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## Introduction

The essays collected in *Adeptus* issue no. 13 and authored by up-and-coming academics<sup>1</sup> comprise a valuable contribution to the international and interdisciplinary conference entitled “Axiosphere of the Soul – The Soul in the Axiosphere”, held on 19–21 October 2017 at the University of Warsaw Library as the second event in the series called “Anthropological and linguistic images of the soul in an intercultural perspective”.<sup>2</sup>

The axiological deliberations pertaining to the phenomenon of the soul are themselves a continuation of notions explored during the first conference of the series: “The World through the Eyes of the Soul – The Soul in the Eyes of the World”, held two years prior (15–17 October 2015) in the same venue. Organized by the Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences, in collaboration with the Slavic Foundation and the University of Warsaw's Faculty of Oriental Studies, the two events were an opportunity for scholars from

<sup>1</sup> Editors' remark: this issue of *Adeptus* also features a number of essays on language that have not been written for the conference. However, given their similar subject matter, we decided to include them in this issue.

<sup>2</sup> The international academic conference *Axiosphere of the Soul – The Soul in the Axiosphere* was financed from the funds of the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education allocated for activity disseminating science (DUN), contract no. 695/P-DUN/2017.

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a number of academic centres in Poland and abroad to meet and discuss their research. At the first conference, attendees came from 18 Polish and 16 foreign academic institutions, but the ratios reversed at the second event of the series, with representatives from as many as 24 foreign centres joining scholars from 15 Polish ones.

The international and interdisciplinary character of the conference drew scholars from a number of countries, including Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Slovakia, Czechia, Croatia, Macedonia, France and Denmark.

The presence of scholars working in a variety of fields resulted in a broad spectrum of subjects being taken up at the conference and fostered reflection on the phenomenon of the soul, which, in turn, liberated the notion from the yoke of theological dogma, philosophical axioms or premises drawn up by life sciences, and allowed the scholars to see within it both that which is universal in our human way of conceiving the soul, as well as our cultural differences – particularly with regard to value hierarchies.

Thus, confronting the results of analyses of data from a dozen languages and cultures, performed from different perspectives – philological as well as culturo-linguistic – allowed the scholars to examine the matter of SOUL through the lens of axiologies embedded in linguistic constructs, their meanings and the functions they serve in particular texts and cultures. The presence of analyses pertaining to other codes – the “language” of iconic signs in painting, filmmaking and the visual arts – proved likewise important. The spectrum of languages and cultures turned out broad enough to offer the attendees a closer look at different conceptions of the soul and its place in the value hierarchies of European (mainly Slavic) and oriental languages and cultures, in both their general and regional or local variants, in artistic, journalistic and sacred texts and informal writing, in languages and cultures that the recipients consider more proximate and those more “exotic”.

Up-and-coming scholars – the authors of the essays featured in this issue – enjoyed the unique opportunity to attend presentations by highly respected figures in the academic community, both from Poland and from abroad, present to them their own observations and interpretations, and take part in debate sessions where discussions revolved around subjects considered fundamental to human existence, subjects that not only encouraged further reflections, but also prompted axiological, eschatological deliberations, compelling attendees to engage in discussions over the grand *topos* of cultural texts, the archetype and the verbalized category undisputedly present in both colloquial and artistic language. The debate on the matter of the soul – traditionally considered the remit of theology,

anthropology, metaphysics and psychology – was truly interdisciplinary, drawing voices from very different fields.

Both conferences resulted in collected volumes as well as a number of articles authored by the youngest generation of scholars, featured in *Adeptus*. We also ought to note here that the presentations delivered by young scholars at the first conference were published in a separate, dedicated issue of *Adeptus* (No. 7/2016). Works produced as a result of the debates held at the conferences form a publishing series entitled *Antropologiczno-językowe wizerunki duszy w perspektywie międzykulturowej* (Anthropological and Linguistic Images of the Soul in an Intercultural Perspective), with three volumes released to date: Vol. 1: *Dusza w oczach świata* (The Soul in the Eyes of the World, eds. Ewa Maślowska, Dorota Pazio-Wlazłowska), Vol. 2: *Świat oczyma duszy* (The World through the Eyes of the Soul, eds. Magdalena Kapełuś, Ewa Maślowska, Dorota Pazio-Wlazłowska), Vol. 3: *Aksjosfera duszy – dusza w aksjosferze* (Axiosphere of the Soul – The Soul in the Axiosphere, eds. Joanna Jurewicz, Ewa Maślowska, Dorota Pazio-Wlazłowska). All of them have been published in open access in order to broadly disseminate and popularize knowledge about the subjects in question.

*Translated by Jan Szelągiewicz*

**Note:**

This is a translation of the original article entitled “Wstęp”, which was published in *Adeptus*, issue 13, 2019.

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