

Nedzib M. Prasevic¹
University of Pristina in Kosovska Mitrovica
Faculty of Philosophy
Department of Philosophy
Kosovska Mitrovica (Serbia)

Original scientific paper
UDC: 37.013.73
DOI: 10.5937/IstrPed2402334P

THE PARADOX OF MORAL EDUCATION²

Abstract: One of the most important problems in philosophy of education is known under the name of the paradox of moral education. The hypothesis from which we begin and the validity of which should be proved is reduced to the claim that this paradox arises when the basic categories of philosophy of education, such as autonomy, authenticity and the purpose of education, are assessed in the context of the metaphysics of free will, particularly in relation to the tacit libertarian premise on which these categories are founded. In order to overcome the paradox, this theoretical research examines in what manner Frankfurt's hierarchical theory may sustain the basic categories of philosophy of education, i.e., in what manner the metaphysics of free will can help in resolving this problem. The interpretation of Frankfurt's thought experiment and the logical analysis of the arguments in the basis of this theory about the hierarchical structure of the will, as well as examining the conclusiveness of the argument about the dilemma caused by determinism, will be the applied methods which will enable the examination of the proposed hypothesis. The research results will confirm the initial assumption according to which Frankfurt's insights can be substantially used for overcoming the challenges of the dilemma of determinism and the paradox of moral education by enable us to define differently the key concepts of philosophy of education, which can no longer be affected by (meta)physical assumptions about the order of the world that we accept noncritically and that have conditioned the emergence of the paradox of moral education.

Keywords: philosophy of education, autonomy, authenticity, purpose of education, hierarchical theory of the will.

Introduction

One problem persistently undermines the optimism of philosophy of education in relation to the possibility of moral education and upbringing of young people, and in literature it is known under the name of the paradox of moral education (Cuypers, 2009: 124). However, remaining within philosophy of education, we cannot clearly see the reasons for the emergence of this paradox. This should not surprise us particularly because such state of affairs is present in many other philosophical disciplines and, therefore, it is a reliable signal that certain basic, and most often tacit assumptions are in the state of crisis. In other words, when such state of affairs sets in, the metaphysical foundations are undermined and they need to be revised and examined. Otherwise, we will remain hostages of the non-thematized conditions which profile the perspective of perceiving a certain problem by producing it with inadequate means.

¹ nedzib.prasevic@pr.ac.rs; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5001-5441>

² This study was supported by the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovations of the Republic of Serbia (Contract No. 451-03-66/2024-03/200184).

One of these basic questions due to which the paradox of moral education arises concerns the concept of free will and its supposed meaning in the theories that deal with the matters of moral education of children, as well as the main purpose it presupposes, either tacitly or explicitly, when formulating all those ideals we strive for in the preschool and school system and on which each educational and upbringing policy of the country, as well as of the family itself, relies. So, no matter whether we believe that the basic value without which it is pointless to consider all other values is the cultivation of the environment leading to the achievement of authenticity and/or autonomy of a person, or whether we believe that the teleological aspect of perceiving education goals precedes all other questions and that through the prism of a specific idea of the well-being and welfare of an individual, which was based as early as in Aristotle's insights in *The Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristotle, 2009), all other questions and problems arise and are.

No matter which perspective or paradigm we accept, it seems that there is a presupposed condition for both of them, without the meaning of which neither of them can achieve what is formulated as own ultimate goal. The tacit premise without which neither of the above-mentioned strategies has its probative force is also contained in the simple and, at first sight trivial and self-comprehensible request that a person must possess control over own actions, which does not mean anything but that the person must be free, or possess free will. Why it is important, among other things, can be seen if we remember that it is through very upbringing and education that the transition should be performed from heteronomy and determining conditions towards the autonomy and authentic existence of a person, which is manifested in the ability of its own initiation of own action and doing it in line with a certain value-normative framework which should guide and motivate acting and decision-making. It is exactly in relation to this assumption that philosophy of education must establish a dialogue with a more primary philosophical discipline – the metaphysics of free will, and search for answers in it in order to prevent the emergence of paradoxical insights.

Moreover, we can generalize this question and say that for philosophy of education, as well as some other philosophical disciplines, the question of freedom of the will is crucial and urgent. Without an adequate answer to this key metaphysical question, all important theories within the above-listed disciplines will remain mere guesses or specific provisionals whose meaning declines to an extent to which the presupposed metaphysical foundation is abandoned or rejected. Furthermore, the significance of these questions is also reflected in the fact that it is on the metaphysical assumptions regarding the concept of free will that a concept is founded, very important for philosophy of education – the concept of person, in particular its autonomy which is considered a decisive condition to be reached by both educational and moral strategies of development (Haji, 2014; Haji, Cuyper, 2008; Winch, 1999; White, 1999).

In order to perceive the above-mentioned more easily, we will make a preliminary claim that the theories within philosophy of education are founded on the tacit libertarian premise regarding the meaning of the concept of free will. According to this attitude, we possess free will only if we are able to act differently from the way we acted, i.e., if we had an available and unobstructed possibility of choice, as well as if we are initiators of our own decisions and actions (Prasevic, 2019). The first condition can be called the condition of alternative possibilities and every understanding of freedom is based on it, while the second condition can be called *causa sui* condition, whereas the concept of the autonomy of the personality is most frequently based on it. The first condition is of extreme importance in the metaphysics of free will and within this discipline it has the status of a principle, which is evident in the name of the principle of alternative possibilities, while the idea of the second condition is properly illustrated by Spinoza's interpretation of substance as *causa sui*, and here it is used in the same meaning, but, unlike Spinoza's use of it, here it is ascribed to the subject (Spinoza, 1983: 3). In addition, for the sake of clearer understanding, the *causa sui* condition can also be called the condition of initial initiator,

when freedom in the latter meaning is opposed to Aristotle's determination of the forced act, according to which the incentive and cause of that act comes from outside, and the forced person does not participate in it (Aristotle, 2009).

