

HUMAN ACTS VS. ACTS OF MAN

WHAT IS HUMAN ACT?

These are actions that are proper to humans, thus the crucial element of willful consent and knowledge of the action must be present. One must freely use his/her intellect and freewill when acting. Human acts reveal the value of responsibility or accountability. (Living a Christian Moral Life, 2013).

Why Human Acts?

- Human acts reveal the value of responsibility or accountability.
- Man/woman takes into RESPONSIBILITY of these actions.

Human Acts

- Acts that we do with the use of free will and intellect.
- They are done freely, deliberately, and voluntarily.
- These are actions that are proper to humans, thus the crucial element of willful consent and knowledge of the action must be present (Living a Christian Moral Life, 2013).
- Example: studying, working, eating healthy foods

Acts of Man

- Acts that we do without free will and intellect; some are done by instinct.
- The actions are performed without conscious deliberation or knowledge and with the absence of a free will. Acts of man constitute unconscious and involuntary actions.
- Example: breathing, digestion, circulation of air in the body
- These are natural processes within the body that continue to function without the use of free will and reason. They just happen naturally as automatic responses to situations (Living a Christian Moral Life, 2013)

HUMAN ACTS VS. ACTS OF MAN

Essential qualities of Human Acts

- KNOWLEDGE OF THE ACT IT MUST BE DELIBERATE
- FREEDOM IT MUST BE FREE
- VOLUNTARINESS IT MUS BE VOLUNTARY

Essential qualities of Acts of Man

- DONE WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE
- WITHOUT CONSENT
- INVOLUNTARY

Constituents of Human Acts

1. Human acts must be known and deliberate.
 - An individual, as the moral agent, has full knowledge of doing a certain action. There is prior knowledge and a deliberate evaluation of whether to fulfill an action or not (*Living a Christian Moral Life*, 2013). It asks the questions: Do you know exactly what you are doing? or Do you do the act intentionally? He/she must have full knowledge and consent of his/her action

Constituents of Human Acts

2. Human acts must be free.

- An individual as the moral agent is free from any external factors as well as internal pressure to do an act. He/she is neither forced nor intimidated to do or not to do something (*Living a Christian Moral Life*, 2013).
- There is an obvious absence of constraint from within and outside of the individual. He/she is free to do the act without the influence of an outside factor and personal pressure from within. He/she does the act so independently and not because of shame, request, or control from someone else nor from emotional disturbance.

Constituents of Human Acts

3. Human acts are voluntary.

- The action proceeds from the willingness of an individual to perform an action with a perceived knowledge of the end. (*Living a Christian Moral Life*, 2013). It asks the question: Are you willing to do the act? and do you know what you are doing and where your action is leading into? He/she wills to perform the act with the understanding that he/she knows consciously where his/her actions are leading into

Determinants Human Act & Act of Man

| Determinants | Human Act | Act of Man |
|----------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Knowledge/Use of Intellect | Yes | No |
| Presence of Free Will | Yes | No |
| Conscious Process/ Voluntariness | Yes | No |

- This clearly shows the differences between human acts and acts of man. As an object of morality, the human action is done with full knowledge of the action, performed with the use of free will, and acted upon voluntarily. The absence of these three crucial determinants renders the action as a mere act of man (Living a Christian Moral Life, 2013)

- Human actions are qualified as good or right (moral), bad or wrong (immoral), or indifferent (nonmoral). The quality and standard of a human act depend on the relationship of the act with the norms of morality (Law: Eternal law; Natural law; and Positive law (divine or human)). Both Divine and human positive laws are specific applications of the Eternal Law or the Natural Law. If a Positive Law does not adhere to or respect the Natural Law, then it ruins or damages the development of the human person.

- An act is good when it agrees with the dictates of the right reason.
(Living a Christian Moral Life, 2013).
 - An act is bad when it disagrees with the dictates of the right reason.
(Living a Christian Moral Life, 2013).
 - An act is indifferent when it stands no relation to the dictates of the right reason (Living a Christian Moral Life, 2013) (acts or actions that are neither good nor bad).
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- NOTA BENE: We do not moralize the acts of man, but the human acts.

- FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY
- Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980)
- Man is condemned to be free, because there is no God, according to Sartre. “Isinumpa ang tao na maging Malaya.” Whether he likes it or not, man is doomed to freedom, as he himself is freedom. “Ang tao mismo ay kalayaan.” This follows from Sartre’s perception that man is the only being whose existence precedes his essence. There is no such thing as God-given essence or nature of man, insofar as man alone has to create himself and develop his own essence through his freedom (Timbreza, F., 2005).
- Sartre is telling us that man is condemned to be free, because once thrown into the world, he is responsible for everything he does. It is up to you to give (life) a meaning. Sartre believes that existence precedes essence (Ramos, C.C. 2010). Meaning, Sartre believes that “existence precedes essence.” Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself (Nabor-Nery, M.I., 2007).
- There is no such thing as God-given essence or nature of man, insofar as man alone has to create himself and develop his own essence through his freedom (Timbreza, F., 2005). Sartre, as an atheist, tells us that the human person becomes responsible for the projection of one’s life. Since you are a free being, it is up to you to how you use your freedom to make your life meaningful. Remember that, for Sartre, the essence of man is freedom. So, freedom should make or create your life.

- Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)
- Heidegger contends that this emphasis on freedom enables us to understand philosophy as a “going-after-the-whole” that is at the same time a “going-to-our-roots.” In other words, we must search for the essence of human freedom in the constant presence of being-in-the-world that precedes and grounds philosophical thinking (Heidegger, M., 2005).
- This is manifested in Martin Heidegger’s idea on “Dasein” (Da-means there, Sein-means being). Heidegger challenges us to understand the meaning of Dasein (of what it means to be there.). He claimed that man is Dasein (being-there) but Dasein does not necessarily mean man. This means that being-there has to be made. “Ginagawa ang pagiging tao.” We have to create our being as persons. Our mere existence does not presuppose that we are living as a person already. Like Sartre, we are responsible for projecting our lives. So, we must see to it that we are the gardener of our own lives. This is what makes Heidegger “very interested in the problem of being rather than merely in the problem of human existence” (Ramos, C.C. 2010)

Other Factors which Affects the Morality of Human Acts

- If you have noticed, observed, or experienced, while norms or laws are general, most often, in their implementation, there are many factors to consider especially in judging the acts committed in relation to the law. Example: If two people committed the same crime, how come that their punishments are not the same? Even in the school setting, sometimes a student would complain that how come that my classmate was allowed to enter or do such things while I am not? Aside from the purpose and circumstance that affect the judgment of a certain act, there are other factors to consider. Other authors would call these Impediments to Human Acts. (Impediment means hindrance).

Impediments to Human Acts

- Human actions, though naturally a product of will and reason, are sometimes influenced by certain factors, which are called impediments to human actions. These factors intervene and bar one's actions from being human or contribute to the reduction of the quality of a certain action. The impediments affect the quality of human acts

1. Ignorance

- It pertains to the lack of pertinent information, as to the nature, circumstances, and effect of a certain action. Ignorance takes place when an individual consciously proceeds to act on a certain matter without due consideration of the relevant or necessary information related to it.
- Ignorance is classified into

Ignorance is classified into

a. Invincible Ignorance

- There is invincible ignorance when one is totally ignorant of the things surrounding his/her action and there is no way to remove/dispel it. In situations like this, the culpability of the individual is negated. A good example of this kind is a person who is illiterate -- one who does not know how to read and write, who is caught jaywalking.
- There is a lack of required knowledge to determine the goodness or badness of a certain action, but this can be dispelled or learned through ordinary efforts, conscientiousness, and proper diligence.

b. Vincible Ignorance

- Mistakes or wrong actions out of vincible ignorance lessens one's culpability. An example would be committing a mistake without totally knowing that what you are doing is really wrong.

There are two forms of vincible ignorance

i. Affected vincible ignorance

One is pretending to be ignorant since he/she just wants to gain the approval of the other for his/her wrong action. (In your ordinary language children, you call this “agpalusot”.) Naturally, any action, performed under affected or pretended ignorance, does not excuse a person from his/her action. In fact, it actually increases his/her culpability. An example would be a student who pretends not to know the school’s policy on a proper haircuts to excuse him/her when confronted by the guards

ii. Supine or crass ignorance

It happens when a person exerts little effort to know something. Giving the wrong medicine to a sick person may result in the sickness of the person getting worse.

2. Concupiscence

- A situation where one's inordinate passion hinders one to exercise correct reasoning, thus also affects his/her action. Passions mean our emotional elements like anger, pride, envy, love, joy, etc. Not all passions are bad. Some are innately bad, but some become bad only when they are excessive or called inordinately. An example is a pride and anger, these two becomes bad only when they become excessive that they already control one's mind and even push him/her to do a certain action. Still, on pride, you must be proud of your parents; you need pride, or else you will be contented with your grades even if they are all line of seven or even all 75%.
- The morality of actions done out of concupiscence depends on how the passions affected the action of the doer. The culpability may increase or decrease or can be negated

Antecedent Concupiscence

- A spontaneous/sudden inordinate passion influences an action before it has been controlled by the will. Example: Juan was already running late for his class. When he entered the school campus, the guard confiscated his ID for no apparent reason. Out of his anger, he unconsciously cursed the guard. (In ibanag, you call this “gavva lang”, like gavva kang nanampal dahil sa gulat, etc.)
- The culpability of bad actions done out of Antecedent Concupiscence can be lessened or even negated depending on how it happened.

