



ESSAY ON THE ETHICAL VALUES OF PHYSICAL MOVEMENT-EXERCISE IN THE WORK OF MILIVOJE MATIĆ

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SUMMARY

In a theoretical essay authors have conducted an analysis of the papers by one of the most significant theoreticians and practitioners of methodology of physical education in Serbia, full-time professor Milivoje Matić, PhD. Four publications by this author found themselves to be the focus of the analysis: *“Physical Education Class”* (1978), *“Axiological and Methodological Bases of Revalorization of Physical Movement-Exercise”* (1982), *“Physical Education – Introduction to Expert and Theoretical Improvement”* (1990) and *“General Theory of Physical Culture”* (2005). With the application of theoretical analysis and content analysis of said books, and relying on theoretical conceptions of leading theoreticians and philosophers, authors have interpreted the potential contribution of Milivoje Matić to the theory and practice of physical education, as well as to the general theory of physical culture. *“Matić’s Methodics of Morals”*, modelled on Kant’s deontological ethics theory can be considered an original contribution to the theory and practice of physical education. In the area of general theory of physical culture Milivoje Matić has elevated the theory of physical culture to the level of philosophical contemplation by introducing elements of philosophical thinking into theoretical discussions, which is his original contribution to the development of the general theory of physical culture.

Key words: Milivoje Matić / Physical movement-exercise / Ethical values / “Matić’s Methodics of Morals”, / The onset of philosophy of physical culture

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INTRODUCTION

Professor Milivoje Matić published 173 papers during the period of 38 years (1961-1998) that he spent as a professor on the University of Belgrade's Faculty of Physical Culture, (Bokan, B., 2000:25), and 12 more papers after going into retirement. A total of 185 papers from different areas of physical culture (according to our inspection) puts Milivoje Matić among the rare practitioners in the field of physical culture who published a great number of papers during their lifetime.

Professor Milivoje Matić has accomplished one of the most significant influences on the development of theoretical thinking and its application in the practice of physical education in Serbia through his written work and first-hand pedagogical influences on students and school practicing pedagogues alike. Through his papers on the theory of physical culture he has also, in a broader context, expanded his influence on the development of general theory and philosophy of physical culture.

Out of the total number of said papers, the most significant publications that achieved influence on the development of theory and practice of physical education are: *"Physical Education Class"* (1978) and *"Physical Education – Introduction to Expert and Theoretical Improvement"* (1990). The most significant publications in the area of general theory of physical culture are: *"Axiological and Methodological Bases of Revalorization of Physical Movement-Exercise"* (1982) and *"General Theory of Physical Culture"* (2005).

From the total opus of Milivoje Matić, the said four publications, according to our inspection, belong to the core written matter that, through its ideas, and penetrating into the very essence of physical culture, achieved the biggest influence on the development of theory of physical education and general theory of physical culture.

With the application of theoretical analysis and content analysis of said papers, along with relying on theoretical conceptions of leading theoreticians and philosophers, the authors interpreted the potential contribution of Milivoje Matić to the comprehension of ethical values of physical movement-exercise.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

In his first published papers, and especially in the work *“Physical Education Class”* (1978), Milivoje Matić already suggested with his ideas that there had appeared a lucid thinker and creator in physical culture. By choosing an unusual thought as the outcome of every beginning for the motto of his book: *“In the beginning there was movement... and remained... foremost as exercise”*, Matić guided our profession to the threshold of anthropology and philosophy of physical culture.

This inner need for theoretical-philosophical framework of orientation in physical culture set Matić’s later thinking efforts on the path towards constituting *“physical movement-exercise: from reality by itself to a value for someone”*, giving life to one of the most significant ontological thoughts in physical culture in the process (Matić, M., 1978:15):

“Physical movement-exercise is an individual human act by which mechanical changes of our own body, as reality by itself, are transformed into value for someone in specific human practice”

In the anthropological sense, even though “movement” and “exercise” find themselves in the unity of opposites (therefore the linguistic compound “movement-exercise”), Matić mentally distinguished “movement” from “exercise” and supposed that *“physical exercises do not exist as some “separate essences”, regardless of physical movement as an act of man’s practical life”* (Matić, M., 1978:10), but that *“physical movement is only physical movement-exercise a posteriori”* (Matić, M., 1978:11):

*“If a certain physical movement is performed under certain conditions (specific meaning and organization of an act), it **can be** considered physical movement-exercise”.*

Matić found this essential difference between “movement” as genus proximum and “exercise” as differentia specifica in the specific meaning of the relation “movement-exercise”. Explaining the essential difference between “physical movement” and “physical exercise”, Matić logically analyzes the relation between “objective” and “value” levels of movement-exercise, pointing out that on the objective (real) level there is no difference between physical movement (in general) and physical movement-exercise. Only when movement of a human body is performed with a GOAL, as a conscious, rational, voluntary and freely chosen project for one act, can we consider it to be physical exercise.

