



Humanism, Reason and Science a Reflection on the Nature of the Human Being

Colorado FD*

Faculty of Law, Catholic University, Mexico

***Corresponding author:** Fernando Díaz Colorado, Professor at the Faculties of Law, Catholic University, Institute of Mediation of Mexico, Mexico, Email: ferdicol@gmail.com

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Introduction

Addressing human nature is not an easy task; on the contrary, it is a complex matter, not at all peaceful and, therefore, of much debate among academics and defenders of each of the multiple positions that have been raised on humanism. For this reason, the purpose of this essay is to show the complexity of the debate that has been taking place on humanism, focusing on four aspects that I consider fundamental to broaden and enlarge the questions that are currently being posed. In this sense, the basic foundations of human nature will be shown, defining its origin, biological and cultural nature, the construction of collectivities and group identity, as well as the sustenance of the confrontation between morality, irrationality and rationality of the human beings.

Origins of the Homo Species

Since the big bang occurred 13,500million years ago, the universe began to originate, but it was only until about 70,000years ago that the homo sapiens species emerged and therefore the cultures that we know today. In this passage of the emergence of the Homos species in the universe, the historian N.Y. Harari (2019), has been able to establish three key moments or better revolutions that constitute the axes on which Homo sapiens has been evolving:

- The cognitive revolution (construction of an imagined reality),
- The agricultural revolution (manipulation of animal and plant species: agriculture and grazing) and,
- The scientific revolution (emergence of science and technology).

But what is key to note is that Homo sapiens became the most evolved species to date, mainly due to co-operation and the construction of collective myths. This is what has given rise to the invented stories that support the existence of religion, nations, money, human rights, laws, justice, etc. Since the cognitive revolution, the human being has lived in a dual reality, between the objective reality of nature and the imagined reality, but it is the latter that has allowed the cultural advancement of humanity since it is what has allowed the generation of cooperation and the realization of the greatest human enterprises: nations, technology, corporations, etc [1,2].

Likewise, history tells us that it was only until about 500years ago that man began to question myth and belief to focus on science. However, at this time in history there is no shared idea that is completely alien to the debate that allows us to say with absolute certainty how we could define humanism.

Philosophical Position and Humanism

The term Humanism was coined in 1808, by the German theologian Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer Kristeller PO, et al. [3], to refer to the teachings focused on the study of the Greek and Latin classics. Humanism originally starts from the idea that man is in possession of potentially unlimited intellectual capacities, so the search for knowledge and mastery of various disciplines constitutes a necessary condition for the proper use of these faculties. In this sense, humanism focuses on establishing that human beings are free, autonomous and fully responsible for their actions. Hence, the notions of freedom, free will, equality, independence, tolerance, cooperation, human dignity, etc., are closely linked

to the origin of humanism. Undoubtedly one of the aspects that generate consensus about the concept of humanism is that they all focus on the fact that the objective of humanism is to maximize prosperity and the flourishing of life, health, happiness, freedom, knowledge, love, wealth, well-being, peace and tranquility of human beings.

But, although there are religious currents that support their creed in a humanist position, there are currents of thought that indicate that humanism implies a commitment to the search for truth and ethics by human means, in particular the sciences, such as the *médium* more suitable to achieve humanistic ends. This position of humanism rejects the validity of transcendental justifications, considering them dependent on the mythical and on beliefs, whose truth is centered on sacred books such as the Bible, the Koran, the Torah, the Talmud, Upanishad, Brahma Sanhita, etc.

These texts are presented as of divine origin and, therefore, are not susceptible to scientific verification and neither can it be assumed that they are properly constructions from human beings, which is contrary to the conception of the humanist perspective that focuses on the maximization of human qualities and not in divine conceptions. It is more or less what Harvard chaplain Greg Epstein called the search for good without God (Epstein, 2009). For some scholars of humanism, belief in God prevents human beings from fulfilling themselves fully, clouds personal consciousness and social structures, and makes them an obstacle that must be eliminated in order to ensure that human beings occupy their rightful place. However, for the believer, without God it is impossible to be fully human.

