

# GODFREY OZUMBA'S SPIRITOCENTRIC HUMANISM: A CONCEPTUAL CRITIQUE

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“Without argument and clarification, there is strictly, no philosophy”

- Kwasi Wiredu; *Philosophy and an African Culture*, 1980p.47

## Abstract

This paper raises argument and attempts clarification. The argument advanced is that the notion of *Spiritocentric Humanism* a theory, philosophical system and method propounded by Professor Godfrey O. Ozumba of the University of Calabar is a misnomer or a miscoinage, inappropriate and a terminological inexactitude, considering that Humanism as a philosophical system is essentially *humanocentric*. The thesis advanced in conclusion is that if *Spiritocentric Humanism* is “a philosophy onto eternity” as Ozumba contends, it is to the extent of its goal, a philosophy that is more spiritual than humanistic. Consequently, the paper suggests that Ozumba’s espousal can still be termed “Integrative Humanism” without it synonymously being characterized as “Spiritocentric Humanism”, if it has to be considered as a variant of authentic humanistic philosophy.

## Introduction

*Spiritocentric Humanism* is a contemporary philosophical current propounded by Professor Godfrey Ozumba of the University of Calabar, Nigeria and being popularized by ardent students of the University and beyond. Ozumba interchanges the term “spiritocentric” with the term “integrative”. Consequently “Spiritocentric Humanism” is synonymous with “Integrative Humanism”. Ozumba in defining “Integrative Humanism” says that,

Integrative humanism is simply defined as a ratio-spiritocentric approach in understanding human existence, interpreting human affairs, and a rigorous philosophical attitude which takes into consideration, the spiritual and the mundane dimensions of human existence and reality. It attempts at philosophizing from the point of view of holistic truth bearing in mind that man is both mortal and immortal, terrestrial and preternatural, spirit and body. Integrative humanism is both a philosophy and a method of doing philosophy (Ozumba; 2010; 22).

It needs no gainsaying the fact that philosophy thrives on mutual criticism, and criticism is best when it is directed at those who are in a position to reply.

This paper is a conceptual critique of the fresh approach to Humanistic philosophy which Professor G. O. Ozumba, a long standing teacher of the writer has propounded. The paper is presented not as an undermining reaction to the philosophy and method of “Integrative Humanism” but as a compliment to the progenitor of the theory. Of course, again, it needs not be gain said that the greatest compliment one can pay a philosopher and any scholar for that matter is to criticize his work. Let it be noted that my expectation here is that my remarks will provoke critical discussion from which many shall come away more enlightened and a hundred flowers of “Spiritocentric Humanism” will bloom.

### **What is Humanism?**

The concept of “Humanism” is derived from the word “human” which relates to or is connected with people-human beings-rather than animals, machines, gods, angels, devils or spirits. In its broadest sense, Humanism is an attitude of mind that is centred on mankind and human interests. But Barbara Smoker, an avowed humanist, has observed that as a philosophical disposition Humanism does not exclude the consideration of the interests of other animal species, but definitely excludes “gods, angels, devils, and other make-believe beings”. (Smoker, 2006;5). According to Smoker, Humanism, generally implies,

A desire to think for yourself, to “do your own thing”, to accept the results of free inquiry, whatever they may be; and to act in accordance with those results, in the light of reason, and in cooperation with others, for the promotion of human happiness (Smoker, 2006;5).

Jim Herrick in his book *Humanism: An Introduction* echoes Smoker in his assertion that the emphasis of Humanism is “on the human, the here –and-now, the humane” (Herrick, 2006;1). Herrick also informs us that “Humanists are atheists or agnostic and do not expect an after-life. It is essential to humanism that it brings values and meaning into life” (Herrick, 2006;1). The point made basically by the two “Humanist” scholars above is that Humanism is a *humanocentric* philosophy of life; the focus of Humanism is the *human* in the *here-and-now*. It is agnostic, even atheistic, and definitely anti-supernaturalism.

