

AN ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF HUMANISM ON THE MODERN WORLD

¹Odumegwu, Andy. C., ²Chris O. Abakare, ³George Franklin Umeh
^{1,2,3}Philosophy Department, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Abstract

Humanism have dismissed metaphysics as a meaningless, fruitless venture; a sound fury exercise, signifying nothing. Progress in science has offered many benefits over the course of human history, and has also enabled us to conquer some previous limitations. Now, the problem is, since humanism has gotten an answer to virtually all aspects of human endeavor which was from the status quo, left to the exclusive preserve of the divine and the supreme beings, then, does this imply an invitation to abrogate any pre-informed knowledge and recourse one has about the divine? What is the place of values and self-worth in an age science has promised much ease and convenience? Does religion, moral awareness still make sense? Does removing God from the picture solve a lot of problems? These and other problems are what the researcher is anxious about in order to give humanity a new dimension of looking out to the world. The method of analysis have been employed in this research work. Our finding have shown that notwithstanding the unquantifiable positive impact of humanism, which follows from the amelioration of the standard of living of human beings, there is a clear and unflinching denial in the existence or belief in any God or supreme being. I therefore recommend that proper values should be placed on the human person who should be seen as an end in itself and not as a means to an end.

Keywords: Humanism, Metaphysics and Existencialism

Introduction

The content of this piece of research focuses on what was arguably the most distinctive feature of remittance culture. Like the term renaissance, humanism as a historical phenomenon, has been the subject of wide ranging debate. Attempt to define it and as well as locate its origin and impact on the western world have preoccupied cohorts of scholars for generation and continue to provide intellectual stimulation for a new generation of writers and scholars.

In the first place, a consistent theme of this research is discussion of the extent to which we should see the renaissance either as a period or as a stimulation for a new generation of researches and writers. One of the prime factors of this research is to provide an overview of much of that scholarly debate, particularly as it relates to humanism. Humanism which bases its understanding of the world on reason and science, bases their decision on reason, with the input of empathy, and aiming towards the welfare and fulfillment of living things, became the central focus of the renaissance era. Attention was shifted entirely on the individual himself and recourse to abstract realities became abrogated.

This piece of work also brings to the open the historical antecedent of the concept humanism which took its root from the word *humanitas* a concept which makes a holistic digging on the human person. Humanity is the state of being a person rather than a god, an animal or a machine. Humanism was as a result of the intellectual consciousness of some individuals who considered the recourse to abstract terms as unimportant and unnecessary in defining the human person, thus they anthropocentrized every discussion on man himself.

Humanism also has some aspects or forms. These forms are clearly explicated in this literary work as an exposure to the concept of humanism in full. The renaissance humanism as an aspect, can be likened to the real idea of humanism, as the foot note of humanism was an offshoot of the renaissance period. Religious humanism employed by August Comte sought for a means of bringing in a new religion of humanity clearly removed from the idealized concept of God or a supreme being into scientific discoveries and innovations. Secular humanism posits that human beings are capable of being moral without any recourse to the divine. There is also the theistic humanism which has the traces of human egoism.

This work also traces the philosophic forerunners of humanism. From time immemorial, it is said that the originator of the concept of humanism was Protagoras who is regarded as the father of sophism. In his famous man is the measure of all things theory, he concentrated all attention to man. Another big head reckoned as the father of naturalism and in a sense humanism is Aristotle, in his natural philosophy and concentration on civility of the human person. In the modern era, humanism was trumpeted by the Darwinian evolution theory. Humanism has also pulled a lot of influence both on the positive and negative way in the modern era. The rapid progress of science and technology, is an evident result of humanism. Notwithstanding, the blatant extrication of the concept of the divine and the consequences accruing from such abrogation, has also pulled a negative impact to the modern world especially as regards morality. The criticisms of some philosophers on the concept of humanism was also explored in this work.

Finally, from the above listed observations and contributions, the authors of this piece deduced their contributions and evaluations on the influence of humanism on the modern world.

What is Humanism?

