Bioethics and the Demise of the Concept of Human Dignity: Has Medicine Killed Ethics?

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Abstract

The rise of ‘dignity talk’ has led to the concept of human dignity being criticised in recent years. Some critics argue that human dignity must either be something we have or something we acquire. Others argue that there is no such thing as human dignity and people really mean something else when they appeal to it. Both ‘dignity talk’ and the criticisms arise from a problematic conception of medical ethics as a legalistic, procedural techne. A retrieval of hermeneutical ethics, by contrast, offers a way to overcome both the legalism of contemporary ethics and the abuses and criticisms of the concept of human dignity. Such an ethics affirms both the inherent dignity of a human being as a multidimensional, meaning-seeking, historically-situated, relational individual, who desires to live a good life, and the realised sense of her own dignity toward which she works. As such, human dignity cannot be reduced to one feature of the human, and instead functions both a descriptive category that avoids moralism, and as normative category that allows relativity whilst avoiding relativism.

Introduction

The concept of human dignity is evidently in crisis. From once being widely accepted as the basis and goal of human rights, and as one of the foundational concepts of constitutional and international law, the concept of human dignity is being called into question. What is more, the criticisms being levelled at it are not unwarranted.

From once bearing the promise of a new universal ethic in the wake of the horrors of the Second World War, human dignity is now facing the charge that it is useless. It was several years ago that bioethicist Ruth Macklin first claimed that human dignity is a useless concept. Macklin’s editorial sparked a flurry of activity amongst supporters of the concept of human dignity and its detractors alike. There has been a notable increase in publications related to the concept of human dignity, especially in the area of bioethics, including high level projects such as that produced by the United State’s President’s Council for Bioethics in 2008. Nonetheless, despite this activity, the jury would appear still to be out regarding the concept of human dignity’s efficacy as an ethical category in bioethics, and as the recent multi-disciplinary conference hosted by the Centre for Bioethics and Emerging

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Technologies at St Mary’s University College in London demonstrates, interest in the problem has yet to wane.

Therefore, it remains important and necessary to ask the question: is human dignity a universally relevant concept, fundamentally valuable to contemporary ethical discourse and policy-making, or is it actually useless? Would we in fact be better off—would our ethical discourse and ethical decision making be better off—without the concept of human dignity?

This contribution will argue that we would not be better off without the concept of human dignity, and that the concept of human dignity is of vital importance to contemporary ethical discourse, be it bioethical or otherwise. Furthermore, precisely because it is of vital importance to our ethical discourse, the concept of human dignity is likewise vital to the guidance, formulation, and implementation of public policy.

That being said, there is a caveat. If a case is to be made for the continued relevance of the concept of human dignity, then the criticisms that have been levelled at the concept must be taken seriously. The problems in the conception and use of human dignity that have plagued the term in recent years, and have led to the present crisis in its meaning and relevance, must be addressed.

Therefore, conscious of this need to take the criticisms seriously, this contribution will approach the question of human dignity’s universality or uselessness in three steps. First, three of the problems in meaning and usage that any ultimately useful concept of human dignity must address will be highlighted. The second step will then propose that the critique that rightly highlights the aforementioned problems would nevertheless be misguided in calling for human dignity’s dismissal as an ethically relevant concept. The section will argue that the call for human dignity’s demise is a symptom of a more deep-set methodological crisis in professional ethics. In light of this ‘critique of the critique’, the third step will set out one way, amongst possible others, in which, through a retrieval of the idea of a hermeneutical ethics, the concept of human dignity can be defended as a rich, ‘thick’, and multidimensional concept with both descriptive and normative efficacy for contemporary ethics.

The Critique of the Concept of Human Dignity

The Problem of ‘Dignity Talk’

The first, and most obvious problem, shall be referred to as ‘dignity talk’. Dignity talk is where two opposing sides of an ethical dispute both appeal to the concept of human dignity to underpin their claims, and, moreover, they make this appeal in a manner in which human dignity is not so much an argument, but a weapon with which to bludgeon the opposition into submission, an argument ending, self-evident, normative trump card. Such uses of human dignity present a barrier to constructive ethical discourse. Insurmountable polarisations of ethical disagreements arise because neither side, having appealed to human dignity to underpin its opposing view, could now agree to a compromise position. To do so would be tantamount to at best inconsistency and at worst violating the inviolable.