Matić explains the meaning of the movement-exercise relation’s value level in the following way (Matić, M., 1978:11):

*“Value level is the level of estimation, determination of meaning and sense for all that exists as the content of a subject's consciousness (including himself). Here one objective fact – in our case physical movement – in addition to it (really) **being** starts to (subjectively and in the sense of value) **mean**, that is, to be a “conjunction” (instrumentalization) between the real, i.e. existing, and the ideal, i.e. the projected; the connection between that which the individual man who projects (i.e. creates his ideal and strives towards it) **is** (-now) and that which he **is not** (-yet), but which is his real possibility”.*

Researchers of physical culture concluded that the largest number of quantitatively oriented empirical researches were aimed in the direction of establishing positive influence of physical movement-exercise on the biological status of man (Bokan, B., 2013) and more rarely on interdisciplinary approaches: psychological, sociological, ethical, esthetical, axiological, ontological and other influences in the process of maintaining a holistic view on the objective reality of physical movement-exercise. Matić is among the rare theoreticians in physical culture who laid the premise of such a new approach and according to this set a direction for the development of thought in physical culture as a practical activity that perceives its generic essence in the process of gaining knowledge as well, and as Matić says: *“These knowledges become values only if they are introduced as an acting agent in the domain of an individual's personal life”* (Matić, M., 1978:14).

Through this idea Matić leads us to an understanding of physical movement-exercise as an act of creation in which he increasingly tries to penetrate into the most delicate connections between physical movement-exercise and the meaning of the very act of exercise. In his analysis of the relation of man's body movement in the process of labor and production, and physical movement-exercise as a free and self-purposeful activity in free time, Matić stresses the following: (Matić, M., 1978:12):

*“Having in mind that labor and production often have prerogatives of necessity and lack of freedom – it could be concluded that **the goal of physical movement, exercise, is after all closer to man's generic core**”.*

In Kangrga's opinion, this generic core of man reflects itself the most in the notion of freedom (Kangrga, M., 2004:105):

*“**Freedom is the prerequisite for the possibility of ethical-moral sphere in general, and its basic notions (“subjects”) – good and evil alike**”.*

Quoting Schelling's opinion, Kangrga further asserts (Kangrga, M., 2004:282):

*“The form of general will is freedom in general, and its matter is morality. Therefore, **freedom is not dependent on morality, but morality is dependent on***

freedom. *Not because if I am ethical, I am free, but because if I want to be free, I should be ethical”.*

Kangrga strengthens the previous thought with Hegel’s attitude (Kangrga, M., 2004:283): *“Only according to his essence can a free man be both subject of morality and law alike (that is why in this context Hegel says: ‘There are as many rights as there are duties, and vice versa!’)”*

Kant considers the notion of freedom as key for explaining the autonomy of will (Kant, I., 2008:101):

“Will is a kind of causality of living beings insofar as they are rational, and freedom would be that property of such causality that it can be efficient independently of alien causes determining it, just as natural necessity is the property of the causality of all nonrational beings to be determined to activity by the influence of alien causes.”

Kant further says (Kant, I., 2008:111):

*“With the idea of **freedom** the concept of **autonomy** is now inseparably combined, and with the concept of autonomy the universal principle of morality which in idea is the ground of all actions of rational beings, just as the law of nature is the ground of all appearances.”*

Matić developed one of the key themes in physical culture in a work of a monographic type: *“Axiological and Methodological Bases of Revalorization of Physical Movement-Exercise”* (1982), and he founded one of the strongest theoretical-philosophical conceptions about *“Values of physical movement-exercise and physical movement-exercise as a source of value”* in the introductory part. Ideas that had been conceived and developed in detail in this work were further developed and underwent elaboration in textbooks: *“General Theory of Physical Culture”* (1992) and *“General Theory of Physical Culture”* (2005).

