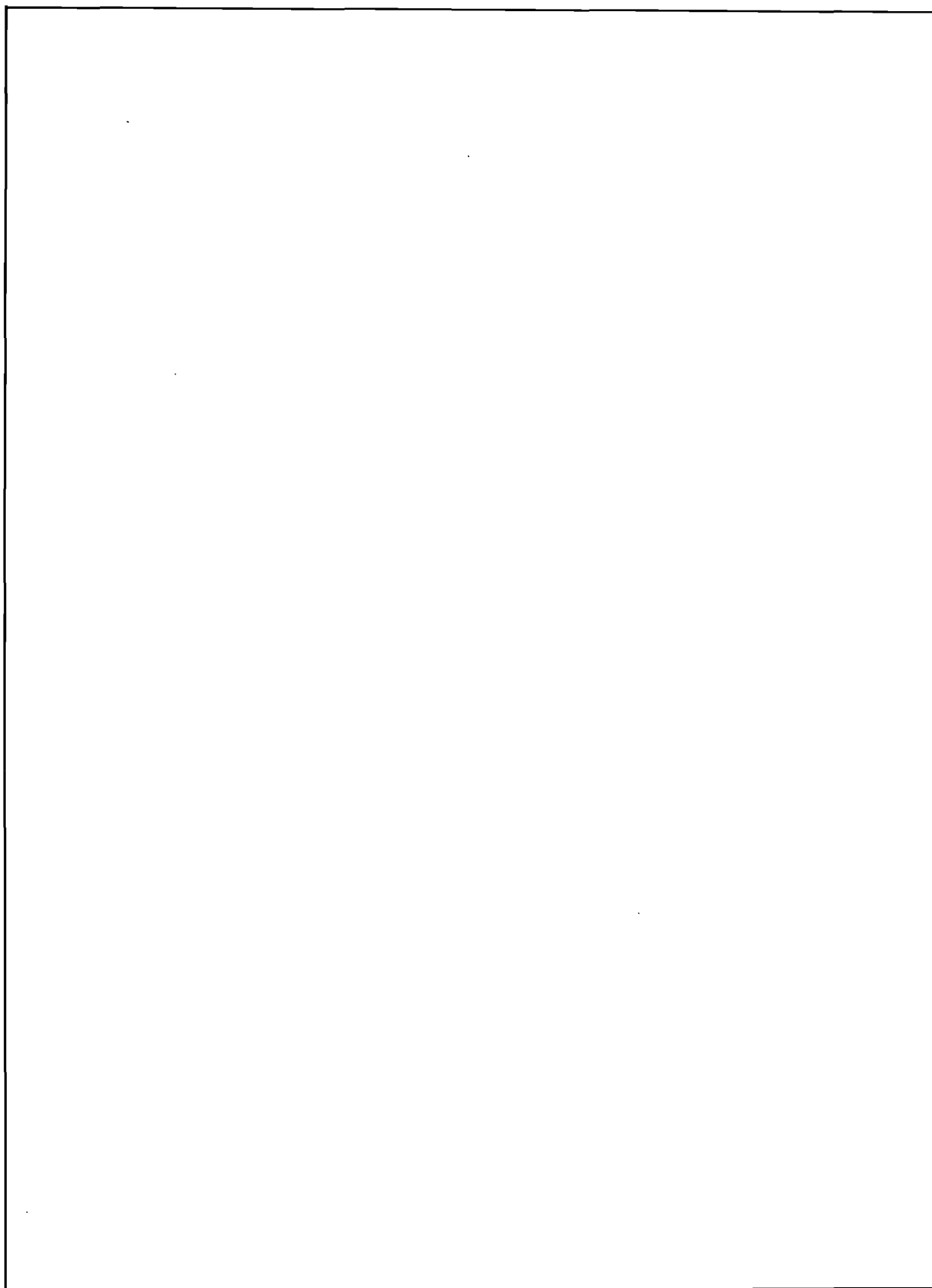


A Comparison of the Philosophical Realist and the Sociologist  
On Their Respective Views of Nature, Man, Morals, Society, and Government  
With an Aim towards Utility.

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## INTRODUCTION

I have chosen for my topic of study the two disciplines of sociology and realist philosophy. My purpose is to show that while they are different and incompatible in several ways, they can still be of great use to man. I will first of all present the philosophical realist's view of nature, man, morals, society and government. Secondly, I will present the sociologist's view of the same phenomena. Thirdly, I will compare and contrast the views presented and will attempt to show that the realist philosopher's view has more merit than the relativist view of the sociologist in that it encompasses all of man's nature while the sociologist's view is limited to studying man through the lens of society. In the conclusion, I hope to show that the sociologist and the philosophical realist can indeed work together to help man better understand himself.

