Tibor Mahrik
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-7799-5841
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The End Justifies the Means – Ethical Analysis

Annotation

In the context of the transformation of post-communist European countries, we consider teaching ethics in schools to be a perpetual and urgent task. One reason is life in an open society, which directly confronts one with a panorama of various, oftentimes contradictory ethical attitudes and moral bases. The axiologically and morally disoriented cultural environment of the V4 countries is currently faced with significant ethical challenges, which can only be overcome through a deeper analysis from the perspective of moral philosophy. International Student Assessment, PISA, have brought the most attention to problems with comprehensive reading among students in Slovakia. As a consequence, ethical formation of the young generation becomes much more difficult. This study presents an analysis of the well-known Machiavellian slogan in a broader ethical context with an ambition to join the discourse on the fundamentals of morality through presenting relevant stimuli and current arguments.

Introduction

Historical documents prove that the phrase "Exitus acta probat"[1] was used as early as the start of our century by Ovid in his *Heroides*. However, this concept is usually ascribed to Nicollò Machiavelli (1469–1527), who elaborated it to such an extent that he had a significant impact on Western political thought. It has survived until this day in various forms,

[1] P. E. Knox, *Ovid Heroides – Selected Epistles,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1995, p. 128.

in both the democratic political systems of the current world and in ordinary life. Machiavelli inspired personalities such as F. Bacon, J. Milton, J. Rousseau and D. Hume, as well as several American presidents[2]. Various forms of this particular concept have also been appearing in the current political landscape. The statement uttered in 2014 by the former speaker of the Slovak Parliament, Pavol Paška[3] – "Win the elections and you can do anything…" – would certainly fall into this category. Its meaning could be paraphrased in the following way: "If we won the elections and we are to govern, we can and, in fact, need to do everything in our powers to accomplish the government program." That is to say, legality is becoming a basis for the definition of morality and is therefore leading into the implementation of formal decisions of the government entity, which would ensure that the steps necessary to complete their goal are legal. In itself, this particular approach is not problematic as long as the legislature is not infiltrated by principles which are in moral conflict with metaethical and normative ethical frameworks. However, this philosophical stance is not sustainable. If we are to critically reflect the consequences and the philosophical and ethical bases of this thesis, we need to focus on questions such as: Is it really legitimate to undertake morally wrong steps in the name of a good cause? Is it that we *must* undertake such steps, or is it that we *may* undertake them? On the other hand – is it possible to achieve truly good goals without completely avoiding morally wrong steps? Is there a particular line or a way to discern the extent of evil which needs to be endured on the road to good? It is evidently an ambitious topic.

Machiavellism

In his most known work, *The Prince* (1513), Machiavelli analyzes the mechanism of exercising authority and his recommendations have broken away from any Christian or conventional morality.

> Therefore it is unnecessary for a prince to have all the good qualities I have enumerated, but it is very necessary to appear to have them. And I shall dare to say this also, that to have them and always to observe them is injurious, and that to appear to have them is useful; to appear merciful, faithful, hu-

[2] G. Gilbert-Hamerling, *Exitus Acta Probat: George Washington and the American Civil Religion*, University of California, Berkeley 1993.

[3] Pavol Paška, a member of the governmental party Smer, uttered these words as a speaker of the National Council of Slovak Republic during one of its official sessions. After receiving pressure from the opposing parties and influential media, he resigned from his post a month after the incident. (https://aktualne.centrum.sk/paskov-najslavnejsi-vyrok-ma-rok-v-smere-nan-uz-zabudli/slovensko/politika/)

> mane, religious, upright, and to be so, you may be able and know how to change to the opposite.
>
> And you have to understand this, that a prince, especially a new one, cannot observe all those things for which men are esteemed, being often forced, in order to maintain the state, to act contrary to fidelity, friendship, humanity, and religion. Therefore it is necessary for him to have a mind ready to turn itself accordingly as the winds and variations of fortune force it, yet, as I have said above…
>
> For this reason a prince ought to take care that he never lets anything slip from his lips that is not replete with the above-named five qualities, that he may appear to him who sees and hears him altogether merciful, faithful, humane upright, and religious… Every one sees what you appear to be, few really know what you are, and those few dare not oppose themselves to the opinion of the many, who have the majesty of the state to defend them; and in the actions of all men, and especially of princes, which it is not prudent to challenge, one judges by the result.[4]

