

Humanism

“Humanistic” redirects here. For the album, see [Humanistic \(album\)](#).

This article is about human-centred philosophy. For other uses, see [Humanism \(disambiguation\)](#).

Humanism is a philosophical and ethical stance that emphasizes the value and agency of human beings, individually and collectively, and generally prefers critical thinking and evidence (rationalism, empiricism) over established doctrine or faith (fideism). The meaning of the term *humanism* has fluctuated, according to the successive intellectual movements which have identified with it.^[1] Generally, however, humanism refers to a perspective that affirms some notion of human freedom and progress. In modern times, humanist movements are typically aligned with secularism, and today “Humanism” typically refers to a non-theistic life stance centred on human agency, and looking to science instead of religious dogma in order to understand the world.^[2]

1 Background

The word “Humanism” is ultimately derived from the Latin concept *humanitas*, and, like most other words ending in *-ism*, entered English in the nineteenth century. However, historians agree that the concept predates the label invented to describe it, encompassing the various meanings ascribed to *humanitas*, which included both benevolence toward one’s fellow humans and the values imparted by *bonae litterae* or humane learning (literally “good letters”).

In the second century A.D, a Latin grammarian, Aulus Gellius (c. 125– c. 180), complained:

Those who have spoken Latin and have used the language correctly do not give to the word *humanitas* the meaning which it is commonly thought to have, namely, what the Greeks call φιλάνθρωπία (philanthropy), signifying a kind of friendly spirit and good-feeling towards all men without distinction; but they gave to *humanitas* the force of the Greek παιδεία (paideia); that is, what we call *eruditionem institutionemque in bonas artes*, or “education and training in the liberal arts [literally 'good arts']”. Those who earnestly desire and seek after these are most highly humanized. For the desire to pursue of that kind of

knowledge, and the training given by it, has been granted to humanity alone of all the animals, and for that reason it is termed *humanitas*, or “humanity”.^[3]

Gellius says that in his day *humanitas* is commonly used as a synonym for philanthropy – or kindness and benevolence toward one’s fellow human being. Gellius maintains that this common usage is wrong, and that model writers of Latin, such as Cicero and others, used the word only to mean what we might call ‘humane’ or “polite” learning, or the Greek equivalent *Paideia*. Gellius became a favorite author in the Italian Renaissance, and, in fifteenth-century Italy, teachers and scholars of philosophy, poetry, and rhetoric were called and called themselves “humanists”.^{[4][5]} Modern scholars, however, point out that Cicero (106 – 43 BC), who was most responsible for defining and popularizing the term *humanitas*, in fact frequently used the word in both senses, as did his near contemporaries. For Cicero, a lawyer, what most distinguished humans from brutes was speech, which, allied to reason, could (and should) enable them to settle disputes and live together in concord and harmony under the rule of law.^[6] Thus *humanitas* included two meanings from the outset and these continue in the modern derivative, *humanism*, which even today can refer to both humanitarian benevolence and to scholarship.^[7]

During the French Revolution, and soon after, in Germany (by the Left Hegelians), *humanism* began to refer to an ethical philosophy centered on humankind, without attention to the transcendent or supernatural. The designation Religious Humanism refers to organized groups that sprang up during the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is similar to Protestantism, although centered on human needs, interests, and abilities rather than the supernatural.^[8] In the Anglophone world, such modern, organized forms of humanism, which are rooted in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, have to a considerable extent more or less detached themselves from the historic connection of humanism with classical learning and the liberal arts.

The first *Humanist Manifesto* was issued by a conference held at the University of Chicago in 1933.^[9] Signatories included the philosopher John Dewey, but the majority were ministers (chiefly Unitarian) and theologians. They identified humanism as an ideology that espouses reason, ethics, and social and economic justice, and they called for science to replace dogma and the supernatural as the basis of morality and decision-making.^{[10][11]}

2 History



An ideal society as conceived by Renaissance humanist, Saint Thomas More in his book *Utopia* ("Nowhere").

In 1808 Bavarian educational commissioner Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer coined the term *Humanismus* to describe the new classical curriculum he planned to offer in German secondary schools,^[12] and by 1836 the word "humanism" had been absorbed into the English language in this sense. The coinage gained universal acceptance in 1856, when German historian and philologist Georg Voigt used *humanism* to describe Renaissance humanism, the movement that flourished in the Italian Renaissance to revive classical learning, a use which won wide acceptance among historians in many nations, especially Italy.^[13]

But in the mid-18th century, during the French Enlightenment, a more ideological use of the term had come into use. In 1765, the author of an anonymous article in a French Enlightenment periodical spoke of "The general love of humanity ... a virtue hitherto quite nameless among us, and which we will venture to call 'humanism', for the time has come to create a word for such a beautiful and necessary thing".^[14] The latter part of the 18th and the early 19th centuries saw the creation of numerous grass-roots "philanthropic" and benevolent societies dedicated to human betterment and the spreading of knowledge (some Christian, some not). After the French Revolution, the idea that human virtue could be created by human reason alone independently from traditional religious institutions, attributed by opponents of the Rev-

olution to Enlightenment *philosophes* such as Rousseau, was violently attacked by influential religious and political conservatives, such as Edmund Burke and Joseph de Maistre, as a deification or idolatry of humanity.^[15] Humanism began to acquire a negative sense. The *Oxford English Dictionary* records the use of the word "humanism" by an English clergyman in 1812 to indicate those who believe in the "mere humanity" (as opposed to the divine nature) of Christ, i.e., Unitarians and Deists.^[16] In this polarised atmosphere, in which established ecclesiastical bodies tended to circle the wagons and reflexively oppose political and social reforms like extending the franchise, universal schooling, and the like, liberal reformers and radicals embraced the idea of Humanism as an alternative religion of humanity. The anarchist Proudhon (best known for declaring that "property is theft") used the word "humanism" to describe a "culte, déification de l'humanité" ("cult, deification of humanity") and Ernest Renan in *L'avenir de la science: pensées de 1848* ("The Future of Knowledge: Thoughts on 1848") (1848–49), states: "It is my deep conviction that pure *humanism* will be the religion of the future, that is, the cult of all that pertains to humanity—all of life, sanctified and raised to the level of a moral value".^[17]

At about the same time, the word "humanism" as a philosophy centred on humankind (as opposed to institutionalised religion) was also being used in Germany by the so-called Left Hegelians, Arnold Ruge, and Karl Marx, who were critical of the close involvement of the church in the repressive German government. There has been a persistent confusion between the several uses of the terms.^[11] philanthropic humanists look to what they consider their antecedents in critical thinking and human-centered philosophy among the Greek philosophers and the great figures of Renaissance history; and scholarly humanists stress the linguistic and cultural disciplines needed to understand and interpret these philosophers and artists.

2.1 Predecessors

2.1.1 Asia

Human-centered philosophy that rejected the supernatural can be found also circa 1500 BCE in the Lokayata system of Indian philosophy. Nasadiya Sukta, a passage in the *Rig Veda*, contains one of the first recorded assertion of agnosticism. In the 6th-century BCE, Gautama Buddha expressed, in Pali literature, a skeptical attitude toward the supernatural.^[18]

Since neither soul, nor aught belonging to soul, can really and truly exist, the view which holds that this I who am 'world', who am 'soul', shall hereafter live permanent, persisting, unchanging, yea abide eternally: is not this utterly and entirely a foolish doctrine?

Another instance of ancient humanism as an organised system of thought is found in the *Gathas* of *Zarathustra*, composed between 1,000 BCE - 600 BCE^[19] in *Greater Iran*. *Zarathustra's* philosophy in the *Gathas* lays out a conception of humankind as thinking beings dignified with choice and agency according to the intellect which each receives from *Ahura Mazda* (God in the form of supreme wisdom). The idea of *Ahura Mazda* as a non-intervening deistic divine God/Grand Architect of the universe tied with a unique eschatology and ethical system implying that each person is held morally responsible for their choices, made freely in this present life, in the afterlife.^[20] The importance placed on thought, action, responsibility, and a non-intervening creator was appealed to by, and inspired a number of, *Enlightenment* humanist thinkers in Europe such as *Voltaire* and *Montesquieu*.

