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Jadwiga Zamoyska's Concept of Education

ABSTRACT

The Parliament of the Republic of Poland named Jadwiga Zamoyska (1831–1923) one of the patrons of 2023. The centenary of her death falls in November of this year. Among the many activities for which she is admired and appreciated, the closest and most important to her was educating the youth. Patronage of the Year is an initiative that is intended to honor, but also to protect from oblivion, people, events, and ideas that are important to Poland and Poles. This text responds to this objective. The aim of the article is to indicate the universal values of Jadwiga Zamoyska's educational thought. An analytical-synthetic method was used. The basic source is the work titled *O wychowaniu* [On Education], in which Jadwiga Zamoyska presented a program for Catholic upbringing and education. The value of integral human development, obedience, role model, work, and virtue in upbringing was reflected upon. Universal values are beyond differences of time and mindset. After all, the Sejm of the Republic of Poland indicated the life of Jadwiga Zamoyska as an example to all Poles, and not to a specific group. It is interesting to wonder whether there is anything current and valuable in this message for humans made richer by over hundred years of worldwide research and experiments.

KEYWORDS:

Jadwiga Zamoyska, education, obedience, role model, work, virtue

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Introduction

In 2023, the Parliament of the Republic of Poland honored Jadwiga Zamoyska, née Działyńska, as one of the year's patrons, marking the 100th anniversary of her death in November. Zamoyska was a socially committed Polish patriot, wife of General Władysław Zamoyski, mother of four, educator, and servant of God. Among her many achievements, she is particularly esteemed for her commitment to educating the younger generation, something that was very meaningful and important to her (Palka 2006: 25). Amidst the pressures of the Prussian partition, she established the School of Domestic Work in 1882 on a farm near Kórnik, which became the first economic school in Poland and Europe founded by a single individual. The school's guiding principle, and the essence of Jadwiga Zamoyska's life, was: "To serve God by serving the Fatherland; to serve the Fatherland by serving God" (Palka 2007: 18). Her approach to education for work and through work was recognized by Popes Leo XIII and Pius X (Sztaba 2015: 97). Additionally, her support played a pivotal role in her son Władysław's successful efforts to reclaim the Morskie Oko lake for Poland (Parliament of the Republic of Poland, 2022). In 1921, Marshal Józef Piłsudski decorated her with the Polonia Restituta Cross (Palka 2006: 25).

In its resolution, the Parliament of the Republic of Poland acknowledged Jadwiga Zamoyska as the creator of a coherent pedagogical system (Parliament of the Republic of Poland, 2022). This recognition invites reflection on her thoughts on education, particularly since her ideas are considered wise and ahead of her time (Czartoryski-Sziler 2009: 12), and her character, though remarkable, has been largely forgotten (Palka 2006: 25). The initiative of naming a patron of the year serves not only to honor but also to preserve the memory of individuals, events, and ideas significant to Poland and Poles. This article contributes to that intention by calling attention to the universal values in Jadwiga Zamoyska's educational philosophy. Utilizing an analytical-synthetic approach, the article draws primarily from her work *O wychowaniu* [On Education], in which Zamoyska outlined a program for Catholic education and upbringing. Universal values are those that transcend differences in time and worldview, and the Parliament of the Republic of Poland has presented Zamoyska's

life and work as a model for all Poles, not just a specific group. This article explores whether her teachings, more than a century later, still offer relevant and valuable insights for contemporary society.

The value of integral human development

Development is a natural aspect of human life. It results from the constant discrepancy between a person's potential and their real capabilities. Through development, individuals can increasingly express themselves in a fuller, more authentic way. True development occurs when it encompasses all aspects of self-improvement: physical, mental, moral, social, and spiritual. The integration of these dimensions is essential for acquiring the competence to overcome risks in daily life. As Antoniewicz notes, "When any dimension is neglected, development loses its authenticity. It is possible to observe progress in one aspect, but never true comprehensive development" (Antoniewicz 2010: 276). In such cases, individuals may fall short, feeling that the challenges are beyond their capabilities.

Integral development is a fundamental right for everyone, but it requires wise guidance and thoughtful application. Therefore, it should also be viewed as a responsibility, which is inherent in the process of upbringing. The goal of upbringing is to help individuals harmonize the various dimensions within themselves to realize their developmental potential. As Łobacz explains: "In the process of development, a person first becomes aware of their body, then their psyche, particularly their emotional experiences. It is only later that they discover the moral, spiritual, social, and religious dimensions of life. What ties these dimensions together and gives them meaning is the individual, who transcends the limitations and possibilities of their own humanity" (Łobacz 2019: 60).

A reductionist approach to understanding the human being, which selectively emphasizes certain dimensions of development while neglecting others, undermines the theory and practice of education. The omission of any dimension is detrimental, as each is integral to a comprehensive understanding of the human person. This is by no means a new issue; Jadwiga Zamoyska recognized this problem in her own time. She observed that while people of her era

took pride in scientific progress and technological advancements, this focus often came at the expense of moral and spiritual development:

There is rightful pride in the advancements of knowledge and inventions inspired by science. Each new discovery serves as a gateway to further progress and breakthroughs. However, as knowledge advances in the material realm, with scholars gaining deeper insights into the laws of nature and harnessing new forces with remarkable precision, a contrasting trend emerges in the moral and spiritual domains. (Zamoyska 2002: 9)

According to Zamoyska, morality and spirituality are the most neglected dimensions of development. These same aspects are often cited today as the root cause of human “weakness.” Antoniewicz (2010) confirms this by stating:

The experience of inner emptiness, numerous neuroses, and feelings of social or psychological alienation often defy explanations offered by medical, sociological, or psychological perspectives. Therapeutic interventions frequently fail to provide solutions, as these issues often stem from a spiritual basis, and it is here that their solution should be sought. (Antoniewicz 2010: 272)

Given that Zamoyska accurately diagnosed these issues in her time, it is valuable to consider the solutions she proposed. Her remedies are deeply rooted in the principles of upbringing.

