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## **Ethics of the teaching profession as an ethics of care**

### **Etyka zawodu nauczyciela jako etyka troski**

#### **Introduction**

Educational activity initiated by the teacher is characterized, among other things, by its ethical dimension. This, in turn, determines the specific nature of the work of the representatives of this socio-professional category. Even though the ethical dimension of teaching profession has been the subject of scientific exploration, due to its place and importance in the area of a teacher's professional work, it remains a subject of cognitive interest, especially among researchers dealing with ethical and pedagogical issues. Hence, an attempt to reflect on the ethics of a teacher's professional work, due to its theoretical and practical implications, is justified from both an epistemological and social point of view. This is also important because the ethical issues of the teaching profession are not perceived in a clear and undisputed way, and many issues related to it require in-depth studies and analyses. It is rarely understood in the context of the ethics of care, as opposed to expressing it in a normative perspective – as the ethics of duty or as the ethics of virtue, as evidenced by

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the analysis of the literature on the subject, both compact works and articles published in scientific journals devoted to the ethics of the teaching profession.

Therefore, the aim of this article is an attempt to present the professional ethics of a teacher as an ethics of care, which is one of many possible approaches to the ethical dimension of the pedagogical activity of the representatives of this profession. Analysing this ethics is particularly important in the era of ethical chaos that affects social reality, including educational reality, and, therefore, also the teacher's professional work. Due to the multi-faceted and multi-problematic nature of issues related to the ethics of care, which cannot be included within the scope of the limited text, the following reflections focus only on some of the issues related to this ethics. The presented considerations should therefore be treated as a prolegomenon to a broader reflection oscillating around the ethics of care in the area of a teacher's professional work.

### **The ethical dimension of a teacher's professional work**

Many years ago, Jan Legowicz (1988, p. 95) wrote: "[...] in their profession, a teacher is not someone like anyone else in the work he performs, because although he is a human being, like every other similar person, despite everything, not like anyone else, he testifies and should testify in their teaching activity and in what it morally obliges them to do". These words, despite the time lapse, have not lost their relevance and importance in relation to practicing the teaching profession. Moreover, it can be said that due to the increasingly complex and complicated nature of a teacher's professional activity, their rank has increased.

There are still much higher social demands placed on teachers' work than those resulting from the assignment of duties and the labour code (Drózdź, 2004, p. 53). The complexity of educational situations in which a modern teacher functions proves the role of professional ethics, due to the fact that this ethics regulates their decisions and methods of conduct, which cannot be regulated by other regulations (Kozakiewicz, 1996, p. 202). A teacher who wants to introduce a young person to the right path of life, as well as to teach him proper moral behaviour, must know what and why to recommend to students as morally good, and how to protect them from morally bad. It is the teacher who must recommend noble deeds and conduct (Siemianowski, 1995, p. 6). To be able to do this, the teacher himself must be an "ethically formed"

person who is close to the arrangements that are part of professional teacher ethics, which means that he knows them, accepts them and, mostly important, respects them in his educational activities.

The thing about a teacher's work is that a lot depends on the teacher himself, on his knowledge, skills and competences. A teacher can properly practice his profession if he has a deep conviction that what he does is primarily for the good of the student, the social group to which he belongs due to his profession and society. These beliefs are strengthened by professional ethics, which regulates professional activities and relations within a given social group, between individuals performing this profession, who at the same time remain in various professional relationships (Augustyniak-Kopka, 1994, pp. 69–70). As Philippe Meirieu (2003, p. 5) rightly emphasizes: "Everyone who is in any way involved in education: a teacher, educator or animator should have professional competences, be convinced of the value of social and moral norms and attach importance to choices of ethical issues that he faces in his everyday professional life". This is important because the teaching profession is perceived in terms of a specific mission (*missio*) and vocation (*vocatio*), and the moral imperative appears in this profession as an indispensable and necessary condition for effectiveness of action and social prestige (Barycz, 1997, p. 165–166). Urszula Ostrowska (2010, p. 65) is right when stating: "The teaching profession is associated with a social mission and a sense of ethos, with duties and vocation. To meet such requirements, physical fitness, strong character, willpower and fortitude are essential. There is a close connection between professional duties (professionalism) and moral duties (ethicality). Teachers are expected to be faithful to duties and moral principles, and even to act beyond duty and obligation (supererogation). Teachers are entrusted with what is most valuable from an individual and social perspective – the education and upbringing of young generations". The fidelity to moral duties and principles indicated by the cited author allows us to treat the ethics of the teaching profession as an ethics of duty. Most often, it is associated with the code of ethics for teachers, which, despite attempts to construct and disseminate it, has not been implemented in Poland<sup>2</sup>. Without presenting the

