

Public against our will? The caring gaze of Leviathan, “pink files” from the 1980s Poland and the issue of privacy¹

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In my article I attempt to decipher the logic of a large police and secret services operation conducted by means of surveillance and direct control of the gay men in the late 1980s in Poland. LGBTQ+ activists claim that some 11000 men were involved in it, and yet, this action has never been properly researched, summarized and no justice procedures have been undertaken after 1989. This article combines the “archive activism” of Howard Zinn and his followers in the queer activism and theory, certain elements of theories of the public sphere and counterpublics (Kluge and Negt, Warner etc) and the critical deconstructive and feminist research on the archive and the private (Derrida, Berlant, Gatens) in order to build a discussion of how to queer the scattered state archives of the state police and services without petrification, nostalgia or resignation. It investigates the large spectrum of implications of “being public against our will”, depicting forms of resistance and insubordination as well, as “archiving against their will” in the institutional context avoiding responsibility.

Keywords: archives, Operation “Hiacynt,” surveillance, homosexual men, police

We're so glad to see so many of you lovely people here tonight, and we would especially like to welcome all the representatives of Illinois' Law Enforcement Community who have chosen to join us here in the Palace Hotel Ballroom at this time. We do sincerely hope you'll all enjoy the show, and please remember people, that no matter who you are, and what you do to live, thrive and survive, there are still some things that make us all the same.

You, me, them, everybody, everybody.

(Elwood, in the *Blues Brothers*)

(...) the privacy of embodied individuals cannot be understood independently of the historical specificity of the social and political contexts within which such identities are formed.

(Moira Gatens, *Privacy and the Body*)

Privacy is the Oz of America.

(Lauren Berlant, *The Subject of True Feeling*)

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Becoming public

The image of the public sphere reproduced in liberal media and political theory, academia and to some extent also in art, most often suggests that becoming public is not only harmless but should also be seen as highly rewarding (Habermas). Discussions surrounding the concept of the public sphere, including many of its critical reinterpretations, such as the concepts of proletarian, feminist, subaltern or queer counterpublics or even theories of the common, almost never mention the more painful repercussions of entering the public realm. In the theories of Jurgen Habermas, but also Alexander Kluge, Oskar Negt or even Nancy Fraser, participation in the public sphere seems a blissful bath in the river of deliberation, truth and recognition, rather than a fight or sacrifice². Somewhere between Aristotle's legitimate citizen and Sophocles' Antigone spreads the large spectrum of possible versions of becoming public and its repercussions, which only in some cases seem plausible.

From the perspective of those excluded, oppressed and marginalized, the public sphere is not merely a blissful confrontation with the common matters, but also a clearly separated zone of privilege, in which those allowed enjoy the possibility of expressing their political interests and sharing their political concerns, while the excluded experience a variety of exposures to forced publicity, segregation, marginalization and discrimination³. The gay population of the People's Republic of Poland enjoyed almost complete invisibility, with the exception of some key figures of culture in the 1950s and the 1960s, investigated upon by the secret services, until the sudden decision of the Headquarters of the Polish Police (Milicja Obywatelska, MO) in Warsaw to examine the population of the homosexual men in fall 1985, in a nation-wide action called "Hiacynt", repeated in 1986 and in 1987⁴. Currently the state's preoccupation with the gay community in Poland is at times combined with the conservative backlash, as in the years 2005-2007 and from 2015 onward. The official reasons for the "Hiacynt" operations were that the number of solved criminal cases where gay men were involved as victims was low, that the sudden appearance of HIV/AIDS required some investigation of the supposedly most exposed group and that the Polish Police did not have sufficient knowledge about this sexual minority⁵. According to the documentation gathered in the state archives of the Institute of National Remembrance (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, IPN), the "Hiacynt" operations were held each time only for 48 hours or less, however various particular investigations were continued longer. As it will be shown further in this article, many gay rights activists in Poland recall oppressive forms

² See: Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt, *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere* (1993) and Nancy Fraser, *Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy* (1990).

³ See: Warren Montag and Mike Hill, *Masses, Classes and the Public Sphere* (2005); bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (1984) and Moira Gatens, *Privacy and the Body. The Privacy of the Affect* (2004).

⁴ Documents of the IPN about the launching of the action issued in the Warsaw headquarters of the Polish Police: KR 0105/85 (signed by plk. Jablonski); a letter from the police headquarters in Warsaw from 30 July 1986 (IPN number unclear, in the Szczecin files), KR I 020/87 (signed by Mr. Trzcinski).

⁵ These aims are depicted in the documents issued in Warsaw, quoted above and in the action plans I refer to later in this article. Page 102 in the Szczecin file however suggests a possibility for the Secret Police to use the data collected during the operation "for its own purposes." This and other small remarks of the kind suggest that there might have been more purposes of the "Hiacynt" operations, and of less noble nature.

of police control and repression as elements of these operations. While I do not want to undermine these statements, I need to suggest, basing on the archive research, that while the police might have used the reference to “Hiacynt” as legitimization of their repressive agency, the files clearly define these operations as lasting only two days each time, and conducted in 1985, 1986 and 1987⁶. It must be emphasized that while incidents of homophobic abuse happened in the post-war Poland, there is no data proving that the sexual orientation-based persecution was a commonplace motivation behind the workings of these institutions or that the “Hiacynt” operations lasted for long years, as it is suggested by various activists and scholars in Poland⁷.

In this article I give an account of the “Hiacynt” operations, basing on my archive research at the state archives of the IPN, conducted in April and June of 2015. This account is embedded in a wider investigation concerning the issue of queering the archives – which I understand as not only a production of grassroots archives of sexual minorities, but also as a transformative critique of the *modus operandi* of the existing state archives. In doing this, I critically address the issue of the archive, and I do this in several ways: in its classical version, in the form shaped by the Foucauldian “critique of the repression hypothesis,” in the feminist perspective, where the concepts of “the public” and “the private” are under particular scrutiny, and finally – in the deconstructive perspective, opened by Jacques Derrida in his *Archive Fever*, where the psychoanalytic hypothesis of the unconscious and desire are put in play, allowing a further renegotiation of the supposed neutrality of the archive.

This article’s main aim is therefore above all to show how to queer the existing, institutional archives, how to develop the idea of the “archive activism” invented by Howard Zinn, which – due to the state’s resistance to activism, but also due to some misguided concepts of “neutrality”, “privacy” and “protection”, still remain largely closed to the wider public and are completely unprepared to serve any queer researchers, not to speak about the “archive empowerment”, as defined by Ben Power Alwin in his excellent interview for the *Radical History Review* (Rawson).

Queering the archives in Poland

In countries governed by highly undemocratic forces, such as Poland, which, while currently belonging to the global center, were for many years part of global (semi-)peripheries, it seems necessary to rework the public memory institutional practices, including the state archives, which remain the most important resources of history knowledge, partially due to the lack of resources on the side of

⁶ It should be stressed that the documentation gathered in the IPN state archive is very scattered – some assume that as much as 90% of the documents of the Polish Police and Secret Police from the years 1945-1990 have been destroyed. Although I examined the documents at the IPN for some 3 weeks altogether, and further in this article I build some claims concerning the “Hiacynt” operations, it should be stressed that due to the incompleteness of this archive any generalization based on the evidence gathered there can only be relative.