In China, *Huangdi* is regarded as the humanistic primogenitor. Sage kings such as *Yao* and *Shun* are humanistic figures as recorded. *King Wu of Zhou* has the famous saying: "Humanity is the *Ling* (efficacious essence) of the world (among all)." Among them *Duke of Zhou*, respected as a founder of *Rujia* (Confucianism), is especially prominent and pioneering in humanistic thought. His words were recorded in the *Book of History* as follows (translation):

What the people desire, Heaven certainly complies?
Heaven (or "God") is not believable. Our *Tao* (special term referring to "the way of nature") includes morality (derived from the philosophy of former sage kings and to be continued forward).

In the 6th century BCE, *Taoist* teacher *Lao Tzu* espoused a series of *naturalistic* concepts with some elements of humanistic philosophy. The *Silver Rule* of *Confucianism* from *Analects* XV.24, is an example of ethical philosophy based on human values rather than the supernatural. Humanistic thought is also contained in other *Confucian* classics, e.g., as recorded in *Zuo Zhuan*, *Ji Liang* says, "People is the *zhu* (master, lord, dominance, owner or origin) of gods. So, to sage kings, people first, gods second"; *Neishi Guo* says, "Gods, clever, righteous and wholehearted, comply with human." *Taoist* and *Confucian* secularism contain elements of moral thought devoid of religious authority or deism however they only partly resembled our modern concept of secularism.

2.1.2 Ancient Greece

Main article: *Ancient Greek philosophy*

6th-century BCE pre-Socratic Greek philosophers *Thales* of *Miletus* and *Xenophanes* of *Colophon* were the first in

the region to attempt to explain the world in terms of human reason rather than myth and tradition, thus can be said to be the first Greek humanists. *Thales* questioned the notion of anthropomorphic gods and *Xenophanes* refused to recognise the gods of his time and reserved the divine for the principle of unity in the universe. These *Ionian Greeks* were the first thinkers to assert that nature is available to be studied separately from the supernatural realm. *Anaxagoras* brought philosophy and the spirit of rational inquiry from *Ionia* to *Athens*. *Pericles*, the leader of *Athens* during the period of its greatest glory was an admirer of *Anaxagoras*. Other influential pre-Socratic or rational philosophers include *Protagoras* (like *Anaxagoras* a friend of *Pericles*), known for his famous dictum "man is the measure of all things" and *Democritus*, who proposed that matter was composed of atoms. Little of the written work of these early philosophers survives and they are known mainly from fragments and quotations in other writers, principally *Plato* and *Aristotle*. The historian *Thucydides*, noted for his scientific and rational approach to history, is also much admired by later humanists.^[21] In the 3rd century BCE, *Epicurus* became known for his concise phrasing of the *problem of evil*, lack of belief in the afterlife, and human-centred approaches to achieving *eudaimonia*. He was also the first Greek philosopher to admit women to his school as a rule.

2.1.3 Medieval Islam

See also: *Early Islamic philosophy*

Many medieval Muslim thinkers pursued humanistic, rational and scientific discourses in their search for knowledge, meaning and values. A wide range of Islamic writings on love, poetry, history and philosophical theology show that medieval Islamic thought was open to the humanistic ideas of individualism, occasional secularism, skepticism, and liberalism.^[22]

According to *Imad-ad-Dean Ahmad*, another reason the Islamic world flourished during the Middle Ages was an early emphasis on freedom of speech, as summarised by *al-Hashimi* (a cousin of *Caliph al-Ma'mun*) in the following letter to one of the religious opponents he was attempting to convert through reason:^[23]

"Bring forward all the arguments you wish and say whatever you please and speak your mind freely. Now that you are safe and free to say whatever you please appoint some arbitrator who will impartially judge between us and lean only towards the truth and be free from the empery of passion, and that arbitrator shall be Reason, whereby God makes us responsible for our own rewards and punishments. Herein I have dealt justly with you and have given you full security and am ready to accept whatever decision Reason may give for me or against

me. For “There is no compulsion in religion” (Qur'an 2:256) and I have only invited you to accept our faith willingly and of your own accord and have pointed out the hideousness of your present belief. Peace be with you and the blessings of God!”

According to George Makdisi, certain aspects of Renaissance humanism has its roots in the medieval Islamic world, including the “art of *dictation*, called in Latin, *ars dictaminis*”, and “the humanist attitude toward classical language”.^[24]

2.2 Renaissance

Main article: Renaissance humanism

Renaissance humanism was an intellectual movement in

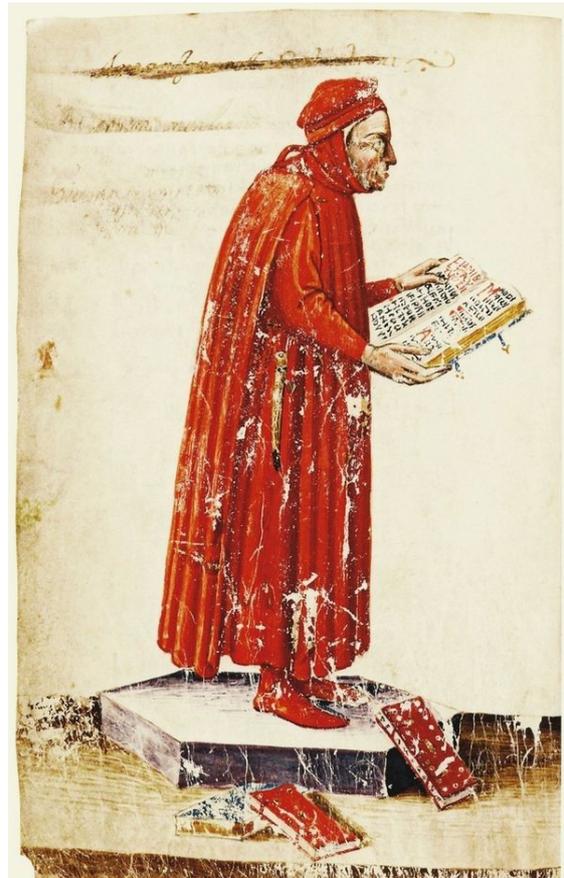


Portrait of Petrarch painted in 1376

Europe of the later Middle Ages and the Early Modern period. The 19th-century German historian Georg Voigt (1827–91) identified Petrarch as the first Renaissance humanist. Paul Johnson agrees that Petrarch was “the first to put into words the notion that the centuries between the fall of Rome and the present had been the age of Darkness”. According to Petrarch, what was needed to remedy this situation was the careful study and imitation of the great classical authors. For Petrarch and Boccaccio, the greatest master was Cicero, whose prose became the model for both learned (Latin) and vernacular (Italian) prose.

Once the language was mastered grammatically it could be used to attain the second stage, eloquence or rhetoric. This art of persuasion [Cicero had held] was not art for its own sake, but the acquisition of the capacity to persuade others – all men and women – to lead the good life. As Petrarch put it, 'it is better to will the

good than to know the truth'. Rhetoric thus led to and embraced philosophy. Leonardo Bruni (c.1369–1444), the outstanding scholar of the new generation, insisted that it was Petrarch who “opened the way for us to show how to acquire learning”, but it was in Bruni’s time that the word *umanista* first came into use, and its subjects of study were listed as five: grammar, rhetoric, poetry, moral philosophy, and history”.^[25]



Coluccio Salutati, Chancellor of Florence and disciple of Petrarch (1331–1406).