Machiavelli connects his efforts to build a firm system of society to various forms of possible violence, deception and camouflage, anchoring it in the reasoning that real life does not happen in a moral world, but rather in the real world, where one needs to live and survive. The goal is to enforce one's will, one's project, one's concept into the society at any cost. The prerequisite for this, however, is that the result will be welcomed by the given society, because that is what it had hoped for. The market has its own expectations and the leaders that are able to fill these expectations are brought into the attention of the society; they gain influence. The masses, however, do not care how the "expectation" came to be. When it comes to public opinion, everything is fine as long as such unfair practices remain secret.

Thus, a machiavellist is someone who decides to act in a morally faulty, pragmatic and cynical way, while attempting to achieve a goal widely perceived as beneficial – in Machiavelli's case, a functioning and powerful state. Yet, in a wider sense of the word, we might speak of an effort to build a powerful company, a powerful church, a powerful family, community system, etc. Having experienced years of turbulent revolution in tsarist Russia, Lev Trockij (1879–1940) adds to the address of Machiavelli: "The end can justify the means as long as there is something to justify the end."[5] Similarly, Kierkegaard deals with perennial questions about the nature and the status of morality while bringing

[4] N. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Dover Publications, Inc., New York 1992, p. 46–47.

[5] B. Dupre, *50 Philosophy Ideas You Really Need to Know*, Quercus, New York 2013, p. 65.

them into contact with important and active debates in metaphysics, the philosophy of language, moral psychology, and epistemology.[6] This opens up a new metaethical scope for reflection upon this problem.

Moral Complexity

Life is not simple, but hard; at times very hard. Oftentimes it is not merely due to complications, which come about in the form of an illness, economic bankruptcy or family breakdown. Sociology recognizes numerous turbulent events and crisis modes besetting higher social entities, or alternatively, the whole society. These conditions become a catalyst in the process of applying deeper moral justifications for human actions, which can be an arduous process in and of itself. In this particular study, moral complexity represents something deeper and more fundamental. We have to think of and recover some of the complexity of the phenomena, which ought to be dealt with by moral philosophy. The types of complexity that concern us are fundamental and pervasive, not framed by any specific moral problem within a particular historical context, but rather constitutive of morality in general. We have to deal with the foundation of philosophical anthropology and understanding of the universe. As Larmore relevantly points out:

> The two dominant traditions of modern moral philosophy, Kantianism and utilitarianism, have been at one in seeking a fully explicit decision procedure for setting moral questions. As a result, they have missed the central role of moral judgment, or the faculty of insight into how general rules are to be applied to particular situations. Rules are undeniably, a necessary feature of morality, but morality does not consist merely in the conscientious adherence to rules. A second simplification involves the assumption that what may be a decisive moral consideration in one area of social life must carry an equal weight in other areas. Nowhere has this assumption played a more insistent and harmful role than in the domain of political theory.[7]

It concerns the complexity of the outer and inner environment, in which we make decisions, or rather moral judgments. From a certain perspective, our environment is not homogenous, and thus it is not possible to mistake a particular dimension of morality with the universal one. Moreover, it is true that we sometimes find ourselves in a situation where none of the available solutions are completely satisfactory and

[6] T. Máhrik, *Kierkegaard's Metaethical Fragments*. KUD Apokalipsa, Ljubljana 2017.

[7] Ch.E. Larmore, *Patterns of Moral Complexity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1992, p. ix.

morally clean. It is not that we would be unable to find such a solution, and it is neither due to an insufficient awareness or any other internal or external limiting factor. One of the reasons could be the essential character of such phenomena and the foundational aspect of reality itself. It is then that we speak of significant ethical conflicts and moral dilemmas. In cases such as this one, each solution will prove to be problematic, no matter our choice. Some go even further in claiming that in its existential state of depravity, humanity is unable to do anything deemed morally clean and perfect. If that were so, would it mean that a man can do evil in the name of good?

