

Chapter 1

Scholasticism



When you hear that something you do not know is like something you do know, you know them both.

—*From the later Mohist Canons*¹

How does one go about arguing for scholasticism as a general and cross-cultural category in the history of philosophy? Like religion, scholasticism is an English word with Latin roots. It is a construct of the Euro-American academy.² But whereas the word *religion* has been used broadly to describe a variety of phenomena across cultures, *scholasticism* has rarely been used as anything but an appellation for a medieval European intellectual movement. For it to be more broadly construed, scholasticism would have to undergo the same process of abstraction and decontextualization that has led to the more general construal of the category of religion. Let us, therefore, begin our discussion by rehearsing what this process of abstraction entails and the role comparison plays in it.

The study of religion in Europe and America, as paradigmatic of the human sciences, has evolved through a process of abstraction that is twofold. On the one hand, there has been a move away from the particular to the general and universal. On the other, there has been a tendency to objectify—to make the object of critical reflection—what was previously a lived-through world-view. Among other things, it was abstraction in the first sense of the word that led European intellectuals, especially from the time of the Enlightenment on, to seriously recognize

the existence of other religions, and then, under the influence of the deistic notion of "natural religion," to an abstract and universal concept of religion itself.³ But simultaneously operative was abstraction in the second sense of the word. This led first to self-critical reflection on the very notion of religion, what might be called the *focus on method*, and eventually to a second-order analysis (reflection on that reflection), that is, to the study of method, or methodology. Together, these two forms of abstraction have given rise to two of the most prominent characteristics of postmodernism: a pluralistic consciousness and the focus on theory. In the study of religion this tendency has manifested itself in two ways: in a greater emphasis on comparison as a method for gaining knowledge,⁴ and in a greater preoccupation (one might almost say obsession) with methodology.

We shall have more to say later concerning abstraction in the second sense of the word, that is, as objectification, and of the type of secondary discourse to which it gives rise; but it is abstraction in the first sense of the word that is of immediate interest here. The history of the study of religion has also been witness to the fact that, like the notion of religion itself, other related phenomena have come to be similarly "universalized." Hence, over the years a variety of foci of varying usefulness have emerged in the study of comparative religion and philosophy: deity, pilgrimage, ritual, and more recently virtue and scripture, to name just a few.

It need hardly be stated that the abstraction of these categories through comparative analysis yields new insights, raising as it does new questions for the traditions being examined, questions that would (and perhaps could) never be raised otherwise. It is the aim of this study to suggest another abstract and general category in the comparative study of religion and philosophy: scholasticism. The ultimate purpose of this work is to suggest that scholasticism be freed from its parochial European usage and instead be treated cross-culturally. The body of the work explores Indo-Tibetan Buddhist notions regarding the nature and use of language, both as scripture and as medium of expression generally. But this more specific aspect of the study, focused as it is on language and concentrating on the dGe lugs

pa synthesis, must be understood in context, for if the elements of the Indo-Tibetan philosophical tradition examined here are in some significant sense "scholastic," this implies the more abstract idea of scholasticism, a more general notion of which the specific Indo-Tibetan case is an example. In this way, the examination of a particular non-Western case is meant to serve as support for the fact that the notion of scholasticism can be extended in a meaningful and interesting way to describe a family of intellectual movements that are present in other cultures.

I am not suggesting here that the concept of scholasticism as it is understood in its parochial usage, as nomenclature for a medieval European philosophical movement, be applied *as it stands* to other non-Western traditions. Such a suggestion would be imperialistic at best, requiring the contortion of the other in the service of a dubious theoretical goal. Instead, the comparative method, as I see it, requires that the category under discussion—here, the notion of scholasticism—be itself transformed in the process of abstraction. Comparison is a dialectical process in which the category under analysis becomes refined; and this very process of refinement suggests new questions of the tradition from which the category, in its original and particular form, emerged.⁵ This, it seems to me, is how comparison operates in yielding new and interesting knowledge.⁶