Humanism has a broadly allusive concept that can be subjected to a wide variety of applications, thus, in defining this concept, strict scrutiny and precision must be properly adopted. There are three basic types: humanism as *classicism*, humanism as referring to the *modern concept of the humanities*, and humanism as *human centeredness*. Humanism and related terms are frequently applied to modern doctrines and techniques that are based on the centrality of human experience. The pragmatic humanism of *Ferdinand c.s Schiller*, the Christian humanism of *Jacques Maritain*, and the movement known as *secular humanism*, of the 20th century, though differing from each other significantly in content, all showed this anthropocentric emphasis, thus, the definition of humanism as anthropocentricity or human centeredness, has a firmer claim to correctness.

Humanism can be thus defined as an ethical life stance that affirms that human beings have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape their own lives and society¹. Humanism stands for the building of a more humane society through an ethics based on human and other natural values in the spirit of reason and free inquiry through human capabilities. Humanism is not theistic, and it does not accept supernatural views of reality. A humanist bases his understanding of the world on reason and scientific method (rejecting supernatural or ill formed ideas). A humanist judges his ethical decision again on reason, with the input of empathy, and aiming towards the welfare and fulfillment of living things."

Origin of the term Humanism

The Ideal of humanitas

The history of the term humanism is complex but enlightening. It was first employed as humanismus by 19th century German scholars to designate the renaissance emphasis on classical studies hi education"¹. These studies were pursued and endorsed by educators known as early as 15th century, as *umanisti*- that is professors or students of classical literature. The word *umanisti* derives from the *studia humanitatis*, a course of classical studies that, in the early 15th century, consisted of grammar, poetry, rhetoric, history, and moral philosophy. The *studia humanitas* were held to be the equivalent of the Greekpa/We/a. Their name was itself based on the roman statesman *Marcus Tullius Cicero's* concept of *humanitas*; an educational and political ideal that was the intellectual basis of the entire movement. Renaissance humanism in all its form defined itself in straining towards this ideal. No discussion of humanism, therefore, can have validity without an understanding of *humanitas*. *Humanitas* meant the development of human virtue, in all its forms, to its fullest extent. The term thus implies not only such qualities as are associated with the modern word humanity-understanding, benevolence, compassion, mercy etc. But also more assertive characteristics as fortitude, judgement, prudence, eloquence and even love of honor". *Humanitas* called for a fine balance of action and contemplation, a balance born not of compromise but of complementarity. In short, humanism called for the comprehensive reform of culture, the transfiguration of what humanists termed the passive and ignorant society of the dark ages into a new order that would reflect and encourage the grandest human potentialities*. Humanism had an evangelical dimension: it sought to project *humanitas* from the individual into the state at large. The well spring of *humanitas* was classical literature. Greek and Roman thought, available in a flood of rediscovered or newly translated manuscripts, provided humanism with much of its basic structure and method. For renaissance humanists, there was nothing dated or outworn about the writings of Aristotle, Cicero, or Livy. Recovering the classics was to humanism tantamount to rediscovering reality*. For them, it was an effort towards coming to terms systematically and without any preconceptions of any kind, with perceived experience. Classical virtue was not an abstract essence but a quality that could be tested in the forum or on the battle field. Humanism, then, may be accurately defined as the renaissance movement that had at its central focus the ideal of huumanitas. The narrower definition of the Italian term *umaniisi* notwithstanding, all the renaissance

writers who cultivated humanitas, and all their direct descendants may be correctly termed humanists.

Aspects of Humanism

There are several aspects or components of humanism. Most of these elements can stand alone. Humanists are sometimes associated with naturalism, which says that we live in a natural world, and there are no gods or ghosts, disembodied spirits or immortal souls. There is no divine realm. Of course there are stages or as yet unanswered questions about the world, but as we gain knowledge and understanding then previously unexplained phenomena are always brought into the natural world, or can be understood under the laws of nature. Naturalism usually entails atheism; dissent from the existence of a God or gods or at least some form of agnosticism (the idea that the existence of gods is unknown or unknowable or even a meaningless question). Humanists agree that we can learn about the world through the use of reason and scientific method or conjecture tested against logic and empirical evidenceTM. In other words the world is amenable to rational investigation. Let us critically examine some of the aspects of humanism.

