AN ARCHIVES FEEL? EMOTIONS AND TRAUMA IN ARCHIVES; SOME PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING DESCRIPTION OF EMOTIONAL AND TRAUMA-RELATED ARCHIVAL SOURCES ROBERT PARNICA

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Robert Parnica[1]

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Abstract

Purpose: *This paper aims to investigate and elaborate on the definition of ‚emotional archival sources.‘. Emotional or trauma sources are the notion that some archivists and archival theoreticians have frequently used when dealing with significant violations of Human Rights, war destruction, and massive human suffering. First, the author investigates how the archives and archivists can „feel" the emotional „weight" of those sources and if they can genuinely depict the trauma behind them by using proper and unbiased descriptive terms and expressions. The second level of analysis focuses on the ethical and professional problems of content description in archival praxis and the issues archivist face during their work.*

Method: *The paper reviews available literature and analyzes the descriptions of several archival collections from the institutional archival catalog that raised professional and ethical concerns on bias and objectivity within the archival profession. By comparing diverse emotional sources encapsulating various historical and individual stories, archivists often stay on their own when deciding on ethical and other professional issues. The paper analyzes how emotional sources have multiple personal and societal meanings, as seen through some recent cultural criticism theories.*

Results: *The emotional sources embody disturbing content in text, photos, and moving image materials that temporarily reduce our rational cognition during archival processing, especially description. Emotional and cognitive empathy are explained in the broader context of ethics of care. Archivists describe and label metadata under the impact of emotional content and contextual information, but also archivists themselves are prone to emotional distress and emotional empathy, including secondary trauma.*

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1   Robert Parnica – Blinken OSA (Open Society Archives), phd candidate at Alma Mater Europaea University, E-mail: parnicar@ceu.edu and robertparnica@gmail.com.

Conclusions: *Emotional sources appear to be challenging to define and describe. Each trauma-related archival collection has a specific historical context requiring adequate descriptive language, terminology, and contextual information, making it difficult for archivists to make the right and long-term professional decisions.*

Keywords*: emotional sources, archival description, affect, emotional and cognitive empathy, secondary trauma, ethics of care,*

GLI ARCHIVI POSSONO SENTIRE? EMOZIONI E TRAUMA NEGLI ARCHIVI; ALCUNE CONSIDERAZIONI PROFESSIONALI ED ETICHE RIGUARDO ALLA DESCRIZIONE DELLE FONTI ARCHIVISTICHE EMOTIVE E RELATIVE AL TRAUMA

Abstract

Scopo: *Questo articolo mira a investigare ed elaborare la definizione di „fonti archivistiche emotive". Le fonti emotive o di trauma sono la nozione che alcuni archivisti e teorici dell'archivistica hanno frequentemente utilizzato quando si tratta di violazioni significative dei Diritti Umani, distruzione in guerra e massiccio dolore umano. In primo luogo, l'autore indaga su come gli archivi e gli archivisti possano „percepire" il „peso" emotivo di queste fonti e se possano realmente rappresentare il trauma che si cela dietro di esse utilizzando termini e espressioni descrittive appropriati e imparziali. Il secondo livello di analisi si concentra sui problemi etici e professionali della descrizione dei contenuti nella prassi archivistica e sulle questioni che gli archivisti affrontano durante il loro lavoro.*

Metodo: *L'articolo esamina la letteratura disponibile e analizza le descrizioni di diverse collezioni archivistiche provenienti dal catalogo archivistico istituzionale che sollevano preoccupazioni professionali ed etiche riguardo al bias e all'obiettività all'interno della professione archivistica. Confrontando diverse fonti emotive che racchiudono varie storie storiche e individuali, gli archivisti spesso si trovano da soli nel decidere su questioni etiche e di altro tipo professionale. L'articolo analizza come le fonti emotive abbiano molteplici significati personali e sociali, come visto attraverso alcune recenti teorie della critica culturale.*

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Risultati: *Le fonti emotive incarnano contenuti disturbanti in testi, foto e materiali audiovisivi che riducono temporaneamente la nostra cognizione razionale durante l'elaborazione archivistica, in particolare la descrizione. L'empatia emotiva e cognitiva è spiegata nel contesto più ampio dell'etica della cura. Gli archivisti descrivono e etichettano i metadati sotto l'impatto di contenuti emotivi e informazioni contestuali, ma anche gli archivisti stessi sono soggetti a stress emotivo e empatia emotiva, incluso il trauma secondario.*

Conclusioni: *Le fonti emotive sembrano essere difficili da definire e descrivere. Ogni collezione archivistica correlata al trauma ha un contesto storico specifico che richiede un linguaggio descrittivo adeguato, una terminologia e informazioni contestuali, rendendo difficile per gli archivisti prendere decisioni professionali corrette e a lungo termine.*

Parole chiave: *fonti emotive, descrizione archivistica, affetto, empatia emotiva e cognitiva, trauma secondario, etica della cura.*

ALI ARHIVI ČUTIJO? ČUSTVA IN TRAVMA V ARHIVIH; STROKOVNI IN ETIČNI PREMISLKI V ZVEZI Z OPISOM ARHIVSKIH VIROV, POVEZANIH S ČUSTVENIMI IN TRAVMAMI