It is clear that the debate on humanisms is supported by both positions that have historically been manifested against its definition: those coming from religion and those coming from a scientific, non-confessional and/or atheistic position. In this sense, Feuerbach (1804-1872) pointed out that "Man creates God in his image." In his opinion, the qualities that humanity has attributed to God from the most remote times: a wise, omnipotent, morally perfect being, in possession of the fullness of love, etc., are just the qualities that one's being should have human, but it doesn't have.

Something very similar was expressed by Karl M, et al. [4], for him every society is explained and sustained on a basic structure composed of two elements: the economic base: how the generation, production and distribution of products and the superstructure are organized, which is the set of laws, ideas and customs (culture), which arises from this form of production. The economic base and the superstructure influence one another, they maintain a dialectical relationship; it is. In other words, when it is realized that the economic base, the structure, is unfair and

annuls the human being who works, the superstructure generates a defense mechanism that Marx calls ideology. Ideology is a false consciousness, a set of ideas, that justifies and seeks to maintain reality as it is by making individuals form false theories about themselves and about the world, so that the human being lives unrealized, alienated. Another representative of this secular and non-religious position is Friedrich Nietzsche, who argued that, as Darwin's evolutionism pointed out, man also follows an evolutionary process in morals. For him, the culture of the West has been marked by metaphysics and Christian morality. It is a slave morality where the fundamental thing is resignation, humiliation, pain and the rejection of the enjoyment of life. Being founded on the idea of a single God, it has conveyed the idea that there is only one truth, a single way of behaving, and the idea that this life has to be sacrificed, suffered for the sake of a future life. This morality is, for Nietzsche F, et al. [5], unnatural, and it is what is preventing the emergence of a new model of human being, the superman, destroyer of the previous way of life and marked by other values that will make him strong, instinctive, creative constant that accepts the tragic of life, the Dionysian, its future, multiplicity and its diverse perspectives. Hence the exhortation: "I urge you, brothers, to remain faithful to the earth and do not believe those who speak of super-earthly hopes", pp: 43.

From another shore Freud S, et al. [6], argued that religious ideas are an illusion. Like all other psychic phenomena, its origin lies in the depths of the psychic apparatus. In fact, Freud affirms, that all human beings experience desires for transcendence, for immortality, but reality frustrates those desires. Faced with this situation certain defensive mechanisms are unleashed: religion as a consolation, as a narcotic. Religious prayers and rites only seek to calm anxiety. For Freud, the psychological need to feel that we live in a protected, safe world, leads us to create the image of a father figure: God. Freud's criticism is against the infantilisms with which, at times, faith is lived: taking refuge in it so as not to have to face personal maturation or the difficulties of life.

As we see, humanism has been linked to the conception of the human ideal, some from a transcendental perspective and others from a materialistic and/ or realistic perspective, humanism does not renounce truth, nor of course reality, it only pretends that it is more precise, that is why he denies that concepts and laws are mere duplications of reality. Humanism strives to know what is achieved to know, it is a philosophical perspective and not a thesis susceptible of demonstration Ferrater M], et al. [7]. We could then accept the statement of Heidegger M, et al. [8], when he specified that "humanism is to meditate and take care that man is human instead of non-human, inhuman, that is, alien to his essence", pp: 34.

Imagined Order as a Construction of the Reality of the Human being

Human beings have a particularity as a species and that is that we believe in a particular order not because it is objectively true, but because believing in it allows us to cooperate effectively and forge a better society. What Harari NY, et al. [1,2] calls the imagined orders that the human being builds. We know from biology that human beings are not the same, but we do believe that they are, it can help us create a stable and lasting society. There is no doubt then, that human rights are a myth, they only exist in the imagination, they do not have a natural or concrete existence. This does not mean that they are not useful or that they should not be respected, of course this is another matter.

For Harari NY, et al. [1,2], the imagined order is constituted in the incorporation of principles from birth and education and that are immersed in the interweaving of the development of people's lives in a given society. For this historian there are three central factors that prevent people from realizing that the order that organizes their life exists only in their imagination and has no concrete existence.

- The first factor is that the imagined order is embedded in the material world, because it is woven into the material reality around us.
- The second factor that he mentions is that the imagined order shapes our desires. All of us are born into a pre-existing imagined order, and therefore desires are shaped from birth, so desires become the most important defense of that imagined order.
- The third factor refers to the fact that the imagined order is intersubjective, since in this order it does not exist only in the mind of an individual, it exists in the minds of many individuals with whom it shares it, of millions of strangers who believe the same thing.

