

Archive as a Practice in the Literary History

To be honest, the history of literature does not like archives. At least this was the case until recently. Unlike political history, military history or cultural history, as well as a number of other historical disciplines, the history of literature prefers to deal with works themselves and *distilled* biographies *themselves*. It prefers to analyse literary fiction (by reading into it intertextually, comparatively or through *close reading*), while at the same time referring to publications from old periodicals or documents from archival collections only as secondary and tertiary sources that *accompany* works (and that are not quite close).

There is a fundamental suspicion, whether explicit or implicit, that in a way archives divert research attention away from *important* literary and historical analyses. The truth is, however, that such suspicion arises from the choice of methodology, and sometimes – please excuse our explicitness – from the laziness of the researcher. Without a doubt, it is easier to ignore the archive with subtle arrogance – and in the name of “pure” literature studies. Why is that? How can the introduction of archives to literary research stand in the way of science? Could archives hinder the rapid course of discourse with documentary “details”? Or could they render the imaginary world of interpretation too “realistic”?

Let us put it bluntly – the above are exaggerated, unrealistic fears. Practice shows that they can be overcome with the help of hard-working professionalism and high research ethics. Piles of documents resemble mountains of information that want to be explored carefully, with curiosity, caution, care for the truth, in search of knowledge and understanding.

Archives are not self-sufficient.

First of all, even in the times *before* the archives, i.e. when the documents (transcripts, letters, notes, diaries, etc.) were created, they contained references to other texts and contexts. More and more often we are also faced with the problem of *bringing about* or even *creating* archives by

researchers when they interview authors of books or participants of some events in order to incorporate these interviews into their research discourse, to quote them as discursive blocks, building the discursive historical reality itself. Today, memories function as *living archives* – and have left the domain of *oral history long ago*.

Secondly, each archive remains a mere collection of sources if it does not try to turn into a story over time. What's more, archives offer the opportunity to write many different stories, but on condition that, in the process of reconstructing the past, they are treated by research discourse simultaneously as a voice and as an instrument of equal importance.

Thirdly, in research practice, the documents of one archive always form an interpretative network with other texts and archives, and are thus subject to mutual verification and comprehension. Today, the history of literature is forced to practice *mutual reading* of various texts (archival documents, literary works, non-literary texts, letters, notes, interviews, public statements, newspapers, diaries, etc.), to build multi-layered historical and literary contexts in order to *work out, organize and tell* the past.

It is worth pointing to the basic method of *mutual reading* of texts that are different in type, genre and form. This method means accepting the fact that a historical-literary text is a meeting of literary works, as well as of (if applicable) different variants of the same work, articles from periodicals and monographs, source documents, diary notes, letters, diary testimonies, interviews with participants of past events and others. Only the creation of such a network of various texts gives a chance for a comprehensive reconstruction of a given moment in history and can initiate the process of understanding historical figures. Different sources/texts check one another, confirm one another or enter into conflict, while maintaining a discursive balance between the so-called *facts of the works* and the *facts of life*.

It is precisely the observation of tensions between *literary* and *non-literary* discourses that opens the space for understanding the author and his or her work, events and trends in the field of literature. Sometimes the tensions are so strong that splits and delayering appear in the overall perception of the author and his or her literature. The work does not confirm the facts of life, and the writer's behaviour does not confirm the work. It turns out that aesthetic choices are not coherent with life's choices. The level of everyday life and sociopolitical presence of the author does not

match the height of the shelves on which his/her book is placed. Of course, sometimes this level is the same, at least partially, because it is difficult to permanently separate writing from behaviour.

Obviously, a behaviour is also a type of text – it is a linguistic behaviour, reflected in *non-literary* texts. How different can an author be when writing a novel, a story or a poem and when writing an article or a speech; when speaking at a meeting or public discussion organized, for example, by some magazine? How can the words from an interview relate to the words of a literary text? Do the differences between politically correct ideas in a novel and negative assessments of the authorities in a journal produce more sense when (re)constructing the author's personality or, on the contrary, hamper the process of (re)construction? In other words, what interpretation is required in the case of recorded dissident messages compared with public statements which confirm loyalty to the authorities?