Izvleček

Namen: *Namen tega prispevka je raziskati in podrobneje opredeliti definicijo 'čustvenih arhivskih virov'. Čustveni ali travmatični viri so pojmi, ki so jih nekateri arhivisti in arhivski teoretiki pogosto uporabljali, ko so se ukvarjali s pomembnimi kršitvami človekovih pravic, vojnim uničenjem in ogromnim človeškim trpljenjem. Avtor najprej raziskuje, kako lahko arhivi in arhivisti »začutijo« čustveno »težo« teh virov in ali lahko z ustreznimi in nepristranskimi opisnimi izrazi pristno prikažejo travmo, ki stoji za njimi. Druga raven analize se osredotoča na etične in strokovne probleme opisovanja vsebine v arhivski praksi ter vprašanja, s katerimi se arhivisti srečujejo pri svojem delu.*

Metoda: *Prispevek pregleduje razpoložljivo literaturo in analizira opise več arhivskih zbirk iz institucionalnega arhivskega kataloga, ki so vzbujali strokovne in etične pomisleke o pristranskosti in objektivnosti znotraj arhivske stroke. S*

primerjavo različnih čustvenih virov, ki zaobjemajo različne zgodovinske in individualne zgodbe, arhivisti pri odločanju o etičnih in drugih strokovnih vprašanjih pogosto ostanejo sami. Prispevek analizira, kako lahko imajo čustveni viri več osebnih in družbenih pomenov, kot je razvidno iz nekaterih nedavnih teorij kulturne kritike.

Rezultati: *Čustveni viri utelešajo moteče vsebine v besedilih, fotografijah in materialih gibljivih slik, ki med arhivsko obdelavo, zlasti z opisovanjem, začasno zmanjšajo naše razumsko spoznanje. Čustvena in kognitivna empatija sta razloženi v širšem kontekstu etike skrbi. Arhivisti opisujejo in označujejo metapodatke pod vplivom čustvene vsebine in kontekstualnih informacij, vendar so tudi arhivisti sami nagnjeni k čustvenim stiskam in čustveni empatiji, vključno s sekundarno travmo.*

Sklepi: *Opazimo, da je čustvene vire težko definirati in opisati. Vsaka arhivska zbirka, povezana s travmo, ima poseben zgodovinski kontekst, ki zahteva ustrezen opisni jezik, terminologijo in kontekstualne informacije, kar arhivistom otežuje sprejemanje pravih in dolgoročnih strokovnih odločitev.*

Ključne besede: *čustveni viri, arhivski opis, afekt, čustvena in kognitivna empatija, sekundarna travma, etika skrbi.*

INTRODUCTION

This work analyzes archival materials – textual, moving images, photos, and digital – that embody intense emotional sensations and trauma about past events. They represent an authentic and trustworthy testimony about somebody's life trauma that can be used either for a legal battle or writing a historical narration, but for some critical cultural concepts to reflect on the nature of emotional and trauma materials. These materials are essential testimonies and proof of social, ethnic, political, or racial injustice, human rights violations, and human suffering. Besides human rights archives, the traditional archives often hide emotional sources that remain hidden because dominating ideological and intellectual currents were unaware of marginal social groups and those oppressed. Thus, archivists nowadays become aware of hidden voices and their narrators who stay deeply covered under the piles of archival boxes of an official historical narrative of the so-called „colonial" archives. Recently, some of these materials gradually made critical legal cases and political issues (Thomas & Fowler, 2017; Azoulay, 2019).

Materials that testify to significant human rights violations and human suffering can be perceived in several directions from the archivists' and users' points of view, as well as those of the archival institutions and critical scholarship with their cultural theories (Nathan et al. 2015). The rise of postmodernism has democratized and pluralized the concepts and views on analyzing and explaining archives and archival work, including their sensitive and trauma-related archival collections. The "affective turn" that emerged in the 1990s introduced debates on emotions and feelings in archival science, which became a legitimate object for scholarly discussion (Cifor, 2016). This led to the introduction of an "ethics of care" that appeared as a strong criticism of the liberal discourse, which found little room for emotions and affect as an object of scientific study. (Larsson, 2020).

The power of emotional sensation encapsulated in the emotional and traumatic source triggers users to imagine the event and deeply co-feel the traumatic situation (past, weather conditions, location, etc.). Such records can act as "autonomous beings living and breathing and performing user's desires" (Tai et al., 2019, 16.). Today, archivists have adopted the concept of a trauma-informed approach to managing such collections vis-a-vis their researchers and their archivist col-

leagues because trauma is pervasive and affects everyone (Laurent & Wright, 2020). While dealing with the emotional materials, archivists started to recognize a need for support and help due to stress and "secondary trauma." Secondary trauma is a term recognized in some disciplines, and it is manifested by "compassion fatigue or vicarious traumatization (Sloan et al., 2019).

In this work, the author analyzes the emotional materials from the archivist's point of view, vis-a-vis their users, and the descriptive metadata (terminology) they use when dealing with such materials. However, recently, it has also been recognized that archivists could be exposed to secondary trauma because of their professional work when they process, analyze, describe, present, and represent emotional and trauma-related sources (Regehr et al., 2023).