The purpose of education and the value of obedience

The ancient philosopher Diogenes of Sinope, who lived around the 5th and 4th centuries BC, famously wandered the city with a lit lamp, proclaiming, “I am looking for a man” (Diogenes Laertios 1984: 331). Centuries later, at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, Zamoyska echoed a similar sentiment, lamenting the “lack of people in society”: “Plenty of people are born, but though they have the human form, they lack the spirit that makes them, in the fullest sense of the word, the kind of people that the country and society need” (Zamoyska 2002: 11). She questioned the value of physical development, education, or material success if a person cannot use them wisely. Her answer was clear: education must be accompanied by upbringing—“the development of sound judgment, a vigilant conscience, a valiant will, and fortitude of soul” (Zamoyska 2002: 10).

According to Zamoyska, upbringing is the art of guiding souls; the most difficult art of all, because “no two souls are so alike that what applies to one can absolutely match the other” (Zamoyska 2002: 13). Thus, education has both a distant and a proximate goal. The distant goal, shared by all people, is eternal happiness. The proximate goal involves discovering one’s vocation and the talents needed to fulfill it. The role of upbringing is to nurture these talents while eliminating negative inclinations.

Fulfilling the goals of education, according to Zamoyska, requires obedience. This idea runs counter to modern attitudes, where obedience is often seen as a barrier to the development of reason and will. Obedience is typically understood as following rules and commands (Reber 2000: 525). A legitimate concern arises from the risk that rules and commands might be misinterpreted or misguided. This is especially true if obedience is mistaken for mere submission, where a person complies not because they understand or believe in what they’re doing, but simply because they feel compelled to do so (Reber 2000: 525). Zamoyska argued that “shaping” blind obedience in upbringing is unjustifiable:

People raised in this way do not know how to direct themselves. Just as actors, who, without learning their lines, cannot perform without a prompter, so too, children accustomed to passively following someone else’s will—always held on a tight leash, without forming their own principles and beliefs—succumb to various influences and, like moths to a flame, fall into the very dangers they were most conscientiously protected from for many years. (Zamoyska 2002: 20–21)

The fact is that upbringing initially requires obedience is justified by the child’s dependency and the need to protect their well-being. While a child has free will, making the right decisions depends on rational discernment. Although a child has reason, they lack the ability to fully judge what is true and good versus what is false and morally wrong. What is necessary is the gradual and regular development of the child’s reason and will, guided by teachers who create the optimal conditions for this growth. The teacher—often the parent as the child’s first educator—uses their wisdom to guide the child’s will. This eliminates the dangers of obedience associated with vague rules and commands, as in proper upbringing these are always aimed at the child’s welfare.

Thus, in the early stages of upbringing, obedience is required, but always with respect for the child's dignity. Over time, the focus shifts toward developing common sense, a moral character, and the desired independence. Obedience "strengthens the will, provides the power to control oneself and one's negative inclinations, the strength to restrain anger, overcome laziness, resist temptations, and fortitude to fulfill even the most difficult duties" (Zamoyska 2002: 20). Respecting a child's independence without allowing them to experience obedience is a misguided principle. "Even the most talented and well-endowed individuals, if they do not learn to adhere to clearly defined rules, even with good intentions can lose time, energy, and resources—ultimately to no benefit for themselves, society, or the country. (Zamoyska 2002: 20).

A well-known consequence of this misguided principle is that children may dominate adults with selfish demands, and later, as adults, may impose their will egocentrically in family and social settings—as spouses, coworkers, or supervisors. Zamoyska also pointed out another advantage: "Those who learn to obey without hesitation will later avoid the indecisiveness that is so harmful and so common now that people have stopped valuing obedience" (Zamoyska 2002: 19). She provides an example: children might argue with their parents over choosing a coat or shoes, "but when it comes to a decision that determines their vocation or entire future, they become as if powerless and thoughtless" (Zamoyska 2001: 128).

It seems that the erosion of the value of obedience continues today: it is not uncommon for young people to struggle with decisions about independence, forming lasting relationships, or taking on the responsibilities of parenthood. This indecisiveness can even extend to fundamental aspects of identity, such as one's gender. To make wise decisions, one needs sound reasoning and a steady will, both of which are gradually developed through skillful, decisive, and systematic educational guidance. In Zamoyska's view, obedience not only does not hinder the development of reason and will—it is essential to shaping them.

Radosław Mazur offers a useful comparison to understand the value of obedience. In both Hebrew and Greek, there is a close connection between the concepts of "to obey" and "to listen," leading Mazur to define obedience as "responding positively to what one hears and

affirming the call” (Mazur 2019: 284; cf. Kogler, Egger-Wenzel, Ernst 2011: 606). Paweł Pawlikowski describes this process as follows:

Listening demands much more than seeing, which instantly reveals the shape of things. Listening, however, is a gradual process of following the speaker’s thoughts, slowly bringing the listener closer to understanding the speaker’s intentions and will. True listening engages the entire person. While we may hear with our ears, comprehension comes through the mind, and acceptance or rejection of what is heard comes through the will. (Pawlikowski 2019: 270)

Understanding obedience, then, involves more than just following rules and commands designed for the good of both the individual and the community, it also requires considering the subjectivity behind obedience, meaning the personal motives and intentions that drive it. It reaches beyond mere outward compliance, and touches the depth of thoughts, reflections, and choices, as obedience stems from trust and a deliberate decision, shaped by the quality of the relationship with the person to whom it is directed. In Zamoyska’s view, cultivating obedience, given its crucial role in achieving educational goals, is an essential foundation for the upbringing process.

