
A Linguistic Wanderlust around Humanism

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ujah.v18i2.27>

Abstract

Humanism, a man-centred interest, is in contrast to the Middle Ages or ecclesiastical period, a God – centred churchianity. The different mankind’s interests to control and embellish his surroundings to infuse comfort are discussed under ancient, classical, ecclesiastical, modern and contemporary humanism. The purpose of this paper therefore is to recall that mankind’s march of civilization is a march to realize himself, to conquer his environments, and to make himself comfortable. Thus, its contribution is bringing to the forefront language as the pivotal tool facilitating the humanism of mankind, and a tool relied upon in this wanderlust around humanism. In so doing, the paper concludes that humanism and human development, suggestive of humanism, are stored, retained and accounted for by language.

Introduction

The suffix “-ism” is polysemous, i.e. has multiple meanings, as listed in *Merriam- Webster’s collegiate Dictionary* (11th Ed). But regarding its affixation to “human” to derive “humanism”, this work adopts as its meaning “characteristic or peculiar feature or trait” of human, or “manner of action or behaviour characteristic of a person or thing”. Humanism therefore refers to characteristics or peculiar features or traits, manners of action and behaviours attributable to human beings.

These peculiar features ascribed to human by the affix, “-ism”, is formally described by many authorities. *Webster’s Dictionary* approaches its explanations in two ways: subject matter description and philosophical leaning: as a subject of study, it is a “devotion to the humanities: literary culture”, it is “the revival of classical letters, individualistic and critical spirit, and an emphasis on secular concerns characteristic of the Renaissance”. As a philosophical pursuit, it is “a doctrine, attitude, or way of life centred on human interests or values; esp.: a philosophy that usually rejects supernaturalism and stresses an individuals dignity and worth and capacity for self-realization through reason” (605).

David Jowitt subsumes humanism under the Renaissance. Renaissance means rebirth, reawakening, revival of learning about mankind’s interest. The central features of Renaissance, according to Jowitt, are the rebirth of learning; the rise of humanism; and the growth of scientific understanding (69). He elaborates on these thus: the rebirth of learning means ... the renewed study of ancient learning of the Greeks and their diffusion, as well as the “evolution and application of more rigorous standards of criticism in all fields of learning”. Humanism refers to the discovery or rediscovery of the value and centrality of the human, and fresh advances in scientific knowledge of the secular world beyond the point attained by the ancient and mediaeval (including Islamic) worlds.” Further aftermaths of these human interests are the Reformation (religious rebellion / revolution), the overseas expansion of Europe, progress in the arts and in vernacular literature, the development of the sovereign state, and the growth of capitalism (69).

Kathleen McCoy explains humanism as “the intellectual movement that began in Europe with the revival of study of

ancient Greek and Roman texts”. (54) Continuing, she explains that “classical literature stressed living in the present and cultivating and enjoying the pleasures and satisfactions of the here and now”, “unlike the medieval church teachings, which depicted this world as merely a trial in preparation for the next”. According to her, “the goal of humanism was the study of human institutions and political behaviour for their own sakes, and possibly for their improvement”.

Adding to McCoy’s humanism, Richard Taylor says that “the rebirth of classical learning and humanism” showed that “the individual controlled his universe, created both order and beauty, and looked to himself as a legitimate object of study and value”. Contrasting this with the ecclesiastical medieval era, Taylor asserts that “the excessive spirituality and self- denial of the earlier God-centred view slowly gave way to a man –oriented conception of the universe. Knowledge and free enquiry into formerly frightening and half-understood world opened the door to man’s further intellectual development”. (23/24). Taylor describes this development as “the rebirth of learning” which replaced “the superstition of the Middle Ages”, and thus, constrained the “men of the Renaissance to turn to classical sources of scientific knowledge and philosophy”.

Webster’s Dictionary, Jowitt, McCoy and Taylor present humanism as human- centred interest: Webster’s considers it as way of life centred on human interests and values; Jowitt regards it as the discovery or rediscovery of the value and centrality of human; McCoy et al see it as the interest in human which focuses on his pleasures and satisfactions here and now; Taylor sums it up as man’s interest in himself as a legitimate object of study and

value. Interest is therefore the common perceptible denominator in the idea of humanism. Humanism is man's interest in himself (well-being), his surroundings, his world-views, his religion. This interest from the ancient to the present is understood by record-keeping facilitated by language. How ancient, classical, ecclesiastical, modern and contemporary interest of mankind is understood is a wanderlust of this paper.