⁷ Perhaps the most interesting effort to build a queer archive has for many years been made by the gay artist Karol Radziszewski, who reconstructs the memories and images of the gay communities in Poland, sometimes in cooperation with the gay activists and artists from the 1980s. The novels of Michał Witkowski also offer reconstructions of the gay communities of the 1970s and the 1980s in Poland, see: M. Witkowski, *Lovetown*, Portobello Books, London 2011. The articles and other publications concerning “Hiacynt” will be listed and discussed further in this essay.

the LGBTQIA activists and researchers. As it becomes clear from my own experience as an archive researcher at the IPN archives, the Polish state-run archives are not only completely unprepared for any form of queer research, they also dissimulate the basic knowledge of the state-run operations against queer communities after 1945, and by so doing – they perpetrate the LGBTQIA invisibility as well as they protect the perpetrators of sexuality-based repression perpetrated on behalf of the Polish state apparatus in the post-WWII years. It is therefore necessary to undermine this dissimulative rationale, while at the same time – to negotiate all the formats of what epistemologically can be called “subalternity”, following Gayatri Spivak (*Critique*). In my critical account of the state archivization of the state repression against queers (particularly – gay men in the 1980s), I follow certain elements of the “archive activist” proposal, as it evolved from the 1977 formulation of Howard Zinn, but Foucault’s critique of the “hypothesis of repression” is also referred to in the article. I also investigate the necessary opacities and blanks produced in the cultural processes of dissimulation, resulting in the state’s inability and unwillingness to properly archive its own acts of repression against the LGBTQ persons, but also in the activist’s impossibility of embracing the historical truth “in its entirety” caused by the constantly reshaping formats of identity making and unmaking, the reconfigurations of privilege and oppression etc. I begin with a recapitulation of Zinn’s “archive activist” concept, then I follow the feminist critique of the ideas of transparency and privacy. After that I discuss the concept of “the archive activist”, the problems of queering the state archive in a semi-peripheral country such as Poland and finally – the “Hiacynt” operations themselves. I believe a version of “the archive activist” will emerge at the end of this text, signaling the constraints and opportunities at hand for a feminist-queer archive activist of semi-periphery. This archive is concluded with a strong statement against the sometimes practiced refusal to enter and/ or produce the archives, which I find conformist.

The seminal essay by Howard Zinn, *Secrecy, Archives, and the Public Interest*, from 1977 inspired several generations of researchers and activists to overcome the “silence of the files” and to undermine the status quo by actively engaging not so much into politicizing the archive, as to openly declare that the archive is always already political. Zinn’s arguments about the archives as a site of privilege preservation unfold in seven steps, and I believe it is worth bringing them here since what I was doing in the IPN archive and what I try to achieve writing this article can be seen as a continuation of his principles. In *Secrecy, Archives...* Zinn argues that the “preservation of social arrangements” in the state archives is made possible because: 1) the archives are determined by the existing divisions of power; 2) the governments preserve their power by negating the public access to documents; 3) the collection of records, papers, and memoirs, as well as oral history, is biased and compliant with the existing privilege; 4) the written word still dominates; 5) the emphasis in the collection of records is placed on individuals rather than movements; 6) the emphasis is on the past over the present; 7) far more resources are devoted to the collection and preservation of what already exists as records than to recording any fresh data (Zinn 20-21).

These objections to the ways the government preserves its undemocratic power are particularly relevant in Poland. The ways the IPN operates make it virtually impossible to use their resources, although theoretically they should be made accessible to any Polish citizen. But the problems do not end at the gate of the archive, they mount in the IPN's libraries as well since there is virtually no order in which the files are offered to be viewed. The example of my own research is in many ways peculiar, however I do not see any good reason why I was offered to look at some 40 files of men named "Hiacynt" from the years 1945-1955, when I clearly requested the files concerning the "Hiacynt" police operations from the 1980s. Before I even came to Warsaw, I called the IPN several times, asking about any kind of documents, recommendations etc that I should bring with me from Berlin. On the day of my arrival I was informed that my research requires a recommendation of the director of my institute. Luckily, the Director of the ICI Berlin was available, and I got my recommendation properly stamped and signed within 15 minutes. But what if he had not been at work? In Zinn's terms, the IPN service is a clear representation of the state power's desire to keep the documentation of the Polish history away from the citizens and therefore it requires not only critique but also serious changes.

Although the "Hiacynt" files clearly follow the script of a state action against a group of citizens (the gay men in Poland in the 1980s), the archive not only focuses on particular cases and stories but it also makes it virtually impossible to put the ends of the police action together. I was prepared for it, but it seems that other researchers simply get lost in the material. The "Hiacynt" files do not follow any order. They are offered to the public as a chaotic mixture of documentation of the local police actions from different regions, central orders, files of significant and insignificant investigations. It seems as if nobody was interested in suggesting any order to one of the largest police operations of the 1980s, which seems improbable, given the fact that the police usually want to understand the logics of its own actions, and they usually proceed in orderly ways rather than invent completely new, chaotic strategies every time they want to examine a large group of citizens.

Although in recent years several researchers working on the archive methodology have made a big effort to dissimulate the role of the social struggles of the 1960s and 1970s in the process of reshaping the archives, most scholars and activists are referring to the archive activism in positive ways, usually in an effort to continue Zinn's radical critique of the state power and to develop democratic strategies of accessing, maintaining and transforming archives⁸. The essay by Patrick M. Quinn, *The Archivist as Activist*, puts the account straight, enumerating several crucial groups of political activists, whose interventions in the ways the archives are organized made previously excluded

⁸ The most striking efforts to dissimulate the role of social movements for the process of making of the archives can be found in two articles: Mark A. Greene's *A Critique of Social Justice as an Archival Imperative: What Is It We're Doing That's All That Important?* (2013) and Randall C. Jimerson's *From the Pacific Northwest to the Global Information Society: the Changing Nature of Archival Education* (2010). I quote Jimerson: "The debate over whether history or library science departments were the best places for archival education became the focus of attention during the late 1960s and the 1970s, with some later reverberations. Thirty years ago most archival education programs were based in departments of history. In recent decades, library and information science has played an increasingly important role in archival education". Not a word about feminist and anti-racist researchers fighting for the minorities to enter the archives!

groups visible. Recently scholars have persuasively argued for maintaining a vital connection between archive work and litigation, thus allowing the documentation of the repressions of sexual minorities to be combined with the search for justice – this is the key argument of the recent article by Charles Francis and Pate Felts, *Archive Activism: Vergangenheitsbewältigung!*, in which they explain why and how only the combined forces of archive revisions and juridical action against the decisions of particular politicians and state functionaries actually bring about change. Their argument is particularly interesting in the context of the research I conducted in order to write this article, because only a combination of archive research and litigation could allow one to meet justice in the context of the “Hiacynt” operation, which cannot be measured without proper research.

