

One of important issues discussed in contemporary metaphysics developed in analytic philosophy is the problem of personal identity over time. It is about what makes a person one and the same despite the passage of time and related changes within his or her mind and body. In other words, what connects me with someone from the past or someone from the future and makes us one and the same person, as well as, differentiates us from other people. Some philosophers indicate a necessity of maintaining a proper connection between mental states (a content of memory, beliefs, intentions, etc.) of a person who persists over time. The competitive position speaks of a need to remain the same living human organism. Many researchers believe that adopting a particular view in this matter entails specific ethical consequences, for example regarding attribution of moral responsibility, punishment and compensation, or bioethical issues (e.g. admissibility of destroying human embryos). According to them, certain moral rights and duties depend on whether we are dealing with the same person. However, specific ethical conclusions may be different due to the fact whether being the same person amounts to being the same human organism or being properly mentally related to a particular person.

Nowadays, a significant group of researchers claims that for important reasons the problem of personal identity over time is undecidable on the basis of the methods used so far. Replying to this diagnosis, the aim of my project is to examine whether it is possible to apply a new strategy by assessing the accuracy of positions regarding personal identity over time basing on their ethical implications. As part of the research, I will critically analyze various arguments which employ ethical premises to indicate correctness of any of these positions. This study will reveal conditions under which applying ethical premises may lead to at least partial solution of the dispute about personal identity over time. It will also show what specific strategies of this type of argumentation are applicable in this and other areas of metaphysics. Therefore, the project is metaphilosophical, it is devoted to methods of philosophy and the relation between its different disciplines - metaphysics and ethics, but its realization can significantly contribute to enriching discussions on specific metaphysical and ethical issues, including bioethical ones.