Renaissance Humanism

During the fourteenth century, humanism became the dominant word used to mark the renaissance. The most important intellectual event of this time was the rebirth of interest in Greek and Roman literature. Towards the end of the fourteenth century, Greek manuscripts became more widely available in the West. Plato seemed to offer a breath of fresh air, a way to free their thought from medieval chains. Scholars could now read Plato and Aristotle without having to depend on the commentaries of their predecessors. Finally, they could enjoy philosophy as an intellectual adventure and not merely as a means for defending orthodoxy^{TM1}. Technology played a role in this rebirth of culture. The invention of printing press in 1447 had an enormous impact on the culture. The most important outcome of this development was that learning was no longer confined to the clergy, which means the intellectuals were no longer exclusively theologians".

This era rejected medieval scholasticism as sterile, abstract intellectualism^x. They practically idolized and worshipped the classical tradition. This outlook gave priority to the autonomy and independence of individual thinkers, and exalted the value and dignity of the human person. *Desiderius Erasmus* is one of the clearest examples of the spirit of renaissance humanism.

The spirit of the time can be seen in changes occurring in art. The medieval art focused extensively on arts, turning people's mind to heaven, while the renaissance arts focused on the human forms

of the personages drawn. Leonardo da Vinci stands out to be the person who fulfilled the renaissance ideal of the human person or the *universal genius*.

This period also witnessed the protestant ages which was spear headed by Martin Luther who brought concern over the condition of the Church to a crisis point. Luther nailed his criticism, the famous ninety- five theses to the door of Wittenberg castle Church in 1517.

This led to his eventual excommunication by Pope Leo X, the aftermath of the excommunication was the Protestant Reformation and the widespread religious, intellectual, cultural, and political changes. The Reformation was not simply a replacement of one set of religious doctrines or the other, rather it brought in a whole new look, which had widespread cultural implications. Thus, Luther's pastoral advice to believers became translated into a new philosophical creed: ****Listen to your own spirit, follow your own personal reflections'**.***

There was also the interplay of social and political changes, kings turned away from Rome and this destroyed the religious unity of Europe and inevitably led to the outbreak of religious political wars. Ultimately, this led to the spirit of skepticism and tolerance in reaction to counterproductive strife and confusion produced by theological fanaticism¹⁰. The world of commerce also underwent a rapid expansion, a money-based economy replaced the crude barter system. The rise of banking and emerging capitalism created a need for firm and stable governments.

The rise of modern science was the most influential impact of this era, but we must remember that initially, the Renaissance was a rebirth of classical thoughts more than it was a moving forward into new ways of thinking. It was within the late periods of the Renaissance era in the 16th century, that the Scientific Revolution began to surface with a group of thinkers who had different interests from the humanists¹¹. In the second century AD Ptolemy of Alexandria held the geocentric theory that the earth was at the center of the universe and the sun and planets circled it. But as astrological observation grew more accurate, Copernicus through the meticulous use of both observation and mathematics, revolutionized astronomy with his heliocentric theory. Another big head, took off from the paths trod by Copernicus who was killed by the Church as a result of his development. Galileo Galilei then took the heliocentric theory of Copernicus to a fuller step by maintaining that the earth and heavenly bodies revolved around the sun.

The Implications of the New Science

The new science did not simply replace one fact with another, rather it brought with it a whole new outlook on the world that had philosophical implications. First, Galileo combined the materialistic atomism of the Greek philosopher Democritus with the mathematical ideals of the Pythagoreans and Plato, to form a new conception of the world^{xiv}. Secondly, the modern sciences replaced *teleological explanations* i.e. explaining things in terms of their purpose, with the descriptive, mechanical explanations¹². Furthermore, as scientists began to eliminate final causes from their explanations, God was no longer viewed as the supreme Good that drew all things towards their final end, also when they found that mathematical, physical laws were sufficient explanations for natural events, the need to postulate God's active intervention in the world diminished^{xv}. The new astronomy forced people to renegotiate their relationship with the cosmos. No longer was the night sky a comfortable dome, nestled close to the earth, lit up by thousands of tiny, sparkling lights, and with heaven and the choirs of angels just beyond what we can see. Instead people now realized that the earth was just a speck in the dark, loneliness of infinite space.^{TM1}

