

A Philosophical Investigation of African Humanism and Its Sensibility

Mrs. CHILKA ANITA

*Lecturer in English, Andhra Christian College,
Guntur, GUNTUR (Dt)-522001
Andhra Pradesh.
anitachilka73@gmail.com*

Abstract:

Like any humanism, African humanism places a high value on an individual's welfare or well-being. It's crucial to keep in mind, though, that not all humanists are iconoclastic, atheistic, or religious. The reason this precautionary measure is so important is that, since the sixteenth century, people have commonly associated the term "Humanism" with people "with a set of entirely nonreligious beliefs and values," and by "traditional religions pervade all departments" of their lives, we are referring to Africans, who are widely recognized as "notoriously religious" across the globe. Among the qualities of African Humanism, it is obvious that human beings that could be classified as "incurably religious" are at its core. In actuality, the primary thread that unites African humanism throughout the continent may be found in their religion, which influences their fundamental ontological and/or worldview. The current study used the idea of humanism to examine how African sensibilities are present in Black people.

Key words: *African Humanism,*

I. INTRODUCTION

African humanism places a high value on an individual's welfare or well-being, just like all other forms of humanism. But let us not forget that not all humanists are iconoclastic, atheistic, or religious. Because Africans are widely recognized as being "notoriously religious" and having "traditional religions permeate all the departments" of their lives (Mbiti 2; Idowu 5), this precautionary measure is crucial because, since the 16th century, the term "humanism" has been commonly applied to people "with a set of entirely nonreligious beliefs and values" (Hinnells 225). One can easily see that at its foundation are those people who might be described as "incurably religious" when considering the traits of African humanism. In actuality, the primary thread that unites African humanism throughout the continent may be found in their religion, which influences their fundamental ontological and/or worldview. This is in turn mostly anthropocentric. In other words, nearly everything is evaluated with the importance of humans in mind. There are many who even assert that God exists for the good of humanity (Awolalu and Dopamu 160). Booth sings on "how African Religion is centered more on man than God or nature" Religion is best described as a form of Religious Humanism for the Baluba people of Zaire (Booth 34). They believe that religion is more about bettering human lives than it is about the divine or the natural world.

African humanism is a philosophical investigation of the relevance of African reverence for the human being. The ancient values of hospitality, primacy of the individual, respect for life, sense of the sacred, family hood, brotherhood, solidarity, and other aspects of an African person's communalistic life are recognized. Which applies the descriptive analytic and phenomenological methods of inquiry and expanding the scope of our coverage to include not only black negroes within the confines of the geographical configuration of Africa but also diasporas and those of any race and color within the continent, practical examples are sourced in order to illumine our subject matter. Significant problems are addressed regarding the nature of the centrality of the human person, his or her dignity rights, and the necessity for fair play and a feeling of responsibility on the part of citizens and general leadership. The reputation of Africa and Africans as faiths in many facets of life is being used as a springboard for this critical mission. By and large, Africans are called upon not only to be more aware of the latent potentials in this inherently humanistic light, but also to minimize and promote them rigorously, as well as to give it a more cosmopolitan appearance as they anchor their lives on this richer, sweeter heritage. This, in turn, is expected to yield enormous determination in not only curbing violence, terrorism, genocide, and all forms of social ills associated with our contemporary world, but also to bring about much-needed peace, harmony, and progress in its global ramifications.

The central concept of African humanism essentially sheds more light on the human experience. It places a high emphasis on human life, as well as a premium on dignity, compassion, humaneness, and respect for the humanity of others. African humanism opposes anti-social, shameful, inhumane, and criminal behavior and promotes social justice.

EURO-CENTRIC CONCEPT OF HUMANISM AND THE WESTERN WAY OF LIFE:

Many historians believe that European dominance in the modern world is mostly due to distinct European historical achievements. In the last two to three centuries, Europeans have definitely dominated the planet. They have effectively governed the wealthiest and most militarily powerful countries. They have had access to the most advanced technologies and were instrumental in its development. These facts appear to be widely accepted and difficult to refute. The question is what causes this disparity in power and living standards with the rest of the world? One type of response is that Europeans have done something noteworthy and distinct from people in other regions of the world. This is what scholars mean when they speak of the 'European miracle'. Europeans initiated the industrial revolution or maintained expansion. They introduced modernity, along with capitalism, bureaucracy, and individual liberty. Europeans who pioneered these inventions were proud of their accomplishments, which the rest of the world should envy or appreciate. Whenever such a transition occurred, Europeans saw their achievements as highly desirable in the modern world. They believed that for the most part they are Universalists. This was the era of the cultural triumph of science as a knowledge activity.