A perusal of even the most recent literature in the field of religious studies makes it clear that *scholasticism* as a term has rarely been applied outside of a medieval European context.⁷ The term is almost never used to describe the traditions that we find, at some point or another, in the intellectual history of most of the literate religious and philosophical traditions of the world. In the rare cases when it is so used it is often used uncritically, as if the abstract category of "scholasticism" had already been established on firm methodological footing.⁸ More often than not, however, the term *scholasticism* has failed to be used in this more global sense at all. What is more, this myopia has resulted in a lacuna in the cross-cultural study of religion. It has meant that an essential *topos* in the comparative history of ideas has been all but overlooked. Interestingly, an exception to this shortsightedness is found in the work of P. Masson-Oursel, ar-

guably the founder of the modern discipline of comparative philosophy.⁹ Masson-Oursel's vision of comparative philosophy in general, and of scholasticism in particular, evinces the Enlightenment ideal of achieving in the human sciences the kind of objectivity and impartiality perceived to be paradigmatic of the natural sciences. To the modern reader his goal of achieving objective, impersonal laws through the use of the comparative method may seem naive and outdated, but there is great insight and novelty in the work of Masson-Oursel. In his now forgotten essay, "La Scholastique,"¹⁰ he argues precisely for a general notion of scholasticism:

If scholasticism represents an episode, whether accidental or necessary, of our civilization, one that emerges out of the Greco-Roman world, we must resign ourselves only to describing it, without hope of ever defining it. But if the data that, in one way or another, evoke our notion of scholasticism, are to be found in other civilizations, it becomes incumbent upon us to confront this diverse order of facts with the firm goal of observing as much the similarities as the differences. The hypothesized phenomenon will, due to a certain generality, reveal itself in that case, as the essential elements are made to appear throughout the diversity of the contingent facts. Taking history as a basis, we shall rise above it, and shall bring to light a notable aspect of mental life.¹¹

That scholasticism can be exactly defined by uncovering its essential qualities is of course problematic. Moreover, later in the same essay it becomes clear that Masson-Oursel advocates a kind of historical determinism that, far from allowing for the emergence of scholasticism as a contingent fact, conceives of the global emergence of scholasticism as necessary. Not only is scholasticism a necessary stage in "the evolution of civilizations," but there is for Masson-Oursel a synchronicity to its emergence, so that it arises approximately at the same time in each civilization. This is no mere accident, for scholasticism always emerges as a response to what he calls *sophism*.¹² Whereas the latter is a period of chaotic creativity, without order and discipline, the former represents the systematization of sophism through the use of logic and categorization. Because Buddhism, for Masson

Oursel, is a quintessential example of sophism, he considers it a forerunner to scholasticism, a move that prohibits him from ever seriously considering the possibility of a Buddhist scholastic tradition. Finally, Masson-Oursel considers the break from a scholastic mentality to be essential to the development of a scientific and critical perspective. In this sense he buys into a Hegelian evolutionism that sees the West as superior, and he awaits the day when Asian civilizations will disengage themselves from the scholastic world-view to "awaken from their dogmatic slumber."¹³ Such are the limitations of Masson-Oursel's work, but these do not completely vitiate its usefulness. Despite his essentialism, despite his commitment to a historical evolutionism, and despite his Hegelian Eurocentricity, his characterization of scholasticism remains in many ways insightful and interesting.

In setting forth his theory of what constitutes the scholastic world-view he identifies certain key features that, even if—from our post-Wittgensteinian perspective—they cannot be considered universal, must nonetheless be considered central to the characterization of what constitutes the phenomenon of scholasticism. These include scholasticism's formal nature, its systematicity, its preoccupation with scriptures and their exegesis in commentaries, its rationalism and its reliance on logic and dialectics in defense of its tenets, its penchant for lists, classification and categorization, and its tendency toward abstraction:

If scholasticism is a teaching that bases its authority in the words of a sacred text, interpreted by a corps of professionals dedicated both to establishing and defending a religious truth, and to that end rely on formal and discursive reasoning, it is exemplary of a stage in civilization of which our own Middle Ages cannot be considered the only example.¹⁴

What is more, Masson-Oursel is ahead of his time in his keen awareness of the fact that the comparative process is a dialectical one that raises new questions of indigenous conceptual structures: "Taking for granted then that there exist Oriental scholasticisms, we must then ask ourselves about their characteristics so as to determine the extent to which these latter (factors)

are found in European scholasticism."¹⁵ In brief, Masson-Oursel's studies, even if encumbered by the limitations described previously, nonetheless show sparks of genius; and it is to his credit that he was the first to suggest the thesis that scholasticism should be considered a "notable aspect of mental life" across cultures.

