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## **Humanism and Death of God**

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### **General Introduction**

Humanism had its distinctive beginning with Protagoras' declaration that man is the measure of all things as a philosophical worldview. But this pronouncement was as startling as it became too misleading almost immediately after it was made. Humanism came to signify the doctrines which assumed the centrality of man. One of the significant themes of Humanism is the exaltation of freedom. In other words, man has been given an eternal nature, the power to do and undo, and choose and fashion his destiny. Humanism, therefore, stresses the dignity and worth of human beings and their capacity for self-realization through reason. It represents a belief in the importance of man, confidence in his powers of reason, and a conviction that man is capable of moral greatness. This implies that man can do almost everything for himself to the point of even redeeming himself.

Broadly speaking, it symbolizes a shifting of the center of gravity from supernaturalism to naturalism, from transcendental to the existing, from abstractions to a living reality. In brief, it indicates man's place at the center of everything. The centrality of human interest and well-being underlie the Protagorean dictum was soon sunk.

Nietzsche as a philosopher has always inspired all the students in their pursuit of knowledge. The Christian concept of God, which is based on the Platonic and Aristotelian Philosophy, explains God as the eternal reality who created everything that comes into existence. In this context, there emerged in the late 19th Century who challenged the foundations of Christianity and morality. Nietzsche uprooted the metaphysical concept of God and explained it as a psychological entity that soothed all the distress and made the statement "God is dead."

This comparative study of Humanism and Death of God is analyzed in the light of the Christian faith. This work is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is a general matter of Humanism. This chapter explains the philosophical meaning and historical origin and growth of Humanism. And also deals with various forms of Humanism and shows the historical implication of atheistic Humanism. The second chapter deals with Nietzsche's concept of the Death of God. Thus it briefly speaks about the Nihilism, madman story, and proclamation of the "death of God." And it importantly deals with the comparative study of 'Humanism and Death of God.' it is an analysis through different stages of these philosophies. And it is an attempt to interpret that God became diseased through different stages and shows the severe condition of diseased God and the rise of 'Age of Man' or 'Era of Humanism.'

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### **Humanism**

#### **1. Introduction**

The humanistic view had its philosophical beginning with the declaration of Protagoras's dictum that '*man is the measure of all things*'. Humanism is an articulated means of thinking that can be traced to certain socio-politico-religious developments in post-medieval times. Humanism is an attitude towards and approaches man's life and values. It is characterized by an interest in man, concern for man, faith in reason and conscience, etc. The meaning, origin, forms, cruel faces of Humanism, and the concept through different perspectives are discussed here.

#### **1.1. Meaning of Humanism**

"Humanism, from the Latin word '*humanitas*,' implies ontological individualism and the quest for the perfection of the human spirit through the consummation of man's inherent potentialities."<sup>1</sup> "Man is not only the measure but the master and the creator of reality to an indefinable extent."<sup>2</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> VISHWANATH PRASAD VARMA, *Philosophical Humanism and Contemporary India*, New Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1979, 6. (Here after referred to as VARMA, *Philosophical Humanism and Contemporary India*)

<sup>2</sup> A.H. DAKIN, *Man is the Measure*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1939, 24. (Here after referred to as DAKIN, *Man is the Measure*)

word '*humanitas*,' which Cicero first used to describe the values related to liberal education, is similar to present art, philosophy, history, and literature. The doctrine of Humanism presumes the centrality of man.

The vital goal of Humanism is human flourishing, making life better for all humans, and promoting concern for the welfare of other beings and the whole. We see that the term '*humanism*' does not stand for a single, well-defined concept. It has meant different things in different periods of man's cultural history. Humanism signifies a cluster of more or less vaguely defined attitudes and intellectual prejudices that characterized the European mind during the period called the Renaissance. The Oxford dictionary of philosophy tells us that Humanism in the Renaissance sense "was quite consistent with religious belief; it being supposed that God had put us here precisely to further those things the humanists found more important; later, the term tended to become appropriated for anti-religious, social and political movements."<sup>3</sup> However it tells us that as a movement, Humanism is "distinctive of the Renaissance and allied to the renewed study of Greek and Roman literature: a rediscovery of the unity of human beings with nature and a renewed celebration of the pleasure of life, all supposedly lost in the medieval world."<sup>4</sup> In the twentieth Century, postmodernists and some feminists writers have used the term '*humanism*' as a disapproving term to be applied to philosophies "that rely upon the possibility of the autonomous, self-conscious, rational, single self and that are supposedly insensitive to the inevitable fragmentary, splintered historically conditioned nature of personality and motivation." In its current usage; the term implies "any philosophy concerned to emphasize human welfare and dignity, and optimistic about the powers of unaided human understanding."<sup>5</sup>

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the philosophical meaning of Humanism is; "A belief or outlook emphasizing common human needs and seeking solely rational ways of solving human problems, and concerned with humankind as responsible and progressive intellectual beings."<sup>6</sup> In other words, we can say that valuing what it is to be human is the minimal definition of Humanism. Humanist values in western societies are about the complex ideas of personhood, which is primarily concerned with including beliefs in the individual rights, freedom, moral standing, and dignity of each human subject in virtue. However, Humanism is any philosophy that recognizes the value or dignity of man and makes him the measure of things or somehow takes human nature its limits or interests as its theme.

Humanism gained a new aspect in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, beginning with Schiller, who took it as the unique name of his version of Pragmatism. His position was that all philosophical understanding stems from human activity. In this frame of mind, he reaffirms the Pythagoras' content that "man is the measure of all things" against what he called intellectualist philosophers, whether represented by Plato, by Hume, or by the idealists of his own time. Hence Humanism is a philosophical and literary movement. Humanism does also mean, most of all, is that the world has become a human world, determined by human aspirations. Robert C.S. remarks that "the world may have been created by God, but it was now in the hands for better or worse of humanity. The world was a human stage, with human values, emotions, hopes, and fears, and this humanity was defined in turn by a universal human."<sup>7</sup> The exponents of Humanism assert that Humanism is the tenacious attempt of reasoning men to think through the most fundamental issues of life, to reach reasonable conclusions on first and last things. They say that Humanism is a philosophy in which the top end of human life is to work for the happiness of man upon this earth and within the confines of the nature that is his home.

