

**Tad Schmaltz (University of Michigan at Ann Arbor):  
Descartes's Critique of Scholastic Teleology**

It has been said that one mark of Descartes's modernity is his rejection of scholastic teleology. However, I argue that Descartes's attitude toward teleology is more flexible than this rejection may seem to indicate. I illustrate this flexibility by focusing on Descartes's argument that teleological explanations in scholastic physics derive from the confused sense that there are "little souls" that cognize the ends of inanimate bodies. I link this objection to remarks in Descartes's writings that indicate that his critique of teleology is qualified insofar as it allows for (1) genuine final causation in the case of finite minds, (2) the possibility that God's action is conditioned by (indifferently created) ends, and (3) a kind of finality in the case of the mind-body union that does not depend on divine teleology.

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