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Summary of the doctoral dissertation

The Concept of Sacrum in the Postmodern Thought of Wisława Szymborska in Relation to Catholic Theology of Spiritualit

Critics, literary scholars, and ordinary readers pondering the poetry of the Polish Nobel Prize winner, Wisława Szymborska (1923-2012), unanimously concluded that her work is devoid of references to transcendence. The few mentions of God, eternal life, soul, supernatural reality are far from the Christian vision and often not without irony. Meanwhile, at the end of her life, as mentioned by her personal secretary, Michał Rusinek, the poet stated that she was a religious person - albeit in a different than traditional sense - and regretted that no one had discovered this in her works. No one has attempted to comprehensively elaborate on the subject of the poet's religiosity - discovering what religion she professed, what is the creed of this religion, what is its ethos (moral principles), what constitutes its *sacrum*, how it shapes a man - its follower? This work is an attempt to answer all the above questions.

The title: *The Concept of Sacrum in the Postmodern Thought of Wisława Szymborska in Relation to Catholic Theology of Spiritualit* contains, on the one hand, a goal - the discovery of *sacrum*, which, according to religious studies scholars such as Rudolf Otto, is the core of every religion, and on the other hand, the assumption - that postmodern thought, discovered in Wisława Szymborska's poetry, is a tool that enables the realization the task set in this dissertation.

In order to meet the task defined in the topic of the dissertation and the poet's wish to rely only on the analysis of her poems, an assumption was made that poetic texts would be treated as a kind of prayer that reflects the author's faith. This made it possible to apply the method contained in the ancient Christian formula expressing the idea that "the law of prayer is the law of faith" - *lex orandi lex credenti*. In addition, the classical method of analysing a literary text and a comparative study of the results of literary research with sources and studies in the field of theology, philosophy, sociology and religious studies were used. The use of such a complex method made it possible to extract meanings not explicitly given in Szymborska's works. As a result, a coherent picture appeared, which allowed to present the

full concept of *sacrum*, and also the religion professed by the poet. In addition, some of the analysed poems gained a new, hitherto undiscovered meaning.

The research results were presented in three chapters.

The first chapter includes the definition of the doctrine and ethos of the religion – named after Benedict XVI as: "the religion of nature". Religion understood in this way worships its deity in all manifestations of life. In this religion, nature and its laws, common to all creatures, including people, are elevated to the doctrinal status. Nature thus acquires the characteristics of an object of worship, the status of a deity whose worship has replaced traditional religion.

The second chapter presents the holistic concept of *sacrum*, inscribed in Szymborska's poetry, which makes it possible to precisely define the poet's religiosity, in which one can find elements of both the Christian and New Age religions, as well as deep ecology, which deifies nature and its power. It is also a religiosity which uses prophecies, fortune-telling and horoscopes characteristic of the New Age movement. It refers both to primitive religions (pantheism) and to Marxist thought. However, it does not identify with any of them. It is characterized by individualism (in living the faith) and reluctance toward institutions, as well as loss of interest in eschatology and focusing on earthly life. It is deprived of transcendence in favour of immanence. It is an eclectic postmodern religiosity.

The third chapter presents a reductionist vision of a human being in line with the thought characteristic of postmodernism, inscribed in the poetry of Wisława Szymborska. A follower of the religion of nature is devoid of a soul, and thus human nature, its psycho-spiritual dimension. The follower is closed to God and eschatological hope. The worshiper seeks holiness and divinity in nature.

In conclusion, it should be stated that the goal has been achieved - with the presentation of the concept of *sacrum* in the poetry of Wisława Szymborska, the basic assumptions of the religion of nature derived from postmodern religion were defined, and thus the poet's postmodern religiousness.