

Editorial

Vasil Gluchman

“Man reckons with immortality, and forgets to reckon with death”.
(Milan Kundera: *Immortality*)

The topic of death is much more complex than can be embraced in everyday reasoning. Such areas can be mentioned as abortion, euthanasia, clinical death, coma, etc. Brain death, which also falls within this framework, is the main theme of the current issue of the *Ethics & Bioethics (in Central Europe)* journal. Its core is formed by a contribution by Peter Singer, who contemplates on the possibility of brain death not meaning the death of the human organism. In this context, he asks questions about whether the harvesting of vital organs from a brain dead patient should be stopped, as brain death does not equal the death of the human organism, or, on the other hand, whether to accept that an innocent human being who has, irreversibly, lost their consciousness, can be killed.

Piotr Grzegorz Nowak holds the opinion that Singer’s latter suggestion could be accepted, as it facilitates the provision of a sufficient number of organs necessary for transplantation and better corresponds with the term ‘death’ in everyday language. Similarly, Vilius Dranseika and Ivars Neiders consider Singer’s latter alternative more acceptable. They base their standpoint on an earlier view by Robert Veatch, who considered the presence of consciousness a criterion when defining death. Ireneusz Ziemiński claims that Singer’s view can also be accepted from the Kantian and Christian standpoint. On the other hand, he points to such cases when organs cannot be harvested for the needs of transplantation, such as in people in a persistent vegetative state or anencephalic children.

Further contributions follow Singer’s text in a broader context. Ján Kalajtzidis deals with the topic of death in the context of contemplations on a moral agent and moral object within ethics of social consequences. Based on the above, he differentiates between the death of the moral agent and the death of the organism. Similarly, Katarína Komenská ponders over the difference between the end of the life of the organism and the end of the life of a person, as this relates to life goals, the idea of a good life, etc. She studies the topic through the lens of the perception of dignity in ethics of social consequences. Furthermore, a philosophical essay by Mariusz Wojewoda is to be found, who considers the relationship to death a test of our humanity and, in the same context, studies how the sense of mortality influences people’s perception of values.

The collective of authors sincerely believe that they have managed to compile a highly interesting issue of the journal focused on a topic that is deeply philosophical and ethical, while touches upon the essence of our being, including its metaphysical and moral issues. We will be most happy if it prompts further discussions and polemics on the topic discussed in the journal or in other specialised philosophical, bioethical as well as medical journals, edited volumes, or books.