Ozumba posits that, “Humanism as a philosophical and literary movement originated in Italy in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century” (Ozumba, 2010;14). But we must note that Humanism has a long tradition which has developed through time and in various cultures. Scepticism-the continual doubting of all we are told or all that we see-, agnosticism and indeed atheism, which are fundamental elements of the humanist outlook is prevalent in ancient thought and can be found in religious documents. In Oriental culture, among the Hindu’s, there is ultimately one reality. Ultimately reality is one and only one. This ultimate reality is *Brahman*. Every other thing is considered to be part of *Brahman* and a manifestation of *Brahman*, and this includes human beings

as well as animals, trees and inanimate objects. These are all manifestations of *Brahman* and parts of *Brahman*. *Brahman* is the source and sustainer of all things. (Edet, 2002;7). But in one of the Upanishads comes forth the following lines: “Is Brahman the course? Whence are we born? Whereby do we live, and whither do we go?” (Sītātāsvar Upanishad).

Humanism is a questioning, questing philosophy of life. It questions existing ideas and quests for new ones. People have always raised the fundamental questions about life?, what is the nature of the world around us? What is man’s ultimate destiny, what is our personal potential? What does man live for? For the Hindu, the idea of the Hindu God- *Brahman*, could be questioned, root and branch. Subsequently a Hindu school of thought known as the Cārvakā in the sixth century B. C. held that the Hindu sacred literature is false, that there is no deity, that all life is matter, that there is no immortality, that priests are of no value and that pleasure is the aim of life. (Herrick, 2006;4).

Similarly, in early Chinese thought Confucius (551-471B.C) expressed ideals which contained the seeds of humanism and agnosticism. Mesembe Edet writes in this regard that,

when someone asked the master teacher about how to serve the spirits, he replied, “you are not yet able to serve men, how can you serve spirits?” And he said, “we don’t know about life, how can we know about death?” Confucius was concerned only about life in this changing world, his philosophy was this-worldly and not other-worldly. It is in this world that the human being must live and with other people that he must associate, Confucius emphasized. (Edet; 2002; 99).

In ancient India, the Buddha, who founded Buddhism, rejected most of the features commonly associated with religion. He rejected belief in God or gods. Buddhists argue that gods and goddesses, if they exist, are subject to *annica-* change and impermanence. He rejected the offering of sacrifices, rituals and prayers as “useless”. (Edet, 2002;83). This reflects a sceptical and atheistic strand-elements of Humanism. And in the Biblical tradition, it is written that: “The fool hath said in his heart; there is no god” (Psalm 14:1). This is evidence that atheistic thought did exist as early as Biblical times.

About traditional Africa, it has often been said that our traditional outlook was “intensely humanistic”. There was a preoccupation with human welfare and considerations of human wellbeing. Morality was founded on what is decent for man – what brings dignity, respect, contentment, prosperity, joy, to man and his community. (Wiredu, 1980 3,5).

However, the philosophical ideas in modern Humanism have their source in the thinking of some of the ancient Greek philosophers. At that time, Greeks believed in a very wide range of gods and had a diversity of religious practice. It was the Ionian triad-Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes – who rejected the prevailing mythological and religious outlook of Greek culture and set out the “naturalistic view” that everything is based on matter, leaving no role for the spirit in

inert or living matter. But it was the sophists, - a group of itinerant teachers – who laid down the essential foundations of humanism. They shifted the emphasis of philosophy from speculations about the cosmos to speculations about man and how he lives in the society. The maxim of Protagoras, the chief sophist, to the effect that “man is the measure of all things, of things that are that they are, and of things that are not, that they are not”, can be said to be the fundamental principle of Humanism. Here we see that man (the *human* being) is the focus of Humanism.

