

# “The Most Important Task” and “Great Personal Value”: The Role of Teaching and Upbringing in the Activities of Izydora Dąmbska

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**Abstract:** This article aims to show the main features of the style and content of teaching that was proposed in Izydora Dąmbska’s texts and implemented in her educational practice. Her legacy emphasizes a close connection between teaching and upbringing, with teaching always serving a formative role as an integral part of the educational process. The article focuses on the analysis of Dąmbska’s pedagogical activity at two educational levels – high school and university, as well as within secret teaching during World War II. Moreover, the proposals formulated by Dąmbska herself regarding possible forms of modernizing curricula and teaching methods in secondary and higher schools are examined, as well as how her superiors, colleagues, and students assessed this activity. In the final part of the article, the similarities between the pedagogical solutions proposed by Dąmbska and the Socratic model of teaching are pointed out. A set of features characterizing the thoughts of Dąmbska regarding philosophy of education is provided.

**Key words:** axiocentrism, Dąmbska, philosophy of upbringing, paidocentrism, Lvov-Warsaw School, Kazimierz Twardowski

## 1. Introduction

Izydora Helena Maria Dąmbska is one of the most famous female figures associated with the Lvov-Warsaw School (hereinafter: LWS), with an extremely wide range of interests, including primarily epistemology and broadly understood logic, with an emphasis on semiotics.<sup>1</sup> The Polish philosophical community also

<sup>1</sup> This is how Dąmbska’s main interests are defined by Władysław Stróżewski; see W. Stróżewski, *Philosophari necesse est*, in: *Rozum–serce–smak. Pamięci Profesor Izydory Dąmbskiej (1904–1983)* [Mind–Heart–Taste: In Memory of Professor Izydora Dąmbska (1904–1983)], ed. J. Perzanowski, Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Filozoficzno-Pedagogicznej Ignatianum, Kraków 2009, p. 27.

owes much to her as a historian of philosophy and the author of many translations of classics of philosophy, such as Descartes and Leibniz. At the same time, she had a fascinating biography<sup>2</sup> and an extraordinary personality. Władysław Stróżewski, who worked with her as an assistant in the Department of the History of Philosophy at the Jagiellonian University, which she headed, offered a beautiful characterization of her:

Professor Izydora Dąmbska, so responsible, disciplined and demanding – and not only towards herself! – was at the same time extremely understanding towards others, firm and gentle, unwavering in her deepest convictions and truly tolerant, deeply convinced of the dignity of science and those who serve it, and at the same time full of modesty, painfully reacting to all wrongs and injustices, and at the same time generous and ready to justify many things (though not everything...), uncompromising in her assessment of evil – and boundlessly good.<sup>3</sup>

Both the character traits mentioned in the quoted words, and the personal convictions regarding what philosophy is and what goals it should serve,<sup>4</sup> meant that teaching and the related shaping of the minds of school and university youth played a crucial part in her activities. This is evidenced by the expressions of gratitude she shared with her friends and devoted students involved in preparing a commemorative book for her, presented during the ceremonial session of the Cracow branch of the Polish Philosophical Society:

[W]e are educated not only by our professors and our colleagues. Our personality and scientific activity are enriched to no small extent by our students.

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<sup>2</sup> Its most detailed discussion can be found in Jerzy Perzanowski's paper: *Izydora Dąmbska – filozof niezłomny* [Izydora Dąmbska: A Steadfast Philosopher], in: *Izydora Dąmbska (1904–1983). Materiały z sympozjum "Non est necesse vivere, necesse est philosophari."* Kraków, 18–19 grudnia 1998 r. [Izydora Dąmbska (1904–1983): Materials from the Symposium "Non est necesse vivere, necesse est philosophari." Cracow, 18–19 December 1998], ed. J. Perzanowski, Polska Akademia Umiejętności, Kraków 2001, pp. 11–108.

<sup>3</sup> W. Stróżewski, *Philosophari necesse est*, op. cit., pp. 29–30. Unless stated otherwise, all translations are my own.

<sup>4</sup> In Dąmbska's legacy, there are few metaphilosophical publications in which she explicitly presents her own position on the tasks facing philosophy and how it can be defined in principle. The most insight on this subject can be gained from her response to a survey conducted by Zbigniew Podgórzec in "Znak" magazine: I. Dąmbska, *Czym jest filozofia, którą uprawiam?* [What Is the Philosophy that I Practice?], "Znak" 1977, Nos. 8–9, pp. 1335–1337.

I have always, since my years as an assistant in Lvov, considered contact with students to be extremely valuable. And whenever I was given the opportunity [...] to help young people on their path to philosophy, I felt it to be the most important task and at the same time a great personal value. If there are people in Poland who want to consider themselves my students – and I know that there are such people – I also address to them the words of my most heartfelt thanks for all the moments of valuable co-philosophizing with them.<sup>5</sup>

These words clearly reveal the specific nature of the relationship that connected Dąmbska with her students. It was based on the conviction that academic youth were capable of fruitfully engaging in philosophical discussions and of taking part in them on an equal footing with scholars. The model of teaching emerging from this passage could be described as dialogical, due to the assumption of equality of the participants in the debate and the possibility of multilateral flows of knowledge. In such an assumption, one can see the influence of the ancient tradition, for example, Plato’s dialogues.

The aim of further considerations is to develop and systematize this general characteristic of Dąmbska’s pedagogical views. The key concepts I will use will be *teaching* and *upbringing*. However, I will particularly emphasize the latter, as I aim to defend the thesis that in Dąmbska’s thought, every form of teaching is at the same time an element of the educational process.<sup>6</sup> It may therefore be helpful to specify the concept of upbringing itself, which will allow us to avoid ambiguity at the next stages of analysis. For this purpose, I will draw on the terms of *intellectual upbringing* and *moral upbringing* as used in pedagogy. The first is defined as “the field of upbringing, which refers to one of the basic values, which is truth. Therefore, the aim of intellectual upbringing is to equip man with knowledge

<sup>5</sup> I. Dąmbska, *Podziękowanie* [Acknowledgements], “Ruch Filozoficzny” 1978, Vol. 36, Nos. 2–4, pp. 128–129.

<sup>6</sup> In this position, it is easy to see the influence of her teacher, Kazimierz Twardowski, who had a similar view of the specificity of the connection between teaching and upbringing. In *Zasadnicze pojęcia dydaktyki* [Basic Concepts of Didactics], he states the following: “Teaching is educational if it does not deal exclusively with the material or formal education of students, but also aims to exert an educational influence on them. This is exactly what the teaching provided in the elementary school should be like” (K. Twardowski, *Dydaktyka. Inedita* [Didactics: Inedita], Vol. 4, ed. A. Brożek, Academicon, Lublin 2023, p. 136). This view, it seems, can also be extended to other types of schools, without distorting the author’s message in any way.

based on truth, i.e. the correspondence of what is known with reality.”<sup>7</sup> Intellectual education serves to prepare a young person to consciously use sources of knowledge, to equip them with the ability to read critically, and at the same time make them aware that acquiring knowledge is a process, both due to the gradual development of the person being educated and the changes taking place in the surrounding reality.<sup>8</sup> Moral education, in turn, is a field based on moral goodness, understood in the most general sense as “those values that are the source of the fundamental content of this education,”<sup>9</sup> and its fundamental goal is to shape human conscience.<sup>10</sup> In Dąmbska’s philosophy, these two fields seem to be inextricably linked.

