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On the Abuses in the Research of the Holocaust Experience

Reflection on the abuses in speaking and writing about the Holocaust and in its artistic representation is quite well settled in contemporary humanities. It has been a subject of brilliant and at the same time bitter analyses concerning the forms of the presence of the Holocaust experience in the public sphere. They point to the phenomenon of the Holocaust's McDonaldization,¹ which is spreading like cancer – its political instrumentalization, ideological manipulation and commercialization (see already classic works such as *The Holocaust and Collective Memory: The American Experience* by Peter Novick, *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust* by Tom Segev, or *Selling the Holocaust: From Auschwitz to Schindler; How History is Bought, Packaged, and Sold* by Tim Cole).

The ways of showing the Holocaust in art, film and literature are critically judged from the perspective of the “ethics of representation,” the appropriateness or the inappropriateness of the means of expression used and the artistic language adopted. Phenomena such as the esthetic meanders of Holocaust literature, the kitsch in Holocaust cinema and in the mass culture are discussed. It seems, however, that there is an area which becomes the subject of such reflections definitely less often. What I mean here is the issue of the abuses in Holocaust research.

I would like to share a few of my reflections on the topic. These are thoughts racing, caught and written on the spot, which are more like a record of a state of unrest than a proposition of a solution or diagnosis. These are a few thoughts which are very much unfinished and thus should not be regarded as an orderly description of the situation. They are, however, bothering enough to demand being said here and now.

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Undoubtedly, it was precisely the postmodernist thinkers who came to recognize the Holocaust as the critical event marking the moment of a radical interruption on the trajectory of the development of the West. In their texts they present very force-

¹ The term has been taken from Georg Ritzer's classical work, *The McDonaldization of Society*.

fully the conviction that the “final solution” plays the key role in the experience of modern humankind. Consequently, *Endlösung* becomes one of the main protagonists in the postmodernist discourse. Within the framework of these philosophical inspirations the notion of the Holocaust as the “borderline event” or “extreme occurrence” has been developed. It means that the annihilation of the European Jews is not only the most extreme case of genocide in human history but it is also an event that has a transformative power resulting in the destruction of the foundations of the existing civilizational order and the values on which it had been founded. The event reveals the design of modernity and indicts it by pointing out its horrifying implications. According to Przemysław Czapliński, “the Holocaust is the gravestone of modernity and the fluid foundation of post-modernity.”²

According to Jean-François Lyotard³ not only “reality” was killed in the gas chambers, but also the hitherto existing ways of talking about reality. “Grand narratives” presenting the world as a sensible entity collapsed and their place was taken by a number of “micronarratives”: fragmentary, temporary, provisional, incomplete. There is no longer a fixed point of reference, the hitherto existing norms of cognition have been shattered, we are thrown right in the middle of a conflict between various “phrasing” orders, none of which has the final and ultimate sanction. Lyotard calls this incessant struggle a quarrel, an argument (French *différend*, English *differend*⁴), and makes it the core of his conception, which he formulates in his frequent references to the Holocaust. For the French philosopher, Auschwitz is a synonym of the destruction of the standard ways of naming, judging, understanding. Auschwitz occasions the destruction of the Auschwitz experience itself because it is something so radically new in history that it even renders testifying about it impossible. In his exposition Lyotard refers to a metaphor of an enormous earthquake which destroys all the seismological apparatus and thus makes taking any measures impossible from that moment on. Scholars are unable to investigate and find out what happened, while common people develop a “negative image of the indefinite.” The testimony to Auschwitz remains something unthinkable, inexpressible. “Auschwitz,” writes Lyotard, “is the most real reality. Its name delineated the bounds within which historical knowledge comes to question its own competence. One cannot go any further for one would arrive at nonsense. The alternative here is not the signification established by means of cognitive procedures or the absurd; the alternative is a kind of mysticism.”⁵

Characteristically, in his book Lyotard refers to the names and works of great philosophers beginning with Plato and Aristotle, through Kant and Hegel to Levi-

² P. Czapliński, “Zagłada jako wyzwanie dla refleksji o literaturze,” *Teksty Drugie* 5 (2004): 11.

³ J.-F. Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, transl. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis, 1996).

⁴ The term was expressed by means of a neologism.