In one of his works, *Of the Gods*, Protagoras also states, “About the gods I have no means of knowing either that they exist or that they do not exist or what they are like to look at; many things prevent my knowing-among others, the fact that they are never seen and the shortness of human life” (Quoted in Herrick; 2006;5). This reflects agnosticism towards religion and concern with the here-and now which are elements of Humanism. Protagoras also taught that justice is a matter of agreed rules, not divine ordinance, and that indeed, “man is the measure of all things”. In other words, that for human beings there is no standard, or ideal, outside human purposes and values derived from human experience and sensibility. Barbara Smoker writes that,

This principle is central to modern humanism, and is in fact the main difference between humanism and religious faith. The religionist generally believes that human values derive from absolute values, originating in a god that is independent of mankind, beyond time and beyond this world. To the humanist, however, alleged divine revelation was actually thought up by clever men for the sake of greater authority (Smoker, 2005; 10).

Smoker avers that “Protagoras is sometimes called the first humanist”. (Smoker, 2005;10).

Democritus, Hippocrates and Epicurus in ancient Greece laid the foundation for the scientific, empiricist and pragmatic outlook of modern Humanism. Democritus was a “materialist” or “monist” – that is, a philosopher who says that the universe is made up of one fundamental material substance or material things and their movements. For the materialists, mind or mental events are a process of the material brain, not something different and time and space are aspects of matter. Instead of starting from the prevailing supernatural beliefs, Democritus studied nature at first hand. He worked out an atomic theory (first suggested by the atomist philosopher Leucippus) that came remarkably close to the science of our time-saying that the material universe comprised changeable combinations of atoms that had always existed, the world being formed out of a primeval whirling motion. Democritus, who lived to be a very old man, was known as “the laughing philosopher”, because he used to laugh at the follies of mankind (Smoker, 2006;11).

Also living at that time was Hippocrates who is reputed to be the father of western scientific medicine. He was a Greek physician born at Cos about 460 BC and died at 380BC. He and his pupils freed their minds of religion and superstition and adopted the concept of “learning from nature”. They believed that to understand the nature of the human body, one has to understand the nature of the universe, by observation. Before their emergence superstitious, and mystico-religious

and mythical beliefs dominated the practice of medicine and medical techniques. Religion provided answers to problems without evidence and illness was considered to be a part of the divine will, but Hippocrates and his pupils insisted strictly on observations of symptoms. Basic knowledge of the human anatomy was shrouded in mysteries, speculative hypothesis and unproved beliefs, but with the Hippocratean medical school practical observation and careful interpretation of symptoms began.

Hippocrates encouraged the need for tests and practical experiments rather than rely on speculation or chance. He taught that diseases had natural causes and that remedies must therefore be natural. This scientific attitude was matched by the humanitarian care that Hippocrates and his followers showered on their patients, whom they took fully into their compassionate confidence; and these forms the basis for the humanistic view of medicine that has remained the ideal for doctors to this day. Epicurus, another atomist philosopher, taught that the gods did not exist or at least were indifferent to humanity. He believed in the search for a contented human life, taking as his starting-point, Aristotle's principle that good conduct is that which promotes human happiness. A popular statement credited to Epicurus which just as the Protagorean dictum, "man is the measure...", is considered as a basic principle of modern Humanism: "friendship goes dancing round the world proclaiming to us all to awake to the praises of happy life". (Quoted in Herrick, 2006;6). This statement expresses the optimistic concern of the Humanist to make the world a better and happy place to live in, not only for people alive today, but for future generations too.

Still during the ancient Greek period, Socrates who may not be categorically described as humanistic in his teachings, because he had a religious turn of mind and saw a divine order in the universe, did inadvertently contribute to the development of the Humanist spirit of free inquiry through his method of philosophical dialogue (called "dialectics"). Socratic dialectics pursued truth by question and answer. Socrates just asked questions, especially to begin a conversation, as if he knew nothing. Wherever the discussion or argument might lead was never determined. In the course of the discussion he would generally get his opponents to recognize the weakness of their arguments, and, forced into a corner, they would finally be obliged to realize what was right and what was wrong. This indeed fulfills the Humanist requirement of free inquiry, scepticism, and suspension of judgment and sets the tone for the Humanist reliance on reason or rationality as the best guide we have in facing life's problems and the foundation for the *free thinking* open mindedness of the modern Humanist. Socrates said that the only way in which he was wiser than other men was that they thought they knew a lot (and closed their minds) whereas he knew how ignorant he was (and continually kept an open mind).

