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## The Relationship between a Master and a Student in the Pedagogy of Father Jacek Woroniecki

### Introduction

Father Jacek Woroniecki (1878–1949) left behind a rich legacy, including ethical, theological, social and pedagogical work—both in the field of the theory of upbringing, as well as specific guidelines relating to educational work.

A special place in his writings is occupied by the person of the teacher-master, as well as the relationship with the student, pupil, and charge. In that relationship, the main role is played by the mutual opening of its participants to each other and respect of the dignity of both the educator and the pupil. Woroniecki’s teaching is permeated with concern for the subjective, personalistic nature of the upbringing process. On the one hand, this eminent Pole gives interesting hints about the teaching profession itself, the proper approach to this profession, its special features and requirements that result from the choice of this path – the necessity of being a teacher, master, tutor,



leader. On the other hand, he sensitizes to the impossibility of replacing the teacher with even the best book, and more specifically, the impossibility of excluding him or her from the educational relationship. A master is not only a treasury of knowledge, he or she is a person with all his or her intellectual, moral, spiritual, and cultural endowments.

Following in the footsteps of Woroniecki's pedagogical thought, such issues will be presented as: mastery in upbringing and the specificity of the teaching profession, the question of requirements and obedience, the importance of the authentic relationship between the master and the student, and the importance of witness as the best educational method.

## **Mastery in Upbringing**

Current pedagogy needs a teacher – a master “who impresses those who observe him or her or learn from him or her, who becomes for them an unquestionable authority and a model worth following.”<sup>1</sup> In *Słownik etymologiczny języka polskiego* [Etymological dictionary of the Polish language], the word “master” was derived from the Latin word “magister” – higher, superior.<sup>2</sup> What are the characteristics of a person who deserves to be called a master? First of all, he or she is “transcendent to the need for recognition, [...] does not strive for authority. [...] The student is the one who, seeing and accepting his or

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<sup>1</sup> Mirosław Szymański, “Nauczyciel akademicki – mistrz, przewodnik czy partner studentów,” [An academic teacher—a master, guide or partner of students] in *Uniwersytet Społeczeństwo Edukacja* [University society education], ed. Wiesław Ambrozik, Kazimierz Przyszczypkowski (Poznan: UAM, 2004), 76. This and future quotes of books and articles are translated by Joanna Kiereś-Łach.

<sup>2</sup> Aleksander Brückner, *Słownik etymologiczny języka polskiego* [Etymological dictionary of the Polish language] (Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna, 2000), 318.

her eminence, follows him or her.”<sup>3</sup> Woroniecki’s statement that “citizens themselves choose their superiors holding power”<sup>4</sup> expresses his conviction about who deserves to lead others, to exercise power over someone. With his or her humanity and attitude – especially towards other people, he or she gains recognition in the eyes of others, he or she is predestined to lead other people. A teacher-master – who wants to build authority in the eyes of his or her students – cannot demand that students respect him or her, admire him or her, listen to him or her, imitate him or her, draw a lot for themselves from his or her attitude, just because he or she has a superior function towards them. He or she must strive with his or her whole being in contacts with pupils, so that they voluntarily recognize that it is worth having a point of reference in his or her attitude and beliefs.

According to Woroniecki, to fruitfully accompany pupils in growing up to a richer humanity, the educator should have solid competences in the field of anthropology and educational sciences. So—following Woroniecki’s instructions—“Anyone who wants to teach and lead others must first work on himself or herself and be educated properly so as not to be a blind leader.”<sup>5</sup>

An important feature of a master is undoubtedly the realization and knowledge in the field of moral values.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Iwona Jazukiewicz, “Autorytet mistrza,” [The authority of the master] in *Personalistyczny wymiar filozofii wychowania* [The personalistic dimension of the philosophy of education], ed. Anna Szudra, Katarzyna Uzar (Lublin: KUL, 2009), 309.

<sup>4</sup> Jacek Woroniecki, “Uniwersytety katolickie,” [Catholic universities] in *Oświata katolicka i uniwersytety katolickie. Szkice kazań na “Dzień Uniwersytecki,”* [Catholic education and catholic universities. Sketches of sermons for “University Day”] (Lublin: Uniwersytet, 1929), 13.

<sup>5</sup> Jacek Woroniecki, *Przewodnik po literaturze religijnej i pokrewnych dziedzinach filozofii i nauk społecznych* [A guide to religious literature and related areas of philosophy and the social sciences] (Poznań: Księgarnia św. Wojciecha, 1927), 15.

<sup>6</sup> Jazukiewicz, *Autorytet mistrza* [The authority of the master], 310.

