or a constellation of works that affect each other, as it does for the author’s sum of intentionally created works, which are a consequence of authentic experience (reality in the flesh, so to speak) emerging somewhat involuntarily, in acts of socio-political involvement, as well as those documenting everyday – including private – life. Therefore, it should be emphasized that it was thinking focused on interpretation (i.e., understanding hermeneutics) that legitimized the importance of sources in the practice of the humanities; it also strengthened the belief in the importance of the varied provenance of documents accompanying the life of an outstanding artist as a necessary basis for the comprehensive understanding of their work. Thus, in the humanities, this attitude has strengthened the belief that the study of the sources created by the author and accompanying their life, in the most classic Diltheyan approach, does not only have an auxiliary, preliminary, contributory function, but also determines the nature and quality of the final overall interpretation. And yet – preserving this initial supposition about the apparent banality

of the subject – it must be stated that, as active researchers of sources and their interpreters, we now find ourselves in a paradoxical situation. If we look at the situation and workshop of a contemporary literary scholar, especially in the last twenty years, it is not so much the cacophony and intensity of research “turns” that astonishes us, but rather the contradiction between the intention inscribed in them and scholarly practice. For instance, regional concepts and local narratives (“small literatures”) have been acquiring academic significance for some time, and the belief in the importance of a culture of memory reinforced by the institution of an artefact has been gaining prominence. Furthermore, efforts of this kind are accompanied by an increasingly efficient digitization policy conducted by state and social institutions, through which the archival footprint is effectively and successfully moving to the virtual world. On the one hand – especially in the last decade – we observe a significant increase in the number of cultural (and memory) institutions in Poland, performing a hybrid mission (e.g. The Emigration Museum in Gdynia, the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk, the Siberian Memorial Museum in Białystok, the Museum of the Eastern Lands of the Historical Commonwealth in Lublin, the Emeryk Hutten-Czapski Museum – here the Józef Czapski Pavilion of the National Museum in Kraków). We can also observe a constant, systematic development of already existing institutions, e.g. the Ossoliński National Institute in Wrocław, the Adam Mickiewicz Museum of Literature in Warsaw, the National Library, and the National Digital Archive. Although the collections held by the listed institutions vary in provenance, because they are libraries, archives, and thematic museums, they are becoming increasingly convergent, increasingly similar to each other. By conducting a somewhat diverse, although of course justified, activity, they risk weakening their primary mission. And this is certainly not good, although let’s admit it – it is a sign of the times; this also applies to the Polish diaspora and émigré institutions scattered throughout Europe and the United States. Contemporary cultural institutions are simultaneously museums collecting material artefacts (paintings, photographs, human voices, objects, publications), places where we watch spectral multimedia narratives, and homes to teams specializing in professional scientific research, with separate archival departments, publishing tasks, etc. In addition, they organize exhibitions, often presenting extremely rich and valuable collections, digitize them and make them available online, and also create thematic (and institutional) portals; and during the pandemic they developed virtual journeys through their own resources. In a word – Polish cultural institutions are today some of the most modern in Europe; more have been created and are still being created, al-

most before our eyes. They are all looking for original forms of influence not only to arouse the interest of professionals, but also to reach a wider circle of so-called casual patrons. They use every possible multimedia method to encourage both casual visits and professional, permanent research work. Furthermore, ministerial programs (especially the National Programme for the Development of the Humanities) today prefer editorial and archival works of an organizational nature and at the same time emphasize the digitization of collections. The importance of this program cannot be overstated. The availability of sources stored even in the most geographically distant archives and other research or cultural institutions is no longer as serious a problem today as it was years ago (before the era of digitization and the development of the Internet). For Polish culture in general and for the culture of memory in particular, this is of particular importance, especially when it comes to the Polish diaspora or émigré institutions, which to this day operate successfully outside the country, also supported by ministerial programs. Lively archival-organizational and digitization work has recently been carried out particularly in Maisons-Laffitte and the Polish Library in Rapperswil; digital inventories are being developed at the Józef Piłsudski Institute in America based in New York, the Polish Scientific Institute or the Polish Museum in America based in Chicago. Undoubtedly, this facilitates the work of researchers who search through archival ensembles scattered around the world.