The basic training of the humanist was to speak well and write (typically, in the form of a letter). One of Petrarch’s followers, Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406) was made chancellor of Florence, “whose interests he defended with his literary skill. The Visconti of Milan claimed that Salutati’s pen had done more damage than ‘thirty squadrons of Florentine cavalry’”.^[26]

Contrary to a still widely current interpretation that originated in Voigt’s celebrated contemporary, Jacob Burckhardt,^[28] and which was adopted wholeheartedly, especially by those moderns calling themselves “humanists”,^[29] most specialists now do not characterise Renaissance humanism as a philosophical movement, nor in any way as anti-Christian or even anti-clerical. A modern historian has this to say:



Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459), an early Renaissance Humanist, book collector, and reformer of script, who served as papal secretary.^[27]

Humanism was not an ideological programme but a body of literary knowledge and linguistic skill based on the “revival of good letters”, which was a revival of a late-antique philology and grammar. This is how the word “humanist” was understood by contemporaries, and if scholars would agree to accept the word in this sense rather than in the sense in which it was used in the nineteenth century we might be spared a good deal of useless argument. That humanism had profound social and even political consequences of the life of Italian courts is not to be doubted. But the idea that as a movement it was in some way inimical to the Church, or to the conservative social order in general is one that has been put forward for a century and more without any substantial proof being offered.

The nineteenth-century historian Jacob Burckhardt, in his classic work, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, noted as a “curious fact” that some men of the new culture were “men of the strictest piety, or even ascetics”. If he had meditated more deeply on the meaning of the careers of such humanists as Abrogio Traversari (1386–1439), the General of the Camaldolese Order, perhaps he would not have gone on to describe humanism in unqualified terms as “pagan”, and thus helped precipitate a century of infertile de-

bate about the possible existence of something called “Christian humanism” which ought to be opposed to “pagan humanism”. --Peter Partner, *Renaissance Rome, Portrait of a Society 1500–1559* (University of California Press 1979) pp. 14–15.

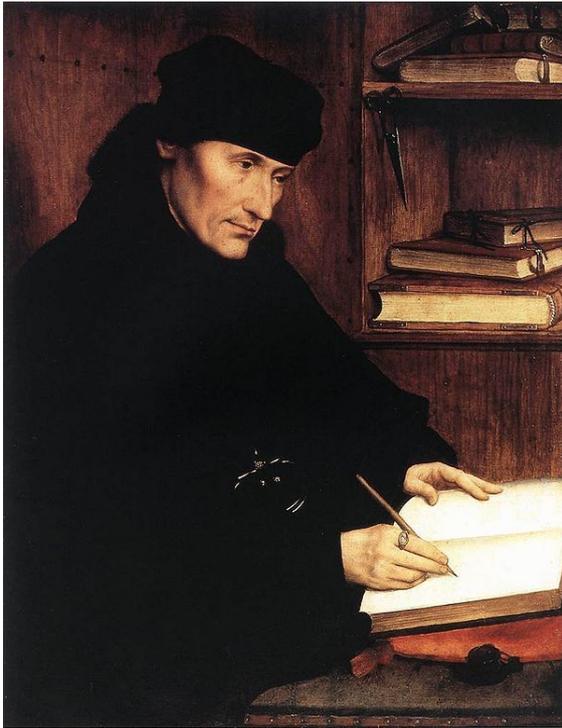
The *umanisti* criticised what they considered the barbarous Latin of the universities, but the revival of the humanities largely did not conflict with the teaching of traditional university subjects, which went on as before.^[30]

Nor did the humanists view themselves as in conflict with Christianity. Some, like Salutati, were the Chancellors of Italian cities, but the majority (including Petrarch) were ordained as priests, and many worked as senior officials of the Papal court. Humanist Renaissance popes **Nicholas V**, **Pius II**, **Sixtus IV**, and **Leo X** wrote books and amassed huge libraries.^[31]

In the high Renaissance, in fact, there was a hope that more direct knowledge of the wisdom of antiquity, including the writings of the Church fathers, the earliest known Greek texts of the Christian Gospels, and in some cases even the Jewish **Kabbalah**, would initiate a harmonious new era of universal agreement.^[32] With this end in view, Renaissance Church authorities afforded humanists what in retrospect appears a remarkable degree of freedom of thought.^{[33][34]} One humanist, the Greek Orthodox Platonist **Gemistus Pletho** (1355–1452), based in **Mystras**, Greece (but in contact with humanists in Florence, Venice, and Rome) taught a Christianised version of pagan polytheism.^[35]

2.2.1 Back to the sources

The humanists’ close study of Latin literary texts soon enabled them to discern historical differences in the writing styles of different periods. By analogy with what they saw as decline of Latin, they applied the principle of *ad fontes*, or back to the sources, across broad areas of learning, seeking out manuscripts of Patristic literature as well as pagan authors. In 1439, while employed in Naples at the court of **Alfonso V of Aragon** (at the time engaged in a dispute with the Papal States) the humanist **Lorenzo Valla** used stylistic textual analysis, now called philology, to prove that the **Donation of Constantine**, which purported to confer temporal powers on the Pope of Rome, was an 8th-century forgery.^[36] For the next 70 years, however, neither Valla nor any of his contemporaries thought to apply the techniques of philology to other controversial manuscripts in this way. Instead, after the fall of the **Byzantine Empire** to the Turks in 1453, which brought a flood of Greek Orthodox refugees to Italy, humanist scholars increasingly turned to the study of **Neoplatonism** and **Hermeticism**, hoping to bridge the differences between the Greek and Roman Churches, and even between Christianity itself and the non-Christian world.^[37] The refugees brought with them Greek manuscripts, not only



Portrait of Erasmus of Rotterdam

of Plato and Aristotle, but also of the Christian Gospels, previously unavailable in the Latin West.

After 1517, when the new invention of printing made these texts widely available, the Dutch humanist Erasmus, who had studied Greek at the Venetian printing house of Aldus Manutius, began a philological analysis of the Gospels in the spirit of Valla, comparing the Greek originals with their Latin translations with a view to correcting errors and discrepancies in the latter. Erasmus, along with the French humanist Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, began issuing new translations, laying the groundwork for the Protestant Reformation. Henceforth Renaissance humanism, particularly in the German North, became concerned with religion, while Italian and French humanism concentrated increasingly on scholarship and philology addressed to a narrow audience of specialists, studiously avoiding topics that might offend despotic rulers or which might be seen as corrosive of faith. After the Reformation, critical examination of the Bible did not resume until the advent of the so-called Higher criticism of the 19th-century German Tübingen school.

2.2.2 Consequences

The *ad fontes* principle also had many applications. The re-discovery of ancient manuscripts brought a more profound and accurate knowledge of ancient philosophical schools such as Epicureanism, and Neoplatonism, whose Pagan wisdom the humanists, like the Church fathers of old, tended, at least initially, to consider as deriving from divine revelation and thus adaptable to a life of Christian

virtue.^[38] The line from a drama of Terence, *Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto* (or with *nil* for *nihil*), meaning “I am a human being, I think nothing human alien to me”,^[39] known since antiquity through the endorsement of Saint Augustine, gained renewed currency as epitomising the humanist attitude.^[40]

Better acquaintance with Greek and Roman technical writings also influenced the development of European science (see the history of science in the Renaissance). This was despite what A. C. Crombie (viewing the Renaissance in the 19th-century manner as a chapter in the heroic March of Progress) calls “a backwards-looking admiration for antiquity”, in which Platonism stood in opposition to the Aristotelian concentration on the observable properties of the physical world.^[41] But Renaissance humanists, who considered themselves as restoring the glory and nobility of antiquity, had no interest in scientific innovation. However, by the mid-to-late 16th century, even the universities, though still dominated by Scholasticism, began to demand that Aristotle be read in accurate texts edited according to the principles of Renaissance philology, thus setting the stage for Galileo’s quarrels with the outmoded habits of Scholasticism.