I will analyse the levels of both school and academic teaching. In describing Dąmbska’s work, I will always try to adopt two perspectives – the person teaching and the person being taught. I will take into account both the postulates of the scholar herself and the assessments of her work formulated by students and superiors. On this basis, I will try to indicate the basic features that, in Dąmbska’s opinion, should characterize the educational process,<sup>11</sup> and also determine what connects her approach with two main trends in contemporary pedagogy – axiocentrism and paidocentrism.

## 2. Axiocentrism and Paidocentrism

According to Jan Zubelewicz, axiocentrism and paidocentrism are two fundamental positions within the philosophy of education.<sup>12</sup> They were founded on two different anthropological visions of humanity. The axiocentric approach sees hu-

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<sup>7</sup> A.M. de Tchorzewski, *Wstęp do teorii wychowania* [Introduction to the Theory of Education], Wydawnictwo Naukowe Akademii Ignatianum, Kraków 2016, pp. 153–154.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 154.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 155.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 156.

<sup>11</sup> I deliberately avoid using the terms *model of education* or *philosophy of education*, because they could wrongly suggest that Dąmbska developed a complete theory of education, which would be an exaggeration. However, in her own writings and those devoted to her, one can undoubtedly find many important remarks on how she imagined the educational process and how she implemented her vision in practice.

<sup>12</sup> J. Zubelewicz, *Filozofia wychowania. Aksjocentryzm i paidocentryzm* [Philosophy of Education: Axiocentrism and Paidocentrism], “Żak,” Warszawa 2002, p. 7.

mans as beings with an innate tendency towards both good and evil. In order to educate individuals to prioritize the former over the latter, it is necessary to foster in them an awareness of their participation in a tradition that shapes specific social roles and dictates moral norms. The task of a person raised in the spirit of axiocentrism is to struggle with their own weaknesses and the irremovable flaws of the world and other people in order to be able to avoid evil and be able to discover appropriate values that will make them a respectable participant in the cultural community. Supporters of paidocentrism, in the spirit of the philosophy of Jean Jacques Rousseau, consider humans as beings who are good by nature, whose development is potentially unlimited. Their task is to liberate themselves from tradition, to overcome its limitations in the name of self-realization. Paidocentrism also proposes a theory of values that is radically different from axiocentrism – each person must establish them themselves, and the fundamental criterion for assessing their importance is an individual decision.<sup>13</sup> It seems reasonable to say that axiocentrism is naturally connected with axiological objectivism, while paidocentrism is connected with subjectivism.

The positions discussed propose two completely different educational models. Axiocentrism prefers a high level of discipline and rigorous rules of conduct. Students should be held to high standards and these expectations should be enforced in a strict but fair manner in the form of numerous exams or tests. The teaching process is based on the role of the authority of the teacher, educator or parent. A young person should perceive them as having a monopoly on reason, whose decisions are not disputed, because they always result from appropriate premises. Of course, the role of authorities is to ensure that their wisdom, experience and moral impeccability are values that are implemented, not just declared. Paidocentrism focuses on a completely different model of education, characterized by a relationship of partnership between teachers and students, based on empathy and sincerity. The role of the guardian is to create conditions for their charges in which they will be able to fully satisfy their needs for expression, show inventiveness and discover what is important to them and how they would like to shape their fate. The place of authority here is taken by education in the field of student, citizen and human rights, treated as a set of fundamental principles, the recognition of which is obvious.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 28–59.

### 3. School Teaching: From the Perspective of a Teacher

After introducing all the necessary concepts, we can now turn to the main subject of the article. It is worth starting with a clarifying remark – Izydora Dąmbska's teaching activity can be clearly divided into three periods:

- **1928–1939:** work in secondary schools as a teacher of propaedeutics of philosophy, pedagogical subjects and Polish language;
- **1940–1945:** work in clandestine teaching, which included both secondary school students and students of Jan Kazimierz University;
- **1946–1983:** academic work, during which, with breaks,<sup>15</sup> she taught philosophy students.

I will primarily analyse the first and third periods, because they were the most important from the perspective of shaping Dąmbska's vision of education.

Dąmbska worked in a number of Lvov schools: Queen Jadwiga State Girls' Gymnasium, Casimir the Great's 8th State Gymnasium, and Zofia Strzałkowska Private Girls' Gymnasium and High School,<sup>16</sup> so she knew the problems of the school system at the time from her own experience. She did not hesitate to propose changes in curricula that would provide young people with better opportunities for full intellectual and moral development. One of the most important postulates was to open students more broadly to independent ethics. In her article *O etykę naukową w szkole średniej* [On Scientific Ethics in Secondary School],<sup>17</sup> Dąmbska noted that, at that time, ethics was taught mainly to catechists, leading students to mistakenly believe that every moral system had to be associated with a specific religious faith. She pointed out a number of negative consequences of

<sup>15</sup> According to Perzanowski, Dąmbska gave lectures commissioned by the University of Warsaw in 1946–1949, and lectured at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań in 1949–1950. In the years 1950–1957, during the Stalinist era, she was removed from academic teaching, only to return in 1957 during the October Thaw. The next seven years, spent at the Jagiellonian University, were undoubtedly Dąmbska's most valuable teaching experience. After being dismissed from her position as a lecturer again in 1964, she began to conduct *privatissima* for the most interested students, which she continued almost until her death. See J. Perzanowski, *Izydora Dąmbska – filozof niezłomny*, op. cit., pp. 22–74.

<sup>16</sup> Archiwum Nauki PAN i PAU, signature K III-109. Legacy of I. Dąmbska. Quoted after: W. Szulakiewicz, *O uczących i uczonych. Szkice z pedeutologii historycznej* [On Teachers and Scholars: Sketches from Historical Pedeutology], Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 2014, p. 204.

