

PAUL STRATHERN



THOMAS AQUINAS

IN 90 MINUTES

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Aquinas's life and ideas presented in entertaining and accessible fashion--another title in our highly successful "90 Minutes" series. "Each of these little books is witty and dramatic and creates a sense of time, place, and character....I cannot think of a better way to introduce oneself and one's friends to Western civilization."--Katherine A. Powers, Boston Globe. "Wall Street Journal."

Thomas Aquinas in 90 Minutes Details

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From Reader Review Thomas Aquinas in 90 Minutes for online ebook

Kathleen says

I didn't care for the tone of the book. A bit snide. Off putting.

Timothy McNeil says

A fair amount of general history, and Strathern focuses a bit too much on the connective tissues between Aristotle and Aquinas (and not on Aquinas' work in its own right), but it was a good read.

Wade Bearden says

What do you know, it took about 90 minutes.

Realini says

Thomas Aquinas in Ninety Minutes by Paul Strathern
Religion

These are the first positivity traits that come to mind when thinking about this book
Amusement, interest, even awe, serenity, gratitude, inspiration,
With perhaps less of the last four-Love, pride, hope and joy.

I start with amusement because, surprisingly- I was amused by aspects of the book. Let me mention five:

- Thomas Aquinas, although a man of God, was rather heavy and this is attributed to the fact that he ate quite a lot, but absentmindedly
- At one point during a dinner Aquinas had with king Louis, the thinker loudly hit the table with his fist: "I got it!" – to everyone's astonishment
- I know how to combat Manichaeism' and the king, upon learning what actually had happened was not displeased, even brought in a secretary to write down the ideas
- Aquinas was reputed to be able to dictate to four secretaries at the same time, beating napoleon it would seem, who was able to do just two things at the same time
- The author however, gives a funny twist to this tale, by adding that in those days the style of writing, easy going attitude would not make this the enterprise we imagine today
- King Louis comes out as a good personage, who did what he said, respected his promises, had a good attitude towards Aquinas and is known and celebrated in...
- New Orleans, which reminds us of the French Connection, with Louisiana and all the rest of the territories which had belonged to France, back in those days.
- When thinking about the target audience of Aquinas, the prototype suggested was that of an Arab who would possibly convert to Christianity after reading Summa Theologica
- For in the West, there were few people who would need arguments for Christianity- they were already all

in...

- The few who supported other, "blasphemous views" were getting extinct through the tremendous effort made by the Inquisition

Here I am thinking about two comical views on the Inquisition- one made by Monty Python, who are getting back together this week and the other by Mel Brooks:

<http://youtu.be/5ZegQYgygdw>

Summa Theologica

The very name would have made me shiver in the past, when I was pretty much against religion.

- It's a Miracle! Like in The History of The World by Mel Brooks, a hilarious comedy, somewhere in the top twenty

I am very interested in religion at this point, indeed, so much so that I am thinking about a new religion, which would combine perhaps elements from a few religions, including Taoism

- The Way of the Taoists sounds exhilarating

The argument of the first mover sounds interesting. A moved thing needs to have something or someone to move it and we go all the way to the Prime Mover or God.

I find the other theory glorious:

- God is such a wonderful Idea that He must exist – not in these words, but meaningful and powerful enough for this non-believer looking for the supreme light

- Kant's argument that the existence of God can be deduced from the existence of good is also poignant.

In conclusion, I love some of the arguments of Aquinas, although I would still be excommunicated and damned for all time with the opinions I still hold:

- God is ok with me, not drawn up along the strict lines in existence,

- With a Holy Trinity and a dogma still based on Aristotle and Aquinas

- My concepts are (too) flexible, permissive and accepting too much from

- Buddhists, Taoists and even Islam-a language which sounds great at times;

- Alhamdulillah- I love the sound of that and Insha'Allah

- But I disagree- I would not be able to say "there is only one God and Mohamed is His Prophet- I feel there may be quite a few more prophets and all.

?

Kaa says

["We cannot know what god is but only what he is not."

]

Stephen says

While the 90 minute limit was met, precious little of Aquinas' philosophy was discussed. The author preferred to wax poetical about the ways in which the Catholic Church supposedly worked against progress rather than stick to the main subject material, Thomas. There was also a great deal of speculation and some downright misinformed and/or poorly researched sections which made this an unacceptable introduction to the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, and an even worse introduction to the times in which he lived. I cannot emphasize enough how terrible this work is.

I cannot recommend this work to anyone because of glaring errors and an obvious slant against presenting Thomas as he understood himself.

Joseph says

Free on Audible Channels.

I know Aquinas for one thing and that is the Just War Theory and that was not covered. There is detail on scholasticism which was the stopping point of philosophy for a long time. Aquinas took Plato and Aristotle and "Christianized" the philosophy. The church thought Aquinas did such a good job they made his version of philosophy the truth. Good jobs are entitled to rewards but Galileo and a host of other scientists would disagree Aquinas and the church. The church's adaptation of Aquinas's philosophy put a quick stop to any new learning or science even when the science is right -- earth-centered universe and heavier objects fall faster than lighter ones lived on even when they were wrong.

Matt says

The authors open hostility towards anyone so stupid, ignorant or so uncultured so as to even entertain religious notions clouds his treatment of the subject. The venom with which he constantly attacks Catholicism and Christianity gets in the way of actually describing the works of Thomas Aquinas. Surely his works (besides the two treated in this text) provide more material that could be summarized. Instead, space in this rather compact text is given over to a seemingly constant flow of jabs that grow ever more tiresome (though there are one or two good "zingers" you have to admit, is this why I'm reading the book?). In the end, the book was as much about the author and his views as it was about Aquinas. For that reason, I view it as an utter failure.

Trice says

fun as well as interesting to listen to - nice overview of historical and philosophical context of aquinas, as well as what he himself wrote/taught.

Paul Smith says

I wish the author were as confident of Aquinas' brilliance as he is of his own. I'm wondering how much Aquinas he's actually read given that this book (to the limited extent it deals with Aquinas) is largely biographical along with historical context and a great deal of snark directed at those, including Aquinas, who the author feels superior to.

Don't waste your time.

David says

Thirty minutes of substance and sixty of snark.

benebean says

This is my first time listening/reading anything on Aquinas so I have no idea whether he was covered well or not. However, this seemed more like a summary of Aquinas's biography rather than a summary of his philosophy.

Maggie says

this series of authors/philosophers in 90 minutes has been a treat. alas. strathern had too many snide remarks and not much substance to share on st augustine and on thomas aquinas. perhaps his world view doesn't allow for honest assessment of these writings and instead he choose to focus on unnecessary and personal responses to two men and their writings which have made serious contribution to collected thoughts. ah well. such is life. not recommended. there's not much substance here only clever personal opinions.

at first being startled by the lack of substance i thought "aha! this is telling. i know about these two writers and their works. perhaps my assessment of lack of substance should reflect on strathern's other 90 minutes works." on second thought, i realized he probably had not actually STUDIED aquinas and augustine and so the lack of substance more likely comes from that cause yet he felt he had to include these two "players" in western philosophy so all he had to offer his reader was his bias against them. hence two books based more on opinion than careful analysis.

these two books stand more as an embarrassment against strathern than as a help to those who want a digest of the writings/thoughts of these two men.

Andrew Price says

Just read Aquinas.

Ben says

Another quick, witty, summary of a philosopher's life and work in this "90 minute series".