Religious Humanism

This is an integration of humanist ethical philosophy with congregational but non theistic rituals and community activity which center on human needs, interests, and abilities. Religious humanism typically organize in the 1st century under the umbrella of ethical culture or ethical humanism. By the 1960s, it had abandoned its religious trappings and asserted humanism less as a religious identity and more as a useful label to describe rational and non-religious attitudes to morality and ethics. The ethical culture was conceived as a new religion that would strip away accumulated unscientific dogmas of traditional religions while retaining and elevating the ethical message at the heart of all religions. They believed that traditional religion will ultimately prove to be incompatible with scientific world view. They felt that the vital aspect of religion should not be allowed to fall by the wayside. Religion provided vital functioning in encouraging good works. And religion taught important truth about the world, but this truth was expressed through metaphors, that were not always suited to modern understanding of the world. Religious humanism was spear headed by August Comte in his quest to discover an objective moral standard, this led him to developing his history of ideas which shows that there has been a clear movement of thought by a successive progress of three stages. The first which is the theological stage represents for him a very naive outlook of the world. This is because people were wont to explain phenomena with reference to divine or causal forces. The second stage which is the metaphysical, replaces this human centered concepts of divinity with impersonal and abstract forces. The last positivist or scientific stage emphasizes that human interactions and relations to the world are to be scientifically studied like any other natural phenomenon. This eventually gave rise to the establishment of a new religion he calls religion of humanity¹. Having discarded the notion of God, he replaces the Supreme Being with the positivist¹'s humanity. He believes that what we need is a scientifically, respectable religion that will have all the emotional appeal and motivating force of Christianity without its theological and metaphysical baggageTM.

Secular Humanism

This is a philosophy or life that embraces human reason, secular ethics, and philosophical naturalism while specifically rejecting religious dogma, supernaturalism and superstition as the basis of morality and decision making³. Secular humanism posits that human beings are capable of being ethical and moral without religion or belief in a deity. It does not however assume that humans are either inherently good or evil, nor does it present human as being superior to nature. Rather the humanist life stance emphasizes the unique responsibility facing humanity and the ethical consequences of human decisions. Fundamental to the concept of secular humanism is the strongly held view point that ideology be it religious or political must thoroughly be examined by each individual and not simply accepted or rejected on faith. Along with this, an essential part of secular humanism is continually adapting search for truth, primarily through science and philosophy. Many secular humanists derive their moral codes from a philosophy of utilitarianism, ethical naturalism, or evolutionary ethics and some advocate a science of morality. By the nineteenth century, humanism came to be identified with a purely secular

attitude. The American Humanist Association, which grew out of the Unitarian movement, holds that human beings can satisfy religious needs from within, discerning the concept of God as inconsistent with advanced thought and human freedom.TM

Theistic Humanism

This aspect of humanism is theorized as the scientific world view. It has to be defended and made to exist against scientific and philosophical skepticism. Most traditions of humanism end up in immanetism; a philosophy which begins in man and ends in man, and remains in man. They are philosophies of human egoism, of the individualism characteristic of Protestantism and liberalism. Theistic humanism could be termed Christian humanism. Here individuals and cultures have unique values. Such humanism will insist among other things insist on priority of persons over things; of ethics over politics; of subject over object; of moral over science. It will maintain these principal priorities without prejudice to things, objects, politics and science.

