

There are representations of the Holocaust in the Polish cultural memory which exist outside or just on the borderline of what is considered correct, appropriate and acceptable. Most often they are labeled with terms of 'impropriety', 'kitschy' or 'rubbish', are being accused of 'appealing to the reader's lower instincts' or of 'shocking with violence and sex'. I do believe that this kind of esthetic or moral judgment does not grasp level beneath it, namely radical brutalization and sexualisation of the Holocaust experience. A perverse representation of Holocaust is a form of converting the experience, in which one of its unbearable aspects assumes another meaning, for example when radical violence becomes saturated with sexual pleasure. The main objective of the project is describing and analyzing perverse representations of the Holocaust in Polish memory – foremost in the recent years, when the last witnesses pass away.

Thanks to analysis of these representations an answer to a question will be possible, in what way Polish society remembers the Holocaust which will enable description of the position of the Polish bystander. Poland during World War II became the location of the German extermination of the Jews. The proximity of the Holocaust for the Polish locals resulted in a specific experience of eye-witnessing the Holocaust which after the war needed to be encompassed in the cultural memory. The project will offer an understanding of the eye-witnessing and the gaze cast by the Polish bystanders. In this sense, the project will follow the recent trend in historiography of analysis of Polish reactions to Shoah.

Polish perverse representations of the Holocaust (representations which mix brutality with sexuality) will be analyzed in both literature and visual arts, either created or gaining popularity in recent years. Analysis of them is not merely descriptive, but also ethical, as the research of texts and images so far excluded from the mainstream discourse is supposed to draw attention to alternative forms of Holocaust remembrance.