

So What's New About Scholasticism?

Scholasticism, the philosophical and theological movement that dominated Western thought during the Middle Ages, has seen a resurgence of interest in recent years. But what exactly is Scholasticism, and what's new about it?



So What's New About Scholasticism?: How Neo-Thomism Helped Shape the Twentieth Century

by David Shoemaker

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In this article, we'll explore the history of Scholasticism, its key features, and its relevance to contemporary thought.

The History of Scholasticism

Scholasticism arose in the 11th century as a way to reconcile the teachings of Aristotle with the Christian faith. Aristotle's philosophy was highly influential in the Islamic world, and as Christian scholars came into contact with Islamic thought, they began to see the value of Aristotle's insights.

However, Aristotle's philosophy was also seen as a threat to Christian orthodoxy. Some church leaders feared that Aristotle's emphasis on reason

and logic would lead people to reject the truths of the faith.

Scholasticism sought to find a middle ground between these two extremes. Scholastics argued that Aristotle's philosophy could be used to support the Christian faith, but that it needed to be interpreted in a way that was consistent with Church teaching.

The most famous Scholastic was Thomas Aquinas, who lived in the 13th century. Aquinas's massive work, the *Summa Theologica*, is a systematic exposition of Christian theology that draws heavily on Aristotle's philosophy.

Aquinas's work helped to establish Scholasticism as the dominant intellectual force in the West. Scholastics continued to be influential throughout the Middle Ages, and their ideas had a profound impact on the development of Western thought.

The Key Features of Scholasticism

Scholasticism is characterized by a number of key features, including:

- Its emphasis on reason and logic
- Its use of Aristotle's philosophy
- Its focus on the systematic exposition of doctrine
- Its commitment to the Christian faith

Scholastics believed that reason was a valuable tool for understanding the world and defending the faith. They also believed that Aristotle's philosophy provided a sound philosophical framework for Christian thought.

Scholastics were also committed to the systematic exposition of doctrine. They believed that it was important to present Christian beliefs in a clear and organized way.

Finally, Scholastics were committed to the Christian faith. They believed that reason could be used to support the faith, but they also believed that faith was ultimately a matter of revelation.

The Relevance of Scholasticism to Contemporary Thought

Scholasticism has seen a resurgence of interest in recent years, as scholars have come to appreciate its insights into a wide range of topics, including:

- Metaphysics
- Epistemology
- Ethics
- Logic

Scholastic metaphysics seeks to answer questions about the nature of being, existence, and God. Scholastic epistemology seeks to answer questions about the nature of knowledge and how we can know the world.

Scholastic ethics seeks to answer questions about the nature of the good and how we should live our lives.

Scholastic logic seeks to develop a system of reasoning that is both valid and sound.

Scholasticism offers a valuable resource for contemporary thought because it provides a systematic and rigorous approach to a wide range of philosophical and theological issues.

By engaging with Scholasticism, contemporary thinkers can gain new insights into the fundamental questions of life and the universe.

Scholasticism is a rich and complex philosophical and theological tradition that has had a profound impact on Western thought. Its emphasis on reason and logic, its use of Aristotle's philosophy, and its commitment to the Christian faith make it a valuable resource for contemporary thought.

By engaging with Scholasticism, contemporary thinkers can gain new insights into the fundamental questions of life and the universe.

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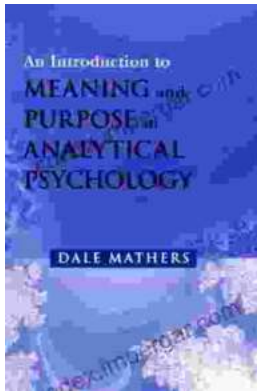
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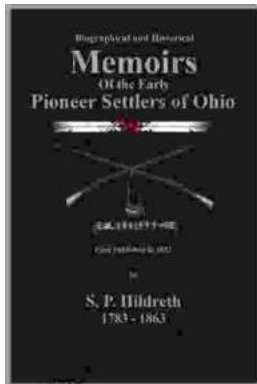
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