As Peter Singer has rather wryly put it—and of course Singer is himself quite a controversial figure in the debate regarding the relevance of human dignity because he argues that it amounts to little more than unjustifiable speciesism—“Philosophers frequently introduce ideas of dignity, respect, and worth at the point at which reasons

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appear to be lacking, but this is hardly good enough. Fine phrases are the last resort of those who have run out of arguments." Therefore, if human dignity is going be a useful concept, then there need to be arguments that underpin it, that tell us what it is, and how it can be useful.

The next two problems arise when one begins to interrogate what people actually mean when they appeal to the concept of human dignity.

Is Dignity Something Human Beings Have or Something They Acquire?

There appear to be two distinctly different understandings of the concept of human dignity in use in public discourse. On the one hand, there is the idea of human dignity as some sort of inviolable, inherent or intrinsic worth or value that is always already and ever present in every human person or human being. This can be contrasted with, on the other hand, an understanding of human dignity as something to aspire to, to obtain, which is the end or fulfilment of one’s humanity. This latter notion finds itself expressed in such phrases as “living with dignity” or, for that matter, “dying with dignity”. The same can be said for the unusual expression, “to treat someone with dignity,” which implies, rather peculiarly, either that the way the agent behaves is dignified (i.e. worthy behaviour), or that the person being acted upon is afforded or attributed dignity (i.e. worth) through the manner in which they are treated. In other words, the implication is that dignity is violable, or at the very least mutable, based on how one acts or is acted upon. The point is that there is an experiential, psychological understanding of human dignity as a conscious sense of pride or self-worth, such that an offence to dignity is not an offence to some abstract notion of one’s inherent or intrinsic worth, but much more to one’s concrete self-perception as worthy, as having dignity. Steven Pinker, a vocal critic of the concept of human dignity, for example, talks about the distinction between third-person dignity, which is that kind of abstract, inherent, inviolable worth that we affirm for all people, whether they experience it themselves or not, and first-person dignity, a conscious sense of one’s own worth and a desire not to be shamed or humiliated, a desire not to have everyone see one’s bottom when one wanders down the hospital corridor in one of those charming, open-backed gowns. In any event, this means that in order to defend an ethically useful concept of human dignity, either it must be

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5 For a more detailed discussion of the differences between ‘absolute’ and ‘contingent’ dignity see David G. Kirchhoffer and Kris Dierickx, "Human Dignity and Human Tissue: a Meaningful Ethical Relationship?", Journal of Medical Ethics 37, no. 9 (2011): 552-56.


shown that one of these conceptions is false, or a way must be found to account for how human dignity can be both something we already have and something that we seek to acquire.

There Is No Such Thing as Human Dignity

It may be possible to circumvent the second challenge just identified simply by being more specific in one’s choice of terminology to identify whether one is talking about dignity as something human beings always already have or as something that human beings acquire. The third challenge, however, is far more difficult to overcome, because it could mean that in fact there really is no such thing as human dignity.

Herein lies the important core of Ruth Macklin’s critique. She argues that respect for human dignity just means respect for autonomy and respect for the person, and that therefore the concept of dignity is useless. What is important about Macklin’s critique, however, is that if one takes it further, by interrogating what people really mean when they appeal to human dignity in a fashion consistent with what has been described above as ‘dignity talk’, then one might conclude that the concept of human dignity is really just a façade; human dignity, because it is a term seemingly endowed with a mysterious, normative power thanks to its inclusion in human rights documents and national constitutions, is in fact really just representing another claim, such that when one argues for a particular course of action based on respect for human dignity, one indeed means something else. Macklin mentions autonomy, but one might also mention life, or one’s pride, or one’s religious beliefs. In other words, sometimes, especially in public discourse, when people say ‘respect human dignity’ they really mean respect autonomy, or respect physical human life, or respect my belief that God made me, or respect my desire to be respected. And when that is the case, then Macklin is right, human dignity may be useless because it masks what people think is really at stake, whilst at the same time putting an end to further constructive discourse because what they think is really at stake is never actually articulated.

So, an adequate defence of the concept of human dignity will have to show that human dignity cannot simply be reduced to one or other feature of the human person. Moreover, it will have to demonstrate that the concept offers something more to ethics than any of the individual features alone.