Efforts to continue documentary works, i.e. the broadly understood culture of memory, do not meet the expectations of at least part of the research community. At the same time, as archival institutions are developing intensively, the traditional paradigm of the researcher-humanist is changing. This is a change in the understanding of the academic methods employed, which also seems to be generational or formative in nature. Its observable effect is a reduction of the importance of cultural institutions and archival resources to the function of a cultural ornament, which is – at best – used to illuminate bibliographic records; at times, footnotes to the main argument are merely filled out with source content. The classic tool-kit of a humanist working with sources on a daily basis is being questioned, and even rejected by many younger researchers, despite the much greater availability of ego-documents, genealogical registrations of works, and other artefacts than twenty years ago. The reasons for this state of affairs are diverse: it is perhaps the result of questioning the classical humanities, for which the pursuit of truth derived from the aesthetic structure of the work was and is of primary importance for some researchers. It is the upholding by the new humanities of the belief in the superior role of free interpretation and methodology over the

work (text) itself, which is furthermore not limited by the testimony of ego-documents, and finally the effect of the atomization of interpretation and its reductionist nature. Certainly, factors that are difficult to grasp also play a role: reluctance, and often also the inability to follow the so-called state of research (this is the effect of the evaluation requirement in academia leading to a numerical increase in subject literature), as well as significant dispersion of publications across digital and analogue journals. We must not forget that source research requires time, often interdisciplinary competences, and particular personality traits, above all patience, the ability to critically analyse sources, a detective's sense, and good knowledge of so-called copyright status, etc., all of which stands in contradiction to the current rules of academic evaluation. Its guidelines "reward" source works and critical editions very poorly, and value highly articles signalling an international reach of the discussed problems/topics. And Polish archives hold – to put it conventionally – mainly "Polish" matters. The situation is improved slightly by the National Programme for the Development of the Humanities mentioned at the beginning, but only slightly. In a word – the contemporary works of philologists incline toward a bitter and perhaps even slightly exaggerated supposition about the conjunctural nature of the "turn" noticed in academic literature, both toward an unfettered interpretation and a reductionist form resulting from its ideological assumptions. But more on this later. At the end of the twentieth century, Umberto Eco³ stated that we live in a world of widespread excess, abundance of architecture, abundance of material artefacts that all but beset the modern man, that our space is filled with documents and various provenance notes and signs (gestures) of cultural activity and technological facilities accompanying this phenomenon of modernity, which are conducive to multiplication, thus multiplying the circulation of the same content and forms, obviously, for their better and more lasting promotion. When I read Eco over two decades ago, I was struck by his emphasis on the supposedly tiring and 'redundant' accumulation of objects. This reaction, however, also revealed a profound asymmetry of historical experience: Eco's diagnosis was formulated within a cultural context characterized by relative material continuity, unlike that of Poland, where repeated episodes of war, occupation, and deliberate destruction severely disrupted cultural transmission and archival preservation. In this respect, the historical experience of Italy was different from that of the Republic of Poland, so my surprise has and still seems not to have passed, but I think it is justified. In Poland, all decisions made in recent years in the area of culture and in connection with its functioning pursue the basic goal of collecting and preserving the artefacts and remains of the past and making

them accessible. In the last decade, such actions have also strengthened the institutional skeleton of the state, which undoubtedly seems to be the result of coupled yet unforced social (civic) bottom-up actions that find an appropriate response from the central authorities. This alignment of central and regional authorities is commendable and has given excellent results in the form of a significant increase in the number of places of memory, history, or culture. As a side note, it is also worth noting that today's state policy towards cultural institutions follows in the footsteps of the Second Polish Republic. It was then that the fundamental framework of a long-term strategy was created, accompanied by the idea of the inseparable link between culture and politics, as well as universal and elite education and mediation in the context of various experiences gained from the partitions. Activities within culture and through culture were guided by the idea of dignity and civilization, which was an undoubted chance for the stabilization and development of the republican community of the Second Polish Republic,⁴ but the outbreak of war brutally interrupted this process. The continuation of this pre-war concept can be found in the institutional activities in exile; hence, the network of Polish memorial and cultural sites has an extensive geographical scope today.

