

Summary of the doctoral thesis

The World of Values in the Sermons and Homilies of Archbishop Ignacy Tokarczuk

The dissertation aims to reconstruct the linguistic image of the axiological concepts crucial to the preaching work of His Excellency Archbishop Ignacy Tokarczuk and, thus, falls within the scope of several subdisciplines of linguistics, including axiolinguistics, cognitive linguistics, and theolinguistics. His Excellency served as the bishop of Przemyśl diocese from 1965 to 1993, and was one of the most prominent figures in the Catholic Church in the times of the Polish People's Republic, who became known for his scathing criticism of the anti-religious policies of the authorities and efforts to protect civil liberties, including freedom of conscience. His Excellency delivered a plethora of excellent sermons and homilies that did not shy away from topics related to politics, with particular emphasis on unwarranted interference in the religious lives of Polish people. However, his work focused primarily on emphasizing the beauty of the Gospel, strengthening the faith of Polish people, and conveying fundamental moral, social, and transcendent values. Similarly, during the period of political transformation in the early 1990s, His Excellency emphasized that only the realization of axiological ideals guarantees the formation of a truly free country.

Taking into account the richness of contexts and thematic significance of the material analyzed, it was decided that the investigation would focus on four specific values, namely *God, homeland, nation, and truth*. The analysis was based on 100 preaching texts delivered by His Excellency and published in various journals, brochures, bulletins, and collections (including the most extensive collection titled *Pastoral Sermons 1966–1992*, which comprises 65 preaching texts).

The research was undertaken on the premise that the linguistic image of the world can be reconstructed not only from systemic data, but also from specific realizations of the linguistic system, for example, textual data.

The present thesis consists of eight chapters that are preceded by an introduction and a biography of His Excellency Archbishop Ignacy Tokarczuk. Biographical data concern the Archbishop's childhood, youth, and period of episcopal leadership in the Przemyśl diocese. The biography focuses particularly on the experience of His Excellency during World War II, when he directly encountered two totalitarian regimes. This experience had a tremendous

impact on His Excellency and heavily influenced his later criticism of communist ideology and its propagators.

The first chapter discusses the concept of religious language and presents the most important definitions of the notion. In addition, particular attention is paid to research concerning the position of religious language, including stylistic and discursive perspectives, and its functions.

The second chapter provides a description of sermons and homilies as categories of religious discourse, situated within the realm of preaching style and discourse. It also explores their history, functions, and stylistic features, and highlights the main trends in preaching practice.

The following chapter analyzes various interpretations of the terms value and valuation in philosophy and linguistics. It also includes the most noteworthy taxonomies of values.

The fourth chapter describes the methodology used in the present analysis. It discusses the assumptions of cognitive linguistics, the genesis and definitions of the linguistic worldview, as well as cognitive linguistic tools used for its reconstruction, such as profiling, categorization, conceptual metaphor, and cognitive definition.

The main body of the dissertation comprises three analytical chapters. The fifth chapter analyzes the linguistic image of God, specifically the Three Divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Examination of the homiletic semantics of God revealed that it is anchored in the traditional, cultural, and religiously entrenched conception of the discussed concept. At the same time, the analysis revealed that the semantics exceeds the boundaries of lexicographic definitions. It was concluded that the image of God present in the sermons abounds with evaluations and emotions that stem from evaluative means typical for colloquial language (lexemes, metaphors, phraseological units, and emotional expressions).

In the sermons, God is portrayed not only as a personal being, but also metaphorically through the names of values and other abstract concepts. Most of the descriptions used to characterize God (periphrases, nouns, adjectives, including superlatives) are conventionalized in religious discourse due to their biblical origin, however, the analyzed texts also contain less obvious conceptualizations. The analysis revealed an intensified divine activity towards human beings that was presented in an anthropomorphic manner and resembled human behavior and reactions. However, it should be noted that God does not impose anything on humans, with His only expectation being their cooperation. The most prominent profile rooted

in the Holy Scripture is the image of the Father, comprising facets that reveal His care, love, understanding towards people, and their equal treatment.

The author of the sermons vividly portrays the figure of Christ. When addressing the Second Divine Person, His Excellency most typically employs well-established names and designations from religious discourse, including metaphorical ones, however, some untypical references are also present. In his depiction of Christ, the Archbishop emphasizes features such as sensitivity, emotionality, firmness, and consistency.