⁵ J.-F. Lyotard, *The Differend*. I refer to pages: 32–33 and 56–58. The quote comes from page 58.

nas, but he does not mention at all such great Auschwitz witnesses as Elie Wiesel, Charlotte Delbo, Primo Levi, Tadeusz Borowski or Imre Kertész. He carries on his exposition in a sense beyond them, over their heads, as if he left in a black hole everything that had managed to get out of it: not only survivors' testimonies written post factum, but also the manuscripts buried in the ashes of the Birkenau crematorium which were hidden there by *Sonderkommando* members, who hoped that one day somebody would find and read the texts.⁶

The postmodernist Holocaust discourse breeds many dangers, and the youthful contacts with fascism and anti-Semitism of some of its founders – such as Maurice Blanchot or Paul de Man – cast a shadow on their works. The critics of this discourse point, among other things, to the danger inherent in questioning the fact and the status of historical truth. Czapliński is right when he writes that “there is no such language which could express the truth of the Holocaust, because language does not express anything and the Holocaust has no truth of its own.”⁷ Such a conviction, however, can easily become an impulse that triggers the mumbling speech of the priests of the inexpressible or it might be a fuel for the negationists. Although others soberly point out that the negationists do not refer to postmodernist treatises but to a peculiarly interpreted experience, we should listen to what cultural critic Michiko Kakutani has to say about it:

The thing is that the deconstruction provides a brilliantly nihilistic vision of the world according to which all meaning is relative, all truth is elusive and thus devoid of meaning. . . . The deconstructivists and thinkers of a similar mental attitude conduce to the atmosphere in which the ideologues and propagandists, e.g. those who deny the Holocaust, might attempt to attack these two foundations of human civilization – memory and truth.⁸

Kerwin Lee Klein warns against the abuses and intellectual shallowness brought by the fascination with the category of memory. He points to two currently discussed concepts of memory: the “therapeutic” (which uses the Freudian terminology) and the “avant-garde” one (connected with postmodernism). The postmodernist concept of memory discovers in it the experience of “renewed fascination” and “direct experiencing,” which replaces “history” and even becomes its opposite. It contains in itself what is inexpressible and impossible to articulate. This area is extensive and is particularly favored by Holocaust scholars, who originate from this inspiration. Thus understood memory refers to the sphere of the “inexpressible” – the excesses, taboo, darkness, lofty things – or the Absolute, whose arcana are clear only for a handful of the elect who possess the secret code of access. . . . As James Berger pointed out in his analysis of the theory of trauma and its fascination

⁶ *Wśród koszmarnej zbrodni: notatki więźniów Sonderkommando*, translation from Yiddish and French, selected and edited by J. Bezwińska, D. Czech, 2nd extended edition (Oświęcim, 1975).

⁷ P. Czapliński, op. cit., 14.

⁸ Quoted in: A. Milchman, A. Rosenberg, “Experiments In Thinking The Holocaust: Auschwitz,” *Modernity and Philosophy*, 72.

with the “discourse of the inexpressible,” a part of the postmodernist catastrophic dictionary seems to have recently become blurred, adopting a form of a “traumatic-sacred-lofty otherness.”⁹

Other dangerous traps in the post-modern style of thinking about the Holocaust lie in certain assumptions of the “narrativist turn” in the philosophy of history and the constructivist orientation in humanistic research. What I mean here is the danger of abuse of such key notions as “historical source” or “historical fact.”

We must realize, as Jerzy Topolski¹⁰ reminds us, that the phrase “historical source” itself has the form of a lexicalized metaphor whose metaphorical quality can no longer be sensed. In accordance with the logic of such a loss of metaphorical quality, we should say that something as crystal clear as spring water flows from the source. The truth is the water which the historian draws from the source. In this sense sources have a cognitively higher status than the historical narration created on their basis. “What I call the myth of historical sources is this conviction from which stems the categorical distinction between historical sources and narration and the treatment of sources as depositaries of truth,” writes Topolski.¹¹ The author mentions two manifestations of the myth of sources. The first one is the principle, which is a part of the technical canon, and which gives rise to the conviction that having two independent sources both confirming the information on the same fact practically proves its authenticity. But one might call into question both the rule of two sources itself (does the information from only one source need to be a priori unreliable?) and the notion of their independence (for sources could have been created independently of one another but still their authors could have been dependent on the same vision of the world). Another manifestation of the myth of sources is the conviction that the more sources a historian has, the closer he is to the truth. But the cognitive value of sources cannot be established a priori – it can only be established in relation to concrete research, in other words: in relation to what the historian is looking for.