In one of his articles, Fr. Jacek Woroniecki emphasizes: “It is clear that theoretical knowledge about education alone cannot be enough to conduct the educational process, and that the main factor in education is the moral value of the educators themselves.”<sup>7</sup> The source of the master’s authority is not the so-called meritocratic stereotype—valuing cognition and knowledge above all else—but the inner value of a human being. The student expects a teacher who respects fundamental values and respects the dignity of the human person. Pupils need masters who are able to fascinate them, who design changes, disseminate innovations, whom they want to imitate.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, Woroniecki rightly warned: “It is wrong when he or she cares only about erudition, about furnishing the head with a series of practical knowledge, while omitting the systematic development of the child’s spiritual powers.”<sup>9</sup>

Mastery in upbringing is associated in a special way with example, with the witness of life, compliance of words with deeds. Therefore, the leader—teacher, educator “should submit himself or herself to this atmosphere of order and set an example of subordination to the good of the whole, which he or she is supposed to watch over. This will give him or her an inner moral authority to rule, to command, and to demand obedience from others [...] which can never be replaced by the outer authority of the office he holds.”<sup>10</sup> A person who is a master appreciates the individuality of each student, their uniqueness and

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<sup>7</sup> Jacek Woroniecki, “Społeczeństwo a wychowanie,” [Society and upbringing] (ed. Justyna Golonka), *Polska myśl pedagogiczna* [Polish pedagogical thought], no. 7 (2021), 393.

<sup>8</sup> Elżbieta Skonieczna, “Autorytet nauczyciela – kryzys czy nowa jakość,” [A teacher’s authority—a crisis or a new quality] *Życie szkoły* [School life], no. 8 (2006), 45.

<sup>9</sup> Jacek Woroniecki, *Okolo kultu mowy ojczystej* [On the cultivation of the language of the fatherland] (Lviv–Warsaw: Książnica Atlas, 1925), 15.

<sup>10</sup> Jacek Woroniecki, *Umiejętność rządzenia i rozkazywania* [The skill of governing and giving orders] (Lublin: *Servire Veritati* IEN, 2016), 13.

exceptional quality. Thanks to such an approach, taking into account the value of each individual, it is additionally possible—according to Woroniecki—to “save the social machine many frictions.”<sup>11</sup>

The authority of a master is a gift, because he or she is for someone, he or she should share and pass on his or her wealth. “The authority of the master remains forever. [...] When a master leaves, his disciple remains.”<sup>12</sup> Jacek Woroniecki's teaching contains a warning against the lack of a successor, a disciple, a continuator of the research conducted by the master. According to the author, this situation may be caused by “a strange fear of a successor who would one day knock the master off the pedestal of knowledge, who would equal him or her, perhaps surpass him or her.”<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, a master is someone who shows the way, and at the same time accompanies his or her student, does not limit him or her. A master understood in this way leads him or her from being brought up towards self-upbringing.

Today, young people need true role models, masters who act in accordance with the preached ideas, show kindness to their students, are people who fulfill themselves in their humanity, whose work has a moral dimension. The master is someone who is filled with “the love of human souls,” about which Jan Władysław Dawid wrote. The way to rebuild the teacher's authority is “love of human souls” thanks to which we become beautiful and free, we find the meaning of life and inner harmony.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Woroniecki, “Społeczeństwo a wychowanie,” [Society and upbringing] 392.

<sup>12</sup> Jazukiewicz, *Autorytet mistrza* [The authority of the master], 309–310.

<sup>13</sup> Jacek Woroniecki, “Uczeń czy książka,” [The student or the book] in Jacek Woroniecki, *W szkole wychowania. Pisma wybrane* [In the school of upbringing. Selected writings], (Lublin: *Servire Veritati* IEN, 2008), 109.

<sup>14</sup> Maria Leśniak, “Autorytet nauczyciela – trudne wyzwanie współczesnej szkoły,” [The teacher's authority—a difficult challenge of modern schools] *Nowa Szkoła* [The New School], no. 10 (2008), 38–40.

Following Woroniecki, it is rightly emphasized that guiding another human being, especially a child, an immature, adolescent human being, is a kind of exercising power over them. This task is “not only difficult, but above all it is a form of service to another human by governing him or her [...]. The soul of authentic power must therefore be love and kindness born from it, genuine power is always imbued with the virtue of pietism, it is a form of service for good.”<sup>15</sup> Therefore, only a true master has a chance to become an authority in the eyes of students—as a patient, persistent and hard-working seeker of fullness and harmony of the pupil. The meeting with such a teacher takes place only on the basis of love. Only then does the teacher have the power to change the pupil’s life.

### **The Teacher and the Difficulties of Teaching —to Whom to Entrust the Upbringing of a Human Being?**

The term “teacher”—as the name suggests—refers to a person who teaches and transfers knowledge, but also educates. Over the centuries, the definitions of people who performed educational functions have changed. Teaching and upbringing have been accompanying human beings since the times of primitive communities. However, the social status, requirements and expectations of society, and the main duties and tasks of educators, have evolved over the centuries.