However, for these attitudes about will to be valid, it is first necessary to accept a more serious metaphysical assumption which is to a large extent opposed to the scientific picture of the world, based on the acceptance of the causal-deterministic thesis. According to this attitude, everything is determined, and if we, as part of this world and nature, cannot avoid the challenges of determinism because in this world there is simply no place for the libertarian concept of freedom (Van Inwagen, 1983). In a word, human freedom and the scientific deterministic thesis do not exclude each other. When things are perceived from this perspective, we reach a specific dialectical blind alley in which decisions are arbitrary and risks huge and unpleasant. What is this supposed to mean? In simple terms, if we accept the libertarian thesis, we must reject the overall scientific picture of the world or, vice versa, if we accept the deterministic picture of the world, we must abandon the libertarian determination of the person, on which all moral, educational and upbringing theories have been constructed. Naturally, there is yet another possibility available – to ignore the challenges of the question about the status of our free will and to continue as we have done so far. However, in that case we must be ready for the situation where, as a rule, at all crisis moments, all the problems ignored today will appear more intensively, and then we will have to make a decision. Having in mind that both above-mentioned strategies are unpleasant, there is yet another strategy, although counter-intuitive at first sight, which can be used for determining the concept of person, as well as the freedom on which this concept is founded, are not necessarily based on the libertarian paradigm whatsoever. Furthermore, for the subject to be free, and opposite to the terms in which this concept is understood and used by philosophy of education, the subject does not need at all to have available alternative possibilities, or that the subject is the initiator of own actions in terms of which this aspect of action is determined by libertarians. This bold position is defended by Harry Frankfurt in his works (Frankfurt, 1969; Frankfurt, 1971) and this paper is dedicated to the explanation of it as a possible antithesis to the established assumptions.

Methodology

Thanks to the well-known thought experiment that brought into question the validity of the principle of alternative possibilities, Frankfurt opened up a new research area which enabled him to formulate the hierarchical structure of the will theory that was supposed to show that in the causal-deterministic world there is a foundation on which the assessment of moral responsibility can be based. The interpretation of Frankfurt's thought experiment as one of the most important evidence tools of the philosophical analysis examining the unconditional validity of its basic paradigms, and the logical analysis of the arguments underlying the hierarchical structure of the will theory, as well as the examination of the conclusiveness of the arguments about the dilemma raised by determinisms, will constitute the applied methods that will enable the confirmation of the hypothesis according to which Frankfurt's insights can be substantially used for overcoming the challenges of the dilemma of determinism and the paradox of moral education by offering us different definitions of the key concepts of philosophy of education, which can no longer be affected by the (meta)physical assumptions about the order of the world that we noncritically accept and that have actually led us to this paradoxical situation.

Basic concepts of philosophy of education: autonomy, authenticity and well-being of an individual

Autonomy as a crucial value in a person's development was recognized quite early. One form of glorifying the anatomy of a person – due to its importance for life, as well as for establishing and maintaining a democratic order of the polis – can be found in Pericles' famous speech to the fallen Athenians, in which he is angry with his fellow citizens for becoming apathetic and uninterested in their own life, in terms of abandoning themselves to fate, i.e., a passive relationship towards life, instead of being active, or being the creators of their own life and fate – the particular attribute characteristic of the Athenians among all the Hellenes (Tukidid, 1957). In other words, Pericles criticizes his fellow citizens for abandoning their authentic way of living, for fatalistically resorting to facticity, thinking that they have no control over events, but treating everything happening to them as an accident of fate, forgetting that as persons they possess control over their own lives, i.e., that they are autonomous in relation to all limiting aspects of life, and that they themselves decide about the course of their lives, accepting all those values the practicing of which achieves the ultimate value of such life – that it is valuable in itself. In that respect, this very form of autonomy or authentic existence is the ultimate goal towards which education and upbringing strive, each in its own segment and scope of influence. Pericles' speech keeps the memory of this achievable ideal, as well as the explanation as to why such life is desirable.

Later echoes of this idea can also be found in Kant's famous division into autonomy and heteronomy, which represents the pillar of his practical philosophy (Kant, 2002). In fact, the entire moral capacity of an individual is based on the idea of autonomy and authentic way of life. In that respect, overall education can be observed as a preparation for equipping the person in the state of heteronomy with all the necessary prerogatives which will subsequently serve as the basis of autonomous acting. The adoption of the culture one belongs to and the acquisition of knowledge and skills at an early age or at the pre-normative stage of development are achieved, as a rule, either by emulating adults or by acceptances based on various motives and techniques; however, it is illusory to think that at this age they are performed on the basis of the capability of a rational insight into the reasons which recommend certain values, as opposed to some less desirable motivating foundations. Later on, during the development of the rational component in an individual and during the period of growing up, i.e., in the post-normative stage of development, there is increasing importance of the very reasons which function as the justifying basis of acting and on which a very significant aspect relies of control we possess over our own behaviour and actions.

The concept of autonomy determined in this way continues with the idea of the purpose and/or goal of education. Naturally, just as with other basic questions, there is no general consent among philosophers of education regarding this question either. As we have already seen, some philosophers think that autonomy constitutes this goal, while the others see the person's well-being as what should be achieved by education and upbringing (Marples, 1999); moreover, to some authors it is the cultivation of the ability of critical thinking (Hare, 1999), but also the formation of national identity (Enslin, 1999).

