



The Scholastic Spectrum in the Modern Education

Ecilana Luiza de Menezes Vieira

Department of Theology and Religious Studies Postgraduate, Venda Nova do Imigrante College, Santarem, Brazil

Email address:

ecilana.vieira@hotmail.com

To cite this article:

Ecilana Luiza de Menezes Vieira. The Scholastic Spectrum in the Modern Education. *Science Journal of Education*.

Vol. 10, No. 4, 2022, pp. 127-132. doi: 10.11648/j.sjedu.20221004.11

Received: March 30, 2022; **Accepted:** May 3, 2022; **Published:** August 24, 2022

Abstract: The article discusses Modern Education and Scholasticism and their relationships using historical aspects and making parallel convenient. This research describes the methodology Scholastic for comprehension of its characteristics and its relationship with modern education through bibliography and method qualitative research to deepen the theme and enable the necessary inferences. The paper emphasizes the legacy of medieval school education today to understand which particular aspects are similar to Modern Education. The scholastic method believes that man's reasoning frees him from the possible errors of reality often caused by the excess of information which happens because the accelerated information is without the necessary analysis and correlation. And all this promotes chaos and irrationality besides makes the knowledge become inaccessible. Therein lies the importance of critical thinking, exercising the ability to think and study rigorously, always aiming at the truth are mechanism from thought scholastic which makes humans capable of discerning the good and evil. The habit of developing readings and discussions to achieve reality in its essence are nowadays the biggest challenge for educators in modernity. The search for the truth sets people free, thinking for itself is a sign of freedom, and goes far beyond earning a certificate.

Keywords: Scholasticism, Modern Education, Influence

1. Introduction

The topic of Education is vast. Over the years, different purposes have been assigned to it. Because each age, according to its historical context, has its particular view of the world, a cosmovision. After all, each epoch has a type of lens through which the individual filters the reality. Many, without noting have been living their lives based on these lenses. That way, make the place and the experiences, each person acquire a reading of the universe. These might have repercussions over all aspects of the individual's reality, including his vision about the teaching. That is why it is impossible to defend a single definition of it. However, even though there are different approaches, there will be recognition that Education's role has always been indispensable.

This article addresses the influence of medieval pedagogy on modern teaching. Both methodologies are situated at different times. Due to this, it carried its peculiarities that stand out in its respective time. In the Modern Age, for example, the philosophy of science almost irreducibly admits

that knowledge is based exclusively on observation, experience, and verification, the scientific spirit, according to Hayek [7]. This hegemonic idea is in most scientific settings.

However, although it is predominant, this assumption has resistance. Moreland [9] states that the scientific spirit is nothing more than a thought or a philosophical statement because it is not there is a possibility of an empirical test of the sentence mentioned. Noting this, he claims not just that the premise is false but also reveals the inefficiency of this type of science to explain its assumptions and how these are unfeasible to be scientifically elucidated. Moreland categorically states that scientism is not self-sufficient to justify itself.

In this same scientific context, belief systems are interpreted only as an objectified phenomenon for the study and critique from science. Religion, therefore, does not present any contribution. This thought contrasts with the analysis of the specialist medieval historian Christopher Dawson that

attributes the Christian tradition as the main responsible for the development of knowledge bequeathed by the wise men of antiquity, the Greeks [4]. Dawson still adds that no culture truly can flourish without its religious roots. For example, Middle Ages, Age that predominates the Christian thought, there was a flourishing and strengthening of the role of Education, above all, because at period an institution considered essential in our present, the university, was born.

The duel between these different thoughts shows the remnants of the medieval legacy persisting in the contemporary age. Consequently, the importance of analyzing the background of each period is verified to assimilate the Education's role. It means, despite the temporal contrasts of thought, it is possible to infer that there is an interaction or confluence between times and their respective pedagogies, though even, throughout history, only their divergences are accentuated. It is interesting to achieve greater clarity of their confluences and the influence of Scholastic over modern Education, first of all, describing them significant divergences.

2. Education and Its Concepts

2.1. The History and Main Characteristics of Scholastics

Scholasticism comes from the Latin meaning "belongs to the school", due to its genesis having been at the medieval schools. This movement followed the patristic philosophy, scholastic method emerged in the early Middle Ages and reached its maximum splendor in the thirteenth century. According to Rey Nunes, Scholasticism was initially developed in monastic establishments, episcopal schools that little by little gained space in medieval schools and finally was also present in the various university schools of the 13th century.