In Greek culture, the role of educator was most often entrusted to slaves who were not fit for harder work. Pericles (who saw a fruit-

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<sup>15</sup> Paweł Skrzydlewski, “Filozofia władzy w ujęciu o. Jacka Woronieckiego,” [Philosophy of human power in the perspective of Father Jacek Woroniecki] *Roczniki Pedagogiczne* [Annals of Pedagogy], no. 12 (48) (2020), 146–147.

picking slave fall from a tree and break his leg) famously said: “Oh, he’s going to be a teacher now!”<sup>16</sup> In the case of elementary education teachers, their social status at that time was also low, and their earnings were poor. Society treated them as losers in a sense. When someone disappeared without a trace, it was said: “Either they died or they teach children somewhere.”<sup>17</sup>

It should be noted that even today, despite the passage of many centuries, certain negligence concerning the status of the teaching profession is still visible. At least the very basic issue of salaries deserves attention, which was pointed out by Father Woroniecki in his writings when he appealed that teachers “to earn a living for themselves and their families should not have to work outside school hours.”<sup>18</sup> Elsewhere, the author of *The Catholic Educational Ethics* laments the paucity of “genuine vocations to the teaching profession” and that society “does not sufficiently value this important vocation.”<sup>19</sup>

In Woroniecki’s writings, one can often find a call to respect this unique profession: “We have too few teachers [...] And in society there is little understanding of the beauty and sublimity of this vocation.”<sup>20</sup>

Another important problem pointed out by Woroniecki is the lack of adequate preparation of teachers, namely appropriate qualifications, knowledge, skills, and competences. Negligence in this matter brings significant harm to children and youth, and gives a bad example to other teachers, or finally discourages potential educators from this profession: “Well, dilettante treatment of teaching by individuals unre-

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<sup>16</sup> Stanisław Kot, *Historia wychowania* [The history of upbringing], vol. 1 (Warsaw: “Żak”, 1996), 39.

<sup>17</sup> Kot, *Historia wychowania* [The history of upbringing], 44.

<sup>18</sup> Woroniecki, *Okolo kultu mowy ojczystej* [On the cultivation of the language of the fatherland], 99.

<sup>19</sup> Woroniecki, “Społeczeństwo a wychowanie,” [Society and upbringing] 391.

<sup>20</sup> Woroniecki, “Społeczeństwo a wychowanie,” [Society and upbringing] 391.

pared for this work discredits the entire teaching activity and often discourages individuals who would like to lovingly dedicate [themselves] to it.”<sup>21</sup>

How can this situation be changed? What should we pay attention to so that both the teaching profession and the teachers themselves have authority and that it is reflected in reality? Father Woroniecki gives valuable advice here, saying we need “employees who are passionately attached to their profession and convinced that the most interesting process in the world is the slow development of the human mind and heart, and the most beautiful job is the ability to direct this development.”<sup>22</sup> We need teachers with a vocation, who are professionally prepared, but also treat their profession with respect and affection, and are aware of the great responsibility for the spiritual development of entire generations.<sup>23</sup>

Only a true master—who is a patient, persistent and hard-working seeker of the fullness and harmony of the student—can help to authentically educate and grow according to the person’s needs. Years ago, Woroniecki pointed out that “devoting yourself to educational work requires much more work on yourself, much more sacrifice, much more vigilance over your entire moral life.”<sup>24</sup>

The teacher, educator, and pedagogue with whom the student lives every day is often observed and embodies values thanks to the natural tendency of young people to look for an ideal worth imitating. What are the characteristics of a teacher according to Father Woroniecki’s pedagogy?

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<sup>21</sup> Jacek Woroniecki, “Społeczeństwo a wychowanie,” [Society and upbringing] in Jacek Woroniecki, *W szkole wychowania. Pisma wybrane* [In the school of upbringing. Selected writings], (Lublin: *Servire Veritati* IEN, 2008), 43.

<sup>22</sup> Woroniecki, “Uczeń czy książka,” [The student or the book] 125.

<sup>23</sup> Woroniecki, “Uczeń czy książka,” [The student or the book] 125.

<sup>24</sup> Woroniecki, “Społeczeństwo a wychowanie,” [Society and upbringing] 49.