We can agree that all the listed goals are extremely important, but it seems that the importance of the person's autonomy is the precondition for all other goals, or the ultimate goal. A slight comparison is sufficient to observe this more clearly. Let us ask ourselves whether it is possible at all to develop critical thought in a person who is heteronomous, i.e., under the tutorship or some form of manipulation by another person, a system or the given order? In the same line, can the individual's well-being be complete if the individual is not directly involved in the achievement of the desirable direction in life, i.e., on the basis of the ability of having insight into the reasons, in the definition and acceptance of a certain direction as his/her own? Someone who believes that

well-being In life can be achieved without personal participation is far from the basic idea of the concept of the person, i.e., the idea of what the person is and represents. In the same line, it can be observed that autonomy is a value on which the possibility of achieving all other goals depends.

This is where the most serious problem or challenge lie, because the idea of the person's autonomy is seriously brought into question when it is related to the non-thematized assumptions on which it is founded, and it concerns the concept of free will. The reason why it is like this is contained in the fact that all theories within philosophy of education, as we have established on preliminary terms, are basically libertarian. Thus, we usually start from the self-comprehensive idea that we are free, that our will is free, and that we also possess control over our actions – this all being based on the first-person experience which, from its privileged position, gives confirmation for such conclusions.

The significance of possessing free will and the concept of an autonomous person based on it is reflected in the fact that in this way the achievement of the purpose of education is ensured, but also that this is a way of ensuring the foundation of responsibility which designs the pronouncement of criticism and praise for actions, outcomes and omissions. Namely, they are exactly important in the formation of the value vertical of young individuals because they constitute specific instruments with which we manage to correct and achieve desired educational goals.

Argumentation for the thesis: the dilemma of determinism

In the introductory part of the paper, there is a preliminary observation that the libertarian assumption brings serious burdens to philosophy of education, and now it is necessary to prove that claim. Since it is usually thought that the most serious challenge to libertarians is posed by causal determinism, through sketching an argument we will show that the problem unexpectedly lies in the in deterministic theory as well.

For that purpose, we will consider the following argument which is known as the dilemma of determinism, formulated by Fischer (Fischer, 2012: 85-86) starting from the observations presented by James in the eponymous text (James, 1956: 145-184):

1. The thesis about the validity of causal determinism is either true or not,
2. If it is true, then I must act the way I do, i.e., I cannot act differently and, thus, I cannot be morally responsible for my own actions either,
3. If it is not true, then my actions cannot be adequately related to the preceding conditions (namely, my actions are not mine in real terms) and that is why cannot be morally responsible for my own actions.

Therefore, no matter whether 2 or 3 is true, in both cases I am not morally responsible for my actions.

Here, we can certainly add that this argument problematizes the concept of autonomy – for two reasons. First, Premise 2 claims that determinism prevents freedom of the will because in the world in which this thesis applies, the acting of each subject is identical to that of forced acting, since we cannot act differently from what we acted. The reason for this impossibility is contained in the conditions pointed to by Inwagen, in fact the conjunction of the facts of the past and laws of nature (Van Inwagen, 1983). Therefore, in the world in which causal determinism would apply, the conjunction of the facts of the past and laws of nature would condition our actions and, since we do not have control over these conditions because it is not in our power to change the facts of the past, or to affect natural laws, i.e., to change them, we cannot impact our actions so as to make them different from what we have actually done. Accordingly, determinism prevents the

existence of alternative possibilities and, thus, it makes senseless the concept of free will on which we count, rejecting the idea of future contingency – the very idea as the basis of the libertarian model of freedom which, for the sake of illustration and clearer determination, can be understood with the aid of Aristotle’s description from *Metaphysics* when, speaking about the “accidental sense”, he claims that nothing else is the cause of its emergence (Aristotle, 1998, 1027b). That is where the reason for the person’s heteronomy because the determining conditions over which the subject has no control prevent the subject from being considered autonomous in his/her own actions. If we define determining conditions as desires, motives, aspirations and reasons, in the deterministic scenario they constitute the very factors which force into action and over which the subject has no control. Furthermore, it means that every subject in its history has elements which are not authentically its own and, in that respect, we cannot consider this subject autonomous, but we can compare it with those persons who are victims of indoctrination.

Having in mind that determinism brings insurmountable problems to the concept of free will, and thus to the concept of autonomy, a natural conclusion arises that the necessary condition for freedom of the will and autonomy is the absence of the valid thesis about causal determinism. But Premise 3 of the mentioned argument actually problematizes this self-comprehensiveness and it is directly relevant for the point of this paper. Let us consider what is claimed by it by pointing to the tacit conditions on which its strength relies.

The invalidity of causal determinism actualizes the indeterministic thesis. According to the thesis of the validity of indeterminism, everything that happens does not happen under the force of the preceding conditions, and in this manner the possibility of alternative acting is ensured, but it is definitely not sufficient for ensuring the validity of the adequate concept of free will in such a scenario because random and accidental preceding conditions do not provide the sort of control necessary in the assessment of moral responsibility. Namely, there is no way of explaining why the subject has imposed one option over the other, without reaching for a type of deterministic interpretation. If in a sort of thought experiment, we turned back the moment of choice, as observed by Inwagen, many times, since nothing guarantees the choice any longer and there is no control of the determining conditions by the subject, we would have statistically different choices in identical conditions (Van Inwagen, 2000). It would transpire that the choice, decision-making and acting are random or accidental and, thus, if we consider indeterminism and alternative possibilities the basic conditions of assessment and attribution, we would base responsibility on the actions over which the subject has no control, because the subject possesses adequate control only and exclusively when all the segments of acting have the subject’s authorship and depend on the subject. Therefore, although the incompatibilist arguments prove why free will and causal determinism cannot be compatible, this does not lead to a direct conclusion that causal indeterminism and moral responsibility may be compatible. The virtue of this argument is also reflected in the fact that it prevents reaching for indeterministic interpretations of the world, such as quantum physics or a variation of epicurean physics, since each thesis like this must cope with the problem of the accident, which seems unsolvable in the context of the story of freedom of the will and moral responsibility.