What is important here are only genre indicators, with which the individual manifestations of creative and linguistic behaviour are hierarchized in the writer's consciousness. Later on, similar genre indicators influence the historical literary consciousness, that arranges the texts of a given writer in a specific historical order. Most often literary works are placed on the highest level, while interviews and journalistic articles, intimate texts and texts of everyday communication (letters, oral statements, etc.) – on the lowest. But how important is this hierarchy of values? Do the tensions between literary and journalistic texts, between publications in the author's book and articles in the press, between works and public statements (during meetings, congresses, conferences, etc.) always confirm the greater value of the former?

Since we are talking about writers and literature, there seems to be a consensus that it is precisely literary works that are the most expressive, authoritative "sources" and that their interpretation can lead to the reconstruction of the author's presence. Separate publications in the press – traditionally seen as texts of lesser public and historical importance – participate in this process as if from aside, as "secondary" sources. If a letter or an article by a given writer confirm or complete the content and meaning of a work, they acquire historical literary value, they are eagerly quoted and used as a sought-after fuel for the interpretation machine and sometimes for over-interpretation. If, on the other hand, they are not in line with the

work, if they are contradictory and cause interpretative “misunderstandings”, they are often “forgotten.” They are rarely used – at most they are used as exotic counterpoints, specific non-fiction exceptions that simply confirm the “norm” of a literary work.

At the beginning of 1990-ies in his short essay entitled *Гледна точка и възглед*, the Bulgarian literature specialist Encho Mutafov presented a similar idea on the complex relationship between a literary and non-literary text in the legacy of a given author. Mutafov insisted that these texts should not be considered separately but together, because one presents a point of view (visible in fiction) and the other: a view (a product of non-fictional discourse). Mutafov claimed that “in the author’s overall picture, they may coincide, but they may also weaken each other” and gave examples of well-known names from world literature: Dostoyevsky – as an author in whom fiction and documentary sources are definitely divergent; Hemingway, in whom the “point of view” and the “view” double, where words and artistry intertwine in constant writing, “almost as if he was breathing – letters, novels, reports, short stories, notes on the margins of ten thousand books (!), from his home library, as they say” (Мутафов, 1991), everything “written in the same way”; Ivo Andrić, with whom “the story and the essay watch each other” (Мутафов, 1991) to always maintain their own character. But it was Thomas Mann who was proclaimed the “exception among them all: with his unity between the point of view and the view, thanks to which he has self-explained his own work in an unrivalled manner” (Мутафов, 1991).

Even such an *achronological* analysis of the problem, seen from the tops of world literature, raises new doubts, since it draws attention to non-literary “sources” limited to essays, reports and diary entries (in the examples given by Mutafov, these are non-fiction texts with a high literary and self-reflexive factor), but omits typical *archival* texts that record intimate, everyday and social communication situations. Outside the area under study, there is a large intermediate genre area, filled with a particular type of author’s and sometimes non-author’s texts, as well as fragments of varied authorship – small articles in magazines; notes or autographs in books, statements in transcripts from meetings and gatherings, replicas or broader views expressed by the writer, but written in *someone else’s* diaries and memoirs, biographical documents, etc. Some of these texts are either *non-literary* or *secondary*, i.e.,

they have no direct reference to the literary works or they indirectly testify to the words and deeds of the author, recorded by others. We must be *vigilant* when dealing with secondary sources and we must not allow their unconditional use in research, but sometimes it is precisely from these types of texts that we draw valuable information or even key arguments in the interpretation of a literary work or the behaviour of its author. This is especially important when they form a complex set of arguments that arise after these texts are combined with other similar “sources.”