“These will include, first of all, complete self-control, which is expressed through perseverance, patience and long sightedness, then decisiveness, severity and great consistency in behavior, and finally kindness towards young people, the ability to lower the teacher’s level to theirs, gentleness and understanding towards their mistakes and kindness in external forms of interaction.”<sup>25</sup> Moreover, a person teaching at school should have thorough theoretical knowledge of ethics and live according to its principles.<sup>26</sup> The educator should also have the obedience of his or her pupils, which involves the ability to command and give orders—“by clearly and firmly expressing his or her will, by transferring its power, its tension into the child’s soul.”<sup>27</sup>

Among the qualities of a teacher, Woroniecki also mentioned the ability to overcome difficulties and be resistant to changing moods.<sup>28</sup> He also warned that educators should not punish their students in anger, because “any shouting, impatience and anger [...] is very harmful here and necessarily reduces the effectiveness of the admonishment.”<sup>29</sup>

And finally, one more attribute, often marginalized among educators, namely joy. Cheerfulness, a sense of humor, cordiality, and a smile on the teacher’s face are the features that students especially look forward to. Jacek Woroniecki speaks on this issue in a very radical and

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<sup>25</sup> Jacek Woroniecki, “Zdolność wychowawcza szkoły publicznej i jej granice,” [The educational capacity of public schools and its limits] in *W szkole wychowania. Pisma wybrane* [In the school of upbringing. Selected writings], (Lublin: *Servire Veritati* IEN, 2008), 77.

<sup>26</sup> Jacek Woroniecki, *Katolicka etyka wychowawcza* [The catholic educational ethics], vol. II (Lublin: RW KUL, 1986), 415.

<sup>27</sup> Jacek Woroniecki, “Długomyślność jako właściwa cnota wychowawcy,” [Long sightedness as the proper virtue of an educator] in *W szkole wychowania. Pisma wybrane* [In the school of upbringing. Selected writings], (Lublin: *Servire Veritati* IEN, 2008), 250.

<sup>28</sup> Woroniecki, *Katolicka etyka wychowawcza* [The catholic educational ethics], vol. II, 416.

<sup>29</sup> Woroniecki, *Umiejętność rządzenia i rozkazywania* [The skill of governing and giving orders], 29.

uncompromising way: “whoever cannot control the temptations of sadness and discouragement [...] should consider himself disqualified for this type of work.”<sup>30</sup>

An educator and teacher of young generations should be a personal model and moral authority. The educational process itself should become a collaboration between the educator and the student, referring to the educator’s experiences and the way of understanding and accepting values. It is important that the entire society pays attention to the issue of education, takes care of “hosts of well-prepared professional forces,” and “values the teaching vocation more highly than before.”<sup>31</sup>

### **Demands, Discipline and Obedience in the Educational Relationship**

There is no upbringing without requirements; these requirements open new perspectives, teach how to meet challenges, how not to succumb to difficulties, how to realize life goals. According to Woroniecki, “To rule means to lead the entire group entrusted to oneself to its proper goal; to order is to indicate to individuals what they should or are allowed to do in this way; finally, to discipline is to point out to them where they have gone wrong or where they are guilty and to give them the opportunity to make amends for the wrong that they have done.”<sup>32</sup>

On the other hand, nothing serves education better than a cheerful atmosphere. However, if this mutual kindness is devoid of requirements, it turns into a sterile, “easygoing” life. Reflecting on the ability to gov-

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<sup>30</sup> Woroniecki, “Zdolność wychowawcza szkoły publicznej i jej granice,” [The educational capacity of public schools and its limits] 79.

<sup>31</sup> Woroniecki, “Społeczeństwo a wychowanie,” [Society and upbringing] 44–45.

<sup>32</sup> Woroniecki, *Umiejętność rządzenia i rozkazywania* [The skill of governing and giving orders], 9.

ern, Woroniecki warned: “Experience shows that children brought up in discipline are much more attached to their parents than spoiled children who are allowed to not care about anything and disregard everything. As soon as their dependence on their parents ends, they will immediately forget them and even be ready to show contempt for them because of the lack of character their parents have shown in raising them.”<sup>33</sup>

Hence, kindness and firm requirements towards pupils, wards, and students, and informal and official rules must complement each other; balancing these two elements of the teacher’s attitude determines proper upbringing.

The upbringing of young people often oscillates between two extremes: excessive strictness and too much freedom. It is important to take from each of these two systems what is part of the truth in them and to establish a pedagogy that takes into account the real state of affairs, a pedagogy that would successfully avoid both rocks—that of excessive strictness and that of too much freedom. For this reason, following Woroniecki, it is rightly emphasized that:

Numerous anthropological, social and ideological errors have made many people today seem to propagate an extremely dangerous concept of power, in which human good and the institution of power itself are lost. Power is sometimes wrongly identified here either with some form of unlimited despotism, domination and the use of something or someone, or it is presented in terms of arbitrary behavior, unrelated to any good and truth, even as an unreasonable action, based on whims, in which neither natural relations, interpersonal relationships, nor the order established by God matter.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Woroniecki, *Katolicka etyka wychowawcza* [The catholic educational ethics], vol. II, 144.