This is exactly the outcome leading to the emergence of a dilemma, because in both cases, when we either promote the deterministic thesis or reject it, we come into a situation where we cannot provide an adequate sort of control over actions which would enable us to rightfully consider the subject autonomous.

How is it possible to overcome this situation and go out of the dialectical blind alley we have reached?

Before we offer an answer to this question, for the sake of defining an adequate context for introducing the third possibility, let us remember the way in which the concept of autonomy is explained in philosophy of education. We have already seen that autonomy actually implies the concept of freedom on which our concept of the person depends as well. The person is free if he/she can undisturbedly choose how to act, whereas it is important to observe that the introduction of the ability of choice is only half of the answer to the posed question, since this condition is definitely necessary but not sufficient for us to consider someone's actions authentic and autonomous. The simplest way of understanding why it is like that is to remember that someone who is a victim of indoctrination and who still has the ability of choosing between certain options will not be considered autonomous in his/her own actions, because the options chosen by that person are, in significant terms, deprived of his/her authorship or, more precisely, they are rooted in that person by manipulation, and thus they did not undergo his/her personal authorship and acceptance. Therefore, although that person can choose, he/she is not free to choose the options over which a decision must be made. Or, speaking more strictly, the actor seems to have no ability to choose his/her own desires and aspirations. It is in this respect that the concept of autonomy and authentic life is encountered in philosophy of education. This type of freedom can be called complete freedom because it is not exhausted only in the ability of choosing, but also takes into account the type of freedom that refers to the constitution of options. If we now introduce the idea of the purpose of upbringing and education as well, we will see that it is assumed that it is necessary to cultivate and enable this type of freedom because, at the end of the process from the state of heteronomy or pre-normative state, in which the child initially lives, it is necessary to reach the state of autonomy and ability of constituting, understanding and categorizing specific actions as requested norms, rules and laws – which means nothing else but bringing up a morally responsible person.

However, the argument raising a dilemma about the validity or invalidity of the thesis of determinism shows us exactly that neither option can ensure the validity of the thus-determined concept of the person, or of the prerogatives characterizing it. How is it possible to resolve this situation? Of course, we can keep the incompatibilist or compatibilist position and try to offer a solution. Nevertheless, it does not seem so simple, so the most elegant overcoming of the dialectical blind alley would be yet another option which is, to tell the truth, counter-intuitive but definitely possible – namely, that moral responsibility, and thus the concept of the person in general, do not have to depend on the concept of autonomy in the manner inherited and determined by philosophy of education. In other words, responsibility does not depend at all on the fact whether determinism is valid or not.

Harry Frankfurt has shown that such intuition is worthy of attention and that a respectable theoretical position can be based on it. It is exactly what can enable us to respond to the challenges of the above-mentioned argument and to ensure for philosophy of education a possible interpretation of the person, as well as of the concept of autonomy and authenticity.

Frankfurt's scenario

So far, we have seen from our presentation that the concept of free will is commonly understood through the ability to choose between alternative possibilities, whereas both alternatives must be available to the one who chooses, i.e., they must exist, in the true sense of the word. However, we have also seen that in the world in which the thesis of causal determinism applies, we cannot speak about any alternative possibilities. In his famous example, Harry Frankfurt shows that alternative possibilities are not a necessary condition for the subject to be responsible for his/her actions, because responsibility can be founded on a different prerogative which can reinterpret the meaning of the concept of free will (Frankfurt, 1969). Therefore, in his well-known thought

experiment Frankfurt shows that the subject can be responsible although he/she could not act differently.

In Frankfurt's example, the situation is shown in which the subject decides on his/her own to perform a certain action (or to make a certain choice), whereas the subject's activity or, more precisely, brain processes, are supervised by the evil neuroscientist who has a sophisticated way of extorting a desired action, which, as a rule, coincides with the subject's intention, in case the subject tries to choose differently. However, in the actual scenario in which the subject acts in the way he/she wishes, the evil neuroscientist remains inactive and does not affect the performed activity in any way, whereas, thanks to a sort of advanced neuroscope, the neuroscientist blocks the possibility of an alternative choice, in case of the slightest sign that the subject would like to act differently. In such circumstances, Frankfurt thinks that the subject is responsible because the impossibility of alternative acting neither prevents nor forces the subject to perform a desired action in the actual scenario. Thus, the subject can have an available excuse which, in given circumstances, would lead to the foundation releasing of responsibility, because they do not have to constitute the reason of the subject's action, nor do they prevent the manifestation of the type of activity on which the assessment of responsibility is based. In Frankfurt's opinion, there may be circumstances in which the subject cannot act differently, while the circumstances themselves do not constitute the reason why the subject acted the way he/she actually did.