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<sup>2</sup> It is worth emphasizing here that already in 1966, a special conference organized in Paris convened by UNESCO adopted the following resolution: "Teaching organizations should develop codes of ethics or codes of conduct, because such sets of standards contribute significantly to ensuring the prestige of the profession and to fulfilling professional duties according to established principles" (quoted in: Kozakiewicz, 1971, p. 150). On the initiative of Mikołaj

arguments of supporters and opponents of a formal code of ethics for teachers, it is impossible to disagree with Elizabeth Campbell (2000, pp. 203–204), who claims that codes of ethics, although they may not be helpful, they will not harm the teaching profession and can, in a positive sense, do a lot for its practitioners, especially in times of greater attention paid to the ethical dimension of teacher's work.

In addition to specific ethical conditions, the virtues represented by the teacher also gain great importance in the ethics of the teaching profession. Recognizing their role and importance in the area of professional ethics, Jarosław Horowski (2011, p. 178) writes: "Since virtue, if developed in a person, is a component of his personality, virtue ethics outlines the ideal of a man who consistently strives in his actions to realize the good. In the case of professional ethics, it is the ideal of a person who does not have guidelines how to behave towards a client, but prudently recognizes what is best for that person and, in accordance with the principle of justice, tries to help the person under his care to achieve this good. He also skillfully manages his feelings; his reactions are governed by moderation and courage. The perfection of virtue lies in the fact that it regulates human action from the inside, and not from the outside, through a series of commandments that are imposed on a man. For this reason, it corresponds to the approach to the profession as a vocation, among others, in relation to the teaching profession". The words of the cited author convince us that, when addressing the issue of the ethics of the teaching profession, it is impossible to free ourselves from thinking about it as virtue ethics, for which the clearly crystallized ethical dispositions of the teacher, determining the quality of the educational services he or she provides, are more important than specific ethical conditions.

It is worth mentioning here that there are still ongoing disputes about the normative vision of the ethics of the teaching profession, in particular whether it is to be an ethics of duty or rather an ethics of virtue. Both of them have their supporters and opponents, which is justified not only due to the specific

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Kozakiewicz, immediately after this conference, a discussion on the codification of teachers' professional ethics was initiated, which resulted in the creation of a draft of such a code (*Draft of the Teacher's Code of Ethics*) (Kozakiewicz, 1971, pp. 164–170). In 1995, the Polish Teachers' Association developed *the Code of Ethics for Teachers* (Chomczyk, 2003, p. 631), and in 2012, on the initiative of the Polish Teachers' Union, *the Declaration of Teachers' Ethics. Project* was created. (2012, pp. 216–219). It is also important that many schools create their own codes of ethics for teachers.

nature of the teaching profession, but also in relation to the image of the teacher himself. However, this does not mean that it is possible to attempt to contaminate these ethics.

Referring to David Carr's considerations, Piotr Kostyło (2008, p. 170) states that both the ethics of duty and the ethics of virtue are necessary in the teaching profession. However, taking into account the specificity of the teaching profession, the ethics of virtue becomes more important, because the ethics of duty is not sufficient to properly equip and make the teacher sensitive to ethical problems manifested in the framework of his professional activity. David Carr (2006, p. 171) states that in relation to a teacher, his professional development is not only exhausted by fidelity to duties (deontic norms), but should also be perceived in terms of the development of personal character traits (aretic norms).

An attempt to combine the ethics of duty and the ethics of virtue in relation to the teaching profession could result in the development of a relatively coherent and compact concept of teaching ethics – such ethics that could not only be accepted, but above all observed by teaching circles in their professional activities.

Summarizing the above considerations, it can be stated that from a normative perspective, the ethical dimension manifested in a teacher's professional activity concerns the fulfillment of specific moral obligations or, more broadly, compliance with ethical requirements (ethics of duty), and also the possession of a specific set of ethical dispositions that predispose one to perform them (ethics virtues). The list of these qualifications and virtues characterizing a teacher, presented in the literature on the subject, seems to be open and incomplete, and, therefore, requires constant supplementation and updating. Hence, the issues related to the work ethic of this socio-professional category are still – to use the Latin formula – *in statu nascendi*.