<sup>34</sup> Skrzydlewski, “Filozofia władzy w ujęciu o. Jacka Woronieckiego,” [Philosophy of human power in the perspective of Father Jacek Woroniecki] 139–140.

Freedom that has no limits hinders the development of an individual. The same happens with coercion, which—when it exceeds its powers—becomes a factor leading to regression. “For Woroniecki, exercising power over oneself and other people turns out to be a human duty, also a specific art and skill needed for the full personal development of a human being, but also something indispensable for the existence of individual, family and social life.”<sup>35</sup> Moreover, Woroniecki emphasized that being subject to someone else’s authority does not diminish personal dignity in any way, but even affirms it if this authority is accompanied by an appropriate goal and the means by which one wants to achieve it. Being under someone else’s authority can even become an improvement factor. By submitting to good authority, we have a chance to participate in the fruits that this authority brings.<sup>36</sup>

It is important—as Woroniecki emphasizes in his teachings—to reprimand and discipline in such a way as not to discourage or deter, but to inspire trust in the educator. All commands and orders should be precise, clear, and concise, free from any ambiguities that could obscure their meaning.<sup>37</sup> “Humility is the secret of such skillful discipline.”<sup>38</sup> It also enables the teacher to praise, notice the student’s strengths, and reflect on what deserves recognition in him or her.

Obedience and following the teacher’s instructions are educational only when they are reasonable and the result of the student’s reflection and free response. Only an educator who does not “produce” his or her

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<sup>35</sup> Skrzydlewski, “Filozofia władzy w ujęciu o. Jacka Woronieckiego,” [Philosophy of human power in the perspective of Father Jacek Woroniecki] 147.

<sup>36</sup> Skrzydlewski, “Filozofia władzy w ujęciu o. Jacka Woronieckiego,” [Philosophy of human power in the perspective of Father Jacek Woroniecki] 141.

<sup>37</sup> Woroniecki, *Umiejętność rządzenia i rozkazywania* [The skill of governing and giving orders], 20.

<sup>38</sup> Woroniecki, *Umiejętność rządzenia i rozkazywania* [The skill of governing and giving orders], 25.

own copy (even the most perfect one) in the student, but leads him or her to independence, is able to trigger self-creation in him or her. Therefore, it is worth agreeing to a certain independence of the student and giving him or her some freedom of action. This does not mean just observing the student's free, unrestricted development. This does not mean leaving him or her alone to face difficulties. It is rather a participation in solving problems independently. Nowadays, in educational work, one can encounter many manifestations of the lack of obedience to teachers. The current reality is created by three main forces: consumerism, mass mediatization of culture and entertainment, and widespread computerization of society. Hence, manifestations of misunderstood freedom can be observed at school.

The lack of strict rules and arbitrariness have led to one of the quietest and least bloody revolutions, which in turn leads to the creation of a group of self-satisfied, thoughtless, and passive consumers. Only the presence of rules that respect the human person and fundamental values can liberate young people from this apparent freedom, which shallows and trivializes the world of existing values.

### **Father Jacek Woroniecki's Concept of Building the Relationship between Master and Disciple**

The pedagogical space is shaped primarily by a specific personal relationship: educator-disciple. However, it is not a simple exchange of information, or a relationship based on its assimilation (disciple) and enforcement (educator). The metaphysics of help is revealed in the educator's work on the student. The educator is entrusted with the vocation of helping the disciple. Education from the perspective of personalistic philosophy aims to develop the human person. A factor that may contribute to achieving this goal is undoubtedly proper com-

munication between the meeting participants (educator and disciple). The educator enters into a dialogue with the disciple when he or she respects the disciple's freedom, tries to talk to him or her, and enters into his or her existence. Moreover, the educational relationship is perceived as not one-way (directed from the teacher to the disciple), but as a relationship of reciprocity. "In the process of education, the teacher/educator 'gives' something (his or her experience, knowledge, skills) to the disciple, but is also gifted by him or her."<sup>39</sup> An example is—according to Father Woroniecki—the scientist's publications, which are the result of live contacts and authentic relationships: "Contact with young minds, gained through teaching, must be reflected in literary work, giving it clarity and accessibility; someone who cannot teach properly rarely has these qualities in his writings."<sup>40</sup>

Therefore, the foundation for educational and upbringing activity should be building a master-student (disciple) relationship, an interpersonal and inter-subject relationship. Father Woroniecki strongly warned against replacing a true, personal relationship, a relationship with a master by contact with a thing, even if it is the best, the wisest book: "The help of a teacher and educator is necessary—and a very dangerous exaggeration, especially in the field of education, is putting self-education above learning under the guidance of a teacher."<sup>41</sup>

Jacek Woroniecki appeals to teachers and educators to connect "life experience with true youth of the soul" in contact with children and young people, and for this there is a need for "true love for youth [...] a certain familiarity does not detract anything from seriousness and

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<sup>39</sup> Wojciech Chudy, *Pedagogia godności. Elementy etyki pedagogicznej* [Pedagogy of dignity. Elements of pedagogical ethics], ed. A. Szudra (Lublin: TN KUL, 2009), 213.