Its educational structure has relied on the seven liberal arts that were Trivium and Quadrivium. The first consisted of linguistic knowledge linked to grammar, dialectics, and rhetoric. The second consisted of geometry, arithmetic, music, and astronomy. Such methods were a kind of propaedeutic of the students, preparing them for the initiation of the superior degrees, of which three faculties stood out Medicine, Law, and Theology. At this same time, beyond the university, there was another institution called the "*studium generale*" likeness to a higher school, which conferred titles under papal or secular authority, which were valid throughout Christian Medieval Europe [11]. Due to such amplitude, this license was also called "privilege" (*privilegium studii*). Some episcopal schools enjoyed this privilege, drawing on their long tradition of legitimizing themselves through papal bulls.

The university was not an entity like a higher school but was close to an association between masters and students. Like Patristics, Scholasticism was a method of thinking and teaching that maintained the same proposal: the valorization of earthly life and its philosophies together with transcendence and Christian world-life. Through the encounter between Christian doctrine and the metaphysical

vision, thinkers were impelled "to consider beings and, finally, the very Being that underlies and justifies their existence" [10]. Anselm from Canterbury, considered the father of scholasticism, explained the existence of God, one of the most recurrent debates in the medieval period, through genuinely rational arguments "the being than which nothing greater can be thought" than whose existence could not be unthought. Consequently, it followed the legacy left by the first priests whose motto was *Fides quaerens intellectum*, faith in search of intelligence.

In this period that Christian philosophy proper, theology, as it is also known, arises. Aristotelian logic was prime influenced by the Scholastic method; his work known in the medieval world through Avicenna's translations of the papers of Averroes. In Aristotelian metaphysics, there was a more complete and profound study on the impact being for the understanding of the soul, great value for the period [2]. The contact between Western thinkers and Eastern thinkers and access to the legacy of Greek culture, such as the works of Aristotle, was fundamental to stimulating the study of philosophy and ancient Greek sciences in universities.

The introduction of Aristotelian works in the Latin fields of study and their increase in the curriculum enabled the consolidation of philosophy in Western thought as "discipline in other practical and Aristotelian fields intimately with as with a different religious proposal but independent in its religious management and operation [10]". Relying on the precise technique of formal logic, which supported the idea of laws of intelligence, the West has begun to make use of the instrument of philosophizing which through dialecticians would counterattack the sophist discourses. Having a rigorous method of thought, according to Aristotle, was essential to achieve certainty, in addition to generating irrefutable arguments. One of the figures influenced by the works of Aristotle and the most outstanding of this period was Thomas Aquinas. He was responsible for the dissemination of universal concepts, a predominant idea in the Middle Ages. According to Thomas, the existence of a universal concept to designate individuals of the same species means that it is real, that it exists, even outside the human mind, that conception became known as reality [11].

According to Thomas Aquinas, to arrive at theological truth was necessary to go through a procedure in which the text (*Lectio*) whose authors (*auctoritates*) were the ancient Church fathers was known, in some of these texts, there were explanations or commentaries (*glossa*) which they raised the *quaestiones* that provoked debates where arguments were presented during disputes (*disputatio*) organized by master for his students and his improvement.

They were a technique based on the Second Analytics, on the Topics and the Refutations of Sophistry. The *quaestio* became the axis of the Scholastic method. So that the medieval university has not seen as an annoying place whose routine of students were mere listeners or servants who would listen to the teacher's every word, on the contrary, they became students stimulated by the investigations and debates existing in that space.

2.2. *Beginning and Main Characteristics of Modern Education*

Scholasticism lost its strength in the 16th century due to Luther's reform, and it was quenching little by little to receive new influences. In this same context, teaching became a right for all society and for passing up has a secular character [13]. Above all, the Enlightenment was the movement that focused on a new teaching proposal, and as came from Renaissance humanism, rationalist and empiricist thought whose proposal was different from scholasticism, it exposed a new role for Education at a time when the State and the Church were the dominant institutions. Faced with an ignorant population, the Enlightenment proposed to promote a transformation in the foundations of European society, a transformation arising from reason.

"The Enlightenment" or reason would be the cornerstone to eradicate the injustices and poverty that plagued 18th century Europe. It was what the French Revolution attempted, the prime thinkers of this movement through empirical knowledge that means in knowledge "verifiable experience", precisely because it is verifiable knowledge. For him, perception from the senses gave birth to a thought, a composition of a rational came from an experience lived, generally, several times. These world-derived organizations were responsible for the investigation.

As subsequent reforms, after the Enlightenment influence, they aimed to rationalize and produce a new man who, through the acquired knowledge, would promote a new world whose order was no longer dominated by the establishments of the medieval world; but a dynamic and mobile order. In other words, Education would not be an activity of meditation, contemplation, or reflection [12]; but a weapon for the social promotion of the individual, in line with the shackles of the liberation society, and thus would allow the empowerment of the individual through knowledge.