Just as artist and inventor Leonardo da Vinci — partaking of the *zeitgeist* though not himself a humanist — advocated study of human anatomy, nature, and weather to enrich Renaissance works of art, so Spanish-born humanist Juan Luis Vives (c. 1493–1540) advocated observation, craft, and practical techniques to improve the formal teaching of Aristotelian philosophy at the universities, helping to free them from the grip of Medieval Scholasticism.^[42] Thus, the stage was set for the adoption of an approach to natural philosophy, based on empirical observations and experimentation of the physical universe, making possible the advent of the age of scientific inquiry that followed the Renaissance.^[43]

It was in education that the humanists’ program had the most lasting results, their curriculum and methods:

were followed everywhere, serving as models for the Protestant Reformers as well as the Jesuits. The humanistic school, animated by the idea that the study of classical languages and literature provided valuable information and intellectual discipline as well as moral standards and a civilised taste for future rulers, leaders, and professionals of its society, flourished without interruption, through many significant changes, until our own century, surviving many religious, political and social revolutions. It has but recently been replaced, though not yet completely, by other more practical and less demanding forms of education.^[44]

2.3 From Renaissance to modern humanism

Early humanists saw no conflict between reason and their Christian faith (see **Christian Humanism**). They inveighed against the abuses of the Church, but not against the Church itself, much less against religion. For them, the word “secular” carried no connotations of disbelief – that would come later, in the nineteenth century. In the Renaissance to be secular meant simply to be in the world rather than in a monastery. Petrarch frequently admitted that his brother Gherardo’s life as a Carthusian monk was superior to his own (although Petrarch himself was in **Minor Orders** and was employed by the Church all his life). He hoped that he could do some good by winning earthly glory and praising virtue, inferior though that might be to a life devoted solely to prayer. By embracing a non-theistic philosophic base,^[45] however, the methods of the humanists, combined with their eloquence, would ultimately have a corrosive effect on established authority.

Yet it was from the Renaissance that modern Secular Humanism grew, with the development of an important split between reason and religion. This occurred as the church’s complacent authority was exposed in two vital areas. In science, Galileo’s support of the Copernican revolution upset the church’s adherence to the theories of Aristotle, exposing them as false. In theology, the Dutch scholar Erasmus with his new Greek text showed that the Roman Catholic adherence to Jerome’s Vulgate was frequently in error. A tiny wedge was thus forced between reason and authority, as both of them were then understood.^[46]

For some, this meant turning back to the Bible as the source of authority instead of the Catholic Church, for others it was a split from theism altogether. This was the main divisive line between the Reformation and the Renaissance,^[47] which dealt with the same basic problems, supported the same science based on reason and empirical research, but had a different set of presuppositions (theistic versus naturalistic).^[48]

2.4 19th and 20th centuries

The phrase the “religion of humanity” is sometimes attributed to American **Founding Father** Thomas Paine, though as yet unattested in his surviving writings. According to Tony Davies:

Paine called himself a *theophilanthropist*, a word combining the Greek for “God”, “love”, and “humanity”, and indicating that while he

believed in the existence of a creating intelligence in the universe, he entirely rejected the claims made by and for all existing religious doctrines, especially their miraculous, transcendental and salvationist pretensions. The Parisian “Society of Theophilanthropy” which he sponsored, is described by his biographer as “a forerunner of the ethical and humanist societies that proliferated later” ... [Paine’s book] the trenchantly witty *Age of Reason* (1793) ... pours scorn on the supernatural pretensions of scripture, combining Voltairean mockery with Paine’s own style of taproom ridicule to expose the absurdity of a theology built on a collection of incoherent Levantine folktales.^[49]

Davies identifies Paine’s *The Age of Reason* as “the link between the two major narratives of what Jean-François Lyotard^[50] calls the narrative of legitimation”: the rationalism of the 18th-century *Philosophes* and the radical, historically based German 19th-century Biblical criticism of the Hegelians David Friedrich Strauss and Ludwig Feuerbach. “The first is political, largely French in inspiration, and projects ‘humanity as the hero of liberty’. The second is philosophical, German, seeks the totality and autonomy of knowledge, and stresses *understanding* rather than freedom as the key to human fulfilment and emancipation. The two themes converged and competed in complex ways in the 19th century and beyond, and between them set the boundaries of its various humanisms.^[51] *Homo homini deus est* (“The human being is a god to humanity” or “god is nothing [other than] the human being to himself”), Feuerbach had written.^[52]

Victorian novelist Mary Ann Evans, known to the world as **George Eliot**, translated Strauss’s *Das Leben Jesu* (“*The Life of Jesus*”, 1846) and Ludwig Feuerbach’s *Das Wesen Christentums* (“*The Essence of Christianity*”). She wrote to a friend:

the fellowship between man and man which has been the principle of development, social and moral, is not dependent on conceptions of what is not man ... the idea of God, so far as it has been a high spiritual influence, is the ideal of goodness entirely human (i.e., an exaltation of the human).^[53]

Eliot and her circle, who included her companion **George Henry Lewes** (the biographer of Goethe) and the abolitionist and social theorist **Harriet Martineau**, were much influenced by the positivism of **Auguste Comte**, whom Martineau had translated. Comte had proposed an atheistic *culte* founded on human principles—a secular **Religion of Humanity** (which worshiped the dead, since most humans who have ever lived are dead), complete with holidays and liturgy, modeled on the rituals of what was seen as a discredited and dilapidated Catholicism.^[54]

Although Comte's English followers, like Eliot and Martineau, for the most part rejected the full gloomy panoply of his system, they liked the idea of a religion of humanity. Comte's austere vision of the universe, his injunction to "*vivre pour autrui*" ("live for others", from which comes the word "altruism"),^[55] and his idealisation of women inform the works of Victorian novelists and poets from George Eliot and Matthew Arnold to Thomas Hardy.

The British Humanistic Religious Association was formed as one of the earliest forerunners of contemporary chartered Humanist organisations in 1853 in London. This early group was democratically organised, with male and female members participating in the election of the leadership, and promoted knowledge of the sciences, philosophy, and the arts.^[56]

In February 1877, the word was used pejoratively, apparently for the first time in America, to describe Felix Adler. Adler, however, did not embrace the term, and instead coined the name "Ethical Culture" for his new movement – a movement which still exists in the now Humanist-affiliated New York Society for Ethical Culture.^[57] In 2008, Ethical Culture Leaders wrote: "Today, the historic identification, Ethical Culture, and the modern description, Ethical Humanism, are used interchangeably."^[58]

Active in the early 1920s, F.C.S. Schiller labelled his work "humanism" but for Schiller the term referred to the pragmatist philosophy he shared with William James. In 1929, Charles Francis Potter founded the First Humanist Society of New York whose advisory board included Julian Huxley, John Dewey, Albert Einstein and Thomas Mann. Potter was a minister from the Unitarian tradition and in 1930 he and his wife, Clara Cook Potter, published *Humanism: A New Religion*. Throughout the 1930s, Potter was an advocate of such liberal causes as, women's rights, access to birth control, "civil divorce laws", and an end to capital punishment.^[59]

Raymond B. Bragg, the associate editor of *The New Humanist*, sought to consolidate the input of Leon Milton Birkhead, Charles Francis Potter, and several members of the Western Unitarian Conference. Bragg asked Roy Wood Sellars to draft a document based on this information which resulted in the publication of the *Humanist Manifesto* in 1933. Potter's book and the Manifesto became the cornerstones of modern humanism, the latter declaring a new religion by saying, "any religion that can hope to be a synthesising and dynamic force for today must be shaped for the needs of this age. To establish such a religion is a major necessity of the present." It then presented 15 theses of humanism as foundational principles for this new religion.

In 1941, the American Humanist Association was organised. Noted members of The AHA included Isaac Asimov, who was the president from 1985 until his death in 1992, and writer Kurt Vonnegut, who followed as honorary president until his death in 2007. Gore Vidal be-

came honorary president in 2009. Robert Buckman was the head of the association in Canada, and is now an honorary president.

After World War II, three prominent Humanists became the first directors of major divisions of the United Nations: Julian Huxley of UNESCO, Brock Chisholm of the World Health Organisation, and John Boyd-Orr of the Food and Agricultural Organisation.^[60]

In 2004, American Humanist Association, along with other groups representing agnostics, atheists, and other freethinkers, joined to create the Secular Coalition for America which advocates in Washington, D.C. for separation of church and state and nationally for the greater acceptance of nontheistic Americans. The Executive Director of Secular Coalition for America is Sean Faircloth, a long-time state legislator from Maine.