If we leave aside the decades-long debates about Frankfurt's example and the deficiencies which are definitely present, but not essential, we may agree that the subject possesses certain suggestive strength and that, at least intuitively, it may be concluded that even in these circumstances the subject is responsible for his/her own acting. If that is so, then freedom of the will interpreted through the possibility of acting differently is not an indispensable criterion when determining moral responsibility, which means that the incompatibilist insisting on this condition is unsubstantiated. However, it should be noted that in his original example Frankfurt does not express a clear opinion about the validity or invalidity of the thesis of determinism, but it is not of particular significance because the interpretation offered here is based on intuition that the given subject is responsible, so that it is also based on the condition which is not affected by the validity or invalidity of determinism. In that manner, the challenge of the dilemma of determinism is rejected, and a new area is opened where it is possible to examine on which morally relevant condition our intuition is based in relation to the existence of responsibility. Therefore, we see that the function of this example is not only critical, but it also has a positive connotation because, by overcoming dialectical situations and unsolvable disputes, it takes the debate into a new area of research.

In the following step, we will point to the initially suggested novelty that can enable us to interpret the concept of autonomy which could easily be dominant within philosophy of education, with no further fear about its being affected by the challenges of the dilemmas arising from the noncritical assumption of the libertarian concept of free will and of the understanding of autonomy based on it.

**Result: resolving the dilemma with the aid of the concept
of the person in the hierarchical theory of the will**

One of the most important achievements of Frankfurt's example seemingly consists of trivial insisting on what we consider the subject responsible is contained in the actual scenario, and not the alternative one. Indeed, everything that is relevant for the assessment is contained in the actual scenario and in what the subject does there, and not in what the subject could do. Still, in the text in which he introduces the thought experiment, Frankfurt does not say what the actual scenario offers and on what our assessment will be based. He gives the answer to this question in

his other, equally important text entitled *Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person* (Frankfurt, 1971). In this text, Frankfurt offers the interpretation which finds the criterion of responsibility in the psychological structure of the person, so that his solution is of internalist nature. More precisely, all these theories, in particular Frankfurt's version, remind that in the structure of our will hides the foundation of moral responsibility – in the fact of its hierarchical order. Therefore, our will is characterized not only by desires, motives, deciding and choosing, but also by the ability Frankfurt calls reflexive self-assessment, which is manifested through the formation of the second-degree desires (Frankfurt, 1971: 7).

What does Frankfurt specifically refer to? Apart from primary desires related to actions, second-degree desires are desires about desires, and in addition to what I may want to act in a certain manner, I can also wish a specific desire. We possess second-degree desires either when we have a certain desire or when we want that desire to be effective, i.e., when we want that desire to be of our own will. In the latter case, Frankfurt labels these desires second-degree aspirations, and in them he sees the key characteristic of a person (Frankfurt, 1971: 10). The hierarchical theory of freedom is thus reflected in the relation existing between our aspirations, will and activities.

In Frankfurt's opinion, there are two forms of free activity, as well as two forms of freedom of the will. We act freely when nothing prevents the execution of our will, or when we do what we want to do, but we also act freely when we can act differently. Just as our activity, our will is free when nothing disturbs the harmony between second-degree aspirations and the will, while the other type of freedom of the will is the subject's ability to turn some other first-degree desire into his/her will. It is clear that the first meaning of freedom of action and will takes into account the principle of alternative possibilities, while the other two do not take this option into account. When I have a certain desire, I am not pleased only by having this desire of a desire, but I want it to be an efficient and effective desire that will motivate my acting, i.e., I want this desire to be my will. Therefore, just as freedom of acting is reduced to the ability to do everything I want, freedom of the will is also reflected in my ability of possessing the will I want.

The awareness of possessing this ability is gained at the moments when a conflict of the first-degree desires arises. The fact that the desires are in conflict is indicative, because the subject is exactly involved in that conflict and wants to resolve it, which means that the subject is not indifferent and points to the fact that the will is hierarchically organized. If the subject is not indifferent, it means he/she finds something important in that conflict, because otherwise it would be meaningless to speak about the conflict of desires. What is important to the subject is what desire will tip the scales, which means nothing but which desire will become effective in terms of leading to a certain action; thus, in the situation in which a certain action is forcefully extorted, it is clear that the subject does what he/she does not want to do, while controlling his/her own actions and realizing what must be done. However, when we release these subjects of responsibility, we do it not because they could not act differently, but because their will was not free, i.e., the will which conditioned their actions was not theirs in stricter terms. Namely, to act in the way the subject is forced to act, he/she must possess the desire to act in that way, whereas the desire is an effective one because it lead to the requested action, but what is not the subject's is reflected in the fact that, although the desire was an operational principle of the subject's will, he/she did not identify with it, i.e., it is not his/hers, so we cannot say that the subject possessed the will he/she wanted to possess when doing what he/she had to do. The colloquial language even points to this subtle nuance in the excuses such as "I have done it against my will". Therefore, the subject possesses free will when his/her first-degree desires, which are reduced to the desire to do something, are in harmony with the second-degree desires, which are actually desires about desires, so that the freedom of the will is reflected in the harmony or network existing between the subject's preferences and effective desires.

This perspective enables us to distinguish three potential relationships of the subject towards his/her own will. Namely, the subject may possess the will he/she wants, then the will he/she does not want and, finally, the subject may be completely uninterested in his/her own will. Therefore, having freedom of the will is not the same as possessing the freedom to possess the will we want. Accordingly, in the context of the question of freedom, it is legitimate to emphasize that the will is free only when the person is free to have the will he/she desires, and hence it can be derived that the will could also be different, but in the context related to moral responsibility this question is irrelevant “because the assumption that the person is morally responsible for what he/she as done does not necessarily mean that the person was in the position to have the will he/she wanted” (Frankfurt, 1971: 19).