## CHAPTER I

### THE PHILOSOPHICAL REALIST'S VIEW

In the study of realist ethics and a realist view of society one must first find the foundation for such a philosophy. The foundation for the philosophical realist is the theory of natural law.

Five basic doctrines are found to be always characteristic of it.

1. The world is an order of divergent tendencies which on the whole support one another.
2. Each individual entity is marked by an essential structure which it shares in common with other members of the species.
3. This structure determines certain basic existential tendencies that are also common to the species.
4. If these tendencies are to be realized without distortion and frustration, they must follow a general dynamic pattern. This pattern is what is meant by natural law. It is grounded on real structure, and is enforced by inexorable natural sanctions.
5. Good and evil are existential categories. It is good for an entity to exist in a condition of active realization. If its basic tendencies are hampered and frustrated, it exists in an evil condition.<sup>1</sup>

Thus we have a definition and a foundation. We see that each entity has an essential structure -- i.e. what makes it what it is and not something else. Also each entity has existential tendencies -- i.e. needs that must be fulfilled for the existence of that individual and the species. It follows, then, that each entity must have a primary tendency in accord with both the species and the individual. This tendency would also have to correspond with the essential structure of the entity. Since existence is concrete and essence is abstract there may be some divergence in how close the existence can fulfill the essence. The complete and total fulfillment of the essence by an entity is called the final end of that entity. The entity is said to

have reached perfection.

Since it appears that everything else in the world strives to reach its perfection, should man be an exception? Should he be the only creature that has no goal or end? Since man is a part of nature we must say that he has to have an end. It is now our purpose to discover this end.

It seems rather apparent that we can eliminate such things as sense-pleasure almost immediately since all of them only deal with one aspect of man -- in the case of sense-pleasure, only the body is perfected.<sup>2</sup>

Rather the human good will involve what might loosely be called the maturity or healthy condition of the whole man, or of man in his total being. Likewise, since man is a being capable of intelligence and understanding, and consequently of planned and deliberate behavior on the basis of such understanding, it may also be presumed that the way in which a human being attains his appropriate good or natural perfection will be rather different from that of a plant or an animal. . . . a human being can presumably attain his perfection only by a conscious recognition of what the human end is and by deliberately aiming at this proper end.<sup>3</sup>

So now it is necessary to study what the whole man inclines to. That is, what does natural law say are the natural inclinations of man. How does he compare and contrast with the rest of nature? What is his specific difference? What makes man a man?

"The order of the precepts of the law of nature follows the order of natural inclinations. First, there is present in man an inclination towards the good considered in relation to his nature in so far as this nature is shared by all other substances. . . . And as a consequence of this inclination those actions by which a man's life is conserved and death avoided belong to the natural law." Together with all other substances man has a natural tendency to preserve his being. . . . "Secondly, there is present in man an inclination according to his nature in so far as it is shared by other animals." This naturally implanted inclination . . . is an inclination to propagate the species and bring up offspring. And reason reflecting on this natural inclination promulgates the precept that the species is to be propagated and children educated. "Thirdly, there is present in man an inclination to his good as a rational being. Thus man has a natural inclination to know the truth about God and to live in society." Reason, . . . , promulgates the precept that he should seek truth

and avoid ignorance.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, the thing that man does not share with any other creatures is his inclination to know the truth and to live in society. I wish first to deal with his search for truth.

What allows man to search for truth is his own intelligence.

However, one must be careful not to fall into the trap of making intelligence the end of man. If one does, the same mistake is being made that was made in regards to sense-pleasure, i.e. the perfecting of only a part of man, not of the whole man. If one does fall into the trap, the following argument may be held up. We all have known men who were extremely intelligent but whose lives are not at all exemplary. We would not call these people "ideal" men. Some examples would be Hitler and Stalin.<sup>5</sup> And then, what of the men who were not overly intelligent but whom we hold up as "ideal" men. For an example we might use St. Francis of Assisi.

No matter how stupid and ignorant and obtuse a man may be -- yes, even if he acknowledges to himself his own intellectual inferiority, taken in the strict and narrow sense -- still it is more than likely that what keeps such a person going and makes life bearable for him is his own secret, or perhaps not so secret, conviction that when it comes to his personal decisions and personal choices, he's not really so dumb, and that, according to his lights, he is after all pretty shrewd in the matters of what Aristotle, in the above-quoted passage, termed "the practical life of man as possessing reason."<sup>6</sup>

We have, then, the idea put forth that intelligence is a means, not an end.<sup>7</sup>

It is to be used as a tool to discover man's natural end and then to move towards that end. If intelligence is made an end then we say that the person is smart but has no common sense. If intelligence is made a means to an end then we have what Socrates called the examined life.<sup>8</sup> Man using his reason to analyse the knowledge he possesses and to bring it to bear on his own life and conduct.

