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The master

Mistrz

STRESZCZENIE: W postmodernistycznej dobie deprecjacji autorytetów powracam do fundamentalnej nie tylko dla nauk humanistycznych, ale dla społeczeństw, kategorii mistrza. Zastanawiam się nad tym, jak dzisiaj jest on rozumiany, jak dalece odchodzimy od źródeł chrześcijańskiej kultury, a w środowisku akademickim – od humboldtowskiej idei i relacji między naukowcem a jego uczniem. To w tym fenomenie kumuluje się niemalże większość cech, jakie przypisywane były szczególnym postaciom, mistrzom różnych ról społecznych, dziedzin życia czy profesji. Zastępowanie mistrzostwa pojęciami i rolami liderów, przywódców, VIP-ów, celebrytów, „utytułowanych” w popkulturowym świecie idoli itp., prowadzi nas w ślełą ulicę powierzchowności i *quasi*-profesjonalizmu. Odpowiadam zatem na pytanie, czy mistrzem w nauce i szkolnictwie wyższym ma być rynkowo zorientowany profesjonalista, czy personalista dążący konsekwentnie do PRAWDY o badanym i współtworzonym świecie?

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: Autorytet, mistrz, lider, przywódca, osoba, idol, profesjonalista, nauka, edukacja, szkolnictwo wyższe.

ABSTRACT: In the postmodern era of depreciation of authorities I return to fundamental, not only for the humanities, but for societies, category: master. I’m discussing in the article how it is understood today, as it is moving away from sources of Christian culture, and Humboldt academia ideas and the relationship between the researcher and his follower. In this phenomenon there accumulate most of the features that were attributed to special characters, masters of different social roles, areas of life and profession. Replacing mastership concepts with the roles of leaders, VIPs, celebrities, “wearing titles”, and idols known in the pop culture world, leads us into a dead end street of superficial and *quasi* professionalism. Therefore I answer the question of whether a master of science and higher education is to be market-oriented professional or personalist consistently striving to TRUTH about the examined and co-created world?

KEYWORDS: Authority, master, leader, person, idol, professional, science, education, higher education.

Introduction

The subject is seemingly banal, after all we find examples that confirm its meaning in our lives every day, like in these well known sayings for example: “Practice maketh the Master” (from the German *Übung macht der Meister*), “The past is the master of life” (*Book of quotations* 1975, p. 428) and “Judge the master by their work” (ibid, p. 117). The concept of the master can of course be found in lexicography, where it is described as: “the title given to a person who has reached the highest degree of knowledge or skill in a particular field; one enjoying a kind of authority and standing as a role model (teacher, guru) hence possessing a position/status which distinguishes from the general public” (<http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mistrz>). In the *Dictionary of the Polish Language*, the term “master” has the following meanings:

- “1. A person decidedly superior than others in some area;
2. A person worthy of emulation and recognized by others as a role model;
3. The title of the heads of certain associations and orders of knights; also: a person bearing this title;
4. The title of the person or team that won a sports competition or contest; Also the person or team that won the title;
5. A qualified craftsman;
6. A qualified worker supervising subordinate workers” (<http://sjp.pwn.pl/sjp/mistrz;2483787>).

You can, therefore, be a champion in a sport, in a particular profession, craft, art, organization, or someone particularly ‘in the know’, someone’s supervisor, possessing privileged knowledge, a person with exceptional qualities of character and so on. In the field of science, the phenomenon of mastery refers explicitly to Humboldt’s proposition and the relationship between the tutor and his student. It is here that most of the features attributed to those who were masters in various social spheres, areas of life and professions are to be seen. This, however, is too superficial an approach to the matter of the master, whose place in postmodern times is given to leaders, gurus, VIPs, celebrities, “successful” in the pop culture world idols, Miss and Mister dot com and the like.