It is important to remember that at the time of their creation, such texts exist in a different *circle of recipients* – half closed, isolated from the rest of the world, serving small communities. Transcripts that record the key views of a given author/editor, even if they are distributed further by word of mouth, remain closed in document folders. Words spoken in person, addressed to one person only or to a small group of interlocutors, remain written in unpublished journals, or in late diaries. Letters remain lying silently in private archives. They usually have one addressee only. Even press articles and reports published at the right time, since they are designed to be situational (for temporary or economic reasons) and non-literary, sink with time into the depths of magazines and rarely resurface to take part in constructing the image of their author. Their non-literary purpose distances them from the basic body of literature, even though they are sometimes essential in the process of the author’s identification by the audience.

Of course, every text – whether literary or not – seeks audience that reveals itself at the moment of publication. During an author’s life, enough texts are created to be addressed to different audiences: from the “eternal reader” to the circle of word lovers, or from the circle of non-professional readers to a single person. There are cases when a literary text (rather than a documentary text) splits up to look for a diverse audience and recognition. It is oriented to meet the editorial requirements of a specific magazine or it is written at someone’s order in terms of ideas and topics.

This is especially visible in the era of the communist regime in Eastern Europe, where the names of hundreds of authors can be seen in the press under the works dedicated to important dates and events of the ideological calendar. In fact, these so-called *literary* works play a *non-literary* role in the work of their authors, similar to the role played by non-literary texts (articles, reportages, etc.) in other writers – they accompany their most

important works, testify not only to their loyalty to the regime, but also to their creative involvement in its current political program. On one hand, they constitute an ideological “packaging” of the most important works, guaranteeing a positive reception for the author, but on the other hand, in time they start to fall away from the basic body of the writer’s works that becomes covered with dust. In this way, the work of a given author resembles a multi-module rocket, which gradually releases its empty tanks along the way (such as marginal texts, created at the beginning of the author’s career to speed it up, and to make the author stand out from others on the literary scene), thanks to which the rocket itself (as the most *valuable* creative part) has a better chance for a longer flight (in time) and to achieve better results (impact on readers). Over the years, *insignificant* works fade as they are forgotten, so that only significant works can remain.

In this way, not only texts stored in archives, that were not published at the right time (since they are not to be made public), but also literary and non-literary works, published but gradually forgotten articles from the press or from the first editions of collective works and author’s books, often remain practically unknown and excluded from hermeneutical circulation – they constitute a *published but dormant archive*. Without arranging a new hierarchy of different types of texts within one creative activity, we need to give a chance to all “sources” that could help us understand the author and his or her works. We need all the richness of the sources to understand that. Value lies not only in the literary works, but also in the interrelations between them and all the other texts, forming an interpretative web in which one can catch as much senses as possible, that is often contradictory, incompatible or disintegrating into a hard to maintain wholeness. These senses function as confirmations, but sometimes as denials of a work, they move around its meanings, direct it towards new hermeneutic approaches to define the area of understanding of the text and the author, the cultural era and the literary situation, as well as other (*parallel*) authors and works.

The archival sources, although they come from *non-literary reality*, directly “participate” in the process of writing, transcribing, reading and interpreting literary texts. Documents not only show how the author and his work relate to factors that traditionally do not belong to literature, but also how often they depend on the laws of production and functioning imposed by entities outside of the literary field. One cannot expect anything else,

especially when this field does not have stable autonomy or even more – when it is subject to the omnipresent authorities. This is why we must keep repeating the obvious: archives are proving to be the key element in the study of literature, both in the past and at present.

The current issue of the *Poznan Slavic Studies* was prepared for print at a particular time, between two lockdowns, when we were struggling with the pandemic. According to the Bulgarian novelist Georgi Gospodinov (2020), this is the moment when the uncertainty of tomorrow becomes the reason for the longing for what has gone by, for a nostalgic looking through old albums and escaping into the past. The writer comments on analogies that are helpful in trying to explain the present day – there are comparisons to World War II and 1918, when the Spanish flu was taking its toll. Gospodinov wants to hope that these returns to the past entrench the faith in the future. Since Europeans have survived the traumas of the past, they will also survive the current crisis. However, he fears that history might get tangled up with political propaganda. He predicts that political programs will soon start to manipulate nostalgia and will propose a return to the past not only as a form of consolation, but also as an expression of the conviction that humanity has not invented and will never invent anything better, that a different future is impossible. When we were thinking about the theme of the current issue – many months before the outbreak of the pandemic – we didn't realize how up-to-date it would be. We couldn't have foreseen that by dealing with archives and related practices, we would find ourselves at the very centre of the revisited question of relationships between the past and the future.