From this, knowledge or Aristotelian models were insufficient for understanding the world. The changes idealized by the moderns impacted the teaching curriculum: reading, writing, arithmetic, and precepts of civility. In addition, the influence of the State on Education issues begins to gain strength when seeing it as a preparation or a tool to shape society. While the method Scholasticism aims at the contemplation of being in the cosmos, modernity prepares man to be a citizen, to play a role in society, to be a political administrator, etc.

2.3. *Convergence Between the Two Proposals*

The temporal distance between the Contemporary Age and the Middle Ages and even their classification as incompatibles; did not prevent similarity between the two. Today's universities carry similar aspects of medieval universities: their autonomy and their curricular organization of faculties [6]. According to Haskins, most of our university mechanisms, for example, exams, courses, graduations, and academic degrees were still organized in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Beyond this, scholastics' behavior looking for Greek philosophers to complement or even corroborate an argument is very similar to what is now called a theoretical framework. A fundamental step of the research, because it is the one that will legitimize the paper. So that university discussions and debates are based on solid and coherent facts or theses, never based on fantasies or guesswork, a knowledge free from any common sense.

Auctoritas, like Aristotle, one of the greatest influencers of that period played a strong role mainly in the thought of Thomas Aquinas, who deepened Aristotelian works, such as metaphysics. When deepened by Aquinas, it gained a transcendental character of Christianity. Thomas Aquinas recognized the admirable work of the Greeks in their constant search for knowledge and found coherence to support argumentative theses. Similarly, the theoretical framework bases research on other papers already published and accepted by the scientific community.

Even with the aforementioned preservation of some traditions, Delors [5] states that changes in the knowledge process are natural, and society must make use of all the possibilities presented to it. It reflects how the learning process is without limit and how immeasurable is its ways of being noticed, innumerable are ways of investigating what is unknown. It is expected that each generation will come to boost the teaching mechanisms as the only means of training the human being in its fullness.

However, these changes, in addition to being inevitable, need to be systematized. Organized for a logical reason, according to Delors, it helps the student and even the teacher to trace the real and significant goals. Because the apprehension of the world goes far beyond repeating texts, it has to do with dealing with your environment, reality, evidence, from this learning has a relationship not only with theories but mainly and deeply with reason practice. For human beings to apprehend the world, they must take advantage of every aspect of their existence.

Above all, in the case of the present paper, in the area of knowledge, among the various aspects in the learning structure improved throughout history, there is one today that is considered a very dynamic resource for learning, problematization. It breaks with the idea that knowledge is concentrated or even got stuck at school. Whenever that takes place is harmful, for education becomes limited. The method of problematization encourages an analysis of the reality of students, which enriches the debate, provides the application of knowledge in practice, thus achieving a satisfactory understanding of reality.

Problems or any activities existing in society must not only be contemplated but must also raise questions that trigger research and the search for understanding our environment. Whether positive or negative problems in society, these are starting points for the implementation of the dynamic method of problematization, the investigation of some errors or "trivial" things generates successes and relevant conclusions.

When the teacher is able to help the student to understand the path of investigation taken to define an object of study

and internalize the corresponding mental actions, the application of the pillars of education has been successfully implemented. For this, a privileged procedure is problem-based teaching. Actions linked to learning imply the resolution of cognitive tasks based on problems, so that, in the appropriation of knowledge and scientific thinking, teaching with research is associated with the problem-solving method [1].

The great benefit of the problematization method is to provide an alternative to learning by breaking with the traditional, official, or standard model and breaking with the stigma or monopoly of the single one. For example, in the theory of relativism of Albert Einstein, we see something very similar when the physicist ruptures with the absolutization of science. It brings to light models that analyze in different ways what science used to work with a single one, as when they used just Newton's classical mechanics to unravel the Universe at all.

Problematization offers a new mechanism that allows building knowledge based on criticality. This is of great importance, in addition to giving the student a leading role to carry out their analysis of their reality. This method should be based on the synchronized relationship between the teacher and the student, not only establishing criticism as a starting point but also involving every day and subjective aspects as integral to the learning process.

So far, there are many similar points. Encouraging criticality, debate, the search for the truth; are values shared by the two methodologies. That is, such perspectives are not select purposes of each one. And from this, the development of teaching is shown, and, therefore, it is possible to affirm a certain dialogue over time between the different didactics that were once consolidated. That's why it's always good to consider knowledge as something that doesn't have a secret formula that man discovered without a minimum of effort or sacrifice.