What we know about the masters of education we only know to the extent that they themselves have left us in their work and from our own memories of personal and/or professional interactions. Hence, it is rather we-students whose significant role in the history of educational thought and practice is to offer up to THEM our dissertations and jubilee studies, to publish recollections

of THEIR lives and, while they're still alive, to honour THEM by means of some anniversary where we can express our undying gratitude to THEM for the gift of wisdom which THEY bestowed during his life and scientific career. Their biographical memoirs also become accommodated to a certain extent into the literature of pop-culture, as their authors reminisce on everyday life, on critical events and on incidents that directed their professional, social, and personal lives.

In higher education, especially in science, there is no place for such an animal, because mastery is not the result of votes cast for one person or the number of text messages sent and the number of likes of a fan-page is not accepted as proof of mastery in the field of teaching or in academia. As my professor and also master of scientific thinking and writing Charles Kotłowski once told me: “the initials «Dr» in front of a name don't always mean «doctor». Sometimes they mean – dureń (idiot)”. In the text that follows, I will use the term master interchangeably with the wider role of the teacher, as being the former always depends on being the latter to others. A master (teacher) becomes a master when he teaches those who want to learn, including those who want to be teachers, and in being recognised as such, is often adored. I suggest we examine the master in two areas: the master as a professional and as a person.

The master as a top-class professional

It is widely recognized that the most characteristic feature of a professional master is the person's wisdom, and their unique dispositions and skills that allows them to maintain their distance, not only in relation to themselves and to others, but also to their own profession, discipline and to science in general. This, however, must not lead to a narrowing of the perception of the teacher in only utilitarian terms. The everyday technopoly of postmodern societies, of those entangled in totalitarian technocracy and which represent a kind of culture or mind set, is dependent “on the deification of technology, meaning that culture seeks affirmation in technology, finds satisfaction in it, and takes its orders from it. [...] Those who feel most comfortable in this technopoly are those convinced that technological progress is the highest achievement of mankind, while also a tool that will help solve our biggest dilemmas. They believe that information is an unquestionable blessing, and its continuous and uncontrolled production and dissemination offers greater freedom, creative opportunities and peace of mind” (Postman 1995, p. 87). In the world of technopoly, the role of the master is subject to a strong utilitarianism and

objectification because it is treated as something that can be picked up relatively easily. Just read a manual, take a few courses, and one is a ready-made leader in a given profession, a model, and a guide for others. However, we are not told, as a result of this approach, what exactly we have become masters of.

In technopoly the specialists with narrowed fields of knowledge and skills are not only demanding control over technical matters, but also over the social, psychological and the moral. What does it matter if they are masters in the field of how to raise children, how to teach them how to be loved, how to influence people and how to gain friends, if this only serves to technologise social relations and thus to subject to increasing control the lives of other people by more so-called specialists? The promoting of the role of bureaucrats in education (specialists, but in effect ignoramuses) and bestowing them with trust leads to a cultural disaster, because by their interventions they deplete social life, reducing it to a problem which can only be solved by technical means. However, the categories of efficiency, precision and objectivity have nothing to do with education, and even less so with mastery. In a culture evolving by these means, the categories of evil and sin disappear since they come from the world of ethics and cannot be measured and objectified. “Hence the high priests of technopoly designate sin a «social deviance», which is a statistical concept, while evil is seen as a “psychopathology”, which makes it a medical concept (ibid, p. 110).

Is this really the kind of mastery we should be seeking to achieve through the education and training of younger generations, or in the education of adults? Based on years of research of various professions some scientists, such as A.C. Ornstein and D.U. Levine, determine the conditions that must be met in a given country in order that the teachers and educators there might become professional masters. These are:

1. The existence of specialized knowledge and skills that exceed the knowledge and skills of laymen;
2. a sense of public service and full commitment to it;
3. The application of research and theory in practice;
4. a long period of specialised training;
5. control over licensing standards and/or the requirements enabling entry into the profession;
6. autonomy in deciding their own chosen areas of professional activity;
7. acceptance of responsibility for the tasks undertaken to an existing set of standards;
8. dedication to work and service;

9. use of authority to improve the work of professionals;
10. existence of professional associations (chambers) for members of the profession;
11. organizations offering accreditation for individual professionals;
12. a code of ethics permitting the resolution of contentious issues related to the profession;
13. a high level of confidence in each employee of the profession;
14. a high social standing and economic status of workers (Průcha 1997, p. 169).