Not all humanists seem to be waiting for such a development of events in connection with the construction and expansion facilitating access to the stored source documentation of already existing memory institutions with equal intensity and interest. "Looking into" archives before starting an interpretative work with a so-called longer breath (monographic, biographical) is not considered to be the first, necessary step in the research procedure today. The practice of mainly working on a fragment, embedded with the combinatorics of many theories and beliefs, or imposing a radical interpretative perspective on it has spread among historians and theorists of culture, literature, and art. New methods of working with a text, image or object are not, of course, in themselves undesirable in the humanities, but the issue lies in the quality and – as I see it – quantity, which are determined by fashions (external pressures) with an ideological tinge. After all, for example, the so-called new historicism, which intrinsically inspires research using sources (based on sources, on their criticism) can be extremely useful and inspiring.⁵ However, the problem is the research intention and – I repeat – proportion. One can get an irresistible impression, and this impression is confirmed by observations made from inside academia, that the primacy of theory over basic research, i.e. source research – which can be defined as positivist research – is being particularly strengthened today. It also turns out that theory seems to be everything in today's practice of the human-

ities, that framework, conceptual thinking, which is more attractive with its unlimited potential, overcomes tedious and often unsatisfactory factual studies. Studying sources in order to determine the basics, thus obtaining the freedom of interpretation – proven, because derived from these “basics” – precisely from them, is – to put it mildly – of lesser importance today. It only limits the perspective of a free and often attractive sublimation interpretation built “top-down”, and – what is worse – it takes up valuable time. For the so-called new humanities, facts do not objectively exist, and therefore there is no truth that the researcher is obliged to investigate; searching for it thus turns out to be essentially pointless. This approach or attitude resembles the imposition of coloured filters on the eyes of the observer (in this case, the “scholar”), which determine the view of the past of a cultural phenomenon or a separate work (object). It is the glasses, which determine the shape and ideological shade of the narrative, that count, and not the integral objects (items) viewed on their own. Using such a method, it is otherwise easy to forget about the limitations to which both researchers and their changing paradigms are subject.⁶ There would certainly be many partial answers to the question why this is happening (there is never a single cause in such cases), but along with a subjective sense of “satiety” or “excess” (here it is worth recalling Eco’s opinion again), it is a state of cognitive nihilism derived in academia from this “satiety” (i.e. from the alleged excess and invalidity of sources), additionally reinforced by a buffer of post-modern concepts, that we – as practising scholars – are dealing with.

2. Returning to the source: archival practice and emigration collections

Is it then possible to go back to the source? I believe so, especially since there is still a large group of researchers (especially historians and literary scholars) who represent the classical school of literary cognition, based on traditional textological foundations and cultural semiology, that is, on the materials accompanying the work, on broad contexts, ego-documents, sources of various provenance, and on the developed techniques of their verification and criticism. For those practising especially in national, Polish diaspora, and émigré archives and writing about the phenomenon of post-war emigration, the importance of institutions storing and sharing source documents cannot be overstated. None of my works could have been created if I had not previously been able to use authorial or institutional archives. Almost all of my protagonists (e.g. Czesław Straszewicz, Roman Palester)