These relationships are the main topic raised by the authors of the first four articles in the issue. Biljana Dojčinović and Ana Kolarić introduce the process of the preparation of the *Knjiženstvo* database, containing information about Serbian female writers until 1915. The authors discuss in detail not only the validity and the need to create such epistemological tools, but also the problems faced by researchers deciding to digitalise this type of sources. Contrary to appearances, these are not merely technical challenges, although some materials may be difficult to access, incomplete or damaged.

Digitalization of women's magazines involves, first of all, a debate about the definition of the range of materials that will be classified in this category. Secondly, revealing the extent of women's participation in the shaping of contemporary Serbian culture and literature has far-reaching consequences in terms of identity, as it undermines the established national canon and makes us aware of its gaps and discontinuities. It is a trouble spot in the relationship between the past and the future. Dojčinović and Kolarić show how the information about the history of women's writing directly accessible in the internet enables future change in the conception of developmental stages of Serbian literature. However, the future is always immeasurable and in order to be open to this temporal dimension, one needs a special attitude, which the authors call *research-based activism*. This perspective combines the literary approach with social commitment and a sense of increased responsibility for the future. As the authors say:

The digital database *Knjiženstvo* represents an intervention of sorts in what is perceived as "official knowledge" [...]; when the category of gender is placed at the centre of research, together with the women's experience (experience of an oppressed, subordinate group in society throughout history), the dominant histories simply become inaccurate (or, at best, incomplete). This is, therefore, an essential change of the knowledge base, and not mere "addition" of new/different knowledge to regular history.

Here, Dojčinović and Kolarić pay close attention to the ethics of the archivist and to the values that become the basis of a given archive collection, because, as Hayden White (1987) states, the transformation of archival data into a historical narrative is a subjective act. The authors reflect on women's archives organized around gender, race and class. The collection of artifacts documenting the life and work of women has its political significance measured by the level of resistance of anti-feminist organizations. Dojčinović and Kolarić recognize that it is the duty of researchers and archivists to uncover the political and ideological entanglements of every archive and every archival practice.

Karolina Ćwiek-Rogalska takes a similar position. In her article *Archiving in the Face of Erasure: the Idea of the "Post-German" Archive*, she imagines the possible existence of an archive of German people expelled from Poland and the Czech Republic, which is both an inventive and a constitutional act. The researcher reaches into the future with her imagination and carefully investigates the conditions that would allow the emergence

of the designed collection. First of all, the question of its inclusiveness must be resolved. As a set of narratives of marginalised groups, the “post-German archive” must find an appropriate openness both for the point of view of the expelled and the settlers. Second of all, this archive would have to break the attachment to canonical symbols and images. According to the author, in this context the postmodern suspiciousness of historical documents is essential. *Ćwiek-Rogalska* confirms this conviction through the analysis of photographs that iconically represent the expulsion and the new settlement after 1945. The awareness that “photos are also historical actors” and must be treated “not only as pure evidence” becomes the basis for the recognition of the fact that a documentalist in the “post-German archive”, open to the tension between what is remembered and what is forgotten, mainly develops historically conditioned ideas about the process of expulsion and resettlement on the Polish and Czech lands. Thirdly, the archive proposed by the researcher is multilingual. *Ćwiek-Rogalska* postulates special care in using local names, which usually exist simultaneously in several languages. According to her, any reduction of multilingualism is epistemological violence, which makes it impossible for the people who use the forbidden languages to have a voice. The same principle should be observed in creating the archive structure. Citing anthropologists Marvin Harris and Kenneth Pike, in line with Derrida, *Ćwiek-Rogalska* insists on constantly asking questions: “What are the names used to describe the collection? [...] Are they rooted in the materials collected or were they imposed from above? And above all, are they legible to those who use the archive?” The fourth and the final condition for the existence of the “post-German archive” is for future archivists to accept the special responsibility for the materiality of the established collection. *Ćwiek-Rogalska*, just like *Dojčinović* and *Kolarić*, sees the need to digitalize available documents. Similarly to both Serbian authors, she points out to the responsibility of archivists and archive researchers for the production of knowledge. However, according to *Ćwiek-Rogalska*, the practice of the archive is also a very individual and even personal experience. The researcher states that the archivist and archive researcher are not only subject to different interests, regimes of power and depend on the availability of materials that they collect and interpret, producing knowledge and narratives, but also enter into a peculiar relationship of partnership with documents and become