In comparison to the conceptualizations of the First and Second Divine Persons presented in the dissertation, the image of the Holy Spirit, the Third Divine Person, is less distinct. The Third Divine Person is most typically conceptualized as the provider of values such as love, courage, and reason. In his sermons, His Excellency also underlines the responsibilities that human beings have towards the Holy Spirit.

The sermons are characterized by an affirmative stance towards the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, visible on the lexical, syntactic, and stylistic levels. The means used for this purpose have an unambiguously positive valorization stemming from their linguistic, cultural, and religious connotations. It should be noted that His Excellency shows a somewhat dualistic perception of the concept of God; while the religious perspective dictates a hierarchical understanding of the nature of God, a more human and, perhaps, naive perspective leads to the conceptualization of God as the transcendent Being. This arises from the form of the sermons. As the sermons were delivered in speech, the texts were largely improvised and spontaneous, and are characterized by the emotiveness of delivery, the presence of evaluative means, and everyday metaphors. As a result, the stereotypical images of God coexist with a few individualized depictions, confirming the assumption stemming from the concept of linguistic worldview that the meaning of words depends heavily on a specific point of view and discursive conditions.

As demonstrated in the sixth chapter, the concept of homeland occupies an equally important place in the Archbishop's axiosphere. Interestingly, the analysis revealed that the Archbishop's perceptions of the concept correspond to and actualize the variants distinguished by Jerzy Bartmiński. The homeland is portrayed as a space as well as a common good belonging to the entire nation that requires care and protection. It is depicted as a source of Catholic identity, and being a part of Europe, it should spread the values derived from the Gospel. His Excellency also emphasizes the social values stemming from remaining unified despite our differences. As a common good, the homeland evokes positive emotions and

feelings and, at the same time, obliges individuals to perform specific tasks and responsibilities towards one another.

The axiology of the concept is unambiguously positive; homeland is associated with the development of individuals and the entire community. The homeland is portrayed as a sacred concept and a carrier of the most important Polish values: attachment to the land, faith, tradition, and patriotism. It signifies the pursuit of freedom and the fight for human and national rights. Ultimately, the homeland is also understood as people who are united by a common faith, history, tradition, culture, language, and place of residence. It is perceived as good and connotes goodness.

The portrayal of homeland present in the sermons of His Excellency corresponds with the conceptualization of this concept in religious discourse typical for the late 1980s and 1990s. More specifically, the homeland was typically understood as an entity protecting the interests of a particular national group. The notion of mutual respect among people regardless of their national and religious differences is also present, although to a lesser extent. As the notion of homeland as a nation is firmly established, the image of the nation was extensively discussed in the seventh chapter, forming a cohesive whole with the conceptualization of the homeland.

In the eighth chapter, the concept of truth is analyzed. The analysis indicated that the Archbishop's perception of truth is in accordance with its most common definitions in Polish (correspondence of words to reality; a factual state; ethical behavior; prevailing opinions). The dissertation also highlights numerous updates in the understanding of truth; although incidental, the concept may also be understood as revealed or religious knowledge. The religious context provides additional perspectives in which truth may be associated with transcendent reality, God, teachings derived from God, and the belief in the correspondence of one's own words with reality.

In addition to the conceptualization of truth exploiting conventions in language and religious discourse, individualized textual images of truth emerge, depicting it as a value that manifests itself in four essential profiles: a value conditioning other values, something essential for life, something enduring and strong, and something fragile that can easily be destroyed and, therefore, needs protection.

In the dissertation, the data was analyzed from the perspective of cognitive semantics. The analysis revealed strong connections between the meanings of the lexemes *God*, *homeland*, *nation*, and *truth*, and their representations in the everyday language. It also uncovered transformations in the semantic structures of these words, although these are not

frequent due to the considerable conventionalization of the sermons, in the sense that the world is interpreted through the lens of the Holy Scripture. Importantly, the construction of terms used to describe values takes place within religious discourse, and thus it is determined by its conditions and schemes. This, in turn, confirms the validity of the claims that being part of a specific discursive community is associated with adopting the community's view of reality, knowledge of the world, perspectives, and value hierarchies.

Considering this type of discourse, the semantics of words are shaped through references to the sacred sphere, which often leads to the formation of new meanings and sacral connotations. In light of this observation, the examined names of values (*God*, *homeland*, *nation*, and *truth*) gain an unequivocally positive axiological dimension.

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Monika Mazian