The study is a self-reflexive inquiry into a complex area of emotional and trauma archival materials, chiefly elaborated on through their symbolic and functional meaning. In the first part of this paper, the author reflects on recent literature on the emotions in archives and questions if archivists can capture and justly describe the truth of emotional materials in archival descriptions. The author presupposes considerable tension between professional description and ethical decisions in being a just and neutral actor during the archival processing. However, there is a crucial part of subjective elements that consciously and non-consciously impact archival descriptions, the process during which archivist's ethics could play a significant role. The author further elaborates on the archival praxis of emotions firmly under the impact of modernism and specific cultural concepts such as social justice, radical ethics, affect trauma, imagined records, etc. In the second part of this paper, the author analyzes three archival collections from the Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives in Budapest, containing a considerable quantity and intensity of the affect in selected collections, including some issues concerning their proper content descriptions.

CAN ARCHIVES FEEL? AFFECT AND TRAUMA IN ARCHIVES

Historians and other researchers encountered many emotions in archives, research institutions, museums, and libraries. Since the 1990s, „the affective turn" has been named by scientific and cultural theorists of affect, who found alternatives to the psychoanalytic approach to affect (Cifor & Gilliland, 2015). They

claimed that affect, feelings, and emotions are powerful and legitimate objects of academic research and exist in meaningful connection to each other. While the concept of affect has distinctive meanings in cultural studies, these terms are used interchangeably in different disciplines and professions. Cifor states (Cifor, 2016, 8) that the definition of affect is a force that creates a relationship between the individual or collective body and the world (Lowry, 2019). For Cifor, archives also produce and reproduce both social justice and injustice in their shaping of the past, engagement in the present, and building the future (Cifor, 2016). Thus, for Cifor, affect is the principal component of social justice work and aims. For Shouse, an affect is a non-conscious experience of intensity, a moment of un-formed and unstructured potential. „Affect is the body's way of preparing itself for action in a given circumstance by adding a quantitative dimension of intensity to the quality of an experience" (Shouse, 2005). He distinguishes between three terms: *emotions* that are social, *affects* that are pre-personal, and *feelings* that are individual and biographical. It brings us to what kinds of affect and emotions are experienced in archives during archival processing. To what extent do archival sources capture or hold emotions, and what ethical dilemma do they pose for archivists? Gilliland and Cifor stated that archival ethics in this area concern activism in various human rights and community archives (Cifor & Gilliland, 2015). Because of the increased trauma and distress found today in archives and libraries, many archives follow ethical standards to inform their users of possi-ble disturbing content of their collections or books (Russell, 2018; Laurent and Wright, 2020). Finally, it also brings us to the problem of archivists and their handling of emotions and affect.

In many societies, certain social strata, ethnic and national minorities, different races or sexual groups, women, etc., were denied from their histories. They were thus de-legitimized and de-historized by being excluded from the mainstream narrative because there are no visible traces of their existence in archives (Azou-lay, 2019). It could happen unconsciously due to the lack of knowledge and social justice, but more often, it happens deliberately and consciously with a hidden agenda (Cook, 2011). As the appraisal of such materials becomes an essential pro-fessional and ethical question, the archival description is an equally complex and challenging task. It depends on the archivist's knowledge and moral and ethical

integrity. The terms and words archivists use in their descriptions and metadata attribution always lag new theoretical and philosophical currents that affect archival science. Even recent court decisions at international courts made archival descriptions – old and obsolete.

Archivists have become increasingly self-conscious and aware of their archival practice as essential to societal memory systems. With the change in archival paradigms and the advance of modernism, archivists also had to calibrate their work to a new value system. The notion that the archivist should be an objective curator, passive, and neutral was challenged by the notion of conscious mediator, activism, and subjectivism centered around values (Cook, 2011). T. Cook describes a fundamental problem of assigning values to collections during appraisal. However, he claims that legal norms and moral judgments should be seen as evidence from positivist and objectivist roots, including memory. In contrast, a value set and subjective notion derive from postmodernist philosophical and theoretical currents (Cook, 2011).

This section starts with whether archival descriptions of emotional sources can be „honest" and represent the truth and, in short, if an archivist can be an honest broker in capturing the truth. Even well-intentioned and educated archivists can make mistakes by perpetuating inherent injustice in archival descriptions and writing patronizing and erroneous descriptions (Winn, 2017). There is a complex question that archival science needs to address. Are archivists ready to face their professional practice of institutionalized dehumanizing minorities, including indigenous peoples, Black people, sexual minorities, immigrants, and other war-torn and marginalized communities? Caswell thus focuses on the process by which archivists contribute to the omission or erasure of historically marginalized groups, known as „symbolic annihilation" (Caswell, 2014). Another area that archival science faces is how individual archivists can recognize and reprogram their internal cultural biases when facing hegemonic structures in archives. Azoulay suggests decolonizing professional archival practice by stripping it from its ideological foundations of description (Azoulay, 2019; Winn, 2017).

Finally, the question persists. Should archivists still strive to remain „neutral," using unbiased vocabulary in their descriptions, or should they „feel" and sense the trauma from the emotional sources they describe and thus be more authentic

for the historical narration? There are no satisfactory answers to these questions. Still, archivists should be able to recognize colonial or ideological archival hierarchies and warn their users that some of the collections carry prejudice, ideology, and cultural biases incompatible with our present time.