## 1.2. The Origin and Growth of Humanism

In the last years of the 13th Century and the first decades of the 14th Century, the cultural climate was changing in some European regions. The rediscovery, study, and renewed interest in authors who had been forgotten and in the classical world they represented inspired a flourishing return to antiquity's linguistic, stylistic, and literary models. There emerged a consciousness of the need for a cultural renewal, which sometimes also meant a detachment from contemporary culture. Manuscripts and inscriptions were in high demand, and graphic models were also imitated. This "return to the ancients" was the main component of so-called "pre-humanism," which developed mainly in Tuscany, in the Veneto region, and at the papal court of Avignon, through the activity of figures such as Lovato Lovati and Albertino Mussato in Padua, Landolfo Colonna in Avignon, Ferreto Ferretti in Vicenza, Convenerole from Prato in Tuscany and then in Avignon, and many others.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> ASHOK VOHRA, "Humanism in Indian Thought" in *Facets of Humanism*, eds., P.K. Mohapatra, New Delhi, Decent book, 1999, 8. (Here after referred to as VOHRA, "Humanism in Indian Thought")

<sup>4</sup> VOHRA, "Humanism in Indian Thought", 8.

<sup>5</sup> VOHRA, "Humanism in Indian Thought", 8-9.

<sup>6</sup> MARK VERNON, *Humanism*, UK, Teach Yourself Publication, 2008, 13. (Here after referred to as VERNON, *Humanism*)

<sup>7</sup> ROBERT C.S., *A History of Western Philosophy 7*, Oxford University Press, 66. (Here after referred to as ROBERT C.S., *A History of Western Philosophy 7*)

<sup>8</sup> MARK CARTWRIGHT, "Renaissance Humanism", World History Encyclopedia, November 2020, [https://www.worldhistory.org/renaissance\\_humanism/](https://www.worldhistory.org/renaissance_humanism/) [accessed on December 18, 2021]. (Here after referred to as CARTWRIGHT, "Renaissance Humanism", [https://www.worldhistory.org/renaissance\\_humanism/](https://www.worldhistory.org/renaissance_humanism/))

### 1.2.1. Birth of Humanism

By the 14th Century, some of the first humanists were great collectors of antique manuscripts, including Petrarch, Giovanni Boccaccio, Coluccio Salutati, and Poggio Bracciolini. Of the four, Petrarch was dubbed the "Father of Humanism," as he was the one who first encouraged the study of pagan civilizations and the teaching of classical virtues as a means of preserving Christianity. He also had an awe-inspiring library, of which many manuscripts did not survive. Many worked for the Catholic Church and were in holy orders, like Petrarch, while others were lawyers and chancellors of Italian cities and thus had access to book copying workshops, such as Petrarch's disciple Salutati, the Chancellor of Florence.

### 1.2.2. Influence of Humanism in Italy

In Italy, the humanist educational program won rapid acceptance and, by the mid-15th Century, many of the upper classes had received humanist educations, possibly in addition to traditional scholastic ones. Some of the highest officials of the Catholic Church were humanists with the resources to accumulate essential libraries. Such was Cardinal Basilios Bessarion, a convert to the Catholic Church from Greek Orthodoxy, considered for the papacy and was one of the most learned scholars. Several 15th-centuries and early 16th-century humanist Popes, Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (Pope Pius II), was a prolific author and wrote a treatise on *The Education of Boys*. These subjects came to be known as the humanities, and the movement they inspired is shown as Humanism.

### 1.2.3. Renaissance Humanism

In modern times, the term 'humanism' has gained a different meaning (a rational and non-religious way of life), and so to safeguard its original purpose, when applied to 1400-1600, it is often clarified as 'Renaissance Humanism'. It is important to remember that Renaissance thinkers did not use the term humanism, and neither did they agree on all subjects. Due to these problems of definition, some historians prefer to use the term *studia humanitatis*, coined by the Roman statesman Cicero (106-43 BCE) and revived by the Florentine scholar Coluccio Salutati (1331-1406). *Studia humanitatis* refers to studies which, rather than concentrating on religious matters, focus instead on what it is to be human, and more precisely, consider what a virtuous individual is in its broadest sense and how many that individual fully participates in public life.

The main elements of Renaissance humanism include:

- An interest in studying literature and art from antiquity
- An interest in the eloquent use of Latin and philology
- A belief in the importance and power of education to create valuable citizens
- The promotion of private and civic virtue
- A rejection of scholasticism
- The encouragement of non-religious studies
- An emphasis on the individual and their moral autonomy
- A belief in the importance of observation, critical analysis, and creativity
- A belief that poets, writers, and artists can lead humanity to a better way of living.
- An interest in the question 'what does it mean to be human?'<sup>9</sup>

### 1.2.4. Humanism as a spread-out Disease

The printing press helped spread humanist ideas from Italy to the north of Europe. Italian Humanism spread northward to France, Germany, the Low Countries, Poland-Lithuania, Hungary, and England with the adoption of large-scale printing after 1500, and it became associated with the Reformation. In France, pre-eminent humanist Guillaume Budé (1467–1540) applied the philological methods of Italian Humanism to the study of antique coinage and legal history, composing a detailed commentary on Justinian's Code.