Ancient Humanism

Ancient "relates to a remote period, to time early in history, or to those living in such a period or time; especially: of or relating to the historical period beginning with the earliest known civilizations and extending to the fall of the western Roman Empire in A.D. 476" (Webster's 46). The earliest known civilizations were Egypt, Persia and Assyria, Babylon. The Egyptian civilization gave the world one of the seven wonders of the ancient world- the Pyramids. It also stored for the world the "mummies" of notable Egyptian kings and queens, and introduced the irrigation system of drawing water from the River Nile to the cultivable fertile shores which provided continuous cultivation to feed her population. The legacies of Egypt were introduced to the modern world via two sources: the hieroglyphics writing system and archeological studies of these ancient writings translated into modern writing. The hieroglyphics is a "system of writing in pictorial characters", or "the picture script of the ancient Egyptian priesthood "(Webster's). This writing system, when deciphered, informed the world of Egyptian interests regarding politics, religion, and socio-economic operations of the people.

The Asian civilizations of Babylon, Persia and Assyria had as their writing system, the *cuneiform*, described as "an ancient system of

writing used in Persia and Assyria “(Hornby). This system of writing was written in wedge-shaped characters”. (Webster’s). Describing the writing system used in ancient Babylon, George. S. Clason says:

The glory of Babylon has faded but its wisdom has been preserved for us. For this we are indebted to their form of RECORDS (emphasis mine). In that distant day, the use of paper had not been invented. Instead, they laboriously engraved their writing upon tablets of moist clay. When completed, these were baked and became hard tile. In size, they were about six by eight inches, and an inch in thickness. (141/ 142)

The wisdoms of Babylonians recorded, according to Clason, are described: “They were an educated and enlightened people. So far as written history goes, they were the first engineers, the first astronomers, the first mathematicians, the first financiers and the first people to have a written language “(141). These perceived wisdoms of Babylon, according to Clason, were corroborated by Herodotus. “Herodotus, the Greek traveller and historian, visited Babylon while it was still from its prime and has given us the only known description by an outsider. His writings give a graphic description of the city and some of the unusual customs of its people. He mentions the remarkable fertility of the soil and the bountiful harvest of wheat and barley which they produced “(141). Clason further says that “the Babylonians were skilled in the arts. These included sculpture, painting, weaving, gold working and the manufacture of metal weapons and agricultural implements”, (143/ 144).

Clason states that the modern world is indebted to Babylon for their form of records, that they were the first to have a written language, and that Herodotus wrote down his observations of Babylon. Aptly therefore,, the interest of Babylon was preserved in language. Language therefore aided the rediscovery of what ancient Babylon was in regard to her politics, and socio-economic well-being.

Classical Humanism

Classical is “connected with or influenced by the culture of ancient Greece and Rome” (Hornby 258), and, according to David Jowitt (79), “the classical languages [are] Greek and Latin, the knowledge of which was spreading among lay people as a result of the revival of learning”. Writing about the influence of these cultures, Richard Taylor explains that

The culture of Western Europe, which includes England and America, is derived from two ultimate sources - Graeco-Roman civilization and Judaeo- Christian theology [the latter is not the purview of this paper]. From the classical world of Greece and Rome we have inherited a highly developed SENSE OF IMAGINATION (emphasis mine) and of EXPRESSION as well as literary forms. In fact, Latin served as the formal language of education until fairly recently and has had an enormous effect on English literature from the earliest times.... The legacy passed on from the Graeco- Roman world also includes a full range of myth and heroic legend, a storehouse of incident, image and symbol which is still in USE and STILL USEFULL (emphasis mine) (18/ 19).