What we want to remind our expert and scientific public of today is Matić’s essay on *“Ethical Values of Physical Movement-Exercise”*, as one of the dominant values of physical culture.

Therefore, Matić’s conception that introduced Kantian ethical model of categorical imperative to theory of physical culture should be pointed out right at the beginning of this discussion (Matić M., 1982:118):

“Basic moral unit in physical education and physical culture is:

(moral) habit of regular and systematic practice of physical movement-exercise as a personal, immediate (physical) act”

To achieve the (moral) habit of regular and systematic practice of physical movement-exercise it is necessary to be accustomed to exertion as a constitutional element of creative life, which is why Matić stresses:

*“Culture and physical education as its part have immeasurable significance in achieving this state of acceptance of **physical exertion as an ontological data of the human being**. Physical education both is, and has to be even more, education for ‘physical’ exertion” (Matić M., 1982:110-111. – bolded by the authors).*

In the explanation of said statement Matić relies on the knowledge that the totality of a grown normal man’s generic being, his consciousness, his commitment in terms of values, his morality, lie in the basis of every “muscular” exertion that he makes, and that in accordance with this exertion is inseparable from the concept of consciousness. And so personal exertion becomes consciousness about the quality of one function, and permanent exertion in time becomes the knowledge of the value of that practical activity. Through this kind of logical analysis Matić arrives at the determination of the very ontology of man’s morality, stressing that (Matić, M., 1982:1149):

*“... **morality, “spirit”, lie in the basis of every physical exertion, and that every moral perfection of man is closely connected to his physical foundation”.***

Matić considers that self-realization and personal commitment to physical movement-exercise can be accomplished only if certain historical, social and personal prerequisites are met and states the following: (Matić, M., 1982:101):

“Ethical values of physical movement-exercise can be discussed, above all, if the individual reached a level of psychological and social maturity, if he found his place in a concrete society and if he is fulfilled in various social interactions, i.e. if he lives in cultural and historical circumstances in which (self) realization of personality is one, not only tolerated, but normative fact”.

After the realization of the moral value of physical movement-exercise, there has to be order in the individual’s personal behavior as the absolute condition (*conditio sine qua non*), for the physical exertion of the individual to take place regularly, in which case that behavior tendency is further strengthened by exercising. That is why Matić speaks of the **“internalization”** of physical exercise, that transforms exercise into a habit and need, into the very process of man being born (Matić, M., 1982:117):

“Physical movement-exercise of grown men that they diligently perform in a longer time period, when that exercise is already almost “internalized”, when it has become their habit and begins to “act” as a need – is sometimes experienced, verily, as a celebration of the being.” Performed physical movement-exercise is also an act with its objectivization in the material substratum of the one who performed it, but

at the same time it is an intimacy, a spiritual and emotional confirmation of the agent about his own progress: man is being born”.

However, this process of “being born” is not at all simple, even though there is that famous Fromm’s thought: The whole life of the individual is nothing but giving birth to himself (Fromm, E., 1980:49). Transferred to the field of physical culture, the act of “giving birth” to oneself becomes one of the more important tasks for pedagogues of physical culture. Matić understands this in a right way and points out 5 (five) “basic projections” of the house in the area of methodology of physical education, or five basic tasks-influences that the teacher has to perform with his students in the process of his pedagogical work: ABILITIES, APTITUDES, KNOWLEDGES, APPLICATIONS and **CONVICTIONS** (Matić, M., Bokan, B., 1990:120).

Although it is the fifth projection in the order of counting – **CONVICTION**, in the context of “internalization” of physical movement-exercise it becomes the FOUNDATION for stable building of an expert “house” for the pedagogue of physical culture, by being built into the second part of the definition of the goal of physical education, which was applied in the school system until 2000:

“...permanent encouragement of the student to build its activities into everyday life and living culture in general” (Matić, M., Bokan, B., 1990:121 – bolded by the authors).

In further theoretical efforts to elaborate attitudes on encouraging students in physical education classes, Matić’s ideogram on the need for not just winning, but convincing students, is known to pedagogues (Matić, M., Bokan, B., 1990:115):

*“Let us unfold flags for individual and group efforts on which it will be said: **It is beautiful and difficult to WIN...** but let us know that our pedagogical message does not end here, because the biggest efforts and the greatest gain await us from an immediate (along with a mast carrying the flag of victory) raising of a whole obelisk on which a continuation of the message from the flag is written, and it says... **and just how beautiful and just how difficult it is to CONVINC!**”*

This kind of theoretical approach enabled Matić to have a new approach in methodology of physical education that he defined as: **New methodology – “A step towards and above”** (Matić, M., Bokan, B., 1990:141).