We can see that the conclusion imposed by the teaching about the hierarchical structure of the will is in compliance with the main idea of Frankfurt’s scenario because, both here and there, it is necessary to remind of the fact that in the situation in which the subject cannot do everything he/she would like to do, thus to possess the will he/she would like to possess, he/she is not necessarily an unsuitable addressee for ascribing moral attributes. If the subject acted in the way he wanted and if the will was his/hers because it was exactly the will he/she wanted, it can be rightfully considered that the subject is morally responsible and that his/her actions are, in certain terms, authentic and autonomous. Since the will driving the subject was his/her own, because he/she wants it to be like that, the subject cannot claim that his/her will was imposed or that he/she was a passive observer of its constitution. In such circumstances, it is irrelevant to examine whether the subject had at his/her disposal those possibilities not chosen by him/her, i.e., the possibilities he/she did not identify with. The difference in the attitude towards determining conditions over which the subject does not need to possess any control, or even to participate in the genealogy or history (Zimmerman, 2003), which culminates in a certain action, is enough to show us not only the subject’s character (not even a reference to the substantial character is necessary), but also his/her attitude towards the will. The fact that the subject is not a passive observer of the powers forcing him/her into action, but that, in significant terms, the subject is active, is sufficient to consider him/her morally responsible also in those situations in which the subject could not act differently, as well as in those situations when the subject did not possess control over determining conditions, no matter whether the absence of control is due to indeterminism or determinism. The remaining type of control that is sufficient for moral responsibility actually represents volitional control.

Implications of potential significance for moral education

The introduction of the hierarchical theory of the will has enabled us to see that the morally relevant capacity of the will is exhausted in the possession of volitional control which is reflected in the ability of forming second-degree aspirations and not in the ability of wanting control over alternative options, in terms of being able to make an operational principle of our will from every will of ours. The fact of possessing plural volitional control (Kane, 1998: 134) in itself is not sufficient to explain why the subject is morally responsible for a certain action or omission. If we imply that a morally responsible person is the subject whose personality is sufficiently developed to be morally responsible for certain actions and that, accordingly, the subject can be ascribed moral attributes of guilt and merit, then the reflexive self-assessment in the formation of second-degree aspirations is fully sufficient to serve as the basis of the assessment of moral responsibility (McKenna, 2011). What is of particular importance is not reflected in the fact that this description enables us to introduce the traditionally understood components of which moral responsibility consists, such as values, reasons and the character, because they are a secondary, derived condition, the functioning of which actually depends on a certain type of control designing and enabling them. As the presentation has shown so far, this control is made of the hierarchically organized control.

A logical consequence that can be derived from this is related to the nature of the reasons on which responsibility is most often founded, including the concept of autonomy. Contrary to the common insistence on the subject's having to possess a morally relevant reason for a certain action, as well as on the fact that the reason must be the subject's own, while such possession is ensured by the rational ability of formulating the reason, the position taken here does not insist solely on the rationality of the reason, and in the subject's rational ability, containing the subject's morally relevant capacity. Although the rational ability is the condition for moral responsibility, this in turn is not exhausted only in that power, because it makes us morally responsible subjects and defines our attitude toward our will. In fact, the origin of reasons, as well as the ability of their formulation are irrelevant conditions. The postulation of possessing moral reasons as a rational segment necessary for deliberation does not seem to be indispensable either if we advocate the hierarchical theory of the will, although most authors insist on this condition (Watson, 1982; Wolf, 1980). The motivating basis of acting when identifying with the first-degree desires does not need to lie only in the moral status of the reasons, because irrational reasons, just as the action inspired by emotions, may make us morally responsible. Thus, the origin of the reasons on which their dignity is based is also an irrelevant condition. Even when the reason as such is not moral, the identification with that reason, as well as the possession of it, points out that the subject possesses certain preferences because otherwise the identification exactly with such a desire would be unclear. In that respect, the preference constituting identification can be assessed in compliance with moral attributes because, eventually, it also shows what is valuable and important to the subject. Therefore, in any adoption of the will and identification, no matter what reason drives the subject to do it, it still points to a certain quality of its normative-deliberative framework which, as it has been emphasized, stands as a secondary condition and, thanks to identification, it may constitute a legitimate supplement in the assessment of responsibility.

For this reason, we can understand why subjects do not find important only the status of the actions performed, but also the manner in which they present themselves in such acting. Otherwise, we would never look for excuses for what we do. Although their basis of desirability is commonly seen in rationality, this interpretation enables us to realize that sometimes feelings determining the will may also be, in moral terms, more important than discursive reasons. When the subject acts in line with these conditions, he/she demonstrates an important moral quality of the will, which is reflected in overcoming the concern for one's own self by placing the other as more valuable and important.

Now let us consider the way in which this condition can be interpreted in deterministic and indeterministic scenarios respectively. For the sake of emphasizing the point, let us remember that in the causal deterministic scenario, the facts of the past and natural laws condition each of the subject's actions. This specifically means that the subject does only what he/she has to do, i.e., he/she acts under the pressure of external conditions in relation to his/her will and, therefore, he/she cannot possess either absolute or hypothetical volition control. However, the hierarchical structure of the will enables us even in these circumstances to ensure the segment that is relevant for the assessment of responsibility. If the subject can form a second-degree aspiration and if, in compliance with it, he/she identifies with the first-degree desire, he/she is morally responsible – although he/she may not act differently, he/she still wants the first-degree desire to become an effective principle of his/her will. This act of identification also presupposes reflexive self-assessment and does not depend on the subject's inability to choose an alternative desire. When adopting the first-degree desire, the subject also demonstrates a certain attitude in that manner, which is more clearly observed if we introduce the teleological principle of interpretation – what must be done can be done by the subject for the sake of achieving a different goal, not only because he/she must do it and/or because he/she cannot act differently. Therefore, two situations which may be completely identical regarding internal and external conditions, in identification and

rejection of identification with determining conditions can still ensure the necessary criterion in the assessment of moral responsibility.