The inheritance of “sense of imagination and of expression” brings to memory such notable names in classical philosophy as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Anaxagoras and Protagoras. Socrates did not write anything, but when “ Plato met Socrates in 407bc... he came under the ‘hypnotic spell’ of Socrates. So decisive and persuasive was the influence that Plato abandoned the idea of becoming a Poet.”(Subrata Mukherjee and Sushilla Ramaaswamy, 50). Plato lived out the Philosophy of Socrates which says that “ virtue is knowledge” and “a life unexamined is not worth living”. Plato added to it in his Academy. “Mathematics, arithmetics, advanced geometry, astronomy, music, law, and philosophy were the main subjects of study” (51), according to the above authorities.

These authorities aver: “Plato, along with his disciple Aristotle, has been credited for laying the foundations of Greek political theory on which the Western political tradition rests. These two versatile thinkers between themselves have explored, stated, analyzed and covered a wide range of philosophical perspectives and issues. A most fitting tribute has been paid by Whitehead who stated that the entire European philosophical tradition is nothing but a set of footnotes to Plato and Aristotle” (50). Like Plato, Aristotle having left Plato’s Academy as a student and an official found his school Lyceum. “Lyceum was more than a school or university. It was a public leisure centre, where Aristotle lectured to his chosen students in the morning, and to the general public in the evening” (Mukherjee and Ramaswamy, 94).

Plato’s Academy, “a seat of higher learning and intellectual pursuits in Greece” (51), Aristotle’s Lyceum, “the protogorean school of Crotona and the school of Isocrates were all learning

centres for explaining Grecian world views, faunas, floras, government, laws, social – cultural - economic realities of ancient Greece. The activities of these philosophers together with these notable Greek writers – Homer wrote *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the latter was considered the first well written novel in Western Europe; Herodotus, a historian, who recorded Grecian achievements, administration, laws and justice, wars (Peloponnesian) and so on – reached the modern world via classical Greek, a language in use during the golden years of Greek city states of Athens, Sparta, Milletus, e.t.c.

Classical Latin is also used to preserve Roman legacies to the modern world. Rome as a Republic was made possible by deposing “Tarquin the proud, the last king of Rome” (William Shakespeare, 56). The government of three notable generals, called the first Triumvirate, was instituted in 60 BCE. Julius Caesar, Pompeius Magnus (Pompey the Great), and Marcus Licinius Crassus (the richest man in Rome) became the three – man leaders. Caesar became more famous and popular. This ignited the suspicion of the Roman Senate and so culminated in civil wars: Crassus died early, but Pompey engaged in futile battle with Caesar. (Wikipedia. Org & Livinus. org). “Pompey and Caesar had been rivals for power. Caesar defeated Pompey at the battle of Pharsalia and Pompey fled into Egypt where he was put to death” (Shakespeare, 4), and Caesar also had “victory over Pompey’s two sons” (Shakespeare, XVI). Thus becoming the sole survivor, Caesar through his nephew Octavius Caesar established the long line of emperors overseeing the huge Roman “empire already in decline at the beginning of the fifth century of the Christian Era” (Kathleen McCoy and Judith A.V. Harlan, 2).

The lives, cultures, politics and society of Roman survived to be studied by the modern world because of writers and statesmen who recorded them. Virgil (fully called Publius Virgilius Maro) (70-19BC) wrote Roman epic, pastoral and didactic poem (Antony Kamm, 486). His works, according to Kamm, “describes the activities of a farming year, with emphasis on traditional agricultural industries, on a return to the old forms of worship, and on communal working”. Commissioned by Augustus Caesar, Virgil wrote *Aeneid*. This work, an epic, glorifies the achievement of Augustus Caesar, gives “account of the mythological antecedents of Rome”, “is the national epic of the Roman Empire, and the most famous and influential poem of the Roman era. “(487).

Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43BC) was a Roman statesman, a master of rhetoric and style. The Roman language, Latin, was the tool he used to expose human foibles and weaknesses: he dealt “firmly with Catalines conspiracy against the state (“Cataline, an ambitious Roman nobleman, undertook a plot to overthrow the government “(Hibbs, et al, 437); he shows that one can be in opposition: he “refused to join Caesar’s triumvirate and criticized its right to govern”; he attacked Mark Anthony, and urged “the senate to grant amnesty to the conspirators who assassinated Caesar; Cicero was thereafter murdered, “his head and hands were cut off and sent to Rome, where they were nailed up in the forum” (Kamm, 94).

