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BIOETHICAL PERSPECTIVE OF MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

Abstract

When we observe sports in a (bio)ethical context, we are usually dedicated to the questions of fair play, sport virtues, gender issues, or racism. However, we rarely ask the question of bioethical justification of sport *per se*. MMA (mixed martial arts or ultimate fighting) has experienced a boom in the last 15 years, with its dynamic and combination of elements from different, more traditional martial arts, slowly overtaking the throne of popularity from the most popular martial art hitherto - the “noble art” of boxing. Questions arising in the triangle of MMA, sports, and bioethics are various. Can we bioethically justify, in the name of entertainment and sports, deliberately harming another human being? Can we justify placing ourselves consciously at the risk of injury as well? What about the rest of the (in)direct participants of this sport, such as organizers, promoters, fans - people who profit in some way from the fights (be it material or immaterial) although they are not directly included in it? It is easy to answer these questions, especially from the aspect of a right to harm and self-harm, as much as it is easy to answer a question of whether we have a right to take our own life. However, in this paper, we will try to deal with the general justification of the sport of MMA as a legitimate bioethical problem. We will offer an example of a perspective, and show how the sole idea behind the sport can be observed as a legitimate issue, examining definitions of violence, harm, and, in the end, philosophical notion of dignity and duty, based on the works of Immanuel Kant.

Keywords: bioethics of sports, mixed martial arts, MMA, harm, Immanuel Kant

Introduction to the subject – what the sport of Mixed Martial Arts is

Mixed Martial Arts (synonyms: *ultimate fighting*, *cage fighting*, further in text: MMA) is a contemporary sport which combines the skills and rules of both striking and grappling martial arts. This fusion of the two main branches of fighting systems - striking disciplines (e.g. boxing, kickboxing, taekwondo) and grappling disciplines (e.g. jiu-jitsu, judo wrestling,) is what makes MMA interesting in a competitive sense - the combination of *stand up* with *ground fighting*. Formally, MMA is defined as “unarmed combat – a form of competition in which a blow is usually struck which may reasonably be expected to inflict injury”.¹ Therefore, MMA competitors, fighters, are labeled as *unarmed combatants*.

One typical MMA bout consists of 3 rounds of 5 minutes, with one minute of rest between rounds. Combatants are divided into weight classes and usually paired by similar experience, wearing protective gear consisting of a mouth guard, groin guard, and a set of gloves with open fingers of 110 to 170 grams (for comparison, standard boxing gloves weigh 340 grams - heavier gloves absorb impact better and the overall damage should be lesser). Victory can be achieved either by the judges’ decision after the bout (in which case the winner is the individual who was more active - same as in boxing) or via stoppage (e.g. knockout, technical knockout, submission, doctor’s or judge’s stoppage if deemed necessary). To emerge as a victor, an unarmed combatant may use various striking techniques (e.g. punches, kicks, elbow, and knee strikes) and grappling techniques (e.g. throws, holds, locks, chokes, joint manipulations).² At this point, a vague idea of the main point we will be discussing may appear – the issue of consciously inflicting physical damage, which we shall explore further in the text.

The historical context of MMA

As a historical phenomenon, MMA can trace its earliest roots back to ancient Greece and the martial discipline of pankration introduced to the Olympic Games

1 See: “Unarmed combat” defined. *Justia US Law*, 2010.

URL: <https://law.justia.com/codes/nevada/2010/title41/chapter467/nrs467-0107.html> (12-7-2020);

Committee Report on Unified Rules for MMA. *Association of Boxing Commissions and Combative Sports*, 2009.

URL: <http://www.abcboxing.com/committee-report-on-unified-rules-for-mma/> (12-7-2020)

2 Ibid.

in 648 BC. Pankration was a combination of two older disciplines, wrestling, and boxing, with a set of scarce rules allowing almost everything, from chokes, locks, holds, and kicks – almost everything except biting and eye-gouging (Georgiou, 2008: 92-97). After the classical era, this type of hybrid martial art remained on the margins of the sporting world until the last decade of the 20th century, when it was reborn in Japan and the USA (another forerunner can be found in the Brazilian combat sport of *Vale Tudo* as well).