How then can the phenomenon of scholasticism be more broadly construed? Of course, this process has already begun, for European medievalists have had to generalize the notion of scholasticism at least to the point where the term could be applied meaningfully as nomenclature for a variety of philosophical movements that were both historically and religiously disparate, including not only Christian, but also Jewish and Muslim, philosophical speculation. Broadly speaking, the decontextualization effectuated by scholars of medieval European scholasticism can be classified into two groups: those that aim at creating an abstract notion of scholasticism based on similarities in the *content* of scholastic speculation, and those that are based on similarities in the scholastic *method*. De Wulf, for example, believed that all scholastics were essentially concerned with the same types of questions; that is, for de Wulf, what characterized scholasticism as a movement was a similarity in philosophical content. This he identified as their acceptance of a series of postulates that included the existence of God, God's role as creator, and the objectivity of human knowledge.¹⁶ Grabmann, Knowles, and others, however, have tended to see the movement as achieving the kind of unity that one would expect of a coherent intellectual tradition more because of similarities in method than because of identity of subject matter.¹⁷ These latter scholars then tend to see scholasticism as a movement that, although not exhibiting a uniformity of content, nonetheless exhibits a uniformity of approach: concern with harmonizing scriptural authority and reason, with apologetics, with the application of Aristotle's logic to religious questions, and with the use of dialectics. We shall return to this issue in the Conclusion. For now, suffice it merely to point out this divergence of views. Though this first step in the process of creating the abstract category of "scholasticism" in a medieval European setting is helpful, it does not go far enough for the purpose of this study, which is comparative in a much broader sense.

In a Christian context, the "scholastic" has often been contrasted with the "monastic." Jean Leclercq¹⁸ and others have documented the fact that in the twelfth century there existed two distinct forms of education in Christian Europe: schools for clerics and schools for monks. The former were concerned primarily with training clerics in the liberal arts and scholastic theology, preparing them for the "active life." The latter were the training ground for boys destined for the monastic life. Monastic training, according to Leclercq, was more individual. It took place under the guidance of an abbot and had a contemplative bent that was missing in the scholastic training of clerics. This is not to say that monastic theology was unaware of, or opposed to, the scholastic method taught in the schools for clerics. Rather, monastic learning stressed, in addition to intellectual understanding, an inner, experiential, and mystical dimension, "a personal, subjective element, which provided the point of departure for further reflection."¹⁹ Attempts at reconciling the rational "scholastic" method with this experiential dimension were seen as early as the eleventh century, with the figure of Anselm of Canterbury, who has been called the father of Christian scholasticism. In his masterful study, *The Implications of Literacy*, Brian Stock underscores the extent to which Anselm was himself the synthesis of "monastic" and "scholastic" ways of thinking:

He fervently believed in prayer, mysticism, and supreme values; yet he pursued logic, factuality and the resolution of opposed views. . . . Anselm, for his part, had bridged the monastic and scholastic realms by suggesting that the establishment of logico-linguistic facts was not incompatible with deep personal meditation on religious mysteries. He effectively reconciled the objectifying and subjectifying aspects of critical investigation within one literary endeavor.²⁰

We shall return shortly to this particular trait of scholasticism; namely, the felt need to reconcile the rational and experiential aspects of religion. However, it is interesting to note, by way of contrast, that the scholastic method in Europe eventually gave way to another form of inquiry, one less concerned with the experiential and practical implications of rational inquiry. By

the twelfth century a new method of philosophical and theological thinking was emerging—one that attempted to dissociate itself from the inner, experiential dimensions of monastic education and practice, focusing instead on

the abstract idea of information, that is, of factual knowledge, (which) was gradually separated from the individual understanding. A difference was recognized between the knower as inquiring subject and the knowledge which was the object of his investigations. Unlike the eastern “wise man” and the early medieval sage, the twelfth century intellectual did not embody a subject personally, he taught it. Being an intellectual was a profession, even a social role.²¹

George Steiner has described, in *Real Presences*,²² transitions of the kind just mentioned, and has explored the implications of this to the present situation in the academy. Steiner bemoans the fact that humanistic scholarship has distanced itself so thoroughly from primary sources, obsessed as it is with secondary discourse, the “editorial-critical discourse on discourse.” More important, he believes that there is a continuity between our present state of affairs and the scholastic mode of inquiry.²³

When Stock and Steiner are taken together the implication is that modern scholarly praxis in the humanities represents the secularization of what is an essentially religious method: scholasticism as a mode of philosophical and theological reflection. First, the experiential and practical relevance of rational inquiry is lost, giving rise to the figure of the “intellectual” and to disembodied knowledge for its own sake. The trend culminates, in the Enlightenment, with the secularization of scholasticism, so that the religious nature of the inquiry gives way to more “naturalistic” explanations. Eventually, of course, this leads to secular secondary discourse as the paradigm of Western academic and scholarly inquiry, the situation that Steiner so abhors.