Other Roman writers who preserved Roman social, political, cultural and economic interests of Rome were “Ovid, Horace, the satirist Juvenal.” (Jowitt, 4). Publius Ovidius Naso was a Roman elegiac poet as well as work on love: *Heroides* (Heroines), “a

series of imaginary letters to faithless lovers...”; *Amores* (Love Poems) and *Ars Amatoria* (The Art of love), which were “not so much erotic (but were) “irresponsible in that they appeared to condone adultery, a criminal offence ...” (Kamm, 358).

Quintus Horatius Flaccus was a Roman Lyric poet. “His main works comprise 17 “Epodes” on a variety of political and satirical themes, with some love poems; 103 ‘Odes’ reflecting events of the times and of his personal life,...” (Kamm, 221). Titus Livius (Livy) was a Roman historian. “His full history of Rome up to 9BC comprised 142 books, of which we have 35, plus synopses of the rest.... He concentrates on narrative and character, paying particular attention to the speech he attributes to his protagonists” (Kamm, 277). Cornelius Tacitus, also a historian, wrote, among others, “two series of histories covering the reign of Tiberius to that of Domitian, which are known as the ‘Histories’ and the Annals’ He was a literary stylist as well as a shrewd observer and commentator, and an upholder of the ancient virtues of his nation” (Kamm, 461). Decimus Junius Juvenalis is a Roman satirical poet. In his 16 surviving ‘Satires’, “he employs a mixture of sarcasm, invective, and broad humour to attack various social targets, including homosexuals, women, conditions in Rome, extravagance, human parasites, and vanity, while moralizing on such topics as learning, guilty consciences, parental example, and the treatment of civilians by the military” (Kamm, 244).

Language, preserving Socratic, platonic, Aristotlean, Virgilian, Ciceron activities, brings to the forefront mankind’s interests, both positive and negative: Socrates was killed for trumped-up subversion, Plato fled from Athens when Socrates was killed, Aristotle came closely to been killed but he fled into exile, Cicero

was decapitated and his arms dismembered by Mark Antony's second triumvirate who thought him traitorous. Though these flowers of classical Greece and Rome were victims of their own interests and the interests of their attackers, from them were recorded societal operations, human engagements and survivals which the modern world gleefully has recourse to as a foundation of its thoughts and socio-political organizations. The glories of Greek, among which were bestowing the Olympic Games, giving educational stages of children and making of laws presided over by Draco, from whence we obtained "draconian", and later Solon who succeeded him as chief magistrate, were legacies left for the modern world. The glories of Rome, among which were one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, the Colossus of Rhodes (an extremely large statue), the legal idea of not condemning a person until found guilty, and its "genius in administration, law-making, civil engineering, and military organization and strategy" (Jowitt, 4), were skills the modern world studies, accepts, and modifies to suit its organogram.

Ecclesiastical Humanism

Ecclesiastical refers or relates to a church as an established institution (Webster's, 393). Judaeo-Christian tradition introduced one church from the first coming of Jesus Christ, through the Middle Ages to the Renaissance when rebellion, revolution and disintegration crept in to disrupt the "one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic church" (Alan Schreck, 14). However, prior to the Protestant Rebellion, the Pope was the *primus inter pares* and his period was God-centred universe. This section of humanism is not just for the clergy and the lay people. It is to establish that human-centred interest conditioned after God Almighty's basic truth prevailed. Jesus Christ with his Apostles extended the moral

theological order: “Do unto others that you will like others to do unto you” (the Golden Rule) which Jesus Christ considers the summary of the Law and the Prophets. The interests of man in regard to the expectation of God as manifested by the Pope, was to know God, Love God, worship God, live with God after death. The holiness of the Pope constrained many emperors to be crowned by the Popes. In reciprocating the Pope’s gesture, an emperor would willingly marshal out his soldiers to fight “Crusades” declared by a pope. Converts were convinced to believe to do away with classical and ancient knowledge as it was about paganism, heathenism, occultism and Satanism (Amon and Isis of Egypts, Greek Pantheon of Zeus and other gods, Roman pantheon of Jupiter and his gods, etc).