Modern Europe saw itself as more than just one civilization among many, but one that was distinctive. For some, civilization was encapsulated in 'modernity', which included technological advancement and increased production, as well as a cultural conviction in the presence of historical evolution and progress. Others defined civilization as growing autonomy for the 'individual' in relation to all other social factors, including the family, community, state, and religious institutions. Others defined civilization as non-brutal behavior in everyday life, or social manners in their broadest sense. For others, civilization represented the decline or limiting of the scope of legitimate violence, as well as the expanding of what constitutes cruelty. Of course, many people associate civilization with a combination of several or all of these characteristics.

The set of values, however we prefer to designate them—civilized values, secular-humanist values, modern values—permeate social science, as one might expect, since social science is a product of the same historical system that has elevated these values to the pinnacle of a hierarchy. Social scientists have incorporated such values in their definitions of the problems—the social problems, the intellectual problems—they consider worth pursuing. They have incorporated these values into the concepts they have invented with which to analyze the problems, and into the indicators they utilize to measure the concepts. Social scientists no doubt have insisted, for the most part, that they were seeking to be value-free; insofar as they claimed they were not intentionally misreading or distorting the data because of their socio-political preferences. But to be value-free in this sense does not at all mean that values, in the sense of decisions about the historical significance of observed phenomena, are absent. This is of course the central argument of Heinrich Rickert about the logical specificity of what he calls the 'cultural sciences'. They are unable to ignore 'values' in the sense of assessing social significance. To be sure, the Western and social scientific presumptions about 'civilization' were not entirely impervious to the concept of the multiplicity of 'civilizations'. Whenever one posed the question of the origin of civilized values, how it was that they have appeared originally—or so it was argued—in the modern Western world, the answer almost inevitably was that they were the products of long-standing and unique trends in the past of the Western world—alternatively described as the heritage of Antiquity and/or of the Christian Middle Ages, the heritage of the Hebrew world, or the combined heritage of the two, the latter sometimes renamed and respecified as the Judeo-Christian heritage.

Many arguments can and have been raised against the set of successive presumptions. The notion that the modern world, particularly the modern European world, is civilized in the sense that the term is used in European discourse has been called into question. When asked, 'Mr. Gandhi, what do you think of Western civilization?', he said, 'It would be a terrific idea.' Furthermore, the claim that the ideals of ancient Greece and Rome, or ancient Israel, were better suited to establishing the groundwork for these so-called modern values than those of other historical civilizations has been challenged. And finally whether modern Europe can plausibly claim either Greece and Rome, on the one hand, or ancient Israel, on the other, as its civilizational foreground is not at all self-evident. Indeed, there has long been a debate between those who have seen Greece or Israel as alternative cultural origins. Each side of this debate has denied the plausibility of the alternative. This debate itself casts doubt on the plausibility of the derivation. In any case, who would argue that Japan can

claim ancient Indic civilizations as its forerunner on the grounds that they were the place of origin of Buddhism, which has become a central part of Japan's cultural history? Is the contemporary United States closer culturally to ancient Greece, Rome, or Israel than Japan is to Indic civilization? One could, after all, make the case that Christianity, far from representing continuity, marked a decisive break with Greece, Rome, and Israel. Indeed Christians, up to the Renaissance, made precisely this argument. And is not the break with Antiquity still today part of the doctrine of Christian churches?

However, the political arena has emerged as the focal point for the debate over values. Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir has made it clear that Asian countries can and should 'modernize' without accepting some or all of European civilization's principles. His ideas have been largely shared by other Asian political leaders. The 'values' argument has also grown central within European countries, particularly in the United States, as a discussion about 'multiculturalism'. This version of the contemporary argument has had a significant impact on institutionalized social science, with the emergence of university systems that group scientists who reject the premise of the uniqueness of anything termed 'civilization.'

Migration is the migration of people from one location or area to another. The current global population distribution is the result of large-scale migration of people from a few regions where humans were involved early in history. Tropical Africa is said to be one of the early human evaluation regions. In the past, migrations helped to alleviate the burden of overpopulation on local resources, as people relocated in pursuit of new opportunities. People move for a variety of reasons, including economic, social, and political ones. People typically relocate from areas with harsh environmental conditions, a lack of arable land, unemployment, poverty, and persecution due to religion or politics to areas with these resources available, as well as areas with minerals, the freedom to practice religion or politics, and the possibility of future growth once economic conditions improve. The assessment of human culture has occurred as a result of migrations and settlements. The evaluation that we might refer to as cultural has become just as important as natural evaluation going forward.