In the positivistically oriented methodology of history, a historical fact (a specific event which happened in the past) is the object of analysis, while the historian’s task is to determine these facts beyond doubt. Behind the very notion of historical fact lies the conviction, not openly expressed, that first of all, what has been established and called a fact really took place; and secondly, that it is entitled to the status of autonomic reality, which is independent and separate from both the cognition process and the cogniting subject. Meanwhile, since the anti-positivistic turn in the humanities, the subject’s active role in the constitution of the research object has been accepted. A historical fact is thus not “a thing in itself” but a construction

⁹ K.L. Klein, “O pojawieniu się pamięci w dyskursie historycznym,” trans. M. Bańkowski, *Konteksty. Antropologia kultury – etnografia – sztuka* 3–4 (2003): 48.

¹⁰ See: J. Topolski, *Jak się pisze i rozumie historię. Tajemnice narracji historycznej* (Warsaw, 1996) (see chapter 20 devoted to these issues “Źródła historyczne a narracja historyczna,” 335–348).

¹¹ J. Topolski, *op. cit.*, 337.

created by the historian on the basis of a number of pieces of indirect information which he needs to interpret and structuralize. A historical fact is a construction, for it is the historian who points to certain phenomena, decides about their chronological, geographical and factual boundaries, orders them, puts them in a sequence or in a cause-and-effect order. "Historical sources give us an unlimited number of facts which I call 'physical' here [that is those 'provided by nature' such as the death of a person - J.L.]. The historian places them within the society using his conscious or unconscious knowledge of it. By grouping, separating, isolating and combining them, the historian constructs from them what we informally call 'historical facts' . . .," writes Witold Kula.¹²

Joanna Tokarska-Bakir gives two examples of abuses of post-modern research practice concerning Holocaust studies.¹³ The first one refers to the limits of the freedom of the interpretation of "facts," while the other refers to the pathology of the relation between discourse and reality.

Christopher Browning, one of the greatest Holocaust historians, master of gathering facts which with most extraordinary precision reveal the *modus operandi* of the "final solution," writes that 101 Reserve Police Battalion arrived at Józefów in the morning of 13 July 1942 and shot many hundreds of Jews in a nearby forest. Such 'facts' simply do not allow for their interpretation, they have no sense, at least in those categories of questions about sense which I look for answers to.¹⁴ Tokarska-Bakir comments, "Even though the discovery of the ubiquity of interpretation was once a turning point, today innovative is rather the question as to how it happens that some facts can do so well without an interpretation. Interpretation is never innocent and it is not always needed, and it is particularly not innocent when it is not needed."¹⁵

The second example comes from the French historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet's statement. This subtle expert on ancient Greece was also interested in modern history, and the crimes of colonialism; he condemned the tortures applied by the French in Algeria, and he also fought against negationist stances: both the negation of the Armenian genocide by the Turks and the destruction of the Jews by the Germans. He tried to safeguard reality against the temptations to make it vague, to blur or mask it. He was perfectly aware of the fact that we see history through the discourse on history, but he pointed out that "there is something which exists beyond it, which existed before it, something which cannot in any way be reduced to discourse, and which I would still call reality."¹⁶

¹² W. Kula, "Rozważania o historii," in idem, *Wobec historii* (Warsaw, 1988), 42-44.

¹³ See: J. Tokarska-Bakir, "Syn marnotrawny dziesięć lat później," *Teksty Drugie* 4 (2005): 145-147.

¹⁴ Quoted in: J. Tokarska-Bakir, op. cit., 146

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 147.

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 146.

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All artistic representations of the Holocaust face – roughly speaking – two dangers. Let us imagine a fast-flowing river or a deep abyss – insurmountable obstacles. Above them there is a narrow, unstable, unsafe footbridge, spread between the two banks and leaning on solid ground. Everything depends on the ground's solidity. If the footbridge is solidly fixed and the ground is hard then one has a chance to walk over the abyss, over the water. But what if the two banks are only quicksand and do not provide stable support or allow for any foundations to be built? What is going to happen with the foothold when we step on it? I think that Holocaust representations, just like this footbridge over the abyss, spread between the pole of trivialization and kitsch on the one hand, and the pole of sublimation and sacralization on the other. In both cases the Holocaust experience is pushed beyond the area of what is real.