Nor is it any wonder that if and when a human being does succeed in living in this intelligent and enlightened way, he will be fully aware of his life as being an examined life and hence a life that is proper to man. In other words, it is the life that satisfies man's natural aspirations and strivings and tendencies: and because it is thus satisfying, it is the truly happy life.<sup>9</sup>

Now that we see that the final end of man is leading the rationally examined life we must now move into how one evaluates an act to be good or bad. Therefore we proceed with a look at moral acts. According to Aquinas: "It is only . . . free acts proceeding from the will in view of an end apprehended by the reason, which fall within the moral sphere and are morally good or bad."<sup>10</sup> Thus, it is an act in which man exercises some form of control. This is perhaps what leads Aquinas to distinguish between exterior and interior acts. An exterior act is one that is observable by other people. The directing of the will towards an end would be the interior act. Therefore, there can never be an exterior act without an interior act but there may be an interior without an exterior act.<sup>11</sup>

Now intention belongs to the interior act. And it informs the whole act, in the sense that absence of a good intention and the presence of a bad intention vitiate the whole act and renders it morally bad. If a materially good act is done with a bad intention the total human act, consisting of both elements, is rendered morally bad. . . .

It does not follow, however, that for Aquinas intention is everything. "Goodness of the will, proceeding from intention directed to an end, is not sufficient to make an exterior act good." . . . For a human act, considered as a whole, to be morally bad, the absence of one single requisite factor is sufficient. But for a human act to be good without qualification the presence of one single requisite factor, like a good intention, is not sufficient.<sup>12</sup>

Aquinas held that a morally good act was an act which helped man to develop and perfect his nature as man. Or, to put it a different way, an act which helps man to realize his natural end -- i.e. a rationally examined life. However, there is a danger in that a man may not realize that an act is not



compatible with his end. This is where the concept of "right reason" enters in.<sup>13</sup> This involves having the objective good of man in focus, a time of deliberation to see if this immediate apparently good act is indeed compatible with the objective good of man, and finally a resolve to carry the act out, which has often been called obligation.

In this sense, obligation is imposed by the practical reason, binding the free will to perform the acts necessary for the attainment of the final end or good for man and to abstain from the acts which are incompatible with its attainment.<sup>14</sup>

It should be becoming apparent by now that in order to be a man constantly striving for the objective good of man one would have to be constantly reflecting on each individual act he was about to perform. However, we are saved by a part of our rationality. We have the ability to form habits. These habits are generalized enough that they can be applied to several types of situations so that we do not need one habit for each and every situation. Unfortunately, however, we can learn bad habits.

Good operative habits are called by Aquinas "virtues" and bad operative habits "vices." But he was not content with this distinction, and he followed Aristotle in distinguishing between the moral virtues, which incline a man's sensitive appetite to act in accordance with right reason, and the intellectual virtues which perfect a man's rational powers. We can have certain intellectual virtues without possessing the moral virtues. It is possible, for example, to be a competent metaphysician or pure mathematician without being a moral man in the colloquial sense of the term. . . . But it is not possible to have the moral virtues without the intellectual virtue of "prudence" which inclines us to choose the right means to the attainment of the objective good or to have prudence without the moral virtues.<sup>15</sup>

We can acquire vices. We acquire habits by acting and if our teachers err in our learning process then we may learn vices.

But then how do our teachers know what is a good or bad act? The main way of finding this out is by an examination of man's nature and natural inclinations. From this one can determine the good for man in the natural

order.<sup>16</sup> Once man has determined his tendencies and needs, he must then reflect on them and finally man can come to a knowledge of the natural moral law.<sup>17</sup> This is possible because of man's rationality and the fact that the natural moral law is based on natural law which has been shown to be all beings striving for their natural perfection. The word "moral" only adds the idea that man must use his rationality to determine the correct path to the end and to make sure he has that objective end clearly in focus. Otherwise, he may not use "right reason" and end up in error.

Thus far we have talked about the individual man searching for his final end. However, experience shows us that men do not live alone but in groups. Thus we have need of defining a "common" good.

. . . the common good is neither an alien good, opposed to the individual good, nor is it materially identified with the latter. It is not the good of any majority or the good of all, understood as a mere particular collection, for this is only another "larger," material good. The common good is based on a true universal, the good of all, that which is essentially good for man as such, abstracting from what is accidental and contingent. It is this universal good as attainable here and now by a particular human group. It is a whole, not of common substantial being, but of common perfection of being. It is something which cannot be touched or seen or pointed at or counted. It is something which must be understood.<sup>18</sup>

Thus the common good seems to be an environment in which men can reach their natural perfection and wherein this perfection is strongly encouraged.