The depersonalization and eventual secularization of scholastic philosophical discourse, what Henderson calls “the transition from commentarial forms and modes of discourse to modern scholarship and criticism,” as Masson-Oursel himself points out, is not of course a global trend. It never occurred in Buddhism, for example.²⁴ Why is this so? Is it in part due to the fact

that the scholastic-monastic distinction, as it has been formulated by scholars of Christian scholasticism, is unknown in the Buddhist context? In the Buddhism of India and Tibet there was, as is well known, never a distinction between monk and cleric. Indeed, there was never a clergy apart from the order of monks and nuns. Whether for this reason or for other more complex ones that involve more basic religious presuppositions and world-view,²⁵ the philosophical and "theological" reflection of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism saw neither a scholastic-monastic split, nor a scholastic-secular one. Buddhist scholasticism was a monastic movement, and it neither transformed into, nor did it ever give rise to, a tradition of secular criticism.

Not all forms of scholasticism, even some that never saw this move to secular-critical scholarship, are of course monastic; neither rabbinic, nor Islamic, nor neo-Confucian scholasticism is, for example, this. And yet it might be argued that scholasticism, whether monastic or not, is concerned with reconciling the rational and the experiential aspects of human religiousness. In some cases (Buddhism, Christianity, and certain movements within Islam) this experiential dimension involves the transformation of the individual through inner contemplative practice. In other cases (Judaism, Confucianism, and perhaps *Mīmāṃsā* Hinduism) the experiential dimension has more to do with the transformation of the individual and society through the practice of ritual, moral principles and laws, that is, through action. But scholastic traditions generally share this common concern: that experience and action be guided and justified by reasoning and that rationally justified doctrine be made experientially relevant. According to Wing-tsit Chan, for example, it was precisely the fact that the philosophical position of the Chinese Logicians (Hui Shih and Kung-sun Lung) "represented an interest in knowledge for its own sake, an interest not at all in harmony with the keen interest in life of Taoism, Confucianism and Moism"²⁶ that led to the sustained criticism of the Logicians by the latter schools and to the demise of Chinese "intellectualism" almost in its infancy. Scholastics seem willing to sacrifice neither the rational nor the experiential dimensions of human religiousness, and this leads, at least in the Indo-Tibetan tradition,

to a tension that manifests itself repeatedly and in a variety of interesting ways, as we shall see.

Over and above the mere synthesis of experience and reason, however, many scholastic movements would go one step further, claiming that reasoning and systematicity, far from being incompatible with personal religious experience, are the *very prerequisites* for spiritual realization and action. The reasons for this commitment to rational and systematic inquiry obviously vary from one scholastic tradition to the next. For example, the presupposition that a rational Creator is both worth knowing and knowable through rational means may represent a reason for rational and systematic inquiry in some theistic traditions that finds no counterpart in nontheistic cases. Despite these differences, however, four factors generally seem to drive scholastic traditions toward rationalism and systematicity.

The first is the basic intelligibility of the universe. Scholastics maintain in general that, whether or not *everything* is intelligible (and some *do* advocate even this stronger notion), at the very least everything that is of soteric importance is understandable through rational inquiry. Reality, for the scholastics, is accessible, and though the rational-conceptual knowledge of reality may not always be the highest form of understanding, being superseded by intuitive knowledge, or in some instances by action, it is nonetheless a prerequisite to the latter.

Second, scholastic movements are highly tradition oriented. They have a strong sense of history²⁷ and lineage and are committed to the preservation of the tradition. Now to preserve tradition certainly means to preserve the spirit of the tradition as it is expressed in experience and action. Insofar as the practical-experiential dimension of tradition is determined by the rational dimension—that is, in so far as experience is conditioned by doctrine, understood rationally—to preserve the tradition means to preserve its intellectual underpinnings, rational inquiry into doctrine. There is no better way to ensure that what an adept experiences is particularly Christian or Buddhist, or that the way in which an adept behaves is particularly Confucian or Jewish, than to ensure that the “experiencer” has had a strong foundation in his or her respective intellectual tradition.

Likewise, from a de facto perspective, it is the rational-conceptual assessment of an experience or behavior—its consistency with scripture, oral tradition, and reasoning—that legitimizes it as “orthodox.”

