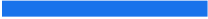




The Self in Contemporary Catholicism

Background

IAN J CRANSTON

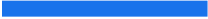


Nature and grace in the Catholic tradition

- Background: Aristotle and teleology
- Thomas Aquinas on nature/grace
- Nature/grace in post-scholastic thought
- Henri de Lubac on nature/grace

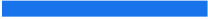
Teleology

- Aristotle introduces the notion of teleology
- *Telos*: a thing's end or purpose
- In his *Metaphysics* and *Physics*, he presents the four causes: material, efficient, formal, final
- The four cause 'move' a thing from potency to act
- A thing's end or purpose is intrinsic (innate) or extrinsic (given to a thing)



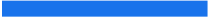
Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274)

- Thomas blends Greek philosophy with Christian doctrine/biblical revelation
- In his writings on nature/grace, Thomas speaks of the beatific vision as our natural end
- Think back to Aristotle's notion of a thing's natural end or *telos*
- Grace 'moves' an individual to their natural end
- Grace acts formally within being (form = Aristotle's third cause), 'moving' an individual from potency to act
- I am potentially one thing that 'moves' to actually being one thing
- Our desire for an end in the supernatural is natural for the individual
- The natural end is innate; it is not added to the individual



Nature/grace is post-scholastic thought

- This is a hugely complex historical period/area of scholarship
- Topics to consider might include:
 - Baroque Scholasticism
 - Work of Francisco Suarez
 - 19th century Neo-Scholasticism
 - 20th century neo-Thomism
 - Catholicism and modernism
 - *La nouvelle theologie*



Henri de Lubac (1896–1991)

- French Jesuit priest and theologian
- Associated with the *la nouvelle theologie* (the new theology) movement from the 1930's/40s
- Along with others, de Lubac returns to the sources of Christian theology to think again about doctrine and especially the interpretation of Thomas Aquinas
- He is a significant contributor to current thinking about nature/grace
- Distancing himself from earlier neo-Thomist ideas of nature/grace (where both qualities had become separate categories), de Lubac follows Thomas in understanding them as blended qualities
- De Lubac rejects nature separate from grace; this he sees as a neo-scholastic development in the 19th century
- Nature separate from grace would imply a pure nature