would not have seen a source edition if I had not previously examined the state of archives concerning their persons and work or created by them (the resources also included audio sources from Radio Free Europe that were unusual for a literary scholar).⁷ Therefore, I appreciate the importance of archival research – as both supporting and basic research, constituting the essence of critical editions, and consequently serving multi-directional genealogical and genetic inquiry. It is therefore quite natural at this point to refer to the status of the Polish diaspora abroad, especially to the state and importance of archives for research on the history of Polish political and cultural emigration from 1939–1990. These are, moreover, the best known to me and, in particular, the potential possibilities of their use will be discussed in the next part of this text. Importantly, not all archives and authors' collections are far away, i.e. abroad, many began to return to national institutions after 1990, enriching them with important objects created in a different political and cultural context. And so, for example, thanks to the decision of Stefania Kossowska, the London archive of "Wiadomości" reached Poland. This huge and multidimensional – in terms of the collected objects – archive enriched the University Library in Toruń, and within its structure it functions as the Emigration Archive. Some of the resources of "Wiadomości" have already been digitized, although to gain an idea of the details, one should go to Toruń (the inventory itself is no more than a hint). Today, many authorial collections can be found in university libraries, museums, and archives dedicated to one author. Particularly noteworthy are the emigration collections stored at the Ossoliński National Institute, in particular materials on Radio Free Europe composed of the collections of Jan Nowak-Jeziorański, Tadeusz Zawadzki-Żenczykowski, Lechosław Gawlikowski, and others), in the National Digital Archive – a collection of broadcasts of Free Europe is also stored here but in typescript (the audio version is in the resources of Polish Radio: radiawolniosci.pl), in the National Library (a huge archive in which we find documentation on, for example, later emigrants), and in the Warsaw University Library – here, among others, the Palesters collection, as well as in the Adam Mickiewicz Museum of Literature (where the documentation of many 19th and 20th century artists, including emigrants, is kept). National universities also collect similar collections. For example, the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University has created a dedicated unit, supervised by Iwona Hofman. It not only gathers collections of domestic and émigré authors, but also manages them, and makes them available, and conducts intensive editorial work.⁸ As a side note, it is worth noting the problem related to the process of returning emigration archival resources to the country; a good illustration of this is the case of the Polish collec-

tion from Rapperswil, which returned to the country just after the Second Polish Republic regained its independence, delighting researchers for several years. It met a tragic fate at the hands of the Germans – as did other Polish archival materials. Unfortunately, Poland's geopolitical location forces us to be particularly vigilant in this regard and confronts us with a difficult choice concerning the fate of Polish collections around the world.

It is necessary to emphasize the attractiveness of Polish diaspora and émigré collections, their diversity (the richness of audio-visual, iconographic, textual documentation, as well as the diversity of subject matter). Polish institutions outside the country arose spontaneously, out of the need to preserve the community and cultural heritage, hence their somewhat eclectic collections, as demonstrated by their names themselves, e.g. the Polish Institute and the General Sikorski Museum in London, the Polish Library in Paris, which also functions as a museum, and in its history refers to the activity of the Historical and Literary Society and the Academy of Arts and Sciences, as well as the Literary Institute in Paris (in Maisons-Laffitte) – today holding the archives of “Kultura” and the letters of its editor Jerzy Giedroyc. Today, it serves as a historical monument in itself – “Kultura's” historical editorial office and home. I am not listing all the Polish academic, museum, and publishing centres established much earlier, not only in Europe and the United States. They arose from the same intentions as a form of fostering a culture of memory. By providing a source base, they enliven the discussion and help shape it. Querying domestic and foreign archives is made possible by today's improving information tools, which increasingly accurately inform about the resources and collections and about where they are kept, even in the most remote corners of the world. On this basis alone, the first, general, and discerning query of authorial and institutional resources can be made. Such a query, preceding visits to the archives, significantly shortens the stage of resource penetration and reduces the costs of research. An important role in promoting source research is played by the National Programme for the Development of the Humanities, which I mentioned earlier, and which in recent years has not only been practically (i.e. financially) supporting academic work based on archival resources, but also directing funds to digitization and other activities of an organizational nature, which are important from the point of view of the sustainability of resources. In a word – the programme effectively encourages source research in the field of humanities as well as social and interdisciplinary sciences; the competitions of the last five years were directly aimed at the areas of emigration culture and the calls were not limited solely to undertaking research on written documents, nor geared only towards traditional literary studies,

but also towards various forms of presentation of works (including audio and audiovisual recordings).