<sup>17</sup> I. Dąmbska, *O etykę naukową w szkole średniej* [On Scholarly Ethics in Secondary School], "Przegląd Klasyczny" 1936, Vol. 2, Nos. 9–10, pp. 711–715.

this state of affairs. Young people who abandon religion often reject moral norms at the same time, wrongly believing that there is an essential connection between them. Believers, on the other hand, treat the ethics related to their faith as the only correct approach, considering all other possible moral choices to be wrong. Finally, linking the spheres of ethics and religion suggests that the claims of ethics, like those of religion, are purely dogmatic. All the described threats mean that, according to Dąmbska, the burden of teaching ethics should rest primarily on the teacher of philosophical propaedeutics, who will familiarize students with the main directions of normative scientific ethics, understood by the philosopher as "any such ethics in which the practice does not refer to metaphysical or religious dogmas."<sup>18</sup> Dąmbska does not stop at generalities – she cites specific examples of texts that students could work on as part of normative ethics lessons, and also suggests that teachers of classical philology and modern languages could provide additional support. She also notes that the goal of every teacher should be to teach criticism and caution, but that they cannot promote any of the systems discussed. As Dąmbska writes, a teacher of philosophical propaedeutics "will achieve his goal if he makes his students aware of how beautiful, wise and noble is the effort of human thought, seeking moral good, and how this effort is inseparable from human nature."<sup>19</sup> The following words can be considered a kind of credo of the text under discussion:

If we want secondary schools to educate individuals with a clear, critical view of the world, if we want their students to be people who appreciate the importance of moral principles and moral obligations, we should lead young people to understand that there are independent ethical values, that developing a sys-

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 713.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 714. At the same time, these words also prove how important it is from the perspective of a young person's development to teach them the basics of philosophy. Kazimierz Twardowski undoubtedly had a similar opinion, writing more than 30 years earlier about subjects taught in junior high schools, and pointing out that the quality of teaching propaedeutics needed to be improved. He also emphasized the specific benefits of getting to know the basics of logic and psychology, taught as part of the aforementioned subject: "Logic [is] needed as an awareness of what a student does throughout junior high school: constantly [namely in what they learn] definitions, classifications, rules and laws, proofs, justifications, conclusions, assumptions, concepts, judgments, hypotheses. So [it is] needed. [...] Psychology – the same: it makes one aware of thought processes from another side. It is an important supplement to education: otherwise the mental world could easily give way in the student's consciousness to the physical [world]" (K. Twardowski, *Dydaktyka*, op. cit., pp. 178–179).

tem of ethical principles is generally a need of the human mind and that everyone can take up the effort and joy of working on themselves, regardless of their religion, race or nationality.<sup>20</sup>

The above words indicate the complexity of Dąbbska's position, which cannot be easily categorized within the opposition of axiocentrism and paidocentrism. She is certainly associated with the first trend because of her belief in the existence of a normative, independent ethics and the postulate of working on oneself. A clear declaration of no consent to discrimination on religious, racial or ethnic grounds, along with an emphasis on the individual's independent reflection on themselves, is, however, closer to paidocentrism.

Dąbbska points out that shaping one's own morality should be the fruit of individual effort combined with reflection on "independent ethical values," the various forms of which have been outlined by philosophers throughout the centuries. The teacher's task is to present these values objectively, to the extent possible, so that the students can recognize those they consider important, or propose their own in creative opposition to the discussed values. As if in passing, Dąbbska also expresses in the above words her ideal of education, understood as "a certain description, vision or idea of a perfect person," who "is a mental construction by means of which an image of integrated properties and characteristics of a person is presented [...] such as does not yet exist in reality, but towards the realization of which all rational pedagogical efforts should aim."<sup>21</sup> This is a person with a "clear, critical view of the world," and therefore a person striving for clarity both in knowing reality and expressing one's own thoughts, characterized by a reluctance to think dogmatically and accept statements on faith where the boundaries of scientific knowledge, including philosophical knowledge, reach. However, this does not mean completely denying the *raison d'être* of views that are not supported by reason and experience. As Dąbbska notes in the summary of her habilitation thesis *Irracjonalizm a poznanie naukowe* [Irrationalism and Scientific Cognition]:

The intention of the treatise was not to combat irrationalism in general, but to outline the boundaries within which it is not justified. However, if it is true to say that scientific knowledge is by definition anti-irrationalist, then the fight

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<sup>20</sup> I. Dąbbska, *O etykę naukową w szkole średniej*, op. cit., p. 713.

<sup>21</sup> A.M. de Tchorzewski, *Wstęp do teorii wychowania*, op. cit., p. 100.



against irrationalism, transferred to other areas of life, would be a fight to scientificize these areas. [...] This postulate turns out to be powerless in those cases in which the human mind seeks answers to fundamentally unsolvable problems.<sup>22</sup>

Dąmbska therefore allows for the existence of such areas of life in which the requirement of rationality is not absolutely binding. Moreover, there are many of them, because science is only a small fragment of the inexhaustible wealth of typically human activities. Good upbringing should also prepare one for the fact that some views are necessarily only a matter of faith, because their subject escapes rational consideration. At the same time, however, Dąmbska was unfamiliar with attempts to excessively stretch the area of issues that the human mind cannot cope with. One can see in this position the inspiration drawn from the postulates of the LWS,<sup>23</sup> as well as continuity with her philosophical views.<sup>24</sup>

At this point it is also worth considering in more detail the relationship between the position of Dąmbska and the pedagogical thought of her philosophical patron, Kazimierz Twardowski. The latter did not devote much space in his *Zasadnicze pojęcia dydaktyki* [Basic Concepts of Didactics] to the issue of separating scientific

<sup>22</sup> I. Dąmbska, *Irracjonalizm a poznanie naukowe* [Irrationalism and Scientific Knowledge], Druk. Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 1937, pp. 62–63.

<sup>23</sup> In describing the last 40 years of philosophy in Lvov, Dąmbska noted: “What was Twardowski’s plan? The plan was bold, although seemingly ineffective: to create a scientific style of philosophizing in Poland, using rigorous research methods to cultivate those branches of philosophy that belong to science. To clearly mark the boundaries – by applying the postulate of clarity and validity of statements – where science ends in philosophical inquiries and poetry or the profession of faith begins” (I. Dąmbska, *Czterdzieści lat filozofii we Lwowie 1898–1938* [Forty Years of Philosophy in Lvov 1898–1938], “Przegląd Filozoficzny” 1948, Vol. 44, Nos. 1–3, pp. 14–15).

<sup>24</sup> The postulate of cognitive criticism can be linked to Dąmbska’s interest in philosophical scepticism. As Zbigniew Orbik pointed out, the author of *Sceptycyzm filozoficzny a metoda naukowa* [Philosophical Scepticism and the Scientific Method] shows a positive attitude towards philosophical scientific scepticism, i.e., theoretical scepticism applied to scientific knowledge (Z. Orbik, *Filozofia Izydory Dąmbskiej* [The Philosophy of Izydora Dąmbska], Wydawnictwo Politechniki Śląskiej, Gliwice 2018, p. 83). A sceptical attitude may also prove helpful in research in the field of philosophical anthropology – as Dąmbska wrote towards the end of her life, in March 1982: “An essential element of the philosopher’s ethos is the persistent, critical, and perhaps even sceptical search for the truth about man as a cognizant and acting being” (quoted after J. Perzanowski, *Izydora Dąmbska – filozof niezłomny*, op. cit., p. 34). For more on the significance of the sceptical ethos for philosophy and Dąmbska’s attitude, see L. Zgoda, *Być sumieniem filozofii* (On the Scepticism of Prof. Izydora Dąmbska), “Ruch Filozoficzny” 1984, Vol. 41, No. 4, pp. 339–347.