Big Mama, data collecting, feminist theories of privacy and nostalgia today⁹

This article is an element of a larger discussion concerning resistance to the constantly changing apparatuses of sovereign power, recently acquiring surprisingly “caring” and “maternal” aspects, as opposed to the *pater familias* figure of the Roman law and pre-modern times (Foucault, *Discipline*; Derrida, “Archive Fever” 9-63). While the caring aspects of state power have been analyzed at length since Foucault and his theory of bio-power, the shift from “the paternal” to “the maternal” “caring” modes of state power still needs their critical feminist interpretation. Therefore, together with the feminist-queer critique of the often fetishized concept of privacy, I would like to discuss the “caring” agency of the Leviathan based on the “Hiacynt” operations from the late 1980s. Based on archive research, personal experiences and critical theories of power, archive, privacy and surveillance, this small study sets to dismantle the romantic nostalgia of privacy and at the same time to reject the conformist logic of “resistance is futile.” In the times aptly called those of “the spectacle of transparency”, the dangers of uncontrolled sovereignty should be opposed and avoided just as carefully as in the past (Hansen et al. 117-131). However, in both cases the optic of the criticized “repression hypothesis” should be replaced with more nuanced approaches, possibly feminist ones, since, as I argue, the power has shifted towards those forms of cultural agency which were understood as feminine in the past (Foucault, *Discipline*). Since Foucault (*Society*) we have been speaking about the biopolitical agency of the Leviathan, but only in the recent years the “paternal” forms of power are accompanied by the “maternal” models of care. The surveillance after 9/11, the “Patriot Act” and other documents allowing the state apparatus to enter into formerly preserved spaces of human activity, are most often backed up by narratives of care and supposed empathy of the state, efforts to “best protect” the population. The Foucauldian analytics of biopower and pastoral discourse should therefore be strengthened by the introjection of an analysis of the instrumentalization of traditionally maternal functions into the state apparatus. I think that as much as we discuss “the feminization of labor” in the cultural production and analysis of work, we should also think of the caring imperatives as some form of “feminization of sovereignty” (Hochschild, 1983; Negri and Hardt;

⁹ I refer to the title given by the Tactical Tech Collective to a small part of the *Nervous Systems* exhibition at HKW in Berlin 2016. I need to credit Oliver Bauerhenn for the title of my presentation at the *Nervous Systems* exhibition (*But I am your Mother!*).

Fantone 5-20). Therefore a new question should be asked, somehow reversing the usual feminist concerns about how women can refuse housework (Federici), namely: how is resistance possible if the sovereign is a caring rather than punitive one?

In order to grasp the problem of becoming public involuntarily, it is perhaps interesting to look at the conceptualizations of the private and privacy. If we understand privacy as a sphere in which some unmediated intimacy magically renders itself available, and this is its most common understanding, then this article might bring some genuine disappointment to those who thought they could have direct access to it. The dominant tendency in claims and demands concerning privacy is often conveyed in a purely nostalgic way, in the sense given to this word by Svetlana Boym, the author of *The Future of Nostalgia*, who argued:

Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy. Nostalgic love can only survive in a long-distance relationship. A cinematic image of nostalgia is a double exposure, or a superimposition of two images—of home and abroad, of past and present, of dream and everyday life. The moment we try to force it into a single image, it breaks the frame or burns the surface (Boym).

In the words of those defending privacy against surveillance and control, the perhaps dominant tendency is to position it as somehow directly available and unmediated. It results from the liberal ontology, in which individuals, groups and institutions are defined as independent from one another (Benhabib 38-60). Rightly criticized by Hegel, Marx and feminists as highly unrealistic, this liberal ontology is unfortunately organizing the mainstream image of privacy, leading not only to its nostalgic idealizations but also to the downplaying of other aspects of social life, such as autonomy, solidarity and freedom. The neoliberal visions of privacy petrify our imagination and enforce a highly problematic image of the social and the political where once the atomized users of computers and smart phones have been liberated from the state control, freedom and equality abound and everybody becomes happy. While freedom from overprotective state surveillance is a basic human right, and it definitely should be not only claimed but also executed, it is necessary to remember that it cannot provide a happy or livable life when detached from other freedoms and rights.

Moira Gatens rightly specifies that the body constitutes the primary space of exercising privacy and as such it also leads to a materialist theory of privacy (Gatens 113-132). Different bodies lead to different experiences of privacy, as it is demonstrated by Gatens's reading of the biographies of two white European men, J. S. Mill and J. P. Sartre and of an indigenous Australian woman, Sally Morgan. Gatens (130) argues that privacy should be given a context and argues that its value is neither good nor bad but it is context dependent. Borrowing Etienne Balibar's concept of "transindividuality" and using arguments of fellow feminist authors, Gatens proposes an excellent alternative to the liberal understanding of privacy, one in which its role is neither overlooked nor overestimated.

Another feminist and radical take on privacy is developed by Lauren Berlant, who depicts privacy as “the Oz of America”, and while analyzing the “place of feeling in the making of political worlds” she mercilessly dismantles the highly idealized concept of “the American citizen”, privacy constituting a milestone of it. While it is necessary to remember that the European or Polish constructs of citizenship are definitely different from those practiced in the USA, the recent strengthening of the caring eye of the Leviathan on one hand and the public protest against it on the other again make the American experiences, but also the American dream, quite hegemonic in Eastern Europe. The idealized visions of privacy remind us of the “beyond the rainbow” safe space from the Wizard of Oz, says Berlant, who also emphasizes that

[b]ased on a notion of safe space, a hybrid space of home and law, in which people will act legally and lovingly toward one another, free from the determinations of history or the coercions of pain, the constitutional theorization of sexual privacy is drawn from a lexicon of romantic sentiment a longing for a space where there is no trouble, a place whose constitution in law would be so powerful that desire would meet moral discipline there, making real the dreamy rule (60)

While demands of freedom from the “caring gaze of the Leviathan”, formulated in times of surveillance cameras and constant invigilation, seem perfectly justified, perhaps our claims concerning privacy should be scrutinized and liberated from idealist illusions? The nostalgic longing for perfect privacy might be just as controversial as the demand of full accessibility of individuals for state’s observation. This idealistic longing also strengthens the public/private divide, undermined by the feminist scholars, as shown above. If we look at the lives of Mary Wollstonecraft, Olympia de Gouges, Emma Goldman, Rosa Luxemburg, Rosa Parks, Angela Davis, Anna Walentynowicz, Assata Shakur or Chelsea Manning, we see an entire line of female, trans- and queer political figures whose privacy has always been permeated by politics in a very spectacular way, sometimes leading to deportations, imprisonment or even political executions. The feminist-queer archive activist should not try to install an idyllic vision of privacy at the core of their research, they should instead problematize the controlling practices of the state in the context shaped by a complex interplay of privilege and invisibility. The possibility of arranging archives in ways empowering for minorities was beautifully demonstrated by Ben Power Alwin, who lives in the Sexual Minorities Archive, initiated by the lesbian-feminist organization, the New Alexandria Lesbian Library, in 1974, and moved to Massachusetts in 1979. The SMA is a home-archive where the classical mode of presentation has been twisted and queered in order to empower the queer communities and to strengthen the LGBTQIASM rainbow coalition (2015).

A quite different question however is how to queer the state-run archives in countries which have not embraced the queer-friendly politics, such as Poland? Should we make all the archives public in a society in which the queer persons are most often not ready to come out? How to provide public access to scenes/ operations of homophobic violence without risking personal assault? These are

relevant questions in the context of the “Hiacynt” operations archives where not only perpetrators of offenses or crimes against the LGBTQ communities might be still alive but also the names and other private data of possibly living persons are present, and these persons might not all be queer activists ready to come out.