3 Types

3.1 Renaissance

Main article: Renaissance humanism

Renaissance humanism was an activity of cultural and educational reform engaged in by civic and ecclesiastical chancellors, book collectors, educators, and writers, who by the late fifteenth century began to be referred to as *umanisti* – "humanists".^[4] It developed during the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries, and was a response to the challenge of scholastic university education, which was then dominated by Aristotelian philosophy and logic. Scholasticism focused on preparing men to be doctors, lawyers or professional theologians, and was taught from approved textbooks in logic, natural philosophy, medicine, law and theology.^[61] There were important centres of humanism at Florence, Naples, Rome, Venice, Mantua, Ferrara, and Urbino.

Humanists reacted against this utilitarian approach and the narrow pedantry associated with it. They sought to create a citizenry (frequently including women) able to speak and write with eloquence and clarity and thus capable of engaging the civic life of their communities and persuading others to virtuous and prudent actions. This was to be accomplished through the study of the *studia humanitatis*, today known as the humanities: grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry and moral philosophy.^[62] As a program to revive the cultural – and particularly the literary – legacy and moral philosophy of classical antiquity, Humanism was a pervasive cultural mode and not the program of a few isolated geniuses like Rabelais or Erasmus as is still sometimes popularly believed.^[63]

3.2 Secular

Main article: Secular humanism

Secular humanism is a comprehensive life stance or world view which embraces human reason, metaphysical naturalism, altruistic morality and distributive justice, and consciously rejects supernatural claims, theistic faith and religiosity, pseudoscience, and superstition.^{[64][65]} It is sometimes referred to as Humanism (with a capital H and no qualifying adjective).

The International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) is the world union of 117 Humanist, rationalist, irreligious, atheistic, Bright, secular, Ethical Culture, and freethought organisations in 38 countries.^[66] The "Happy Human" is the official symbol of the IHEU as well as being regarded as a universally recognised symbol for secular humanism.

According to the IHEU's bylaw 5.1:^[67]

Humanism is a democratic and ethical life stance, which affirms that human beings have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape to their own lives. It stands for the building of a more humane society through an ethic based on human and other natural values in the spirit of reason and free inquiry through human capabilities. It is not theistic, and it does not accept supernatural views of reality.

3.3 Religious

Main article: Religious humanism

Religious humanism is an integration of humanist ethical philosophy with religious rituals and beliefs that centre on human needs, interests, and abilities. Though practitioners of religious humanism did not officially organise under the name of "humanism" until the late 19th and early 20th centuries, non-theistic religions paired with human-centred ethical philosophy have a long history. The Cult of Reason (French: *Culte de la Raison*) was a religion based on deism devised during the French Revolution by Jacques Hébert, Pierre Gaspard Chaumette and their supporters.^[68] In 1793 during the French Revolution, the cathedral Notre Dame de Paris was turned into a "Temple to Reason" and for a time Lady Liberty replaced the Virgin Mary on several altars. In the 1850s, Auguste Comte, the Father of Sociology, founded Positivism, a "religion of humanity".^[69] One of the earliest forerunners of contemporary chartered humanist organisations was the Humanistic Religious Association formed in 1853 in London.^[69] This early group was democratically organised, with male and female members participating in the election of the leadership and promoted knowledge of the sciences, philosophy, and the arts. The Ethical Culture movement was founded in 1876. The movement's founder, Felix Adler, a former member of the Free Reli-

gious Association, conceived of Ethical Culture as a new religion that would retain the ethical message at the heart of all religions. Ethical Culture was religious in the sense of playing a defining role in people's lives and addressing issues of ultimate concern.

4 Polemics

Polemics about humanism have sometimes assumed paradoxical twists and turns. Early 20th century critics such as Ezra Pound, T. E. Hulme, and T. S. Eliot considered humanism to be sentimental "slop" (Hulme) or "an old bitch gone in the teeth" (Pound)^[70] and wanted to go back to a more manly, authoritarian society such as (they believed) existed in the Middle Ages. Postmodern critics who are self-described anti-humanists, such as Jean-François Lyotard and Michel Foucault, have asserted that humanism posits an overarching and excessively abstract notion of humanity or universal human nature, 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)".^[71] Nevertheless, philosopher Kate Soper^[72] notes that by faulting humanism for falling short of its own benevolent ideals, anti-humanism thus frequently "secretes a humanist rhetoric".^[73]

In his book, *Humanism* (1997), Tony Davies calls these critics "humanist anti-humanists". Critics of antihumanism, most notably Jürgen Habermas, counter that while antihumanists may highlight humanism's failure to fulfil its emancipatory ideal, they do not offer an alternative emancipatory project of their own.^[74] Others, like the German philosopher Heidegger considered themselves humanists on the model of the ancient Greeks, but thought humanism applied only to the German "race" and specifically to the Nazis and thus, in Davies' words, were anti-humanist humanists.^[75] Such a reading of Heidegger's thought is itself deeply controversial; Heidegger includes his own views and critique of Humanism in Letter On Humanism. Davies acknowledges that after the horrific experiences of the wars of the 20th century "it should no longer be possible to formulate phrases like 'the destiny of man' or the 'triumph of human reason' without an instant consciousness of the folly and brutality they drag behind them". For "it is almost impossible to think of a crime that has not been committed in the name of human reason". Yet, he continues, "it would be unwise to simply abandon the ground occupied by the historical humanisms. For one thing humanism remains on many occasions the only available alternative to bigotry and persecution. The freedom to speak and write, to organise and

campaign in defence of individual or collective interests, to protest and disobey: all these can only be articulated in humanist terms.”^[76]

Modern Humanists, such as Corliss Lamont or Carl Sagan, hold that humanity must seek for truth through reason and the best observable evidence and endorse scientific skepticism and the scientific method. However, they stipulate that decisions about right and wrong must be based on the individual and common good, with no consideration given to metaphysical or supernatural beings. The idea is to engage with what is human.^[77]

Contemporary humanism entails a qualified optimism about the capacity of people, but it does not involve believing that human nature is purely good or that all people can live up to the Humanist ideals without help. If anything, there is recognition that living up to one’s potential is hard work and requires the help of others. The ultimate goal is human flourishing; making life better for all humans, and as the most conscious species, also promoting concern for the welfare of other sentient beings and the planet as a whole.^[78] The focus is on doing good and living well in the here and now, and leaving the world a better place for those who come after. 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. It still remains to be seen whether the same actor can play both parts.”^[79]

5 Humanistic psychology

Main article: Humanistic psychology

Humanistic psychology is a psychological perspective which rose to prominence in the mid-20th century in response to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory and B.F. Skinner's Behaviorism. The approach emphasizes an individual's inherent drive towards self-actualization and creativity. Psychologists Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow introduced a positive, humanistic psychology in response to what they viewed as the overly pessimistic view of psychoanalysis in the early 1960s. Other sources include the philosophies of existentialism and phenomenology.