and religious ethics. At first glance, his position seems clear and consists in treating moral and religious education together. He included among the tasks of elementary school “educational influence on children and school youth in a religious and moral direction, so that they grow up to be brave people who feel they have civic duties and are able to fulfil them.”<sup>25</sup> Later in his argument he added: “We speak of a RELIGIOUS and moral character, because the religion of Christ is the most perfect expression of what should be considered good in the ethical sense.”<sup>26</sup> It seems symptomatic, however, that although Twardowski speaks of religious and moral upbringing, he does not provide any specifics regarding the role of the Church in this process. The situation is different in the case of the family home, which, according to the philosopher, is the second key factor in the process of educating a young person, which cannot be ignored by school.<sup>27</sup> It should also not escape our attention that the above words come from a relatively early text, written in 1901, and moreover concerning the early stage of education. In *Projekt programu propedeutyki dla liceów ogólnokształcących* [Draft Programme of Propaedeutics for General Secondary Schools], written over 30 years later, in 1935, Twardowski addresses the issue of good in the form of a separate point and suggests discussing the following issues: “Some views on the essence of good in the moral sense (hedonism, utilitarianism, ethical evolutionism [Spencer], ethical objectivism). The subject of ethical evaluation. Duty (Kant). Ethical character. Responsibility and freedom of the ethical subject.”<sup>28</sup> This bundle of issues is nothing less than the key trends in philosophical ethics, and thus, in Dąmbska’s view, scientific ethics – demonstrating the community of thought that existed between them.

Let us now return to Dąmbska herself – in the previously discussed text *O etykę naukową w szkole średniej*, the author suggested, among other things, cooperation between teachers of philosophical propaedeutics and modern languages, including Polish. According to Dąmbska, this type of interdisciplinary approach should apply not only to teaching ethics, but also to logic. In the article *W sprawie nauczania logiki przy sposobności nauczania języka polskiego* [On Teaching Logic while Teaching Polish Language],<sup>29</sup> the author noted that,

<sup>25</sup> K. Twardowski, *Dydaktyka*, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 253.

<sup>29</sup> I. Dąmbska, *W sprawie nauczania logiki przy sposobności nauczania języka polskiego* [On the Teaching of Logic while Teaching Polish Language], “Przegląd Humanistyczny” 1930, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 279–288.

in principle, every field of knowledge, provided it is scientific in nature, has its own logical structure. In the case of language, grammar has a special status in this respect, because “certain branches of logic and grammar concern the same subjects, although they approach them from a slightly different point of view.”<sup>30</sup> However, the possibility of developing logical thinking skills in Polish language lessons is not limited to this. Dąmbaska proposes two types of exercises that can accompany the reading of any texts, especially literary ones. The first of these are semantic exercises, which consist in pondering over the actual meaning of words and sentences occurring in a specific context. The second group of tasks, which can be described as logical,<sup>31</sup> includes, among others, examining the correctness of inferences, definitions, as well as naming and defining the nature of errors occurring in them. In this way, according to the author, students will deepen their understanding of the texts they read, and will also acquire the competence of logical reasoning, which is necessary in all aspects of life. As Dąmbaska noted in the introduction to her considerations:

A general logical education is an indispensable condition for both honest scientific work and a virtuous life. A logical education develops in a person a critical mind, caution in formulating statements, a love of precision in reasoning, care for clarity and precision of expression, and these features, on which the so-called logical culture is based, are necessary both in research work and in practical life.<sup>32</sup>

The proof that elementary logical culture is important in performing very diverse professions that may not be directly associated with this field is a series of lectures entitled *Elementy logiki dla bibliotekarzy* [Elements of Logic for Librarians], which Dąmbaska gave in 1957 at the Gdańsk Library. The introductory lecture included the following words:

Librarians often encounter obstacles in their work, the sources of which can be traced to the lack of necessary knowledge in the field of logic. Often, in works in the field of bibliology [...], logical shortcomings occur, which lower

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 281.

<sup>31</sup> However, Dąmbaska herself does not use this term.

<sup>32</sup> I. Dąmbaska, *W sprawie nauczania logiki przy sposobności nauczania języka polskiego*, op. cit., p. 279.

the logical value of these works. One way to prevent these obstacles and shortcomings is to properly master the elements of logic.<sup>33</sup>

Among the logical issues useful from the perspective of librarianship, Dąbska included the basics of semantics (including the study of names, their meanings, objects, relations, etc., and the study of the imperfections of everyday speech), the study of the principles of ordering elements of sets, the study of logical classification and definitions, as well as selected issues from the theory of reasoning, including logical errors and eristics.<sup>34</sup>

In terms of valuing the role of the foundations of logic as a kind of foundation for acquiring knowledge in other fields, Dąbska aligns fully with Twardowski's position. The latter uses the concept of formal education, understood as a type of education that "aims to develop and practise intellectual abilities."<sup>35</sup> In addition to it, we can also distinguish material education, which "provides the mind with knowledge, supplies it with material that can later be used in various ways."<sup>36</sup> Their mutual relationship is best evidenced by the following passage:

Any [...] knowledge, possession of information, even the most numerous and diverse, is a dead capital without value, if it is not combined with the ability to independently and accurately apply it. It is not enough for a person to know a lot; they must also be able to use what they know. To this end, school education must not only provide students with a certain amount of knowledge, but also develop, strengthen, and perfect their intellectual abilities, so that they can easily and fluently perform those mental activities that are necessary for the independent application of acquired knowledge.<sup>37</sup>

Although this idea is not mentioned explicitly in Dąbska's article, the examples of exercises she discusses allow us to state that her vision is far from pure

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<sup>33</sup> I. Dąbska, *Elementy logiki dla bibliotekarzy. Skrypt wykładów prowadzonych w Bibliotece Gdańskiej w roku 1957* [Elements of Logic for Librarians: Script of Lectures Given at the Gdańsk Library in 1957], Biblioteka Gdańska, Gdańsk 1958, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 4. This enumeration also shows how broad the definition of logic adopted by Dąbska is. In the treatise *Niektóre pojęcia gramatyki w świetle logiki* [Some Concepts of Grammar in the Light of Logic], the philosopher defines logic as "the science of formal structures of the elements of our cognition and their connections" (quoted after Z. Orbik, *Filozofia Izydory Dąbskiej*, op. cit., p. 276).

<sup>35</sup> K. Twardowski, *Dydaktyka*, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

formalism, that is, completely omitting the material layer of teaching in favour of the formal one. The latter is to support the student in acquiring knowledge from individual fields, including literature and language. Twardowski reasoned similarly, and for him both extremes, materialism and didactic formalism, were alien.<sup>38</sup>

So far, Dąmbaska's texts devoted to teaching individual school subjects have been analysed. Meanwhile, lessons are not the only form of developing young people's interest in philosophy. In the polyphony of *Organizacja kółka filozoficznego w szkole średniej* [Organization of a Philosophy Club in Secondary School],<sup>39</sup> Dąmbaska identifies three forms of extracurricular enrichment for deepening students' philosophical education:

- **occasional discussion meetings** – students participate in them without prior preparation, the topic of discussion is indicated by the teacher, the aim is to express their own views on a given issue and to provide arguments supporting their thesis and present counterarguments to opposing positions;
- **philosophy club** – during meetings, participants focus on joint reading of texts and commenting on them;
- **studio** – combines elements of individual and team work. Students meet with a certain frequency and conduct very diverse activities, such as organizing psychological experiments, conducting surveys, presenting papers, organizing discussions with the participation of guests or joint reading. The studio, in comparison with the philosophy club, is characterized by a greater variety of forms of cooperation and, consequently, a higher level of originality of the activities undertaken.