In this new approach, along with “*Methodology of training and perfection of motor forms-techniques*” and “*Methodology of developing and maintaining physical abilities-conditions*”, that were in force up until that point, Matić also insists on the following new forms of pedagogical influence on students: “**Methodology of searching for meaning and encouragement for commitment to and acceptance of exercise**” and “**Methodology of strengthening and persisting in the act of exercise**”. In this new approach to methodology Matić insists that

physical education methodology must be founded on PERSUASION (about the value of physical education), on GETTING ACCUSTOMED (to physical activities, to their practical application), and on ENCOURAGEMENT (to persist in this habit and practice).

Searching for ideas that lead Matić's reflection to the threshold of Kant's categorical imperative, we arrive to the concept of **autonomy of personality** that becomes the basic condition for the ethics of freedom, dignity and autonomy of an individual, of which Matić thinks in the following way (Matić, M., 1982:101):

"However, in order to constitute the category of ethical value the personality has to be autonomous (of course, to the extent in which this is at all possible for a social creature), to be oriented to himself and his (self) realization (again, to the extent in which this is possible without belonging to others and without others influencing us)".

According to Matić, to the autonomous personality the degree of personal satisfaction is immeasurably more important than outside success (Matić, M., 1982:101):

*"Not only is the autonomous personality not obligated to work on his perfection through physical movement-exercise (upbringing and education) and not only does he not have urges to manifest, compare and prove that perfection of his in front of others and against others (sport), but feels free to perform that (self) realization through physical movement-exercise (as well), above all, **for himself**".*

Matić is correct to think that in certain age, but also in certain living conditions, physical movement-exercise exists as a need but is not felt as a need (Matić, M., Bokan, B., 1990:107):

"The need for physical movement-exercise has alienated itself as a need; from an inner need it has transformed into an external need; from autonomous it has transformed into heteronomous".

Introducing a discussion about the needs for physical movement-exercise as being autonomous and heteronomous, Matić increasingly enters the area of imperativeness as the basic condition for conscious commitment to physical exercise and states the following (Matić, M., Bokan, B., 1990:108):

*"This "taking of measures" reveals the continuity of "life" attribute for the need for physical movement (-exercise), but now on a higher level – level of consciousness, turning the need for it from a fact that is (physically) felt into an **IMPERATIVE** that is (consciously) required and finally into a **VALUE** that is (freely) chosen."*

This idea of Matić's only confirms that, when it comes to understanding ethical values of physical movement-exercise, he acknowledged Kant's categorical

imperative and autonomy of personality in the process of applying certain forms of physical exercise. Even though he didn't explicitly state **Kant's deontological ethics theory** in the methodological sense, in his understanding it is clearly and undoubtedly confirmed that "**(moral) habit of regular and systematic practice of physical movement-exercise**" possesses the full meaning of ethics of morality developed by Kant ("*Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it be a universal law*" – Kant, I., 2008:60).

CONCLUSION

With the application of theoretical analysis and content analysis of Milivoje Matić's most significant works, and relying on the theoretical conceptions of leading theoreticians and philosophers, authors have interpreted the possible contribution of Milivoje Matić to the theory and practice of physical education, as well as to the general theory of physical culture.

Matić's "Methodology of Morale", modelled on Kant's deontological ethics theory, can be considered an original contribution to the theory and practice of physical education. In the field of general theory of physical culture, Milivoje Matić has elevated the theory of physical culture to the level of philosophical contemplation, which is his original contribution in the development of the general theory of physical culture.

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ОГЛЕД О ЕТИЧКИМ ВРЕДНОСТИМА ТЕЛЕСНОГ КРЕТАЊА-ВЕЖБАЊА У ДЕЛУ МИЛИВОЈА МАТИЋА