### Care as an educational category

When considering the ethics of the teaching profession, one of the most important categories is “care”. Based on dictionary findings, it means: “1. feeling of anxiety caused by a difficult situation; (...) a situation in which such a feeling is experienced; 2. caring for someone, something or striving for something” (Dictionary of the Polish language, 2006, p. 1054). For Judith

Phillips (2009, p. 7) care is associated with categories such as attachment, love, duty, goodness, responsibility, reciprocity and it plays an important role in social relationships, both official and professional, as well as in intimate relationships and friendship. It manifests itself through contact, action, feeling, and body language.

Care is manifested through various behaviours, e.g. meeting needs, caring, building trust, compassion, etc. (Penczek, 2016, p. 58). As Joanna Madalińska-Michalak (2017, pp. 103–104) rightly writes: “Care seems obvious in everyday life. It is associated with looking after someone’s well-being, looking after something that is considered valuable or caring. Care is sometimes identified with custody, with trying or striving to make sure everything goes as best as possible, so that our actions benefit others. Care also means worry and is identified with the feeling of anxiety within us about someone or something”. Inscribed in the everyday activity of a person dealing with someone or something, it becomes a particularly useful category to be considered in the field of social sciences, including pedagogy, although not only in this discipline and not only in this area of sciences.

It is regrettable that in the field of pedagogy, the issue of care has not been the subject of in-depth scientific considerations to a sufficient extent so far, as Alicja Żywczok (2018, p. 115) writes the following: “In pedagogy, the issue of care has rarely been subjected to exploration; rather, other terms have become popular in its subdisciplines, such as: care, help, support, assistance”. The lack of a sufficient number of works encourages analyses focusing on the category of “care”, which is done by the already mentioned Alicja Żywczok (2018, p. 114) who conducted an interesting lexical analysis of terms semantically similar to care, such as: concern, custody, caring, taking care of. As a result of her reflections, the author comes to the conclusion that the lexical and semantic differences between these categories are not significant. “Care or concern (different from concern by the presence of anxiety and even sadness) – writes Alicja Żywczok (2018, pp. 114–115) – is a mental attitude of the subject rather than an action. Taking care is already a manifestation of human activity – a purposeful and usually directed action, and an act rather than a process; It is not without reason that it is associated with the initiation of action rather than with long-term activity. In turn, caring can be considered not only as an activity, but also an attitude, and a process rather than an act. However, caring, already included in ancient times as a moral virtue, is also a positive feature/

disposition of human character/personality (an advantage), and certainly a distinguishing feature of humans, although it is difficult not to attribute care identified with caring for offspring to some animals as well”.

For the considerations undertaken here, it is important that care is a good that is not indifferent in moral terms. The “ethical status” of this good is crucial. Care is recognized as a value and as a virtue (the virtue of caring) (Dobrowolska, 2010, p. 92), but also as a relationship that exists between those who care and those in need of care (Waleszczyński, 2019, p. 124). It appeared as a separate ethical category only at the end of the 20th century and was built in opposition to the category of justice (Waleszczyński, 2019, p. 117). Care is part of the field of humanitarian work and can be associated with a person’s vocation and a specific system of values. It contributes to the development of specific goods and directs people towards what they want and strive for (Theiss, 2012, after: Żywczok, 2018, pp. 106-107). Joanna Madalińska-Michalak (2017, p. 106), reconstructing the views of the leading representative of the ethics of care – Nel Noddings, looking for the educational implications of this ethics, writes as follows: “*Ethical care* requires effort and serves self and others. Its existence does not require blood ties and the feeling of attachment to another person is not enough. This type of caring goes beyond what is natural and requires efforts that are not noticed in a situation of being guided by spontaneous feeling as such. Ethical care is itself a virtue that is developed through caring for others; it is a specific sense of duty, expressed in responsibility for a specific entity of concern. If care is to be considered in an ethical sense, it requires the meeting of specific entities that it concerns and their cooperation. Care is part of relationships in which there is consent to care, to mutual interest in each other of the entities involved in the relationship of care”.