<sup>38</sup> Twardowski defined these extreme approaches in the following way: “[Didactic] materialism is that superficial view which considers a certain amount of acquired material – regardless of the way it was acquired – as a spiritual achievement, and as a result makes the amount of this acquired material the measure of education. This of course leads to *stupor paedagogicus* – commonly called ‘stupidity.’ On the other hand, considering formal education alone is also harmful, because it leads to indifference to the material on which the skills are trained. For example, learning languages in itself educates formally; but one must select such languages so that the greatest possible benefit results from it for material education at the same time. And one must not, while educating materially, overlook that one should also use it in a formal direction” (K. Twardowski, *Dydaktyka*, op. cit., p. 151).

<sup>39</sup> L. Blaustein, I. Dąmbaska, S. Igel, T. Witwicki, *Organizacja kółka filozoficznego w szkole średniej* [The Organization of a Philosophical Club in a Secondary School], “Przegląd Filozoficzny” 1938, Vol. 41, No. 1, pp. 92–98.

The last of the forms of cooperation proposed by Dąmbska seems particularly interesting. As the author reports, at the time of writing the text, a workshop of this type was operating in one of the schools in Lvov, but nowadays similar initiatives are rather difficult to find. Meanwhile, the philosophical workshop in the form proposed by Dąmbska encourages students to manifest intellectual freedom, which is a component of the freedom of the human person. The value of the latter for the educational process cannot be overestimated, as confirmed by the words of Adolf E. Szołtysek: "The freedom of the I-human as: (1) a human person gives meaning to moral education, (2) a social being gives meaning to ethical education, (3) a citizen gives meaning to doctrinal education."<sup>40</sup>

The efforts undertaken by Dąmbska, as well as many other outstanding educators, aimed at improving the quality of education in public and private schools, were brutally interrupted by the outbreak of war in 1939. Immediately after this event, the philosopher, together with Fryderyka Jarzębińska, began organizing secret education, which included both secondary school youth and students of Jan Kazimierz University.<sup>41</sup> The classes conducted for students were aimed at preparing for the secret matriculation exam, which in turn allowed them to begin studies at the secret university. Dąmbska regularly served on examination committees as their chairwoman or member. The result of their efforts was at least 40 matriculation protocols and certificates. In addition, she conducted classes for both pupils and students.<sup>42</sup> Interestingly, at that time her teaching focused on Polish grammar and the history of literature, not necessarily on philosophy – as one might assume, the message of texts such as *Reduta Ordoni* or Part III of *Dziady* by Adam Mickiewicz spoke more powerfully and effectively to the imagination and conscience of students during the difficult war period, hence the decision to leave philosophy for more peaceful times. The explanation may also be

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<sup>40</sup> A.E. Szołtysek, *Filozofia wychowania. Ontologia, metafizyka, antropologia, aksjologia* [Philosophy of Education: Ontology, Metaphysics, Anthropology, Axiology], Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 1998, p. 97.

<sup>41</sup> As Maria Oberc emphasized, this idea would never have been realized if not for Dąmbska's personal persistence. Many people suggested to her that the war would end sooner or later and then it would be possible to return to teaching, but in the meantime it was necessary to take care of one's own safety. However, the philosopher replied: "We cannot waste time, no matter how long it will take, and who knows?" (see M. Oberc, *Profesor dr Izydora Dąmbska w tajnym nauczaniu* [Professor Izydora Dąmbska in Secret Teaching], "Ruch Filozoficzny" 1978, Vol. 36, Nos. 2–4, p. 123).

<sup>42</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 122–124.

more pragmatic – Polish, unlike introduction to philosophy, was an examination subject, so teaching it was of primary importance.

#### 4. School Teaching: From the Perspective of the People Taught

Unfortunately, no testimonies of the students whom Dąmbska encountered while teaching in Lvov secondary schools have survived. However, thanks to the materials preserved in archival records, it is known that her work was highly valued by all of her superiors from that period. The opinion provided by her superior at the Queen Jadwiga State Girls’ Gymnasium in Lvov can be considered representative:

Thanks to her thorough knowledge, love of the subject, she was able to set teaching at a very high level, arouse lively interest and achieve serious results of her work. She led a philosophical club for the whole year, which also included students from classes in which Ms Dąmbska did not teach. The club’s work was also of a high standard [...]. With the values of her mind, character, disposition and subtle pedagogical tact, she was able to gain my full recognition and respect, great sympathy from her colleagues, warm attachment and full trust from her students.<sup>43</sup>

The earliest opinion on the value of classes conducted by Dąmbska is connected with the period of secret teaching and was formulated by Maria Oberc, who passed her secret high school leaving exam in 1943. She noted that “her lessons stimulated thinking, discussion,”<sup>44</sup> which allowed students to explore subsequent issues on their own to a large extent. The relationship she had with the youth placed under her care was also characteristic:

She talked to everyone as an equal – she was rather shy, questioning, she let us believe that it was us who discovered the lands, that it was we – not her – who were the wise philosophers. She did not convince, did not impose..., she waited until we figured it out ourselves. During Polish lessons she sometimes read fragments of poems – quietly, calmly, and in such a way that we often

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<sup>43</sup> Certificate of 30 August 1934. Quoted after: W. Szulakiewicz, *O uczących i uczonych*, op. cit., p. 205.

<sup>44</sup> M. Oberc, *Profesor dr Izydora Dąmbska w tajnym nauczaniu*, op. cit., p. 126.

cried and then were ready to shoot and die, although she never said: shoot, fight, die with honour! She did not use big words, she did not tolerate pathos.<sup>45</sup>

These words allow us to assume that in her approach to students, Dąmbska implemented elements of both the paidocentric attitude and the moderate axiocentric attitude, according to which teaching is based on authority. In contrast to the extreme variety, the recognition of authority and acting according to its instructions is not a result of force and fear, but respect for the intellectual, moral, religious or other values represented by the educator.<sup>46</sup> The combination of these two relationships (partnership and authority), seemingly so difficult to reconcile, was present in Dąmbska's attitude towards her students. She adopted a dialogical, egalitarian attitude that, to her students, became a value worthy of respect. This in turn encouraged them to submit to the philosopher's influence and to remain open to other values she introduced into the discussion. It is possible that the author of *O narzędziach i przedmiotach poznania* [On the Tools and Objects of Knowledge] drew this axiocentric element of her own position from her mentor, Twardowski, whose views on the importance of the teacher's authority and his seriousness align closely with the position outlined above. This is evidenced by the following words:

The students must feel the teacher's superiority, and it is well known that seriousness does not hinder the acquisition of attachment and trust, but even facilitates it. Wanting to be serious for the students, the teacher must [...] avoid everything that could shake the students' faith in the truth of what he says, in the accuracy of what he does. Therefore, the teacher dare not give an answer to any question from the students that is not true, he dare not withdraw any order or command once given, and before he does something to the students, he should make sure that he will do it well.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid. Another of her students, Leopold Zgoda, expressed a similar opinion about Dąmbska: "I think that the Professor had no taste for heroism and sanctity. I dare say that she only wanted to be and was – in a way appropriate for practising philosophy – a human being" (L. Zgoda, *Charakter i filozofia* [Character and Philosophy], in: *Rozum-serce-smak. Pamięci Profesor Izydory Dąmbskiej (1904–1983)* [Mind–Heart–Taste: In Memory of Professor Izydora Dąmbska (1904–1983)], ed. J. Perzanowski, Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Filozoficzno-Pedagogicznej Ignatianum, Kraków 2009, p. 136).

<sup>46</sup> J. Zubelewicz, *Filozofia wychowania*, op. cit., pp. 40–41.

<sup>47</sup> K. Twardowski, *Dydaktyka*, op. cit., p. 131.



Both in Dąbska's and Twardowski's work, the teacher's role as an authority is not only compatible with the students' sympathy and attachment, but is in fact in harmony with them.<sup>48</sup> In the case of Dąbska, this postulate was subject to specification in the form of combining in her attitude understanding and kindness towards others with high substantive requirements towards herself, but also towards the people she taught, which was emphasized by Stróżewski, quoted at the beginning of the article.

Oberc's quoted statement also shows that Dąbska implemented a form of teaching that Twardowski called heuristic. He understood it as follows:

[T]he heuristic form of teaching consists in the fact that the student, following the teacher's instructions, arrives at the knowledge he is to acquire on his own. In order for the student to be able to acquire any knowledge on his own, the teacher must create the appropriate conditions for the mental work that the student is to perform in searching for that knowledge. To this end, the teacher must first of all tell the student what kind of knowledge he is talking about in a given case; in this way he gives the student's mental work a precisely defined direction.<sup>49</sup>

Moreover, Twardowski pointed out that this form of teaching should be used wherever possible, but not abused in situations where it could lead to awkwardness.<sup>50</sup>

## **5. Academic Teaching: In Organizational Terms**

After 1945, Dąbska abandoned her work in secondary schools and focused on academic teaching. Although due to unfavourable political and historical circumstances she was able to teach at a university only for a short period of her life, she used this time in an extremely fruitful way. This applies especially to the period

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<sup>48</sup> Twardowski expressed this idea in the following words: “In order to gain the attachment of students, the teacher must always treat them with the greatest kindness and understanding; students must continually be assured that the teacher only wants their well-being; any sarcastic remarks, any harassment, ridicule or disregard of students would be one of the most serious offenses of the teacher, who himself should have a heart for students and always look into their hearts” (K. Twardowski, *Dydaktyka*, op. cit., p. 130).

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

from 1957 to 1964, when the philosopher headed the Department of the History of Philosophy at the Jagiellonian University and taught courses for students in independent philosophical studies. The importance of this initiative, in Dąmbska's opinion, is reflected in a statement made at a conference held at the Ministry of Higher Education on 14 January 1957: "[I]t should be possible to study philosophy and obtain master's or doctoral degrees in its scope at those universities where the philosophy departments will be staffed by independent academics."<sup>51</sup> The fact that without Dąmbska's participation it would have been impossible to establish independent philosophical studies at the Jagiellonian University caused her to reject offers from two other universities, Wrocław and Poznań, from which she also received offers to take up the position of professor.<sup>52</sup> She knew that by choosing these institutions she would have to limit her teaching activities to conducting lectures commissioned for the needs of other faculties. Although she considered the need to include them in the curriculum to be important,<sup>53</sup> she saw her role differently. Looking back, it seems that it was the right choice.

In the above-quoted voice in the discussion, Dąmbska also provides arguments for the validity of her postulates. A fundamental one is the need to embed a certain kind of *philosophical culture* among future philosophy teachers, so that they would be able to take responsibility for the philosophical education of the

<sup>51</sup> Quoted after J. Perzanowski, *Izydora Dąmbska – filozof niezłomny*, op. cit., p. 28. In the same speech, Dąmbska radically distanced herself from the understanding of philosophy adopted by Marxists. In her opinion, this term should be used to describe "the search for truth in the scope of basic issues of science and life, which is served by a set of philosophical disciplines in the form of logic, psychology, epistemology, ontology, ethics and aesthetics, as well as the history of the struggles of the human spirit in these fields" (ibid.). It is easy to see in this definition the influence of Twardowski, according to whom philosophy, by "making the truth itself the subject of its research, illuminating the paths leading to it, creating a theory of scientific knowledge, [...] becomes an ally and guide of all who strive for truth in any field of human inquiry" (K. Twardowski, *O dostojeństwie uniwersytetu* [On the Dignity of the University], Uniwersytet Poznański, Poznań 1933, p. 19).

<sup>52</sup> J. Perzanowski, *Izydora Dąmbska – filozof niezłomny*, op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>53</sup> This is evidenced by another fragment of the already quoted statement at the conference at the Ministry of Higher Education on the reorganization of philosophical studies in Poland: "[C]ertain elements of logic, psychology, epistemology and ethics in the form of a lecture on the main principles of philosophical sciences are needed by students of all faculties, but depending on the scientific specialization they choose, the emphasis in the lecture on logic or epistemology would rest on different issues. A lecture on the history of philosophy combined with a lecture on the main directions or independent from it seems essential for those studying the humanities" (J. Perzanowski, *Izydora Dąmbska – filozof niezłomny*, op. cit., pp. 27–28).

young generation in the future.<sup>54</sup> These words prove that Dąmbska, although she no longer taught at school, never forgot about its needs. The same text also clearly reveals her concern for the formative impact that philosophical studies should have on their students. Dąmbska bluntly stated that since 1950 the discipline "has been in ruins," which is why "Poland is already facing the imminent disappearance of scientific achievements in the field of philosophy and the prevention of creating real foundations for its reconstruction and development, and the complete squandering of the significant achievements in this field of the interwar period and earlier."<sup>55</sup> The philosopher does not hesitate to call such a state of affairs "the defeat of Poland's spiritual culture," against which "we must defend ourselves."<sup>56</sup>

As a result of the joint efforts of Dąmbska and Roman Ingarden, Kraków managed to largely return to the ethos of the LWS, which both scholars remembered from the pre-war period. It was a special situation, as reflected in Jerzy Perzanowski's comment: "Something like a miracle – in the middle of Gomułka's era, studying as in Lvov before the war. However, some managed to do so!"<sup>57</sup> The curriculum included lectures on basic philosophical disciplines, as well as monographs, where professors usually presented the results of their work. However, the seminars were of key importance. They were preceded by a proseminar in the first year of studies, and in each subsequent year, students had to choose two or three classes of this type. As Perzanowski noted:

They were just learning the art of philosophizing – under the guidance of the professor leading the seminar, they were co-philosophizing, learning the art of clear thinking, expressed in clear speech. The art of noticing, preparing and – if luck and the head were favourable – solving philosophical problems. A problematic view of philosophy and the fact that philosophy is a science, and a difficult science at that.<sup>58</sup>

Dąmbska devoted a lot of effort to the needs of thorough preparation for the classes she taught. She approached her obligations to her students with great conscientiousness and reliability, considering this to be a standard that should apply

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., pp. 27–28.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., pp. 35–36.

to every university employee involved in teaching. She devoted herself fully to her students and did not forget about them even in the most difficult moments, as evidenced by the words from her farewell letter addressed to the Council of the Faculty of History and Philosophy of the Jagiellonian University after she was removed from teaching and reassigned to the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

I am also deeply concerned about the situation of the young people I have looked after over the years, especially the fate of the students who are just finishing their fourth year of studies, all of whom (12 of them) are writing their master's theses under my supervision. These young people are fervent in their philosophizing, and a large percentage of them are exceptionally talented [...]. Parting ways with these young philosophers is particularly painful for me.<sup>59</sup>

Her sense of responsibility for the well-being of her students and the courage to stand up for them never left her, even after she was officially removed from teaching. She spoke in defence of the protesting students in a letter to the Minister of Education and Higher Education, Henryk Jabłoński, on 15 March 1968:

Today, formally standing outside the university community, I cannot, however, as a professor, not feel obliged to speak out at a time when the youth of higher education institutions are making legitimate demands for respect for the freedom of thought guaranteed by the constitution, and are met in retaliation with repression and accusations of a political nature that harm their good name. I therefore appeal to you, Mr Minister, [...] to support the legitimate demands of the youth and in this way contribute to repairing the relations prevailing in the world of science and culture in Poland.<sup>60</sup>

The problem area of her classes at the Jagiellonian University was extremely diverse. She taught such subjects as: General Logic, Main Issues and Directions of Philosophy, Introduction to Philosophy, History of Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, History of Modern Philosophy, History of Modern Philosophy and Science of Morality, and also gave monographic lectures.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., pp. 35–36.

## 6. Academic Teaching: Through the Eyes of Students and Colleagues

There is a certain trait of Dąmbska's character that appears in many of her students' accounts and is crucial for speaking about her in terms of an authority and a role model. This trait is *authenticity*. As Andrzej Wroński wrote:

Never before or since have I had the impression that attending university classes gave me so much as I did then. The professor was able to make the eternal problems of philosophy seem more important than anything else, and her patient and friendly encouragement was invaluable during clumsy attempts to think with my own head. When I try to name this trait of Izydora Dąmbska's personality that made philosophy in her version so absorbing, the term that most often comes to mind is *authenticity*.<sup>62</sup>

Krystyna Stamirowska spoke in a similar tone:

The feature of the Professor that was perhaps most striking was [...] "what is called authenticity or moral integrity of a human person," that is, "the correspondence between what is on the outside and what is inside, as Plato says in *Phaedrus*." Professor Dąmbska was always herself; she did not pretend to be anything; the correspondence between what she thought and said and what she did was obvious.<sup>63</sup>

Dąmbska was remembered in a similar way by one of her students who was most deserving of her memory, Jerzy Perzanowski: "Modest in manner and dress. Honest in thought. Full of natural, unforced dignity, *dignitas*. And true *philosophia*: love of wisdom. She was true: A true Lady. A true Philosopher. A true Professor. A true Human Being."<sup>64</sup>

<sup>62</sup> A. Wroński, *Wspomnienie* [In Remembrance], in: *Izydora Dąmbska (1904–1983). Materiały z sympozjum "Non est necesse vivere, necesse est philosophari."* Kraków, 18–19 grudnia 1998 r. [Izydora Dąmbska (1904–1983): Materials from the Symposium "Non est necesse vivere, necesse est philosophari." Cracow, 18–19 December 1998], ed. J. Perzanowski, Polska Akademia Umiejętności, Kraków 2001, p. 123.

<sup>63</sup> K. Stamirowska, *Sedno nauczania* [The Essence of Teaching], in: *Izydora Dąmbska (1904–1983). Materiały z sympozjum "Non est necesse vivere, necesse est philosophari."* Kraków, 18–19 grudnia 1998 r. [Izydora Dąmbska (1904–1983): Materials from the Symposium "Non est necesse vivere, necesse est philosophari." Cracow, 18–19 December 1998], ed. J. Perzanowski, Polska Akademia Umiejętności, Kraków 2001, p. 126.

<sup>64</sup> J. Perzanowski, *Izydora Dąmbska – filozof niezłomny*, op. cit., p. 13.

Such conduct directly stemmed from her declaration concerning how philosophy should be understood. At that time, she noted that for her it constituted “an essential existential function – a constant, despite the uncertainty of results, search for the order of truth and the duties it sets that transcends human life subject to transience and death.”<sup>65</sup> It is not difficult to see in this declaration a type of ethical intellectualism – truth appears to Dąmbska as a value in itself, in the shape of Stoic *virtus*, which calls for responsibility and demands realization for its own sake. Realization of the duties of a moral nature set by truth leads in turn to the improvement of the philosophizing person themselves. Her position on this issue finds support in Twardowski’s views, about which she wrote as follows:

According to Twardowski, practising philosophy is not only about solving certain theoretical issues. It is also a path of deepening and moral improvement, a path of gaining true wisdom in life, a path to internal independence and self-control.<sup>66</sup>

Another feature of Dąmbska, which significantly influenced the way she conducted her classes, was the clarity of thought and the related ability to clearly interpret complex philosophical texts. This, in turn, was related to the precision of expression and careful selection of words for the reflections she wanted to share. As Władysław Stróżewski noted: “Her ability to analyse a philosophical text, her precision of expression – these were truly things that could be learned from her.”<sup>67</sup> Leopold Zgoda spoke in a similar tone: “It is precisely the responsibility for the word that makes us silent where everyone speaks similarly and without thinking or out of fear. The Professor – with words, attitude, but also reflection on silence – knew how to speak.”<sup>68</sup> This feature is mentioned once again when

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<sup>65</sup> I. Dąmbska, *Czym jest filozofia, którą uprawiam?*, op. cit., p. 1337.

<sup>66</sup> I. Dąmbska, *Czterdzieści lat filozofii we Lwowie 1898–1938*, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>67</sup> A. Brożek, *O tradycji Polskiego Towarzystwa Filozoficznego. Rozmowa z Władysławem Stróżewskim* [On the Tradition of the Polish Philosophical Society: A Conversation with Władysław Stróżewski], in: *Fenomen Szkoły Lwowsko-Warszawskiej* [The Phenomenon of the Lvov-Warsaw School], eds. A. Brożek, A. Chybińska, Academicon, Lublin 2016, p. 266.