The imposition of such a large number of high standards on particular professional groups means that only a few are able to meet them. In light of this, Polish teachers cannot be considered full-fledged professionals because they have not been ensured, or have not themselves ensured, the majority of these criteria. Lawmakers in Poland have diluted the requirements for being a professional teacher to such an extent that almost anyone can become one as long as they possess some undergraduate degree or other. In fact, most of the criteria that define professional knowledge and skill required to perform the role of a teacher have been eliminated, while spiritual formation and personality have been completely omitted, making what is expected of them inconsistent and unclear (see: Kawka 1998; Kędzierska 2012; Kwiatkowska 2005; Śliwerski 2010a, 2010b; Zajac 2011).

In their studies, Karl-Oswald Bauer and Andreas Kopka (1994) came to the conclusion that the development of professionalism cannot be achieved without changing the organization of work. This requires the more frequent presence of teachers in school, which in turn requires, as a minimum, that schools have sufficient resources (work places, PCs, library, rooms for group work, etc.) In addition, the professionalization of teachers is not a state but a process that progresses with practice in the profession. This process is, on the one hand, a matter for the individual teacher, but one which on the other hand takes place within a school community, on which it also has an effect. The professionalization of the vocation of teaching is therefore something much broader than just the assimilation of expertise, legitimized by specific systems and cognitive theories (Landwehr 1993).

Can such an instrumentally conceived professionalism produce competent teachers and scientists? According to Robert Kwaśnica, it is not possible to fully prepare teachers for teaching work, hence differentiating the processes of education, training and improvement with respect to this group is unfounded and questionable. One cannot create a standard model of professional training for teachers that would define the knowledge and skills

that make up a full set of professional qualifications because teachers work in, and have to manage, open and unrepeatable situations which further influence the open, partly mysterious and unknowable structure, that is man. "Full professional preparation can be meaningfully discussed for such professions that rely on relatively repetitive and predictable tasks, and which at the same time require technical competence. The concept of a fully prepared professional teacher is a contradiction in terms with respect to the very essence of the teaching profession. [...] the abilities which it requires are inherently always unfinished, always insufficient and constantly in flux, in development, and constantly demanding change (Kwaśnica 1994, p. 10).

A teacher affects their students with their whole being and through the type of human they are, hence, preparation to the profession must be holistically and progressively supportive to personal development. "Teachers training – whether it includes candidates for the profession, novice or experienced teachers, - is always aimed at aiding their development, which should take account of: a) the type of competence which the development aims to promote, b) the logic for this development and c) the actual progress in development of those teachers to whom it is directed" (ibid, p. 15). Foremost, the vocation of teacher requires focus on practical-moral competencies (interpretive, moral and communicative), which define the specificity of the profession, and not on technical competences (normative, methodological and executive).

Practical-moral competencies apply "All the goals, methods and means must be vetted practically-morally before the teacher can use them. To be able to avail themselves of them the teacher must first personally qualify them. They must, referring to practical-moral knowledge, answer the following questions: what to do to so that the objectives, methods and measures do not become a tool in my hands manipulate and enslave another human being? Can I use them in this particular educational situation and how? (ibid, p. 21) However, technical competences have a limited scope of application in teaching, and they relate mainly to planning and organizing of processes of learning and teaching and not of upbringing (Śliwerski 2001).