Consequent concupiscence

- Consequent concupiscence
- This happens when one is aware of the inordinate passion and the will chooses to arouse the said passion to perform the bad action. The passion has already passed through the intellect and controlled by the will, but still, the individual performs the human act. In other words, you know that you are very angry at that person, but you still push through with the bad actors like punching or kicking or slapping him/her. You did not do anything to calm down or to cool your anger. Since the passion is deliberately and voluntarily acted upon, the culpability of the action increases. Gluttony is a very good example. Pedro is obese. During a town fiesta, he had visited the houses of his four friends, eating to his satisfaction. On his way back home, he decided to drop by a fast food restaurant for more food, and later on, he vomited. Clearly, it is within his control to limit his food intake; however, despite being full from the feast, he deliberately decided to eat more on his way home. His moral responsibility increases since it is within his will, reason, and disposal to decide to stop, but failed to do so.

3. Fear

- Fear affects the performance of a human act since the individual is threatened by the impending dangers (ginawa or nagawa mo yung isang bagay kasi tinakot ka) The presence of danger and intimidation affects his/her thought-processes in determining the goodness or badness of his/her actions.
- A human act done with fear is considered voluntary, therefore it will be culpable if it is a bad act. The act is still culpable because one can still choose not to act despite the fear or danger. Example: They forced a woman to remove her clothes with a gun pointing at her, the woman can still choose not to do the act.
- However, the culpability of a bad act done out of fear can be lessened, increase, or even negated depending on the gravity of the threat and the circumstance surrounding the action especially in a situation where one just follows his/her instinct to survive. While walking in a dark alley, Pedro was accosted by a robber pointing at his head a gun. Trapped and in danger of being killed, Pedro has no alternative but to fight back. As a result, the robber was terribly hurt. In this case, Pedro does not have moral responsibility for hurting the robber because he had performed self-defense to protect himself from a very clear and present danger. Acts done from fear or through fear, in certain cases are involuntary because the agent is obligated to choose to avoid the greater evil. This kind of situation lessens voluntariness and thus, decreases moral responsibility.
- 3.1 Light Fear: The threat/imminent danger confronting a person is not so serious or grave to influence or force one to do a certain act.
 - So, a seriously bad act done under light fear is culpable.
- 3.2. Grave Fear: The threat is so serious or grave that it can really influence or force one to do a certain act.
 - Examples of this are the cases of hold-ups wherein people are forced to give their money or belonging to another just out of fear; and other similar circumstances.
 - The culpability of a bad act done under grave fear can be lessened or negated.

4. Violence

- This is very much related to the cases of fear.

The direct message of this is, you must exert all the efforts needed to defend yourself in extreme cases where your life or your dignity is at stake. Again, this is in the cases of rape or hold-ups wherein the hold uppers even want to kill their victims.

The morality here is that one is culpable if he/she will not exert all the necessary efforts to defend herself/ himself from the aggressor if needed if his life or dignity is at stake. Although, the culpability can be lessened depending on the circumstance.

On another angle, if a woman is defending herself from a rapist and accidentally, the head of the rapist hits a wall or stone or hard object and died. In this case, the woman's action is not culpable since she was just defending herself and there was no intention to kill the aggressor.

Self-defense is a classic example in the face of aggression wherein one has to protect himself/herself from the attacker.

Conditions for Self-defense:

1. The aggression must be unjust.
2. The aggression must be actual.
3. Use minimum violence/it must be proportional

- Problems come when people just kill someone without being attack physically. There was no actual aggression done. For example, one is just looking at you intently then suddenly you spank or even kill him with a gun or any other hard objects. Remember in self-defense, there is no intention to kill but only to defend oneself or run away from the trouble. For example, you have a gun and one is running after you with a knife. Which part of the aggressor's body should you hit with your gun? The head? Stomach? Neck? Chest?

5. Habit

It is a firm and stable behavior pattern of acting. An individual naturally and consciously performs an action, as a result of its repetitive performance through time. One acts based on his/her repeated responses to situations.

Good moral habits are called virtues while bad habits are vices. People are expected to exert utmost effort to free themselves from vicious habits.

Some examples of your bad habits children are: speaking bad words when you are mad, always coming late, not attending mass, copying during quizzes and exams, etc.

How do we moralize vices or bad habits?

Vices or bad habits are culpable. The culpability is lessened only when one is exerting effort to correct or stop his/her vices.