In light of the above discussion, it should be clear that there are problems with contemporary usage of the concept of human dignity. The rise of dignity talk is a problem because it means we are more often faced with unconstructive shouting matches than with genuinely clear and constructive ethical argumentation. This only leads to further polarisation, particularly in the popular press that feeds off this kind of conflictual, moralistic rhetoric, leaving policymakers facing the seemingly impossible task of creating policy that will not lose them the next election.

A Methodological Critique of the Critique

It is one thing to acknowledge the legitimacy of certain criticisms of contemporary usage of the concept of human dignity, and quite another to accept the proposal that therefore the concept of human dignity should be dismissed from our ethical discourse entirely.

This part proposes that the solution to the problem lies in an examination of the underlying methodological assumptions of the critique on human dignity, and indeed

8 Macklin, "Dignity Is a Useless Concept."
more importantly, the assumptions that underlie the kind of use of human dignity that these criticisms rightly call into question. In other words, when legal scholars, like Mirko Bagaric and James Allan in particular, are concerned that the alleged ‘vacuity’ of dignity makes it defunct as a normative moral criterion, our question should be, should we only be thinking about human dignity as a legalistic normative criterion? Saying that human dignity is the basis of human rights does not necessarily mean that it therefore has to be a simple, one-dimensional concept by which all rights claims can be assessed.

Has Medicine Really Saved the Life of Ethics? Toulmin Thirty Years On.

This section begins its analysis of the underlying methodological assumptions by way of a brief reflection on a very influential article that was first published almost thirty years ago now in 1982 by the late Stephen Toulmin. Toulmin’s article is rather boldly titled “How Medicine Saved the Life of Ethics” and it is from this that the present contribution derives its title. This section’s thesis is that a trend that Toulmin identifies in his article as being a positive force ‘saving the life of ethics’ is indeed what has led us in part to a new predicament that threatens to ‘end the life’ of ethics, and with it, any meaningful notion of human dignity.

Toulmin argues that the challenges of new developments in medicine in the 1960s marked a shift in the role of the moral philosopher. Prior to these developments, moral philosophy, he argues, was primarily concerned with meta-ethical questions, like questions about what kinds of issues can or should be called moral. What happens after the Second World War, according to Toulmin, is that public debate starts getting stuck, much like it is today in many ways, between so-called relativists on the one hand, who were largely inspired by sociological and anthropological research, and dogmatic, usually religiously-inspired absolutists on the other hand. In order to resolve these problems, policymakers began to turn to professional moral philosophers like Toulmin to help them. Ethicists (as they came to be called) were now being asked to find rational ways of settling moral disputes on concrete issues. In effect, they were being asked to rediscover casuistry. Toulmin argues that this saved the life of ethics by making it relevant and practical, driven by phronesis (practical wisdom or prudence) rather than episteme (abstract, systematic knowledge).

Despite Toulmin’s optimism about the possibility of a revival of situated, casuistic ethics that dealt with real people and real relationships in real situations instead of with abstracted formal or foundational systems or principles, it would seem that, in the pursuit of these ‘rational’ solutions, modern bioethics may have come full circle: it has become increasingly expedient to engage a more legalistic discourse and a rational moral calculus, such that phronesis, as a practically oriented situational ethics to which understanding or theoria might have been seen as integral, has been reduced to a sort of foundationalist techne (the application of a process or technique). In other words, as both Toulmin and David C. Thomasma have pointed out, as is often

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the case in the history of philosophy, the pendulum swings backwards and forwards between foundationalists and anti-foundationalists. At present, it would seem that clinical bioethics in particular is dominated by a legalistic foundationalism, fuelled possibly by a combination of increasingly litigious social contexts on the one hand, and the demands of economic productivity and so-called ‘managed care’ on the other.

This comes about as follows. In an effort to resolve difficult issues, recourse is made to what Johan Verstraeten has called a “radical method of avoidance.” That is to say, in an effort to find consensus and to find a workable solution to a problem, any question of the deeper meaning of the issues—of what, for example, makes the human body or free choice, or any other concept, ethically relevant—is put aside, or even actively avoided. What one is left with is a “theoretical construction of formal procedures”. As Verstraeten says of these procedures, “Their minimal state no longer has an ethical basis or function”.

In other words, in the name of expediency, ethics tends to become reduced to a legalist moral calculus. To put it in Heideggerian terms, calculating thought—a weighing of the profit and loss of interests—is favoured over hermeneutical thought, over a kind of ethical thinking that takes seriously the existential import and meaning of the interpretations that we give to moral behaviour.