The teaching profession is subjected to continuous, and often mutually exclusive, regulation. Along with changes in the Ministry of Education's political leadership every few years there come extreme, opposing approaches to the teachers role, from the opening up of the sphere to free, creative input to a lack of confidence, rigor and top-down control. Continuous control and, monitoring of teachers' work results in the belief that the persons practicing the profession are not trustworthy entities. Jarosław Rudniański drew attention to this very early on, condemning this model of the perception of teachers by

the education authorities for whom the teacher “is the type of man who wants to act contrary to all the rules, does not want to work, is open at any moment to being lazy, wasteful, fraudulent and to all the other sins if the opportunity so arises. Hence, he is a weak and selfish person and as such is not really Good, so one must constantly be careful he does not inflict evil, lie and cheat, «cause mischief», ruin, and say and do the unwarranted (Rudniański 1980, p. 549.)

In our country, we not only continue to impose a defined structure of work on teachers, but also a preconception of this work. Educational authority, wanting to control teachers, obliges them to a huge amount of illusory work and at the same time demands that this works be treated as authentic. Evaluating teachers according to criteria such as the level of discipline in the classroom (silence, order, tidiness, humility, lack of resistance, suppression of criticism, lack of or non-disclosure of conflicts etc.), or by indicators of the effectiveness of education and upbringing (average score, average of books borrowed, absenteeism in school children, the number of children using the forms of extracurricular activities, the number of school champions, their quantitative participation in competitions, tournaments, and the progress of high school graduates in further education, etc.) must lead to a mindset of ‘keeping up appearances’ and to a selective attitude to children in process of education.

Unfortunately, it turns out that regardless of the political system, almost every power is tempted by the desire to administrate (manage) teachers as if they were a group for whom not only the space and time of their work could be objectively determined, but also the scope of their activities and the results they should achieve. Teachers know that their work is evaluated by the school heads, and they in turn answer to the body responsible for the school and for pedagogical supervision. It is not without reason that an education authority imposes on teachers the “right” approach to professional tasks and the standardization of services, which in reality leads only to enhanced performance if viewed from the narrow perspective of education authorities, while at the same time ensuring completely submissive and obedient employees. “Inevitably, this state of affairs instills a feeling of anxiety, frustration and lack of competence among the employees, as well as indifference or even hostility” (Fromm 1995, p. 59). In most cases, teachers fear their superiors as well as curatorial pedagogical supervision and the possibility of losing their jobs.

All this is carried out in cooperation with prevailing hierarchical institutions and governing administrative bodies that objectify the teachers work by means of the regulation of rights and responsibilities through the Teachers’ Charter, and by directives from the Ministry of Education. Unfortunately,

teachers have for decades put up with sacrifice, austerity and constant exploitation by the public (including in particular the state authorities). This is because their professional role has been deemed as vocational, missionary and public spirited, and not possessing the right to protest or to insist on normality, with decent pay and working conditions (Bortnowski 1982, p. 21–28). Being a master does not fit with the logic of the humble, unconditional recognition of a teacher's authority by the student, since he does not have and does not need to have a monopoly on the truth. It also does not fit in with a neo-liberal approach, as this submits education and all learning processes to the free market economy. Mastery is thus being passed to the private sphere, resulting in the internal emigration of many excellent teachers and researchers.

Mastery, demoted to a profession, cannot ignore the fact that a profession of disappointment may be the result for anyone who has chosen the wrong career path i.e. non-realisation and lack of fulfillment in their chosen profession. This state can be caused by the dissatisfaction of those for whom it is performed, or by it being perceived as a burden, something painful, unpleasant, and undesirable. This happens in situations where a teacher lets someone down, fails someone's trust, expectations, hopes etc, or by reason of experiencing negative emotional, mental and physical states etc, from just doing the job. It is this situation, highlighted by a growing body of empirical research that shows it is a poor master who cannot even cope with himself. According to many researchers, work related stress or burnout affects both those poorly engaged in their professional roles and those most involved in its implementation. The former "suffer" in the role as they might with tight clothes or worn out shoes, although fully aware of having either badly chosen their profession or of personal incompatibility with inherent responsibilities and standards. The other "burnouts" are those educators most consumed by their profession, devoted enthusiasts, who are unable to cope with the barriers and obstacles that others put in their path to professional fulfillment (Śliwerski 2010a).