In the indeterministic scenario, the situation regarding the assessment criterion is identical to that in the deterministic scenario. Even though the subject does not possess control over determining conditions and even though it seems that the subject arbitrarily opts for a certain action, this very fact does not prevent the manifestation of volitional control which is here also reflected in the identification with first-degree desires. Seen from this perspective, the origin of desires does not have to be of any significance to us, just as whether the subject is in a way their creator and initiator or whether they are external, in the relevant meaning of the word. Even in this scenario, the assessment criterion does not have to be the principle of alternative possibilities, but the fact that the subject did something he wanted and in line with the will he/she wanted to possess.

Above all, and that is one of the most serious touchstones of each theory of moral responsibility, the hierarchical structure of the will enables us to draw a clear demarcation line between the average subject and those who suffer from some mental disorders. The absence of control in the latter subjects is reflected in their inability to form second-degree desires and to perform a reflexive self-assessment, although they may undisturbedly desire and, in line with this desire, perform the desired activity. However, what they lack is reflected in the fact that they do not have the identity separate from their first-degree desires (Frankfurt, 1971). In fact, they are helpless observers of the powers forcing them into action, and, in certain terms, they are passive, or uninvolved in that activity and that is only why we can release them of moral responsibility.

Therefore, the hierarchical structure of the will may constitute a legitimate option in the assessment of moral responsibility to which the questions of the truthfulness of metaphysical conditions are irrelevant. Being irrelevant, they cannot serve either as a basis of an adequate excuse which would release the subject of responsibility.

The hierarchical structure of the will proves the plausibility of intuition from which we started, according to which freedom does not need to be understood through alternative possibilities, but, according to which, autonomy does not need to be understood through the subject's self-determining ability either. In both cases, there is a remaining detail which is sufficient for rightfully establishing the subject's responsibility for what he/she does or fails to do, as well as for the consequences of the subject's own deeds. The absence of the so-called plural volitional control does not necessarily have to be understood in a defeatist manner for, although it is a desirable measure of freedom, the impossibility of its gaining in the context of the argument of the dilemma introduced by determinism is not necessarily demoralizing, because Frankfurt's version of compatibilism copes quite successfully with such challenges.

Another detail must be emphasized here, and it refers to the challenges of manipulation. Frankfurt's examples and hierarchical theory of the will quite successfully decline this type of objection, since they show us that for assessing the subject's responsibility in a situation it is enough to make a local assessment, because that act contains everything we need, so that it is not important to introduce the historical perspective into the story. Of course, in the metaphysics of free will, there has been a persistent and long-lasting dispute over the ahistorical and historical understanding of responsibility, and both sides offer adequate arguments about certain encumbrances, but here we cannot afford to delve into all details (Prasevic, 2020). For us it is enough to show that it would be worthwhile to speak about freedom of the will, responsibility and autonomy, even in the scenario with the valid thesis of causal determinism, or in which we would encounter the challenge of manipulation, such as the manipulation present in *Brave New World* (Haksli, 2017). Moreover, this position also copes well with the problems present in indeterministic scenarios and, in those terms, it may constitute an adequate option. No matter

how much in these circumstances we may regret not being able to possess full freedom, it still does not mean that we cannot be persons and that in our actions it is impossible to identify a segment which could rightfully provide autonomy, while our acting could be considered authentic.

Of course, in this manner we cannot suppress the libertarian aspiration to understand autonomy as acting in line with available alternatives, as well as the one which we defined as self-determining, i.e., the one unconditioned either by external or internal determinants. On the contrary, the hierarchical theory of the will has exactly shown us the way in which authorship may be gained even over the determinants that are perhaps not ours, in a stricter meaning of the word, and that is the detail that makes us responsible and, thus, autonomous. That is why this position has an important interpretative capacity and should not be rejected too easily.

Conclusion

At the very end, we must formulate more strictly the outcome to which our analysis has led us so far. If we still insist on the concept of autonomy which is determined and defined in libertarian terms, but is not immune to the challenges of determinism and indeterminism, then we may say that in such circumstances there is an interpretation that gives a meaning to the concept of free will and that can substantially design and explain acting in the causal-deterministic scenario. Therefore, if we insist on the common concept of autonomy, we must say that we can be free and morally responsible even if we are not autonomous in our acting.

Does this constitute a sufficient solution to in philosophy of education and to the concept of autonomy inherited by it? Of course, it is impossible to give a unique answer to this question, but we have shown that the hierarchical structure of the will and the process of identification, as well as the acceptance or refusal to identify ourselves with certain determinants, quite nicely explains what exactly makes us persons and what we should reach by upbringing and education. If this interpretation is accepted, a privileged position is ensured because metaphysical conditions of the world order become irrelevant when assessing responsibility, as well as for the idea about what makes us personalities and what is important to us as humans. Finally, in this way the paradox of moral education is also resolved, because by shifting the story from external to internal conditions eventually shows that the paradox of moral education is characteristic of the libertarian position, while it does not even exist in the hierarchical interpretation of the will.