### 1.2.5. New Horizons of Humanism

From the fourteenth to the seventeenth century, we find a grand revival of humanistic tradition in European countries. Erasmus initiated a new wave of self-esteem and self-fulfillment in man and encouraged them to free themselves from all barriers of theological despotism and medieval orthodoxy.

<sup>9</sup> CARTWRIGHT, "Renaissance Humanism", [https://www.worldhistory.org/renaissance\\_humanism/](https://www.worldhistory.org/renaissance_humanism/), [accessed on December 18, 2021].

Montaigne laid great emphasis on the mutability of man and the world. He preached that a man could attain perfection by properly enjoying his being.<sup>10</sup> This renaissance movement made man end as the center and creator of all values. It opened a new humanistic horizon for the modern world.

But in the mid-18th Century, different use of the term began to emerge. In 1765, the author of an anonymous article in a French Enlightenment periodical spoke of "The general love of humanity ... a virtue 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."<sup>11</sup> The later 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.

Now 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. In this polarized atmosphere, liberal reformers and radicals embraced the idea of Humanism as an alternative religion of humanity. Ernest Renan in "The Future of Knowledge": Thoughts on 1848 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 man — all of life, sanctified and raised to the level of a moral value."<sup>12</sup> In 1933, Humanism, as a point of view, was proclaimed by a galaxy of thirty-three intellectuals hailing from western society. It was laid down as a new philosophy, not as a new creed, and was said to be about matters of final concern developed out of the materials of the modern world. Religion and spirituality were not wholly decried. Religion was recognized as a means for realizing the highest value of life, and spiritual values were sought to be inculcated as the spirit comes at the apex in order of existence.

### 1.2.6. Humanism, in 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century

In the 20th and 21st centuries, members of humanist organizations have disagreed on whether Humanism is a religion. Modern Humanists, such as Corliss Lamont or Carl Sagan, hold that humanity must seek truth through reason and the best observable evidence and endorse scientific scepticism and the scientific method. However, they stipulate those decisions about right and wrong must be based on the individual and common good. "Humanism does not consider metaphysical issues such as the existence or non-existence of supernatural beings as an ethical process. Humanism is engaged with what is human."<sup>13</sup>

Contemporary Humanism entails a qualified optimism about people's capacity, 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 support of others. The ultimate goal is human flourishing, making life better for all humans and as the most conscious species, and promoting concern for the welfare of other sentient beings and the planet. The focus is on doing good and living well here and now and leaving the world a better place for those who come after.<sup>14</sup>

### 1.3. The Different Definitions of Humanism

"Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good without theism or other supernatural beliefs."<sup>15</sup>

– American Humanist Association

"Humanism is a democratic and ethical life stance that affirms that human beings have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape their own lives. It stands for building a more humane society through ethics based on human and other natural values in a spirit of reason and free inquiry through human capabilities. It is not theistic, and it does not accept supernatural views of reality."<sup>16</sup>

– Humanists International

<sup>10</sup> PAT. J. GEHRKE, "The Ethical Importance of Being Human: God and Humanism in Philosophy" in *Philosophy Today*, 50/ 5, winter, 2006, 430. (Here after referred to as GEHRKE, "The Ethical Importance of Being Human")

<sup>11</sup> "Humanism", *City Vision University*, <https://library.cityvision.edu/humanism> [accessed on December 18, 2021]. (Here after referred to as "Humanism", <https://library.cityvision.edu/humanism>)

<sup>12</sup> "Humanism", <https://library.cityvision.edu/humanism> [accessed on December 18, 2021].

<sup>13</sup> V. TIRUPATHI RAO, "Secular Humanism" in *Global Journal for Research Analysis*, IC Value 80.26/6 (Accessed on December 18, 2021). (Here after referred to as RAO, "Secular Humanism")

<sup>14</sup> "Humanism", <https://library.cityvision.edu/humanism> [accessed on December 18, 2021].

<sup>15</sup> "Definition of Humanism", American Humanist Association, <https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/definition-of-humanism/> [accessed on December 16, 2021]. (Here after referred to as "Definition of Humanism", <https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/definition-of-humanism/>)

<sup>16</sup> "Definition of Humanism", <https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/definition-of-humanism/> [accessed on December 16, 2021].

#### 1.4. Forms of Humanism

If one can understand Humanism in universal as a concern that man becomes free for his humanity and finds his significance in it, then Humanism differs according to one's notion of "freedom" and "nature" of man. So too, are there various paths towards the realization of such conceptions? The Humanism of Marx does not need to return to antiquity any more than the Humanism which Sartre conceives existentialism to be. In this broad sense of Christianity, too, is Humanism. However, different forms of Humanism may be in purpose and principle, in the mode and means of their respective realizations, and the structure of their teaching, they nonetheless all agree in this, that "the *humanitas* of *homo humanus* is determined about an already established interpretation of nature, history, world, and the ground of the world, that is, of beings as a whole."<sup>17</sup>

##### 1.4.1. Marxist Humanism

The term 'Marxist humanism' has its foundation from Marx's conception of the '*alienation of the labourer*' as he advanced it in his 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844' - and alienation that is born of a capitalist system in which the worker no longer functions as a free being involved with free and associated labour. It is concerned more with the structural conception of a capitalist society. The dominant feature of Marxian Humanism is its unalterable hope for a better future. As a result of the revolution, the new order will usher in by giving rise to a new type of man. Karl Löwith calls this "a secularized biblical eschatology in which the proletariat has assumed the broad features of the Servant of the Lord, whose vicarious suffering for the whole creation inaugurates the new age."<sup>18</sup> But Marx is farthest from the gospel where his Humanism is highly pronounced. His central claim is that integrated, spontaneous, and then autonomous man will be a historical society member.