Privacy has become a vital element of the popular image of a “good life”, and as such it obviously is nostalgically drawn on some highly improbable and definitely inaccessible idyllic “past.” We are somehow “homesick” about privacy and we do fantasize about it without acknowledging its always already interrelated character that is dependent on the context, including our own embodiment, historical and cultural conditions and economy. This contemporary tendency to buy the comfort of building one’s comfortable autonomous self depends on our ability to keep countless “Others” in precarity (Lorey). Foucault’s recapitulation of the “Panopticon” project reminds one of the deep impossibility of this dream (Berlant). The Polish state often employs the caring logic of protecting privacy, neglecting the fact that the society should be allowed to investigate the clear cases of abuse of power in the police actions conducted during the “Hiacynt” operations or under their pretext.

A la recherche des archives perdus. The “Hiacynt” operations files

The main object of my investigation was a collection of materials gathered in a particular Polish state archive, the Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej – IPN), created in the late 1990s by the Polish Parliament. For a definition – I quote the official IPN website:

The Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation (IPN) was established by the Polish Parliament by virtue of the act as of 18 December 1998. Its actual activity began in the middle of 2000 (...) The resolution on the establishment of the IPN, made by the coalition of parties, stemming from the Solidarity movement (...) was connected with an attempt to solve the problem of documents left after the Communist State Security Bodies dissolved in 1990. This concerned the establishment of an institution, which was apolitical and independent from the government. The institution would take control over the archives of the Communist political police, which were controlled by secret services...¹⁰.

The archivist research I conducted for the purpose of writing this text lasted some two weeks in April and one in June 2015, however it encompasses enough data to allow some generalizations. No general archive under the name “Hiacynt archive” exists today in the IPN archives, although this is a commonly used phrase. “Hiacynt” is the name of 3 police and secret services operations, lasting approximately 48 hours each, conducted in the years: 1985, 1986 and 1987 in Poland. It is important

¹⁰ From the IPN official website. Accessed: 30 09 2016.

to remember that the archives of the Polish Police and the secret services were destroyed in almost 90% whereas their equivalents from, for example, the Czech Republic or East Germany were mostly preserved. Therefore my analysis is at times speculative, drawing much more on Gayatri Spivak's *Critique of Postcolonial Reason* and her own archivist fever during a visit to the palace of the woman depicted in *Can the Subaltern Speak?* as "Sati", than on classical archive studies (Spivak, *Critique*; LaCapra). It is also indebted in Dominick LaCapra's theory of trauma inscribing itself in our memory as a sort of trickster, making the content of our remembrance work hyperbolically (Kitliński and Leszkowicz; Fiedotow; Kurpios; Warkocki; Selerowicz).

Several researchers, journalists and writers have written about the files of the "Hiacynt" operations. None of them offers a detailed description of the IPN "Hiacynt" files, except Agata Fiedotow, who mentions several documents without analyzing the structure of the actions. An interesting book, recently published in Polish, *Foucault in Warsaw* by Remigiusz Rzyński, depicts the existence of the remnants of the "Hiacynt" files, but does not offer any synthesis of these actions. Błażej Warkocki explicitly says that the "Hiacynt" operations still await their monograph. These scattered files constitute a perfect pretext to show how the incompleteness of any archive leads to the necessary conclusion that objective knowledge can only be based on a partial perspective. None of the sources I have considered presents the general schematics of the "Hiacynt" operations and many scholars still refer to a "Hiacynt Archive", which does not seem to exist. In the book *Kryptonim "Hiacynt"* Andrzej Selerowicz does not depict the basic schematics of this police action either, he does however cover one very important empty spot of the history of gay men in Poland – he collects the memories of the gay men from different regions in Poland who were targeted in the "Hiacynt" operations (see Selerowicz).

To complicate things more, on the basis of the IPN archive materials it can be said that the "Hiacynt" operations were launched upon the orders from the vice-chief of the Polish Police (MO), not the Secret Police, although several documents regarding the "Hiacynt" actions issued by the Department of Internal Affairs (Urząd Bezpieczeństwa, UB, the Secret Police) are accessible too. It is important to remember that the data collected as a result of the "Hiacynt" actions, or what is left of them, were meant to stay peacefully dispersed in the police stations all over the country. From what can be found in the IPN archives, only general reports happened to be sent from the regional police to the police headquarters in Warsaw after each of the "Hiacynt" operations. Perhaps some of the documents are still in local police stations since the police stopped sending their archives to the IPN in 2006 due to the change of law regulating this institution. It should also be noted that some 80-90% of the Polish Police and secret services files were destroyed in the years 1988-1990. Partly as a result of the political changes of 1989 in Poland, the scattered materials collected in the IPN became accessible for practically anyone via the IPN offices in cities across the whole country; one can order documents gathered in other cities upon request as well. My main tropes for researching the IPN archives were: "homosexual men", "Hiacynt" (which gives perplexing results since this word also stands for a male name in Poland, apparently still quite popular around the 1940s and the 1950s, not anymore) and

“sexuality.” In April and June 2015 I analyzed some 70 files, approximately 300 documents, mainly from the 1980s. In order to compare two distinct periods, I also requested some files from the 1950s and the 1960s. I wanted to compare the methods of police operations, and the differences were striking. The majority of the 1980s files are written by the police or result from the investigations and testimonies gathered in police stations, and they are very formal and neutral. The files from the 1950s and the 1960s, however, combine police documents and large amounts of long testimonies of police informants (spies), who describe the invigilated persons in wildly judgmental terms, sometimes overtly expressing disgust. It has to be said that the Polish legal history concerning male homosexuality was rather progressive – the ban on sexual relations between men was erased from the Polish penal code as early as in 1932, and it was never brought back, therefore while the society did not accept same sex relations until very recently, the law was not forbidding them. Although it is known that the police were trying to use “accusations” of homosexuality against politically involved writers and artists in the first decades after the WWII and against the political opposition in the 1980s, the strategic use of homophobic plots by the police was far less common in Poland than in some other countries of the Eastern Bloc, such as the USSR, East Germany or Romania, where the ban persisted long after 1945.

The data from the IPN archive documents regarding the “Hiacynt” operations should not be seen as the sole source of information about these events. According to the gay activists, some 3000 people were taken to the police stations and questioned on 15 November 1985 alone. The witnesses claim that some 11 000 persons were investigated upon (Kurpios). This number of the “pink files” created as a result of the “Hiacynt” operations appears in the open letter signed in 1988 by a particularly important lawyer and communist politician, Mikołaj Kozakiewicz, on request of the gay activists. The letter demands the right of the gay men to form non-governmental organizations and the end of surveillance of this group by the police (Kozakiewicz). If we compare these numbers to the number of persons under NSA surveillance today or even those investigated by the Polish Police in the 1980s because of their supposed oppositional activities, it does not sound very big, however still the “Hiacynt” operations constitute one of the biggest police actions of the 1980s in Poland and demand systematized research, analysis and perhaps also measures of justice to rehabilitate those who were victimized by the state apparatus.

The main objectives of the “Hiacynt” operations, as defined in the documents issued by the headquarters of the police in Warsaw, were: to investigate the homosexual circles, to register the homosexual prostitutes, to establish the knowledge about possible AIDS cases and to get to know more about young men, some of whom are becoming homosexual when runaway etc. The initial document starting the “Hiacynt” operation of 1986 specified that the operations should not concern individuals already under the Secret Services supervision, which most certainly means the political opposition. This would be a very clear indication that the initial motifs behind the “Hiacynt” operation were not immediately directed at the political opposition. It actually seems that there was a genuine concern about “AIDS” and the unsolved criminal cases within the police forces of the time. In one of

the IPN documents it can be read that this action was started because the high number of unsolved murder cases when the victim was homosexual was 7 times bigger than of those cases in which the victim was heterosexual (Pietkiewicz).