Zacharias reflects in an interesting way on the contemporary society as a social entity characteristic of fragmentation and atomisation. The high rate of work specialisation results in the disintegration of the original and firm "system" into smaller units, all in order to achieve more effectiveness in work and more effective reactions to the changes in the market and the cultural environment. On the other hand, this leads to a gradual loss of context, interconnection and coordination. It is a sort of metaphorical analogy between the disintegration of man and the disintegration of the functioning of society. Zacharias presumes that the solution hinges on the man and his ability to integrate divergent social forces and trends.

> Where there is no coherence, there is no meaning. We look for coherence between law and life. We look for coherence between word and deed. We look for coherence between love and trust. In short, there is a longing to find a connectedness in life. Cultures seek coherent answers within themselves because without coherence in community there is evil in the home and on the streets. And there is no coherence in our communities because there is no coherence in our individual lives. We cannot put into living what we do not have in life. We cannot give to others what we do not have ourselves or know where to find.[8]

Is the call for coherence valid? Is coherence attainable? If yes, under what conditions and using what means? Why is it not achievable yet – given that we ask this question in light of the evolutionary understanding of the society's development? If coherence is unattainable, why is it so? How can we find a satisfactory explanation for the need to attain something unattainable? The questions certainly do not end there, as in this way of reasoning, there is room for detailed reflection on the fragmented state of the world and, simultaneously, a search for a way

[8] R. Zacharias, *Deliver Us from Evil*, Word Publishing, Nashville-London-Vancouver--Melbourne 1997, p. 113.

out. It is no doubt that a man, being a creative agent in the world and society, is directly responsible for the state of the moral quality of his own environment. The dialectics of the relationship between an individual and a group uncover the complexity of these subjects; how they influence each other and how they determine and condition each other. In this context, man is also becoming a limiting factor in the given system – otherwise – if a man does not carry coherence within himself, he can neither produce it, pass it on, or catalyse it in the society. If a man carried coherence within himself, why, then, does it vanish in the given sociological system? Why is it so scarce? It seems that the complexity of reality conceals certain mysteries, which remain hidden from the knowledge of men.

Moral Dilemmas

Paradoxes and moral dilemmas can be found on all levels of human activity and in all conceptual expressions of the observed world. All knowledge in the field of natural sciences, as well as humanities and social sciences, is paradoxical in nature. No profession and no area of human life or the life of a society can avoid the phenomenon of paradox. It is obvious among current scholars that the account of reality and human consciousness is inherently and ineradicably paradoxical in its structure:

> Paradox, ambiguity, contradictory positions that are equally true, is the world of poetry, and the language of poetry is capable of holding tensional relationships together. The world of logic, clarity and systematization is the world of philosophy, and the language of philosophy is designed to classify, demystify, and articulate difference. In a paradoxical world a paradoxical mode of symbolization that allows for ambiguity, tension, and incommensurate competing truth may be a better guide and interpreter than a mode of symbolization that organizes and orders.[9]

The consequences of the paradoxical character of the universe significantly influence our understanding of moral dilemmas. Firstly, we cannot expect any ethical theory to aptly and completely express the complexity of reality. Whether it be the development of ethical thinking, critical reflection on ethical preferences or openness towards other concepts, they are becoming an integral part of research in the field of ethics. It is thus necessary that even in the educational process, we are capable of leading the students towards uncovering the positive aspects of a given ethical

[9] Ch.R. Embry, B. Cooper, *Philosophy, Literature and Politics,* University of Missouri Press, Columbia 2005, p. 152.

concept, while alerting them to its limitations and boundaries. Secondly, we stumble upon the natural question concerning the anthropological perspective in moral philosophy. What is the nature of man? What does it mean that a man is a moral being? How shall we interpret the moral basis of an individual and later the society as a whole? In this regard, Keith Thomas points out that a human being was described by Aristotle as a political animal, by Thomas Willis as a laughing animal, by Benjamin Franklin as a tool-making animal, by Edmund Burke as a religious animal, and by James Boswell, the gourmet, as a cooking animal.[10] Our perspective on human nature correlates with how we account for the moral character of its existence.