Plato, Socrates friend and disciple, advanced a theory that there was an ultimate reality behind our world of sense experience. This is his popular theory of "forms". For Plato, the forms are ideal prototypes-absolute, eternal and unchanging. They exist, said Plato, in some higher world, apart from their particular manifestations which we experience in the ordinary world, the manifestations being illusion, not reality. According to this Platonic philosophy, the human values of beauty, truth, and goodness come to us from the human higher world. Humanism rejects this

sort of “other-worldly” theory. Aristotle, Plato’s former student disagreed with much of Plato’s thought. His approach was more empirical-looking at the evidence without preconceived theories. His study of ethics is based entirely on the human. In common with many Greek philosophers, scientific research and speculation was important to him. Barbara Smoker sums up the discussion of the humanist tradition in its earliest beginnings in ancient Greece thus, “Plato is an opponent of the humanist tradition. Humanists follow Protagoras and Democritus, not Plato” (Smoker, 2006;13).

The medieval period of the history of philosophy spans the period of the Middle Ages of western European history. It is the period between the disintegration of the Roman Empire, about the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries A. D. and the Renaissance and Enlightenment in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Church of Rome had come to be the dominant cultural force in Western Europe. There was so little education in Christian Europe that this period is known as the Dark Ages. Critical thinking was repressed, but some questioning is to be found in diverse heretical movements which suffered intense persecution. Humanism or the humanist spirit could not thrive in the climate of the time. Jim Herrick notes that “Arab culture and thought during this period was considerably more developed in terms of science, art and philosophy. The philosopher Averroes (1126-98) born in Spain, was an original and heretical thinker, and among those who transmitted Greek thought to the thinkers of the Renaissance” (Herrick, 2006;6).

During the period of the Renaissance – the period between the rigid formality of the Middle Ages and the period of the Enlightenment there was a revival of classical learning. The word “humanism” at this period, came to stand for a passion for scholarship and the arts. People who cared about art and literature, to the exclusion of science, began to call themselves “humanists”. Renaissance thinkers used the phrase *studia humanitatis* in referring to the study of the humanities (rhetoric, grammar, literature and philosophy). Some of the Renaissance “humanists” were Erasmus and Thomas More. But Smoker observes that these were not “complete humanists in our sense, because they were still Christian”. (Smoker, 2006;17). This obviously suggests that Humanism in the modern (contemporary) sense is in opposition to religion.

During the Renaissance, there was also an increased emphasis on the civic, and Vittorina da Fletro (1378-1446) an educationist at the University of Padua, wrote: “Not everyone is called to be a lawyer, a physician, a philosopher, to live in the public eye, nor has everyone outstanding gifts of natural capacity, but all of us are created for the life of social duty, all are responsible for the personal influence which goes forth from us”. (Quoted in Herrick; 2006;7). According to Herrick, “the life of social duty” is an important emphasis in humanism”. (Herrick, 2006,7).

Still during the Renaissance, the development of print and the ability to read the Bible in one’s own language enhanced the capacity for independent thought about religion and several essays were written criticizing Christian ethics and the Catholic Church. Other essays deplored religious strife and intolerance. One of the prominent essayist’s of the time was Michael Montaigne (1553-1592), associated with the statement, said to be inscribed on the beam of his room, “Homo

sum, humani a me nihil alienum puto “(I am a man. I consider nothing human to be alien to me) (Quoted in Herrick, 2007;7).

