

Summary Edward Feser's "Teleology: A Shopper's Guide," *Philosophia Christi* 12, No. 1 (2010): 142-159

UNIVERSALS	TELEOLOGY
REALISM	
Realism regarding universals holds that universals are real and irreducible to particulars.	Realism regarding teleology (Teleological Realism) holds that teleology is a real and irreducible feature of the natural world.
<p align="center">Extreme Realism (Plato)</p> <p align="center">Universals are real and are not reducible to particulars.</p>	<p align="center">Platonic Teleological Realism</p> <p align="center">Teleology is irreducible but is entirely derived from an outside (extrinsic) source, as, for example, a divine mind like Plato's demiurge.</p>
<p align="center">Moderate Realism (Aristotle)</p> <p>Universals are real but only exist (as universals) in intellects. They come to exist in the intellect by way of abstraction from something metaphysically real in the particulars (i.e., the form). Thus, the form "tree" exists as a universal in the intellect of the knower and as a particular in a tree. If all human intellects were to go out of existence, there would no longer be any universals since there would no longer be any intellects in which for them to exist.</p> <p>Moderate realism differs from conceptualism (below) in that conceptualism denies that the concepts in the mind (which are regarded as universals in some sense) arise by way of abstraction from anything metaphysically real in the particular.</p>	<p align="center">Aristotelian Teleological Realism</p> <p>Teleology is intrinsic to (immanent within) natural substances and does not derive from any divine source. This is not in conflict with Aristotle's Unmoved Mover. While the Unmoved Mover is the <i>telos</i> toward which all motion is directed, it is not the cause of the existence of the natural substances with their teleologies, in as much as the Unmoved Mover (or Movers) is not at all an efficient cause of the universe.</p>
<p align="center">Scholastic Realism (Thomas Aquinas)</p> <p>Scholastic Realism is the same as Moderate Realism in that that the universals can come to exist in the intellects of humans (by abstraction).</p> <p>Scholastic Realism differs from Moderate Realism in that the universals also exist eternally in the mind of God as their Creator.</p> <p>Be aware that many (if not most) textbooks do not make this distinction and, thus, would call the Realism of the Scholastics Moderate Realism (either because they do not notice the distinction or do not regard it as warranting a separate label).</p>	<p align="center">Scholastic Teleological Realism</p> <p>Teleology is intrinsic to (immanent within) natural substances. In this is it the same as Aristotelian Teleological Realism. However, the existence of final causes (teleology) must ultimately be explained in terms of a divine intellect. In this it differs from both Platonic and Aristotelian Teleological Realism. Like Platonic Teleological realism (but unlike Aristotelian Teleological Realism) it sees the divine mind as relevant to teleology. Like Aristotelian Teleological Realism (but unlike Platonic Teleological Realism) it sees teleology as intrinsic to (immanent within) natural substances.</p> <p>The key here is this: "The difference from the Platonic approach is that the Scholastic view does not take the existence of a divine ordering intelligence to follow <i>directly</i> from the existence of teleology in nature. An intermediate step in argumentation is required, for the link between teleology and an ordering intelligence is (with a nod to Aristotle) not taken to be <i>obvious</i>." [Feser, Teleology, 148]</p> <p>For Feser, the problem with ID is that it skips this intermediate step, thus rendering the argument (either explicitly or by implication) non-Thomistic in as much as it (again, either explicitly or by implication) fails to factor in that the teleology arises <i>primarily</i> from the form (i.e., it is intrinsic to or immanent within the substance) while <i>ultimately</i> from God as the Creator of the form. The reason that this is a problem is because certain of the main proponents of ID claim to be Thomistic.</p>
ANTI-REALISM	
Universals are either reducible to particulars or are unreal altogether	Teleology is either reducible to non-teleological phenomena or is unreal altogether
<p align="center">Conceptualism (Ockham)</p> <p>Universals are nothing but concepts in the minds of intellects and have no real grounding in the particulars. It should be noted that some text books label Ockham as a nominalist and would put Hume (below) entirely outside the discussion of universals as a philosophical skeptic.</p>	<p align="center">Teleological Reductivism</p> <p align="center">Admits teleology in some sense, but says it can be reduced to non-teleological phenomena.</p>
<p align="center">Nominalism (Hume)</p> <p align="center">There is no reality to universals. Instead, what are referred to as universals are only names or labels given to certain things or properties.</p>	<p align="center">Teleological Eliminativism</p> <p align="center">Denies teleology altogether.</p>