

Aristotle

(a note on the reading, "Nature and the Four Causes")

Note: "cause", for A, has the force of "explanatory factor."

E.g., w.r.t. a house:

MATERIAL CAUSE: the "stuff" from which the house is built (wood or stone)

EFFICIENT CAUSE: the builder himself

FORMAL CAUSE: the plan of the house (blueprint)

FINAL CAUSE: the purpose or end of the house (provision of shelter)

(INSTRUMENTAL CAUSE: the boatbuilder's tools)

In natural phenomena efficient, formal and final causes often coincide. For this reason A often simply contrasts matter and form.

In natural processes identity (e.g., of an oak tree) depends on the complete form realized at its end.

In natural things the end is an internal governing principle of the process rather than an external goal.

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The Council of Trent (1545-1563) on Justification

- 1] Final cause: the glory of God
- 2] Efficient cause: God's free grace
- 3] Meritorious cause: Christ's suffering and death
- 4] Instrumental cause: baptism
- 5] Formal cause: the conferred righteousness of God

The Puritans, misreading Trent, regarded #5 as "works-righteousness" [i.e., self-salvation], and thereafter regarded #3 as Formal cause. Their shift here gave rise to "TULIP": those who are the recipients of the conferred righteousness of God are those *alone* for whom Christ died. These cannot fail to persevere [i.e., remain in such righteousness.]