6 See also

- Alternatives to the Ten Commandments – Secular and humanist alternatives
- Christian Humanism
- Community organising

- Extropianism
- Humanistic psychology
- John N. Gray
- List of humanists
- Materialism
- Misanthropy
- Natural rights
- Objectivity (philosophy)
- Pluralistic Rationalism
- Post-theism
- Social psychology
- Unitarian Universalism
- Ubuntu

7 Notes

- [1] An account of the evolution of the meaning of the word *humanism* from the point of view of a modern secular humanist can be found in Nicolas Walter's *Humanism – What's in the Word* (London: Rationalist Press Association, 1997 ISBN 0-301-97001-7). A similar perspective, but somewhat less polemical, is found in Richard Norman's *On Humanism (Thinking in Action)* (London: Routledge: 2004). For a historical and philologically oriented view, see Vito Giustiniani's “Homo, Humanus, and the Meanings of Humanism”, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 46: 2 (April–June, 1985): 167–95.
- [2] See for example the 2002 *Humanism* issued by the International Humanist and Ethical Union, or the British Humanist Association's definition of Humanism
- [3] Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights*, XIII: 17.
- [4] Nicholas Mann (1996). *The Origins of Humanism*. Cambridge University Press. pp. 1–2. The term *umanista* was used, in fifteenth century Italian academic jargon to describe a teacher or student of classical literature including that of rhetoric. The English equivalent 'humanist' makes its appearance in the late sixteenth century with a similar meaning. Only in the nineteenth century, however, and probably for the first time in Germany in 1809, is the attribute transformed into a substantive: *humanism*, standing for devotion to the literature of ancient Greece and Rome, and the humane values that may be derived from them.
- [5] *Humanissime vir*, “most humane man”, was the usual Latin way to address scholars. (Giustiniani, “Homo, Humanus, and the Meanings of Humanism” : 168.)

- [6] There was a time when men wandered about in the manner of wild beasts. They conducted their affairs without the least guidance of reason but instead relied on bodily strength. There was no divine religion and the understanding of social duty was in no way cultivated. No one recognized the value inherent in an equitable code of law. (Cicero, *De Inventione*, I. I: 2, quoted in Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics, Volume 2: Renaissance Virtues* [Cambridge University Press, 2002], p. 54.)
- [7] A noted authority on the subject, Paul Oskar Kristeller, identified Renaissance humanism as a cultural and literary movement, which in its substance was not philosophical but which had important philosophical implications and consequences. "I have been unable to discover in the humanist literature any common philosophical doctrine," he wrote, "except a belief in the value of man and the humanities and in the revival of ancient learning." (Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought: The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanist Strains* [New York, Harper and Row, 1961], p. 9). As the late Jacques Barzun has written:
- The path between the onset of the good letters and the modern humanist as free-thinker or simply as scholar is circuitous but unbroken. If we look for what is common to the Humanists over the centuries we find two things: a body of accepted authors and a method of carrying on study and debate. The two go together with the belief that the best guides to the good life are Reason and Nature. (Jacques Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence :500 years of Western Cultural Life* [New York: HarperCollins, 2000], p. 45)
- [8] "Genesis of a Humanist Manifesto". Retrieved 2006-05-14.
- [9] "Text of Humanist Manifesto I". Americanhumanist.org. Retrieved 2011-11-13.
- [10] Although a distinction has often been drawn between secular and religious humanism, the International Humanist and Ethical Union and similar organizations prefer to describe their life stance without qualification as 'Humanism'. See Nicolas Walter, *Humanism: What's in the Word?* (London: RPA/BHA/Secular Society Ltd, 1937), p.43.
- [11] Harold Blackham, Levi Fragell, Corliss Lamont, Harry Stopes-Roe, Rob Tielman. "Humanism is Eight Letters, No More".
- [12] Niethammer's book was entitled *Der Streit des Philanthropinismus und des Humanismus in der Theorie des Erziehungs-Unterrichts unsrer Zeit* (*The Dispute between Philanthropinism and Humanism in the Educational Theory of our Time*), which directly echoes Aulus Gellius's distinction between "philanthropy" and humane learning. Niethammer and other distinguished members of the movement they called "Neo-Humanism" (who included Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling and Johann Gottlieb Fichte), felt that the curriculum imposed under Napoleon's occupation of Germany had been excessively oriented toward the practical and vocational. They wished to encourage individuals to practice life-long self cultivation and reflection, based on a study of the artistic, philosophical, and cultural masterpieces of (primarily) Greek civilization.
- [13] As J. A. Symonds remarked, "the word humanism has a German sound and is in fact modern" (See *The Renaissance in Italy* Vol. 2:71 n, 1877). Vito Giustiniani writes that in the German-speaking world "Humanist" while keeping its specific meaning (as scholar of Classical literature) "gave birth to further derivatives, such as *humanistisch* for those schools which later were to be called *humanistische Gymnasien*, with Latin and Greek as the main subjects of teaching (1784). Finally, *Humanismus* was introduced to denote 'classical education in general' (1808) and still later for the epoch and the achievements of the Italian humanists of the fifteenth century (1841). This is to say that 'humanism' for 'classical learning' appeared first in Germany, where it was once and for all sanctioned in this meaning by Georg Voigt (1859)". (Giustiniani, "Homo, Humanus, and the Meanings of Humanism" : 172.)
- [14] "*L'amour général de l'humanité ... vertu qui n'a point de nom parmi nous et que nous oserions appeler 'humanisme', puisqu'enfin il est temps de créer un mot pour une chose si belle et nécessaire*"; from the review *Ephémérides du citoyen ou Bibliothèque raisonnée des sciences morales et politiques*, Chapter 16 (Dec, 17, 1765): 247, quoted in Giustiniani, "Homo, Humanus, and the Meanings of Humanism" : 175, note 38.
- [15] Although Rousseau himself devoutly believed in a personal God, his book, *Emile: or, On Education*, does attempt to demonstrate that atheists can be virtuous. It was publicly burned. During the Revolution, Jacobins instituted a cult of the Supreme Being along lines suggested by Rousseau. In the 19th-century French positivist philosopher Auguste Comte (1798–1857) founded a "religion of humanity", whose calendar and catechism echoed the former Revolutionary cult. See Comtism
- [16] *The Oxford English Dictionary VII* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1989. pp. 474–475.
- [17] "*Ma conviction intime est que la religion de l'avenir sera le pur humanisme, c'est-à-dire le culte de tout ce qui est de l'homme, la vie entière santifiée et élève a une valeur moral*". quoted in Giustiniani, "Homo, Humanus, and the Meanings of Humanism" : 175.
- [18] "Lesson I: A brief history of humanist thought". *Introduction to Humanism: A Primer on the History, Philosophy, and Goals of Humanism*. The Continuum of Humanist Education. Retrieved 2009-08-21.
- [19] "Principles of Integral Science of Religion", By Georg Schmid, page 109, 'As an Example: Yasna 32:8', p. 109
- [20] "Human Behavior and Good Thinking".
- [21] Potter, Charles (1930). *Humanism A new Religion*. Simon and Schuster. pp. 64–69.