In Japan, MMA began its development in a form of singular spectacles or exhibitions intended to find the most dominant fighting discipline. One of the famous (or notorious) examples which may be understood as a precursor to MMA was “The War of the Worlds” – an arranged match between Muhammad Ali and professional wrestler Antonio Inoki in 1976. Afterwards, shoot style pro wrestling promotions and first MMA competitions emerged, such as Shooto (started in 1985), Pancrase (started in 1993), and Kingdom (started in 1997), with the culmination of MMA development in Japan being the organisation Pride Fighting Championship (1997-2007) (Gross, 2016). The success of Pride FC saw the rise of first international MMA stars, such as Fedor Emelianenko, Mirko “Cro Cop” Filipović, Antônio Rodrigo Nogueira, and Wanderlei Silva.

Meanwhile, in the USA, today’s most prominent MMA organisation began its rise in 1993 – Ultimate Fighting Championship (further in text: UFC). Mostly referred to by its acronym, this organisation is so popular today that the *UFC* is often mistaken as a synonym for MMA. In the US, sport authorities such as Nevada State Athletic Commission and New Jersey State Athletic Control Board created the first unified rules in 2000, and thus, the common formal frame of MMA, accepted today by all relevant MMA organisations. The composition of these *Unified Rules of Mixed Martial Arts* marked the entrance of the sport from semi-formal and often marginalized events, to a more professional and homogenous sport.

Nevertheless, the controversies and allegations followed MMA since its beginnings in the USA. For instance, the state of New York in 1997 promptly banned MMA competitions, stating that it is an “unbridled human cockfighting which can seriously injure contestants and which was a terrible example to our youth” (Meltzer, 2016). The ban of professional events in New York lasted almost ten years, and MMA fighters were finally able to compete at the Mecca of all professional sports - Madison Square Garden, on November 12, 2016 - almost 100 years after their “brothers-in-arms” from the sport of boxing had their first matches in it (first boxing match held at MSG in 1925). Similarly, the largest

Canadian province of Ontario legalized professional MMA events on August 14, 2010, and France did not begin the process of legalization of MMA events until January of 2020.

Setting up the context of development, and marking these notes in the short history of MMA, partly answers the question of why we have chosen MMA exclusively as a basis for this article, and not some more traditional martial arts or sports, such as boxing, karate, or taekwondo. As MMA is a contemporary phenomenon, and its new-fangled formal basis can be traced only to the last decade of the past century, this provides us with a unique opportunity to observe bioethical issues related to the sport basically since its beginnings. It is a young sport, and, dare we say, a controversial one (e.g. while boxing is called “the noble art”, or “the sweet science”, the adjective still used to vilify MMA is, as mentioned, “human cock-fighting”).

MMA as a basis for bioethical examination

Issues related to MMA in the context of bioethics can be formulated in various ways: can we justify that I, as an individual, for the purpose of entertainment and sport, consciously harm other individuals? Alternatively, can we justify that I consciously put myself in danger of being harmed? Lastly, how can we justify (or do we need to at all) other individuals involved in this sport (in)directly, such as coaches, promoters, fans, and in the end, doctors and corner-men, equally in charge of stopping the fight, as they are prolonging it as much as possible? All of these questions are as easily answerable as issues concerning the justification of suicide or euthanasia. Furthermore, we could explore the path from a cultural and political viewpoint – how come MMA was glorified from its conception in countries such as Japan, and frowned upon in countries such as the USA? However, in the service of a concise discussion, and not to wander too much from the starting premises, in this article, to show how sport as a whole can be viewed as a bioethical issue, our aim is to explore two angles: firstly, the notion of *harm*, through the definition of violence and a brief study of empirical data, and later, the idea of dignity through *duty*, by exploring a traditional philosophical system.

MMA as a violent sport

Let us first brush upon the adjective intuitively associated with MMA – it being violent. Here, it would be of interest to question further what it means for one sport to be characterized as a violent one, and later, to truly back up the interrelated claim of harmfulness. It seems that the connection between MMA and violence is inseparable. According to the “World report on violence and health”³ (2002), published by World Health Organization, *violence* can be defined as an:

“intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.”