Not only was rational inquiry perceived as essential to the preservation of the tradition’s self-identity, it was also considered essential to *distinguishing* that tradition from others, to *defending* it against the intellectual assaults of others, and to *demonstrating* its relative superiority to others. Although the art of interreligious polemics has been all but lost today,²⁸ it was very much a part of the intellectual life of scholastics.

Finally, scholastics are usually dealing with large quantities of disparate textual material that is often contradictory. Part of their self-imposed task is to synthesize this material into an ordered whole. In so doing, one option would be to ignore a portion of this textual material, that is, to work with an abbreviated corpus of texts, and this is not unknown. When this tack is taken, reason comes into play in choosing what will be discarded and systematicity in the exposition of the material that remains. On the whole, however, scholastics tend toward the proliferative. More textually inclusive than exclusive, they prefer to analyze and systematize rather than to limit what is at their disposal. Hence, rational inquiry and systematicity becomes necessary from a textual standpoint as well.

Scholastic rationalism operates in large part to justify religious beliefs as expressed in doctrine. This, combined with what I have called the generally *proliferative* character of scholasticism as a movement, means that, in principle, there is for scholastics no end to the rational process. It is always possible for an opponent, real or imagined, to demand a reason, that is, to require that a particular doctrinal assertion be justified; and for the scholastic there is never any theoretical ground for denying the validity of such a request.²⁹ To say that scholastics are rationalists is in part to say that they are ever willing to answer an opponent’s “why?”

I claimed earlier that in the human sciences in general, and in the study of religion in particular, abstraction has been operative in two ways, in a universalizing or generalizing mode

and in the sense of objectification. To abstract, in this latter sense, means to make an object of what was previously a presupposition for the purpose of critical self-reflection. Although the clamor of humanistic disciplines today, such methodological self-reflection was not unknown to the scholastics. Indeed, if many of our present concerns as scholars in the academy are byproducts of our common medieval scholastic heritage, it may well be that scholasticism's concern with abstraction and critical self-reflection is one source of much contemporary scholarship. Be that as it may, it seems clear that at the very least scholastics share this common concern with critical self-reflection, that is, with abstraction in this second sense of the word.

Scholasticism is proliferative in three ways: textually (opting for inclusion rather than exclusion of the textual material that is to act as object of reflection), rationally (forever willing to entertain new arguments), and epistemologically (insofar as it is concerned with understanding many, and in some cases *all*, phenomena). But scholasticism is itself a phenomenon, making it natural for scholastics to eventually turn their attention to their own tradition. Convinced of the importance of rational inquiry, scholastic philosophers then commit themselves to applying this very method critically *to their own enterprise*, not simply for the sake of self-understanding, but because the scholastic method itself had to be justified to others, defended against rival theories of philosophical speculation, and in this way established on firm footing. This self-reflective quality of scholastic speculation is equally important to understanding it as a coherent movement in the history of ideas.

Artists utilize a variety of media, and for the scholastic the medium is language. In its manifestation as scripture it is the source of scholastic speculation. But language is also the scholastics' own medium of expression, and of course it is the subject of a great deal of their own speculation. Understanding this threefold character of language—scriptural language as source, philosophical language as medium, and language in general as the object of reflection—is essential to the understanding of scholasticism as a phenomenon.

I use the term *scripture* here in a very broad sense that refers to all of the authoritative texts of a tradition. My notion of scripture excludes neither religiously relevant classical texts, nor commentaries that have achieved authoritative status, nor established lineages of oral explanation. To say that scripture is a source of scholastic speculation is, in part, to reiterate the point that scholasticism is tradition oriented, for the textual corpus in part defines a tradition. I hesitate to identify scripture here with canon because the textual sources of the scholastics is often much broader than their formal canons. It is not unusual, for example, for certain scholastic texts themselves to gain greater prestige and authority than any canonical work. But whether it be canon or the more all-encompassing notion of scripture I am suggesting here, it is this material that serves as a major source of philosophical speculation. What is more, scholastic philosophical speculation is, at least in theory, bound by scripture, in the sense that it can never go beyond it or against it. Philosophical speculation can never go *beyond* scripture because scripture is complete. There is nothing worth saying that has not already been said before. Philosophical speculation cannot go *against* scripture because scripture is inerrant, that is, true in its entirety. This being said, it is amazing how clever exegetes can, to paraphrase Jonathan Z. Smith, extricate themselves from the self-imposed limit that is a canon and thereby effectively go both beyond and against scripture, regardless of the rhetoric to the contrary.