- [22] Lenn Evan Goodman (2003), *Islamic Humanism*, p. 155, Oxford University Press, ISBN 0-19-513580-6.
- [23] Ahmad, I. A. (3 June 2002). *The Rise and Fall of Islamic Science: The Calendar as a Case Study* (PDF). Faith and Reason: Convergence and Complementarity. Ifrane, Morocco: Al-Akhawayn University. Archived (PDF) from the original on November 29, 2014. Retrieved 2014-12-31.
- [24] Makdisi, George (April–June 1989). "Scholasticism and Humanism in Classical Islam and the Christian West". *Journal of the American Oriental Society* (Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol. 109, No. 2) **109** (2): 175–182. doi:10.2307/604423. JSTOR 604423.
- [25] Johnson, Paul (2000). *The Renaissance*. New York: The Modern Library. pp. 32–34 and 37. ISBN 0-679-64086-X.
- [26] Johnson, Paul (2000). *The Renaissance*. New York: The Modern Library. p. 37.
- [27] Following an old engraving; from Alfred Gudeman, *Imagines philologorum: 160 bildnisse...* ("Portraits of Philologists, 160 prints"), (Leipzig/Berlin) 1911.
- [28] The influence of Jacob Burckhardt's classic masterpiece of cultural history, *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860) on subsequent Renaissance historiography is traced in Wallace K. Ferguson's *The Renaissance in Historical Thought: Five Centuries of Historical Interpretation* (1948).
- [29] For example the *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, adhering to the tenacious 19th-century narrative (or myth) of the Renaissance as a complete break with the past established in 1860 by Jacob Burckhardt, describes the liberating effects of the re-discovery of classical writings this way:
- Here, one felt no weight of the supernatural pressing on the human mind, demanding homage and allegiance. Humanity—with all its distinct capabilities, talents, worries, problems, possibilities—was the centre of interest. It has been said that medieval thinkers philosophised on their knees, but, bolstered by the new studies, they dared to stand up and to rise to full stature."Humanism". *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, Second Edition*. Cambridge University Press. 1999.
- [30] "The term *umanista* was associated with the revival of the *studia humanitatis* "which included *grammatica, rhetorica*, poetics, *historia*, and *philosophia moralis*, as these terms were understood. Unlike the liberal arts of the eighteenth century, they did not include the visual arts, music, dancing or gardening. The humanities also failed to include the disciplines that were the chief subjects of instruction at the universities during the Later Middle Ages and throughout the Renaissance, such as theology, jurisprudence, and medicine, and the philosophical disciplines other than ethics, such as logic, natural philosophy, and metaphysics. In other words, humanism does not represent, as often believed, the sum total of Renaissance thought and learning, but only a well-defined sector of it. Humanism has its proper domain or home territory in the humanities, whereas all other areas of learning, including philosophy (apart from ethics), followed their own course, largely determined by their medieval tradition and by their steady transformation through new observations, problems, or theories. These disciplines were affected by humanism mainly from the outside and in an indirect way, though often quite strongly". (Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Humanism*, pp. 113–114, in Charles B. Schmitt, Quentin Skinner (editors), *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* [1990].
- [31] See their respective entries in Sir John Hale's *Concise Encyclopaedia of the Italian Renaissance* (Oxford University Press, 1981).
- [32] To later generations, the Dutch humanist, Desiderius Erasmus, epitomised this reconciling tendency). According to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, "Enlightenment thinkers remembered Erasmus (not quite accurately) as a precursor of modern intellectual freedom and a foe of both Protestant and Catholic dogmatism". Erasmus himself was not much interested in the Kabbalah, but several other humanists were, notably Pico della Mirandola. See Christian Kabbalah.)
- [33] Bergin, Thomas; Speake, Jennifer (1987). *The Encyclopedia of the Renaissance*. Oxford: Facts On File Publications. pp. 216–217.
- [34] "Only thirteen of Pico della Mirandola's nine hundred theses were thought theologically objectionable by the papal commission that examined them.... [This] suggests that, in spite of his publicly expressed contempt in his *Apologia* for their intellectual inadequacies, the Curial authorities hardly saw these theses as the work of a dangerous theological modernist like Luther or Calvin. Unorthodox though they were, most of the issues raised in them had been the subject of theological dispute for centuries and the commission ... condemned him not for innovations but for 'reviving several of the errors of gentile philosophers which are already disproved and obsolete'". Davies (1997), p 103.
- [35] Richard H. Popkin (editor), *The Columbia History of Western Philosophy* (1998), p. 293 and p. 301.
- [36] More than 100 years earlier, Dante in the *Divine Comedy* (c. 1308–1321) had pinpointed the Donation of Constantine (which he accepted as genuine) as a great mistake and the cause of all the political and religious problems of Italy, including the corruption of the Church. Although Dante had thunderously attacked the idea that the Church could have temporal as well as spiritual powers, it remained to Valla to conclusively prove that the legal justification for such powers was spurious.
- [37] Ironically, it was a humanist scholar, Isaac Casaubon, in the 17th century, who would use philology to show that the *Corpus Hermeticum* was not of great antiquity, as had been asserted in the 4th century by Saint Augustine and Lactantius, but dated from the Christian era. See Anthony

- Grafton, *Defenders of the Text: The Traditions of Scholarship in an Age of Science, 1450–1800* (Harvard University Press, 1991).
- [38] “Humanism”. *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion* F–N. Corpus Publications. 1979. p. 1733. ISBN 0-9602572-1-7. “Renaissance humanists rejoiced in the mutual compatibility of much ancient philosophy and Christian truths”, M. A. Screech, *Laughter at the Foot of the Cross* (1997), p. 13.
- [39] *Homo* in Latin specifically means “human being”, in contrast to *vir*, “man”, and *mulier*, “woman”: Annabel Robinson, *The Life and Work of Jane Ellen Harrison* (Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 206; Tore Janson, *A Natural History of Latin* (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 281; Timothy J. Moore, *Roman Theatre* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 62 (note to the line in Terence); as a “watchword” for humanists, *Humanism and the Humanities in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by William S. Haney and Peter Malekin (Associated University Presses, 2001), p. 171; similar *homo sum* declaration by Seneca, James Ker, *The Deaths of Seneca* (Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 193.
- [40] The statement, in a play modeled or borrowed from a (now lost) Greek comedy by Menander, may have originated in a lighthearted vein – as a comic rationale for an old man’s meddling – but it quickly became a proverb and throughout the ages was quoted with a deeper meaning, by Cicero and Saint Augustine, to name a few, and most notably by Seneca. Richard Bauman writes: “*Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto.*, I am a human being: and I deem nothing pertaining to humanity is foreign to me.’ The words of the comic playwright P. Terentius Afer reverberated across the Roman world of the mid-2nd century BC and beyond. Terence, an African and a former slave, was well placed to preach the message of universalism, of the essential unity of the human race, that had come down in philosophical form from the Greeks, but needed the pragmatic muscles of Rome in order to become a practical reality. The influence of Terence’s felicitous phrase on Roman thinking about human rights can hardly be overestimated. Two hundred years later Seneca ended his seminal exposition of the unity of humankind with a clarion-call:
- There is one short rule that should regulate human relationships. All that you see, both divine and human, is one. We are parts of the same great body. Nature created us from the same source and to the same end. She imbued us with mutual affection and sociability, she taught us to be fair and just, to suffer injury rather than to inflict it. She bid us extend our hands to all in need of help. Let that well-known line be in our heart and on our lips: *Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto.*” (Bauman, *Human Rights in Ancient Rome* (Routledge Classical Monographs (1999), page 1.)
- [41] A. C. Crombie, *Historians and the Scientific Revolution*, p. 456 in *Science, Art and Nature in Medieval and Modern Thought* (1996).
- [42] Gottlieb, Anthony (2000). *The Dream of Reason: a history of western philosophy from the Greeks to the Renaissance*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. pp. 410–411.
- [43] Alleby, Brad (2003). “Humanism”. *Encyclopedia of Science & Religion* 1 (2nd ed.). Macmillan Reference USA. pp. 426–428. ISBN 0-02-865705-5.
- [44] Kristeller, Humanism in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, p. 114.
- [45] Schaeffer, Francis A. *How Should We Then Live?*. Crossway. pp. 146–147. ISBN 978-1581345360.
- [46] Os Guinness, *The Dust of Death: A Critique of the Establishment and the Counter Culture and the Proposal for a Third Way* (Intervarsity Press, 1973) p. 5.
- [47] Schaeffer, Francis A. *How Should We Then Live?*. Crossway. pp. 79–80. ISBN 978-1581345360.
- [48] Schaeffer, Francis A. *How Should We Then Live?*. Crossway. pp. 146–147. ISBN 978-1581345360.
- [49] Tony Davies, *Humanism* (Routledge, 1997) p. 26-27.
- [50] In *La Condition postmoderne*
- [51] Davies, *Humanism*, p. 27.
- [52] Davies, *Humanism*, p. 28.
- [53] quoted in Davies (1997), p. 27.
- [54] “Comte’s secular religion is no vague effusion of humanistic piety, but a complete system of belief and ritual, with liturgy and sacraments, priesthood and pontiff, all organised around the public veneration of Humanity, the *Nouveau Grand-Être Suprême* (New Supreme Great Being), later to be supplemented in a positivist trinity by the *Grand Fétish* (the Earth) and the *Grand Milieu* (Destiny)” According to Davies (p. 28-29), Comte’s austere and “slightly dispiriting” philosophy of humanity viewed as alone in an indifferent universe (which can only be explained by “positive” science) and with nowhere to turn but to each other, was even more influential in Victorian England than the theories of Charles Darwin or Karl Marx.
- [55] Davies, p. 29.
- [56] Morain, Lloyd; Morain, Mary (2007). *Humanism as the Next Step* (PDF). Washington, D.C.: Humanist Press. p. 109. ISBN 978-0931779091. LCCN 97-74611.
- [57] “History: New York Society for Ethical Culture”. New York Society for Ethical Culture. 2008. Retrieved 2009-03-06.
- [58] “Ethical Culture” (PDF). American Ethical Union. Retrieved 2009-02-23.
- [59] Stringer-Hye, Richard. “Charles Francis Potter”. *Dictionary of Unitarian and Universalist Biography*. Unitarian Universalist Historical Society. Retrieved 2008-05-01.
- [60] American Humanist Association