Thus, whilst Toulmin is right to an extent to say that medicine has saved the life of ethics, it is a fairly impoverished form of ethics with which we may be left. According to Paul Van Tongeren, ethics is being reduced to techne, and the role of the ethicist to that of a technician who comes in with a tool to apply to a given situation that will then provide the affected parties with the right answer.

**Techne and the Critique of Human Dignity**

Now, with this thesis in mind, if one reconsiders the problems highlighted in the first part regarding the uses of the concept of human dignity, one sees indeed that

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16 See Paul Van Tongeren, "Ethics, Tradition and Hermeneutics," in *Matter of Breath: Foundations for Professional Ethics*, ed. Guillaume de Stexhe and Johan Verstraeten, European Ethics Network Core Materials for the Development of Courses in Professional Ethics (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 119-32, 119. A similar point is made by Joseph A. Selling, "(In Search of) A Fundamental Basis for Ethical Reflection," *Ethical Perspectives* 1, no. 1 (1994): 13-21, 13. Selling states that people often simply resort to tools such as ethical guidelines, codes, or policies to make decisions without questioning where these tools come from. Moreover, the tools tend to become hyper-specialised, leading to the assumption that unless someone has the necessary technical expertise they cannot make an ethical decision in that field. Selling is concerned about this development because it seems to mistakenly suggest that no fundamental basis common to all ethical reflection exists.
many of these problems can be accounted for precisely because the concept of human dignity is being expected to function as a basis for a rational moral calculus. This applies both to the critics, and those they criticise.

First, with regard to the problem of dignity talk, human dignity is often used as a sort of trump card to put an end to conflicting rights claims. The very recourse to the language of human rights itself is often left uninterrogated. It is already symptomatic of the kind of moral rational calculus and avoidance of questions of meaning just discussed. In these instances, the appeal to dignity is often made because the language seems powerful rather than because there is any real interrogation of what such an appeal might actually mean to those making it.

Second, Macklin’s editorial is illustrative of how, once one starts to ask the questions that the radical method of avoidance seeks to avoid—questions like, what exactly do you mean by human dignity?—one discovers that people can understand it to mean different things, or perhaps better put to be relevant and meaningful in different ways at different times. To then suggest, however, that dignity is useless, or should be dismissed from our discourse is symptomatic of precisely that same kind of legalistic reasoning. It misses a crucial point, namely, that the concept of human dignity, by its nature as a term intended to refer to the ultimate worth of the human person, of necessity invites the more meaning-oriented, hermeneutical questions about what it means to be human, what it means to flourish, what it means to live a morally good life, and so on. Consequently, the concept of human dignity cannot be expected to do the job of a simple one-dimensional criterion that would decide beyond doubt the validity of conflicting rights claims. Note, however, this is not the same as saying that the concept of human dignity has no purpose in contemporary biomedical ethics. On the contrary, as the third part will demonstrate, the concept of human dignity still has a vital role to play.

By way of conclusion to part two of this contribution, then, both the current problems in the use of the concept of human dignity in bioethics, and the critique that suggests that it is therefore useless and should be dismissed are the result of a tendency to reduce ethics to a legalistic moral calculus, a techne, that avoids questions of meaning. The critics continue to operate largely from within the same legalistic paradigm as those they criticise.

**A Case for the Concept of Human Dignity: the Retrieval of a Hermeneutical Ethics**

So far in this contribution, much of the current use of the concept of human dignity in bioethical discourse has been shown to be problematic. Therefore, any legitimate case for the continued relevance of the concept of human dignity needs to take these challenges into account and come up with a meaningful way to overcome them.

One way that has been proposed to deal with these challenges is simply to do away with the concept of human dignity altogether. The previous section has shown, however, that such a dismissal of the concept of human dignity is short-sighted. Such a dismissal does not deal with the underlying cause of the problem that has led the concept of human dignity to be misused in bioethical debates in the first place. That is, such a dismissal does not effectively deal with the increasing reduction of ethics to a sort of procedural techne, particularly in professional contexts such as ethics committees and policymaking bodies, that relies on thin, one-dimensional concepts that can be easily inserted into formulaic procedures to resolve ethical disputes.
What follows is a tentative proposal for how the concept of human dignity might still be useful to ethics conditional upon the retrieval of a hermeneutical ethics that will overcome the perils of the aforementioned techne.