<sup>68</sup> L. Zgoda, *O miłości, postawie i nauczaniu* [On Love, Attitude and Teaching], in: *Izydora Dąmbska (1904–1983). Materiały z sympozjum “Non est necesse vivere, necesse est philosophari.” Kraków, 18–19 grudnia 1998 r.* [Izydora Dąmbska (1904–1983): Materials from the Symposium “Non est necesse vivere, necesse est philosophari.” Cracow, 18–19 December 1998], ed. J. Perzanowski, Polska Akademia Umiejętności, Kraków 2001, p. 136.

Zgoda outlines the overall profile of the philosopher. I quote it in full, as a summary of this part of the considerations:

How do I see the Professor today? A characteristic figure of a fair height, a clear gaze, focused attention, a smile that confirms the significance of convention, a constant readiness to take up the subject of discussion, doubts related to the analysis of the text that were only ended by the passing of time, hands immersed in dark, rich, but closely cropped hair, and this wrestling with herself to make the right choice of words, vigilance so as not to cause any discomfort, striking modesty in everyday matters, memories from the years of study and not only, a delicate touch of the hand when saying goodbye. All this is subordinated to a constant, unequivocal hierarchy of values and the importance of matters, acquired from the family home and refined during the period of studies, and related to the original meaning of the word “philosophy.”<sup>69</sup>

The best expression of appreciation for Dąmbska’s attitude and teaching is the popularity of the semi-secret epistemological and methodological seminar she founded, which began operating in November 1964, among final-year students and graduates. Its participants first discussed the results of Dąmbska’s own work, which was later published in the form of a collection of texts entitled *O narzędziach i przedmiotach poznania* [On the Tools and Objects of Knowledge], and later focused on Ludwig Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and Gottlob Frege’s semantic writings. The tradition of the seminar is continued to this day by the Izydora Dąmbska Methodological and Epistemological Team at the Cracow branch of the Polish Philosophical Society. Meanwhile, the room at the Institute of Philosophy of the Jagiellonian University, where seminar meetings have been held since 1966, was named in her honour in 1999.<sup>70</sup>

## 7. Dąmbska and Ancient Pedagogy

Dąmbska’s students and commentators on her work have repeatedly pointed to the Socratic features of her attitude. Leopold Zgoda wrote about the “Socratic

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>70</sup> J. Perzanowski, *Izydora Dąmbska – filozof niezłomny*, op. cit., p. 66.

modesty and intellectual honesty”<sup>71</sup> of Dąmbska, and in another place he noted: “What did Socrates teach? With words and deeds, character, attitude. With words and deeds, the Professor taught.”<sup>72</sup> In turn, Perzanowski recalls in the introduction to his detailed chronicle of Izydora Dąmbska’s removal from the Jagiellonian University that she was stripped of her position as a lecturer “on a truly Socratic charge – of having a bad influence on the youth.”<sup>73</sup>

These associations are not accidental, because Dąmbska’s educational attitude essentially matches the model set by Socrates himself. As Marcin Wasilewski writes, today Socrates symbolizes the perfection of teaching and the ideal teacher. The dialogues he conducted were aimed not only at repairing the souls and lives of his interlocutors, but also at perfecting the philosopher himself. The method he used was to encourage students to test their beliefs and moral doctrines, and the goal was to achieve virtue, associated with the healing of sick souls. An important feature of his approach was the coherence between word and action, as well as education through personal influence and setting a good example, and not through a systematic pedagogical doctrine. Importantly, Socrates never put himself in the role of an educator; he preferred that something elusive remain in his relationship with the young people around him.<sup>74</sup> These qualities are reflected in the way Dąmbska proceeded in her teaching and the lasting impression she left on her students.

Interestingly, Dąmbska herself characterized her mentor, Kazimierz Twardowski, in a similar way, which is another testimony to the significant role of the ties connecting her with the philosophical school established in Lvov:

The ideal of a philosopher that Twardowski nurtured was close to the ideal of the ancient sage, modelled on the figure of Socrates. Twardowski had something of Socrates in him, both in the emphasis he placed on the method of scientific work, and in the postulate of clarity and precision of terminology, and in the uncompromising nature of his ethics, and in his great civic courage. And in the fact that, like Socrates, he was a hunter of souls.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> L. Zgoda, *O miłości, postawie i nauczaniu*, op. cit., p. 134.

<sup>72</sup> L. Zgoda, *Charakter i filozofia*, op. cit., p. 133.

<sup>73</sup> J. Perzanowski, *Izydora Dąmbska – filozof niezłomny*, op. cit., p. 44.

<sup>74</sup> M. Wasilewski, *Pedagogika grecka. Od Protagorasa do Posejdoniosa* [Greek Pedagogy: From Protagoras to Poseidonius], Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2017, pp. 104–106.

<sup>75</sup> I. Dąmbska, *Czterdzieści lat filozofii we Lwowie 1898–1938*, op. cit., pp. 17–18.



## 8. Conclusions

Izydora Dąmbska, although she cannot be considered a theoretician of pedagogy, undoubtedly integrated many important principles into both her teaching projects at the secondary and higher school levels and their practical implementations. These efforts, on the one hand, earned her the sympathy and recognition of students, and on the other hand, provided valuable guidance for future teachers of philosophy, but also educators in other fields. What is the essence of her proposals in the field of the educational process? Certainly, a dialogical attitude and equal treatment of those taught, avoiding the artificial creation of a relationship of subordination between them and the lecturer. On the contrary – encouraging them to participate in the discussion and to seek their own solutions to the problems raised. Treating each student as an intellectual partner in a joint search for truth did not interfere with, but rather encouraged, the fact that Dąmbska was universally regarded as an authority. Undoubtedly, the postulate of clarity and clarity of the teaching content was also important. Dąmbska’s attitude, due to its authenticity, intellectual honesty and combining high scientific requirements with gentleness and understanding, may become a role model for contemporary teachers as well.

When Ewa Chudoba, in the book *Córki Nawojki. Filozofki na Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim 1897–1967* [Nawojka’s Daughters: Female Philosophers at the Jagiellonian University 1897–1967], written together with Anna Smywińska-Pohl, lists three areas of Izydora Dąmbska’s activity, she puts teaching young people first, ahead of library science, along with collecting bibliographic information in the field of philosophy, and philosophical scientific work (in the form of her own research and translations of classics).<sup>76</sup> It may have been a coincidence, but it is possible that in this way the author wanted to emphasize the importance that the philosopher attributed to education, which was embedded in the teaching of philosophy. If this was indeed the case, this recognition, though bold, seems convincing, especially in light of the analysis presented here.

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<sup>76</sup> E. Chudoba, A. Smywińska-Pohl, *Córki Nawojki. Filozofki na Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim 1897–1967* [Nawojka’s Daughters: Female Philosophers at the Jagiellonian University 1897–1967], Wydawnictwo Libron, Kraków 2017, p. 194.

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