The value of role models in education

Jadwiga Zamoyska believed that every person a child encounters, even briefly, bears significant responsibility. Whether a relative, friend, priest, doctor, visitor, or neighbor, each plays a role as a teacher: “One good example, one word of admonition, warning, or encouragement is sometimes enough to steer a youngster away from a bad path, guide them toward a good one, and ignite a noble desire for study and work, or a zeal for any worthy cause” (Zamoyska 2002: 23). Similarly, she warned: “One careless smile or a reckless word, one dismissive shrug, can undermine a child’s judgment and conscience, potentially causing great harm to their soul” (Zamoyska 2002: 23). Children are highly perceptive; they notice everything they see and hear, nothing escapes their attention, and these observations shape their thoughts, feelings, and will:

They observe what makes people happy, what they worry about; what people value and what they disparage; what they willingly spend money on and what they refrain from spending on; what makes someone

angry; what sparks anger or laughter—they observe how everyone behaves towards others, what is said to their face, and what is said behind their back. From all of this, a child's concepts and principles are formed. (Zamoyska 2002: 23)

Zamoyska's observations confirm the findings of modern developmental psychology that humans naturally have a tendency to observe and emulate certain models—a pattern evident in children, adolescents, and adults alike (Olubiński 2012: 9). Experienced educator Helena Izdebska notes that upbringing cannot be effective without the presence of positive role models (Izdebska 1990: 34).

In upbringing, it is important who the young person chooses to imitate. Empirical studies have shown that 41% of adolescents aged 12–14 are influenced by media role models (Wasylewicz 2016: 107). These figures—often idols and celebrities—become part of the daily lives of young people through the media, fostering a sense of closeness and a desire to emulate them. While they are often seen as authorities, they do not always embody values that are beneficial for education. In fact, they can pose a developmental risk, as they frequently operate outside the realms of truth, goodness, and moral beauty that are essential to true authority. Instead, these caricatures of authority figures often seek fame over the well-being of those who admire them.

This makes it crucial for teachers and educators to be aware of the environment in which a child is growing up and to actively work to ensure it is educationally sound. Zamoyska emphasized this responsibility: “Parents must be very careful not only in choosing those to whom they entrust their children but also in considering everyone with whom their children interact” (Zamoyska 2002: 23). While these words express the parental duty, there are ongoing efforts to limit parents' rights to influence educational programs in kindergartens and schools (cf. https://www.portalsamorzadowy.pl/forum/191360_0.html [dostęp: 8.08.2023]).

The quality of role models is fundamental to education. Of particular importance is whether, and to what extent, the teacher serves as a role model. As Zamoyska (2002: 23) aptly questions, “In the material world, no one can give what they do not possess. So, how could one possibly do so in the realm of the mind or spirit?” She argues that education will be fruitless if a parent or teacher attempts

to teach and demand virtues they do not practice themselves: “To teach truthfulness, diligence, decency, and kindness, one must embody these very qualities—being truthful, diligent, decent, and kind” (Zamoyska 2002: 22–23). This observation is logical and irrefutable, yet it poses challenges in educational practice. For instance, a teacher might silence a class by shouting, a parent might require a child to attend Mass while neglecting to do so themselves, or an educator who smokes might preach the harms of smoking. In such cases, the power of personal example often speaks louder than words. Zamoyska also pointed out the importance of sincerity in the educator’s actions. If an educator acts solely to set a good example without genuinely believing in the rightness of their actions, the effectiveness of their example is diminished: “Beautiful words can sometimes temporarily convince, lift spirits, cheer up, or even inspire beautiful deeds, but even the most eloquent teacher will soon lose their influence and appeal if their life does not follow the principles they preach.” (Zamoyska 2002: 22). While the effort to avoid poor upbringing is important, it lacks the power that Zamoyska eloquently describes as the “conditions of vitality” that underpin the true effectiveness of a role model. Therefore, it is essential to remember that education begins with the teacher’s self-improvement. The failure to effectively work with others often stems from a lack of work on oneself (cf. Zamoyska 2001: 125).

Value of work

The formation of the mind and will is necessary for undertaking anything that involves understanding its essence, meaning, and requires good will, patience, and persistence. Zamoyska, known for her great diligence, instilled the belief in her family home that work is the ultimate expression and test of love for the Fatherland. As an adult, she acknowledged that all development and progress depend on work, and that life itself is work (cf. Zamoyska 2001: 23). Hence, the issue of work occupies an important place in her educational philosophy, evident in the preparation for and daily practice of work at the School of Domestic Work that she founded in 1882, to which she devoted 40 years of her life.

Zamoyska's concept of work is personalistic, which corresponds with her understanding of human worth. She believed that in educating for work, one must first uncover the subjective meaning and suitable method of work (cf. Sztaba 2015: 98). If work incites aversion, she attributed this primarily to the individual, then to the nature of the work itself (Zamoyska 2001: 25–26). Her approach to laziness as an aversion to work is interesting. She categorized it into physical, mental, and spiritual types, recognizing that greater aversion correlates with greater annoyance a person experiences at work. Correspondingly, she identified three types of work as the only effective means of overcoming laziness (Zamoyska 2001: 25). Thus, one can conclude that laziness contributes to the degradation of human development across various dimensions, while work serves as a vehicle for integral development.

The strength of Jadwiga Zamoyska's concept of work lies in her belief in the unity of three types of work. This approach is worth revisiting today, especially since we often see mental work valued more highly than physical labor, with physical workers sometimes spoken of disrespectfully as “proles.” At the same time, spiritual work seems to be increasingly neglected—as if knowledge alone should constitute the wisdom of a person. Over a century ago, Zamoyska argued that the value of each type of work can only be fully realized when they are united. Yet even in her time, she noted, “it would seem that both in education and in the entire social order, people take as a principle not the unity of the three kinds of work, but the disunity between them” (Zamoyska 2001: 24). Contempt for any type of work, she argued, reflects a low moral standard (*ibid.*: 32), while industriousness, even if limited to simply fulfilling one's duties well, is a cornerstone of society because:

there is no greater benevolent force than the moral power of an individual who fulfills their tasks in the right position, at the right time, and in the right way. This moral foundation underpins the worth of individuals, nobility and success in family life, and the flourishing of all institutions, associations, societies, and nations. (Zamoyska 2001: 125)

Work should lead to self-reliance and an increase in personal resources, as it enhances “the vitality of the nation and its right to exist” (Zamoyska 2001: 127–128). This is why it is so important in upbringing to learn not just to work, but how to work. It seems

that the art of properly structuring work within the broader context of human activity, and working out internal principles for work has been lost in the process of upbringing. Zamoyska believed that “to break out of passivity, to change the shape of social life, it is necessary to closely examine our collective approach to work.” She emphasized the importance of daily work, done in small, deliberate steps—not for show, but methodically, persistently, and consistently (Gondek 2005: 248). Thus, work has both individual and social dimensions. It is an existentially significant value, as through work, a person enhances their potential, expresses themselves, and connects with the world, including through love of their homeland.