Since man appears to live with his fellows and since he can reach his perfection with his fellows, it seems that society is the logical outcome. However, many philosophers and social scientists have argued over the concept of society as a part of natural law. Copleston says that Aquinas answered the arguments this way:

Yet he regarded life in society as being prescribed by the natural law. That is to say, he recognized in the human being a natural tendency to live in society with his fellows, not only in the

smaller group of the immediate family circle but also in those larger groups which in their developed form are called States or political communities. Social life is thus founded on human nature itself, and the family and the State are both natural communities. Reason, reflecting on man's fundamental inclinations and tendencies, says that these societies ought to be formed, inasmuch as they are necessary for the development of man's potentialities. In fine, society is required for the satisfaction of man's bodily and spiritual needs. It is therefore not a purely artificial construction but a natural institution which follows from man being what he is.<sup>19</sup>

Since society is a natural inclination of man then it must also be inclined towards the common good. If it was not then there would be a contradiction in the natural law theory, i.e. if society is natural to man and man strives for the common good, then society must strive for the common good and this is natural. However, a problem enters in here. Each individual man has the common good (or the final end) of man in different focus from other men. Aquinas says each man has a different amount of insight to the final end. Thus when men are in a society some common agreement has to be reached. Even if the final end would be clearly in focus the means to that end would have to be somehow established. Thus we have the concept of positive law.

Aquinas first of all defines law. "Law in general, he says, is a measure or rule of human acts, a measure or rule conceived by reason and promulgated with a view to the common good."<sup>20</sup> He thereby says that law is not just for itself but is an aid to the search for the common good of man.

. . . one of the functions of human positive law, the law, that is, of the State, is to define such concepts as clearly as possible and to provide those temporal sanctions which are not provided by the natural law. . . . But legislation must be compatible with the moral law. Since the function of legislation is to promote the common good, the criterion of goodness and badness in legislation is its relation, as discerned by reason, to that end.<sup>21</sup>

However, since when one legislates one is moving from the general to the particular, there is room for error. Thus there has to be a distinction

made between natural and positive law.

By nature is meant the essence alone apart from all that is extraneous and incidental. As Plato clearly saw, the appeal to nature can never be used legitimately to justify any given situation in all its factual detail. Such a material state of affairs, as he pointed out (Republic 471c-474b), can never do more than approximate the truly natural state.<sup>22</sup>

Since we can never actually reach the natural state because we are immersed in material affairs, this is no excuse not to try to at least approximate it. However, if each individual man tried to do this on his own there would be chaos. Thus we need society. But within society we need leaders who are in authority over us. The following is a definition of the ideal authority.

This authority performs three important functions, analogous to deliberation, judgement, and choice in individual practical reason. First of all, the group authority must preserve an understanding of the basic natural law from which the group structure is derived. It must maintain the positive laws introduced into the original constitution and lay down new positive laws when the situation so requires. In the second place, it must exercise a judicial function, applying this body of law equitably to varying individual cases in accordance with distributive and corrective justice. In the third place, it must choose and decide between alternative courses of concrete action and carry them out in practice.<sup>23</sup>

This, of course, is government. Government is nothing more than an authority group which does the three-fold functions listed above to help the individual men in that particular society to reach the final end of man: the perfection of his rationality through an examined life.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SOCIOLOGIST'S VIEW<sup>1</sup>

In all of the social sciences, including sociology, there is the fundamental assumption that all creatures act in certain patterns of behavior. This assumption is called the Law of Behavior.<sup>2</sup> Behavior is the actions of a creature when introduced to different stimuli. These actions fall into two basic categories: reflex and cognitive. Reflex is that action in which no thought process is needed; there is no decision to be made between various actions. In cognitive action, the subject decides which action to take. However, this action is limited by the laws of behavior. In other words, given a certain animal with a certain background in a certain set of circumstances a social scientist can pretty well predict the animal's reaction.

However, with man a new problem arises.

The idea of human nature is clear enough when it refers to the study of man as a physical organism. The more we learn about body chemistry and physiology, the more we can say about the organism's responses to the invasion of bacteria and the changes in temperature, pressure, and nutrition. Similarly, various psychological phenomena, such as learning and perceiving, seem to follow laws that are characteristic of the whole species. But man also has personality, characterized by dispositions to responding in emotional ways, by the development of a self, and by psychological defences.<sup>3</sup>

Sociologists identify these non-physiological characteristics of man with language. Language brings forth reason.<sup>4</sup>

One might now ask, "if man can't be explained physiologically and since he, at times, reacts to situations unpredictably, why do the social

scientists attempt to study him? The answer given is that social scientists can learn the disposition of the person to respond. Certain needs will show up in many different types of studies which will indicate the "underlying psychic condition" of man.