Care appears to be a necessary category in educational interpersonal relationships. It ensures the correct quality of these relationships, contributing to the creation of a specific ethical relationship between the donor and the recipient. Care finds its special rank and importance in the area of the ethical dimension of a teacher’s educational activity. The teacher is particularly predestined to ensure that concern becomes a permanent part of his ethical equipment, contributing to undertaking educational activities that will be characterized by values consistent with professional ethics.

## Ethics of care in a teacher's professional work

The ethics of care is a relatively new position in ethics. Over the last few decades, as Virginia Held (2006, p. 3) notes, it has developed as an alternative to other moral approaches, at the same time giving hope for how we should manage our lives in a better way.

In Poland, just like the previously analysed category of “care”, it has not yet been recognized to a satisfactory extent. Maciej Uliński (2012, p. 9) is right when he states that: “The term <ethics of care> is not popular in Poland, although in Anglo-Saxon countries and Scandinavia it is a classic term, used in textbooks and encyclopedias, especially those devoted to feminist ethics, where care ethics is considered one of its basic directions and the most frequently discussed positions”. It was created in the 1980s. Its forerunner was Carol Gilligan, and the other representatives included: Nel Noddings, Virginia Held, Annette Baier (Penczek, 2016, p. 57).

The innovative nature of the ethics of care is manifested in questioning commonly accepted assumptions that concern the need for rationality and universality within moral philosophy (Kanclerz, 2018, p. 30). As Andrzej Waleszczyński (2019, pp. 125–126; 2013, p. 120; 2012, p. 147) notes, in its classical understanding it is relational ethics. Referring to the views of Virginia Held, Nel Noddings, and Sara Ruddick, the author states that the basis of the ethics of care is a relationship that is strongly emotionally coloured, especially visible in the mother's attitude towards the child. The mother-child relationship is a model of a caring relationship, including social relationships. Hence, as Magdalena Środa notes (2011, p. 6), the prototype of the ethics of care may be motherly love. Erich Fromm (1994, pp. 42–43), referring to Max Weber's “ideal types” or Carl Jung's archetypes, analyses this love, stating: “[...] a mother's love is not subjected to any conditions. All I have to do is be – be her child. A mother's love is happiness, it is peace, it does not have to be earned, it does not have to be deserved. [...] Maternal love, by its very nature, is not dependent on any condition. A mother loves a newborn infant because it is her child, not because it has met any particular condition or met any particular requirement”. Mieczysław Łobocki (2003, pp. 314–315)<sup>3</sup>, using Erich Fromm's assumptions, states that motherly love is: 1) unconditional – the child does not have to meet any conditions for the mother to love him; 2) all-embracing – the

<sup>3</sup> It is worth mentioning that Erich Fromm (1994) and Mieczysław Łobocki (2003) also analyse the features of fatherly love.



mother loves all the properties of her child; 3) omnipresent – a mother can love her child regardless of the circumstances; 4) constant – the mother does not stop loving her child at any time. The distinguished features of maternal love constitute the foundation of the ethics of care, the basis for developing its rudimentary assumptions.

The sources of this ethics should be sought in the confrontation of Lawrence Kohlberg's positions of moral researchers, who created his own theory of human moral development in the course of life, in which the core of the field of morality is justice (ethics of justice) and the already mentioned creator of the ethics of care – Carol Gilligan (students and collaborators of Kohlberg), for whom care and responsibility are more important (ethics of care). The first perspective – justice, which is more characteristic of men – emphasizes reciprocity, equality, respect, while the second – more assigned to women – emphasizes concern, care and openness to the needs of others (Czyżowska, 2004, pp. 119–120).

The formation of the ethics of care in the last century was supposed to be a response to Kantian ethics and utilitarianism, as well as a reaction to theoretical ethics as such. The basis of this ethics is the belief that every person, and not only him, requires care from others at various stages of his life, and this is a moral fact that must be taken into account in ethical theories and discussions (Juruś, 2015, pp. 188–191). Will Kymlicka (cited in: Penczek, 2016, p. 57) states that the ethics of care, firstly, (it) assigns the main importance to developing people's disposition to react appropriately from a moral point of view, understood as care; secondly, recommends, in ethically difficult situations, the search for solutions appropriate to a specific case; thirdly, it assumes that moral obligations are specific and refer to a specific situation, and, fourthly, it draws attention to the protection of interpersonal relationships. As Beata Dobrowolska (2010, p. 157) writes: "Ethics of care is a special proposition in which the complicated world of morality is sometimes treated (e.g. by feminism) as an opposition to fidelity to universal principles. As a consequence, the concept of ethics of care shifts the focus from «fidelity to principles» to «fidelity to man». In other words, it is about emphasizing the importance of the good of other people. Therefore, emphasis is placed on orienting ethical reflection towards this good, and not only on the rules defining what should be done in a given situation". Hence, on the basis of the ethics of care, attention is paid not so much to the ethical restrictions, established somewhere by someone, that should be followed in specific situations, but to the specific person to whom this care is addressed

and this situation, which should be taken into account when guided by such, but not by other ethical guidelines.