- [61] Craig W. Kallendorf, introduction to *Humanist Educational Treatises*, edited and translated by Craig W. Kallendorf (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London England: The I Tatti Renaissance Library, 2002) p. vii.
- [62] Early Italian humanism, which in many respects continued the grammatical and rhetorical traditions of the Middle Ages, not merely provided the old Trivium with a new and more ambitious name (*Studia humanitatis*), but also increased its actual scope, content and significance in the curriculum of the schools and universities and in its own extensive literary production. The *studia humanitatis* excluded logic, but they added to the traditional grammar and rhetoric not only history, Greek, and moral philosophy, but also made poetry, once a sequel of grammar and rhetoric, the most important member of the whole group. (Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought II: Papers on Humanism and the Arts* [New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965], p. 178.)
- See also Kristeller's *Renaissance Thought I*, "Humanism and Scholasticism In the Italian Renaissance", *Byzantion* 17 (1944–45): 346–74. Reprinted in *Renaissance Thought* (New York: Harper Torchbooks), 1961.
- [63] Vito Giustiniani gives as an example of an out-dated, but still pervasive view, that of Corliss Lamont, who described Renaissance Humanism as, "first and foremost a revolt against the otherworldliness of mediaeval Christianity, a turning away from preoccupation with personal immortality to make the best of life in this world. Renaissance writers like Rabelais and Erasmus gave eloquent voice to this new joy of living and to the sheer exuberance of existence. For the Renaissance the ideal human being was no longer the ascetic monk, but a new type - the universal man - the many-sided personality delighting in every kind of this-earthly achievements. The great Italian artists, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, typified this ideal." (Giustiniani, "Homo, Humanus, and the Meanings of Humanism" : 192.)
- [64] Edwards, Fred (1989). "What Is Humanism?". American Humanist Association. Retrieved 2009-08-19. Secular Humanism is an outgrowth of eighteenth century enlightenment rationalism and nineteenth century freethought... Secular and Religious Humanists both share the same worldview and the same basic principles... From the standpoint of philosophy alone, there is no difference between the two. It is only in the definition of religion and in the practice of the philosophy that Religious and Secular Humanists effectively disagree. A decidedly anti-theistic version of secular humanism, however, is developed by Adolf Grünbaum, 'In Defense of Secular Humanism' (1995), in his *Collected Works* (edited by Thomas Kupka), vol. I, New York: Oxford University Press 2013, ch. 6 (pp. 115-148)
- [65] "Definitions of humanism (subsection)". Institute for Humanist Studies. Retrieved 2007-01-16.
- [66] "Humanist movement hits new high in membership.". iheu.org. Retrieved 2013-04-11.
- [67] "IHEU's Bylaws". International Humanist and Ethical Union. Retrieved 2008-07-05.
- [68] "War, Terror, and Resistance". Retrieved 2006-10-31.
- [69] "Humanism as the Next Step". Archived from the original on 2006-06-14. Retrieved 2006-06-25.
- [70] Tony Davies, *Humanism* (Routledge, 1997) p. 48.
- [71] Laurie, Timothy (2015), "Becoming-Animal Is A Trap For Humans", *Deleuze and the Non-Human* eds. Hannah Stark and Jon Roffe.
- [72] in *Humanism and Anti-humanism (Problems of Modern European Thought)* (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Press, 1986, p. 128.
- [73] quoted in Davies (1997) p. 49.
- [74] Habermas accepts some criticisms leveled at traditional humanism but believes that humanism must be rethought and revised rather than simply abandoned.
- [75] "The antihumanist Humanism of Heidegger and the humanist antihumanism of Foucault and Althusser" (Davies [1997]), p. 131.
- [76] Davies (1997), pp. 131–32
- [77] Lamont, Corliss (1997). *The Philosophy of Humanism, Eighth Edition*. Humanist Press: Amherst, New York. pp. 252–253. ISBN 0-931779-07-3. Conscience, the sense of right and wrong and the insistent call of one's better, more idealistic, more social-minded self, is a social product. Feelings of right and wrong that at first have their locus within the family gradually develop into a pattern for the tribe or city, then spread to the larger unit of the nation, and finally from the nation to humanity as a whole. Humanism sees no need for resorting to supernatural explanations, or sanctions at any point in the ethical process.
- [78] See for example Kurtz, Paul (2000). *Humanist manifesto 2000 : a call for a new planetary humanism*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books. ISBN 157392783X.
- [79] *Science and the Modern World* (New York: Simon and Schuster, [1925] 1997) p. 96.

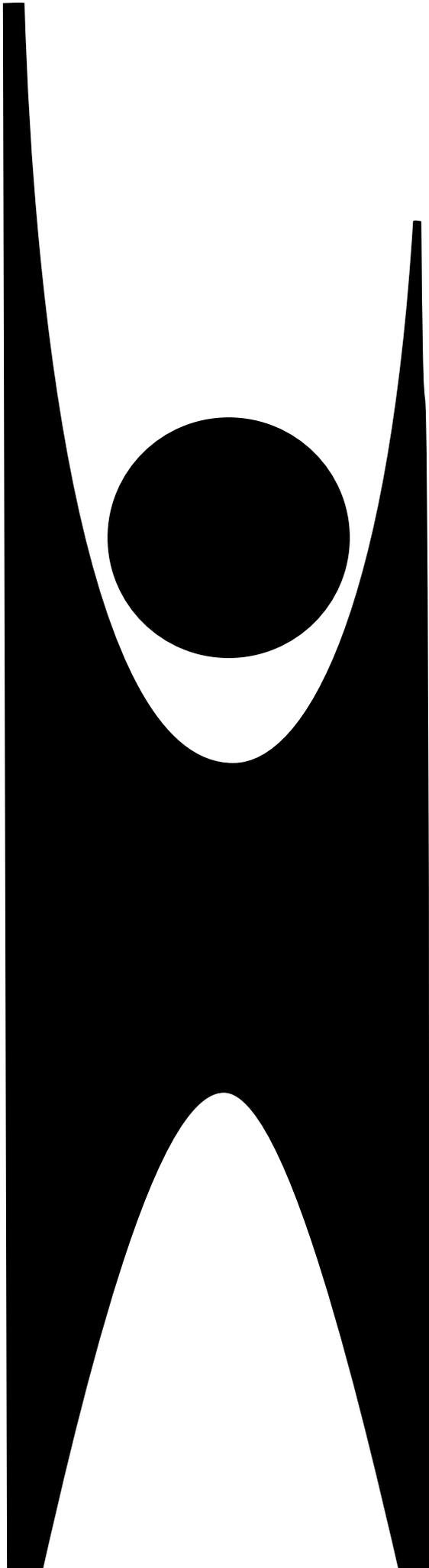
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9 External links

- *In Our Time* with Melvyn Bragg. Humanism. BBC Radio discussion with Tony Davies, Department of English, University of Birmingham; Lisa Jardine, Professor of Renaissance Studies, Queen Mary College, University of London and Honorary Fellow of Kings College Cambridge; Simon Goldhill, Reader in Greek Literature and Culture at Kings College Cambridge.
- Humanism at the Open Directory Project. A web portal to Humanist Societies.
- *The Philosophy of Humanism* by Corliss Lamont
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