

## **Kant's Conception of Human Dignity and the Importance of Singularity within Commonality**

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**Abstract :** Kant's household theory of human dignity as a common feature of all rational beings is the starting point of any intellectual endeavor to unravel the implications of this normative notion. Yet, it is incomplete, as it neglects considering the importance of the singularity or uniqueness of the individual. In a first, deconstructive stage, this paper describes the Kantian account of human dignity as one among many conceptions of human dignity. It reads carefully into the original wording used by Kant in German and its English translations, as well as the works of modern commentators, to identify its shortcomings. In a second, constructive stage, it then draws on the theories of Aristotle, Alexis de Tocqueville, John Stuart Mill, and Hannah Arendt to try and enhance the Kantian conception, in the sense that these authors give major importance to the singularity of the individual. The Kantian theory can be perfected by including elements from the works of these authors, while at the same time being mindful of the dangers entailed in focusing too much on singularity. The conclusion of this paper is that the Kantian conception of human dignity can be enhanced if it acknowledges that not only morality has dignity, but also the irreplaceable human individual to the extent that she is a narrative, original creature with the potential to act morally.

**Keywords :** commonality, dignity, Kant, singularity

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