Another foremost essayist of the period was Francis Bacon (1561-1626). He marks the end of the Renaissance and the beginning of the Enlightenment. He was obviously not an atheist. He wrote in his essay titled *Of Atheism*,

... And therefore God never wrought miracle to convince atheism, because his ordinary works convince it. It is true, that a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's mind's about to religion; for while the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest in them, and go no further; but when it beholdeth the chain of them, confederate and linked together, it must needs fly to providence and Deity. (Bacon, 1972;49).

This shows that he was not a “humanist” in the modern sense, but nevertheless, his understanding of the scientific method, especially the inductive method and the importance of experiment, and his survey of the idols and distempers of learning laid the foundation for the modern scientific Age which has established the scientific method (that is, the method of observation, test, theory and experiment) as the ideal approach to getting knowledge. Of course, the “scientific method” recommends itself to humanists as the humanist way of getting knowledge, as opposed to alleged religious revelation.

The period of enlightenment, about the 18<sup>th</sup> century, was the Age of Science. Notable figures of the period include Voltaire (1694-1778), a French mathematician, philosopher, poet, playwright, and satirist who rejected Christianity absolutely and postulated that belief in God was a way of keeping the people in order. He endorsed the principle of free speech which includes the defence of the rights of those with whom you disagree. There was also Diderot, who was a more vehement atheist. In his work, *Philosophical Thoughts* he wrote that “scepticism is the first step towards truth”. Another work of his, *The Encyclopedia* was banned before its completion and had to be completed secretly, but it was a great contribution to 18<sup>th</sup> century thought. (Herrick, 2006;8).

The modern period of the history of western philosophy witnessed the emergence of the philosophers of modern science-the empiricists, beginning with John Locke (1632-1704). The “Empiricists” (from the Greek word for “experience) were so called because they maintained that all knowledge of reality comes from observational experience. They laid a solid foundation for modern Humanism, with its circumspective attitude, towards religion; David Hume (1711-1776), a leading empiricist philosopher in one of his major works *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, containing a chapter “On Miracles” presented incisive arguments against the belief in the existence of God and strong arguments in support of skepticism in religious matters.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Utilitarians – Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill and others were outstanding precursors of the Humanist philosophy. The utilitarians taught that the moral law is

based, not on any transcendental criterion, but on utility, that is, the practical, consequence of particular actions. They adopted the maxim, “the greatest happiness of the greatest number” which implies that good or bad, right or wrong, are to be judged in terms of human happiness. In the middle of the nineteenth century, the ideas of Charles Darwin on the evolution of species had enormous influence and made it possible to question Christian ideas of the creation.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century there were many outstanding Humanists, in science and public life, but perhaps the greatest of all was the English mathematician and philosopher, Bertrand Russell. His essay entitled “Why I am not a Christian” is world famous. He wrote in his autobiography, looking back on a long life, that despite the ferocity from 20<sup>th</sup> century wars and the cruelty stemming for 20<sup>th</sup> century dictators, he still retained his personal vision-

to care for what is noble, for what is beautiful, for what is gentle: to allow moments of insight to give wisdom at more mundane times’ and ‘to see in my imagination the society that is to be created, where individuals grow freely, and where hate and greed and envy die because there is nothing to nourish them (Quoted in Herrick, 2006:11).

Those in the Humanist tradition would share these ideals.

Since the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, up till the present day there has been rapid advances in science, and technology has been making huge strides—science, explaining more and more about the natural world, and technology conquering space and time, - so leaving less and less for supernatural explanations to get away with.

This review of the Humanist tradition since its beginnings is necessary, if we hope to adequately grasp and appreciate the major elements and characteristics of authentic Humanism, especially in our modern times. From the foregoing, the following elements are discernible in the Humanist tradition.