Despite great technological advancements, the disappearance of certain professions and the emergence of new ones, the timeless principles articulated by Jadwiga Zamoyska regarding work remain relevant (Zamoyska 2001: 119). It is worthwhile to reflect on one’s awareness of these principles:

- Do not start with what you might end up with.
- Do not neglect what is urgent.
- Do not begin non-obligatory work if obligatory work remains unfinished.
- Attend to what is closer before addressing what is further away.
- Avoid tackling difficult and optional tasks before conscientiously fulfilling necessary and easier ones.
- Resist the temptation to prioritize generosity over justice.
- Do not dream about what could be done under better conditions, but focus on what needs to be done under current circumstances.
- Fulfill inherent duties before engaging in activities outside this scope.

These principles can be compared with contemporary sayings about work, such as:

- Work isn’t going anywhere.
- Whether one sits or lies down, payment for work is due.
- Why do today what you can put off until tomorrow?
- Do the day after tomorrow what you have to do today, you’ll have two days off.
- Being cunning will get you promoted.

In Zamoyska's perspective, work is not merely a "commodity." It is essential to prepare oneself and the work environment thoroughly because all work is more successful when it is prepared with the worker's talents, appropriate time, place, manner, and tools necessary for this work" (Zamoyska 2001: 46). Her insights are both wise and practical, and oriented on ensuring that work is done efficiently with a sense of purpose and joy, rather than mere toil.

A person can have different attitudes toward work, ranging from seeing it as a necessity to embracing it as a way of serving others—moving from compulsion to love. Theologian and psychologist Marek Dziewiecki offers an insightful reflection:

Those who love little also work little. Conversely, those who try to work though they love no one, often do so for the wrong reasons, such as the pursuit of a career or money alone. Such people do not experience the joy of life. Instead, they may fall into work addiction (workaholism) or abandon work entirely, choosing to live off others. (Dziewiecki 2007: 7)

One can be satisfied with one's work to varying degrees, or even experience a lack of such satisfaction. One can fulfil oneself, one's plans and dreams to varying degrees through work, or experience a lack of self-fulfilment. One's attitude toward work is shaped by one's work-related preferences, among other things:

One can view work through the prism of economic benefits, forming an instrumental attitude, or through the prism of self-fulfilment, forming a subjective attitude. Through a certain attitude toward work, a person expresses his/her expectations of life, themselves and others, and reveals who he/she is or who he/she would like to be as a person and a member of the community. (Jazukiewicz 2017: 88)

Understanding the value and meaning of work should, therefore, be a crucial part of education. Zamoyska was aware of this when she developed a program of social work that emphasized two key dimensions: the individual and the national. On an individual level, she viewed the preparation for and experience of work as essential to achieving life goals, bringing a sense of purpose and joy. On a national level, she saw work as a means to combat certain societal flaws, and better serve the Fatherland. Zamoyska particularly stressed the need to address laziness, carelessness, and a lack of precision through education (Zamoyska 2001: 34). In both cases, she considered work to be

a difficult yet noble good, one that corresponds to and enhances the dignity of both the individual and the nation, expressing this dignity and multiplying it.

The fruits of education and the essence of virtue

According to Zamoyska's perspective, the ultimate goal of upbringing should be virtues, as they are essential for achieving both immediate and long-term goals in the process of education. According to Zamoyska, inner virtues, or moral virtues form the basis of familial, social, and international relationships (Zamoyska 2002: 262). Therefore, their cultivation is of pivotal importance since they do not develop spontaneously. Virtues represent specific qualities that guide us towards moral excellence. They are subjective and reflect a person's reasoned judgment and their will to act accordingly. For virtue to occur, both aspects of human internal faculties—reason in discerning truth and goodness, and will in making decisions in accordance with such discernment—must be refined (cf. Jazukiewicz 2012: 168).

Zamoyska asserts that virtues should be instilled from an early age: "Children have the potential to cultivate nobility and spirituality if they are shielded from their animal instincts from an early age, and encouraged to develop a sense of personal dignity" (Zamoyska 2002: 263). The manifestation of virtue lies in morally upright actions, which underpins the author's belief that "All acts of theft, persecution, or murder are always caused by a deficiency in moral virtues" (Zamoyska 2002: 262). Creating conditions conducive to the formation of virtues in childhood entails ensuring that children, "prior to making any major decision, consider whether their intentions are prudent, just, temperate, and courageous" (Zamoyska 2002: 263). The primary virtues she identifies are prudence, justice, courage, and temperance. These virtues, articulated by Plato, are categorized in contemporary virtue theory as cardinal virtues, with temperance referred to as the virtue of moderation.

Prudence enables reason to discern the moral good accurately and to guide its realization, and motivates the will to adopt the right attitude (Jazukiewicz 2012: 95). It is synonymous with practical wisdom, as it involves applying learned truths in everyday actions. Zamoyska defines prudence as "choosing appropriate and decent

means for achieving the desired goal, while also anticipating the dangers that may await us” (Zamoyska 2002: 266). It serves as a principle of right action, since it makes it possible for us to identify the means necessary to achieve a goal in any given situation. Importantly, virtue always concerns decent goals and means.