Kierkegaard works with the Judeo-Christian understanding of a man created in the image of God. Under this approach, one can quite successfully interpret several phenomena connected to the diversity of moral cultures, to the incompleteness of ethical concepts, and to the fact that no system of formal axioms can grasp the complexity of the phenomenon of the world and morality. The biblical approach to the nature of the dilemma phenomenon is quite simple – a reality of two worlds, good and evil, meeting in the space-time continuum and culminating in the existentials of man. Stott puts it this way:

> Here, then, is the paradox of our humanness: our dignity and depravity. We are capable both of the loftiest nobility and of the basest cruelty. One moment we can behave like God, in whose image we were made, and the next like the beasts, from whom we were meant to be completely distinct. Human beings are the inventors of hospitals for care of the sick, universities for the acquisition of wisdom, parliaments for the just rule of the people, and churches for the worship of God. But they are also the inventors of torture chambers, concentration camps and nuclear arsenals. Strange, bewildering paradox! [11]

In his works of fantasy, C. S. Lewis masterfully describes the fundamental principles which play a key role in human decisions. Humanity is at the centre of Lewis's interest, which becomes apparent when reading the stories situated in metaphorical and symbolic realities. In Narnia, for example, humans are consistently referred to as „sons of Adam" or „daughters of Eve", to distinguish them from nonhumans. Among the plethora of different kind of creatures, this is significant when Aslan talks to Caspian: „You come of the Lord Adam and the Lady Eve," said

[10] K. Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500–1800,* Oxford University Press, Oxford 1996, p. 31.

[11] J. Stott, *The Contemporary Christian*. Inter Varsity Press, Leicester 1992, p. 42–43.

Aslan. „And that is both honour enough to erect the head of the poorest beggar, and shame enough to bow the shoulders of the greatest emperor on earth."[12] Contradictions abound once again. Humanity's incredible potential for evil is matched by an opposing potential for good.

However, the objective reality of the depravity of creation and a man's place in the concept of depravity, himself being depraved, in no way reduces the problem of ethical dilemmas, nor does it make the search for solutions easier. On the other hand, it intensifies them. In fact, both Machiavelli's and Trockij's perspectives stall when it comes to the subject of man, because man is the one who sees. Man is the one who thinks. Man is the one who sets a goal and man is the one who decides – therefore – man is the one who justifies both means and ends. Is this truly so? If yes, how would it touch Ovid's thesis, *Exitus acta probe*? It is partly so in the perspective of the Judeo-Christian perception of the world, but ultimately, it is not so. The legitimacy of autonomous and heteronomous paradigms in ethics is questioned. In other words, what is a man's mandate when judging ethical principles?

The Air Balloon

We find that when researching the field of moral philosophy, mental projects or simulation models – which can concisely illuminate the researched issue and help students gain an understanding during the educational process – have proven to be most successful. For instance, during our seminars we enjoy using the *air balloon* example – the balloon is transporting a university professor, a policeman, a politician, a pregnant mother, a pensioner and a student of medicine. The balloon malfunctions mid-flight and a fall is imminent. The only possible solution is to get rid of one passenger. The task assignment is as follows: How should the passengers decide? Provide a reason for your solution.

Such a task creates a particularly rich and fruitful opportunity to reflect upon and critically analyze the available ethical frameworks. Who shall decide – the strongest one? The youngest one? Can Habermas's discourse ethics provide a satisfying solution? Shall they cast a lot? Who will be the one to cast the lot of death? Alternatively, will the passengers resort to an analysis of significance and value of each individual and base their decision upon it?