##### 1.4.2. Christian Humanism

Christian Humanism is an attempt that develops a human-centered philosophy of ethics and social action within a framework of Christian principles. It is an expression of the religious rather than the secular aspects. It is the position that universal human dignity and individual freedom are essential and principal components of or are compatible with Christian doctrine and practice. It is a philosophical union of Christian and humanist principles. One common complaint about Christian humanism is that in attempting to place humans as the central focus, "it contradicts the fundamental Christian principle that God must be at the center of one's thoughts and attitudes. However, Christian humanists continue to hold their view of the human being as the image of God."<sup>19</sup>

##### 1.4.3. Enlightenment Humanism

Enlightenment humanism gives importance to reason expounding its infinite potentialities and unfettered employment. Our reason and imagination set the goal of humanity. This goal is not the adoration of God, nor is it our self-realization in the heavenly city, but the welfare of the individual and society for which no supernatural faith and grace is required. Its result is criticism and scepticism. Everything is held as falsifiable. No authority is accepted. No person or institution can claim infallibility. Everything is publicly examined. "Reason liberates all from every type of tutelage through the instruments of truth, morality, and political systems. Nominalism, Humanism, and the growth of the empirical sciences contributed to its emergence."<sup>20</sup>

##### 1.4.4. Pragmatic Humanism

If overconfidence in the power of reason marked Enlightenment humanism, pragmatics like S. Peirce and J. Dewey rejected such an approach as it focused too much on the cognitive rather than the practical. "The human is what he does. He is a doer, not a knower. Hence, meaning or truth resides in conceivable practical effects, i.e., something is true if useful. Accordingly, belief in God is good if it is helpful and can be held as true."<sup>21</sup>

#### 1.5. Implication of Atheistic Humanism

Several philosophical traditions shape contemporary Humanism. Today, most obviously, the point of contention is whether Humanism is explicitly anti-religious. We can go through the history of Humanism and survey the content of its philosophies at some length. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century witnessed many horrors

<sup>17</sup> LAWRENCE E. CAHOONE, "Letter on humanism" in *From Modernism to Postmodernism: An Anthology*, ed., Martin Heidegger, USA, Blackwell Publishers, 1996, 280. (Here after referred to as CAHOONE, "Letter on humanism")

<sup>18</sup> ABRAHAM C. KURUVILLA, "Marx's Promethean Humanism" in *Journal of Dharma*, Vol. XIV, no. 2 (April-June 1989), 156-157. (Here after referred to as KURUVILLA, "Marx's Promethean Humanism")

<sup>19</sup> ALEX THARAMANGALAM, "Humanism" in *ACPI Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Vol.1, ed., Johnson J. Puthenpurackal, Bangalore, Asia Trading Corporation, 2010, 632. (Hereafter referred to as THARAMANGALAM, "Humanism")

<sup>20</sup> THARAMANGALAM, "Humanism", 631.

<sup>21</sup> THARAMANGALAM, "Humanism", 631.

meted out by human beings. We can figure out three individuals who were particularly successful at filling the world with their monstrous terrors. They are Mao, Stalin, Hitler.

"The biography of Mao by Jung Chang and Jon Halliday reveals that he is responsible for 70 million deaths, and all in so-called peacetime, too. The trials and purges that killed tens of millions of his political opponents, Stalin's industrial policies led to famines in which 10 million peasants also perished. And there is something uniquely disturbing in the genocidal policies of Hitler. He reached in the 'Final Solution' of Reinhard Heydrich to 'cleanse Europe, from West to East, of its Jews. And he wiped away around 11 million Jews. They came forward by advocating Humanism and freedom. And their regime shows the plenty of evidence that both Stalin and Hitler were inspired by the atheistic humanism."<sup>22</sup>

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## Conclusion

For one thing, Humanism remains on many occasions the only available alternative to conflict, violence, bigotry, and persecution. The freedom to speak and write, organize and campaign in defense of individual or collective interests, and protest and disobey can only be articulated in humanist terms. As noted, the ultimate goal of Humanism as a philosophy is human flourishing, making life better for all humans, promoting concern for the welfare of other sentient beings and the planet as a whole, encouraging citizens to do what is within their power to preserve life instead of destroying it. Therefore, the focus of the underlying logic is on doing good and living well in society and leaving the world a better place for those who come. As it is human knowledge must be amended from time to time, and because situations constantly change, human choices must be made must change as well. Hence, governments' national and international policies must be cognizant of the humanist philosophy.

With humanist philosophy, all you see is divine and human, in one person man. We are parts of the same perfect body humanity. Nature created us from the same source and to the same end. She imbued us with mutual affection and sociability, and she taught us to be fair and just, to suffer injury rather than inflict it. She bid us extend our hands to all in need of help, and this idea would seek neither to exploit, nor to exaggerate, nor to rationalize atrocity. Instead, it would articulate an understanding of events that value human life without ethnicity, nationality, religion, or gender. If we love humanity in this way, it would indeed limit violent conflict and terrorism that has made the earth a cemetery scattered over the continent of our planet.

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## 2. Death of God

### Introduction

Nietzsche as a philosopher, has always inspired all the students in their pursuit of knowledge. The Christian concept of God, which is based on the Platonic and Aristotelian Philosophy, explains God as the eternal reality that created everything that came into existence. In this context, there emerged in the late 19th Century who challenged the foundations of Christianity and morality. Nietzsche simply uprooted the metaphysical concept of God and explained it as a psychological entity that soothed all the distress and made the statement "God is dead". In this chapter, I would like to discuss Nietzsche's madman and Death of God, Nihilism, Death of God Versus Existence of God, and comparative study of Death of God and Humanism.