Without borders, without limits that must not get stuck in a cabinet, knowledge is in motion, and human intelligence has to keep up with it. Through this perception that the object sought to be not found in a single context, the interaction between the various areas of knowledge on the same topic improves skills for worldview and its meaning for society. It is what the current teaching pursues and closely resembles the perspective of the scholastics.

However, although they present good results, they are not so easy to apply. It is clear that there is methodological rigor and a certain mastery over the rules is necessary. For this, a systematization is necessary so that the contents may be introduced and prepared for constructive criticism. Delors' Four Pillars teach us that Education is not like a finished object. "Learning to Know, Learning to Do, Learning to Live, Learning to Be" reveal the unfinished of learning that is ever-improving.

In addition, Delors' vision triggers the stimulus to research, the search, and scrutiny of knowledge for its applicability in practical life. The research is not limited to articles, TCCs, or dissertations, but it is linked with the thirst for learning. Such

a habit is still rare in the academy, however, little by little both teachers and students are becoming aware, albeit incipient, but relevant, that the participation of both is fundamental for the construction of knowledge.

Didactics is much more than technical mastery and the art of teaching. Didactics involves the active participation of professors and students through mechanisms such as seminars, group work, guided reading, etc. The teacher gives direction, and the student substantiates or complements themes addressed by their research in search of learning knowledge.

3. Spectrum of Scholastics in Present Days

It is undeniable that modern teaching is quite different from medieval times, yet it is indisputable too: the Scholastic influence breathes today, "even if it is through plenty difficult". With this brief description of the different moments and learning techniques and analysis of the convergences, it is essential to understand why the influence of the Scholastic method remains today.

The legacy of medieval education remains similar to a ghost haunting an abandoned house. It seems to be a rather absurd comparison, but the interpretation is this: the investigative spirit of the scholastics has never forsaken precisely because its object of study persists in the imagination of the human being, especially its philosophy. Thomas Aquinas the prime intellectual of Scholasticism says "the study of philosophy does not aim at knowing what others have thought, but at knowing the truth of things". Scholastic philosophy has been based on Greek metaphysics, according to Nunes.

The aspects of metaphysics and its determination through the essence of things, through knowledge, through factors that go beyond material experience; generated questions that would not end in the time of the Greeks or medieval man, that is, questions that remained as time passed and that increasingly aroused interest.

By being reflexive, metaphysics reveals that the core of reality is very complex to understand. Its philosophers make interesting consideration at this point: the assimilation of reality goes beyond the senses, that is, for the ordinary man, knowing and knowing things are not self-evident, but understood through the effort exercise of human potential. Therein lies the difference between appearance and essence, between the superficial and the real.

Scholastic disputes, for example, did not happen to expose students to their error but to lead them to the truth. That would be the reality as it really is and not as it appears to be. In other words, it was not a matter of expressing an opinion as to if it were private property but of a search that achieves the knowledge through a rigorous investigation.

For professor José Monir Nasser, scholasticism was the "most rigorous philosophical method ever conceived" [10]. The practice of *disputatio*, for example, expressed the

commitment that the scholastics had to follow the strict requirements for a fair debate to take place. And not only that, based on the ratio (reason) reasoning with the help of the *auctoritas* (authority) refereed authors selected for to ratify theses, the scholastics aimed to produce authentic knowledge.

It was what distinguished metaphysics from the other sciences and even made it superior among them, according to Aristotle, since the object of metaphysics did not begin and end with the ancestors. The concerns of modern man are the same as those. In the different ages that have passed, man has made several discoveries, but he has never stopped being restless because it is part of his nature to want to know the unknown. For this, he has faculties that distinguish him from animals, which are not limited to the ability to dominate them by force, but mainly because of the ability to understand reality itself. In other words, knowledge is inherent to man, not to an epoch, or culture, or class, but man. Thomas Aquinas says:

[...] anything has a natural inclination to its own operation, as what has heat has a tendency to heat up, and what has weight to move downwards. However, the proper operation of man, as a man, is to know. Indeed, it is because of this that he is distinguished from all other things. In this way, man's desire naturally leans towards knowing and, consequently, towards knowing [2].

Although proposed by the medieval methodology to respond to its demands, these investigations also served future generations. In other words, changes that came happen in the various dimensions of life, but concomitant with this, certain elements remained, especially those of a reflective character. Because of this, they have developed tools to satisfy this objective.

In the middle Ages an expression that emerged even in antiquity, the liberal arts, was perfect. In short, this has not lost its meaning but has been improved, as per the demands of the time. The liberal arts, according to Joseph [8], were based on the student relating learning as a whole and organic, as the ability to associate ideas or facts generates greater ease of understanding than considering them disconnected. For example, currently, with the advent of social media, there is accelerated dissemination of information that, when accumulating, does not generate knowledge, but an overload on the individual's mind; however, when this information is connected, enlightenment and improvement of ideas are promoted.

