

“What do Philosophers Have Against Human Dignity?”

Among analytic philosophers, there is considerable antipathy towards the concept of human dignity. It is not always expressed, but the impression is conveyed that this is a rather disreputable idea and that its trumpeting in legal and political theory is to be deplored. The present paper tries to get to grips with the sources of this antipathy. Is it based on the unclarity of the concept, its religious overtones, its speciesism, or its redundancy as a moral idea? The paper makes a case for regarding the concept of human dignity as a work in progress. It also has to be understood as status-concept -- denoting a particular sort of moral/legal status that all humans have.