Some may see the pensioner as the one who will save the society. Our statistics show that this very alternative is the most popular among the students – chosen by 60% of them. The responders usually support their decision with arguments in the likes of: He has lived his share of

[12] C.S. Lewis, *Prince Caspian,* Harper Collins, New York 2002, p. 233.

life, he has had family... he had a chance to enjoy his career as well, unlike the student who is yet to live... During the discussion, we usually touch on another perspective on this solution: the pensioner has lived a fruitful and valuable life in the eyes of the society; it is his very taxes that provide support for the student and the pregnant mother... he has a right to make use of his retirement and enjoy life! Once the moderator suggests the alternative where the balloon is rid of the politician or the policeman, it usually releases the tension and the group reaches a rapid agreement, but it does not mean that the solution is morally clean. Only rarely did we witness students presenting the following solution: Someone should voluntarily offer to sacrifice his or her own life for the sake of others. This solution, however, provokes a plethora of questions: Who should it be? What would be the motive behind it? ...

The Enigma Code

The year 2014 marked the release of a British-American film titled *The Imitation Game*, which received eight Oscar nominations. The plot is based on true historical events, which unfolded during the Second World War. In their attempts to crack the German code used to encode war messages and battle instructions, the Brits approached the prominent mathematician Alan Turing with the request to form a team of experts and solve the problem. Turing was successful and they were offered a peek into the German kitchen, where all the attacks were being planned.[13] Paradoxically, by solving the problem, they merely gave rise to another. Of what sort?

It was a serious philosophical problem: to know or not to know? The nature of the problem is such: if British military headquarters were to undertake particular steps based on the deciphered German messages, i. e. to save their endangered ships, it would immediately result in the Germans learning that the Brits had cracked the code. The Germans would then swiftly change their coding in order to remain successful in the war, which would render obsolete the two years of the Brits' arduous research. The allied forces would be faced with destructive consequences. The British headquarters, then, opted for another solution – pretending to not possess the deciphering machine in order to gain a strategic upper hand against Germany. What were the real implications of this decision? They had to sink some of their ships and submarines, all consciously and purposefully. That might even pose a more challenging moral problem than if I simply hadn't known the enemy's code and had sent my troops to die in the battle. Causing death due to lack of knowledge is signif-

[13] A. Hodges, *Alan Turing: The Enigma,* Princeton University Press, Princeton 2014.

icantly different from causing death with the knowledge that it could prevented, and yet it cannot be so due to this or that reason.

Mathematics and Morality

Through the addition of mathematics, the story of Enigma created intriguing interdisciplinary room for ethical reasoning. After cracking the German encryption code, the British military headquarters established a new team comprised of mathematical analysts, psychologists and war strategists. Through mathematics they were to find an answer to an ethical dilemma: what portion of troops should be surrendered to death and how much should moral values be compromised, so that the enemy will not learn the truth and the Brits will gradually gain a military advantage? The mathematicians counted it, the politicians reached a conclusion and the generals executed it. Contemporary war historians and analysts presume that because of this decision, the Second World War had been cut short by two to three years, thus sparing a great many lives and preventing grave material damage. [14] Similar arguments are used when justifying the release of atomic bombs above Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is therefore understandable that Britain issued a strict embargo on all information about the Enigma, which lasted until the 1990s, when they released certain information and became a subject of art as well as fervent scientific debate.

The Snowden Affair

Another noteworthy case is the case of Edward Snowden, a top-ranking IT expert, who participated in the U. S. Special Forces training, worked for the NSA (National Security Agency) and later leaked sensitive information to global media, which resulted in him having to request asylum in Russia, where he lives to this day.[15] His case reemerged into the public eye during the recent presidential elections in the USA, with accusations that claimed that Russian IT experts hacked internal information connected to Hillary Clinton's e-mail communications and used it in favor of the candidate Donald Trump. What is the nature of the ethical problem in the case of Edward Snowden? Is this an issue of whistleblowing or should we examine something else, potentially deeper?

[14] D.J. Sexton, *Signals Intelligence in World War II: A Research Guide*, Greenwood Publishing Group, London 1996, p. 81.