The intersubjective refers to something that exists within a communication network that connects the individual subjective consciousness of people. For this reason, money, gods and nations, for example, constitute imagined orders in which millions of people believe.

These imagined orders have been changing throughout the history of mankind as man has evolved in every sense. For example, the imagined order that human beings are equal does not always correspond to what is currently claimed. For many years, human beings divided people into higher and lower hierarchies, some dominated and others were discriminated against. The American Constitution of 1776 did the same, it also established a hierarchy between men who benefited from it and women who were not recognized in authority, recognized the freedom of whites, but did not recognize the equality of blacks and Indians were considered

inferior and therefore could not have the same rights Harari NY, et al. [1,2].

All these distinctions are based on fictions that were based on statements that nobody disputed, for example, Aristotle, et al. [9], argued that slaves had a servile nature and therefore their level in society was simply a reflection of that servile innate nature. Hence, today many people affirm that their social hierarchy is natural and just while those of other societies are ridiculous and false. This explains the reason for the existence of classifications of people in imagined categories: poor and rich, commoners and slaves, whites and blacks, patricians and serfs, Brahmins and Shudras, whites and Indians, etc. The strength of imagined orders is so powerful that they become exercises without discussion or criticism, as exemplified in the case of the late nineteenth century, when the young black Clennon King tried to enroll at the University of Mississippi in 1958 and it was worth it be admitted to a sanatorium for the mentally ill, since the judge presiding over the denounced event ruled with complete certainty that a black person had to be crazy if he thought he could be admitted to the University Harari NY, et al. [1,2]. This explains why today discriminatory and abusive behaviors are maintained against women. In many societies women were the property of men, their husbands, fathers, or brothers. Rape, rape, and sexual abuse in many legal systems were considered acts against property; that is, the illegal act was against the owner and not against the woman as victim. In the Bible, for example, it is stated: if a man finds a young virgin who is not married, grabs her and lies with her and they are surprised, the man who lay with her will give the young woman's father fifty silver cycles and she will be his wife (Deuteronomy, 22, 28-29).

In present times, in 2006 there were still 53 countries where the husband could not be tried for the rape of his wife. Even in Germany, rape laws were not corrected until 1997 to create a legal category of marital rape Harari NY, et al. [1,2]. This explains the strength of the imagined order over women in most countries of the world. The division between men and women is nothing more than a fiction created by human beings that is shared and therefore taught and consolidated by education and culture.

The Rationality or Irrationality of Human Nature

For Pinker S, et al. [10,11], human nature can be approached by studying the fears that this problem generates and which he summarizes in four ways:

- If people are innately different, oppression and discrimination would be justified.
- Yes people are innately immoral, hopes of improving the human condition would be vain.

- If people are products of biology, free will would be a myth and people could no longer be held responsible for their actions.
- If people are products of biology, life would no longer have a higher meaning and purpose.

For Pinker S, et al. [10,11], the fear of accepting the biological notion of inequality is centered on the fact that for some thinkers the human being at birth is a race table, a blank paper on which culture can write and construct the subject given the conditions of existence, so genetic and biological differences generally do not matter. For the natural sciences, human beings are not a clean slate at birth and that we are different and have potentialities and talents that come at the moment of birth, which leads us to think that discrimination against members of some groups could be rational. In this way, if the differences between individuals are innate in nature, then they could not be attributed to discrimination, which makes it easier for the victim to be blamed and inequality tolerated. If people differ biologically in a way that other people value or despise, they would be prompted to intervene biologically to improve society through eugenics or the elimination of these groups. This fear of recognizing the innate differences that exist between human beings is what sustains denying their existence, even denying the existence of a human nature.

Biology has found that human beings are not a clean sweep and that there are important differences at birth. In this sense it is known that there are differences between sexes and races for example. All human beings are very similar but we are not clones, we have different capacities. We are all genetically unique. What we can say today is that regardless of physical strength, IQ or any other trait that may vary, all human beings have certain traits in common. For this reason, the position on equality is a moral, political or religious position, but it does not correspond to the correct answers of biology, anthropology and the evolutionary position in general Harari NY, et al. [1,2]. The discourse on human rights is a narrative construction that seeks to eliminate discrimination, humiliation and the contempt of some men for others, but it is not supported by a claim of a biological nature that supports it.