Hermeneutical Ethics

Hermeneutical ethics is based on the presupposition that human beings are meaning-seeking and meaning-making beings always already situated in historical relationships. Human beings are, if you like, always in the processes of interpreting the meaning of events, texts, relationships, and so on for their lives, and, more importantly for their sense of self-understanding as living meaningful and purposeful lives.17

Human beings engage in this interpretive practice out of a fundamental desire to be good and to live a good life, to live a life that is purposeful and meaningful.18 This, too, is an important presupposition of hermeneutical ethics. Precisely because human beings want to be good, they interpret meaning when they are faced with moral choices or ethical issues. Moreover, it is because of this meaning-making interpretive capacity and the desire to live a good, meaningful life that we can even describe something as a moral choice or an ethical dilemma in the first place. Human beings are moral beings precisely because they have the capacity to reflect on the existential meaning of the historical situations in which they find themselves, and of their subsequent behaviour.

Finally, human beings, these meaning-seeking and meaning-making entities that want to be good, live in communities of meaning-makers that have already articulated meanings and attached value to things. In other words, human beings always interpret themselves and their moral behaviour in conversation with articulations of meaning and value that precede them or confront them. One might call these already expressed meanings and values tradition.19

Therefore, when people act according to pre-existing (traditional) moral norms, or justify their actions in terms of such norms (for example in the case of ‘dignity talk’), they do so to the extent that such norms, or indeed their interpretation of the meaning of such norms, can be coherently integrated into the narrative self-image that they seek to construct through the way they live out their lives. This means that both a person’s actions, and the norms he or she invokes to justify these actions can be interrogated for the meaning that he or she intends these norms and actions to bestow on his or her self-image as a good person.20 In other words, a hermeneutical ethics can ask: What do the manifold aspects involved in a particular moral decision or action mean for one’s life as a whole? According to Van Tongeren, hermeneutical ethics, therefore, aims “to reach, through the appropriation of meaning, a morally meaningful and inhabitable world … In doing this, by bringing up the ethical questions that are

18 See Jean-Pierre Wils, Handlungen und Bedeutungen: Reflexionen über eine hermeneutische Ethik, Studien zur theologischen Ethik (Freiburg, Switzerland: Universitätsverlag and Verlag Herder, 2001), 89.
20 See Wils, Handlungen und Bedeutungen: Reflexionen über eine hermeneutische Ethik, 74, 77, and 80.
behind the applied ethical problems, it contributes to the design of a structure of moral meaning, where answering so-called applied ethical questions belongs.”

Implications for the Concept of Human Dignity

What are the implications of this understanding of ethics as at least in part a hermeneutical enterprise for the concept of human dignity? This contribution argues that hermeneutical ethics opens up the possibility of using human dignity not as the end of ethical conversation and reflection—the argument settling trump card—but indeed as the beginning. Human dignity, by affirming the worth of the multidimensional reality that is every human being, is the concept that gives expression to the fundamental existential reason for why we bother with ethical questions at all, namely, that we all want to feel like our existence is meaningful and worthwhile.

Part one highlighted the problem of how human dignity is sometimes spoken about as something that all human beings intrinsically already have, and at other times as some sort of acquired sense of self-worth. Critics of the concept of human dignity might argue that these two uses are incommensurate. Human dignity has to mean either one thing or the other; alternatively we must find a way to distinguish between the two senses by using different terms. What follows demonstrates how an appreciation of hermeneutical ethics might overcome this problem. Remember, of course, that it is perceived as a problem in the first place precisely because the paradigm of a rationalistic moral calculus out of which the critique arises, if it is to be efficient, requires simple rather than meaning-rich multidimensional concepts to function properly. A legalistic ethics resists any kind of ‘both … and’ understanding of the world. It does not do grey. It sees things or at least always tries to reduce things to black and white because this is easier to manage and less messy. It ‘avoids’ in the name of expediency and ‘rationality’ the deeper, thicker questions of meaning that morally relevant situations invite.

Hermeneutical ethics, by contrast, thrives in the messy. Hermeneutical ethics recognises that meaning-making for historically situated human beings in relationship is fraught with grey areas and limitations, with seemingly impossible choices between good and better, and sometimes, more problematically, between bad and worse.