[15] G. Greenwald, *No Place to Hide: Edward Snowden, the NSA, and the U. S. Surveillance State*, Metropolitan Books, New York 2014.

Snowden was employed by the NSA and he signed a code of ethics legally binding him to an appropriate handling of information. By leaking it, he violated the code. Snowden claims that NSA violated its own code of ethics, especially imperative 1.7 – "respect the privacy of others", particularly in how they wiretapped not only Americans, but also Brits, Chinese... What are the implications for the ethical solution, especially considering the protection of national interests? In this case, is it possible to violate the code of ethics? Another recent affair provoked mixed reactions, when security forces needed to gain access to a phone, but the phone manufacturer refused to provide it in the name of "protecting the clients' interests". What if the interests of an individual or a group are in direct conflict with the interests of the society? Should we then give the green light to Machiavelli's principle? What if the society is a totalitarian regime and the problem concerns a dissident?

We must bring forth one more noteworthy aspect. In this regard, Luke Harding makes interesting points:

> Outside, in central Moscow, the skies were darkening. Snowden ordered a bowl of chocolate and vanilla ice cream and strawberry sorbet. Why had he decided to become a whistleblower? What had driven him? He recounted his disillusionment with government spying. It had happened, he said, "very gradually". He'd begun to have doubts about the ethics of what he was doing as he moved from "merely overseeing" powerful tools such as PRISM and XKeyscore to working as an analyst and you literally drive it like a [remote--controlled] car, Snowden explained.[16]

In such casuistic we must be very careful before resorting to conclusions, as they concern an ethical precedence of global meaning. At the same time, if we adopt the perspective of the coherence of ethical frameworks, we can expect that the critical reflection on this case through the lens of moral philosophy will rely on the standard bases. It concerns individuals with very particular skills and their status in non-standard projects, and as a result, experts are thus faced with very special ethical dilemmas. They are expected to present a non-standard solution, which, under certain circumstances, does not have to be in accordance with the code of ethics. Such solutions usually stem from the inner world of values and world views of the given individual. If we take Snowden's decision to request political asylum in Moscow, what value system does it point to? The answer to these questions is beyond the mandate, the topic and the scope of this study, and yet, we must think about it. In

[16] L. Harding, *The Snowden Files: The Inside Story of the World's Most Wanted Man,* Vintage Books, New York 2014, p. 331.

fact, whether it be the handling of sensitive information or access to the international and intimate world of an individual or a community, they are both becoming a significant ethical challenge from the perspective of responsibility towards oneself, towards the company one works for and towards the society where one does or does not belong. The world of contemporary social networks, nanotechnologies and cyber reality has become a space where the absence of ethical normatives grows more and more striking each day. It is due to this reality that there is a renaissance of metaphysical reflections among experts and researchers in the field of ethics, while its foreground is occupied by the redefining of the term "truth". Whether it be postmodern relativism and the question of how we define "truth", or philosophical pluralism producing a plethora of different ethical frameworks, they have both hit rock bottom and pose a great many unanswered questions.

Possible Solutions

If we are to look deeper into this issue, we should primarily speak of two groups of ethical theories. The first group represents the consequentialist concepts, which are used to deem an act morally right or wrong mainly on the basis of consequences, which are produced by the given act in the given system or social entity. In this regard, a moral act is considered to be a mere means to the desired end. Its wrongness or rightness is perceived from the perspective of the rate of effectiveness, with which it contributes towards the achievement of the goal. In the case of the question whether to shoot down a plane which has malfunctioned and is now uncontrollably falling into a densely populated area with the possible threat of a disaster and massive casualties, it is possible to eventually reach the decision to shoot the plane down. If we are to judge the quality of "means" leading towards a chosen end, we need to examine the fundamental issue in their ethical analysis – the nature of the chosen end: the purpose that is meant to be fulfilled by the decision (using the means). Judging an end, goal or purpose presents a complex problem without concrete bases or concrete criteria. They are, in fact, culturally, socially and religiously conditioned. Even utilitarianism does not provide the instrumentarium necessary to conclusively define the rate of correctness of a certain end or purpose.