On 14 October 1985 a "Framework of the Nationwide Operation „ was issued by the headquarters of the Polish Police in Warsaw (Komenda Główna Milicji Obywatelskiej, KGMO) and signed by its vice-commandant, general Zenon Trzcinski. All the state officials and gay activists confirm that the order must have come from the Minister of Interior (Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych, MSW), at that time – general Czesław Kiszczak, however I could not find such a document in the IPN archive. I believe it is logical that the order must have been issued by the Minister of Interior, this was also suggested by numerous gay activists. In this Framework we find a general description of the aims, strategies, tactics etc of an action which was to be started at 8.00 AM on 15 November 1985 and to be terminated at midnight on 16 November 1985. At this early moment of what I would call "the first Hiacynt operation" (there will be similar mobilizations in 1986 and 1987) the logic of the supposedly communist Leviathan is a "caring" one. The first reason given to legitimize the action is the lack of success in solving murder cases in which the victims are homosexual. The state acts therefore not as a prohibitor of homosexual acts but as a guiding, caring instance that understands the vulnerability of the non-heterosexual masculine subjects who live a risky, often lonely life under cover and might be vulnerable to criminal activity or might also participate in it. In line with Foucault's somehow ironic narrative from *The Society must be Defended* lectures series, the Polish state's agents also tried to "care" for their citizens, to protect them in classically "pastoral" ways. At that time the Polish state was composed of 49 regions (voivodshafts). The IPN archives I managed to see (although I demanded a more extensive material on several occasions) provided the information on 9 of them. They were often scattered; more or less complete files came only from Szczecin and Białystok. The "Hiacynt" operation was conducted in each of the 49 regions, which required local "action plans" and specific forms of involvement and possibly also resistance, or at least obstinacy, which could today be seen as a form of (intended or unintended) resistance.

Gay activists in Poland claim that the process of registering gay men, brutal investigations and threats were intrinsic elements of the "Hiacynt" operations. The archives do not allow this kind of generalization; however, they do suggest that in some regions in Poland this might have been the case. The popular belief is also that there was one "Hiacynt" action which lasted several years. This also cannot be confirmed on the basis of the IPN archives, which prove that there were several, most probably 3, actions that lasted for less than 48 hours and in some cases led to new investigations. However, it is possible that the regional police headquarters, as well as police stations, were using the name "Hiacynt" or referring to these operations as a justification of their homophobic actions in other periods than these stipulated as the beginnings of the "Hiacynt" operations.

Interestingly, some form of resistance can be found also in the police files. In the small town called Police and three other small towns near Szczecin, the police refused to conduct the "Hiacynt" operation

because – as they wrote in their notes sent to Szczecin’s police headquarters, “no homosexual milieu was detected in our region”¹¹. This might simply mean laziness or insubordination, but perhaps it was more than that – a sudden act of refusal based on decency? The chief of the police in Szczecin demanded to register all gay men in Szczecin, which led to the production of a list of 450 men, with their addresses and dates of birth, in 1985 and another 550 men in consecutive years. The registration of gay men in the regions was not mentioned as a necessary task in the documents issued by the Warsaw General Police Headquarters, and it seems from the IPN archive that the police chiefs in other regions did not order such private data collections. The gay men were brought to police stations on 15 November 1985 in several cities in Poland, according to the statements made by activists – at least in Wrocław, Kraków, Gdańsk, Warsaw, Poznań and Sopot¹². On the other hand, In Białystok the police seem to re-open the files of unsolved crimes against homosexual men and actually perform some police work. There is no mention of any “registering” of gay men in that region, however we must remember, that the IPN files are generally incomplete¹³. Every regional police chief was writing an action plan for the “Hiacynt” operation each year, and in Szczecin the registration of the gay men is not only mentioned but the archive also offers such a list, while in Białystok there is no mention of any general registration, however there are several names and addresses of supposedly gay men who are questioned. The police in Białystok also ordered some lectures about homosexuality, and the general focus of the “Hiacynt” action in that area seems to be to understand the gay milieu better in order to solve “pending” crimes, which cannot be said about the documentation of the actions conducted in Szczecin. This difference might result from the scarcity of the archive, however since the IPN archive provides reports from both regions to the Warsaw General Police Headquarters, and these reports differ significantly, it can be assumed with some probability that the ways the police conducted the “Hiacynt” operations varied depending on the region and possibly – on the decisions of the regional chiefs of the police.

The “Hiacynt” operation in 1986 was “enriched” by the problem of runaway youth and this led to some satiric archival results, like a detailed description of the Socialist Youth Organization of the Sieradz summercamp in Nowy Sącz, included in the “Hiacynt” operation file. The young people apparently drank alcohol and had sex¹⁴. This occupies some 40 pages of the files and perhaps explains why the topic of youth was dropped in 1987 during the next operation. From the perspective of the chaotic collection of data presented to me at the IPN archive in Warsaw, some of which arrived from other cities in Poland, the “Hiacynt” operation seems like a police action similar to any other. The exceptional effect of this action was the building up of resistance, as early as in 1986: gay men began to unite and decided to register the first gay-rights organization to defend their rights. There

¹¹ IPN documents from the Szczecin Region: the action plan demanding registration of homosexual men: KR 04381.85; KR I 03363/85; the documentation of the refusals of the undertaking of the “Hiacynt” operation in Pырzyce L.dz. 02229/85.

¹² Based on conversations with Paweł Leszkowicz, Waldemar Zboralski, Karol Radziszewski, Błażej Warkocki and several other anonymous testimonies; conducted in the years 2015-2017.

¹³ IPN documents concerning Białystok and the region, file nr: IPN Bi 445/15 19/5: concerning AIDS: KR III 154/ 85; concerning crimes investigated during the “Hiacynt” operation: KR III 355/87, KR I 01829/87.

¹⁴ IPN document nr OE III 06266/86.

was a “gay Walesa” – Waldemar Zboralski, a gay activist from Nowa Sól, who came out long before the police started the “Hiacynt” operations (Tomasik)¹⁵. He was one of the first gay men to openly declare the necessity of standing up against the repression and legalizing an organization of gay men and lesbians to speak up about their rights.

Incidents of orientation-based violence have been discussed in sociological books, for example *Gejereł* by Krzysztof Tomasik, but also in literary fiction smoothly mixing social facts, like Michał Witkowski's *Lubiewo* [Lovetown], also in art catalogues and books. Several persons claim that they know people who were threatened, harassed or even raped (Witkowski). Zboralski, who is the most outspoken about the “Hiacynt” events, says that the policeman who investigated him seemed embarrassed and generally showed that he did not feel comfortable asking about Zboralski's intimate life details¹⁶. I would not like to suggest that the cruelty of the police actions against gay men depicted in *Lovetown* never happened. The IPN archives allow one to assume that perhaps they were not immediate effects of the “Hiacynt” operations, but resulted from other reasons, including the homophobic character of the society in general and some police members in particular.

LaCapra claims that “trauma registers in hyperbole”, that even those who promise a linear, realistic report end up repeating literary narratives, inventing events etc. LaCapra uses the radical example of Primo Levi and his effort of reporting of Auschwitz. Levi claims that he will not use any metaphoric or poetic language, which of course does not happen, and La Capra demonstrates it. Another paradox of Levi's “report” emphasized by La Capra is the fact that the image Levi paints of Eastern European women clearly comes from the anticommunist propaganda of the 1950s American media, so from the time after he was one of the prisoners of the Auschwitz camp... I would like to suggest that the memories of the people involved in the “Hiacynt” operations might mix events that happened under different orders and circumstances, in different years and within different agendas.