It seems that the academic Holocaust discourse faces a powerful temptation which is indeed difficult to resist. I would call it the temptation of narcissism. Artists are narcissistic. It is not only understandable and justified but also commonly accepted, even obvious. The conviction that the narcissistic trait also deeply marks the personality of researchers, people of science, academics nonetheless is less obvious. Perhaps because it is more concealed.

Let us treat Andrzej Bart's *Fabryka muchołapek*¹⁷ as an intermediate link between Holocaust representation in art and in science. The author carries out a comprehensive Holocaust study, carefully prepares the source material, investigates the history of the Łódź ghetto and his novel's hero Chaim Rumkowski. He does all that to impress the reader with the wide spectrum of his erudition and literary mastery and to create a quasi-world of quasi-Rumkowski's quasi-trial. That construction is woven from quotes and quasi-quotes from sources, with historical figures speaking their own or almost their own voice – everything is (almost) right. Only that "almost" makes an enormous difference. For me Bart's book is an example of narcissistic kitsch. It lies half way between literature and documentary, between a novel and an account, between a testimony and a record of a dream. It is conspicuously "between" discourses, genres, truth and fiction. Thus, it perfectly fits the model of post-literature in post-modern times. Consequently, it is not surprising – its poetics is perfectly predictable, it is painfully "post-traditional." It flatters the tastes and trends. It is also perfectly empty cognitively. The author plays with conventions of speaking, quotes, narrative perspectives, ideas for the plot, but it does not lead to anything. More specifically: it does not lead to anything apart from the satisfaction of the author's *ego*. Having read *Fabryka muchołapek* we know as much about Rumkowski's dilemma and the Holocaust experience as we had known before. We only became hostages of Andrzej Bart's erudite and literary showing off. It is pure narcissism.

¹⁷ See J. Kowalska-Leder's review, *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* 6 (2010): 319–322.

I would classify the quite easily noticeable manifestations of exuberant emotionality as narcissistic abuses in the area of scientifically oriented texts about the Holocaust. Sometimes the author consciously breaks the principle of linguistic neutrality or the principle of restraint, of matter-of-factness, conceptual clarity and comprehensibility of the terms used. The text becomes dominated not so much by merit as by the intensity of expression. It is as if the cognitive values became less important, superseded by poetic effects. The text presents its rhetoricality to all and sundry, as if the author's ultimate goal was precisely to develop a rhetorically sophisticated construction, and as if the Holocaust was becoming just the canvas for an elaborate intertexture of metaphors and lyrical incantations. In such a model of scientific narcissism the author's "I" dominates, overshadowing the reality of the Holocaust. The author's "I" seems to fill everything up with itself. It is present everywhere: in the structure of sentences, in their disjointed, fragmentary flow full of exclamations, in the rhetorical questions, in the clash of single words and long passages filled with adjectives.

I think that Piotr Weiser's text on the *Erntefest* action, as seen by Polish prisoners of Majdanek, which is actually very interesting, inspiring and asks very important questions, serves, however as an example of that type of "post-scientific" narcissism.¹⁸ This study based on a rich source material is torn between two elements – the research element and the lyrical one. It seems that at times the author finds it hard to decide what his text is to be: a study adhering to the principles of scientific discourse understood in a very liberal and post-modern way, or a personal meditation. In many places emotionality and impressiveness get the upper hand over rationality, and the analytical course is disturbed with aleatoric, variational, and associative rhythm. All three forms of presentation mix with one another: direct speech (integral quotation), indirect speech (reporting other people's words) and seemingly indirect voice (a clearly two-part form where someone else's and one's own words mingle). Let us quote a longer excerpt:

Infernum in the Poles' texts did not sound like metaphors in Dante's verses. The crematorium with fire burning inside seemed like hell in the human world, the debauched functionary was the human embodiment of Satan. Eschatological associations were repeated most often: "if the world is ever going to end, then I and many others have already lived through it then." ... Europe was immersed in mass murder. The fall massacre suggested the hierarchy of all atrocities. Such a "horrible act of genocide rarely happened" in "the history of humanity." Witnesses do not carry out academic discussions about uniqueness. The precedents found only confirmed its monstrosity. A junior high school student enumerated the following events, "the Cartagena massacre, the invasion of the Huns, the fall of Jerusalem." And that crime was "a day which should go down in history, ranked as one of such events." That