### 2.1. Nihilism

The word Nihilism means 'the belief that nothing has any value, especially those religious and moral principles. Nihilism is frequently associated with the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, who believed it was widespread in Western culture. Historically, "Christianity provided an antidote to Nihilism by providing Christians with a source of truth, value, and meaning."<sup>23</sup> Nietzsche saw Nihilism as the result of repeated frustrations in searching for the meaning of religion. According to Nietzsche, Nihilism means "that the highest values devalue themselves. The aim is lacking."<sup>24</sup> Several challenges from opposing perspectives, including philosophical pessimism and modern science's evolutionary and heliocentric theory, had suffocated the religious worldview. This intellectual condition, according to Nietzsche, presents a new challenge to European culture.

#### 2.1.1. Nihilism as a Challenge

Nietzsche observed Nihilism as the hidden presence within the very base of European culture and saw it as a crucial and approaching destiny. "Nietzsche identifies the intellectual conditions as a new challenge to European culture. Nietzsche considers Nihilism as a symptom of either strength or

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<sup>22</sup> VERNON, *Humanism*, 152.

<sup>23</sup> MESSERLY JOHN, "Nietzsche: Active and Passive Nihilism", *Reason and Meaning*, 8 December 2021, <https://reasonandmeaning.com/2020/03/25/nietzsche-active-and-passive-nihilism>, [accessed on 2021, December 28]. (Here after referred to as JOHN, "Nietzsche: Active and Passive Nihilism")

<sup>24</sup> NIETZSCHE FRIEDRICH, *The Gay Science*, Kaufmann Walter, trans., New York, Vintage Books Edition, 1974, 344. (Here after referred to as FRIEDRICH, *The Gay Science*.)

weakness."<sup>25</sup> Nietzsche sees reality, the cosmos, as valueless. He emphasizes and follows that the "world has no value because there is nothing in it that might sensibly be supposed to have value. There is neither order nor purpose, things nor facts, nothing to which our beliefs can correspond. So, our beliefs are false."<sup>26</sup> Everything organic and inorganic is reduced because it is merely the result of matter, obeying deterministic law.

### 2.1.2. *Nihilism as a Disease*

The advancement of science and technology, the Christian revolution, evolution theory, and many other factors pointed to the world being valueless. "Nihilism, according to Nietzsche, is a symptom of either strength or weakness."<sup>27</sup> Nietzsche describes Nihilism as 'ambiguous' in that it can be symptomatic of either power or weakness. It is an extreme form of pessimism. If we discuss Nihilism as a simple term, it is the belief that everything is meaningless. Nothing is considered valuable in the cosmos, and everything is pointless. "Nietzsche did not interpret Nihilism as an excellent philosophical position; instead, he saw it as a pathological disease. Like any other disease, Nihilism can be viewed as a transitional stage in one's life. For him, it is a necessary step in revaluing all values."<sup>28</sup>

## 2.2. *Madman and Death of God*

Nietzsche's most essential and famous concept about God is his proclamation is that 'God is dead. He maintains the concept death of God as the greatest recent event. "Have you not heard of that mad man, who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the marketplace and incessantly: 'I seek God! I seek God...' whither is God?' He cried, 'I will tell you we have killed him-you and I."<sup>29</sup> "The madman proclaims that we all are responsible for the death of God, and we are all his murders."<sup>30</sup> God is dead that he has died in the hearts and minds of human beings. So, no one should believe in God.

### 2.2.1. *The Message of the Madman*

"After the proclamation that God is dead, the universe's idea was ruled by physical laws, not by divine providence was now a reality. And also meant that society no longer uses God; the belief does not help the survival of the species; rather, it hinders."<sup>31</sup> "The traditional beliefs in God were reduced unbelievable by development in science."<sup>32</sup> "The most significant recent event that God is dead; that the faith in the Christian God has become impossible- is already starting to cast its first shadow over Europe."<sup>33</sup> Christianity, according to Nietzsche, contradicts his concept of Nihilism. The Christian moral doctrines give people faith in God, which justifies their existence in the world. As a result, Christianity serves as an antidote to the most basic form of Nihilism, the despair of meaninglessness.

### 2.2.2. *Nietzsche's Wider Perspective*

By the concept of the death of God, Nietzsche tries to convince people that God is useless and we need to replace something instead of God. And through his view, he emphasizes the extinction of religion in society. Europe no longer needed God as the source of morality, value, or order in the universe; science and philosophy could do that. "This increasing secularization of thought in the west led the philosopher to recognize that God was dead, and those human beings killed him with their scientific revolution and their desire to understand the world better."<sup>34</sup> Nietzsche was trying to convey that

<sup>25</sup> NIETZSCHE FRIEDRICH, *The Will to Power*, New York, Vintage Books; A Division of Random House, 1968, 23. (Here after referred to as FRIEDRICH, *The Will to Power*)

<sup>26</sup> ARTHUR C. DANTO, *Nietzsche as Philosopher*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 196, 33. (Here after referred to as C. DANTO, *Nietzsche as Philosopher*)

<sup>27</sup> FRIEDRICH, *The Will to power*, 24.

<sup>28</sup> FRIEDRICH, *The Will to Power*, 4.

<sup>29</sup> FRIEDRICH, *The Gay Science*, 125.

<sup>30</sup> FRIEDRICH, *The Gay Science*, 125.

<sup>31</sup> ROY JACKSON, *Teach Yourself Nietzsche*, Gloucestershire, Teach Yourself publication, 2010, 56. (Here after referred to as JACKSON, *Teach Yourself Nietzsche*)

<sup>32</sup> TOM GRIM WOOD, "Nietzsche's Death of God, [https://www.academia.edu/1039821/Nietzsches\\_Death\\_of\\_God](https://www.academia.edu/1039821/Nietzsches_Death_of_God), [accessed on 27 December, 2021]. (Here after referred to as WOOD, "Nietzsche's Death of God, [https://www.academia.edu/1039821/Nietzsches\\_Death\\_of\\_God](https://www.academia.edu/1039821/Nietzsches_Death_of_God),)

<sup>33</sup> FRIEDRICH, *The Gay science*, 343.