Besides the Law of Behavior, there is the Law of Determination which affects behavior. This law states that our actions are influenced by what we are physiologically, geographically, economically, educationally, racially, sexually, etc. . . . and our experiences of the past. A major input into this is the culture we live in.<sup>6</sup> "Culture is the design and the prescription, the composite of guiding values and ideals."<sup>7</sup> This means that whatever we do is in the light of some sort of a culture. It is culture which sets up ideal goals for all its members to reach. It also sets up a system of punishments for those who hinder anyone in the culture from reaching their goals. Culture is a stabilizing force in men's lives because it tends to be consistent.<sup>8</sup>

The word "value" has appeared several times in relation to culture. It is a key concept and needs to be defined. "A cultural value may be defined as a widely held belief or sentiment that some activities, relationships, feelings, or goals are important to the community's identity or well-being."<sup>9</sup> To the individual man, this means that the community in which he lives has certain expectations of him. If he does not live up to them he may be punished. However, it should be pointed out that cultural values are ideals.<sup>10</sup> The minimum expected of a man in the culture according to its values is concretized in cultural norms. These set limits on how much individuals may deviate from the ideal. "A value is more general than a norm."<sup>11</sup>

These norms are learned by an individual through a process called socialization. There are many theories concerning how this socialization takes place. However, it is a certainty that socialization is a necessity for man.

From the point of view of the individual, socialization is the fulfillment of his potentialities for personal growth and development. Socialization humanizes the biological organism and transforms it into a self having a sense of identity, capable of disciplined and ordered behavior, and endowed with ideals, values, and aspirations.<sup>12</sup>

Because of other influencing factors, individuals will vary within a culture. However, cultures also tend to differ from each other. What is a value in one culture may be a vice in another. Social scientists call this cultural relativism.

This point of view was expressed by Sumner when he said, "everything in the mores of a time and place must be regarded as justified with regard to that time and place. 'Good' mores are those which are well adapted to the situation. 'Bad' mores are those which are not so adapted." In other words, there is no universal standard which an outsider can use to evaluate cultures or cultural norms as good or bad. Each culture must be seen in its own terms.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, there is no absolute morality. This, however, does not mean that there are no values which are good for all men. Inherent in relativism is the good value of respect for cultural differences. Also, there is the possibility of discovering values held cross-culturally.<sup>14</sup> Cultural universals are possible. Three reasons for this possibility follow: "1. The psychic unity of mankind. . . . 2. Requirements of group life. . . . 3. Limited possibilities. . . ." <sup>15</sup> These are because of either the physiological nature of man or the physics of interaction.

Therefore, we have cultures that hold different values because of the situations in which the culture exists. However, since it is man that

makes up culture and since man is a species with certain biological characteristics, there is room for cross-culturally held universals. (See appendix I for a list of common elements found in all known cultures.)

Society is an artificial construction set up by man to unite several cultures together. This may be done for several reasons. Some of these are: self-preservation of individuals, domination by a society, and a large culture splitting but the two factions are still compatible enough to form a society. In a given society, the cultures must be compatible. The more interaction in a society between the cultures, the closer these cultures will have to be in their cultural values.

Just as cultural norms insure the conformity of individuals to the culture, so laws insure the conformity of the cultures to society. But there is a difference between laws and norms. "Law has been defined as 'the enterprise of subjecting human conduct to the governance of rules.' A rule is not any norm but one that is formal, explicit, and deliberately instituted."<sup>16</sup> Thus, laws just don't happen, but they are enacted by some sort of legislative body. However, even this legislature is subjected to laws -- not only civil and criminal laws but also administrative, procedural, and substantive. No one is exempted from all law in a society.

There are four functions of a legal system: "1. To maintain public order. . . . 2. To facilitate cooperative action. . . . 3. To confer legitimacy. . . . 4. To communicate moral standards. . . . "<sup>17</sup> The legal system also distinguishes between types of acts and these are reflected in the severity of punishment. It distinguishes between acts mala prohibita (wrong by prohibition) and acts mala in se (wrong in themselves). Examples are, respectively, overtime parking and cold-blooded murder. However, as



one works down through the various crimes and tries to rank them, it soon becomes apparent that the dividing line isn't all that clear.<sup>18</sup>

The job of making and carrying out these laws falls to the government of that society.

But every social power, whether called authority or anything else, is constituted by a corresponding assent, spontaneous or deliberate, explicit or implicit, of various individual wills, resolved, from certain preparatory convictions, to concur in a common action, of which this power is first the organ, and then the regulatory. Thus, authority is derived from concurrence, and not concurrence from authority, (setting aside the necessary reaction:) so that no great power can arise otherwise than from the strongly prevalent disposition of the society in which it exists. . . .<sup>19</sup>

Therefore, the government is decided by the people. However, once a society and its government are established there may be a change. A society does have special needs unique to itself. In order to acquire these needs, society demands our aid. We become its servants and may be forced to do things which are against our fundamental inclinations and desires.<sup>20</sup> It will succeed in doing this if the society can invest its government with moral authority and then get the people to venerate this authority. Next, the government gives out commands, which, because of their nature, do not allow for deliberation. After all, who deliberates when the authority on morality (in this case the government) says to do something.<sup>21</sup>

### CHAPTER III

#### A COMPARISON AND A CONTRAST OF THE TWO DISCIPLINES

In the preceeding two chapters, the view of man and morality by two different disciplines was presented. Now it is time to compare and contrast them.