At this point we can, once again, remind ourselves of the definition of MMA (as a form of competition in which a blow is usually struck which may reasonably be expected to inflict injury), and then comprise the explanation provided by the WHO, in order to compare both. Shortened, WHO’s definition of violence is: *intentional use of physical force or power against another person that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury*. By using WHO’s definition we can describe MMA so well that the meaning of these two statements bares an almost identical implication, claiming that MMA is *a form of competition in which intentional physical force or power is used against another person that can either result in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury*. Relying on this semantic exercise, we can characterize MMA as a *violent competition with the aim of harming the other combatant*. Although this may seem as a redundant step, as any form of fighting or martial art immediately implies violence by its nature, the existence of some martial arts which restrict themselves only to the simulation of violence (e.g. Jiu jitsu or karate) corroborates this need. Thus, the next step would be, by utilizing available empirical data, to verify or disprove how harmful MMA is – to show the scope of injuries and the impact it has on the health of its participants.

3 Available at URL: https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/ (12-7-2020)

The notion of harmfulness in MMA

Once again with the help of the WHO, we can define health as: “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” Using this definition, all harmful actions can simply be described as ones which jeopardize that condition of well-being. From a bioethical perspective, if we can agree that one of the fundamental components of a human being is its physical integrity and that the physical integrity depends partly on health, then the negative effect on health threatens the physical integrity of a human being itself. Therefore, if we can conclude that MMA is truly violent and that it consciously endangers the physical health of its participants, then we can also say that MMA endangers human beings as persons and we can set up a proper bioethical issue.

Let us examine if that is the case and if MMA is, in fact, harmful. Firstly, we can see how injury rates of MMA compare to other martial arts, and thus, we can set up a frame for the questioning of harm it poses on its competitors.

Comparison of injury rates in various martial arts	
<i>(per Reidar, Lystad, and Gregory: 2014)</i>	
Sport	Injury rate <i>(per 1000 athlete exposures)</i> *
MMA	228.7
Judo	44.0
Taekwondo	79.4
Amateur boxing	77.7
Professional boxing	between 118.0 and 250.6
<i>*one athlete exposure defined as one athlete participating in a single fight</i>	

Table 1: *Comparison of injury rates in various martial arts*

By observing this rare example of meta-analysis (Reidar, Lystad, and Gregory: 2014), we can see that injury rates of MMA fare significantly higher compared to most of the other full-contact combat sports, with stating the necessary caveat of variability in provided study methodologies, as seen in the example of professional boxing. Similarly, an individual study from 2006 reports an injury rate of 28.6 per 100 professional MMA combatants (Bledsoe et al, 2006: 136-142), which brings us to a concurrence of both studies that approximately one-fourth of all MMA bouts result in an injury.

Out of these injuries, significant to the idea of harm to the overall well-being are ones considering head trauma. One of the most thorough researches dealing with the impact of serious injuries was published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine titled “Comprehensive analysis of ‘knockouts’ in Mixed Martial Arts (MMA)” (Hutchison et al, 2013) with the objective, in its own words, to quantify and identify potential risk factors for knockouts and technical knockouts in MMA fighters – to point out to the most harmful aspect of MMA – that which causes cumulative neurodegenerative effects. By analyzing data gathered from UFC events during the span of 4 years, and by reviewing 503 bouts, researchers concluded that 36% of all fights finish either by knockout or technical knockout, with the mechanism resulting in this scenario being predominately a direct blow to the head. Consequences of this type of finish not only drastically increases the risk of a concussion but also, in the long term, severe and irreparable brain damage – development of chronic traumatic encephalopathy, commonly known as a punch-drunken syndrome or *dementia pugilistica* (literally meaning *boxer’s* or *fist fighter’s dementia*). Similar earlier research, conducted as a 10-year overview of MMA competitions, showed that 28% of fights ended after head trauma, resulting in the losing combatant becoming completely or partially unresponsive (Buse, 2006: 169-172).

Although served as a short empirical overview, this should provide us with enough context to conclude that MMA as a sport is, indeed, violent, and consequently, harmful. Taking into consideration that data presented comes from various studies, some of them being almost 15 years old, with slight discrepancies between them, what is important here to underline is the sole intent of presenting enough factors to further polemicize the harmful nature of the sport, and not give a definite medical assessment. If we can agree, at this point, that MMA is harmful, even compared to other full-contact combat competitions, we can question next how it fares compared to the other popular sports.