Zamoyska believed that these goals and means should include teaching children to: (1) manage themselves prudently to avoid unnecessary risks and illnesses; (2) use things wisely and according to their purpose, e.g. respecting books, equipment, and clothing, and not wantonly destroying or wasting anything; (3) handle money prudently, avoiding unnecessary purchases, even if they are appealing or inexpensive—a principle especially relevant in today’s world of promotions and sales; prudence also involves not accumulating unnecessary items, especially if one does not have a proper place or use for them; (4) use speech prudently, knowing what to say, to whom, and how to speak, as well as when to remain silent; (5) manage time prudently; (6) exercise freedom judiciously; children should be carefully guided “until they have judgment, conscience, and will sufficiently developed to govern themselves” (Zamoyska 2002: 267), but “without creating oppressive conditions—instead, they should be taught prudent self-reliance; (7) choose friends carefully, recognizing that a good friend is a great gift, but poor choices in friends or acquaintances can lead to disastrous consequences as can trusting people whom one does not know well enough; prudence is even more important in making decisions related to marriage.

According to Zamoyska, wisdom necessary for prudence comes more naturally to those who are shy, selfish, or phlegmatic than to those who are self-reliant, generous, or zealous (Zamoyska 2002: 268). However, prudence is an acquired virtue that anyone, with good will, can develop. Zamoyska also offers a useful criterion for recognizing prudence in oneself: “If someone is unsure whether an act, move, or words are prudent, they should ask themselves what would happen if everyone behaved similarly” (Zamoyska 2002: 268). It is often a lack of prudence that causes people to feel easily offended: “A little reflection and prudence would be enough to see that criticism and reprimands shed light that might not otherwise be shed, and thus, one need not be indignant about them; instead, one should be grateful for them” (Zamoyska 2002: 269). Zamoyska acknowledges

that remarks or criticism can be exaggerated or unfair, but prudent people are those who can make proper use of them, as they are “grateful for what is said to them directly, rather than behind their back” (Zamoyska 2002: 269). This is because a prudent person does not get caught up in trivialities of little importance.

Gianfranco Ravasi, an Italian Catholic cardinal, observed that in modern thought, the virtue of prudence has been somewhat marginalized, “partly due to a style of behavior that trusts in impulses, disregards rules, focuses on freedom, and often ignores limits and boundaries” (Ravasi 2012: 41). Zamoyska’s educational views rehabilitate this lost virtue by refusing to separate theory from practice and by connecting the moral sphere not only to specific situations but, above all, to enduring values.

Justice is a concept that is simultaneously clear and complex, straightforward yet often misunderstood. As a virtue, it is sometimes considered “iron-clad” and marked by traits of severity (Ravasi 2012: 48, 54). This perception is probably due to the fact that the law is the guarantor of justice. A person upholds the law, grants it to others, and receives it in return. Justice not only acknowledges this reality but also involves an act of prudence through which the law becomes an actual decision (Kalinowski 2000: 96–97). According to Zamoyska, justice and prudence are closely connected:

Everything that applies to the one also applies to the other, with the difference, however, that prudence serves mainly to judge each matter and action in itself, while justice is to judge it in relation to other matters, actions, and circumstances. (Zamoyska 2002: 271)

While prudence involves deciding whether an action is appropriate and useful, justice evaluates whether it is possible to undertake the action while respecting others’ rights, fulfilling one’s obligations, and considering the available means (Zamoyska 2002: 271). Zamoyska’s understanding of justice centers on relationships. First, it involves fulfilling duties toward others and oneself. Families, institutions, and nations thrive when everyone, guided by principles of justice, conscientiously fulfills their obligations. This is crucial for accumulating the resources needed to remedy difficult and crisis situations, both individually and socially (cf. Zamoyska 2002: 270, 274). Second, the relational aspect of justice is evident in giving back to everyone

what is rightfully theirs. This perspective excludes the notion of justice as equal distribution. Zamoyska believed that the very nature of life precludes equality. Equality might apply to mechanical products, but humans, endowed with reason and will, should strive in their endeavors—whether in existence, property, respect, or position—according to the duties of their status, circumstances, and available means. Striving for or maintaining equality in this regard would lead to sameness, resulting in “slavish mediocrity” (Zamoyska 2002: 272). Wisdom, she suggested, involves “doing better and better what one should do” (Zamoyska 2002: 274). This insight from Zamoyska is especially relevant in today’s world, which often pushes people to constantly do more and more. A wise understanding of the virtue of justice requires recognizing that the fundamental pillar of justice is merciful love: “Embracing justice, love gives rise to mercy, while mercy reveals the very perfection of justice” (John Paul II, 1980). According to Zamoyska, justice without mercy is ruthless and can even turn into injustice. Similarly, mercy without justice becomes harmful, so it ceases to be true mercy (Zamoyska 2002: 272). Thus, separating justice from charity distorts both virtues. Zamoyska’s reflections on the mutual complementarity of love, mercy, and justice offer valuable insights. Modern civilization requires such an understanding of justice that finds its fulfilment in the virtue of love (Jazukiewicz 2012: 99). The gap between these virtues might be one reason for modern attempts to replace the civilization of love with barbarism.