<sup>34</sup> SCOTTY HENDRICKS, "God is Dead: What Nietzsche Really Meant", *Big Think*, <https://bigthink.com/scotty-hendricks/what-nietzsche-really-meant-by-god-is-dead>, (accessed on 12 January, 2022). (Here after referred to as HENDRICKS, "God is Dead: What Nietzsche Really Meant", *Big Think*, <https://bigthink.com/scotty-hendricks/what-nietzsche-really-meant-by-god-is-dead>,)

there is no need for religion and faith in God. "The implications of this are important for ethics, for with the death of God comes the death of religious, especially Christian, morality: a morality that has underpinned western culture since the fourth century."<sup>35</sup> God has died, and he will not help any of his believers. Nietzsche says that if God exists in the world, he will be the ultimate power and head everything. It is that ordinary person created God to forget their pains and sufferings.

### 2.2.3. *The Value of God*

People believed that God is the supreme power and ultimate source which protects them from all problems in life. The 'Death of God' message is not merely an announcement for the extinction of religion. The announcement of Death of God shows us the emptiness and nihilistic elements of society. The mad man accuses the audience of saying, "we have killed him", which means now the whole world looks baseless again. To say the world is 'valueless' is not to say that it has little worth. Instead, it does make sense to say one thing has more 'value' than another. This rejected the belief in an objective world held by many philosophies and religions.

### 2.2.4. *Implications of the Madman's Message*

"Religions and other metaphysical claims frequently support a correspondence theory of truth."<sup>36</sup> It devalues religion and everything connected to religion. "In Nietzsche's perception, Christian faith of 'God is truth' is the divine concept but divine cannot be proved, so the concept of God is the great error, blind less and lie."<sup>37</sup> As an atheist, Nietzsche denied God and religion by announcing to the madman that 'God is dead. He uses the phrase 'death of god' and the particular statement 'we have killed God' as the tools to support his Nihilism.<sup>38</sup> The announcement of the 'death of God' shows the emptiness and nihilistic elements in society. Nietzsche, himself, represents be the madman in the street. He says, "To have lost God means madness; and when mankind will discover that it has lost God, universal madness will break out."<sup>39</sup>

## 2.3. *Death of God Versus Existence of God*

God is the creator who is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, perfectly moral, etc..<sup>40</sup> Nietzsche viewed God through the lens of his encounter with meaninglessness. In *The Gay Science*, "Nietzsche expresses his pessimistic and nihilistic outlook on life and denial of God's existence. Nietzsche views the idea of God among people for helping them in handling the widespread and senseless suffering."<sup>41</sup> There is a natural explanation for believing in God because he observed the people of his time maintain faith or belief in God for enduring the miseries in their life.

### 2.3.1. *Nietzsche's Conception of God the Father*

He advocated that God is merely a psychological fabrication created to cease distress from these speculations. Nietzsche also comments on the Christian concept of God the Father. In the book *Beyond Good and Evil*, He states, "The Father in God has been thoroughly refuted; as well as, 'the judge', 'the rewarder'. Also, his 'free will' he does not hear, and if he heard, he still would not know how to help."<sup>42</sup> Nietzsche sees God the Father as merely a judge and rewarder who expects human believers to obey his rules. As the scripture states, Father the God does not hear anything and does not help anyone for any reason. Nietzsche suggests that God the Father is merely a concept that does not exist in reality.

### 2.3.2. *Inconsistency in the "Death of God"*

The death of God is inconsistent with God's very nature. If there is a God, he should exist both in the past and future because his essence is the same as existing. There are various arguments for God's existence, such as the cosmological, teleological, ontological, moral, etc. The cosmological

<sup>35</sup> JACKSON, *Teach Yourself Nietzsche*, 56.

<sup>36</sup> BERND MAGNUS, HIGGINS KATHLEEN M., ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, United Kingdom, Cambridge University Press, 1996, 55. (Here after referred to as MAGNUS, KATHLEEN M., ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*.)

<sup>37</sup> FRIEDRICH, *The Gay Science*, 283

<sup>38</sup> FRIEDRICH, *The Gay science*, 143.

<sup>39</sup> WALTER KAUFMANN, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 97.

<sup>40</sup> MORLEY, Western Concept of God, available at: <https://iep.utm.edu/god-west/>, [accessed on 15 January, 2022].

<sup>41</sup> JUSTIN REMHOF, "God is Dead": Nietzsche and the Death of God, <https://1000wordphilosophy.com/2018/02/13/nietzsche-and-the-death-of-god/>, [accessed on 19 January 2022]. (Here after referred to as REMHOF, "God is Dead": Nietzsche and the Death of God, <https://1000wordphilosophy.com/2018/02/13/nietzsche-and-the-death-of-god/>.)

<sup>42</sup> NIETZSCHE FRIEDRICH, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2002, 66. (Here referred to as FRIEDRICH, *Beyond Good and Evil*)



argument is concerned with the universe's existence and order. Many philosophers, including Aristotle, believe that the universe results from an efficient cause. According to the moral argument, God serves as a coherent ontological foundation for the existence of objective moral values and duties.<sup>43</sup>

### 2.3.3. *Existence as the Essence of God*

The teleological argument is end-oriented; they argue that God is the one who gives this lifeless and unintelligent universe an end or purpose. And the ontological argument regards God as a being greater than which nothing can be conceived. The phrase 'God is dead' refers to the death of a God who once existed. When we speak of God's existence, we should be clear that God's essence is to exist. And it is because of this crucial factor, God is referred to as God. The Biblical statement clarifies this: "I am who I am" (Exodus 3:14). This means his "thatness" and "whatness" are the same.<sup>44</sup> According to Christian belief, God is eternal. That is, God was is and will thus not die.