Based on everything said so far, the findings of this theoretical research provide certain implications and conclusions according to which it is possible to deduce the guidelines that can be of use to all those who are involved in the process of moral education of young people. The first and basic one refers to the importance of the actual scenario when assessing moral responsibility, as opposed to the libertarian alternative scenario, and the perception of the segments of which concrete acting consists. Thus, instead of considering whether at the moment of choosing to act in a certain manner, the subject could act differently (the primacy of the alternative scenario over the actual one in the assessment), by having insight into the actual scenario and into what the subject is doing in it, we perceive a different attitude towards will. What is of extreme importance is that we are not indifferent towards will which moves us into action, i.e., the quality of the will we possess is important to us. Therefore, by accepting the lessons of the hierarchical structure of the will theory, all those involved in the moral development of young people may direct their actions towards helping young people to understand the role and importance of the will, as well as being responsible for their own actions, omissions, non-acting and consequences deriving from such an attitude even in those situations when they cannot act differently, and even when they are forced to act, because even then their attitude towards inevitabilities can point to preferences, the value vertical, the moral character

and, lastly, to what is important in life to them as persons. This important lesson remains invisible if it is insisted on the principle of alternative possibilities and the libertarian determination of the basic concepts of in philosophy of education.

In the end, what we can also learn from this is that, as long as a man can choose and act differently, he is not a virtuous person (Frede, 2012: 48). There is no moral dilemma for a moral man because he always knows how to act.

Literature:

- Aristotle. (1998). *Metaphysics* (H. Lawson-Tancred, Trans.). London, New York: Penguin Books
- Aristotle. (2009). *The Nicomachean Ethics* (D. Ross, Trans.; L. Brown, Ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Cuyppers, S. E. (2009). Educating for Authenticity: The Paradox of Moral Education Revisited. In: H. Siegel (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Education* (pp. 122-145). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Enslin, P. (1999). The Place of National Identity in the Aims of Education. In: R. Marples (Ed.), *The Aims of Education* (pp. 100-112). London, New York: Routledge.
- Fischer, J. M. (2012). Indeterminism and Control: An Approach to the Problem of Luck. In: Fischer, J. M. (Ed.), *Deep Control. Essays on Free Will and Value* (pp. 85-105). New York: Oxford University Press. DOI:[10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199599844.003.0004](https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199599844.003.0004)
- Frankfurt, H. (1969). Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 66 (23), 829-839.
- Frankfurt, H. (1971). Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 68 (1), 5-20. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2024717>
- Frede, M. (2011). *A Free Will. Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.
- Haji, I. (2014). Education's Ultimate Aims and Freedom to Do Otherwise. *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 31 (1), 81-108. DOI:[10.1017/S0265052514000120](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265052514000120)
- Haji, I. & Cuyppers, S. E. (2008). Authenticity-Sensitive Preferentism and Educating for Well-Being and Autonomy. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 42 (1), 85-106. DOI:[10.1111/j.1467-9752.2008.00604.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9752.2008.00604.x)
- Haksli, O. (2017). *Vrli novi svet*. Beograd: Kosmos izdavastvo.
- Hare, W. (1999). Critical Thinking as an Aim of Education. In: R. Marples (Ed.), *The Aims of Education* (pp. 85-100). London, New York: Routledge.
- James, W. (1956). The Dilemma of Determinism. In: W. James (Ed.), *The Will to Believe: and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy, and Human Immortality* (pp. 145-184). New York: Dover Publications, Inc.
- Kane, R. (1998). *The Significance of Free Will*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kant, I. (2002). *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (A. W. Wood, Trans, & Ed.). New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Marples, R. (1999). Well-Being as an Aim of Education. In: R. Marples (Ed.), *The Aims of Education* (pp. 133-145). London, New York: Routledge.
- McKenna, M. (2011). Contemporary Compatibilism: Mesh Theories and Reason-Responsive Theories. In: R. Kane (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will* (pp. 175-199). New York: Oxford University Press. DOI:[10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195399691.003.0009](https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195399691.003.0009)
- Prasevic, N. (2019). *Slobodna volja. Uvod u savremene teorije*. Beograd: Srpsko filozofsko drustvo.
- Prasevic, N. M. (2020). Argument manipulacije i kompatibilizam frankfurtovskog tipa. *Theoria*, 63, 57-73. <https://doi.org/10.2298/THEO2001057P>
- Spinoza, B. (1983). *Etika*. Beograd: BIGZ.
- Tukidid (1957). *Povijest Peloponeskog rata*. Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska.

- Van Inwagen, P. (1983). *An Essay on Free Will*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Van Inwagen, P. (2000). Free Will Remains a Mystery. *Philosophical Perspectives. Action and Freedom*, 14, 1-20. DOI:[10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195178548.003.0007](https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195178548.003.0007)
- Watson, G. (1982). Free Agency. In: G. Watson (Ed.). *Free Will* (pp. 96-110). New York: Oxford University Press.
- White, J. (1999). In Defence of Liberal Aims in Education. In: R. Marples (Ed.), *The Aims of Education* (pp. 185-200). London, New York: Routledge.
- Winch, C. (1999). Autonomy as an Education Aim. In: R. Marples (Ed.), *The Aims of Education* (pp. 74-85). London, New York: Routledge. DOI:[10.4324/9781003209317-7](https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003209317-7)
- Wolf, S. (1980). Asymmetrical Freedom. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 77 (3), 151-166.
- Zimmerman, D. (2003). That Was Then, This is Now: Personal History vs. Psychological Structure in Compatibilist Theories of Autonomous Agency. *Nous*, 37 (4), 638-671.

Biographical note:

Nedzib Prasevic is an associate professor at the Department of Philosophy of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Pristina with temporary headquarters in Kosovska Mitrovica, Serbia. He deals with the research of problems in the field of metaphysics of free will and in the history of philosophical ideas.