

## Critical Study of Western Natural Law Theories in the Second Stage of Its Revival in Postmodern Period

Mohammad Hossein Talebi\*

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### Abstract

Natural law is the main reason of natural human rights. According to its most famous conception, natural law is the commands of practical reason about free human behaviours to arrive at eternal happiness. Western natural law discussions started from the sixth century BC. During this long history, natural law was under different conceptions. In the 19th century, natural law discussions subsided altogether because of the domination of positivism on the philosophers' thoughts and they were revived in three stages in the postmodern period of the 20th century. This paper analyses natural law theories in the second stage of the revival. These theories are classified into two groups: Catholic and Protestant views. The Catholics thought that paying attention to natural law teachings is necessary to make positive laws ethical in societies. Protestants were prudent in relation to natural law as the real (not intrinsic) secular morality. In addition to the particular deficiencies of each theory, the common problem of both two groups of theories is that they are not natural law in the same name. That is why dividing them under one word (of natural law) is not a correct logical division. The research method in this paper is a synthetic one, which is traditional – intellectual – critical.

**Keywords:** natural law; the second stage of revival; postmodern; Catholic; Protestant.

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\*Associate Professor, Department of Law and Social, Research Institute of Hawze and University, Qom, Iran.  
Email: mhtalebi@rihu.ac.ir



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