The master as a person

A slightly different approach to the mastery of the teaching profession is taken by Christopher Day of the University of Nottingham in the UK, where it is the teacher as a person which interests him, a person with problems and successes in their personal life, struggling with the everyday, but with all the circumstances commensurate with their professional role (Day 2005). Teachers are expected to have passion and to be in love with serving children

and young people but without any sentimental pathos and without needing to resort to an ideological sense of mission or vocation. It is important that the teacher infect students with their knowledge while remaining someone who is constantly learning. "One of the main tasks of all teachers is to inculcate their students with a willingness to learn throughout life. Therefore, they themselves must demonstrate their commitment and enthusiasm for practicing such learning" (ibid, p. 17). To understand the essence of teacher development, the fundamental issue is that a teacher, and by association their mastery, is not something that can be developed since he or she has to want to do the developing themselves.

Christopher Day, referring to the results of international comparative research on the teaching profession, introduces a completely new causative factor, which significantly determines the effectiveness of education, namely the scope and quality of the new type of professionalism. Any official attempt at introducing professional standards and using them as a means to evaluate all teachers results in making the process overwhelming, dehumanises relationships, and it reduces the assessment of progress and achievement to the supposedly rational and simply technical, while simultaneously oversimplifying the actual value of the activities of teachers. In a situation where teachers need in some contrived manner to manage their career advancements, they lose not only executive power and authority, but cease to be creative in their work with children and youth.

In neoliberal working conditions it is no wonder we are forced all the more often to turn to the philosophy of personalism, in light of which the value and dignity of person is within the person themselves, in being human, so this value is fundamental and autotelic. The human person should not be treated instrumentally, as a means to an end, as their existence is fundamentally determined first of all through their attitude and relationship with other people, and, in the case of Christian personalism, through the interpersonal relationship between man and God. The philosopher Andrzej Grzegorzcyk wrote his paper, the so-called second edition, at the end of 1970s, so that no man be treated only as the sum of his utility value, because beyond this each of us also possesses existential value (Grzegorzcyk 1979). Teachers, as human beings after all, even if some of them happen occasionally to behave inhumanly, also have existential value, a value that does not change with time and with the number of roles, positions, and salary supplements, as is the case with utilitarian value.

In this sense, in light of the existential values, we are all equal. Each teacher brings to the job of working with the children something unique and

special, something characteristic in the way they are with themselves, with others and the world, and this means that no one can copy or reproduce these individual characteristics and inter social relations. The openness of the situation and of the learning processes created by a teacher opens opportunities for other people in the social sphere. The invitation to learn is a gesture of sorts, which demonstrates that the master is keen on opening his own heart, mind and will to his students and that they may have a chance to adopt as their own the value of Goodness, Truth and Beauty, of wisdom, of experience and emotion. That's the point: for teachers to be able to be and to want to be themselves so that through their work they sear themselves into the memory of those who have learned through them and with them. The process of education and upbringing is in fact possible only when we follow the principle that all the parties involved in it must be free. "Education is based on freedom in the sense that the educational process is a meeting of two freedoms, respecting the other human being as such, as being free. If it denies this respect, it negates its own impact and influence on others, because in order for it to be successful – so that the act remain a genuine act, that is to say stimulated by freedom – you have to respect the otherness and freedom of the other" (Leveque, Best 1988, p. 21–22).

The relationship between master and disciple involves an invisible hierarchy, a distance that the British refer to as a gentleman's agreement. This is the kind of relationship that is created from the bottom up, not by the one who is master, but by the learner. It is in the course of meetings with his teacher, attended willingly by the student, that a student sees a master and as such bestows the title themselves. This type of relationship is built on mutual trust, and thus generates social capital so that the master and the student may be mutually open and honest, and thus equally demanding. Finally, there is one other ethical dimension of being a master that cannot be overlooked when one is defining its fundamental and constituent components. It is not enough to be a university professor and, as a result of an academic title of master, to deserve to be called such unconditionally, if one does not act in a worthy, noble, and valiant way, and in accordance with the prevailing system of moral and social values and norms. The master is not simply the guardian of the values he professes, but their advocate, a person living in complete agreement and harmony with them.

