

Philosophy of Education

Scholasticism vs. Humanism

Aims of the session

- ▶ To develop an awareness of the scholastic and humanistic traditions and their educational philosophy
- ▶ To explain the differences between scholasticism and humanism

Definitions

Scholasticism	Humanism
1100-1600 dominant teaching method Western Europe	14 th - 17 th century Renaissance period
Reason, experience, authority	Emphasises the 'value' of human beings

Scholasticism

- ▶ Synthesis of Aristotelian philosophy and Christian faith
- ▶ Allows for the decoding of the natural and supernatural world from a set of rules derived from the above

Origins of Christian schools

- ▶ 529AD closure of the Platonic Academy
- ▶ Establishment of Monte Cassino
- ▶ Crumbling of the Roman Empire
- ▶ Scholastic process of learning

Some general principles

- ▶ An acceptance of prevailing Catholic orthodoxy
- ▶ An interest in the works of Aristotle
- ▶ Dialectical thinking & syllogistic reasoning
- ▶ A tendency to dispute - often in minute detail
- ▶ Distinction between 'natural' and 'revealed' theology

Scholastic method

- ▶ Critical engagement with the text- note down any issues or disagreements.
- ▶ *questionae & summae*
- ▶ Method of teaching
 1. Lectio
 2. Disputatio

The Move towards 'High Scholasticism'

- ▶ Moved towards other fields of study such as epistemology, political science, economic theory, psychology
- ▶ Albertus Magnus (c.1200-1280) - considered as having supreme systematic knowledge for his time period
- ▶ Sir Thomas Aquinas (c.1225-1274) - student of Magnus, proponent of natural and supernatural revelation

Humanism

- ▶ Basic educational philosophy of the Renaissance
- ▶ Italian medieval education
- ▶ University education at the end of this period beginning to move more towards developing more practical vocational experiences
- ▶ New emphasis on human experience
- ▶ Critical thinking and evidence rather than a reliance on faith

Three definitions of Humanism

- ▶ Paul Oskar Kristeller - change in words used both written and verbally. Also a change in the subjects being taught - what it means to be human
- ▶ Eugenio Garin - shifts focus from institutional settings to the values and assumptions about reality that humanists share.
- ▶ Hans Baron - Looked at work of Niccolo Niccoli

Key theorists

- ▶ Piero Paolo Vergerio *The Character and Studies Befitting a Free-Born Youth* (c.1402-3)
- ▶ Education involves character and learning - what kind of student would be best to receive education? How can we improve the character of this student?
- ▶ Leonardo Bruni *The Study of Literature* (1422-1429)
- ▶ Wide and varied education required, self and factual expression is important

- ▶ Maffeo Vegio *On Education and Excellence of Character in Children* (1444)
- ▶ Wrote large number of texts, first three deal with obligations of parents and teachers towards children
- ▶ Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini *The Education of Boys* (1450)
- ▶ Education must train the body and the mind

Humanism

- ▶ Erasmus 1466-1536 - the essential goodness of children
- ▶ Human centred rather than religion centred
- ▶ Has links with ethics, metaphysics, epistemology, political philosophy