## 2.4. *Comparative Study of Humanism and Death of God*

The Age of Reason, which began somewhere in the mid- 17<sup>th</sup> Century and lasted until the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, saw an explosion of scientific discovery and coincidentally marked the end for God and the rise of Humanism in the modern culture. Is it possible to have a rationally coherent, morally compelling, and historically sustainable discourse and practice of humanistic values and human rights without a thick metaphysical or religious framework such as the one provided in the western tradition for some two millennia Judeo-Christian source? Can we be good without God is a superficial one? Will we still be good to strangers in our midst once we have truly and utterly abandoned the idea that every person is made in the image of God? Although the underlying argument or theme is, as we shall see, an essentially Dostoevskian's one, those primarily responsible for removing that metaphysical or religious framework is, of course, the Nietzsche.

### 2.4.1. *The Stage for Humanism*

The ugly truth is that the death of God was a long time coming. The first signs began to appear in Greece about the 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. These god-killers, known as Philosophers, started breaking away from the mythological traditions concerning the origins of the cosmos, looking for what they considered to be a more logical explanation for the phenomena they saw in nature. Men such as Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, and Pythagoras were the interpreters of the world around them. As philosophy grew more popular, the gods were slowly diminished. The stage had been set for later known as Humanism to arise. Somewhere in infinity, God began to develop a cough.

### 2.4.2. *The Role of Epicurus*

The Gods would suffer another sudden blow with the emergence of Epicureanism in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C. Epicurus was a materialist who saw religion as the primary cause for the world's miseries. Men were afraid of the gods and the prospect of punishment in the afterlife. Under this pretense, he sought to develop a system of thought that would eradicate the fear and anxiety associated with religion. So simply put, he was about to kill the gods. Epicurus needed to eliminate the silly notions of life after death. He thought if men feared death and what lay beyond it, how could they ever live in a harmoniously happy life on the earth? As a materialist philosopher, he believed that the soul was nothing more than a substance composed entirely of atoms that may perish after death. So his doctrine's made men from the belief of any life after death, thus freeing them from anxiety concerning reward or judgment. "Death does not concern us because as long as we exist, death is not here. And when it does come, we no longer exist."<sup>45</sup>

### 2.4.3. *Declining Health of God*

God's fragile condition was first noticed by His people in a display of cosmic irony. Symptoms of God's increasingly poor health began to show around 1543, with the arrival of Nicolas Copernicus's theory of a heliocentric universe. Until Johannes Kepler and Galileo Galilei in the 1600s, at least in certain circles, God's illness was confirmed. Meanwhile, the outcry for answers concerning the seemingly stark contradictions between natural science and biblical accounts grew more and more. It was left to men such as Isaac Newton, Rene Descartes, to take up the charge to answer the questions surrounding the mystery of our universe.

<sup>43</sup> C. STEPHEN EVANS, "Moral Arguments for the Existence of God", Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/moral-arguments-god/>, [accessed on 19 January 2022]. (Here after referred to as EVANS, "Moral Arguments for the Existence of God")

<sup>44</sup> AIDAN KIMEL, "I Am Who I Am": Thomas Aquinas and the Metaphysics of the Exodus" Eclectic Orthodoxy, <https://afkimel.wordpress.com/2015/05/11/i-am-who-i-am-thomas-aquinas-and-the-metaphysics-of-the-exodus/>, [accessed on 19 January 2022]. (Here after referred to as KIMEL, "I Am Who I Am")

<sup>45</sup> EPICURUS, *Letter to Menoecus*, Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1926, 33. (Here after referred to as EPICURUS, *Letter to Menoecus*)

#### 2.4.4. *The Dead God Revealed*

If anyone held hope for God's recovery, that hope was devastatingly dashed in 1859, with the publication of Charles Darwin's *magnus opus*, *The Origin of Species*. In his book, Darwin attempted to explain variances within the biological traits of creation species via evolution through natural selection. It was a death blow, which forever shattered the fragile relationship between science and religion. Altogether, these theories concerning the universe's age, operation, and origin challenged religious presuppositions, revolutionized science like physics, geology, and biology, and seemed to draw back the veil to reveal a sick, weakly God no longer capable of sustaining His myth. It wasn't until 1882 that we finally received the final prediction: God is dead.

#### 2.4.5. *Self-Reliance of Man*

However, interestingly enough, he never denied the existence of the gods. He neutralized them. To him, the gods living in distant, interstellar space and who do not intervene in the affairs of men. The gods of Epicurus are concerned more with eating and drinking than the undesirable burden of worldly affairs. So man was left up to himself, the self-proclamation lord of all creation. "Man, therefore, freed from the fear of death and fear of the gods, has no duty save to live as happily as he can during his brief space upon the earth."<sup>46</sup> Epicurus was not the first to attempt to extinguish the terror of his deities, nor was he the last; however, the groundwork for the principles we see present in modern-day secular Humanism can undoubtedly be traced back to his philosophical system.

#### 2.4.6. *Last Breath of Diseased God*

Friedrich Nietzsche, who would stumble over the divine corpse and thus be credited for foreshowing the death of God to the world, in 1882, published his book, *The Gay Science*, proclaiming the demise of the once omnipotent creator. "God is dead, but given the way people are, there may still for millennia be caves in which they show his shadow. And we- we must still defeat his shadow as well."<sup>47</sup> His growing disdain for the forced moral values of established religious traditions inherent in society, his contempt of humanity's ultimate shallowness in accepting those values, and the apparent impotence of God would ultimately lead him to the conclusion that a new age was on the horizon, an age without God. "Do we still hear nothing of the noise of the gravediggers who are burying God? Do we still smell nothing of the divine decomposition? Gods, too, decompose! God is dead! God remains dead!"<sup>48</sup> "Once blasphemy against God was the greatest blasphemy, but God died and in addition to that all those blasphemers."<sup>49</sup> The death of God marked the end of traditional theological and religious moral values.