The remnants of the IPN documentation of the “Hiacynt” actions in the years 1985-1987 allow one to see contemporary police surveillance in a larger perspective, both historically and politically. Becoming public in the context of homosexual men in a homophobic society is not necessarily a wanted strategy. In the context of the “Hiacynt” actions we witness an underscrutinized form of becoming public happening via the state investigations and surveillance and resistance to those and not one based on individual choices. Both in the “Hiacynt” actions in Poland in the 1980s and in the current “data wars”¹⁷, the overdose of state surveillance leads to the appearance of new public personae who resist them, but also certain individuals or groups become “public” against their will due to the leaks from state agencies or because they decide to oppose and resist the state activities.

¹⁵ A letter of Zboralski available in the National Library in Warsaw, 19 November 1985.

¹⁶ Based on the conversations with the activist, 2015 and on the articles in the magazine *Inaczej*, 10/99.

¹⁷ Just one reference to a largely used notion: <http://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/the-coming-consumer-data-wars>.

Le cas Foucault

Michel Foucault was one of the first men oppressed by the Polish state apparatus on the grounds of his homosexuality, but not merely because of it, after the WWII. When in Great Britain the brilliant logician, and WWII hero, Alan Turing, was still facing a dilemma of either imprisonment for his sexual orientation or being subjected to a hormonal treatment, which eventually cost him his life, in Poland homosexuality was legal from 1932 on, yet not socially accepted.

In 1957 Foucault went to Warsaw to become the director of the *Centre de la Civilisation Francaise* in Warsaw, an old research entity within the University of Warsaw. At that time he also researched for his studies on the clinic (*The Birth of the Clinic* was published in 1963). Foucault wrote in a letter to his friend on 22 November 1958 that "Ubu [le Roi – a piece by Alfred Jarry, EM] happens now in Poland, meaning nowhere. I am in prison: I mean on the other side, but this actually is the worse"¹⁸. As it was claimed in several biographies of Foucault, including Eribon's, he had to leave Poland in 1959 due to a secret police action which led to a scandal involving his sexual life (Eribon). All the sources confirm that an agent was introduced to Foucault to play the role of his lover, and some sources also claim that the motivation behind the scandal was his research on confinement and his contacts with more critical academics (Fiedotow). The Polish State Archive (IPN) does not contain any information on Foucault, or at least I was not able to find any of it. It does contain however quite specific information about several other important cultural figures, such as writers or composers, and their sexual lives, depicted in sometimes astonishing details by two particularly active "spies", gathered a bit later, in the early 1960s. Today, these facts are quite well known, but at the time it could have had some power as a threatening tool. This kind of depictions, resulting from the activity of civilians spying on their friends or colleagues, are not present in the files from the 1980s, where almost only the state agents, usually policemen, collected the results of their work, usually in a particularly dry and formal style.

The archive fever

Derrida's theory of the archive is based on the presumption that working for the past actually means working for the future, that reshaping the past order and possibly also past traumas establishes not only the possibility of a future but also a version of it, possibly a less traumatized one: "The archive has always been a pledge, and like every pledge [gage], a token of the future. To put it more trivially: what is no longer archived in the same way is not lived the same way. Achievable meaning is also and in advance codetermined by the structure that archives. It begins with the printer" (Derrida, "Archive Fever"). The father-son/father-daughter relations permeate his vision, since Freud's letter to his own father is discussed, and also Freud's relation to Anna. Modernity, *par excellence* the time of archives, starts with the father figure being killed by the brothers, who later re-enact the father's most hated aspects in their unconscious mimicking of the patriarchal power. The re-enacted "father" now

¹⁸ Michel Foucault's Archive online, <http://michel-foucault-archives.org/?Michel-Foucault-et-la-Pologne,306>. Translation from the French: EM.

has to confront the daughter(s), and this is where I also found myself while visiting the IPN state archive – with the “father” killed by many: the anti-communist opposition, the rebelling gay men in the 1980s, my own antipatriarchalism etc; the father re-established in me becoming an archont in the archive when I was rearranging the otherwise completely chaotic files so that they form a response to my questions about the “Hiacynt” operations, all enacting not just intellectual but also affective response to the archive and the files it contains. There is an interesting twist between the titles of two versions of Jacques Derrida’s most famous essay on the archive – in the French version we see the “evil or pain of the archive”, clearly referring to the death drive which Derrida locates in the archive. In the English title of the same text we only encounter “fever”, which in some cases cannot be good, yet it might also work as a power having contradictory significations – like the *pharmakon* or the writing, which petrifies and sets free at the same time (Derrida, “Plato’s Pharmacy” and “Archive Fever”). The *malaise*, the fever, but also sickness, was definitely my experience at the IPN, but at the same time some catharsis appeared as I slowly managed to put the puzzles of the “Hiacynt” operations together on my small desk in April 2015, 30 years after the first police operation of surveillance and control of the Polish gay community.

For a situated knowledge or feminist uses of partiality and location

Laura Poitras, the Oscar winning documentalist, who made Edward Snowden’s enunciations a publicly known matter, recently opened an exhibition at the Whitney Gallery in New York, in which she discussed the lives under surveillance, including her own¹⁹. In the debates about surveillance it is often forgotten how deeply these practices of the eyes and hands of Leviathan alter one’s life experience, especially in the times of the digital data collection when we do not even try to be nostalgic over some lost “privacy” in a sharp consciousness that perhaps we never had... The archives of the “Hiacynt” operations definitely alter the affective neutrality causing flashbacks, comparisons and associations because they contain the documentation of oppressive control actions performed by the state power on people whose only “crime” was to desire against the heteronormative social norm.

The “Hiacynt” files from the mid 1980s were produced at the time when my own father was involved in the political opposition, and also spied upon, arrested and investigated. The confrontation with files concerning men investigated by the Secret Police in the same years as my own father was, obviously is not the same experience as the one I might have visiting my father’s files, but it unexpectedly evokes memories, including traumatic ones. The “accusation” of homosexuality and sexual abuse was used against my father to discourage his students from supporting him around the year 1984 when he was arrested for 7 months. This kind of allegations were a common strategy of the Polish secret services, although obviously this is not something to be found in the IPN files, probably because the police forces did not document their own violence against gay citizens. Since my family’s contacts with the “caring” forces of the state powers are not only of dissident nature –

¹⁹ Laura Poitras, *Astro Noise: A Survival Guide for Living Under Total Surveillance*, exhibition statement for the Whitney Museum in New York 2016.

after 1989 my father became a politician, one of his responsibilities was the reshaping of the Polish Police and other institutions of repression, there is some *unheimlichkeit* in these shifts of power that condenses and collapses in the process of archive research of that period. It is only ironic that later I confronted the same executive powers of the state both as a political radical and researcher. The images of my somewhat troubled childhood were obviously brought back by the IPN files and I came to a reflection that some other people of those 11 000 affected by the "Hiacynt" action were troubled in a similar way.