DESCRIBING EMOTIONAL SOURCES

Describing emotions and emotional sources, we can explain from a professional, theoretical, and symbolic point of view. The author briefly elaborates on the historical phases during which archivists worked, reflecting on their time's dominating social, ideological, and philosophical currents. The Enlightenment brought archival descriptions and standards, where an archivist's role was to reveal the significance and meaning of the archival records without constructing meanings or narrations through his professional activity by establishing intellectual control over the materials. Under the strong impact of new theoretical thoughts in the post-World War II period up to the 1990s (marked by the latest historical current in the archival description, which focused on archival processes such as archival selection and appraisal), they often questioned notions of traditional descriptions. That saw archival intervention outside the construction of meanings and the exercise of power (Duff & Harris, 2002). Finally, the last decade of the 20th and first two of the 21st centuries brought an emergence of the current, which was the result of „postmodernist" inquiry into the archival science that completely transformed it from the inside (Ketelaar, 2000; Cook, 2001; Nesmith, 2002; Cook, 2013; Gauld, 2017). Although partly based on the archival selection and appraisal, the new current posed many fundamental questions concerning archival descriptions. Some of them include whether archivists actively construct the meaning and importance of the historical record or question the relation between archival „context" and „content." Could interventions in archival descriptions still reflect inherited power relations? To what extent do archivists have moral and ethical considerations and obligations to embrace those excluded and marginalized voices from mainstream history? Or is an archivist a storyteller, a profession exclusively reserved for historians (Duff & Harris, 2002)? Could archival description be perceived as a form of narration, and how far is it from ideology? Mark Martinezo stated in his address to the 2015 Library Information Technology Associ-

ation forum that archival descriptions and metadata are „another space in which ideology and systematic oppression are likely to be reproduced" (Winn, 2017, 2). Despite existing international, descriptive standards (ISAD(g), RIC, and others), as mentioned above, the question remains open: whether a consistent standardization of archival descriptions for professionals and mainstream history can fully describe the fundamental nature of emotional sources.

Based on historical and practical currents in the archival description, the author briefly reflects on the ‚descriptive architecture' that embraces a way of deconstructing archival descriptions. Archivists strive to preserve the original archival internal and external structure in their professional work. There are two acknowledged archival traditions. The series system derives from the recordkeeping tradition developed in Australia. The system based on record series as an independent element is not bound to the administrative context, dropping out the importance of provenance. However, the second approach is fonds-based tradition, which creates entities based on provenance and original order characteristics of European archival tradition. Thus, provenance protects the sources' evidential value by preserving the acts and deeds of the bodies that create them. Terry Cook suggests that fonds could be seen as an ‚intellectual construct' rather than a ‚physical entity' (Cook, 1992). However, both the fond-based and series system approaches have the same goal of reflecting on the context of recording and preserving the evidential value of archival documents (Duff & Harris, 2002).

Tom Nesmith emphasizes that the description of archival sources can change the record's meaning by making and remaking records through archivists' representations and by uniquely describing them at various times (Nesmith, 2002). There is a specific power to define and transform archival materials derived from different provenance views. Each story that the archivist describes the records, each description they write - significantly changes them.

Before concluding this part, it is also essential to mention the impact of emotional and trauma sources on archival professionals because dealing with evidence of human pain and suffering can cause 'unsettling emotional responses' (Sloan et al., 2019; Regehr et al., 2022). A recent study showed a wide range of reactions and emotions, including shock, sense of deep anger, intrusive thoughts, sadness, disillusion, and despair, which can cause disrupted functioning personally and

in archival work (Regehr et al., 2022). One factor causes increased vulnerability to distress in archival professions dealing with emotional sources, which could relate to emphatic engagement with its two processes: emotional and cognitive. Archivists develop different strategies to combat distress and show resilience, but all this depends on the content, the form it takes, the intensity, the length of exposure, and the degree of individual emotional responses that each person can withstand the pressure.

Further on, archivists exposed to emotional and traumatic records can develop intimate relationships during which personal experiences can be blended into one field of filing and experience (Koss-Chinoino, 2006). Caswell and Cifor introduced a deliberate approach toward emotional empathy, introducing the term "radical empathy," which has the potential to create change. However, at the same time, radical empathy could be dangerous for archivists and archives because they could appropriate the experience of trauma under the mask of empathy (Caswell & Cifor, 2016). Caswell and Cifor distinguish between emotional and cognitive empathy. Cognitive empathy is thus a process during which an emphatic person or archivist can accurately imagine the viewpoint of the oppressed and perceive their pain (Regehr et al., 2022). Both empathies, emotional and cognitive, have implications for the development of stress and trauma behavior in archivists' work with the emotional and trauma materials.

