

Natural law (Aquinas)

Discovered by investigating the desires that belong to human nature:

The good is what *all things* desire →

1. Do and pursue good; avoid evil. (Root of the natural law)

Every *substance* (independent thing) strives for the conservation of its own being in the way that its nature allows →

2. Preserve individual human lives. (Right to life)

Every *animal* seeks to reproduce and educate its offspring →

3. Perpetuate the human species, and educate children to maturity. (Rights to procreation and some level of education)

Every *human being* is rational →

4. Seek the truth (i.e., avoid ignorance) and live peaceably in community. (Rights to inquiry and communal peace)



Mediated by:

Fundamental Desires

Cultural Norms

Religious Laws

Human Law

Habits

Social Approval

Ontological Justification (Objective) – Pieper

Rights arise on the basis of what we are (rational animals, substances that are oriented to the good) → this is why there is anything due to any of us

But we are what we are only due to having been created that way (cf. Declaration of Independence: “that all men are *created* equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness”)



Epistemic Justification (Subjective) – Parekh

Conscience: a trained feeling that is not arbitrary but correlated with reality.

Training takes place through talking with others in different life situations and through imagining oneself into other perspectives (universality).

Having a conscience that is well-attuned then lets me live in tune with myself, so that I don't have to wall off some things I do from my internal conversation (Socratic justice).

What do we rely on
when these fail?