- (i) Humanism is focused on the human and in his circumstances in “the here and now” and in “the here and now” for future generations of humans. It is thus *humanocentric*.
- (ii) Skepticism, agnosticism, suspension of judgment are fundamental elements of the humanist tradition.
- (iii) Humanists are secularists, pragmatists and realistic. They abhor dogmatic religion and are therefore anti-super naturalism Humanists are “this-worldly” and not “other-worldly”.

Barbara Smoker says it all where she maintains that,

Humanists are *free thinkers*, because they never hand over their minds irrevocably to any church or party, but remain free to think for themselves. Humanists use the scientific method, not only to explain nature, but in every aspect of life, and, as Bernard Shaw put it, “never accept anything reverently



without asking it a great many very searching questions”. Humanists are *materialists* – having no belief in spirits (mind without body). Humanists are *empiricist* in their approach to knowledge; *utilitarian* in morality, *Epicurean* in the art of living (Smoker, 2006, 30).

The question which then arises and which we must address, to establish the basis and legitimacy of our conceptual critique is whether there can be a “New Humanism” or “new Humanisms” such as a “*Spirito-centric Humanism*” which can firmly stand as perhaps variants of authentic Humanistic philosophy?

### **Can there be a “new” Humanism or New Humanisms, such as “Spirito-centric Humanism?”**

Professor G. O. Ozumba admits that “the purpose of humanism was/is to restore the dignity of man” (Ozumba, 2010,14). He says he draws his inspiration from the “new Humanism” of Professor Udo Etuk. According to Ozumba “Udo Etuk’s new Humanism can be said to provide a good base for the take off of our modest attempt at articulating a method which we have called integrative humanism” (Ozumba, 2010, 14). What is this “new humanism” of Udo Etuk?

Professor Udo Etuk in his quite exciting book *The New Humanism* set out to argue the thesis that “Humanism need not be non-theistic or even more atheistic. Atheistic humanism does not make sense. Rather it is theistic humanism which both points the way and supplies the motive power to the full realization of human dignity”. (Etuk, 1994,4). Udo Etuk says that,

Modern Humanism makes it seem that in order for man to improve his well-being in his present life, he must deny the possibility of any other life; in order for man to make this world a better place for himself, he must repudiate the existence of another world; and in order for him to realize his dignity, he must set himself up in the place of God. (Etuk, 1999,3).

Udo Etuk’s mission in that work was to attack and debunk that position.

In introducing 20<sup>th</sup> century humanism as a “systematic philosophy”, Udo Etuk employs Corliss Lamont as the spokesman of the philosophy of Humanism. Corliss Lamont, defines 20<sup>th</sup> century Humanism as “a philosophy of joyous service for the greater good of all humanity in this natural world and advocating the methods of reason, science and democracy” (Quoted in Etuk, 1999,8). Etuk admits that the dominant motivation of Humanism is the repudiation of religious or theistic beliefs, and practices built on them. Etuk highlights Lamont’s exposition that,

Humanism is the viewpoint that men have but one life to lead and should make the most of it in terms of creative work and happiness; that human happiness is its own justification and requires no sanction or support from supernatural sources, that in any case the supernatural, usually conceived of in the form of heavenly gods or immortal heavens, does not exist; and that human beings,

using their own intelligence and cooperating liberally with one another, can build an enduring citadel of peace and beauty upon this earth (Etuk, 1999,9).

What is clear from the above elucidation is that modern Humanism is a man-centred, *humanocentric* philosophy which sets for itself the very challenging plan of helping man to realize his paradise here on earth, since there can be no paradise. It needs no gainsaying then, that the attitude of humanism is clearly anti-religious or anti-theistic.

Udo Etuk's reaction to Humanism in this form is that,

Man has value and dignity, yes, man's worth is inestimable, and this planet Earth is his home for a while, yes; and he has a right to the resources of Planet Earth as well as an obligation to make his dwelling here both comfortable and compatible with the realization of his full human dignity (Etuk, 1999,3).