The interest of man was to live holy life, die holy death, and live happily afterwards. Tertulian observed “the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church” (Schreck, 24). Christian lives and social relationship are summed up in *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*_(rev.ed). On page 31 of the “Prologue”, the lives and social relationship of man hinges on love:

The whole concern of doctrine and its teaching must be directed to the love that never ends. Whether something is proposed for belief, for hope or for action, the love of our Lord must always be made accessible, so that anyone can see that all the works of perfect Christian virtue spring from love and have no other objective than to arrive at love.

Therefore the love of God and the love of man (neighbour) are the central tenet striven by man. The idea of preaching, sermon,

evangelism, indulgence, Eucharist, confession, baptism, confirmation, holy order, extreme aunction, matrimony were all introduced and observed to enable one enroll in the ship bound for heaven. “To accomplish this, when the fullness had come, God sent his son as Redeemer and Saviour. In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life”. (The catechism, 27 of Prologue). Based on blessed life, adherents faithfully observed Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation like Christmas, New Year, Easter and solemnities and memorials of the Virgin Mary and other saints.

These human interests are extant for man to look through and amend his ways. “Latin, the scholarly clerical language” (McCoy and Harlan, 3), was the tool for preserving these ecclesiastical interests before English came of age to have these interests translated into English. Even today important events are still observed in Latin to avoid distortion, and in the Catholic Church first Sundays of every month have their liturgies mainly in Latin. These Latinate observances are affirmed thus: “An important early use of writing was to preserve the exact wording of sacred texts that would otherwise be corrupted by imperfect memories and changes in the spoken language. For most of the history of writing, literacy has been restricted to a small elite of book keepers and priest; often the two occupations were combined in one scribe” (Millward in Gary Goshgarian, 44).

Latin, today, falls under language extinction and/or endangered language described as “Bottom-to-top language death.”. According to Victoria Fromkin, et al, (525), this term “describes a language that survives only in specific contexts, such as a liturgical language. Latin, and at one time Hebrew, are such languages....

People stopped speaking Latin in daily situation centuries ago, and its usage is confined to scholarly and religious contexts”.

Modern (Renaissance) Humanism

Renaissance “has been described as the birth of the modern world out of the ashes of the Dark Ages; as the discovery of the world and the discovery of man; and as the era of the emergence of untrammled individualism in life, thought, religion, and art”. (M.H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham, 338). The discovery of the world with the discovery of man inhabiting that world made man a central study of the surroundings of this world. According to Jowitt, “the discovery or rediscovery of the value and centrality of the human” manifested “in the painting of the period with its realistic representation of the human figure... fresh advances in scientific knowledge, including fresh astronomical discoveries, the development of scientific methods, and fresh advances in mathematics” (69).

The interest of mankind is also noticeable, according to Jowitt, (69-70), in Reformation – a religious rebellion against the papacy spearheaded by Martin Luther; the growth of European overseas enterprise culminating in the colonization of America, Asia, Africa and Australia; the achievements in painting and architecture as noticeable in the works of Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci etc; the recognition of national sovereignty, independence of papacy control. The notable figure here is Machiavelli, in his book, *Prince*, he averred that “a successful prince was sovereign in his own territories, was answerable to no one outside, and embodied the state”, and the encouragement of capitalism which “means... lending and borrowing on interest”. Capitalism “facilitated the rise

of capitalist enterprise, which became the hallmark of Western civilization in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries”.

Outlining like Jowitt the Renaissance interests, Abrams and Harpham (339-342) give a cursory examination of “Renaissance individualism”: the first is “the new learning” spearheaded by the “Renaissance scholars of the classics, called humanists”. These humanists “revived the knowledge of the Greek language, discovered and disseminated a great number of the Greek manuscripts, and added considerably to the number of Roman authors and works which had been known during the Middle Ages”. Giving a further widespread to past historical facts and ideas is “the invention of **printing** on paper from movable type” which “made books for the first time cheap and plentiful, and floods of publications, ancient and modern, poured from the presses of Europe to satisfy the demands of the expanding population who had learned to read”, and actually read Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* and Mallory’s *Le Morte d’ Arthur*. In furtherance of the new learning, Baldassare Castiglione’s *Il Cortegiano* (The courtier”) of 1528 “was the most admired and widely translated of the many Renaissance **courtesy books**, or books on the character, obligations, and training of the man of the court. It sets up the ideal of the completely rounded or **Renaissance man**, developed in all his faculties and skills – physical, intellectual, and artistic. He is trained to be a warrior, statesman, athlete, philosopher, artist, conversationalist, and a man of society” whose “relationships to women, and women to men, are in accordance with the quasi-religious code of Platonic Love...”