This practice promotes the freedom of the individual. This methodology received much attention because it associated the search for truth with freedom. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" [3]. Freedom thought was developed through liberal education that it would be responsible for freeing man from himself, freeing him from his tyranny.

The concept of freedom is defined, in the modern conception, by the ability and conditions of the human being to act according to his perspectives and desires, while in antiquity, freedom was an act of virtue whose essence was to

educate the interior of the human being, the cultivation of good habits. Even with these variations of definitions, such elements are appreciated by knowledge yet. Therefore, human nature will always be inclined to know and use the various methodologies of which the Scholastic method stands out for its accurate investigation.

Finally, the Scholastic spectrum accompanies the past Ages because it has always dealt with the intrinsic concerns of man. These, by nature and not age, are significant issues for understanding not merely to answer the existence of an individual but of an entire mechanism, the cosmos. Whenever its method was used metaphysics that studies the causes of things and not its mere description like the other sciences, makes it stand out about them. Even with all the scientism, knowledge is still formed by the invisible and immaterial. It is the specialty of scholasticism.

4. Conclusion

In times of extreme rationalism in the academies, the rescue of philosophy is urgent. The reflexive mechanism must be resumed and allied to the knowledge process that is possible from a deep meditation of the analyzed object. However, it seems that the human being is losing the ability to meditate. In the 20th century, for example, humanity enjoyed many technological advances, but it also experienced some horrors concerning a regression in exercising its humanity. It allows you to question your rational and spiritual state. Unpleasant as the history of predecessors is, it is essential to understand their successors. In short, such questions may link to the questions of how modern man apprehends the world and how this can improve through the Scholastic method that still survives today, albeit in a veiled way.

References

- [1] A didática no ensino superior A [recurso eletrônico] / Cengage Learning Edições Ltda. – São Paulo, SP: Cengage, 2016.
- [2] AQUINO, Tomás de. Comentários à metafísica de Aristóteles I-IV – Volume 1; tradução de Paulo Faitin e Bernardo Veiga; Campinas, SP: Vide Editorial, 2016.
- [3] BÍBLIA, Português. A Bíblia Sagrada: Antigo e Novo Testamento. Tradução de João Ferreira de Almeida. Edição rev e atualizada no Brasil: Sociedade Bíblia do Brasil, 1969.
- [4] DAWSON, Christopher. Criação do Ocidente: a Religião e a Civilização Medieval –1. ed.– São Paulo: É Realizações, 2016.
- [5] DELORS, Jacques. Educação: um tesouro a descobrir. São Paulo: Cortez, 2001 GORDON, Flávio. A corrupção da inteligência: intelectuais e poder no Brasil.– 5ª edição – Rio de Janeiro: Record, 2018.
- [6] HASKINS, Charles Homer. A ascensão das universidades. Balneário Camboriú, SC: Livraria Danúbio Editora, 2015.
- [7] HAYEK, Frederick A. Os erros fatais do socialismo. – 1 ed. Barueri: Faro Editorial, 2017.

- [8] JOSEPH, Miriam. O trivium: as artes liberais da lógica gramática e retórica: entendendo a natureza e função da linguagem; tradução e adaptação de Henrique Paul Dmyterko. – São Paulo: É realizações, 2008.
- [9] MORELAND, J. P. Racionalidade da fé cristã: argumentos para a sua defesa. – São Paulo: Hagnos, 2013.
- [10] NUNES, Ruy Afonso da Costa. A história da educação na idade média. – 2º edição – fevereiro de 2018 – CEDET. RIETH, Ricardo Willy. A Reforma, a educação e as universidades. 2016. Disponível em: <http://www.ulbra.br/upload/5af00d56a6492c62edb81dca20f897cf.pdf> dia 28 de abril
- [11] RIETH, Ricardo Willy. A Reforma, a educação e as universidades. 2016. Disponível em: dia 28 de abril
- [12] TURLEY, Steve. Educação clássica vs. educação moderna: a visão de C. S. Lewis. [Epub] Tradução de Elmer Pires. – São Paulo: Editora Trinitas, 2018. Disponível em: <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/armazem18/0oQXGpGTtVQ>.
- [13] WERNER, Lilian Lima. Lutero e a reforma defesa por uma educação elementar pública e obrigatória. 2018. 42 p. Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso (Graduação) – Faculdade de História, Universidade Federal de Roraima, 2018.