Not only are individual scriptures a *source* of scholastic speculation, in the act of commentary or exegesis, but scripture as a whole is often its *object*. The tendency to self-reflection is equally operative in regard to this source of tradition as it is in regard to the tradition itself. Hence, scholastics ask themselves, what makes something scripture, what makes scripture authoritative, how can the authority of texts be reconciled with the spirit of rational inquiry, and what is the nature and limits of scriptural authority? They ask themselves not only what scripture means, but what it means to mean, and how the rules for extracting meaning from scripture are to be systematized and

rationally justified. All of these are, of course, meta-questions that are concerned more with scripture as a category, as object of reflection, than with scripture as source of reflection.

Likewise, scholastics are all too aware that they are engaged in a philosophical task that involves the distinctive use of language, logic, and conceptual thought. When they reflect on *this* self-critically, it leads them to theorize on the methods, goals, and limits of philosophical inquiry and on the nature and workings of language and conceptual thought. Logic is the formal method of the scholastics, the framework that undergirds their rationalism. James A. Weisheipl has called logic "the chief instrument of scholastic training."³⁰ It is not surprising, therefore, that many scholastics should have been preoccupied with the workings of syllogistic reasoning and its role in philosophical discourse. But logical argumentation, and indeed philosophy itself, is expressed linguistically and understood conceptually. Concomitant with an interest in logic, therefore, is a general interest in the workings of language. Do words refer to real entities or abstract ones? If the latter, what is the ontological status of these abstract entities? Language also functions to generate conceptual knowledge. But how does it do so? What is conceptual knowledge? How is it related to sense perception? And most important, perhaps, can language and conceptual thought depict and understand reality? This last issue is of the utmost importance, for unless a case can be made for the effective use of language and conceptual thought, the tradition remains forever indefensible, and more important, inaccessible to future generations.

The characteristics of scholasticism just discussed have been couched in a rhetoric that assumes the scholastic enterprise to be monolithic, as if every scholastic tradition partook of all of these attributes. To have done otherwise would have meant qualifying the discussion at every turn, pointing out exceptions to every "rule." However, it is not my intention here to suggest that these characteristics form some sort of essential core to scholasticism, which is after all one of the limitations of Masson-Oursel's own approach. In the words of a leading European medievalist, "the features identified as common for scholasti-

cism and scholastics often seem elusive, or too trivial to carry the weight of a complex intellectual movement."³¹ When this is so of the European case, there can of course be little hope of arriving at a definition of the more general cross-cultural category, at least if this entails arriving at some common core of qualities shared by all scholastic traditions. We shall find, instead, that some of the traits identified above may be more prevalent in some traditions than in others. Some that may be altogether missing in some cultures may be central to the scholasticism of others. I am suggesting, of course, that these characteristics should be taken rather as resemblances among the family of movements we label *scholastic* than as the essential traits that all forms of scholasticism must share. With a phenomenon as complex as scholasticism any essentialistic approach at definition will obviously fail.

In the pages that follow we shall see how each of these various features of scholasticism are played out in the specific Indo-Tibetan case. If the Indo-Tibetan scholastic tradition is paradigmatic of the more general phenomenon of scholasticism, then we should be able to see in the latter, as we can in the former, a concern with scripture, language, logic, and reasoning. We should be able to see Indo-Tibetan scholasticism as a movement that focuses on language, especially in its scriptural manifestation, as a necessary source for spiritual insight; that it is intensely preoccupied both with the theory and the practice of its interpretation. Methodologically, it should be seen to be critical, rationalist, and intensely self-reflective in tone, feeling a deep need to legitimize its own rational-critical approach. To that end, it should attempt to establish language, conceptual thought and logic on a firm footing and reject the attempts of those who would repudiate the communicative abilities of linguistic expression and the epistemic power of reason.

The Latin West's preoccupation with incorporating Aristotle into religious scholarship is obviously one of the idiosyncratic features of European scholasticism. Likewise, many of the characteristics of the specifically Indo-Tibetan expression of scholasticism that the reader comes across in the following pages will, in the long run, be found to be uniquely Buddhist. Many, how-

ever, will be shared by other traditions. Only continued cross-cultural investigation will allow us to map out the pattern of family resemblances that we expect to find if the category of "scholasticism" is a useful one. These family resemblances, however, will be gleaned only through the systematic investigation of particular historical traditions. If I have one single hope for the present work it is that it will spark this type of investigation, encouraging scholars of different religio-philosophical traditions to give thought to what, in their own geographical and cultural setting, it might mean to say that a particular movement is *scholastic*.