The second human- centeredness is “the new religion”, tagged “the Reformation” led by Martin Luther (1483—1546). “This early

Protestantism was grounded on each individual's inner experience of spiritual struggle and salvation. Faith (based on the word of the Bible) alone was thought sufficient to save, and salvation itself was regarded as a direct transaction with God in the theater of the individual soul, without the need of intermediation by church, priest, or sacrament". The third is "the new world". The new world was the American continent discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1492. This exploration of discovery was inspired by "old Greek idea that the world is a globe", and, so, to find a new sea route to the East, Christopher accidentally landed on a new continent of America. This successful exploration stirred further explorations in European nations of Spain, England, Portugal, etc.

Affirming Abrams and Harpham, Taylor (29) says: "The imagination of England was stirred by first-hand knowledge of Africa, Asia and Americas, by knowledge of their cultures, climates, plants and animals. A measure for comparative analysis of European preconceptions and manners was at hand and the journey or voyage of a fictional hero became a major feature in the literature of the period." Abrams and Harpham concluding English interest in the new world say: "More important for English literature...was the fact that economic exploitation of the new world – often cruel, oppressive, and devastating to the native peoples – put England at the center ... of the chief trade routes, and so helped establish the commercial prosperity that in England, as in Italy earlier, was a necessary though not sufficient condition for the development of a vigorous intellectual and artistic life" (340). The fourth is "the new cosmos": The Medieval period of God – centred universe of Catholicism believed the Greek astronomer, Ptolemy, who taught that the earth was the center of the universe, "around which rotated the successive spheres of the moon, the

various planets, and then the fixed stars’’. However, in the sixteenth century, Copernicus (1543) refuted this age long belief. “The *Copernican theory* proposed a system in which the centre is the sun, and not the earth, and in which the earth is not stationary, but only one planet among many planets all of which revolve around the sun’’. This refutation of the initial belief of the church shows that the interest of man is questioning what otherwise should not have been questioned without the imposition of inquisition.

What Renaissance elucidates for man then and the modern world is facilitated by language – Latin and English (English both as a national and a vernacular language). Expatriating this, Taylor (24) states:

By 1500 the development of the English language had reached the stage of what we call Modern’ as opposed to ‘Middle’ English and the vernacular, rather than the formal Latin of education and government, was finally accepted as the natural medium for literature. Great works such as those of Geoffrey Chaucer had been written in Middle English during the Medieval period, but Latin still dominated the intellectual life of the country..... The general literary style of the Renaissance was a lively and richly ornamented English which made effective use of characteristics derived from Anglo—Saxons, especially the flexible ordering of monosyllabic words, heavy patterns of stress, repetitions of sound and vivid imagery.

Contemporary Humanism

Contemporary refers to “happening, existing, living or coming into being during the same period of time “(Webster’s Dictionary, 269).

This period is marked by national sovereignty or independence (Ethiopia under Menelik II regained her independence from Italy's Mussolini in 1935, India regained hers in 1947, Ghana in 1957 e.t.c), international associations (The League of Nations 1918, the Axis and the Allied powers of 1914-1918, the Commonwealth of Nations (1931), the United Nations Organizations (1945), the Organization of African Unity of 1960s (now African Union), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS, 1975), the European Unions etc) and technological knowhow. These affiliations show interests in national party representations, in International bloc votings and choice of positions.

Education to enroll mankind into the mainstream of the currencies of national and international issues is now the rule rather than the exception. Arising from education is the permeation of technology into the superstructure and substructure of society. Consequent upon technology is computer technology. Every engagement of mankind is computerized: medicine agriculture, conferences, etc.