<sup>40</sup> Woroniecki, "Uczeń czy książka," [The student or the book] 120.

<sup>41</sup> Jacek Woroniecki, "Oświata a wychowanie," [Education and upbringing] in Jacek Woroniecki, *W szkole wychowania. Pisma wybrane* [In the school of upbringing. Selected writings] (Lublin: *Servire Veritati* IEN, 2008), 32.

respect.”<sup>42</sup> Selfless, unconditional love for children is a very important factor in a teacher’s vocation. It requires attention to children, reliable knowledge of children’s needs, and exceptionally developed empathy. Children want to see the teacher as an authority, but not as dry and repulsive one; they want him or her to impress them as a master.

In this context, it is worth noting that nowadays the human being himself and his communal life are threatened by anonymity, apparent and worthless virtual dialogue. There is no authentic personal dialogue. Teachers do not have time to answer students’ questions. In such a situation, the student, left to his or her own devices, looks for someone who will answer his or her questions and guide him or her in the right direction. Meanwhile, as Woroniecki teaches, “The entire behavior of every person [...] should be characterized by a certain acceptance of responsibility for the influences that we exert through our behavior on others, especially on young people.”<sup>43</sup>

For this reason, it can be seen that for Woroniecki the “heart” of the school’s educational activity is what happens in the teacher-student relationship. Everything should serve the proper development of this relationship—the law, the school system, organization, supervision, programs, but also unofficial rules created during the educational situation. This relationship cannot be reduced only to the teaching process. The teacher and the student are people who should be in constant dialogue, covering a much wider range of issues than just giving knowledge.

What is fundamental in an educational relationship is the mutual openness of its participants to each other. Openness does not only apply to the people currently involved in this relationship. Education and upbringing as well require openness to the community of people

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<sup>42</sup> Woroniecki, “Zdolność wychowawcza szkoły publicznej i jej granice,” [The educational capacity of public schools and its limits] 82.

<sup>43</sup> Woroniecki, “Społeczeństwo a wychowanie,” [Society and upbringing] 47–48.

in general. Openness is associated with a lack of exclusivity in upbringing.<sup>44</sup> Jacek Woroniecki emphasizes this truth in his teachings: “Not the principal and individual educators, not even the entire group of them, but the school as a whole is the main factor in education and upbringing.”<sup>45</sup>

When we are talking about the nature of the teacher-student relationship, it is worth recalling that education is ineffective if it is based on sanctions, fear, showing impatience, and rushing students in their efforts. Woroniecki rightly says: “Giving in to discouragement and impatience [...] always shows a certain weakness.”<sup>46</sup>

The teacher’s trust in the student makes the student trust in the teacher. This particular feedback mechanism builds healthy, positive motivation for learning in the student and for engaged work in the teacher. Mutual kindness and trust, as well as fairness in assessing student achievements, are the right starting point for educational work and at the same time a condition for its success. “The educator should be able to intelligently influence this process of shaping the will of the student and know all the means that are used to achieve this; but at the same time he or she should not delude himself or herself that this work is completely in his or her hands.”<sup>47</sup>

When we are considering the master-disciple relationship in the context of Jacek Woroniecki’s pedagogy, it is worth referring to the metaphysical optimism indicated by the author. In case of failures in educa-

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<sup>44</sup> Chudy, *Pedagogia godności. Elementy etyki pedagogicznej* [Pedagogy of dignity. Elements of pedagogical ethics], 219–220.

<sup>45</sup> Woroniecki, Woroniecki, *Umiejętność rządzenia i rozkazywania* [The skill of governing and giving orders], 12.

<sup>46</sup> Woroniecki, “Długomyślność jako właściwa cnota wychowawcy,” [Long sightedness as the proper virtue of an educator] 251.

<sup>47</sup> Woroniecki, “Długomyślność jako właściwa cnota wychowawcy,” [Long sightedness as the proper virtue of an educator] 248–249.



tion, lack of visible educational effects, or lack of any specific successes, the educator should not be discouraged. “As long as a human is alive, we cannot doubt him or her. The most deprived person should be treated in such a way that he or she feels and understands that we always trust in the possibility of them changing for the better.”<sup>48</sup>

The unique relationship between leader and guided, master and student, educator and student should be, above all, human. The attitude of students towards their teacher depends on the results of continuous observation of the teacher as a human being. Partially revealing oneself to young people as a person, “humanizing” the rigid course of classes, is important for establishing proper personal relationships between the teacher and the students. Teachers can best fulfill their educational task through closeness and dialogue, leading young people behind them, realizing through their lives the values desired in their students.<sup>49</sup> Education always takes place “along the way.” Without the participation of interaction and proper, wise relationships, upbringing becomes only a form of wrongly understood moralizing.<sup>50</sup>

### **Testimony of life—Father Jacek Woroniecki in the Memories of Students**

Many times in the works of Father Woroniecki we can find the message that an educator should be a witness of the values that he or she

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<sup>48</sup> Woroniecki, “Długomyślność jako właściwa cnota wychowawcy,” [Long sightedness as the proper virtue of an educator] 253.