FRAGMENTING ARCHIVAL DESCRIPTIONS

The last decade of the 20th century saw the development of the record continuum (McKemmish et al., 2006) and other theories in which descriptive standards appeared to support the growing online dissemination and exchange of descriptive information (Wood et al., 2014). These are value-added and post hoc descriptions of archival records gathered around the metadata. There is a complexity and interdependence of different forms of metadata because of technological progress that introduced several layers of internal and external metadata (NISO, 2004; Riley, 2017). Metadata helps researchers locate groups of related items from the regular work of one person or corporate body, and it also helps identify and retrieve digital objects. Cultural heritage institutions heavily use descriptive metadata to describe a resource's content better, which allows for finding or understanding it

(Riley, 2017). Archival records earn their trustworthiness according to how they and their metadata adhere to accepted archival principles that ensure they are not manipulated or changed. Record trustworthiness depends on preserving the integrity of its form and content, where proper metadata attribution plays a crucial role (Sternfeld, 2011).

Many academic fields criticized how ‚archival power' has been traditionally exercised. The twenty-first century characterizes the growing need to pluralize, diversify, and activate the archives and archivists supporting social justice and human rights aims (Nathan et al., 2015; Gilliland, 2011). Archival scholars and government officials identified archival descriptions as a critical factor in the oppression, silencing, marginalization, traumatization, and alienation of individuals and entire communities, which remained excluded from mainstream narratives (Wood et al., 2014). Archival descriptions of human rights and social justice perspectives have critical issues, such as the impossibility of separating the record from the politics of its origin and human life.

Value-added archival descriptions are intrinsically connected with archival intervention in contemporary archival practice and archival theory, where ethics plays a significant role. Codes of ethics in archival institutions encourage archivists to be neutral and impartial in their activities so that the public and record creators can trust their institutions and repositories. The Codes of ethics thus established public faith in archives and their activity in society (Dingwall, 2004; Heđbeli, 2008; Semlič Rajh, 2013). The postmodernist turn saw archival neutrality as increasingly problematic and controversial because of its prominent place in building and preserving memory on one side and politics on the other (Gilliland, 2011). However, how can archival descriptions allow for the diversity of hidden voices throughout archival collections to speak out?

When describing records, archivists highlight some relationships, ignore others, remember certain things, and forget or even hide others (Duff & Harris, 2002). Terry Cook emphasized that neutrality and impartiality are no longer acceptable (Cook, 1997). Archivists find it challenging to describe records as unbiased, neutral, or objective because they consciously and unintentionally inject their values into the process. The description, thus, always creates a story, but they tell stories about the stories. However, archival storytelling has its dangers, a power of

the narrative that can privilege one and marginalize the other story to construct knowledge and exercise control. Archival descriptions reflect the values of the archivist who created them.

For this reason, we must document and make visible these biases, assumptions, and interpretations that influence and shape archival descriptions (Duff & Harris, 2002). Archivists' biases will always shape and distort the records during description; thus, they must discuss which attributes in documents require greater emphasis and which can be diminished. Despite some voices being silenced, the archivist has an ethical and professional duty to ,see' and recognize these voices and should strive to respect the rights of all voices. Duff and Harris advocate ,descriptive architectures' that archivists need to create as holes that allow in the voices of their users. For this, archivists will identify all distinct types of existing and potential archival users. They also suggest a liberatory rather than oppressive descriptive standard that would encourage archivists to be open to other telling and re-telling competing stories (Duff & Harris, 2002).

Anne Gilliland and Michelle Caswell dealt with individual and collective imaginings about the non-existing or unreachable and absent archive by introducing two relevant concepts: imagined records and impossible archival imaginaries (Gilliland & Caswell, 2016). Both authors introduced the discussion on nature and the role of affect. For archival practice to consider imagined records means taking effect as an essential part of evaluating and describing emotional archival sources. However, Halilovich (2014) described how survivors of the ethnic cleansing and genocide in Bosnia and the Bosnian refugee diaspora perceive the experience of missing personal records and material evidence of their local and communal histories. As refugees at various geographic points, the members of the fragmented community imagine distant spaces in their home places, streets, houses, and the people they used to meet. Although dispersed and separated physically, they created a parallel network of imagined communities that now function – virtually (Halilovich, 2014). The members of those communities mutually helped each other recreate their own ,emotional' archives and preserve memories, reinforcing their ,erased' identities in virtual and real life.

ETHICAL CONCERNS OVER THE IDENTITY OF THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY AND THE „PUBLIC GOOD" - JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES LEGAL BATTLE FOR THE KUSSEROW FAMILY ARCHIVES

Preserving marginal historical materials and hidden voices is essential for several reasons. However, there is tension when preserving the identity of one marginal group when confronting broader community interests. Social responsibility for the hidden voices in the community has been shown in the ongoing legal case in Germany (Hickley, 2022). Jehovah's Witnesses pursued legal action against the German Government to claim the family archive that documents the history of their religious group. The Museum of Military History in Dresden bought the archive from a family member. The archive consists of 31 files of documents, including intimate letters and family photos relating to the Kusserow family, whose members were arrested, imprisoned, and murdered by the Nazi regime, creating thus a body of „emotional archival material." Jehovah's Witnesses religious group heavily suffered during the Nazi regime when more than 4000 members were imprisoned at Nazi concentration camps where they were given uniforms marked by a purple triangle. One thousand six hundreds of them died. They were the only prisoners who could choose to leave the concentration camp if they signed a declaration and renounced their faith. The legal battle showed two just and equally valid principles and ethical issues concerning privacy, identity, social justice, and public good that the German court needs to resolve. On one side was the Jehovah's Witnesses claiming that the Kusserow family's possession is crucial for preserving their religious identity as a unique cultural heritage. They claimed the archives to be returned to the central archive of their faith. However, the representatives of the Military Museum are also on the other side of the legal battle. They consider including the objects from the family archive in their museum as ,considerable value' for the museum and the public good. The selected objects testify to and are a forceful reminder that religious freedom and strong beliefs must be defended and fought repeatedly (Hickley, 2022). The legal battle between two approaches toward sensitive and emotional archival materials continues with substantial ethical and moral consequences.