The ethics of care seems to play a special role and importance in the area of a teacher's professional activity, especially its ethical dimension. Elizabeth Campbell (2008, p. 358) associates teaching ethics with a broader concern for the moral dimensions of a teacher's professional activity, in particular teaching. Joanna Madalińska-Michalak (2017, pp. 109–110) draws attention to the ethics of care in the area of a teacher's professional work, demanding the rightful place of the relationship of care at school. In building this relationship – as the above-mentioned author notes – emotions are of particular importance, working with and over which is the teacher's task. Reflecting on the ethics of care in the area of school education, in particular the place of this ethics in the teacher's work, Joanna Madalińska-Michalak asks the following questions, which are interesting from an epistemological point of view:

- “Is care constituted in the essence of man and how? Is it a specific “human qualification”, a feature constituting humanity, a distinguishing feature of human being? What are its determinants? In what situations does the phenomenon of care manifest itself?
- What is the exclusiveness of teachers' care, as opposed to the care of parents or other educational environments? What types of teacher care can be distinguished? What should be the teacher's concern? What determines a teacher's concern? What is the role of a teacher's emotional work in building relationships of care at school” (Madalińska-Michalak, 2017, p. 110).

Both the nature and characteristics of a teacher's work prove that care and the emotions accompanying it are inherent in the nature of teaching. The need for a teacher to have the ability to engage in in-depth ethical reflection, along with the accompanying ethical sensitivity, seem to be indispensable in the professional activity he or she undertakes, in particular in relation to the relationship of care. Thanks to them, there will be, at least to some extent, the possibility for teachers to make ethical decisions and related professional activities that will be focused on the good of other people, in particular of a specific student-mentor, but not only observe ethical restrictions that are sometimes disconnected from reality.

The professional activity of a teacher is characterized by the fact that the appropriate care for the student/ward he or she initiates significantly determines

the quality of the educational services he or she provides. Teachers' care for the optimal development of the student in the intellectual, moral, social, aesthetic and physical spheres arises from the need to ensure the highest, above-average ethical level of pedagogical activities in the field of teaching, upbringing, etc. One may be tempted to conclude that care may constitute, at least to some extent, the essence of the teaching profession, and taking care of the caring relationship is one of the highest ethical challenges facing a teacher.

When considering the ethics of care, it is also worth considering caring people who are characterized – as Andrzej Waleszczyński (2019, p. 125) claims – by the virtue of caring. This line of thought leads to reflection on what qualities these people are supposed to have? As Adam Skowron (2021, p. 182) notes, the ethics of care, due to the concept of a “caring person” present in it, shows a number of similarities with the concept of a reliable caregiver by Tadeusz Kotarbiński, because its core is the attitude of natural, voluntary involvement in the good of another person<sup>4</sup>. An interesting analysis aimed at trying to capture the common elements of the concept of a reliable caregiver and the idea of contemporary ethics of care is made by Maciej Uliński (2012, p. 230), pointing out that they are: “drawing attention to the necessity and universality of the phenomenon of caring, an attempt to outline the model of a noble caregiver, showing the difficulties in realizing the ideal of universal care and the belief in the need to particularize care relationships”. Maciej Uliński also notices that the ideal of reliable care is broader than the personal models mentioned by care ethicists, because it contains the requirement of justice, which is opposed to care, and thus does not have an adequate place in the ethics of care (Uliński, 2012, p. 230).

