

***Body: between sacrum and profanum – a report***

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*Body: between sacrum and profanum* is an international conference organized in the Department of Modern Languages and the Department of German Studies at the University of Zielona Góra, Poland on November 28-29, 2023. The conference was organized within the ninth edition of Foreign Languages Days (known in Polish as Dni Języków Obcych - DJO) held annually since 2015 in the Department of Modern Languages and the Department of German Studies at the Faculty of Humanities. The conference had the honorary patronage of the Rector of the University of Zielona Góra, Professor Wojciech Strzyżewski.

The idea of the Foreign Languages Days is to bring together scholars working in different fields of science and different languages. Presentations can be delivered in English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Russian and Polish. The funding idea is to communicate beyond typical boundaries to widen scientific perspectives and see the interrelationship between various disciplines and arts. In this way, the participants of the conference have an opportunity to look at their research from a new perspective and share their findings with experts in other fields. All the nine editions of the conference have brought over 230 presentations. While some of the participants took part in DJO only once, many scholars come back to the event every year. Thanks to the participation of foreign researchers, the conference has now the status of an international conference. Not only renowned specialists but also BA, MA and PhD students are welcome to deliver a speech in a friendly, homelike atmosphere the conference is known for.

This year, 25 scholars representing 13 universities shared their knowledge and experience related to the body studied from the point of view of humanities and social studies, including literary studies, linguistics, cultural studies as well as pedagogy and psychology. The speakers represented six Polish universities (University of Zielona Góra, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, University of Wrocław, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, University of Silesia in Katowice and Silesian University of Technology), five Italian universities (University of Genoa, University of Verona, University of Florence, Salesian University Institute of Venice, The Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum) as well as the University of Potsdam, Germany and Rutgers University in the USA.

As the theme of the current edition of the conference was the body between sacrum and profanum, the organizers invited speeches related to, among others, the canons of beauty throughout history, modifications of the body, body in different stages of human life, diseases and disabilities, burial rituals and the Passion. The vast range of topics and fields of research translated into a diverse methodology applied by the speakers, but the prevailing ERL strand within the Scope Major seems to be Language and Culture. In this edition the cultural background was dominant if culture is understood in a broad sense, comprising literature, religion and art. When it comes to the Scope Minor, all four dimensions coexisted, i.e. beliefs, activity, thinking and affect.

Among the 23 speeches delivered (one of the presentations was prepared by a team of three researchers), most, if not all, put emotions in the foreground of their considerations even if these were

not always expressed openly. Among the topics presented, some speeches focused on naturalism, if not obscenity, in which the human body and its functions are presented in the art and literature of various countries. Other presentations addressed the tragic fate of the disabled, the cultural dimension of mutilation, and various aspects of death and burial rituals (in Colombia). Several presentations discussed the ageing process from the medical and social point of view and its implications for the current society. One presentation focused on nightmares and all the sensations it brings.

Two talks presented the body from the point of pedagogy, i.e. non-verbal communication between teachers and students and the importance of physical education in schools from a historical perspective. Another three presentations connected the body with linguistics: one showed the relatedness of the names of body parts in various European languages, another one showed the wide range of synonyms for the adjective lethal in American English and their use in English-Polish medical translation while the third one analyzed how taste sensations are verbalized in Polish and Russian.

As the topics mentioned show, the discussion on the (human) body is strongly related to various emotions, in this case, mainly negative ones, caused by the approach to the topic which the presenters chose. Focusing on death, medical issues, disability or mutilation is strongly related to fear, horror, disgust, but also sympathy and empathy. As various experiences with the body are of common interest, a high level of emotional involvement in the discussion was observed.

For all those interested in taking part in the next year's edition of the Foreign Languages Days, please contact us by the e-mail address [dnijezykowobcychuz@gmail.com](mailto:dnijezykowobcychuz@gmail.com) or on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100010829776091> (Dni Języków Obcych UZ). While the exact date is not yet indicated, the topic is meant to be related to memory.