Philosophic Forerunners of Humanism

The first notable Humanist of whom there is reliable record was Protagoras, a Greek teacher and philosopher of the fifth century BCE, to whom Plato devoted an entire dialogue. Protagoras formulated the famous dictum *"Man is the measure of all things, of things that are that they are, and of things that are not that they are not."*^{3TM} This statement is too vague and subjective to be taken over without qualification by modern Humanism, but was at the time a daring and unorthodox thought. Protagoras was also an outspoken agnostic. According to Diogenes Laertius, he asserted: *"As to the gods, I have no means of knowing either that they exist or do not exist. For many are the obstacles that impede knowledge, both the obscurity of the question and the shortness of human life,"* [^]or these and similar iconoclastic sentiments the Athenians accused Protagoras of impiety, banished him, and "burnt his works in the market place, after sending around a herald to collect them from all who had copies in their* possession." A number of other Greek philosophers in the fifth century BCE showed a Humanist bent in that they, too, concentrated on the analysis of humankind rather than on the analysis of physical Nature, as the earlier generation of Greek thinkers had done. Most of them, like Protagoras, were Sophists, that is, wandering "teachers of wisdom**" who discussed practically all the major issues that have ever arisen in philosophy. The first great naturalist in the history of philosophy, though by no means a consistent one, was Aristotle, most universal of Greek philosophers, who lived in the fourth century BCE. Aristotle, student of Plato at the renowned Academy in Athens and tutor of Alexander the Great, was a biologist and psychologist as well as a philosopher. He not only provided powerful sinews for the life of reason by clarifying and codifying the laws of logic, but was also the founder of science as a discipline and an organized, interrelated body of fact^{xxiv}. His broad and penetrating genius explored, and then extended, practically the whole range of knowledge as it existed in his day. Though Aristotle's underlying purpose was to explain rather than to reform the world, he arrived at many conclusions that are usable by those who would re-

make society. Perhaps most important in this connection was the emphasis on the fact of process in Nature and civilization, although his analysis of motion and change remained far from science. It then came back into the mainstream of Western thought with a renewed vigor, receiving a fresh and lasting impulse from Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, published in 1859.^{xxv} What Darwin and his fellow biologists did, through marshaling incontestable evidence of the evolution of humans from lower forms of life, was to demonstrate that no wide and impassable gulf exists between *Homo sapiens* and the rest of Nature. This undermined some of the most powerful arguments of religious supernaturalism and of the traditional philosophies associated with it, giving most convincing support to the major naturalist thesis that human beings and all of their experience are in every respect a part of Nature. Naturalist trends in Europe greatly increased as a result of Darwin's work. But the revival of Naturalism as an explicit philosophy in intellectual and academic circles took place. The most significant resurgence of Materialism, however, took place in France during the second half of the eighteenth century as part of the great Enlightenment that stirred to its depths the Western world. The French Encyclopedists, such as *La Mettrie* and *Helvetius*, *Holbach* and *Diderot*, were able to utilize the materialist philosophy as a powerful weapon against religious superstition and the reactionary Catholic Church. In his *System of Nature* Baron d'Holbach summed up the materialist attitude toward religious supernaturalism: *"If -we go back to the beginning of things, we shall always find that ignorance and fear created the gods; that imagination, rapture, and deception embellished or distorted them; that weakness worships them; that credulity nourishes them; that custom spares them; and that tyranny favors them in order to profit from the blindness of men."* And the uncompromising Diderot exclaimed: *"Men will never be free until the last Jang is strangled in the entrails of the last priest!"*^{xxvi}

How Humanism has Contributed to the Modern World

Imagine a world without technology, no phones, no laptops, no TV's etc. If it weren't for humanism, that's the kind of world we would be living in right now. Our way of thinking has been refined and developed from a way of thinking during a very important time period- the renaissance. The renaissance which meant rebirth, was a time that succeeded the dark ages. The dark ages were a time where nothing but bad happened, events like the Black Death severely reduced the world population. There weren't any significant inventions either. The renaissance was a time when many thinkers emerged, there were many debates at that time and rational thought was evident. Humanism resurfaced at that time, and many people began looking back and studying human nature. These individuals helped the world leave the dark ages, and eventually led the world to where we are right now. Had it not been for humanism, our world would be lacking many things. We wouldn't have the art, technology, and way of thinking that we presently have. This is because our rational thought and creativity, allows us to excel and continue to further our abilities. We owe it to the individuals who lived before us.