The concept of a reliable guardian, which is the essence of Tadeusz Kotarbiński's independent ethics, is the quintessence of human nature in the sense of its moral condition (Dudek, 1997, p. 132). As Tadeusz Kotarbiński (1986, pp. 59–60) states: “A guardian is reliable when you can rightly trust his care, that he will not fail, that he will do everything he needs to do, that he will keep his ground in times of danger and in general he will be sure to support in difficult circumstances. [...] Only a person who is friendly towards those under their care can fully take care of other people's affairs, so the best person to be

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<sup>4</sup> Magdalena Środa also mentions the emerging similarities between the ethics of care and the ethics of a loyal caregiver by Tadeusz Kotarbiński. However, the author points out a certain difference, namely, reliable care refers to “earned” virtues, while care is based on natural, spontaneous, uncontrolled, concrete feelings (Środa, 2012, p. 7).

a guardian is probably a good person, with a good heart, sensitive to the needs of others and willing to help". A trustworthy guardian is a person who deserves respect, a decent, respectable, brave, good, kind-hearted, honest, reliable and noble person (Dudek, 1997, p. 55). As Joanna Dudek (1995, p. 75) writes: "For T. Kotarbiński, the model of a reliable guardian – a decent person on whom you can count in every situation, automatically determines the hierarchy of the most important values in the teaching profession".

However, a question arises here: Do contemporary teachers, with their characteristics, and to what extent, fit the image of a reliable caregiver? The answer to this question is probably not easy and unambiguous. It is important that the teacher as a trustworthy guardian is not only a moral postulate, but also becomes a real image of a teacher, taking up his/her activity in such and no other conditions, unfortunately not always conducive to this image in its full scope.

The considerations presented raise one more issue, namely reflection on the relationship between the ethics of care and the ethics of virtue. As Ewa Hyży (2012, p. 530) writes: "Care ethics is sometimes treated as a type of virtue ethics. Indeed, both theories have a lot in common. Both strive to develop a better person, not just better ethical principles or strict reasoning. Both appreciate the importance of moral reasoning, with the caveat that moral principles alone do not provide sufficient motivation for moral behaviour. They emphasize relationality, contextuality and bias in the assessment of emotive components. Both deal with how we should live and are not limited to the field dealing with duties and obligations to others. However, what distinguishes them is that care ethics pays more attention to social virtues and focuses on relationality, instead of the focus on the autonomous subject in virtue ethics". When talking about the relationship between the ethics of care and the ethics of virtue, it is impossible not to mention the position of Margaret McLaren (quoted in: Uliński, 2012, p. 127), according to which: "ethics of care is best considered in the context (within a framework) of virtue ethics, because it provides an important normative context that care ethics lacks".

Virtue ethics can be considered superior to care ethics. Therefore, the ethics of care is included in the ethics of virtue, especially if we treat care or solicitude as an important virtue, constituting an ethical disposition that predisposes a person to specific activities in the ethical dimension (Zajęc, 2022, p. 12). In the case of a teacher, this care can be treated as one of his virtues,

the development of which could take place already at the stage of preparation for practicing the profession, and then during its performance at individual levels of the educational system. It is important for teachers to take care of their own development, also in the ethical sphere, among other things, through continuous improvement in caring and, consequently, in a caring relationship, especially in relation to their pupils.

## Summary

The presented reflections focused on the ethics of the teaching profession, in particular the ethics of care should be given more attention in considerations that are part of contemporary ethical and pedeutological reflection. Presented in the article, only in the form of a modest outline, the ethics of care is a proposed approach to the ethical dimension of a teacher's professional work, constituting an alternative to the ethics of justice, without depreciating it. The question arises here whether there is a possibility of contamination of these ethics, especially since, as Renata Ziemińska (2008, p. 130) claims: "[...] the ethics of care and the ethics of justice are two different contexts of moral sensitivity, but there are similarities more between them than differences". Perhaps Andrzej M. Kaniowski (1999, p. 393) is right when he writes about the ways of thinking about morality, namely: "(...) I consider the one more accurate who (a) treats orientation towards the good as the distinguishing feature of the morality of deeds and conduct, the other, but (b) it also considers norms or rules made credible by the principle of universalization as the foundation of morality".

However, the possibility of combining the ethics of care and the ethics of justice in the area of teachers' professional activity requires separate analyses, going beyond the considerations presented here. An attempt to compare these ethics, with an indication of the arguments for their contamination, may be an interesting subject of ethical and pedeutological exploration.

To sum up the presented considerations, one can risk the conclusion that in practice it is not that important whether one is a supporter of the ethics of care or the ethics of justice, or perhaps an ethics that will be an attempt to combine these ethics, but what is more important is to be a person with the highest ethical level, which will be manifested in individual areas of his activity. This also applies to the professional activity undertaken by the teacher at various levels of the educational system.