witnesses in the Agambenian sense. The attitude of “research-based activism” discussed by Dojčinović and Kolarić is thus enriched by the approach of an “engaged scholar.” At this point, it is impossible to address the genealogies of these two corresponding concepts. What seems more important, is that they show the practices related to the archive as activities that are radically oriented towards the future.

Thinking of the archives as a thing of the future is also the approach of Alena Příbáňová and Zvonimir Glavaš. Investigating misunderstandings between Derrida and new media theorists, Glavaš tries to answer the question of how technologies revolutionize and will revolutionize the archive. His article not only provides a reliable report on the mis-readings of *Archive fever* in the theoretical discourse of the new media, but also shows how Derridian thought can help to understand the upcoming changes in archiving and archive use determined by further technological developments. As the researcher argues, the key in this respect are the transformations of the concepts that organise the French philosopher’s thinking about politics – citizenship, hospitality and virtuality – that are made thanks to the new media. According to Glavaš, the techniques of the new media “make visible” the spectral characteristics of the archive, whose sense is now more dispersed than ever, in constant motion, present in an elusive way.

Alena Příbáňová’s article can be read as a testimony to the dispersion of the archive, but no longer in a metaphorical, but literal sense. The researcher shows the fate of the Czech samizdat editions – a thoroughly Derridian material – devoid of originals, with faded provenance, in constant movement (that also overcome specific geographical spaces between e.g. The Czech Republic, Canada and Germany) that conditions their existence. The researchers of the Czech samizdat, who aim to create a reliable knowledge base, need to face the problem of how to show this disintegration. However, Alena Příbáňová does much more – she presents an introduction into the circle of ethical and very personal dilemmas of the authors of the “encyclopedia of the Czech samizdat” related to communication with the users of the unofficial publications in the Czech Republic: memories, or lack thereof, sometimes become the only available form of memory of some works published outside censorship. Steadman (2001, 1177) states that “historians read for what is not there: the silences and the absences of the documents always speak to us.”

The following three papers in this issue take up the theme signalled by Alena Přibáňová and focus on the issue of memory as an important part of the archive. Leszek Małczak, Lahorka Plejić Poje and Nikolay Aretov show that every archive can become a driving force behind the processes of remembering and forgetting. Leszek Małczak, dealing with the problem of scientific communication between the People's Republic of Poland and Yugoslavia, recreates the history of gradual liberalization of these relations and their dependence on individual contacts. He points out two basic difficulties faced by researchers in the history of Polish-Yugoslav intellectual contacts from the second half of the 20th century. The first obstacle is the strategy of wiping out in documents certain conflict-generating episodes that would exclude Yugoslavia from the community of socialist states. The fact that they were chosen not to be remembered should particularly sensitize researchers to what has been left unsaid. The second problem is related to the dispersion and difficult availability of materials documenting that era – this situation depends largely on the geopolitical entanglements and the contemporary popularity of the archives of the People's Republic of Poland. In her article Lahorka Plejić Poje diagnoses to what extent contemporary Croatian philologists are interested in archival sources. The author states that because of the lack of reliable specialist education of researchers, many manuscripts and old prints, which are part of the Croatian literary legacy, remain unrecognized and unpublished. She notes the historical antecedents behind the process of withdrawing from researching archival collections by experts, combining the contemporary lack of interest in the manuscripts with the completed process of building the nation. As Plejić Poje points out, the establishment of a corpus of old Croatian literature was partly also a process of developing national identity, after which, at the end of the 19th century, the need to explore the archives seemed to be disappearing. The researcher, sharing the discovery of five unknown Kajkawa manuscript songbooks, shows that it is premature to condemn the archives to oblivion, because they still contain materials that modify the existing knowledge of national literature. In this particular case, the researcher enumerates the unique features of the Kajkawa songbook, which contained dedicated love songs. She forwards the hypothesis that these texts were previously unknown due to coincidence and poor interest in the archives. Nikolay Aretov presents the opposite case – he discusses fictional works,