One cannot be a teacher of others without, at the same time, being oneself. As Janusz Korczak once said – "the enslaved cannot bestow freedom on others". It is irrelevant therefore whether someone has taken on this profession for reasons other than those that give it a kind of beauty, the unique

experience of communing with students. That, thanks to which we can (but do not need to) be a value in the lives of others, does not have to be measurable and quantifiable, and thereby so easily suggestive of the possibility of slipping above, near or below the existing standard. The value of the teacher-master is often “measured” over time and the master does not always personally experience qualities he has imparted in his charges, such as strength, intensity, positive memories, and an accumulation of feelings and/or capabilities.

A Master is a sovereign entity, and a self-perfecting and responsible person who does not need to subject his own spiritual structures (psychophysical) to the objective structures of its activity. He always acts in accordance with his own ideas and professional competence, and so does not need to be assessed externally by anyone, because his conduct is both a way to preserve his fidelity and his honour. It is the teacher of conscience who, fed by his hopes and desires, always becomes his own greatest critic. He does not have to worry about anyone else’s interest in his work (rather than instrumentally treated assessment), neither that of students or their parents, or of superiors, because he is true to himself regardless of their attention or his obligations. The Master is completely free from becoming totally and thereby *debilitatively* absorbed in his own actions. He constantly strives to know and understand his own self, and to personally uncover the values which concern the sense of human existence.

Although a teacher’s/master’s internal freedom, along with his nature, is part of his makeup. However, we must agree with the philosophers that in the order of excellence, that is, the degree of participation in freedom, this freedom is also part of his remit. Teachers should therefore constantly be seeking to be unshackled, acquiring and preserving their inner freedom, i.e. the freedom to choose and implement intended objectives, and this in itself should enable resistance to external pressures. Nobody on the outside will provide them with the necessary freedom for creative work, unless they themselves make the effort in this direction. However, in order to be liberated from the bondage of seduction, one must have a critical approach to the necessity of government in the implementation of a common good or happiness, such as learning and the education of others. The master is the one who breaks with the government “determined” nature of the professional in favour of a “target” nature, that encourages creative searching, self-definition and self-determination.

I would like to draw attention to one other characteristic of those we honour with the authority/title of being our masters. It is their great modesty. In his autobiography, the prominent philosopher Władysław Tatarkiewicz beautifully reveals this dimension: “From home I gained a sense of hierarchy

and kept it for life, as well as the sense that never and nowhere should I be first. The position of leader, in which I later sometimes served, always embarrassed me and did not give me pleasure. I'm happy to sit in the second row, as long as I'm not in the first. I am now a very old man, and yet I still like it when someone praises me, confirms that I did or said something good: it's also probably an echo of childhood". (T. and W. Tatarkiewicz 2011, pp. 160–161). The virtue of humility builds the truth of the person, which is revealed not only in relation to people but to circumstances.

Barbara Smolińska-Theiss draws attention to another aspect of mastery, which results from her analysis of the life and works of Janusz Korczak, whom it would be difficult to deny was a master in the education of children's teachers. Mastery is not only due to a person's age, wise living, or resources of experience, competence, sensitivity, and empathy, but it can also be noted among the non-professional educators of children namely their peers. Korczak "did not create social myths, did not try to professionalise the role of the educator. He realized that the function of educating younger children was met by their older colleagues, by the bursars, the camp leader, the cook, etc. He did not formalize teacher qualifications" (Smolińska-Theiss 2013, p. 169) Therefore, anyone who joins in the development of another person, and who knowingly or unknowingly helps them in discovering and perfecting their own humanity, can be a master of upbringing, of secondary socialisation. As a result, it is not necessary to idealize and reduce the role of master to a particular profession.