For centuries, people looked to religion for the answers to their greatest questions. The church had a firm grip of how people viewed the world. God's will was to be followed

without question and any attempt to explain a phenomenon without God's involvement was heresy. When the renaissance began to spread across Europe, the qualities of humanism became more prominent. Scientific and rational analysis was becoming of great interest compared to supernatural explanations. Humanism was meant to impress and awe its observers, by embodying the beauty of the human person. At first, humanism was actually thought by some to be a way of validating the church and supporting her. With man being the measure of all things, and man being created hi the image and likeness of God, it would show how perfect God is. Pico della Mirandola' s literary work Oration on the dignity of man is a clear example of how the early goal of humanism was to create a better understanding of God. However, as the sciences began to contradict what the church taught the public, humanism began to be painted in a more pagan light

Humanism and Democracy

Humanist principles demand the widest possible extension of democracy to all relevant aspects of human living. The Humanist conception of democracy naturally incorporates earlier contributions to the democratic ideal such as the guarantees embodied in the American Bill of Rights, and the stirring battle cry of the French Revolution, "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity." Also Humanists the world over subscribe to the internationally valid tenets of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. Democracy is of course a method as well as a goal. It is the most intelligent method of conducting political life, of carrying through social changes, and of settling disagreements in the realm of public affairs. The life of reason—the appeal to the supreme court of the mind for which philosophy implies in its very essence, peaceful persuasion through the free exchange and competition of ideas in the wide arena of social discussion**". The philosophic ideal is the transformation of our bitter social and economic disputes into great Platonic dialogues carried on in legislative bodies and the organs of public opinion—dialogues, however, that in due course have a definite outcome and therefore do not end as inconclusively as most of those in which Socrates took part. Humanism's support of the democratic way is a matter of both idealism and realism. To quote Professor Reinhold Buhr's epigram, "*Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary*"**TM** Democracy is a comparatively new thing in the world; and a very radical thing. Violence, blood- shed, coercion, and war—both civil and international—are the old, traditional methods of resolving deep-going conflicts of opinion and interest. Such methods have been wasteful, in terms of human life and economic dislocation, beyond all computation. Often they have succeeded in curing one evil only by substituting another.

Since Humanism as a functioning credo is so closely bound up with the methods of reason and science, plainly free speech and democracy are of its very lifeblood. For rea- son and scientific method can fully flourish only in an atmosphere of civil liberties. Humanism envisions a republican society where Humanists and everyone else can express unorthodox ideas on any subject without risking persecution, prosecution, execution, exile, obloquy, or loss of employment. As a minority position at present, Humanism must

defend democracy on the grounds of both the social good and sheer self-interest Only if the channels of opinion are kept open can the Humanist viewpoint hope to win a majority in the nation and the world. A true democracy welcomes differences and disagreements and cherishes, as a creative force in society, minority criticisms of existing customs and prevailing patterns of thought The democratic spirit is not dogmatic, for it recognizes the value of constant challenges to basic assumptions. Minority criticisms of existing customs and prevailing patterns of thought The democratic spirit is not dogmatic, for it recognizes the value of constant challenges to basic assumptions.

Positivism and the Church of Humanism

August Comte believe human history would progress in a law of three stages from a theological phase, to the metaphysical towards a fully rational positivist society. In later life, Comte attempted to introduce a religion of humanity in light of growing anti-religious sentiments and social malaise in the revolutionary France.^{50ax} This religion would necessarily fulfil the functional cohesive role that supernatural religion once served. In 1878, the society established the church of humanity under Congreve's direction. There, they introduced sacraments of the religion of humanity and published a co-operative translation of Comte's positive polity. The American version of the church of humanity was largely modeled on the English version, it wasn't atheistic and had sermons and sacramental rites. At times the services included reading from conventional religious works like the book of Isaiah.

Anti-Humanism; a Critique of Humanism.

In social theory and philosophy, anti-humanism is a theory that is critical of traditional humanism and traditional ideas about humanity and the human condition. Central to anti-humanism is the view that concepts of human nature, man or humanity should be rejected as historically relative or metaphysical. In the late 18th and 19th century, the philosophy of humanism was a cornerstone of the enlightenment. From the belief in a universal moral core of humanity, it followed that all human person are inherently free and equal. For liberalists such as Kant, the universal law of reason was a guide towards emancipation from any kind of tyranny. ***The criticism of humanism as being over idealistic began in the 19th century. For Friedrich Nietzsche, humanism was nothing more than an empty figure of speech, a secular version of theism"TM. Max Sterner expressed a similar position in his book the *ego and its own* published several decades before Nietzsche's work. Nietzsche argues in *genealogy of morals*, that human rights exist as a means for the weak to constrain the strong as such, they do not facilitate the emancipation of life, but deny it. Marx for one believed that human rights were a product of the very dehumanization they were intended to oppose. Given that capitalism forces individuals to behave in an egoistic manner, they are in constant conflict with one another and are thus in need of rights to protect themselves. True emancipation he asserted, could only come through the establishment of communism, which abolishes the private ownership of all means of production.