But if we approach the problem of free will from this perspective, for example, we could say that it is closely linked to responsibility. In the field of law, a person is blamed for the execution of a crime only if there was an intention to do so, and they could have chosen another action. That is, we assume that human beings make decisions in a rational way, so in biological terms there is an affectation in the person's brain, there is no doubt that it would be innocent; that is, we apply determinism and it would be assumed that there will be no punishment and therefore, their behavior would

be excusable. Biology can show that all human beings are innocent since we are not aware of the genetic load and the evolution suffered from our ancestors. It is usually affirmed then that the act of rape of a man to a woman is the result of the influence of a gene that predisposes men to suffer attacks of anger that is present in the family of the rapist and therefore their behavior is not present. Mediated by the full use of their freedom Pinker S, et al. [10,11].

In this sense Dennett DC, et al. [12], argues that the last thing we want is a free soul that allows us to do what we want, if the behavior was decided by a completely free soul, then we could not hold people responsible for their actions, because Such a being would not stop at the threat of punishment, nor would he be ashamed at the prospect of ignominy, nor would he feel guilt, and the penal or moral codes would not stop him because he would be on a different plane from that of cause and effect. Punishing the offender would be evil, since it would have no effect on that subject. But if we condition and the soul ceases to be truly free, then the shame and punishment that the person would possess would be subject to resisting such contingencies and his act would not be fully free, but driven by prejudice, shame, guilt and violation to the norm. As Hume said, either our actions are determined, in which case we are not responsible for them, or they are the result of random events, in which case we are not responsible for them Pinker S, et al. [10,11].

Therefore, responsibility is intended to dissuade the person from committing crimes and in this way to dissuade others from carrying out those same acts. In this perspective, punishment is a dissuasive policy. For this reason, for many researchers today the punishment or better the prison is not something obsolete because they consider that it is the only solution regardless of the immediate effects that it causes, what matters is that the act of justice constitutes a principle of mandatory compliance. Hence, if a person sentenced to death tries to commit suicide, all medical resources are applied to save him and then he is transferred to the place of execution. Victorian jurist James Stephen, quoted by Kaplan J, et al. [13], said that: "criminal law has the same relationship with the desire for revenge that marriage has with sexual desire", pp: 29.

What is clear for Pinker S, et al. [10,11] is that we do not need to solve the problem of free will and we only have to preserve personal responsibility in the face of the increasing understanding of the causes of behavior. What this tells us is that we should not resort to deterministic explanations of biology to exonerate the offender, but on the contrary, the creation of deterrence should be encouraged as the active ingredient of responsibility. This does not indicate in any way that science is eroding the idea of free will or that it is the enemy of this statement and therefore affecting the defense

of the responsibility that as human beings we have in front of the facts that we carry out.

The Nature of Human Morality

In the same way, we can affirm that the brain is a structure of organized matter (neuronal system), in such a way that it gives rise to a sensitive organism with the capacity to feel pleasure and pain; this is, in turn, the framework that allows the emergence of morality, which is why it is the result of an evolutionary process as pointed out by Hauser M, et al. [14], when he affirms “that this marriage between morality and religion is not only forced but unnecessary, so he is crying out for divorce”, pp: 20. Emotions trigger moral judgments, reason is behind this dynamic, it is what allows us to think about the relationship between means and ends, but it can never motivate our choices or preferences.

Our moral sense provides us with emotional responses that motivate action, making possible judgments about what is right and wrong, what is allowed and what is forbidden. Our moral sense is an inevitable result of normal growth, nothing different from the growth of an arm or any part of the body. As Humme D, et al. pointed out, “beauty is not a quality of the object, but a certain feeling of the viewer, so that virtue and vice are not qualities of the people to whom language attributes them, but viewer’s feelings”, pp: 34.