Tai and al. (2019), in their research of communal archival users, found out that some records go far beyond their evidential and informational value and that they perform in "... a myriad of ways – whether in performance of personal or

community identity…" (Tai and al., 2019, 16). Such records can liberate, make visible, and act as agents for their users. For Tai and al., records exhibit agency in materializing individual and collective desire for representation within larger historical narratives (Tai et al., 2019, 16). According to authors, archivists have a responsibility to help fill the silence of archives they work in and to be personally accountable by possessing ethical imperative for inclusion, acceptance, and historical and cultural contributions of those marginalized (Tai et al., 2019, 16).

The case, as mentioned earlier with Jehovah's Witness, illustrates how trauma-related archival materials are essential not only for this marginal group to preserve its religious and cultural identity and preserve a strong bond with its perished members but also for the broader cultural community. Emotional sources thus preserve their memory of the historical trauma relating to the Holocaust. Still, they also became the symbol for protecting the unique religious identity that the community keeps together.

ARCHIVAL DESCRIPTIONS IN BLINKEN OSA – A FEW EXAMPLES

Terminology in archival descriptions is crucial to their affirmation, findability, access, and identity formation. The following part focuses on the comparative analysis of three analog archival collections with their audiovisual materials and their descriptions of emotional materials, which are available in the institutional online catalog of Blinken Open Society Archives.

The methodology applied for this analysis included comparing the most common descriptive terms/names used in the online catalog and the item-level descriptions of their metadata. The author grouped the terms into four units: a. geographical names, b. national and individual names, c. legal and value concepts, and 4. strong expressions and terms associated with war trauma and suffering. Table 1. shows the number and extent of geographical terms that appear in the catalog for two audiovisual Series: Records of the International Human Rights Law Institute Relating to the Conflict in the Former Yugoslavia, series ‚Video Recordings Relating to the conflict in the Former Yugoslavia (HU OSA 304-0-16), and the Records of the International Monitor Institute, Balkan Archives (HU OSA 350-1-1).

The titles and basic content descriptions were inherited as the donor or creator attributed them. In this initial phase, we consult the information provided on the medium (VHS tapes) and the inventory list. The first problem appears when the archivist processes and describes the series. During that phase, additional given names and terms are added within ISAD(g) container-level descriptions relating to its content. During processing and adding new descriptive metadata, numerous professional and ethical problems emerge.

The problems appeared with unknown geographic names and troponins characteristic of the micro-region that are unknown to archivists and whose limited knowledge of the locations relies exclusively on the creators' description. In such situations, the archivist does not judge or validate the authenticity of original VHS tapes' descriptions but only enters new ones and corrects spelling mistakes. The accurate description of geographical names and their mapping with geolocations could be beneficial for users who want to spot spatial and temporal events.

Table 1: The appearance of geographical names in two collections (HU OSA 304-0-16 and 350-1-1)

GEOGRAPHICAL TERMS	HU OSA 304 - 0 - 16 237 VHS tapes	HU OSA 350 – 1 – 1 1326 VHS tapes	HU OSA 386-8-3 Textual
Bosnia	185	2037	58
Croatia	103	1715	0
Serbia	121	1601	0
Kosovo	32	1207	0
Former Yugoslavia	52	929	0
Sarajevo	115	726	2
Beograd	0	5	0
Zagreb	15	79	0
Dubrovnik	32	49	0
Srebrenica	121	163	21
Prijedor	5	23	0
Vukovar	20	81	0
Omarska	11	62	0

The second group of terms used in archival descriptions are those relating to ethnic, personal, and national names, as shown in Table 2. Those names and geographical names represent the most reliable and acceptable part inherited from the creators' descriptions and are genuinely relevant for a successful online

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search. Similar problems occur with the personal names of unknown individuals (politicians, military leaders, etc.), sometimes local and marginal, whose information about their role during conflict is difficult to discover and validate.

Table 2: Terms used in descriptions relating to personal, ethnic, and national names (HU OSA 304-0-16 and 350-1-1).

Personal, Religious, and National Names	HU OSA 304 - 0 - 16 237 VHS tapes	HU OSA 350 – 1 – 1 1326 VHS tapes	HU OSA 386-3-8 Textual
Milošević	15	442	0
Karadžić	12	247	0
Mladić	4	129	0
Arkan	13	117	0
Izetbegović	2	74	0
Tuđman	15	186	0
Albanians	40	854	0
Serbs	47	486	0
Muslims	93	142	0
Croats	24	93	0

The third group of terms used for archival descriptions consists of legal and complex value concepts deriving from the content of the VHS, which are prone to subjective judgment, archivists' knowledge and understanding of the context, and the collection's content. Table 3 illustrates the most used terms and frequency of these two audiovisual collections.