¹⁸ P. Weiser, "Poszli wszyscy: mężczyźni, kobiety, starcy i małeńkie dzieci. Poszli na zagładę". 'Erntefest' zmysłami polskich więźniów Majdanka," in *3-4 listopada 1943. Erntefest. Zapomniany epizod Zagłady*, ed. W. Lenarczyk, D. Libionka (Lublin, 2009), 130-150.

sentence must have sounded suggestive, for one of the fellow prisoners wrote it down.

Participation in apocalypse transforms terror into exaltation. The historic event lends importance to the observer. He has peeked into hell! Who else can say that about himself? A tourist with a guide in his hand recalls Hannibal's war in Cartagena; a pilgrim submerged in prayer in Jerusalem reads Jeremiah's stanzas. They are looking through the windows of history. The other one writes about his experience. He has been there. He has seen it; if not everything, then quite a lot. The glint in his eye when he stands in the eye of the cyclone gives him away. He sees the smoke of the fire site with a slight syndrome of a pyromaniac. Exaltation is threatened by excitation. He does not give in to the temptation, but he takes notice of its presence. His story carries such traces as well."¹⁹

Following the ideas suggested by the author himself we could venture to point out the strong points of the peculiar trajectory of the "post-scientific" Holocaust discourse with emotionality as its dominant characteristic: esthetization - exaltation - excitation.

Exuberant erudition, which has fed on narcissism and which grows lushly, especially in the texts of students, imitators and epigones of the postmodernist discourse, leads to a different kind of abuse. This manner of writing seems to be penetrating ever broader areas of reflection on the Holocaust. Particularly coddled key-words (or perhaps: "picklock" words) are: inexpressibility, aporia of sense, silence, emptiness, absence, etc. These are the key words for reflection on the Holocaust, but due to their ritualized use they have almost lost their meaning, apart from the purely liturgical function of quotation and repetition. They signalize one's affiliation with a particular milieu and - just like thieves' slang - they create an exclusive community and exclude others from communication.²⁰ Talking about the impossibility of talking about the Holocaust, monotonous repetition of what the great masters of post-modernity said is becoming increasingly idle, because it is more and more predictable, just like a decorative ornament repeated over and over again.

For me one example of such narcissistic-liturgical eruditeness is Jan Goślicki's pretentious and gibberish-filled introduction to Piotr Rawicz's excellent Holocaust testimony and novel *Krew nieba*.²¹ Let me quote an excerpt:

Destabilizing signification becomes established here, in which the shadow of the Great Unattested Carnage is cast between language and the world. You say "chair," but attached to the word is the image of a wall shattered by a bomb

¹⁹ Ibidem, pp. 117-118.

²⁰ Bronisław Geremek wrote about the excluding function of the thieves' slangs: "The very fact of searching for a secret code of communication allowed such a group to be regarded as criminal. Including some people while excluding others from the communication, the slang lives and functions within the framework of tensions and conflicts between organized society and marginal groups." "O językach tajemnych," *Teksty 2* (1980): 15-16.

²¹ P. Rawicz, *Blood From the Sky* (New Haven-London, 2003).

and an exposed corner of the room in which this salvaged (salvaged?) chair stands. And what does it “mean”? “Chair”? “Chairness”? “Chair’s negation”? An empty sign? In a way, all this simultaneously refers one to the other, indefinitely postponing a definite answer. And thus Rawicz seems to be somebody who is in possession of a dictionary whose entries are constructed precisely in such a way, and who uses it consistently.