<sup>49</sup> Andrzej Spychała, “Relacje nauczyciel – uczeń w procesie nauczania,” [Teacher–student relations in the teaching process] accessed August 30, 2023 [https://www.profesor.pl/mat/n10/n10\\_a\\_spychala\\_040509\\_2.php](https://www.profesor.pl/mat/n10/n10_a_spychala_040509_2.php).

<sup>50</sup> Wojciech Chudy, “Istota pedagogiki personalistycznej,” [The essence of personalistic pedagogy] *Ethos*, no. 75 (2006), 71.

himself or herself proclaims, should affirm them and confirm them with his or her life. The best educational method is witness, which involves treating other people in a way that shows our respect for their subjectivity, uniqueness, and specialness.

Young people look for authorities and want to entrust themselves to someone they consider as a particularly valuable person. It is therefore not surprising that the Dominican clerics with whom Father Woroniecki cooperated were also looking for such role models. Chroniclers say that Woroniecki lectured on patrology, homiletics, Church history and ascetic-mystical theology and was highly respected and appreciated by students.<sup>51</sup> In the memories of the clerics of that period, we can read words about Woroniecki full of sympathy and respect: “even a short contact with him has a strange positive effect on us. [...] We had a long talk in the garden with Father Jacek, pointing out his cheerfulness, joy, and comprehensive knowledge.”<sup>52</sup>

Woroniecki’s erudition and knowledge impressed people around him. Father Adam Studziński (1911–2008), recalling classes with Jacek Woroniecki many years later, emphasized that “you just ran to his classes, he lectured so engagingly.”<sup>53</sup> Similarly, Woroniecki’s stu-

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<sup>51</sup> Marek Miławicki, “W poszukiwaniu mistrza i autorytetu duchowego. Ojciec Jacek Woroniecki OP we wspomnieniach współbraci zakonnych, uczniów i przyjaciół,” [In search of a spiritual authority and master. Fr. Jacek Woroniecki OP in the recollections of Dominican Brothers, students and friends] in *Wychowawca–nauczyciel–mistrz. O potrzebie mądrości, autorytetu i cnoty* [Educator–teacher–master. On the need for wisdom, authority and virtue], ed. Barbara Jędrzychowska (Wrocław: Instytut Pedagogiki Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2017), 65–66.

<sup>52</sup> Miławicki, “W poszukiwaniu mistrza i autorytetu duchowego. Ojciec Jacek Woroniecki OP we wspomnieniach współbraci zakonnych, uczniów i przyjaciół,” [In search of a spiritual authority and master. Fr. Jacek Woroniecki OP in the recollections of Dominican Brothers, students and friends] 66.

<sup>53</sup> Miławicki, “W poszukiwaniu mistrza i autorytetu duchowego. Ojciec Jacek Woroniecki OP we wspomnieniach współbraci zakonnych, uczniów i przyjaciół,” [In

dent Józef Bocheński (1902–1995) wrote about him in letters to his father: “He is excellent; we can learn the most from him.”<sup>54</sup>

There are also other features of the master, teacher and lecturer that were particularly memorable for his students: wisdom, but also “a certain dignity could be felt in him;” he was remembered as a very direct person in conversation, cheerful and smiling. Among Woroniecki’s characteristic features, his students also point out a sense of humor and a positive approach to life. However, he was especially remembered as “a man who lived deeply in faith in God, although outwardly he showed no signs of devotion.”<sup>55</sup> Woroniecki was very concerned about the issue of educating young people into an intellectual elite, but above all, a spiritual elite who would be able to testify with their lives about their belonging to God, authentic faith, and religiosity.<sup>56</sup>

The above-mentioned Feliks Wojciech Bednarski (1911–2006) presents interesting observations, emphasizing such features as: “shining with personal character,” setting an example with his own life, making an effort to educate in every activity: conferences, retreats, sermons, and even hearing confessions.<sup>57</sup>

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search of a spiritual authority and master. Fr. Jacek Woroniecki OP in the recollections of Dominican Brothers, students and friends] 67.

