

# Adam Michałek

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## Dear Readers

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Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej [bazhum.muzhp.pl](http://bazhum.muzhp.pl), gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

## **Dear Readers,**

more than glad I am giving you the 130<sup>th</sup> Nurt SVD's issue, which contains the material from the scientific Conference on *The Ritual: from Ethology to Theology* – organised within the agenda of the 9<sup>th</sup> Interdisciplinary Days at the Faculty of Theology at the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, on October 25-26, 2010.

Ethology and Theology – a provocative epistemological combination – or an exceptional example on interdisciplinary research? What kind of relation may occur between a theological discourse and the research on animals' behaviour? These two, though thoroughly different realms of cognition, are yet correlated by a "ritual behaviour." Often identified with the liturgical expression of religious beliefs, *the ritual* is in fact an invention of a widely-understood culture: "the ritual practice occurs after the act of *enculturating* the nature and is a result of human ability to ritualise and symbolise" (J.J. Pawlik). Such characteristics generate a problem of intentionality which then indicates the border between the world of humans and the world of animals – does the ability and necessity of ritualising lies both in the nature of the humans as well as in the nature of animals? Ceremonies (shows, poses, rituals) in the animal world come as a consequence of a "ratio-morphic" behaviour, that is analogous to the logical procedures in terms of their formality – but they are not intentional. However, "both the animals as well as the human ritual behaviours are very close to the theatre" (R. Schechner) – the profound sense of a ritual can only be discovered in the space of faith (religious beliefs) or in the philosophy of life option.

A ritualised behaviour, as an exceptional form of a non-verbal communication, constitutes a very wide subject for research. The spectrum of the taken topics is so ample that a question occurs about the methodological borders of the phenomenon being investigated on. By publishing in "Nurt" the aftermath of the Olsztyn's scientific Conference – the fourteen essays presented by sixteen scientists – we do realise the risk and the chance for interdisciplinarity. Without a doubt, a greater openness to other realms of knowledge – is one of the challenges for today's theology. Taking the side of this aspiration – we yet hope that the present attempt of connecting faith and knowledge in an interdisciplinary debate will fulfil our Readers' certain ambitions.

*Adam Michatek SVD*