For instance, when discussing the most serious injuries, head traumas, neither MMA nor other martial arts are in the focus of the public. Attention to this problem is directed towards the US National Football League (NFL). Since 2014, linked statistics have recorded an increase in the number of concussions of 58%, and only in the height of the 2016 season, 182 cases of serious head trauma were recorded. Furthermore, research has shown that retired NFL players are three times more likely to develop neurodegenerative diseases than the average person, and a study conducted by the University of Boston and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, which included the autopsy of 165 football players, further found that 131 (79%) of them showed signs of chronic traumatic encephalopathy (Binney, 2015; Breslow, 2016; Omalu, 2005: 128-134).

Redefining MMA as an intentionally violent affair

With the help of the above-mentioned empirical data, we can, indeed, claim that MMA as a sport presents a high risk for the well-being of its combatants. Also, as we brushed upon the example of NFL, we can say that there is at least one non-martial sport that can be considered harmful as well. As we shift from empirical back to theoretical examination, the difference between MMA and all other non-combat sports can be drawn through the action of intended violence – while injuries in other sports are accidental or unintentional (or intentional but illegal), injuries in MMA are purposeful. A victor in an MMA bout is the one who physically incapacitates his/her opponent more effectively. Injuries are actively avoided in any other non-combat sport, and, in the case when they occur, they are a consequence of an error, mistake, clumsiness, or, if we ignore fair-play, illegal activity (which is then punished by judges or referees). The relation between injuries and MMA is fundamentally opposite. As damage dealt in other sports happens through actions mainly not intended to directly cause harm, the aim of all actions in MMA bouts leads directly to the intention of harming the other combatant. We can underline this purpose once more with the definition of MMA being a *form of competition in which a blow is usually struck which may reasonably be expected to inflict injury*. Thus, a victor is that combatant who is able to use striking or grappling techniques more effectively to incapacitate an opponent. MMA can then be defined as a form of sport with the goal of physically harming the other person to the necessary extent that he or she is no longer able to continue the competition.

A philosophical examination of MMA

Our transition to the final part of the paper requires another highlighting of some previous notions. Firstly, our main point of discussion has been *harm through violence*, and thus the problem of conscious infliction of physical damage. As we previously stated, one of the fundamental components of a human being is its physical integrity, and the negative effect on health threatens the integrity of a human being itself. We will now try to find the connection between the preservation of physical integrity with the concept of intrinsic dignity and duties it implies. In bioethics, from one perspective, intrinsic dignity is often associated with the individual's right to take his or her own life, and, from a different perspective, with the sanctity of life and the claim that people do not have the right to commit suicide, no matter how miserable their life may be. Dignity can also be understood as the autonomy and freedom of each individual to determine how he or she will live or die (Rao, 2011: 229-234). In the Western spiritual-historical tradition, the notion of personal dignity is based on natural law - either through the theological concept of natural law created, above all, by Catholic theologians, or through rationally based natural law through the meditations of Enlightenment (Küenzlen, 2000: 119). Although this part of the text could not possibly reach a definite agreement of philosophers on the problem of dignity (nor is intended to), we will choose one philosophical point of view and explain it. As Immanuel Kant has formed the most fundamental and most distinctive understanding of the dignity of a man as a person, tied closely with a set of duties, we will use his thought to further discuss the relation between bioethics and MMA.

The key point here will be Kant's claim that rational human beings should be treated as an *end* in themselves, and not as a *means* to something else, as discussed in his "Metaphysics of Morals" (1991). We will concentrate on the second part of his work, titled *Introduction to the Doctrine of Virtue*, in which Kant identified the ends that are also duties: a) one's own perfection and b) the happiness of others (Kant, 1991: 190). In relation to the first duties, to the ones which are connected with one's own perfection, the next quote is of special interest:

"Man has a duty to raise himself from the crude state of his nature, from his animality, more and more toward humanity, by which he alone is capable of setting himself ends." (Kant, 1991: 191)

Overcoming this crude state of animal nature, by Kant, means fulfilling consistency of the maxims of one's will with the dignity of humanity in its person. This is done by procuring or promoting the capacity to set oneself as an *end* (Kant, 1991: 196). Not setting oneself as an *end* and making oneself a *means* is to tarnish this dignity, depriving oneself of the prerogative of a moral being, and for Kant this means that person has become "a plaything of the mere inclinations and hence a thing" (Kant, 1991: 216). Now, keeping in mind previous conclusions in regards to the nature of MMA, could we say that this sport can be viewed as a reversed process compared to the one Kant is describing - as a process of lowering oneself from his humanity back to animality? Furthermore, if we observe the wider scope of MMA, and include other participants, from fans, coaches, judges, and promoters, from this external point of view, MMA combatants serve not as an *end* in themselves, but as a *means* to their entertainment and profit.