The sense of privacy, the number and forms of the daily experience coding strategies, a sense of always being observed – these are peculiar experiences, and perhaps only those exposed to them know how they affect their trust in others, the sense of safety, intimacy and other aspects of life that are usually seen as the core of privacy. At my home we never had that. When I was a child, the police raids, including those actually leading to my father's imprisonment, were quite common. From a certain point we knew the apartment was bugged, so certain conversations were hushed, and some topics abandoned. The books, pillows and other things had double functions, also serving as containers of other materials, like Marx and Engels's *Communist Manifesto* which was used as a hiding place for small anti-communist leaflets since no secret policeman would think it could contain such things. This would eventually teach me certain behaviors that my friends did not develop, later we called it "hygiene in our contacts with the police", an appropriately Foucauldian term. While the proximity with the police was shaping the behaviors of my father and my own, it had a very different impact on my mother who was deeply traumatized by these restrictions of privacy, and she reacted with some classical post-traumatic stress disorder, the most theatrical manifestation of which was perhaps her habit of hiding us – herself and me, age five or six, under our big table with a candle (which could easily put our home on fire) and repeating neurotically that "they are listening" until I convinced her to go to bed. These images of my somewhat troubled childhood accompanied my reading of the IPN files on several levels – on the highly personal one, where once again I had to confront the sad obligation to calm my own mother in the times of my father's imprisonment, and on a more generalized level as well, in which, as I think I can realistically imagine, not only my mother but perhaps also some other people of those 11 000 affected by the "Hiacynt" action were traumatized by the police as well, perhaps to such extent as my mother? I was sitting there, in the IPN building, trying to mend the pieces of yet another "broken vessel" of the "Hiacynt" actions²⁰, trying to understand the logics of the police from the scattered pieces of the original texts, possibly destroyed in 90%, and at the same time revisiting traumatic memories of my parents' lives and my own childhood trauma, at the same time arranging the archive in a comprehensive way and also producing growing empathy towards the suddenly scrutinized gay men living in the 1980s Poland who sometimes had families, towards the kids whose fathers were being dragged out of homes... The scarcity of resources, but also the general argument of "they were not *really* persecuted, look at

²⁰ I am vaguely referring to Walter Benjamin's theory of translation here, see: Walter Benjamin, *The Task of Translator*, 1968.

the *real* victims of communism”, is not enough to preserve the silence of the archive and the silence of the victims of state abuse. The Polish queer communities will not build reasonable standards of state’s responsibility without a decent investigation concerning the 1980s police actions against gay men. We need to work it through, otherwise it will hunt us as a ghost of those who were persecuted and never gained peace.

Matteo Pasquinelli rightly points out that today it is metadata that seems to be the main object of investigative scrutiny. Depicting the difference between now and the times of Foucault, he argues that “the database depicts mathematically the formations of power that Foucault was used to record institutionally” (254). In his account the central position of metadata signifies that the individual was replaced by “the dividual”, production by modulation and bodies by masses and samples, just as Deleuze argued in the *Postscript to the societies of control*. This shift does not tell us that the control over individual has been replaced by the more general surveillance of groups. It informs us that the algorithms are generated far more quickly, but it also suggests that as data is collected in masses also massive mistakes and misunderstandings are possible. I would add, basing on my own experience of traumatic results of surveillance, that also massive traumas are induced on otherwise also quite insane masses of today.

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Wherever there is control, there always is resistance

In her article about queer visibility and its relations to the capitalist process of commodification, Rosemary Hennessy argues that

A way of seeing sexuality, critique insists on making connections between the emergence of a discourse or identity in industrialized social formations and the international division of labor, between sexy commodity images and labor, the spectacle and the sweat- shop, style and class (141).

In the context of the massive data collecting taking place today both in the commercial contexts but also by the state apparatus, we should understand the connection between data collecting and circulation in different parts of the world as means of control, disciplining and abuse. We should also try to think beyond the repressive hypothesis, as Foucault rightly insisted; this however cannot lead to assimilationist strategies of accepting the archives as they are, because all state regimes create oppression. The intrinsic connection between state and oppression, emphasized among others by Judith Butler, who in *Gender Trouble* makes a brilliant case of symbolic violence accompanying the binary gender divisions, and in *Excitable Speech* explains the presence of censorship in any culture, cannot lead to the blind acceptance of institutional abuse. The culture wars also lead to battles in the archives about what is stored there, how it is made accessible to the public, who is to define it.

In the post-communist countries archives have been instrumentalized by the political right, often for the purpose of discriminating against the opposition. Disagreeing with such misuses of the state archives, we cannot assume the conformist attitude of neglecting the archives as “corrupted anyways.” In order to maintain disagreement with state abuse, we need to work on dissident, oppositional, critical practices in the archive. In a recently published article, Stanimir Panayotov displays precisely the opposite position arguing that “the making of the queer archive is merely the exposure of false consciousness”. It can very well be argued that the false consciousness consists in remixing catchy phrases without comprehension. The unexamined presumption that queer politics can only survive *in actu* can perhaps seduce some rhetorically unprepared audience, but its main premises do not hold if we examine any cultural production. The refusal of engaging with the archives and more generally – with the hard work of rehearsing, transforming and queering the canon is at best a childish conformism dressed up as disobedience resulting in handing the power over our future to the archonts of the past who had centuries to profess it in ways leading to our exclusion and discrimination.

As an alternative I suggest to explode the archives with our queer radical affects, methodologies and disobedience, to invade and reshape them in such ways that for a traditional archivist will seem like a bombing. We need to enter the archives, to declare our democratic power over their content and our right to rework the twisted and abusive line of state treatment of the LGBTQA minorities. In his blatant effort to contradict any rational take on the archive, Panayotov also claims that “the formalization of remembrance and memory of sexual difference cannot be non-normative” (124). After decades of memory and archive studies, this statement seems a matter of fact only until we realize that it is embedded in a supposedly radical manifesto in which such evident truths are combined with a complete lack of interest in actually contradicting or opposing the state power. He also states that “the form of institution, apart from being a biopolitical site of exclusion, is the battlefield of identity” (121). His strategy is to give this battle up. There is no bigger conformity than that.

In the context of the “Hiacynt” archive, it is a question of whether to protect the privacy of people investigated in the 1980s or perhaps preserve the archive as a set of traces of the state’s repressive, disciplinary and controlling agency in a particular time. In Lisa Duggan’s words, “the queering of the state should proceed as a practice of dissent”. I argued in line with her that a disruptive, subversive attitude towards the part of the state archive depicted here is perhaps better than the more definitive ones demonstrated by the gay activists until now. The demands to “bring order” to the scattered and dispersed parts of the “Hiacynt” archive or the calls to eliminate this archive are both built on a sense of clarity and innocence which is never accessible in the state archives and which has also been criticized by feminist and queer researchers as an ideologized ideal in the context of defining privacy or identity. Enforcing “order” on the IPN archive, and particularly on its “Hiacynt” part, could be compared to the claims to “the objective knowledge” and the efforts to get rid of this archive – to “relativism”, both criticized by Haraway in *Situated Knowledges*.

Today neither the liquidation of the archive will be effective as scholars, politicians, journalists and others had access to it and probably also documented it, nor the demand of full order could possibly be effective given that different parts of the archive had been dispersed in different institutions and some 90% of the police documentation had been destroyed around 1989. Our knowledge will always be “partial” and situated, and perhaps this is the only way of gathering it.