From this perspective, we can affirm that all human beings already have dignity in that they are meaning-making beings who normally desire to live morally good and meaningful lives. This does not mean that they do not make mistakes, or that they do not sometimes fail. It does, however, affirm the fundamental moral worth of all human beings as moral beings, i.e., beings with the potential and arguably the desire to reflect on the existential significance of their moral choices. At the same time, a hermeneutical ethics affirms that human dignity, as a cognitively and affectively experienced sense of one’s own worth, is precisely what the processes of making meaning and moral reflection seek to attain. People want to perceive their lives as meaningful and purposeful, and, of course, because people are already always embedded in relationships with other people, one of necessity needs to articulate the meaningfulness, the worth, of all human beings, if one’s own self-understanding as worthy, as having dignity, is to have any real validity.


22 It could be argued that it is on this basis that human dignity can and should be extended to those who do not yet seem to have actualised any potential as makers of moral
Thus, the idea that the human person both already has inherent dignity as a meaning-maker, and strives to acquire dignity through the process of making meaning, means that human dignity, instead of being reduced to a one-dimensional legalist criterion, becomes an invitation to reflect on the meaningfulness of the manifold dimensions of being human, including the meaningfulness of particular choices and actions in concrete situations. It invites an ongoing exploration of the multidimensional reality of the human person, in all its many and plural facets, as morally meaningfully, as having worth. In other words, instead of dismissing an appeal to human dignity as useless, stupid, or desperate, by conceiving of human dignity both as something human beings already objectively have and as something they subjectively seek to realise, we are invited to ask how such an appeal to human dignity is meaningful, to ask what aspects of the human person as a whole are being given priority in our self-understanding and our understanding of others in those particular circumstances. What is this person’s operative understanding of the concept of human dignity? What are the social influences, mores, and circumstances that may have contributed to this understanding of human dignity? And how does this person’s operative understanding of human dignity affect and provide subjective justification for the moral choices he or she makes, and the behavioural strategies he or she undertakes?

The advantage of such an approach is that it avoids a judgemental moralism, and asks us to take seriously the moral meanings that are at stake. Such an approach invites us to gain real insight and understanding into the existential nature of the moral issues being encountered. This need not mean, however, that human dignity now no longer has any normative value. On the contrary, by affirming that all human beings fundamentally seek to live a worthy and meaningful life, and seek to realise this desire through their moral behaviour, any course of action that makes this impossible, or that seeks the affirmation of one person’s self-understanding as dignified at the expense of another’s must be called into question and challenged as a morally bad vision of human dignity and the moral life.

At the same time, however, the normativity of human dignity thus understood is also more open, in that it makes space for a range of meaningful ways of being a good person. It opens the way to a better appreciation of relativity in ethics, without abandoning ethics to relativism.

Finally, such an understanding of human dignity also always reminds us of the limitations of our own historically-situated selves to ever fully realise human dignity either in our lives or in the world. It reminds us to be humble in our ethical deliberations. We are all on this journey together; we are trying to making moral sense of an often morally ambiguous historical world, and as such, no matter what we decide, we always need to bear in mind that we might be wrong.

meaning, e.g. infants, or who have lost that potential, e.g. the minimally conscious. In the case of the former, it is precisely because the potential for moral meaning-making is or will be present. In the case of the latter, it is because it has been present and a morally meaningful existence has been led. I had dignity before I was able to realise it myself; whatever extent to which I am able to realise that dignity in my moral life will remain realised even when my conscious life, and arguably my biological existence, is over.

Conclusion

First, it is important that the problems in the way that the concept of human dignity is sometimes employed in bioethical discourse today be acknowledged. Second, if meaningful solutions to the problems are to be found, they need to be approached from a fundamental reappraisal of how ‘ethics’ should be done. When such as critical reappraisal is undertaken, as in this contribution, one sees that many of the problems in the usage of the concept of human dignity can be accounted for due to the dominance of an understanding of ethics as a legalistic rational moral calculus that avoids deeper questions of meaning. Finally, through the proposed retrieval of the idea of ethics as at least in part a hermeneutical enterprise, founded on a conception of the human person as a multidimensional, meaning-seeking and meaning-making relational being, a future is opened up for a rich, multidimensional understanding of human dignity that invites us to enter into deeper reflection on the existential meaning of our lives.

References