The universalization of the Eurocentric humanistic worldview by Western thought, together with the remarkable evolution of European man, ultimately led to the inevitable outcomes that we see today in America and other areas of European supremacy. We learn that Western civilization's code of growth, also known as western humanism or Eurocentric humanism, is a result of its political and social structure; it is primarily predicated on the ideas of democracy and the rule of law. White people hold that human civilization must adhere to the western legal and judicial system, which is demonstrated by the consensus behind the establishment of the political order (state), which is public involvement. In such a world nothing is able to stand against this endless courage or escape from it, rather everything must have been down in the presence of this legal order.

All these independent, self-satisfied, and arrogantly Eurocentric human ancient and dominant worlds, which believed they knew the one true, everlasting truth, and that they were superior to all others because of this "truth," along with their entire culture, history, language, literature, geography, and perimeter, must once again come under the intense scrutiny of the insatiable curiosity of contemporary technological and scientific cultural advancement. The African institution has been destroyed by this Eurocentric notion of enlightenment. Afrocentric and other migratory cultures have become invisible due to the rise of pseudo-modern Eurocentric culture.

CHINUA ACHEBE'S HUMANISM:

Achebe has faced criticism from Western scholars such as Purvey for being perceived as a humanist in his writings. However, the author believes that Purvey's critique stems from racial discrimination and the imperialist belief that nothing good can emerge from the black race. As African humanists, we must all recognize that one fundamental quality of Achebe that sets him apart from others is his willingness to share his knowledge so that future generations might benefit from it. This deed has been portrayed in all of the encomia that have surrounded his unique work, which has been translated into numerous languages for readers in Africa, the West, Asia, and the African Diaspora.

The book "Things Fall Apart" is set in a realistic environment that reflects African culture. Africans lived in harmony and supported one another through life until the white man arrived. "Unoka" Okonkwo's father may have been a wimp due in part to the way Africans live, which also contributed to Okonkwo's rise above his father. This also explains the deep-rooted African belief that a child's growth will surpass that of the father. Through Okonkwo's adoption of the small boy Ikemefuna, who grew up under his roof and came to call him father, Achebe explored humanism in a profound way. Ikemefuna's foster father cherished him dearly. The claim that Okonkwo killed him betrays a naturalistic and ethical error. The fact that humanism flourishes at this time is crucial to our research since Okonkwo's best friend even gave him a warning, stating, "This child calls you father: do not have a hand in his death." This is an example of humanism that is not too dissimilar from

what happened in the west. The fact that Ikemefuna's father killed him is not inherently barbarous, as it is consistent with all global customs. There are many customs included in the sacred scriptures, as seen by God's demands that Abraham, the father of faith, surrender his one and only son. God himself was so devoted to the world that he offered his only son to be crucified and die a humiliating death on a cross as a sacrifice.

This is a clear picture of a caring and committed teacher, a person dedicated to his family and the entire community, worthy of note. An example of such teachers abounds in African communities. They were treated with reverence by both adults and children. Such a teacher was an epitome of African humanism. In his work "No Longer at Ease," Obi Okonkwo's act of demanding or accepting of bribe is an aberration to African humanism. For it is an African way of life to go an extra mile to help a stranger who he knows not where he comes from. This explains the hospitality extended to the white man when he came to Africa and he refused to go. Rather he chose to give Africans funny names and human resources which he took away as slaves. Leaving the book of life (Bible & Qu'ran) with a bunch of contradictions as they only represent the life culture and traditions of other nations of the white race.

Thus far, the research has looked at humanism and defined it as a philosophy that prioritizes man (or the human being) over all other considerations. Philosophically, its meaning can be derived from the super natural or the higher authority for the well-being of humanity, despite the fact that it sounds unclear at first. The meanings of African and Western humanism are similar. There aren't many differences between them, particularly when it comes to religion. In terms of history, Achebe is comparable to Homer of the Greek Romans, who established the Greek literary canon.

Achebe is the African Shakespeare; he is also comparable to Pushkin, who is seen as the founder of Russian literature (Nwala, 2013). "These were the men of comparable status in the history of human civilization," as Nwala noted. If they haven't already, Africans view Achebe in a similar way. "A teacher, a great philosopher, and a great humanist," was how Nwala characterized Achebe. We all held him up as a symbol and an idol for the advancement of our children's civilization. He had to have been a man of destiny and history, with a strong spirit.

II. CONCLUSION

The welfare or well-being of the human being is the primary characteristic of African humanism, just like it is of all other humanistic ideologies. However, we must keep in mind that not all humanists are atheistic, iconoclastic, or religious when we think about this. Thus far, the research has looked at humanism and defined it as a philosophy that prioritizes man (or the human being) over all other considerations. Humanism has come under fire despite all of the research done thus far on African sensibility, different theological ideologies, and social reformers in relation to Eurocentric humanism. It needs to be investigated scientifically from a multidisciplinary standpoint.

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