What Hauser M, et al. [14] suggests is that human beings have moral instincts that are characterized by the emergence of universal principles of rules common to all human beings in which each culture introduces certain exceptions that generate the various moral forms that each culture defines. This position is shared by Haidt J, et al. [15], who argues that human beings are equipped with four families of moral emotions:

- Heterocondemnatory: contempt, anger and disgust.
- Self-conscious: shame, embarrassment and guilt.
- Sympathizers: compassion and,
- Heteroencomiastic: gratitude and exaltation.

These moral emotions are the ones that move the whole process, they are the rainbow that allows the conformation of human morality, they are the ones that provide us with intuitions about what is right or wrong and what we should do or not do. This indicates an absolute separation between evolutionists and those who believe that without the guidance of divine light from God, human beings could not obtain moral guidance.

What we can say at the moment is that human beings are endowed with a moral instinct, a faculty of the human mind that unconsciously guides our judgments about right or wrong, establishing a range of moral systems capable

of learning each one of them with its unique and shared characteristics and hallmarks, which allows us to propose a pluralist stance of morality against a single and universal stance and that despite this allows us an understanding between different human cultures.

Identity and Culture

Initially, we can start from the idea that the division of the world population by civilizations, by races or by religions produces a singularist approach to human identity, according to which human beings place ourselves in groups and are characterized by that condition of group membership that makes us equal to everyone in the group but different from all those who are not from the same group. In other words, this singularization of group membership eliminates any possibility of individual diversity. Today we know that this is not totally true, since a person can be black, have been born in Europe and live in Latin America, be married to an indigenous woman and profess the Muslim religion. This mixture of identities makes him a singular being and impossible to place in a particular category or identity. We are on many occasions the result of a sum or mixture of many apparent identities. Violence arises when we affirm that we have a unique, inevitable, often belligerent identity, which apparently demands a lot from us and facilitates sectarian confrontation Sen A, et al. [16].

A world divided by totally separate and unrelated or mixed identities is a disintegrated and conflictive world, which is opposed to the world of plural and diverse categories that is what we really live in these moments of history, since it not only goes against the universal affirmation that we are all equal, but against the less debated concept that takes full force today that indicates that we are different human beings. It is not unreasonable to say then, that the only right of absolute truth is the one that proclaims the right that each and every human being has to be different, to be different, to claim our uniqueness. The conception of the humanist position tells us that having the right to difference implies respecting the plan or life project of each human being. That is, there is not a universe but a multiverse.

For Sen A, et al. [17], many communitarian theories defend the idea that human beings are not beings with diverse identities, but fundamentally as members of a particular social group or community. These theories defend the idea of an identity due to the fact of being human, based on belonging to a community, underestimating all the other affiliations that make human beings the complex and intricate persons that we are. Therefore, any conceptual categorization that apparently supports this reductionist vision of any culture or social group tends to seek claims that support violence as a legitimate means of reinforcing identity.

Hence the assertion that it is impossible for a democratic global state to be constituted in the immediate future. Today there is an urgent need to ask questions not only about the economics and politics of globalization, but also about the values, ethics and sense of belonging that shape our conception of a global world. We must one day understand that there is no universe but a multiverse and that we are not nationals of this or another country, but that we are something more valuable, we are citizens of the world.

Conclusion

We could say to close this essay that the idea of defining what we understand by humanism is crossed by the consideration of the questioning about the equality of human beings, their rational capacity, their moral nature and the diverse cultural construction. Science has told us that human beings are biologically unique and different, that there are innate moral feelings, that we are not rational but that we aspire to constitute ourselves as rational beings and, furthermore, we are beings that live in a permanent duality between which we provides the physical and material objective world in which we live and the imagined world built by us and that allows the creation of orders that explain the existence of everything that human beings consider immutable or true but that are only imaginary such as money, business, freedom, religion, success, happiness, etc [18-20].

It could be said then that the human is not necessarily good as many point out as not bad; But what is worth helping to build is precisely a more humane universe that contemplates both the biological aspects of human nature, as well as the constructions of the different imagined orders that facilitate us to live in environments of peace, of acceptance of difference and of Respect for the "Other" who, although different from me, has the same right as me to exist. The human being is prone to believe in myths and fantasy and to reject science and objectivity, precisely because of the orders imagined so far constructed, but the truth is that science is the basis of illustration and the least wrong way to advance in that process called civilization.

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