On the other hand, the given issue might be analysed from the perspective of deontological ethics. In this case, actions are not regarded merely as means of reaching an end; we perceive an intrinsic dimension of the action itself in the ethical sense. Moral actions, or rather moral rules are the centre of attention. Actions are, consequently, regarded as

"right actions" and "wrong actions" for the values that they carry themselves. Such an attitude offers a certain guarantee of the stability of ethical environment and a high degree of discipline and organization. On the other hand, what is lacking is the necessary flexibility, so that the system is able to react to a particular curious or non-standard circumstance in order to survive or protect its own interests. In this case, consequences of actions are ignored and ends become secondary. Following this principle, the decision to shoot down the plane would not be made, despite the fact that it will crash and kill many more people than the number of passengers. It would also not be possible to eat another person's body, as was the case after a group of sportsmen crashed in the Andes on October 13, 1972. [17]

Conclusion

We do not deem unreasonable the claim that in the contemporary society, Machiavellianism blossoms and presents a significant ethical challenge which cannot be ignored, as its negative consequences impact the society in all levels of its existence. One of the ways to avoid this phenomenon is to understand its root system and identify the fruit that it bears in the life of an individual as well as the society. For that reason, we used this study to present the basic historical overview and key theses upon which depends the Machiavellian concept of ethics of purpose. It is through critical reflection and analysis that we have reached the following findings:

- the paradoxical character of the universe postulates elemental limits, within which it is necessary to judge all ethical concepts or systems of moral imperatives,
- the complexity of the moral order of the world and life implies carefulness when judging ethical patterns and prevents hasty preferences in favor of one ethical principle at the expense of other ones.
- as a natural part of human life, ethical dilemmas present an empirical phenomenon, which on one hand proves that the paradoxicality of the nature of the world is indeed truthful, and on the other hand proves a challenge for a society-wide discourse on the legality and codification of moral solutions and ethical approaches,
- the criterion of coherence, which corresponds to the methodological approaches used in scientific research, is a suitable mode of orientation in the search for answers to ethical questions,

[17] http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3455568/Die-break-ultimate-taboo--Survivor-s-moving-account-Andes-plane-crash-victims-forced-eat-friends-bodies-story-haunts-world-40–years-on.html

- in terms of ethical education, it is appropriate to interconnect theory with practice, which can be properly achieved through using a particular example from life or a thought project that we put through a thorough critical analysis,
- in regard to the weak standard of comprehensive reading among the contemporary young generation, it is necessary to use the subject of ethics to work with texts and examples, to analytically develop them and teach the students to create holistic images with a clear cognitive message out of partialities.

In many regards, Machiavelli was right, and in others, he was not. If only it could be acknowledged by those who have adopted *Exitus acta probe* as their lifestyle.

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Tibor Mahrik – (PhDr., MSc., PhD.) is Assistant Professor at the Department of General and Applied Ethics at the Faculty of Arts at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia. He is also a fellow of the Central European Research Institute for S. Kierkegaard in Nitra and of the Hong Kierkegaard Library in USA. His previous publications include *Ethical Bridges: Interdisciplinary Insights into Ethical Challenges of Contemporary Philosophy, Theology and Technology* (2011) and *Kierkegaard's Metaethical Fragments* (2017).

Tibor Mahrik – (PhDr., MSc., PhD.) jest adiunktem w Katedrze Etyki Ogólnej i Stosowanej na Wydziale Sztuki Uniwersytetu Konstantyna Filozofa w Nitrze na Słowacji. Jest także członkiemŚrodkowo-Europejskiego Instytutu Badawczego dla S. Kierkegaarda w Nitrze i biblioteki Hong Kierkegaard w USA. Jego poprzednie publikacje to *Mosty etyczne: interdyscyplinarne wglądy w etyczne wyzwania współczesnej filozofii, teologii i technologii* (2011) oraz *Fragmenty metaetyczne u Kierkegaarda* (2017).