Temperance, or moderation, is the virtue by which a person exercises self-control and applies the right measure to everything they do (Jazukiewicz 2012: 105). Zamoyska described this virtue as: “Temperance, or moderation, the right measure in all the activities of life, which produces the domination of reason and will ... over the senses” (Zamoyska 2002: 275). From this follows the significance and power of temperance, as it ensures harmony between the body and spirit, allowing the spirit to rightfully dominate over sensuality. For a temperate person, the pursuit of pleasure is not the determining criterion for making choices or guiding behavior in everyday life. Instead, decisions are shaped first by necessity, then by utility, and only lastly by what is pleasurable. This connection between temperance and prudence is crucial: without prudence, temperance would not be a rational virtue, as one would not be able to select the right pleasures

that contribute to their well-being without hindering the pursuit of objective good. Through temperance, the body and senses find their proper place within the whole of humanity, which is intimately tied to dignity. The value of moderation is not found in what it restricts but in what it offers (cf. Jazukiewicz 2012: 107–108). Its inherent goodness is not about “masochism, anorexia, or a tart and grim asceticism ...; it is a sign of serene detachment and inner dignity; ... when we violate the rules of temperance, we face not just a physiological issue, but moral degeneration” (Ravasi 2012: 68). Jadwiga Zamoyska contemplated the practical aspects of this understanding of human existence, pointing out the areas of daily life that require careful attention in education (Zamoyska 2002: 276–277):

1. Temperance in eating and drinking: This virtue contributes to mental fortitude, clarity of mind, and physical health, and helps avoid unnecessary expenditures, not only on excessive food and alcohol or other stimulants, but also on the consequences of such intemperance. A lack of temperance weakens a person’s spiritual, mental, and physical faculties, leading to family and social suffering. Educational reflection on this matter is particularly necessary today, as the modern Western world trends towards consumption and waste, while obesity is a significant problem, and other parts of the world suffer from hunger and thirst (cf. Ravasi 2012: 67).
2. Temperance in speech: Zamoyska aptly noted, “Speech, like water, the better tamed, the greater strength it possesses; spreading widely and shallowly, water creates a swamp, and speech creates talkativeness” (Zamoyska 2002: 276). The art of expressing oneself concisely is vital—to so as to avoid boring others, to so as not to obstruct agreement, so as not to waste time, so as not to gossip or spread confidential information. One should be cautious about assuming that others will keep confidential matters when one has not been careful about keeping quiet oneself; In situations of reprimand, “a prudent and firm word will do more than arguments repeated a dozen times” (Zamoyska 2002: 276).
3. Restraint in play: Children should be taught to end their play at a given time without bargaining, without shouting and anger, which helps them develop the self-control needed to

prioritize their future duties over social activities. This does not mean abandoning social duties but understanding legitimate preferences. Many people struggle to focus on work because “every opportunity to play, to visit, or to entertain guests presents itself to them as a duty, whether social or familial, that takes precedence over their state duties” (Zamoyska 2002: 276). For example, a woman might feel that she “does not have time” to care for children, manage a home, or educate herself (e.g., through a good book), because she is too busy planning and preparing entertainment, after which she paradoxically needs rest. A house perpetually full of guests creates a new duty: reciprocating visits, which is a sort of a “trap.” Intemperance in entertaining not only hinders the performance of duties but “actually makes it harder to fulfill them, because any task, like any work, becomes so much more difficult when it is done less conscientiously” (Zamoyska 2002: 277).

4. Temperance in work: A just measure in this regard means limiting work “to the hours set aside for work, and not stretching it beyond the hours needed for sleep and meals” (Zamoyska 2002: 277).
5. Restraint in generosity: Generosity must not turn into wastefulness; frugality should not become stinginess; strictness should not become sternness; and mercy should not become an incentive for abuse. As a matter of fact, according to Zamoyska, only love is beyond moderation, as love should be “without any limits,” although temperance is needed in expressing it so that love remains a virtue and not a passion (cf. Zamoyska 2002: 278).

Zamoyska believed that while prudence and justice can only be taught to children once they reach a certain level of mental development, temperance can and should be taught from birth (Zamoyska 2002: 275). Shaping this virtue is a paramount task, particularly for Poles, as the author considered temperance the most difficult moral virtue for them to master. This observation remains relevant today: “The lack of temperance itself could largely suffice explain our national disasters and the frequent personal failures so common among us” (Zamoyska 2002: 275).

Regrettably, it must be admitted that the task of learning temperance has not been fulfilled for over a century. The individual, family, and social tragedies associated with alcoholism and other intoxicants are just a few examples. If we consider that the moral virtue of moderation applies to a broad spectrum of behaviors (e.g., shame, decency, generosity, graciousness, modesty, and desires) and becomes “an arbiter in matters of sight, smell, hearing,” then we must also acknowledge the role of moderation in addressing issues like pride, arrogance, and abuse (Ravasi 2012: 70–71). This, in turn, implies a link between temperance and fortitude, which is not lacking in our nation.

The virtue of fortitude represents the strength of spirit needed to do good and endure the hardships that arise in achieving it. The essence of fortitude manifests itself primarily in consistently choosing truth and goodness in one’s actions, and in the ability to overcome obstacles in this pursuit. What is truly valuable is a person’s steadfast commitment to truth and goodness, whether through heroic acts in extraordinary circumstances or the quiet heroism of everyday life (cf. Jazukiewicz 2012: 104). Zamoyska’s educational thought emphasizes this everyday aspect of fortitude. She describes fortitude as “overcoming difficulties in fulfilling duties and enduring life’s hardships” (Zamoyska 2002: 278). While she acknowledges the valor of fortitude in battle, suffering, martyrdom, death, and persecution, traits that Poles already exhibit and do not need to be taught she believes that it is the less obvious aspects of fortitude that are most crucial.

Fortitude also involves perseverance, the sacrifice of self-love, setting aside personal concerns and the desire for popularity. Defending truth, faith, justice, and principles and beliefs, can lead to slander and persecution, not only from oppressors but, even more harshly, from one’s own people and loved ones. This deeper dimension of fortitude is something that should be taught. (Zamoyska 2002: 278)