In regard to the lower animals, there is little, if any, difference between Natural Law and the Law of Behavior. However, when man is added to the picture a difference emerges. The distinction is made between behavior and conduct.

This idea of behavior contrasts its nature with that of conduct as understood in moral theology. The Catholic views conduct as the result of his own action freely exercised about some definite object that exists independently of him, when external acts are considered, and mentally in internal acts. In sociology, the individual is but another link in social continuities which bring about every new manifestation of social progress or retrogression, in theology the individual is endowed with personal and independent existence, and his actions are properly his own, because he was free to have withheld them altogether had he so decided.<sup>1</sup>

In sociology, man is bound not to himself, as in natural law, but to his culture. Sociology sees man having reason only because he has language.<sup>2</sup> Language is determined by culture. Thus man's reason is defined by culture. In the natural law theory, it is language which results from man's rationality. Language is a quality of man, it is not his specific difference. Language may be determined by the culture but man is not totally conditioned by his language.

Sociology also adds the Law of Determinism. This states that we are bound by our culture to be what we are. We also are bound by our race,

sex, location, etc. . . . to be as we are. We are left with very little which we can control. A philosophical realist answers the argument as follows:

. . . we can scarcely blink the fact of life so completely as not to recognize that there are countless determining factors that operate to make us what we are, and to make us happy or miserable.

. . . Nevertheless, for most of us, most of the time, our adversities and ill fortune are not such as to leave us completely without resource. Nor is such resource exclusively an intellectual affair. . . . From the moral standpoint the important thing is not whether I am shrewd enough to avoid certain misfortunes, or to extricate myself from them once they have befallen me, but whether I have sufficient character (moral virtue) to sustain them in such a way as a good man or a wise man would do.<sup>3</sup>

The two disciplines also differ in how they conceive of the final end of man. The philosophical realist would say that the final end of man is living the rationally examined life. The sociologist, on the other hand, might say the same thing but in the context of a certain culture. In this sense the rationally examined life becomes nothing more than the living up to the expectations of the culture -- in other words, living frictionlessly in a culture. Sociology could then, in the hands of a sociologist with an ethical bent, become a discipline whereby one can learn the art of conformity to the culture. One might also say that to live this way would be to fall into the same trap as was demonstrated by sense-pleasure in chapter one. That is, one would only perfect his social nature, not his whole self.

The philosophical realist says that in order for man to reach his perfection he must follow the natural moral order. This order or law says that man must use right reason to decide which acts are good or bad. Good acts are those which help man to attain his end. Obligation enters in saying that man must use the means available to reach his final end. A sociologist argues that values are determined by the culture. These values

are important for the well-being of the community. The individual man may benefit from these values but he may just as easily not. Also, sociology does not see values as absolutes. "As may be seen from the work of Durkheim and Sumner, society is viewed as a closed, self-intelligible system which is the source and ground of all sociocultural phenomena. All cultural values are thought to be functions of social organization and to vary with the modes and interests of society."<sup>4</sup> However, philosophical realists go so far as to say that the absolute values to be valid do not have to appear in any culture or society.<sup>5</sup>

Now we come to the biggest distinction of all. The sociologist holds the cultural relativist view. This view stems mainly from the science of anthropology.

Entitled Patterns of Culture, the book attempts to exploit some of the wealth of modern anthropological research in support of a thesis of throughgoing ethical relativism. After all, Dr. Benedict argues, different human cultures, with their widely varying patterns are to be regarded as "travelling along different roads in pursuit of different ends, and these ends and these means in one society cannot be judged in terms of those of another society, because essentially they are incommensurable."<sup>6</sup>

Thus there is no objective morality. Therefore, there can be no society better than another. No culture's values could be more important than any other culture's values. This calls for tolerance and abolishes ethnocentrism. However, here Dr. Benedict slips. Tolerance is held up to be a virtue and Dr. Benedict's whole purpose is to put down the intolerance in America and in all other countries. Thus a tolerant society is better than an intolerant society.<sup>7</sup> The theory is also supposed to abolish absolutes, but an absolute is at its very center.

This thesis implies that culture is an absolute reality in the sense that culture alone is autonomous and independent, and that all modes of human experience and thought are relative thereto because

they are functions of culture and dependent on it for their form and content. In sum, cultural relativism presupposes a theory of cultural absolutism.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore we find a valueless theory full of value judgments.