In Literature, contemporary interests have captured the imagination of wider readership. According to Taylor (38), "African literature in English has captured the imagination of an international readership because of its relevance to contemporary problem of cultural alienation and the search for new modes of expression. In general, black literature is based on socio-political protest and the rejection of European tradition, but it also raises perennial questions of ethnic and individual identity in a dehumanizing modern world". The protest and rejection of European tradition equally reared up in post-independence disillusionment of African political leadership as featured in Ghana (*The Beautiful Ones Are*

Not Yet Born), in Nigeria (*A Man of the People* , *Anthills of the Savanna*), in KENYA (*Weep Not , Child ,A Grain of Wheat*), and in South Africa, the literature of the Apartheid reigned sway (*Sizwe Bansi is Dead; Cry, the Beloved Country; A Walk in the Night*, etc).

These humans' cries, laughter, and neutrality, all dependent on the interests of the oppressed or the oppressor, admits another flavour in human interest. What is called **Neocolonialism** (" the economic and political policies by which a great power indirectly maintains and extends its influence over other areas or people " (Webster's, 830). Neocolonial literature manifests in the works of Chinweizu. *The West and the Rest of Us*, Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Frantz Fanon *Black Skins, White Masks*, etc.

As happened before, language is still at the centre of recording and preserving the current human interest .African Languages were incapacitated as English via broken, pidginized and formal permeated the language faculties of Africans and compelled them to accept English as the new language of the emerging culture. The English language is now " like a Colossus, and we petty men (Nigerian languages) walk under his huge legs and peep about to find ourselves (themselves) dishonorable graves' (Shakespeare, (19).The English Language bestriding the narrow world like a Colossus is indispensable in facilitating worldwide communication. Hans Kurath (83/84) describes vividly the unavoidable and satisfactory overwhelming march of English as a world Language.

The substantial standardization of cultivated English by the end of the sixteenth century-before English settlements

were established overseas-has had tremendous consequences for the history of the language in all parts of the world. It accounts for the ease with which an educated Englishman can communicate with an educated American from any section of the United States and Canada despite the formidable physical barrier that separates the North American continent from the British Isles and despite nearly two centuries of independence of the United States. In later settlements and countries that came under British political and cultural domination in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Standard English inevitably became the medium of communication in public affairs and the instrument of instruction in the schools. In all parts of the word speakers of English **read the same literary and learned publications.** (Emphasis, mine) and listen to much the same talk on radio and television.

Conclusion: The Humanistic Tradition

To conclude this linguistic wanderlust around humanism, this paper embraces Gloria K. Fiero's "Preface" of her work. *The Humanistic Tradition* (ix and x). According to her, "the term humanistic tradition refers to humankind's cultural legacy – the sum total of the significant ideas and achievements handed down from generation to generation. This tradition is the product of responses to conditions that have confronted all people throughout history." "In response to these ever present and universal challenges" of "survival by achieving harmony with nature", of "the inevitable realities of disease and death ", of " living collectively and communally", and "the desire to understand themselves and their place in the universe", "human beings have created the tools of science and technology, social and cultural

institutions, religious and philosophic systems, and various forms of personal expression, the sum total of which we call culture”.

Humankind’s march of civilization above, summed up by Fiero as *survival, communality, and self – knowledge* has presently been broken down into subjects of study. The humanistic tradition, Fiero explains, “focuses on the creative legacy referred to collectively as the *humanities*: literature, philosophy, history, architecture, the visual arts (including photography and film), music, and dance”. She further explains that these humanities of the humanistic tradition “explore a living legacy”. “History confirms that the humanities are integral forms of a given culture’s values, ambitions, and beliefs. Poetry, painting, philosophy, and music are ... tangible expressions of the human quest for the good (one might even say the “complete”) life.

Throughout history, these forms of expression have served the domains of the sacred, the ceremonial, and the communal.” And, accurately, language - “pictograms or picture writings”, “petroglyphs or cave drawings”, generally called ideograms “(Fromkin et al 547), cuneiform, hieroglyphics, Greek, Latin, Anglo-Saxon, modern English – is the recorder, the preserver, the reservoir, the disseminator to which teachers and/or anybody have recourse in drawing out the ideas about survival, communality, self-knowledge of the ancient, classical, medieval, Renaissance, and the contemporary humankind and the various forms of human developments.

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