

Kantian ethics  
demands that we  
treat 'humanity in  
your own person or in  
the perso...

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Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end and never merely as a means to an end. " This maxim reflects Kant's deontological view of ethics that is based on the constraint of actions not necessarily from fear of the circumstances arising from actions but for the respect for rational beings. Respect for humanity is based on acknowledging the rationality of beings that are able to reason. All material bodies under the umbrella of nature are governed by and are subject to laws. Rational beings carry out acts that concur to one's own perception of a given law. This attribute of a rational being is what constitutes the will of a man, which in turn is derived from reason. Such a power can only be found in rational beings. Supposing that the existence of a rational being has in itself an absolute value there would then be ground for a possible Categorical Imperative. As a generalisation rational being are ends in themselves and not merely as a means of manipulative use by one person or another. This rational being in all actions whether directed to himself or others should always be seen at the same time as an end. Beings that depend on nature rather than will have relative value as means, and because of this attribute are referred to as things. Rational beings however are called persons and their very nature places a demand on themselves as well as others for treatment as ends in themselves and not merely as means. This then places a strong limit on arbitrary use of a person as would be in the case of a thing. Rational Nature exists as an end in itself. If a man conceives his existence in such a manner the italicised statement becomes a subjective principle of human actions.

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However it is also in this way that every other rational being conceives his existence hence it is at the same time an objective principle of human action from will laws that govern the will are to be formulated. Considering the following examples: Example 1: A certain man contemplates suicide in order to escape away from situations considered as miserable and undesirable. If he asks himself if his actions are compatible with the idea of humanity as an end in itself and continues to end his life it can thus be said that he is making use of his own person as a means to a tolerable state until the end of this life. However man is indeed not a thing. His actions show disregard for this rule through the processes of thinking of and executing this act. He must in all his actions regard himself as an end in himself and not simply as a means to an end. Example 2: A certain person borrows money from another and may have neither the means nor the intent to pay it back. Using this formula it is quite apparent that this act is immoral. The act of a lying promise in a functional society is not universalisable and makes use of the other as a means to an end that that he has little or no possibility of partaking in. This violation of one's duty to others is more apparent when regarding the freedom of individuals as well as their property. It is in these cases that the transgressor against the rights of the other with no consideration of the rationality of the violated person. He is simply using the other as a means to an end and not as an end in himself who at the same time must be able to share the end of this action. Taking these examples into consideration it can therefore be said that it is not enough that an action should conform to the formula of treating rational individuals as end but must harmonize with this

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end. Humanity looked at holistically can be viewed as an end in itself and therefore a disregard of the rationality of an individual goes against the treatment of humanity as an end in itself. Also a dominant pursuit of individuals within the set of humanity seek to pursue happiness. Rational beings should therefore should not only seek to contribute to the happiness of others but to also refrain from deliberately impairing their happiness.

Reference list Kant, I. (1999). Introduction to Philosophy (3rd Edition ed.). (J. Perry, & M. Bratman, Eds.) New York: Oxford University Press. Paton, H. J. (1952). Kantian Ethics. The Philosophical quarterly , 53-58.