It is difficult to admit, even to oneself, that one lacks the courage to pursue what is desired. It is not physical courage alone that is the issue. According to Zamoyska, while physical courage is a noble quality, it does not constitute a virtue on its own. Physical courage is largely influenced by natural predispositions, though it can and should be developed through physical exercise, which builds strength, dexterity, and health. It also helps instill boldness, temper selfishness,

awaken a sense of dignity, and cultivate self-control (Zamoyska 2002: 278–279). However, true fortitude requires moral courage, which stems from “a love of truth and justice; sometimes we need it greatly to stand firm in our principles and convictions, even when it means facing criticism, mockery, or persecution in defense of truth and justice. It involves rising above merely personal or immediate concerns to uphold these values. (Zamoyska 2002: 279). A practical way to understand the importance of this virtue is to consider the consequences of lacking it. Fear of being labeled timid, selfish, or stingy can lead people to engage in reckless or imprudent or even erratic behavior. A lack of perseverance can cause individuals to abandon their commitments, impacting others who depend on them. Many individual and national disasters stem from weak principles, a lack of courage to uphold convictions, and inconsistent follow-through on decisions. The source of fortitude is love: “Love of truth and justice can overcome selfish timidity and pettiness” (Zamoyska 2002: 279). While fortitude is a personal virtue, it also has a social dimension, contributing to a better future (cf. Zamoyska 2002: 280). This belief is echoed by contemporary thinkers:

We live in a world where structures and situations of injustice, economic inequality, and domination are increasingly prevalent. Therefore, fortitude must be directed towards resolving these issues plaguing the lives of citizens on both national and global levels. (Ravasi 2012: 60)

Zamoyska framed the outcomes of comprehensive education within the context of virtue. This perspective led her to investigate how moral goodness shapes one’s way of being, as part of a broader search for the purpose and meaning of education and life itself. Her focus was on human happiness, self-improvement, and the quality of relationships with others and oneself. Moral virtues, according to Zamoyska, improve an individual’s ability to lead a responsible, self-reliant and fulfilling life. Her message emphasizes the importance of the everyday aspects of life and the quality of fulfilling one’s civic duties. These virtues constitute a person’s strength in fulfilling one’s potential, managing one’s personal development and contributing to societal well-being. Zamoyska’s approach to education reflects a deep wisdom and remains relevant across time.

The value of the relationship between upbringing and religion

Zamoyska's ideas offer a coherent program of Catholic education. Her approach is based on universal values that transcend individual worldviews and historical periods. To fully understand her perspective, it is essential to explore the religious premises embedded in Zamoyska's views on upbringing. This connection between upbringing and Catholicism remains significant for contemporary audiences. Maria Gondek has articulated this relevance as follows:

The program of Catholic education and upbringing presented by Zamoyska stands as a precise counter to the atheistic agendas prevalent in schools today and the contemporary trends dominating school curricula. These trends, which sometimes even affect Catholic institutions, liberalize the educational process to an extent that has led, on the scale of entire societies, to widespread pedagogical failures. These failures have resulted in the erosion of the authority of educators and disruption of the educational system. The misguided "freedom" granted to students which is based on social ignorance and divorced from the pursuit of goodness—has been fueled by popular notions of spontaneity and naturalness. This has led to a blind "love" from parents and educators, causing many children harm that is often irreparable in adulthood. (Gondek 2002: 7)

Zamoyska viewed life and education through the lens of eternity, seeing personal growth as intertwined with religious maturity. Below are examples of how religious principles are integrated into her educational philosophy, organized according to the topics discussed in this article.

1. The complexity of everyday life requires comprehensive development. Zamoyska notes: "How many people, under the pressure of various circumstances, rush through life day by day, unaware of their direction or purpose. It is no wonder that, in this pursuit, they blindly fall into the abyss" (Zamoyska 2002: 11). The contradictions within human nature—noble impulses and moral failures, wicked falls, angelic highs and base instincts, strengths and weaknesses—are difficult to explain. Zamoyska's perspective is religious: "Human beings are created in the likeness of God and, at the same time, are unfortunate heirs of original sin" (Zamoyska 2002: 11). Hence, education and upbringing are essential.

2. Upbringing is a deliberate process guided by specific principles. According to Zamoyska, the source and justification for these goals and principles are religious: “Therefore, if we wish to educate a person, where should we turn for guidance on their being, purpose, and the laws governing them, if not to God who created them and established their purpose and laws?” (Zamoyska 2002: 11).
3. Upbringing has both distant and immediate goals. The distant goal, which unites all people, has a transcendent dimension: eternal life (cf. Zamoyska 2002: 27). The immediate goal is individual and concerns the fulfillment of a vocation: “God gives each person talents according to His calling, so, alongside the overall goal, upbringing should take into account these individual tasks” (Zamoyska 2002: 13). Children’s abilities reflect God’s will, so the task of educators is to recognize these abilities and create conditions for their growth. Parents are of particular importance in this process, as Zamoyska “holds them accountable” to God, stating: “Parents are neither masters nor creators of their children; they should nurture God-given abilities but cannot create them. Insisting on educating children in areas for which they are not gifted can lead to neglect of other important gifts, which parents will have to account for before God” (Zamoyska 2002: 13).
4. Upbringing requires obedience. Zamoyska justifies this need with a religious perspective: “When God created the first people, first He demanded absolute obedience without explaining why He forbade them from eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge. Later, Christ, while teaching by word and example, spoke to His disciples at their level. Similarly, the Church gradually proclaims its doctrines and teachings in line with societal development and maturity” (Zamoyska 2002: 15). Through obedience—understood as listening and responding to divine guidance—one can fulfill God’s will according to their vocation. Mature obedience is marked by an orientation towards the kingdom of God (Pawlikowski 2019: 277).
5. It is the duty of the teacher to set an example of what qualities they expect from their students. Zamoyska supported this idea

