

## **The human being as a person: about the necessity of philosophy for biology and medicine**

Beginning with Karl Ernst von Baer as a good example for the internal relation between philosophy and biological science I am going to show how medicine needs a pre-scientific, philosophical understanding of illness and pain, of life and death as well as a critical reflection of the conditions and limits of its own scientific methods and technical means in order to function as a good medical practice in an ethical sense. Based on these general considerations I will argue for the thesis that the moral status of the human being as a person – as a subject of rights and claims – is the central reference point of this practice, independently of actual mental capacities. That means that the person and the will of unborn children, severely demented or comatose people and even the departed have to be respected in different manner but in equal measure as sane, adult, living people.

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