САЖЕТАК

У теоријском огледу аутори су извршили анализу радова једног од најзначајнијих теоретичара и методичара физичког васпитања у Србији, редовног професора др Миливоја Матића. У фокусу анализе нашле су се четири публикације овог аутора: „Час телесног вежбања“ (1978), „Аксиолошке и методолошке основе ревалоризације телесног кретања-вежбања“ (1982), „Физичко васпитање – увод у стручно-теоријску надградњу“ (1990) и „Општа теорија физичке културе“ (2005). Уз примену теоријске анализе и анализе садржаја наведених дела а ослањајући се на теоријске концепције водећих теоретичара и филозофа, аутори су интерпретирали могући допринос Миливоја Матића теорији и пракси физичког васпитања, као и општој теорији физичке културе. Као оригинални допринос теорији и пракси физичког васпитања, може се сматрати „Матићева методика морала“ по узору на Кантову деонтолошку етичку теорију. На плану опште теорије физичке културе, уводећи у теоријске расправе елементе филозофског мишљења, Миливоје Матић је теорију физичке културе подигао на ниво филозофске контемплације, што је његов оригинални допринос у развоју опште теорије физичке културе.

Кључне речи: Миливоје Матић / Телесно кретање-вежбање / Етичке вредности / „Матићева методика морала“ / Зачеци филозофије физичке културе

ЭССЕ ОБ ЭТИЧЕСКИХ ЦЕННОСТЯХ ФИЗИЧЕСКОГО ДЕЙСТВИЯ-УПРАЖНЕНИЯ В ТРУДАХ МИЛИВОЙЕ МАТИЧА

АННОТАЦИЯ

В эссе авторами проведен анализ трудов одного из наиболее значимых теоретиков и практиков методики физкультурного образования в Сербии, кандидата наук, профессора Миливойе Матича. Проанализированы четыре публикации: «Физическое воспитание в классе» (1978), «Аксиологические и методологические основы ценностей физического действия-упражнения» (1982), «Физическое воспитание – Введение в экспертное и теоретическое совершенствование» (1990), «Общая теория физической культуры» (2005). Используя теоретический анализ и контент-анализ содержания указанных книг, руководствуясь теоретическими концепциями ведущих теоретиков и философов, авторы интерпретировали существенный вклад Миливойе Матича в теорию и практику физического воспитания, а также в общую теорию физической культуры. «Методику морали Матича», основанную на деонтологии И. Канта, можно считать оригинальным вкладом в теорию и практику физического воспитания. В области общей теории физической культуры Миливойе Матич развил теорию физической культуры до уровня философского созерцания, введя элементы философского мышления в теоретические дискуссии, что является его оригинальным вкладом в развитие данной теории.

Ключевые слова: Миливойе Матич, физические действия-упражнения, этические ценности, «Методика Морали Матича», зарождение философии физической культуры.

EIN VERSUCH ÜBER DIE ETHISCHEN WERTE DER KÖRPELICHEN BEWEGUNG-ÜBUNG IM WERKE VON MILIVOJE MATIC

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In ihrem theoretischen Versuch haben die Verfasser eine Analyse der Werke von einem der wichtigsten Theoretikern und Methodikern der Körpererziehung in Serbien, dem ordentlichen Professor Dr. Milivoje Matic ausgeführt. Im Schwerpunkt der Analyse waren vier Publikationen dieses Verfassers: „Eine Stunde der körperlichen Übung“ (1978), „Die axiologischen und methodologischen Grundlagen der Revalorisation der körperlichen Bewegung- Übung“ (1982), „Die körperliche Erziehung – Einführung in den fachlich – theoretischen Überbau“ (1990) und „Die

allgemeine Theorie der Körperkultur“ (2005). Neben der Anwendung der theoretischen Analyse und der Analyse des Inhalts von angegebenen Werken unter Anlehnung an die theoretischen Konzeptionen der führenden Theoretiker und Philosophen haben die Verfasser den eventuellen Beitrag von Milivoje Matic an die Theorie und Praxis der körperlichen Erziehung, als auch der allgemeinen Theorie der Körperkultur interpretiert. Als einen originellen Beitrag an die Theorie und Praxis der Körperkultur kann die „*Matics Methodik der Ethik*“ mit Anlehnung an die Kants deontologisch-ethische Theorie in Betracht gezogen werden.

Was die allgemeine Theorie der Körperkultur anbetrifft hat Milivoje Matic die Theorie der Körperkultur durch die Einführung von Elementen des philosophischen Denkens auf das Niveau der philosophischen Kontemplation erhöht, welche Errungenschaft sein origineller Beitrag an die Entwicklung der allgemeinen Theorie der Körperkultur ist.

Schlüsselworte: Milivoje Matic, Körperliche Bewegung-Übung, Ethische Werte, „*Matics Methodik der Ethik*“, Ansätze der Philosophie der Körperkultur

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