The philosophical realist, when faced with the diversity of values in cultures, answers with Aquinas:

Aquinas himself was not ignorant of the fact that different groups have held different moral convictions. According to him all men are aware of the most fundamental principles in their most general form. All men would agree that in some sense good is to be pursued and evil avoided. If a man denies this principle he is probably denying not the principle itself but that what another man or a given society calls good is good. But when we come to less general and more particular conclusions, derived from the fundamental principles, ignorance is certainly possible. "In the case of some the reason is blinded by passion or by bad habits or by physical conditions. For example, according to Julius Caesar robbery used not to be considered wrong among the Germans, although it is expressly against the natural law." A fortiori there can be differences of opinion about the application of precepts to particular cases. Conscience may be erroneous, whether through our own fault or through some cause for which we are not responsible. And if our conscience tells us that we ought to perform a particular act, it is our moral duty to perform it. . . . This does not mean that there is no such thing as right reason and no such thing as an objectively moral conscience; but ignorance and mistakes are possible in moral matters, and the nearer we come to particulars the greater is the field of error.<sup>9</sup>

Thus as one gets more and more nearer to particular concrete situations, the more he must rely upon his insight into the natural law.

The realist allows for the concept of the common good. However, a sociologist who holds that culture is the center of values can only believe in common goods. This common good, since man is already determined, can only be that which will benefit the culture.

The two disciplines also disagree on their view of society. However, a distinction must first be made. When Aquinas used the term society, he meant the same as a sociologist does when he says culture. A society, for a sociologist, is made up of cultures which have compatible

values. Aquinas believed that culture was natural to man since man always seemed to be in it and since it could be made compatible with man's final end by being based on a view of the common good. Sociologists, however, view culture as a construct. It came about as a result of men wanting protection from the state of nature which they identified as "a state of war waged by independent, predatory individuals."<sup>10</sup> Thus man subjugated himself to culture. He entered into a contract with other men. The philosophical realist answer to this question is as follows:

No doubt, in the history of every concrete community, the primordial, general pattern of just or rational organization, in which each individual plays the role for which he is best fit and receives some proportional recompense, has been further specified and adjusted by numberless socially approved contracts. But each contract must have been based on natural principles already recognized, or the contract itself would be an uncaused mutation with no explanation, and history would lose all continuity. Why, indeed, should men enter into specific or rational contracts with one another unless their rational nature prescribed this for them as a natural necessity.<sup>11</sup>

So as one works back from present day "contracts," it soon becomes apparent that the first contract had to be a rational one or else the whole foundation of society would fail when challenged by a non-realist.

Because of the contract theory of culture, law is considered to be an institution for the preservation of culture.

Like religion and education, law is a major institution of social integration. Legal recognition lends coherence, regularity, and acceptance to social forms and codes of conduct. Law sustains and encourages social organization by defining what men can rely on in the conduct of others. As a sensitive indicator of cultural values, law says what men should aspire to in the ordering of their affairs. . . . Law is, therefore, a public, institutionalized mechanism for resolving controversies. Its contribution to social integration is active not passive.<sup>12</sup>

Philosophical realists, however, feel that law must deal primarily with putting forth the common good of man. Law only delimits the means to

the end, it does not set the end as it does in the sociological viewpoint.

Both views hold that government is the group that carries out the necessary laws. In the philosophical realist view, the government must always be for the common good. It must reflect on the laws or the lack of them and see if the situation aids or hinders individual men from reaching their final end. In sociology, the government is set up by the people to serve the society. The things individual men are asked to do by the government may be against their individual needs and wants.

## CONCLUSION

In analysing these two disciplines it has become increasingly clear to me that the whole problem of their compatibility or incompatibility rests on their focal point. Sociology has its start in society (culture) and from this it tries to work back to man. This causes a great deal of concentration on culture and very little on man as such. This is why it holds some of the views it does, e.g. laws are made for society, for social integration, not for man; or the view that society makes man rational through language. Natural law theory takes man as he is now and analyses him. From this it finds man's natural inclinations and tendencies. It can therefore say that man tends toward his natural end and society (culture) is only there to help him achieve his aim.

The question is now, "How do these two views balance each other?"

Culture, I have maintained, is not the only or primary factor in human experience; it is but one essential condition of human experience. The other pole or dimension of reality is that of nature, cosmic and human, which provides human experience with a common frame of reference and enables man to correlate his cultural constructs with the coercive power of nature and his own individual and social needs and desires.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, by using both disciplines man can find out if he is on the right path for his perfection. The sociologist will provide the data and the realist will advise on whether or not the culture we are in is on the right course.

However, there is a danger. Both the sociologist and the philosophical realist must realize the boundaries of his particular discipline and stay in them. If either one crosses the boundary into the other, he must realize



that he will be judged by the other's criteria and will probably come out the worse for it.