which, closed in the archive and unpublished, were condemned to oblivion by their authors. The literary historian is looking for an answer to the question why Vasil Popović and Asen Christoforov condemn unpublished works to oblivion and silence. The author rejects the explanation that the reason for such behaviour is censorship – in one case moral, in the other – political. Based on two case studies, Aretov shows that the obstacle is not so much the censorship as the psychological profile of the author.

Apart from articles dealing with memory, we publish three papers asking questions about the content and the process of creating and completing the archive. Maya Ivanova, Mira Dushkova and Nadezhda Alexandrova test the capacity and inclusiveness of the archive, while at the same time making available unreleased documents from the archives of writer Konstantinov and his sister Donka Konstantinova, scientist Petar Dinekov and literature expert Elka Konstantinova. All three researchers deal with sources that Plamen Dojnov would describe as secondary, belonging to the order of everyday communication, usually devoid of any literary character. However, such documents often have an unprecedented potential for placing well known cultural phenomena in the context. Mira Dushkova's article is an excellent example of creating an interpretative network of references that allows for a better understanding of both the life of the painter Bronka Gyurova-Alcheh, the author of letters first published here, and the writer Konstantinov and his sister Donka Konstantinova, the addressee the many years of correspondence. The article by Maya Ivanova analyses the unknown element of Polish-Bulgarian intellectual relations. The materials found by the researcher – letters from Edward Mozejko to Petar Dinekov – can serve as an argument in favour of the thesis formulated earlier by Leszek Małczak that scientific relations between the socialist countries depended mainly on personal relations between scientists. Maya Ivanova carefully reads not only the signs of mutual sympathy and friendship, but also the traces of the 1960s, with their political and civilisational upheavals, inscribed in this correspondence. The materials described and interpreted are of great biographical value and are undoubtedly a testimony to that that time. At the same time, their elaboration is linked with Dojnov's question about the hierarchy of archival documents. The fate of an unknown and unexplored part of the legacy of the Bulgarian literary scholar presented by Ivanova is a testimony to the turn that took place in the historiographic consciousness. At the time of the registration of

Dinekov's archive, his private correspondence was separated without any labelling and practically condemned to oblivion. Today, thanks to Ivanova's persevering effort, it is being described and made available because, as the researcher convinces, in order to understand the biography of a scholar and his correspondents, we can no longer question the value of private writings with their high emotional load, connected with the banality of everyday life. A different perspective is presented by Nadezhda Alexandrova. She deals with the category of documents defined by Dojnov as archives produced by researchers. Alexandrova presents an unpublished survey entrusted to her, conducted by journalist Konstantin Mladenov with Elka Konstantinova. The survey does not contain new biographical information, it is only a repetition of previously presented attitudes and known facts. The interview analysed by Alexandrova testifies to Konstantinova's self-awareness, her effort to leave behind a coherent narrative about herself, the role of her family and her stay in Krakow, in shaping her scientific views and interests. Working on these materials is therefore connected with the question of the autocreative power of the archives.