- with a religious comparison, quoting St. Paul: "Imitate me, just as I imitate Christ" (Zamoyska 2002: 21).
6. Work has a religious dimension. It is an atonement for sins and a condition for salvation. Zamoyska wrote: "Subdue the earth, said God to our first parents, giving them the earth to possess; but how could they possess it without some degree of labor, even if only to gather its crops?" (Zamoyska 2001: 23). She identifies three types of labour and cites their religious justification: "Christ, in Nazareth, worked by hand at the parental workshop; in the temple, He engaged in intellectual work through study and teaching; He also worked spiritually by praying, suffering, fasting, and battling Satan. He left us these three forms of work as examples" (Zamoyska 2001: 24). The Catholic dimension of Zamoyska's concept of education through work was affirmed by Popes Leo XIII and Pius X in letters addressed to her. According to theologian Mariusz Sztaba, Zamoyska's understanding of work not only enriched the Catholic tradition but also anticipated contemporary Catholic thought on work, as presented by Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Laborem exercens* (Sztaba 2015: 97).
 7. Virtues should be the fruits of education. Virtue arises from the collaboration between human will and God's grace: "Neither divine grace without human will, nor human will without divine grace will produce virtue" (Zamoyska 2002: 261). The three divine virtues form "the infallible basis of all moral principles and social order. How can we discuss the fruits of upbringing without mentioning these three powerful virtues, which are not only the basis, but also the culmination of education?" (Zamoyska 2002: 264).
 8. Zamoyska identified religious sources as the foundation of educational reflection. Particularly valuable is the Catechism of the Catholic Church. In this source, anyone can find answers to existential dilemmas: "Where do we come from? Where are we destined to go? What must we fulfill on earth, and what awaits us after death?" (Zamoyska 2002: 11). Drawing principles for life and upbringing from the catechism, she notes, "We go to the treasury of wisdom for wisdom, to omnipotence for power; as Christ promised, we find what we seek,

we receive what we ask for; in the catechism ... the whole matter of upbringing is presented to us in the right light” (Zamoyska 2002: 13). Even the structure of Zamoyska’s work, *O Wychowaniu* [On Education], mirrors that of the catechism. Aware that the catechism—being a summary of the truths and principles of faith found in Scripture—contains abstract concepts, Zamoyska recommends children and young people turn to the examples of life provided in the Scripture.

Holistic human development includes the spiritual dimension, that is, the inner space that can be filled with the love of God. The program of Catholic upbringing consciously forms the identity of a Christian, person who, by serving God, their homeland, and others, and by discovering and fulfilling their earthly vocation, attains both temporal and eternal happiness. This program leaves no room for laziness or discouragement; instead, it celebrates work, joy, and hope. In encountering God, a person receives more love than they deserve and learns to bestow it on others. Every person needs love; without it, there is no life or development.

Conclusion

Jadwiga Zamoyska lived and worked during a time when the country was under foreign oppression. The School of Domestic Work was established during the Prussian partition, and its emphasis on patriotic education was strongly resisted by the Prussians. This persecution forced Zamoyska to leave Kórnik and frequently relocate. Despite these challenges, she never wavered, surrendered, or lost faith in the importance of education and upbringing. She believed it was vital, especially for when independence would be regained. Her foresight proved correct. Once independence was restored, the country needed a wise and educated populace, so she developed a program of individual and social work. She stressed the importance of self-improvement, combating national vices, and contrasting diligence with laziness, conscientiousness with sloppiness, honesty with dishonesty, and perseverance with carelessness. Zamoyska’s philosophy suggests that patriotism is not only about grand gestures but also about the everyday heroism of faithfulness and conscientiousness. Such an attitude is shaped in the process of upbringing. This understanding of

sacrificial love for one's homeland and its values is detailed in her work, *O miłości ojczyzny* [On the Love of the Homeland] (2021).

The message of Jadwiga Zamoyska remains relevant and necessary. Individual shortcomings, when compounded, can weaken a nation. Personal efforts to develop virtues, methodically pursued through upbringing and education, contribute to the nation's strength. For Zamoyska, personal work is not a burdensome task but a joyful endeavor; obedience is not about submission but about gaining independence; and respect for moral principles is not a mere duty but a path to wisdom. Her educational philosophy is not a list of prohibitions but a positive guide to living a life filled with love, responsibility, truth, and freedom, including the freedom of God's children. The goal of education is to cultivate mature love for God, one's homeland, life, and people. Zamoyska also assigned a significant role to women in society. She believed that a woman's moral character profoundly impacts the social and national moral integrity. As she wrote, "irrespective of the great responsibilities of a husband, father, master of the house head of the household, if he does wrong by his shameful behavior, how much more terrible is the social harm inflicted on a woman when she strays from virtue, when she deviates from the right path, and neglects her duties as a wife, mother, and mistress of the house" (Zamoyska 2002: 351). She further noted, "A man, despite some mistakes, can sometimes bring considerable benefits to society, but a woman, when she lacks her virtues, humiliates herself and her household ..., does terrible harm to her nation" (Zamoyska 2002: 351). The conclusion is clear: "What moral value of a woman, ... such is the moral integrity of the society and the nation" (Zamoyska 2002: 351). Zamoyska attributed significant power, honor, and responsibility to women. In today's era of various social movements, it is worth reflecting on the value of female dignity. Zamoyska not only promoted her beliefs but also demonstrated them through her actions. She was renowned for her diligence and perseverance in advancing educational and social causes for her country. She remains a model of wisdom and dedication, and her example can inspire and guide one through daily life.

On one side of Poland, we are facing a military war, while on the other, we are grappling with a moral one. The former is instigated by criminals, and the latter by so-called "engineers of this world" who

aim to normalize what is abnormal. In this challenging context, Zamoyska's educational program offers a blueprint for living a normal and happy life, both individually and as a nation. Some of Zamoyska's ideas, presented at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, remain self-evident today. If we feel we already know these values, it is worth asking why they still await fulfillment. At a convention of the women of Kuźnice (Kuźniczanki) on June 14–15, 1931, in Poznań, Poland's Primate August Hlond spoke poignant words about Jadwiga Zamoyska: "It is a pity that she is so little known and her teachings so little promoted" (Bross 1937: 8). To what extent have we, as Poles, made up for this "national loss"?

Jadwiga Zamoyska has been named a patron saint of 2023 in Poland. This recognition spotlights her as a role model for every Pole, and her ideas and social contributions are relevant to all, including non-believers, despite her authorship of a Catholic education program. Zamoyska exemplifies a life lived with integrity, and her educational philosophy centers on the fulfillment of humanistic values—attitudes essential for any nation that cares about its past, present, and future.

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