In the 20 century, the view of humans as rationally autonomous was challenged by Sigmund Freud, who believed humans to be largely driven by unconscious irrational. Martin Heidegger viewed humanism as a metaphysical philosophy that ascribes to humanity a universal essence and privileges it above all other forms of existence. For Heidegger, humanism takes consciousness as the paradigm of philosophy, leading it to subjectivism and idealism that must be avoided. Like Hegel, before him, Heidegger rejected the Kantian notion of autonomy, pointing out that humans were social and historical beings, as well as Kant's notion of a constituting consciousness. Heidegger nevertheless, retains links both to humanism and to existentialism despite his efforts to distance himself from both in the letter on humanism. Paul Kehinde Oredipe represents similar view when he quoted the emeritus pope Benedict 16

'In the millennium just past, and especially in the last centuries, immense progress was made in the areas of technology and science. Today, we can dispose of vast material resources. But the men and women in our technological age risk becoming victims of their own intellectual and technical advancements, ending up in spiritual barrenness, and emptiness of heart.'^{TM*}

In the above excerpt, his holiness hinges on the spiritual unconsciousness which has resulted because of humanism whose aftermath is seen greatly in science and technology.

Paraphrasing his holiness Pope John Paul the 2, he posits that *'humanism is built on atheistic and secularist forms, which has arrived at a point -where the human person is diminished and annihilated. He also relates humanism to being a veritable tool and form of real idolatry which rightly acknowledge the greatness and misery of individuals'*.

Resultant Consequence and Challenge of Humanism

Openness to Transcendence- By eliminating the transcendental dimension of the person, the call to communion with others and with God himself, the reductive ideologies have degraded persons to anonymous individuals, open to manipulation and abuse from every side. Where God disappears, the absolute dignity of man disappears as well. For human liberty cannot be absolutized without losing its identity leading to the destruction of man. In the same trend, Rocco Buttiglione spells out the root of the holocaust *'in a universe from which God has been expelled, any reason to respect man is forfeited**^*. Man becomes simply an object similar to other natural objects, on which other men exercise their will to power. History bears this out eloquently; *'the critical effort of modern philosophy to cut human intelligence down to size by denying its openness to infinity has alarmingly lowered the ethical level of the society ^V* Thereby, we have landed in the cultural relativism and openness to closeness. The superman of Nietzsche led more or less directly to fascism. Feuerbach's man is god for man generated Marxism. Absolutizing human liberty leads to the loss of the sense of transcendence. Pure licentiousness becomes the order. And if there is no point of reference beyond myself or beyond yourself, then, reason, justice and law become exploitable by the powerful and the influential and the weak have nothing left to appeal to. When the absolute ground of existence and of

values recedes, human life lacks form and direction. As the ancient Roman adage puts it: "what are laws without morals? Thus if God does not exist, everything is permitted. The contemporary queries about human person can be answered only in relation to God, the world, and human society. It is an illusion to think that man is in complete possession of himself, that he enjoys absolute freedom, that he can be manufactured according to chance, and nothing mysterious.

Descartes' Dream and Demon Arguments; a Contradiction of T--R Concept of Humanism.

In the dream argument, Descartes says that he may see himself in fire only to see himself as seated near the fire only to wake up and realize that he is somewhere else, thus for him, there are no conclusive indications by which waking life can be distinguished from sleep. Is he imagining soul, or spirit. The above implies a holistic realization of the existence of a supreme being, and that this idea he has of the existence of God is implanted in him by God himself. Even though Descartes* argument has some certain levels of reservation and can be subjected to debate, he has surely given a sure foundation to the inconsistencies inherent in the humanist conception that man should be guided supremely by the sense.