To further ponder the question of justifying placing oneself in harm's way, even if we observe a person not as a moral being (and thus, for a moment, disregarding the issue of becoming a *means*) we can still examine man's duties to himself as a solely animal being. The first duty of a man to himself as an animal being would be to preserve himself in his animal nature. An obvious breach of this duty would be "willful physical death or killing oneself", but what serves us here is that Kant draws the difference between total suicide and a partial one – mutilation. By the latter, Kant understands those actions that either deprive oneself of certain organic parts, or actions that deprive oneself of one's capacity for the natural use of one's powers (Kant, 1991: 218). Here, the next quote would be of interest:

"To deprive oneself of an integral part or organ (to maim oneself) — for example, to give away or sell a tooth to be transplanted into another's mouth, or to have oneself castrated in order to get an easier livelihood as a singer, and so forth — are ways of partially murdering oneself." (Kant, 1991: 219)

We can expand, following on this idea and assimilating it with conclusions from previous excerpts, that a singer, maiming himself, consciously harms the overall state of his well-being. By sacrificing one part of his health (although in a controlled, non-violent environment) there is still a point to be made, with the help of Kant, that this can be considered a conscious infliction of physical damage. Analogously, we can claim that a singer's actions pose irreversible consequences on his reproductive system and, similarly, an MMA combatant's choices pose irreversible consequences of physical damage on his or her neurological system.

Both cases are, that of a singer and a fighter, interestingly enough, in service of a specific goal, together with that of general entertainment.

After discussing a breach that MMA poses on duties of oneself, both as a moral, and an animal being, we can, at least from a Kantian point of view, answer the question of (not) justifying conscious actions which result in the injury of oneself. Now, to point towards the issue of harming other human beings, we could easily apply either The Golden Rule or some other ethic of reciprocity, which would answer the posed question immediately, taking into consideration the above-mentioned premises about harming oneself. However, leaving this frame for some future examinations, we will not do that in this paper. What we will do, instead, is explore Kant's philosophy a bit further, and return to his "Metaphysics of Morals", namely to the second part of ends that are also duties: the happiness of others. When philosophizing about the happiness of others, viewed as an end that is also a duty, Kant focuses on the natural welfare of others, stating that: "we must avoid those actions that can cause harm to other people, either physical or mental" (Kant, 1991: 197), as they are connected. To further expand on this, we have chosen another quote to explore, because it, opposite of obvious expectation, concentrates not only on natural welfare in a physical sense but also warns what harmful actions may do to the conscience of the others, to their moral well-being:

"To see to it that another does not deservedly suffer this inner reproach is not my duty but his affair; but it is my duty to refrain from doing anything that, considering the nature of men, could tempt him to do something for which his conscience could afterward pain him, to refrain from what is called giving scandal." (Kant, 1991: 197)

Using this notion in the context of MMA, an issue can be sought in a question: should a combatant offer him/herself in such a way that he/she becomes a *means*, a thing, and that in the process of getting hurt, burdens the other combatant who struck a harmful blow with a pain of conscience for his/her actions? In a scenario like this, willingly entering the arena, combatants not only risk their own dignity of humanity, but also force other combatants to sacrifice their dignity as well. It is a reciprocal relation of oneself and the other, both becoming a plaything of the mere inclinations, a thing, and an instrument under the excuse of sport and entertainment.