**Abstract:** Teachers are among many educational entities. In this profession, it is worth paying special attention to its ethical dimension. This is dictated primarily by the specific nature of the educational activity of the representatives of this socio-professional category which includes, among others, interpersonal relationships with pupils and students. They are manifested in various educational situations, often complex and complicated, requiring the teacher to represent a high ethical level, consistent with the arrangements made in the field of professional ethics. This, in turn, taking into account its shape, may be perceived differently.

The aim of this article is to attempt to present the ethics of the teaching profession from the point of view of the ethics of care. Understanding the ethics of the teaching profession as an ethics of care is rarely presented in the literature on the subject. Most often, teaching ethics is associated with a set of specific ethical conditions or moral virtues, somewhat reducing the importance of the category of care in this ethics. Hence, the main research problem revolves around the questions: What are the characteristics of the ethical dimension of a teacher's professional work and what does care and ethics of care mean in the teaching profession? The adopted research method was the analysis of the literature on the subject and of articles published in scientific journals, concerning the research issues being undertaken. The presented text discusses the ethical dimension of a teacher's professional work from a normative perspective, in particular from the point of view of the ethics of duty and the ethics of virtue, and then the category of care and the ethics of care with its relation to the teacher's professional activity. The analysis of the literature on the subject leads to the belief that in contemporary scientific explorations consistent with ethical and pedeutological thought, greater emphasis should be placed on the ethics of care in the teaching profession, as well as the possibility of contamination of the ethics of care and the ethics of justice. All this can serve to optimally practice the teaching profession in ethical terms.

**Keywords:** ethics of the teaching profession, care, ethics of care, relationships, reliable caregiver

**Streszczenie:** Wśród wielu podmiotów edukacji wymienia się nauczyciela. W zawodzie uprawianym przez niego warto zwrócić szczególną uwagę na wymiar etyczny. Podyktowane jest to przede wszystkim specyficznym charakterem aktywności edukacyjnej przedstawicieli tej kategorii społeczno-zawodowej, w którą wpisane są między innymi relacje interpersonalne z uczniami-wychowankami. Manifestują się one w różnorodnych sytuacjach edukacyjnych, niejednokrotnie złożonych i skomplikowanych, wymagających od nauczyciela reprezentowania wysokiego poziomu etycznego, zgodnego z ustaleniami poczynionymi na gruncie etyki zawodowej. Ta z kolei, biorąc pod uwagę jej kształt, może być różnie postrzegana.

Celem podejmowanych w niniejszym artykule rozważań jest próba ukazania etyki zawodu nauczyciela z punktu widzenia etyki troski. Ujmowanie etyki zawodu nauczyciela jako etyki troski rzadko eksponowane jest na gruncie literatury przedmiotu. Najczęściej etykę nauczycielską kojarzy się z zespołem określonych obwarowań etycznych bądź cnót moralnych, umniejszając nieco rangi kategorii troski w tej etyce. Stąd też główny problem badawczy oscyluje wokół pytań: Czym charakteryzuje się wymiar etyczny pracy zawodowej nauczyciela oraz co oznacza troska i etyka troski w zawodzie nauczyciela. Jako metodę badawczą przyjęto analizę literatury przedmiotu zarówno zwartą, jak również artykułów zamieszczonych w czasopismach naukowych, dotyczącą podejmowanej problematyki badawczej. W przedstawionym tekście kolejno zaprezentowano: wymiar etyczny pracy zawodowej nauczyciela z perspektywy normatywnej, w szczególności z punktu widzenia etyki powinności i etyki cnoty, a następnie kategorię troski oraz etykę troski wraz z odniesieniem jej do aktywności zawodowej nauczyciela.

Przeprowadzona analiza literatury przedmiotu skłania do przekonania, że we współczesnych eksploracjach naukowych wpisujących się w myśl etyczno-pedeutologiczną należy położyć większy nacisk na etykę troski w zawodzie nauczyciela, a także ewentualną możliwość kontaminacji etyki troski i etyki sprawiedliwości. Wszystko to służyć może optymalnemu uprawianiu zawodu nauczyciela pod względem etycznym.

**Słowa kluczowe:** etyka zawodu nauczyciela, troska, etyka troski, relacje, opiekun społeczności

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