The possibility of creating one's own image through biographical and private materials was fully understood by Kirila Vyzvazova-Karateodороva – archivist and librarian, specialising in the period of Bulgarian re-birth, about whom a paper was written by Radina Bozhilova. Although Bozhilova's research deals with an initial outline of the future extended biography of a woman forgotten today, but important for Bulgarian culture and especially for archivists, there are also reports of problems connected to the lack of documents, biographical testimonials and the problem of their conscious processing for future researchers. Similar topics are also considered in the papers of authors dealing with Czech literature and Croatian archival and theatrical heritage.

Drita Maroshi and Mario Stipančević, show how to overcome the lack of available sources, each from a slightly different perspective. Drita Maroshi analyses in detail the library resources of the Croatian Academy of Science and Arts devoted to the history of theatre, to show what assumptions were made when completing the collection. Mario Stipančević reconstructs the history of the Croatian Academy of Science and Art and draws attention to the changes in the perception of the social and political role of the archive, which affect its material base and conditions.

The autobiographical dimension of the archive becomes an object of interest for Gabriela Abrasowicz and Kamila Woźniak. The researcher of the work of the Czech writer Milada Součková focuses on one short story from the collection *Neznámý člověk* to show the analogies between the archival practices of searching, processing and storing documents and the writer's creation, which integrates these activities into the construction of the analysed story. Gabriela Abrasowicz, on the other hand, interprets the tendency to use archival materials – transcripts of events, interviews, diary notes, memoirs – as a means of regaining subjectivity, a sense of empowerment, and working through trauma in Croatian theatre. Abrasowicz pays special attention to the performativity of the archive revealed by the theatrical performances, to the gestures of reviving history, which allow for interactive and affective cognition, going beyond the “stability and hermetism of the document.”

The reflection on archival practices is closed with review articles by Anna Artwińska, Urszula Kowalska-Nadolna, Zdzisław Darasz, Natalia Długosz and Piotr Mirocha. Urszula Kowalska-Nadolna reviews the collection *Český literární samizdat 1949–1989. Edice, časopisy, sborníky*. She gives an assessment of the encyclopaedic solutions to the research dilemmas previously described by Alena Příbáňová. Reviews by Anna Artwińska and Zdzisław Darasz enter into dialogue with articles in the field of *memory studies*. In her interpretation of Nina Friess's work, Artwińska draws attention to the paradoxes of remembering and forgetting about the Gulag against the background of the possibility of creating transnational memory of Soviet gulags. Zdzisław Darasz discusses a book about Emil Korytka published in Ljubljana and shows the discontinuities and inequalities in the memory discourse in both homelands of the Pole of merit for Slovenian culture. In her review of Vania Zidarova's book on lexical innovations in Bulgarian, Natalia Długosz presents the relationship between the past and the future as seen through the eyes of a linguist, drawing attention to the phenomenon of “linguistic memory.”

Veronika Stranz-Nikitina's paper on the role of dialogue in the reportage of Nobel Prize winner Svetlana Alexievich *Chernobyl prayer. A Chronicle of the Future* and Mirosława Hordy's paper about the Polish equivalents of the Russian expression *не судьба*, which were published in the section “Beyond the theme”, although not directly related to the issue, metaphorically

refer to two important issues for us – reflection on the past and the fate of the archives. The last in this section is Pavol Štubňý’s paper on the social functions of literary narrative in school education. Therefore, we are publishing this issue of “Poznan Slavic Studies” in the hope that dialogue with the past – with all the difficulties, discontinuities, discoveries and revelations it entails – is successful and that it foreshadows good fortune for the practitioners in research on archives in the field of Slavic studies. As archivist and art curator Mark Greene (2003/2004, 100) claims, the work of archive researchers is to provide “the building blocks and tools for assembling and interpreting the past – history and/or memory.” Without this fundamental work, the relationship with the past would be called into question.

Plamen Dojnov, Adriana Kovacheva
Translation Katarzyna Krajewska

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