Here Udo Etuk remains faithful to the *humanocentric* focus and emphasis of authentic Humanism, but he argues further that,

....Man's dignity is not *sui generis*; man's dignity does not derive from man, nor can man confer inestimable value on another man... the dignity of man is conferred on man by the one who created man in his own image, and to discount this factor is, in fact to devalue man. (Etuk, 1999,5).

Udo Etuk describes his approach to Humanism as "the new humanism" which shifts man from being the centre and measure of all things; from being his own God; from denying and repudiating the existence of other life forms and cosmos, to a new conception where man's dignity derives from being created in the image of the Almighty God; where existence and meaning in this life can only be found in relation to a faith in life hereafter; and where the concept of the "brotherhood of man" makes sense only in the acceptance of the corollary concept of the "Fatherhood of God".

It is from here that Ozumba derived his inspiration. He says that,

Udo Etuk's new humanism which is equally anchored on God stresses the need to revert back to God since man being wolf to man cannot guarantee man's readiness to take care of themselves as rationality demands. And since man cannot take care of himself, then, he must look up to his creator who has all it takes to ensure that his society operates as God would want it in tandem with his divine will and purpose. This is a great inspiration to our philosophy of integrative humanism (Ozumba, 2010, 14).

Ozumba uses "Integrative Humanism" as synonymous with "Spirito-centric Humanism". In our view, that is where the conceptual problematique arises.

We must note that Udo Etuk's refocusing Humanism from man *per se* to God, does not deviate from the *humanocentric* character of authentic humanism. Udo Etuk himself affirms that it

is correct to say that all Humanism can be summed up as one big concern with man. (Etuk, 1999;159). He insists that man is very important for a number of reasons which he provides. His Humanism is “new” only to the extent that it considers man as a creature of God, made in the image of God, and from whom he derives his value and dignity. The point here is that though Udo Etuk’s Humanism is God-focused it retains the *humanocentric* character of authentic humanist tradition, thus we aver that there is nothing new about the “new humanism” because although Humanism is not religion, the Humanist will live beside the religious, believing in freedom for religion and also freedom from religion.

### **Godfrey Ozumba’s “Spirito- Centric Humanism”.**

In various articulations of his idea of “*spirito-centric Humanism*”, Ozumba says that,

It is the disposition, the willingness, acceptance and the application and consideration of the spiritual component in our cognitive quests in all areas of human endeavour. It is more than a readiness to accept that every reality has a spiritual component, rather, it entails the necessity to endeavour to seek out the spiritual component in our philosophical discourse. Spirito-centricism is therefore both an urge and an imperative for contemporary philosophizing (Ozumba; 2010;40; 2009;60).

Ozumba says that “Spirito-centricism” is “the attitude of mind that any realistic epistemological cogitation should include a passionate and a penetrating unmasking of the spiritual component” (Ozumba, 2010;40;2009;60).

For “Humanism”, Ozumba refers to “the vision of man as the agent, agenda and the agency of knowledge” (Ozumba, 2010;40;2009;60). He says that Humanism is the vision of man as “the means and the end, the subject and predicate of knowledge”. Ozumba proposes Spirito-centric Humanism as both a philosophical system or theory and as a method. As a philosophical system or theory, Ozumba presents “Spirit-centric Humanism” as a variant of the Humanist philosophy. Ozumba declares that,

my humanism is secular, academic scientific, religious, and intellectual with more emphasis on the spiritual and the integration. It is not necessarily against any of the humanisms per se only to the extent that each emphasizes an aspect of reality. My humanism is all embracing. (Ozumba, 2010,17).

Ozumba says that “Spiritocentric Humanism is “a philosophy onto eternity”.

This is where we take our point of departure, because throughout the historical development of the Humanist tradition, as we have shown, authentic Humanism has been *humanocentric* rather than *spiritocentric*. If “Spiritocentric Humanism” is a philosophy on to eternity as Ozumba contends, it is to the extent of its goal, a philosophy that is more spiritual than humanistic.