#### 2.4.7. *Era of Humanism or Age of Man*

The funeral fires of God marked the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and a new era in our history, the Era of Humanism- the Age of Man. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century and the Age of Humanism witnessed the rise of the two most significant global conflicts. An Austrian native despot named "Adolf Hitler," whose political philosophies were heavily influenced by the works of Nietzsche went on to carve a bloody path of destruction throughout Europe from 1939 to 1945. In horror, six million Jews were tortured and massacred in Nazi death camps as the world looked on. Or what of "Joseph Stalin", leader of the Soviet Union, who killed around fifteen million of his countrymen while he was in power. It was Stalin himself who, while studying to become a priest in the Russian Orthodox Church, was quoted as saying: "You know, they are fooling us, there is no God."<sup>50</sup> Did God do this? Are we point out our fingers at the divine scapegoat once more? How can we blame Him for our troubles? Have we so quickly forgotten that we buried Him? How can we justify questioning, in our disgust, "where was God?" Perhaps Epicurus and Nietzsche did not envision their philosophies to be taken to such negative extremes: This is the inevitable consequence of Humanism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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## Conclusion

The reality is: Humanism may have very well killed God, but it also killed us, too. The current state of our world is not the result of the failure of God, but the loss of those whom He placed in charge of it—Us. "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the

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<sup>46</sup> STACE WALTER TERENCE, *A Critical History of Greek Philosophy*, Kindle Edition, 174. (Here after referred to as TERENCE, *A Critical History of Greek Philosophy*)

<sup>47</sup> NIETZSCHE FRIEDRICH, *The Gay Science*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, 138. (Here after referred to as FRIEDRICH, *The Gay Science*)

<sup>48</sup> FRIEDRICH, *The Gay Science*, 148.

<sup>49</sup> NIETZSCHE FRIEDRICH, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, London, Sterling Publishing, 2012, 6. (Here after referred to as FRIEDRICH, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*)

<sup>50</sup> YAROSLAVSKY, YEMELIAN MIKHAILOVICH, *Landmarks in the Life of Stalin*, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1942, 9. (Here after referred to as YAROSLAVSKY, MIKHAILOVICH, *Landmarks in the Life of Stalin*)

sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Genesis 1:27-28). God gave men perfect free will and the responsibility of governing the Earth. In our sovereignty, we murdered God, declared ourselves gods in His place, drowned the earth in piss and blood and other things, then turned around and blamed Him for it. It makes sense, doesn't it? Yet, I shall tell you a secret that God is NOT dead. He is very much alive. What we buried all those years ago was not the body of God but some less than perfect likeness we had fashioned. God remains high upon His throne, watching that He made in His own image try desperately to convert themselves.

Our life, our history, and our ultimate fate are inescapably bound up with that of our Maker. Thus, modern-day Humanism, with its Epicurean symbol of the "Happy Man," is inadequate to deal with the pressures of divinity. And while men like Epicurus, Friedrich Nietzsche, and many others would pass sentence upon God as the cause of the world's sufferings; I put forward a thought to think that as long as man stands at war with his God, he will be condemned to stand at war with himself.

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## General Conclusion

The aim of Humanism is to have an enriched culture, enjoyed by all, regardless of class. In a mass society, this is an idea difficult to comprehend and realize. 'Humanism', as generally comprehended, suggests to be a perspective, having a set of presuppositions that considers the human race as having a special position among the rest of the things in the world. To state it explicitly, it upholds the most essential aspects of man that incorporates the human values, his goals, his ideal and his self-esteem. The humanist, thus, focuses not only on the uniquely human aspects of people but so the important aspects. The word 'humanism' came into general use only in the nineteenth Century; however, the humanistic model of thinking had widened its tradition with the advent of eighteenth-century thinkers like Voltaire, Bentham, Hume, Kant, and others.<sup>51</sup> They did not always agree with one another, nevertheless, these thinkers united in support of such values of freedom, equality, tolerance, secularism, etc. They also encouraged individual creativity, moral sense, and responsibility and believed in the possibility of progress and the possibility of perfection of human nature.

Today, what we need is not so much the advancing humanist, but the practicing humanist. Humanism is not maintained in thought alone, nor shown in action alone. It is propounded in thought, word, and action – all three in perfect unison. Humanism is a value, an arch value for all human beings. Let Humanism begin from our home and then get spread to our workplace, society, state, country, and the entire globe like a drop of ink spreading gradually in a bowl of water.

The reality is in a constant flux or is continuously changing. Reality is not stable and it is a process. This reality does require a source which was described as water, air, fire, etc. by the various ancient philosophers. The main points derived from this seminar include the notion of Nihilism and the concept of God according to Nietzsche. What seemed interesting in his derivations on God includes the concept of Nihilism and the death of God. He criticized all the existing theories of God and finally formulated his concept of God as a mere psychological entity. While speaking on God as a psychological entity he mentions that the people in this world no longer need a God as the principle of morality. Also, the idea of God is considered to help people to handle the senseless sufferings of this world. But this God concept does not acknowledge God as the 'unmoved mover' the concept which is adapted by the Christian faith. While speaking of God as dead, he doesn't mean there existed a God who is now dead.

In short, we can say that humanists and the philosophers like Epicurus and Nietzsche try to bury all those years ago as not the body of God, but some less-than-perfect likeness we had fashioned. Many would blame upon God; the cause for the suffering in the world. And many tries to devalue moral values and rejects the moral life which is firm on Christian ethics. And lead a life of their own interest which is out of social good. I tend to think that as long as a man stands at war with his God, he will be condemned to stand at war with himself.

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<sup>51</sup> MOHAPATRA, 61.

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