What are (or may be) the effects of the work of a literary scholar in the archives? Undoubtedly, thanks to archives, there is still a chance to reach new, lesser-known, forgotten, consciously omitted, and censored pieces; there is a possibility of real (not presumed) determination of facts – often contrary to common stereotypes. Developing the case study technique gains renewed freshness in the light of sources, as long as specific cases and contextual discussions are undertaken with the intention of creating a more complete version of research findings, moving towards an overview, perhaps even a synthesis. No significant critical biography or monograph can be created without reference to source materials. The importance of this problem in the context of this type of work is taken up in the paper *W stronę biografii “scalających”. Postulaty badawcze a współczesna praktyka uniwersytecka*.⁹

Finally, a remark at the end of this part of the discussion: there is still a group of practising scholars and their students gathered around the traditionally understood methods in the humanities, in which insight into unpublished sources and resources is something natural. This group, especially its younger adepts, gives hope that this tedious research practice will have its continuators. They respond in a lively and practical manner to the incentives coming from institutions of memory; they are also the natural addressees and interlocutors of these institutions. Let us hope, therefore, that the efforts of this community will be successfully combined with the demands of the elites, and will naturally be connected through the process of shaping the subsequent generations of researchers, thus creating an intellectual formation that retains a long ethical memory – both institutional and individual at the same time. The methodology for this type of foundational source work should be one of interpretative understanding, which wisely and precisely incorporates interdisciplinary tools. I believe that it can be both useful and fruitful, because it is not closed to various “turns” or methodological “orientations”, albeit applied in moderation and with respect for observable facts.

3. The costs of archival work: dispersion, loss, and cognitive risk

A small fly must be dropped into this ointment – working with archival materials is also a discouraging experience, which results from at least several factors, such as:

- The excessive dispersion of archival collections of the Polish diaspora and emigrants, their frequent accidental division, which greatly complicates the researcher's understanding of the content of resources (this is a problem well known to editors of epistolography, who are looking for letters of respondents in order to reconstruct the dialogue in which they have engaged in; collections of letters are scattered, incomplete, and stored in random places).

- The existence of unfixable defects resulting from various random events affecting the creators of the collections and the collections themselves (e.g. force majeure, such as fire, flood, war damage, sudden need to evacuate from a place of residence, etc.). Such defects are also a consequence of intentional intervention by the collection's curator, who is not interested in creating and storing a source collection, or when their heirs decide to censor the documentation, e.g. irretrievably destroying it in whole or in part. Losses also result from the nature of the institution in which the collection is accidentally created, which by its nature performs a different mission from that of an archive (e.g. media, especially radio). There is yet another type of defect that we, as users of archives, often observe at the institutional home of the collection, which in turn indicates insufficient administrative protection (i.e. the irreversible "disappearance" of individual objects from the collection).

- Archival collections, although they are a resource of national culture and should theoretically be available to a wide group of researchers, are often managed like a private estate. Their practices are opaque to scholars, who are arbitrarily allowed or not allowed to use them; such decisions are not based on any formal preclusion clause.

- It is sometimes difficult to determine the ownership rights of the collection, as they are often defined by disproportionately rigid preclusion clauses (the scale of legal rigour is the issue here). In this case, the time factor may lead to a loss of interest in the problem, topic, or person. What is also important for scholars is the "window of opportunity", a term we recognise from the history of culture and politics, i.e. the moment of increasing interest, which is usually followed by its decline.

- An insufficient number of qualified archivists makes the problem of proper qualification of documents and the quality of catalogue publication a difficult task for researchers. Undoubtedly, archivists should also be aware of the need to deepen cooperation with scholars in the field in order to properly extract and precisely describe the collected documents. A separate issue is the still unsatisfactory pace of this work. There is no central digital register of émigré resources; those that exist are still partial.