## APPENDIX I

"Murdock has listed the following common elements in all known cultures, arranged in alphabetical order:

Age-grading, athletic sports, bodily adornment, calendar, cleanliness training, community organization, cooking, cooperative labor, cosmology, courtship, dancing, decorative art, divination, division of labor, dream interpretation, education, eschatology, ethics, ethnobotany, etiquette, faith healing, family, feasting, fire making, folklore, food taboos, funeral rites, games, gestures, gift giving, government, greetings, hair styles, hospitality, housing, hygiene, incest taboos, inheritance rules, joking, kin-groups, kinship nomenclature, language, law, luck superstitions, magic, marriage, mealtimes, medicine, modesty concerning natural functions, mourning, music, mythology, numerals, obstetrics, penal sanctions, personal names, population policy, postnatal care, pregnancy usages, property rights, propitiation of supernatural beings, puberty customs, religious ritual, residence rules, sexual restrictions, soul concepts, status differentiation, surgery, tool making, trade, visiting, weaning, and weather control."<sup>1</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

### Chapter I

<sup>1</sup>John Wild, Plato's Modern Enemies and the Theory of Natural Law (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 132-33.

<sup>2</sup>F.C. Copelston, Aquinas (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1967), p. 203.

<sup>3</sup>Henry B. Veatch, Rational Man: A Modern Interpretation of Aristotelean Ethics (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), p. 53.

<sup>4</sup>Copelston, op. cit., p. 223, quoting Aquinas, S.T., Ia, IIae, 94, 2.

<sup>5</sup>Veatch, op. cit., p. 58.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 69 - 71.

<sup>10</sup>Copelston, op. cit., p. 201.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 201-02.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 207, quoting Aquinas, S.T., Ia, IIae, 20, 2.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 212-13.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 225.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 215.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 222-23.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 221.

<sup>18</sup>John Wild, Introduction to Realistic Philosophy (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), pp. 190-91.

<sup>19</sup>Copelston, op. cit., p. 236.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 219-20.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 239-40.

<sup>22</sup>Wild, Introduction, op. cit., pp. 179-80.

### Chapter II

<sup>1</sup>For the main source of this chapter I used an introductory sociology text written by Leonard Broom and Philip Selznick. I used only this one wherever possible since it appears to be in agreement with other current sociology books. The ones I examined were Paul H. Landis, Introductory Sociology (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1958), and Joseph H. Fichter,

Sociology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957). I finally decided upon this particular text because it appears to be the most widely used and because I am familiar with it from an introductory course I took.

<sup>2</sup>Rev. Theodore M. Hemelt, S.S., S.T.D., Final Moral Values in Sociology (Washington, D.C.: Sulpician Seminary Press, 1929), pp. 184-85.

<sup>3</sup>Leonard Broom and Philip Selznick, Sociology: A Text with Adapted Readings (4th ed.; Evanston: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 116.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>6</sup>David Bidney, "The Philosophical Presuppositions of Cultural Relativism and Cultural Absolutism," in Ethics and the Social Sciences, ed. by Leo R. Ward (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959), p. 59.

<sup>7</sup>Broom and Selznick, op. cit., o. 55.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 70, quoting William Graham Sumner, Folkways (New York: [Mentor] New American Library, 1960), p. 65.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 381.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 379-80.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 392.

<sup>19</sup>Auguste Comte, "Society and Government," in Theories of Society, ed. by Talcott Parsons, et al., (2 Vols.; New York: Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1961), p. 127.

<sup>20</sup>Emile Durkheim, "Society and Individual Consciousness," in Theories of Society, op. cit., p. 720.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 720-21.

### Chapter III

<sup>1</sup>Hemelt, op. cit., pp. 135-36.

<sup>2</sup>Broom and Selznick, op. cit., p. 86.

<sup>3</sup>Veatch, op. cit., pp. 162-64.

<sup>4</sup>Bidney, op. cit., p. 58.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>6</sup>Veatch, op. cit., p. 39, quoting Ruth Benedict, Patterns of Culture (New York: Mentor Books, 1958), p. 206.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Bidney, op. cit., p. 66.

<sup>9</sup>Copelston, op. cit., pp. 227-28, quoting Aquinas, S.T., Ia, IIae, 94, 4.

<sup>10</sup>Wild, Introduction, op. cit., p. 176.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., o. 178.

<sup>12</sup>Broom and Selznick, op. cit., p. 379.

#### Conclusion

<sup>1</sup>Bidney, op. cit., p. 67.

#### Appendix I

<sup>1</sup>George Peter Murdock, "The Common Denominator of Cultures," in The Science of Man in the World Crisis, ed. by Ralph Linton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945), p. 124, in Broom and Selznick, op. cit., p. 68.

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