Instead of a conclusion

To utilize Kant's thought once more in the end:

“Humanity itself is a dignity; for a man cannot be used merely as a means by any man (either by others or even by himself) but must always be used at the same time as an end. It is just in this that his dignity (personality) consists, by which he raises himself above all other beings in the world that are not men and yet can be used, and so over all things. But just as he cannot give himself away for any price (this would conflict with his duty of self-esteem), so neither can he act contrary to the equally necessary self-esteem of others, as men, that is, he is under obligation to acknowledge, in a practical way, the dignity of humanity in every other man. Hence there rests on him a duty regarding the respect that must be shown to every other man.” (Kant, 1991: 255)

Taking into consideration claims developed in the previous section, and relying on definitions and empirical data used in the first part of the paper, we can underline some notions. MMA may be defined as a violent competition with the aim of harming other combatants. Compared to some other martial arts, which restrict themselves to just a simulation of violence, statistics show that injury rates in MMA have a high likelihood of occurrence, high enough, that the sport can be characterized as a harmful one. Although an example of other harmful sports was presented (i.e. American football), what differs MMA from any other non-combat sport is the intention of violence. MMA *has* to be violent, as in violent actions it fulfills its purpose. By observing the sport through the philosophical scope of Immanuel Kant, we concluded that MMA can be understood as a degradation of a person back to its animality. By willingly becoming a means instead of an end, combatants demean their dignity of humanity, breaching duties not only as moral beings but as solely animal beings as well.

We can say that by choosing a rigid ethical frame such as Kant's, the justification of MMA was doomed to a negative sentence from the beginning. However, as stated in the introduction, this should not be understood as the main purpose of this article. Our intention was primarily to show one the possible directions where discussions about sport as a bioethical issue *per se* could lead. As Kant was utilized to present a condemning image of the sport, various bioethical or libertarian positions could be used to defend it, for instance, Thomas Szasz's idea of self-ownership. Even so, new autonomous discussions

can be lead, as there was no significant effort of placing one martial art as a basis for a thorough bioethical examination so far. Firstly, as we hope that we did here, the fertility of such an intention had to be shown. Sports as a whole can be observed, discussed, justified, or condemned from a bioethical perspective, equally well as other human actions can be questioned, mainly the ones directed towards the treatment of non-human animals in scenarios that are sometimes called sports as well, such as bull-fighting. Furthermore, as MMA as a whole can be set up as a basis for discussions, similarly to the examinations that aspects of other sports undergo, one can also ponder upon concepts such as fair-play, use of performance-enhancing substances, betting, and transgender athletes in MMA. It is an interesting frame - as studying of disciplines such as *unarmed combat* may offer a better insight into the cultural-philosophical phenomenon which has followed humanity since its beginnings - a phenomenon of fighting simulations emerging as competitions and sport.

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BIOETIČKA PERSPEKTIVA SLOBODNE BORBE

Sažetak

Kada promatramo sport u kontekstu (bio)etike, često smo usmjereni na pitanja poput fair playa, vrlina u sportu, rodni pitanja ili rasizma. Međutim, rijetko postavljamo pitanje bioetičke opravdanosti sporta per se. Slobodna borba (eng. ultimate fight ili mixed martial arts; MMA) u posljednjih 15-ak godina doživljava procvat, svojom dinamikom i kombiniranjem elemenata različitih tradicionalnijih borilačkih vještina i sportova polako preuzimajući primat popularnosti od to tada najpopularnijeg borilačkog sporta – „plemenite vještine“ boksa. Pitanja koja se nameću u trokutu slobodne borbe, sporta i bioetike su raznovrsna. Može li se bioetički opravdati, u svrhu zabave i sporta, svjesno ozljeđivanje druge osobe? Koliko je opravdano da sami sebe svjesno izložimo riziku od ozljede? Što je s ostalim neizravnim sudionicima ovoga sporta poput organizatora, promotora, navijača, osoba koje na neki način imaju koristi (bilo materijalne bilo nematerijalne) iako nisu izravno uključene u borbu? Na ova je pitanja, osobito na aspekt prava ozljeđivanja i samo-ozljeđivanja, jednostavno odgovoriti koliko i na pitanje imamo li moralno pravo oduzeti vlastiti život. Ipak u ovome ćemo se članku najviše pozabaviti pitanjem općeg opravdanja slobodne borbe kao legitimnog bioetičkog problema. Ponudit ćemo primjer jedne perspektive, te pokazati kako sama ideja iza sporta se može promatrati kao legitiman problem, istraživanjem definicija nasilja, štete, i, u konačnici, filozofskih pojmova dužnosti i dostojanstva, uz pomoć rada Immanuela Kanta.

Ključne riječi: bioetika sporta, slobodna borba, MMA, dužnost, Immanuel Kant