And a word about working in the archive itself. Working in the archive on a specific topic is difficult and often unsatisfying; sometimes it does not bring spectacular results (it is like drawing water from the ocean with a teaspoon...). Frequently, the results of archival queries also destroy the researcher's initial idea of the subject of inquiry; the effect can be confusing, which in turn requires a degree of professional "bravery". It happens that scholars, overwhelmed by the abundance of documents, stop at a random and partial analysis, and then rush on because they are not (or do not want to be) faithful to their topic, or have not yet discovered "problem threads" that would be important for them. Furthermore, for some, the effects of research deeply immersed in archival sources will always be refreshing, cognitively inspiring, and culturally (and politically) important, as an act of intentional honesty; others, however, consider them dangerous, because they can significantly affect the correction of seemingly established hierarchies of topics, works, people, and thoughts. The new preferences that emerge in this way threaten to undermine the position of scholars who have, as it were, "entrenched themselves" in the high canonical status of their protagonists within contemporary culture and see no need for any revision. Here, however, we enter a fundamental yet "nebulous" area of intentionality, research ethics, and cognitive risk.

It would not be a good perspective for academia for history, cultural history, media studies, anthropology, and other related disciplines growing out of the core of the science of spirituality become a field in which it is not worth investigating the truth, since, as some progressive voices claim, it does not exist. It is to be replaced by "large" and "small" narratives changing places in a vertical hierarchy, new schools of "invalidation", "suspicion", reinterpretation, and criticism, which, instead of being falsified by their assumed radicalism, reinforce mental clichés and sustain them through stereotypes¹⁰. If we finally decide that the truth no longer counts, that it is not needed by anyone, the humanities will only become (and this is happening slowly today) a place of conflict between competing ideologies, obscuring the barely concealed interests of groups of influence, using culture (literature) and historiographic images produced by history as a justification for their leadership and domination (with full awareness and cynicism). The culmination of these tendencies can be seen today in the phenomenon of the culture of memory being replaced by a culture of invalidation.

Let us thus return to the dramatic question: what is the fate of our modern museums and archives, including the alternative yet complementary digital reality? Are we at risk of feeling over-saturated with artefacts, as Eco believed, or will we, on the contrary, never become satiated or bored?

This last question is not unfounded in the context of new forms of censoring and invalidating totalitarianism advancing from the West. What is the fate of literary scholars who value sources and focus on the need for their interdisciplinary analysis? After all, in today's world, they appear impractical and "useless" for a university institution that is becoming a corporation; after all, they are also deemed "inefficient" in terms of evaluation. In a word – are the last of the Mohicans of traditional literary studies still needed?

NOTES

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² I discuss this issue in my article *W stronę biografii "scalających". Postulaty badawcze a praktyka uniwersytecka* (in: Janicka et al., 2022), where the footnotes also provide an extensive overview of the relevant literature that informed my decision to take up this topic. Related questions are addressed by Bolecki (2023a, 2023b) in two papers published in *Sztuka Edycji*.

³ I am referring primarily to the selection of Umberto Eco's columns originally published in the weekly *L'Espresso* and later collected in the volumes *Il diario minimo* and *Il secondo diario minimo* (Eco, 1963/1986, 1992). These texts were subsequently published in English as *How to Travel with a Salmon and Other Essays* (Eco, 1994) and in Polish as *Zapiski na pudełku od zapalek* (Eco, 1994, 1997, 2005). A related, slightly earlier publication is *De bibliotheca* (Eco, 1990).

⁴ For related discussions, see Kielak (2016, 2018a, 2018b).

⁵ For a Polish perspective, see Kasperski (2010).

⁶ A concise and still relevant lesson in methodological restraint can be found in Gadamer (2000), particularly in the essays *Estetyka i hermeneutyka* and *Problem dziejów w najnowszej filozofii niemieckiej*.

⁷ For studies on émigré literary networks and archival materials, see Wejs-Milewska (2007, 2016) and Palester (2021).

⁸ For a discussion of archival materials related to *Kultura*, see Hofman (2022, pp. 277–292).

⁹ Hofman (2022, pp. 211–226).

¹⁰ A comparable risk of conceptual dilution may accompany the unreflective adoption of intersectionality in contemporary cultural and social research.

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