Summary

We must therefore return to the first principles in order to avoid associating mastery with some supposedly directly linked set of skills, competencies and instrumental personality traits. Przemysław Gintrowski, among others, protested against the succumbing to such a perception of mastery by some scientists in the song "Organ Grinder" by Jerzy Czech from the album "Stones" in which he gave a poetic response to the amoral state of Polish society in the early years of the Third Republic, which included the spiritual collapse of academia: "The same old characters will be exhumed / what I've seen before comes again into sight / Academia's laurels awarded again / For irrefutable proof that black is now white" (Czech 2014). In art there is no doubt that the one who is gifted with charisma and talent is the only master. In one of the *Tales of the Hasidim* the prominent philosopher Martin Buber invokes the following argument in favor of the uniqueness of each of us:

If I am, because I am being me,
and you are, because you are being you,
then I am I and you are you.
However, if I am I,
because you are you,
And you are you because I am I,
Then I am not I, and you are not you (Buber 1986, s. 270).

As a result of the Cultural Revolution entirely new concepts values, lifestyles and methods of influence on others appeared in the contemporary humanities and social sciences, and these are gaining greater and greater acceptance in the awareness of societies and individuals. The character of the so-called “new humanities” is no longer Christian, spiritual, deferring to transcendent values, to imponderables. Increasingly we are dealing with the elimination of the glossary clearly referring to those traditions, like: truth, morality, conscience, common sense, heart, assistance, authority, integrity, hope, friend, health, etc. In their place are new concepts whose meanings are unclear, and whose content is often ambivalent, e.g. government with a human face, quality of life, leaders, etc. Appropriation of the language of humanism, by giving opposing and at the same ideologically conditioned functions to existing roles, leads to the disappearance of the role of master for a narrowly conceived concept of professionalism.

With respect to a master, what is important is not a perceived professionalism or authority over someone, being someone’s superior, overseer. Certainly, we do live in a time institutional, state and even church authority is being eroded, but in spite of this cultural/ social shift, the aforementioned spheres are defending themselves and continuing their authority, giving our lives and our passions constancy and stability, and providing them a significant point of reference. With a master we do not experience any anxiety or fears towards them, because positive emotions are stirred in us by those who evoke deep admiration and respect, joy of contact, and a sense of authentic, unconditional and selfless gratitude. A master is the person who gives us the chance better ourselves, without instilling in us a sense of shame, embarrassment, and ignorance, since he is there for us, to support us, give a hand, and point the way to the desired end. Hence, we appreciate criticism from the master all the more, as it arises from the need to strengthen our development, knowledge, and skills, while at the same time serving as a warning against the possibility of getting lost in a world of mistrust, aggression, hostility, envy, etc. Fortunately, there are a lot of passionate teachers

who love their work, and who derive the meaning of their own lives from it, and help others to discover the meaning of their lives for themselves (see Day 2008; Matulčíková 2007).

An important element of the master-disciple relationship is the unpredictability of people, who might refuse to cooperate with the master and end a meeting. The value of the educational process lies in the freedom of both parties, a freedom that brings opportunities as well as hurdles, among which is the possibility of the teacher being rejected (even if he seems to be a master). The ability to take into account the unpredictability of another person is one element which differentiates a master from a professional (*Tischner's relevance* 2008, p. 60). Such a model of communication requires the active participation, keeping track of what is happening, i.e. concentration, and, at the same time, active participation. This model points to the role of bond building as the primary function of dialogue, which is an autotelic value. Regardless of whether the communication between teacher/master and their student is direct or indirect, its aim is to build relationships that are lasting, while already in itself being of great value to the two people involved. This relationship can go through various phases, stages: from initial fascination, through differences and mutual determination of boundaries, to acceptance and trust (Tischner 2002, p. 63).