Table 3: Legal and value terms (HU OSA 304-0-16 and 350-1-1).

Legal and value judgment terms	HU OSA 304 - 0 - 16 237 VHS tapes	HU OSA 350 – 1 – 1 1326 VHS tapes	HU OSA 386-3-8 Textual
War	206	1102	10
Refugees	56	590	3
Women	46	236	2
Terror	6	232	0
War crime	32	168	1
Rape	62	161	0
Conflict	23	147	1
War criminals	5	139	0
Trial	8	120	0
Victims	30	117	13
Camps	37	87	2

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Mass graves	6	78	2
Ethnic Cleansing	5	50	0
Evidence	12	48	0
Propaganda	6	40	0
Genocide	8	38	1

Finally, the last group of terms represents ‚strong' words associated with trauma and suffering and remains in the archivist's exclusive attribution domain. These terms could contain their own beliefs, biases, and misperceptions but also support sympathy and everything related to emotional empathy when archivists cannot distinguish between emotion and their experience while working with traumatic sources. These acts of naming and describing are frequently unintentional and could result from several factors relating to emotional and cognitive empathy, as well as a lack of relevant information, adequate historical knowledge, or contextual information. Finally, archivists, too, could be under emotional pressure and stress to make descriptions that reflect their subjective views and emotions.

Table 4: Terms - nouns and verbs relating to intense emotions and trauma associated with heavy crime and suffering often subjectively selected by the describer (HU OSA 304-0-16 and 350-1-1).

Trauma, Suffering, and Affect	HU OSA 304 - 0 - 16 237 VHS tapes	HU OSA 350 – 1 – 1 1326 VHS tapes	HU OSA 386-3-8 Textual
Destruction	4	0	1
Shelling	12	54	0
Suffering	7	23	3
Killings	5	51	0
Bombing	1	424	0
Torture	14	42	0
Burning	6	49	0
Slaughter	4	10	0
Help	22	105	2

There is a substantial difference in describing archival materials, which was a product of some new agency or television house that attributed their shootings with terms and concepts they wanted to emphasize. By doing this, they also formed the dominant mainstream paradigm of the conflict. In the most described emotional materials, the producer deliberately cut scenes of trauma and selected

those for public viewing. It meant that they were censored and sanitized by their professional and ethical norms tailored to be acceptable to their viewers. The content of the audiovisual tapes was described by inertia, using inherited terms for valid and trustworthy archival descriptions. However, emotional sources could be sent to archives without contextual and content information. In those cases, an archivist alone must master the knowledge of the content and the context of those materials to describe them adequately.

Different archival institutions own various emotional sources of varying intensity and emotional sensations. They could be systematically produced during organized and planned activities as a product of some TV shooting or appear spontaneously in ad-hoc situations. Most of those materials came from professional mass media houses, which had a final cut in presenting and launching them publicly on television.

The older materials preserved on VHS and other magnetic tapes were always well planned as a part of some broadcasting transmission with the explicit purpose of provoking the reaction of viewers/listeners and impacting their moral and political decisions. However, nowadays, many social media, such as FB, Twitter, Instagram, and others, offer enormous emotional materials: catastrophic situations, devastating urban places, and human pain beyond our imagination. We have witnessed some of these images and short films these days with news arriving from Ukraine where, equally, side-by-side, authentic individual footage is used concurrently by news agencies. Each describes the same problem but has different objectives and agendas for propaganda and disinformation purposes.

PHYSICIANS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS – VIDEO COLLECTION (HU OSA 386-3-8)

The archival funds HU OSA 386 documents three projects run by the Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) in Bosnia-Herzegovina: The Ante Mortem Database Project, the Identification Project, and the Forensic Assistance Project, collectively known as the Bosnia Projects. The records give a detailed insight into the detailed and meticulously performed work PHR carried out to identify the thousands of victims of the war conflict in the former Yugoslavia exhumed from the various mass graves scattered throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. Materials

include reports, databases, lists, forms, memos, correspondence, handbooks and manuals, newsletters, press releases and clippings, maps, photographs, and videos.

Forensic monitoring and autopsy reports, antemortem interviews, dental and DNA records, and photographs of human remains and personal belongings represent disturbing and emotional historical sources not only for the users directly affected in the war zones but also for the archival users, including archivists. One can closely follow how the exhumations, the identification of the individuals, and the cause and manner of their deaths were meticulously conducted.

The correspondence with the International Commission on Missing Persons, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, including several state ministries and their investigation commissions, reveals that evidentiary records of war crimes together with forensic science can help in the conviction of perpetrators. In addition, several files of the collection deal with the psycho-social and traumatic effects of the war on the Bosnian society (Blinken OSA website).