If such a language “after the Holocaust”, assuming nothingness as the center of signifying, shuns argument, presentation, narration, if it refers to difference, whose each constituent can be conceived of equally well [*sic!*] (“Psalm” is theology and ontology, but the modern spirit, from the decidedly anti-theological Gombrowicz, to the radically anti-theological Derrida, has managed to problematize everything – “truth”, “essence”, “beginning”, “end”, “inside”, “outside”, etc., placing sense within the difference – and this is a postponed sense, one that assumes the indefiniteness of narration), then at least it is unfit to lead all kinds of silly ideologies, because, as long as one remains within it, it is impossible to be right.²²

This eminent essayist and translator, who during the occupation was hiding with his parents in the Cracow district of Kazimierz, was a student of Paul de Man. Thus he knows well what he is writing about. But is the reader able to follow the meanders of his thoughts and make his way through his enigmatic comment? I have a feeling that the introduction to Rawicz’s book perfectly illustrates the whole idleness and lack of originality of the language taken over from the masters of language.

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So what is the scientific investigation of the Holocaust all about? Can we simply let the wave take us and can we float gracefully on the smooth surface of the water, which will reflect the self-satisfaction visible on our faces? I shall give a naive and old-fashioned answer: it is about what really happened and about the other human being. About those who were killed, each of whom had his own face and his own name.

I am not so naive, nevertheless, to have nostalgic dreams about the original agreement and harmony between the word and being, between truth and reality, between the world and language. I am aware that we live in a time of crisis of the traditionally defined experience, whose nature is changing: it “comes unstuck” from reality, it loses its integrity and cognitive neutrality, it stratifies. Between what is represented and the subject itself there is a disturbing space difficult to traverse.²³ I am perfectly aware that – using a phrase borrowed from George Steiner – “the contract has been broken.”²⁴

²² Ibidem, 117–118.

²³ I also refer here to Ryszard Nycz, who situates traditional concepts of experience against the modern form of experience. See: “Literatura nowoczesna wobec doświadczenia,” in *Literackie reprezentacje doświadczenia*, ed. Włodzimierz Bolecki and Ewa Nawrocka (Warsaw, 2007).

²⁴ Here I refer to George Steiner’s essay *The Broken Contract* (Chicago, 1991).

Let us listen to Steiner:

Anything can be said and, in consequence, written about anything. We scarcely pause to observe or to countenance this obviousness. But an enigmatic enormity inhabits it.²⁵

Then he writes,

We can tell any truth and any falsehood. . . . To speak, either to oneself or to another, is in the most naked, rigorous sense of that unfathomable banality, to invent, to re-invent the being and the world.²⁶

Steiner sketches the panorama of culture, art, humanist reflection in which the contract between the word and the world has been broken. According to the essayist, it is one of a few spiritual revolutions in the history of the West, which defines our modernity in a fundamental way. We are in the post-Logos phase. In the post-modern phase. The old-fashioned term “meaning” needs to be replaced with the “infinite signification” which opens “infinite possibilities,” or with “following the traces.” Let me quote the conclusion of George Steiner’s essay:

We must ask of ourselves and of our culture whether a secular, in essence positivist, model of understanding and of the experience of meaningful form (the aesthetic) is tenable in the light or, if you will, in the dark of the nihilistic alternative. . . . There is a distinct possibility that these questions no longer admit of an adult, let alone consoling, answer. They may be mere flourishes of nostalgia and pathos. The cruelest of paradoxes in deconstruction is this: there was no “place to start,” but there is, in regard to our innocent, factitious, opportunistic habitation in meaning, a place at which to end. What seems clear is that the challenge cannot be evaded. . . . For the current masters of emptiness, the stakes are indeed those of a game. That is where we differ.²⁷

A mind searching for the truth knows no boundaries. It is free in the perennial movement of search, doubt, asking, questioning. It knows no rest and does not fear danger. How do we know when it is wrong, when it goes astray? Steiner suggests an uncertain criterion, but what is certain in this world? If for the masters of emptiness the stakes are those of a game, of satisfying narcissistic temptations, then I shall not be with them.

Abstract

The abuses in the presentation of the Holocaust in art, film, and literature have been extensively studied in contemporary humanist studies. The analyses point to the phenomenon of the Holocaust’s McDonaldization, its political instrumentalization, ideological manipulation and commercialization. The article is an attempt

²⁵ Ibidem, p. 53.

²⁶ Ibidem, p. 55.

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 134.

at a critical examination of a different dimension of the phenomenon in question, hitherto overlooked, namely the abuses in Holocaust research. The author points at a number of dangers which appear in the academic Holocaust discourse – from the “source myth” to narcissistic temptations.

Key words

Holocaust research, postmodernist Holocaust discourse, threats and abuses in academic research