Critical Evaluation of the Influence of Humanism on the Modern Period

One cannot fail to acknowledge the enormous impact of humanism on the modern world. This impact is not just on the surface level, it cuts deeply into virtually all aspects of human endeavor. The intellectual awakening of this concept is a novel input in the history of world. Humanism gave room for widening of the horizon of enquiries into adapting a very good condition for man's comfort. If there were none of these humanistic awakening, humans will still be caught in a tyranny of impoverished thinking. Philosophical humanism has been argued also as the only system capable of formidably inspiring any authentic development of the world. With its many riches and concern for human welfare at a universal level, no future development will run contrary to humanism.

The above notwithstanding, humanism is not without some harms and misgivings. The growth of science has changed humanity's story. It may have alleviated the miseries of disease and drudgery and provided an array of gadgetry for our entertainment and convenience, but it has left us in a world without wonder. It has robbed us of the deeper questions about life, purpose and meaning. Science in its genuine approach undoubtedly helps humanity and enhances civilization. But disturbing trends like scientism, humanism, nihilism, and the likes, try to reconstruct the image of man to that of a beast without conscience. The evident historical changes of scientific theories point to the fact that science is no close to capturing God's blue print of the universe. Science provides us with information about the form or structure, rather than the nature or content of what is unobservable. Thus, the questions of God and morality, human purpose and meaning in the wave of science and technology, social media, and human relationships and our quests for material happiness in a changing world of science, should have a way of getting us

review and possibly unseat our most certain convictions. More still, humanism posits an overarching and excessively abstract notion of humanity which can then be used as a pretext for imperialism and domination of those deemed somehow less than human. "Humanism fabricates the human as much as it fabricates the nonhuman animal", suggests Timothy Laurie, turning the human into what he calls "a placeholder for a range of attributes that have been considered most virtuous among humans (e.g. rationality, altruism), rather than most commonplace (e.g. hunger, anger)".

In 1925, the English mathematician and philosopher Alfred North Whitehead cautioned: "The prophecy of Francis Bacon has now been fulfilled; and man, who at times dreamt of himself as a little lower than the angels, has submitted to become the servant and the minister of nature.^{xxxvi} It still remains to be seen whether the same actor can play both parts"* This implies that man's over emphasis on himself has, alleviated him of the intellectual contemplation of the divine and thus making him a minister of nature. In another approach, one can say that the concept of humanism is too vaguely defined and does not really mean anything, or to put it in another way, there's been no major systematic treatment of humanism, no systematic theology as it were. Underlying this critique is the feeling that humanists spend all their time disproving God, and very little of their time coming up with a positive, constructive statement of then* position. Let me give a specific example, Christians have hagiography and Christology which is the description of saints and the study of the nature of Christ. Certain branches of Buddhism have their *arhats* and other moral exemplars and how they tell the story of how Siddhartha *Guatama* found the middle way. But humanists have no equivalent study. They have no systematic way of holding up morals exemplars

Again, in trying to represent a comprehensive picture of human beings in relation to other creatures, *Rush and Anyanwu* write that 'to exist means more than just being there'. It means standing in a particular relationship with all there is both visible and invisible (the obvious and less obvious). In other words, human beings encompasses the two order of creation, the visible and invisible, the material and the immaterial, the body and the soul. Beyond the lower animals, these components appear in human beings as two faces of the same coin.^{TM"TM}

Finally, I want to at this juncture, support the humanist psychology of Sigmund Freud, who believed humans to be largely driven by unconscious irrational. This implies that one cannot wholly take recourse to reasoning and dependence on self as the only explanation to things. Human beings are sometimes flared by unconsciousness in thinking and can carry out certain actions without proper and accurate sense perception.

Conclusion

From our researches and contributions, it is obvious that science may not succeed at hitting the blueprint of reality, and thus, we can never understand the basic furniture of the universe created by God. Sciences in their various fields, only describe man and things around him in the world. But the basic question of why there is this world and from which source it came to be, still overwhelms man and his scientific breakthroughs. That is why

trends like humanism which extol human reasoning as the sole instrument for solving human problems have failed to underlie the basic principle behind human beings.

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