

# **Philosophical and psychological concept of free will and responsibility (the meaning of freedom for (post)modern man)**

## **Abstract**

The modern, or more precisely postmodern, individual of Western culture is born into a liberal democratic rule of law that considers them free from birth without the slightest doubt. The legal order grants individuals free will and responsibility, although the very questions of free will and responsibility concern the meaning of life on earth in general. The European Convention on Human Rights, which is a universally accepted document describing the current state of European-style constitutional law, the later Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and all European constitutions recognise similarly extensive lists of fundamental human rights and freedoms, the interpretation of which by the judiciary is increasingly moving towards the widest possible recognition of human autonomy. Individuals can do almost anything, they can be whoever they want. Is that enough?

This thesis is primarily an analysis of the meaning of freedom for postmodern (Western) man. It analyses what relationship exists between the attitude of the individual and the state of freedom thus achieved, which is guaranteed by liberal democracy. For individuals today, unlike their predecessors, know not only negative freedom – freedom from coercion – but also positive freedom, freedom of self-realization. However, the freedom, free will and responsibility thus guaranteed are more closely related to the active attitude of individuals than they probably know.

On the one hand, the entire modern history of the Western world is marked by man's efforts to free himself from political, economic, and spiritual bonds. On the other hand, however, the tendency to abandon the individuality thus achieved is rather growing. Looking at its relation to these facts, the following question arises: Is freedom inherent in man at all? What is the cause of such a contradiction? Is it the post-modern age, which in its fluidity, haste, and fleeting nature distances individuals from the old ideals of “heavy” modernity: permanence, eternity, and order?

This thesis aims to demonstrate what freedom, free will and responsibility are as a human experience, what the relationship between these realities is, and what the importance of each person and his or her attitude is in maintaining a state of freedom that often seems unshakeable and unquestionable to him or her because it is presented as such by the legal order.

**Key words:** free will, responsibility, negative and positive freedom, liberal democracy, postmodernism