The focus of our study is the audiovisual part of the PHR collection. The 21 videos contain programs and footage on PHR efforts to identify the bodies of those massacred during the genocide in Srebrenica in July 1995. Some of the videos are educational programs explaining the identification project. Physicians for Human Rights hoped to identify victims by combining "postmortem" with "antemortem" data. The videos include an explanation of "postmortem" data or scientific information from the unidentified bodies analyzed by forensic anthropologists. They also highlight the importance of collecting "antemortem" data, which is information on the victims' clothes, lifestyles, etc. Collecting "antemortem" data from relatives requires a team of case managers to manage the process. Some of the videos display the training of case managers and highlight the psycho-social issues that case managers face when confronting families. Other programs include families describing their experiences during the genocide in Srebrenica. These audiovisual materials are a unique testimony of the traumatic experience explained from within the organization by the people directly involved in the exhumation and identification of retrieved bodies. Thus, the videos contain many interviews with representatives and employees of PHR who explain their individual roles in the identification project. Many videos display footage of Srebrenica and the mass graves.

While working in the field throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, the creator used names, terms, and expressions characteristic for this activity describing legal, forensic, trauma, and empathy expressions (exhumation, identification, human remains, forensic report, DNA database, etc.). Most of these value-added metadata and expressions were inherited from the creator and edited by the persons who preserved them. However, these are professional descriptions conducted under the influence of emotions, trauma, and cognitive empathy.

Table 5: Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) in Bosnia-Herzegovina – Video Collection, four groups of descriptive terms and expressions (metadata) used in the online catalog (HU OSA 386-3-8).

Geographic terms		No. of mentioning
	Bosnia	35
	Srebrenica	15
	Sarajevo	2
	Tuzla	2
Personal and national names		
	Muslim	3
	Serbian	0
	Chetniks	1
Legal and value terms		
	Identification	29
	Physicians	16
	Antemortem data	11
	DNA	10
	War	10
	Postmortem data	5
	Forensic	4
	Exhumation	3
	Refugees	3
Emotional and trauma expression		
	bodies	8
	unidentified	7
	victims	7
	killed	6
	sufferings	3
	violence	2
	destruction	1

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In the brief analysis of these three collections, we can immediately distinguish some similarities and differences. Fonds 304 and 350 appear to be similar in the audiovisual materials. They use remarkably similar terms for descriptive metadata. They differ in the number of tapes, which is reflected in the number of terms mentioned in the catalog. These two fonds, with their audiovisual materials, describe broader geographical, military, and political contexts, including several conflicting states with geographic terms, including those of personal and national names. Similarities are also noticed in the metadata relating to legal and value-added terms. The fourth group of terms and metadata are closely related to trauma and emotions. Persons describing these materials used vast spectra of 'hard' terms that clearly describe the terror and the trauma. As the metadata and terms were not controlled, each archivist who described them used personal terms and expressions. The danger is that many described sufferings in the collections transform into symbolic if deprived of concrete individuals and their emotions.

However, the first look at HU OSA 386, in Table 5, relating to Physicians for Human Rights and their audiovisual collection, shows that the descriptive metadata shifted the focus from more geographical terms (regions) and issues (war) to more specific (genocide in Srebrenica and mass graves in Bosnia). While in the first two series, we see apparent similarities in descriptive pattern, HU OSA 386 uses specific language and very specialized legal and professional terms, which are narrowly connected with real and bodily sufferings. This series brings us to the next level of granularity when talking about trauma, emotions, and human sufferings that go beyond our rational comprehension. Despite this, archivists and their users must develop approaches to remain immune to the intensity and quantity of human suffering and trauma in archival sources.

CONCLUSION

In many collections scattered among archival boxes and folders, emotions and effects of different intensities and extents deserve our attention, and all this from two perspectives: those of users and those of professional archivists who are daily dealing with emotional records. There are repressed and almost lost voices of others who were neglected or consciously marginalized. As we dig deeper into archival materials and our lenses are calibrated to more sensitive topics, those

of lost voices and traumatized, the unfamiliar emotions start to pop out and leak from folders and their boxes, narrating for themselves. Some emotional materials are a constant source of trauma that deeply disturbs war-torn families and their communities. Unlike many archival materials that change over time by changing interpretations, emotional sources will preserve their unique virtue and stay unchanged for posterity.

The title of this paper poses the question of what archives can ‚feel.' By their very nature, they do so because they contain and preserve human suffering and injustice that has accumulated throughout history. Because of this, historians and others are prone to subjective interpretations, as archivists, too, are prone to fall under emotional empathy and stress. However, the question is whether archivists can be subjective and emotional when dealing with archival descriptions. Moreover, what does that ‚feel' mean for users, victims, historians, and archivists who process and curate emotional sources? These are all legitimate questions that remain without sufficient answers that will constantly test our professional and ethical decisions. This paper is a small effort to raise awareness and consciousness concerning serious archival professional and ethical dilemmas when describing emotional materials.

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Summary

This paper explores the concept of „emotional archival sources," which are often invoked by archivists when addressing significant human rights violations and trauma. The author examines how archives and archivists perceive the emotional weight of these sources and their ability to convey the underlying trauma through unbiased descriptions. The analysis highlights ethical and professional challenges in archival practice, particularly regarding content description. By reviewing existing literature and institutional archival collections, the paper reveals how archivists often navigate ethical dilemmas alone when confronted with emotionally charged materials. It discusses the impact of disturbing content on rational cognition during archival processing and describes how emotional empathy and secondary trauma affect archivists. The study concludes that defining and describing emotional sources is complex, as each trauma-related collection requires careful consideration of historical context and appropriate terminology, complicating long-term professional decision-making.

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