



The Question of Humanism: Challenges and Possibilities

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Humanism is a philosophical stance that emphasizes the value and agency of human beings, individually and collectively. The meaning of the term humanism has fluctuated according to the successive intellectual movements which have identified with it. Generally, however, humanism refers to a perspective that affirms some notion of human freedom and progress. It views humans as solely responsible for the promotion and development of individuals and emphasizes a concern for humans in relation to the world. Revised edition, 2009), humanist publications tend to play down Humanism's connections with dissenting religion in favour of an emphasis on the radical Enlightenment and the more irreligious philosophers of the ancient world. Recognising the origins of Humanism in dissenting religion is not a concession to theism. After all, astrology played a vital role in the development of astronomy and trigonometry, but astrology is nevertheless nonsense. It is important to be honest about our own history; we cannot claim to meet rational standards of enquiry otherwise. Reading: Russell, Bertrand *The Faith...* 4. Can humanists be agnostics on the question of god? 5. Can humanists be spiritual? 6. Do humanists have to believe in progress? Humanism, system of education and mode of inquiry that originated in northern Italy during the 13th and 14th centuries and later spread through western Europe. The term is alternatively applied to a variety of Western beliefs, methods, and philosophies that place central emphasis on the human realm. Humanism and related terms are frequently applied to modern doctrines and techniques that are based on the centrality of human experience. In the 20th century the pragmatic humanism of Ferdinand C.S. Schiller, the Christian humanism of Jacques Maritain, and the movement known as secular humanism, though differing from each other significantly in content, all showed this anthropocentric emphasis.