Consequently we submit that Professor G. O. Ozumba's notion of "*Spiritocentric Humanism*" is a misnomer or a miscoinage, inappropriate, and a terminological inexactitude.

### **A Conceptual Critique of "Spirito-centric Humanism"**

"Spiritocentricism" simply means centred or focused on the spirit or spiritual. It means emphasis on the spiritual. "Humanocentricism", on the other hand simply means centred or focused on the human, man. Indeed the term "humanism" is derived from its humanocentric character, focus and concerns. Thus a Spiritocentric Humanism" appears to be a paradoxical miscoinage. Ozumba employs "Spiritocentric Humanism" and "Integrative "Humanism", as well as "integrativism" as synonyms and interchangeably, and another problem arises here. Ozumba writes that "integrativism is another name for our method of "spiritocentric humanism". By integrativism we mean harnessing, processing through engrafting of the different forms of knowledge" (Ozumba, 2010,41;2009;61). He says that "the undergirding objective of integrative humanism is the need to place man's physical and spiritual well being at the centre of every intellectual endeavour" (Ozumba, 2010,19).

It does appear to us that "integrativism" is the method, rather than "Spiritocentric Humanism", which Ozumba presents as synonymous with "Integrative Humanism". And in our view it would have been more appropriate for Ozumba to describe his philosophy as "Integrative Humanism" which employs the method of "integrativism", rather than introduce the inconsistent and paradoxical notion of "Spiritocentric Humanism" and present this as synonymous with "Integrative Humanism". This is because, it is clear that "Integrative Humanism" as Ozumba conceptualizes it advocates the integration of insights from the physical and spiritual dimensions of reality in tackling all human-based problems and quests for knowledge. This is clear and understood. Why then do we need the emphasis on the *spiritocentric* perspective?

Indeed "integrative humanism (not spiritocentric humanism) can be properly conceptualized as a variant of authentic Humanistic philosophy if it retains its objective of integration for the purpose of "understanding the necessity of positive aggregation of supposed opposed positions to supply the missing links and the perceptive or propositional gap(s) that have necessitated the misgiving and to fill it" and for the purpose of "appreciating that knowledge has two components, the spiritual and the physical or humanistic" (Ozumba, 2010,45). "Integrativism" would then constitute the method of "Integrative Humanism" which chief aim would be to integrate the spiritual and the humanistic components of reality in the service of mankind and God.

Elsewhere in a subsequent essay, Professor G. O. Ozumba, in presenting a background to the philosophy of Integrative Humanism noted that "Integrative Humanism as a philosophy was instigated by the need to debunk the view that philosophy should be concerned about the mundane and not the metaphysical, the spiritual or religious dimensions of reality" (Ozumba, 2011, 153). There can be no gainsaying that, just as with Udo Etuk's "New Humanism", the challenge for Ozumba, and his response to "mundane humanism" is quite legitimate. But it is interesting to note

that in the subsequent essay under reference nowhere is “Spirito-centric Humanism” presented as the synonym to “Integrative Humanism” or “Integrative Humanism” presented as synonym for “integrativism”. Perhaps Professor Ozumba had come to the realization of his earlier miscoinage and terminological inexactitude and inconsistency.

## Conclusion

What we have laboured to establish is that Professor G. O. Ozumba’s reference to his well worked out philosophical theory of Integrative Humanism as “Spirito-centric Humanism” is a misnomer because any form of humanism for it to be authentic must be *humanocentric*; we have suggested that indeed the concept of “Integrative Humanism” appropriately captures Ozumba’s philosophy because it aims at configurational, thematic, linguistic, ontological and epistemological integration of knowledge of reality for man; and its method is “Integrativism” which functions to integrate all components of presenting realities-physical and spiritual and all knowledge. We have dismissed “Spirito-centric Humanism” as a misnomer and insisted that “Integrative Humanism” and “integrativism” cannot be synonymous, the former is the philosophical system, the latter is the method.

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