<sup>54</sup> Józef Bocheński, *Listy do ojca. Prywatna korespondencja* [Letters to father. Private correspondence] (Krakow: Salwator, 2008), 24.

<sup>55</sup> Miławicki, “W poszukiwaniu mistrza i autorytetu duchowego. Ojciec Jacek Woroniecki OP we wspomnieniach współbraci zakonnych, uczniów i przyjaciół,” [In search of a spiritual authority and master. Fr. Jacek Woroniecki OP in the recollections of Dominican Brothers, students and friends] 69.

<sup>56</sup> Jacek Woroniecki, “Życie religijne współczesnej inteligencji polskiej,” [The religious life of contemporary Polish intelligentsia] in *U podstaw kultury katolickiej* [At the foundations of catholic culture], (Lublin: *Servire Veritati* IEN, 2002), 23–54.

<sup>57</sup> Feliks W. Bednarski, *Zagadnienia pedagogiczne* [Pedagogical Issues] (London: Veritas, 1982), 59.

Cardinal Karol Wojtyła (and then Pope John Paul II), a great intellectual, an outstanding authority on many levels described Father Woroniecki as a thinker, theologian, professor, pastor and “a pioneer of a certain form of thinking and form of action, a certain form of Catholic life and awareness of the Church.”<sup>58</sup> Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński, on the other hand, described his relationship with Woroniecki as “the relationship of a student to an outstanding professor.”<sup>59</sup>

Among the features that characterize Father Woroniecki, it is also worth mentioning his avoidance of indulgence; as a teacher he was demanding. He was also remembered by his students as a strict examiner.

The above memories, especially those of witnesses of Father Jacek Woroniecki’s life (seminarians, students, colleagues), reveal the truth about his life, attitude and temperament. They show a specific man, a master, an authority who left a part of himself in his students. The testimony of life, affirmed values, true faith, knowledge and experience became an important point of reference in the lives of those who grew up next to him. Education goes beyond words and transcends them, but what remains is witness.<sup>60</sup>

## Conclusion

The observation of many areas of contemporary Western culture, and in particular the field of education and upbringing, may lead to the conclusion that the human being’s spiritual space is increasingly

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<sup>58</sup> Karol Wojtyła, “O Ojcu Jacku Woronieckim,” [About Father Jacek Woroniecki] *W Drodze* [On the Way] no. 8 (1974), 6.

<sup>59</sup> Stefan Wyszyński, “O Ojcu Jacku Woronieckim,” [About Father Jacek Woroniecki] *W Drodze* [On the Way] no. 8 (1974), 4.

<sup>60</sup> Wojciech Chudy, *Esej o społeczeństwie i kłamstwie* [Essay about society and lies], vol. 1 (Warsaw: Oficyna Naukowa, 2007), 352.

devoid of universal values, which is why a spiritual emptiness, nihilism, extreme consumerism, and merciless struggle appear on many levels. Young people are in a particularly difficult situation here—they have many paths to choose from, in every sphere of life (including the moral one!). In the face of this situation, Father Woroniecki's pedagogy and his instructions regarding the master-disciple relationship are extremely relevant. It is an indication of a relationship based on authority, respect, love, and focused on the good of the other. However, it is not a relationship without requirements, setting boundaries and discipline. Woroniecki highly values direct personal relationships in the processes of upbringing and education. In the proposed concept of education, he puts the human being at the center—a person, an individual who, through a meeting with a master teacher, has a chance to develop into an “independent personality, able to effectively wield all his or her talents in full consciousness.”<sup>61</sup>

*Translated by Joanna Kiereś-Lach*



### The Relationship between a Master and a Student in the Pedagogy of Father Jacek Woroniecki

#### SUMMARY

The aim of the article is to show the unique relationship of master and disciple in the concept of Father Jacek Woroniecki. First, the characteristics of the master and his or her features were mentioned, then the profession of a teacher and educator was analyzed, with particular emphasis on the problem of underesti-

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<sup>61</sup> Jacek Woroniecki, *Katolicka etyka wychowawcza* [The catholic educational ethics], vol. I (Lublin: RW KUL, 1995), 384.

mating this profession on the one hand, and on the other hand, showing the teacher's qualities per Woroniecki's writings. An important element of the article is the issue of requirements from the educator and the obedience of the student, because at this point Woroniecki's pedagogy responds in a special way to the needs of contemporary culture permeated by permissiveness, arbitrariness and extreme freedom. The central part of the article refers to the master-disciple relationship and the conditions of this unique communication. Since the most effective and desirable educational method is witness, the analyses contained in the final part of the article focus on Father Woroniecki as an example, an authority, a master who, with his life, confirmed the fundamental theses that he proclaimed and included in his rich achievements focused on the process of human upbringing.

**Keywords:** Jacek Woroniecki, master, disciple, teacher, student, relationship, education, upbringing

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