We live in a society that increasingly does not permit people to understand their living environment, and to be able to control and shape it according to their own conscience. At the same time, however, people increasingly want to broaden the scope of their experience and consciousness. Learning is inseparable from experience in the course of real, authentic interpersonal meetings where no one plays a role, where no one needs to wear a mask. Everyone is the subject of their own successes and failures and discovers their identity as a result of decisions, choices made, trials, and through exploring the world by what happens there. Each new choice brings something new to our experience, shaping our identity. This approach to education is also of great importance in the education of future master-teachers, as they also should be provided with the necessary conditions to make choices and to take sovereign control of their own learning process. They should be taught everything that has for a long time been forgotten in their own lives, namely, fun, curiosity, imagination, enthusiasm, energy, confidence, hope and joy (Holt 1974).

One can be a master in different educational situations, as long as one does not lose one's own SELF. This is possible, regardless of the role the master plays in creating an opportunity for learning – educator, partner, listener, imparter of knowledge, mentor, narrator, tutor, animator, arranger, creator,

etc.? Educating others or being a master of learning to others takes place primarily in situations of dialogue, based on truth, responsibility, freedom and appealing to the mutual recognition of freedom of the learner and the educator. Krzysztof Konarzewski writes: “The teacher is a person of unshakable principles and broad horizons. This individual elevates the high mission of master and friend by subordinating themselves to those in their care. They are scholars in their specialty and great connoisseurs of the soul of youth, while simultaneously being sincere and spontaneous in their reflexes. They possess a rich, fully formed personality and throughout their life, both public and private, serve as an example of the educational virtues” (Konarzewski 2004, p. 160).

In any type of school, not only the traditional but also the digital, which in the second decade of the twenty-first century is said to be the way of the future, the teacher/master will not be replaced by computer software, teacher-robots, social networks, or digitization of knowledge, because there still has to be SOMEONE who will be a guide, someone who on the one hand will continue to be a creator of sources of knowledge, as well as someone who will take students into the virtual maze and into real life. In the age of cyberculture, a whole new generation of pupils is growing up as cyber-natives and their tutors, teachers, as cyber-immigrants. Those who socialized in the pre-digital era use of a different language for studying and understanding the world than those who are maturing in the postmodern age, and both think and process information in different ways. Being a teacher might therefore mean finding oneself occupying a losing position, with reduced chances of making contact with the world of the young, the cyber-generation. Meanwhile, as digital natives in the virtual world, today’s cyber-children and cyber-youth easily and successfully read all their texts off the screens of their multimedia devices, consider video and audio superior to the print, prefer free (hypertext and hypermedia) access to information sources and parallel process information from many different sources (Spitzer 2013).

Despite the impending end of the era of chalk and blackboard, we are still unable to cope with the most dramatic challenges of the modern world, the dehumanization of politics, education and relationships, the progressive destruction of the environment of life or the permanent local wars fought on religious, ideological or cultural grounds. It is no wonder therefore that for years our hopes and expectations have been invested in schools, despite them having inadequate resources to cope effectively. When a crisis of education and training is spoken of, it is necessary to separate the crisis of everyday generational coexistence and opposition to the polarising of human relations

from the crisis of educational institutions and educational environments, as well as the setting in which the learning process transpires, in order to enable individuals to find their own identity in their interaction with the world. The difference between the modern teacher and post-modern pupil lies in the fact that the former's world is offline while the latter's world is online. "Thanks to a school education, today's participant in the techno-scientific civilization to some extent wakes up in a cave where the walls are made from the hard logic of rational calculation. The freeing of the prisoner from this cave can be done by opening the gates to the imagination, which is needed to kick start the liberty necessary for the soul to soar into long forgotten human interaction with the universe" (Palouš 2010, p. 37). This message applies to all educational environments, since the inclusion of the master in the growth process of people involves – as Helena Radlińska beautifully put it – "a subtle blossoming of life" and "a clear awareness of humanity" (Radlińska 1961, w. 5).

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