It is important to emphasize that the “Hiacynt” operations directly inspired the first efforts to create gay rights organizations in Poland. Waldemar Zboralski and other gay activists demanded the acceptance of their organization which they wanted to register since 1988. Since their own efforts did not break through, they requested support from state functionaries, lawyers and politicians, who – like Professor Mikolaj Kozakiewicz – supported their petition and put some pressure on the Polish state. Then the year 1989 came, the system changed, and the first two post-“Solidarność” governments seemed actually quite promising not just for the legalization of the gay rights ngo’s and groups but also for the state engagement in the protection of the rights and liberties of the Polish gay community. This tendency of resistance seems present also today, when *Jakieś Studia Gejowskie lub Lesbijskie* [Some Gay or Lesbian Studies Journal] was created after the current minister of higher education, Jaroslaw Gowin, declared that he wants to cancel all the gender and queer studies programs at Polish universities and that the gay and lesbian studies journals should not be given any recognition²¹. We can obviously accept this politics of ignorance or we can explode it with the knowledges, practices and lived experiences aimed at a transversal, queer reshaping of culture, approaching archives like any other field of social *praxis* – with radicalism, affect and critique.

It is therefore even more important to research the past ways the Polish state investigated sexualities, to build critiques of the state surveillance, which are actually helpful and do not solely spread panic, and to form solidarity networks across the lines of class and political views in which resistance can be practiced not only theoretically. For all this to really happen, privacy needs to cease being an ideological site of privilege. This text is perhaps an effort to perform the supposedly impossible connection between the Foucauldian and Habermasian traditions, to move between the supposedly caring powers of the sovereign gaze and the conceptual framework of the public sphere in order to provide a queer-feminist critical response, embracing the risks resulting from the current forms of surveillance. The discussion about how a state archive should function, also as a resource of information concerning sexuality, is *par excellence* a public sphere topic, and it allows us to undermine the liberal optimistic vision of the public as a blessing. It also undermines the conservative repressive silencing of sex minorities and gender radicals, leading to a more egalitarian society of dissent. I do not believe that without a strong queer counterpublics any interesting social changes could be reached. As Derrida claimed, and as the state functionaries very well know, the archives

²¹ Jaroslaw Gowin’s statement in Polish: <http://wyborcza.pl/1,75478,19198390,minister-gowin-reforma-nauki-i-szkolnictwa-wyzszego-zaboli.html> (accessed 10.09.2016); *Some Gay or Lesbian Studies Journal* website: <https://jsll.wordpress.com> (accessed 01.10.2017).

have the power over our future. Regardless, whether it is based on our progeny or merely on the digital avatars of our precious selves, we might want it freed from the hetero-matrix.

I think that Gayatri Spivak ("Scattered Speculations") was right when she argued that Habermas's model of the public sphere should not be forgotten, but it should constantly be resisted. In this sense queering the public means not only using the existing public sphere against a repressive archive, it also means permeating the collective critical strategies and techniques with somewhat deconstructive and counter-liberal insights. In one of his earlier books, *In a Queer Time and Place* Jack Halberstam makes several suggestions concerning queer archive. He argues that

by reckoning only with Brandon's story, as opposed to the stories of his girlfriends, his family, and those other two teenagers who died alongside him, we consent to a liberal narrative of individualized trauma. For Brandon's story to be meaningful, it must be about more than Brandon (33).

It is important to notice that a tacit claim for radical archivization is embedded in this generally innocent statement. What is important in this claim however is the insistence on not separating the queer from the (supposedly) non-queer. I tried to show that this insistence could be developed into noticing elements of disruption or subversion in the institutions supposedly functioning as the key agents of the social order, such as the police. In the behavior of the contemporary archivists and historical agents of government control there is sometimes more subversion than in the actions of some activists or supposed radicals. This paradox is one of the highlights in this text.

On the 25th of September 2007 two gay rights activists, Szymon Niemiec and Jacek Adler filed a demand to the IPN to investigate the "Hiacynt Action", as they called it, as a case of a crime against the Polish nation. The response came on the 29th of January 2008 in the form of decision of the Regional Court in Warsaw that there is no sufficient ground to find a crime in the agency of the Polish authorities. The Chief of the IPN at the time, Janusz Kurtyka, made a stronger claim – he said, that the "organs" of the Polish state acted to protect the population. As most of the actual witnesses of the events do not talk openly and the only documentation of the "facts" remains police data, scattered as it is, most probably destroyed in 90% or more, we will never be able to reconstruct the events surrounding the "Hiacynt" operations in fully credible ways. There is however some hope in visiting even these scattered archive, there is something more than actual orders, arguments and practices of the state functionaries that we can find there. The constant curiosity and "caring" engagement of the state authorities with our bodily and sexual practices is once again documented there. I believe that it is worth going to the IPN archives just to learn about that. It is not only interesting as a historical fact. The states do investigate our bodily and sexual practices still now, only now their technological capacities expanded to an extent which is difficult to imagine. Obviously, the visit to the IPN archives was useful also because it allows understanding of the processes. We can

accept this clear abuse based on a misinterpretation of the historical facts, or we can undermine the way the archives have been organized with critical practice.

My visit to the IPN archives was useful because it allowed me to understand the mechanism of one of the most enigmatic operations of the Polish state in the 1980s. It is a necessary companion to the traumatized memories of those who, because of the "Hiacynt" operations, but very probably – mostly because of other police actions, became the victims of homophobic crimes. Their pain, their trauma and oppression should never be forgotten, and it is, I think, an important part of any researcher's work, including my own, not only to remind others of it, but also to act upon this moral and political premise so that any form of registering, segregation or gender, race, ethnicity, ableism or sexual orientation-based bias can never be deployed again. In this I join Zinn's postulate of "archive activism", while also queering it in ways depicted above. I hope that both queer archives and the process of queering the state archive will soon accelerate.

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Upublicznianie wbrew naszej woli?

Opiekuńczy wzrok Lewiatana, polskie „różowe teczki” z lat 80. XX w. i kwestia prywatności

Artykuł jest próbą zrozumienia logiki dużej akcji przeprowadzonej przez milicję obywatelską i służby specjalne, polegającej na inwigilacji i bezpośredniej kontroli homoseksualnych mężczyzn w Polsce pod koniec lat 80. XX w. Aktywiści LGBTQ+ twierdzą, że akcją objęto około 11.000 mężczyzn, lecz akcja ta nigdy nie została rzetelnie zbadana. Po 1989 r. nie zostały też podjęte przez wymiar sprawiedliwości żadne kroki naprawcze. Niniejszy artykuł łączy „aktywizm archiwalny” Howarda Zinna (i dzielących jego poglądy queerowych aktywistów i teoretyków) z wybranymi elementami teorii sfery publicznej i kontrpublik (Kluge i Negt, Warner et al.), dekonstruktywizm krytyczny oraz feministyczne badania na temat archiwów i prywatności (Derrida, Berlant, Gatens), by otworzyć dyskusję na temat tego, jak queerować rozproszone państwowe archiwa milicji i służb specjalnych bez petyfikacji, nostalgii i poddawania się. Autorka rozważa szerokie spektrum implikacji „bycia osobami publicznymi wbrew naszej woli”, przedstawiania form oporu i nieposłuszeństwa, a także „archiwizowania wbrew ich woli” w instytucjonalnym kontekście unikania odpowiedzialności.

Słowa kluczowe: archiwa, Akcja „Hiacynt”, inwigilacja homoseksualnych mężczyzn, milicja obywatelska